

Jesus Glorified

- Mark 9:1-13
- Let's look at this passage under three main points: turning point, transfiguration, and teaching.
- **Turning Point (verse 1)**
- We are halfway through this Gospel, and we have just hit a turning point. Jesus' question for the disciples on the way to Caesarea Philippi, "Who do you say that I am?" sets the direction for the rest of the story. "You are the Christ," Peter replies, and then Jesus turns messianic triumphalism on its head with his affirmation of Peter's answer and his explanation that his triumph would come through suffering, and death, and resurrection. Jesus calls his disciples to *follow* him. And then we come to this: He says that some of them would not die before they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power. What did he mean by that? Are there still some of the first crowd of followers alive today, waiting for the second coming? No. We always have to look at context in understanding Scripture. In all three of the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, the transfiguration is preceded by this statement, that some would not taste death until they had seen the kingdom of God in power. You've heard of show and tell; Peter's confession, "You are the Christ" is the tell. We learn how to think about Jesus in that declaration. The mount of transfiguration is the show, the picture: we are allowed to behold his true nature. There is a dual application of Jesus' statement that they would not die until they saw the kingdom of God. This is the first application: Peter, James, and John saw it on the mount. But the second application, I believe, is to the resurrection, when the disciples and many others would see the glorified Jesus face to face.
- Jesus has asked the disciples, twice, about his identity, and then confirmed that what Peter said is true. But the matter is not settled yet. There's one more voice to be heard.
- **Transfiguration (verses 2-8)**
- Have you ever overheard your children talking among themselves about something and one of them says, "Well I know for a fact that we are going out to eat tonight." Or, "We are going to camp out in the back yard tonight." Or "We are going to get a puppy this week." And then you hear one of the other children say, "Uh-Uh! No, we're not." And then you hear the child who made the claim in the first place seal the deal with these words: "Dad said!" They nod with all the sincerity in the world, and then say it again: "Dad said." Some of the sweetest words in the universe. Dad said! Dads, we need to be careful what we say because to most children, at least when they are little, "Dad said" is the Gospel truth. Why? Because when the father speaks, he speaks with authority. Not only that, he speaks for the whole family. Not only that, according to Deuteronomy 6, when the father speaks, he speaks for God. God told Moses to tell the fathers that they were to teach the commandments of God "diligently to your children, and talk about them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up." Why should you follow the Lord your God and serve Him only? "Dad said!" Dad's voice is powerful and can affect change for generations to come. Why do I bring this up? Remember, the question is "Who is Jesus?" On the Mount of Transfiguration, one final voice is heard: **Dad** speaks. God's voice is heard by the three disciples who were there, with the definitive answer to the question, "Who is Jesus?"

God says, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." I don't care what the culture says about Jesus. I know what Dad said. I don't care what my doubts say about Jesus. I know what Dad said. And isn't this interesting? Remember at Jesus' baptism, God spoke directly to His Son, saying, "You are My beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." Now God speaks instead directly to the followers of Jesus, giving them the final and authoritative word on who Jesus is! Dad said. And not only to tell them, definitively, who this Man is, but to give them a command as well: **listen to Him!** This declaration from heaven, James Edwards writes, "sets Jesus apart from Moses and Elijah and designates him uniquely as God's Son." Listen to him, God commands all disciples, not just Peter, James and John. This recalls God's word from the mouth of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15...***The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.***

- This is a scene that puts Steven Spielberg to shame. Because this isn't special effects, this is the real thing. No special lighting used in the transfiguration, just the shekinah glory of God! Jesus is praying and all of a sudden, the whole place lights up with God's glory, emanating from Jesus. The appearance of his face is altered (Matthew says it "shone like the sun"), and his clothes are "radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them." This was Peter's way of relaying to Mark, "Hey, this scene was NOT of this world!" What they were seeing was the glorified Jesus, the one who had come from heaven and the one who would appear after the resurrection. They got a preview of the resurrection, though they still did not understand that, because a resurrected Christ requires first a dead Christ, and they were having none of that.
- Then, Moses and Elijah are standing there *with Jesus!* Luke says they "appeared in glory." Now, this brings up lots of questions that I guess will take up part of our time in eternity as we get to know the rest of the story. First, how did Peter, James and John know it was Moses and Elijah that Jesus was having a conversation with? Think about it. "Did they introduce themselves?" (Howdy, boys, you can call me Moses. This here's Elijah.) Or maybe they knew Moses because he looked just like Charlton Heston! No...but maybe he had a copy of the Law in his hands? Maybe Elijah came riding down in a whirlwind or a chariot of fire. Can you imagine? Well, the answer is: listen! We don't know because God chooses not to tell us. The second question is, why Moses and Elijah? Why not Abraham and David? Or Noah and Nehemiah? These were great men of God, too. Now, maybe we can come close to answering this one. Perhaps the answer can be found in Matthew 5:17 where Jesus said, ***Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*** Perhaps Moses is there because he represents the law. Elijah is there because he represents the prophets.
- What was Jesus talking about with Moses and Elijah? We are told the answer to this one for sure, in Luke's gospel: His departure, which he would accomplish in Jerusalem. (Luke 9:31). The word for departure in Luke is also translated exodus, an obvious allusion to the exodus from Egypt which was led by Moses. You can do your own digging on this, but there are several points of contact between this event in Jesus' life and Moses leadership of the children of Israel.
- About this time, Peter, seeing the shekinah glory, asks the Lord if they can build three shelters: one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. Peter is thrilled at the idea that

now that this powerful triumvirate are together at last, they should just move in and take up residence and settle down and, and...and do what, Peter? We cannot be too hard on the leader of the disciples, though. After all, he is, to quote from Edwards again, “a hollow mortal in the searing light of the eternal.” He must have admitted to Mark when telling him this story that he didn’t know what to say and he was absolutely terrified. That’s what Mark writes. But, Peter’s suggestion is not all foolish. The understanding of the Jews was that God would once again tabernacle with his people, as he did in the wilderness. That’s what the Feast of Booths is all about. But what Peter doesn’t realize yet is that God has provided his own tabernacle where all of his people may dwell, and that tabernacle is standing there and has been walking with the disciples. It is Jesus, and as John wrote, “The Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) Yes, John indeed saw his glory. That leads to a teachable moment.

- **Teaching (verses 9-13)**

- Jesus knew they did not understand what they had just experienced. And he told them to keep what they had seen to themselves until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. This reinforces the truth that until we see the cross and the risen Christ, we absolutely do not understand anything about Jesus and his divine purpose. They had seen the transfigured Christ, but they would not understand that until they had seen the cross and the risen Savior. We know they don’t because Mark tells us in verse 10 that they wondered what this “rising from the dead might mean.”
- The three then ask about Elijah, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” Most believe they are still trying to get around any idea of Jesus having to die. If Elijah has to come before “the great and awesome day of the Lord comes,” as Malachi prophesied, and here he is, we just saw him, then that’s good. Right? No more talk about a cross, right, Jesus? Elijah has come. Bring on the kingdom!
- Jesus answers them that their hope is essentially correct. Elijah does come first and prepare the way. But he says, “And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?” He appeals to another passage, most believe, to Isaiah’s portrayal of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53:3-- “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” **Jesus claims that promise for himself.** And then he says that Elijah too must suffer, and puts it in the past tense. “They did to him whatever they pleased.” This must have been a shock to the disciples. Who ever heard of Elijah suffering before the Day of the Lord? And of course, we know now, and they would know later, that Jesus was referring to another. Matthew makes it plain in his account, when he writes, “Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.” (Matt. 17:13). Again Jesus points them to the inevitability and the necessity of his death. If men had done what they wanted with the forerunner of the Messiah, should there be any surprise about what the Messiah himself must suffer? And... those who follow him?
- What a moment that was for the three disciples! We sometimes wish we could have God break through like that in our own lives. But I will close with this from Vance Havner. He wrote years ago, “I rejoice that God has not seen fit to give me a dazzling experience. If He had, I might have talked about it and then people might have tried to have the same experience and, failing, they might have grown discouraged. But I have Jesus and I

can always leave them with Him and know that 'heaven and earth may pass away but Jesus never fails' ... I always have Jesus, the same yesterday and today and forever.

"When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace." Everything else may come and go, all else may fail, all else may change, but we still have Jesus."

- **Prayer**