

Mark 9:2-10
The Transfiguration
“The Holy Sight”

2 (D) And after six days Jesus took with him (E) Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was (E) transfigured before them,³ and (G) his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one^[a] on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. 5 And Peter said to Jesus, (H) “Rabbi,^[b] it is good that we are here. Let us make three (I) tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”⁶ For (J) he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 And (K) a cloud overshadowed them, and (L) a voice came out of the cloud, (M) “This is my beloved Son;^[c] (N) listen to him.” 8 And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

9 (O) And as they were coming down the mountain, (P) he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, (Q) until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 (R) So they kept the matter to themselves, (S) questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.

Main Idea of text:

In the transfiguration on the mountain, a glimpse of Christ’s divine glory was revealed to the three apostles.

Sermon Outline:

I. The Glorious Transfiguration v. 2-3

II. The OT Confirmation v.4-6

III. The Father’s Declaration v.7-8

IV. The Waiting Revelation v.9-10

The Sermon:

2 (D) **And after six days Jesus took with him (E) Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.**

What is the ‘6 days’ that Mark mentions here as a time marker? Presumed it is 6 days after Jesus and the disciples had been in the villages of Caesarea Philippi and Peter had confessed to Jesus the answer to his question to the disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.” – Mark 8:29

This city was an ancient Roman city located in what is now known as the Golan Heights but today it is an archaeological site – few people live there.

Which mtn. they went to is not known.

Possible candidates are:

Mt. Hermon, 9230 feet, 20 miles NE of Caesarea Philippi

Mt. Tabor, 1929 feet, 50 miles SW of CP

Mt. Meron, 3962 feet, 25 miles SW of CP

And he was (E)transfigured before them,³

Kim Tan notes that the word “*Transfigured*” is not an easy term to translate, for it designates an event which is entirely outside the experience of people.”

The word “transformed” is “metamorphoo” in Greek, meaning basically, to change in form.

It’s a word used to describe the changing of a caterpillar into a butterfly. The inner essence of the insect is the same, but its form, its shape, its functionality has changed – it’s been radically enhanced.

and (G)his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one_[a] on earth could bleach them.

The KJV translates this as “³ And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.”

A ‘fuller’ is one who cleans woolen cloth – Like a professional dry-cleaning person today.

Jesus’ appearance was reminiscent of and similar to descriptions in the Bible of God himself. For example, listen to Daniel 7:9:

⁹ “As I looked,

(A) thrones were placed,

and the (B) Ancient of Days took his seat;

(C) his clothing was white as snow,

and (D) the hair of his head like pure wool;

his throne was fiery flames;

(E) its wheels were burning fire.

Derrick Thomas describes what the three disciples saw:

“They’re given a fresh glimpse of unsurpassable glory, of unimaginable majesty, of dignity and transcendence, and otherness; you get the impression that the Gospel writers—Mark here, especially, is straining to describe this event as he talks about the

clothes of Jesus in dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. What does that mean? They'd seen nothing like this before; not in all the months of itinerant ministry and close fellowship with Jesus had they ever glimpsed anything like this before. There is a cloud that overshadows them, reminiscent of the Shekinah glory cloud of the tabernacle and temple, the very symbol in the Old Testament of the presence of God. There's a voice that speaks, which identifies itself as the voice of the Father speaking to His Son..."

So what we see first of all in this even in verses 2 and 3 is:

I. The Glorious Transfiguration v. 2-3

Let us continue on:

4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

The word "appeared" is a verb that is used in the NT of beings who make their appearance in a supernatural manner. For example:

Luke 1:11

11 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of (A)the altar of incense.

Luke 22:43

43 And there appeared to him (A)an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

Luke 24:34

34 saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and (A)has appeared to Simon!"

Acts 7:2

2 And Stephen said:

(A)"Brothers and fathers, hear me. (B)The God (C)of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, (D)before he lived in Haran,

What do you think Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about?

In the parallel account in Luke's gospel we read this:

30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure,^[a] which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Luke 9:30-31.

So Moses and Elijah were discussing with Jesus his “departure,” that is, his “exodus.” That is, his coming death on the cross for sinners. They were talking to Jesus about the very heart and soul of his mission in coming to the world. Jesus came to die. That was his purpose. All the rest of human kind are born to live, but the Son of God was born of Mary in order to die.

This is the great hinge pin of human history, this is the most important and crucial event that has ever happened or will happen. Jesus came for this very purpose, the eternal Son of God left heaven and took upon himself our full human nature, in every way as fully human as we are, except he had no sin, in order to die as a substitute on the cross for us. He suffered the punishment from God that we his people deserve. We have earned the need to be punished for our sins. God is just and he must punish sinners. We deserve to go to hell a thousand times over for every wicked and unkind thought, word and action we have committed, for every time we ignored God and did our own thing. For every time we loved our own pleasure instead of God’s commandment to be holy as he is holy.

This is the glory of the Christian Gospel, that God himself would do the amazing thing and become a man in order to die for men and women, to stand in our place and take the wrath of almighty God that is directed at us and our sin; Jesus stepped in and offered up himself in our place.

It’s like you had stepped out into a busy street, not paying attention to what you were doing and a city bus was bearing down on you and about to plaster you onto the pavement and Jesus jumps into the street and pushes you out of danger and is hit by the bus and dies instead of you.

Why Moses and Elijah? Why not Abraham and Isaiah? Or Adam and Noah? Or Jehoshaphat and Jeremiah?

The Traditional view is that they represent the Law and Prophets. When Moses was on Mt. Sinai, to him God gave the nation of Israel the Law, such as the 10 commandments and the laws about animal sacrifices and offerings that are extensive in the Exodus and Leviticus, for example.

And Elijah was an important prophet who defended and upheld the exclusive worship that should belong to Yahweh alone as he confronted the pagan Baal worship promoted by King Ahab and his Phoenician wife Jezebel.

Kim Tan offers the view that the reason these two prominent OT figures appear here is because “both played a role in God’s covenant to save his people through Exodus

experiences: Moses led Israel out of Egypt and Elijah was “a covenantal reformer” and is expected to return at the end time to prepare the way for the 2nd Exodus” of God’s people” into their ultimate destiny which is to be with God and Christ in the new Jerusalem.

It is interesting and significant that both these OT figures are mentioned at the very end of the OT, in the final verses of Malachi: (4:4-5)

4 (M)“Remember (N)the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules^[b] that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

5 (Q)“Behold, I will send you (E)Elijah the prophet (Q)before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 6 And he will (R)turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and (S)strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”^[c]

Also both these men had unusual ends to their time on earth:

God himself buried Moses and Elijah was swept up by chariots of fire and did not experience death as other people do.

So we have next seen:

II. The OT Confirmation v.4-6

These two great OT figures were sent by God to the holy mountain to converse with Jesus and speak to him about his coming death. Moses was so happy, we could imagine, that the Law would now be written on men and women’s hearts as the New Covenant would be established in Jesus’ blood.

And Elijah was no doubt so happy that this coming death and resurrection of Christ would bring spiritual birth and life to God’s people so that they would be devoted and loyal to God and pursue his knowledge and fellowship all the days of their lives, forsaking all false idols.

We can consider that these two men are representative of the entire OT revelation, which purpose was to prepare the world for the coming of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

5 And Peter said to Jesus, (H)“Rabbi,^[b] it is good that we are here. Let us make three (I)tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.

The word tents here is literally “booths” – it means small “lean-to’s” made out of branches and leaves that the Israelites would construct every year for the Feast of

Booths, or Feast of Tabernacles, or Feast of “Tents.” They would live in them for one week in the 7th month of the year, in the fall. They did this as it was a command of the Law to remember that they lived in this kind of shelter during their 40 years of wilderness wanderings after they came out of Egypt.

”6 For (J)he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

Peter and the other two were scared out of their wits. That’s not hard to imagine. I think all of us would be too. To see two famous OT saints suddenly appear with Jesus and then this cloud of glory descend, was a frightful sight. In his characteristic fashion, Peter blurts out something.

7 And (K)a cloud overshadowed them, and (L)a voice came out of the cloud, (M)“This is my beloved Son;[c] (N)listen to him.”

The third major point I want to bring out is...

III. The Father’s Declaration v.7-8

The appearance of the cloud surrounding them is significant. In the OT a glory cloud indicated the presence of God as he descended to be among his people.

Exo. 24 :15-16 - 15 Then Moses went up on the mountain, and (U)the cloud covered the mountain.¹⁶ (V)The glory of the Lord dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

Note here that Yahweh calls to Moses out of the cloud. And here on the Mt. of Transfiguration, as we call it, again Yahweh calls to these men out of the cloud.

And then there was the cloud of Yahweh that protected them in the wilderness from the hot desert sun. It was a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. Talk about supernatural help – they had it.

And we read of the power and presence of God associated with the “cloud of his presence, “ as in Exo.40:35.

35 And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Hear again from Exo. 24:1 - Then he said to Moses, “Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, (A)Nadab, and Abihu, and (B)seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar.

Later in v. 14 we read: ¹³ So Moses rose with his assistant ^(B)Joshua, and Moses went up ^(S)into the mountain of God.

So the point is that as some people were allowed to accompany Moses at least part of the way into the presence of God, and possibly Joshua all the way, so here we see companions of Jesus accompanying him up to the holy mount.

We also read in Exo. 34:30 - ³⁰ Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face ^(A)shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

So we see here that Moses' face shone from being in presence of Yahweh and the people were afraid. So here it was Jesus whole being that shone and the whole scene brought fear into the 3 disciples minds and hearts.

So there several striking similarities to Moses going up on Mt. Sinai into the presence of Yahweh to receive the Law and Jesus going up onto this mount, so that we can consider Jesus as the Second and Greater Moses.

This is the second and final time that the Father speaks from heaven regarding his Son. He had done this earlier at his baptism where we read in Mark 1:11:

And ^(A)a voice came from heaven, ^(B)"You are my beloved Son;^[a] with you I am well pleased."

There, at the beginning of his public ministry, at this baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist, the Father spoke directly to his Son. But here he addresses the 3 disciples: **"This is my beloved Son;^[c] ^(N)listen to him."**

⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

⁹ ^(Q)And as they were coming down the mountain, ^(P)he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, ^(Q)until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ ^(R)So they kept the matter to themselves, ^(S)questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.

The thing that these three disciples were discussing was not the issue of resurrection. They were conservative Jews who believed the OT and its passages about the resurrection from the dead, such as Daniel 12:2:

² And many of those who ^(A)sleep in ^(B)the dust of the earth shall ^(C)awake, ^(D)some to everlasting life, and ^(E)some to shame and everlasting contempt.

So we see here...

IV. The Waiting Revelation v.9-10

The thing they were discussing was what did Jesus mean when he said he would “rise from the dead?” They couldn’t grasp what he was talking about. They believed in the truth of the resurrection from the dead but they couldn’t conceive of it practically or actually happening in regards to Jesus, their beloved leader. Later, of course, when he did rise and he did appear to them, and they saw him with their own eyes and touched him with their own hands and ate and drank with them, then they knew without a doubt that he really had risen from the dead.

But we see that this experience had a tramatic and unforgettabler impact on these 3 disciples:

Peter’s declaration:

2 Pet. 1:16-18 - ¹⁶ For we did not follow (J)cleverly devised (K)myths when we made known to you (L)the power and (M)coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but (N)we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, (O)“This is my beloved Son,[c] with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on (P)the holy mountain.

John declares - john 1:14

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APPLICATIONS:

1. Confirmation that Jesus is the Christ.
2. OT points to and is fulfilled in Jesus.
3. Father’s declaration – “unmediated voice of God” declares who Jesus is.
4. We must listen to Jesus:
 - a. His Word written

- b. His Word preached
- c. His word shared by believers
- d. His word communicated by HS in prayer and meditation

Our call: to go the mtn – to the mtn of his Word to see who Jesus is, to know he is the Son of God, and worship and serve him now and all days of our lives. The revelation has been given. Let us not neglect it, but rejoice in it and declare it to all the peoples.

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