

Message #30**Mark 9:1-13**

Carefully observe how **verse 1** begins, with the sequential conjunction “and.” Jesus had just challenged the crowd and His disciples to turn their souls over to Him. Salvation was not about physically following Him, it was about turning their souls over to Him by believing in Him. Now that kind of commitment would be a dangerous commitment in this world.

If you were to do that and then testify of that, you could be persecuted and perhaps executed. If you started proclaiming to this religious world that Jesus Christ was the God/Savior/Messiah/King who could save you from your sins, you risked your life.

Now the truth is most of the people did not believe in Him. Most had no idea who He actually was. So it was about time for some of them to find out. So Jesus decides to show them. He decides He will actually let some of them see Him in all of His divine glory.

JESUS ASKED PEOPLE TO LITERALLY GIVE UP THEIR LIVES FOR HIM AND HE PERMITS SOME OF HIS DISCIPLES TO SEE HIM IN ALL OF HIS TRANSFIGURED KINGDOM GLORY THAT WILL BE REVEALED WHEN HE RETURNS TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD.

When Jesus Christ comes to establish His kingdom, He will share it with those committed to Him.

Whoever dedicates himself or herself to believing on Jesus Christ and communicating the truth of the Gospel and the truth about Jesus Christ will never regret it. One day Jesus Christ will establish a glorious kingdom on earth and those who have stood for Him and defended Him will share in that Kingdom.

In **verse 1**, Jesus said to His disciples that there were some standing with Him who would get a glimpse of the Kingdom power of God before they would die. There were some who would literally get a preview glimpse of what it will be like when He comes to reign with power and take over the world. When that happens, everything will be transformed.

According to **verse 2**, six days after Jesus made this statement, some amazing visual and verbal events occurred:

EVENT #1 – Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John. **9:2a**

Now this is an event that Peter always remembered. In fact, he was still rolling this event in his mind when he wrote his last epistle (II Peter 1:16-18).

Now Jesus makes the statement that “there are some of those standing here who will not taste death.” The negative “not” is the strong “ou may” combination, which means they will never taste death until they have actually seen with their own eyes a display of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus was talking to a mixed crowd of people and His disciples (Mark 8:34). So the “some” refers to some of this listening audience who would literally get to see some Kingdom display before they died.

Now the some refers to the three apostles who actually saw the full display of this, but also the other disciples and crowd who actually saw something special about Jesus Christ (9:15). Apparently when Jesus came back down the mountain, He had some Kingdom look about Him that amazed this crowd.

Now six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John and went up on a high mountain by them. Luke says it was eight days later (Luke 9:28). How do we explain the difference?

Well the high mountain is probably Mt. Hermon, which is the highest mountain in Israel. It rises some 9232 feet above sea level. It is a mountain range with three peaks that sits today on the border between Syria and Lebanon. It could easily take a couple of days to get to the place where Jesus wanted to go. I have actually hiked into steep mountains to hunt elk and just 4 or 5 miles can take you several hours.

Just recently a Syrian refugee wanted to escape and he said it was a 9 hour climb just to get to the top of where he wanted to go in this very mountain. So the simple solution is that Jesus started out on day 6 and got to the top on day 8.

Now He took Peter and James and John with Him. This was His inner circle. The question is why three and why these three? We know from Numbers and Deuteronomy that truth is confirmed by 2-3 witnesses.

We knew that James would be the first to die and John would be the last to die of these apostles, but the truth is we don't know for sure why He chose just these three.

One expositor said I'll tell you why He chose these three, when you can tell me why He chose you and me. Why would God work in our lives and cause us to believe on Him? Who in the world are we that He chose us?

EVENT #2 – Jesus brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. **9:2b**

Tradition says it was Mt. Tabor, but Mt. Tabor is not a “high” mountain. It only goes up about 1000 feet. The high mountain is Mt. Hermon. That is the high mountain located about 12 miles north of Caesarea Philippi. Luke says that when they got up on top of the mountain they were so tired, they went to sleep (Luke 9:32).

EVENT #3 – Jesus was transfigured before them. **9:2c**

Right before their very eyes, Jesus was transfigured. The Greek word is the word “metamorphis” which means to change something or transform something from one form to another (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 287).

It is the same word that we use when a caterpillar transforms into a beautiful butterfly.

The passive form of the verb “transfigure” means it just happened to Jesus. He was the recipient of the action. He is on top of this mountain and all of a sudden before their very eyes He is transformed into His Kingdom glory.

You cannot transform His nature because He is always God; but you can transform His appearance so these three could see Him in all of His glory.

Now for us, we are to be transformed in our nature by the renewing of our minds on the Word of God. It is our sin nature that needs to be transformed; His didn't.

EVENT #4 – Jesus' garments became radiantly white. **9:3**

Jesus' garment became whiter than any color of white on this earth and whiter than anyone on earth could bleach any clothing.

Matthew says that Jesus' face “shone like the sun” (Matt. 17:2). Luke says His face became different (Luke 9:29). For one brief moment these three are getting a spectacular look at Jesus Christ in His Kingdom glory.

EVENT #5 – Elijah appears to them. **9:4a**

We may remember that people were saying He was Elijah. Well that is disproved here because Elijah is here talking with Jesus. Elijah was a great O.T. prophet who was raptured (II Kings 2:11).

There are so many things to consider here, one of which is the three disciples recognized Elijah. Now as near as we may determine, there was no formal introduction, so what we may conclude is that in the Kingdom, people will automatically know each other.

EVENT #6 – Moses appears to them. **9:4b**

Again the three recognize Moses. Moses was the writer of the O.T. law. **What this teaches all of us about the future Kingdom is that when this Kingdom is established on this earth, O.T. believers will be in it and N.T. believers will know who they are.**

EVENT #7 – Moses and Elijah are talking with Jesus. **9:4c**

Now one question that has been raised is why these two? Why not Amos and Hosea? Why not Ezekiel and Daniel? Why not Isaiah and Jeremiah?

Some possible answers:

- 1) Both Moses and Elijah talked with God on mountain tops—Moses on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 31:18), Elijah on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18) and Mt. Horeb (I Kings 19:9).
- 2) Both Moses and Elijah had been shown God's glory. Jesus is God, they are seeing His glory.
- 3) Both Moses and Elijah had very unusual departures from this world.
Moses died on Mt. Nebo and God buried him in some secret grave (Deut. 34:1, 6).
Elijah was taken by a whirlwind up into heaven (II Kings 2:11).
- 4) Moses was the one who led Israel to the Promised Land and Elijah will be the one who will be a forerunner to restoring Israel to the Promised Land.

Now Luke tells us that they were discussing the fact that Jesus was about to be killed in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). Jesus' death was critical to Christ getting His kingdom.

EVENT #8 – Peter tells Jesus what he thinks they ought to do. **9:5-6**

Now one would logically think if you were actually up on this mountain and saw this gathering of Jesus, Elijah and Moses, you might want to keep your mouth shut and just watch and listen. But this was not so with Peter.

Response #1 - Peter says it was good for them to be there. **9:5a**

That is brilliant. Obviously it certainly wasn't bad.

Response #2 - Peter says we should make three tabernacles. **9:5b**

If they really knew what was happening here, they would make one. Some suggest that Peter is saying let's start making booths to establish your glory and kingdom on earth right now. Forget this dying business. He apparently thought the Kingdom would be established right then.

Response #3 - Peter was terrified and didn't know what to say. **9:6**

Well, the obvious solution to this dilemma is, don't say anything.

EVENT #9 – God the Father speaks to these three from a cloud. **9:7**

The cloud referred to here is the shekinah glory cloud that displayed God's glory that had not been seen for 600 years prior to this moment (i.e. Ex. 40:35). As the three looked at the cloud, a voice of God the Father said—Jesus Christ is God's beloved Son and you need to listen to Him.

Matthew said when this voice came out of heaven, they fell down on their faces and were terrified and they did not get up until Jesus told them to (Matt. 17:6-7).

Now this voice is critical because what this would teach these disciples is that even though Jesus would be rejected by the religious and political leaders of His day, He was God's beloved Son. They needed to listen to Him tell them about the Kingdom program which included Him suffering and dying on a cross.

EVENT #10 – Everything disappeared instantly except Jesus. **9:8**

Now keep in mind that God the Father has just said this is His Son and they actually saw Him as God's glorious Son. When the disciples looked, everything was back to normal. Moses and Elijah were gone. The cloud was gone. Christ was wearing His same clothes. It could be that His face still had a glow to it that would explain the crowd reaction when He came back down the mountain (9:15).

Now Jesus could have taken off into heaven with the rest of them. He could have taken off with Elijah and Moses and gone back up to heaven to be with His Father. Why didn't He?

EVENT #11 – Jesus orders them not to tell what they have seen until He is risen from the dead. **9:9**

Now right here Jesus reveals that this God/man, whom they have just seen in His glory, is going to die. He is the God/man, He will die and then He will come back from the dead alive.

Now if He is God, why would He have to die? The reason He stayed here to die is that He had to die on the cross so Israel and Gentiles might be saved. Israel does not have the righteousness she needs to get into the Kingdom. We do not have the righteousness we need to get into heaven. In order to have that, Jesus must die.

EVENT #12 – The disciples discuss what rising from the dead means. **9:10**

These disciples probably thought He was speaking about the resurrection that will come at the end of the Tribulation for Israel as predicted by Daniel (Dan. 12:2-3). They could not conceive that this God/man would die. They have just seen He has access to heaven now.

EVENT #13 – The disciples ask Jesus why the Scribes say Elijah must come first. **9:11**

It is predicted by Malachi that before the great and terrible day of the Lord, Elijah will appear to restore the hearts of the Jewish people to a right relationship with God (Mal. 4:5-6). Obviously the Scribes are picking up on that theme.

We are of the opinion after carefully studying the book of Revelation that this will occur in Revelation 11.

During the Tribulation, as we near the 3 ½ year point, there will be two prophets who will literally be in Jerusalem and we think it is the two who appeared here with Jesus and one of the two was Elijah. They will appear and have power for 1260 days (Rev. 11:3).

If the book of Revelation is chronological, and we believe it is, then shortly after these two prophets are killed and raised, the Antichrist goes on an all-out worldwide crusade to kill the Jews.

EVENT #14 – Jesus lays out prophetic truth about Elijah and Himself. **9:12-13**

Jesus responded to the disciples:

Response #1 - Elijah will come first before the Kingdom is restored. **9:12a**

Response #2 - The God/man must suffer first before that happens. **9:12b**

Response #3 - An Elijah-type has come in the person of John to introduce the Son of Man and they killed him. **9:13**

Matthew said that had they been willing to accept Jesus Christ as the God/Savior/Messiah/King, then John the forerunner would have actually be a type of Elijah and the Kingdom could have been established (Matt. 11:13-14)

There are two parting applications we want to make:

Jesus Christ is the Glorious God/Savior/Messiah/King who is the only one who can save you from your sins. You cannot be saved by your religion, by your works or by your efforts. He is the only One who can save you. He will save you if you will believe on Him.

Jesus Christ will come back one day in all of His glory and will take charge of this world; and if you will believe in Him and will defend Him, you will share that glory and Kingdom with Him.