

Activity on the Mountain.

Mark 9:2-8. Math. 17:1-8. Luke 9:28-36.

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INTRO: Let's take a few minutes to get some background to the passage that we are going to take a look at. After Jesus was baptized at, I believe, when He was 30 years of age, he was led out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. It is interesting to know that the Priests in the Old Testament also only began their ministry at the age of 30. Jesus' ministry began when he returned from the wilderness. He chose 12 disciples and he mentored them as they followed Him wherever He went. They watched Him heal the sick, cast out demons, give sight to the blind and raise people from the dead. Along with the Apostles, crowds began to follow Him. Some out of curiosity, some who wanted to hear His teachings and to see His miracles. Others followed Him to try and trick Him or catch Him out on some of the things He said. Jesus taught these followers by means of parables. What is a parable? Jesus was asked this same question. Turn to **Math. 13:10-15**. And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" ¹¹ He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: *'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; ¹⁵ For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'*

Remember now, these disciples were in training. After Jesus had taught using a parable, they would invariably ask Him to explain it to them and this He did. Look at verse **31-35 (NKJV)**

³¹ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, ³² which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." ³³ Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

³⁴ All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, ³⁵ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: *"I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."*

Then there were the times when he fed a crowd of three and five thousand.

This brings us to chapter 16:13-19. Which is a parallel description of Mark. 8:27-29, where we read: ²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸ And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." ³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

Matthew 16:16. Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

John MacArthur comments: This is the apex of Mark's gospel. It is also the midpoint of Mark's gospel. Everything leads up to this, everything flows down from this. To acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God, is to make the right judgment concerning Him. Peter made that judgment not for himself only but for all the apostles and all the disciples who were followers of Christ. What Peter said there is verified in the passage before us. What Peter said by faith; he will now see by sight. Remember, Peter makes this great confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," with the anticipation that the

kingdom would come immediately. But no sooner had he made that confession then, in verse 31, “Jesus began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and then after three days, rise again.” Jesus would continue to talk of His future despite the fact that the disciples were convinced that Jesus was going to subvert the authority of Rome and set up His Kingdom on earth. However, Jesus, at His mock trial reiterated that, “My Kingdom is not of this world.”

Vs.2 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; Peter, James, and John were selected to witness “apart” from others the high point of Jesus’ visible glory as well as the low point of His humiliating agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

(Matthew. 26:37-38. And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”) These were rare privileges for these three, who also stood nearby when Jairus’ daughter was raised from the dead. **(Luke 8:51.** When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl.)

We would do well to remember just who it was that took these three men with Him up that mountain.

Phil.2:6-7. Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

You will also remember that in the previous chapter, Peter through the power of the Spirit of God confessed: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,”

Read Mark 9:2-8 now.

1. The Appearance and Witnesses to Christ’s Glory.

Moses was called to meet with God up on a high mountain. After forty days he came down and the children of Israel were afraid when they saw his face shining. This created such fear, that he had to cover his face with a cloth. Moses was up the high mountain covered by a cloud. He was in the presence of the Glory of the Lord which caused his face to shine. He was still reflecting the Glory of the Lord. Now, in a number of circumstances in scripture we see when the Lord’s presence is made known in the form of light it was often a bright light. The children of Israel were led by pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire for light by night. These pillars represented both His presence and His Glory. When the Tabernacle in the wilderness was completed, His Glory filled the temple, this was His Shekinah Glory. **Shekinah Glory is a visible manifestation of God on earth, whose presence is portrayed through a natural occurrence. The word shekinah is a Hebrew word meaning “dwelling” or “one who dwells.” Shekinah Glory means “He caused to dwell,” referring to the divine presence of God.**

In the case of this lesson in scripture Jesus took Peter, James and John up a high mountain while the rest of the apostles stayed where they were. They were going to have a mountain top experience like they had never had before.

Luke 9:29 As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became* white *and* glistening. Mark 9:2. The last part of the verse we read..... and He was transfigured before them. What then does Transfiguration mean? “It is the supernatural and Glorified change in the appearance of Jesus.” In Mark 9:3, His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. In Matt.17:2b. ...His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light.

Zodhiates in his commentary on Matthew says: “The transfiguration is a momentary reversal of this humiliation, a temporary repositioning of the two permanent forms—one to the foreground, and one to the background. Since the Lord Jesus is always God and man, the change is the relative positioning of forms, not the absolute replacement of one by the other. The passive voice is used for the triune God's action on Christ's humanity. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all repositioned the human form of Jesus Christ, unveiling and forwarding His deity while veiling his humanity, placing it in the background. The Son of man,

then, was passive from the standpoint that God the Father did this and yet active from the perspective that whatever the Father does, the Son of God does likewise.”

These three men, in other words, got a glimpse of the Glory of Christ before He took on the form of man and they also were able to see His Glory and a glimpse of what was ahead for Jesus. Mathew Henry says: **He took three, a competent number to testify what they should see; “for out of the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. This is according to Matthew 18:16.** Here we have three witnesses in Glory and three witnesses chosen by Jesus to proclaim this, but only after his death and resurrection.

Warren Wiersbe in his commentary had this to say; **“The word transfigured gives us the word “metamorphoses.” It is a change on the outside which comes from the inside. When a caterpillar builds a cocoon and later emerges as a butterfly it is due to this process. Our Lord’s Glory was not reflected but radiated from within. There was a change on the outside that came from within as He allowed His essential glory to shine forth.**

So, what do we see here?His appearance changed.... His face altered.... His clothing was as bright as a lightening flash, dazzling white...think about how bright a lightening flash is, now imagine just how bright that entire area was where Jesus was. These men had never experienced anything like this. This experience both affected and changed these men. Peter in his epistle says this: **2 Peter 1:16-19.** For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷ For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

John had this to say: **John 1:14.** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

1 John 1:1-3. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- ² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- ³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Just what was it that they saw? This was a scene in Glory! MacArthur says, Jesus always possessed that glory but kept it veiled until this moment. He acknowledges in John 17 that He had the glory from eternity, but it was veiled. It was covered until this moment. This is the glory that one day will be fully revealed, Matthew 24, He will come in full blazing glory. And Revelation says the people in the world are going to see that glory and they’re going to cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, to hide them from the face of His glory. Matthew 25:31 says the same thing, “He’s coming in glory.” Revelation 19 describes Him coming in glory, full blazing glory.

Mathew Henry comments: The substance of his body remained the same, but the appearances of it were greatly altered; he was not turned into a spirit, but his body, which had appeared in weakness and dishonor, now appeared in power and glory. Christ was both God and man; but, in the days of his flesh, he took on him the form of a servant- **Phil. 2:7** (... but *He* made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.) He drew a veil over the glory of his godhead; but now, in his transfiguration, he put by that veil, appeared in the form of God. I would imagine that this is a good picture, as it were, when the veil of the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom revealing a new way of access to the God of Glory. While Jesus was in the flesh, living as a man, the Transfiguration pictured His past and His future.

2. The Accomplishment in Jerusalem.

Luke 9:30-31 And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah,

³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Elijah and Moses represent the Law and the Prophets. They were both great deliverers. Together they represent the prophetic tradition that points to the Messiah. Moses grew up in Pharaoh's palace with the authority of a king's son, but later identified with his people, the children of Israel. Moses was chosen by the Lord to lead captive Israel out of Egypt. He was not only prophet, but also a priest, a mediator and a miracle worker. Elijah was a Prophet who walked in obedience to God and communed with Him. He raised a widow's son, provided food for them, confronted evil and challenged the prophets of Baal. Moses died and was buried by God. His body was never found. Elijah was taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot. Elisha's servants looked for his body, but it could not be found after three days.

While His glory is being displayed in brilliant light, Elijah and Moses appear, talking to Jesus. Luke says in Luke 9:31 they **"were speaking of His death."** The word for "death" in the Greek text is "exodus"! Jesus would lead the people of God out of the bondage of sin in a new exodus through His death (a new Passover) and resurrection, and He would constitute a new people called the church. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus in GLORY as they spoke of His exodus from this world. Jesus had already been telling His disciples this fact as was previously mentioned. **Matt. 16:21.** From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. The disciples had heard Jesus tell them this, now they were hearing it from two other witnesses, Moses and Elijah who appeared with Jesus. They were speaking about His exodus from this world. Does this mean that they were talking about His death, burial, resurrection, and His return to Glory? I think that is quite probable since they were discussing His exodus or departure. Despite the fact that they were in Glory, Moses and Elijah may have been encouraging Jesus for what lay ahead for Him. The program was set, He was God, yet He was veiled in the flesh of mankind. God had become man to accomplish what no one else could accomplish. He was to be made sin on that cross so that God could pour out His wrath upon sin. Under the law, sacrifices were offered to cover or atone for their sin. Those sins were not blotted out yet because Jesus had not yet paid the price for the sin of mankind! This practice would cease after the death of Christ had occurred. You may remember that when the earth quaked after Christ yielded up His spirit, the curtain in the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom while offerings were being made by the priests in the temple. This torn curtain indicated that there was now a new way of access to God which was via the cross on Calvary. The high priest, the O/T mediator ceased as Christ had now become the mediator. **1 Tim. 2:5-6a.** For *there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,*⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all,

Listen to what Hebrews says: **Hebrews 10:4-10.**⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me;⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure."⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'⁸ When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law),⁹ then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second.¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Going down to vs. **14.** For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.¹⁸ Now where there is remission of these, *there is no longer an offering for sin.* Jesus paid it all!"

When we repent of our sins, the blood of Christ which was shed for our sins not only cleanses us from our sins, but it removes them from us **Ps. 103:12.** "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."

I wonder if Peter, James and John had any idea as to what the long-term implications of this event meant to them, the other disciples and the effects that their future ministry would have on the lives of those to whom they would witness and minister to.

3. The Action of Peter and the Astounding Response from God.

Matt. 17:4-5. And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”

In the previous chapter, after Jesus had explained that “He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” Now Peter, remembering what Jesus said, had to say something, because he was Peter, **Matt. 17:4-5.** And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” When a person is fearful, he or she is apt to say anything just to be heard. One commentator, D L Akin asks this question: **Is Peter placing Jesus on equal standing with Elijah and Moses? Does he think that up on a mountain in isolation is where God wants His workers? Peter was so excited and scared he just had to say something. His mind would only catch up with his words after the cross and the resurrection. We will never understand the person and work of Christ apart from the cross and resurrection. Leave them out, and He is at best a moralist and at worst a self-destructive fool. Leave out the cross, and there is no atonement. Leave out the resurrection, and there is no victory over sin. In sinful weakness we would avoid the cross, stay on the mountain, and make ourselves comfortable. In contrast Jesus will embrace the cross, ascend Calvary’s hill, and drink the cup of suffering filled with the wrath of God.**

⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; **listen to him!**” While he was still speaking...The Lord God overshadows them with a cloud of His Presence interrupting Peter. When the disciples heard this thundering voice, they were afraid and fell on their faces. Mark 9 says they were terrified....and Luke 9 says they were afraid as they entered the cloud. The three disciples were now more than ever in the presence of the Lord, so it is no wonder that they fell on their faces to the ground. They were also aware of the fact that no one can see the Lord and live. Their fear showed forth a deep respect for the Lord.

This cloud, God’s *shekinah* glory cloud, overshadows or envelops them. There was no need for man-made tents (v. 5). Rather, we need the presence of the Holy Spirit of the living God indwelling us, God now speaks words that thunder with authority and embodied with meaning: **“This is My beloved Son; listen to Him!”** This was Yahweh, who called Moses from the burning bush (*Exodus 3:2–3*) and guided the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt to the promised land in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (*Exodus 13:21*). This was the God Who met Elijah on Mount Horeb and came to him in “a quiet, whispering voice” (*1 Kings 19:12*). This was the Father of Jesus, who had called the three to discipleship and with Whom they had traveled the sea and walked the hills of Galilee. This was the Father Who would give His Son for the redemption of mankind. They heard His voice coming out of the cloud saying, **“This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”** **Again, just as He had at Jesus’ baptism, the Father identified Jesus as His Son and declared Himself to be Jesus’ Father.** These three disciples experienced a glimpse of a realm far beyond their human understanding. No wonder they were frightened, they did not know what to say. **It was however indelibly imprinted on their minds for their future ministry after Jesus had ascended into heaven.**

The Father forcefully commanded, “Listen to him!” The context shows that the Father was reprimanding Peter for his impulsive desire to build three tents in this location to commemorate the event. From his human perspective, Peter had again tried to do the right thing but had not waited for God’s leading.

4. The Application for Both You and Me.

It is extremely important that we have the presence of the Lord in our hearts and lives. His eternal presence confirms who He is, our God, who cleanses us from our sins, providing us with our robes of righteousness. Do you have the Presence of the Lord in your life? Is Jesus your Lord and how is it that you can love Him?

Nicodemus was a teacher in Israel, yet even he could not understand why Jesus said to him, "you must be born again,"

John 3:14-18. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. What about you, have you truly believed in Christ for the saving grace that He is offering you today? There is a big difference between knowing about Christ and what He has done for you as a sinner and believing on Him with your heart for your salvation.

Eph.1:3-4. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love. **1 John 4:19.** We love Him because He first loved us. This is how we love Him. Just as Jesus chose the apostles, so He also chose us, and gave us the faith to believe in Him. The Philippian Jailer, when the earthquake occurred asked Paul and Silas. **Acts 16:30-31.** "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." What then must you do? Call out to Jesus, ask Him to have mercy on you, for you are a sinful person, For all have sinned....Confess your sin....Tell Him that you are sorry for sinning against Him. Do you remember earlier when we discussed Peter's confession, who did Jesus say revealed that info to him? **Matt. 16:17.** Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. That is, through His Holy Spirit. Since we are all sinners, we need to confess our sins and believe in the Lord Jesus, that He died for our sins, that He was buried and that He rose again from the dead. **Romans 10:9-10.** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

As the Lord God said to Peter, "listen to Him" so too do you need to do the same. Have you Believed? Is Jesus your Savior? Do you know for sure that you have savingly believed in Christ for your salvation? The only chance you have to believe in Christ is now while you are still a living being. Once your life is terminated on earth, The offer of salvation no longer exists! For it is appointed unto man, once to die, after that the judgement.

Revelation 20:15. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.