

A GLIMPSE OF HIS GLORY

Mark 9:1-13

- 1 And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."
- 2 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.
- 3 His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.
- 4 And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.
- 5 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--
- 6 because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.
- 7 And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"
- 8 Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.
- 9 Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
- 10 So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.
- 11 And they asked Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"
- 12 Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"
- 13 But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him."

Today we come to one of the most dramatic events in Scripture -- ranking perhaps only after the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord -- the transfiguration of Jesus. This event follows His announcement of the cross, and of the way of discipleship.

The Lord's disciples were already reeling from the His revelation that He would be put to death and rise again, 8:31. On the heels of that stunning statement, Jesus called His followers to a life of total commitment and absolute separation. His words must have come as a shock to their system. They had left every aspect of life as they knew it to go with Jesus. They did so expecting Jesus to deliver Israel and establish the Kingdom of God on earth. But, Jesus is now telling them that His way involves suffering and death.

As soon as Jesus tells His men that He is going to die, and as soon as He calls them to a life of total surrender; Jesus makes a very strange statement. Verse 1, **"Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."** He tells

the assembled multitude that some of their number will actually see the kingdom of God coming in power before they die. What is Jesus talking about?

If we look back to the last verse of chapter 8, verse 38 Jesus had just talked about coming "**in the glory of His Father and of the holy angels.**" Certainly the judgment Jesus talks about in that verse comes at Jesus' return, His second coming. Is that what Jesus refers to here in chapter 9 verse 1 also?

I don't believe that Jesus was talking about His second coming. I believe He was talking about what happens next, the transfiguration. Here Jesus allows a hand full of His followers to get a glimpse His glory that all will see when He returns.

What happens in the transfiguration is a preview of the second coming of our Lord. The fact that this is the case is made very clear to us by Peter himself. Jesus chose Peter, James, and John to be with Him on the mountain top. Peter later refers explicitly to this event in his writings in Second Peter, Chapter 1, Verses 16-18:

16 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. {2 Pet 1:16-18 }

Peter confirms that our Lord is here giving a preview of what it will be like when He comes again in glory, with all his holy angels. Jesus gave them a glimpse of His glory to strengthen and encourage His discouraged and confused disciples. Yes, there would be suffering and death for Jesus and for His followers, but there will also be the glory that will follow. The glory follows the suffering.

Let me just pause to say that I praise the Lord that there is a better world waiting for the people of God! Jesus will come again some day. The fullness of His Kingdom will be glorious: a world where there is no sin, sickness or separation. A world where Jesus is glorified and the saints of God will enjoy Him forever in glory. This precious passage gives us a little glimpse of the glory we will see on day in the future.

Please allow the Lord to speak to your heart as we seek to catch A Glimpse Of His Glory. There are four dramatic occurrences in this account that immediately rivet our attention:

1. Jesus' Appearance is Changed.

This passage opens with the mention of a mountain. We are not told what mountain it is, but most scholars believe that it is Mount Hermon. This mountain rises some 9,200 feet above sea level. It is some twelve miles north of Caesarea-Philippi, and is near the place Jesus has been ministering.

Mountains occupy a special place in the Word of God.

- It was on a mountain called Moriah that God manifested His grace to Abraham when he willingly offered up his son Isaac, Gen. 22.
- It was on Mount Sinai that God handed down His Law to Moses, Ex. 19.

- It was on Mount Carmel that God demonstrated His power to Israel through Elijah, 1 Kings 18.
- It was on Mount Horeb that God ministered peace to the troubled heart of Elijah, 1 Kings 19.
- It was on Mount Calvary that Jesus died for our sins on the cross, John 19.
- It was from the Mount of Olives that Jesus ascended back into His heavenly glory, Acts 1:9-11.
- It will be that same mountain that will greet His feet when He returns in glory, Zech. 14:4.

Every now and then we are blessed with a mountain top experience. I am glad there are a few places along the way where we are allowed to see His glory and His power!

This isn't the first time Jesus singled these men out for a special time of ministry, nor would it be the last time He would do so. The first time Jesus singled these three men out was when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, Mark 5:37. He singled them out here. Jesus would also take these men "a little deeper" with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He went to the cross, Mark 14:33. These men were privileged to see things the other disciples never got to witness.

Now, we all know that God does not show partiality, Rom. 2:11. God does not play favorites. He does not love you more than He loves me and He does not love me more than He loves you. But, as Vance Havner so wisely said, "*God does not have favorites, but He does have intimates.*"

He may not love one believer any more than any other, but some are simply closer to Him than others are. And those who are closer to Him will see more of His glory and more of His power than those who stay farther away.

Do you ever wonder why some people seem so full of love for the Lord? Do you ever wonder why some people seem always ready to worship and praise Him? Do you ever wonder what their secret is?

There secret is no secret at all! Those people have made up their minds to live close to Him. As a result, He has promised to live close to them. The outcome of that is the sweet presence of Jesus in their lives.

How much do you desire to see His glory and His power?

I want to get as close as I can!

The climb to the top of Mount Hermon would have taken the better part of the day. Luke, in his account of this event, tells us that Jesus began to pray when they arrived at the top of the mountain, Luke 9:28-29. Apparently this prayer meeting lasted for a while, because the disciples fell asleep, Luke 9:32.

Suddenly, Jesus changes! His face changes, Luke 9:29. His garments change, v. 3. His is "transfigured". This word comes from the word "metamorphosis". It is the same word that is used to describe the changes a caterpillar goes through when it is "transfigured" into a butterfly.

In other words, Jesus changed forms on the mountain. The glory that was concealed within Him was revealed on that mountain. The mountain was instantly bathed a light brighter than the sun.

These men were given a glimpse of the glory all of God's children will see when they get to Heaven. One day, we will see Jesus in all of His glory, 1 John 3:2.

2. Moses and Elijah Appear with Jesus.

Then, Moses and Elijah appeared there on that mountain with Jesus. Mark says they were **"talking with Jesus"**, v. 4. Luke tells us that they were discussing **"His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem"**, Luke 9:31. They came to talk with Him about His impending death upon the cross.

Why Moses and Elijah? Moses and Elijah are the preeminent representatives of the Law and the Prophets. Moses was the great lawgiver and Elijah was the leader of the prophets. These men have come to represent the Word of God that spoke of the coming of the Messiah.

These two men also represent the two ways the people meet the Lord when He returns. Moses died and was buried, Deut. 34:5-6. Elijah was taken up in a fiery chariot into Heaven, 2 Kings 2:11.

Like Moses many believers die and are buried, they will be raised to life and appear with Jesus when He comes. Like Elijah, some will be taken up alive to meet the Lord in the air, 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thes. 4:16-18. Like Moses and Elijah, regardless of how you leave this world, if you know the Lord, you will be with Him in glory someday! What a truth and what a blessing!

When Peter, James and John see all this, they are terrified, v. 6.

Peter didn't know what to say, v. 6, so he just blurted out something. He recommends that they enter into a building program, v. 5. He suggests that they build three lean-tos, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus.

Peter may have been suggesting that they just stay on the mountain, enjoying this amazing moment. Maybe Peter was suggesting that they use Mount Hermon as the world headquarters for the "Kingdom of God Movement" that he felt like was about to take place.

3. The Father Speaks.

Whatever Peter's motives may have been, one thing is sure, God did not like what Peter had to say. All of a sudden Jesus and the other five men on that mountain are overshadowed by a cloud. Matthew tells us it was a bright cloud, a very bright, shining cloud.

I believe that this is the same cloud that descended on Mount Sinai when God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, Ex. 19:16-19. It was the cloud that Moses had only been allowed to catch a glimpse of as the Lord passed by, Ex. 33:18-23. This was the same cloud that rested on the Tabernacle, Ex. 40:35. This is the cloud that filled the temple in Solomon's day, 1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 7:1 This is the same cloud that Ezekiel saw arise from between the cherubim and move to the threshold of the temple because of the apostasy of Israel, Eze. 8:4; 9:3. Then the glorious cloud moved to the east gate of the temple where it hovered for a time, Eze. 10:4, 18, 19. and then rose from the Mount of Olives to be seen in Israel no more, Eze. 11:22-25. The glory cloud had

not been seen in Israel for over 600 years. Now, it has come back and it has encompassed Jesus and all who are with Him!

Out of that cloud booms the very voice of God Almighty. There are three occasions in the New Testament when the voice of God spoke directly from heaven concerning the work of Jesus. One was at His baptism, when he began his ministry. There the words were addressed to Jesus himself: "**You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**" (Mark 1:11). Here we have the words addressed to the disciples, to correct a mistake they were making. The third account is in John's gospel, Chapter 12, just before the cross in Jerusalem. Jesus spoke of having completed the work which the Father had given him to do, and said in prayer to the Father, "**Glorify thy name.**" And a voice spoke from glory and said, "**I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again,**" referring to the cross immediately to follow. So three times we have the voice of the Father from heaven: to launch His ministry; to correct a mistaken idea about Him; and to complete the testimony that Jesus gave by His life and ministry.

And the voice of the Father says, "**Hear Him!**" "Listen...listen," listen to what? "Listen to what He has to say about His death. Listen to what He has to say about His death."

The Kingdom will come in its time, but listen to what He says about His death. The transfiguration, obviously, is a glimpse of glory, but its main point was to demonstrate that the glory is later and the cross was now.

God speaks and immediately the cloud is gone, Moses and Elijah are gone, and the disciples are alone with Jesus once again.

4. The Discussion Which Follows.

As Jesus and His men leave that mountain, Jesus tells them not to tell what they have seen until He rises again from the dead, v. 9. They do not understand what He means by this, v. 10, because they would not grasp the truth of the resurrection until Jesus had actually died and was risen again.

Jesus told them to keep this information to themselves for two reasons. 1.) They didn't have all the information they needed. 2.) They didn't understand the information they did have. If they had gone around telling everyone what they had seen, they would have confused many and hindered the rest of Christ's earthly ministry.

As they come off the mountain, the three men are confused. They want to know why the scribes say that Elijah must come before the Messiah, v. 11, when they had already seen the Messiah, and then they saw Elijah appear on the mountain. Jesus tells them that Elijah will come, v. 12, and then He turns the tables on them.

Jesus turns the focus from Elijah to Himself. He tells the disciples that while Elijah will come, the Son of Man will suffer and be treated as nothing. Then in verse 13, Jesus lets them know that Elijah has already come, not literally, but in the person of John the Baptist, who came in the "spirit and power" of Elijah, Luke 1:17. When this great man of God came, he was put to death. Jesus says that the same things must happen to Him, "**He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt.**"

The suffering must precede the glory. Now, according to 2 Corinthians 3:18, we now can share in that glory: "**But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a**

mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." So we can have that transformation beginning in us now, that is sanctification - but one day, when the Lord comes, we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him. When the Lord returns the bodies of dead saints, like Moses, will rise. Living saints, like Elijah, who never died, will rise to be with the Lord - and together, what a glory!

The cross will not destroy God's plan for the fulfilment of the kingdom, it will not obstruct it, it will fulfill it!

With that in mind, allow me to give you a few insights that seem to me to stand out as the **reasons for the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ**.

1. To encourage the Son of God – Just as God had at the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry, Mark 1:11, He proclaims His relationship to Jesus and His approval of the Lord's ministry. Jesus would hear that voice again as He got nearer to the cross, John 12:28.

2. To prove once and for all that Jesus is the Son of God – Jesus had performed many powerful miracles in His life and ministry. His followers believed He was the Christ, the promised Messiah. But they still doubted His deity. This miracle proves that He is God in the flesh, John 1:1; 14!

3. To encourage and challenge the disciples – Peter was committed to the glory but not the cross. He was committed to the exaltation but not the humiliation. The scandal of the death of Christ to the Jews was a stumbling block. This was so hard for them to swallow that our Lord needs to lift them up after this massive disappointment. He shows them that the glory will come after the suffering.

Perhaps you're here today and you feel like giving up on the Christian path you've been walking. Following Jesus hasn't turned out the way you'd hoped it would. Following Jesus has taken you down some dark valleys, valleys of disappointment and pain, valleys of heartache and doubt. And you wonder if you should turn back, if you made a mistake embarking on this journey. Today I want you to know that this journey through the valley will lead to the mountain of the glory, that this is how life works.

It was that way for Jesus, and it's that way for us. In God's plan, there is no glory without suffering.

Someday we will appear ourselves in a body like unto His glorious body. Someday we'll have that experience, but in the meantime, we suffer for the sake of the cross, we suffer for the sake of the gospel because it's suffering, then glory. They had a hard time with the cross, as you can see. They eventually got the message, but it wasn't easy and I imagine that when it was hard to handle the suffering, they remembered this experience, the glory will come, and they gave us their witness, "We beheld His glory...We were eyewitnesses of His majesty."

I praise God for the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nowhere in the Gospel record can His glory and identity be seen any clearer. Jesus was completely man, yet He was so divine that He could let His real glory shine like the sun. He is the fulfilment of everything Moses and Elijah, and all the Law and prophets, said or wrote. He brings that fulfillment to us! He brings the presence of

God to our lives; He illuminates our lives; and one day, through our relationship with, we will rest for all eternity in the glory of our risen, sovereign Lord.

Now, I know have covered a lot of ground in this message. It may that God has spoken to your heart in some area today. If He has, let me invite you to come before Him and take care of business.

If you are lost come to Jesus and be saved.

If you need to thank God the mountain top experiences in your life, now would be a good time.

If you want to seek His face and become a person after God's own heart, this altar is open.

If God has encouraged your heart and you want to thank Him, now is the time.