

FOLLOW THE LEADER Sunday School- February 13, 2011

Unifying Topic: THIS IS MY BELOVED

Lesson Text

I. The Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-4)

II. The Response To The Transfiguration (Mark 9:5-8)

III. Jesus And Elijah (Mark 9:9-13)

The Main Thought: And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This my beloved Son: hear him. (Mark 9:7,KJV).

Unifying Principle: People need reassurance that they are listening to the right leader. How can we know who is right and who is wrong? God's voice in the cloud dramatically identified Jesus as God's chosen One, the One to whom they should listen. This is known as a theophany—the appearance of God.

Lesson Aim: To teach students that Jesus Christ is the beloved Son of God.

Life Aim: To teach Christians that Christ is, God's Son who fulfilled His will, provides us with guidance and direction, inspires us to live holy lives, and answers our puzzling questions as we listen to Him.

- 9:2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.
- 9:3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.
- 9:4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.
- 9:5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.
- 9:6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.
- 9:7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.
- 9:8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.
- 9:9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.
- 9:10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.
- 9:11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?
- 9:12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.
- 9:13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

HISTORY:

Chapter 9:1

There is the issue of death: tasting death vs. seeing God's kingdom. This verse belongs at the end of Chapter 8; it is the final statement in Christ's lecture about self-denial. Although He had just emphasized the spiritual over the physical, men seek and need physical evidence. Thus, it is promised: **some of them that stand here...shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.** This is not a reference to the Lord's Second Coming. The disciples did not die before Jesus' return (resurrection). In Scripture, the word **taste** is a synonym for "*experience*." Thus this refers to "*some will see*", "*will experience*" God's kingdom in its glory. It does not mean that they would not ultimately die, but that before they died they would see beyond the veil into the kingdom. The Kingdom of God is where He rules and reigns and it's always with power. He allowed some to see His power in His death, in His resurrection, and in His glory at the Transfiguration. The Lord's victory over death and hell took place upon the cross. His resurrection made it possible for the rule and reign of God's kingdom to take place within the heart of the believer when the Holy Spirit comes to take residence within the believer. That experience began in the upper room at Pentecost. And on the Mount of Transfiguration is where the three saw heaven's glory of the Father approving of His Son.

LESSON:

Mark 9:2-4 The Transfiguration

9:2 The purpose of the Transfiguration was to reveal heaven's glory, and heaven's glory would strengthen Jesus to bear the cross, and strengthen the disciples in their belief that Jesus was God's Messiah. After six days of drilling His disciples with the fact of His coming death and resurrection, He only takes **Peter, James, and John up to a high mountain.** Why did He not take the other disciples with them? The answer is not given. Peter, James, and John apparently formed an inner circle around Jesus. Jesus revealed more to these three men than to the other disciples.

They were with Him when He raised Jairus' daughter, when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane, and here on the Mount of Transfiguration. Each was chosen for a very special leadership role. They were not aware of it yet, but they were to fulfill unique positions.

1. Peter was to be the leader of the early church, the one who was to open the door of the gospel to both Jew and Gentile after Pentecost (Acts 2:1; 10:1).
2. James was to be the head of the first great church which was to be at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13).
3. John was to receive The Revelation from God to close out the Scriptures.

They witnessed Jesus' **Transfiguration** on a mountaintop, perhaps referring to Mt Hermon, the highest mountain in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi. The word describing His transfiguration (*Gr metamorphōō*) signifies an outward manifestation of an inward change.

9:3 Although Matthew and Luke's accounts mention Jesus' change in countenance, Mark restricts his comments to the Lord's apparel. Two things are noted:

1. **His raiment became shining.** The word "*shining*" (*stilbo*) is a Greek participle which means the shining is active. The transfiguration was a real, active experience. It was no illusion, or dream; it was not of the imagination. It was not a reflection of the sun shining off some rock, glass, or lake. The glory was shining **white as snow**. It was the glory of the Lord's inner nature actively shining right through His being.
2. The full glory of the Godhead was not shining through Jesus. No man could ever stand in the full glory of the Lord's presence, not in man's present physical body. As scripture says, "*Our Lord Jesus Christ...the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see*" *1Tim.6:14-16*. Apparently God allowed only a small degree of the glory; only what the three disciples could bear to shine through the body and clothing (raiment) of Jesus.

The word **fuller** was one who professionally cleaned clothing. No matter how they might clean it, they could never get it as white as it shined on the Mount of Transfiguration!

9:4 While they are viewing this spectacular event of the Transfiguration, Elijah (**Elias**) and **Moses appeared** and were **talking with Jesus**. Why did Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus? There seemed to be two reasons:

1. To discuss Jesus' death. Jesus needed to be strengthened to bear the weight and pressure of the cross, the Garden of Gethsemane experience and His cry on the cross. Or—
2. To show that Jesus was the true Messiah. He was superior to the Law and the Prophets. You see, Moses represented the Law, and Elijah, who was considered the greatest of the prophets, represented the prophets. These two men were honoring and ministering to Christ. By such they were symbolizing that the Law and the Prophets found their fulfillment in Christ.
 - a. Christ was the One of whom the Law and the Prophets spoke of.
 - b. Christ was the One of whom the Law and the Prophets pointed to.

The Transfiguration is, of course a mystery to man. But it should be remembered that it is a mystery cloaked in the fullness of the Godhead. And God's glory is so brilliant there is no need for a sun (Rev.21:23; 22:5). The glory of the Supreme Being who stand behind the Universe in His unlimited presence and power, is bound to be beyond description and thought.

Mark 9:5-8 The Response To The Transfiguration

9:5 First, the response of the Transfiguration was that the disciples were strengthened and excited, which led Peter to make the statement, **It is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles**. Peter misjudged in his suggestion primarily because his impulsive nature responded too quickly. Although he had just exalted Christ as the "*Son of the Living God*", here he placed Jesus on an equal plane with the two prophets. But Peter offered to build three shelters (*skenas*) for Jesus and the two prophets as an act to extend the stay of the heavenly guests and this glorious experience. The shelters which Peter offered to build were the booths made of branches and grass which could be quickly built (the kind often built by travelers on their stops along the road night by night). **V6** Secondly, although the disciples were strengthen, they were struck with awesome fear. They really **didn't know what to say; for they were sore afraid** (terrified), but here goes impetuous Peter. Peter, James, and John found themselves in the awesome, The Almighty, fearsome, and gloriousness of God's presence. That's what it will be like when the believer experience the Day of Redemption.

- The believer will experience the "*Shekinah glory*"; see its full manifestation upon Christ.
- The believer will hear the voice of God proclaiming Christ to be His Son expressing perfect approval of His redemptive work, and rejoicing that He has been heard, and heard throughout eternity.
- The believer will fall upon his face, prostrate before Christ in awe, and adoration, and worship.
- The believer will experience the Lord's intercessory work. He will feel the Lord's hand reaching out to touch him and to lift him up. And the believer will stand in the Lord's righteousness and perfection, living in a state of glory forever.
- The believer will witness and experience the Lord's preeminence throughout all eternity.

9:7 Thirdly, the response of the disciples was that they got a chance to witness and experience God's confirmation and approval of His beloved Son. God spoke from heaven, beyond the clouds. **The cloud overshadowed** and enveloped **them**. And in the mist of the cloud, God speaks. In Matthew it speaks of them "*falling on their faces and being sore afraid*" Matt.17:6, unable to look up. As mortal men, they were paralyzed in fear. Also in Matthew, it says it was a "*bright cloud*." The bright cloud overshadowing Jesus is a far contrast to the dark and threatening cloud that overshadowed the giving of the Old Covenant to Moses, that is the Law (Exo.19:18; 20:21). There is a point to be made here. The Law (Old Covenant) was dark and threatening; the New Covenant (the love of Christ) is bright and is given to save and bless, not to threaten and condemn (Heb.12:18-24).

A voice speaks (the Father), endorsing Jesus (His Son) just as He did at His baptism. The voice speaking actually says in Greek, "*This is My Son, the Beloved One*." The idea is, that Jesus is "*The only begotten Son who was to be given for the world*" (Jh.3:16). This time, though, the approval includes the phrase, **Hear Him!** The phrase indicates clearly what Moses was doing there, because it comes directly from his prophecy: "*The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear*" Deut.18:15NKJV). In the broader context of Mark, the voice is telling the disciples that Jesus is exactly right in predicting His own death. The word used for "*hear*" is "*akoute*", a Greek word that really means "*listen and obey*." God was saying, **This is my beloved Son**—"pay attention to Him and do what He tells you."

V8 Suddenly, the three disciples found themselves **alone with Jesus**. It happened in a twinkling of an eye. Elijah and Moses had faded away. The disciples must be saying to themselves, why did they leave? The imagery seems to say Jesus fulfills everything to which the Law and the Prophets pointed to; they will fade away, leaving only Jesus as the path to God.

Mark 9:9-13 Jesus And Elijah

9:9-10 The Transfiguration gave a unique opportunity to discuss God's Messiahship. However, you always have to come down out of the clouds and back to reality. Well, **Jesus charged the disciples to tell no one** about their experience **until after He had risen from the dead**. Whatever you've seen, **keep it to yourselves**. The mention of the rising from the dead stirred them to **question what He meant**. They really thought that He was going to set up His kingdom now, and that He would now reign in glory. So, therefore, when He admonished them not to say anything, they did just that! I guess I would also, after hearing a voice from the cloud saying "*Hear Him*"—*listen and obey*, you would to!

9:11-12 After seeing all this, there's something the disciples can't figure out. **Elijah** was supposed to **come before the Messiah**. They were referring to

Mal.4:5—"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

They saw Elijah for the first time after the Messiah had arrived. So, therefore, they asked Jesus, for they needed to know what's going on. First, **Jesus responds by agreeing** that the scripture does teach that **Elijah must come first and prepare the way**. In Malachi, the mention of Elijah was to announce the Messiah's arrival. John the Baptist was a type of Elijah at Christ's first Advent in the New Testament. **Lk.1:13-17** says,

"...and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John...For he will be great in the sight of the

Lord ...He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the

children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the

children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

John the Baptist came not in the body of Elijah, but in the spirit and power of Elijah! When the priest and Levites asked John the Baptist if he was Elijah, he answered, "*I am not*", meaning that he was not Elijah literally, though he was doing the work of Elijah (Jh.1:21). When we turn over to **Isaiah 40:3**, Isaiah is also proclaiming the Word of the Lord to Israel, that would be fulfilled by the ministry of John the Baptist, preparing the way for Jesus Christ—

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

"The great and dreadful day of the Lord" spoken in Malachi also may pertain to the last half of the "Great Tribulation",

where the two witnesses will appear for forty-two months or 3½ years (Rev.11:3). Most likely this will be an Elijah-like person as John the Baptist was—Elijah-like. It only says two witnesses and most commentators speculate that it will be Moses and Elijah. However, it does not predict the resurrection of Elijah, but rather God raising up one who will do the same kind of work that Elijah had done. So, to read this in a spiritual manner, the spirit and power of Elijah has indeed come through the person of John the Baptist.

Secondly, Jesus also makes them take notice of the scripture which teaches that the Messiah **must suffer many things, and be set at nought** (to slight, disregard, disdain, utterly despised, and be treated with contempt and rejected)[Ps.22; Is.53:3]. This also was written, as well as the mission of Elias. And this was a fact that they were overlooking. He is trying to bring them back to the real point. He will be killed and then be resurrected the third day. So if Elijah was supposed to restore all things, why must the Son of man still have to suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

9:13 The answer is that **Elijah came, but the people did whatsoever they listed** (desired). The word, "*list*", is related to the word "*lust*". It means that they simply followed their base inclinations; their desires. ...**as it is written** of him, means, they have done whatever they listed to do to John as it is written, they will do to the Son of man. John was executed by King Herod; too many people ignored him and then killed him. And the fate for Jesus would be crucifixion. Therefore, if the forerunner was treated in such a way, then the Christ, the One who came after him, could expect a similar fate.

The prophecy in Malachi had a "*lest*" clause ("*lest I come and smite the earth with a curse*"). God already knew the ending from the beginning. He knew how they would receive Elijah. Therefore, the Son of man must suffer to remove the curse from God's disobedient, hard-hearted people. Elijah did what he was supposed to do and Jesus came to do the ultimate. Jesus is trying to reveal to His disciples the kind of rejection that He will soon receive and the reason He will need to be resurrected in order to fulfill His calling as Messiah. In finishing the Transfiguration story, Mark again brings back the theme of the cross. This is the paradox and the anxiety of following Jesus: self-sacrifice and persecution, mingled with glorious divine revelation. The sacrifices are temporal. The glory will be eternal.

SUMMARY:

Before in Chapter 8, they learned of the cost of discipleship, and now, that Jesus was going to Jerusalem to die, they needed strengthening. However, the Transfiguration brought a new radiance of the Messiah's glory; and made them eye-witnesses to this brilliant splendor of the path He must take; and to top all of that, to hear God's voice of approval speak through the cloud. They also seeing that the Law and the Prophets represented in Moses and Elijah, found their fulfillment in Christ. Therefore their spirits were raised and strengthened in the firm conviction that Jesus was God's Messiah. The Transfiguration gave the disciples a taste of glory. It was much so, that they didn't want to leave from that place. Did they understand it all? For Jesus told them not to say anything of what they had seen till after the resurrection. Then they had questions again. Jesus answered their questions; however, their response still showed that they didn't quite understand. It was difficult to understand that their Messiah would have to suffer. The Jews who studied the Old Testament prophecies expected the Messiah to be a great king like David. Well, all of this leads me back to what they heard the voice say in the cloud, "*This is My beloved Son: hear Him.*" Hear Him in the Spirit; Hear Him with a walk of faith; Hear Him and follow Him as your Messiah. He was on His way to the cross, and therefore, we can't help but follow the true Messiah, who is the Beloved Son of the Father.

APPLICATION:

Through our valley or mountaintop experiences with God, it is always a step of faith in the Son of the Living God. The key Word today is, **Hear Him**, listen and obey by following the only One who knows the right way.

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