

## The Gospel According to Luke

Luke 9:27-36 (*Matthew 17:1-8 and Mark 9:1-10*)

Reading: Mark 9:1-10

Sermon #41

June 2, 2019

## Jesus' Glory

### Foundation

God made himself known in the Old Testament in veiled and mysterious ways. Job said of God, in chapter 26 that God was known in a number of ways through creation, nature and action, at the end of the chapter Job writes “Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?” (Job 26:14) Moses talked with God and asked of him, “Please show me your glory.’<sup>19</sup> And God said, ‘I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ ...<sup>20</sup> ‘But,’ he said, ‘you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.’” (Exodus 33:18 and 20) Because of God’s incredible and amazing person that is beyond human understanding no one can look upon the face of God and live. Isaiah wrote the glory of God is seen in the future coming of the Messiah, “the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” (Isaiah 40:5) God’s glory is revealed in the Messiah and all mankind shall see it and the Messiah will speak with the authority of God, for the Messiah is the Lord God. We learn from the Old Testament that the Messiah, which is the Lord Jesus Christ is the manifestation of the glory of God. The people of the Old Testament only read and anticipated the first coming of the Messiah but Jesus spoke also of his second coming – his return. This morning’s passage of the transfiguration of Christ was a preview of his 2<sup>nd</sup> coming when he will return in full visible glory. Jesus spoke of this saying,<sup>29</sup> “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its

light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ... <sup>25:31</sup> When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.”

(Matthew 24:29-30; 25:31) This is what the disciples waited for after Jesus was resurrected, it is what the church has been waiting for ever since and it is what we wait for – Jesus’ return. While we wait, our prayers should be three pronged; praying for the gospel to entered into the hearts of all people, for the return of the King and by God’s strengthen we will be faithful to live and proclaim the gospel. So now is a good time to lift our hearts and minds to God in prayer as we prepare to see Jesus’ glory, the glory of God in three ways; Jesus’ transformation, the disciple’s association and God’s revelation.

Pray.

## **Transformation**

Jesus had just ended his teaching about the cost of being his disciple by taking up one’s cross daily to live as Jesus lived, proclaim the gospel as he proclaimed it. Then he ended with this statement in verse 27, “**But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.**” The “**some**” Jesus refers to, we come to know, is Peter, James and John. What these disciples are about to see is an unveiling. It is not a changed Jesus, but Jesus how He really is. Reading again from Luke chapter 9 at verse 28, “**Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.**” <sup>29</sup> And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered or as Matthew and Mark say it “*transfigured*”, and his

clothing became dazzling white.” This altering or transfiguring occurred as he prayed. This incredible event was marked by prayer. For Jesus, prayer was essential as it was in the apostle’s lives following the resurrection and as it should be in every believer’s life.

When these 3 catch this amazing glimpse of the Kingdom of God and of Christ, it is not future. This is Jesus. They were seeing the glory that the Son had with the Father before the world began. Later when it was time for Jesus to suffer for the sins of mankind, he prayed, what is referred to as the high priestly prayer, to God his Father and towards the end of the prayer he confirms what Luke has recorded, “now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.” (John 17:5) What Peter, James and John saw is Jesus with the veil of flesh lifted. This is Jesus as He was prior to the incarnation. This is Jesus now. What they saw that day was the Kingdom of God that is a different dimension. Jesus has control of the earthly dimension and the spiritual dimension. As a result of His prayer, they were brought together for a few moments and as the result of prayer we too can be brought into the throne room of God, into the spiritual dimension where Jesus is until his return.

The transfiguration was the moment when eternity and time met. Jesus was seen as He actually is. What the disciples saw, was Jesus and all His glory. When theologians speak of the glory of Christ, they are often speaking of this radiance that illuminates from the person of Christ, His deity is visible as bright white light. The Old Testament writers spoke of God’s glory and when they did it was always in reference to brightness, light, lightning and brilliant illumination. As Isaiah spoke of the coming Messiah, “The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD *the Messiah* will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.” (Isaiah 60:19) In Ezekiel

chapter 1 he describes the 4 living creatures and above them is God “... there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance.<sup>27</sup> And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. ...<sup>28</sup> so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face ...” (Ezekiel 1:26-28) This is what Peter, James and John saw in our passage today – the brilliance of the glory of God the Son.

The visible transformation of Jesus was literally a complete change. Luke mentions Jesus’ face being transformed. Matthew, His face shone like the sun and clothes were even glorified. Mark, His clothes became intensely white, whiter than anyone could bleach them. I wonder if it may not have been Jesus’ clothes that changed, but his glory was so intense it shown through his clothes. This is the picture given to us by John, “In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.” (Revelation 1:16) This is the Christ who will return, if we are alive at his return this is who we will see and be in awe of, just as Peter James and John.

Jesus is so bright that in the New Jerusalem, there will be no need for the sun because the light will radiate from the Son of God. Think of the light being so bright that it will shine through all the emeralds and sapphire and rubies in heaven that John tells about in the Book of Revelation and their brilliance will be a reflection of Jesus’ light. All of creation will reflect His glory. I was thinking about precious stones in our world today and how they are worshipped rather than Christ because our world is fallen. Their real purpose will be fulfilled in Christ as they

reflect and refract the beams of his Glory throughout the eternal city. I want to see that.

The writer of Hebrews wrote of this in clear language; Christ is the glory of God, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,<sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.<sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Hebrews 1:1-3) Even Moses did not see glory as bright as Peter, James and John. Moses could not look upon the face of God and live, but these 3 saw the face of God incarnate.

My beloved, this is a King worth all we have, this is a King that we can follow into battle against evil and this is the only King that gives eternal life even though we die. Look back at verse 26 where Jesus issued a stern warning, “For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” As the follower of Jesus, we are called to live as boldly as the apostles lived and to live with complete submission and allegiance to the King of kings.

## **Association**

As believers we can take comfort in knowing that everything Jesus had been telling His disciples about eternal life was true. Reading verses 30 and 31, “And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah,<sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” Moses had been dead for about 1,500 years and yet, there he is standing and speaking with our Lord. Elijah did not die but had been gone for 900 years and

there he was as clear as day. In the splendor of their glorified bodies Moses and Elijah were recognizable and this indicates that in heaven we will be recognizable as well. Their conversation with Christ concerning his coming crucifixion and resurrection and return to heaven and by this we are further given evidence that Jesus' sacrifice and atonement was the fulfillment of God's eternal plan. Since Moses and Elijah had lived in the presence of God since their departures from the earth they had known who Jesus was and had worshipped him as the Christ and as they were now eternal, they had witnessed the fulfillment of God plan for redemption of mankind.

One can only speculate as to why God choose Moses and Elijah to appear with Jesus. However, I believe there are several reasons. First, they both had unusual exits from this world. We know from Jude that Michael the archangel and Satan fought over Moses body and then God buried Moses so his body would never be found. Elijah did not die but went up to heaven in a whirlwind according to 2 Kings 2:11. Secondly, they would be witnesses - that Israel would trust. Also, they represented the 2 divisions found in the Old Testament; Moses is identified with the Law and the prophet Elijah guarded the law and submitted to it. His stance against Israel's idolatrous rejection of the Law culminated with his victory over hundreds of false prophets on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings chapter 18. My final thought is, why did they speak with Jesus of his departure? In the original Greek, the word used is not departure, but exodus and Moses was the leader of the exodus of Israel out of Egypt and out of bondage and this was only a foreshadowing of the true exodus that was to come. Jesus' exodus would lead all His people out of bondage to sin and into God's promised land for eternity.

The Old Testament saints were deeply interested in how the Messiah would atone for their sins. They were concerned with the details of the foretold Messiah

and they were saved by their faith in the Messiah over works and sacrifices, just as we are. They knew of the Messiah and were in anticipation of his coming, but they had questions and Moses and Elijah gave validity that Jesus was the only one who could answer their questions for He was the Messiah come. As Isaiah wrote, what in times past were only whispered of who God is, would be made very clear in Christ. These events, the death and resurrection of the Messiah was what the Old Testament pointed to but there remained questions of how and when the Messiah would come.

As incredible as this meeting of Moses and Elijah and Jesus was, we read in verses 32, “Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy or overcome with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.” The perfect passive participle translated as “heavy” or “overcome” implies that their falling asleep was involuntary. Jesus had **not** brought them with him up the mount to sleep and they are awakened and they see Jesus’ glory. Since it had been many generations since Moses and Elijah had lived – Jesus would have had to introduce them or given divine knowledge to his disciples for them to know who these 2 men were. This brought to my mind what important things, what eternal events am I taking no notice of or sleeping through? On the other hand if I truly focus my life on Christ – what will he reveal?

This brings us to a key point, we come to the theological purpose of this event. This event was not for the benefit of Jesus or Moses or Elijah. This event was to help these disciples and strengthen their faith. It has always been the practice of God to fulfill prophecy on multiple levels. For example, when Isaiah would make a declaration of prophecy from God, there would be an immediate fulfillment of that prophecy or the prophecy would be fulfilled in part which was for the benefit of his contemporaries and to prove that he was a prophet from God

and not a false prophet, then there would be a future fulfillment that he was calling his contemporaries to believe.

Throughout Jesus' ministry, He has made some pretty amazing claims. He has spoken of His coming Kingdom, His death and resurrection. He has spoken of His rule and authority. Up until now, His followers have only seen some effects of His rule and reign. They had seen the sick recover, evil spirits flee, the dead raised. But they had never actually seen the Kingdom of God in Jesus as he had been preaching about all along...that is - until now.

Jesus had made the statement in our text last week that some would not taste death until they see His Kingdom. Now he brings Peter, James and John to see the Kingdom, if only briefly ... why three? Moses the Law giver stated, [“A single witness shall not suffice ... Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.”](#) (Deuteronomy 19:15) Jesus' disciples' testimonies and their writings would be the future evidence that Jesus was the Christ, so their creditability was vastly important.

Now awake, Peter, impetuous Peter, speaking one's mind Peter, speaking before he thinks things through Peter, prepares to speak. Jesus is most likely thinking Peter be quiet, you just woke up, think things through because you are getting ready to say something you should not. Peter says, [“as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah’—not knowing what he said.”](#) Peter's most obvious mistake was placing Moses and Elijah on the same level as Jesus the Messiah, the Christ. The writer of Hebrews knows what Peter does not at this point, writing, [“For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor](#)



than the house itself. <sup>4</sup>(For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) <sup>5</sup>Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, <sup>6</sup>but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son." (Hebrews 3:3-6) As much as Peter did not want to see Jesus suffer and wanted the Kingdom of God to begin – God's plan of redemption could not be changed by human desire. Before Jesus could wear the crown, he had to suffer the cross. This what Isaiah's chapter 53 is all about – take time this week and read it from this perspective.

These select 3 - their faith would be bolstered by the vision they had just seen and this would help cement their life's mission. Peter later wrote, "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup>For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,' <sup>18</sup>we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain." (2 Peter 1:16-18) Here Peter is referring to the transfiguration and the validity of the apostle's witness and testimony of Jesus Christ.

## **Revelation**

Another witness to the divinity of Jesus is God the Father. Reading verses 34 to 36, "As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup>And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!' <sup>36</sup>And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen." This is about the identity of Jesus. Remember

earlier in chapter 9 reports had come back to Herod about who Jesus might be. Then Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”<sup>19</sup> And they answered, ‘John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.’<sup>20</sup> Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, ‘The Christ of God.’” (Luke 9:18-20) Then Jesus affirms Peter is correct.

Now from heaven comes a confession like no other. There is no confusion here, no ambiguity; the identity of Jesus is crystal clear – “This is my Son, my Chosen One” The same cloud that was God’s glory on earth during the exodus with Moses now again descends and engulfs those present and God speaks. Jesus is the Son, God incarnate. God further commands the 3 disciples “listen to him!”

Why such a strong command? Because the disciples were still confused – the big picture was not in focus. Jesus had told them truths about himself and the Kingdom of God, His kingdom and they heard these truths but did not fully understand them or how all the pieces fit together. Jesus spoke to them, of his eternal kingdom and they were still focused on him as an earthly ruler that would reestablish Israel as a powerful nation. The Gospel writers, some of which are the disciples of Jesus while he walked the earth, wrote of how they would argue among themselves about who would be the greatest in Jesus’ reestablished kingdom. The disciples were not focused yet – they would be in the near future, but not yet and this event increased their faith and validated their witness.

God declares from heaven to those present and to us here this morning that Jesus “is my Son, my Chosen One”. Jesus is deity. Jesus is God incarnate. Are you following King Jesus today or are you ashamed of Him? I pray we are not asleep when it comes to eternal things. I pray that as we read and study this section of

Scripture today that our faith is strengthened. Jesus showed these 3 disciples a sneak preview of the fullness of His kingdom and he shows us His true nature and his coming kingdom through their testimony. Once the disciples brought the picture of Jesus as the Christ into focus and the picture of Jesus was clear, the disciples would follow Jesus even to death if necessary. Let me ask, “Are you a follower of Jesus as the disciples were? Will you live obedient to the commands of your King? Will you live the Bible, the Word of God?” If so, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”** (Matthew 28:19-20) Amen and amen!