

Lesson # 5 -- The Greatness of the Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus

Introduction

- A. The gospel record presents the Lord Jesus faithfully carrying out the will of His Father. This was His basic concern.
  - 1. The months of ministry between the Baptism and the Transfiguration reveal a deepening change of attitude toward the Savior. The crowds had grown smaller, the religious leaders had become more and more hostile, and the disciples -- while increasing in devotion -- were unable to understand the message related to their Messiah's death.
  - 2. This was a time of great concern for the Lord Jesus. He deeply felt the rejection of the people. He was being forced more and more into arguments with the religious leaders. The death of John the Baptist caused Him to go into retirement for a time. He was increasingly reaching out to the disciples but they were preoccupied with their own problems. He must have longed for a fresh touch from Heaven.
- B. The immediate background to the Transfiguration is important.
  - 1. The confession of His deity, Matt. 16:13-20.
  - 2. The confrontation with the enemy, Matt. 16:21-23.
  - 3. The cost of discipleship, Matt. 16:24-27.
  - 4. The awareness that there was to be a new manifestation of His Kingdom, Matt. 16:28 (II Peter 1:16-18)
- I. The Significance of the Transfiguration Proper. Matt. 17:1-8
  - A. It was a confirmation to the Lord Jesus.
    - 1. He had gone into the mountain to pray, Luke 9:28,29.
    - 2. He was deeply concerned about His ministry and the increasing awareness of His coming death.
    - 3. The transfiguration comforted Him personally, confirmed the direction of His life, and clarified the meaning of the next few months.
  - B. It was a fulfillment of God's promise to Jesus Christ as the Son of Man.
    - 1. The promise: perfect obedience would exempt one from death. (Lev. 18:5; Neh. 9:29; Ez. 20:11; Luke 10:28; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12)
    - 2. In the Transfiguration Jesus Christ was offered Heaven -- as a man. He had obeyed perfectly. He did not have to suffer death.

3. In not stepping into Heaven -- coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration -- the Lord Jesus indicated His willingness to carry out His work and to suffer in our place.
  4. He had come to fulfill the Law of God (Matt. 5:17; Rom. 5:19; 8:3,4; 10:3,4). The Transfiguration indicated that He was accomplishing His work.
- C. It was a form of revelation to the disciples and to us.
1. The disciples selected were Peter, James, and John. Matt. 17:1
  2. These three were given the privilege of observing the Lord Jesus raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Luke 8:41-56), and to go through the Gethsemane experience with the Savior (Matt. 26:36-46).
  3. The instruction in these three events -- redemption.
    - a. At the house of Jairus they realized the Savior was Master over death.
    - b. In the Transfiguration they realized He did not have to die.
    - c. In Gethsemane they understood He was going to die as a Substitute for mankind.

## II. The Significance of the Heavenly Visitors. Matt. 17:3,4

### A. Their representation

1. Moses represented the Law of God and had led in a physical Exodus from Egypt. Exodus 3-15
2. Elijah represented the Prophetic Movement and had led in a spiritual exodus from idolatry. I Kings 17-19

### B. Their discussion -- the "Exodus" of the Lord Jesus. Luke 9:31

1. The Savior was to fulfill the law which Moses represented and to die under its curse. All the Old Testament symbolized He was to fulfill.
2. The Savior was to fulfill all the prophecies represented by Elijah. He was to lead His people through a spiritual exodus in His redemptive work.

### C. The instruction -- there is accountability and life after death.

1. We must look at ourselves and our life in the light of eternity.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. II Cor. 5:10

2. We must look at our goals and possessions in the light of eternity.

And he (the Lord Jesus) said unto them. Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Luke 12:15

3. We must look at our spirituality in the light of eternity.

And now, little children, abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.  
I John 2:28

### III. The Significance of the Father's Proclamation. Matt. 17:5

#### A. The recognition of the Father: "This is My Beloved Son."

1. This was an affirmation of the deity of the Lord Jesus.
2. This was an affirmation of the Savior as the Old Testament Messiah.
3. This was an affirmation of the Father's love for His Son.

#### B. The approval of the Father: "In Whom I am well pleased."

1. This was a commendation of the Lord Jesus for His past ministry.
2. This was a commendation in regard to the Savior's choices and goals regarding the future.
3. This was a instruction to the disciples regarding the Lord Jesus.

#### C. The exhortation of the Father: "Hear ye Him."

1. The Lord Jesus was given the Father's approval as prophet, priest, and king.
2. The Lord Jesus was designated to be greater than Moses and Elijah.
3. The Lord Jesus was to be "heard." He was/is revelation.

### Conclusion

#### A. The effect of the Transfiguration on the disciples.

1. The immediate effect was fear. Matt. 17:6
2. The long-range effect was spiritual stability.
  - a. James died as a martyr. Acts 12:1-3
  - b. John wrote that he had beheld the glory of the Father in the Lord Jesus. John 1:14
  - c. Peter wrote that he was an eyewitness of the majesty of the Lord Jesus and had heard the Father's voice. II Peter 1:16-18

B. The effect of the Transfiguration on the Lord Jesus.

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. Luke 9:51

C. The effect the Transfiguration should have on us.

1. A deeper understanding and appreciation of the greatness of the Lord Jesus.
2. A better understanding and gratitude for the redeeming work of the Savior.
3. An aggressive determination to change our priorities and life so we may live in the will of God.
  - a. This should involve serious and practical choices of obedience.
  - b. This should involve personal discipline regarding the Bible, prayer, the family, and the church.