

Review

At the end of the verses we studied last week, Jesus made a mysterious statement to His disciples:

Matt. 16:28 “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Many people have been confused by this. At first, it sounds like He’s saying that His Second Coming will occur within the following 50 years. To others, it sounds like He is promising to make some of the disciples invulnerable to death until He would come back 2,000 years later.

But I believe that Bible explanations are most often found in Bible context. And when each of the Synoptic Gospel writers wrote of this statement, they immediately followed it up with an event that took place about a week later (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28).

This event would later be spoken of by Peter and John in this way:
2Pet. 1:16 ...we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

John 1:14 ...we saw His glory...

Peter, James, and John are about to catch a glimpse into the kingdom of God, when they see Jesus in all of His glory and majesty.

17:1 Three Guys On A Mountain

Although the crowds of disciples were huge, Jesus had named twelve as apostles. Of those twelve, there seems to be a smaller group of three or four that scholars have referred to as “the inner circle.”

- It is true that Peter, James and John were the only ones allowed into the house when Jesus resurrected the 12-year-old girl from the dead (Luke 8:51).

- These were the three guys who Jesus would later take with Him to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37) as He was grieved and distressed.

- It was these three, along with Andrew (Mark 13:3), who questioned Jesus privately about the end times, an inquiry which resulted in the incredible end-times sermon called the Olivet Discourse.

Many commentators believe that these three or four were Jesus’ “best friends.” That is quite possible. However, it is equally possible that these guys got extra time with Jesus because they needed the extra

attention, they needed the tutoring! To paraphrase Gayle Erwin, “The inner circle? No, more like the remedial class!”

And so Jesus took Peter, James, and John up onto this high mountain for a unique experience.

17:2 The Transfiguration

At the top of the mountain, Jesus was transfigured. That word in Greek is “Met-am-or-FO-o,” from which we get our English word “metamorphosis.” It means to change physically, like the metamorphosis which takes place when a caterpillar turns into a butterfly, or a tadpole becomes a frog.

Jesus’ New Form

Matthew writes that Jesus’ face was shining like the sun and His garments were white as light. Luke said,

Luke 9:29 And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming.

Mark described this as,

Mark 9:3 ...His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

17:3 Meeting With Moses And Elijah

Moses and Elijah suddenly appear on the mountaintop and begin talking with Jesus. What were they talking about? Luke says that they...

Luke 9:31 ...were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Remember, it was just a week ago that the disciples came to realize that Jesus was the Messiah.

Matt. 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show 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 up on the third day.

The disciples didn’t understand it. But Moses and Elijah did, and they spoke about it up on the mountaintop. When they finished their

conversation, they turned to leave (Luke 9:33). But you just know that there can't be an event this monumental without Peter jumping in...

17:4 Peter's Groggy Offer

Luke points out to us that Peter had been sleeping instead of praying (Luke 9:32), so he was a bit groggy when he woke up and saw this meeting taking place. As a result, he was...

Luke 9:33 ...not realizing what he was saying.

Peter suggested that he build three tents - one for each of them.

17:5-6 Listen To Him

It's wasn't Peter's finest moment. After all, Moses and Elijah were two of the greatest men who had spoken FOR God. But now they were speaking WITH God. Unfortunately, Peter's statement had seemed to make them equivalent to God.

The Father interrupts Peter at this point, saying, "THIS is My beloved Son, listen to HIM!" The Father is saying in no uncertain terms, "Peter, close your mouth and listen to Jesus."

I hope that each of you has discovered the simplicity of true Christianity. A faith that is in Jesus alone, that listens to Jesus alone, and that follows Jesus alone.

So many people today are adding requirements, regulations, and rituals. It is interesting to me that Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the prophets, for people today are trying to direct us towards them again. "Follow the Old Testament Law for a more complete Christianity." "Come to our revival and hear the prophets speak for a more complete Christianity."

Rom. 3:21-22 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe...

The Law and the Prophets pointed to Jesus. When Philip found Nathanael, he said,

John 1:45 ..."We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote - Jesus of Nazareth..."

I can guarantee that if you bring the Law and the Prophets up to the same level as Jesus, you will fall on your face, just as the disciples did on that mountaintop.

17:7-8 Jesus Alone

When God got in Peter's face, Peter dropped to his face. And when he got up, suddenly, Moses and Elijah were gone (Mark 9:8).

Someday, every person is going to be in that position. Whatever or whoever they elevated to be on the same level as Jesus is going to be gone. And when they look up, there will be only Jesus.

Phil. 2:10-11 ...at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...

Wouldn't it be great if we mastered that action in this life? To look up and see Jesus alone - to confess Him as Lord. May we learn today what Jude already knew, that He is...

Jude 1:4 ...our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.