

“A Preview of the Kingdom of God”

Luke 9:27-36

Read Luke 9:27-36... Wow! The narrative in this passage is rather fast paced, and we must not forget the context from last week, when Jesus (cf. **Luke 9:22-24**) challenged His followers to deny themselves and follow Him; telling them that He was going to be rejected by the religious leaders of Israel and He was going to be killed, but on the third day He would rise from the dead.

Now we read (**Luke 9:27**), where Jesus says some of those who are there at this time will not die before they see the kingdom of God; (**Matthew 16:28**) some of them standing there won't die until they see, "the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" [lit. royal splendor].

Both **Mark 9** and **Matthew 17** give accounts of the Transfiguration of Christ up on the mountain; and along with Luke, they place the promise of **Luke 9:27** right before the Transfiguration, which occurs about a week later.

Jesus (**Luke 9:28**) takes Peter, James and John with Him up on a mountain. It is possible that this is Mt. Hermon where the Transfiguration occurs, as it is the highest mountain in the Caesarea Philippi area (over 9,230 ft. high). Peter, James and John were also singled out in the Garden of Gethsemane, to keep watch and pray with Jesus just before His arrest.

Luke says (**9:29**), "the appearance of [Jesus] face became different, and His clothing *became white and gleaming* [Lit. *flashing like lightening*]." Both Matthew (**17:2**) and Mark (**9:2**) use a Greek word that is translated "transfigured," the word is *metamorphoo*, and from it we get our English word metamorphosis. Jesus was miraculously changed before them (**Matthew 17:2**), "His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light," (**Mark 9:2**), "His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them."

In some miraculous way, Jesus' bodily form was changed or altered, so as to display the glory He willingly set aside in order to put on flesh (**Philippians 2:5-7**), "Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men."

Here in Luke 9, Jesus was transformed in order to manifest some of His divine glory. His clothes became radiantly white, whiter than any earthy laundry facility using chemical whiteners could ever hope to accomplish; for this is the white light that is associated with God's visible presence, i.e., it is the radiant glory of God emanating from Jesus Himself, so that it shows through His clothing, giving the appearance of brilliant white light.

“A Preview of the Kingdom of God”

Luke 9:27-36

Hebrews 1:1-3, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And *He is the radiance of His glory* and the exact representation of His nature.”

Revelation 21:22-23, “I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.”

Revelation 22:5, “And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.”

In **Luke's** account (**9:28**), it says Jesus went up on the mountain to pray, and while He was praying (**Luke 9:29**), the appearance of His face changed or became different, and His clothing became the whitest white; and then Elijah and Moses appear (**Luke 9:30-31**) in glorious splendor (i.e., they are radiant) standing there talking with Jesus; conversing with Him about His departure at Jerusalem, i.e., His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension back to the Father.

Evidently (**Luke 9:32**), while this supernatural event is yet unfolding, Peter, James and John wake up from a deep sleep only to see this marvelous presentation of Jesus in His glorious splendor, visiting with Elijah and Moses.

It would appear (**Luke 9:33**) that Moses and Elijah are leaving, so Peter exclaims, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—*not realizing what he was saying*”.

As if it isn't marvelous enough to have Jesus there in His radiant glory, here they see Moses and Elijah also, who are glowing with Kingdom Light.

All of a sudden, as Peter is speaking (**Luke 9:34-35**) a divine cloud encompasses them all (Peter, James and John are afraid) and God the Father speaks, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; Listen to Him!” And immediately (**Matthew 17:6**), “When the disciples heard *this*, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.”

Luke 9:36 tells us that “when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they [Peter, James and John], kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.” **Matthew 17:9** tells us, “As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.’”

“A Preview of the Kingdom of God”

Luke 9:27-36

Jesus had previously told the Twelve (cf. **Luke 9:21**) to tell no one that He was the Christ [Messiah, the Savior who had come to die for the sins of the world]; and yet, John the Baptizer had declared (**John 1:29**), “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Peter, James, and John, had just seen Moses and Elijah standing with Jesus, all of them glowing with radiant light of the glory of God present in Christ, and they aren’t to tell anyone? Why?

The people were expecting a conquering king on a white stallion, not a humble servant who ride into town on a donkey’s colt; the people were waiting for a divine deliverer, one who would free them from Roman oppression, not from the penalty of sin; they expected the Messiah to bring prosperity and long life now, to initiate the Millennial Kingdom.

Neither the disciples nor the people of Israel understood Christ’s mission at His 1st coming to earth, nor did they understand God’s timeframe. Yes, in the future after the rapture of all true believers and followers of Christ, followed by the rise of the Anti-christ and a period of seven years of tribulation, God the Son will return as a victorious warrior (**Revelation 19:11-16**); and He will destroy all of God’s enemies and sit on the throne of David for 1,000 years, during a time of unparalleled peace, prosperity, and long life. But none of that can happen until Jesus goes to the cross as payment for all sin, and then rises from the dead to demonstrate eternal life.

Jesus had earlier told His disciples (**Luke 9:22**) that He would be put to death, and yet on the third day He would be raised to life; but they didn’t really understand what it meant to be “raised from the dead,” (**John 20:9**), “For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.”

All Israel was confused about Jesus being the Messiah, the Savior, God in the flesh [Immanuel], the Holy One from God.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on a Sunday, during Passion Week, the people were praising Him, hailing Him, beseeching Him to save them (**Matthew 21:9**), “Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!” Five days later, on Friday, the people were crying out (**Mark 15:13**), “Crucify Him!”

In our narrative today, Peter, James, and John, have just witnessed Elijah and Moses with Jesus, all of them glowing with the radiant light of the glory of God. This is a preview of the kingdom of God, when all things will be restored as they were before sin entered creation.

“A Preview of the Kingdom of God”

Luke 9:27-36

The Bible says two servants of God will appear during the 7 Year Tribulation Period [Time of Jacob’s Trouble, Great and Terrible Day of the Lord]. According to the Scriptures, about 3.5 years before the 2nd Coming of Christ, near the middle of the 7 year Tribulation (as recorded in the book of Revelation), when the Abomination that causes desolation

stands in the Holy of Holies and declares himself to be God, they will appear.

Revelation 11:3-6, “And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

The powers displayed by these two witnesses is reminiscent of Moses and Elijah who used miraculous powers to bring about repentance among the people (destroying their enemies with fire, withholding rain, turning water into blood, striking the earth with plagues).

According to the Old Testament narratives, after Moses died (cf. **Deuteronomy 34:5-6**) his body was taken by God and buried where no one knows but God; and Elijah went alive up into heaven to be with God (**2Kings 2:11-12**), “Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven... And Elisha saw him no more.”

August 6, 2023 – (full sermon notes)

“A Preview of the Kingdom of God”

Luke 9:27-36

Could the two witnesses in Revelation 11 be Elijah and Moses? Maybe, nobody knows for sure, but it is very possible, considering the ministries both of these men had when they were on earth: Moses represents the Law of God; Elijah represents the Prophets of God.

Whether or not the two witnesses of Revelation 11 are Elijah and Moses, the Transfiguration of Jesus seems to be a supernatural preview of the Lord's glorious return and of our life after death; for Moses died 1500 BC, Elijah was taken up to heaven 800 BC, and yet they were very much “alive” at the Transfiguration.

What a great confirmation of Christ's sovereign authority as Creator, Sustainer, Savior, and Judge; giving clear incontrovertible testimony as to why we can believe in and trust Him as Lord, now and forever! This Jesus who was crucified, buried, resurrected, and is coming back again to take those who believe in Him to heaven.

Pastor Mike

>'(((><