
Reason for study:
1. Takes up several verses in three of four gospel accounts
2. One of most interesting events in Lord's life
3. Captures our imaginations

The time:
1. Last six months of His Life
2. Period of disfavor
   a. Romans were edgy about rebellion
   b. Herod thought He was John (Matthew 14:1ff; Luke 13:31 Pharisees warned Herod would kill Him)
   c. Chief priests, scribes and Pharisees were plotting how to kill Him (Matthew 12:14)
   d. The multitudes wanted to make Him king by force (John 6:15 after the feeding of 5,000)
   e. His own disciples were beginning to show signs of wear (Matt. 16:22 Peter's rebuke)
3. He was beginning to speak openly about His coming crucifixion which must have been heavy on His mind (Mt. 16:21)
4. It might be that He was sensing the end of His ministry (see Mark 8:22-26 where blind man had to be handled twice)
5. He had just asked the question "Who do men say I am?" (Matthew 16:13-16...only one had it right!)
6. He had just made a proclamation kingdom would be observed coming in the days of those living then:
   In all three accounts - (Mt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27)
7. It was now six full days later, eight counting the day of that statement concerning the kingdom and the day of the transfiguration (Luke 9:28)

The place:
1. Because of these problems, He had been to Tyre and Sidon
2. Most recently in regions of Caesarea Philippi
3. "a high mountain" (Matthew 17:1 Could have been at Mount Hermon, 9400 ft. high, not Tabor, 1700 ft.)
4. It was remote and quiet for the purpose of prayer (Luke 9:28)

The people present:
1. Jesus, the beleaguered Son of God, facing death soon
2. The favorite three:
   a. Peter, the apostle to the Jews (2 Peter 1:16-18)
   b. James, the first apostle to die (Acts 12:2)
   c. John, the beloved apostle; doesn't specifically mention this event in gospel (John 1:14; 20:31-32; 1 John 1:1-3)
   d. These three at Jairus' house and Garden of Gethsemane
   e. Three is the optimum number of witnesses (Deut. 19:15)

The event:
1. The change:
   a. As He prayed "the appearance of His face was altered" (Luke 9:29)
   b. Greek word in Matthew is METAMORPHOTHEY...a complete change
   c. The description
      1. “His face shone like the sun” – Matt. 17.2
      2. His became as white as light – Same

2. The company:
   a. Moses; the first lawgiver
   b. Elijah; no prophet greater by virtue of many miracles
      1) One of only two who ever ascended without death (2 Kgs 2)
2) His power and spirit upon Elisha
3) The prophecies of Malachi concerning this name (Mal. 4:5)
c. Representatives of the Law and the prophets, particularly the prophet who was to precede the kingdom's coming
d. Speaking with Him about His "exodus" which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31)

3. Apostles' reaction:
   a. Had been dozing (Luke 9:32)
   b. When fully awake saw the glory and those talking with Him...the light and the conversation?
   c. As Moses and Elijah were departing Peter speaks

4. The cloud and voice:
   a. Before it left Peter's mouth, the bright cloud began to engulf them;
      1) Ex. 13 pillar of cloud and fire
      2) Exodus 24 cloud covered Mt. Sinai
      3) Exodus 40 cloud filled the tabernacle
      4) 1 Kings 8 cloud filled temple
      5) Always sign of great things happening, presence of the Godhead
   b. The voice out of the cloud:
      1) As at baptism preceding the Lord's temptation
      2) Greatest sign of approval of Father
      3) Proof of complexity of Godhead

5. The aftermath:
   a. All quiet
   b. The warning against telling the vision
   c. The question concerning Elijah:
      1) They had just seen him
      2) Great sign of the legitimacy of Jesus as Christ
      3) Why do the scribes say he is coming first?
      4) He was, and he was John the Baptizer (Matt. 11:12 and Matthew 17:13)

The messages:

1. To Christ...

2. About the Law and prophets...
   a. One greater was here
   b. The covenant He brought was consistent with the covenant Moses gave and Elijah ministered under
   c. Note: some have asked if Moses was "saved"...here is the answer

3. To the apostles...
   a. Proof of Christ's deity and superiority to a flagging spirit
      1) He was NOT John the baptizer
      2) He was NOT Elijah
      3) He was NOT just a prophet or like one of the prophets
      4) He was and is the SON!
   b. Sustained them in their future troubles; James' death, Peter's work and death, and John's long life

4. To you and me...