

Text: Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:27-36

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
 3. Literally "flashing like lightning" – Luke 9.29
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...*