

Introduction

For some reason Karen and I like the mountains. When we used to go on vacations, we usually tried to find a mountain. We went to Cherokee, North Carolina and camped in the Appalachian Mountains. One year, Karen and I went to Breckenridge, Colorado to spend a week together for our twentieth anniversary. I pastored a church in Acworth, Georgia called the Mountain of the Lord. It was named from a passage in Isaiah 2 and Micah 4. We just seem to enjoy the mountains.

There is something special about the mountains. God called Moses up to the mountain and gave him the ten commandments. In Psalm 121, we read, "I will lift my eyes up to the mountains, from whence shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." The mountains represent a place of prayer.

(Ps 121:1-2) "I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come? {2} My help *comes* from the LORD, who made heaven and earth."

I think there was something special to Jesus about the mountains. In John 8:1, when people went home, Jesus went up to the Mount of Olives to pray. Right before Jesus was arrested and crucified, He and His disciples went to the Mount of Olives. In Luke 22:39-41, we find that Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, as was His custom. This was a place He went frequently to pray. I think Jesus enjoyed the mountains, and He found it was a great place to pray.

(John 8:1) "But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives."

(Luke 22:39-41) "And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. {40} When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." {41} And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray,"

In our text today, Jesus went up to a high mountain. They were in Caesarea Philippi, which was a very wicked place. There was a spring coming out of a cave there that was called the "Gates of Hell." There was all kinds of sin, sexual perversion, and pagan worship that took place there. It was on their journey to this wicked place that Jesus asked His disciples who people said He was. After they responded and said, John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets, He asked them who they thought He was. Peter said, "Thou are the Christ!" Jesus told him that flesh and blood did not reveal this to him, but His Father in heaven. God the Father had revealed Jesus' identity to him in this darkest place.

Then, Jesus began telling them that He had to suffer, be rejected, and be put to death. Peter began to rebuke Jesus, because he did not want his Lord to suffer and be put to death. Jesus told him that he was setting his mind on man's interests, and not on the things of God.

Last week Jesus told His disciples and the crowd that if they wanted to come after Him, they needed to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. He gave them some other things to consider while making that most important decision about following Jesus.

Our text today begins with "six days later." They are still in Caesarea Philippi, but they have been there for a week. And, where does Jesus go? There is a high mountain near them called

Mount Hermon. The text does not say Mount Hermon, but most scholars believe that this is where He went. It is 9,150 feet in elevation and it matches their location and the text. There is a ski slope there, so that tells me that they probably went there in the summer, not the winter. Jesus took Peter, James, and John and brought them up to the mountain. I want to cover three things this morning. First, I want to talk about going up to the mountain. Second, I want to talk about what happened while they were on the mountain. Last, I want to talk about their trip down the mountain. The title of the message is the glory and majesty of Christ Revealed. Most people know this passage by the title, Transfiguration. I call it the glory and majesty of Christ revealed because that is the significance of the whole passage. Let's read our passage.

The Glory and Majesty of Christ Revealed (Mark 9:2-13)

1. Going up the Mountain
2. Vision at the Top
3. Going down the Mountain

(Mark 9:2-13) "Six days later, Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John, and *brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; {3} and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. {4} Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. {5} Peter *said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." {6} For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified. {7} Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!" {8} All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone. {9} As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. {10} They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant. {11} They asked Him, saying, "Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" {12} And He said to them, "Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? {13} "But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him."

1. Going up the Mountain (Mark 9:2)

Our text begins with six days later. This is six days later than the last scene, where the identity of Jesus had been revealed to Peter. In Matthew 17:1, he also recorded that this took place six days later. However, in Luke's account, he records that it was "some eight days after these sayings." Why the difference. In Barnes notes, he states that Mark and Matthew mention the six days that intervened between the day of the conversation and the transfiguration, and Luke includes both of those days. Luke does fix a precise time. In the Greek it is "about eight days after." Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.

(Mark 9:2) "Six days later, Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John, and *brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them;"

(Luke 9:28) "Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray."

Jesus took with him Peter, James and John. Jesus had an inner circle, which included Peter, James and John. Then, He had the other nine apostles. Then, there were many others that accompanied Jesus. We know that He sent out seventy in Luke 10:1. We don't know why He only took these three with Him, but that is what He did.

Why did Jesus go up to the mountain? I mentioned that He frequently went to the Mount of Olives to pray. This is exactly why Jesus went up to the mountain; He went to pray. Mark and Matthew do not record why, but Luke was very specific in saying that they went up to the mountain to pray.

In Mark 8:31-32, Jesus was telling His disciples that He had to suffer, be rejected and be put to death. In Mark 8:34-38, He told the crowds that if they wanted to come after Him, they would have to take up their crosses. The cross is on His mind. In 1 Peter 5:7, we are told to cast our cares upon Him because He cares for us. When Jesus had cares, He went to the Father and cast those cares on the Father. Jesus was constantly speaking to the Father about things on a daily basis, but this was not the daily things; this was something big and burdensome. Jesus is going up to the mountain to pray about His departure.

(1 Pet 5:7) "casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

We see in Mark 9:4 that Elijah and Moses appeared to Jesus and were talking to Him. It does not say what they were talking about. But, in Luke's account, He said that they were speaking to Jesus about "His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." Jesus was burdened about His departure. He tried to talk to the disciples and got a rebuke from Peter. The disciples did not really understand all that was getting ready to happen, but Jesus knew full and well what was going to happen, and He was burdened about it. So, He went up to the mountain to pray and the Father sent Elijah and Moses to speak to Him about His departure.

(Luke 9:30-31) "And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, {31} who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."

Jesus went up to the mountain to pray, and Elijah and Moses appear. In Matthew's account, after they had left, Jesus told them not to tell the vision to anyone until after He had risen from the dead. They appeared to Jesus in a vision, and all four of them saw the vision. When we spend time with the Father in prayer, concentrated prayer, things like this are more likely to happen.

(Matt 17:9) "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."

In Acts 13, the leaders at the church at Antioch were ministering to the Lord and fasting, and the Holy Spirit told them to set apart Barnabas and Paul for the work that He was calling them to do. This prophetic word came as they were ministering to the Lord. Things happen when you spend time in worship, and prayer and fasting. I have found that it is really important to journal while fasting, because prophetic words, visions, and other things happen.

(Acts 13:2-3) "While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." {3} Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

In 1 Samuel 3:1, the Lord said that “word from the Lord was rare in those days, visions were infrequent.” Why was the word rare? Why were visions infrequent? Notice what little Samuel was doing. He was ministering to the Lord, and it is in contrast to Eli, who was the priest. While Samuel was ministering to the Lord, the Lord appeared to Samuel and revealed Himself to him.

(1 Sam 3:1) “Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD before Eli. And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent.”

Are you burdened about some things? Let me encourage you to cast your cares upon the Lord. Go the mountain and spend time with the Lord. Take a friend with you and let them pray with you. That is what Jesus did. He took Peter, James, and John with Him to pray about the things that were on His mind.

Do you need vision and a word from the Lord? Let me encourage you to spend time ministering to the Lord. Go spend time on the mountain and ask the Lord for a word and a vision. Lift your eyes up to the mountain. From whence shall your help come. Your help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. (Ps 121:1-2)

2. Vision on the Mountain (Mark 9:2-8)

While they were on the mountain, Jesus was transfigured before them. The Greek word is metamorphoo (Strong’s G3339), which means to change, transfigure, or transform. It is the root word for our English word, metamorphous, which is used to describe what happens to a caterpillar as he turns into a butterfly. Metamorphoo is used four times in the New Testament: Mark 9:2, Matthew 17:2, Romans 12:2, and 2 Corinthians 3:18. In Mark and Matthew, it is used to describe what happened to Jesus on the mountain. In Romans 12:2, it is used to exhort us not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul wrote that we are being transformed by beholding the glory of the Lord.

(Mark 9:2b) “...And He was transfigured before them;”

(Rom 12:2) “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

(2 Cor 3:18) “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

In 1983, I flew out to Las Vegas for the Las Vegas Invitational. My family was not with me, and I made a decision to spend all the time when I was not at one of the golf courses that we were playing that week in my hotel room praying and reading God’s word. It was a very special week for me, a mountaintop experience. The Lord taught me about meditation and I have taught those principles that I learned that week for the past thirty-seven years. I spent hours at a time memorizing and meditating on a single verse. When I flew home to Orlando at the end of the week, Bill Porter, another Christian golf professional, asked me what happened to me. He said I was glowing. I was glowing because I had spent time in the presence of the Lord, beholding His glory, and some transformation had taken place in my life.

Mark records that His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. Matthew recorded that His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. Luke said that while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. None of the writers were with Jesus. Peter was there, and most scholars believe that John Mark wrote this account with Peter helping him. Luke interviewed as many witnesses as he could to write things in consecutive order. Matthew probably heard Peter, James, and John describe it to him when they got down from the mountain. It is very likely that Luke interviewed all three also. They all got eyewitness accounts and descriptions. All three writers were led and inspired by the Holy Spirit as they wrote this scriptural account.

(Mark 9:3-4) “and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. {4} Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.”

(Matt 17:2) “And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.”

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

Then, Elijah and Moses appeared, and they were talking with Jesus. They were talking to Jesus about His departure (Luke 9:31). Why did the Father send Elijah and Moses? I believe that Moses represented “the law” and Elijah represented “the prophets,” and both together the whole testimony of the Old Testament scriptures. Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, was the fulfillment of the Law, represented by Moses. Jesus, was the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah, represented by Elijah.

Jesus’ face changed appearance and shone like the sun. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, where God had given him the ten commandments, the skin of his face shone because he had been speaking with God. When Aaron and the sons of Israel saw Moses, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. So, Moses put a veil on when he was around the sons of Israel, but would take it off when he went to speak with the Lord (Ex 34:34-35). I don’t think that it is a coincidence that Moses was there with Jesus.

(Ex 34:29-30) “It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony *were* in Moses’ hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him. {30} So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.”

(Ex 34:34-35) “But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out; and whenever he came out and spoke to the sons of Israel what he had been commanded, {35} the sons of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone. So Moses would replace the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him.”

The people of Israel were not the only ones that were afraid. Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one

for Elijah.” Peter was just babbling. He did not know what to say. It says that Peter did not know what to answer, for they became terrified. When Jesus’ face changed appearance and shone like the sun, and His clothes became white, it terrified Peter, James, and John.

(Mark 9:5-6) “Peter *said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." {6} For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.”

After Peter suggested building three tabernacles, a cloud formed, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!” When they looked around, there was no one with them anymore, except Jesus.

(Mark 9:7-8) “Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!" {8} All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.”

When the Lord spoke to Moses, He said that He would come in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever. God came in a cloud and spoke to Moses and affirmed Moses before the people. God was doing the same thing here. He came in a cloud and spoke so that Peter, James, and John saw the cloud and heard God affirming that Jesus is the Son of God. A week earlier, they had a revelation of who Jesus is. Here on the mountain, they saw and heard God affirm who Jesus is.

(Ex 19:9) “The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever." Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.”

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:5, that there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Jesus was qualified to mediate because He was the Son of God, and the fullness of deity dwelt in Him. Therefore, because He was God in the flesh, He could represent and mediate on behalf of God. Jesus was also the Son of Man, and was the man Christ Jesus. Because He was man, and was tempted in all things, He can represent and mediate on behalf of men. God spoke in the cloud and told Peter, James, and John that they were to listen to Jesus. We don’t pray to Moses. We don’t pray to Elijah. We don’t pray to Mary. We don’t pray to anyone but God, and our mediator and our access to the Father is Jesus. We pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven...and in the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.”

(1 Tim 2:5) “For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”

(Heb 4:14-16) “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. {15} For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. {16} Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

When Moses would go to the mountain, the cloud would cover the mountain. We also find that the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai. The sons of Israel saw the cloud, and they also saw the glory of the Lord like a consuming fire on the mountain top. When Peter, James, and John

saw the appearance of Jesus change, and His clothes become white, they were seeing the glory and majesty of Jesus. When they saw the cloud and heard the Lord speak, they were seeing the glory of God.

(Ex 24:15-17) “Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. {16} The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. {17} And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top.”

What is the significance of the transformation? It is that the glory and majesty of Jesus was revealed. In John 1:14, John wrote that the “Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Where did John see the glory of Jesus? The glory and majesty of Jesus was revealed at the top of this mountain.

(John 1:14) “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

When Peter wrote his second letter, he said that they did not follow cleverly devised tales when they made known to them the power and coming of the Lord Jesus. He said they were eyewitnesses of His majesty. “For when He (Jesus) received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased,’ and we ourselves heard this utterance from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. Peter and John were both writing about this experience with Jesus on the mountain. They saw and heard the glory and majesty of Christ revealed.

(2 Pet 1:16-18) “For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. {17} For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— {18} and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.”

Peter also used the word eyewitnesses of His majesty. There is something very important about that word. In both the Old and New Testament, you needed two or three witnesses to confirm every fact. Why did Jesus bring Peter, James, and John up to the mountain? It was not just to pray with them. The three of them were brought there as legal witnesses of the glory and majesty of Jesus being revealed.

(Deut 19:15) “A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.”

(Matt 18:16) “But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.**”

3. Going Down the Mountain (Mark 9:9-13)

As much as we would love to stay on the mountain, especially a mountaintop experience like they just had, they had to come down the mountain. We never want these glorious things to end. The good news is that the memories of these mountaintop experiences were recorded and we have them. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. I think that would be pretty difficult to keep quiet about. They had the other nine apostles to keep this secret from. They had their wives and children. There were many other women and men that accompanied Jesus, and they could not say anything to any of them until after Jesus had risen from the dead. Mark records that they seized upon that statement. The KJV says that they kept that saying within themselves. The ESV says they kept the matter to themselves.

(Mark 9:9-10) “As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. {10} They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.”

In Luke’s account, it says that they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen. Peter, James, and John were obedient to what the Lord commanded. That is a good reminder to all of us that when the Lord commands us to do something, we need to obey. If He tells us to go preach the gospel, we should go preach the gospel. If He tells us not to say anything to anyone, we need to keep the matter to ourselves, just like the apostles did. There would be a time to tell everyone, but they would have to wait until then to tell about this mountaintop experience.

(Luke 9:36) “And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.”

The disciples then began to discuss what rising from the dead meant. They had seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11:44). They had seen Jesus raise Jairus’ daughter from the dead (Mark 5:42). Yet, they were discussing what rising from the dead meant. This was going to make a lot more sense in the days to come, when Jesus did rise from the dead.

As they continued coming down the mountain, they asked Jesus about why the scribes said that Elijah must come first. He told them that Elijah does come first and restore all things. And then Jesus asked them a question. “How is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?” Jesus has been talking about suffering, being rejected, put to death, and being raised from the dead for weeks. This is burning on His mind. Then, Jesus told them that Elijah had indeed come, and they did to him what they wished, and what had been written of him. The prophecies concerning Elijah had been fulfilled. In Matthew’s account, he wrote that when Jesus said that, the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

(Mark 9:11-13) “They asked Him, saying, “*Why is it* that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” {12} And He said to them, “Elijah does first come and restore all things. And *yet* how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? {13} “But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”

(Matt 17:13) “Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

Conclusion and Applications

In Mark 1:1, Mark wrote, “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” In John 20:31, John wrote that he had written these things so that we would “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” The gospels have been written for this reason.

(Mark 1:1) “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

(John 20:31) “but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

At Jesus’ baptism, the voice came from heaven declaring that Jesus is the Son of God. The attesting miracles that Jesus did attested to the fact that He was the Messiah. The importance of the transfiguration was that the glory and majesty of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was once again revealed. God revealed it at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, when He was baptized. Jesus is now at the end of His earthly ministry, and is preparing to go to Jerusalem for His departure, and God affirmed His identity one more time.

Let me ask you a question. Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? Do you believe that He is the Son of God? Do you believe that Jesus lived a sinless life and fulfilled the Law? Do you believe that Jesus fulfilled all the hundreds of prophecies about the Messiah, including that He would die for our sins and be raised from the dead? If you believe, but have never received Jesus Christ into your life, let me give you an opportunity to receive Him right now. If this is your desire, then pray with me.

“Father God, I believe that You sent Jesus Christ, Your Son, to come and take away my sins. I believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and that He died for our sins and that You raised Him from the dead. Jesus, I confess You as Lord. I ask You to come into my life. I am willing to deny myself, take up my cross and follow You. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

This morning, I want us to close with a song called Majesty. His glory and majesty were revealed and we worship His majesty this morning.

Introduction (Ps 121:1-2, John 8:1, Luke 22:39-41, Mark 9:2-13)

1. **Going up the Mountain** (Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28-36, Mark 8:31-32, 8:34-38, 1 Pet 5:7, Mark 9:4, Luke 9:30-31, Matt 17:9, Acts 13:2-3, 1 Sam 3:1, Ps 121:1-2)

2. **Vision on the Mountain** (Mark 9:2-8, Matt 17:2, Rom 12:2, and 2 Cor 3:18, Luke 9:29, 9:31, Ex 34:29-30, 34:34-35, 1 Tim 2:5, Heb 4:14-16, Ex 19:9, 24:15-17, John 1:14, 2 Pet 1:16-18, Deut 19:15, Matt 18:16)

3. **Going Down the Mountain** (Mark 9:9-13, Luke 9:36, John 11:44, Mark 5:42, Matt 17:13)

Conclusion and Applications (Mark 1:1, John 20:31)