

**[073017-1] Luke Series, Chapter 9, 28-36, The Transfiguration of Christ – Craig Thurman**

Concerning the Lord Jesus, the Scriptures of Lk.9.18-27 have presented within the framework of who Christ is, the Christ of God, his rejection and death, taking up our cross daily, and His coming. Now, in the text before us, Lk.9.28-36, the Father manifests the *majesty* of the Son of God. The Father had illumined the minds of the disciples to know that Jesus is the Christ of God, and now He opens before their eyes a brief glimpse of His majesty. 2Pe.1.15-18 should be read before we begin.

*2Pe 1:15 Moreover I (the apostle Peter) will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease (Gr. exodos. same that Luke uses when speaking of Christ's departure) to have these things always in remembrance.*

*16 ¶ For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming (Gr. δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν) of our Lord Jesus Christ (referring to Christ's first advent), but were eyewitnesses of his majesty (Gr. root μεγαλειότητος, gen. sing.; Lk.9.43, is tss. mighty power, dat. sing.).*

*17 For (instance) he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

*18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*

Clearly the occasion of the transfiguration is the notable, visual revelation of the majesty of the Son of God to three of the apostles of Christ. He shows only to Peter, John and James, an instance of the glorious form of His only begotten Son of the Father. It is doubtful that this occasion was for Christ as much as it was for these disciples and us. How many times did our Lord Jesus pray and such a manifestation of this sort had not taken place? Yet it was at this time for prayer that Jesus selected these three men to accompany His most private intercourse with the Father. Doubtless, Jesus knew that the Father would manifest His glory to them.

**Read the text of Lk.9.28-36.**

**28 ¶ And it came to pass about an eight days after**

*Mt.16.1; Mk.9.2 ¶ And after six days*

λόγους τούτους

**these sayings, he took Peter and John**

words or reasonings

**and James,**

*Mt.17.1 his brother [specifically stating that John is James' brother, by this identifying which James this is.]*

**and went up into a mountain**

**to pray.**

*Mk.9.2 apart by themselves*

28 Ἐγένετο δὲ μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους ὡσεὶ ἡμέραι ὀκτῶ καὶ παραλαβὼν τὸν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἰάκωβον ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι

**29 And as he prayed,**

τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον  
**the fashion of his countenance was altered,**

form

[became] another [fashion]

ἐξαστράπτων

**and his raiment was white and glistening.**

*Mt.17.2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*

*transfigured, μετεμορφώθη, 3ps. aor. ind. pass. of μεταμορφώω, μετά after, change + μορφώω, form; μεταμορφώω, transfigured (3), changed (1)*

*Mk.9.33 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.*

*was altered, ἕτερον, acc. masc. sing. of ἕτερος, heteros; other, another*

*glistening, ἐξαστράπτων, nom. sing. masc. part. pres. of ἐξαστράπτω, ἐξ (ἐκ) from, of, out, out of, since + ἀστράπτω, KJV, lightning, shining (noun, ἀστραπή, KJV, lightning, bright shining); ἐξαστράπτω is only found here in Luke 9 and with the preposition*

would lend to the idea of shining forth, a brilliance, [J. P. Green's IGNT, *dazzling*]; Wycliffe (1380) *shining*

**dictionary:**

*glistering* : glisten: to shine by reflection with a sparkling radiance or with the mild luster of a wet or oiled surface; glitter, sparkle.

**LXX:**

Nah.3.3, *glittering* sword – Ez.1.4, *gleaming* fire; v.7 *gleaming* brass

[*Glistering*] This word is only used once in the New Testament. Parkhurt explains it as meaning, “to emit flashes of light, to shine or glister as lightning.” *Expository Thoughts, Luke*, J. C. Ryle, p.319

Luke is the only evangelist of the synoptic gospels which noted that it was *as he prayed* that our Lord was transfigured; not Matthew or Mark. I doubt that there is not a one of us which thinks less of prayer than we should. Jesus took these three disciples apart with Him *to pray*. What a blessing that was to them in spite of the fact that they slept through most of it. But to their credit, they were sleepy because they had been serving others for Christ's sake. They weren't sleepy because they had labored so hard to fill their bellies and their wallets. These men needed rest for their bodies. What a grace it was that the Lord allowed them that rest while at the same time gave a window of opportunity to see Him in His glory.

Brethren, it is in the times of prayer that the Lord takes us aside and removes us from the world. It is probably in prayer when, as our Lord underwent a change, that we do too, in a much lesser sense undergo a change. Make no mistake about it. It isn't prayer which changes us, but the Spirit of God. If we will enter into true prayer we must be changed from our former appearance into another glorious form, if but for only a few moments. Which child of the Father doesn't plead to God by prayers for grace and forgiveness against what he is presently in this earthen state, *Lk.18.13 ... God be merciful to me a sinner?*

This is the one who returns to his work *justified* before God. The greatest change in us takes place as we approach unto the holy throne of His grace. As our sinless Lord prayed he was changed in his appearance into another. Sinner must surely be changed in prayer or we have not yet entered into prayer! We should have been changed in some measure from our present form at the end of prayer.

29 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι αὐτὸν τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον καὶ ὁ ἱματισμὸς αὐτοῦ λευκὸς ἕξαστράπτων

συνελάλουν

**30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:**

*Mk.9.4 ... with Jesus.*

Gr. for Elijah

Evidently the prayers of our Lord came to an end or were interrupted by the coming of these two men, Moses and Elijah. Bear in mind that the time of the disciples of Christ was separated by about 1,500 years from the time of Moses and roughly a 1,000 for Elijah.

‘Moses had been dead nearly fifteen hundred years. Elijah had been taken up by a whirlwind from the earth more than nine hundred years before this time.’ *Expository Thought, Luke*, J. C. Ryle, p.315

(cf. Ironside, *Addresses on Luke*, p.303, 304, of Moses, 1,500 yrs. ago)

Moses was called to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Though he had died, his body was buried by the LORD in a tomb in Moab, somewhere near Baal-Peor. (cf. Deu.34.5, 6; Jude v.9) Elijah, was called to restore Israel to the worship of the LORD. (1Ki.18.18, 21; Mal.4.5, 6; **Mk.9.12**) His death is not recorded in Scripture. He was taken alive into heaven by a whirlwind. (2Ki.2.1, 11) Two very important figures in the history of Israel, and two very important subjects for Christians: Moses - redemption and Elijah - resurrection.

Brethren, there is life after death! There are three personal accounts that come to mind, apart from our Lord Jesus Christ’s resurrection, which witness of *life after death*. There is Samuel the prophet which was allowed

of the Lord to speak to king Saul. (1Sa.28.14-19) There is the account of the rich man and Lazarus, which are viewed, one suffering after death and the other living in a most blessed state. (Lk.16.19-31) And this one where Moses particularly is present with the Lord Jesus though he had been dead and buried for the past 1,500 years.

I cannot speak particularly of Elijah. He is never said to have died, but was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind. This is very unusual.

All that have died in the Old Testament period went to Abraham's bosom until the day that Christ died and raised to life. When He raised He took all of those saints with Him into the presence of God. (cf. Eph. 4.8; Re.6.9)

Now, how Peter, John and James *knew* that these two men were Moses and Elias I cannot say. But they knew. We'll know them when we meet one day. We'll certainly know our Lord Jesus Christ when we meet.

At this occasion of the transfiguration neither Moses nor Elias were said to have been transfigured or altered. Moses experienced something quite remarkable when he descended from mount Sinai the second time. At the prospect of a kept law and Moses having spent another 40 days and nights in the presence of the LORD his face was glorified in its appearance.

*Ex 34:29 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. (literally by the Gr. of the LXX, that the color of the appearance of his face was glorified)*

*30 And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone (the color of the appearance of his face was glorified); and they were afraid to come nigh him.*

*31 And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them.*

*32 And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai.*

33 And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. (cf. 2Co.3.13)

30 καὶ ἰδοῦ, ἄνδρες δύο συνελάλουν αὐτῷ οἵτινες ἦσαν Μωσῆς καὶ Ἡλίας

οἱ ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ  
**31 Who appeared in glory,**  
Who became visible in glory

*appeared*, ὀφθέντες, nom. pl. masc. part. aor. pass. of ὁράω, horao; a perception through the eye and a perceptible realization (see εἶδον).

*in glory* tells either *where*, as a place they appeared, or *how*, as a state in which they appeared. Being they are together with the Lord in the mount it would refer to the *state* of their appearance ... a state of *glory*, but what that state or condition might be is not revealed other than what is said here.

ἔξοδον  
**and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.**  
exodus intends to accomplish  
to fulfil

*should*, ἔμελλεν, 3ps. imperf. of μέλλω; the *to do* affected by the verb tense.

*accomplish*, πληροῦν, pres. infin. act. of πληρόω; *to fulfil*, *accomplish*

Why the coming of Moses and Elias in the mount to Jesus? (cf. Mal. chapt. 4; some say Moses represents the Law, and Elijah the Prophets [cf. J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts, Luke*, p.319]) I do not know. But what we do know is that the subject of their discussion concerned the coming death of Christ which must be accomplished at Jerusalem.

We don't know that Moses and Elias knew anything else about the events of this earth. They had one topic before them: the death of their Lord Jesus. There is no more an important historical event in the history of

mankind than the death of Jesus Christ. The first coming of Christ was so significant for humanity that *time* has been divided into two parts: B.C. and A.D. But it is the death of Christ which divides between *eternal* those which have eternal life and those which remain in eternal death. It appears that Moses and Elias knew more perfectly since their deaths about Christ than they knew when they were living in the earth. During the times that these men lived the the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ would have been kept from their understanding, as we have seen for those disciples of Christ during His earthly ministry. But now, Moses and Elias know that Christ *must* die and be raised to life again.

Moses and Elias, as great men of God, yet looked forward to and depended upon the death of Christ to make atonement for their sins and for the sins of all of His people. Even at this present occasion we see the forbearance of God applied to these two faithful servants as they stood there that day with Christ. Outside of the prospective death of Christ for them these two, as all men which die without Christ, would have received an immediate punishment in the fiery torment of hell. (cf. Lk.16.23, 24) But they were not so condemned, even after death, because Christ's death was pertained to all of the elect of God which were ever put into Christ before the foundation of the world.

Brethren, if Christ's death on the cross paid for all of the sins of His people in time past, then also He must have paid for all of the sins of His people in the future. If Christ's death can be so applied to the one, beyond question it must be as sensibly applied to the other. And as it cannot be said that any in the Old Testament era perished for whom Christ died any more than it would be said for those of the New Testament, then the atoning of His blood was *particularly* applied to them all, past, present, and future as one, people. And if there is *particular atonement* by Christ's blood then there must be an *election of grace* by God the Father which took place *before the foundation of the world*. If this is not true, then Christ's death was for no one. But that notion opposes the plain statements of God's Word and therefore must be soundly rejected.

*Joh 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

*Mt 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

*Mt 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (not all)*

*Joh 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*

*Joh 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

*Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me ...*

*Mt 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

*Re 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (If the names were not written prior to the foundation of the world they are rejected.)*

(Read the personal pronouns salted throughout Isaiah chapter 53. Here is particular redemption, vicarious suffering, substitutionary death, and imputation of sin to Christ and imputation of righteousness to the elect.)

They spake of his decease: exodus. The exodus is more than a departure, it is also an arrival.

*Lu 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and **to enter into his glory?***

27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

By Christ's departure (exodus) he not only died, but he came into His glory. The death of Christ was to fulfil prophecy concerning Him, just as the prophecies which concerned His resurrection.

31 οἱ ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ ἣν ἔμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ

32 **But Peter and they that were with him** ὑπνω  
**were heavy with sleep:**  
obviously James and John

were heavy, βεβαρημένοι, nom. pl. masc. part. perf. pass. of βαρέω; KJV, to be heavy pressed, charged, burdened.

with sleep, ὑπνω, dat. sing. of ὕπνος; always tss. with the English word sleep.

**and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.**

when they were awake, διαγρηγορήσαντες, nom. pl. masc. part. aor. of διαγρηγορέω, διά among, by, by reason of, therefore, through + γρηγορέω to watch, wake, be vigilant; διαγρηγορέω is only once found in the N.T., with the preposition διά it perhaps carries the greater sense of being *thoroughly wakened*.

These two shared in the familiar *glory*, but Christ alone is said to have been transfigured.

(Of the synoptic gospels, Mark's account does not mention *sleeping*.)

32 ὁ δὲ Πέτρος καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ ἦσαν βεβαρημένοι ὑπνω διαγρηγορήσαντες δὲ εἶδον τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς δύο ἄνδρας τοὺς συνεστῶτας αὐτῷ

33 **And it came to pass, as they** διαχωρίζεσθαι  
**departed** **from him,**

*departed*, διαχωρίζεσθαι, pres. infin. of διαχωρίζομαι, διά + χωρίζω to put asunder, depart, separate;

**Peter said unto Jesus, Master,**

*master*, ἐπιστάτα, only used by Luke (5.5; 8.24, 45; 9.33, 49, 17.13); LXX, *superintendent*, *task-master*.

καὶ ποιήσωμεν σκηνὰς τρεῖς  
**it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles;**  
or, we should make habitations or tents

*let us make*, ποιήσωμεν, 1ppl. aor. subj. act. of ποιέω, *to do*; KJV, *let us make, let do, [will] continue, [shall] do*.

**one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.**

Mk.9.6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

*knowing*, εἰδὼς, nom. sing. masc. part. of εἰδέω (οἶδα); *knowing, perceiving*.

33 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ διαχωρίζεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ εἶπεν ὁ Πέτρος πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν Ἐπιστάτα καλὸν ἔστιν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι καὶ ποιήσωμεν σκηνὰς τρεῖς μίαν σοὶ καὶ Μωσεῖ μίαν καὶ μίαν Ἠλίου μὴ εἰδὼς ὃ λέγει

ἐγένετο (v.35)

**34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them:**

Wycliffe (1380) a cloud was made

*came*, ἐγένετο, 3ps. aor. ind. of γίνομαι, *to be*; KJV, *arose, came came to pass*, etc. (200 times).

*overshadowed*, ἐπεσκίασεν, 3ps. aor. ind. of ἐπισκιάζω, ἐπί on, upon, among + σκιάζω, noun σκιά, shadow; with the preposition ἐπί, *shadowed upon*, therefore *overshadowed*.

**and they feared as they entered into the cloud.**

34 ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ἐγένετο νεφέλη καὶ ἐπεσκίασεν αὐτούς  
ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἐν τῷ ἐκείνους εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν νεφέλην

ἐγένετο (v.34) ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης

**35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.**

35 καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε

**36 And when the voice was past,**

*was past, γενέσθαι, aor. infin. of γίνομαι, to be; KJV, of this verb, be, become, was past, come to pass, were (was)*

**Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close,**

*close, ἐσίγησαν, 3ppl. aor. ind. of σιγάω, KJV held ... peace, kept secret, kept silence.*

οὐδενὶ ἀπήγγειλαν

**and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.**

none announced (that is, Peter, John and James kept this to themselves)

Mt 17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

The disciples still did not understand the coming death of Christ which was before them. They resisted each instance where Jesus spoke of it. But they were also taught that He was raise from the dead. But this they did not understand either.

*Mk.9.10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.*

The Father gave a preview of the glory of Christ to these three disciples.

*Joh 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

*6 ¶ I have manifested thy name unto the men which **thou** gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

*7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.*

*8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

We considered today the majesty of Christ, the transfiguration of prayer, the evidence of life after death, and the particular atoning death of Christ. All of these are profound truths of God's Word. Do you believe the record that God gave of His Son? If so, you have eternal life. Walk with Him. Be baptized and follow Christ from within the setting of one of His N.T. churches until He comes from glory again one day very soon.

If you have not believed the record that God gave concerning His only begotten Son, you remain in death, and before you sets the prospect of the great white throne judgment where all of the dead shall be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone for ever and ever. That is the end of every soul without Christ. Come to Christ.

36 καὶ ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι τὴν φωνὴν εὐρέθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς μόνος καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐσίγησαν καὶ οὐδενὶ ἀπήγγειλαν ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις οὐδὲν ὧν ἔώρακασιν