

Lesson 32 Matthew 17 1-8 (6)
Jesus teaches His atoning work

The transfiguration

The Lord took 3 disciples apart privately *κατ ιδιαν* and lead them up or brought them up a towering mountain or highland country. This is likely to have been Hermon-though tradition with basilica support points to Tabor. He was "transfigured" *μεταμορφεω* before them. The usual understanding of this term is "to transform oneself". This change displayed the supernatural Christ.

1. His face shone as the sun. The face of Jesus radiated and gave light all around the mountain top. This clearly was one reason why Jesus wished to come apart. The vision was for the appreciation of devoted lives
2. His garments became bright as when daylight (*φως* in the original text) breaks out and increases

Moses & Elijah

The law giver and second founder of Israel appear with Christ were seen with Him-they were chatting animatedly with the Lord. It is Luke that tells us they spoke of the Exodus He should accomplish at Jerusalem- this then was clearly a subject in which they had the very deepest interest. They were intimates on this matter. Moses for his part had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. He had met God at the burning bush and most significant of all he had quested to see the glorious Lord. This moment filled Him with the deepest emotion- he had been transported to the time of Shiloh-of which he wrote in Genesis 49.10 As for Elijah he who had heard the still small voice was now conversing with the Master. His many prayers for the conversion of the nation to God in this new era to which he was made privy will now be realised only through Jesus.

Peter responds

Why does Peter answer? What has he heard? It is hardly that Jesus had introduced the visitors because they were not there to talk with the apostles. It might be Jesus briefed them-although it seems like this was a surprise which took place in such a way that they were frightened. It seems that Peter just made a response to what Jesus had done. He said epically "It is beautiful (*καλος* in the original language) for us (James and John and I) to be here. The word describes beauty but also something seasonable and full of moral virtue. He was speaking of the highest spiritual experience he had yet known. Now Peter learned that Jesus was supreme guardian of the best

Peter's readiness to proceed his way provided Christ would consent.

It would be natural for Peter who thought of Moses on the mount of God to think of staying a while. Forty days would have been good-even a week like the festival of Tabernacles. The place must have been well wooded with branches readily available. However they were spared this task for Jesus showed no "inclination" for the plan. The response was an immediate tent of a wholly different kind. They were over- shadowed by a cloud that threw light on them instead of casting a shadow. In the text the word "behold" is equivalent to our "Well if you please"- it is an expression of surprise that immediately a tent of such glory can be put up. Then another "behold" with a second seriously fearful voice. "**This is my son the beloved in whom I am well pleased-listen to Him.**" Here is the final rebuke of Peter. He must listen to God.

Jesus reassurance

The disciples were now where disciples should be-worshipping-ready for service. They had learned the meekness and the instant obedience that marked Moses and Elijah in one lesson. They were one more step along the road in training to be faithful apostles in the world. Jesus came touching them and said, "You ought to have risen up" (aorist imperative passive) and not continued in fear. And when they lifted up their eyes they saw no man but Jesus only. In other words they missed the remainder of the vision. But for us and them the blessing is that whoever may depart from our vision "Jesus only" should fill it

From Paper to practice



What does the transfiguration tell us about Christ being the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy?
How did this experience affirm Jesus as supreme guarantor of moral and spiritual values
"Not my will but Thine be done" & "Jesus only" -what will impress these lessons on any heart?