

Matthew 17
Part 1 (1-13)
The transfiguration

- I. Jesus is transfigured before the disciples (1-8).
 - A. He was transfigured in the presence of His three closest disciples (1-3).
 - 1. They were selected on three occasions to observe something special (cf 26:37; Mk 5:37).
 - a. Jesus was not partial to them. They were the ones most ready to grasp His teaching.
 - b. There is a great lesson here for us.
 - 2. “Six days” ties this event to the end of the last chapter (cf Mk 9:2; Lk 9:28).
 - a. The high mountain mentioned here is an unknown mountain (Possibly Mt. Hermon).
 - b. A lot of bible history occurred on top of a mountain (cf Gen 22:2; Ex 3:1, 2; Matt 4:8).
 - 3. Jesus was changed (transfigured) in form or appearance (cf Rom 12:2) (Metamorphosis).
 - a. We don’t know all that was involved in this change. Same word used in 2 Cor 3:18.
 - b. The shining face and white clothing could be the result of being in God’s presence (cf Ex 34:29, 30; Acts 26:13).
 - 4. Moses and Elias (Elijah) would represent the “whole” of the Old Testament Law.
 - a. Moses was the lawgiver (cf Jn 1:17).
 - b. Elijah was a great prophet (cf 1 Kgs 18:17-40; 2 Kgs 2:11).
 - B. Peter suggests building three tabernacles (4).
 - 1. “Tabernacle” was a tent, (cf Num 24:5) or a temporary dwelling place (cf Lev 23:34, 40-42).
 - a. The identity of Moses and Elijah must have been revealed in the conversation.
 - b. In Peter’s mind this was a great compliment to group Jesus with these two heroes.
 - 2. Peter’s suggestion shows that Peter not only misunderstood who Jesus was but misunderstood His mission, as well.
 - C. God speaks to them from a cloud (5, 6).
 - 1. This “bright cloud” represented the presence of God (cf Ex 40:34, 35; 1 Kgs 8:10, 11).
 - a. The voice came from the cloud (cf Deut 5:22).
 - b. Interestingly, this whole event probably occurred at night (cf Lk 9:32).
 - 2. What the Father said here closely resembles what was said at Jesus’ baptism (cf 3:17).
 - a. This is the main point and focus of all that was seen and heard that night on the mountain.
 - b. Obviously spoken for the benefit of the disciples.

- c. “Hear ye him”, turns us away from those men of the Old Testament and toward His Son. (cf Jn 12:48; Acts 3:22, 23; Heb 1:1, 2)
 - D. The disciples react to the sound of God’s voice (7, 8).
 - 1. They fell to the ground at the mighty sound of the voice (cf 1 Chron 21:16; Dan 8:17).
 - a. This reverence or awe is the same reaction we all should have (cf Gen 17:3; Acts 22:7; 26:14).
 - b. Fear of God is healthy (cf Ps 111:10; Acts 9:31).
 Note: In verse 4 they were happy to be there. When God spoke they fell down in fear.
 This is another example of them not knowing who Jesus really was (cf Jn 14:9-11).
 - 2. Jesus touches them and encourages them (cf Rev 1:17).
 - a. This was a lesson designed to teach the disciples, not to scare them.
 - b. This also shows Jesus as our go between or our mediator (cf 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6).
- II. Jesus’ charge concerning the transfiguration and the question asked about Elijah (9-13).
 - A. He tells them to keep what they have seen private (9).
 - 1. “Tell the vision to no man” evidently left out the other nine apostles as well (cf 17:1).
 - a. The three who saw it did not understand this transfiguration.
 - b. A time would come (After the Comforter came) when they would understand what they had seen that night (cf 2 Pet 1:17, 18).
 - c. That which is not understood should not be taught.
 Note: This event was recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. These three were not witnesses.
 - B. A question concerning Elias (10-13).
 - 1. Notice “Why then say the scribes”.
 - a. This indicates that the common Jew didn’t read the scriptures for themselves (cf 7:29).
 - b. These men were often corrupt (cf Lk 20:46, 47).
 - c. There is always a problem when we rely on others for our spiritual knowledge.
 - 2. They were now satisfied He was the Messiah after the transfiguration.
 - a. But, they questioned how this could be true (cf Mal 4:5, 6).
 - b. They had not seen the resurrected Elias (Elijah).
 - 3. Jesus corrects their faulty thinking.
 - a. John was not Elijah, (cf Jn 1:21, 25) but came in the *spirit* of Elijah (cf Lk 1:17).
 - b. Jesus had taught plainly concerning John (cf 11:11-15).
 Question: How could these close disciples not know the facts concerning John?
 - c. The twelve had been sent out on the limited commission and did not hear His teachings (cf 11:1).
 - d. “Restore all things” is a turning back to God (cf Lk 1:16, 17).
 - 4. The Jews had rejected John’s baptism and preaching (cf Lk 7:30).

- a. Because of their lack of respect for John they abused and killed him.
 - b. Jesus says that in this same fashion they will abuse and kill Him.
5. Jesus continues to prepare them for His suffering and death (cf 16:21; Acts 2:23).

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