

Church of God Sunday School

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew 16:21-28; 17:1-9

Mark 8:31-38; 9:2-10

Luke 9:22-36

Jesus had been talking with His disciples, telling them of what was coming soon. They knew Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah for whom Israel had been waiting. However, they did not understand why Jesus had come. They thought the Messiah would set up a kingdom on the earth and deliver them from Roman bondage. Jesus knew they did not understand. So, He began to explain that He would "suffer many things" and "be killed." He also let them know that He would "be raised again the third day."

This was not what the disciples wanted to hear. Peter spoke sharply to Jesus, saying that this must never happen! Jesus rebuked Peter, telling him that he did not understand "the things that be of God." Peter was looking at it from a human viewpoint.

Jesus went on to say that if any one desired to be His disciple, he would have to "deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." The life of a Christian is a life of sacrifice—putting God and others first and yourself last.

After several days Jesus "took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray." Soon He would be going to Jerusalem where He would be arrested and crucified. This would not be easy. Jesus needed to talk to God!

The disciples fell asleep. While Jesus was praying, He was "transfigured." That means He changed or He looked different: His face "did shine as the sun" and His clothes were "white as snow." (Do you remember how Moses' face shone so brightly after he had spent time with God on Mount Sinai that he had to put a veil over his face?) The glory of God was shining out of Jesus.

When the disciples woke up and saw the glory of Jesus, they also saw two men talking with Jesus. These

men were Moses and Elijah, and they were talking about what would happen to Jesus in Jerusalem.

Why did Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus? Moses was considered "the great lawgiver." He had received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai, and he also wrote the first five books of the Bible.

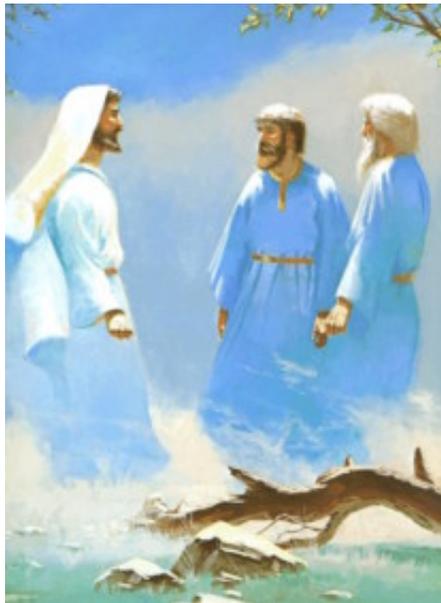
Elijah was considered to be the greatest of the prophets. When Israel rejected God and worshiped Baal, Elijah prayed and no rain fell for three-and-a-half years (James 5:17). Elijah's ministry was to turn the hearts of Israel back to the true God (1 Kings 18:37). At the end of his life, he was "translated" (taken to Heaven without dying). Also, it was traditionally believed among the Jews that Moses and Elijah would appear with the Messiah.

Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets—both of these pointed to Christ. Jesus was the fulfillment of the Law and all the prophecies (Matthew 5:17). The presence of Moses and Elijah was a confirmation. It was like Moses and Elijah were saying: "Here is what we were talking about. This is whom we were looking for!"

As Moses and Elijah began to leave, Peter quickly said, "Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us

make three tabernacles [dwelling places]; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias [Elijah]." But Peter did not know what he was talking about. Quite possibly he still thought Christ's kingdom was to be set up on earth.

Peter's idea seemed to show that Moses, Elijah, and Jesus were equals, but they were not. Also, the time of the Law and the Prophets was coming to an end. A new era of time was beginning—the Gospel Day.



While Peter was speaking, a bright cloud came and "overshadowed" them, and a voice was heard from the cloud. This was God's voice, and He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." God was not pleased with Peter's idea of three tabernacles. Jesus was far greater than Moses or Elijah. God used the same words He spoke at Jesus' baptism ("beloved son"; Luke 3:22) to let the disciples know Jesus was the One they should be listening to!

When the disciples heard this voice, they fell on their faces, for they were very afraid! When the voice was finished speaking, Jesus told them, "Arise, and be not afraid." When they looked up, "they saw no man, save Jesus only."

When they came down from the mountain, Jesus told them to tell no one what had happened until after He had "risen again from the dead." The disciples still could not completely understand, for they questioned

each other, asking "what the rising from the dead should mean." But they did as Jesus asked, "and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."

The appearance of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration and the glory of God shining through Jesus were truly miracles. These confirmed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God! Not a Messiah who would be an earthly king, not a Messiah who would set the Jews free from Roman rule, but Jesus was the Messiah who came so He could live in the hearts of every man, woman, boy, and girl who repent of and turn from their sins!

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."*  
 —Matthew 17:5  
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**Circle the Names of
 the Men Who Were
 on the Mountain**

John
 Moses
 Philip
 Andrew
 James
 Mary
 Joseph
 Simon
 Judas
 Peter
 Elijah
 Jesus
 Lazarus
 Matthew

Draw a Line From the Questions to the Correct Answers

HOW MANY DISCIPLES WENT WITH JESUS?

HOW MANY MEN APPEARED WITH JESUS?

Three

To pray

Moses & Elijah

Two

WHAT DID JESUS' CLOTHES LOOK LIKE?

Bright as the sun

Peter, James & John

WHOM DID JESUS ASK TO GO WITH HIM?

White as snow

WHO APPEARED ON THE MOUNTAIN WITH JESUS?

WHY DID JESUS GO UP THE MOUNTAIN?

WHAT DID JESUS' FACE LOOK LIKE?





The Transfiguration of Christ