

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Text: Mark 9:2-10

INTRO: One of the most unusual events to ever take place in human history was the transfiguration of Jesus as recorded in Matt. 17, Mark 9 and Luke 9. Simon Peter, one of the eye-witnesses, later wrote of what he saw. READ 2 PETER 1:16-18.

We have no writings of the apostle James, but John, the 3rd eye-witness may have had the transfiguration in mind when he wrote: "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace & truth" (John 1:14).

In this lesson we will briefly view Moses & Elijah & take note that as great as they were, Jesus far outshone them.

I. A BRIEF LOOK AT THE LIFE & DEATH OF MOSES.

A. At the time of Moses' birth, the Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt. The king of Egypt had ordered that all male children of the Hebrews be killed at birth, EX 1:13-16.

B. Moses' mother put her infant in a water proofed basket & placed it in the Nile River. Pharaoh's daughter came there to bathe & drew him out of the water & raised him as her own. The name Moses means to draw out. EX. 2:2-10.

C. Moses was educated in all the knowledge of the Egyptians. By Divine providence his own natural mother was selected to

care for him, so he also learned the ways of the Hebrews & the true God. EX 2:7-8; Acts 7:21-22.

D. At age 40 Moses took his stand with the Hebrews & killed an Egyptian slave driver. The Hebrews were not ready to accept his leadership so it became necessary for him to flee to the land of Midian. There he married the daughter of the priest of Midian & for 40 years he cared for his father-in-law's sheep, EX 2:11-21.

E. When Moses was 80 God spoke to him from a burning bush & sent him to deliver the Hebrews, EX 3:2-10.

F. At Mt. Sinai, God gave Moses the 10 Commandments. The Law was so glorious that Moses' face glowed, but Paul contrasts the greater glory of Jesus & the N.T.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 3:7-11

G. On many occasions, the Hebrews grumbled & complained. Moses showed almost super-human patience & love. He frequently interceded for them when Divine punishment was imminent. But in a moment of weakness, he committed a sin for which he was not permitted to cross over Jordan into the promised

land for which he had yearned & labored 40 years.

H. Deut. 34:1-7 records what, to me, is one of the saddest stories in all of literature: how at the age of 120, God permitted Moses to stand on Mt. Pisgah & look beyond the Jordan into the land in which he would never dwell. There on Mt. Pisgah he died, God buried him, & no man has ever known his burial place.

- I. Someone has summarized Moses' life thusly:
 1. 40 years thinking he was somebody.
 2. 40 years learning he was nobody.
 3. 40 years learning what God can do with a nobody.

II. A BRIEF LOOK AT THE LIFE & TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH.

A. Elijah lived about 600 years after Moses, about 900 years before the birth of Jesus. His ministry took place during one of the most trying times ever experienced by the nation of Israel--the times of Ahab & his evil wife, Jezebel, 1Kings 17:33.

B. Elijah prayed for God to send a drought to humble Ahab & Jezebel--& it didn't rain again till Elijah prayed for rain 3 1/2 years later, 1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-45; James 5.

C. The last scene in his earthly life is somewhat similar to the transfiguration.

2 Kings 2:11, Then it happened as they continued on & talked that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, & separated the 2 of them; & Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

D. About 500 years later Malachi prophesied that Elijah would come before the Messiah. The Jews took the prophecy to be literal. Jesus explained that it was fulfilled spiritually in John the Baptist, Matt. 17:12-13.

III. MOSES & ELIJAH TOGETHER ON THE MOUNTAIN.

A. In their earth-life, they had been separated by 600 years. Moses had not been seen on earth for almost 1500 years. Elijah had been gone for about 900 years.

B. Moses, who had spent 40 long hard years of wilderness wandering, yearning to enter Canaan, is finally there! But now it is an anti-climax. He has been for over 1400 years in a better land than Canaan.

C. Moses is proof of life beyond the grave.

D. Elijah is proof of God's ability to change those who are still alive & equip them for heaven, 1 Cor. 15:51-55.

E. Both Moses & Elijah are proof of recognition in the life beyond this life.

F. But the greatest lessons on the day of transfiguration is that Christ excels. When the O.T. began, Moses was filled with such glory that no man could look into his face. But that glory was nothing compared to that of Jesus. The prophet Elijah left the earth in a whirlwind with a chariot of fire & horses of fire, but his glory was nothing compared to that of Jesus.

G. Jesus--greater than Solomon, MT 12:42. Greater than Jonah, LK 11:32. Greater than the angels, Heb. 1:4. Greater than Moses and Elijah. HEAR HIM!

CONCLUSION: Dec. 18, 1856, death came to J.T. Johnson. He had been a congressman & a brother to Richard Johnson, Vice President of the U.S. under President Martin Van Buren. But above that, a Christian, & a gospel preacher. To another gospel preacher, a brother Bledsoe, came the task of informing brother Johnson that the doctors were convinced that he had only a few hours to live. Brother Johnson replied, "I did not think that death was so near, but let it come." Brother Bledsoe then asked if he had any fears as to the future. Brother Johnson replied, "None whatever. I have lived upon Christianity, & I can die upon it." He was asked if he had any message to be passed on to his children. His answer: "None, except that they live godly lives & meet me in heaven." There is only one way to have that kind of assurance: obey the gospel & live faithfully.

La Porte, TX, February 10, 1980

Exton, PA, September 8, 1985

Exton, PA, April 28, 1991

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, July 2, 1995

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, December 26, 1999