

**Matthew 17:1-8:** And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. <sup>3</sup> And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup> And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." <sup>5</sup> He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." <sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." <sup>8</sup> And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

**Intro:** In the last few weeks, we heard Jesus tell us: **Matthew 16:24:** If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Then Jesus gave us reasons for why we should deny ourselves, take up our cross, & follow Him:

- 1) If you lose your life for Jesus' sake, you will find it!
- 2) Jesus is coming back; 3) Jesus is going to repay each person according to what he has done;
- & 4) Some of the disciples will see Jesus coming in His kingdom (Our text today: The glory & beauty of Christ!)

**J. C. Ryle:** Christ is He who has the keys of death and hell. Christ is the anointed Priest, who alone can absolve sinners. Christ is the fountain of living waters, in whom alone we can be cleansed. Christ is the Prince and Savior, who alone can give repentance and remission of sins. In Him all fullness dwells. He is the way, the door, the light, the life, the Shepherd, the altar of refuge. He that has the Son has life – and he that has not the Son has not life. May we all strive to understand this . . . no man ever thought too much of Christ.

**Behold your God & become more like Him: 2 Corinthians 3:18:** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

### **1. Jesus Takes Some Of His Disciples Up A High Mountain**

**Matthew 17:1:** And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

**a. After six days: Exodus 24:15-16:** Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days.

**b. Jesus took Peter, James, & John:** They are the inner circle of Jesus; His three closest disciples; Jesus chooses!

**c. God has often revealed Himself in powerful ways on high mountains: Isaiah 40:9:** Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

**Writer:** Mt. Sinai is also sometimes called Mt. Horeb. Mt. Horeb is the place where Moses saw the burning bush & where God spoke to him & sent him on a mission to Egypt to bring the Israelites out of slavery (Ex 3:1–6). Mt. Sinai was the mountain in the wilderness where, after the crossing of the Red Sea, God met with Moses & delivered the law. So Moses received the law & saw the presence of God in the same area as he originally encountered God in the burning bush (Acts 7:30) . . . Moses spent an extended time on Sinai, & God allowed Moses to witness some of His glory. When Moses came back down the mountain, his face was shining with the glory of God. The people were afraid of him, so he put a veil over his face so he would not frighten the Israelites (Ex 34:29–35) . . . Sinai also features into the story of the prophet Elijah. When running from Queen Jezebel, Elijah stopped to rest in the desert. There, an angel of the Lord fed him, & “strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days & forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God” (1 Kgs 19:8). At Horeb, or Sinai, Elijah stayed in a cave where he met the Lord. God spoke to him with “a still small voice” (1 Kgs 19:12). The parallels between Elijah’s experience & Moses’ are significant: both prophets were sustained by God for 40 days and nights.

Both met with God & heard His audible voice. Both were in the same location. Throughout the rest of Scripture, Mt. Sinai is associated with the giving of the law. Hundreds of years later, Nehemiah publicly prays, “You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules & true laws, good statutes & commandments” (Neh 9:13). In Galatians 4:24–25, Paul uses Mt. Sinai metaphorically to represent the law & Old Covenant. Paul also speaks of Moses’ face that shone (an event inextricably linked to Sinai) in 2 Corinthians. He says that the law involved glory (as evidenced by Moses’ face), but it was a fading glory. Paul calls the law the “ministry of death” because it condemned all who broke it (2 Cor 3:7). Paul notes how much more glory, & lasting glory, is present in the ministry of the Spirit & the gospel that brings life. **(Jesus Is God!)**

**d. Jesus chose three witnesses: Deuteronomy 19:15:** Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.

Peter had just received the strongest rebuke by Jesus! Yet, he gets to go up the mountain! This is a picture of the lavish grace of God! **Brian Davis:** Last week’s sin does not exclude us from receiving transforming grace today!

**Peter spoke of what he saw & heard: 2 Peter 1:16-19:** For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power & coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. <sup>17</sup> For when He received honor & glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased " - <sup>18</sup> & we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup> & we have something more sure, the prophetic word . . .

## **2. Jesus Is Transfigured**

**Matthew 17:2:** And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

**a. God shines like the sun: Psalm 84:11:** For the LORD God is a sun and shield

- **Isaiah 60:19-21:** The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. <sup>20</sup> Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.

<sup>21</sup> Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever . . . **(Jesus Is God!)**

**MacArthur:** I believe that this is the greatest single testimony given on the pages of holy Scripture to the deity of Jesus Christ. First of all, His deity is made evident by the transformation of the Son . . . Now, if you ever have any question about who Jesus Christ is, it should end at this text. For here He pulls back the veil of His flesh & reveals the same glory that Moses saw on the mount in Ex. 33, the same glory that they saw in the tabernacle in Ex. 40, the same glory that came down to the temple in 1 Kings 8. It is that very same Shekinah, that very same essence of God in blazing fullness. & when Jesus pulls back the veil of His flesh, it is that He may reveal Himself to be God – very God, the blazing one, the one who is eternally the Lamp, in which dwells the glory that lights eternity.

Leviticus 9, God appears in light; Exodus 24 God appears to Moses as light; Exodus 40:34-35, the tabernacle is completed and God appears in the Shekinah glory as light; Numbers 14, 16, and 20 – God appears in light.

- **Psalm 104:1-2:** O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, <sup>2</sup> Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak **(Jesus is God!)**

- **Hebrews 1:2-3:** in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. <sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature

**b. Jesus is unfathomably glorious, majestic, & beautiful:** Nothing was added to Jesus in the transfiguration: He wasn’t made into something He was not. God simply lifted the veil to show the disciples the beautiful Christ in all His glory! **Brian Davis:** When we are unveiled; when people see the depths of who we are, it’s bad, sinful, & ugly. Not with Jesus Christ! He is altogether lovely!

**Jn 17:5:** Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was  
**Philippians 2:8:** Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

**2 Peter 1:16:** we made known to you the power & coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

**c. MacArthur: This is a miniature picture of Christ's second coming:** 1) Jesus is at the center in power & glory  
2) Zechariah 14:4 says, "He will come, and His feet will touch" – what? – "the Mount of Olives.": mountain!  
3) Jesus will come to His people: Peter, James, & John represent God's people  
4) He will come with His people: 1 Thess 3:13: at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (Moses/Elijah)  
5) Moses died; Elijah didn't; Moses represents the saints that died. Elijah represents the saints that are translated.

**d. Why would God do this – lift the veil? 1) To encourage His Son: Hebrews 12:2:** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross . . .

- **2 Peter 1:17:** For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son,<sup>1</sup> with whom I am well pleased,"

**2) To encourage Jesus' three disciples: Galatians 2:9:** James & Cephas & John, who were reputed to be pillars

James was the first disciple after Pentecost to have the privilege of being martyred for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Tradition tells us Peter was crucified upside down for the name of Jesus. John was exiled for the sake of Christ.

- **Romans 8:18:** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

### **3. Moses And Elijah Appear And Speak With Jesus**

**Matthew 17:3:** And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

**a. Moses and Elijah's presence teach us that Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's promises – all the law and the prophets:** Jesus is the fulfillment of all the law and the prophets! He is the Yes and Amen to all God's promises! More importantly, Moses and Elijah point to the fact that with Jesus' coming, the last days are here – the Messiah has come – Jesus is fulfilling all God's promises and the last days have come in Christ!

**1) The presence of Moses points to God's final Prophet: Deuteronomy 18:15:** The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, **you shall listen to him.**

**God's mercy on Moses:** Moses asked to see God's Glory; **Mark Jones:** Remarkably, God answered Moses' prayer many years later – in fact even after he had departed from this world. On the mount of transfiguration, Moses saw God's face, for Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God (Col 1:15) and the "radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Heb. 1:3). What Moses desired on earth, he saw on earth! He saw God's glory and lived. [And Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land, but he saw Christ here!]

**2) The presence of Elijah points to the nearness of the day of the LORD: Malachi 4:5:** Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.

**3) The presence of Moses & Elijah point us to the sufferings of Christ:** They were rejected by God's people!

**4) The presence of Moses & Elijah point us to the deliverance Jesus would accomplish by His departure:**  
**Daniel Doriani:** Both labored to deliver God's people. Moses led Israel out of Egypt, & Elijah fought to deliver them from the terrible, alien grip of Baal, the god who promised them prosperity [both foreshadowing Christ]. Both had an unusual departure or exodus from this world. Moses died alone with God on a mountain, & God took Elijah to heaven on a chariot of fire. [Jesus died alone on a hill; Jesus conquered death & ascended into heaven!]

**b. Jesus spoke with Moses & Elijah About The Cross: Luke 9:30-31:** And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure [exodus] [2 Pet. 1:15] which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

- **Luther:** There is not a word in the Bible which can be understood apart from the cross!

Have you gone to the cross? You won't understand one Word in this Bible until you go there first! **GOSPEL!**

#### **4. Peter Desires To Make Three Tents**

**Matthew 17:4:** And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah."

**R. T. France:** Peter's proposal to build shelters for Jesus and his [respected and impressive] visitors may be no more than a spontaneous and rather inept attempt to rise to the occasion with proper hospitality. Or perhaps he wants to "institutionalize" the fleeting vision (as Moses set up the "tent of meeting" in Ex. 33:7-11); if so he has again misunderstood Jesus' mission, which is not to stay on the holy mountain but to go down to the cross.

#### **5. God The Father Declares His Love For And Pleasure In God The Son**

**Matthew 17:5:** He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

**a. The bright cloud represents God's presence: Exodus 24:15-16:** Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days.

**b. God the Father declares His love for and His pleasure in His Son:** The Father expressed this love & delight in Jesus at His baptism as well. The Father loves His Son! & Beloved, You are in Christ! God loves you!

**c. God the Father commands Jesus' disciples to listen to Jesus:** Jesus is more important than Moses! Jesus is more important than Elijah! Above all, we listen to Jesus, Who inspired both Moses & Elijah to do & to say all that they did & said & wrote (Moses)! We listen to Jesus! We obey Jesus! We read Jesus' Words in our Bibles!

- **France:** In this context there is perhaps an implied rebuke of Peter's recent failure to grasp Jesus' teaching about Messiah's role.

- **Lane:** Jesus Himself is the new Tabernacle of divine glory! His Word and deed transcend all past revelation!

- **Believer:** God makes this declaration upon you – you are God's beloved Sons in Christ! Therefore we listen/obey

#### **6. The Fear Of The Disciples**

**Matthew 17:6-7:** When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.

**When God appears in all His glory and power, human beings are terrified: Writer:** God descended on Mt. Sinai with a terrible display of power: thunder and lightning, a dark cloud, fire and smoke, the blast of a trumpet and quaking of the earth (Exodus 19:18). God thundered out His commands to the people. They were so frightened that they asked that God speak to Moses and let Moses be the intermediary (Exodus 20:19)

#### **7. The Comfort Of Jesus**

**Matthew 17:7:** But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear."

Jesus touches; Jesus speaks; Jesus calms our fears; **Hymn:** Be still, my soul; the waves and winds still know his voice who ruled them while he lived below; Isaiah 40 – Behold Your God!

#### **8. May We See Jesus Only**

**Matthew 17:8:** And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Jesus is in a class by Himself! He's the preeminent Prophet, Priest, & King! He alone saves! John 14:16!

**a. Writer from Ligonier Ministries:** Elijah, seeing that his life was in danger, fled to Beersheba, located in the south of Judah. Then, he went even farther south to Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai), where God had revealed the Mosaic law to His people centuries earlier (Ex. 19–24; Deut. 4:1–14). It took forty days and forty nights for Elijah to travel from Beersheba to Horeb, and God provided food to the prophet through the supernatural means of an angel (1 Kings 19:3–8). There are clear parallels here to Israel's receiving food in the desert and Moses' sojourn of forty days and forty nights on Sinai (Ex. 16; 24:15–18). So, we see that Elijah was a new Moses, whose message was to be received as from God, and he was a new Israel, called to faithfulness in the wilderness. Later, the final Moses and true Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ, would come and spend forty days in the desert, be ministered to miraculously, and give a message and example that we must keep (Mark 1:12–15).

**b. We will be transformed: 1 John 3:2:** we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

- **Colossians 3:4:** When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**c. We will be transformed all because of the cross of Jesus: Mark Jones:** Some scholars have correctly pointed out that the key to understanding the transfiguration lies in understanding its parallel in the crucifixion. There are few more beautiful contrasts found anywhere in God's Word than that between the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-9) & the events surrounding the crucifixion (Matt. 27:33-54). First, Jesus was revealed in glory on [a mountain] (17:2); while He was crucified in shame on the hill of Golgotha (27:33). Second, at the transfiguration, Christ's clothing majestically shined "white as light" (17:2); while on Golgotha, [Jesus was stripped naked &] the Roman soldiers shamelessly divided his bloodied garments (27:25). Third, on the mountain, Moses (representing the law) & Elijah (representing the prophets) gloriously stood beside & spoke with Jesus (17:3); while on the cross, two criminals shamefully hung beside & reviled Him (27:44). Fourth, on the mountain, a bright cloud overshadowed those present (17:5); while on the hill [of Golgotha], darkness (reminiscent of the plague in Egypt – Exod. 10:21-22) covered the land (27:45). Fifth, on the mountain, God publicly declared: "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him" (17:5); while on the cross Jesus cried out: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (27:46). Moreover, the centurion surprisingly testified with others: "Truly this was the Son of God" (27:54). Sixth, on the mountain, Peter was thrilled: "Lord, it is good that we are there" (17:4); while at Golgotha, the apostle was hiding & nowhere to be found. In the end, we cannot have the mountain without the hill.

#### Jesus' Transfiguration Revealed His Glorification In A Bright Sensation As The Beloved Son Of All Adoration!

Jesus chose His witnesses three  
Peter and James and John – not me  
His choice is always wise and free  
So trust His right and good decree  
He took them up the mount to see  
His glory bright – they'd all agree  
To speak of death upon that tree  
He's cast our sins into the sea  
And then He rose to make death flee  
So bow to Him on bended knee  
And trust the Son – He'll set you free!

On that mount His clothes became the purest white  
They shined and dazzled – a radiant bright  
His face shined like the sun that ends the night  
The scene made the three all tremble with fright  
He's the God Who dwells in unapproachable light  
His glory and beauty are clear out of sight

He alone heals your sick, sinful plight  
He saves to the uttermost with powerful might  
He's history's unconquerable, shining Knight  
Who brings you to joy's unspeakable height  
He's the God Who always does what's right  
And He'll fill you with everlasting delight!

Elijah and Moses show the end is near  
Elijah must come for the Christ to appear  
The Prophet like Moses will speak as God's Seer  
In Jesus these fulfillments all are here  
May God give you an ear that you might hear  
May you turn to God's Christ and believe and fear  
For He died on that cross and was stabbed with a spear  
Then He rose from the dead and lives without peer  
If you trust in Him with faith sincere  
He'll save you from hell to a heavenly sphere  
And He'll make you like Him to persevere!

Jesus is God's holy, beloved Son  
He's in a class by Himself and second to none  
After His face had shined like the sun  
Only Jesus was left – the others were done  
In Him God's redemption has begun  
If by faith to His arms you'll freely run  
You'll be saved in Christ, and you'll be God's son  
He'll love you like Christ – He'll never shun  
His love for you cannot be outdone  
May this truth your heart forever stun  
As you find your delight in the face of the Son!

Christ Jesus Shone Bright At The Transfiguration  
Strong As The Sun His Face Alteration  
His Clothes A White Light Beauty Manifestation  
God Pulled Back The Veil Of His Glorification  
And Showed Us His Glory For A Short Duration  
Moses And Elijah Were There In Grand Conversation  
Peter's Stunned And Stammers About Tent Accommodation  
The Father Speaks About His Beloved Son's True Relation  
I'm Pleased With Him! Listen To All His Communication!  
The Disciples Fall Down In Shock-Fear Combination  
Christ Comforts "Fear Not!" With A Touch Affirmation  
They Lift Up Their Eyes To See Jesus Only: Salvation  
For He Would Go Die As Our Propitiation  
Then Rise Up Alive For Our Justification  
To Be Our All Only: Our Life Celebration  
So Praise And Worship Him With True Adoration!