

Matthew 17:9-13: & as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead." ¹⁰ & the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" ¹¹ He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. ¹² But I tell you that Elijah has already come, & they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

Intro: Last week, we saw Jesus' Transfiguration, and we were reminded in multiple ways that Jesus is God!

1) As God revealed Himself to Moses and Elijah on a high mountain (Sinai), so Jesus revealed Himself in a special way on the high mountain of Transfiguration! Nothing was added to Jesus, but God pulled back the veil!

2) As God is described as shining like the sun, so Jesus shone like the sun!

3) As God is clothed with splendor and majesty, covering Himself with light as with a cloak, so Jesus was clothed with splendor and majesty and His clothes became as white as light!

4) As God met with Moses & caused Moses' face to shine with a reflected glory, so Jesus, the God-Man, met with Moses on the mount of Transfiguration & Jesus' face shone with Jesus' own glory!

5) Jesus is declared by God His Father to be His beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased! He's God's Son & shares God's divine nature: **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. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature **(And we are loved in Christ like this!)**

We desire to behold our 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.

Today we come with Jesus down off the mountain & see Him have a discussion with His disciples about Elijah & John the Baptist, & again Jesus tells His disciples what is going to happen to Him: He will suffer, die, & then rise!

Jesus is the greatest light because He is the God-Man, and because He endured the greatest darkness on that cross!

1. Jesus Commands His Disciples To Be Silent About His Transfiguration

Matthew 17:9: & as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

a. Why Be Silent? Edwards: The cross and resurrection are the only vantage point from which Jesus' life and ministry can be understood according to their divine purpose – until the cross and resurrection all other knowledge of Jesus is inadequate. [Jesus wants to be understood for Who He really is and not false beliefs about Who He is.]

b. Notice that the disciples never got Jesus' death & resurrection before He did actually die & rise:

Edwards: The disciples are not in fellowship with Jesus because of their knowledge, virtue, or abilities. They are in fellowship solely because of Jesus' sovereign call, and they remain in fellowship only because of His faithfulness to them. Their discipleship does not depend on their knowledge and understanding, but simply on continuing to follow where Jesus leads.

You may not always know everything you need to know about Jesus or understand everything you need to understand about Jesus, but keep following Him; keep trusting Him; keep obeying Him; He'll never lead you astray! And you can always trust Him that He'll lead you where you need to go – for your good and for His glory!

c. Jesus gives an expiration date on their silence: Verse 9: "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

We go tell now! John Piper's testimony about evangelism to his neighbor.

2. Jesus' Disciples Ask About The Scribes Saying Elijah Must Come

Matthew 17:10: & the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?"

a. The scribes said Elijah must come first because of Malachi 4:5-6: Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.

b. Why do Jesus' disciples ask this question?: 1) The three have just seen Elijah, so he's on their mind. If they think that was the coming of Elijah, they may wonder why Jesus came first? 2) Elijah's supposed to come back first, & he's supposed to restore all things. But, to the disciples & scribes, it seems all things are not restored? 3) **D. A. Carson:** The connection is deeper. Elijah was expected to restore all things – to bring about a state of justice and true worship. If that were so, how could it be that Messiah would be killed in such a restored environment – killed, Jesus had told them only a week before, by elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law (16:21)? . . . If Jesus as Messiah (whose messiahship the disciples do not now doubt) must suffer, then how could it be said that Elijah must first come to restore all things? Their confusion is not merely chronological, though that may be involved; it is their inability to find a framework in which they can believe that the Messiah could die.

3. Jesus Explains The Coming Of Elijah

Matthew 17:11-13: He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. ¹² But I tell you that Elijah has already come, & they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

a. First, Jesus affirms that Elijah does come & will restore all things: Some believe Jesus is referring to another coming of Elijah later in redemptive history before the end of the age (like the two witnesses in Rev. 11).

Craig Blomberg: Full restoration of course awaits Christ's return (Acts 1:6; 3:21), leaving open the question whether there is a yet unfulfilled part of the prophecy regarding Elijah. Revelation 11:3-6, in which one of the "two witnesses" has a miracle-working ministry closely parallel to Elijah's, suggests there may be but is not clear about how literally this text should be taken. The two witnesses could well stand for the entire witnessing community of the people of God in the last days.

b. Jesus declares that the prophecy about Elijah coming was fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist: V. 12: But I tell you that Elijah has already come, & they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased

- **Matthew 17:13:** Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

- **Matthew 11:13-14:** For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, ¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

1) See the danger of taking the Bible too literally and missing Jesus Christ!

2) What does "restore all things" mean if John the Baptist fulfills this coming of Elijah? **Malachi 3:1:** Behold, I send my messenger & he will prepare the way before me. & the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; & the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

Luke 1:13-17: But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, & your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, & you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy & gladness, & many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, & he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ & he will go before him in the spirit & power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, & the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

- **Craig Blomberg:** The restoration he brought must thus have included his ministry of preaching and the widespread repentance to which it led.

- **Leon Morris:** The future, *he will restore*, indicates a future aspect of the work that prophet has inaugurated. *Restore* signifies a bringing back to a former state of affairs, and *all things* shows that the restoration will be thoroughgoing. The thought is apparently that sin has corrupted and ruined the creation, but Elijah's function is to usher in the events that will (through the atoning work of Jesus) restore the pristine blessedness.

4. Jesus Again Speaks Of His Death And Resurrection

Matthew 17:9, 12: & as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead." . . . ¹² So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands."

a. Jesus would die and rise again! GOSPEL!

b. The sufferings of John the Baptist point to the sufferings of Christ: Verse 12: But I tell you that Elijah has already come, & they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.

There are parallels between Elijah and John the Baptist: Both were harassed by a wicked woman (Elijah by Jezebel; And John by Herodias). They were both harassed by a weak King (Elijah by Ahab; and John by Herod).

Wessel and Strauss: Herod and Herodias were foreshadowed in Ahab and Jezebel.

The disciples struggled with how Elijah could be "a captive, murdered prophet: a dead Elijah?" And they struggled with how the Messiah Jesus could be a suffering, crucified Messiah!

It was hard for them to grasp suffering before glory; the cross before the crown. **Isaiah 53:3:** He was despised and forsaken of men . . . **Psalm 118:22:** The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.

Lane: [These verses] serve as a warning that the sufferings of John and his shameful rejection do not disqualify him from fulfilling the role of Elijah nor do Jesus' sufferings discredit him as the transcendent Son of Man.

c. Be encouraged when you suffer for Jesus – you are following the way of your Savior: V. 12: But I tell you that Elijah has already come, & they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased.

James Edwards: That phrase must have resonated with Mark's first audience, which itself was subjected to the savageries of Nero's persecution. It resonates today with the persecuted church in various parts of the world. Whenever Christians follow Jesus on the way of the cross, they find themselves exposed to the world and vulnerable to its evil [actions]. The inevitable suffering that results in discipleship to Jesus is not a sign of abandonment by God, however, but of fellowship with the Son of Man, who "must suffer much and be rejected."

- **Philippians 3:7-11:** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things & count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ & be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith - ¹⁰ that I may know him & the power of his resurrection, & may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

- **Hebrews 13:13:** So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

- **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.

Christ Jesus Suffered Many Things And Final True Salvation Brings By Rising Up The King Of Kings!

The command to silence Jesus gave
Until He's raised up from the grave
For only through His death He'd save
And tread upon death's killing wave
The way to life He'd clear and pave
And all our condemnation waive
For though to sin we were a slave
We'd sin and lust and misbehave
Christ died and rose so God forgave
His Spirit makes us strong and brave
And leads us holy to behave
Since we're forevermore God's slave!

The three obey – their mouths they close
But Christ's good words a problem pose
Until the Son from the dead rose
How could Christ die? – this no one knows
Yet this is how God's story goes
A Suffering Servant Isaiah shows
He takes God's wrath – He's crushed with blows
And through His death evil's deposed
To save us from death's wicked lows
For us the Christ this suffering chose
And let Himself be stripped of clothes
Now all our sin He does expose
By faith in Him we find repose
For He the devil will oppose
And win the victory for all those
Who trust the Son for us He arose!

Scribes say Elijah must come first
But Christ is here – was this reversed?
No – Elijah's come as it was versed
And Christ must die – receive the worst
For on that tree He would be cursed
And in God's wrath be all immersed
Then rise alive and death's grip burst
Earth's dreaded curse would be reversed
All broken hearts He'd have them nursed
And for this Christ alone we thirst!

To read the Bible as we should
We all must read as Jesus would
For how He reads is always good
Not wrong and blind under a hood
Interpreting as literal wood
So read like Christ just as you should
Then He won't be misunderstood!

The cross comes first and then the crown
For all glory our King's cast down
He Who is the greatest Noun
The greatest of all those around
He died to win a wedding gown
So down on us our God won't frown
For we've been lost but now we're found
Our God raised Jesus from the ground
And now His grace towards us abounds
His love forever will astound!

Christ Jesus Told What Was To Come
Commanded Silence Keep It From
The Crowds Till Death Is Overcome
Elijah Restores All Things In Sum
John Beat The True Repentance Drum
And Was Struck Down Like Hated Scum
As Christ Would Die Like Sheep That's Dumb
Under God's Wrath He Would Succumb
Then Rise To Save His Chosen Some
Now Cruel Death Is Overcome
Christ Fills With Joy More Than Rum
He's Worthy More Than All Income
So Praise His Name And To Him Come
Of Every Joy He's The Sum!