

PETER AT THE TRANSFIGURATION

We are studying the Life of Peter from the Book of Matthew on Saturday nights.

Many bible scholars place the transfiguration of Jesus on Mt. Hermon about 14 miles from Caesarea Philippi. Mt. Hermon was about 11,000 feet above the Jordan Valley and could be seen 100 miles away at the Dead Sea.

However, today's lesson from this mountain is not about geography but about theology. Peter will later refer to this mountain as 'sacred or holy' in 2 Pet.1:18.

The transfiguration is recorded in the synoptic gospels of Matt.17:1-9; mark 9:2-8; and Luke 9:28-36.

Jesus handpicked three disciples to experience the transfiguration. These three disciples were considered the "inner circle" of disciples. Peter, James, and John were chosen by Jesus to go to this mountain to pray with Him. Later, Jesus will invite these three to pray with Him in Gethsemane.

Luke records that the transfiguration (metamorphoo/ a.p.ind) took place during the prayer (Luke 9:29).

**This lesson will study SIX aspects of Peter's experience at the Transfiguration of Jesus
As recorded in the synoptic gospels.**

1. Our lesson text begins with this important phrase – “and six days later.” (17:1) It may not seem important until you understand the bible lesson taught at the transfiguration.

It is a reference back to the heavy teaching of Jesus on His Passion (Matt.16:21-23) and especially to the doctrinal principle taught in Matt.16:28 – “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

“There are two main interpretations of this verse: (1) It is a prediction of the transfiguration, which happened a week later (17:1) and which demonstrated that Jesus will return in His Father's glory (16:27). (2) It refers to the day of Pentecost and the rapid spread of the gospel described in the Book of Acts. The context seems to favor the first view. See notes on 2 Pet.1:16.” (NIV, Matt.16:28)

2. Later Peter and John will write about the doctrinal importance of the transfiguration of Jesus and the doctrinal impact upon their lives (2 Pet.1:16-18; John 1:14).

- Peter declared an eyewitness account of Jesus' Majestic Glory (2 Pet.1:16-17).
- Peter declared that he heard God's voice from heaven say these words, “This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well-pleased.” (2 Pet.1:17).
- John also declared that the three were eyewitnesses to Jesus majestic glory (John 1:14).
- John declared that he was convinced by the transfiguration that Jesus was “the One and Only who came from the Father.” (John 1:17)

“In Christ's transfiguration the disciples received a foretaste of what His coming will be like when He returns to establish His eternal kingdom (Matt.16: 28).” (NIV, 2 Pet.1:16)

3. The transfiguration took place during a special prayer time (Luke 9:28). These three disciples were apparently Jesus' prayer partners.

Luke records that these three disciples were "very sleepy" during the prayer time (Luke 9:32). They had the same problem at Gethsemane (Luke 22:45-46).

But at Gethsemane, we learn that it was "soul sleep." Soul sleep refers to a soul that is tired from struggling with the faith cycle on some specific doctrinal issue.

In the case at hand, these three disciples were struggling with soul sleep regarding the Passion of Jesus Christ (death, burial, and resurrection) (Matt.16:21-23 and 26:36-46).

Sleep is one way of avoiding dealing with a soul problem (OMCD / flesh). It is a temporary escape from dealing with the frustrating and tiresome struggle (1 Pet.5:6-11).

4. As a result of soul sleep (OMCD) these three disciples of Jesus missed a very important bible study on the very doctrine they were struggling with in their lives.

They were the right believers, in the right place and with the right people (geographical will), doing the right thing at the right time (operational will), but missed it (**out of the mental will**).

"And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." (Luke 9:30-31)

They slept through this bible study and woke up as Moses and Elijah were leaving (Luke 9:32-33).

Having missed this bible study, they were unprepared on how to handle this unbelievable experience.

Peter suggested building three tabernacles and Luke added that Peter "didn't know what he was saying." (9:32).

5. Pay attention to this principle – God is faithful to teach positive volition to spiritual advancing believers who are struggling with their Old Man thinking (OMCD).

"While he (Peter) was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My Beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!'" (Matt.17:5)

Seven different titles were used for Jesus during the transfiguration.

- Jesus (Iesous)– Matt.1:21; 17:5: Lord (kurios) – Matt.17:4: Rabbi (rhabbei) – Mark 9:5
- My Beloved Son (ho agapetos ho huios) Matt.17:5: Master (epistates) – Luke 9:33
- Son of Man (ho huios tou anthropos) – Matt.17:9, 12: My Chosen One (ho eklego) – Luke 9:35

6. Why Moses and Elijah? Both had mysterious disappearances in death (Deut.34:1-6; 2 Kings 21:1-11). Both had a prophetic role in eschatology (Rev.11:1-12).

They represented the Law and Prophets of messianic soteriology (Luke 24:25-27) of which Jesus came to fulfil (Heb.8:7,13; 9:1,14-18, 23-28; 10:9-10).

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." (Rom.10:4)