

LUKE 9 V 28-36 LULLINGSTONE 3 MARCH 2019

Have you had a mountain top experience? It's often tempting, when thinking about the Transfiguration to talk about 'mountain top' experiences with God and hope that we will all get to experience God in a dramatic thunder and lightning way. Some Christians spend their whole time wishing for a dramatic experience of God and then wonder why they're disappointed. Paul had that kind of experience on the road to Damascus, and some folk have that type of experience when things just suddenly click into place. Some Christians spend their whole time hoping for a dramatic experience of God and then wonder why they're disappointed. For others it's a long and steep learning curve, which was the road I had when I became a Christian, no 'mountain top' experience for me.

I don't think the story of the transfiguration is there to tell us we can all have a mountain top experience of God. I think it's there to reveal to us who Jesus really is.

From the very beginning of Jesus birth there has been nothing about His appearance that would cause you to think that he was anything more than just another boy, the son of a carpenter. To the world, Jesus was simply the son of Joseph and Mary, brought up to learn his father's trade. To the few, that knew Him, Jesus was the Son of God. But nothing about his appearance gave you the impression that he was something more.

These are the words of the prophet Isaiah.

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. (Isaiah 53:2)

But on this mountain top three apostles saw something more. Peter, James, and John saw something amazing. They saw Jesus for who he really was in his physical appearance. No longer did they just see Jesus the human. In Luke 9:32 we read, **³² Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, "They saw his glory."** In Luke verse 29 it says **²⁹ And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.**

For a moment everything about the appearance of Jesus changed. But Jesus is not the only one appearing in glory. There were two others with Jesus talking to him, Moses and Elijah. The reading goes on in verses 30 and 31 **30 Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. 31 They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.** Let's think for a moment and consider that here we read that Moses and Elijah were alive. Moses had died around 1500 years before this event and Elijah had been caught up into heaven in a chariot of fire around 900 years earlier. Yet here they are alive and appearing in glory with Jesus. We are seeing proof of the resurrection. God is the God of the living. It is also interesting that Peter recognises them he knows who Moses and Elijah are. He had never seen them before yet he recognizes that these men are Moses and Elijah, verse 33 **Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah".**

How would you be feeling if you were one of the disciples at this moment? Imagine that you are either Peter, James, or John. You are witnessing the most amazing event of your life. You are seeing the true glory of God in Jesus. You are seeing the dead alive in Moses and Elijah. You are seeing two of the great figures in Israel's history. Moses, who was the deliverer of the nation of Israel and gave the Law of God to the people at Mount Sinai. Moses who had prophesied that God would raise up a deliverer for the people one day.

You are also looking at Elijah. He is the great prophet of God who performed many great miracles. Think about his great victory over the prophets of Baal. Think about how he withstood the most wicked king and queen in the history of Israel, Ahab and Jezebel. Think about Elijah who did not die but was carried to the Lord in the chariot of fire. Moses and Elijah are a representation of the Law and the Prophet.. This scene is picturing the fulfilment of what the Law and the Prophets pointed toward. This transfiguration scene shows that the hope of Israel is found in the glorious Jesus. What would you do? What would you say?

As Peter is asking about building three shelters, one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah, God the Father intervenes. A cloud came and overshadowed them. They were afraid as they entered the cloud. **Then a voice comes out of the cloud making an important declaration.**

“This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” (Luke 9:35)

The gospel of Luke has been asking the question, “Who is this Jesus?” The apostles understand that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah and deliverer. God is now going to answer the question, “Who is Jesus?” God’s answer is threefold. **This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him.”**

So, we, just before the contemplative and sometimes difficult season of Lent, are given a glimpse of who Jesus really is, resurrected, ascended, glorified; we must keep this reality in our minds as we journey towards Easter.

So be encouraged as we go into Lent, the resurrected Christ is with us throughout our journey of life, whether we are in darkness, or whether we are on the mountain top, He journeys with us, wherever we are, whatever we are doing, and He is the only one we should listen to.

Amen