

## Written Copy: Luke 9:29-31 The Exodus of the Transfiguration

### The Transfiguration of Our Lord

Sunday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022

#### Text: Luke 9:29-31

<sup>29</sup> And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup> And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

#### The text's intent

Connect Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ of God, with what He must suffer in Jerusalem, which is all part of His exodus that He discusses with Moses and Elijah. These three disciples see the power and glory that is cloaked in Jesus, which is how they will be able to pick up their cross: the suffering and temptations that come with living as faithful follower of Christ. The glory they see, the presence of the Father, and His declaration of Jesus as the His beloved Son, the Chosen One is the power that will empower us to follow Christ in our own trek through the wilderness of this fallen world, with His reign and rule in our hearts and surrounding us by His presence, all the way to our Promised Land of Eternal Life to come.

#### Focus Statement:

Jesus gives His disciples and us a foretaste of the glory to come when we see Him as He really is in the resurrection. This glory and power was always with Him, and is hidden within us by the presence of the Holy Spirit. He is our Moses who used His mighty power as God to break our bondage to sin, death, and the devil, and open the way to our Promised Land of Eternal Life. And in our baptism, He forever drowns the enemy who would try to enslave us again

#### Function Statement:

##### Why it's important to know:

We sometimes discount the power and glory that is available to us as we pick up our crosses of suffering, temptation, and problems that come with life in this fallen world. We need to see the reign and rule of Christ that is hidden but really here with us.

##### What the hearer should do as a result:

Remember the glory and power of God's reign and rule is always at our disposal, even though we it is hidden from our physical eyes. It remains with us through our time in the wilderness of this world until we reach life everlasting.

#### Subject Sentence: The Reign and Rule of God is Hidden in Us.

## Introduction: Who I Am

Greetings faithful followers of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I am privileged by the miraculous power and working of our God to join with you from beyond the grave as it were. You may be wondering who I am. I am an eyewitness to the testimony that your Pastor Hensler read earlier. And I must say you did a fine job young man. I can call him young man because although my appearance may not show it, while I was alive on earth, I was many years your senior when the LORD finally called me home. I have been known by many names: “The Evangelist”, “The Son of Thunder”, “The Son of Zebedee”. I have a letter, a testimony, a “Gospel” if you will, that you sometimes read from in your worship that has my name attached to it, but nowhere in that Gospel did I identify myself by name. I may have been the one holding the pen, but it was not my thoughts that were recorded, they came from the Holy Spirit. But in that “Gospel”, I reference perhaps my favorite nickname: “The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved”. For me, my given name, that of John, is not the most important identity to me. What is most important is that Jesus loves me. And I’m here to make sure you know He loves you too.

## What I Saw

I was an eyewitness to Jesus’ transfiguration. The account you read from Doctor Luke; the friend of the Apostle Paul, is pretty good. He links this event to what Jesus was teaching just prior to this happening, what He was teaching those eight days before He took the three of us up on that mountain. The best place to begin is with Peter’s confession of Jesus as “**The Christ of God**”, by which He meant “The Anointed One of God”, the One Chosen to be the Messiah, who would save His people. But what did that really mean? We thought we knew; that He would be the One who would defeat the Romans and make us that free Kingdom of our forefather David again. But right after that confession Jesus begins talking about how He must go to Jerusalem, suffer at the hands of evil men, be put to death, and then rise from the grave. This sounded like madness to us. And then on top of that Jesus told us that as His followers we would have our own “cross” to carry, suffering that would follow us in this world, through which we must hold fast to our confession of faith, or when He comes in the glory of His Father, He would deny us. Heavy words. We were wondering how we were supposed to accomplish all that; by what power. But Jesus had the answer for us, although we didn’t understand it at that time. The answer would come when His prediction came to pass, that, “**some standing here will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God**”.

So eight days later Jesus calls Peter, my brother James, and myself to come with Him up a mountain where He began to pray. Our days following Jesus could be long, hot, and tiring. As He was praying all three of us dozed off and fell into that kind of sleep that comes upon you when you just can’t keep your eyes open. But then, all of a sudden, we were brought to wakefulness, and what we saw just blew our minds.

Jesus was there, and I knew it was Him, yet the appearance of His face had changed. As I would later tell Matthew His face shone out with a brightness that was like looking at the sun. And His clothes radiated a whiteness that shown forth like the brightness of a lightning bolt that remains before your eyes. This was not like a light reflecting off Him from some other source. This brightness, this glorious light, was emanating from within Him. We had never ever seen Jesus looking like this. As we stared at this unbelievable vision, we noticed Jesus was not alone. Standing with him were two important figures from our past, ones we knew from our study of the Scriptures as children. Standing with Him were Elijah and Moses. Don't ask me how I knew who they were. I had never seen them when they walked the earth. Somehow, I just knew. These two represented the totality of God's Word of Scripture to us at time: Moses representing the Torah, or the Law, and Elijah representing the prophetic word. Together they were the embodiment of God's revealed will to us.

Now Elijah was certainly someone we revered. After all he was the one who was taken to heaven by a whirlwind and chariot of fire. That has never happened to anyone else. But then there was Moses. Moses was the shepherd of the flock of Israel. He was sent by God to save His people from slavery in Egypt. He was called by God to be His prophetic voice and the means through which God would do those amazing and mighty plagues that revealed that Egypt's gods were really false idols and that there was only One LORD God, and Pharaoh in the end had to let Yahweh's people go. And it was Moses who lifted up his staff and parted the waters of the Red Sea so Israel could walk through the water, which came back together to forever defeat and destroy the Egyptian army chasing them. That is the Moses who was standing there. You can understand why Peter wanted to keep this moment from ending. So as Elijah and Moses were fading out Peter quickly says the first thing that comes to mind: "Hey Jesus! It is really good that we are here!" Well, duh Peter! But then he continues with a novel idea, "How about we build three temporary shelters, one that You can hang out in Jesus, one that Elijah can hang out in, and one that Moses can hang out in. Then we can spend time talking at the feet of them too!" But that was not God the Father's plan and they continued to fade out.

But before I continue with the tale I want to pause for a moment and talk about a detail that Luke includes in His account, a detail that is not there in Matthew's account, or in the account Peter gave to John Mark to write down. Luke remembers what we told him about the topic that Moses and Elijah were discussing with Jesus. What Pastor Hensler read from your translation of Luke's account is that they were discussing Jesus' "departure" that He would accomplish in Jerusalem. Now the word from the original Greek that Luke wrote this account in can be translated into your English as "departure", or "going out", or even "death". But the Greek word Luke wrote is the same word from which you get the title for the 2<sup>nd</sup> book of your "Old Testament": the word is "Exodus". Moses and Elijah were discussing the "exodus" that Jesus would accomplish when He came to Jerusalem.

Now as good Jewish men who had grown up in the synagogue and knew the Torah (the first 5 books of Scripture), and had read the Greek Translation of it, we should've known exactly what this meant. Just as Moses led God's people out of slavery in Egypt, Jesus was coming to Jerusalem to fulfill what his Exodus was only a foreshadowing of. Jesus, with the power, authority, and might of God Himself had come to save not just us Jews, but all of mankind. He came to save us from our slavery to a far greater enemy than Egypt's Pharaoh, or Rome's Emperor. Jesus "Exodus" would save all mankind from our slavery to sin, death, and the devil. He would do what only God Himself could do by His power and might, take upon Himself all of the wrath mankind earned for its many sins; to suffer and die to break the chains that held us in bondage to everlasting damnation. And because He was God the Son cloaked in humanity; because He is The Word that was with God and is God made flesh, His blood shed in death was the perfect sacrifice of atonement for you and for me, to atone for our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And He when He ascended, He sent His Spirit to you in baptism so that water could save you personally from those enemies Christ defeated on the cross and give to you personally that victory He won for you. That is the "Exodus" they were talking about, and it is to this day a wonderful and glorious thing. Just as Moses was the shepherd leading the people of God through the wilderness to the Promised Land, Jesus through the Holy Spirit is shepherding you through the wilderness of your fallen world, to lead you safely to the complete fulfillment of what the Promised Land was only a foreshadowing of: Eternal Life.

We didn't get that. We were focusing on the presence of Moses and Elijah, when we should've been focused on the One that they were testifying to by their presence; the One in whose glory they stood. And so it was that as they faded out a cloud enveloped us. As a good Jew who grew up reading of Moses' encounter with God on Mount Sinai, I knew this cloud represented the real presence of God the Father Himself. We were flabbergasted with what we'd already seen. Now we were terrified. Mortal man cannot be in the presence of God the Father and live. But in loving grace the Heavenly Father cloaked His presence for our safety. And from that cloud came the Father's voice, His testimony about Jesus, just as He had done so at Jesus' Baptism. He said "**This is My Son, My Chosen One**" meaning the One chosen to be our Savior and Lord from eternity past, and who would always be our Savior and Lord into eternity future. And then the Father gave us and you this command: "**Listen to Him**".

Moses and Elijah only wrote and did what this Chosen One had planned for them as part of the Father's plan of Salvation from eternity past. As I would later have revealed to me this man standing before us was "**the Word of God made flesh**". As Peter would go on to say about Jesus "**You have the words of eternal life**", because He is life now and eternal life to come. When He had told us before that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, die, and rise, we really weren't listening to Him as we should. And even after the Father gave this command we still refused to hear and take to heart His words that He must suffer, die, and rise. But on resurrection day, when He appeared to us risen from death to eternal life, then we began to understand. We remembered all that He had taught us. We truly began to listen and hold fast to Him

## **The Power of the Reign and Rule for Me and For You**

And what exactly was it that we saw radiating out from Jesus on the mount? The glory that has been and is His to this day. He had it all along. It was cloaked as He walked the roads of Palestine with us, but it was always there. It is the glory and power that is the reign and rule of God that had come among us. And that power, that reign and rule of God has come upon you as well. It came to you in your baptism through the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is the power that creates the faith you need to believe and hold fast to Jesus even as you carry your cross in this world, even as you suffer trials and temptations, even as the world seems to be on the brink of chaos and war; that power, that reign and rule of God Almighty is here. He is ruling over all things with that same mighty hand that defeated Pharaoh. That power is watching over you through His mighty angels that are sent to guard you. And the reign and rule of God is in your heart, where Jesus is reigning and ruling right now by faith. That faith is the power by which you hold fast to the forgiveness that is extended to you for all the times you don't listen to Him, all the times you turn away from Him to listen to and follow the world. It is through that powerful presence of His Spirit that He keeps calling you back to Him in repentance.

### **Conclusion**

Well, I've interrupted your worship long enough. Perhaps the LORD will allow me to return to you sometime in the future if your Pastor is willing. Now before I leave, I should explain this one last thing. You may be wondering why in my Gospel I didn't include a Transfiguration account. Go ahead and check, it's not there. Matthew, John Mark, and Luke do a pretty good job covering the details with their three accounts. And because they each do, you focus on this every year before Lent, and it is good for you to be here. However, I was blessed to see something even greater. Pick up your Bible sometime and read the first chapter of my letter you call Revelation. While I was on the Island of Patmos, I saw this same Jesus appear to me. Here on the Mount of Transfiguration he only pulled back the cloak a little bit to reveal the glory and power that is His as God the Son. But to me He gave a full blast of it. It blew my mind and I collapsed in death. But He reached down His mighty and loving hand and brought me back to life. He made me able to stand in His glorious presence. On the Last Day, because you listened to Him, because you have the reign and rule of God living inside you, you too will have His strong hand reach down into your grave and raise you up, never to die. And you will live to see Him in all His glory and do so for days without end. I may see you again here, but I know that if you believe in Jesus, we will see each other and talk together for eternity. God's love and peace be with you all.