

PM Exodus 24:15-18 & Luke 9:28-36

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[0 : 0 0] It takes place after the Israelites have been led out of Egypt, out of their slavery, and brought through the wilderness to Sinai, Mount Sinai, where they receive the law of God.

God makes a covenant with them and gives them his law. And Moses is sort of up and down Mount Sinai.

But we're just going to read these four verses from the end of chapter 24, from verse 15. 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. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain, in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain.

[1 : 1 0] And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. And then a second reading from the New Testament, from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 9.

So Luke chapter 9, from verse 28. And that's on page 1044 of the Church Bible. Now about eight days after these sayings, Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.

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

Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep. But when they became fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men who stood with him.

And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah, not knowing what he said.

[2 : 5 3] As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my Chosen One.

Listen to him. And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

May God bless to us those readings of his word. Let's join together again in prayer. Verse 28 to 36.

I want you to imagine that you're in a city, maybe a big open square, and you're part of a huge crowd. And you're waiting to welcome home a team that has won the Football World Cup.

And you're waiting, and the anticipation builds up. And then the open-top double-decker bus arrives, with the triumphant team holding aloft the trophy that they have won.

- [4 : 06] And the crowd erupts with cheering and shouting and waving banners. It's a moment of glory. And glory is a word that is often used of that kind of situation in the media, by commentators, and so on.
- Let's change the scene. Imagine a wedding day. And you're sitting in the church, waiting for the bride to come in.
- And the bride has spent the morning getting her hair done, and putting on her makeup, and putting on the dress, and making sure everything's just right.
- And then she travels to the church. And you hear the piper playing the pipes. The door opens, and in walks the bride, resplendent, glorious in her appearance.
- Well, this evening, I want us to reflect on the revelation of a far greater glory and splendor and beauty and radiance, that of the glory of Jesus Christ, revealed at the Transfiguration, this event that we have read about.
- [5 : 27] This event takes place, most likely, on Mount Hermon, which is 9,232 feet, so over twice the height of Ben Nevis, on the border between Palestine and Lebanon.
- And I want to look at four aspects to this event. And they all begin with C. So first of all, the change. Second, the company.
- Third, the conversation. And fourth, the comparison. So first of all, the change. In verse 29, we read that, As Jesus was praying, The appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.
- Mark, in his version, it's in Mark and Matthew as well, says that there he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.
- And Matthew tells us that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. And his disciples witnessed this glorious, splendid, dazzling, brilliant sight.
- [6 : 50] In verse 32, we read that, They saw his glory. Now, we read of two others there.
- We'll come to Moses and Elijah in a minute or two. But I want us to notice the contrast here, because we read that Moses and Elijah appeared in glory.
- But by contrast, Jesus doesn't appear in glory. The disciples see his glory. Glory that belongs to him. Glory that is his very own glory.
- Now, we read earlier from Exodus chapter 24, and you might have noticed a number of parallels between these two passages. The account of Moses going up on Mount Sinai and encountering the glory of the Lord.
- Now, some of the comparisons, or some of the likenesses between those two passages are between Jesus and Moses. In some ways, Jesus is a Moses-like figure.
- [7 : 55] But on Mount Sinai, it wasn't Moses' glory that was revealed. It was the glory of the Lord, the glory of God himself, that Moses saw.
- And here on this mountain, well, Moses was there and saw it as well, but the disciples saw Jesus' own glory. And there's a contrast there, as we've said, between Moses and Elijah appearing in glory and seeing Jesus' own glory.
- Up to this point, the disciples, Peter, James, and John, had known Jesus as a man, as a great man, as a teacher, as their leader, a healer, a prophet.
- But in appearance, he was no doubt fairly similar to themselves. But now, here on the mountain, they see a new aspect, a new dimension to Jesus.
- They saw his glory. It's an unveiling of who Jesus really is. Up to this point, his glory was, to some degree, at least veiled.

[9 : 04] Now, not completely, because there is a glory to the man that we read about in the Gospels. The, in appearance, ordinary man who went around in humility and service of others, suffering for others.

That man who's, who came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. But there is still a veiling of Jesus Christ.

Before Jesus Christ came to this world, we're told in John 17, verse 5, that he shared the glory in eternity with God the Father. And that he would shortly return to that glory that he had with him from before the world was created.

But I want to, just to ask a question, and this is a question we'll come back to later as well. And it's the question, why did this event happen? For whose benefit was it?

Well, I think one answer to that question is that it was for the benefit of these three disciples, and in turn, for our benefit.

[10 : 15] This event left a lasting impression on these disciples. Indeed, that's, if it hadn't, it wouldn't have been recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But Peter writes about this in his second letter, the letter of 2 Peter in the New Testament, and probably written a number of decades after the event.

But Peter writes, this is in 2 Peter 1, verse 16 to 18, he says, we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power.

But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. We received, he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory, saying, this is my son whom I love, with him I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. And the New Testament speaks in a number of places of Jesus' present reign in glory, that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth.

now he reigns at the right hand of the Father. And it also prophesies Jesus' future return in glory and great majesty at the end of this age.

[11 : 39] And that is something that we can, to some extent, imagine based on this event which was witnessed and described for us by these disciples.

This event is kind of like a trailer of Jesus' glory after his ascension into heaven, the glory that he has now and also the glory that will be revealed to all people when Jesus Christ returns at the end of this age.

So that's the first thing, the change. The second is the company. In verse 30 we read that, Behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

So these two figures, Moses and Elijah are two of the greatest characters in the Old Testament scriptures. They can be said to represent the law and the prophets.

Moses represents the law and Elijah the prophets because the law was given through Moses and Elijah was sort of the beginning of a great movement of prophets in Israel's history.

[13 : 03] Both of these men were also associated with mountains. Moses is associated with Mount Sinai where he received the law where he met with God and God appeared to him and God revealed his glory to Moses on that mountain, Mount Sinai.

Elijah is associated with Mount Carmel and that great contest between Yahweh and Baal where Yahweh demonstrated that he and he alone is God by answering Elijah's prayer with fire to burn up the sacrifice that Elijah had offered.

But why are Moses and Elijah here on the mountain with Jesus? Well that brings us to our third point which is the conversation.

I wonder who are your two greatest heroes from history? Maybe from national history maybe some of you would like to meet someone like William Wallace or it might be from literature maybe you'd like to meet Shakespeare or Jane Austen or it might be from science so someone like Newton or Einstein or maybe from church history maybe it would be Augustine or John Knox or John Payton or Mary Slessor that you just you know they are your greatest heroes and you would love to be able to meet them of course you know you can't meet them but you would love to.

I remember once filling in an application form and it had one of these sort of random questions what two people from history would you most like to meet and I remember one of them I put was Abraham I can't remember the other one I put but if you could meet your two you know your two sort of most favourite heroes from history what would you want to talk to them about?

[15 : 03] Well I think you'd want to talk to them about their lives their achievements their experiences you wouldn't be you know if you met say it was Shakespeare you wouldn't want to meet Shakespeare and dominate the conversation with you know the details of your career plans or what you're planning for your home improvement at home you'd want to talk about his life his achievements what he did well here we have this conversation between Jesus who's a contemporary person alive at that time and two of the greatest heroes of his people's history from many centuries earlier on and for anyone else in that situation the focus of the conversation would be on the two heroes it would be on Moses and Elijah on their lives on their times and yet here we find that the focus of their conversation what they're talking about is not Moses or Elijah but Jesus and in particular they spoke about his departure which he was about to accomplish or bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem now this word departure in verse 31 it's it's actually the Greek word is the word

Exodus and you'll probably recognize that word that's the Greek word and it can be used for death and indeed it does mean that here it means Jesus' death but Exodus as you probably know is the name of the second book in the Bible and it literally means the way out that's what Exodus means the way out and it's because that book is about God bringing his people the Israelites out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses and the Exodus that event that is recorded in the book of Exodus the Exodus is a signpost pointing to Jesus' death in at least two ways first of all the Exodus was God redeeming his people from the land of slavery setting them free to be his own people so Exodus means redemption setting free the second thing is that

Exodus was brought about in part by the Passover you might remember that God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh and the Egyptians and the final the tenth plague was when God put to death the every firstborn son in every home in Egypt and there was one way to escape that horrendous judgment that terrible judgment and that was for the household told to slaughter a lamb and to smear its blood on the doorposts of the house and when the Lord saw the blood on the doorpost he passed over that house and the firstborn son of that household was spared well here we read of

Jesus Exodus Jesus was to experience an Exodus to which the original Exodus was a signpost pointing forward and it was an Exodus he was about to bring to fulfillment in Jerusalem in his suffering and dying on a cross so Jesus by his own Exodus by his death he redeems his people from the slavery of their sins and just like the Passover lamb he dies in the place of others so that they may escape the judgment of God as John the Baptist announced that Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and this is the topic of their conversation between Elijah Moses and Jesus this is what

Moses and Elijah as Old Testament prophets had longed for and waited for they probably didn't see it with all the clarity that we have looking back on the event but it was what they each in their own way prepared the way for and were waiting for and longing for what they set their hope and their faith on was now about to be fulfilled because Moses and Elijah's salvation and forgiveness and their inheritance of eternal life is only possible because of the death the exodus of the Lord Jesus Moses and Elijah were great heroes of the faith of the Israelites but they were also both sinners they both sinned there's record of that in the scriptures and of course we like they also are sinners but we too can be forgiven we too can receive eternal life if we place our faith in

[20 : 51] Jesus Christ coming back to this question why did this event happen for whose benefit was it and we've noted already that it was for the disciples benefit and through them for our benefit but also it was for Jesus own benefit it was for Jesus own encouragement and support Jesus is human fully human and as a human being he needed human company human support human encouragement Jesus needed the ministry of these two prophets from of old because no one alive at that time was able to provide this for him just just before immediately before this event Jesus tells his disciples about his own suffering and death which is still future at that time and Peter had tried to rebuke him and none of his disciples got that the

Messiah had to suffer in fact they found it objectionable that's why Peter tried to talk him out of it and that must have been profoundly discouraging for Jesus and so in response to that discouragement that Jesus received from his contemporaries God the father provides this miracle of Moses and Elijah appearing there on the mountain to talk with him to encourage him and Jesus needed that because he faced a future prospect far worse than any faced by any other in history his exodus in Jerusalem would cost him it would be a terrible horrific experience and it was something that he dreaded in Luke chapter 12 verse 50 Jesus says I have a baptism to be baptized with and how great is my distress until it is accomplished

Jesus had this horrific prospect this horrific distress hanging over him and it didn't go away and so he needed encouragement you see our salvation is free for us but it cost him more than we can ever imagine and Moses and Elijah encouraged him to go on to go on to Jerusalem to his departure to his exodus to his death and a few verses later in verse 51 of Luke 9 we read that when the days drew near for him to be taken up Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem encouraged by these two Moses and Elijah well fourth we have the comparison in verse 33

Peter says to Jesus master it is good that we are here let us make three tents one for you one for Moses and one for Elijah not knowing what he said now read that Peter didn't know what he was saying here so it's maybe hard to draw too much from this but I think perhaps what's going on here is that Peter wanted to honour all three he wanted to honour Moses Elijah and Jesus together and we read in verse 34 that while he was saying these things a cloud came and overshadowed them and they were afraid as they entered the cloud in the Bible God's presence is often symbolised by a cloud in fact we saw that in Exodus 24 verse 15 that when Moses went up on the mountain the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai the

Lord called to Moses from within the cloud and no wonder the disciples are afraid and then a voice comes from the cloud in verse 35 saying this is my son my chosen one listen to him I think Peter's mistake may have been to underestimate Jesus he talked about building three shelters one for each as if these three were worthy of similar honor now Moses and Elijah were great prophets and indeed they were told in verse 31 that they appeared in glory but Jesus is in a completely different category he is in a class of his own with a glory of his own Moses and Elijah were prophets they were the

[26 : 05] Lord's servants but Jesus is God's son whom he has chosen now this term son of God often has the meaning of being the Messiah God's anointed chosen king in the line of David but sometimes it refers beyond that to an eternal spiritual relationship that Jesus is uniquely close to God loved by God and indeed of the same nature as God and equaling glory with God beginning of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament says this it says in the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom also he made the universe the sun is the radiance of God's exact representation of his being sustaining all things by his powerful word

I wonder how do you think of Jesus don't underestimate him don't underestimate him by putting him on a level with other great figures in the Bible however great they may be Jesus is unique Jesus is in a class of his own and in verse 35 God says the voice of God says listen to him as we were seeing this morning today we can do that today by reading and obeying his word in the Bible that is his word that is how we listen to Jesus Christ today and elsewhere the New Testament tells us to let the word of Christ dwell in you richly God says to us this is my son whom I have chosen my chosen one listen to him let's pray Lord our God we thank you for your word we thank you for this great passage that speaks of the glory of the

Lord Jesus Christ and we thank you that here we just get a glimpse of who he truly is and we pray that our response would be to listen to you and to worship you Lord we pray that as we go into this new week as we go about our daily business our work our study of family life whatever it is that you call us to that we would do that for you as unto you to honour and glorify you we pray in Jesus name Amen Well let's conclude our worship this evening by singing Psalm 24