

Preview Of The Kingdom

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. I don't know if you've ever said the wrong thing.

! It's actually how I won Sherry to be my wife.

It's our first date off campus. We met in college, and I was a Bible major. She was an accounting major.

And sophomore year, we went to Friendly's. Anybody ever heard of Friendly's restaurant before?

It's kind of like a big boy, mostly on the East Coast.

But anyway, we went to Friendly's with another couple. And being the only Bible major in the group, I got nominated to lead prayer before the meal.

[1 : 17] And I was still a relatively young Christian at the time. And so I began to pray. And, of course, in that moment, you want to put your best foot forward.

Not in your mouth, but best foot forward. But I proceeded to pray. Lord, thank you for the ability to eat.

And then the other three people seated at the table got the giggles. Right there as I'm trying to seriously pray and, you know.

And what's funny, well, it's not funny, but she still ended up staying with me. That might be surprising in and of itself. Well, today we're going to see Peter open his mouth and perhaps insert foot once again.

Peter sometimes gets a bad rap because he'll say things. And sometimes what he says is not necessarily wrong. It might just be the timing. That's what we're going to see today.

[2 : 25] What he said wasn't necessarily off, but the timing was off. So that's part of it as well. And to start with, we're talking about the transfiguration of Christ, the Mount of Transfiguration, when Jesus takes three of his apostles up on the mountaintop to pray, and there he is transfigured in front of them.

And they don't really talk about this after the event. And so it's something that we don't really hear much from. It's Peter, James, and John. We don't hear much from James or John on this matter, but Peter in 2 Peter 1 has this recollection, and you have not yet on your sermon notes in just a moment.

2 Peter 1 verse 16, For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So a reference, if you will, to his Jesus being the Lord, the Messiah. But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Now here is Peter talking about that moment on the mountain as they see the transfigured Christ and the two that were with him. He goes on in verse 17, For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory, which is an unusual way to speak of God the Father, the way that he refers to him in that way, the majestic glory.

[4 : 01] This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

So it's not a reference to his baptism, which these very similar words were spoken from heaven. But he's saying specifically this is a reference to that moment on the mountain when Jesus was transfigured in front of them.

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you do well to pay attention. And we're going to see that at the end of our story today as well.

This is not paying attention. As to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. This answer is one of the critiques that people have about the Scripture.

[5 : 07] Sometimes if you talk to people who are not Christians, they will say, well, the Bible is just man's word anyway. It's just written by a bunch of men, and they were following, as actually Peter talked about it, cleverly devised mysteries or false sayings, and they're just legend.

And it's just the word of man, not the word of God. And Peter says, no, no, no, no, no. We didn't write Scripture based of our own account or of our own will.

No. Holy men of God are moved along by the Holy Spirit, and we would do well to pay attention to it. Hold on to that thought until we get to the end of our story today as well.

And so we have before us now Luke chapter 9. Actually, before we get to it, this is on your notes. The transfiguration showed the three apostles, in particular Peter, James, and John, what Christ would be like in his glory, or in other words, and gave them a foretaste of his kingdom.

They would see what life in the kingdom, at least a little taste of it, was like beforehand.

[6 : 31] And so this is key as we begin to read this story. We ended last week here at verse 27. Jesus talking to the disciples, but I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.

This is a reference to what was about to happen next in Luke's account. It's eight days later, and Jesus takes three of them, three of the disciples, along with him on this mountaintop experience to pray.

So he's got Peter, James, and John with him, and he takes them up. And this is what this verse is referenced to. It's what it's speaking of. This moment.

Don't be confused into thinking, well, this means that the disciples didn't die until the kingdom came. It's just speaking to a reference to this foretaste of the kingdom that they would experience together on the mountain.

Now about eight days after these sayings, he 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.

[7 : 54] And Matthew's account gives us a little bit more explanation here. He was transfigured before them. Now the word transfigured here, we get our English word metamorphosis from this Greek word.

The Greek word is actually metamorphosis. And so this is what happened to Jesus in this moment. So they're on the mountain, they're praying, and as they are praying, Jesus begins to transform in front of them.

And everything becomes bright and white and just overwhelming for the disciples to look at. So he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

Now I don't know if there's a way for an author to describe what this would be like. I think when we see this for the first time, we'll be blown away by it, even though we've had kind of in word a preview of what this will look like.

I don't think that will do any justice to the actual experience of seeing it. So these disciples are seeing this. And as he was praying, back in Luke 9.29, as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.

[9 : 14] So everything was changed about him. His clothes were regular beforehand. Now they're dazzling white. His face is shining. It's bright.

It's, I don't know if their earthly eyes, they had to shield them as they looked upon Jesus. And this reminds us of something else. Back in the book of Exodus, when Moses went on the mountain to receive the commandments of God, Exodus chapter 34, verse 30, Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone.

And because of that, it would eventually wear off. But because of how his face was shining, they were afraid to go see him.

And this experience is something that we will have as well. 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 7 and 8. Now if the ministry of death carved in letters on stone, and this is talking about now the Old Testament covenant.

And Paul here in 2 Corinthians refers to the Old Testament, the Old Covenant as a ministry of death. And that's because that's all the Old Covenant could do was to supply sheep and bulls and goats and birds to sacrifice in order that people might put off the forgiveness of their sin until the sacrifice of Jesus would finally pay for their sin.

[10:43] So now if the ministry of death, this Old Covenant carved in letters on stone, going back to Moses and the commandments, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?

So you and I, being New Testament believers, get this incredible gift of the Holy Spirit that we have living within us, and that provides even more glory.

So in a sense, you could say, praise you, Lord, for I am a New Testament Christian. That's, in a sense, better than being an Old Testament saint. And so this is what Paul's argument is.

Verse 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.

For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. We have this expectation as well, that our lives are being transformed. One day we will see Jesus face to face, and we will be as He is.

[11:58] In other words, Jesus in His glory, we will have that glory in us as well, not because of anything that we have done, but all because of what Christ has done for us.

Back in our text, Luke 9, verse 30, And behold, two men were talking with Jesus, and the two men were Moses and Elijah. Now, I don't know if the disciples are like, Hey, what's your name?

I don't know. Or if they just kind of knew or supernaturally knew that this was Moses and Elijah. That's an interesting concept.

Remember, Jesus had just asked them a few verses before this, Hey, who do people say that I am? King Herod asked the same question. You know, is Jesus, what is this all about?

And some were saying that He was Elijah, or one of the prophets, or maybe Moses come back. And so now we've seen appearance of Moses and Elijah, which is interesting, who appeared in glory and spoke of His departure.

[13:06] So Moses and Elijah are there having a conversation. This is not just a little quick sentence or two. This is a full-on conversation that they're having with Jesus about His departure.

The Greek word here is exodus. It means exit. In other words, they're talking about how Jesus would be crucified and then taken up into heaven after His resurrection, His departure, the payment for the penalty of our sin.

They're having this conversation about that moment, about which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. And so here in chapter 9, we see Jesus is determined now to go to Jerusalem to have this take place.

He doesn't want to announce it ahead of time. He doesn't want to have people take hold of Him and arrest Him in Galilee because His time has not yet come.

That won't happen until He reaches Jerusalem, and then the events will unfold from there. So they're having this conversation, Moses and Elijah and Jesus, and then Peter, James, and John are there as well, and they were sleeping.

[14:22] Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep. We're going to see this kind of becomes a problem for them when Jesus, in a while, goes up into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, and they can't stay awake there either.

And when they became fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with them, with Jesus. 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 or three tabernacles and three abiding places, if you will.

This goes back to the Feast of Booths, or the Feast of Tabernacles, or some would call it the Feast of Tents, Old Testament. And it's actually a call to Zechariah chapter 14, which was also a prophecy of the coming kingdom, that in the kingdom, these foreign nations would come to Jerusalem and set up these tents or these tabernacles outside the city, and then go and worship the Lord there as He sits on the throne in the kingdom.

One for you, He said, one of these tents or these tabernacles for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. And then Luke kind of adds this after-the-fact commentary of saying he didn't know what he was talking about.

[15 : 53] And it's interesting when you refer to this because there's a sense where Peter does get it right. It is the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles is also a reference to the coming kingdom that we will see.

So Peter gets that part right, but what he forgets is also what Jesus had announced to them just a little bit before this, that before the kingdom would come, first would come His death by crucifixion and His burial and His resurrection from the dead.

That had to come first, and they couldn't quite put that together. They just were looking for the kingdom. Peter is maybe assuming here that this is the moment that Jesus is going to set up His kingdom.

Right here, right now, it's happening. Here's Moses, here's Elijah. Elijah, the kingdom is coming right now. So let's go ahead and set up a reminder of this moment that is happening.

Now it's interesting, before we move on with this, this conversation that's happening, Moses in this picture represents the law.

[17 : 11] Elijah represents the prophets, the most famous of the prophets. So between Moses and Elijah, you have a mentioning of the law and the prophets and how Jesus is the fulfillment of all the law and the prophets.

It's also interesting that in Moses' day, the guy that seemed to be large and in charge was Pharaoh. But was Pharaoh really the one in charge? No, it was the Lord all the time.

Same thing with Elijah. During Elijah's ministry, you might have thought that Ahab and Jezebel were the ones that were large and in charge, if you will.

As a matter of fact, Elijah ran in fear because of Jezebel. But again, we see that, no, the Lord is the one who is in charge. The Lord is the one who calls the shots, who sets up kingdoms and kings and rulers and brings them down.

And same thing in Jesus' time and the time of the apostles. You would think that Rome and maybe the Sanhedrin, these were the ones that were truly in charge of the events of Israel and Jerusalem.

[18 : 22] But no, that didn't matter. What Jesus came to accomplish, he was going to accomplish according to God's plan, regardless of Rome and the Sanhedrin.

And then we might ask the same thing today. Who is it that seems large and in charge in our day? And then ask the same question. Is it really that person, that king, that ruler, that president, that whatever?

Or is it God who is the one who is in charge? And ultimately, we understand as believers that it is the Lord who is in charge of the world that we live in.

And we also see in this moment, some evidence, more evidence, of life beyond the grave. Notice how with Moses and Elijah, they recognize who they are.

And they're using the same names that they had from their Old Testament days. And they have bodies. And they have conversation. We saw from the resurrected Christ and how he ate and will be able to eat.

[19 : 35] And in Revelation chapter 6, how the martyred saints were given robes to wear. Now, this is all except for Jesus before the resurrection.

Moses and Elijah had not been resurrected yet. The Revelation martyrs had not yet been resurrected. And they will have bodies. It's not like we live as disembodied spirits, just kind of floating kind of in space in another dimension or whatever it is.

I remember having a conversation with a man who believed he was a Christian. But his idea of heaven was this idea that when we die, it's just our spirit that lives on.

And we just kind of float around in the ether. Or I don't know. I'm not sure I quite understood what he was getting at.

But it's not an unusual expectation for people, even some who claim to be Christian, that when this life is over, or it's just our spirit will go on and just kind of float among the clouds or that kind of thinking.

[20 : 49] And it's just wrong. And I went on to talk to him about, no, that heaven is a place of physical beauty and created beauty like the earth without the stain of sin, without the consequence of sin.

And we will have bodies and we will fellowship and we will eat and we will enjoy each other's company and we'll know each other by name just as we did before. And we'll still have who we are.

It's just us perfected and glorified. And he refused to believe that, even though the clear evidence of Scripture teaches that this is what heaven and the kingdom of God will be like.

And so, again, more evidence of what it will be like after the grave. And so, Peter goes on to say what he says and as he was saying these things, verse 34, cloud came and overshadowed them, probably the Jesus and the two, Moses and Elijah.

And then, Peter, James, and John were the ones who were afraid. And then, the cloud enveloped them all, overtook them all.

[22 : 08] They eventually were overcome by this cloud as well. And they were afraid by that. The imagery here in the Old Testament, cloud represented the presence of the Lord oftentimes.

And that's exactly what we see happening here as well. A voice that came out of that cloud said, this is my son, my chosen one.

Listen to him. So we have that charge. And then, when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.

In other words, the three disciples were there. Moses and Elijah are gone. And Jesus is alone. And they kept silent and told no one. Partly, I think, because, what do you say?

How do you communicate this? So they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen. And Jesus wouldn't have wanted them to.

[23 : 14] Because it wasn't the moment. His time had not yet come. He needed to reach Jerusalem before that would happen. So we have this story now.

And so on your notes, some takeaways from this moment of transfiguration that Peter, James, and John were able to witness here. And the first takeaway for us is this.

That the transfiguration once again confirms the identification of Jesus as Israel's Messiah. Jesus had been revealing this about himself throughout.

And it's interesting to me that there are some quote-unquote New Testament scholars. I have a hard time calling them scholars. I have, I would say more they're like New Testament fools.

Because they would deny that Jesus had any kind of claim that you can't read the Gospels and figure out that Jesus is the Messiah. That Jesus didn't make that claim and that Jesus never, it's just never clear that this is who he is.

[24 : 27] And I think to come to that conclusion, you kind of have to look at the Gospels and say, well, this part's true and this part's not and this part's true and this part's not.

Because otherwise, you have events like this and earlier, the events that we've looked at before where Jesus is actually saying, no, no, this is, even at the very beginning when he went to his hometown synagogue in Nazareth and he's reading from the prophet Isaiah talking about the coming Messiah and he's saying, yeah, this prophecy has been fulfilled now in your presence. And it's like, well, yeah. And the people there understood what he was saying because they wanted to kill him for blasphemy because he was making claim that he was indeed the Messiah.

And so again, just another piece of this evidence that Jesus is who he says he is, that he is the Messiah of Israel.

He is the one to come to bring salvation to the world. The second thing that this transfiguration scene does is it identifies the kingdom that Jesus spoke of and Jesus is, I mean, that's his message, right?

[25 : 46] We've talked about this before. He's preaching the gospel of the kingdom. The kingdom of God is at hand. And as Jesus is declaring this, he's saying that the kingdom of God is at hand.

It's as if he's saying the kingdom of God is standing right in front of you. Recognize it, repent, and trust the one who is sharing this message, this message of the kingdom of God.

And this moment of this figuration identifies the kingdom that Jesus is preaching with the kingdom, the coming kingdom, that all of the Old Testament is pointing to and talks about and prophesies about.

Because we have the identification of Moses and Elijah coming and recognizing Jesus as Messiah. and so you have that connection between Old and New Testament when it comes to this discussion of the kingdom of God.

It's one and the same. So, we have that. And then, thirdly, it clarifies that Jesus is neither Elijah nor Moses.

[27 : 01] Remember, this discussion with his disciples and Herod's discussion. Who is this Jesus? And it's not Elijah, it's not John the Baptist, it's not Moses, it's something different than that.

And, more accurately stated, Jesus is far greater than any one of the prophets of old. Because he is the Lord himself.

the fourth thing that we learn from the transfiguration is that, once again, the cross and the crown are part of one and the same plan.

They're the same, they're the same program. All the disciples and all of Israel, basically, was just looking for half of this equation.

They were just looking for the crown. They wanted to crown the king right now. They wanted the king to come and get rid of Rome and clean up house and take the throne in Israel and that's what they were looking for.

[28 : 18] But they missed the first part of that equation, the cross. They couldn't see it and Peter especially couldn't see it. None of them could see it. So they couldn't see it, they couldn't accept it, they just wanted Jesus as king but Jesus again has just told them that he's going to the cross just in a few verses before this he said that I'm going to the cross I will be crucified and they don't accept that.

They're just looking for the king but this is all part of the same plan. Jesus will indeed wear the crown. He will sit on the throne of David. he will rule in Israel and the world.

He's coming again. The transfiguration is also a testimony of the fact that God is able to raise men from the dead. And here's Moses and Elijah.

Some might would say well did Elijah really ever die because he was taken up into heaven? I would say yes. I would say that of Enoch.

I would say that of the people who are raptured when Jesus comes in the rapture before the tribulation that in that moment in a twinkling of an eye we will be changed and we will be dead and raised in a moment's time and resurrected.

[29 : 51] And this is Moses and Elijah. What is happening with Moses and Elijah you and I can look forward to as well.

Just as they were raised from the dead you and I as believers in Christ we will be raised from the dead. Whether that happens whether we die before the rapture or at the rapture either way we will see Jesus in that moment.

We will be raised and we will be resurrected in that day. Now what's interesting here is Moses and Elijah they're Old Testament saints they won't be resurrected until after the tribulation so they're existing in what only can be understood as spiritual bodies.

Their physical bodies haven't been resurrected yet so they're existing here wearing clothes wearing robes in spiritual bodies that I can't explain to you.

This is one of the mysteries of heaven that we just we don't get it's not soul sleep there is a false doctrine that's out there that talks about how when we die we just fall asleep until Jesus comes again but that's a false teaching because to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord that's not soul sleep but we will have some sort of physical frame to us even though it's not our fleshly bodies we will have a spiritual body again I can't describe that for you I can't tell you what that will feel like or even what it will look like other than we'll still be recognizable just as they were able to recognize Moses and Elijah and the saints in Revelation chapter 6 who will be martyred during the tribulation will be resurrected after the tribulation but still they will be given robes to wear they will have spiritual bodies they will participate in worship this whole idea of disembodied or just spirits floating around is nonsense it doesn't fit with the record and then finally number 6 the transfiguration also teaches that the formerly dead then raised to life would be the ones who possess the kingdom and that includes you and I the Old

[32 : 31] Testament saints who were promised the kingdom New Testament saints who have been grafted in to Israel so that we can also claim Abraham as our father we also are able to claim the promises that have been given to Abraham and Moses and David and so forth because of that we will receive we will be part of that kingdom and we will rule and reign with him in that kingdom and resurrected glorified bodies what's that going to be like we have some clues but a lot of it is just hard to understand or hard to explain but the main thing is God is there our Lord is there that's what makes heaven heaven that's what makes it wonderful now again one major point of application that we should all take from this is this little phrase that the

Lord says in the cloud talking about Jesus he says this is my son my chosen one listen to him that's for us too wasn't just for Peter James and John that's for us as well and actually this calls back to the Old Testament law the giving of the Old Testament law when Moses himself prophesied about a

coming Messiah look at what happens here this is Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 15 the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you from your brothers it is to him you shall listen and this is where Moses now is talking of Jesus he's speaking of Jesus the one who would come after him and you better listen you ought to listen to him and so from your notes now if Jesus is the Messiah the Christ of God and he is now I could have said I could have said here since Jesus is the Messiah the Christ of God I could have done that but then I wouldn't get that cool fill in the blank there of and he is so just in case you were wondering if Jesus is the Messiah he really is then we had better listen carefully to him listen to him as God the father said about his son now the question becomes how do we do that how do we listen to Jesus and we do that by and you've got three blanks there we do that by reading number one reading the word of God so it becomes important for us to read the word of God and you might say well I'm not very good reader well the thing about living in the age that we do live in we have the recorded word of God you can listen almost anywhere any place in your car at night at home off your phone podcast whatever the word of God is more available than it's ever been and yet it seems like we're this generation of believers at least in our country is the most unread when it comes to the scriptures which it doesn't make sense since we have it so readily available to us maybe if it were more precious!

to be if it were harder to get then we might consider it more precious to us but reading is a big part of that even to the point where if you can't read if someone else can read it for you but you go to whatever lengths that you have to to get into the word of God and then to study it not just read it to read it but also to understand as much as you can to say yes I want to know what the word of God says I want to know what it means finally to apply it another word that you could use there is obeying that's basically what it means to apply the word of God it means to follow it it means to obey it and if you're not willing to obey the word of

[37 : 19] God if you're not willing to apply the word of God then the previous two are going to go away you're just going to become more and more callous more and more dull in your understanding of the word of God if you're not willing to obey the truth that you already know and understand if you're going to live in open disobedience to what you already understand God will not reveal his word to you you just won't be able to understand it grasp it for yourself so it comes with all of this reading studying and applying or obeying his word Jesus himself is equated here in John 1 with the word in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God this is another one of those mysterious things that I can't explain how is Jesus and the word the same I don't know but there is a connection there between

Jesus and the word of God Jesus himself! is the very word and so we ought to pay attention to what he has to say and then Jesus himself said this it is the spirit who gives life the flesh is no help at all the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life we need to follow through we need to listen and study and apply the words of Christ the words of the New Testament all of the New Testament is the word of God not just the red letters I don't know if do you guys remember red letter Bibles you guys remember those I remember when I was a young Christian I was like oh words of Jesus in red I like that then I developed kind of a pet peeve against it a couple weeks ago I talked about pet peeves am I allowed to have a pet peeve one of my pet peeves now is red letter Bibles and the reason why is because there are people out there who say well if

Jesus didn't say it it didn't happen we have issues going on in our culture today that well Jesus never spoke to this issue fill in the blank when the Bible actually does speak to the issue just because Jesus didn't utter the words himself doesn't mean that it's not the word of God and so we have to be careful to start playing those kind of games that somehow the red letters are more important than the black and white letters they're not the words of Jesus basically is all of this this is the words of Christ to us and I would say that's both Old and New Testament so we need to pay attention to we need to listen to we need to apply put into practice God's word in our life let's pray Lord we thank you for this word of

God that you have given to us that sometimes we can take for granted but Lord we we ought to listen to it we ought to pay attention to it the charge that you gave to the three apostles on that day on the mountain apply to us as well Lord also help us to recognize that you are absolutely without question the Messiah our Savior our Lord our King and we love you and we honor you may that be true of the way that we live our lives that we would honor you in the words that we speak the actions that we take the choices that we make Lord may we honor you in everything recognizing Lord that

you are the authority you are the
Lord of our lives and we trust you we trust you with our lives and we love you and we praise you in
Jesus name amen amen Thank you.