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The Glory of the King – *Luke 9:27-36*

Introduction – It is significant that immediately following the first mention of the cross, Christ and His disciples are given a glimpse of the glory that would come from the cross. It is as though Jesus provides a private screening for His disciples of how this story of suffering is going to play out. We are in the middle of a section discussing the King and the kingdom of God, and Christ has been emphasizing that He will go to Jerusalem and be killed. We are in the middle of a section discussing the cost of discipleship. And in the middle of this series of discourses and events, the Father prefigures the glory of this King, the glory that will be bestowed upon Him.

Seeing the Kingdom of God (vv27-28) – Completing His thoughts (vv23-27), Jesus says, *“there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God.”* This is followed by the account of the transfiguration. Matt 16:27-28 is just as explicit. John 21:18-23 may provide a helpful biblical commentary on this. History tells us that Peter died before Jerusalem was destroyed and that John may have outlived that destruction. There are many possibilities, but I take this verse to refer to the coming of the Son in judgment upon unbelieving Jerusalem in AD 70. The transfiguration account is a prefiguring of this coming glory; and this foretaste of glory helps to soften the difficulties of the hard sayings Christ had given them in the previous discourse.

Up on the Mountain to Pray (vv29-32) – Jesus is turning towards Jerusalem where He knows His greatest trial awaits Him (v51), and he takes His three closest disciples away to pray. They are much like us – sleepy, lazy, and confused in their time of prayer – and because of this they actually miss much of what transpires.

Jesus, Moses, and Elijah – As Jesus prayed, He is transfigured (metamorphosed) and His clothes become whiter than lightening. Moses and Elijah also appear in their glory and speak with Jesus. There is perfect harmony in the discussion of the Law (Moses), the Prophets (Elijah) and Jesus (the Mediator of the New Covenant). Moses and Elijah fasted for forty days in the wilderness, both met with God on the mountain, and both led and delivered their people like Jesus. They also had, in essence, “empty tombs” as Jesus will. And they discuss Christ’s “departure,” literally, *“His EXODUS which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”*

The Glory Cloud (vv33-34) – The three disciples wake up apparently just as this meeting is ending (why didn’t Jesus wake them up?). Peter doesn’t want them to go and says he would build three tabernacles to house this glory. But God doesn’t want a temple made of human hands and “builds” His own tabernacle with the glory cloud. It comes and overshadows them and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. The Tabernacle (and later the Temple) was always the place of heaven on earth, the place where the Shekinah Glory would come and rest.

Hear Him! (vv35-36) – In this baptism of Light, the Father speaks as He did at the Lord’s baptism of water (Luke 3:22). With this, Jesus is found to be alone, the fulfillment of all that Moses and Elijah proclaimed and did. Jesus does not remain in this prefigured glory and He instructs the disciples to tell no one. In order to reach that glory, Jesus will go to Jerusalem to die for His people. Even at the resurrection, the disciples will have a hard time understanding this concept; suffering and then glory (Luke 24:26-27).

The Glory of the King and of His Kingdom – Peter treasured this experience and brings it up in his second epistle (2 Pet 1:12-21). He had finally come to an understanding of following Christ in suffering even unto death, but all to the final glory that is ours in Christ. He also made clear that we have a more sure Word than even was given in his mountaintop experience. It is this Word that shines in a dark place (it was night on the mountain) *“until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”* We do not really understand the gospel privileges that are ours today.

From Glory to Glory – We are all privileged to behold this glory in the preaching of God’s Word and by the ministry of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:16-18). As we behold this glory, we are transformed (metamorphosed) into this glory, into the image of our

Savior. This work of God's Holy Spirit is something that we are to give ourselves to in the sacrifice of our lives to God (Rom 12:1-2).

The Glory of the King This Morning - Like the disciples, you may find yourself a bit sleepy, lazy, or confused as to where you are right now yourself. Do you realize that you have come to the Mountain of the Lord, to where the very Shekinah Glory dwells? Heb 12:22ff declares that by faith we are given this taste of glory each Lord's Day. And we are exhorted as well, "*see that you do not refuse Him who speaks.*" Hear Him! There will be suffering for a little while. But there will be glory forever.

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