

The Unveiling of Jesus Christ

Luke 9:28-31

March 17, 2019

Open your Bibles to Luke chapter 9, and verse 28. Luke 9:28. We've come to a place in Luke's Gospel of particular wonder, and God, here, by the Spirit, is giving us a brief look behind the veil to see the glory of Jesus Christ. That's what's on display, here, in Luke 9:28-36. So without further ado, let's get right into the text. I'm going to read starting in verse 28. "Now about eight days after these sayings he," 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 at 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.

"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."

It's a text of glory, the glory of Jesus Christ. And there's a couple of things that I want to say, here, just by way of introduction to the text and just to, kind of to clear up a couple of theological misconceptions, or maybe get some theological clarity. The first thing to say, by way of introduction, is this; we call this, The Transfiguration. That's how I refer to this text. That's how, usually, you can find it in your Bibles the heading that says, The Transfiguration. The

word, transfigure, *metamorphao*, comes from Matthew and Mark. But Luke doesn't use that word here in this text. *Metamorphao* can mean, transfigure. It can mean, transform, and that's not quite accurate in a translation.

It can also mean, and this is how Matthew and Mark intended, it can also mean, changed in appearance, as in outward appearance. But an actual transformation is not what's intended. So there's a change in appearance, that's the idea. And that's to say, Jesus did not transform. He didn't change from one thing to another. Nothing is truly changed, here.

Rather, what has happened is that the veil has been pulled back, and we are seeing the deity of Christ that has been veiled beneath the humanity of Christ. In the incarnation, during his first coming his first earthly coming, Jesus' humanity covered his deity. So in this account, we get a glimpse, we get a bit of a preview of his future glory. That's the first thing to clear up. Jesus didn't actually change from one thing to another. He remained the same.

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Another misconception I want to address, here, is that we tend to see this account as exceptional, as out of the ordinary. And that's for good reason because from our perspective, the embodiment of brilliant, shining glory in a human being is not an everyday experience. Humanity, as we look around the room and at each other, we're pretty much the same. Yeah, we dress up our bodies with colorful garments. Ladies add shiny, dangly things. The men, well, they're the men. But there's nothing really too remarkable about the likes of us. There's nothing really that's too much different among us.

Paul tells us, 1 Corinthians 15:40, that "there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, and the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, the glory of the earthly is of another." We are more accustomed to the latter, the earthly, not the former, the heavenly. And so for us, seeing the heavenly glory of Jesus Christ, yes, it's exceptional to us.

But if we pull back out of this narrative a bit and we try to look at this, as it were, from the perspective of eternity, this is the Son of God in his normal state of being. This is not

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exceptional for him. What's exceptional for him is to be veiled, and his glory veiled. From everlasting to everlasting, the Second Person of the Trinity is utterly glorious. He is divinely brilliant. In fact, as Hebrews 1 says, "He is the radiance of divine glory." He's beautiful in his holiness. He is parallel in majesty, in every way, with the other members of the Triune Godhead.

John, the Apostle John, was present on this occasion, as we just read, and he witnessed this unveiling as a, as a very young man. He was the younger brother of James. And much later in his life, as a senior saint, really, John saw this same glory again. I'd like you to turn over just quickly by way of introduction to Revelation chapter 1, Revelation chapter 1 and verse 9. The risen, the exalted Christ visited John while he was in exile on the isle of Patmos, and he gave him the words, there, to write in the book of Revelation, all the visions, all the things that are unpacked in Revelation; Jesus Christ, the exalted Christ, gave those things to John personally.

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And in the very first chapter of the Revelation, we get a fascinating picture of, and I'll say it again, of the normal glory of Jesus Christ. It's kind of strange to put, normal and glory, in the same sentence, but that is what it is for him. Notice Revelation 1, verse 9, "I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, 'Write what you see in a book and send it out to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira, to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.'

"Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lamp stands, and in the midst of the lamp stands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool," like, "like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his

mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.'"

You got to keep that picture in mind as you go back to, go back there now to Luke chapter 9. And think about what we read, as verse 29 says that "as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white." That is a brief, brief picture of what John saw in Revelation chapter 1. He, there, is pulling back the veil, and we're seeing a preview of that post-Resurrection glory, the glory of his exaltation. This is his normal state. We need to understand that. In his incarnation, Philippians 2:7, "having assumed the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity." As the song says, "He is robed in frail humanity," we need to realize this unglorified state as temporary, as he's doing his work here on earth.

We need to realize this is temporary. He continues on with human nature, on into the future, on throughout eternity. It's added to his divine nature, the two natures in one Person of Christ. That is the mystery of the incarnation. That is the union of those two natures in one Person. But he continues on at the Father's right hand. Yes, robed in humanity, but shining in glory. So what we're seeing in this account is not exceptional for Jesus Christ. It's normal. It's exceptional to us because we're accustomed to looking on humanity in its inglorious and fallen and sinful condition. But in Christ, we see humanity exalted. We see the glory of God robed in the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ. And today for us, in this text the veil is opened.

So what's the significance of this? Why this narrative at this time in Luke's Gospel? Why this unveiling of Christ's future glory? That's the question we want to answer. So for today we're going to look at the unveiling, verses 28-31. Next week we're going to hear from God the Father about the significance of this unveiling. But we're going to divide the text for this morning, verses 28-31, we're going to divide it

into three points. I think you've got it there in your bulletins: the setting, the unveiling, and the meeting.

Let's get right into that. First, the setting, the setting, verse 28. Luke sets the scene for us there in verse 28, very short summary statement of summary about the setting. "About eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray."

That is packed with information. Four things Luke gives us, here, about the setting. Number one: He gives us the time and the context. "About eight days after these sayings." He tells us, number two, about the people who were there. It's Jesus along with Peter and John and James. Oh, and we'll, they'll be joined later by three other persons, but right now, Jesus, along with Peter and John and James. Then he gives us, number three: the location, "up on the mountain." Finally, number four, he tells us about the purpose, and the purpose is, purpose here is to pray. So the time and the context, the people, the location, the purpose.

First, the time and the context. "About eight days after these sayings." After what sayings? What, what is he talking about, there? Luke is pointing us all the way back to really, to verse 18, where again we saw Jesus praying. And he was praying again before a significant revelatory event. What did he reveal back in verse 18? What came out of that? His identity, that he is the Christ of God, verse 20. He extracted that, as it were, out of Peter.

That is followed by the promise of his suffering and his resurrection as well, verse 22: "The Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, then on the third day be raised." After that, Jesus spoke to the disciples along with a gathering crowd, telling them that following him meant following him into suffering, verse 23: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me."

We've gone all through that text. We learned about the demands of discipleship. We learned about Jesus' preparation of his disciples, and anyone who's willing to follow him, to face

the scorn and the rejection and the despising that comes from being associated with a cross-bearing, crucified Savior. Not acceptable in the Roman world. Not acceptable to the Jews. But for all those who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, the very salvation of God, the wisdom of God in a cross-bearing, crucified Christ.

After verse 23, we saw this, we've studied through this, Jesus provided several reasons for following after him, verses 24-27. And the final reason that he gave, verses 26 and 27, that final reason, was an essentially an outline of his Messianic career. Gives bookends to the two Advents. He says basically, there, Embrace shame now to see glory then. He revealed the second coming in verse 26, which is in glorious judgment on unbelievers. And then he encouraged the believers, there, with a promise, verse 27: "But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

So about eight days after all of those sayings, by the way, if you're reading in Matthew and Mark, you see that it was after

six days, that's what they say, after six days. Luke says, "about eight days after." There's no contradiction here. The other writers count the intervening days only between the sayings and the Transfiguration. They count the intervening days. Luke is inclusive. He counts the day of Peter's confession at the beginning; he counts the day of Transfiguration at the end.

So about eight days after these sayings, Jesus, here, provides a sneak preview to his three disciples. And I just want to say quickly that this is not the fulfillment of the promise he gave in verse 27. Some of those standing there would be witnessed, witness, not just to this as those three Apostles are, Peter, John, and James, but some of those standing there listening to Jesus on that day of Peter's great confession, they would witness his death in Jerusalem, his burial, his resurrection from the grave, and his ascension into heaven to be exalted on high. They would witness also the fulfillment of the promised Holy Spirit that Jesus said that he would send. They would witness the formation of a new assembly, the church of Jesus Christ.

And so this transfiguration account, it's not the fulfillment of verse 27. It's a preview, it's a preview of future glory. It foreshadows kingdom glory. Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God when he paid the penalty for sin at the Cross. He inaugurated the New Covenant when, when he triumphed over death in the resurrection, when he was exalted to the right hand of God.

But here in this preview of kingdom glory, what is Jesus doing with this? Why does God want to show the glory of Christ to these three men? Because Jesus intends to encourage his disciples by the unveiling of the glory of not just the kingdom but the King himself. He already told them in verse 22 that the Christ, the Son of man, would suffer as the sin-bearer, that he'd be rejected and killed. He unpacked the shame of the cross that they need to embrace.

And now Jesus turns to show that the glory that is going to follow the suffering, that that's true, too, that he wants to unpack that as well. He wants to finish what he started, that whole sentence in verse 22, helping them see what's meant by the

reference in verse 22 to “on the third day be raised.” So he’s really giving them, here, a foretaste of glory divine.

Okay, so that’s the context. Now second, just by way of setting up the scene, here, Luke tells us about the people, the people. Jesus took his inner circle with him, the three of the twelve, Peter and John and James. And you say, “Why these three, and why no more?” Well, I believe Jesus chose these three men, these guys formed his innermost circle of disciples, and he chose these three men because of the significant roles that they would play after the formation of the Church.

Peter, you know this, was the clear leader of the Twelve, always outspoken, sometimes putting his foot in his mouth, but other times he’s nailing it. He’s nailing it. He’s the leader of the Twelve, and his presence, here, at the Transfiguration, would, would help to establish his place of prominence and even pre-eminence among the Twelve. The authority of his testimony would be crucial in establishing the church in Jerusalem.

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John, the next one to be named, he's the longest-living Apostle, the one we just read from in Revelation chapter 1. He provided oversight to the Church over many decades in its, in its nation, formative years. The continuation of his testimony would be vital for the establishment of the Church, especially as it moved beyond Jerusalem into Asia Minor. John's voice of testimony would remain authoritative as he was the longest-living Apostle.

James, James here, what's his significance? He was the first apostolic martyr. He's the first of the Twelve to be put to death, and he would seal the truth of this very testimony with his blood. Dying for the truth would be a significant testimony to the veracity of his, of his witness, a bold statement of authenticity.

You may remember that Jesus took these three back in chapter 8 verse 51, he took these three, Peter, John, and James, into Jairus' house, into the inner chamber where Jairus' daughter was. They witnessed Jesus, there, raising her from the dead. That's pretty significant. Here, he allows them to see his

unveiled glory. Later, he's going to take these same three men with him to pray in Gethsemane as he is contemplating the immediate bearing of sin prior to his arrest.

So you say, Okay, I understand those three. Why not bring the other guys as well? I mean, isn't, isn't Jesus egalitarian? Doesn't he see all these men as equal? Yeah, he sees them as equal, but he's also making a choice, isn't he? He is sovereign, after all. It's his decision who he wants to use in whatever way. There's a, no unfairness in this, no injustice. It's all grace; it's all kindness; it's all mercy.

None of these men deserve to see anything, just as none of us deserve any of the mercies of God. That's why they're called mercies. We don't deserve grace, which is why it's called grace. And God can dole out his grace as he sees fit, and use different people in different ways, some for this purpose, and some for that.

We could guess, though, that Jesus wanted to keep the circle of information, here, small, possibly to prevent a

security leak. We read in verse 36 that Peter, John, and James kept silent and told no one in those days of anything of what they had seen. Matthew and Mark tell us it was Jesus who silenced them, actually, gave them a command, Mark 9, "He charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead." So he kept the circle of information and knowledge small on this point. That's important. We won't get into all the reasons for that right now, but it is important.

Third thing, third piece of information that Luke provides to set the scene, very important, is the location. And this will become even more important, more significant as we come back next week. But Jesus took Peter and John and James, it says there, "up on the mountain." Matthew and Mark call this mountain "a high mountain." None of the Gospel writers named the mountain, so we're asking the question as we try to interpret the text, which mountain?

They'd been in the region of Caesarea Philippi, which is up north of Galilee, north of the Sea of Galilee, and Luke uses,

here, the definite article the. He calls it, the mountain. So for anyone who is in the region of Caesarea Philippi, in that area, that would refer to Mt. Hermon. Other mountains have been proposed. There's Mt. Tabor in the Jezreel Valley. There's Mt. Meron, north, northwest of Galilee.

Setting aside all the details about why those are probably not accurate, most commentators do agree that the scene of the transfiguration is best located at Mt. Hermon. It is the perfect location for solitude, to not be interrupted by crowds. It's the perfect place for private prayer.

Mt. Hermon sits about 9,200 feet above sea level. Each of its three peaks possess a commanding view of the surrounding region. Most of the year the peaks of Mt. Hermon are covered with snow. The snow runoff, it feeds the upper Jordan into the Sea of Galilee down through the lower Jordan, flowing down from Galilee down into the Dead Sea. So that's the mountain we're talking about, Mt. Hermon, high, exalted, lifted up.

So we've got the time, we've got the context of the excursion, we've got the participants, now the location. Let's get to the purpose. What is the purpose? Jesus took them up on the mountain to pray. To pray. Luke is the only one of the Gospel writers to let us know that Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. Luke is like that. He's a, always showing us how Jesus prays, and how he prays not just on special occasions, but as a matter of regular habit. His life is saturated with prayer. Luke 5:16, "Jesus would often withdraw to desolate places to pray."

It's instructive for us, isn't it, to withdraw from this distracted world, turn off all devices, turn off everything, get away from all screens, get away from all the noise, and pray. Luke is also keen, though, to show us the connection between prayer and between that and special, revelatory events, significant events, in Jesus' life and ministry. Jesus, you remember, was praying at his baptism, Luke 3:21, "When the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him, and the Father said, 'You are my beloved son. With you I am well-pleased.'"

He's going to pray at the end, in Gethsemane, prior to his arrest, Luke 22 for, Luke 22:40, where he's going to encourage his disciples: "Men, pray! Pray that you may not enter into temptation." Jesus prayed prior to choosing, then naming and appointing of the twelve Apostles, Luke 6:12. He'll be praying again in Luke 11:1. That gives him an opportunity, there, to teach his disciples to pray, Luke 11:1 and following.

The same vicinity of our passage, we've already looked at it, Jesus prayed in verse 18, prior to eliciting and drawing out the good confession from Peter before he revealed his identity as the Christ of God, before he unpacked the suffering of the Messiah, the resurrection. Now mentioned again in verse 28, again in verse 29, Jesus is praying prior to another significant event: the unveiling of his glory.

So you can say, Well, what is he praying about? What's he saying? What merits this private excursion up the mountain, climbing up the rugged slopes of Mt. Hermon for solitude with these three of his closest disciples? What is he praying about? Why is he trying to get away?

We might imagine that after, just in a human way, we might imagine that after revealing his impending suffering and death to his disciples, Jesus might personally, here, just as a man, be in need of prayer. Not hard to understand that. It's not hard to imagine that he sought strength from the father, be obedient to the father's will. In fact, there in verse 31, we read it, the topic of conversation with Moses and Elijah is his departure, which he is about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

What he was facing not very long from this point had to be much on his mind, and so he sought, here, help from the father to stand firm, to walk through the suffering, to embrace the scorn and rejection, and more than that, to embrace the father's wrath and absorb that for sins.

We can also see Jesus' concern, here, though, to encourage and strengthen these three disciples. That's really what this is about. That's what he's praying for. He spoke about his forthcoming rejection and death, and when he used the language of the cross, we covered that several weeks ago, when he used

that language, no doubt that unsettled the disciples something serious. Shaken their faith. Those sayings and the sayings about the cross in particular were unnerving. These guys are fairly confused, upset, dis, disrupted. It's disconcerting to think.

But what they understood from the Old Testament about the Messiah, and then this talk of a suffering and dying Messiah, none of that fit into their eschatology. They couldn't understand this. In fact, in Mark's account, after the transfiguration, as they're descending the mountain, Jesus charged them to tell no one what they'd seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. And they obeyed; they kept the matter to their, themselves, there, Mark 9:10 says.

But we find out that they kept questioning him as to what this "rising from the dead" means. What are you talking? They'd seen Jesus raise Jairus' daughter. They understood what resurrection was. They didn't associate it with Christ because resurrection means, well, you've got to die first. Doesn't make sense. Death by crucifixion. Jesus' body buried in a tomb? Then rising from the dead? None of that factored into their thinking.

In fact, everything Jesus has taught them since Peter made the good confession, "You are the Christ of God," they'd expected Jesus to talk all about glory, all about triumph, all about overcoming, overthrowing the Roman yoke of oppression, the exaltation of Israel over the nations, ruling with him on thrones. I like that! But instead of glory, Jesus told them all about suffering. That wasn't in their plan. So they've got to be wondering, Is he the Messiah? Is he part one of the Messiah, and then there's a part two? Are we on the right track? Are we following the right guy?

Look, even if they didn't give voice to these thoughts, they're certainly confused, they're alarmed. So Jesus seeks to address that. He comes in, steps in, again, like a gentle shepherd, to meet that need for stability, to provide them with that much-needed encouragement and strength.

If you let your eyes skim over the verses ahead, you'll see how the unveiling of his glory at the appearance of Moses and Elijah in glory, how the visitation from on high, this cloud of

divine, shekinah glory, all of that is going to have the effect of validating Jesus and everything that he'd said. It's going to authenticate every word he'd spoken, everything he taught.

So we might well imagine Jesus praying something like this: Father, I know these men are rattled. They're shaken. All the talk of my crucifixion, all the talk of their bearing their cross and following me into scorn and rejection and suffering. They're unsettled, Father. Please give these men certainty. Please give these men confidence that I am indeed your Son, that I am your chosen Messiah.

You know why we're warranted in making that assumption? Because that's how the father responded. That's what the father allowed them to see and then to hear. He pulled back the veil of Jesus' flesh and showed the glory of his deity. They saw something. And then he told them. They heard something. "This is my beloved Son, my chosen one, with whom I am well-pleased. Listen to him." No doubts. Full certainty, all in keeping with Luke's purpose in writing Luke chapter 1.

So based on the father's answer, we know what Jesus prayed for. He prayed for their courage. He prayed for their confidence. He prayed for their stability. He prayed for their strength. He re, he prayed for their remaining steadfast in faith.

You know what the exalted Christ is doing right now at the father's right hand? He's praying for every single one of us by name, that we'll remain steadfast and strong and faithful and stable and certain and confident, that we'll have courage. Does that comfort you? Because it sure comforts me. God answered, here, he strengthened them. So having been encouraged like this, these three Apostles, they're going to be useful in the future, very, very useful to encourage and strengthen the other men.

Okay, that's the setting. Let's move on quickly to our second point: the unveiling, point 2, the unveiling, verse 29. As a church located here in Colorado, with the Rocky Mountains in our backyard, we understand what it means in verse 28 that Jesus took these men up on the mountain to pray, don't we? We understand that. Matthew and Mark tell us that he led them up on

a high mountain. All that is familiar territory for us. The went on a hike, as it were. Jesus took them to climb a mountain.

I like how Alfred Edersheim paints the picture, and for us Coloradans, we can fill in the gaps with pretty well-experienced and informed imaginations, can't we? He writes this:

"There's only one road that leads from Caesarea Philippi to Hermon. We cannot be mistaken in following it. First, walking among vine-clad hills stocked with mulberry, apricot, and fig trees." He's talking about lower elevations. "And then through cornfields, where the pear tree supplants the fig. And next, there are the oak up rocky ravines to where the soil is dotted with dwarf shrubs. If we pursue the ascent, it's, it becomes still steeper til the first ridge of snow is crossed, after which turfy banks, gravely slopes, and broad snow patches alternate.

"The top of Hermon in summer, it can only be ascended in the summer or autumn, the top of Hermon is free from snow, but broad patches run down the sides, expanding as they descend. And

as they ascend in the cool, the keen mountain air must have breathed strength into the climbers, and the scent of snow, for which the parched tongue would long in summer's heat, must have refreshed them."

We don't know, that's the end of the quote, but we don't, we don't know if they ascended to the very top, to the summit, found a perch atop one of those three peaks, or whether they settled for a spot a little lower down. But whatever the case, once they stopped at a suitable location and caught their breath, Jesus stopped and called a prayer meeting. He went there for the purpose of prayer.

It seems reasonable that, at first anyway, he included them and perhaps they prayed with him for a while until they fell asleep. Pretty clear, verse 32, they've been overcome with fatigue, and whether that's from the climb or maybe from the thinner air up at altitudes they're not used to, or simply from the spiritual energy exerted for them in prayer, the disciples are at this point having a nap.

Now when something remarkable happens, they're about to miss it. They're about to miss it sleeping the time away. The most important thing that they'd ever seen in this, up to this point in their lives, they're about to miss it because they're sleeping. "As he was praying," verse 29, "the appearance of his face was altered. His clothes became dazzling white."

Luke is very brief, but he's clear. Gospel writers seemed to run out of adjectives at this point as they describe it. Matthew says, "He was transfigured," *metamorphao*, "Transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light." Mark says, "He was transfigured before them. His clothes became radiant, intensely white as no one on earth could bleach them." Mama couldn't even do this.

Luke, here, he doesn't use the word, as I, as I mentioned, he doesn't use, use the word *metamorphao*, transfigured, transformed, and that's possibly because of his predominantly Gentile audience, that they might read that verb *metamorphao* in the context of the metamorphosis that they know of, of pagan deities. So he avoids that confusion for his readers, and

instead Luke writes this, this is the literal translation, here:
"The appearance of his face was, other."

That's accurate, and it leaves a lot of room for imagination and mystery and wonder. It was just, it was other. It's the word *heteros*, something completely, something radically different. He, he still had a face. It's just that it was other. It was different. It was a face of another kind. His face shined brilliantly, like the sun. His clothing became, as it says here, "dazzling white." Mark says, "radiant, intensely white." No one could bleach anything this white.

Now this, you need to understand, is not just about a change in his clothing. This means it wasn't just his face that was radiating with the intensity of brilliant light. His entire body, head to toe, radiated light, and the clothing itself could not hide it. That is the idea, here.

This is the glory that Jesus possessed along with his Father, John 17:24, "since before the foundation of the world." This is the glory of Christ we saw in Revelation 1 and all

through. This is the glory that he possesses throughout eternity future. In fact, Jesus says of himself, Revelation 22:16, "I am the root and the descendant of David," what does it say next, "the bright morning star." That's why Matthew said, "His face shown like the sun." His glory is like the shining of a star, and it's radiating the bright light of, like, a nuclear blast.

You just want to stop for a moment, don't you, and just reflect, ponder, let the awe settle in of the one it is that we worship? Who he is who died on the cross to purchase our redemption, to purchase us as a gift for his father. You just want to stop and ponder the magnificence of this, that the, this holy one, this shining one, this bright, radiant one would care for you and me.

This is an amazing moment. It's a display of the true nature of Christ's deity. Up to this point in Luke's Gospel, nothing like this has been seen. We know already, because we read through the birth narratives, Jesus possesses a divine nature. Gabriel told Mary, Luke 1:32, "He'll be great and he will be called Son of the Most High." We understand that. Verse

35, Gabriel told her how it would happen, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Most High will overshadow you." That word overshadow, by the way, is used here in our text as well. "And therefore the child to be born will be called Holy," comma, "the Son of God."

As we've followed his career, we've seen the working out of divine power, all with divine authority, with the prerogative of God, most notably in exercising the right to forgive sins. We've heard him teaching. We've, we've read this mind of divine omniscience and wisdom. This is the first time, though, that we've seen his glory, that we've seen it unveiled.

It's what John said, reflected on at the beginning of his little epistle, 1 John chapter 1. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, touched with our hands concerning the Word of Life." When it says there, "We've seen with our eyes," it's talking about the perception of sight. When it says, "We've looked upon him," it means, observed carefully. "The life was made manifest. We have seen it and testified it

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and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was," manifest, "made manifest to us.

"That which we have heard we proclaim also to you, so that you, too, may have fellowship with us. And indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his son, Jesus Christ. Writing these things that our joy may be complete. This is the message that we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light. In him is no darkness at all." They saw that for themselves. Jesus Christ "is light, and in him is no darkness at all." No sin, no error, no impurity, nothing but brilliant holiness and light. So Jesus is transfigured, transformed, shining brightly. He looks over at his disciples since this display of glory is for their encouragement and for their sake, not for his, his sake; he knows what he is. It's for their sake, and how terribly disappointing to find them fast asleep.

I don't want to condemn the disciples because let's admit it, would we have been any different? We fall asleep after ten minutes of prayer, or in sermons. This isn't about scolding, but we don't want to let the point pass by without lamenting, just a

bit, about how much spiritual blessing that we miss due to our physical weakness, how much spiritual blessing and privilege we miss out on because of temporal distractions, how much we miss out on because of silly, vain commitments, commitments to a world that's passing away, foolish pursuits, totally vain investments?

Like, why do we care about the world that's passing away? Why don't we be, all in, on the things that last? Let us also, just understanding these disciples, let's also pray for a steadfast, undistracted heart, that we might worship him as we ought to worship him, like David who prayed, Psalm 86:11, "Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth. Unite my heart to fear your name." Like the psalmist, Psalm 119, "Let us rise before dawn and cry for help. Let us hope in God's words. Let our eyes be awake before the watches of the night, that we may meditate on God's promise."

And when our strength gives out, which it will, let's pray with Asaph, Psalm 73:26, "My flesh, my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." The

disciples are missing it. They're not only missing the unveiling of Christ's glory, but they're about to miss the most important meeting, the meeting, number three in your outline, num, the meeting, there verses 30-31. Let's look at it, "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."

Notice that even the dramatic appearance of the two most well-known prophetic figures of the Old Testament, Moses representing the Law and Elijah the prophets, the focus, here, is all on Jesus Christ. The two men are talking with him. They're speaking about his departure, which he is about to accomplish.

This is nothing less than a visual picture of the primacy of Jesus Christ. Quite literally, the Law and the Prophets are pointing to him, focusing on him. Their attention is centered on Jesus Christ and his work. That's why Jesus, after he arose from the dead and he met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, he chided them in Luke 24, "O foolish ones, slow of heart to

believe all that the prophets have spoken," like Moses and Elijah, "was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and, and then enter into his glory?"

That's what Moses and Elijah are discussing with him. So for those two foolish, slow-hearted, slow-to-believe disciples, he, Jesus stopped to teach them. He said, "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Look at the scriptures. Look at the scriptures. They point to me.

We're going to talk next time more about the significance of Moses and Elijah. There are so many allusions in this account, by the way, to the Old Testament, how it all points to the fulfillment of the Old Testament, to the person and work of Christ.

But for now, let's look at the glorious blessings that are revealed in these, in just these two verses. First, for Jesus' three disciples, by extension to all of us believers as well, three things we need to notice. And these are things that are

going to bring you encouragement. First, notice that these two men, Moses and Elijah, what are they doing? They're talking with Jesus. Not only that, but they've appeared in glory. Wow! Such incredible encouragement comes from this verse!

When did Moses die? According to Deuteronomy 34:1-6, "Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. Lord showed him all the land. Lord said to him, 'This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, "I'll give it to your offspring." I've let you see it with your eyes, Moses, but you shall not go over there.' So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, and he," that is the Lord, "he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-Peor; and no one knows the place of his burial to this day." That happened in the year 1405 B.C., fourteen centuries before Christ. No one knew the place of his burial, but that now seems rather irrelevant, doesn't it?

What about Elijah? Elijah didn't die, did he? In the eighth century B.C., the 850s, according to 2 Kings 2:11-12, Elijah is

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there, walking with Elisha, his successor. And the text tells us is that, that "they went on, they talked, and behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. Elisha saw it and he cried, 'My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' And he saw him no more." Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Gone. Vanished from sight. Taken up into heaven.

So Moses died, Elijah was translated, taken to heaven in a whirlwind. What is the significance, and why is this all so encouraging to us? Moses and Elijah are talking with Jesus, here. Fourteen hundred years after the death, 850 years after the translation to heaven, they're talking to Jesus, here. That means that they're both alive! Centuries after they left the earth! Beloved, this life, you need to understand, is not all that there is. There is life after death. The saints live on.

And notice they're talking, they've got their wits about them. That's a good thing. Their talking, it indicates their personality continues, their intelligence. They know who they are. They know who it is they're talking to. They're engaged in

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intelligent conversations about things pertaining to spiritual truth, things about the future.

Not only that, but Moses and Elijah appear, not only talking, but in glory, which is hugely encouraging. The older I get, this is hugely encouraging. Small comfort it would be to live for centuries in this body. You got to pity the ancients, right? Adam lived 930 years in the sinful flesh. Nine hundred and thirty years! You kidding me? Seth lived 912 years, Adam's son, in the sinful flesh. Poor old Methuselah, 969 years. You say, Oh, Methuselah, if you had just held on a little longer, you'd get to a thousand! He'd be, like, No way! You kidding me? This sinful flesh?

All these scientists in labs trying to create more life for us. What? This long life is not a blessing, folks, when it's lived with no escape from the curse, no freedom from the presence of sin. Moses and Elijah, here, don't appear that way. They appear in glory, which means they are no longer living in a fallen, weakened, frail, cursed condition. They have been

glorified. No more weaknesses, no more sin, no more struggle with sin, only glory.

Second point of encouragement: Notice that these men, chief representatives of all the prophets, collectively they all point to Christ. Acts 10:38 says, "To him all the prophets bear witness." We see, here, that Moses and Elijah are interested in talking with Jesus about what? His departure. An interesting word. In Acts 13:24 we read about the coming of Jesus, and the word that's used there is *eisodos*, literally, into a way or an entrance, a coming. The word translated here is, departure, it's the word *exodos*. What's that? The word *exodus* in the presence of Moses calls to mind the exodus of Israel from Egypt.

Two privileges, here. We'll call it privilege A, privilege B. Privilege A, this is about the incredible privilege that's ours to live on this side of the cross. Moses and Elijah are talking with Jesus about his exodus, which he is about to accomplish. That is, it's not done yet. Unlike us, they don't have the advantage of revelatory hindsight, twenty-twenty. We have the entire New Testament, not only to tell us about all the events and to see them, but to unpack its meaning. It's what Peter spoke of in 1 Peter 1:10, "Concerning this salvation, the

prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours.” Who are those prophets? Moses. Elijah. They “searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow, things into which angels long to look.” Incredible privilege living on this side of the Cross.

Privilege B, the incredible privilege is here about a better exodus that Moses enjoyed. This isn’t just his, about his exclusion from the Promised Land for his sin. Elijah got to live in the land. It was sorrow to him, though. He lived in a land of idolaters, and he was in the minority. Might as well have lived with the cursed Canaanites. Moses and Elijah, they are beneficiaries of a physical exodus from Egypt, a physical entrance into the land of Canaan.

We, beloved, we’re the beneficiaries of a spiritual exodus, the deliverance from the penalty and the power of sin, one day from the presence of sin. We’ve got deliverance from the dominion of Satan and his demons. We’ve got deliverance from

disease and sickness. We've got deliverance from the destructive forces of nature that oppress us in this fallen world. We've got deliverance from death itself, and even from the fear of death, all taken away. That's an exodus.

This goes back to the theme we've seen over and over in Luke's Gospel when Jesus said at the very beginning of his ministry, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." So we're encouraged about the reality of life after death, a glorified life after death. We're encouraged about the incredible privileges that are ours in the better exodus that Jesus won for us.

And finally, number three, third encouragement: This departure, this exodus, this spiritual deliverance, Jesus, it says, was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. It's the word, *plerouo*, means fulfillment, total completion. I love the word that the ESV translators chose to use here. They could have used

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a number of them, but they chose the word, accomplish. I love that. It's exactly right. It shows complete fulfillment, and it shows merit. He did it. This is Christ's accomplishment. It's what he won for us in the Cross.

In fact, the exodus described, here, the one he's about to accomplish, this departure doesn't just refer only to his death. It refers to the whole of his redemptive work. It talks about his death on the Cross, his burial in the tomb, his resurrection on the third day, his ascension to heaven in glory, all of which he accomplished and he fulfilled in Jerusalem. So much has happened already. We haven't even come to the best part, yet. We need Peter and John and James to wake up. And they're going to as we come back to the text next time. Let's pray.

Our Father, with that thought in mind, we just pray that you would keep us sober-minded and awake for the purpose of prayer, you'd help us to discipline ourselves for the sake of godliness, to help us to pursue holiness in the fear of Christ. We pray that you would remove from our affections all worldly, temporary, passing things, that our hearts might be enlarged to

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embrace the glory of Jesus Christ, that we'd meditate on him and worship him and give thanks to him for all that he has accomplished.

We thank you for the opportunity even now to celebrate that and remember that in the celebration of the Lord's Table. We pray that our hearts would be drawn to a holy and reverent consideration of what these elements mean, all to your glory in the name of Christ. Amen.