

# THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

**BIBLE TEXT:** Matthew 17 :1-9

LESSON 114 - JUNIOR COURSE

**MEMORY VERSE:** "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5).

## Bible Text in King James Version:

### **Matthew 17:1-9 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

<sup>2</sup> And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

<sup>3</sup> And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

<sup>4</sup> Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

<sup>5</sup> While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

<sup>6</sup> And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

<sup>7</sup> And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

<sup>8</sup> And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

<sup>9</sup> And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

## Bible References:

### Notes:

#### **Faith Tried**

In our study of Peter's confession we learned that the disciples definitely believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Peter had said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and he and the other disciples believed it. But God could look ahead and see that their faith would be sorely tried; and that on the night He would be betrayed in the Garden they would all forsake Him. Would they then remember Peter's confession? Would they still believe that Jesus was the Christ?

The disciples expected the Messiah to break the bands of Roman captivity and to make the Jews a free nation again. If Jesus did not set up a literal kingdom on earth at this time, would they still believe?

God knows that we are weak — we are but the dust of the earth — and He tries in many ways to help believers and honest doubters to have faith in Him. When John the Baptist was in prison, and his faith in Jesus was severely tried, Jesus did not condemn him but told His disciples to go and tell John of the works He was doing. Jesus knew that the testimony to actual miracles would encourage John's faith. When we become discouraged we shall find our faith strengthened by remembering what the Lord has done for us; and we may strengthen someone else's faith by telling of God's goodness to us.

#### **Need for Prayer**

About a week after Peter had made the emphatic statement that Jesus was the Son of God, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into a mountain to pray. Jesus many times went alone to pray, sometimes all night. It seemed that there was no one who could continue so long in prayer with Him. The night Jesus prayed in the Garden, He asked, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" He also said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matthew 26:40, 41). After Jesus had risen from the grave, and the Holy Spirit had come upon the disciples, they, too, realized the need for prayer. Peter exhorts the Christians to be sober, "and watch unto prayer" (I Peter 4:7).

#### **Heavenly Visitors**

On this occasion while Jesus prayed, Peter, James, and John went to sleep. As they slept heavenly visitors came to talk with Jesus. Angels sometimes came to strengthen Him — after the forty days of temptation in the wilderness, and in the Garden of Gethsemane — but this time they were men who had lived on earth and whose lives had a definite part in revealing God's plan of salvation to men. They were Moses and Elijah. When they had finished their work on earth they had gone to Heaven. Now they came back perhaps to talk with *Jesus* about His betrayal and crucifixion which would soon take place in Jerusalem.

When Peter, James, and John awoke they were awed by the radiant features of Jesus; and they recognized Moses and Elijah. Here was the Jesus with whom they walked daily, who ate bread with them, whom they entertained in their homes — all glorified, white and shining, brighter than an angel! And He was talking with two men from Heaven — and they could see it! They were so thrilled with this glimpse of heavenly things that they would have liked to remain there.

Sometimes when we pray until the glory of the Lord touches us we feel, too, that "it is good for us to be here." It seems as if we are at the very gates of Heaven and can almost look into the face of our Savior. Sometimes we almost feel that we are leaving this earth and going to be with Jesus. Then we can say with Peter, James, and John, "It is good for us to be here." If this is only a foretaste of the glory that shall be, think how wonderful our home in Heaven will be!

### **Christ's Glory**

The Apostle Paul tells us a little of the glory of Christ when he said: "By whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1:2-4). In spite of that, men who pretend to be Christians will deny that Jesus is the Son of God!

A day is coming when every knee shall bow before Jesus, and confess that He is the Son of God. Then He will rule the nations of the earth with a rod of iron, and His faithful children will rule with Him. Unto Him is given all power in Heaven and in earth. Some day He will rise up and shake terribly the earth. Then all men will recognize that power, but it will be too late to repent (Isaiah 2:17-21).

### **The Law and the Prophets**

The disciples wanted to build a tabernacle for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, so that they all might remain together to worship God. But suddenly a bright cloud came down around them, and they became frightened and fell down upon their faces to the ground. They heard the voice of God say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Moses had been a wonderful man in his day, and God honored him. It was through Moses that the Ten Commandments had been given, and all the instructions for the tabernacle worship. We remember that all the sacrifices typified Jesus who would come as the Lamb of God to die for our sins; the Tabernacle and all its furnishings, too, pictured some phase of Christ and His work. The Law was a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." And here was Christ! The Law that Moses had taught had been fulfilled with the coming of Jesus, and now the people must listen to Him. A greater than Moses was here; and the words He spoke were even a better covenant than that which God had spoken amidst the thunderings on Mount Sinai, because Jesus was ushering in a new dispensation, the Gospel period (Hebrews 8:6-11).

Elijah represented the prophets who, Jesus said, prophesied of Him. Every prophet spoke of the coming of Jesus, because God inspired them to write such prophecies. When the Jews insisted that Abraham was their father, and their religion was based on the Old Testament, which they had, Jesus said that if they had really understood the Scriptures they would have believed on Him, because "they are they which testify of me"

(John 5:39). At another time Jesus said, "Abraham rejoiced to **see** My day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). And Job, who also lived in the early days of Abraham's time, said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19: 25). The Psalmist even prophesied many of the words which Jesus would say when He came to earth hundreds of years after his time. Even Balaam, the false prophet, was moved of God to say: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17).

All these prophecies were of Jesus — and here He was! Was there any

more need for the prophets to tell about Him? Was there any more need for the Law as a schoolmaster to point men to the Christ who *Was* already here? We now have the Holy Spirit to teach us about Jesus (John 16:13).

When the disciples had courage to lift their faces from the ground, they saw no one but Jesus. And the voice of God rang in their ears, "Hear him." The prophecies had been fulfilled; the Law had been fulfilled. Now they must hear Jesus.

### **Christ's Deity**

Few people today are listening to Jesus. He is speaking to us through the New Testament Scriptures, teaching us that He was born in a manger, of the Virgin Mary. He was the divine Son of God. In the lesson on Peter's confession we learned that the disciples declared without a doubt that Jesus was divine. In the first chapter of John, he wrote, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." This surely proved that John knew He was the Son of God. Paul said of Jesus that He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). Jesus proved that He was divine by living again after He was crucified, which no man could do. Even the evil spirits recognized Jesus: "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment Us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29).

Not all the people today believe that Jesus was the divine Son of God. They say He was a good man, a great teacher, that the blood He shed on Calvary was no more than the blood of an ordinary man, and had no power to wash away our sins. Of such people Paul said: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:11, 12). No one is going to go to Heaven who does not believe that Jesus is the divine Son of God.

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 Who went into the mountain with Jesus to pray?
- 2 What did they do instead of praying?
- 3 What happened to Jesus as He prayed?
- 4 Who came to visit Him?
- 5 What position had these visitors had when they were on earth?
- 6 Why did God want the disciples to hear Jesus?
- 7 Give some references that prove that Jesus was the Son of God.