

将来荣耀的预览——马可福音 9:1-8

A Preview of the Coming Glory—Mark 9:1-8

Introduction, Outline

- Bible verses: Mark 8:31-9:8; 1 Thessalonian 4:15-18
- Mark 9:1-8
And Jesus was saying to them, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power. “Six days later, Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. 5Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified. Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!” All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.
- Hope for the future can motivate us today; desire for a future goal will motivate you to pursue it diligently today. When such pursuit involves a high price to be paid, you will need a strong hope for the future to motivate you to pay the price. That’s why Jesus here is giving His disciples a preview of the coming glory.
- Outline:
Title: A Preview of the Coming Glory
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Background (Preceding Text)

- In previous verses, Jesus told disciples that “Son of Man must suffer many things ...and be killed” (Mark 8:31) and that all His followers “must deny himself, take up his cross” also (Mark 8:34). Facing such a challenge, the disciples need a hope of glory to encourage their faith and help them to continue to follow Jesus.

Forenotice (v.1)

- “will not taste death“: this implies that death is not the end, but it’s just a taste-like experience. Hebrews 2:9 said Jesus “taste death for everyone” and 6:4 said that some unbelievers “have tasted of the heavenly gift.”

- “some of those who are standing here”: implying that others here would only see the kingdom of God after they have tasted death. That is, after their resurrection, obviously. Death is never the end for believers. The “some” here specifically refers to the three disciples mentioned later.
- “Kingdom of God ... come with power”: Some say it’s Jesus’ resurrection; some say it’s the Pentecost; some say it’s the work of the church today; some even say it’s the second coming of Christ. But the disciples’ own interpretation of the statement is clearly the transfiguration. This is where the authority and power of the kingdom of God come in a mighty way.

【Significance】 this is a preview of the glory of the coming kingdom. Though it’s not the final complete kingdom, it does signify the certainty of the coming of the complete kingdom. Therefore, don’t worry about having to taste death now.

Transfiguration (v.2)

- “Peter, James, and John”: The Old Testament law says by two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed (Deuteronomy 19:15; cf. Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1, and 1 Peter 5:19).
- “brought them up on a high mountain”: The south part of Mount Hermon. At its bottom is Caesarea Philippi where Peter confessed Jesus as Christ. In the Old Testament, God often appears on the top of mountains.
- “He was transfigured”: No detailed description of the process, as the disciples all fell asleep (Luke 9:32). The process isn’t important, the key point is that Jesus revealed His divine glory to the disciples.

【Analogy】 This word is used two other times in the Bible, both to describe the transformation of the believer’s sanctification process. Romans 12:2 asks Christians to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind”, and 2 Corinthians 3:18 says we “are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory” as we behold Christ’s glory. Sanctification is the transformation of the spiritual images to be more like the Lord, so that the glory of the new self-created by God (Eph 4:24) may be revealed.

Glory (v.3)

- “His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them”: Matthew says Jesus’ “face shone like the sun,” and John saw the same in the Revelation that Jesus’ “face was like the sun shining in its strength.” In the Bible, the image of God is always associated with some kind of light.

【Reference】 Exodus 3:2; 16:10; 24:16; 33:18-23; 40:34; Numbers 14:10; 16:19; 42:20:6; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Habakkuk 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Revelations 21:23-24.....

2 Corinthians 4:6 “For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” This glorious sight we see by faith, the disciples saw it with their naked eyes.

Significance (v.4)

- “And Elijah appeared to them along with Moses...”: The disciples had never seen them, so they must have inferred their identity from their conversation with Jesus. Moses is the representative of the Law, and Elijah represents the prophets. Moses gave the law, and Elijah defended the law. What about Jesus? Jesus fulfills the law.

Matthew 5:17 “Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.”

Romans 10:4 “For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

What were the Old Testament saints talking about with Jesus? They were talking about “His departure” (Luke 9:31). This is the topic that the disciples just cannot take (Matthew 16:22)! There is a great contrast between the glory before their eyes and the message of death in their ears. The two just cannot blend in their mind, for they have not yet seen the glory of Jesus' sacrifice. There is no glory without the cross, and there is no gospel of the kingdom without the cross. The most crucial step of Jesus fulfilling the law is his sacrificial death on the cross.

Reaction (v.5-6)

- “Rabbi, it is good that we are here” Peter said this because “he did not know what to answer” and he didn't even “realize what he was saying” (Luke 9:33). Peter was speaking gibberish, incoherent and illogical.

【Analysis】 Even gibberish can reveal subconscious thoughts. Peter's subconscious thought here was to skip the cross and directly enter glory. Why bother mentioning death? We're already here in glory! Let's just stay here! Let's make tabernacles and celebrate the feast of the tabernacles in this glorious kingdom (cf. Joshua 14:15)

【Imagine】 Although it's gibberish, think about our reaction when we get to see Jesus come again! When Jesus descends from heaven in glory, might we also be so excited as to speak gibberish? Although Peter messed up the timing of the coming Kingdom, the content is correct. The glorious eternal kingdom of God has always been the foundational hope for saints across all generations.

Hebrews 11:16 “ But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.””

1 Thessalonians 4:17: “Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

【Eternal Hope】 When you suddenly find yourself in this glories gathering in the air, what do you think your response would be? “Lord, it is great for us to be here! Let's stay here forever!” And you'd be right. This time, we *will* stay there forever.

- “they became terrified”: The glory of God is a soul-searching light that finds our deepest sin. “Terrified” is a strong word in the intensified form, which is only used twice in the Bible. In its other usage, it describes the terror of God's God judgment on sin. (Hebrews 12:21)

【Insight】 Peter was terrified because he could not believe that Jesus was about to die. Without Jesus' death, there'd be no atonement for sin; and without atonement for sin, there'd be no way for sinners to not be terrified by God. Only by trusting in the whole gospel can our fear be removed.

Instruction (v.7)

- “a cloud formed, overshadowing them”: It's not a dark cloud, but a “bright cloud” (Matthew 17:5). Imagine the plane flying through the clouds. The heavenly Father opened His mouth in the cloud and spoke directly at them.
- “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!”: Listen to what He has to say! Don't be all about expressing your personal opinion! This command implies a rebuke to the disciples. They weren't paying any attention to what Jesus was saying! Jesus was talking about His departure with Moses and Elijah. Such an important message and they weren't even listening! Instead, they just wanted to express their foolish thoughts. When Jesus says, “I am about to suffer and die.” You must not say “Lord, may it never be!” **When He says “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me”, you must not expect anything more comfortable than the cross for following Jesus!**

Reality (v.8)

- “All at once they looked.....” Moses and Elijah disappeared in a sudden, and Jesus hid back His divine glory and returned to his human appearance—genuine, humble, weak human flesh. The full glory is yet in the future. Here is just a small-scale preview. The purpose is to strengthen the faith of the disciples, so that they can face what was to happen next.
- **Philippians 3:20-21** “**20** or our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”