

Luke 9:28-36 – Seeing Jesus' True Glory (The “Transfiguration”)

Do we see Jesus as he really is? Jesus's disciples had seen him being rejected – and not going to Jerusalem as a political and earthly king. Many people did not say that Jesus was the Messiah. But his apostles did believe (9:18-20). Jesus told them that he would go to Jerusalem to die, before he rose again in glory and his kingdom would come. Now, for a short time, Jesus showed his disciples just a small sight of who he really is. He revealed himself to them. Have you, by faith and by the Spirit, seen Jesus as he really is?

1. Jesus revealed: the glory of who he is (v28-29)

Jesus went up a mountain, and took his three closest disciples with him. The same three had been with him when he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (8:51). Some disciples are closer to Jesus than others. Do you want to be closer? He went with them alone, to pray – which he did often (do you?). It seems they prayed through the night. Then, God granted an amazing answer. The curtain was drawn back. These three were allowed to see the true glory of Jesus. He has the glory of the Creator of the world. He is the awesome Son of God with *all* power. Why did he show them this now? Because the cross was coming, and the resurrection. It encouraged them to trust him – and then to witness to him. Why did he not show them before? Because he wanted them first to believe and confess. The Bible's way is first faith, and afterwards sight. We must trust God, and wait and keep trusting – and then one day we too will see.

2. Jesus revealed: the glory of his work at Calvary (v30-31)

Two other men appeared at the same time – Moses and Elijah. Why them? Moses was the giver of the law, and Elijah was the greatest of the prophets. Together, they stood for all the law and the prophets. They appeared in glory, because those who die with faith in God's Messiah go to a place of glory. They rest and have no troubles, but only holy joy. What did they speak about? They spoke about what Jesus would do on the cross when he died. They spoke about his “departure” or “exit”; the Greek word is “Exodus”. Moses knew about an “Exodus” - he once led God's people out of slavery in Egypt. But Jesus was doing something far greater. His death would lead God's people out of spiritual slavery to sin and Satan. His blood would wash away sin and make all nations and the whole creation new again. Elijah preached that Israel should return to God's law. By his death, Jesus would take away sin and open the way to give us God's Spirit so that we could walk in his ways forever. Jesus crucified is the whole Christian gospel. All the law and prophets lead to him. There is nothing else. To learn Christianity, you must go to the cross of Jesus.

3. Jesus revealed: the Son of God; the one way to the Father (v32-36)

Peter spoke. Sometimes, it is better to be quiet! But he suggested they make a place for all 3 men to stay. Maybe he thought the kingdom of God would come from this mountain, now. But Jesus is not one man together with others. Moses and Elijah also needed Jesus to die for them on the cross. Now, the voice of God came. It spoke two things: Jesus is God's beloved Son. Is he beloved to you? Secondly: listen to him! God has no other message for us, except in Jesus. Listen to Jesus! Christianity is not about behaving well and getting powerful blessings. It is about trusting in Jesus' death, and following him as the risen Lord. Peter (2 Peter 1:16-19) later told us that having the word of God (the Bible) is even better than such visions; it is a safe guide into glory.