

Stories of the Master

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~ A Night of Vision and Glory ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read Matthew 16:21-17:8.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story.

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Matthew 16:21-17:8 NASB	Matthew 16:21-17:8 NLT
<p>²¹ From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. ²² Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid <i>it</i>, Lord! This shall never happen to You." ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."</p> <p>²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.</p> <p>²⁸ "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."</p> <p>¹⁷ Six days later Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and *led them up on a high mountain by themselves. ² And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. ³ And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴ Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son,</p>	<p>²¹ From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead.</p> <p>²² But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. "Heaven forbid, Lord," he said. "This will never happen to you!"</p> <p>²³ Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."</p> <p>²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. ²⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. ²⁶ And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds. ²⁸ And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom."</p> <p>¹⁷ Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. ² As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. ³ Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.</p>

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<p>with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"⁶ When the disciples heard <i>this</i>, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.⁷ And Jesus came to <i>them</i> and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid."⁸ And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.</p>	<p>⁴ Peter exclaimed, "Lord, it's wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I'll make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."</p> <p>⁵ But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him."⁶ The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.</p> <p>⁷ Then Jesus came over and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid."⁸ And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.</p>
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2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.

- No one knows which mountain Jesus went to. Here is what the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* says about the location of the Transfiguration.

"A long-standing tradition places it at Mt. Tabor. Since isolation would have been difficult here (there is evidence that a Roman fortress existed at the summit around the time of Christ ... and since it is at a considerable distance from Caesarea Philippi, which is the location of the immediately preceding event in the Gospels, it seems wise to seek another site. Mt. Hermon, near Caesarea Philippi, offers a possibility. Problems attend this theory also, however, including the height of 2,813 meters or 9,232 feet (difficult to reach if the group went near the top) and the improbability (though not impossibility) that upon his descent from mountain some 30 miles north of the Sea of Galilee Jesus would have met a crowd that even included scribes (Mk 9:14) There is another mountain site that was more isolated than Mt. Tabor and more accessible than Mt. Hermon. That is Mount Meiron, located in Galilee some eight or so miles northwest of the Sea of Galilee. It is, in fact, within Galilee itself and boasts the highest peak within Palestine proper. Meiron later became a center of Jewish mysticism and some stories developed there about the future coming of the Messiah in company with Elijah. It would have been natural for crowds, including scribes, to have been near its base...."

- The statement, "This is My Beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased" was used at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:13-17) and is a combination of Psalm 2:8 and Isaiah 42:1 emphasizing Jesus' royalty and his servant-like qualities. The combination of the two is a strong indication that royalty arrives through humble service.
- Jesus calls Peter two kinds of stone. In the previous episode where the Father had revealed the identity of Jesus to Peter, Jesus called him, a stone. But here, where Peter speaks from the spirit of Satan, Jesus calls him a stumbling block.
- Why Moses and Elijah? Moses was buried by God and Elijah caught up into heaven alive. Moses promised that another prophet would come (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). Malachi promised that Elijah would return (3:1; 4:5). Moses and Elijah had divine revelations on a

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mountain. The bright cloud overshadows them all as the Shekinah Glory on Sinai and the chariots of God to Elijah when he ascended to heaven. Moses face shone when he descended from the mountain. Yet, in this vision, God told everyone to listen to Jesus!

Answer these reflective questions.

Why do you think Jesus gave his disciples this vision of his glory? Do you think it had anything to do with his telling them that he was going to Jerusalem and would die? Would this vision have encouraged them?

Why do you think Jesus took only three of the twelve with him to the mountain?

Why do you think that Moses, the law-giver, and Elijah, the prophet, appeared with Jesus on the mountain?

When the cloud surrounded them all, the Voice said, "This is My Son, My Chosen One, listen to Him." What was God saying to Peter, James, and John? Is there a message for us as well?
