

# Stories of the Master

Web – [www.StoriesoftheMaster.com](http://www.StoriesoftheMaster.com) email – [info@WGSministries.org](mailto:info@WGSministries.org)

## ~ A Disappointing Day ~

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

1. Read Matthew 17:9-21 and Mark 9:9-29.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

### 1. Read the text of the story.

**New American Standard Bible (NASB)** Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by [The Lockman Foundation](http://www.Lockman.org)  
**New Living Translation (NLT)** *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation

Matthew 17:9-21 NASB	Matthew 17:9-20 NLT
<p><sup>9</sup> As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." <sup>10</sup> And His disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" <sup>11</sup> And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; <sup>12</sup> but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.</p> <p><sup>14</sup> When they came to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, falling on his knees before Him and saying, <sup>15</sup> "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. <sup>16</sup> I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me." <sup>18</sup> And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once.</p> <p><sup>19</sup> Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" <sup>20</sup> And He *said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. <sup>21</sup> [But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.]"</p> <p><sup>22</sup> And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men;</p>	<p><sup>9</sup> As they went back down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."</p> <p><sup>10</sup> Then his disciples asked him, "Why do the teachers of religious law insist that Elijah must return before the Messiah comes?"</p> <p><sup>11</sup> Jesus replied, "Elijah is indeed coming first to get everything ready. <sup>12</sup> But I tell you, Elijah has already come, but he wasn't recognized, and they chose to abuse him. And in the same way they will also make the Son of Man suffer."<sup>13</sup> Then the disciples realized he was talking about John the Baptist.</p> <p><sup>14</sup> At the foot of the mountain, a large crowd was waiting for them. A man came and knelt before Jesus and said, <sup>15</sup> "Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. <sup>16</sup> So I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn't heal him."</p> <p><sup>17</sup> Jesus said, "You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and it left him. From that moment the boy was well.</p> <p><sup>19</sup> Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, "Why couldn't we cast out that demon?"</p> <p><sup>20</sup> "You don't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible."</p>

# Stories of the Master

Web – [www.StoriesoftheMaster.com](http://www.StoriesoftheMaster.com) email – [info@WGSministries.org](mailto:info@WGSministries.org)

## 2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.

Many Bible scholars have noted the similarity between the Exodus Story and the Transfiguration Story. Compare these events.

<b>The Exodus</b>	<b>The Transfiguration</b>
God delivers his people from Egypt	Jesus speaks of his “exodus” with Moses and Elijah
God takes his people to a mountain	Jesus takes his followers to a mountain
Moses goes up to the mountain	Moses is on the mountain
Moses takes only a few with him part way up and leaves the rest at the base of the mountain	Jesus takes only three with him and takes the other nine at the base of the mountain
The cloud of glory appears on the mountain	The cloud of glory appears on the mountain
God speaks from the cloud	God speaks from the cloud
Moses comes down from the mountain and his people are in unbelief	Jesus comes down from the mountain and his people are in unbelief

We also learn these insights from *A Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* and from the *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*.

- The prophecies of Elijah coming are found in Malachi 3:1 and 4:5
- With the boy’s illness, his family was in jeopardy of losing their status in their village community. They would face the possibility of being ostracized and losing any land they possessed. The boy would not be able to marry and the father would not be able to perpetuate his family line.
- Ancient people recognized that some prophecies could be figurative. The prophecy of Elijah coming could have been a figurative prophecy with John taking his role as the new Elijah. In the Greek and Roman world, people would speak of a “new Caesar” or a “new Alexander.”
- The boy had epileptic symptoms and some epilepsy would be viewed as physical only for Matthew distinguishes between epilepsy and demonic activity in 4:24.
- Moving a mountain was a Hebrew idiom for doing something very difficult, or even impossible.

### Answer these reflective questions.

**Why do you think Jesus did not want Peter, James, and John to tell anyone about the events on the Mount of Transfiguration?**

---

---

---

# Stories of the Master

Web – [www.StoriesoftheMaster.com](http://www.StoriesoftheMaster.com) email – [info@WGSministries.org](mailto:info@WGSministries.org)

**Jesus said, “O, unbelieving and perverted generation. How long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you?” Who was Jesus saying this to, to the scribes, his disciples, the crowds, or the father? Would you describe the generation in which you live as unbelieving and perverted?**

---

---

---

**What do you think the father meant when he said, “I believe, please help my unbelief.”**

---

---

---

**Jesus told the disciples they could not cast out the spirit because of the littleness of their faith. Yet he said all that was needed was faith the size of a mustard seed. How much faith is required to do the works of God? How big is your faith? What is the relationship between prayer and doing the works of God?**

---

---

---