

Lesson 29

Listen To Jesus

Icebreaker:

Do you have a desire to know the future? Why?

Introduction:

Upon ending the discourse of His impending death and the rise of the church Jesus left the disciples with a mysterious but hopeful statement. *“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.”* At that point the disciples had no idea what Jesus meant by the statement but within a few days three of them would experience it first-hand.

It happened when Jesus asked Peter, James and John to accompany Him on a trek up the high mountain¹ to pray. We know that this event occurred early in the Jewish month of Tishri, which is the 7th month² on God’s calendar. After the steep arduous ascent the disciples were weary and fell asleep. As the disciples slept Jesus prayed and while praying His appearance changed. His face shined like the sun and His clothing became white as light. The kingdom of God had appeared with power and glory.

Reading The Scripture:

The Transfiguration

Matthew 17:1-3, Mark 9:1-4, Luke 9:28-32

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible, authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: “Follow Me: A Message from God”, a journey with Jesus)

30 AD, September 16 - Feast of Trumpets

And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray. And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him.

Feast of Trumpets. Today Jews call this Rosh Hashanah (New Year) although the Biblical name is Yom Teruah (Day of Sounding the Trump or Day of Warning). This feast also has two other names that represent

¹ Scholars are divided in their opinion as to which mountain is the Mount of Transfiguration. Some say Hermon while others favor Tabor. I lean towards Mount Hermon for the following reasons. Jesus and His disciples had been spending time in the area of Caesarea Philippi, which lies at the southern foot of Mt Hermon. Mt Tabor on the other hand is fifty miles south of Caesarea Philippi, about six miles southeast of Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth. The Scriptures indicate that it was a high mountain. Mt Hermon is the highest mountain in Israel at 9,232 feet whereas Mt Tabor is a modest 1,929 feet in elevation.

² The fact that the “transfiguration” occurred early in the seventh month can be determined from Scripture. By using the gospels of Luke and John in conjunction, the next major event to occur after the transfiguration was Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth), which began on the 15th day of the seventh month. The second witness is Peter’s statement when he saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus, *“let us make three tabernacles”*. The tabernacles that Peter was talking about were sukkahs, temporary tent-like structures made out of tree branches. The Jews usually started erecting them immediately after the Day of Atonement, which was on the 10th day of the seventh month. They lived in these temporary shelters during the entire Feast of Tabernacles.

themes connected with it. They are Yom Hazikaron (Day of Memorial or Remembrance) and Yom Haddin (Day of Judgment). All of these names point to God's sovereignty and kingship while declaring that men should repent and prepare for His coming.

Matthew 17:4-13, Mark 9:5-13, Luke 9:33-36

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And it came about, as these were parting from Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah" - not realizing what he was saying. And while he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ""This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!" And when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were much afraid. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus Himself alone. And 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." And they seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead might mean. And they asked Him, saying, "Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; 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." Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

The Commands:

1. **THIS IS MY SON, MY CHOSEN ONE; LISTEN TO HIM!**
2. Arise, and do not be afraid.
3. Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.

The Lesson:

As we begin this lesson we must remember that what the disciples saw was a **vision** ... not the **real** thing. The vision was a portrayal of future events, much as was the vision given to the Apostle John on the Island of Patmos many years later. And without that revelation we would be limited in our understanding just as the disciples were. What transpired on the Mt of Transfiguration gives us many clues about the future.

When the disciples awoke from their sleep, they saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. From this we can make several observations:

1. *Moses and Elijah are the two witnesses of the book of Revelation. "And I will grant authority to my **two witnesses**, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." (Revelation 11:3)*
2. *Moses and Elijah are "the two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth." (Revelation 11:4)*
 - a) *The olive trees are referenced in the book of Zechariah. He said to me, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; also **two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side.**" Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, "What are these, my lord?" Then he said, "These are the **two***

anointed ones who are **standing by the Lord** of the whole earth.” (Zechariah 4:2-4 and 11)

- b) *Moses and Elijah, as the witnesses are called lampstands because they represent the Law and the Prophets, which provide heavenly light to live by.*
3. *On the Mt of Transfiguration we see Moses, representing the Law and Elijah, representing the Prophets speaking with Jesus, the Word of God. Both Moses the Law and Elijah the Prophets testify of Jesus the Word of God.*
4. *As witnesses of Jesus, Moses and Elijah also represent the following:*

Moses

The Father

Truth

Domestic Olive Tree

Israel, who was given the Law

Those who have died

Elijah

The Holy Spirit

Spirit

Wild Olive Tree

Church, who was given the Spirit

Those who are living

*Jesus had told the disciples that some of them would not die until they had **seen** the kingdom of God, **after** it had come in power.³ In the vision both Moses and Elijah appeared in their **glorified** state and the apostles knew their identities. This indicates that the time of the vision is **after** the two witnesses of the book of Revelation are killed and resurrected from the dead. (Revelation 11:7)*

- 1. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will **all be changed**, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the **last trumpet**; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable**, and we **will be changed**. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “**DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY**.” (1 Corinthians 15:49-54)*
- 2. None of the disciples had seen Moses or Elijah on earth before, so they wouldn’t have known them on sight. However, the disciples did know who they were. This indicates that their heavenly identity was revealed to the apostles.*
- 3. The book of Revelation also supports the time of the vision because the next major event to occur after the witnesses’ death and resurrection is the sounding of the seventh and last trump. With the blowing of the trumpet loud voices in heaven declare, “*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever.*” This is the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ on earth or “the kingdom of God after it has come in power.”*

Exactly when, Jesus will begin His reign on the earth has been a subject of much debate. The vision doesn’t tell us exactly when this event will take place but it does give the time of year for

³ “The kingdom of God after it has come in power” is just another way of describing the millennial reign of Christ on the earth.

its occurrence ... early in the seventh month of God's calendar. This was derived from Peter's statement about the construction of tabernacles (sukkahs) for Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

There are two significant feasts of the Lord that occur early in the seventh month of Tishri. On the first day of the month is Yom Teruah, the Day of Blowing the Trumpet and it is a Sabbath Day. The day is also called Rosh Ha Shannah (Head of the Year or New Years Day), Yom Hazikaron (Day of Remembrance) and Yom Haddin (Day of Judgment). On the tenth day of the month is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. It is also a Sabbath Day and the only fast that God declared. Following these two feasts of the Lord is Tabernacles, which begins on the fifteenth day of the month. The first day of the feast and the eighth day are also Sabbath Days. From the evidence of Scripture I believe that the "transfiguration" occurred on Yom Teruah, the Day of Blowing the Trumpet. Hence the beginning of Jesus reign on earth would begin at the same time.

1. The book of Revelation says that His reign begins just prior to the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet blast. On Yom Teruah trumpets are blown throughout the day and as the day draws to a close the **last trump** is sounded with the note Tekiah Godola ... an extended blast. In theory this note does not **end** until it is blown again ten days later at the end of the Day of Atonement.
2. The prophecy in chapter seven of the book of Daniel concerning the Son of Man supports Yom Teruah as well.
 - *I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was blaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and **the books were opened**. Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, **with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man** was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. **And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.***
 - The Hebrew teaching is that on Yom Teruah, God opens three books:
 - The Book of Life** - those who are found therein are sealed for life.
 - The Book of the Dead** - those who are found therein are wicked and sealed for judgment.
 - The Book of Repentance** - this book includes most people whose works are neither good nor bad and they have until Yom Kippur to repent. This is called the **sealing**. Jews wish each other a good sealing for the year to come, and then say, "Next year in Jerusalem."

3. On the Mt of Transfiguration, God, himself spoke out loud saying, *“This is My Son, My chosen one, Listen to Him.”* This is the Ancient of Days bestowing dominion, glory and a kingdom upon His Son, the Son of Man.
4. The disciples didn’t come down from the mountain until the following day indicating that it might have been the Sabbath, therefore required to rest.
5. The “transfiguration” probably **didn’t** occur on the Day of Atonement because that would have given Jesus only one week of travel to reach Jerusalem by the middle of the feast of Tabernacles. The journey from Mt. Hermon would have been five or six days which makes it possible for Jesus to do. However, in order to accomplish the intervening events it would indicate a somewhat longer period of time.
6. On the day following the “transfiguration” we see that the disciples could not cast a demon out of one child. Jesus explains to them that that kind of demon did not come out but by prayer and fasting. This indicates that the disciples had not been in prayer and fasting on the previous day, which eliminates the Day of Atonement because both prayer and fasting are requirements of that feast day.

While Jesus, Moses and Elijah were speaking a **bright cloud** overshadowed the whole party. The cloud is called the **Shekinah** in Hebrew. It is the **cloud of glory** that surrounds God himself. This cloud is seen several times in Scripture. It was the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that led the Israelites out of Egypt. It was the smoke and fire that enveloped Mt Sinai from which the trumpets sounded and God’s voice was heard speaking the Ten Commandments. And it was the smoke that filled Solomon’s Temple at the dedication ceremony.

As the cloud began to descend upon the whole party God spoke a commandment to the disciples, *“This is My Son, My chosen one, **Listen⁴ to Him.**”* The disciples fell on their faces and were terrified but they got the point; they needed to do the things that Jesus commanded them to do. Immediately, in the twinkling of an eye, Moses, Elijah and the cloud disappeared. This reminds us of the resurrection of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:12 *“And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then **they went up into heaven in the cloud.**”* When the vision ended Jesus touched His disciples and told them to get up and not be afraid.

Group Discussion:

1. Have you ever had a vision? If you have, what was it like?
How does the Old Testament portion of scripture end? Read the last three verses (Malachi 4:4-6).
2. Why do you think Jesus told the disciples not to tell anyone the vision until after He had risen from the dead?
3. After Peter made his statement about building the three sukkahs, why do you think the Scriptures add this commentary, “not realizing what he was saying”?
 - Peter did not realize He was seeing a vision but thought it was real.
 - It was the Sabbath; therefore he would not be permitted to build the sukkahs.
 - The Day of Atonement had not come yet; therefore by tradition he should wait until the day following it before beginning his construction.
 - Another reason?

⁴ Hear and obey.

The Point Of The Lesson:

Hear and obey Jesus now ... before He returns!

Application:

Read Malachi 3:16 - 4:6

Read Daniel 7

Read Revelation 11