

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

I. QUAR., LESSON V., FEB. 3, LUKE 9:28-36.

Parallel Accounts – Matt. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13.

Golden Text – "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." – Matt. 17:5.

THIS lesson should begin with verse 22. Verses 22-26 tell us how the Lord disclosed to his disciples the intelligence of the tragic end of his life which he must soon meet, and assured them of his resurrection on the third day. He then intimated that his disciples would not be exempt from similar persecution and counselled faithfulness under even such trials, assuring them of an abundant reward in the glory of his Kingdom at his second advent.

Verse 27 was a prophecy which received an almost immediate fulfilment, as the narrative of this lesson proves.

Verses 28-36. We have the Lord's own words to prove that the incident here recorded was a "vision," – not a reality. "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, 'Tell *the vision* to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.'" – Matt. 17:9.

The import of this "vision" is also clearly indicated by the Apostle Peter. (2 Pet. 1:16-18.) He declares it to have been a "vision" of the coming glory of Christ's Kingdom, saying, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eye-witnesses of his majesty*; for he received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, *when we were with him in the holy mount.*"

As a "vision" it is to be understood as a symbolic representation of the glory of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. The changed appearance of the Lord's person and clothing were symbolic of his coming personal glory. And the glorious appearance also of Moses and Elias represented the association with the Lord in the glory of his Kingdom of the two companies from among men who shall constitute the earthly and the heavenly phases of the Kingdom. Moses represented the earthly phase and Elias the spiritual or heavenly phase. Here in symbolic "vision" was represented the established Kingdom, referred to in verse 27 – "I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God." It was not the actual Moses and Elias, remember, for this was a "vision," not a reality. (Jude 9; Rom. 5:12; Eccl. 9:5; Psa. 146:4; Job 14:21; John 3:13; Acts 2:34; Psa. 90:3.) Nor was their resurrection due then: "They [the ancient worthies of the Jewish dispensation] without us [the Church] shall not be made perfect." (Heb. 11:40.) Their resurrection tarries, therefore, until the second advent of Christ and the full establishment of the spiritual phase of the Kingdom – the Gospel Church.

Verse 31 records the theme of the three glorified ones, which was the great transaction shortly to be accomplished at Jerusalem – the crucifixion of the Lord, the payment of our ransom price.

The object of the "vision" was probably two-fold – for the comfort and strengthening of the Lord, and for the enlightenment of his chosen witnesses. The communication with the Lord concerning his decease was probably while the disciples were asleep (verse 32), and was doubtless, therefore, specially for his own comfort. The "vision" came in answer to the Lord's prayer, and though it was not understood by the disciples at the time, it was afterwards a blessed inspiration to them, and should be to us also. Yet, says Peter, "we have a *more* sure word of prophecy [concerning the Kingdom and its glory. It is spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began – Acts 3:19-21], whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a

light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." (2 Pet. 1:19.) The "vision" was a vivid and refreshing symbolic view of the Kingdom, but without the "sure word of prophecy" it would have been unintelligible.

Verses 34,35. Here was another testimony by a voice from heaven to the claim of our Lord to be the Son of God, and pleasing and acceptable to him. At his birth the heavenly messengers announced him; at his baptism the voice from heaven declared him the acceptable Son of God; and here, very near the close of his human existence, he is again proclaimed the acceptable and well-pleasing Son. **[R1761 : page 23]**

Verse 36. "And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone." The "vision," the voice and the cloud had all passed away, and the natural conditions were again realized, while the lessons of that solemn hour remained to gain a yet broader significance when, by and by, after Pentecost, they would receive the anointing of the spirit, and understand its significance.

Thus with line upon line, and precept upon precept, the blessed truths of God concerning his glorious benevolent plan were riveted upon the hearts and minds of his disciples; and they shall be upon ours also as we bring ourselves more and more into communion with his word.
