

## Mark 9:1-8

### “Glory through the veil of humanity”

- I.     **Introduction**
- II.    **Vs. 1 A preview**
- III.   **Vs. 2-8 Fourfold impact of the transfiguration**

#### I.     **Introduction**

One Greek scholar listed the first rule of scripture interpretation as: “*Ignoring all chapter divisions*”. All chapters and verse numbering were added at a much later date: (*Chapter’s were added in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and verse numbers were added in the 16<sup>th</sup> century*) and in both cases they were added for ease of referencing. **The problem is that though they have aided in finding a specific verse, they have been guilty of adding confusion to what they referenced.** Such is the case in this chapter division as verse 1 of chapter 9 should have been the last verse of chapter 8. Look at this section we note that over the course of a few days Jesus had spoken to His disciples about the cross and now He will speak them about the crown!

#### II.    **Vs. 1 A preview**

Vs. 1 In verse 38 Jesus was speaking to the people and His disciples concerning the process of discipleship which led to the motivation and expectation for making such a decision. In finishing this Jesus gave reference to the fact that He will be the person who alone will weigh the actions of people who have claimed they have accepted His invitation. In fact, Jesus even tells them “**WHEN**” this will take place as He says, “*when **I come** in the glory of **the** Father with the holy angels.” The fact that Jesus says that His coming will be “*with the holy angels*” tells us that the timing of this event is **NOT the***

**rapture** of the church but rather **His second coming** which ushers in His Millennial reign. We know this because according to scripture at the rapture He is not accompanied by angels. This aids us in our interpretation of verse 1 with regards to the meaning of the phrase, *“Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”* Jesus was saying that some standing with Him wouldn’t die until they saw the millennial reign of Christ. Though this answers the question as to timing it leaves us with yet another question because Peter, James and John are all dead. The answer to what this phrase means can only be speaking of transfiguration which was a picture or typology of the millennial reign of Christ. Jesus clearly knew that this event was approaching as He announced its arrival according to verse 2 six days prior to it happening, and in so doing He explained the reason for it before it ever took place. Further more He had done so after He had announced the cross and the threefold way of discipleship.

You can see the confusion this chapter division has caused some as they suggest that Jesus was some how predicting the time of His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming to occur within the life time of those who were present with Him and since they died Jesus was wrong. But when you remove this awful chapter division you see clearly that Jesus was referencing His transfiguration which was meant as a **“preview”** of His coming millennial reign in glory. We know this is the correct interpretation of this verse when we cross reference it to 2 Peter 1:16-17. There Peter along with James and John were at this very event and Peter writes, *“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from*

the Excellent Glory: "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This is also referenced in John's gospel chapter 1 verse 14 where John says that "*we beheld His glory*".

Now what's exciting to me is what this verse also implies as it relates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ in His glory and the kingdom of God being present with power. Jesus implies in the phrase "*some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power*" that at DEATH the believer WILL "*see the kingdom of God present with power*"! This of course is what other verses in the bible tells us as well, that when the believer dies we are instantly in the presence of the Lord. What is of further interest to me is that it appears that this has always been the case even prior to the the incarnation of Christ as Jude verse 14 references "*Enoch, the 7<sup>th</sup> from Adam*", who prophesied about: "*The Lord coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones*". Amazingly this is a reference to the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ but done prior to Jesus 1<sup>st</sup> coming. It seems as though as far as "*seeing the glory of the Son and the kingdom of God coming in power*" everything is pointing to the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming to experience that and there are two ways this can happen for the believer:

- Death
- Rapture

### III. Vs. 2-8 Fourfold impact of the transfiguration

Vs. 2-8 Through out these remaining verses Peter told Mark of four things that he never forgot about the event of Jesus' "transformation".

1. Vs. 2-3 **What Jesus looked like**: Mark doesn't tell us specifically which mountain Jesus, Peter, James and John ascended but most believe it to be Mount Hermon in Northern Israel. The Greek word Mark uses to describe Jesus transformation is "*metamorphoomai*" and it is where we get our English word "*Metamorphosis*". The word refers to the "*act of giving outward expression of*

***one's inner character.***" A full translation of this would be "***Jesus' outward expression was changed before them and it did so because it was a true representation of His inner nature.***" The usual outward expression of Jesus was the "*Man of Sorrows, the one acquainted with our grief*". But suddenly He was transformed into the Glory of Son of God the essence of Deity, which He had always possessed and it shone through the clay walls of His humanity and even through the garments He wore. It was the same dazzling radiance the angels saw in Jesus' preincarnate state that Paul describes in Philippians chapter 2 verse 6 where he wrote concerning Jesus that He was, "*in the form of God, and did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.*" Mark says in verse 3 "*His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.*" Matthew adds that "*His face shone like the sun*" and the point is that in this transfiguration Jesus' radiant glory was not borrowed like our moon from the sun's reflection instead His radiant glory came from within, from who He truly was. In fact, the word "*shining*" in Greek indicates that it was **ACTIVE** and as such a picture of what He will be like to all who see Him during His millennial reign. This was a momentary glimpse of His eternal glory that shone through the veil of His humanity. It is what Jesus would pray to the Father a year later in John chapter 17:5 that all of us Christians would experience when He said, "*And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*" ***One of the implications of the transfiguration is that Jesus clearly didn't need to die or pass through death to receive this glory.*** He clearly always possessed it and was able to pass back across the boundary of time into eternity with out passing through death. That reminds us about two things with regards to His death on the cross: It wasn't ever about Jesus regaining that which He lost because clearly He never lost it. Second, it reminds us that Jesus was clearly not afraid to loss His earthly life because it would never change or alter who He essentially was.

2. Vs. 4 **Who was with Jesus:** Mark records for us that Elijah and Moses appeared and were talking with Jesus. The Greek has it that they were actively engaged in a conversation with Him. I would have very much wished that Peter would have had the for thought to write that one down for us but for now we will just have to wait until we see Him face to face. There are several interesting details in this story that indirectly lead us to some interesting conclusions about eternity with Jesus.
  - Jesus makes no introductions as to whom these two men are and there were no photographs of them and yet they seemingly know exactly who they are. *That tells me that in glory there will be no need for introductions; we will just know each other instantly!*
  - Why are the two Elijah and Moses? Why not David and Abraham? Well I believe that they represent several things:
    - a. They represent the make up the two great sections of the Old Testament scriptures, Moses = the law and Elijah = the prophets. The law according to Paul's words in Galatians "*drove people to Jesus*" and the prophets "*provided the map and directions as to where to find Him*".

- b. They also represent the two ways which believers can enter into heaven: Moses = death and Elijah = caught up into heaven or the rapture. It is interesting that both ways are represented in the transfiguration of Jesus. It is interesting to speculate on Moses first arrival into the promise land. Moses had been left up on a mountain over looking the land of promise and was never allowed to enter in for his miss representation the character of God. But here in glory Moses gets to come into the land he could only see at a distance. That tells me that there are experiences here in this life that we may never get to fully understand that the prohibition will be forever lifted in heaven. Moses finally made it past his failures and so will we!
- c. Finally, though Mark doesn't record the conversation Luke 9:31 tells us that the general theme of the conversation was of "*Jesus decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*" Simply put the conversation centered upon Jesus soon exit from his earthly tabernacle back to His heavenly one by means of His death upon a cross for our sins. This causes me to wonder if the conversation wasn't specific with reference to each man: Moses conversation would have centered upon how Jesus soon sacrifice as the Lamb of God would be the fulfillment of what the animal sacrifices pointed to in the law. Elijah's conversation would have centered in upon how His death and resurrection was to fulfill all those prophecies in the scriptures.
3. Vs. 5-6 **The proposal of Peter**: The third interesting detail that Mark records is Peter's reaction to Jesus, Elijah and Moses discussing what Luke has told us was Jesus upcoming death in Jerusalem. What is interesting is that the Greek doesn't indicate that Peter had been a part of the discussion at all. In fact, the word "*answered*" is a compound word that means "*to give off one's judgment without being asked*". Peter then goes on to say, that it was "*good*" for the three of them to be there and uses a word for good that means, "*beautiful*" or excellent and then suggests that the three of them get started in making three tents for shelter. I'm certain that Peter wanted Mark to include the reason for this outburst was extreme fear. But nonetheless Peter had not been called to say anything and silence would have been a far better course of action that what he said. The assessment in all accounts where this story is recorded is that Peter spoke foolishly. I wonder if the point of Peter's words in fear was to suggest headquarters that would set in motion a worldwide movement? There are always two kinds of people in these kinds of situations: ***Those who have something to say and those who have to say something!*** And Peter like many of us at times falls into the later category.
4. Vs. 7-8 **The voice of God from the cloud**: Immediately after this foolish proposal we have the fourth and final recorded detail of the transfiguration. Mark writes of the suddenness of the appearance of the cloud and gives us a better understanding of the cloud as being a specific shape and size and not a vapor thus it speaks of the Shekinah Glory which guided Israel out of Egypt and then resided above the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. Matthew tells us that it was "*bright*

*cloud* that a voice spoke saying, “*This is My beloved son. Hear Him!*” The emphasis is upon two things: That Jesus is the Messiah God’s Son and that He is the beloved One. They are told to be constantly hearing Him and the word means more than just listening to be actively obeying what you heard. It appears that this came as a rebuke from the Father to Peter’s fear based response saying in essence, “*Peter, don’t put My Son on the same level as Moses and Elijah. Listen to Him!*” Jesus was the only One to fulfill all the predictions of the prophets and is the fulfilment of the law, He was no mere man like Moses and Elijah. There were three occasions direct from heaven concerning the work of Jesus: At His baptism, which when He began His ministry, where He was addressed “*You are My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” Here on the Mount of Transfiguration, where the Father speaks to correct Peter’s mistake. And the final is in John 12:28 where the Father responds to Jesus prayer to glorify His name, to which the Father responds, “*I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.*”

Vs. 8 There comes a time when all our searching for answers to the perplexing questions of life end at the feet of Jesus and you look around and He is the only one there.

The transfiguration is a confirmation that Jesus had lived a sinless life, and could have gone directly into heaven. He didn’t need to leave humanity with any explanation of justification for our sin before His departure to the Father. Instead Jesus came down from Mount Hermon, to climb Mount Calvary, the Mount of our redemption!