

Jesus Talks To Moses And Elijah

One of many great events during the ministry of Jesus is recorded in Matthew 17.1-13; Mark 9.2-13, and Luke 9.28-36. Imagine being a disciple of Jesus as He walks up a mountain. Perhaps it is Mount Hermon or Mount Tabor as the specific place is not named but it is a long walk up a steep embankment. As you get there you see Moses and Elijah! Perhaps Jesus identifies them to Peter, James, and John and the inspired writers know who they are.

What will they talk about? Why would they appear before Jesus? Moses speaks of going to Mount Sinai and receiving the Law of Moses. He speaks of leading the children in the wilderness for forty years and dealing with a group of hard headed people. Elijah could speak of his prophecies and others concerning the coming of the Messiah. Of having to deal with Ahab and Jezebel and their wickedness. Instead they talk about the upcoming death of Jesus. "Then behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9.30-31).

About a week before, Peter made the good confession recorded in Matthew 16.16ff. Jesus plainly spoke of His upcoming death and Peter rebuked the Son of God saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to you!" (Matthew 16.22). It was then Jesus referred to Peter as Satan and said, "Get behind Me Satan!" (Matthew 16.23a). What the disciples had a hard time understanding and accepting is the very topic under discussion at the Mount of Transfiguration!

The events on the Mount of Transfiguration left no doubt as to whom Jesus was. He is the Son of God. Moses and Elijah speaking about the death of the Messiah proves a number of things.

It proved Jesus came to die on the cross. Premillennialist claim Jesus came to establish a physical kingdom but was rejected by the Jews. As a result, the church became a substitute for the Kingdom. However, if such as true then why would the Law of Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament speak of His death? Just as importantly, why would the writers of the New Testament refer to the fulfillment of those Old Testament prophecies? One example is Jesus being crucified and the soldiers coming out to break Jesus' legs in order to hasten His death. Finding Him already dead they pierced His side with a spear. When blood and water came from His body they understood He was already dead. "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.' And again, another Scripture says, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced.'" (John 19.36).

It proves Jesus' death was essential for man to be saved. "By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all." (Hebrews 10.10) Jesus died for those who lived under the Law of Moses and even those who lived under the Patriarchal Dispensation. The promise of forgiveness in the Old Testament is ultimately based on the death of Jesus. Therefore, Moses and Elijah speak of that which pertained to their salvation.

Interestingly, the very thing Peter rebuked Jesus over was the very thing Moses and Elijah were looking forward to. – Dennis Tucker