

28“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.”

Chapter 17

1Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. 2And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. 3And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” 5While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” 6When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. 7And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, “Get up, and do not be afraid.” 8And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.

Last week we spent an enjoyable, I hope, Sunday chasing one idea through the Bible. The Glorious idea of **seeing** with our own eyes God in His Glory, in His Son.

A day we long for. We shall behold Him. Face to face, in all of His glory. I told you to go home and listen to Sandy Patti sing that.

We long for that day, because this flesh will be changed. Sin and decay will be gone. Our hearts will be perfected.

No other religion has at it's center a person who is God. Who has in Himself the Glory of the creator.

Mohammed was evil. He hacked people to pieces. He couldn't control his sexual urges besides his many wives. He offers no solution to the problem of sin. He died and is gone.

Buddha, pretty much the same. More confused.

Joseph Smith, a little less bloody than Mohammed. Dead. No answer to sin except, be as perfect as you can. Impossible for fallen men.

The Pope. Buttery nice, and at least he doesn't slaughter people. And he's replaceable when he dies. He declares peoples sins removed. But is that effective?

One person, came and was shown to be God, in human flesh, He died in our place. He gives us His perfection. He takes our hopeless sin unto Himself to the cross. He dies. He rises from the dead. He is fully man and He is fully God.

Col. 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;...

What if it's a hoax. Where is the proof? Why would anyone believe this stuff. No one's seen His glory. We read about it. We can't see it.

Oh, but someone has.

Paul quotes the old testament principle of 2 or 3 reliable witnesses to prove a fact even up to that proof requiring the taking of life. Capitol punishment with 2 or 3 witnesses was established in Deuteronomy 17.

Deuteronomy 17:6

On the testimony of two or three witnesses a person is to be put to death, but no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

Paul uses the same truth to prove his authority. 1 *This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES.* 2 *I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in*

advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest as well, that if I come again I will not spare anyone,...

That's what I used to tell my kids when they were raising heck after I'd put them to bed. *and to all the rest as well, that if I come (into your room) again I will not spare anyone,...*

They all survived. Back to 2 or 3 witnesses. We can build a case of proof that will stand up clear to the point of capitol punishment with 2 or 3 reliable witnesses. This is the design of God.

So back to our question. Who has seen the glory? Why should we believe in this Jesus?

Well, it turns out, it pleased God to reveal His Son, in full glory, to 3 witnesses. Reliable witnesses. Not screwballs. Not crazy people. Rock solid family men who earned a living with their hands type people. Steeped in a tradition of morality that held truth and honesty in the highest esteem, and forbade lying of any kind.

Solid people. Reliable people. Painfully ordinary people. People like you and me. Witnessed the Glory of God openly in His Son, Jesus, the Christ. And they wrote what they had seen down for posterity for all time.

In the courtroom of God, on the judgement day, people will be judged because they did not believe in the Son of God. And doubtless many will say on that day, "We never saw you. Why would we believe? On what basis can you hold us in judgement? If we'd seen you, then we would have believed. We never saw you.

Then God will say, I appeared in all of my Glory, as God on earth, to three witnesses. Their witness is good enough in this court. You should have believed because of what they said.

I think it's interesting that Joseph Smith based the mormon religion on three witnesses who supposedly saw the plates. The Three Witnesses were Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and David Whitmer. All three of

them later denied the Mormon faith. They walked away.

Joseph Smith recognized the importance of witnesses. Too bad his were so wacko. Unreliable witnesses of an unreliable claim. False witnesses.

We have in this story for time immemorial three reliable witnesses that saw Jesus unveiled, in full glory. Let's look at it.

28“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.”

This is now the third time we'll look at this verse. And someone might argue, that what it says isn't about what the disciples saw on the mountain, it's about the 2nd coming.

And I would argue that prophecies can have more than a single fulfilling. Think about Peter at the day of Pentecost. The Spirit descends on believers and they begin to speak in other languages.

And someone in the crowd says, they're drunk. And Peter says, no, this is what was written in the prophet Joel. Remember that. But if you go and read that prophecy, pentecost was just a partial fulfillment. A picture of a later complete fulfillment. Pentecost was but a partial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

We've talked at length about this word Kingdom and how it was used at that time. It's not talking about real estate. It's talking about authority. Kingly authority. Authority to reign. And that's what Peter and James and John saw with their eyes.

The King of Kings, in all of His Glory. We could re-write it to say; 28 *“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 full kingly authority.”*

3 witnesses saw that Glory. All 3 synoptic gospels include this event. It's important. And all 3 include the statement in vs. 28 about some

standing there who will see with their eyes, what Kingdom authority looks like. God is building His case. 3 witnesses.

1Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.

Luke says eight days. What're we going to do with that?

Simple. Just a different way two people look at the same thing. Matthew doesn't count the day we're still in and he doesn't count the day it happened. He counts days in the middle of those 2 days. That's how the jews like to do it.

Luke counts both of those days. He's writing to greeks. That's how they would understand it. Not a big deal. Just a point of interest.

Why Peter and James and John? We see them several times as the inner circle. They get to go in when the girl who had died is raised from the dead. Why? Because it pleased God to do it that way. 2 witnesses would stand up in court. God is gracious and gives us 3.

Lots of ink spilled about where the high mountain was. It doesn't say. We can sumise that it was probably such and such a mountain since they were in a definite locality, but it doesn't say, nor does it matter. Maybe it was the same one Satan took Him up on to show Him the Kingdoms of the world.

2And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

Luke tells us that they were overcome with sleep. I'm sure tagging along and keeping up with Jesus was exhausting at times. Jesus goes up on a mountain and prays. The disciples catch some winks. And you open your eyes and Jesus is glowing like the sun in it's strength.

2And He was transfigured before them; The greek word is metamorphoo. Which we englishise into metamorphosus. To be physically altered.

and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

I personally believe that Satan has been behind Hollywoods fascination with shining beings. Things from outer space.

Do you get a picture in your mind of what this might have looked like. Is your imagination cluttered up with things you've seen in movies. Shining visages of humanoids. Glowing light coming out of the bottom of a flying saucer and glowing humanoid shaped figures standing in the light. Jesus was from Mars. Good one Satan.

Obviously, the writers of scripture were searching for words to try to describe something never before seen. *His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light*

Mark adds; *3and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them*

Put Hollywood out of your mind. 3 reliable honest capable men saw something that they had to search for words to describe. Something brighter than the sun and whiter than any snow. Glowing, bright. Glory as of the only begotten of the father.

The sun that gives us it's light, is a temporary luminary. Some day it will go into retirement. The whole earth will be full of His glory.

Isaiah 24:23

The moon will be dismayed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders--with great glory.

Revelation 21:23 says of the New Jerusalem; *And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

This is what John and Peter and James saw up on the high mountain.

The temporary veil of flesh was momentarily removed as it were, and the Glory of God was seen by men.

3And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Why Moses and why Elijah. And how did the disciples know who they were? We don't know. We aren't told. Somehow they knew. They'd probably seen the Charlton Heston movie. Oh that's Moses. Maybe he still had the staff that he struck the rock with. And Elijah is a hairy guy who wears camels skins with a thick belt. Easy to spot.

It doesn't matter. What does matter is the entire story of the revelation of God to men is represented in these 3 men. The law, the prophets, and the new covenant, all standing there in glory speaking to one another.

Moses gave us the law of God that shows us how hopelessly broken we are. The prophets called us to stand separated from this world, and predicted the redeemer who would purchase us, and save us gloriously.

Jesus is the redeemer who died in our place and gave to us His righteousness, and takes unto Himself all our sin. He dies in our place so that we can live together with Him in His resurrection and Glory.

The whole Bible in these 3 men, shining in glory that is indescribable. The whole story of redemption is there.

Luke adds something important. Luke 9:30 *And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

Luke tells us that Moses and Elijah also appeared in shining glory. And he tells us the conversation was about *His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

The word for departure is the word we would translate exodus. That adds all kinds of color. He's not the only one departing. In Ephesians 4 Paul talks about leading captivity captive. He's quoting Psalm 68:18.

Listen to that Psalm and think about Jesus and the word exodus.

17The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness. 18You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives; You have received gifts among men, Even among the rebellious also, that the LORD God may dwell there. 19Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God who is our salvation. Selah....

Jesus came to earth to take a group of "called out ones" captive. He came to retrieve the folks whose names were written in the book of Life from the foundation of the world.

There is a sense that His departure at Jerusalem is an exodus. Just like Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, Jesus leads His captives, the saints who belong to Him, who His Father has given to Him, who He purchased with His blood, these captives are taken out of this world to heaven and Glory with Him.

4Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

This is a Peter-ism. He's always got his mouth going. Luke adds, "*not knowing what He was saying.*" and Mark says; *6For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.*

It's like Peter's in a bit of a fog, having just woken to see the Son of God in full glory speaking to Moses and Elijah, and he's thinking, 'somebody's got to say something. Well, the other 2 guys are dumbfounded but I'll give it a go'. "*Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.*"

Date wise, this event is just at the time of the feast of booths. Where the children of Israel would set up booths, dwellings made of branches and they would camp outside for a week to remember the Lord's provision for them in the wilderness for 40 years.

I think if there's any logic to Peter's offer, it is that rather than go down the mountain to the death that Moses and Elijah and Jesus were discussing, Peter's like, couldn't we just stay up here on the mountain top. Couldn't we just keep the mountain top experience going for a time. We could celebrate the feast of booths, right here. Hang out. Enjoy the Glory on the mountain.

The word translated good, *it is good for us to be here*, is the word we would translate, excellent. This Glory on the mountain top is excellent. Let's extend it. Let's hang out. Let's prolong the excellence. Leave the valley for later. We'll get some booths put up. We'll hang out and just soak up Glory.

5While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"

You know, we like to poke fun at Peter. We would never open up our mouth and insert foot. We're a lot smarter. A lot classier. Better to remain silent and thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.

But the fact is, if Peter hadn't spoken, we wouldn't have words from God the father that affirm what our 3 witnesses were there to see, and to relate to us.

We've seen this cloud many times before in the old Testament. It is how God manifests Himself and speaks. How He lead Israel in the wilderness. How He filled the temple with His Glory, and later, how the Glory departed.

And here that cloud affirms to these witnesses that Jesus is Son of God, co-equal with God, and a delight to God. Information for all time. Both now and future. God will judge unbelievers based on this statement that these men heard and wrote down. This is reliable fact. It will stand in the court of God. *"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"*

Listen to Him! Again we love to have fun with Peter. Shut up and listen Peter.

Hello? Is there anyone else in the room that has this problem. Quick to speak. Slow to hear. All that God has given us in His word. We approach this book like it's positive but optional. Add this to your life like frosting on the cake, if you feel like it. Or not. Cake is cake either way.

We approach the Word of God as if it is optional information. Good if you take some. No harm no foul if you don't.

God emphatically says to us; *“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; **listen to Him!**”* We need to approach this book with a LOT more urgency than we do. Don't poke at Peter. Look in the mirror. This book is the mirror.

6When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.

We could use some of this terror. We forget that God is huge and we are tiny. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* No one talks about that in American Evangelicalism. We don't want a God who is terrible. We want a God who puts His arm around us while we're shaving.

People who encounter God, almost always have the same immediate reaction as these 3 men had. Over and over when God visits, people end up face down in the dirt. That's almost a universal reaction. Even angels have that effect on humans. Terror!

7And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, “Get up, and do not be afraid.” 8And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.

Grace. We don't deserve it. God has grace for His chosen ones. A touch. Comfort. Understanding. *“Get up, and do not be afraid.”* Easy for You to say.

All of us are going to see God. History and this book say that is inevitable. How will that go down. *Yo! Dude! Rubba dub dub, thanks for the grub . . yay! God. Really? Are you kidding me?*

These three men, chosen by God, arguably the 3 most special men on earth, after 2 1/2 years with the Son of God, made face impressions in the dirt. And they stayed in that position until Jesus touched them and said, It's OK, Get up. Don't be afraid.

What a remarkable experience.

We're all slated to SEE God. With our eyes. What are we doing to prepare for that day? Do you think God's advice to these men might apply to us. In preparation for that day? **Listen To Him**. Get serious about This Book.

Of the 3 witnesses to the Glory of Jesus, there were 2 survivors. James, the brother of John was killed by Herod before he had opportunity to write any books.

What was the effect on Peter and John.

Here's a snippet from John's book.

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

14And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" 16For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18No one has seen God at any

time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

We beheld His Glory. And that changed everything!

And Peter says;

16For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— 18and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

19So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, 21for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Peter and John both base the evidenciary argument that Jesus is God, and that changes everything, to an experience they witnessed first hand up on a high mountain.

2And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. 3And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

No other religion has anything close to God in human flesh, witnessed by reliable men, who wrote it down, once for all, delivered to the Saints. These things are fact, not fiction.

I'll close this morning with another C. S. Lewis quote.

C.S. Lewis’ celebrated children’s book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, tells of the adventures of four children in the magical kingdom of Narnia. The story is fun, but it’s also an allegory of Jesus

Christ and salvation, with Christ represented by the lion Aslan. When in Narnia, the children meet Mr and Mrs Beaver, who describe the mighty lion to them.

“Is he a man?” asked Lucy.

“Aslan a man!” said Mr Beaver sternly. Certainly not. I tell you he is King of the wood and the son of the great emperor-beyond-the-sea. Don’t you know who is the King of the Beasts? Aslan is a lion – the Lion, the great lion.”

“ooh!” said Susan, “I’d thought he was a man. Is he – quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

“That you will, dearie, and no mistake” said Mrs Beaver; “if there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”

“Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy.

“Safe?” said Mr Beaver; “don’t you hear what Mrs Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

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Epilogue: A thought. The law of God says 2 or 3 witnesses. Think about what happened post resurrection. We've got 3 witnesses and Satan says, I'll take care of that. James is murdered and when Herod sees that it pleases the Jews, he throws Peter in prison; to be executed.

2 witnesses snuffed out. Only one witness left. John. That's not enough. And an angel kicks Peter in the side and says wake up. You just got a 'get out of jail free' card Peter.

God will have His witnesses. Satan is over-ruled by a higher authority, and we have 2 out of the 3 accounts, in print, in our hands, intact! this morning.

Maybe that's why Peter was sleeping so peacefully in the jail?