

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

#### Part XV: Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Discipling Of His Followers, Matthew 16:13-20:34

#### C. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Transfiguration

(Matthew 16:28-17:13)

#### I. Introduction

- A. One question Matthew's Gospel addressed for the Jew in particular is this: "If Jesus is the Messiah, and He withdrew the offer of His kingdom due to Israel's rejection of Him, will His kingdom ever be established?!" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1337, "Introduction to the Gospel According to Matthew.")
- B. Matthew 16:28-17:13 answers this question and provides an explanation and lesson on discipleship for us:

#### II. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Transfiguration, Matthew 16:28-17:13.

- A. In Matthew 16:28, Jesus predicted that some of His disciples would not experience death until they had seen the Son of man coming in His Kingdom, a prediction that has led many to misunderstand God's kingdom program. However, the explanation is found in noting that, since there are no chapter breaks in the autograph manuscript, this prophecy was fulfilled just "six days later" in Matthew 17:1-13 when Jesus took Peter, James and John, up into a high mountain and was transfigured before them! (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 59)
- B. Thus, Christ's transfiguration was a foretaste of His future Messianic Kingdom, revealing that this Kingdom is **real** and is yet to occur at His Second Coming *following the Cross* (Matthew 16:21-27), Matthew 17:1-13:
  1. At the transfiguration, Jesus was physically changed into the glory He will exhibit in His future Kingdom, Matthew 17:1-2: His face shone as bright as the sun, and his clothing was illumined as white as the light.
  2. Moses and Elijah also appeared to the disciples, and they spoke with Jesus, Matthew 17:3. This reveals that in the Kingdom, believers in unglorified bodies who survive the Great Tribulation (represented in the three disciples, cf. Zech. 14:4-9), resurrected saints (represented in Moses, cf. Deut. 34:5-6) and raptured saints (represented in Elijah, cf. 2 Kings 2:11) will all be present with the glorified Lord Jesus, *Ibid.*
  3. Peter rightly saw this event as signifying the Kingdom, what the Feast of Tabernacles typifies, so he suggested to Jesus that they build three booths, one each for Jesus, Moses and Elijah, Matt. 17:4; *Ibid.*, p. 60. Luke's account in Luke 9:33 adds the editorial note that Peter did not know what he was saying, that he had overlooked Jesus' claim that His cross would precede His crown, meaning such booths at this time did not fit God's plan as this transfiguration event was just a brief glimpse of the Kingdom, *Ibid.*, p. 231.
  4. Then, to put this glimpse of the Kingdom into proper perspective for Jesus' three disciples, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and the voice of God the Father spoke out of it, saying, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; **hear ye him,**" Matthew 17:5 KJV (emphases ours).
  5. This clear testimony from the Father as to Jesus' deity, of the Father's delight in Him and of the Father's call for the disciples to heed Jesus terrified them, so they fell down on their faces, Matthew 17:6!
  6. Jesus then came and touched them, saying, "Arise, and be not afraid," Matthew 17:7! The imperative is in the present tense together with a subjunctive negative adverb, *me*, a prohibition of an ongoing event, and the verb is in the **middle voice** (U. B. S. Greek N. T., 1966, p. 65; The Analyt. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 427) showing an action done for one's own benefit. Jesus thus said, "Stop being afraid for your own benefit!" The Father thus did not want the disciples to be terrified, but He meant only to **CERTIFY** that Jesus *was* the Messiah, that His Kingdom *was* coming, **but that, as He had said**, it would come *after His cross!*
  7. The disciples then saw no one else with Jesus, and that He was returned to his unglorified state, so after He told them to tell no man of the transfiguration until after He arose, the disciples asked Him why they had not seen Elijah appear as His forerunner like the scribes taught was foretold in Malachi 4:5, Matt. 17:8-10.
  8. Jesus replied that Elijah truly was to arrive first, but that he had already come, but he had been mistreated and slain him, that the rejection and death that had occurred to him also awaited Himself, Matt. 17:11-12.
  9. The disciples then realized that John the Baptizer was the one of whom Malachi 4:5 spoke, Matt. 17:13.

***Lesson:*** Christ's transfiguration was a glimpse of the Kingdom to assure all of us His believers that His Kingdom will truly come, but only after the cross, and that we must thus trust and heed Jesus' word and example by taking up our own cross in our daily walk to follow our Savior in accord with God the Father's will! (Matthew 16:24)

***Application:*** (1) May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) May we realize in the transfiguration the reality of the future Kingdom and be spurred take up our cross to follow Jesus, pleasing the Father for future reward!