



Kingdom Value
A Glimpse of Glory
Matthew 17:1-13

How to Prepare

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

Resources-

<https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/what-was-the-transfiguration>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/transfiguration.html>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/shekinah-glory.html>

Sermon Outline:

Matthew 17:1-13

1. The Setting. Matt. 16:28-17:1
2. The Scene. V.2
3. The Social. Vv. 3-4
4. The Shekinah. Vv. 5-6
5. The Solace. Vv. 7-8
6. The Speculation. Vv. 9-13

Matthew 17:1-13

The Transfiguration

- 1 Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.
- 2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.
- 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.
- 4 Peter 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."
- 5 While 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!"
- 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.
- 7 And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get

up, and do not be afraid."

- 8 And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.
- 9 As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead."
- 10 And His disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"
- 11 And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things;
- 12 but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands."
- 13 Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 17:1-13.

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. The Setting. Matt. 16:28-17:1

1. What was Peter's confession (Matt. 16:6), Jesus' prediction (Matt. 16:21), and Jesus' promise (Matt. 16:28) just prior to this account of the Transfiguration? In light of this context, what was the significance of seeing some of Jesus' glory?

2. What other biblical account does the high mountain location call to mind, and what does this suggest about the importance of the revelation the disciples were about to receive?

II. The Scene. V.2

3. What is the significance of Jesus' appearance? (Exodus 33:20, 34:29, Revelation 1:12-17) What does this reveal about His true nature?

4. Why do you think Jesus chose only Peter, James, and John to witness this event? In what ways might this moment have prepared them for the trials they would later face? How does knowing the true nature of Jesus encourage us?

III. The Social. Vv. 3-4

5. How do Moses and Elijah represent the Law and Prophets, and what events from their lives make their meeting with Jesus especially significant? What does their presence confirm about Jesus' role and mission in scripture and history?

6. Why did Peter suggest building three tabernacles (tents/booths)? What is the danger of elevating Moses and Elijah to the same level as Christ, and how does this inform how we read scripture?

IV. The Shekinah. Vv. 5-6

7. What is shekinah glory and how is it described in the Old Testament? (Exodus 13:21, 33:9) How does the cloud in this account compare to other accounts in scripture, and what does this tell us is happening around Peter, James, and John?

8. What does the Father tell Peter, James, and John, and why does He tell them to listen to Jesus? How do we listen to Jesus (remember: Jesus is the Word, and the Word - i.e. the Law, Prophets, and New Testament... i.e. the Bible - bears witness to Him), and why is listening to Him so important?

V. The Solace. Vv. 7-8

9. What were the disciples doing when God was speaking in the cloud, and why were they so afraid? What kind of fear should believers have of God, and why is that appropriate?

10. How does Jesus comfort His disciples, and what does this tell about how God protects us from His own glory? What does this swift transition from overwhelming glory to "just Jesus" teach us about trusting Christ in the mundane times in life?

VI. The Speculation. Vv. 9-13

11. What did the scribes teach about Elijah returning, and what are some things they got wrong about their interpretation of the prophecy in Malachi 3:1-2 and 4:5-6?

12. How does Jesus' reference to John the Baptist correct their wrong speculations, and how did He also correct their speculations about the Messiah? How should this inform our expectations for our own lives in Christ?

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Matt. 16:21–17:27 The Suffering of the Messiah Revealed. Jesus reveals the nature of his messiahship. He is a suffering Messiah, and those who are his disciples must suffer with him (16:21–28). Still, the transfiguration (17:1–13) discloses who Jesus really is: the Son of God. And believers, who are themselves sons of the kingdom, are free from the old era of the law (17:14–27).

Matt. 17:1–13 The Beloved, Transfigured Son. Jesus reveals his divine glory in the transfiguration (vv. 1–8) and explains how John the Baptist’s ministry fulfills the prophecy of Elijah’s return (vv. 9–13).

Matt. 17:1 After six days probably indicates that they are still in Caesarea Philippi. Peter and James, and John. The inner circle of disciples (cf. 26:37). high mountain. Church tradition identifies this as Mount Tabor, about 12 miles (19 km) from the Sea of Galilee, but most scholars favor Mount Hermon, outside of Galilee and rising 9,166 feet (2,794 m) above sea level.

Matt. 17:2 was transfigured. Jesus’ physical transformation was a reminder of the glory he had before he became man (John 1:14; 17:5; Phil. 2:6–7) and a preview of his future exaltation (2 Pet. 1:16–18; Rev. 1:16).

Matt. 17:3 The appearance of Moses and Elijah represents the Law and the Prophets, which witness to Jesus as the Messiah, the one who fulfills the OT (cf. 5:17). Elijah was considered the prophetic forerunner of the Messiah (Mal. 4:5–6; cf. Matt. 3:1–3; 11:7–10).

Matt. 17:4 three tents. Peter wishes to make some sort of fitting memorial for this glorious event.

Matt. 17:5 bright cloud. Reminiscent of the cloud of God’s presence and glory that appeared at various times in the OT (e.g., Ex. 13:21–22; 34:5–7; 1 Kings 8:10–13). voice. God the Father’s public endorsement of Jesus his beloved Son echoes that given at Jesus’ baptism (Matt. 3:17). Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, superior to Moses and Elijah, so the disciples must listen to him in order to understand his messianic purpose.

Matt. 17:6 terrified. Fear was a common experience of people in the OT who witnessed the awesome reality of God’s presence (e.g., Ex. 19:16; Deut. 5:5).

Matt. 17:9 Tell no one the vision. See note on 8:4; cf. 9:30; 12:16; 16:20.

Matt. 17:10–13 Elijah has already come. See notes on Mal. 4:4–6 and Matt. 11:14. Jesus indicates that the ministry of John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi’s prophecy.

Matt. 17:13 Then the disciples understood. “Understanding” is a key theme in Matthew’s Gospel, and it comes here as a result of Jesus’ teaching (cf. notes on 13:51–52; 16:6–12).