

Mark 9:2-29 - The Beloved Son of God

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Introduction - As Jesus continues His ministry looking toward the cross, He gives His disciples an amazing confirmation of His deity as He is transfigured and illustrates the importance of faith. All authorities reveal Jesus as the foretold Son of God, in Whom His followers must exercise faith. We should exercise faith, accepting Jesus as the Son and trusting His ability to complete the mission.

v2-8 - The Beloved Son - Listen to Him! - Mount Hermon is the likely location - the tallest mountain in the area, usually snow covered at the peaks. Transfigured - “to transform... “metamorphose”...change”¹ Jesus’ physical body was changed into His glorified form (Mat 17:2, Luk 9:29, Rev 1:14-15, Rev 19:11-16). He was praying while this happened and the disciples were sleepy (Luke 9:28-36). If there was any lingering doubt that Jesus was the Christ, this would remove it (2Pe 1:16-18). Elijah and Moses appeared representing the Prophets and the Law of the Old Testament being fulfilled in Christ (Luk 24:27, Heb 1:1-2, John 1:17, Act 3:22, 7:35-37). They discuss Jesus’ upcoming “going away” (Luke 9:31). “The cross is the theme of heaven’s conversation and of heaven’s praise (Rev 5).”² They fell on the ground (Matt 17:6), *ekphobos* - “frightened out of one’s wits”³ (Heb 12:21). Peter wants this moment to last longer, but the Kingdom isn’t coming before the Messiah suffers. He doesn’t distinguish between Jesus and Moses and Elijah (a tabernacle for each of them). A cloud overshadows them (Ex 24:15-18, 16:10). God declares 2 things: “This is My Beloved Son” (1:11 - Jesus’ baptism) and commands, “Listen to Him,” or “Be obedient to Him.”⁴ Jesus tells them not to fear (Matt 17:1-8)

v9-13 - What is written? - Jesus gives them a conditional period of time to keep silent about the transfiguration: until His resurrection. The disciples ask why it is said that Elijah must come first. Elijah (the prophet to Israel taken up in a chariot of fire) does come before the Messiah (Mal 3:1, 4:5-6). Jesus refers to John the Baptist as coming in the spirit and power of Elijah (Matt 17:13, 11:10, 13-14, John 1:21). John the Baptist partially fulfilled the prophecy of Elijah coming first, and in the future, Elijah will indeed come first again (Rev 11). Jesus’ response includes how it’s written He must suffer (Is 53).

v14-29 - Help my unbelief! - Luke 9:37 places this event on the next day. “I brought my son to You” - Jesus’ ambassadors/representatives on earth are His disciples. The disciples fail to cast out a demon inflicting the only (Lu 9:38) son of a father and are arguing with the scribes, likely due to their failure. Matthew says the boy has epilepsy, and all Synoptic gospel writers say this was demonically induced. He is mute and deaf (Mark 9:25). Jesus expresses they are without faith (“unbelieving” NASB), in contrast to others (5:34, 7:29). Jesus engages the father, who eventually pleads, “If you can,” and Jesus calls out his disbelief, prompting the man to confess his faith and plea for his weak faith. The Holy Spirit must do a work in our heart to cause us to draw near to Him (Jhn 6:44). Jesus casts out the demon. His disciples ask why they failed to do so (Mark 6:7). “In Jesus’ absence they must live and work by faith in God, expressed through prayer.”⁵ God is the one who has power, none of us do! He works through us when we allow and seek Him (Gen 41:16, Dan 2:26-30). We must have faith He can do anything we ask in His will (1Jo 5:13-15, Matt 21:18-22).

So, what? Now, what?

- Do we have a balanced theology of Jesus’ humanity and divinity? Am I out of balance in relating to Him?
- How well have we obeyed God’s direction to “listen” to His Son? Am I a good representative of Jesus?
- Am I theologically curious about God’s Word and how Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets? Can I express to someone how I know that Jesus is the Son of God?
- Do I engage God through meaningful prayer in accordance with His will? Do I have faith in His power?
- If you struggle with unbelief, consider reading 1 John and note what John says you can know.

¹ Strong’s Definitions.

² Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the New Testament. Pg. 124.

³ Thayer’s Greek Lexicon.

⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary. Walvoord and Zuck. Pg 143.

⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary. Walvoord and Zuck. Pg 144.