

HERO WORSHIP

Tuesday, March 21

Reading: Luke 9:28-36

Luke 9:29 *As He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30 Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. 31 They spoke about His departure, which He was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. 32 Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him.*

We all have heroes in our lives; men and women whom we look up to and want to be like. But too often we put our heroes on a pedestal and believe they can do no wrong. Whether they are a sports star, Hollywood celebrity, political mover-and-shaker, or even a spiritual leader, when we place them in this exalted position we are in danger of hero worship. This has always been true! Just look at Simon Peter.

Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John up a mountain to pray. However, the disciples fell asleep and almost missed one of the most incredible events in Jesus' earthly ministry. While on earth, Jesus appeared as a normal man. But here His physical appearance was transformed from the inside out. His true glory and purity shone through. This dazzling glory woke up the disciples.

What amazed them was not only Jesus' glory but the appearance of Moses and Elijah. These were two of the greatest heroes from Israel's past - the giver of the Law and the prophet of fire! Awed by this sight, Peter suggests building three shrines, one for each of them. He was placing Moses and Elijah on the same level as Jesus! As the words are falling out of Peter's mouth, God the Father Himself speaks to straighten Peter out.

Peter's act of hero worship made him miss the importance of what was happening. Of all the great things Moses and Elijah had done, their conversation with Jesus revolved around what He was about to do - die for the sins of the world! The most important thing to these saints-of-old was the salvation Jesus would bring. Just as he had done a week earlier, Peter rejects the idea of Jesus' sacrifice and focuses on the glory. This time God the Father had to set Peter straight! No matter how great his heroes were, Jesus is the only One who deserved worship and obedience. Peter should have been listening instead of speaking! It was a lesson Peter would never forget (see 2 Peter 1:17-18 written some 30 years later).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. Who are your heroes? It is OK to have heroes. If we choose them well, they can inspire and encourage us. But we must be careful to choose heroes that will help us focus on Christ. We cannot put them on a pedestal where they don't belong. Like Peter, we must learn that only the Lord deserves the ultimate adoration. He alone is worthy of true "hero worship." He is the One we must listen to and obey!
2. Peter had forgotten who Jesus was – a fact he had just stated a week earlier. This caused him to misspeak and think of Jesus as less than He was (by putting Him on the same level with Moses and Elijah). What are some ways we can forget who Jesus really is? What happens when Jesus becomes less than the Almighty Son of God in our minds? What effect does this thinking have on our witness, worship, and service?

READING THE STORY: Matthew 21-25