INTRODUCTION
Wouldn’t it be awesome to get a sneak preview of heaven? If you could actually see the streets of gold, the throne of God, and the manifestation of His glory, I’m sure it would leave a lasting impression.

Jesus gave His men a glimpse of heaven. He took them up on a mountain and they got to see Him transfigured before them. But before we jump into that, let’s do a quick review.

In the previous passage Jesus had asked His disciples the ultimate question, “Who do people say that I am.” He then asked for their personal opinion, “Who do YOU say that I am.” Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ of God!” Jesus then went on to tell His disciples that He must suffer and die and that if they wanted to follow Him that they would need to deny themselves and pick up their crosses daily. He was telling them that the road would be difficult but that the reward would be great. Listen again to Jesus’ words in Luke 9:23-26.

23 And He was saying to {them} all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. 25 "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? 26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the...
Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and {the glory} of the Father and of the holy angels.

These are very strong words. It might be easy for the disciples to be discouraged. But then in the next verse (Luke 9:27), Jesus makes a remarkable statement, "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

What is Jesus saying? In essence He is saying that to encourage them he was going to give them a glimpse of heaven. As we explore Luke 9:27-36 we will see:

I. The Promise of the Kingdom v27
II. The Preview of the Kingdom vv28-35
III. The Proper Timing of the Kingdom Story v36

Let’s begin with:

I. The Promise of the Kingdom v27
At the end of Jesus’ powerful statements about what it will take to follow Him, He gives the profound words of verse 27, "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

A. It was a heavenly promise
The question arises, “What is the kingdom of God?” It is the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are interchangeable terms!

Matthew 3:2 - "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
Mark 1:15 - "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Notice how the two are used interchangeably in the preceding two verses. Notice how the two are used interchangeably in the following two verses.

Matthew 8:11 - "And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline {at the table} with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;

Luke 13:28-29 - “28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out. 29 "And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline {at the table} in the kingdom of God.

The following verses are obviously talking about heaven and yet they use the phrase kingdom of God.

Mark 9:47 - "And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell.”

Mark 10:23 - “And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, ‘How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!’"

Mark 14:25 - "Truly I say to you, I shall never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."
John 3:3 - “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 - “Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor {the} covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

When Jesus said that some of the disciples would see the kingdom of God before they died meant that He was going to give them a glimpse of heaven!

B. It was an absolute promise
Jesus stresses the truthfulness of what He is telling them. This was no joke! God does not lie! How often have we broken our promises to our kids? God does not break His!

C. It was an amazing promise
Jesus is telling His apostles that some of them would not taste death until they see the heaven. Scripture doesn’t give the apostles’ response but I imagine they were wowed. Maybe they didn’t get it. But perhaps they did and were thinking:

“When is this going to happen? Who will be included? How is this going to happen? Will some of us be taken to heaven like Elijah who was caught up by a chariot? Could it be me?

Jesus is true to His Word. Indeed He gives them a glimpse of heaven.
I had the opportunity once of eating dinner at a banquet with a man who believes that God gave Him a glimpse of heaven... and it changed His life.

This brings us to:

II. The Preview Of The Kingdom vv28-35
“'And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray.’”

A. It was a selective preview
Notice who Jesus took with Him: Peter, John and James. He had done this before. He took them because they were the core group. He took them because the others would listen to them. He may have left the others at the bottom of the hill to minister to the crowds so that they could actually get some time away. He took them because it was one more step in their training. The three may have wondered what Jesus was up to and maybe even wished that they could have stayed behind. Since it was about eight days after Jesus had made His promise to them, they probably did not know what was up.

B. It was a strenuous preview
Not that the preview itself was strenuous but that it was strenuous getting to the preview! They went to the mountain. Matthew 17:1 states, “'And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves.’”

No wonder they were overcome by sleep in Luke 9:32. They were tired. They were used to walking but this was hard. Some folks
think the Transfiguration happened on Mt. Hermon which is over 9,000 feet, one of tallest mountains if not the tallest one in the Holy Land. Mt. Hermon is near Caesarea Phillipi which is the last place mentioned before this event (Matthew 16:13). Mt. Hermon is the northern source for the Jordan River, the life giving river that flows through the Holy Land. Even though we don’t know for sure that the Transfiguration happened there, it is certainly an appropriate place for this glimpse of heaven, because Jesus was the living water that would give life to all who put their faith in Him.

C. It was a spiritual preview
This amazing event was triggered by prayer. Jesus and His apostles had gone up on the mountain to pray, and it was as Jesus was praying that He was transfigured. Great things happen when we pray... One intercessor told me that since she has been devoting herself to prayer that she has been hearing a lot more from God. No surprise...

D. It was a supernatural preview
Listen to verses 29, “And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing {became} white {and} gleaming.”

The Preview included:

1. The glory of heaven
Jesus’ face became different. Matthew 17 says that His face shown like the sun. He clothes became white and gleaming as white as light itself!

God peeled back the veil and the disciples got to see the glory of heaven! Can you imagine how awesome it would
have been. That would be the correct use of the word awesome!

There are so many verses that speak of the brightness and glory in heaven. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Talk about light therapy! There will be nothing but light!

I John 1:5 states, “And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

In the description of heaven in Revelations there are stars, lampstands, and lightning bolts! There is light everywhere! No wonder Jesus’ face shown like the sun!

2. It included the godly in heaven

Now listen to verse 30-32.

30 And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31 who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him.

Not only is God’s glory going to be in heaven. But the godly will be there, too. Here were Moses and Elijah. Moses represented the Law and Elijah represented the prophets. Together they represented the gamut of the Old Testament saints. When Moses died he was buried by God (Deuteronomy 34:6). Before Elijah died he was caught up to
heaven in a whirlwind 2 Kings 2:11. All Christians who have
gone before us will be in heaven. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 states,

6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and
knowing that while we are at home in the body
we are absent from the Lord-- 7 for we walk by
faith, not by sight-- we are of good courage, I say,
and prefer rather to be absent from the body and
to be at home with the Lord.

Notice what Moses and Elijah were talking about. They
were discussing Jesus’ departure from earth. They knew
about what was going on down here. It is possible that
those in heaven can see some of what is going on and are
concerned about it.

Perhaps you long to see a loved one. If they have gone on
before you into heaven they may be there concerned about
you now. They have not lost their identity. You will know
them when you see them!

3. **It included God’s personal presence**

33 And it came about, as these were parting from
Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us
to be here; and let us make three tabernacles:
one for You, and one for Moses, and one for
Elijah"-- not realizing what he was saying. 34 And
while he was saying this, a cloud formed and
{began} to overshadow them; and they were
afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice
came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, {My} Chosen One; listen to Him!"

When Peter, James and John saw what was going on, they were dumbfounded. Peter wanted to make dwellings for the three of them. Perhaps he hoped they would stick around. He had no clue that Jesus just wanted the apostles to observe what went on. It was an experience that they would never forget!

But notice what happened next. A cloud descended and a voice came out of the cloud. It was the voice of God the Father. He hid His presence in the crowd because if the apostles had seen the glory of His essence they would have died.

III. The Proper Timing For The Kingdom Story
Listen to verse 36, "And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen."

Then wasn’t the time. But there would come a time. Mt 17:9 states,

And 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.

This story would confirm that what Jesus told them about the resurrection was true! Now is certainly the time to tell this story of the Transfiguration!

SUMMARY and CONCLUDING PRINCIPLES
Jesus made a promise about heaven to His apostles. He then followed through on His promise and gave them a preview of heaven.
Here are five principles that stand out in this story:

1. There is a heaven – the apostles got a glimpse of it...
2. The dead are raised – some of the Old Testament Saints were seen...
3. Jesus is God’s Son – God the Father commended Him...
4. Jesus’ death was no accident – It was Jesus death that makes a way for those who place their faith in Him to know that when they die they will go to heaven to be with Him for eternity. This was God’s plan from eternity past.
5. We must listen to Christ – If Christ is the only way to heaven we must listen to all He says and obey Him.

Remember Christ’s words in John 3:3 and John 3:16?

John 3:3,
"Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:16
"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Are you born again? Have you believed in Christ? The Bible says that today is the day of salvation. If you haven’t repented of your sin and given your life to Christ, today would be perfect day to do so...