

Kingdom Focus

Some Standing Here

The transfiguration of Christ on the mountain was an important event in his earthly ministry which is chronicled in the gospels of Matthew (17:1-13); Mark (9:1-10); and Luke (9:28-36). Shortly before this event, Jesus spoke some very piercing and demanding truths to his disciples. If Jesus is to be our Lord, then we must

deny ourselves and take upon us the responsibility of a full-hearted commitment to him.

Matthew 16:24

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Woven throughout Jesus' teaching is the theme of dying to self and living for him. If we live for ourselves, we will die. If we live for him, we will gain life.

Verse 25

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Immediately following these radical, all-inclusive requirements, Jesus provides perspective as to why we should live so.

Verses 26 and 27

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Jesus finishes this discourse with a plain statement of fact that must be understood in its context, or it can lead to grave misunderstanding.

Verse 28

Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

How could some see the Kingdom of

God before their death if the Kingdom comes with the return of Jesus Christ? A popular belief, which wrongly interprets this section of Scripture, is that the Kingdom of God began on the day of Pentecost which was ten days after Jesus ascended. Indeed something of great significance took place on that Pentecost which in some respects marks the beginning of what we know as the Christian Church. However, to believe the Kingdom of God began then would deny the overall scope of the Scriptures. All the prophets and apostles agreed and taught that the Kingdom will begin after the Messiah has returned. He will be headquartered in Jerusalem from which he will rule the world on God's behalf.

The correct way to understand this verse is to continue to read the context. Matthew 17:1 says, "...AND after six days." The word "and" is used here as a conjunction indicating a connection with the preceding and that which follows. The gospels of Mark and Luke are identical in this regard. All three gospels tie this comment together with the transfiguration of Christ which followed shortly thereafter.

Matthew 17:1-3

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

The vision which is shown to Peter, James, and John is a preview of Christ appearing in the glory of his future Kingdom. Jesus' appearance is

described in similar fashion to the Apostle John in the book of Revelation which is also prophecy regarding the future. Moses and Elijah are both dead and buried. They are awaiting the resurrection. This vision shows them with Christ in glory. The transfiguration was intended to give Peter, James, and John a brief view of the glory of Christ's second coming. Then they, as well as all believers including Moses and Elijah, will rule on earth with Christ (Revelation 5:10).

Much later, at the end of Peter's life, he refers to this notable occasion.

II Peter 1:16-18

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

When Jesus said some standing with him would not die before they saw the Son of man coming in his Kingdom, he was accurate. However, what they saw was a vision of the future. They are now asleep in the grave awaiting that glorious day to come.