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**THE SUNDAY SCHOOL,**

Lesson IV.—Third Quarter, For July 24, 1910.

**THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.**

Text of the Lesson, Matt. xvii. 1-8, 14-20—Memory Verses, 1, 2—Golden Text, Matt. xvii. 5—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

We have but one lesson in this great chapter which tells us of the transfiguration, the conflict and victory following. His death and resurrection again foretold and the little fish which brought the tribute money. The transfiguration, like the lesson of last week, is recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke and is in some respects the most remarkable event in the humiliation of our Lord. The glory which here shines forth for a little moment was always in Him, but, like the glory over the mercy seat between the cherubim in the holy of holies, was concealed by the veil which was typical of His body and which was rent in twain when He died on the cross (Heb. x. 20; Matt. xxvii. 50, 51). As He spoke of His sufferings in last week's lesson, He said that some of those present would see the glory of His kingdom before they died. I think I am safe in saying that, while both in the Old and New Testaments the glory is sometimes spoken of without mentioning the suffering, we never find the sufferings without the glory to encourage us in the sufferings. This word about seeing the kingdom before they died has been unnecessarily perplexing to many, because they have not noticed its connection with the account of the transfiguration which immediately follows in each of the gospels and in Mark and Luke in close connection. That Peter, one of the favored three, so understood it seems very clear from 11 Pet. i. 16-18. Dr. Scofield's note upon this is so simple and yet so full and conclusive that I quote it here: "The transfiguration scene contains in miniature all the elements of the future kingdom in manifestation—(1) The Lord, not in humiliation, but in glory (verse 2). (2) Moses, glorified, representative of the redeemed who have passed through death into the kingdom (Matt. xiii. 43; c. l. Luke ix. 30, 31). (3) Elijah, glorified, representative of the redeemed who have entered the kingdom by translation (1 Cor. xv. 50-53; 1 Thess. iv. 14-17). (4) Peter, James and John, not glorified, representatives (for the moment) of Israel in the flesh in the future kingdom (Ezek. xxxvii. 21-27). (5) The multitude at the foot of the mountain (verse 20), representative of the nations, who are to be brought into the kingdom after it is established over Israel (Isa. xl. 10-12), etc.

Six or eight days after the saying of Matt. xvi. 28, Jesus took these three men, who were also with Him when He raised to life the ruler's daughter, and in Gethsemane and, as Luke tells us, went up into a mountain to pray, and it was as He prayed that He was transfigured. The eight days of Luke certainly include the six of Matthew and Mark and give the extreme limit of the time intervening. His appearance reminds us of Rev. i. 13-16, and of the assurance of 1 John iii. 2, that we shall be like Him. The more we consider this the more we shall be like Him now, and it is so necessary, for the world needs some manifestation of His life in these mortal bodies (11 Cor. iv. 10, 11). It is most interesting to notice that the word translated "transfigured" is used only in this incident in Matthew and Mark and in two other places, Rom. xii. 2; 11 Cor. iii. 18, in the former being translated "transformed" and in the latter "are changed" and both bearing upon this very point of likeness to Him now. A slight of Moses and Elijah, who had been absent from the earth, one about 1,500 years and the other about 500, gives us a glimpse of the reality of the unseen world. The topic of their conversation (Luke ix. 31) shows us how great is the importance of the death of Christ, the benefits of which they had been in a measure enjoying, as on a promissory note, for so many centuries and by virtue of which alone any one from earth can enter heaven. The disciples were afraid, they were also heavy with sleep, and Peter talked, not knowing what He said, and suggested making tabernacles for the Lord Jesus and for Moses and Elijah. Then came the bright cloud and overshadowed them, and when it was past Jesus was found alone (Luke ix. 32-36).

Out of the cloud came the voice of the Father, saying for the second time, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," but now He added, "Hear ye Him." The disciples, being afraid, fell on their faces, but Jesus touched them and said, "Arise and be not afraid." In the sleep and fear and foolish talk of the disciples see with what human weakness our Lord has always to deal, but in His "Be not afraid" see the loving, compassionate Saviour with whom we have to do. May we ever remember the words of Mark ix. 8, "They say no man any more save Jesus only with themselves." How very necessary it is that we should always see and hear to one, but "Jesus only."

In verses 11-13 our Lord plainly says that the prediction of Malachi concerning Elijah must be fulfilled. John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, being rejected, as was also the Lord Jesus, Elijah must come as the herald of Christ at His second coming in glory. From every mount of privilege we come down to some fresh encounter with the great adversary the devil.

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