

KEY EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST – PART 2

HIS TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew 17:1-8 ~ Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, “Get up, and do not be afraid.” And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.

- For most of Jesus’ earthly ministry, His humanity veiled the full expression of his deity and glory
- But at certain crucial moments, the splendor of Jesus’ deity burst through the cloak of His humanity
- “transfiguration” = *metamorphoomai* = denotes a change in form, a dramatic change in appearance
- Christ pulled back the veil and showed His glory, not merely the reflection of God’s glory but the very glory of God Himself

At the Transfiguration a brilliant light shone from Jesus... There are some similarities between this manifestation of glory and the shining face of Moses when he returned from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments. The differences, however, are significant. Moses’ face shone with *reflected* glory. Christ did not merely reflect the brightness of divine glory. In this respect, His glory clearly transcends the reflected glory on the face of Moses.

R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*, 93

- This Transfiguration was not simply outward in character...it was something that touched the very form, the very nature of His being...perhaps a kind of “foregleam” of the glory of His resurrection body
- Luke 9:31 indicates that the subject of the conversation on the mount is Christ’s “departure”

Luke 9:30-31 ~ And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem

- The presence of Moses and Elijah indicates that there is life beyond the grave
- Peter’s suggestion to make 3 “tabernacles” was both senseless and sinful
- It was senseless in that he did not really know what he was saying (notice that the voice of the Father interrupted Peter while he was still speaking)
- It was sinful in that it would have deterred Christ from his ultimate aim, the cross
- Note also that in his second epistle Peter described that, although that was a wonderful experience, the Word of God is more sure

2 Peter 1:17-19 ~ For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

- God the Father spoke and confirmed Christ's Messiahship to the disciples
- This event is significant for a number of reasons:¹
 1. It authenticates the Son as Messiah
 2. It anticipates the kingdom that is to come on earth (see Matthew 16:28)
 3. It illustrates the inhabitants of the kingdom to come
 4. It portrays the personal resurrection of believers
 5. It confirms OT prophecy about the coming Messianic kingdom
 6. It proclaims the costliness of His sacrifice for sin
 7. It demonstrates the strength of Jesus' passion for souls
- The Transfiguration is similar to what it will be like in the New Jerusalem:

Revelation 21:23 ~ *And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

Revelation 22:5 ~ *And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.*

HIS TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Matthew 21:1-11 ~ *When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.' The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats. Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!" When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" And the crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.*

- Jesus entered Jerusalem amid the shouts of the multitudes...yet few really recognized the significance of the event
- They were enraptured with the idea that their "king" had arrived, but the crowds missed the fact that He had come to redeem them spiritually first
- This was a fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy:

Zechariah 9:9-10 ~ *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.*

- This was Christ's declaration of Himself as Israel's king...the one who would occupy David's throne
- This would be His royal entry into Jerusalem, an event that should have resulted in national acknowledgment of Jesus' messiahship
- The coming King of Israel had arrived...This was the official presentation to Israel of her long-promised King by a faithful Scripture-fulfilling God!

¹ Taken from S. Lewis Johnson, "The Transfiguration of Christ" in *Vital Christological Issues*, 75-76

- The arrival of Christ in Jerusalem “stirred” (vs. 10) the city – the word “stirred” (*seio*) comes from the root that is related to the word for an earthquake
- The crowds were agitated, worked up, wondering who this was!
- They asked: Who is this?
- Sadly, they did not recognize who He really was

In spite of the overwhelming testimony the Messiah met with no response...They stumbled at the Stone of stumbling. Expecting a king who would come “armed to the teeth or bestriding a war-horse,” they failed to recognize the One who came on the lowly donkey, the symbol of peace. They did not know Him nor did they know their own great need. This King conquers by meekness and lowliness, not by force of brazen power. Israel waited for a Messiah “to slay their foes and lift them high,” but He came meekly to die. They did not understand that He must do the work of the Servant of Yahweh in passion and blood before He sits in regal splendor and reigns...Because they would not have Him at His first coming in peace, peace would flee from them. Seeing the future discipline and chastening of the nation He wept. Walking headlong to ruin, they would have to learn the sad lesson that the Triumphal Entry was not only the story of the nation’s rejection of its King, but also of their King’s rejection of them.

S. Lewis Johnson, “The Triumphal Entry of Christ” in *Vital Christological Issues*, 85-86.

- By the way, the date of this entry was Sunday, 9 Nisan, A.D. 30, exactly 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes mentioned in Dan. 9:24–26

Daniel 9:24-26 ~ *Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined*

- A “week” = literally in Hebrew “a unit of seven”
- Therefore 70 units of 7 years which equals 490 years
- 3 separate periods referred to in this prophecy:
 1. 7 weeks (49 years) = time takes to rebuild Jerusalem (vs. 25a)
 - began with Artaxerxes decree to rebuild Jerusalem in 445 BC
 - ended 49 years later when city was completed in
 - 62 sevens (434 years) = time from completion of Jer. to coming of Messiah (vs. 25b)
 - Begins with completion of rebuilding of Jerusalem
 - Ends with Messiah’s arrival in Jerusalem
 - Total 483 years from decree to arrival of Messiah which was fulfilled at the triumphal entry on 9 Nisan, a.d. 30
 2. “After the 62 weeks” (vs. 26), 2 things happen:
 - Messiah killed – 30 AD and Jerusalem destroyed – 70 AD
 - These events happen AFTER 69 weeks but BEFORE 70th week (seems to indicate a gap of time; allows for church age)
 3. 1 seven (7 years) = Tribulation (vs. 27)

HIS GARDEN SUFFERING

Matthew 26:36-46 ~ *Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more. Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"*

- In this moment, Christ was “grieved and distressed”
- Jesus’ death is only a few days away...it’s just a matter of days until he is crucified
- And the magnitude of that event begins to weigh more and more heavily on Christ
- The reality of being the sin-bearer begins to become more and more real
- And in his humanity, Christ begins to become more deeply grieved and distressed at the thought of the cross
- “Gethsemane” means “oil press” – not coincidentally, it was near that very place where Chris would feel the crushing weight of our sin upon Him as he endured the cross
- So great was His grief that Luke 22:44 says ~ And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.
- Jesus knowing that the time of his death was near suffered great mental anguish, so great that his sweat became like blood
- This is a man in deep anguish and suffering
- This is a rare phenomenon – sweating drops of blood (hemohidrosis)
- Occurs when someone is in an extremely stressful or emotional situation
- The emotional stress causes the tiny capillaries in the sweat glands to rupture, allowing blood to mix with perspiration

- Although very rare, this condition has been reported other times in extreme instances of stress:
- A young girl who had a terrible fear of air raids during World War I developed the condition after a gas explosion occurred in the house next door to hers
- Another report details that after being threatened by sword-bearing soldiers, a Catholic nun “was so terrified that she bled from every part of her body and died of hemorrhage in the sight of her assailants”
- During the latter half of the 20th century, 76 cases of hemohidrosis were studied and classified into categories according to causative factors: “Acute fear and intense mental contemplation were found to be the most frequent inciting causes”

- In His prayer while his heart was deeply distressed, he prayed My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”
- This “cup” is a figure of His death signifying the wrath of God He will have to bear on the cross