

## PREVIEWS - MARK 8:31-9:10 - - - THE TRANSFIGURATION - - - PRAY

The Summer Blockbusters are coming. Amidst these blockbusters, Avengers included, will be **Fairy Tales** – tales of imaginary beings and imaginary lands.

Frederich Beuchner – *“As far as I know, there has never been an age that has not produced fairy tales.”*

They are all but universal, and they all scratch the itch we’re born with that there’s something deeper than reality. Like Neo in the Matrix, we have this sense there’s something unseen (due to this eternity sized void we see spoken of in Ecclesiastes). Fairy Tales peel back the curtain, leading us into rabbit holes or through wardrobes, and show us there is indeed another world.

In a similar way, **the Bible** continues to graduate from age to age.

There are certainly blockbuster moments in scripture. For that reason many are made movies- be it the Exodus from Egypt, the flood in Genesis, or Jesus’ death and resurrection we’re set to celebrate with Easter. Because of this, they can drift toward fables and mythical status, becoming larger than life and disconnected from history. But we do well to remember that unlike fairy tales that have also withstood the test of time, the Bible isn’t written in mythology, but history.

If we aren’t careful, it becomes *larger than life* rather than part of our present reality. It isn’t mythology. It’s history. Past reality. And the history is important - especially the Old Testament.

Dave Harvey once said: *“The Gospel is at the heart of the Bible. Everything in Scripture is either preparation for the Gospel, presentation of the Gospel, or participation in the Gospel.”*

Similarly: Jesus is at the heart of the Bible. Everything points to Jesus.

Heroes of the Bible are really types and previews of the one true hero in scripture- Jesus.

**John 1:45** - Jesus’ first disciples... *“Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

**Luke 24:27** – Jesus spoke with disciples confused by His death, walking the road to Emmaus – *“Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”*

Mark 9:1-10 - when we name it- The Transfiguration- we don’t have to call it what it is: an inexplicably wild event on the top of a mountain. If the point of a story is to show Jesus is God, then of course crazy stuff is going to happen, and doesn’t merit further thought.

*But what if it is more than a fairy tale like glimpse of another reality?*

*What if it also speaks to us in our present reality?*

*What if it is not just a one time presentation of Christ’s divinity, but a presentation of Christ that we’re supposed to participate in now?*

### CONTEXT:

We see **MOUNTAINS**. Mountains are the traditional place for special revelation in scripture. Not rabbit holes or wardrobes or a Hogwarts express.

Some of the Bible's biggest moments that peel back reality and give us glimpse of God's glory happen at mountaintops... not mountains of fantasy. Real geographic sites you can visit today.

In a time of prayer, he's revealed in all of his glory, and there with him are Moses and Elijah. This is significant. Turn one page to the left of the Gospels and you'll find what book? Malachi. The last of the OT prophets. And his last words? God's final message before centuries of prophetic silence?

**Malachi 4:2-6** - *For you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture. On the day when I act, you will tread upon the wicked as if they were dust under your feet," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.*

*"Remember to obey the Law of Moses, my servant—all the decrees and regulations that I gave him on Mount Sinai for all Israel.*

*"Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse*

Moses, representing the law, and Elijah, representing the prophets, come alongside Jesus

The Jewish people refer to the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible as the Tanakh.

The Bible is made up of three different sections:

- The Torah - the first 5 books of the Bible.
- Nevi'im – the prophets
- Ketuviim – the writings.

The word Tanakh is a combination of all 3 – Ta (Torah) Na (Nevi'im) Kh (Ketuviim)

Jewish Rabiis taught that when the Messiah would come, all three parts of scripture would testify to him.

God no doubt intentionally pulled Hebrew phrases from all 3 sections during this story.

**"This is my son"** (from Psalm 2:7, Ketuviim)

**"Whom I love/delight in"** (Isaiah 42:7, Nevi'im)

**"Listen to Him."** (Deuteronomy 18:15, the Torah)

God is stating to the disciples present – this is your Messiah. All of scripture serves as a prophetic preview that points to and is fulfilled in Him.

When the cloud overtook the disciples and the Lord spoke, who remained – Jesus.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:17 – "Do not think I came to abolish the law and the prophets. Rather, I have come to fulfill them." Here we see this visually as Moses and Elijah leave Jesus alone.

The Transfiguration is this reminder... everything to this point is **preparation** for Jesus, and here we get God the Father **presenting** Jesus in his glory.

When the cloud overtook the disciples and the Lord spoke, what was his final statement?

**Listen to him.**

(Jesus doesn't speak)

But in all 3 accounts- Matthew 17/Luke 9/Mark 9 – the trip up the mountain is prefigured by Jesus' conversation with his disciples about his suffering and death. And in all 3 accounts, Jesus follows up the Transfiguration by again predicting his death.

The first time he said it Peter didn't listen. He didn't get it. In fact he told Jesus to not speak of such things. So Jesus called him Satan. Here, God tells him to listen. On the way down. Mark 9:10, it says they were still asking questions about what Jesus meant by speaking about rising from the dead. They still didn't understand what was to come.

The transfiguration is a preview and parallel of the Crucifixion – Good Friday. Many of his disciples were shook by his death, and doubted after his death whether he was Messiah at all. But the Transfiguration shows us that his coming suffering wasn't incompatible with his glory. The suffering and the glory are intertwined.

\*\*\*The glory at the Transfiguration was a private epiphany. But the Crucifixion would be a public spectacle.

\*\*\*Surrounded by two prophets at the Transfiguration, he would be surrounded by two thieves at the Crucifixion.

\*\*\*At the Transfiguration three male disciples witness his glory at close range. At the Crucifixion three females witness his death from afar.

\*\*\*God's voice affirms Jesus as the Son of God at the Transfiguration, while one of the executioners, a Roman centurion, acclaims him to be the son of God at the Crucifixion.

\*\*\*At the Transfiguration Jesus' garments glisten in glory, at the Crucifixion his garments would be taken from him and gambled for.

\*\*\*At the Crucifixion Elijah is mentioned. At the Transfiguration he's present.

What the disciples see on the mountain is a glimpse of Christ's glory.

What they need on either side of the mountain is a reminder of Christ's suffering.

They don't set up tents or memorials or anything permanent on that mountain.

They reenter the everyday.

The splendor fades. The Biblical heroes disappear. The voice from the Heavens goes away.

We follow Jesus up the proverbial, metaphorical, worshipful mountain for the magnificent experience of being with him and hearing him and seeing his glory. But this is inevitably and always followed by going back down the mountain into the valley where daily life is lived.

And guess what? Jesus is there too, amidst life's ups and down, in every season and circumstance of life, even the suffering. And the Transfiguration reminds us that this world and its suffering doesn't cancel the glory.

They are intertwined.

So the Bible, the cross, and God's grace, comes off as larger than life rather than speaking to our present reality. But they're made to fit into our life and reshape reality.

We wouldn't say that the Bible and God are fairy tales disconnected from reality, but sometimes we live like it:

**Spiritual life** – miracles, supernatural, breathtaking moments.

**Real life** – we just want God to help us through the day.

When the two are disconnected, God remains disconnected.

We become like the disciples on the Road to Emmaus at the end of Luke...

These are the disciples in Luke 24 who Jesus explained the OT to, as we pointed to as we opened

They talked with Jesus for hours without realizing the Messiah was right there with them.

How long do you go without reflecting on the fact that God is with you?

Hours? Days? Weeks?

**Jesus' death and resurrection should shift our understanding of reality.**

The series that we'll start at Easter on salvation was sparked by a Dallas Willard quote,

"Eternal life is now in session."

The Transfiguration also speaks to this.

The Transfiguration isn't just about Jesus' divinity.

And it isn't just a foreshadowing of his death and resurrection.

It's about you and me. Our suffering. And our glory.

In all 3 gospel accounts – Matthew 17/Luke 9/Mark 9 – the trip up the mountain is prefigured by Jesus' conversation with his disciples about his suffering and death.

But Jesus doesn't stop there. He also says in each account:

***"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it."***

From here, in each account, it jumps to Jesus climbing the mountain to transfiguration.

We all want these mountain top moments.

We all want to see God's glory.

The transfiguration reminds us that we don't have to wait until Heaven.

**Easter's celebration of Jesus shouldn't be detached like a fairy tale.**

**It should shift our understanding of reality.**

**Eternal life begins now.**

**Our transfiguration should begin now.**

**Romans 12:1** – *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God*

(what does "offering my body as a living sacrifice" look like?)

MSG version: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

The same word which is translated '**transfigured**' in Mark 9:2 is rendered '**transformed**' in Romans 12:2. The same word is used for Christ's transfiguration and for our transformation!

Again- we want the glory. We want the mountaintop moments.  
Jesus gives us instructions for climbing our mount of transfiguration.  
How do you climb your mount of transfiguration?  
Take up your cross.

The key to personal transfiguration is lots of deaths and resurrections along the way. A million little deaths where you die to self. You die to selfishness. You die to greed. You die to pride and lust and sin.

When we want to transform ourselves physically we get this.  
I have to die to donuts. I have to lose my soda.  
The problem is we want the beach body without the sacrifice.  
But no pain, no gain.

We get it physically.  
But then spiritually...  
We want the glorification and transformation and the life abundant and all God's promises...  
but we want it without any denial, any pain, any suffering, any death and we totally compartmentalize the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ into it's own realm down some rabbit hole or behind a wardrobe and think it doesn't have anything to do with us and the way we live our lives.

Paul in Romans 8: *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed **in** us."*

That word **IN** is key.  
We will be glorified. Stripped of sin. Resurrected into eternal life.  
Our sufferings can't compare to that glory.

The Transfiguration isn't just about Jesus' divinity. Something we cherish but compartmentalize. Nor is it solely a foreshadowing of his death and resurrection, his suffering and glory. It's about you and me. Our suffering. And our glory.

One day we won't just behold the transfigured Christ, we will be transfigured with him. Our slowly increasing glorification will come to an explosive consummation.

C.S. Lewis – *"the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship."*

We're called as we follow Christ to make that "one day" more and more present in "today."  
Not so people will be tempted to worship us.  
But so people will be drawn to worship Christ.

We're called to serve as previews of Christ.

The Old Testament scripture serves as **preparation**.

At the Transfiguration and the greater context of the Gospels we see the **presentation**.

We are called to **participation**.

Even in transfiguration.

Dying a thousand little deaths. Dying daily.

Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Not conforming to the patterns of this world, but being transformed- transfigured- by the renewing of your mind.

To close- that word renew?

The word 'renew' means to bring back to life, which means death is a requirement!

You can't experience renewal without death.

Spiritual renewal put simply – death and resurrection

Want transfiguration? Want renewal?

You have to die to your ego, you have to die to your laziness, you have to die to your bad habits, you have to die to what is permissible but might not be beneficial, good getting in the way of great, natural getting in the way of supernatural.

If you are willing to die daily, you can be transfigured and renewed in ways you didn't imagine possible, starting today. In your reality.

*What needs to die?*