

It was right after Peter's confession of Jesus being the Christ that he tried to tell Jesus that He should not be killed (Matthew 16:16ⁱ). He received one of the harshest rebukes in Scripture. One minute Peter was inspired by God and the next by Satan. The disciples were having a hard time believing the warning Jesus was giving them about His upcoming death.

Peter, James, and John had just had a mountain top experience. They had seen Jesus radiant with glory and speaking with Elijah and Moses. They had been immersed in the glory cloud and heard the voice of God declare, "*This is my beloved Son; listen to Him!*" The experience on the mountain only made Peter's conviction more certain. Now there is no doubt who Jesus is, but there is still a misunderstanding about what He came to do.

⁹ *And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.* Mark 9:9 As they headed down the mountain, which I think was probably the morning after the transfiguration, Jesus tried again to prepare them for what was soon to take place and to keep what they had seen on the mountain to themselves until then. After He had risen they were permitted to share the event. We have seen several times in this Gospel that Jesus tries to tamp down any Messianic fervor. After feeding the 5000 He had to head up the Golan Heights to escape the people's effort to make Him a king (John 6:15ⁱⁱ). He would tell those who He had healed not to tell anyone how they were healed. When Jesus does make it clear to the public by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, it will only be five days before they crucify Him (Matthew 21:7-9ⁱⁱⁱ). Messianic pretenders had come before Jesus and Rome had quickly dispatched them. That is because most Jews saw the Messiah as a military leader.

¹⁰ *So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.* Mark 9:10 The inner three were faithful to obey this command. That is a miracle in itself. If you or I saw something like what they witnessed, it would be almost impossible for us to not at least hint at it. And if prodded enough, how much would we eventually let slip? But one thing that helped them was Jesus' condition of waiting tell about it until after He had risen from the dead. They still could not understand that the Messiah had to die, so of course they did not understand what rising from the dead meant. The connection of the transfiguration with the resurrection was something they just could not comprehend, and perhaps that helped them obey this command from Jesus to keep it a secret.

In hindsight, Isaiah 53 makes it clear that the Righteous One, God's servant, would die but then prolong His days. ⁷ *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter; and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.* ⁸ *By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?* ⁹ *And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.* ¹⁰ *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.* ¹¹ *Out of the anguish of*

his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Isaiah 53:7-11 (my emphasis) Isaiah predicted the death of the Righteous One would make many to be accounted righteous because He would take on their iniquities. The punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23^{iv}), and God's servant, would die for our sins. The disciples could not yet see that this was exactly what Jesus was talking about.

It remains a mystery for all who have not yet received the gospel. It is usually not until you are ready to receive Jesus as your Savior that it is revealed to you. Ask someone why Jesus died and they are likely to tell you He was a good man who was ahead of His time. Jews of that day thought they were going to heaven because they descended from Abraham. But Ezekiel declared that the soul that sins must die (Ezekiel 18:4^v), and he was not only talking about physical death. Can a just and holy God simply declare us righteous when there is evil in our hearts?

King David, an adulterous murderer, declared that God was not looking for an animal sacrifice, but for a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:16,17^{vi}). That kind of a heart looks to God for mercy that was provided for us on the cross.

What does rise from the dead mean? It means the sacrifice of Jesus giving His life for us was accepted by God. Our debt has been paid. The proof is the resurrection (Romans 4:25^{vii}). Jesus risen from the dead means we are justified, acceptable to God. It means we have looked to the righteousness of Jesus and not our own goodness. It means our faith is in what He did for us and not in ourselves. The connection with the transfiguration is that the glorious Righteous One who did not deserve death died in our place. He became our guilt offering, conquered death and hell, and is at the right hand of God declaring that we are counted as righteous (Hebrews 7:25^{viii}).

¹¹ *And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?"*

Mark 9:11 The inner three disciples know Jesus is the Messiah. They also know that the scribes, those who study the Scriptures, say that Elijah will come back before the Messiah comes. They say that because they have read the prophecy of Malachi. ⁵ *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.*

Malachi 4:5 Even today when Jews have their Passover meal they set a place for Elijah.

^{12a} *And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things.* Mark 9:12a Jesus told them that the scribes got it right, but they missed him when he came. While this passage does not specifically say it was John the Baptist, in other passages such as Matthew 11:14^{ix}, Jesus makes it clear. When the angel Gabriel told Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth would have a child, the angel quoted part of the Malachi prediction. ¹⁷ *and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."* Luke 1:17 However, the angel clarified that John was not Elijah but came in the spirit and power of Elijah. From that we can interpret Jesus' expression of restoring all things to mean leading the people to repentance so that they would receive the good news of Jesus.

^{12b} *And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?* Mark 9:12b Jesus then asked the disciples a question. While the Messiah son of David was the dominate thought of the nation and its religious leaders, they also spoke of Messiah son of Joseph. By that they did not mean Joseph the husband of Mary, but Joseph in the Genesis account. They saw the pattern of Joseph's life

as foreshadowing the coming Messiah. While some Hebrew scholars distance the prediction from the Suffering Servant Song of Isaiah 53, others draw a connection, even quoting portions of the song (Hinne avdi).^x These rabbis saw ben Yosef as making a way for Messiah ben David. It was not a coincidence that Jesus' stepfather was named Joseph. We understand the two messiahs as the first and second coming of Jesus with the church age in between, while they see a future ben Yosef immediately followed by Messiah ben David. Earlier Jewish sages allude to the two being one with an initial rejection but acceptance on His return, which lines up with what Christians understand.

Jesus asked what is written about the Messiah suffering and being treated with contempt? Remember, this is after He told them not to tell anyone until He was risen from the dead. The disciples were questioning what rising from the dead meant, not the fact that He would die or how that would happen. So, Jesus is telling them to search the Scriptures and see what is written. The Suffering Servant Song describes the suffering of his body and soul as well as the rejection He would face. Psalm 22^{xi} tells how He would die. Zechariah^{xii} tells us that He will be pierced. Do you know what it says? We should be able to show anyone who asks. The Isaiah song says it was in bearing our sins to make us righteous before God. The life of Joseph shows us that being falsely accused and slandered while maintaining one's integrity can result in God exalting you for the salvation of others (Genesis 50:20^{xiii}).

Jesus indeed suffered many things. He was thought of as a bastard in His hometown. When He began His ministry the religious leaders challenged Him, ridiculed Him, and falsely accused Him. Finally, they plotted His death by the torturous cross (Matthew 26:4^{xiv}). They beat Him, spit on Him, and mocked Him. His disciples deserted Him. He was scourged just short of death and then made to carry His cross to a public place of execution. Nails were driven in His hands and feet. His shoulders would have come out of joint. Even as He was dying they mocked Him (Matthew 27:40^{xv}). The sins of the world were placed upon Him. The Father turned away and shrouded the scene in darkness. Hell vented its fury on Him. Isaiah^{xvi} says His form was marred beyond human likeness (Isaiah 52:14^{xvii}). He paid our debt and commended His spirit into His Father's hands^{xviii}. That is the suffering many things Jesus told the disciples to consider. I do not think they understood any of this at the time. Jesus was telling them to prepare themselves by searching out what the prophecies said about Him. He would have to explain it all to them after the resurrection on the road to Emmaus and in the upper room (Luke 24:44,45^{xix}).

¹³ *But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.*" Mark 9:13 He followed that warning by telling them the answer to their question. Elijah did come. It was John, if you can receive it. They did to John whatever they pleased. He was surely mocked as well, before they beheaded him. Jesus says it was written of him too. I do not know the passage Jesus is referring to. Jesus may have been referring to the suffering Elijah endured fleeing from Jezebel (1 Kings 19:1-3^{xx}). Or perhaps Jesus was referring to Psalm 139:16^{xxi} (Psalm 56:8^{xxii}). All the days of our life are written in His book before one of them came to be. If that is the case, Jesus is referring to the sovereign will of God and the record of our lives (Revelation 20:12^{xxiii}). If so, it begs the question, what will be written of us?

¹⁴ *And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them.* ¹⁵ *And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were*

greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. ¹⁶ And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” Mark 9:14-16 The disciples had the greatest mountaintop experience of all time. The Christian classic, *Hinde’s Feet on High Places*, tells us those special experiences are to prepare us to return to the valley where we practice our faith.

¹⁷ And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. ¹⁸ And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” Mark 9:17,18 The argument was probably over the method of casting out evil spirits. This poor father had brought his son to the disciples for healing. They had done it before. They had been given the authority. What happened? What the boy suffered sounds like epilepsy, but it is obviously more than that for the boy cannot hear or speak. The fact that he is seized next to fire or water to destroy him shows us the malevolent power behind his condition.

¹⁹ And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” ²⁰ And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Mark 9:19,20 Jesus knows He will not be physically with them much longer. He is longing for them to mature so that when the Holy Spirit descends, they will carry on His work in the world.

The demon within the boy saw Jesus and immediately made one last attempt to damage him. ²¹ And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Mark 9:21,22 The boy must have had scars and burn marks from previous episodes. The father had to be with him every moment. He thinks the demon is so powerful that even Jesus may not be able to help him. This means that he does not yet realize who Jesus is.

²³ And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” Mark 9:23,24 Jesus challenged the man’s statement. It is not about Jesus’ ability but whether the man will place his faith in Jesus. The man is totally honest. We can relate, for there are times when we think something is God’s will, but we just are not sure. We cry out to God, “If this is Your will, help me believe that You will do this!”

²⁵ And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” ²⁶ And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” Mark 9:25,26 Jesus tried to keep a low profile because of the danger of being known as the Messiah. The crowd is running toward Him, so before they arrive He commands the demon to leave and never enter the boy again. The boy cannot hear, but the evil spirit could. He could not speak, but the spirit cries out and convulses the boy as it leaves. The boy was motionless on the ground. People thought he was dead. Maybe he was.

²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. Mark 9:27 Jesus, who is Life (John 14:6^{xxiv}), took the boy’s hand and raised him up.

What a scene! The boy’s face, once looking so tormented was now filled with peace. He could hear and speak. It is similar to how the command of Jesus sets our soul free from the lies that bind us and keep us from hearing and speaking the truth. Before we

met Jesus we were spiritually dead. But when Jesus broke the chains of lies that held us, He raised us up to stand before Him with peace in our hearts. He gave us ears to hear and a voice to speak His truth. Do not ever be bound by those lies again.

²⁸ *And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"* ²⁹ *And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."* Mark 9:28,29 Jesus had given the disciples the authority to cast out demons (Matthew 10:1^{xxv}). What happened? I think they may have fallen into routine as man so readily does. Instead of looking to Jesus in prayer and trusting in His authority given to them, they followed the pattern. After all, they said the words before and the demons left. **The difference is where faith is placed. Is it in the pattern, the words, and past experiences, or is it in the authority and power of Jesus?** The same thing happens to us we pray, worship, witness, and especially as we go through our daily routine. We forget to look to Jesus in prayer. We follow the pattern the Spirit of God led us in before. But we can do all that without our heart seeking our Savior who is the power and authority. Godly routines are good, but we must stay connected to the source. Our hearts must be ever listening for correction and guidance (Proverbs 8:34^{xxvi}). If we go through our routines without looking to our Savior, we end up powerless to do anything of eternal value. We become spiritually lifeless. Prayer is our cord that plugs into the power of Jesus and His guidance. **Do not forget to connect your power cord of prayer to the source of power.**

Jesus and the inner three disciples came down the mountain after being in the cloud of glory and hearing the very voice of God. God gave them the command to listen to Jesus. Arriving in the valley below they faced this fallen world. How were they to face it? By listening to Jesus. How do we listen today? By reading the Word and praying. That is how we walk in the Spirit. That is how He is able to work in and through us. But when we unplug and forget that without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5^{xxvii}), we should not be surprised that the power does not flow. That is why the Apostle Paul tells us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17^{xxviii}). That is how we are to live down here in the valley. Are you connected?

The disciples desperately needed to learn this to face what Jesus predicted in the next verses. ³⁰ *They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know,* ³¹ *for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise."* ³² *But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.* Mark 9:30-32 Jesus avoided the crowds to spend time preparing the disciples' hearts for what was to come. To be delivered into the hands of men was something King David thought to be the worst of fates (2 Samuel 24:15^{xxix}). Man's inhumanity to man knows no bounds. But Jesus gave them a promise. He would rise after three days. They were afraid to ask Him what it meant. It was only after the resurrection that they remembered and believed (John 2:22^{xxx}).

May the Lord help us to stay connected by prayer to Jesus' power and authority in all that He asks us to do for His glory! Without Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5^{xxxi})!

Questions: 1 What did Jesus command the three disciples? Why? 2 What had they missed in the Scriptures? 3 What was their question? Why did they ask it? 4 Where did Jesus

direct them to look regarding the future? 5 What are the two messiahs according to many Jews?

6 Why do we have to come down from the mountain? 7 What did Jesus suffer?

8 What issue did they face in the valley? 9 Why were the disciples not able to cast out the demon? 10 What lessons will you take with you from this passage?

i Matthew 16:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

ii John 6:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

iii Matthew 21:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

iv Romans 6:23 (ESV)

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

v Ezekiel 18:4 (ESV)

⁴ Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

vi Psalm 51:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

vii Psalm 51:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

viii Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

ix Matthew 11:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

^x *Shnei Lufot Ha-Berit*: [8]; Naphtali ben Asher Altschuler's (d. after 1607) *Ayyalah Sheluhah*; Samuel b. Abraham Laniado ha-Darshan (d. 1605) in his Isaiah commentary, *Keli Paz* (Venice, 1657), on Is. 52:13

xi Psalm 22:16-18 (ESV)

¹⁶ For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— ¹⁷ I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; ¹⁸ they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

xii Zechariah 12:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

xiii Genesis 50:20 (ESV)

²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

xiv Matthew 26:4 (ESV)

⁴ and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.

xv Matthew 27:40 (ESV)

⁴⁰ and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

xvi Isaiah 52:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

xvii **Isaiah 52:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

xviii **Luke 23:46 (ESV)**

⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.

xix **Luke 24:44-45 (ESV)**

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

xx **Psalms 19:1-3 (ESV)**

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ² Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

xxi **Psalms 139:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

xxii **Psalms 56:8 (ESV)**

⁸ You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?

xxiii **Revelation 20:12 (ESV)**

¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

xxiv **John 14:6 (ESV)**

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

xxv **Matthew 10:1 (ESV)**

¹ And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.

xxvi **Proverbs 8:34 (ESV)**

³⁴ Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.

xxvii **John 15:5 (ESV)**

⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

xxviii **1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ pray without ceasing,

xxix **2 Samuel 24:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ Then David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man.”

xxx **John 2:22 (ESV)**

²² When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

xxxi **John 15:5 (ESV)**

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