

Who Do You Listen to the Most?

International Bible Lessons

Mark 9:2-13

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“And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus” (Mark 9:4—NRSV).

“Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus” (Mark 9:4—NASB-U).

“And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus” (Mark 9:4—KJV).

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a high mountain that became known as the Mount of Transfiguration after they saw Jesus' appearance changed and His clothes turned dazzling white. They also saw two heroes of their faith talking with Jesus. Luke recorded that Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus about His “departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). Some think that these two encouraged Jesus because His death on the cross would enable their salvation and serve as “a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

The Hebrews honored Moses as their great lawgiver, who led them out of slavery in Egypt. During Jesus' teaching, He often referred people to what Moses wrote or commanded (see Mark 10:3; 12:26). Because we have disobeyed God's moral law given through Moses, “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” to lead us to faith, repentance, and the forgiveness of sins (John 1:17).

The Jewish people also honored the great prophet Elijah as a man of prayer, who called down fire or rain from heaven, and whose prayers could defeat armies, heal the sick, or raise the dead. They expected Elijah to return and prepare the way for the Messiah.

Peter wanted to honor all of his heroes by building them tents on the mountain top, but God the Father commanded, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” (Mark 9:7). The Father wanted Jesus’ followers to put His Son first in their lives and obey His teachings and commands. He would not allow any well-meaning human plans to honor Jesus on Earth to deter His Son from His foreordained destiny—His sacrificial death to save sinners.

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Thinking Further

1. Why do you think Jesus chose Peter, James, and John to go up the mountain with Him to see His transfiguration? If you were one of those chosen, how would you feel? If you were one of those left behind by Jesus, how would you have felt? How might you deal with your feelings?

2. What does the experience of Peter, James, and John teach us about believing based on first hand experience? What must we learn about believing based on what we learn from trustworthy eye witnesses? What are some of the qualities of a trustworthy eye witness? Why are eye witnesses important? Why is carefully evaluating before receiving their testimony important?

3. What should it mean to us when we read what God the Father said to Peter, James, and John in Mark 9:7? How well do we do that? How might we improve?

4. Why do you think Jesus wanted His transfiguration kept a secret until after His resurrection? How do you think the resurrected Jesus looked compared to the transfigured Jesus? How do you think His body and clothing might have looked different transfigured and resurrected? Do you agree or disagree with the idea in the commentary that the transfiguration experience of the three disciples would enable them to help others believe in the resurrection of Jesus?

5. Of what value is it for the followers of Jesus to study about Moses and Elijah and the Old Testament?

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