

PASSOVER MIND

MATTHEW 17:1-8 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” 5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” 6 And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. 7 But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” 8 When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Although the time of the year is not specific, the setting of the transfiguration recalls the scene in Exodus when Moses and the seventy elders were at Mount Sinai. While the others remained at the base, Moses went up the mountain and a cloud covered it. For six days, the cloud remained and on the seventh day God spoke, just as in the transfiguration. For Moses, this happened following the day of Pentecost:

EXODUS 24:9-17 9 Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and they saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in *its* clarity. 11 But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank. 12 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.” 13 So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. 14 And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur *are* with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them.” 15 Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. 16 Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 The sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

But notice what Jesus says after His transfiguration: “Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one **until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.**” ” (Matthew 17:9). The three principle disciples saw a vision of the Kingdom of God that is yet to come. It is a time that portrays the Feast of Tabernacles (Matthew 16:27) but this verse tells us what was foremost on the mind of Jesus Christ—His suffering and death at the Passover.

Now back up a few verses:

MATTHEW 16:21, 24-28 From that time **Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.** ... 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross,** and follow Me. 25 “**For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.** 26 “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. 28 “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Preceding the transfiguration, Jesus explained to the disciples that He would be betrayed, tortured, and murdered on the cross. There is no doubt that they understood, at least partly, the terrible end He was describing (Matthew 17:23b). Jesus then told them that they would likewise have to deny their own life and suffer willingly if they wanted to follow Him and receive that eternal reward when Jesus comes in His Kingdom.

The Passover sacrifice was on the mind of Jesus all the time even when He was talking about God’s Kingdom to come. Why would this be the backdrop to all of His thoughts, even when He was speaking of the times of His glory to come? More importantly, why did Jesus discuss His death while showing the disciples the glory of the Kingdom of God in the transfiguration?

The answer is that the salvation of all mankind rested on a single man living a perfect life without sin. **Jesus Christ had to consider the Passover sacrifice every minute of every single day of His life upon this earth if He was to triumph over Satan.** Consider also that Jesus not only had to battle Satan but also the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes who were constantly tempting Him and seeking to kill Him. The enormity of His responsibility is beyond our ability to grasp. How long can we remain without sin? Though we ourselves are constantly tempted, consider what was at stake for Christ when He was tempted by Satan.

Paul spoke of his war against his own temptations and fully comprehended the incredible victory of Jesus Christ:

ROMANS 7:23-25 But I see another law in my members, **warring against the law of my mind,** and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 **I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!** So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Too often, we do not think of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as a victory but it cannot be described in a better way because Jesus won a war for us that we would have lost. Paul understood that unless we, too, have the same mind toward Jesus Christ’s sacrifice, we will fall short and end up in the lake of fire and brimstone.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus**, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death**, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Passover mind of Jesus Christ ought to be foremost in our thoughts regardless of the season or holyday because none of them matter if our sins overcome us. Keeping our minds focused in the same manner as Jesus Christ is the only sure way to attaining the glory of God.

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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