



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
SERIES: WHO IS JESUS
LESSON: JESUS THE INCOMPARABLE ONE
TEXT: MARK 9:1-13
MARCH 22, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Today we are looking at one of the most remarkable moments recorded in the Gospels. The story of Jesus' transfiguration reveals something extraordinary about who Jesus truly is. In this moment, a few of the disciples are given a glimpse of His glory in a way that they had never seen before. The transfiguration allows us to see beyond Jesus' ordinary human appearance and recognize His divine majesty. It is a powerful reminder that Jesus is not merely another teacher or prophet. He is the incomparable Son of God.

The title "transfiguration" is a reference to Jesus' physical appearance transforming in the sight of Peter, James, and John. In this moment, these three disciples witness Jesus becoming bright, His face shining, and His clothes becoming radiant white. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the event. In our lesson, we are going to focus on Mark's account.

Text

Mark 9:1-13

9 And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

The Transfiguration

2 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one^[a] on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. 5 And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi,^[b] it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6 For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son;^[c] listen to him." 8 And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

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. 10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. 11 And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" 12 And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? 13 But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."

EXPLANATION

Context

Just prior to the transfiguration, Jesus had asked the disciples who they believed Him to be (Mk. 8:29). In that account, Peter tells Jesus that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Peter's confession is correct. Yet even though Peter recognized that Jesus was the Christ, the disciples still did not fully grasp who Jesus truly was or what His mission would involve.

Peter and the rest of the disciples assumed that Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom immediately. They did not realize that Jesus' kingdom would be established through His suffering, death, and resurrection. In fact, when Jesus attempted to explain His coming death, Peter actually rebuked Him (Mk. 8:33).

In turn, Jesus rebuked Peter. He explained that His followers must be willing to suffer for Him as well. If anyone would come after Jesus, they must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him (Mk. 8:34–38).

The transfiguration that follows gives the disciples a glimpse of Jesus' true glory. In this moment God Himself confirms that Jesus is unlike anyone else. The scene reveals Jesus' incomparable glory, authority, and future.

Some Will See the Kingdom of God Come With Power

The story of Jesus' transfiguration comes about a week after Jesus told the disciples that He would suffer, die, and rise again. Jesus concluded His talk with the disciples by saying that some of them would not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come in power. Most likely the disciples were confused by Jesus' statement. Of course, as readers of the New Testament, we have the opportunity to know how the story unfolds, and from this perspective we can better understand what Jesus meant.

Most likely Jesus is referring to His resurrection from the dead. The “some” in Jesus' words would refer to the disciples, with the exception of Judas Iscariot. Jesus' resurrection took place within the lifetime of the disciples. With Jesus' resurrection, the kingdom of God was inaugurated with power.

It is interesting to note that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record Jesus' statement immediately before His transfiguration. It seems that the transfiguration points forward to His resurrection and also to His second coming when the kingdom of God will be fully established and realized.

Incomparable Glory

Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain. We are not told exactly why He chose only these three, but it appears that Jesus occasionally set them apart for particularly significant moments. They were

the only disciples who witnessed Jesus raising Jairus' daughter back to life (Mk. 5:37). They were also the only three who accompanied Jesus to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk. 14:33).

On the mountain, Jesus was transfigured. His "clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them." Matthew adds that Jesus' face also shone. In this moment, the disciples were seeing a glimpse of the incomparable glory that belongs to Jesus as the Son of God.

Incomparable Authority

Two significant Old Testament figures also appeared—Moses and Elijah (Mt. 17:2). Luke tells us that they were speaking with Jesus about His departure which would take place in Jerusalem, likely referring to His coming death (Lk. 9:31).

There are several things worth pointing out about this scene. First, there are some interesting parallels between Jesus' transfiguration and Moses on Mount Sinai.

- In both episodes, Jesus and Moses are on a mountain.
- Jesus becomes radiant, whereas Moses' face shone after leaving the presence of God (Ex. 34:29–35).
- Moses left the mountain with the law of God which the Israelites were to obey (Ex. 19; 20:19–20). Similarly, God the Father speaks here and commands the disciples to listen to Jesus.
- In both episodes God's presence is marked with a cloud (Ex. 19:16).

While these parallels are interesting, the differences are even more significant. Moses shone because he had been in God's presence. Jesus shines because glory belongs to Him. Moses pointed people to God's law, but here God the Father directs the disciples to listen to Jesus. The conclusion is unmistakable: Jesus is greater than Moses, and everything ultimately points to Him.

A second thing to point out is the significance of Moses and Elijah. The account does not explicitly tell us why these two prophets appeared, but there are several possibilities.

- Some commentators consider them to represent the Law and the Prophets. Moses recorded the Law, and Elijah is considered one of the

greatest prophets. In this sense their presence may symbolize that the entire Old Testament points forward to Jesus.

- Both prophets also experienced suffering. Moses faced repeated rejection from the Israelites, and Elijah fled for his life from King Ahab and Jezebel. Jesus too would suffer.
- Moses and Elijah also had unusual departures from this world. Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Ki. 2:11–12). Moses died and was buried by God, and no one knows the location of his grave (Deut. 34:1–8). Luke records that they were discussing Jesus' departure (Lk. 9:31).
- Another possibility is that the Old Testament includes prophecies related to both Moses and Elijah. Deuteronomy 18:15 records Moses saying, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen." Malachi 4:5 says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes."

Although the Bible does not explicitly tell us why Moses and Elijah appeared, their presence clearly emphasizes that the Law and the Prophets both bear witness to Jesus.

Mark does not mention it, but Luke tells us that the disciples had fallen asleep and missed the initial transformation of Jesus and the arrival of Moses and Elijah (Lk. 9:32). When Peter wakes up and sees what is happening, he begins speaking. Peter enjoys what he sees and declares, "It is good that we are here!" He suggests building three tents for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Mark humorously explains that Peter did not know what to say because they were terrified. His words were more the result of fear than wisdom.

Then suddenly a cloud appears and overshadows them. This cloud represents the presence of God. The disciples are terrified. Then God speaks from the cloud: "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." Suddenly the cloud disappears. Moses and Elijah are gone. Only Jesus remains.

The moment is deeply significant. Moses and Elijah had important roles in God's plan, but their purpose was always to point people toward the One who was to come. Once Jesus is revealed, they disappear. The disciples are left with *Jesus alone*, emphasizing that He stands above even the greatest figures of the Old Testament. He indeed has incomparable authority.

Incomprehensible until the Resurrection

As they travel down the mountain, Jesus tells them to remain quiet about what they have seen until after the resurrection. They keep the matter to themselves, though they do not fully understand what Jesus means by rising from the dead.

Trying to make sense of it, they ask Jesus why the scribes say Elijah must come first. Jesus explains that Elijah has already come in the ministry of John the Baptist. Yet Scripture also teaches that the Son of Man must suffer. Just as John the Baptist suffered, so too Jesus will suffer.

Before we move along to our discussion questions, it might be helpful to summarize the story of the transfiguration in its context. Jesus is the Christ who will usher in the kingdom of God. Yet His path to establishing this kingdom will be through His suffering, death, and resurrection. In the transfiguration, Jesus reveals His glory and divine authority. For a brief moment, Peter, James, and John see a glimpse of the incomparable glory that belongs to Him. Though Jesus will suffer and die, He will ultimately be raised in radiant glory beyond compare.

Discussion Questions:

- Compare and contrast Jesus with Moses and Elijah. What are some of their similarities but how is Jesus also better?
- Can you relate to Peter in any way from this story?
- What do you think Jesus was ask the disciples to not share about the His transfiguration until after the resurrection?
- How does this passage challenge the idea that Jesus is just another religious leader?
- If Jesus truly is the incomparable Son of God, what should that mean for how we listen to His words?
- Are there voices in our culture that compete with Jesus for authority in our lives? What are they?
- When you think about Jesus, do you tend to focus more on His humility or His glory? Why?

Conclusions or Application

JESUS THE INCOMPARABLE ONE

It is likely significant that Jesus transfigured soon after He told the disciples that they would see the Kingdom of God coming in power. In the act, Jesus demonstrated His glory and power through His appearance. He revealed Himself overwhelmingly. Jesus is the light of the world, and nothing compares to His light and glory. Not only did Jesus reveal Himself to be God through His miracles and His actions, His appearance too reflects His glory.

Revelation 1:13-18 describes John's vision of Jesus. John's account and the account of the transfiguration both demonstrate Jesus' radiance:

¹³ and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man,^[a] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. ¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

In the act of transfiguring, Jesus foreshadowed what He looks like today. Jesus was buried yet raised imperishable and immortal.

JESUS' INCOMPARABLE FUTURE

We have not discussed this much, just slightly alluded to it, but a major lesson from the Jesus' transfiguration is that He is coming back to fully establish His kingdom. And we can in part be certain of His return because there were three eyewitnesses of His glorified appearance at Jesus' transfiguration. When Jesus returns, He will come in glorious, radiant power. This was Peter's conclusion as he reflected back on Jesus' transfiguration in his second epistle. Second Peter 1:16-18 reads,

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”^[b] ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

The transfiguration of Jesus left a lasting impression on Peter. Looking back on his discipleship journey with Jesus, Peter recalled that Jesus said he would see the kingdom coming in power. In the transfiguration, Peter was privileged to see an actual foreshadowing of what Jesus will be like when He returns. Knowing that Jesus would return with visible, awe-striking glory and power, he wanted his readers in 2 Peter to be ready. He tells them in a few verses prior in 2 Peter 1:10-15:

¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ¹² So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. ¹³ I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, ¹⁴ because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.