This is a message on Christ's Preview of His Kingdom by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg Dean and Professor of Old Testament at Talbot Theological Seminary. The subject of this present message is Christ's preview of his kingdom. Our scripture here is found in Matthew's gospel chapter 17 verses 1-9, Mark's gospel the 9th chapter verses 2-13 and Luke's gospel chapter 9 verses 28-36. The incident is that of the mount of transfiguration experience, one that was entirely unique in the life of our Lord it is unlike anything else in his life. In each gospel where it is found it follows the word concerning the death of the Messiah and the prediction that some standing by would not taste of death before they saw the kingdom of the son of man. The reason this incident is not in John's gospel is clear from John 1:14, and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth. In John's gospel, his glory was constantly being manifested and shown forth. His miracles we read this sign did he that he might manifest his glory therefore in the fourth gospel we have no record of the mount of transfiguration experience. But we do have it in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Matthew 17:1-9 in these words: And after 6 days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them and his face did shine as the son and his garments became white as the light. And
behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him. And Peter answered and said unto Jesus Lord it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt I will make here three tabernacles. One for thee, and one for Moses and one for Elijah. While he was yet speaking behold a bright cloud overshadowed them and behold a voice out of the cloud saying this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it they fell on their face and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said arise and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes they saw no one save Jesus only. And as they were coming down from the mountain Jesus commanded them saying tell the vision to no man until the son of man be risen from the dead. Matthew’s Gospel chapter 17:1-9.

But this portion is preceded as we’ve indicated here and in the other gospels by a prediction that some who were standing by and hearing his voice would not die before they saw the kingdom of the son of man. Now Peter was one of the three who saw the Lord Jesus Christ transfigured. He gives us his very clear testimony in 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 16-18. And incidentally, in this portion he is explaining, he is interpreting if you will exactly what that transfiguration experience was and what it was meant to convey not only to Peter, James, and John but what it was meant to teach all the people of God through the coming centuries. In 2 Peter 1:16-18 we read for we did not follow cunningly devised fables. The apostles didn’t follow some myths and legends as some folks would have us believe today we didn’t follow cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. His powerful coming, his coming in power and glory how did you know so much about it Peter? But we were eye witnesses of his Majesty and where might that be?

For him, our Lord Jesus received from God the Father honor and glory when there was borne such a voice to him by the majestic glory. This is my beloved son in whom I am well
pleased. And this voice we ourselves heard born out of heaven, carried out of heaven when we
were with him on the holy mount. There you have it then. There were those standing by who did
not taste death until they saw a pre-showing if you will, a preview of his kingdom. There's no
question then friends as to what the Lord meant concerning the son of man coming and his
kingdom. For the mount of transfiguration experience has in miniature all the elements of
Messiah's future kingdom. And you may have wondered through the years, why is the mount of
transfiguration experience given before the mount Calvary experience? Ah there's a reason. In
God's wonderful plan there must be the mount transfiguration before mount Calvary. Why?
Hebrew's 12:1 and 2.

Therefore let us also sing we're encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses lay
aside the weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race
that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. Here's the portion
now. Who for the joy that was set before him. That's the joy indicated in the mount of
transfiguration experience. The realization of his kingdom in power and glory who for the joy
that was set before him endured the cross, there's mount Calvary, In view of the far off
wonderful wonderful joy he did endure the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the
right hand of the throne of God. So we have here, in miniature form, four gleams and all the
elements of Christ's future kingdom. Notice the distinctive features of this important scene. First
of all, atop the mount each account deals with fullness of the one who was the central figure, the
uniting, unifying figure in the picture. And it's not Moses, it's not Elijah, it's not the disciples
bellow, and it's certainly not the crowd, but the Lord Jesus himself, the Messiah of Israel and it's
not this Messiah as in Isaiah 53:1-3, the one who came despised and rejected, as a root out of a
dry ground he hath no form, no comeliness, no beauty that when we see him we should desire
him. He was despised and rejected of man. He was not esteemed. He was considered as Luther put it, a no body. He was stricken, smite of God, afflicted. Here he is now though. Not in weakness, not in humiliation, not in ridicule, not in suffering and despised. He is here, in his essential divine glory and the word is so beautifully chosen. He was transfigured, not transformed. That would mean something added from without. But here he is transfigured, something from within. Here he is in his essential, inherent, original divine glory.

That's the reason Matthew puts it, Matthew 17:2 and he was transfigured before them and his face did shine as the sun, the second person of the trinity and his garments became white as the light. Mark puts it beautifully Mark 9 verse 2 and 3 after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, James and John and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves and he was transfigured before them and his garments became glistening, exceeding white so as no fuller, no launderer on earth can whiten them. And the apostle is here again. Luke, in the 9th chapter of his book, of his gospel, verse 29. We have Luke 9:29 with this word, and as he was praying the fashion of his countenance was altered and his raiment became white and dazzling. Beautiful picture of the inherent, unique, exclusive glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the central figure. Now ample proof, if anyone needed it is given of his deity. Notice the glory came from his person.

It did not come from some outside source. It was not something that was added to him but something that was inherently his. And then his deity is pointed up by two of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament meeting and vising with him and speaking with him. the visit of Moses and Elijah for one not of the household of Israel for one in that condition of being difficult to express with what high esteem these two great prophets are held in Israel. Moses is equivalent to our founder of our Nation namely George Washington. And Elijah was the one who
wonderfully restored them in a time of great apostasy, saved the nation in a very real sense just like Abraham Lincoln. Here the visit of Moses and Elijah, two of the greatest of the Old Testament prophets and then as though that were not sufficient, listen to the beautiful testimony from high heaven itself. We have the testimony of God the father, and what do we hear here? A voice out of the cloud. Peter recalls it so well. He mentions it in 2 Peter 1:16-18. That voice out of the majestic glory. The word was this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased and the command hear ye him. You're not to listen to Moses as the last word; you're not to listen to Elijah as the last word. You are to listen to him. Here’s the testimony, the approbation, the approval of God the father. Now the cloud was the shakina glory and there was a voice out of the cloud.

There were two then who appeared and spoke with Jesus on the mount, Moses and Elijah. Moses you remember was the founder of the law system and all the Old Testament prophets if they be understood rightly are understood as expounders or explainers. They are interpreters, commenting on the law system. And the second, Elijah, was the restorer of that lost system in a time of deep apostasy in the reign of Ahab where we read I have reserved unto myself 7000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal nor kissed their hand toward him. Oh it was very very important that Moses appear and give his testimony, important that Elijah be there and and his word of testimony to the unique personality of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are numbers of student of the Bible who believe that when we read in Jude that Michael disputed with Satan over the body of Moses that the time of that dispute was just before this appearing on the mount of transfiguration. Satan, not wanting Moses to give his word of attestation, his word of testimony to Christ and you remember in John 1:17 the Law came by Moses.
Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Here are the two great principle figures of the old and the New Testament, the one and the old speaking of him, taking his secondary place relative to the Lord Jesus. So Moses not only represents the law system as founder. Elijah represents not only a restorer of that system, a restorer of the covenant in Israel in the place of the covenant in a time of deep apostasy. Remember when he fled from Jezebel is very instructive as to where Elijah fled. He fled to Horab, that's Sinai as though to reinstate Israel in the covenant relationship of Sinai. Such also is the theological viewpoint of the rabbis in Israel. But more Moses represents beautifully those who have come through death into the kingdom of the Messiah. You remember, in the book of Deuteronomy Moses dies and it's God who buries him and thus no one knows his burial unto this day and well it is because men would have worshiped him and his grave as they practically do today and in some areas actually do, many parts of the world. God didn't want that.

For that reason also he did not allow any of the original manuscripts of the Old or New Testament to remain extant. We do not know of any of them today although we have authentic, reliable, dependable copies of them. And Elijah, if Moses represents those who come through death into the kingdom of the Messiah, Elijah stands for the saved that have entered the kingdom by translation without death. That is believers of this age. We read of those who've come by way of death in first Corinthians 15:50-53 or rather those really are the ones who have come by way of translation because we're told that we shall not all die 1 Corinthians 15:50-53 we shall not all die but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. The last trump. We shall be changed. We're going to put on immortality, those who are immortal. We're going to put on in-corruption. If the body has already died and decayed but eh principle emphasis, though it mentions both 1 Corinthians 15:50-53 is unbelievers who were here when Christ comes again. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 speaks of what happens to those who have gone on yes. At the mount of
transfiguration you have these two representative individuals. Moses who speaks of believers who've gone into the kingdom through death. Elijah, those who've gone there without passing through the portals of death. I repeat there's no question in the account as to who's the central figure to whom testimony is being given. Now, mark it carefully. Neither Moses nor Elijah was transfigured. Certainly Peter James and John were not transfigured There was only one personality transfigured and here are those who are witnessing it.

The scripture says that the mouth of two or three witness every word shall be established and here you have five witnesses. Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, John and I left out for the last the greatest of all the witnesses that's God the father himself. He witnessed wen he said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased hear ye him. Not just a son but more than even a beloved son my beloved son. Special relationship between God the father and God the son and God indicated that whatever the Lord Jesus was doing, it was well pleasing to him. As we read in John's gospel the Lord himself said I do always the things that are pleasing to the father. Only one transfigured, the Lord Jesus. It was to him, and him alone that God gave the testimony and concerning him God commanded unrivaled, undivided obedience when he said hear him, meaning obey him, follow him, take instructions from him.

The incident is told of a heart stricken woman, she was once asked by a minister. You always tell me that you are in misery that you are in great heaviness of heart, are you I the habit of attending church. Yes, she said. Every church in town but I come away as bad as I go. I read the bible everyday I'm always reading it. I must admit I’m sometimes a little comforted but after it leaves me as wretched as ever. Minister asked her do you ever pray for peace. She said pray for it, I pray for peace every day. Sometimes I get it for a little while and then I lose it. I am a downright miserable woman. Madam, said the preacher, when you pray to whom do you pray?
Why to god to whom else should I pray, to whom else stop now and read this verse. You must come to someone; come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, who said that? She said Jesus. Have you ever been to Jesus for rest? The woman looked amazed. The idea never struck here before. The tears welled up in her eyes. A light like that which flooded the top of the amount of transfiguration with glory beamed on her and in a moments time church bible prayer good deeds all all her works vanished and her yearning heart saw no one in all the universe except Jesus only. She was liberated, yes from years of bondage on the spot. The old burden was lifted off and her feet, as Habakkuk indicated her feet were like hinds feet. They leaped for joy.

How glorious it was. It’s very important to notice that the subject of the discussion, according to Luke's gospel the subject of the discussion on the mount of transfiguration was the decease, the death of the Lord Jesus at Jerusalem. The word for decease is very instructive. The word is literally in the original Greek exodus. His entrance on his ministry is called Isodus, an entrance in acts 13:24 but they were talking about this exodus where he was to accomplish the great redemptive work of God for all mankind for all time. That's what they were interested in. Was Moses really interested in the Old Testament to tell of him certainly he must have been thinking of that. When he wrote under the inspiration of the spirit of God that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head but by so doing is own heel would be bruised he must have been thinking of that. As he wrote concerning those Levitical sacrifices he must have been thinking of that. Moses when he wrote concerning this blessed one in the Passover feast. Yes. He testified concerning that in his writing by direction of this spirit and now he's here as though in person at the hour of the manifested Christ to add the weight of his testimony and similarly with Elijah. Elijah you remember on Mount Carmel he did an interesting thing he didn't shut himself
up to preaching another sermon not at all. He repaired the altar with stones that represented the
twelve tribes and then offered a sacrifice unto the living God upon which fire fell indicating that
the Lord he is God. His entrance on his ministry is rightly called Isodus but they were talking
about his exodus, his going out of this world and the manner of it. They were emphasizing as
with a spotlight Calvary.

My dear friends the purpose of the transfiguration undoubtedly was to confirm the
necessity of the cross. It's right in that context in Luke 9:22 because he had just previously been
speaking of going up to Jerusalem being set it not of the Jews have the scribes and the Pharisees
be put to death and rising again the third day. And do you know in the 16th chapter of Matthew's
Gospel this one which is the basis of our consideration at this time we read in Matthew 16:21
from that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer
many things of the elders and chief priest and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised
up and it was so foreign to them that Peter took him and immediately began to rebuke him. Be it
far from thee Lord this shall never be unto thee. And the Lord Knew that when he said this shall
never be unto thee that he was not speaking but Satan was speaking behind him just as it was
God speaking though as he said thou art Christ son of the living god because he said flesh and
blood have not revealed it unto thee but my father who is in heaven.

How easy it is for us to allow ourselves at one time to be used of God and almost within
the same breath to allow ourselves to be led astray of Satan but what I am interested in
emphasizing at this moment friend is that immediately after this announcement of his coming
death, right after the statement concerning his messiah ship who do me say that I am who do men
say the son of man is? Then when peter had answered rightly he said but the way the way to
confirm that the way to accomplish all my Messianic work is to go to Calvary and immediately
after it the son of man he says is going to come in the glory of his father with his angels then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds and if that seems to be very farfetched and incredible I'm telling you of a truth verse 28 Matthew 16 there are some of them that stand here who shall in no ways taste of death until they shall see the son of man coming into his kingdom. And isn't it by the grace of God that the very one peter who made such a wonderful confession and then such a terrible terrible mistake after it is one of the three. Isn’t that gracious. One of the three was allowed to be there on the mount of transfiguration when Christ was transfigured before him.

Now friends it is a mistake to think that the Old Testament believers knew nothing of the sacrifice of the Messiah because they made mistakes about it as we read in the Gospel doesn't mean that they knew nothing of that sacrifice. There were so many more prophecies of his coming glory that they overshadowed the other. To such an extent that they so longs for him to enter into his glory and they wanted frankly a glorious place as well because James and john the brothers you remember argued about who would have a place at his right hand when he came into this kingdom and who would have the place at the left hand of the Messiah. My friend the aim of all the law and the prophets was not only to testify to the coming messiah but thank god to a dying Messiah and a messiah who would rise again because hew aid the one who's going to be killed said it not the third day will be raised up. Resurrection will be the wonderful answer of God because he delivered him up for our offenses Romans 4:25 but he was raised again because by that death he justified us from all things which we could not be justified I the law and through the law of Moses.