

The Passover Mind

“And after six days, Jesus took with *Him* Peter and James and his brother John, and brought them up into a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shined as the sun, and His garments became white as the light. Then behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him. And Peter answered *and* said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You desire, let us make three tabernacles here: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ While he was speaking, a bright cloud suddenly overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, ‘This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight. Listen to Him!’ And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces in extreme terror. But Jesus came *and* touched them, and said, ‘Arise, and do not be terrified.’ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus alone” (Matt. 17:1-8).

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 as 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.

“And Moses went up, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the heavens in clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay his hands. Also they saw God, and ate and drank. And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Come up to Me in the mountain, and be there. And I will give you tablets of stone, and the law, and commandments which I have written, so that you may teach them.’ And Moses rose up, and his attendant Joshua. And Moses went up into the mountain of God. And he said to the elders, ‘You wait here for us until we come again to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur *are* with you. If any man has a cause, let him come to them.’ And Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. And the glory of the LORD abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain to the eyes of the children of Israel” (Ex. 24:9-17).

But notice what Jesus says after His transfiguration: “Now as they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one **until the Son of man has risen from *the* dead**” (Matt. 17:9).

The three principal disciples saw a vision of the Kingdom of God that is yet to come. It is a time that is portrayed by the Feast of Tabernacles (Matthew 16:27)—but this verse tells us what was foremost on the mind of Christ: His suffering and death at the Passover. Now back up a few verses: “**From that time Jesus began to explain to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem, and to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised the third day....** And Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him **take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it; but whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.** For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall render to everyone according to his doings. Truly I say to you, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they have seen the Son of man coming in His kingdom.’ ” (Matt. 16:21, 24-28).

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

The Passover sacrifice was on Jesus' mind all the time, even when He was talking about His kingdom. Why would Passover be the backdrop to all of His thoughts, even when He was speaking of His future glory? More importantly, why did Jesus discuss His death even when showing the disciples the glory of the kingdom in the transfiguration?

The answer is that the salvation of all mankind rested on a single man living a perfect life without sin. **JESUS HAD TO CONSIDER THE PASSOVER EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY DAY IF HE WAS TO TRIUMPH OVER SATAN.** Consider too that Jesus not only had to battle Satan, but also the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes who were constantly testing Him. The enormity of His responsibility is beyond our ability to grasp.

How long can *we* remain without sin?

“But I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members. O *what a* wretched man I am! Who shall save me from the body of this death? **I thank God for His salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the law of God with *my* mind; but on the other hand, with the flesh, *I serve* the law of sin” (Rom. 7:23-25).

Paul spoke of his war against temptation and fully comprehended the incredible victory of Christ. Too often we do not think of the sacrifice of 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.

“**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;** Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant. And being found in *the* manner of man, **He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death,** even *the* death of *the* cross. Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name which *is* above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord to *the* glory of God *the* Father” (Phil. 2:5-11).

Paul understood that unless we, too, have the **same mind toward Jesus' sacrifice**, we will fall short. The “mind of the Passover” ought to be *foremost* in our thoughts regardless of the season or holy day—because nothing else matters if our sins overcome us. Keeping our minds focused on the Passover is the only sure way to receiving the glory of God.