

# Glory

JESUS FULFILLS GOD'S MESSAGE OF HOPE FOUND IN  
THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

## Matthew 17:1-13

**1** After six days **A** Jesus took **Peter, James, and his brother John** **B** and led them up on a **high mountain** **C** by themselves. **2** He was **transfigured** **D** in front of them, and his face shone like the sun; his clothes became as white as the light. **3** Suddenly, **Moses and Elijah** **E** appeared to them, talking with him. **4** Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it’s good for us to be here. If you want, I will set up three **shelters** **F** here: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” **5** While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud covered them, and **a voice from the cloud** **G** said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased. **Listen to him!**” **H** **6** When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown and were **terrified**. **I** **7** Jesus came up, touched them, and said, “Get up; don’t be afraid.” **8** When they looked up they saw no one except Jesus alone. **9** As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Don’t tell anyone about **the vision** **J** until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.” **10** So the disciples asked him, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” **11** “Elijah is coming and will restore everything,” he replied. **12** “But I tell you: Elijah has **already come**, **K** and they didn’t recognize him. On the contrary, they did whatever they pleased to him. In **the same way** **L** the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” **13** Then the disciples understood that he had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

### Exploring Key Words

- A** Approximately a week after Peter’s confession of Jesus as Messiah at Caesarea Philippi.
- B** Jesus’s inner circle. They were often present for significant moments in Jesus’s ministry (see Matt. 26:37; Mark 5:37).
- C** The exact location is not mentioned, though Mount Meron, northwest of the Sea of Galilee, is possible. Scholars also suggest Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon.
- D** “Transformed” (NLT). Jesus did not reflect the glory of God as Moses did (Ex. 34:33-35). He radiated the glory of God (John 17:5; Heb 1:3).
- E** Moses represented the Law, while Elijah symbolized the Prophets. Together, they encompassed the entirety of God’s Word.
- F** “Tabernacles” (KJV). Likely, booths such as the ones built during the Feast of Tabernacles.
- G** This is the second time Matthew recorded God the Father affirming Jesus as His beloved Son (see Matt. 3:17).
- H** Having seen His glory, the disciples were now commanded to listen and obey Jesus. He was the “prophet like me” promised by Moses (Deut. 18:15).
- I** Encounters with God’s glory leave people filled with fear and reverence (Isa. 6:5; Dan. 10:8-9; Rev. 1:17).
- J** This does not imply the transfiguration was merely a visionary experience. The term refers to something seen with one’s own eyes.
- K** Malachi 4:5 was fulfilled in John the Baptist, who came “in the spirit and power” of Elijah (Luke 1:17).
- L** John’s suffering and death foreshadowed the suffering and death of Jesus.



NOTES

### **Transfigured** (Matt. 17:1-3)

- Six days after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a high mountain.
- There, He was transfigured before them, and they saw His glory.
- They also saw Moses and Elijah, who represented the Law and the Prophets.

### **Overshadowed** (Matt. 17:4-8)

- While Peter suggested creating a memorial for Jesus and the two Old Testament heroes, the Father's presence overwhelmed them with cloud.
- As He had at Jesus's baptism, God affirmed Jesus as the unique Son of God. He commanded the disciples to listen to Jesus's words.
- When the moment had passed, they found only Jesus was with them.

### **Instructed** (Matt. 17:9-13)

- Coming down from the mountain, Jesus ordered His three disciples not to speak about what they had experienced until after His resurrection.
- The disciples asked Jesus about the coming of Elijah. Jesus affirmed that "Elijah" had come as a forerunner for the Messiah in the person of John the Baptist.

### **Summary Statements**

*Jesus fulfills God's message of hope found in the law and the prophets.*

- Pray that you would see the glory of Jesus.
- Worship is always the appropriate response to Jesus.
- Seek to know Jesus better by learning God's Word.

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### **Memory Verse**

*Matthew 17:5b-6*

### **Key Doctrine**

*The Scriptures*

All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation. (See Luke 24:44-46; John 5:39.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](https://www.goExploreTheBible.com).

## ENGAGE

**What kind of sign would you like to receive concerning a decision you need to make? (PSG, p. 36)**

- Decision making can be difficult. Often, we seek some sign that we're choosing the right direction and picking the best option. Is this the right job? Is this the best house? Is she the one for me? If we only had a sign!
- Wouldn't it be great if someone magically appeared to give you affirmation that what you are doing is correct? How about a sign in the sky, or a voice out of the blue?

**Bonus: How would you describe your process for making decisions?**

## EXPLORE

**TRANSFIGURED (MATT. 17:1-3)**

**Bonus: When have you seen something truly amazing? How did you respond?**

- "After six days" connects these verses to what came before. Specifically, this refers to Jesus's statement that some of His disciples would not die until they had seen His glory (Matt. 16:28).
- Jesus brought three of His disciples—Peter, James, and John—up the mountain with Him. Hebrew law called for two or three reliable witnesses to verify an issue in court. These three would serve as trustworthy witnesses concerning the glory of Christ.
- On the mountaintop, Jesus was "transfigured" before the disciples. The Greek word used implies transformation and is the root of our English word "metamorphosis."
- Jesus's outward appearance completely changed, as He "shone like the sun." It was comparable to the Shekinah glory of God in the Old Testament. In addition, Moses and Elijah appeared, representing the Law and the Prophets.

**Where can we see Jesus's glory revealed each day? (PSG, p. 40)**

**OVERSHADOWED (MATT. 17:4-8)**

**Bonus: When have you been at a loss for words? How did that work out for you?**

- Mark and Luke noted that Peter was at a loss for words and said the first thing that came to mind (Mark 9:5-6; Luke 9:33). His declaration that it was "good for us to be here" likely meant it was good that he and the other disciples were there to help.
- Peter suggested they build shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. However, his suggestion was interrupted by the appearance of a "bright cloud" that overwhelmed them. From the cloud, God spoke, affirming Jesus as His unique Son and challenging the disciples to listen to His words.

- Terrified, the disciples fell facedown on the ground in reverence. Eventually, Jesus touched them and encouraged them not to be afraid. As the disciples looked around, Elijah and Moses were gone. They "saw no one except Jesus alone."

**What hinders our ability to hear and act on Jesus's words? What may hinder a person from taking Jesus's teachings seriously? (PSG, p. 42)**

**INSTRUCTED (MATT. 17:9-13)**

**Bonus: Recall a time when you had to keep a big secret. How did it feel once you could finally share the story?**

- Coming down the mountain, Jesus told His disciples to keep what they had seen to themselves for a while. After the resurrection, an account of the transfiguration would be easier for everyone to believe and understand.
- The disciples took the opportunity to ask Jesus about the coming of Elijah in relation to the Messiah's arrival. Jesus affirmed that John the Baptist was "Elijah" as predicted in Malachi 4:5. But the leaders and the people had missed his significance. And, just as John suffered and died, Jesus would suffer and die in Jerusalem.

**How are you making an effort to grow in your understanding of Jesus, His identity, and mission? (PSG, p. 43)**

## CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss what it would be like to experience Jesus's glory in your midst.

**What would be the appropriate response if you did? (PSG, p. 44)**

Challenge individuals to reflect on how God's glory can be revealed through their words, actions, and attitudes.

**How have you seen the glory of Jesus in your life? What does it mean for you to reflect His glory? (PSG, p. 44)**

## FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

## BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 43)

Use cross references to gain a better understanding of a biblical concept.

The New Testament not only records accounts of Jesus's transfiguration but also teaches that believers likewise will experience transformation. Read the following passages and determine what each says about a believer's transformation: Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Philippians 3:20-21. ***How and when does this transformation take place in the life of a believer? How is our transformation similar to or different from what Jesus experienced?***

Write the word "metamorphosis" on the board and allow volunteers to share what it means. Note that it refers to a complete transformation, like a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. Share that believers will one day experience a transformation. Encourage adults to complete the Bible Skill on page 43 of the PSG. After a few minutes, review the questions in the activity.

## OBJECT LESSON: STONES

Direct each adult to find a partner. Direct half the pairs to read and reflect on 2 Peter 1:16-19, while the other half reads and reflects on John 1:14. After a few minutes, lead a brief discussion on how these passages relate to the transfiguration in Matthew 17.

Give each adult a small stone. Say: *From the passages we just looked at, we know that both Peter and John referred back to the transfiguration in their New Testament writings. We can be certain that they never forgot this event.*

Challenge adults to reflect on their own "mountaintop experiences" with God, symbolized by the rocks in their hands. Challenge them to keep the rock in a visible place this week, remembering times they worshiped God and considering how that experience continues to shape their faith.

## THE PROPHETIC WORD

In 2 Peter 1:16-19, Peter assured his readers of the second coming of Christ by pointing to the transfiguration. He insisted that Jesus's return is not one of the "cleverly contrived myths" so many heretics were promoting in that day (2 Pet. 1:16). To the contrary, Peter explained that the transfiguration was proof of what is to come. He, along with James and John, saw Jesus's "majesty" and heard the Father's voice.

In Matthew 17:1-13, we learn that Peter, James, and John not only witnessed Jesus's glory, but they also were commanded to "Listen to him" (Matt. 17:5). Peter echoed this challenge by urging his readers to pay attention to the "prophetic word strongly confirmed" (2 Pet. 1:19). He emphasized that believers can have confidence in the Lord's return because of what he and the other disciples saw on the mountain.

Those of us who weren't on the mountain still have a responsibility to "listen to Jesus" and to live with confidence. To do so, we pay attention to the prophetic word that has been shared with us. In fact, Peter

continued by saying that God's Word serves as "a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19).

So, how can we take Peter's charge seriously? Here are three practical ideas:

- 1. Read the Word.** Make time daily to open your Bible and read it.
- 2. Meditate on the Word.** After reading, reflect on what it means and how it applies to your life. Ask: ***What does this reveal about God? About me? How is God calling me to respond?***
- 3. Pray the Word.** Let Scripture shape your prayers. Speak God's truth back to Him, letting His promises and commands guide your time with Him.