

AMEN.

Afternoon Lesson. John 1. vv. 1-34.23-09-1973
TEXT MATTHEW 17 V--3

We shall try to devote ourselves now to concentrate our spiritual and adoring attention on the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and how this applies to His beloved people, and the fruits and holy effects thereof. For it was consistent with the divine will of God that there should be a special manifestation of the transcendent glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as He is in a state of heavenly exaltation following His

glorious victory, to the three chosen, favoured witnesses, and they would be joined by two from heaven who had been long dead. For something like fifteen hundred years had passed since Elijah was translated to heaven. So consider how amazing it is: they were joined in the holy mount by two from heaven. Both had glorious bodies; both discoursed with Jesus on His coming decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. We have immediate what we said at Uckfield on Friday, - a merging of the tenses, past, present and future. That is a simple definition of eternity, and with the election of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ there is an immediate merging of the tenses. You will see how conversant the heavenly host was with the incarnation of the Son of God and the manner of His suffering Suretyship and of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. The heavens were cognisant of these glorious truths, and the two from heaven could discourse with Christ on the nature, means, and end of it.

Let me drop a word to you again; namely, those who have died in the Lord as to their bodies have put off their earthly tabernacles. They are alive. You have gone to the tomb: you have witnessed with great solemnity, dignity, and worship of God the committal of their precious dust to its downy bed, and you have left the tomb.

"Say not the believer's dead,
He only rests in God." (843)

They are alive in glory. Let this thought permeate your spirits. God speaks of them "I am the God of thy father, - the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Not "I was: I am." They are alive and with Him. How beautiful and amazing it is that two should come from heaven in their glorified persons! In their cases it is evident that they were glorified persons. We know this of Elijah, and obviously Moses too. The rest of the subject concerning those two belongs to within the veil. All we know is the joys of heaven and the whole interest of heaven lies largely in the Person of Christ. So to me this is a beautiful message.

There was a specific reason for God bringing Moses and Elias from heaven in a glorified state to the holy mount. Listen: "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jer-

usalem." Spiritually unique this is. Why did the eternal God choose to bring Elijah and Moses to converse with Jesus concerning His decease? There are several things to be said. By this heavenly manifestation of the two glorified saints we see that Christ is the fulfilling end of the law. Moses received the disposition of the law on Sinai and he saw the glory of God in His justice and holiness. The skin of his face shone with radiant glory. Now he comes and speaks with Jesus concerning His decease. This spells out the fulfilling end of the law; for the dear Person he was speaking with in His holy life, obedience, purity and spotlessness, because this is His nature, He completely was able as no other, to render to God perfect obedience to the law. This will delight your spirits who are sin-afflicted, sin-blighted, sin-ruined, yet hope in God, to meditate on the spotless innocency, purity and holiness of Christ, and in this you stand complete in Him. God looks on you as if you had perfectly obeyed the law because He did it for you. It is put in the heavens to your eternal account: nothing can contravene it. Christ perfectly obeyed the holy law because He only was able to do so because of the purity of His nature and Person. When I hope He did it for me, am I melted?— one who can only sin. All we do is marred with sin. Underline in your heart His spotless innocence and all He did for us. Also, the curse of the law because of its violation,— and there is glory there, a glorious manifestation of God's attribute of justice when He awakened the sword against the Shepherd.—"smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." (Zech. 13.7) His glory was there, and it is seen in Christ receiving the cup of wrath and draining it.

So Moses was there to speak with Him on His decease, on the nature, method, and end of it,— to bring in everlasting righteousness and propitiate divine justice, to appease heaven, to satisfy and please God. You remember centuries before Moses had said: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." So I shall make reference to this in a few moments, because Christ cited Moses and the prophets when He lovingly reproved and taught the two who were so confused concerning the death of Christ on their way to Emmaus. It was as if all their hopes were spilt because He was dead and buried, yet He was talking with them. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all

the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went."(Luke 24.26-28) This was sweet in my spirit in prayer. I thought if we get the presence of the Lord we shall wake up and find we are in heaven. We shall say: "I am home." You hardly know how the time went because when the Lord comes you lose sense of time. As when the disciples had received Jesus into the ship, "immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."(John 6.21)

Moses and Elias were ^{there} to represent the prophets. The Lord set His broad seal on the spirit of prophecy, "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."(Rev.19.10) and so all prophecy has seen its blessed fulfilling in His Advent, Incarnation and work. The two talked with Him concerning His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

A few observations on Moses, who wrote of Him and saw His glory; and as we read the Book of God Moses is the first to write of Christ in the third chapter of Genesis. He is the first to write of His sufferings and death,- His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem and His victory. The seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. It means in the ultimate His crucifixion, death, and burial, and the effects of it, bruising the serpent's head. So Moses and Elias could well speak with Him on the subject of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Wonderful word, accomplish. He did; no one else, because His holy humanity was not capable of death only by a voluntary act. He laid His life down. How wonderful is the voluntary nature of the death of Christ! Wicked hands crucified and slew Him, but He yielded up His life. Moses had seen His glory in all this when he wrote of Abraham offering up Isaac. You will remember after the birth of Isaac (Gen.22) God tried Abraham and commanded him to offer up his son. Listen to this, and see the faith of Abraham and the revelation to Abraham and to Moses who wrote of it. "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship." He had seen the place and he took the wood for the fire. He said; "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Work that out. "I and the lad." You know as the apostle Paul writes in Hebrews how his faith

operated. "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." "and come again to you." There is a question: "My father," said Isaac, "behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb." No wonder Moses could talk to Jesus concerning His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem! He saw by precious faith this truth, centuries before the fulfilment. "God will provide himself a lamb." So he could speak with Jesus concerning His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

When the rebellious Israelites were smitten by God in judgment with fiery serpents, as the venom coursed through their veins they fell in death. It does not take long for poison to produce death if there is no remedy, - and we are stung to death, Do you know it? Do you know the remedy? "Look, my soul, though stung to death.- The remedy's without thee, See it in thy Saviour's blood." (876) God instructed Moses, and as they looked a miraculous cure flowed into their persons. Here is Christ on the cross. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3.14.15) Could Moses speak to Him concerning His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem? Are you within the compass of this wondrous truth, my friends? Can you say 'like precious faith' the Lord has given me?

Elias was representing the prophets. I thought of Elijah, and there are three things occurred to me. When the Lord sent him to Zarephath we presently find the woman's son fell sick; "and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him." She had guilt on her heart, and she was troubled about it. "Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" (1Kings 17) There is often a day with the people of God when their sin is called to remembrance,- sins of youth, sins of thirty or forty years ago. The woman was in trouble; her son was dead. Elijah took her son "and carried him up into a loft...and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried

unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth." The point concerning this is he saw the whole order of resurrection life and power. What was it? what is resurrection derived from? It was the resurrection of Christ that was revealed to him. God raises from the dead those He loves who are in nature's death and ~~dark~~ darkness. He raises them from the grave of condemnation when Christ is revealed. Elijah saw the whole order of the resurrection.

The second thing is very beautiful and you will be well acquainted with it. When the prophet saw the threat of Jezebel and fled to the wilderness the Lord revived him. He "wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave." The Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and after the wind an earthquake. This was a manifestation of His wrath. Presently after the fire was a still small voice. This is Calvary. The sweet voice is the voice of love and mercy that sounds aloud (this sounds contradictory) from Calvary. (93) It is the voice of love, compassion, clemency, mercy from Calvary. So Elijah could speak with Him concerning His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. It was not the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire, but the still small voice. Wonderful, isn't it? This same prophet also had a wonderful view of His death and resurrection and the passage made by the Lord, because before he was taken to heaven he "took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground." (2 Kings 2.8) Listen:

"In that dread moment, O to hide
Beneath His sheltering blood!
Twill Jordan's icy waves divide,
And land my soul with God." (1093)

and Elijah had that. He smote the waters and they were divided.

So Moses and Elias came down from heaven and talked with Him concerning

His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. This to me is beautiful and wonderful. It is obvious with Peter, James and John that they never saw or knew the fulness of this till everything was accomplished. They had here a view of His glory, and in it two things were joined or shown to be joined,- suffering and glory: they are inseparable. Christ gave Himself and voluntarily dismissed His Spirit and died and was buried. Peter, lame because of his thrice denial, did not get to the sepulchre as quickly as John, but he went in. Poor old lame singer, if you get to the sepulchre go in and look round. See the grave clothes neatly folded. "God is satisfied and pleased." (788)

"All is settled,
And my soul approves it well." (582)

Go in and look round: see the place where the Lord lay. And the best of all is when your risen Saviour shows Himself to you. "Mary... Rabboni." He is risen, and we are risen with Him; that is the wonder of it. The full wonder of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem was not known by the three in all its abundance until afterwards, and Peter is the one who specially writes of it. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,"- How do you know, Peter? Because of the view of His glory on the holy mount, and the voice of God the Father.- "When we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." Are you? They saw His majesty as He is in heaven now. "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Yes, and He is well pleased in you for His righteousness sake if you are in Christ. "And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Peter 1.16-18) Here is the whole force of inspiration, revelation; the majesty and glory of Christ shown forth in the gospel. Some of you may have said: "I am afraid I have never seen His glory." Listen: you have felt it. What gives the gospel ^{its power} and efficacy and light and sweetness and all the properties of salvation in your soul? The glory of Christ. What draws your heart to the Lord? what opens your heart? The glory. All the efficacy in salvation, in His holy gospel is the efficacy derived

from the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Do you see? Glory. It is going to take eternity to know the meaning of it; we have an inkling now. The shining forth of the essential essence of God is glory. This we are incapable of bearing. The shining forth of His love and mercy, of all His perfections is in the rainbow. The rainbow reveals the whole spectrum of light and it is a symbol of all His perfections. This you are able to bear and it is your salvation. It shines forth in grace and truth. God's glory is visible in every work of His hands: in the firmament, the sun, moon and stars, day and night. Look to the heavens and you will see the glory of God. "Immensely great, immensely small! (88) A special glory shines in face of Jesus Christ. His disciples had a glimpse of it when He was baptised. "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3.17) A number of His saints were blessed as they recognised Him to be the Son Of God when He projected a beam of His perfection to their spirits, as Nathaniel. The Lord told him He had seen him under the fig tree. "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." (John 1.49) He knew Him to be God. There is glory.- when He raised the dead, wrought miracles, calmed the ocean, cleansed the lepers, when He poured His Spirit from on high at Pentecost, when thousands were wrought on. Glory is the quintessence of all the perfections shining in Jehovah Jesus in your everlasting salvation.

"But if Immanuel's face appear,

My hope, my joy begins;

His name forbids my slavish fear;

His grace removes my sins.

While some on their own works rely,

And some of wisdom boast,

I love the Incarnate Mystery,

And there I fix my trust." (1095)

Bless Him for ever. Amen.