

A Study of the Christ

Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Transfiguration	17:1-8	9:2-8	9:28-36	
Elijah discussed while descending	17:9-13	9:9-13		
Demon is cast out of boy	17:14-18	9:14-27	9:37-43	
Disciples ask about the miracle	17:19-21	9:28-29		
Jesus discusses his death	17:22-23	9:30-32	9:44-45	
Jesus pays tax with a miracle	17:24-27			

Overriding Principles

- Jesus is the one voice that we are to hear in the Messianic Age.
- The Bible teaches with metaphorical imagery that requires us to be mindful of how literature works to accomplish its purposes.
- A lack of faith blinds us and distorts spiritual realities; faith sees clearly the unseen.
- Our faith must be willing to grow.
- Jesus must die.
- Jesus was God's Son and yet He sacrificed privilege to live under the responsibilities of a mere man.

Main Points

- "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased, listen to Him" (Matt. 17:5b).
- Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptizer" (Matt. 17:13).
- "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you" (Matt. 17:17)?
- "I do believe; help my unbelief" (Mk. 9:24).
- "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day" (Matt. 17:22-23).
- "But, lest we give them offense ... " (Matt. 17:27a)

Secondary Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar

- The Transfiguration was an opportunity for God to reveal the changes that we soon to come. Jesus, One with the quality of a Son (Heb. 1:1-2), would replace the Law (represented by Moses) and the Prophets (represented by Elijah) as God's spokesman (**Matt. 17:1-8**; cf. Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:19-23).
- Peter evidenced the difficulty that would attend the Jew's transition from the Law and the Prophets to the Christ (**Matt. 17:4**; cf. Acts 15:1ff.).
- Messianic talk was deliberately suppressed by Jesus due to the inflammatory quality it had among the Jewish establishment (Matt. 17:9; cf. Matt. 12:22-24).
- The Apostles were intrigued with the idea of Jesus rising from the dead; yet another indication of how their upbringing in the contemporary Jewish culture had ill prepared them for the coming of the Messiah (**Mk. 9:10**; cf. Rom. 10:1-2; Jn. 5:39-47).
- Another area of misunderstanding among the Jews about the era of the Messiah was the role of Elijah. Malachi 4:5-6 had spoken of Elijah coming before the Messiah. This, we learn, was a metaphor to describe John the Baptizer (cf. Lk. 1:17; Matt. 11:12-15). John knew he was not Elijah (Jn. 1:21), but he was nevertheless the fulfillment of the prophecy, in a figure of speech (**Matt. 17:10-13**).
- While Jesus and three of the Apostles were on the mountain during the Transfiguration, the remainder of the Apostles were at the base of the mountain experiencing an embarrassing failure (**Mk. 9:14-29**).
- The nine Apostles, unfortunately, had too much of the unfaithfulness of their Age to believe that God's power could work in them to heal the distraught father's son (**Matt. 17:17, 19-20**).
- **Mark 9:29** shows that a lack of prayer was part of the problem; **Matthew 17:21** is a verse with very poor textual support and it is thus omitted in a number of translations.
- The boy's father had a more acceptable faith than did most of the Apostles (**Mk. 9:23-24**). This is a powerful illustration of how saving faith works. God will go with us as long as we will take the next step.
- The forces of Satan were powerful, but they stand no chance against God (**Matt. 17:25**; cf. **Mk. 9:29**).

- The Apostles demonstrate a persistent inclination to not deal with Jesus' instruction about His death (**Mk. 9:30-32**; cf. Matt. 16:21; 17:9, 12, 22; 20:18-19; 27:63). Selfishness, fear, denial, grief, etc., undoubtedly all played a part; faith was the solution. **Luke 9:44** is particularly pointed, "Let these words sink into your ears;"
- The tax mentioned in Matthew **17:24-27** would have been the temple tax (cf. Ex. 30:13; 38:26).
- Jesus uses the incident to show that while He is indeed God's Son and thus exempt, He is also a man who will accept the obligations men must receive. His solution is interesting; He pays, but in a way He does not pay (**Matt. 17:25-27**; cf. Phil. 2:5-8).

Relationship to the Church

- The church has but one true Master (Lk. 6:46).
- Cross bearing is not optional; there must be an identification with the sufferings and death of Jesus (I Pet. 2:19-25).
- Bible study is not an intuitive undertaking, it requires diligent study (II Tim. 2:15).

Who is Jesus?

- He is God's only Son.
- He is God's last, best earthly communication.
- He is the One who was willing to live and die as one of us so that we might find salvation.
- He chastens those He loves (Heb. 12:11).
- He has emotions and feelings that He dared to forcefully express. Let us not think that Christianity domesticates men and women so as to make them bereft of passion for the cause—it does not!