

Bible Stories for Adults

Jesus' Transfiguration

Mark 8:27 – 9:13

Opening

- Gathering: Who do people say that Jesus was / is?
- Today's Focus: The full Trinity of God – Father, Son & Holy Spirit – reveal to Jesus' disciples who He is.
- Key Verses: *"But what about you?" He asked. "Who do you say I am?"* Matthew 16:16
You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Matthew 16:16

Opening Prayer

Lesson

A Place to Teach (*Matthew 16:13*)

- What became a key focus of Jesus' ministry as He neared its end?
Mark 9:30-32 = Spending time with just His apostles teaching and preparing them
- What happened whenever Jesus tried to find a place to be with just His apostles?
Matthew 14:13-14, 34-36 = Crowds tracked him down and He turned away no one
- Where did Jesus finally find a place where the Jewish crowds wouldn't follow?
Matthew 15:21 = Region of Tyre/Sidon (Phoenicia); Furthest Jesus left Jewish territory
- Where else did Jesus take His disciples that would be away from Jewish leaders and crowds?
Matthew 16:13a = Caesarea Philippi

Caesarea Philippi

- Caesarea Philippi - 25 miles north of Sea of Galilee, 1700 feet higher
Outside of Galilee in region ruled by Herod Philip II (third son of Herod the Great)
Name - Augustus Caesar and Herod Philip II (*Caesarea* - Caesar's town, *Philippi* - of Philip)
- At base of Mount Hermon - Large mountain at northern boundary of Palestine, source of Jordan River
20 mile long ridge, three peaks - two over 9000 feet, View all of Palestine to Dead Sea
Also called Ice-Mountain - Source of ice for Damascus and Mt Lebanon during summer
- Near Old Testament town of Dan in territory of Naphtali - Mainly non-Jewish now
Jeroboam set up shrine in Dan, Became worship center for Baal (was *Balinas*)
Caesarea Philippi had shrine for Greek god Pan - had been called *Panias*
Magnificent marble temple to worship Caesar - distinguishing building of town

Question of the Day (*Matthew 16:13-14*)

- Surrounded by such pagan influences, what question did Jesus ask?
Mark 8:27 = *Who do people say I am?*
- How does Matthew's record of Jesus' question differ? = Most common name Jesus called Himself
Matthew 16:13 = *Who do people say the Son of Man is?*
- How does this name that Jesus gave Himself point to who He really was?
Daniel 7:13-14 = Daniel called the Messiah a son of man (also Genesis 3:15, Psalm 8:4)
- Who did people think Jesus was? Did they recognize Jesus as the Messiah?
Matthew 16:14 = No, they thought He was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, prophet

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Jesus as John the Baptist? (*Matthew 14:1-2*)

Who was especially curious about who Jesus really was?

Luke 9:7-9 = Herod Antipas, who had beheaded John the Baptist

Why did Herod believe Jesus was the reincarnation of John?

Matthew 14:1-2 = Jesus' miraculous powers were proof, From supernatural

Were the miracles Jesus performed similar to the ones John did?

John 10:40-42 = John never did any miracles

Did people think Jesus was John because they acted the same?

Luke 1:17; 3:7-9 = John came *in the spirit and power of Elijah*, calling people to repent

2 Corinthians 10:1a = Jesus was meek and gentle

Did they at least look or dress the same?

Mark 1:6 = *John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt*

John 19:23-24 = Jesus wore a nice seamless undergarment

What similarity should the people have recognized?

2 Kings 1:8 = John the Baptist with Elijah

What other visual contrast was made between Jesus and John?

Matthew 11:18-19 = John didn't eat or drink, Jesus did - both were rejected

Jesus as Elijah or Jeremiah? (*Matthew 16:14*)

Why did people think Jesus might be Elijah?

Malachi 4:5-6 = It was understood that Elijah would return before the Messiah came

Jews still leave an empty chair for Elijah when they celebrate the Passover

Why might people think Jesus might be Jeremiah?

2 Maccabees 2:1-12 - Before exile, Jeremiah hid the ark in a cave on Mount Nebo

Jeremiah would return before the Messiah to bring back the ark and incense altar

2 Esdras 2:18 - *For thy help I will send my servants Isaiah and Jeremiah*

The Real Question (*Matthew 16:15-17*)

Was Jesus really concerned about who the people thought He was?

Matthew 16:15 = No, it got the disciples ready to answer for themselves

Did the disciples have a better understanding of who Jesus was?

Matthew 16:16 = Yes - *Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God*

Had they learned this from spending the last two years watching Jesus?

Matthew 16:17 = No, it had been revealed to them by the Father

How Do You Know? (*Matthew 11:25-27*)

Was there any way they could have figured this out by themselves?

Matthew 11:25-27 = No, *No one knows the Son except the Father*

Now that we have the story of Jesus in the Bible, can we figure this out for ourselves?

1 Corinthians 12:3 = No, *No one can say, "Jesus is Lord", except by the Holy Spirit*

Peter was ready to give his confession when asked. What advice does he later give us?

1 Peter 3:15 = *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you...*

Are we to try to be as eloquent and persuasive as Peter and Paul when telling of Jesus?

1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 13 = They spoke what God told them, we should do the same

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Built on the Rock (*Matthew 16:18-20*)

How did Jesus use Peter's confession to help reveal His purpose for the disciples?

Matthew 16:18 = *you are petros (stone), and on this petra (large rock) I'll build My church*

What is this *petra*, the foundation of Jesus' church?

1 Corinthians 3:11 = Our faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God

Did Peter understand what Jesus meant by calling him a stone and his confession a rock?

1 Peter 2:4-5 = Yes, we are living stones that *are being built into a spiritual house*

How did Peter explain Jesus as Christ being a large rock?

1 Peter 2:6-8 = Quoted Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22 showing Christ as the key stone

How important would this church (spiritual house) be? = We open door of heaven to those outside

Matthew 16:19 = It would have the keys to the kingdom of heaven

After verifying that His apostles knew who He was, did Jesus ask them to explain it to others?

Matthew 16:20 = No, The Spirit would come later to speak through them

A Complete Understanding? (*Matthew 16:21-28*)

Was Jesus just concerned that His disciples knew that He was the Messiah?

Matthew 16:21 = They should understand what the Messiah was and what would happen

Wasn't it clear through Peter's confession that they already understood this?

Matthew 16:22-23 = No, they misunderstood; The rock became a stumbling stone

Peter was rebuked as being of Satan soon after being praised for his confession from God

What did Jesus say to explain that being a stone in His church was more than just a confession?

Matthew 16:24-28 = He explained the costs of discipleship - give yourself to Christ

Transfiguration (*Matthew 17:1-2*)

How long did Jesus stay in the Caesarea Philippi area teaching His disciples?

Matthew 17:1 = Six days, took his inner three (Peter, James and John) up Mt Hermon

What is significant about this time?

Exodus 24:15-16 = God's glory was on Mt Sinai 6 days before God spoke to Moses

What does Luke tell us that Jesus did there?

Luke 9:29 = Like Moses on Sinai, He spoke with God (prayed)

Luke says His clothes were as bright as lightning. What analogy does Mark give?

Mark 9:3 = *Dazzling white, whiter than anyone could bleach them* - even Clorox

Was it just His clothes?

Matthew 17:2 = *His face shone like the sun*

Transfigured – Greek word is *metamorphao* (metamorphosis)

Jesus' Glory (*2 Peter 1:16-18*)

How was this similar to, but different than what happened to Moses?

Exodus 34:29 = Moses' face reflected God's glory, Jesus radiated His own glory

Was this glory that Jesus was getting now that He had nearly completed His mission?

John 17:5 = No, He had glory through eternity, but it was hidden while He was on earth

How does Moses' example explain to us why Jesus' glory had not been revealed?

Exodus 34:30, 33-35 = He would not have been able to walk among the people

How did John later refer to this in his gospel? (Also 2:11; 7:39; 11:4; 12:23; 13:31-32; 20:31)

John 1:14 = *We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only*

What did Peter say later in one of his letters?

2 Peter 1:16-18 = *We were eyewitnesses of His majesty...when with Him on the mountain*

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A Mountaintop Experience (*Matthew 17:3-5*)

Besides a shining Messiah, what else surprised the three apostles?

Luke 9:30-31 = Moses and Elijah (Law and Prophets) came and talked with Jesus

Departure – Greek word is *exodus* = God saves His people from slavery – to Egypt and sin

How astonished were these disciples with what they were seeing? = Wanted this to last

Mark 9:5-6 = So much that Peter just blurted out something stupid

What happened before Peter could finish making a fool out of himself?

Matthew 17:5 = God came in a bright cloud and spoke - *This is My Son, listen to Him!*

How would this remind the apostles that Jesus is the Messiah, the new Moses?

Deuteronomy 18:15 = Moses said God would raise up a prophet like him, listen to Him

The Reaction of Peter, James and John (*Matthew 17:6-13*)

How did the apostles react to this mountaintop experience?

Matthew 17:6-8 = They fell down terrified until Jesus touched them and picked them up

What promise of Jesus had just been fulfilled?

Mark 9:1 = Some of crowd wouldn't die before seeing God's kingdom come with power

After seeing this magnificent Epiphany of Jesus, how would the three explain it to the others?

Matthew 17:9 = Jesus told them not to until after He had risen (Luke 9:36 - They didn't)

Did Jesus' order bother the three? = Jews believed all the dead would rise simultaneously

Mark 9:10 = Yes, mainly because they wondered when they would ever be able to tell

What other question popped up as they tried to make heads-or-tails about what happened?

Matthew 17:10 = Elijah appeared briefly, not in spirit and power to people as promised

How did Jesus answer their question?

Matthew 17:11-12 = *Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him*

Did this confuse the baffled three even further?

Matthew 17:13 = No, this they understood

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Who do I believe Jesus to be?
(*Matthew 16:13-14; Mark 3:35; John 1:9, 49; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; John 15:13-14; 20:28-31; Philippians 2:9-10; Hebrews 12:2; 1 John 4:14; Revelation 19:13*)
2. Who do I say (to others) that Jesus is?
(*Matthew 16:15-16; John 12:42-43; Romans 10:9-10; Phil. 2:11; Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 3:15*)
3. In what ways have I been an effective stone in the wall of the church?
(*Matthew 16:18, 1 Cor. 3:10-17; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:3-6; 1 Peter 2:4-6*)
4. When have I found myself saying something stupid because I didn't trust God for the words?
(*Mark 9:5-6; Exodus 4:10-12; Matthew 10:19-20; 12:36-37; 1 Cor. 2:1-5, 13; Colossians 3:16*)
5. God the Father was pleased with Jesus, His Son. Would He be pleased with me?
(*Matthew 17:5; Psalm 69:30-31; Proverbs 15:8; Romans 8:5-11; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; Galatians 1:10; 6:7-10; Ephesians 5:8-10; Colossians 1:10; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Hebrews 11:5-6*)