



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Glory of Jesus Matthew 17:1-5

Matthew 16:27-17:5, *For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. ²⁸ Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”*

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; ² and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³ And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴ Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵ While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

The first overt promise of the second coming recorded in Matthew’s Gospel.

Our Lord has been commanding them to abandon everything and follow Him.

First, He is going to Jerusalem and then killed.

Those who follow Him also carry their cross and even if they must sacrifice their life, they must be willing to do that.

There will be a day when the Son of Man comes in the full blazing glory of the Father with His angels. Then He will in judgment upon every man.

There will be a glory time.

The Son of Man will come not in humiliation, but in royal majesty.

It is so balancing to what they have just heard, because they have just been told, in verse 24, that Jesus requires self-denial, cross bearing, and loyal obedience.

The way life would be suffering.

They are to anticipate rejection, hostility, and even death. But that will be wonderfully compensated by the coming in glory.

Now, the second coming of Jesus Christ is introduced here.

This becomes for Matthew, a very important truth.

Matthew writes about it in some more detail in chapters 24-26. Because Matthew is presenting Jesus as King.

As the King comes into the world, the first time, He was rejected.

The end of the story must be when He comes and is royally acclaimed, crowned, and enters into His reign. Accepts His throne and His sceptre. Rules as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It will come.

In the **Old Testament**, there are probably **1,525 prophecies** of the second coming.

In the **New Testament**, **1 out of every 25 verses**, or **320 verses** talk about the second coming of Jesus Christ in glory. Power, and majesty to judge and to reign.

The Bible is very clear about Jesus' 2nd coming.

The disciples should have remembered that the Messiah would suffer first and then be glorified. But it seems as though all they can see is the glory.

All they can anticipate is the kingdom, wonder, majesty, and all the splendour.

They couldn't handle what's going on in the present tense.

They can't handle the suffering, the death, the pain, the rejection.

So, the Lord makes them this promise.

The promise is very hard to believe. It seems so far away and so hard to realize to make your own.

They were in of hostility, rejection, cross bearing, self-denial, even death. The Lord, in His wonderful grace, goes a step beyond the prophecy.

He promises them a preview.

V 28, *Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."*

Jesus is coming in His royal splendour, coming in His majestic glory.

We have the promise in verse 28.

V 1 and following, the preview itself.

A small glimpse of glory.

Some have a problem relating the transfiguration to the promise of verse 28.

Another passage of Scripture that gives us the same kind of thing.

Acts 2, we have the great day of Pentecost, when the Church was given its formal birth.

On that great day, the people who followed Jesus Christ, **120** of them, were gathered in an upper room, and they were in prayer.

During that time of fellowship and praying, the Spirit of God came upon them. He came with cloven tongues of fire resting upon everyone.

They were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak languages which they did not know humanly. In those languages were words which spoke of the wonderful works of God.

- We have the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- We have the manifestation of fire coming down on the individuals.
- We have signs and wonders by the speaking of languages they didn't know.

All this announcing the arrival of the Spirit of God giving birth to the Church.

The people didn't really understand what all this was.

Acts 2:12-13, *So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"* ¹³ *Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."*

In response Peter speaks to them.

Acts 2:16-21, *But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*
¹⁷ 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. ¹⁹I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. ²⁰The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. ²¹And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.'

Peter quotes from Joel 2.

This is to be fulfilled at the second coming.

Joel 2:28-32, *"And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. ²⁹And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. ³⁰"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. ³¹The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. ³²And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.*

*For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance,
As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls.*

When we read that prophecy of Joel, we know that it's related to the second coming.

We also know that everything that is promised in that **prophecy by Joel did not happen on the day of Pentecost.**

But what did happen on the day of Pentecost, according to verse 16, is this is that which was spoken.

In other words, here is a preview, or here is a sample, or here is an element of final glory, of final kingdom events.

You have a taste today at Pentecost of what will come in its fullness when Jesus returns.

It isn't that Peter is saying all of that is fulfilled today. No, he's saying, "You are getting a glimpse of that final glory. You are getting a taste of that final fulfilment.

Everything Jesus did, all His signs and wonders and miracles, all of those done by the apostles, all His marvellous teaching, His effect in the world was a taste of second coming glory.

Hebrews 6:5, *and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,*

What we have here is our Lord saying to them that they will never doubt the reality of the second coming. He is going to give them a glimpse of glory. Giving them another taste of second coming reality so that they do not doubt.

It comes at a time when they needed balance.

- They had just heard about suffering.
- They had learned that Jesus was a suffering, Saviour.
- They needed to see a glimpse of Him as a glorious King.
- They had been reminded that His followers would share His sorrows.
- They needed also to know that His followers could share His glory as well.
- They knew that as a suffering Saviour.
- He called them to self-denial cross bearing, and loyal obedience at any price even their life.
- They needed also to know that as a King, He offered them a King's reward.

There is a balancing here in their hearts, as they are exposed to the majesty of second coming glory, that they might know that humiliation now means glory then.

As the epistles tell us, if we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified with Him also.

The miraculous preview of final glory is to remind them that it is going to come to pass and to fill their hearts with assurance and hope in the midst of great despair.

It was not uncommon for a prophet in the Old Testament to make a prediction about a far-distant event, the coming of the Messiah – to also make a prediction about something going to happen soon.

The prophesy would have a near fulfilment and a future fulfilment.

The reason the prophets did this was to verify themselves as prophets and to give hope for the future fulfilment.

If someone predicted something to happen in the end time, how would you be able to trust them?

The prophet would then predict something soon.

When the near event came to pass, you could believe Him that the future would as well.

So, it was a part of prophetic credential to affirm something in the far distant future and then verify your trustworthiness by an immediate prophetic utterance which had fulfilment during the life of those who heard you speak.

Jesus is accrediting Himself as a true and trustworthy prophet by saying that I will come in the last day with the great second.

To prove it, I predict that some of you won't die until you see Me in My regal majesty. When the near event came to pass, they knew He spoke as a trustworthy prophet and could trust Him as well for the future event.

V 1, *Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;*

Luke says eight days.

No, Luke says about eight days so that Matthew may be speaking in absolute exactness.

Luke 9:28, *Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.*

Luke may be speaking in general terms.

Matthew may be only talking about the days in between the promise and its fulfilment.

Luke may be including the day the promise was given and the day it was fulfilled, which would add the two days to make it eight.

So, we don't see any contradiction there, just their perception.

Peter, James, and John.

These were the intimates of our Lord. They seem to be with Him at times of intimacy. They were the closest to Him.

According to John chapter 1, were the first ones gathered to His side along with Andrew.

They are very close to the Lord, and He takes them.

Why does He take Peter, James, and John?"

To be witnesses. He needed to have witnesses to see His glory.

Deuteronomy 19:15, *"One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.*

Two or three witnesses.

The Lord, going to display His glory, wants it confirmed in the mouth of three trustworthy witnesses.

They are taken to be those three witnesses.

They were taking because they were the intimates of the Saviour.

They were the closest to Him.

They were around Him the most.

Frequently accompanied Him into intimate times of prayer.

As Jesus takes them into the high mountain, they would have been very shocked by that. It perhaps had happened on many occasions.

They were frequently alone with Jesus.

They were there at the raising of the young girl. They accompanied Him.

Mark 5:37, *And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.*

Mark 14:32-33, *Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.*

They were there with Him in His intimacy also.

We are not surprised that it's Peter, James, and John. Because it seems proper that those who most intimately knew His sorrow, and those who most intimately knew His suffering, should most intimately see His glory.

Peter crucified upside down,
James beheaded, and
John exiled should as well see His glory.

It was their intimacy with the Lord that drew them to this occasion.

Jesus took them was because they were acknowledged, trustworthy leaders.

They were men of great spiritual report and leadership. When it came time to articulate what happened, they would be trusted.

They would be the most believed.

They could convince and influence the rest.

There is a negative reason why He only took three.

If all of the disciples had seen this, or if all of the disciples plus the crowd that was gathered there that day in upper Galilee, if all of them had seen it. There would have been no way to prevent widespread chaos.

Because having seen the glory of Jesus Christ on display, you can imagine that those people would have come running down that hillside and been unable to restrain themselves. They would have propagated what they had seen. Again, Jesus would have been pushed into becoming the political military Messiah that the people wanted Him to be.

Not to do that, Jesus restricts it just to three that He can trust.

Three that can confirm Him as the Son of God.

V 1, *He took them into a high mountain.*

We don't know what mountain it was, somewhere in upper Galilee, south of Caesarea Philippi, where they had been for a while in rest and teaching.

They are moving toward Jerusalem as Christ moves that way, knowing it's only months now till He will die.

As they are coming down from Caesarea Philippi, on their way to Jerusalem, about to enter into Capernaum, in some mountain in upper Galilee, in a high place He takes these three.

When they get up in the mountain, what do you think the disciples were doing?

They did what usually did.

Sleep.

Matthew doesn't tell us that, but Luke does.

Luke 9:32, *But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.*

Jesus was praying.

When into the high mountain they went, Jesus would pray, and they would sleep.

We should not be surprised, because we see this again. Later when the Lord is in the Garden of Gethsemane, pouring out His heart to the Father in that agonizing prayer.

At that very time, the disciples also sleep.

Jesus rebuked them.

Luke 22:45-46, *When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."*

The Bible says they were sleeping for sorrow.

You know what happens when you get really depressed?

You want to sleep.

Many people do that.

Depressed people want to sleep for good.

They were sleeping because it was the only to deal with their sorrow was just to shut it out by falling asleep. Maybe here the same thing.

Because here too they are living in the very near announcement of the fact that everybody's going to die in this deal.

They always see the worst of it.

Later, when Jesus gets very near Jerusalem.

John 11:16, *Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."*

By the time they get to the Garden, in **Luke 22**, for the prayer there, they have heard about His death repeatedly.

The despair is great there and they may have been sleeping because it was one way to deal with their depression.

- Jesus was praying.
- They were sleeping.

But they woke out of their sleep, and Jesus rose from His prayer.

An utterly incredible thing happened.

Unlike any other thing that ever happened in this history of the world.

Five great verifications that this is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

1. The transformation of the Son.

V 2, *“and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.*

Metamorphosis, He was totally changed.

The term **morphoō** has to do with the body and form.

His body, his form was totally changed.

We don't know any of the explanation for it. It is supernatural.

His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

It was dazzling, glistening, blazing.

His face was like the unclouded sun at high noon. Literally, the glory inside was unveiled.

This Jesus, whom they had seen walking around every day with very human form and characteristic was none other than the blazing effulgence of God veiled.

This is the greatest testimony to Jesus Christ of any passage in the Bible.

If you really want to know who Jesus is, here it is.

The glory is radiating from the inside out.

You can only understand it if you can understand some kind of supernaturally infinite light bulb.

The light coming within spreads out, and Jesus is aglow like a divine light bulb.

His brilliance is as the sun.

The glow right through His garments sends its beams of light.

Whenever scripturally God manifests His invisible Spirit essence, it is manifest as light.

The Shekinah, the glow of God's light in the Old Testament. God manifests Himself in blazing light, pillars of fire, a cloud.

That light appears as fire sometimes and as a brilliant cloud other time, and here as just blazing light like the sun.

When God, who is invisible Spirit, chooses to take a form to reveal Himself, apart from the incarnation of Jesus Christ, that form is light blazing light. This is God.

Peter gave testimony to that. In **2 Peter 1**, he says, *"We do not speak to you about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in power as some fable, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty; we saw it."*

John writes **John 1:14**, *“We beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

We saw the very essence of God pouring out of that human form, transformed before our very eyes.

Matthew 24:31, *And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Matthew 24:31, *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the [\[c\]](#)holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*

When the Son of Man comes, He comes in power and great glory, blazing glory.

Revelation 1:12-16, *Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.*

His face was like the brightest sun blazing. It's the same picture right here.

Jesus Christ, in His human form, is veiled.

The body is a veil.

It is a wall.

It closes out the reality.

But when He pulls that veil back for a moment, it is the blazing sun that is seen. That is what they saw.

There is no doubt who He was.

This is God who is synonymous with glory, the revealed essence of His nature.

When Jesus came into the world, He is God, but He took that veil of humanity and clothed the glory.

But here He gave a glimpse. This is God. Don't let anybody come and tell you Jesus isn't God. The glory came from within.

His deity, His majestic kingship, His regal majesty, His royalty as the Son of God the Anointed One of the Father, is seen by the transformation of the Son.

2. By the testimony of the saints.

V 3, *And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.*

Luke adds “in glory” not with glory, but in His glory.

Peter, James, and John are not only seeing something that’s beyond their comprehension.

They are hearing a conversation.

Here is Moses and Elijah appeared in is glory.

How did Peter, James, and John recognize them?

How did they know they were Moses and Elijah?”

I don’t know.

Maybe they had some kind of supernatural intuition.

If God could have put this whole thing on, He sure could have impressed them with who it was.

Why Moses and Elijah are there?

Moses is synonymous with Old Testament.

Sometimes the Old Testament is called Moses.

It is called Law and Prophets and interchangeably Moses and the Prophets.

The law is called the law of Moses.

Moses is synonymous with the Old Testament, raised in the court of Pharaoh the king of Egypt. Exiled to the fields and flocks of Midian to learn humility and to be a servant of God.

Chosen by God to confront the Egyptians. Lead the people of Israel out of that land and through the Sinai wilderness to the borders of the Promised Land.

Moses the greatest leader of humankind who ever lived. Moses, who coordinated 2 million people in a 40-years in the desert.

Moses, who at a time when Israel had no king was their king in authority. When they had no prophets was their prophet in speaking for God.

When they had no priests was their priest, who took them to God.

Moses representing king, priest, and prophet. Moses leader among leaders and unequalled.

Moses was the agent of the coming of the Ten Commandments. He was the instrument through whom God gave the law expressing His will and revealing His character. The Old Testament is known as Moses and the Prophets. Moses was the greatest man of all men in the Jewish mind.

Who could stand with Moses?

Only one Elijah.

Elijah fought against the nation's idolatry.

- Moses gave the law,
- Elijah guarded the law,

The greatest guardian of God's law. The man was zeal personified. He had courage. He spoke words of bold and profound judgment. He had a heart for God. He walked with God. He had miraculous power.

1 Kings, we see the miraculous nature of this man's miracles and prophecies. He was zeal incarnate. His zeal for God was unequalled.

Every prophet should be like Elijah. Elijah stands for all the prophets. He is considered the most zealous and preeminent of them all.

So, Moses gave the law. Elijah great guardian.

What do they represent?

The law and the prophets.

What is the law and the prophets?

The Old Testament.

Why are they there?

They are there as the Old Testament saying, “This is the one of whom we spoke.” It is the affirmation of the law and the prophets. A tremendous scene.

It is Old Testament verification.

It is all that Jesus said when He said, *“I have come to fulfil the law and the prophets.”*

Coming, gathering around Him, standing in His glory, and saying, “Yea, it is He.” It is the affirmation.

We don’t know how Moses and Elijah got there.

We don’t know what kind of form they had.

Why they were there?

They were there so that the people could see that the Old Testament was indeed fulfilled in this person Jesus Christ. He is the King. They needed to hear that.

Matthew says they were talking with Jesus.

Luke tells us what they were talking about.

Luke 9:30-31, *And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, ³¹who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

What were they talking about?

Talking about Christ's death.

Was that important?

They were talking about His final outcome.

They were talking about the big event at the end. The cross. Departure, exodos, is a soft word for death.

They were speaking of Christ's death as an exodus, just as the exodus under Moses delivered the people from the bondage of Egypt, so the exodus of Christ's death would deliver His people from the bondage of sin.

Is it important that they talk about His death?

Because what was the one element about this whole thing the disciples couldn't understand that didn't fit their messianic program His death. They couldn't handle that.

Here is the law and the prophets represented in these two men, and they are saying, "Lord, we are on schedule. We are talking about your final outcome when you go to Jerusalem to die."

An important conversation to hear.

That is why Peter could stand up at Pentecost and say that the Lord was crucified by the determinant council and foreknowledge of God.

Acts 2:23, *Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;*

The Old Testament saying, “This is indeed the King, and He is indeed on schedule, and death is a part of the plan.”

Jesus died as the one ordained to die from before the foundation of the world. His death was as much a part of the plan as His second coming will be.

This is so important for the disciples to know that.

They see and they hear the Old Testament representatives affirming Christ.

What do you do when you are in that kind of situation?

Peter, James, and John they have never seen anything like this.

This is one you can't even approach. It's irreproducible.

But the disciples were really scared.

But their fear was mingled with a sense of awe and afraid one side and the other side they were thrilled.

They are just frozen.

Panic.

Very often in a state of great emotion, when you really don't know what to say, you just open your mouth and dumb things come out. That was sort of a way of life for Peter.

V 4, *Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."*

Even though Jesus was transfigured you can still discern Jesus was there in some transfigured form.

Peter was so dumb.

How do you put glory in a booth?

Don't know why he says things like this, but he does.

It was wonderful that Peter did so comforting for the rest of us.

We don't know what Peter motive was.

We don't know what all the things going through his mind were.

But he really liked what he was experiencing.

In the uncertainty of his thrill and his terror, He made this suggestion.

Luke 9:33, *Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be*

here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said.

Peter didn't know what he was saying.

V 5, *While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”*

Interpreted to what Peter was saying – shut up. This is not the time for dumb suggestions.

What was wrong with what Peter said?

Peter's heart wasn't wrong.

But there was something foolish about it.

Peter didn't understand two things:

One, he didn't understand that this was only a preview. Jesus had to go back to the valley of the suffering, the hardships, the cross bearing, and the self-denial. The Messiah still had to suffer and die.

Second, Peter didn't understand was you can't put Jesus, Moses, and Elijah in equal places.

Moses and Elijah came in a very temporary fashion, and their purpose was to salute their divine successor. The one who fulfilled the law and the prophets. That was their purpose.

Then to leave Him alone in the glory of unchallenged supremacy, and to fade away so that the sole remaining object of the adoration of the disciples. The adoration of the Father was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

Capturing all three of them and putting them in boxes wasn't the point.

Let those two go and leave the one who belongs to stay.
Peter didn't even know what he was talking about.

They couldn't stay.

They wouldn't stay because there had to be the suffering, and there had to be the single, unchallenged supremacy of the transformed Lord Jesus Christ.

We will see Him again this way when He comes in glory.

We are in the same place the other nine disciples were, which isn't too bad.

We got in on the preview.

You are going to have to wait for the real thing till the second coming.

So, the testimony to the kingship and royal majesty of Jesus Christ comes from the transformation of the Son and the testimony of the saints.

3. The terror of the Father.

V 5, *While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"*

Someone else arriving.

Exodus 13:21, *And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.*

Whenever we see white clouds, guess who will be there?

God.

You can follow those white clouds all the way.

Revelation 14:14-16, *Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is*

ripe.”¹⁶ So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Jesus sitting on that white cloud, coming in glory to judge the earth.

White clouds. Brilliant, blazing, dazzling, glistening clouds wherein God sits.

It came down over the scene. Just a mind-boggling scene.

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

Now we are face to face with the awesome, awful, terrifying presence of Almighty God.

Do you have any questions about who Jesus Christ is?

Our response should be as the response of Peter, James, and John.