

“THE SON OF MAN COMING IN HIS KINGDOM”

PART I

SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT SEEN IN MATTHEW 16:28-17:5

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him.

Then appeared Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 16:28-17:5).

The scene on the Mount, in Matt. 17:1-5, depicts that stated in the last verse of the preceding chapter — “the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (v. 28). This is not a foreview of or something like Christ’s return in possession of the kingdom at this time (*cf.* Dan. 7:13, 14). Rather, *exactly as the text states*, some standing there saw “the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”

God can deal with *time* and with *events during time* in this manner if He so desires.

God can move man back in time, or forward in time (*e.g.*, He moved Ezekiel back in time and John forward in time [Ezek. 8:1ff; Rev. 1:10ff]). As well, God can change time as we know it if He so desires (Joshua 10:12-14; Isa. 38:7, 8; Amos 8:9; Matt. 24:22; II Peter 3:8). Then God can deal with events occurring during the time in which man has been placed.

The Scene in Matthew 17:1-5

The time when the Son of Man will come in His kingdom is seen to occur “after six days,” which places it in complete accord with all related Scripture — *on the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period.*

This is the way matters are presented, at the very beginning of the Old Testament, in the opening two chapters of Genesis, establishing a *foundational basis* for that about to be revealed.

And, as well, this is the way matters are presented at the beginning of the New Testament, in the opening two chapters of John’s gospel, again setting forth *the same foundational basis previously seen beginning Genesis* for that about to be revealed.

(*Ref.* the author’s pamphlet, “Genesis and John,” showing why John *must* be seen as the gospel beginning the N.T., not Matthew.)

The location used to depict the Son of Man coming in His kingdom was “an high mountain.” “A mountain” is used in Scripture to depict a *kingdom*. And Christ didn’t select just any mountain to depict that in view. Rather, Christ took three of His disciples up into “an high mountain.”

Note how “a mountain” is used in a metaphorical respect in Isa. 2:1-4 to depict not only Christ’s kingdom but lesser kingdoms on earth in that coming day — “the mountain of the Lord’s house [Christ’s kingdom] shall be established in the top of the mountains [all the subordinate world kingdoms, referred to in this respect later in the verse through the use of ‘hills’].”

Or, Dan. 2:35, 44, 45, as Rev. 11:15, shows the matter after a slightly different fashion. In these sections of

Scripture, the kingdom of Christ alone is seen, with all of the lesser world kingdoms seen as forming part of the worldwide kingdom of Christ.

In Daniel 2:35, 44, 45, Christ is seen smiting the final form of Gentile world power at the time of His return (which will be a worldwide power under the Beast, Antichrist). And “a great mountain” is used to depict the kingdom of Christ as it will exist following the destruction of that depicted by the image.

Then Rev. 11:15 simply states the same thing at the same time, apart from the use of metaphors:

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever,” (NASB).

Those present on the Mount were Christ, Moses, Elijah, and three of the twelve disciples (Peter, James, and John).

Christ was “transfigured” before the disciples (enswathed in the Glory of God).

Moses and Elijah “appeared in glory” with Christ (evidently enswathed in Glory as well [Luke 9:31]), and “a bright cloud” overshadowed all present on the Mount (which could only be the Glory seen in an overall respect in the kingdom).

Then Peter, James, and John — though not enswathed in Glory, as the Others — were present within the overall scope of the Glory overshadowing everyone.

And Peter recognized this scene to be exactly what was being depicted. He suggested building three “tabernacles,” one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. This would be an allusion to the feast of Tabernacles, the seventh and last of the Jewish festivals, depicting offerings and a time of rest at the termination of that set forth by the previous six festivals (foreshadowing offerings during the earth’s coming Sabbath, the Messianic Era).

(These seven festivals form the prophetic calendar of Israel, having to do with events which will transpire following Christ’s return at the end of the

Tribulation, leading into the Messianic Era.

Refer to the author's pamphlet, "The Seven Jewish Festivals.")

Jesus, Moses, and Elijah

When Jesus returns to the earth — that is, when the Son of Man comes "in his kingdom" — He will be accompanied by "the armies...in heaven," seen and identified elsewhere as "angels" (*cf.* Matt. 24:31; II Thess. 1:7; Rev. 19:14). As well, according to the scene on the Mount in Matt. 17:1-5, Christ will be accompanied at this time by Moses and Elijah.

The matter can't possibly be viewed after any other fashion. That which has already occurred in the respect depicted in Matt. 17:1-5 *cannot be changed*. Attempting to see Christ returning at the end of the Tribulation — "the Son of man coming in his kingdom" — apart from seeing Moses and Elijah accompanying Him would be the same as attempting to change something in past history.

The scene in Matt. 17:1-5 is simply future history which has already been depicted (has already occurred in one respect), though it will occur at a yet future date. And *it must occur in the future exactly as it occurred in the past*.

This will explain why two men were present on the Mount of Olives in Acts chapter one when Christ ascended, for He is to return in exactly the same manner that He went away. Two men were present when He went away, and two men will be present when He returns. And these two men are identified in Matthew chapter seventeen.

(Why will these two particular men be with Christ at the time of His return? Aside from the simple fact that this is the way Biblical revelation presents the matter, there are evident, inseparably related reasons why they will be present [*ref.* Parts III, IV].)

Peter, James, and John

One thing should be kept in mind about the scene

set forth in Matt. 17:1-5. The scene, first and foremost, is *Jewish*. It is like and akin to the scene at the time of His ascension. Christ ascended with His hands raised, blessing the disciples (Luke 24:50, 51). And, returning in the same manner that He went away, He will have His hands raised to bless, not just the disciples, but the entire Jewish nation.

This would be seen in Matt. 17:1-5 by the three disciples not only on the Mount in Christ's presence but also overshadowed by God's Glory. As at the ascension, blessings would move beyond them to the entire Jewish nation.

Then something not seen in Matt. 17:1-5, though dealt with in related Scripture, would be those down at the foot of and removed from the mount in all directions — the nations. Blessings will flow out from the Mount through a restored and blessed Jewish nation to those comprising all of the Gentile nations (Gen. 12:3).

The Church and Matthew 17:1-5

Within the scope of the events as they are depicted in Matt. 17:1-5, the Church can be seen only in a secondary respect. The scene presented in these verses has to do with Christ's return to the earth at the end of the Tribulation. The scene is *Jewish, with the nations in view*; and Christians will not be with Christ when he returns to the earth at this time to deal with Israel and the nations.

At least two of the types deal with this aspect of the matter.

In Gen. 45:1ff, when Joseph dealt with His brethren in Egypt, at the time he revealed himself to them, his wife (Asenath) was not with him. Rather she was in another part of the palace.

In Ex. 4:19ff, when Moses returned to Egypt to deal with Israel, his wife (Zipporah) only went part way with him. She was not with him in Egypt when he dealt with Israel through their religious leaders. And Moses' dealings with these religious leaders was with a view to his subsequent dealing with the leader

of the Gentile world power of that day concerning the departure of the Jewish people from Egypt.

When Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation, Christians, exactly as in the two referenced types, will not return to the earth with Him. Christians, seen as Christ's bride in that day, about to become His wife, may, as Zipporah, come part way (possibly remaining in the new Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth [the place from which Christ and His wife will reign during the Millennium]). Or, as Asenath, the bride could be in another part of the palace when Christ deals with His brethren (again, possibly in the New Jerusalem above the earth).

Many individuals look upon the presence of Moses and Elijah in Matt. 17:1-5 as representing two types of Christians following the rapture — those who had died during the previous 2,000-year dispensation and had been raised from the dead, and those removed from the earth without dying.

Moses had died (Deut. 34:5-8), and it is evident from his appearance with Elijah on the Mount that God had later raised him from the dead (*cf.* Jude 9). And Elijah had been removed from the earth without dying (II Kings 2:11).

In a secondary respect, one could draw a teaching from Matt. 17:1-5 concerning two types of Christians at the time of the rapture — *the dead raised, the living removed without dying* — but teachings of this nature drawn from this passage would have nothing to do with the primary interpretation of these five verses. These verses have to do with "the Son of man coming in his kingdom," accompanied by Moses, Elijah, and angelic armies (seen in corresponding Scripture). Christians simply will not be there.

Matthew 17:1-5 is *Jewish, with the nations in view*. And this *must* be recognized in order to properly understand that which is in view.

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