

## Reflections on the message by Marion Kerry, 10th January 2010

### “The Transfiguration” Luke 9:18-36

Has anyone seen "The Secret Millionaire"? Jesus did something similar. He left the glory of heaven to live amongst the poorest of people. They had opinions about who He was, but often He hid his identity from them. On this occasion He revealed who He really was.

Luke 9:18-36. He put the questions **to his disciples**. Peter answered as spokesman. Jesus asked His disciples a strange question: "Who do people say that I am?" He then asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Jesus told them to tell no one who He was. There was obviously confusion about who He was, and yet He wanted to keep his identity a secret. This was so that he could accomplish what he came to do. He wanted to avoid his mission being hijacked. Political solutions would never work. Sin had to be dealt with.

This event is a watershed; things change from this point. This marks the start of the last six months before his death.

Who do you say that Jesus is? No-one has had such an impact on society as He has. There are still many different opinions about who Jesus was. Do you know that Jesus is the Christ, the Saviour? His death was meaningless if you think that He was just a man. It is only your faith in Jesus that will sustain you.

Eight days later, the answer as to who Jesus was came from an unexpected source. Some scholars believe that the Transfiguration took place on Mount Hermon in the north-east of Israel. Some think it was at Mount Tabor. Three of the four Gospels recounts the story, including the questions that Jesus asked, so it is significant. In this event we see his divinity and his humanity. Although divine, He took on all the features of humanity, such as family life. and mixing with all parts of society. He experienced desertion and loneliness. He had feelings, such as sadness and joy.

The Transfiguration was a turning point in the ministry of Jesus. Until then He preached and healed in the northern region of Israel. Now He turned towards Jerusalem, and talked of His approaching suffering. He needed the reassurance of His Father. Peter and John later wrote of His glory that they had seen.

The Jewish people thought of Elijah and Moses as the deathless ones, and expect them to return to help them at a time of trouble. This is why they thought that Jesus called for Elijah on the cross. They misunderstood Malachi 4: 5-6. John the Baptist fulfilled that prophecy (Matthew 11:14, Matthew 17:10-13). Moses and Elijah talked to Jesus about his departure, that is, his death on the cross.

The voice from the cloud answered the question of who Jesus was. This is God's answer to the question: "This is my Son, my chosen one. Listen to Him." We need to approach this with a Hebraic mindset. God never wastes words. First century Jews would recognise three scriptures given in a rabbinical style. The Jewish Tanakh (our Old Testament) was divided up into the Writings, the Prophets, and the Law.

**The Writings:** "This Is My Son" is from Psalm 2:7. The Jews would immediately know where this phrase came from. This is from a royal psalm sung at the crowning of the king, and recalled by kings at times of trouble. The writer of Hebrews identifies it as a Messianic Psalm.

**The Prophets:** "My Chosen One" is from Isaiah 42:1. Matthew 12:18 also quotes this with regard to Jesus.

**The Law.** "Listen to him" is from Deuteronomy 18:5. The Law is the most authoritative part of the Tanakh. It was delivered by Moses, who was a type of Jesus: a shepherd and a mediator. This was a command, not a request. Jesus was the fulfilment of the Jewish Scriptures.

If you believe all this, you have to do something about it. We have to listen to Jesus through the world's confusion and through life's trials. We have to listen to what Jesus said in Luke 9: 23-27. We are called to live a life in obedience to the voice of the Father. We are to be dedicated to the kingdom of God. There is no room for self-centredness. There is no mandate for part-time followers or for half-hearted believers. Is your heart with the things of Jesus, or taken up by selfishness. In Romans 12:1 Paul said I plead with you to offer yourselves as living sacrifices. When you think of what He has done for you, is it too much to ask? Some people go to great lengths for worldly pursuits, because of their passion for them. In this church you will be challenged about your life, because you are in a race (1 Corinthians 9:24, Galatians 5:7, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:1). Time is running out. The transfiguration showed the glory that Jesus had had, and to which He was returning. He is coming again. There will be no confusion then about who He is then. All will see him (Revelation 1:7). He will be accompanied by an army of angels. But those of us who believe will share His glory with Him (Romans 8:30). His delay is because he wants everyone to repent (2 Peter 3:9), but He will come. We need to prepare ourselves for His return. It could be today!