

# Jesus and His Decease

“And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”

Luke 9:30-31

## The Context

- A. This is the account of Jesus Christ being transfigured before Peter, James, and John.
  - 1. It is recorded in three of the gospels (Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-9; Luke 9:28-36).
  - 2. Peter also made reference to it when exalting the second coming (II Pet 1:16-18).
- B. While Jesus was transfigured on a mountain, Moses and Elijah also appeared to them.
  - 1. Matthew and Mark only record in general that the two prophets talked with Jesus.
  - 2. Luke informs us they were glorified and spoke of his coming death in Jerusalem.
  - 3. This is precious data that two men on our level discussed death with Jesus Christ.
  - 4. We are told in the Bible that the spirited Elijah was subject to passions just like us.
  - 5. If you have ever thought of being a fly on a wall to hear a conversation, this is it!
- C. If we back up just a few verses, we will find a discouraging event with the disciples.
  - 1. Jesus said He would be killed in Jerusalem, but the apostles and primarily Peter corrected and rebuked Jesus for the idea (Matt 16:21-23; Mk 8:31-33; Luke 9:22).
  - 2. This quickly followed Peter declaring Jesus was the Christ of God (Matt 16:13-20).
  - 3. Jesus corrected the outspoken spokesperson by rebuking Peter for being like Satan.
  - 4. This is consistent with Peter’s hasty and misguided judgment at the transfiguration.
  - 5. This is in stark contrast to Jesus testifying that God the Father had just helped him.
  - 6. Let us, by God’s grace, flush any wild thought we have contrary to the crucifixion.
  - 7. Let us be careful to avoid anything close to neglecting His death (I Cor 11:26-34).
  - 8. The best of men, without spiritual caution and diligence, can neglect His decease.
  - 9. The best of men, due to the weakness of their flesh, can fail to value His suffering.
  - 10. Though glorified, distinguish yourself by glorying in His cross (Ga 6:14; I Co 2:2).
  - 11. A logical duty falls on men to remember and bear fruit (II Cor 5:13-15; II Pet 1:9).
  - 12. For more of the transcendent cross ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/transcendent-cross.pdf>.

## The Text

- A. The word *decease* simply means death, as Peter used it for himself in II Peter 1:15.
  - 1. **Decease.** Departure from life; death. To depart from life; to die. See Luke 9:31.
  - 2. The Bible word *decease* is used commonly even today for departure or for dying.
  - 3. This is no more or less than Paul’s departure from life (II Timothy 4:6; Phil 1:23).
  - 4. The separation of the soul and body here was the *decease* of a united Jesus in body.
  - 5. Jesus was that day in the Paradise of God with the elect thief crucified beside Him.
- B. *Jerusalem* was the city where God chose He would be worshipped in this world.
  - 1. As early as Genesis 14:18-20 when Melchisedec reigned there, we learn of the city.
  - 2. In Jerusalem was the temple of Jehovah with the holy of holies blocked to men.
  - 3. In Jerusalem were sacrifices offered daily and yearly that could not put away sin.
  - 4. In Jerusalem is where rulers of the Jews sat to condemn prophets (Luke 13:31-33).

5. In Jerusalem's temple is where the *Desire of all Nations* made peace (Hag 2:6-9).
- C. The decease of Jesus was something He was to *accomplish* at Jerusalem for His elect.
  1. **Accomplish.** To fulfill, perform, or carry out (an undertaking, design, desire, promise, etc.). To bring to an end, complete, or finish (a work). See Daniel 9:2.
  2. Jesus accomplished the will of God by His decease (death, departure) for the elect.
  3. Compare other related uses of *accomplished* (Luke 12:50; 18:31; 22:37; Jn 19:28).
  4. When is *deceasing* an *accomplishment*, except the Lord's substitutionary death?
  5. For other men, death is the end of any accomplishment or fulfillment by their lives!

### The Doctrine

- A. Whose death accomplished any real good? But the *decease* of Christ destroyed death!
  1. He came to destroy the devil, who had the power of death (Heb 2:14; II Tim 1:10).
  2. He put away our sins by the sacrifice or decease of Himself (Heb 9:26; I Pet 2:24).
  3. We were cursed by Eden and by the law, but He became a curse for us (Gal 3:13).
  4. He died for us that we should live forever with Him (Rom 5:6-10; I Thess 5:10).
  5. This greatest transaction created a logical argument for us (Rom 8:32; Is 53:4-12).
- B. God had promised a prophet and mediator for His church like Moses, and God sent Moses to discuss Jesus' mediatorial role of dying for sins of the elect (Deut 18:15-19).
- C. The prophets like Moses and Elijah, even David and Isaiah, saw what they wrote rather obscurely on earth, but they saw clearly after getting to heaven (I Pet 1:10-12).
- D. Moses recorded other prophecies of Jesus Christ (Gen 3:15; 22:18; 49:8-12; Num 24:17-19), but we do not have any by Elijah that are written down for our pleasure.
- E. An angel from heaven strengthened Jesus in Gethsemane (and after his temptation in the wilderness), thus indicating a need and use of comfort (Luke 22:43 cp Matt 4:11).

### The Exchange

- A. Moses and Elijah had a very real interest in the decease Jesus needed to accomplish.
  1. If their sins were not covered by His death, they would be thrown out of heaven!
  2. They were in heaven by the forbearance of God waiting for His death (Rom 3:25).
  3. The death of Jesus on the cross was to unite all the elect in one body (Eph 1:10).
  4. His death on the cross was to reconcile all elect in heaven or earth (Col 1:19-22).
  5. It was by means of death Jesus redeemed ancient saints from their sins (Heb 9:15).
  6. Those in heaven sing the song of the Lamb for they needed His death (Rev 5:9).
  7. The book of life has the names of those saved by the Lamb slain (Rev 13:8; 17:8).
- B. If angels helped Jesus by strengthening Him, surely these great prophets could help.
  1. Angels ministered to Jesus in the wilderness and Gethsemane, showing the Lord's need and use of comfort as our very human Mediator (Luke 22:43; Matthew 4:11).
  2. But no angel, not even Michael or Gabriel, had an interest in his death like the two.
  3. These two passionate men who feared and loved God would have loved the Christ.
  4. They were great leaders that addressed kings and would have been quite helpful.
  5. They were highly motivated without sin natures and knowing need for salvation.
  6. Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus; He wept at his funeral (John 11:1-5,35).

7. His human spirit was subject to fear, temptation, and weakness, yet without sin.
- C. What may we conclude they discussed together based on what other scriptures tell us?
1. **Promises** of God's reward for His death (Ps 2:1-12; 16:8-11; Is 53:12; He 12:1-3).
  2. **Prophecies** of Him had been given very early (Gen 3:15; Matt 26:54; Luke 22:37).
  3. **Glory of God**, which was always His goal (John 12:28; 13:31-32; 17:1; Eph 3:21).
  4. **Thanksgiving** for anticipation of salvation and victory (II Cor 9:15; Rev 5:8-10).
  5. **Praise** for the magnitude of victory by the multitude of the redeemed (Rev 5:8-10).
  6. **Fear** for the lack of any other person in heaven or earth to do the work (Re 5:1-7).
  7. **Comfort** for suffering at hand, which the apostles did not give before or after this.

### The Decease

- A. Remember, Luke recorded Jesus, "I must be about my Father's business," (Luk 2:49).
1. From age of 12, Jesus knew His primary ambition or goal was His Father's work.
  2. What was His Father's business? To live to the prime of life and be killed for us.
- B. Shortly after His transfiguration, He stedfastly set his face for Jerusalem (Lu 9:51-53).
1. Did Moses and Elijah encourage Him? More than the apostles did (Matt 16:21-23)!
  2. He was to be received up shortly after death, so He knew that it was time to die.
  3. He was unmovable in His intention to go to Jerusalem and die for us on Calvary.
  4. So committed was He to do God's will – even His death – others knew it clearly.
  5. But two of His favorite apostles showed themselves of another spirit (Lu 9:54-56).
  6. The contrast between His intentions and those of professors is large (Lu 9:57-62).
  7. He gave us an example to look at the reward to justify the sacrifice (Heb 12:1-3).
- C. Later, Jesus declared Jerusalem's judgment and His death as a baptism (Lu 12:49-50).
1. There is no reason to run to the final day of judgment when talking around 30 A.D.
  2. This message was like John's and other generational lessons (Matt 3:11-12; 22:7).
  3. This baptism of Jesus here was immersion under God's wrath at His death for us.
  4. John Baptist had baptized Him in the waters of Jordan long before (Luke 3:21-22).
  5. This is the baptism that He spoke about regarding James and John (Matt 20:20-23).
  6. He was straitened – think straitjacket – very confined and restricted to die for us.
  7. All other activities were mere distractions in comparison to the great goal of dying.
  8. This does not mean He desired the pains of death, but rather to finish it (Lu 22:42).
  9. Appreciate the use of *accomplished* here, just as in our main text (Luke 9:30-31).
- D. Isaiah prophesied of His submissive commitment to die under God's help (Is 50:5-9).
1. Jesus never rebelled against God – to give His life to wicked men for wicked men!
  2. He set His face like a flint to the cross. He knew it would work without any shame!
- E. Be thankful He came down from heaven to do His Father's will for you (Jn 6:37-40).
- F. Jesus declared that His death would reveal He always pleased His Father (Jn 8:28-29).
- G. There was a measure of the will of Christ in His decease needing strength (Jn 10:18).
- H. Jesus knew He was on earth for the cause of death and God's glory (John 12:27-28).
- I. This included painful details of betrayal and crucifixion like Judas (John 13:27-31).
- J. Though the apostles slept again, an angel did what they did not do (John 18:11).

### **The Application**

- A. Jesus, even transfigured, benefitted by brethren, Moses and Elijah, encouraging Him.
- B. He sent revelation to Paul that He is honored by our remembering Him at communion.
- C. Let us, by God's grace, flush any wild thought we have contrary to the crucifixion.
- D. Let us be very careful to avoid anything close to neglecting His death (I Co 11:26-34).
- E. The very best of men, without spiritual caution and diligence, can neglect His decease.
- F. The best of men, due to the weakness of their flesh, can fail to value His suffering.
- G. Though glorified, distinguish yourself by glorying in His cross (Gal 6:14; I Cor 2:2).
- H. A logical duty falls on men to remember and bear fruit (II Cor 5:13-15; II Pet 1:9).

### **For Further Study:**

Sermon ... *The Transcendent Cross* ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/transcendent-cross.pdf>. [And 46 links!]