

## **BIBLE READING DAY 20, FRIDAY: MARCH 18**

### **Sign Seeking and Wrong Doctrine**

Matthew 16:1–12

*The Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus, asking him to show them a sign from heaven.*

*“When it is evening,” he replied, “you say, ‘There will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the face of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and faithless generation demands a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then left the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

*When the disciples reached the other side of the lake, they had forgotten to bring bread. Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”*

*Then they began to reason among themselves, saying, “It is because we brought no bread.”*

*Jesus, aware of their reasoning, said, “O you of little faith! Why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you brought no bread? Do you not understand yet, nor remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered up? Do you not remember the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered up? How is it that you do not understand that I was not talking to you about bread when I told you to beware the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?”*

*Then they understood that he had not told them to beware leaven in bread, but to beware the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

### **Peter Affirms Jesus’s Deity Matthew 16:13–28; Luke 9:26-27**

*When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, he began to question his disciples, saying, “Who are men saying that I, the Son of Man, am?”*

*“Some say you are John the Baptizer,” they said, “others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”*

*“But you—who do you say I am?” asked Jesus.*

*“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!” answered Simon Peter.*

*“Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah,” replied Jesus, “for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I say to you, you are Peter; and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Jesus charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Messiah.*

*From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. Peter took him aside to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This must never happen to you.”*

*Jesus turned away from Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance and a snare to me, for you are not thinking of things from God’s viewpoint, but from men’s.”*

*“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Whoever chooses to save his life for himself will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, but forfeit his soul? What could a man give to buy back his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory—all the glory of the Father and the holy angels! But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”*

**The Transfiguration** Luke 9:28–31; Mark 9:5–6; Matthew 17:5–13

About eight days after saying these things, Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. And behold, two men—Moses and Elijah—appeared in glory and talked with him concerning his death which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Peter exclaimed to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is a good thing we are here! Let us make three booths—one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” For he did not know what to say, for they were much afraid.

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice out of the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him and heed what he says!”

When the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were filled with fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” And when they looked up, they saw no one but Jesus only.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Do not tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Then the disciples asked him, “Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?”

“Elijah will indeed come and restore all things,” replied Jesus. “But I say to you, Elijah has already come; and they did not know him but treated him just as they pleased. Thus, the Son of Man, too, will suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that he was speaking about John the Baptizer.

**Jesus Heals an Afflicted Boy** Matthew 17:14–17, 19–21; Mark 9:20–29

As they returned to the crowd, a man came to Jesus and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and in dreadful condition. He often falls into the fire, and often into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they were unable to heal him.”

“O faithless and perverse generation!” cried Jesus, “how long must I be with you? How long must I bear with you? Bring him here to me.” They brought him to Jesus, and when he saw him, the spirit immediately threw the boy into convulsions, and he fell to the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

“How long has he had this?” Jesus asked the father.

“From childhood,” he replied. “It has many times thrown him into the fire or into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have mercy on us and help us.”

“If you can do anything!” exclaimed Jesus. “All things are possible to him who believes!”

“I do believe—please help me to believe!” cried the child’s father.

When Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying, “You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again!” When he had screamed loudly, with violent convulsions, the spirit came out; and the boy appeared to be dead, so that most of the people said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he rose to his feet.

When Jesus had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why were we unable to cast it out?”

“Because of your little faith,” replied Jesus. “I tell you truly, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to yonder place,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible to you. But nothing can drive this kind out except prayer.”

**Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry**

EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	1 <sup>st</sup> Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	1 <sup>st</sup> Feast of BOOTHS	WINTER	2 <sup>nd</sup> Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING
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## DEVOTIONAL DAY 20 (FRIDAY MARCH 18)

“Get up! Don’t be afraid.”

*Based on Matthew 17:5-13; Mark 9:5-6; Luke 9:28-31*

To me, there are few things on earth that are more breathtaking and majestic than mountains. I was raised near Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where the high, rugged peaks of the Coast Mountain range dominated the landscape, forming a distinctive backdrop view everywhere I traveled. No matter where I was, or how my day was going, I knew I could just look up and I’d be captivated instantly by their beauty and grandeur.

And I thought about this because in our passages today, I was captivated by something more breathtaking and majestic than all the mountains on earth. Here in God’s Word, we see Jesus, up on a mountain, unveiling His eternal glory and revealing His exalted position as the Son of God. He was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, who had always seen Jesus as a man. But now, they had a momentary glimpse of Jesus as eternal God.

Jesus is the God-Man, and Luke wrote, “*the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.*” What a sight to behold!

But then when the disciples heard the audible voice of God the Father saying, “*This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!*” they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. The visible and audible glory of God terrified them, and yet, knowing what it’s like to be human, Jesus took the time to show empathy and compassion. And I love this. Jesus met them where they were, down in the dirt. Then, with gentle reassurance, Jesus called them to “*Get up! Don’t be afraid.*”

And today, Jesus offers you these same words of reassurance when you are down in the dirt, and caught up in the scary, gritty realities of life. He meets you there and calls you to “Get up! Don’t be afraid!” His words are not empty phrases that carry no power. His words are life and have power because He is fully man and able to empathize with your weaknesses. And yet He is fully God and strong enough to overcome all your fears and circumstances. When HE is the object of your faith, He is the source of your power and courage to get up.

Now, don’t miss the timing of the transfiguration and the effect it had on the disciples lives later on. Soon, Jesus would climb another mountain, Mount Calvary, where He would suffer and die for the sins of the world. And as the disciples would later take the gospel into the world, it was the transfiguration that sustained them during their darkest days. James was the first of the apostles to die, then Peter the Rock, and then John would be exiled in His old age. All for the sake of Christ. All for the glory of His name. I imagine that in their last moments, it was that vision of Christ in all His glory that strengthened and sustained them. (2 Pt.1:16-21)

So how does the glory of Christ specifically prepare you for the gritty reality and needs of everyday life? How does the glory of Christ empower you to get up and move forward in faith, in spite of life’s uncertainties and disappointments? Where there’s mountains, there’s valleys. And we have the assurance of Christ’s glory to sustain us through every valley of hardship and loss. And we have the empowering words of Jesus calling us to “get up and don’t be afraid”. Listen to Him!

**Heavenly Father, open our eyes, that we may behold the majesty and glory of Jesus, the Son of God! May our hearts be changed continually by the shining light of Your word, and help us to listen to Your Son, as we look forward to that glorious day when we will see Him face to face. Amen.**

--By Alicia Mellon, Youth Teacher at FBC  
(Lecturer at the Evening Women’s Bible Study Fellowship, Killeen)

**WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:**

**WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?**

**PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?**

**ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION** (How God Can Supply Needs)

**A**

**C**

**T**

**S**