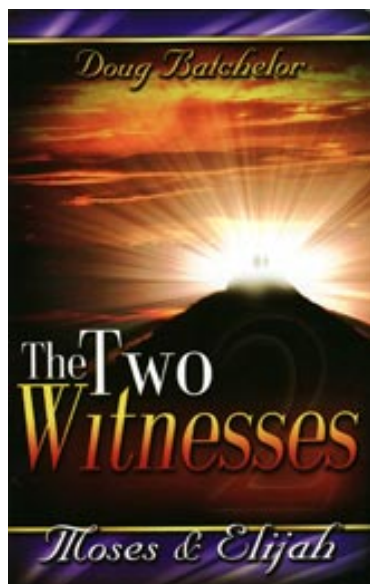


# The Two Witnesses



By Doug Batchelor

## An Amazing Fact

The brightest man-made light on earth emanates from the top of the Luxor hotel, a giant pyramid structure, in Las Vegas, Nevada. A total of 45 xenon lights, each one as big as a washing machine and with the brightest bulb available, shoots a powerful blast of radiant light straight up into the sky. The light beaming from the top of this artificial mountain is so bright, astronauts can see it as they fly overhead. Airline pilots are cautioned to avoid the area, as the beam of light can blind them temporarily if they fly through it. Sadly, this brightest man-made light on earth is totally wasted—it's not illuminating anything as it blazes into empty space.

Did you know there is a story in the Bible that tells of a mountaintop blazing with heavenly light? Even though it is seldom addressed, this event, called the Mount of Transfiguration, or sometimes the Glorious Mount, is one of the most pivotal moments in the New Testament. This monumental experience found in the Gospels of Matthew 16, Mark 9, and Luke 9 is full of profound meaning for Christians, and it helps illuminate many other amazing Bible truths.

## ASCENDING TO THE LIGHT

After a long day of teaching and ministering to the multitudes, Christ and His disciples separate from the clamoring crowds. Jesus then says something very unusual: "There are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power" (Mark 9:1 NKJV). It probably seemed to His disciples that Jesus was predicting something really big. But what?

Then, six days after Jesus makes this cryptic announcement, they reach the foot of a "high mountain." There He handpicks His own trusted "trinity" of apostles—Peter, James, and John—and with them in tow, He leaves the others in the valley and begins the long ascent up the steep hill. As the sun is setting, they finally stumble wearily onto the summit. Jesus immediately kneels and begins to pray, and at first the disciples attempt to join him; yet exhausted, they soon drift into a deep sleep.

Then something extraordinary happens! Combining the testimony of Luke and Mark, we're told, "As He prayed, He was transformed before them. The appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. Exceeding white, like snow such as no launderer on earth can whiten them." (See the full account in Luke 9:29-31 and Mark 9:2-9 NKJV.)

## **THE REASON FOR THE REVELATION**

Suddenly awakened by the cosmic event, the disciples see Christ shining with a heavenly light radiating from within. He is not just the humble son of Joseph and Mary, but with unveiled glory, He now appears as the majestic Creator of the universe.

In the classic book, *The Desire of Ages*, the author helps us better understand Jesus' primary reason for this heavenly visitation. In His prayer, "He pleads that they may witness a manifestation of His divinity that will comfort them in the hour of His supreme agony, with the knowledge that He is ... the Son of God and that His shameful death is a part of the plan of redemption."

The loving Father grants them this brief glimpse of His Son's glory, because He knows the disciples were soon to see their Master completely humiliated. Their teacher was about to be naked, beaten, and bleeding—appearing very helpless and very mortal. So in the same way a little tree stores sap during the warm, bright spring to sustain it during the cold, dark winter, Jesus knows His disciple's faith needed a bright boost on the mountain to see them through the approaching dark day on Calvary.

The disciples also needed the reassurance of this event because they continued to confuse the purpose of the Messiah's mission with the popular Jewish fables of earthly glory. Jesus knew it was going to be devastating for them to see their hopes for earthly glory punctured by Roman nails, so the Father granted this vision to remind them Christ's kingdom was heavenly, not earthly.

## **WHY MOSES AND ELIJAH?**

Along with the glorious light of heaven, the brightest ever seen on earth, two of the greatest celebrities of Scripture appeared at the side of Christ. "And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus" (Mark 9:4 NKJV).

Someone might ask, why these two individuals? God had also taken Enoch to heaven, why didn't he come along for this special visit? Very simply, the two prominent individuals who did come were living symbols of the Word of God. Moses represents the law, and Elijah represents the prophets. Jesus says in Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to [fulfill]." Moses is the great lawgiver, and Elijah is the greatest of the Old Testament prophets.

Throughout the Bible, the Word of God is often portrayed with a dual image. The Ten Commandments were written on two tables of stone. The Word of God is also portrayed as a

sword with two edges. Two lamps and two olive trees portray the two sacred divisions of the Bible. But the ultimate testimony of God's Word is Jesus: "In the volume of the book it is written of me" (Hebrews 10:7). The volume of the Book, the Bible, all points to Jesus, who is the combination of two natures, the human and the divine. Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

In Luke 16:31, Jesus concludes His parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Here Jesus places a very high priority on God's Word, and we shouldn't miss it. No matter what miracles you witness, even someone rising from the dead, you should still place the plain Word of God on higher ground.

## **THE ULTIMATE ENDORSEMENT**

Around election time, politicians begin to campaign and jostle for the support of voters. One common way for them to achieve this is by getting endorsements from as many popular and credible leaders as possible. The Glorious Mount experience is the ultimate endorsement. Ever since the time of Abraham, every Jew had been looking for the coming Messiah. Several counterfeit Christs had appeared on the landscape of Hebrew history. Now as a symbol of supreme support, Jesus stands glorified flanked on the right and left by the two greatest heroes of ancient Israel. Moses and Elijah surround Jesus to give us a very vivid picture that the Word of God points to and endorses Jesus as the Messiah.

This endorsement from Moses and Elijah represents the endorsement of the law and the prophets, God's Word, that Jesus is the "coming one" (Matthew 11:3). No other individuals could have offered greater validation for Jesus' ministry than these two giants of Scripture. The transfiguration is also a direct fulfillment of prophecy. Malachi foretold, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord." One reason the Word of God is so wonderful is because it is so precise. Both Moses and Elijah did appear in the New Testament prior to Jesus' sacrifice to encourage and endorse Him.

## **TWO OR THREE WITNESSES**

In Revelation 11:3-12, we find the great prophecy of God's two witnesses. "These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth" (Revelation 11:4). We know that a lamp is a symbol for the Word of God, "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). When Zechariah sees two olive trees in vision, he asks the angel what they represent. "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6). It also takes the olive oil of the Spirit to illuminate the lamp of God's Word.

Revelation warns what will happen to those who would harm God's two witnesses, the Holy

Bible. "If anyone wants to hurt them fire proceeds out of their mouths and devours their enemies." This happened in the experiences of both Elijah and Moses. Fire came down from heaven on the Egyptians as they pursued God's children and it consumed the sons of Aaron. It also consumed the soldiers when they challenged Elijah. In addition, "These have the power to shut up heaven so no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over water to turn them to blood." Did Elijah pray and the rain stop? Did Moses pray and the water turn to blood? So again we see why God likens the two witnesses, His Word, to the ministry of Moses and Elijah.

Then, as if the endorsement of Moses and Elijah was not enough, a cloud overshadows the mountaintop and the voice of the Almighty is heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, Hear Him." The Bible says, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (1 Corinthians 13:1). On the Mount, two humans redeemed by Christ testify He is the Messiah, and of course, the third is the voice of God Himself! And what better confirmation of truth could God have offered—the lawgiver and the greatest prophet and His own audible testimony? In effect Moses says, "This is the One." Elijah says, "This is the One." Then God Almighty says, "This is the One."

## **A DIVINE DISCUSSION**

When I first read this passage, I wondered, "How did they know it was Moses and Elijah?" They had no journalistic photographs or archived video footage with which to compare these beings. Then I realized they probably overheard some of the conversation and heard Jesus address them by name.

Fortunately, the Gospel of Luke even gives us a little insight regarding what these great men discussed. It says, "Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:30, 31 NKJV). Of course, "decease" refers to His sacrifice on Mount Calvary.

I cannot imagine any other two individuals who would be better qualified to encourage Jesus to go forward with His sacrifice. Both Moses and Elijah understood the sting of persecution, and rejection by their own people. Keep in mind, both Moses and Elijah had been in heaven for hundreds of years, not because of their good works, but because they were enjoying an advance payment on the sacrifice that Jesus was about to make. In other words, if Jesus did not go through with the plan to die for mankind, Moses and Elijah had no right to remain in heaven. They were obviously very motivated to encourage and inspire Jesus to go forward. Ultimately, their purpose was to be witnesses to Christ and to support Jesus in His coming trial and sacrifice.

## **THREE TABERNACLES**

As the eyes of the disciples adjusted to the light and they collected their wits, I image the first thing they did was remove their shoes when they realized they were on holy ground.

After a few terrified minutes of eavesdropping on this divine dialogue, Peter feels compelled to say something. "And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (Mark 9:5).

It is interesting that Bible history records three earthly temples: one in the wilderness during the time of Moses; Solomon's temple standing during the time of Elijah; and the third temple built after the Babylonian captivity. This third one is the one Jesus cleansed. There are also three aspects or stages of salvation: justification, symbolized by Moses; sanctification, the ministry of Elijah; and the God-filled man or glorification represented by Jesus.

## **MOUNTAINTOP EXPERIENCE**

Many of the high points in the Bible are also mountaintop experiences. The Lord often arranged profound events on mountaintops because they make natural monuments. Whenever God's people looked upon these prominent peaks, they would remember the important events of their sacred history.

Consider, for example, that after 40 years in the wilderness, God delivered His covenant to Moses on a mountaintop. Mount Sinai had the fire of God with smoke and thunder shaking the summit. After 40 days in the wilderness, God also spoke to Elijah on Mount Sinai with fire, wind, and an earthquake (1 Kings 19:11, 12). After 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus rebuked the devil on a high mountain (Matthew 4:8-10). God also makes His promises on mountains. It was in the mountains of Ararat that God made His covenant with Noah. He made His covenant with Abraham on Mount Moriah. The whole nation of Jews confirmed its Promise Land covenant from Mount Gerizim (Joshua 8:33). Of course, Elijah was on Mount Carmel when fire and rain came down, a symbol of God's reviving Spirit raining on the church. Moses first glimpsed the Promised Land from Mount Nebo, and it is from a high mountain John first sees the holy city (Revelation 21:10). Most important, God's loving covenant of salvation was sealed on Mount Calvary.

Like Jesus, Moses stood on a mountain with stretched-out hands, supported on the right and the left by Aaron and Hur (Exodus 17:12). Of course, when Jesus died on Calvary, two thieves surrounded Him on the right and the left representing two kinds of sinners, the same way you have Moses and Elijah flanking Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. I think before we climb the Glorious Mount, we need to climb Mount Calvary. God wants to confirm a covenant with you and fill you with His Spirit, and it will happen when you humble yourself upon the mountain where Jesus was slain.

## **THE FINAL WORD**

The Glorious Mount rings with divine authority. Mark 9:7 says, "And a cloud came and overshadowed them" (NKJV). This cloud is actually veiling the glory of the Father, who

declares, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him." God the Father comes to sanction His Son who receives His total approval.

This is so important for us to understand. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, God the Father speaks personally at Christ's baptism in the low Jordan valley, and identifies Jesus as His Son. He says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," announcing that the Jewish nation no longer needs to look for anyone else as the Messiah (Matthew 3:17 NKJV). Anyone who came before Him was a fraud, and anyone else coming after is a counterfeit. Jesus is the one!

Then at the end of Jesus' ministry, God the Father again identifies His divine Son on the mountain, commanding something very simple. "Hear Him." That's a complete sentence, easy to understand. But "hear" means more than just hearing the audible sounds. It really means "listening with undivided attention and doing." Jesus says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the church" (Revelation 2:17). God the Father, in person, is commanding you and me to listen to Jesus' word and to do it.

There have been be a lot of counterfeits, frauds, imposters, and cult leaders trying to impersonate Christ. But God the Father says about Jesus in the Bible, "Hear Him." He is the true Word! That's something very powerful to contemplate.

## **SUDDENLY**

As the last echoes of God's thundering voice resonate from the mountain, the trembling disciples cower in fear. Mark 9:8 says, "Suddenly" it all ended. Just as quickly as the light flashed on, it went off. "When they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves." As the glory evaporates and their eyes become adjusted to the darkness, Moses and Elijah and the Father and the cloud are all gone; all they can see is Jesus. He promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

It's easy to have our vision obscured by the kaleidoscope of images that we see in the Bible. And it's easy to have our minds clouded with the collage of images we see in modern life. But after it all fades, and we're at the base of the mountain again, what really matters? I think God is telling us to only hear Jesus, to only see Jesus. He was the only one left with them; everyone else might forsake you, but Jesus says, "I will be with you till the end" (Matthew 28:20). Always remember that Jesus is still there for you even after the glory disappears.

## **DON'T MENTION IT**

Christ again says something else very unusual to the dazed disciples. You and I can barely imagine how these three apostles are feeling "as they came down the mountain" (Mark 9:9). That incredible event must have been life-changing, and they were probably in spiritual shock, even more than when Christ calmed the storm or walked on water. They might even have been glowing with the lingering residue of light still dissipating from their faces, like Moses was glowing after speaking with God. What doubts about Jesus could they possibly have now? They were probably ready to die for Jesus that very moment.

But then Jesus commands them not to tell anyone of the things they had seen. I imagine that might have been one of the most difficult mandates they ever received from their Lord. They have just witnessed a glimpse of heaven. They've seen Moses, and they've seen Elijah. Like ancient Israel, they've heard the commanding voice of God reverberating from a mountain, and now, they are told not to make any comments regarding this remarkable event. Don't mention it. Keep in mind. He is asking three fishermen not to comment on the most exciting experience of their lives. I don't know if I could have kept it quiet.

## **TIMING TO TELL**

Fortunately, they were not asked to "never mention it." More precisely, Jesus asked, "That they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead" (Mark 9:9).

Why would Jesus make this request knowing their hearts had been so profoundly touched through this event? I believe He wanted them to store this experience in reserve for when they would really need it. Peter, James, and John were chosen to be the leaders of the early church, and when all seemed lost, and when things got hard, they could say, "Don't be discouraged. We want to tell you about something we saw that night with Jesus on the mountain." But sadly, it appears just when they needed it the most, they didn't remember this experience—when their Lord went to the cross, they forgot who He was.

Has God given you a mountaintop experience? Maybe He has answered prayers and worked miracles that right when they're happening, you say, "Wow, praise the Lord!" But then when the glory fades, you end up in a valley with the devil crowding you. And the memory of what's happened on the mountain has all but evaporated.

It's just like when God had told the children of Israel not to make idols, and they heard the voice of God, and they felt the ground shake, and they saw fire consume a mountain. They glibly promised the Lord they would obey. Yet a few days later, they're worshiping a golden calf.

The devil is a master at inducing mountaintop amnesia. If you give him just five minutes of your attention, he can make you forget a whole lifetime of miracles. If you entertain his suggestions, if you embrace his discouragement and his doubts, all those mountaintop memories can dissipate just when you need them the most.

## **LAST-DAY SIGNIFICANCE**

The experience on the Glorious Mount is especially important for the end-times; that's why after His resurrection, Jesus returned to teach on this. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets [here are Moses and Elijah again!], he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

Revelation 12:17 says, "And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The woman represents the church, and the dragon, the devil, wants to destroy her. The church in the last days has two outstanding characteristics: They "keep the commandments of God, and they have the testimony of Jesus." What is the testimony of Jesus? Revelation 19:10 explains, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." So the members of the last-day church are identified as a people who will keep the law (the commandments) and have the prophets (the spirit of prophecy).

Isaiah 8:16 says, "Bind up the testimony, seal the Law among My disciples." Moses, before he died, exhorted the children of Israel to keep the law. He repeats the Ten Commandments to them in Deuteronomy 5 and says, "These words that I have spoken unto you this day shall be in your heart. You shall bind them upon your hand. They shall be as frontlets between your eyes." So the law and the words of the prophets are sealed by the Holy Spirit in the mind and hearts of God's people. "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

We must saturate ourselves with the law and the prophets, with the Word of God, for a special purpose in these last days. Mark 9 says, "His clothing became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them" (NKJV). Mark is really struggling here for words to describe the bright aura of light the disciples saw around this heavenly assembly. The garments of Christ were radiant white, just like new snow, and glowing like the sun. Of course, the robe that Jesus wore is a symbol of His purity. It is what He is wearing in heaven. Wonderfully, you and I are offered this same clothing purified by His blood, if we stay true to His Word. "These ... washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14). "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love" (1 Peter 1:22 NKJV).

## **WHAT ELIJAH AND MOSES WON'T DO**

Since we are talking about the end-times, it's important to look at one crucial issue that's causing much confusion. In Revelation 11, we read about two witnesses. "And I'll give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." Please note this doesn't say these two witnesses will only prophesy for 1,260 days, for witnesses for God witness all the time. This of course, refers to the Dark Ages from AD 538 to 1798, when the law and the prophets, the Bible, was obscured.

There are many good Christians out there who believe that in the last days, Moses and Elijah will literally come down to the earth again to preach, only to be killed and lay in the streets for three-and-a-half days. It's a half-truth, because the two witnesses, the Word, is symbolized by Moses and Elijah. But these two men of God are in heaven with their glorified bodies, and the Bible doesn't tell us that He wants two others to step down from heaven to



be killed. Moses and Elijah will not be coming back to earth in this way.

## **A TYPE OF THE SECOND ADVENT**

To make a full circle, let's go back a brief moment to where we began. One of the most important lessons from the Mount of Transfiguration is that it represents a miniature picture of the second coming of Jesus.

Referring back to this experience, Peter identifies the event as a sample of Jesus' coming. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (2 Peter 1:16, 17).

Remember that Jesus said some of His disciples would not experience death before they saw the kingdom of God coming with power. Of course, we know that these disciples died long ago, but they were given an advance peek of what it will be like when Christ returns.

A number of exciting insights can be gleaned from this story. Consider the parallels:

There will be two categories of saints when Jesus returns: the resurrected and the living. Moses, who died and was resurrected (Jude 1:9), is a symbol of the large class of people who will awake from their dusty graves when the Lord calls them - "The dead in Christ shall rise." Elijah represents the other class of people who will be alive when Jesus returns. Like Elijah, who was caught up into heaven by a fiery chariot, and Enoch who walked with God until he walked right into heaven, they will be translated with new, glorious bodies without ever tasting death.

During the transfiguration, Jesus, Moses, and Elijah are wearing white garments, the same kind that the redeemed will wear. Clouds of glory also accompany them; Jesus left in the clouds and said He would come back in the clouds. And even the voice of the Father in heaven was heard on the Glorious Mount, just as it will be when Christ returns on the right hand of the Father (Matthew 26:64).

## **SIX DAYS TO COME**

There might even be some significance to the fact that this all happens six days after Jesus makes the promise. After Christ told the disciples they would see His kingdom come, He tarried six days before He took them up the mountain. I believe this yields some fascinating truths.

However, before we go on, both Matthew and Mark record this period as six days. But Luke mentions that the delay was eight days. Many antagonists like to point at this and say,

"Contradiction!" But that's just not so. Matthew and Mark, both Jews, recorded time differently than Luke, who was Greek. Luke includes the day Jesus spoke of the event to happen and the time it took for them to return home, and he also gives a rough estimation, "about eight days." No, there is no fire or smoke here—these three accounts match up just fine.

But after six days, Jesus takes the disciples up. In 2 Peter 3, we're told, "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (NKJV). After the fall of Adam, God promises that Christ will come to defeat the devil—and when Christ came, He said He would come again. If we can approximate the date of creation to about 4004 BC, we know that for 2,000 years, God preached His message through the patriarchs, men like Adam, Methuselah, Enoch, and Noah. In 2004 BC, Abraham was born. For the next 2,000 years, God reached out with His gospel through the Jews, the Hebrews. And they faithfully waited for the Messiah to come through their descendants. Then roughly in 4 BC, Jesus Christ was born, and for the last 2,000 years, God has shared His good news through spiritual Israel, the church. If you add these three 2,000s together, you get 6,000. If we apply the theme Peter writes about, well, that should give you goose bumps! Psalm 90:4 reaffirms, "A thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it has passed."

I'd also like to add that the Lord says the righteous will live and reign with the Lord for 1,000 years—a Sabbath of rest. After this time in heaven, God creates a new heaven and a new earth, upon which New Jerusalem will come down. I could certainly be wrong, and date setting is prohibited in the Bible, but I believe that the plan of salvation is encompassed in seven thousand years. I believe it is going to happen this way.

If we're in overtime right now, we should not be surprised. We should be thankful, because the Bible says the Lord is longsuffering and not willing that any person should perish. God is going to do as much as He can, but with all that is happening in the news today, we ought to be trembling that we are living during the sunset of the sixth day. The millennial Sabbath is soon to begin!

## **A BIBLE THEME**

The story of the transfiguration is not the only story in the Bible in which a six-day period is invoked. For instance, in Job 5:19, "He will deliver you in six troubles, yes in seven no evil will touch you." In addition, Athaliah reigned for six years before Josiah was coroneted. When Josiah came forth from the temple, Athaliah was slain and he was crowned—the trumpets even blew, and afterward the Sabbath began.

Hebrew servants were released after six years of servitude. They also sowed the fields for six years and left the land desolate on the seventh. Likewise, the earth will be desolate for a thousand years, a time when the gospel will not be sown. Jesus says, "I am the Sower. The Gospel is the seed." When He comes in Revelation, it is with a sickle to harvest.

But most interesting is when Moses stayed at the base of Mount Sinai. We all know that he stayed on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights, like the flood. But the time before that, Exodus 24 says, "For six days he stayed at the base of the mountain." After that, God called him up to the top to receive the commandments. This is just like what happened on the Glorious Mount. After six days, Jesus went up the mountain, and Moses met Him there.

The Bible fits together perfectly! It's like a puzzle. It's significant that it says, "after six days." That tells me that if this is a miniature picture of the second coming, we are very near the return of the Lord.

## **THE TRANQUILIZED CHURCH**

It is prudent to keep in mind that the Glorious Mount happened very unexpectedly. The atmosphere surrounding the mountain was quiet and dark—the drowsy disciples were snoozing. Then, BANG! It happened. Christ will come as a thief in the night, when many of His followers are unprepared.

There is a sober warning for us in this experience. At the most pivotal moments of church history, Satan seems to sedate the saints. Just before this revelation of glory, the Scriptures declare the disciples "were heavy with sleep" (Luke 9:32). When Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane, the Bible tells us that He picked the same three disciples to pray with Him. And they again went to sleep. Likewise, in the parable of the 10 virgins, Jesus warns us just prior to the second coming that "they all slumbered and slept" (Matthew 25:5). It seems at the most critical moments in Jesus' ministry, the saints are snoring. This is why Jesus warns, "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming; in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping" (Mark 13:35, 36 NKJV).

When they should have been kneeling with Him in the garden, remembering the glory they witnessed, they fell asleep. And because Peter, James, and John were asleep on the Mount of Transfiguration, they lost the full potential of their experience. They forgot the Glorious Mount, so they were not ready to follow Christ to Mount Calvary. I wonder if that haunted them for the rest of their lives: that missed opportunity because they slept when they should have prayed?

## **A MORE SURE WORD**

So how do we stay awake? To the powerful weapon of prayer, we can add the witness of Moses and Elijah, the law and the prophets. God's Word can prepare you for anything. In 2 Peter 1:17, Peter refers back to the Glorious Mount. It is the only time that any of the three disciples write about it. But before Peter's death, he writes passionately, "For [Jesus] received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to Him from the Excellent Glory, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' And this voice which

came from Heaven we heard when we were with Him on the holy mount" (vs. 17, 18 NKJV).

Yet even after Peter reflects on that defining moment in his life, he adds, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto to ye do well that ye take heed" (v. 19). Can you imagine saying that after seeing Christ in all His glory sandwiched between the two greatest Old Testament characters, with the voice of God the Father seared forever into your memory? Yet Peter confesses that however great that experience was, he had something more important, more dependable. God's Word is a light that "grows brighter and brighter until the day dawn."

Peter saw Christ glorified; he received a glimpse of heaven. But you and I have something worth more. We have the Bible. Christ tells us through Peter that your Bible is more trustworthy than a vision. If you want a mountaintop experience, you have it within your reach if you reach for your Bible. Nothing is more important than the testimony of Moses and Elijah, the double-edged sword, the Law and the Prophets, the commandments of God, the testimony of Jesus—it is the most precious thing God has committed to mortals. It is Jesus, the Word who became flesh.

## **GLOWING FOR GOD**

As a child, I was always fascinated by those pale green illuminating plastic toys you could hold up to a light and watch glow even after the light was turned off. I remember one of those toys was a glow-in-the-dark plastic sword. After exposing it to the light, I could find my way through the dark house just by the glow from my sword.

The Lord has given us a special warning message in the Mount of Transfiguration. There are some very troubling days ahead, and now we must spend time on the mountain gathering light from God's Word to see us through the dark valleys. The message from the mountain tells us that Jesus is the One, and that we too can wear the same robes He, Elijah, and Moses wore that day. He's telling us to listen to the testimony of Jesus, and to the laws and the prophets—which point to the fulfillment through Christ. It's a picture of Jesus' imminent second coming, and a warning not to become spiritually sleepy. The mountaintop experience helps to remind us that even when the glory fades, Jesus is always still with us and Jesus is the only way to heaven.

Seven individuals appeared on the mountain that day: Three from heaven—Moses, Elijah and God the Father; Three from earth—Peter, James, and John. And then there was Jesus—the bridge, the ladder, between heaven and earth

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