

**1058 Mount of Transfiguration, who is greater, and looking back -Jesus (13)
(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)**

We shared before that Jesus wasn't merely someone who talked about doing things, He was a doer for His teaching. So, what He did was part of His image. He Himself says in John 5:36, " ...the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish-the very works that I do-testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me." It says in John 14:11, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves." Therefore, the series based upon the Gospel of Luke will be called 'Jesus' instead of 'the image of Jesus' in the future, and will continue with what we shared before.

We first share what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration briefly since we discussed in detail before. We see that God indeed wants us to fix our attention to Jesus only. We also use a discussion of Moses and Elijah to talk about the difference between the judgment seat of Christ and the great white throne. Secondly, Jesus said that some demons can be cast out only through fasting and prayer. He cast out the demon who couldn't be cast out by His disciples. As a result, we can tell that Jesus fasted often. Thirdly, we mention that He made the prophecy that he will be resurrected in three days after dying. The disciples didn't understand what He said, because it was beyond what they could think. Fourthly, we can see the standard between Heaven and the world is very different as the verses say in Matthew 23:11-12, "But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted." Fifthly, in the situation of preaching the Gospel, who isn't against you is for you. Who is considered a friend depends on whether we are preaching or talking about the salvation. Sixthly, the Son of Man came to save the life of people and make them live more abundantly. Lastly, we share the paragraph regarding putting a person's hand to the plow and looking back. A person who genuinely follows Jesus is the one who never looks back.

1. What happened in the Mount of Transfiguration

In Luke 9:27-36, it says, "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"-not realizing what he was saying. While he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!" And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen."

First, we notice that when Jesus said 'truthfully,' it meant something important is coming. Here, it is said in Luke 9:27, "...some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." Indeed, Peter, James, and John fulfill the description and saw that the kingdom of God was upon Jesus in the Mount of Transfiguration. We also see that Jesus took a low profile before His time coming up as the verse in Matthew 17:9 says clearly, "As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'" We see that God wanted us to fix our eyes on His Son Jesus, not even on Moses or Elijah. We know that the Law was given to the Israelites through Moses, and Elijah should represent the prophets since he was the only prophet who ascended on the chariot of fire and horses of fire and didn't taste death. (Ref. 2 Kings 2:11) Although Enoch was a prophet and didn't taste death, his record isn't too much and only in Jude 1:14, Hebrew 11:5, Genesis 5:24. So, he cannot represent prophets.

Someone said that Moses and Elijah were from the future since the great white throne is for everyone and is in the future. (Ref. Revelation 20:11-13). I don't think so, since the Bible says clearly there are some people in Heaven already, as it is said in Revelation 7:9, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, ..." I believe that they already went through the judgment of getting prices by the judgment seat of Christ described in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." Those people had to be resurrected since that God is the God of living as the verses in Luke 20:37-38 said, "But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him." Therefore, those in there should be living.

All other dead Christians still have to go through the judgment of the white great throne, as the verses in Revelation 20:11-13 say that the judgment is for everyone, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds." The names of Christians are already in the book of life. We are called righteous before the God, and once saved are forever saved as said in 1 Corinthians 3:15, "If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

God doesn't lie, but is very fair. He doesn't want us to merely be saved, but wants us to have deeds out of faith, as said in James 1:22 "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." We say so because there are people who cannot enter the new Jerusalem as the following two verses said. It is said in Revelation 21:27, "and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever

come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." Notice that not everyone in the book of life can enter the city, the minimum condition is at least for those who have their names in the book of life. It is said in Revelation 22:15, "Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying." People outside don't include those who don't believe as described in Revelation 21:8 for the second death, "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Although it is far much better than going to the lake of fire, we don't want to be in that place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, as described in Luke 13:28, "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out."

I know that someone thinks those outside the city must be unbelievers, and doubts if those called righteous by God were not even Christians to begin with. We cannot say that the Bible lies if it is talking about those people who once really believed and backtracked saying that they were never saved. This looks reasonable in the aspect of human. But we can see that some Christians can indeed fall to the extent to the situations like those outside the city, as said in Hebrews 6:4-6, "For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame."

The verse says clearly in John 5:27, "and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." Therefore, Jesus must be the one to sit in the white throne to make judgement. In other words, those Christians are under the judgement seat of Christ described in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." There is no contradiction to this verse. We really don't want to say that all Christians don't have to go through the great white throne. It not only gives a wrong guarantee but also is contradictory to what said before in Revelation 20:11-13.

We really want to be the people who can enter the city. Therefore, we should enter through the narrow gate as described in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." It is said in Luke 13:24-25, "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'" Yes, the salvation is according to what we are. But when we die, the door is closed. Before this, God wants us to do things what He thinks that those can last forever as said in Revelation 14:13, "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are

the dead who die in the Lord from now on!" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

2. Casting out a demon through fasting

In Luke 9:37-43, it says, "On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him. And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy, and a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling him as it leaves. I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not." And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here." While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, ..." Apparently, demons can harm people. Not every time, he came out without hurting the host as depicted in Luke 4:35, "...And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm."

The same event is recorded in Mark 9:14-29, and we know that this spirit can make his son mute as said in Mark 9:17, and he had the problem since childhood. It is also recorded in Mark 9:19, "And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" And it is said in Mark 9:23-24, "And Jesus said to him, " 'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." You see the word, 'immediately'. Sometimes, immediacy is very important. When our faith is not big enough for the occasion, we can always pray to increase it. Of course, it is up to Him to make the final decision.

The same event is also recorded in Matthew 17:14-21. In Matthew 17:14, it said that the father was falling on his knees before Him. And it is added in Matthew 17:17-20, "And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

Although the disciples cast out demons before, their faith was not strong enough. I never tried to ask a mountain to move, knowing that it is impossible for me. Although I couldn't believe that my faith was less than the mustard seed at first, but now I know that it is indeed so! Let us take a look at the church in Philadelphia, it is said in Revelation 3:8, just because they had a little power and so on, then "...I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, ..." I am the person who believes often by seeing the facts, how can my faith be strong? Great faith is for those who believe without seeing as "Jesus said to

him (Thomas), "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." (John 20:29)

Jesus indeed cast out that demon. Therefore, we know that He often fasted since He didn't know in advance that the father would appear. Of course, we cannot rule out the case that the Holy Spirit told Him in advance. But when we add the observation that messages from the Bible are consistent. We know that the Holy Spirit will not make a person like a robot, generating one action from one instruction. The possibility of the Holy Spirit telling Him in advance is very low. Particularly if we view the original will stated in Psalms 8:2, "From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease." In front of the fallen angel Satan, we are indeed infants and nursing babies. When we aren't willingly obedient to the Holy Spirit, how can God establish His power to make his goals fulfilled. So, we have to be willingly obedient; otherwise, the enemy will not cease. Don't have actions without putting your heart into them, just like the one-tenth offering from Pharisees where they only had actions on the surface.

3. Prophecy His resurrection the second time

It says in Luke 9:43-45, "...He said to His disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement."

The same event is described in Matthew 17:22-23 and Mark 9:30-32. The place where it happened was clearly in Galilee and He would be resurrected in three days. He prophesied this way the second time, where the first time is recorded separately in Luke 9:21-22, Mark 9:9-10, and Matthew 16:21-23. His resurrection was spelled out clearly, but the disciples at that time didn't understand it since it was beyond what they could think. It wasn't until much later when they finally understood as said in Acts 2:32, "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses."

4. The greatest disciple

In Luke 9:46-48, it says, "An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest. But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great." The event is also recorded in 9:33-37, which is basically the same except saying that it happened in the house of Capernaum.

In Matthew 20:20, the description is on different occasions. That is given in Matthew 20:20, "Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee (James and John) came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him." It is the occasion of argument since it is described in Matthew 20:24, "And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two

brothers." "But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."(Matthew 20:25-26)

Jesus did not just talk about it. Sometime before He died, He actually washed the feet of disciples, and made an example for us. (Ref. John 13:3-17) He was nailed on the cross for us as a propitiation. (Ref. Roman 3:25) We can see the standard in Heaven and the world is very different. It is also said in Matthew 23:11-12, "But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted." We need to be a real humble person, not just on the surface. A proud person can still be proud even he falls very badly, saying financially. We really want to do everything in the heart, "...For from it flow the springs of life."(Proverbs 4:23)

5. Who are friends?

It is said in Luke 9:49-50, "John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us." But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.""

These verses look to be very contradictory on the surface to the verses in Matthew 12:30-31, "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven." There are two things said here. First, there is a limitation for forgiveness. In short, no blasphemy against the Spirit can be forgiven. Secondly, what states here is to look things in the aspect of God, as what said in John 3:18, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." In the Gospel of Luke, it talks about the situation of preaching the Gospel. Indeed, who is not against you is for you. Otherwise, the situations would be like what Paul encountered. Jews at that time tried to kill him everywhere.

6. The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

It is said in Luke 9:51-56, "When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."] And they went on to another village."

He knew that His time was coming. He was determined to go to Jerusalem. Like John the Baptist made ready His way (Ref. Mathew 3:1-3), He sent messengers ahead of Him. At

that time, the Samaritans and the Jews weren't friendly to each other to the extent that the Samaritans didn't receive Him just because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. Indeed, James and John didn't know what kind of spirit they had. Using James as an example, when Jesus was nailed in the cross, he wasn't in front of it. It was only when the Holy Spirit was descended during Pentecost that Christians had power to complete their works. Indeed, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."(John 3:16-17) It is clearly said the purpose of His coming, and also said, "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ...I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."(John 10:9-10)

7. Putting his hand to the plow and looking back

In Luke 9:57-62, it says, "As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.""

Having nowhere to lay His head was the life He had on earth, which was very hard indeed. He had to work very hard by knowing that his time was short, as proved by what said in Mark 6:31, "And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) " And at the time He was only just over thirty, "...the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, ..." (John 8:57) He didn't say that we shouldn't bury our father, but say that people alive are much more important than people were really dead in terms of salvation. As long as it is still called "Today," we should in a hurry preach the Gospel to unbelievers so they could be saved. (Ref. Hebrews 3:13) Just like the call for the apostles James and John, it is said in Matthew 4:22, "Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him." They followed Jesus 'immediately' and didn't turn back. We should do the same. We also see that He suffered for us at least from His starting preaching the Gospel, not only just in the cross.