

Mark 9: 7-10; "A Cloud Overshadowed Them", Sermon # 71 in the series "Astonished at His Teaching", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 30th, 2010, in the Morning Worship Service.

This is now my third sermon on this passage of the Transfiguration of Christ. This passage is speaking about the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ being revealed to three of Jesus' closest disciples on Mt. Tabor, where Jesus had taken them to pray. These verses that we are studying have many blessed aspects of spiritual truth for you and I to consider. In my previous two sermons I have tried to communicate to you truths related to this glory of Christ; the how and the when, of its being revealed on that night. And then by way of application, to show also the how and when of His glory being revealed to us now, who believe in Christ. I said to you that who He reveals Christ's glory to, how it is revealed to them, and when He chooses to do so; are all in the Father's hands. These experiences of realizing Christ's glory come to us according to the Father's wise and sovereign bestowal. They do not come at our bidding, or by our making plans for it. The Father bestows them as He will, according to His sovereign purposes, which to us are often very mysterious. The strength of the revelation of the glory of Christ will differ according to the person, or the church, or the nation who it comes to, according to what the Father purposes that that they should receive. We are not to boast of our experiences or to expect that others must receive them. I said to you that if you have received a greater revelation of the glory of Christ, some exalted experience of Him, it is not something that you can ever prove to other people; it was meant for you, and you alone, unless you are with others in a group or an assembly when you perceive His glory, and others around you are affected as well. These experiences of glory are given to encourage your faith, and they are given to you in order that you might be strengthened for greater labors and greater sufferings which will no doubt come to you because Christ is asking you to follow Him; to pick up your cross and follow Him in particular ways that He has planned for you. Last Sunday I said to you that for you and I, the way that God reveals the glory of Christ to us in the greatest way, is in the preaching of His Word. Our greatest and highest experiences of the glory of Christ are always found in connection with what has already been revealed in the written word of God.

Usually when Christ's glory is preached about or spoken of, it is spoken of in this way; at least this is the way that I heard it, when I was a younger Christian: "First comes suffering, then glory." Now this is a true formula for the Christian life if it is qualified. First came the sufferings of Christ, then He entered into His glory. Similarly, in the life of the Christian disciple, before he or she enters in to the full revelation of this glory of our Lord Jesus, they experience various sufferings which confirm, strengthen and establish them in their faith. And then, upon their death, they experience this greater glory when they die and enter heaven. But what I will try to communicate to you this morning is that which is just a fuller explanation of what I have already tried to communicate to you; that there are degrees of Christ's

glory which are experienced by the true Christian from the moment that he or she becomes a Christian, and there is a transformation that is taking place in their life by grace. In the transfiguration Christ's appearance and clothing were metamorphized to reveal His true glory and how He would appear in the glory. And the true Christian is being changed by beholding this glory and believing in the One who has the power to change them. The formula for being able to live the Christian life to God's glory is this. First comes glory, then comes suffering, and then comes further glory. First comes the glory of conversion to Christ. Peter, James, and John, at the time of this experience of the transfiguration had already experienced quite a taste of Christ's glory. That is why they left all and followed Him. But at this time, when Jesus took them to Mt. Tabor with Him to pray, they did not understand that He would have to suffer for them, die for them on the cruel cross, and rise again on their behalf. That is plain from the words of our text. They did not understand that this was the only way that they could really become really useful and fruitful disciples of His. They needed this further and much greater revelation of His glory because of the cross that was coming for their Master. They needed it so that they would persevere in their own faith and obedience, and then be able to endure their own sufferings when they were led into them by the Holy Spirit. They needed this revelation of glory in order that they could later "strengthen their brethren". It was our Lord Jesus Himself, according to the purpose and plan of the Father, who took Peter, James, and John, and no other disciples with Him, to the mountain that night.

It was the Father of glory who transfigured His Son and gave to these disciples this greater experience of the glory of His Christ. It is the same Father of Glory who will give us who believe, as time goes on, a practical understanding that there are greater degrees of the glory of Christ for us to experience. He will do this in both this life and the next. This morning I want to speak about this truth in relation to the cloud mentioned in our text, and unfold it in relation to the revival of the Church. "A cloud came and overshadowed them." We want to look first at what this cloud was like and what it represented for those on the Mount. Then secondly we want to make applications of how it applies to us; how God gives manifestations of His glory in the New Covenant to believers. And then finally we will make a few applications in relation to Christ's glory being revealed to the nations.

1st of all – We want to look at what this cloud was like, and what it represented for those who were on the Mount.

Look at the text in verse 5 once again. "Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid." "And a cloud came and overshadowed them...." Now turn with me to Luke Chapter 9 and verse 32. "But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him." "Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah', not knowing what he said." "While he

was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were fearful as they entered the cloud." And then Matthew Chapter 17, verse 5. "While Peter was speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." "Hear Him!" "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid." "But Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and do not be afraid.'" Now from these three texts we can determine what this cloud was like, and I trust we will draw the right conclusion about what it represents. The cloud came and overshadowed them. It was not an ordinary cloud, for it had the appearance of great brightness and power, and this was the middle of the night. The glory of Christ's transfiguration was not taken away by this cloud; rather, I think that it was accentuated. The cloud was a cloud which the disciples entered. It was not a fog, and not a mist; but bright and brilliant; awesome and mysterious. We know that it was a literal cloud, and we know that it was a cloud which was representing the glory and presence of God the Father, for it was His voice which came from the cloud. It was a cloud which gave to these men a visible representation of the glory of the Father; especially in His holiness and justice. The Lord Jesus being transfigured was the revelation that He was the radiance of His Father's glory. And we know that by the order of the events that Peter was very much enamored with this revelation of the glory of Christ; so much so that he wanted to make three tabernacles; one for His Lord, and the other two for Moses and Elijah. He was enamored until, the bright cloud came and overshadowed them, and they heard the Father's voice speaking to them. When they heard that, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

Now to understand this better, we need to ask ourselves if there is any other place in the Bible where this kind of cloud was seen by men. And we will find that there is if we will turn back to Exodus Chapter 24. God has revealed Himself to Moses and 70 of the elders of Israel on Mount Sinai, and He is about to give to Moses His holy law in giving him the Ten Commandments. In verse 15 it says, "Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain." "Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days." "And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud." "The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel." "So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain." "And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights." I believe that this cloud was the same kind of cloud in which God manifested Himself to Peter and James and John in the transfiguration. They entered a cloud which overshadowed them as well. And the voice of God spoke to them out of the cloud as well. If we will turn over to Exodus Chapter 33 we find that the Lord continued to show mercy to Israel, on the basis of His faithfulness to His own covenant promises, and the intercession of Moses on behalf of the sinful children of Israel in prayer. I want to begin reading at verse 7, but we need to set the context. In the first 6 verses the Lord is telling Moses that He wants them to leave to go to the land of promise. He would send His angel before them and He would drive out the inhabitants of the

land. He would give them this land, flowing with milk and honey. The Lord was very angry with the children of Israel because they had sinned against Him by making a golden calf while Moses was up on the mount receiving the Ten Commandments. He could have consumed them in a moment for this sin, but instead He reveals to Moses that He is going to show Moses His glory and give Him the second set of the Ten Commandments. Verse 7 says, "Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting." "And it came to pass that everyone who sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp." "So it was whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle." "And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses." "All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door." "So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." "And he would return to the camp...."

Now in verses 12 to 23 Moses receives from God the promise that He will show him His glory. And then in chapter 34, verse 4, it says, "So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first ones." "Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him; and took in his hand the two tablets of stone." "Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord." And look down at verse 10 as well. "And God said, "I make a covenant." "Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord." "For it is an awesome thing that I will do." Now there are certain things that we can draw from what we have read in these passages. The cloud in Moses day is the same cloud which appeared to Peter and James and John in the days before Jesus went up to Jerusalem and was crucified and rose again. In both cases the cloud appeared to, and in connection with, the mediator of a covenant. In the Old, this divine glory was manifested to Moses in the cloud. And in the New it appeared to Christ and these disciples in a cloud. The glory of God; His power and presence and His voice speaking to men was heard. In both cases fear was created in the hearts of those who did not understand what this appearance of the cloud meant. In the account in Exodus we find Moses speaking with the Lord. In the New Testament accounts of the Transfiguration we find Him speaking to the Lord about His departure; His exodus out of this world, by going to the cross, accomplishing redemption, and ascending to glory. Moses had asked to be shown God's glory. Now in the Transfiguration He was beholding it in its greatest manifestation in Christ. When he entered the cloud before, he was given God's holy law. There is great glory in the law. But when he stood with Christ at the transfiguration, He beheld, along with these disciples, the One who fulfilled the law; the One who could, on that basis, convey grace. What the cloud represents in both Old Testament and New Testament accounts, is the power and presence; the holiness

and justice of God the Father. But it represents something else. It represents God the Father's mercy which would be shown in His sending Christ, to a world of sinful and undeserving men. And it also represents God the Father's mercy to manifest His glory in a greater way to some of His dear people who are very concerned for His glory. These were the greatest lessons of the Transfiguration to them, and they are the greatest lessons of the Transfiguration for us.

2ndly - I want to now make some applications related to how God makes manifestations of His glory in the New Covenant to believers.

First of all - Let me ask you if you pray in a similar way to the way to the way that Moses prayed in Chapter 33 of the book of Exodus? I know that he was the Old Covenant mediator, but He was an Old Covenant believer under the grace of the New Testament Christ, who he bore witness to, both in His life and in the Transfiguration. Look at how he prays in Exodus 34: 12 – "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' "But You have not let me know whom You will send with me." "Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.'" "Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in your sight." "And consider that this nation is your people." "And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." "Then he said to Him, 'If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.'" "For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us" "So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth." "So the Lord said to Moses, 'I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.'" "And he said, "Please show me Your glory." Now I am asking you this morning if this is the kind of prayer that you make to God, to be able to be shown His glory? Many things about how to lead the people of God were unknown to Moses. But one thing that He did know; he did not want to go any farther in leading this stubborn and obstinate people unless God Himself went with Him; unless His presence went with him. Could there be any congregation worse than the congregation that Moses had to pastor? What a mega-church it was there in the wilderness. How many were complainers! How many were unbelieving! How would it be known that he and the people that they had really found grace, except God Himself was with them; that they would know His Presence and His power working for them? That is how they would become a separate and distinct people from all the peoples of the earth; it would only come about if God was with them to work His grace into their hearts so that they would become holy. This is the only way that Moses knew that he could keep the commandment of God to "Bring up this people."

Now, I am asking if this way that he was praying is any different from the way that you and I should be praying in relation to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ and His glory in and among His people in His New Covenant, New Testament churches? I do not think that it is any different at all. How are New Covenant believers in our churches to come to the place where they want to submit to Christ,

and to His Word, and to the pastors of their churches when they proclaim to them God's word? They are going to need to have the glory of Christ revealed to their minds and hearts. They will in many cases need personal and corporate revival to see these great things come about. Do you pray for these kinds of things? Do you pray that God would come in His glory to the services of our church? This is often how and where the glory of God and Christ is revealed. Your coming into this church this morning is an entering in to the cloud for you. You do not see a physical cloud. But you behold the glory of God in the gospel and the Word. You have come looking for a revelation of God to your soul through that blessed Word. You will not be disappointed if you will only believe. Here you have come, to enter in to His presence with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. You are to be thankful unto Him, and praise His Holy name. For the Lord is good. God will reveal Himself to your mind and heart here even though you see no cloud, and do not behold physical brightness and glory. Still, in your heart, the glory comes. How are the pastors of churches to come to the place where they can really lead the Lord's people into a more careful and joyful obedience to all the commandments of God and Christ? I believe that it is only by this kind of praying; "Lord, show me Your glory." Now Moses could not see the glory of the face of God and live. It says in Exodus 33: 19, "Then God said, 'I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you.'" (Notice that God's manifesting His glory is spoken of here as "making all His goodness pass before you." Do you praise the Lord for His goodness to you in revealing Christ to you, and giving you all the blessings of grace and truth? God goes on to tell Moses in Exodus 33: 19 - "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." "But He said, 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me and live.'" "And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock." "So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen." I hope that you can see that Jesus Christ our Lord is the Rock of God in which we hide so that we can behold the glory of the Father. We could not bear the full revelation of the glory of the Father and of Christ without the Father's tempering it to us. "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." And another hymn - "He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock, which shadows a dry, thirsty land." "He hideth my life in the depths of His love and covers me there with His hand." "And covers me there with His hand."

Second application - If Moses and select persons under the Old Covenant were given such great revelations of the glory of God, then what great glory we should expect to be revealed to us who are under the New Covenant ministry in the preaching of the Word! Turn with me to 2 Corinthians Chapter 3, verse 7. Listen to what Paul says about this. "But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? "For if the ministry of

condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory." "For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels." "For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious." "Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away." "But their minds were blinded." "For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ." "But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart." "Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away." "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Now there are several things which we need to make mention of here in relation to our present study on the revealing of the Glory of the Father and His revealing the glory of Christ. If the Old Covenant which came through Moses had glory, and it did have great glory; then the glory of the New far exceeds it, and far excels it. It is evident that Moses had glorious times of fellowship and communion with God, because whenever he met with God, the glory of God was so great in their interaction, that his face shone. The glory of God was so great that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly at his face, and so he wore this veil. The reason that they could not look steadfastly at the glory of his face was because of their own willful ignorance, sin, and blindness in regard to the intent of God in the revelation of this glory. The end of the glory of the law was not only to show forth the justice of God, as I have said before, but also to point forward to the one who would fulfill the law and all its righteous requirements and shadowy types; the Christ who was coming. The Law and the Prophets all bear witness to Christ. But there was a veil over their heart, just as there was a veil over Moses face. And the veil is only lifted in Jesus Christ. How sad it is when people cannot see and behold the glory of God and of Christ! Sometimes even those who are Christians do not seem to see it in the way that they should. What should we do? We should pray. It was when Jesus was praying that the Father transfigured Him. It is when we pray that God will come and reveal His glory in the gospel and in His word. And yet there is every reason that you, as a New Covenant believer should pray to behold more of this glory. Ephesians 1: 15 – "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead...." This is the glory that you and I behold by faith; the glory and the power of Christ coming in His kingdom in

our hearts. We do not behold it with physical eyes but rather with the eyes of our heart.

Lastly – Let me apply what I have developed for you to Christ's glory being seen among the nations.

Let us remember God's sovereignty in terms of the gospel coming to the nations in converting power. If the Father can reveal the glory of His Son in the Transfiguration in the way that He did to these 3 simple fishermen and thus bring them to a greater understanding of His Majesty and Power, and their need of the revelation of Christ's glory for them to be more useful servants in His kingdom; then He can also do this on every level, for the Church. His glory can be revealed in missions through the preaching of a man such as David Brainerd; his preaching to the Indians, and sensing the Divine presence among them. Or He can reveal His glory to many churches in reviving power as He did in the First and Second Great Awakenings. Or He can reveal His glory to whole nations and bring them to the foot of the cross. Listen to David Brainerd speaking in his Diary -**Nov. 28**. Discoursed to the Indians publicly, after having used some private endeavors to instruct and excite some in the duties of Christianity. Opened and made remarks upon the sacred story of our Lord's *transfiguration*. (Luke 9:28-36) Had a principal view, in my insisting upon this passage of Scripture, to the edification and consolation of God's people. And observed some, that I have reason to think are truly such, exceedingly affected with an account of the glory of Christ in his transfiguration; and filled with longing desires of being with him, that they might with *open face* behold his glory. After public service was over, I asked one of them, who wept and sobbed most affectionately, "What she now wanted?" She replied, "Oh, to be with Christ! she did not know how to stay," &c. This was a blessed refreshing season to the religious people in general. The Lord Jesus Christ seemed to manifest his divine glory to them, as when *transfigured* before his disciples. And they, with the disciples, were ready universally to say, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Then speaking of some of the Indian's reactions to his preaching, he says, "Others again have had a more *general* view of the beauty and excellency of Christ, and have had their souls delighted with an apprehension of his divine glory, as unspeakably exceeding *all* they had ever conceived of before; yet without singling out any one of the divine perfections in particular; so that although their comforts have seemed to arise from a *variety* of views and considerations of divine glories, still they were *spiritual* and *supernatural* views of them, and not groundless fancies, that were the spring of their joys and comforts.

And as I close this message, I ask you to remember that the prophecies regarding the glory of the Lord in relation to the advancement and triumph of Christ's kingdom upon the earth, are very great. Let us understand and believe that God shall yet pour out His Spirit in greater measure, that He will shine His glorious light into the darkened nations and kingdoms of this world in a greater way than He ever has before, in relation to the preaching of the gospel. Psalm 102, verses 13 and 15 – "You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her, yes, the set time has

come." "So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth
Your glory." "For the Lord shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory." And
Isaiah 60, verse 1 – "Arise shine; for your light has come!" And the glory of the Lord
is risen upon you." "For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep
darkness the people; but the Lord will rise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon
you, the Gentiles (the nations) shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of
your rising. This is speaking, I believe, of the conversion of the Jews, and the glory
which will come upon Christ's Church in a day that is still future. Let us pray that
Christ's Church would indeed be revived by God the Father's revealing, and many
people beholding, Christ's glory. Let us pray that the gospel will conquer; that Christ
will "see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied."