



Mark 9

Through the childhood of the disciples is a dream or promise. I could imagine their parents telling them stories late at night by the fire. Stories of Moses and Elijah. Stories of God and the prophets. I suspect that the disciples sat there with wide eyes listening to the adventures of their childhood heroes. As a child myself, I remember my mom reading Robinson Crusoe and Treasure Island. I watched hockey on TV. My heroes parading across the screen.

I was told that I could be one of them. All through my childhood was a promise that I could be great. This is a free country. I looked to the stars in the heavens and on TV for inspiration and wonder. I could never forget standing in a line at my area for the first time. In those days the NHL players had to walk across the hall to the dressing room. They were towering men with battle scars. I read stories about astronauts and heroic policemen. The protectors of my country. The crusaders in my life.

So, we can open Mark 9 in the same way. The disciples had their heroes of old. The keepers of the Jewish way. God, Moses, Elijah, and others had become bigger than life. Everything in a little Jewish boy's life came back to religion. I have often wondered if there were Pharisee trading cards. Who were the current hockey type heroes in Peter's life? The men beyond the promises of old? Abraham was promised descendants. David was promised kingship. The prophets promised a messiah. All of this comes together in Mark 9.

Just before Mark 9 is an incident in chapter 8. Peter is rebuked for getting it wrong. Jesus proclaims to them that he will die. Peter pipes up and proudly pronounces that it will not happen under his watch. Jesus embarrasses Peter by rebuking him. Yet, the little boy in Peter is confused. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. The protector of the Jews. Jesus claimed to be God's Son. He surely is the all-powerful Christ from his youth? The promised kingdom of God appears to be unfolding right before the eyes of the disciples. They believed in this stuff.

Jesus then makes a crazy statement that someone in the room will not taste death before they see the kingdom come in all its power. Yes! To all the disciples its story time revealed. Bring on the messiah Jesus! It's interesting that it took six more days for the famous transfiguration to happen. Were the disciples waiting all that time for Jesus to rise up and take back their nation from the Romans? Then we get a curious event called the transfiguration. Jesus takes his three closet friends up a mountain (which mountain?) and they see him changed. In a way, they all are transported to heaven of sorts.

Jesus is transfigured into a glowing humanoid with white clothes. Moses and Elijah appear. Jesus knows who they are. Interestingly enough Peter and the boys recognize them too. How did they recognize who they have never met or seen before? It might say a lot about our appearance and relationships in heaven. Imagine Peter, John, and James meeting their Bible heroes. It's a stunning scene. Moses made God a tent. Peter offers these men and Jesus tents too. It says Peter was terrified. Then a booming voice came out of heaven and separated Jesus from Moses and Elijah for the very first time in a Jew's life. "This is my Son: listen to him!"

All their life they were told to worship Moses. To look to the heavens for the coming of Elijah. Jesus was probably considered one of the Bible heroes in line with Moses. God bucks the trend. God tells them to focus on his Son. In a way it's a passing of the torch. All that was told in

their bedtime heroes is now being put in the hands of Jesus. How hard and shocking was this to the disciples? Busting their solid teaching of the law of Moses. These men tasted heaven. They tasted a new way. From that moment on they would have to look at Jesus in a different light. Moses and Elijah are men. Peter and the church are men. Jesus is the Son of God. God said ‘yes’ you are my people. Yes, I will be with you always. Today on a mountaintop God said yes, I am still here.

The disciples grew up with famous Bible heroes. All that was cast aside on the mountaintop. Jesus was the new way to God. In our lives we have grown up believing the church and pastors are the way to God. The Pope is the main man. Priests pray for us. We find God in a church. A cross is our protection. We all have Bible heroes. Yet, God wants us to put all our trust in Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. No trading cards. No famous men. Just a famous God that wants us to be transfigured into heaven as it was always meant to be. To see heaven as it should be. God is saying yes to that through Jesus.