

The Transfiguration: Hear Him

David Halbrook

When Jesus was changed and Peter suggested building three tabernacles, a voice from heaven said, *This is My Beloved Son. . . Hear Him*—do not equally hear Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, but hear Jesus above them all.

Paul's point was similar when he called the law of Moses a tutor and said, *we are no longer under a tutor* (Gal. 3:24-25, NKJV). The law of Moses, including the ten commandments, were given to the physical nation of Israel. Moses taught Israel to remember the Sabbath, offer incense through the priests, kill the unfaithful (in certain circumstances), etc. By Jesus' name (authority) the Lord's Day is holy (first day of the week, Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10; Mt. 28:1), all saints are priests (1 Pet. 2:5), song and prayers (not incense) are offered (Eph. 5:19; 6:18), and saints who are unfaithful to God face social exclusion from their brethren (1 Cor. 5:11).

Do you know people who try to keep the words of both Moses and Christ (teach Sabbath-keeping, offer incense, separate priesthood, etc.) or who ignore Christ's teachings about unfaithful saints? From the mount where Jesus was changed we learn to *Hear Him!*

Editor's Note: Our article in *Arkansas Weekly* shows the importance of *you and I* reading and learning the Bible. The life of Jesus and the apostles provide a way to recognize truth and error and help others to do the same. There are many lessons to learn from Jesus' transfiguration—how can you use these events to teach your children and other family, co-worker, or neighbor?

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Ed & Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, Joyce Ratliff, Ed Koettel, others with ongoing trials, new Christians among us, and Ben Calderon with whom we fellowship (share) in Conway.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*
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Why I Believe in Heaven Heath Rogers

Do you believe in Heaven? I do. Why? I believe in Heaven because I want to believe in Heaven. It is paradise; the hope and goal of my faith. However, it takes more than just wanting to believe in something to make it true. For example, the atheist wants to believe in evolution. There is no scientific credibility to the theory of evolution, but it is the best thing the atheist has going for him, so he believes in it. Heaven is not a fairy tale, a relic of ancient religious folklore. It is real. I believe in Heaven for the following reasons:

Because I believe in God. God created all things, including Heaven (Genesis 1:1). Heaven is the abode of God. *"The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men"* (Psalm 11:4). Jesus affirmed this to be true in Matthew 5:34. If I believe in God, I must believe in Heaven. God created it, and He dwells there.

Because I believe in Jesus. Jesus came to bear witness of the truth. *"Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice'"* (John 18:37). Thus, everything Jesus told us is the truth. On one occasion, Jesus assured His disciples that Heaven was real and was waiting for them. *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also"* (John 14:1-3). On another occasion, Jesus spoke of the reward of the righteous, which will be in Heaven (Matthew 25:31-34, 46). Finally, when Jesus left this world, He ascended into Heaven and sat down on the right hand of God (Mark 16:19). If I believe in Jesus, I must believe in Heaven. He spoke the truth when He spoke about Heaven, and He is there now.

Because I believe in the Bible. *“The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever”* (Psalm 119:160). Every word in the Bible is the truth, from cover to cover. This means we can trust everything the Bible says. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Timothy 3:16). The phrase “inspiration of God” is translated from the Greek word THEOPNEUSTOS, which is actually a combination of the Greek words for “God” and “to breathe.” This means all (the entirety of) Scripture is the product of the mouth of God (“God breathed”), not the mind of man. Heaven is a doctrine of the Bible, so I believe in Heaven.

Because I believe in Hell. Jesus spoke of Hell more than anyone else in the Bible. He described Hell as a place of outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12), a place where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:44), and as a place of everlasting torment prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). Hell exists because God’s righteousness demands that evil and sin be punished. If evil has a punishment, then we can understand that righteousness has a reward. Heaven is the exact opposite of Hell. Heaven is the realization of man’s existence the way God intended for it to be at the beginning of time. Everything that was lost in the Garden of Eden as a result of man’s sin is regained in Heaven (Revelation 22:1-5). I believe in Heaven because I believe in Hell. The same God, Savior, and Bible proclaim both.

Do you believe in Heaven? Do you want to go there? You can! Jesus is the way to Heaven (John 14:6). He is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). Why not obey the gospel today and make Heaven your eternal home?

What Does God Want From Us in This Life?

Ron Halbrook

As we struggle with the challenges of life and death, the most challenging question of all is this: What does God want of us in this life? God answers that question in the Bible. He has made it clear from the beginning until now that He wants our love, trust, and obedience.

Adam and Eve were commanded to care for the Garden of Eden, to enjoy its fruit, but not to eat **"of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"**--a tree which drew the boundary between good and evil. When they ate of that tree, they were driven in shame from the Garden and suffered the ravages of death (**Gen. 2-3**). Later, God commended Abraham as one who **"will command his children and his household**

after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (**Gen. 18:19**). That is what God wants of all men.

The Bible is full of passages summarizing what God wants of us. **"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"** (**Eccl. 12:13**). Our love, trust, and respect for God are shown by obeying His Word. Though God commands formal worship, He also teaches us to translate our worship into daily action. At all times and in all situations, we are to **"hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate...let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream"** (**Amos 5:15, 24**).

When God taught the Jews to bring animal sacrifices for sin, He made it clear that **"thousands of rams"** were no substitute for sincere, daily submission to His will. **"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"** (**Mic. 6:6-8**). Life is brief and uncertain, filled with **"labor and sorrow."** Knowing our time is short, our prayer should be, **"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"** (**Ps. 90:10-12**). We find God's wisdom in God's Word.

Jesus summed it all up in these words:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22:37-40).

All the commandments of God teach us the true meaning of love for God and for our fellowmen. To violate God's Word is to violate that love.

Knowing we have sinned and yet wanting us to be saved, God desires all men to hear, believe, and obey the gospel of Christ. Christ died as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. On the basis of that faith, we must repent of all sin, confess Christ as God's Son, and be immersed in water to receive pardon through his atoning blood. Truly, God **"is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"** (**2 Pet. 3:9; Acts 2:38; 8:37-38**).

When we obey these first steps of the gospel, God adds us to the church of Christ and then teaches us how to worship Him and how to live for Him each day. Thus, He redeems us from the destiny of hell and leads us to an eternal home in heaven. Ultimately, that is what God wants--for us to spend eternity with Him in heaven!

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