

28.62 The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36)

✓ “Check” it out: opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher, not the student. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and/or visual aids found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check also “Activities” and “Handwork” below for additional suggested items.
- Other tools may be found in the following: Accent KT 4G, p. 75; Standard 4s and 5s Winter 2000–2001; CEF flannelgraph “Life of Peter”; Beka Flash-A-Cards for “Life of Elijah”

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *to transfigure*: to change the appearance or form; not the change of the substance of a thing but of its appearance (<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/matthew/17.htm>)
- *Peter, James, and John*: the “inner circle” of the disciples; sometimes Jesus took just these three men and left the other disciples by themselves.
- *scribes*: men who copied the Old Testament by hand. Because their occupation was to copy the Scriptures, they knew them quite well.

Scripture: (NASV)

Matthew 17:1 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” 8 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

9 And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.” 10 And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” 11 He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. 12 But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” 13 Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

Mark 9:2 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. 5 And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 6 For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” 8 And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

9 And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. 11 And they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” 12 And he said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? 13 But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

Luke 9:28 Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. 30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33 And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. 34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” 36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

Introduction/Review:

Last week’s lesson gave us a lot of instruction from the lips of Jesus Himself. Here are some of those teachings: [See enlarged chart below.]

1. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, just as Peter exclaimed.
2. Setting one’s mind on the things of men rather than on the things of God is a hindrance to Christ and His work.
3. If we are followers of Jesus, we must deny ourselves for His sake.
4. If we gain the whole world but not the Saviour, we are lost.
5. Whoever is ashamed of Jesus, of him Jesus will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of Himself, the Father, and the holy angels.

Story:

Jesus and three disciples

Six days* after Jesus instructed His disciples in these matters, He took Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain, which ✓ we will assume was Mount Hermon** since their last specific location was the villages of Caesarea Philippi in the vicinity of Mount Hermon. Jesus often went up a mountain or into a desert place to pray. On this day, as Jesus prayed on the mountain, the three disciples were sleepy, as they often were when Jesus was praying. But something caused them to come to attention. They noticed that Jesus’ appearance was being transfigured before their eyes: His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as dazzling white as light. My! What a sight! “Now I’m awake!”

Jesus and Moses and Elijah

As they watched, the three disciples beheld two other men—Moses and Elijah—talking with Jesus. The disciples even heard the conversation between Moses, Elijah, and Jesus, for they spoke of Jesus’ “departure”—His death that would soon take place in Jerusalem.

Peter and his mouth

Can you imagine the open-mouthed shock seen on the faces of these disciples as they witnessed this glorious sight?! What does one say at such a time? What does one do? Impetuous Peter had to say something—anything! As Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter blurted out, “Master, it is good that we are here. If it’s okay with You, let us make three tents: one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” The Bible adds this commentary: “He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.”

God and His commendation

At the moment Peter was saying these things, a bright cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. Then a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I

am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” And when they opened up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Jesus and rising from the dead

As they descended the mountain later, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision; wait until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.” So they kept the matter to themselves and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen. At the same time they questioned what this “rising from the dead” might mean.

Although they didn’t ask Jesus about the meaning of “rising from the dead,” having just seen Elijah, they did ask, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?”

Jesus and John the Baptizer

Jesus answered, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and the ✓ scribes and Pharisees did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.”

Then the disciples understood that Jesus was not speaking of the Old Testament Elijah but of John the Baptizer, who had already come, had been mistreated, and then had been beheaded by Herod. The fact that Jesus said He, too, would certainly suffer seemed to go right over their heads. But at least they understood that Jesus was the Messiah—the One before whom Elijah/John the Baptizer would come.

*“Luke 9:28 says, about an eight days after. Matthew [also Mark] mentions the six days that intervened between the day of the conversation and the transfiguration. Luke includes both those days, and thus reckons eight. Besides, Luke does not pretend to fix the precise time. He says, ‘about an eight days after’”
(<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/matthew/17.htm>).

**“This mountain’s [Mount Hermon’s] real significance . . . is as the traditional site of Jesus’ Transfiguration. Mount Hermon is one of three possible spots, including the Mount of Olives and Mount Tabor (Matthew 17:1-8). Interesting to note that again He chose “Satan’s turf” to proclaim His glory to His disciples, a declaration that He was the Supreme One who should be worshipped as God. No one knows the exact spot on Mount Hermon where this event occurred, but most believe it was indeed here (http://www.land-of-the-bible.com/Mount_Hermon).

Lessons from This Lesson:

- Jesus is God:
He was transfigured with shining face and clothes (Luke 9:29).
Moses and Elijah talked with Him about His coming death (Luke 9:31).
A voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Mark 9:7).
He acknowledged John’s being “Elijah” before His coming (Matthew 17:12).
- When we don’t know what to say, it might be best just not to speak.
- The going away of Moses and Elijah (symbolizing the Law and the Prophets or the Old Testament) indicates the fulfillment of the Old Testament in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the Israel of God.

Activities:

- Play dough: cloud
- Print and prepare take-home booklets for this story. The online source for ordering or downloading for \$12.99 is <https://www.carsondellosa.com/products/0499--New-Testament-Take-Home-Bible-Stories-Resource-Book-0499#/?book%20media%20type=f389e45b92884d48844baaf09d49e3c5>. The book is less expensive at other sites, but those sites do not offer the ebook.

- Possible snack: Make a cola or root beer float. Fill each child's cup with 3 spoonfuls of ice-cream (one each for Jesus, Moses and Elijah); pour cola over the top to create a "cloud" as in the story (<https://missionbibleclass.org/new-testament/part1/life-of-christ-middle/transfiguration/>).
- Play-act walking up the mountain, watching Jesus pray, falling asleep, awaking to see Jesus transfigured and conversing with Moses and Elijah, blurting out about three tents, hearing the voice from the cloud, falling terrified before Jesus, rising at His touch, walking down the mountain, asking about Elijah/John the Baptist.
- "Open Mouth; Insert Foot": Older students might share times when they or someone they know said the wrong thing at the wrong time. (A personal illustration: When my husband and I were engaged, I visited his home. At the table in the presence of his father, who was a barber, I declared, "When we get married, I'm going to cut your hair and save all that money!" My husband-to-be wisely but emphatically stated, "Oh, no; you're not! My dad is a barber, and I know how hard it is for him to provide for his family." Gulp!)
- Review questions: (Game: Place a strand of yarn on the flannel board to form the shape of a mountain. Use two felt circles to represent children who will climb the mountain, one from each side (if the class is divided into two teams). Each time a team answers a question correctly, its marker is moved 1/5 of the way higher up the mountain. The goal is to reach the peak (from CEF).
 1. Which three disciples did Jesus take with Him when He went up into a high mountain? [Peter, James, John.]
 2. What happened to Jesus as He was praying? [He was transfigured.]
 3. What was Jesus' appearance when He was transfigured? [His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.]
 4. What two Old Testament characters visited with Jesus? [Moses and Elijah.]
 5. What did they discuss? [Jesus' departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.]
 6. What was Peter's "bright" idea? ["Let us make three tents: one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah."]
 7. Why did Peter say such a foolish thing? [He was terrified, didn't know what to say, and just blurted out without knowing what he said.]
 8. What did the voice from the cloud say? ["This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."]
 9. Whose voice spoke? [God the Father's.]
 10. Who is the Elijah that would come before Jesus? [John the Baptizer.]

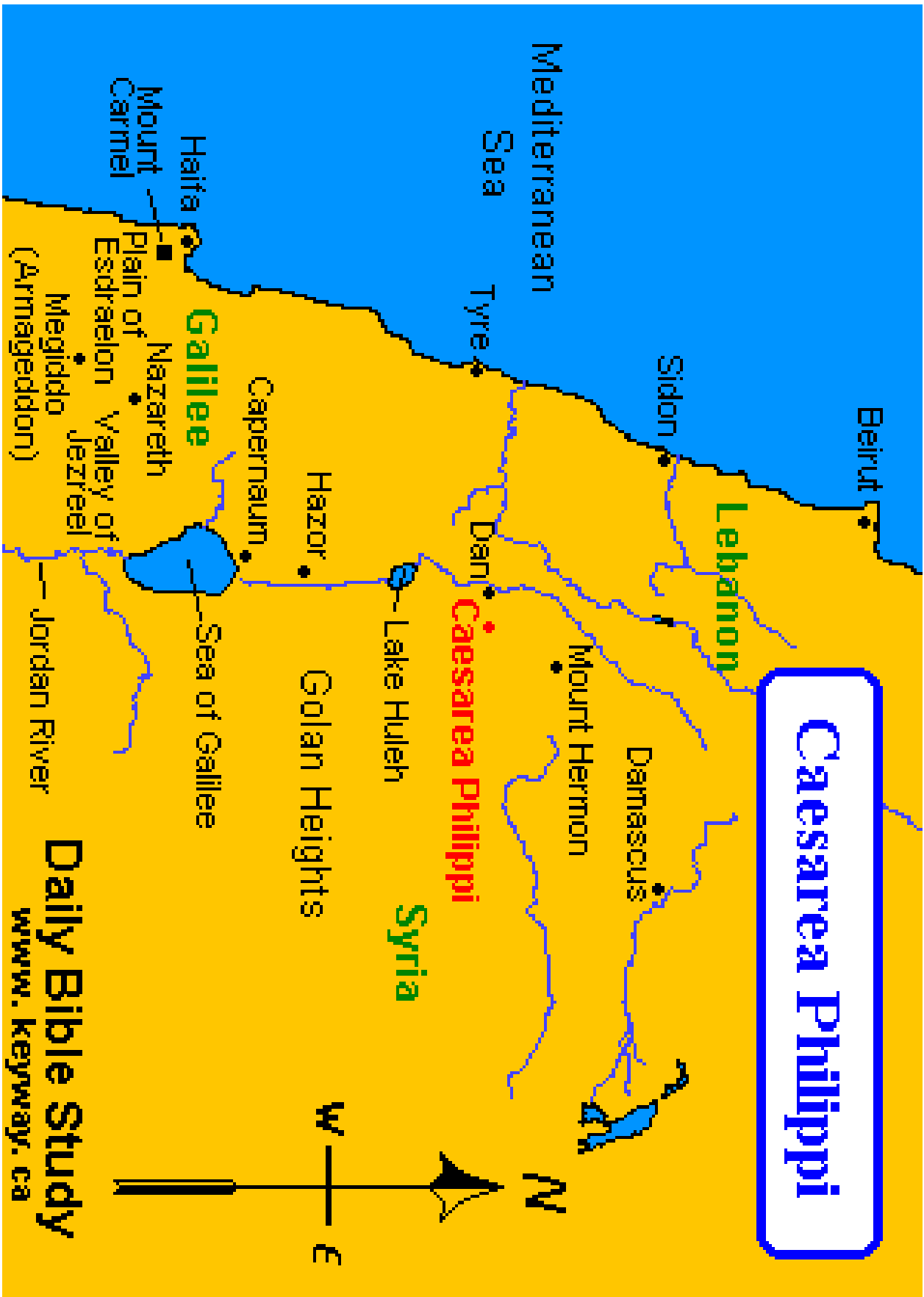
Handwork:

- Color the coloring page found below. Use a gel pen or marker to color the radiating light gold or yellow.

Memory Verse:

- Mark 9:7—And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."

Caesarea Philippi
Mount Hermon



Daily Bible Study
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Instruction from Jesus

- 1. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**
- 2. Setting one's mind on the things of men rather than on the things of God is a hindrance to Christ and His work.**
- 3. If we are followers of Jesus, we must deny ourselves for His sake.**
- 4. If we gain the whole world but not the Saviour, we are lost.**
- 5. Whoever is ashamed of Jesus, of him will Jesus be ashamed when He comes in the glory of Himself, the Father, and the holy angels.**

