

“Listen to Him,” Luke 9:28-36
Tom Johnson, Feb. 14, 2010

There is only a few times in the entire Bible that God actually speaks from heaven. It is a rare privilege. When Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened up, the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and a voice came from heaven: **“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased”** (Luke 3:21).

With God the Father’s words, I was drawing an enormous arrow in the heavens pointing right at Jesus. He was pinpointing his eternal Son to be the One we worship and fix our eyes on.

And just as Jesus was baptized with the visible Holy Spirit and audible voice of the Father, so you and I are baptized with the same Holy Trinity. Though no visible, the Holy Spirit is seen in the water.

Though not audible, the Father is heard in his Word. So that God says of us, “You are my beloved daughter. You are my beloved son. You are now in Christ—in my Son—in his righteousness, I am well pleased with you.”

And now Jesus brings up James and John, the Sons of Thunder, and Peter, the Rock, to a high mountain. And another manifestation of the Triune God occurs. His face is altered. His clothing becomes a dazzling white. And Moses and Elijah appear in their glorious, renewed bodies.

Two prophets. Two preachers. Moses, the greatest of all the prophets. Elijah, the most sensational of the prophets. Men that used their words mightily. People learned to listen—even though sometimes they learned to listen the hard way.

Moses went to the most powerful man in human history—the Pharaoh of Egypt—and said, “Let my people go!” Pharaoh hardened his heart each time. God send his plagues to match the authority of Moses’ word, “Let my people go!”

Pharaoh learned to listen only after he lost his firstborn son to a plague. He realized—only after it was too late—that Moses spoke the very words of the true and living God—Creator of heaven and earth.

Elijah single-handedly took on the entire priesthood of Baal—an entire denomination of false religion. With his words, he challenged them to a dual—a test to see whose god was the true and living God.

The priests of Baal cried out to their god Baal and cut themselves. But their was silence. But when Elijah prayed to Yahweh—the Lord Almighty—the true and living God—“Answer me that the people may know that you, O Lord, are God”—fire fell from heaven and burned up the water soaked wood.

Through Moses’ mouth, God parted the Red Sea and made water flow out of a rock. Through Elijah’s mouth, God raised the widow’s son from the dead.

When Moses died, the location of his grave was hidden so that people would not worship there as a shrine. When the time was up for Elijah, God sent chariots of fire and horses of fire took him up in a whirlwind into heaven.

And now these two great preachers are back! And Peter is excited! He says, “Jesus, Master, this is great! Let’s put up some tents for all three of you and begin our preaching circuit!”

It is spectacular to think of the potential. Jesus, endorsed by Moses and Elijah—the resurrected Moses—Elijah dropped off again by his fiery chariot! This will get peoples’ attention. Even Jesus looks the part with his beaming face and robes. Let’s take this baby on the road!

It is hard to know exactly what was in Peter’s mind. In fact, our text says that even Peter didn’t know what was in his mind. But I’d like to think he was thinking was I am thinking.

This is a sure way to church growth and extending the Kingdom. Three prophets—three of the greatest preachers and miracle workers the world has ever seen—taking the world by storm!

But God the Father interrupts Peter’s outburst of excitement. He doesn’t even allow him a moment to imagine the potential. And what he says seems anticlimactic: “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!”

“Listen.” Moses and Elijah are speaking to Jesus. But their words are not for you. “Listen to Jesus.” “Listen.” And after God speaks from heaven, Moses and Elijah disappear. Jesus’ face is back to normal. His clothes are no longer dazzling white.

And even though the Holy Spirit is no longer visible and the voice of the Father is no longer audible, they are both present in Jesus’ Word. The Spirit and Father’s voice are both present and heard from the mouth of Jesus. “Listen to Jesus.”

Listen to him who said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18).

Listen to him who said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32).

Listen to him who said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Luke 21:33).

Listen to him who said, “the Christ must suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and repentance and forgiveness of sins must be proclaimed in his name to all nations” (Luke 24:46,47).

Listen to him who said, “This is my Body given for you. This is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of all of your sins.”

Listen to him who is your advocate, your friend, your Savior.