

# Biblical Notes — Matthew 16:27-28

**27 – For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.** (27. μέλλει γὰρ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεσθαι ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ, καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ)

This passage is referring to the Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (Son of Man) ἔρχεσθαι (to come) in the glory of his Father. This glory has to refer specifically to the 2nd coming.

Matthew 24:30-31 NASB

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. [31] And He will send forth His angels with a GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Revelation 1:7 NASB

Behold, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

It is at this point the Lord comes with his angelic beings (ἀγγέλων) and will enact judgment and judge the works of man.

Matthew 25:31-33 NASB

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. [32] All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; [33] and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

The judgment at this point, is the judgment of the sheep and goats. Each will pay for his works:

Matthew 25:35-40,42-45 NASB

For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; [36] naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' [37] Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? [38] And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? [39] When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' [40] The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' [42] for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; [43] I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' [44] Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' [45] Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

The judgment here is not for the believers, for they already experienced judgment in heaven at the Bema seat of Christ. The judgment is for the sheep and the goats that came out of the Tribulation.

Revelation 7:9-17 NASB

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; [10] and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." [11] And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, [12] saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." [13] Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" [14] I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [15] For this reason, they are before the throne

of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. [16] They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; [17] for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

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**28 – “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”** (28. ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶν τινες τῶν ὅδε ἐστώτων οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσωνται θανάτου ἔως ὅταν ἴδωσιν τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ)

Matthew 16:28 was fulfilled in Matthew 17:1-8:

Matthew 17:1-8 NASB

Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. [2] And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. [3] And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. [4] Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." [5] While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of 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 face down to the ground and were terrified. [7] And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid." [8] And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.

Peter, James and John beheld him, they are the "some standing here" in Matthew 16:28.

Peter recounts this in Epistle:

2 Peter 1:16-18 NASB

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. [17] For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased" - [18] and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

The following is taken from John Darby's Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, Volume 3, page 137:

"In each Gospel that speaks of it, the transfiguration immediately follows the promise of not tasting death before seeing the kingdom of the Son of Man. And not only so, but Peter (in his second Epistle, 1:16), when speaking of this scene, declares that it was a manifestation of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He says that the word of prophecy was confirmed to them by the view of His majesty; so that they knew that whereof they spoke, in making known to them the power and the coming of Christ, having beheld His majesty. In fact it is precisely in this sense that the Lord speaks of it here, as we have seen. It was a sample of the glory in which He would hereafter come, given to confirm the faith of His disciples in the prospect of His death which He had just announced to them."

The following comment is taken from Amillennialist, Kim Riddlebarger:

"But as D. A. Carson points out, the coming of the Son of Man is like the coming of the kingdom of God. It comes in stages. The kingdom of God came in the person of Jesus Christ, but that kingdom is not yet consummated. Therefore, this verse and those like it (cf. Matt. 10:23) do not teach that our Lord's second coming occurred in AD 70. Rather, Jesus was referring to the coming manifestation of his kingly reign after his transfiguration and resurrection."

— Kim Riddlebarger, A Case for Amillennialism, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2013), 108.

"The Son of man shall come. At Christ's second coming, he will settle all accounts. Thus, suffering for Christ, even unto death, will receive its proper ward. To stress the reality of his country and kingdom as an incentive to men to follow him, even in suffering, Christ gave the promise of verse 28. This coming of the Son of man in his kingdom is explained by some as the destruction of Jerusalem and by others as the beginning of the Church. But referring it to the Transfiguration meets the requirements of the context (all Synoptists follow this statement with the Transfiguration, Mk 9:1; Lk 9:27).

Furthermore, Peter, who was one of those standing here, referred to the Transfiguration in the same words (II Pet 1: 16-18). Chafer calls the Transfiguration to "preview of the coming kingdom on earth" (L.S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, V, 85)."

— Homer A. Kent, Jr., Matthew, The New Testament and Wycliffe Bible Commentary, (Moody Monthly, The Iversen Associates, New York, 1971), 61.

"Judging from the above factors and the place of the narrative in the Gospels, it seems safe to affirm that the transfiguration event was a kind of preview, and thus anticipation, of kingdom power and glory which would come permanently at the parousia."

— Charles Holman, The Idea of an Imminent Parousia, *Studia Biblica Et Theologica* III (1973): 23.

"Futurist commentators generally take one of several interpretive approaches to the second verse of Jesus' prophecy ("there are some standing here who will not taste death until . . ." Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27). One interpretation sees this statement as referring to Peter, James, and John who soon saw the glorified Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36). Proponents of this view point out that the account of this event immediately follows the statement of Jesus in all three Synoptic Gospels, and that the time indicators connecting the two events show that the experience on the mountain took place about a week after he made the statement (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28). One strength of this position is that the apostle Peter identified this event "on the holy mountain" as an "eyewitness" experience of the glorified Jesus (2 Peter 1:16-21). Peter provided this experience as a reason to believe that the apostles "did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:16, emphasis added). This statement links the majestic experience on the Mount of Transfiguration with the return of Jesus using language similar to his statement in Matthew 16:28."

— Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 2902.

"Contrary to DeMar's claims, the Lord's statement (Matt. 16:28) does not indicate that most of the original hearers would die prior to the Lord's coming; it simply states that some would remain alive. The difference is subtle, yet of great importance, because it provides explanatory power for the various futurist interpretations."

— Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 2924.

"Jesus promises in Matthew 16:28 that some of the disciples who were standing there should not die until they had seen the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. This verse has caused much difficulty. It can hardly refer to the coming of the Son of Man to establish His kingdom as prophesied in the Old Testament simply because the Old Testament kingdom prophecies were not fulfilled in the lifetime of the disciples. Matthew 16:28 cannot be a prediction of the resurrection and ascension. How is the verb "to come" (epxopai) to be associated with His resurrection and ascension? Elsewhere the Lord refers to this as His going away (John 16:7). Furthermore, this explanation, because of the Old Testament kingdom prophecies, does not do justice to the statement. It cannot be a reference to Pentecost as some hold. The Son of Man did not come then. He sent the Holy Spirit (John 16:7; Acts 1:5-8). Nor can Matthew 16:28 be a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem as Trench contends. The only parallel between this event and the coming of the Son of Man is the fact of judgment. But what does this catastrophic event have to do with the coming of the kingdom? It seems fairly evident that Matthew 16:28 is an anticipation of the transfiguration, which immediately follows this prediction. It must be noted that verse twenty-seven is to be separated from verse twenty-eight in this connection. Verse twenty-seven looks at the establishment of the kingdom in the future, while a promise of seeing the Messiah in His glory is the thought of verse twenty-eight. They are two separate predictions separated by the words "truly I say to you" (dunv kéyo v piv). Matthew 16:28 is attested as a prediction of the transfiguration by several facts. Peter, one of the three who witnessed the transfiguration, interprets it in this manner."

— Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King, A Study of Matthew*, 209.

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"Some compelling reasons why this reviewer prefers the near/immediate historical view of the transfiguration are as follows:

1. This was the majority view of the early church fathers.

2. It fits the sense of immediacy raised by Christ.

3. Though the unfortunate chapter division between Matthew 16:28 and 17:1 might lead one to believe that there is no contextual connection between 16:28 and that which follows, the parallel passages in Mark 9 and Luke 9 where no intervening chapter breaks appear, prove that what follows on the Mount of Transfiguration is a vital part of the immediate context.

4. The “some” of 16:28 is fulfilled by the “three” of 17:1. It was to be an exceptional experience, not a unanimous one. The resurrection, the ascension, Pentecost, and the kingdom were occasions experienced by all of the disciples, and therefore could not have been what Jesus meant.

5. No one “saw” Christ in A.D. 70; this is a major disqualifier for the preterist interpretation.

6. Only John survived to see Christ in His later glory (Rev 1:12-20), but Peter, James, and John—i.e., some of the disciples (three out of the twelve)—actually saw Christ in His kingdom glory and power on the Mount of Transfiguration, plus they heard the glorious, powerful voice of God the Father. Additionally, they saw kingdom power manifest by the appearance on earth of Moses who died about 1405 B.C. and Elijah who was caught up alive by God’s chariots to heaven about 850 B.C.

7. Both John (John 1:14) and Peter (2 Peter 1:16-18) later wrote about this powerful, kingdom preview. Their descriptions of the actual event closely parallel the expectations raised by Christ’s promise. Matthew 16:28 refers to the prophetic preview of Christ’s future parousia glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, because it is contextually superior (3), the only acceptable view with regard to substance (2, 4, 5, 6, 7), and the historically preferred view (1). Therefore, the passage definitely shows Jesus to be a futurist, because He promised to be seen at His future parousia just as He previewed it at the Transfiguration.”

— Richard L. Mayhue, Jesus: A Preterist or a Futurist, TMSJ 14/1 (Spring 2003), 19-20.