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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1999

HIS MIRACLES - BY MIRACLES AND WONDERS AND SIGNS

Speaker: Bro. Jim Cowie

Study #6: For the Son of Man is Not Come to Destroy Men's Lives But to Save Them.

Reading: Mark 9:1-29

Thanks bro. Bart. In this dispensation, b&s, all things come to an end, it will not be so in the next; so, we come to the last day of our Bible school together. I thought just a few words of a personal note would be appropriate at the beginning, rather than at the end, when I prefer your minds to be on the deeper things. I did not look forward, I'm being honest with you, I did not look forward to the travelling involved in coming to Silver Star because of my health difficulties over the last few months; I don't look forward to the 30 hour trip home either, and in one go, but at least at the end will be my family. But, I knew I would enjoy the Bible school, b&s, and I have, and I'd just like to thank you all for your wonderful fellowship this week, for your response to the wonders of the Word which we've been privileged to see, all of us! I want to thank those who were responsible for inviting me here again, to this mountain.

We come, b&s, this morning to round off our studies around our Lord Jesus Christ, His miracles, signs and wonders. And, I want to just finish off our consideration yesterday, when we left you, as it were, a little bit short of where we should have been. You will recall that we gave consideration to the reason why Moses and Elijah were there, and saw that the reason was that those two men had been upon a mountain where they had learnt that supreme lesson, that men's lives are not changed by miracles; characters are not molded by miracles. We are not, b&s, prepared for the kingdom by seeing signs and wonders. We are prepared for the kingdom by the power of the still small voice of God's Word persistently working in our minds to develop character. And, I said to you that there was another place in the Old Testament where Moses and Elijah appear together with Christ, and most of you by now will have worked it out; It's in Malachi chapter 4. I want you to come back to that chapter with me. I want you to see, b&s and young people, that this is the substance of the shadow, this is the reality of the vision, this is the anti-type of all the types. Moses and Elijah who appear in Malachi chapter 4, appear in the context of the reality which is just around the corner for you and me. And, look how our Lord Jesus Christ is described in Malachi 4 and verses 1 and 2; and, look at the language that is used.

What's the context that leads us then, to Malachi 4? Well, you just have to go back a page in your bibles, back to the end of chapter 2; when in the wake of His rebuke of His own people, Yahweh says, 'everyone that doeth evil, this is what you say, everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of Yahweh and He delighteth in them; or you add to that (what you're really saying is, and this is your challenge to Me) where is the God of judgment?' Well, He's about to come, and chapter 3 speaks of the messenger of the covenant. And, you will notice in verse 2 that it says, 'But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap'. Is there another place in the scripture which refers to garments whitened as no fuller can white them? I know of only one! and it's in the context of the transfiguration in Mark chapter 9 and at verse 2. Don't look at it, it's there, 'His garments were white and glistening as no fuller (no dry cleaner) upon earth could clean them. And, here is the messenger of the covenant in the response to the challenge of Yahweh's people, 'where is the God of judgment?' Well, here He is, b&s, and in chapter 4 verse 1, He comes with fire; fire from heaven, 'for behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven (or 'a furnace' as the word should read) and all the proud (who make challenges like 'where is the God of judgment?') and all the lawless shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Yahweh of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in the extremities of his beams; and ye shall go forth (ye shall ramble) and grow up (or be released) like calves who have been locked up in the stall' (bounding around in the springtime, as it were, released from the life they had to live, a life of restriction, as it were). But, b&s, that's you and me. But, look at the way our Lord is described. He's called the Sun of righteousness, and in the transfiguration, His face shone as the sun; that was the shadow, that was the foreshadowing of greater things to come.

So, we are here in the context of the reality, aren't we? and then we meet Moses and Elijah. Verse 4, 'Remember ye the Law of Moses my servant'. I want you to notice the language used here, remember, it's an important word as we shall see when we come to 2 Peter in a moment. 'Remember', this is an appeal to the intellect, this is an appeal, b&s, to the mind; this is not an appeal to miracles. There are no mention of miracles here in Malachi 4 verse 4. Here's an appeal which is based on trying to get men to think, 'to remember the law of Moses my servant which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments'. So there's Moses!

What about Elijah? Verse 5, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh'. Elijah was sent in past times, b&s, and when he was sent he came that he might call Israel's attention to their apostasy; and, he did it by calling down fire from heaven, that they might be convinced that Yahweh was their God. And, when the king sent for him, in 2 Kings 1, two bands of fifty men plus their captain were consumed by fire from heaven. Elijah in his first advent (if we can use that word of him), in his first mission, was a man, b&s, who didn't fully understand what his true spirit and power should have been. He was too wont to call down fire from heaven, he imagined that miracles could change people lives. But,

this was a new Elijah, you read with me, verse 6, this is a fully converted Elijah! This is a man who now knows his full spirit and power because it says in verse 6, 'He shall turn the heart of the father's to the children, (that is, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, will recognize their children, the Jews who are all scattered into all parts of the earth, because they would have been converted to the Abrahamic faith). And the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse'. Now, think about this, b&s, if this had been the old Elijah and he was sent forth by Christ, his immediate reaction would be, when he saw the waywardness of his people, would be to call down fire from heaven. That's the message of verse 1, isn't it? fire is going to come! but you'll notice that verse 5 says that 'Elijah will be sent out before, BEFORE verse 1, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord'. And, he goes out with an urgent mission, and his mission is to turned the hearts of the Jews back to the disposition of their fathers, 'BEFORE the great and dreadful day when fire falls from heaven, LEST I come and smite the earth with a curse'. This is a very different Elijah, isn't it? and he was followed by one in Luke chapter 1 and verse 17, John the Baptist, of whom it is said in John chapter 10 and verse 41, 'But John performed no miracles, but he was raised up in the spirit and power of Elijah', and the words of verse 6 of Malachi 4 are quoted in Luke chapter 1 and verse 17.

And when they came to John and said, 'Hey listen, John, who are you? who really are you? You're dressed up like Elijah, you live like Elijah, you look like Elijah!' Do you know what his answer was in John chapter 1? 'No, I am not the Christ'. Are you Elijah then? 'No, I am not'. Well, are you that prophet that would come? (Deuteronomy chapter 18). 'No'. Well, who are you, John the Baptist? you're not Elijah, you're not Christ, you're not that prophet, who are you? 'I AM A VOICE'. I am a voice! have you got the message, b&s, have you got that message? John the Baptist had learnt the lesson of Elijah which he knew that Elijah had already learnt by the time that he died, because the next time he appears, he will come in the spirit and power of Malachi 4, verses 5 and 6, to speak to his people, to use the voice before fire is called down from heaven upon the ungodly and the guilty and those who won't turn! What a remarkable development that is!

Now, come with me very quickly to 2 Peter, we've just got to round this off. We've talked about the value of miracles, let's just summarize in the words of 2 Peter. There's a marvellous consistency in this message wherever you go, there are just so many little avenues that we could wander down; and, behold, the same consistent pattern wherever we go. But here, just to round off this matter of men not being changed for the kingdom by power or miracles or signs and wonders, but rather by the power of the Word of God, recall how we looked at 2 Peter and we got down to verse 16, 17, or thereabouts. Let's just step back a little bit. Bro. Richard dealt with this in his session this morning and will save me some time. There are 3 words, cognate words used in 2 Peter 1, and you can see them listed there on the transparency; in verse 12, the word 'hupo mimnesko' (5279) is rendered 'remembrance'; 'Wherefore, I will not be negligent, says Peter, to put you always in remembrance of these things so you know them, etc'. In verse 13 he again uses the word, 'remembrance', but this time it is a slightly different word based, of course, upon the same root, and it means 'a reminding' or 'a recollection'

, so, in verse 12, he is reminding them quietly, he's going to suggest to their memory something. Remember! Remember! that's the word of Malachi 4, remember! The value of miracles, b&s, is to capture the attention, but it needs to be resuscitated, the memory needs to be continually regenerated in the mind, and that can only be done by thought, by rumination, by remembrance.

Verse 15, he says, 'Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my exodus to have these things always in remembrance', (or as the word means 'memory'); hence, when he draws to their attention in verse 16 and 17 the events of the transfiguration, he wants to make this point, doesn't he? that that was an extremely important event in his life; for this purpose - it convinced him and it convinces us that the kingdom will come. There will be a day of reward, the crown will come after the cross, the two keys, you've got to have the first key, the cross, before the second key, the crown or the glory. But, it will come! and 'we have not followed cunningly devised fables'; that's the value of miracles!

But, where lies the true power? Verse 17, 'For He received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice (notice the emphasis?), this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with Him in the holy mount'. Well, what about you and me, b&s? 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy'. The word in the Greek that is rendered 'more sure' (949) is a Greek word that means 'steadfast', 'constant'. It is steadfast and it is constant, it doesn't pass by! Remember yesterday? Not like the vision of glory which passed by, this more sure word of prophecy, or teaching, does not pass by. It remains with us!

Now, if you wonder what that word 'prophecy' means, just cast you eyes down to chapter 2 and verse 1, 'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you'. Now, in your bibles there should be some kind of link between the word 'prophets' and the word 'teachers' in that verse, because that's what prophecy is, it is teaching, instruction, exposition. And, so Peter says 'there will be false teachers among you', so when you go back to verse 19 of chapter 1, he's talking about a more sure word of teaching. It's the still small voice, b&s, the Elisha voice in Israel, the John the Baptist voice in Israel, the voice that kept on reiterating divine principles, and kept on talking about divine truths, which are the only things that can change the minds and the characters of men. Do you see what he's saying? And then he adds in verse 19, 'Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, in your hearts'. Now, you'll notice that I left out the words 'as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise', because in the Greek that's in parenthesis. It can just be left aside for the time being and be read this way, 'whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts', because that's where development takes place! Then he says, 'no scripture is of any private unloosing. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved'. That word is used just one other time in the New Testament in Acts 27 and verse 17, where it is rendered 'driven', where Paul, on the ship for 2 weeks, was driven up and down in Adria

by a powerful wind called Euroclydon (2148), a powerful wind like a divine wind. They were driven. It was a miracle, b&s, it was a miracle that this book could be written and preserved and be brought down to us; it is the greatest product of the Spirit because it is the power that converts men's minds and prepares them for the kingdom. So, you see, in summary we might say this, that miracles have some limitations as we have seen.

And here are the limitations of miracles. They provide assurance, but they do not CREATE FAITH. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God' (Romans 10:17). Faith is developed (if you have a look at 2 Peter 1), it is developed by exact knowledge, and you'll see there that he says in verse 3 and 4, 'According as His divine power hath given unto us, all things that pertaineth unto life and godliness, through the ('epignosis') the exact knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Whereby giving unto us, exceeding great and precious promises, that through these (not through miracles), but through these, you might be partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust'. So, it is knowledge and understanding and comprehension regenerated that is the power that develops us for the kingdom.

Miracles create awe and respect; THEY DO NOT CHANGE CHARACTER FOR THE BETTER. Character is developed as bro. Richard said, by stages, as he quoted verses 5 to 7, 'And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith (which comes from exact knowledge) virtue and to virtue, knowledge, right down to agape love. That's character, b&s, that comes over time by stages, and only through the Word of God working with the experiences of life to develop it. So, there we have a very quick summary of what we've been aiming to achieve this week. We go from this bible school, b&s, we go determined to give our minds in the time that may be left to spiritual things; to grow, to fill our lamps and our vessels with oil, that we might be shining brightly in the day when the reality will come, and the Son of righteousness will appear.

But, there's one more scene that needs to come before our gaze before we depart. And this is where our studies on the miracles coalesce with bro. Alan's studies on the Atonement, and the redemptive work of Christ. And, it is inextricably linked with the scene of the transfiguration. You come back with me to Mark chapter 9. Now this, b&s, in my view, is a glorious, an absolutely glorious illustration of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need for the next 30 or so minutes to enter into it as best we can. And, I will try and dramatize it as much as I can, that we might do that. Mark, chapter 9, now isn't it one of those things that is typically incongruous, that the way of the Spirit is not the way of mortal man. You know, if I'd been on top of that mountain, it wouldn't have been like my trip down the mountain the other day, where I stumbled and sort of half fell down; if I'd been there to see the vision of Christ in glory, I probably would have come down on air! I would have been floating down on air. Look we've been up here, and Peter says, 'we saw His majesty', we were eye-witnesses of it, we were awe-struck and were like floating on air. But, as He came down, the record of Mark 9 verse 9 says, 'As they came down from the mountain, He turned to them and said, 'Now listen here, you three disciples, when we get down to the bottom of this mountain, don't you

tell anybody what you've seen' What? Why? 'till (He put a time limit on it), till the Son of man were risen from the dead'. DEAD? after that!

Verse 10, 'And they kept that saying with themselves'. And, you imagine the debate in their minds! can you imagine their confusion of mind? They're floating on air in the wake of this, this vision of the kingdom; they've seen Christ as He will be seen in glory; they've seen Moses and Elijah in glory with Him; they've listened to some absolutely mind-boggling things; their heart is racing; and, He turns and says, 'I'm going to die!' You see, they didn't fully understand yet that there were 2 keys, the first key was the sufferings of Christ that had to come first, and the second key was the glory that would follow. And that's an inflexible principle, both for Him and for ourselves, but they didn't appreciate that; and they questioned one with another, says verse 10, 'what the rising from the dead should mean.' Can you imagine, can you enter into the spirit of these men stumbling down that mountain in the wake of Christ? Maybe His face was still shining, because when they got down to the bottom, verse 15, it says, 'Straightway, when all the people beheld Him they were greatly amazed'. Why were they greatly amazed? I don't know, it doesn't say, but they came running to Him and saluted Him. Maybe there still was the after glow, the luminous glow of the glory they had seen on the top of that mountain. Maybe it was still there! There was something about it that made them come running to Him; they were greatly amazed.

Can you imagine these disciples, these three in the inner circle, privileged as they were, but really children in their understanding, undeveloped, not yet fully aware of the significance of the keys of the kingdom, coming down that mountain with all sorts of thoughts running around and, in verse 11, they asked Him saying (because they had just seen Elijah on the mountain) 'Why say the scribes that Elijah must first come?' and He answered and told them, 'yes, Elijah verily cometh first and restoreth all things (Malachi 4) and how it is written' (you see, He steers them back, b&s, He steers them back from Malachi 4 to the reality of the present), 'and how it is written that the Son of man that He must suffer many things and be set at nought (exoudenoo -1847 -'to make utterly nothing of'), to be set absolutely at zero. How do you reconcile this? They've just seen Christ in the kingdom, this is the pinnacle of manifestation, and He's trying to convince them, as they come down from that mountain, that He's got to be brought to absolutely nothing by the hands of wicked men. No wonder they were confused!

Verse 13, 'But I say unto you, that Elijah is indeed come, and he's come to Judah in the form of John the Baptist, in his true spirit and power; and they've done unto him whatsoever they listed (what they wanted to do) as it is written of him'. And, there is silence, and 4 men trudge down that mountain; have you got the picture? But, you're never far away from a multitude, are you? even on a mountain! And when they arrived at the base of that mountain, these 4 lonely figures, the multitude spotted them coming, and the record says, as we've read, 'that they ran to Him and they saluted Him', verse 15. They were amazed and astonished utterly (as the word 'greatly amazed' (1568) means in the Greek); and He asked the scribes! (and this is interesting, this is interesting!).

Now, if I was the Lord and I came down from the mountain, and I had 3 of my disciples with me, I'd be looking firstly for the other 9, wouldn't you? I think you would, Uncle Bart. Most of us would, but it doesn't say that here. 'And He asked the scribes', you see, the lesson of the mountain, b&s, had been about the value of teaching, and the scribes were responsible for teaching in Israel, but they let the nation down, they didn't understand these things. 'What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto Thee (notice, not the disciples), 'I have brought unto Thee, my son (because he perceives that there was only One who could solve his problem, and that was Christ) which hath a dumb spirit'. Now, b&s, what we're going to find as we consider this father and his son is that, what we have here in this son with a terrible malady, is the microcosm of the entire human race. And what Jesus does in curing this boy of his malady is symbolic of the work of redemption that Christ had come to do. There could be no glory until this work was complete. That's why he kept on saying as they came down that mountain, 'the Son of man will be taken and crucified by wicked hands and slain and lay in the grave for three days and three nights', 'the Son of man must be set at nought'; and, they're all boggled by this, they can't reconcile how you can go from the glory to nothing! but it was that He might redeem the entire race from its affliction. And this boy is there to demonstrate what that affliction is!

The disease he had is described in various ways, here they are. His malady is called a dumb spirit in verse 17; it is called the 'foul spirit and the dumb and deaf spirit in verse 25 (a little bit of highlighting would help). So, you've got different descriptions, a dumb spirit, a foul spirit, and a dumb and deaf spirit. Now, the word 'foul' in verse 25, 'akathartos' (169), means 'unclean', or 'impure' or 'lewd'. It is used in Ephesians 5 and verse 5 of moral uncleanness. Now, of course, when we talk about a 'spirit' we're talking about a way of thinking, how do we get the right way of thinking? Well, not naturally, that's for sure! We get a right way of thinking by turning to the Word of God, but you see, this is also described as a 'deaf' spirit. And, if you cannot hear, then of course, you cannot speak, because one of the problems with deaf people is they cannot hear how words are enunciated and the inflections of tone, etc., that's important to language that we take for granted. They can't hear that, so, therefore, they don't learn to speak properly; some can just sort of get some words out, but if you cannot hear, you cannot speak. Now, this is a principle of the scripture, isn't it? Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4 verse 13, 'I believed and therefore have I spoken; so he hears and he speaks. This same nexus between the hearing, or the ear and the voice, the mouth, or the heart which speaks through the mouth, is again referred to in Romans 10 verses 8 to 10 as you can see on the transparency which we've just taken two phrases, 'with the heart man believeth', (the heart, there is the mind which is appealed to by the Word of God); but the heart when it believes has a spokesman, doesn't it? and that spokesman is the mouth, so he says, 'and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation'. Now, this is pretty simple stuff, isn't it? people who do not understand the truth, will not speak the truth!

So, this little boy had a problem! It is the natural situation of the entire human race; we were all born this way, b&s. When I was born, my mind was a blank; it's a blank sometimes now, but it certainly was a blank in terms of spiritual things when I was born and so was yours. So, what's his problem? What's the disease? What's the affliction of this unfortunate boy? Well, when you look at the symptoms of this unfortunate boy, it is clearly 'epilepsy'; and, epilepsy was known in medical circles in past times as 'the falling sickness', because that's what happened to the victim. In chronic manifestation it is an abnormality of brain function; that's interesting, isn't it? abnormality of brain function, which causes prolonged loss of consciousness and nearly always associated with convulsions of one kind or another. And, the symptoms of epilepsy are an initial aura or sensation that something bad is about to happen. Now, start thinking about this in the context of our common problem, b&s, (If there's anybody in the audience or anyone who listens to this tape whose an epileptic, if you think we're picking on you or making your situation worse, forget it! I brought into the truth, or had the privilege of bringing into the truth about 20 odd years ago, a brother who still remains one of my best friends, who was an epileptic; and, I have seen him go through some very, very difficult and sad situations because of that. It's a dreadful affliction but I keep telling him, I keep saying to him, 'Ken, I've got your problem; I have got your problem but just in the spiritual way not in the physical way, i.e., I don't convulse around on the ground and foam at the mouth, only occasionally; but I've got his problem and so have you!), we've all got 'falling sickness' and I know when it's about to take over my life. There's an initial aura (have you ever felt that?) I know it's coming on, and I'm almost powerless to do anything about it.

The victim falls unconscious which means your mind is closed off, like the garden of Eden, isn't it? Eve was confident until the serpent said, 'have you thought of this?' and the mind was closed off. These are muscle spasms, you've got no control of the way the body operates: the breathing stops (sometimes for a half a minute or more), and the limbs rhythmically contract and relax and the tongue is sometimes bitten and the victim lies still breathing heavily, and remains sometimes unconscious for a long time; and there is foaming at the mouth. That's the description, isn't it, of verses 18, and again later on in verse 20. So, this man comes and he cries out; (can you imagine the plaintiff voice), 'MASTER, I've brought unto thee my son which hath a dumb spirit. And wheresoever he taketh him (the word 'taketh' means 'to take eagerly or to seize' - 2638) (at whichever spot he is seized eagerly by this problem), 'and it tears him' (the word 'tear' means 'to break', and 'to rend' and 'to burst', 'to dash down', 'to convulse with spasms' - 4682) 'and he foameth' (he froths at the mouth,) and 'he gnasheth with his teeth' (there's a grinding and grating of teeth in a frenzy), 'he pines and withers away and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they had no power'. The word 'could not', the word 'could' is 'ischuo' = power (2480), they had no power. What a dreadful affliction that is, b&s. What's its spiritual counterpart? Let's just embed this in our minds (at the bottom of that transparency, there I'm suggesting to you), that it's 'the spirit of lawlessness in the flesh'.

It's like 1 John chapter 3, isn't it? Let's have a quick look, (I really shouldn't do this but



we have to), 1 John 3, a well-known passage in the 4th verse: 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law'. There are probably about 5 or 6 words in the English that don't need to be there. Let me give you the literal Greek translation, 'whosoever committeth or practices the sin also lawlessness practices. For the sin is lawlessness' (the sin he's talking about, b&s, is where the spirit of the flesh is in domination of the life. Where a man is given over to the fulfilling of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and there is no reigning-in, there's no attempt to reign-in, that's the sin.) And in chapter 5 of this same epistle we read this in verses 16 to 19, 'If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.' We will commit transgressions, but most of the time it's because of weakness, or stupidity, or whatever else it might be; sometimes, it may even be of rebellion, but it's a one-time thing like David's sin. We can be forgiven for that, and in fact, b&s, not only work for the redemption of those in that situation, but pray for them. But, there is a sin for which there is no forgiveness, unless there is a turning. He says, 'there is a sin unto death, it is the sin of lawlessness; I do not say that he should pray for it' (where people are determined to fulfil every desire and whim of the flesh, and there is no intentions of restraining it, it is lawlessness). And, he says in verse 18, 'And we know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not in that way; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not' (that is, he's not under the control of the power of the flesh). From time to time he might stumble, but he's not under it's control and power; he's given himself to another Master. 'And we know, verse 19, that we are of God, and the whole world (look at the words!) lieth in wickedness', and the Greek word means to 'lie outstretched', and is used of lying dead like an epileptic who has falling sickness; he lies, sometimes it's movement, and other times, he's like one dead as we'll see in Mark 9 as we come back to it.

The whole world lies in that condition! So, this boy, b&s and young people, represents the condition of the whole human race. Now, read with me the next verses in Mark chapter 9, verse 19. 'He answereth him and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? (that's a reflection back to verse 8 - 'save Jesus only with themselves' - How long shall I be with you? how long shall I be patient and manifest forbearance with you? As long as it takes to finish the work!). 'Bring him unto Me' (there's the answer to our problems, b&s and young people, 'bring him unto Me' I've got the answer!). That's why He kept on talking about the Son of man shall be set at nought, He shall be taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain and would rise again the 3rd day. There's the answer! 'And they brought him unto Him (now look at this, read this carefully) 'and when He saw him straightway' (immediately, as soon as this boy was brought into the presence of Christ, the flesh does its thing, straightway this problem he had), 'the spirit tare him and he fell on the ground and wallowed foaming'. Can you get a picture of this? You've got this little child, he's wallowing around and foam is coming out of his mouth, and the father is standing there pleading, 'O God, my boy'. 'And He asked his father, (verse 21), how long is it ago since this came unto him? (or, as it literally would read, how long has it been with him?). 'From a baby'. The words 'of a child', 'paidiothen', from infancy (3812), the word is used of a newborn

babe. That's when I got my falling sickness, b&s and young people, and that's when you got yours!

And the father's been watching, hasn't he? I have a 13 year old boy who will turn 14 on the 27 of August, and I'm a father watching a son with falling sickness. Already I see in that boy, the same things I saw in myself at that same age: the awakening, the awakening of interest in things that are part and parcel of the nature that I passed on to him from Adam. He's beginning now to wrestle with the lust of the flesh, and the lust of eyes and the pride of life. Oh, how I wish, b&s, Christ would come! If it were possible, I don't want my boy to go through what I went through, especially in a world 30 or 35 years later, which is so wicked, so corrupt, so base, so pervasively evil, that it is a marvel that any of our young people survive! They only survive for one reason, make no mistake about that, b&s, they survive for one reason, because we have lead them to the Word of God. Look around you, look around you where there has been failure, and the bottom line will be, the absence of the vitality of the exposition of and the love for the Word of God; it is the only power that can redeem, that's the lesson of the transfiguration. And, in the absence of that, we have got no control! Where there is a deaf spirit, there will be a dumb spirit, a foul spirit, and as the father looks down on his boy, and he says in verse 22, 'and frequently it has cast him into the fire' (a symbol of judgment, all sin is judged), 'and into the waters' (the symbol of the nations, that's where our young people end up if the truth doesn't impact their lives, they end up amongst many peoples, nations, and tongues, flitting every which way under the domination of the falling sickness!).

Look at verse 22! 'He's fallen into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him'. And, that word 'destroy' means 'to destroy fully' or 'to perish' (622), it's the word used in John 3:15-16, that God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into the world, that those who believe in Him might not perish (utterly)'. And look at this appeal! 'But if Thou canst do anything, let thy bowels yearn upon us, and help us' (relieve us of this problem). The word 'canst' is the word 'dunamai' (1410), what he is saying is, 'Lord, if you have any power, please apply it to our problem!' And Jesus said unto him, (and here is the classic verse of this context), 'if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth'. Let's take out the microscope: the word 'canst' in verse 23 is the word 'dunamai' again; you see, He's responding to this man's appeal. 'Dunamai' means 'to have power', the word 'possible' in verse 23 is the Greek word 'dunatos' (1415), it's related in some way to 'dunamai', it means 'powerful' and therefore 'possible'. Let me give you what I think is a fairly reasonable paraphrase of the Lord's answer: He says to him, 'if you have the power of conviction, all things are subject to power to him that believeth'. Shall I say it again? 'If you have the power of conviction, all things are subject to power, to him that believeth.' What a response that was, and it's an appeal that comes as forcefully to us today as it did to those that stood there. But this is our response all too often, isn't it? b&s, this is how we feel, verse 24! 'And straightway the father of the child cried out (he shrieked) and he said with tears, Lord, I believe; but help my unbelief!'

Have you ever felt like that, b&s and young people? I believe, and so do you. I believe that God has got the answer for my problem of falling sickness, I believe that God can work in the lives of my children, I believe that the Word of God can do marvellous things, He can perform miracles; but sometimes I'm wobbly, sometimes, b&s, I'm overwhelmed by my own folly and stupidity, sometimes doubt creeps in for whatever reason, that's the nature we bear and He understands it. He knows it only too well, He bore it with us; He was never wobbly, but He knows the influences that lead to that, knows the weakness of this nature. What a call that is!

But, look at verse 25, 'But when Jesus saw that the people came running together' (you've got to read carefully; I thought they were already around Him, didn't you? you look back at verse 15), 'and straightway all the people when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed and came running unto Him and saluted Him'. They were already there, weren't they? So, why in verse 25 does it say that when Jesus saw the people come running together that He then performed some miracle. Well, I'll tell you why, b&s, it's as simple as this, let me illustrate this; that if I suggested to you that I was going to do some magical trick, but then I preceded to give you a dissertation for an hour, I wouldn't be surprised if the hall was empty; but if someone shouted out, 'hey, he's about to do it!' the hall would be full again, wouldn't it? Got the picture? That's human nature, isn't it? and Jesus prolonged this miracle, He strung it out. Do you know what He was trying to do? He was trying to get the principle across, that permanent change to your problem cannot be made by anything other than His Words! That's what He's saying to them; and these people got a bit bored with this, 'wish He'd get on with it!' That's the way we are, isn't it? 'Lord, I believe, but help Thou my unbelief'.

Verse 25 says, that when they came running together, 'He rebuked the foul spirit saying unto him, thou dumb and deaf spirit I charge thee, come out of him (spirit of lawlessness) and enter no more into him' (the word 'no more' means 'never again'). And the spirit cried and rent him sore, and came out of him and he was as one dead'. And, they all stood there looking at him! Have you got the picture? They're looking at him just like we stand at the side of the baptismal bath; we look down at someone, and if it was possible to freeze the frame, when someone gets baptized, just as they go under the water, swish! freeze it! he's dead! and he is, dead to the old man, dead as it were in a figure with Christ, who came down from the mountain to die. And, Jesus extended the open hand, 'and took him by the hand, and lifted him up', says the record of verse 27, and he arose to a newness of life. There's a resurrection isn't there? And when He was come into the house, the disciples in a quandary asked Him privately, 'Lord, we've got a problem; why couldn't we cast this problem out?' Why couldn't they?

The record of Luke chapter 9 verse 1 which precedes the transfiguration says, 'that Jesus sent His disciples forth two by two, 12 of them, and they were given power to heal all manner of sickness and disease including epilepsy. Why couldn't they do this one? Well, there are probably a couple of reasons. There is the reason given by Matthew 17 verse 20, that they didn't have sufficient faith. And, I believe the most important reason is that this one particular miracle, the power had been withholden from the disciples

because this, b&s, is a foreshadowing of the work that Jesus came down from that mountain to perform, that the entire human race with its problem of falling sickness was going to be cured by! It was left to Him alone to perform that work, He was the only one who had the qualifications. So, He says to them in verse 29, 'This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting'. Prayer the symbol of a personal relationship with God. Christ was the only One, of course, to maintain that personal relationship perfectly: 'I have set Yahweh always before My face, that I should not be moved'. And, fasting, total self denial - abstinence from every direction that the flesh might have turned Him towards; He abstained from it; He afflicted His soul that He might make an atonement for all men.

He was the only one who could do that work, and it's wonderfully portrayed, isn't it, as He arrives at the base of that mountain? And it will bring forth fruit, b&s, because you and I recognize our frailty, and we will come, we have come, we have asked, 'Lord, if Thou hast any power, let thy bowels yearn upon us, and relieve us!' And, the answer's come back, b&s, 'If you have the power of belief, all things are subject to power, to him that believeth'.