

Jack is excited. His two sons, Will and Ethan, are going to be arriving tomorrow morning. What a surprise it was when a new fishing rod arrived at his door with a note attached that read; “Old man, get your gear together, we’re coming home for a week of camping, fishing and hiking. See you tomorrow morning. Love, Will and Ethan.” “Old man indeed, I may have turned fifty this week, but I can still hike with the best of them.”

The camping and fishing gear was loaded into the Land Rover and the food was ready to be packed into the cooler. All that was needed was to pick up some ice and bait in the morning.

Jack couldn’t stop smiling. His boys were grown and married, both living about seventy miles away. They are fine young men who love the Lord. Jack was grateful to their families for letting the boys have a week away from home. It meant a lot to Jack. He misses the boys, their wives and the grandkids. They try to get together every other month, and the grandkids come spend a week on his ranch every

summer and during the holidays. Running his small ranch keeps him busy, and he Zooms with the grandkids at least twice a week. He is blessed that they live no further away. A whole week with his boys. They're men now, but they're still his boys. He was smiling as he fell asleep.

The alarm went off at 5 AM, and Derwin Marshall pulled up to the house at 5:30. Derwin is a trusted fellow rancher who is going to stay and run the ranch while Jack is away. Derwin accepted the offer of a hot cup of coffee and said; "So you've turned fifty and now you're so old you have to take on a hired hand huh? Jack shot back; "I'll leave a step ladder in the barn for you to climb into the saddle." They both laughed and headed out to the barn to review the stock and the chores that would need to be done.

The boys arrived and they were soon loaded up and on the road. After a quick stop at the bait shop they were on their way to high country. The scenery was spectacular with Majestic purple mountains and glistening rivers and lakes. The meadows and

forests were alive with wildlife. It was as if they were alone in their own private sanctuary. They set up camp and ate lunch before taking off on a hike.

The temperature was comfortable, but the higher they climbed up the mountain, the cooler air made the trip more enjoyable. They balanced the camera on a boulder and took a snapshot of the three of them at the top of the mountain. The mountain was higher than they realized and they could see for miles around. Eagles soared overhead and they spotted a few mountain goats on the next mountain peak. It was a beautiful place to relax and soak up the quiet beauty.

While opening a thermos, Will said; "Wouldn't it be great to live up on a mountain top like this?" "Ethan wondered if this pristine beauty was a hint of what the Garden of Eden must have been like." There was silence as they admired their surroundings. Will spoke up and said; "This mountain makes me think of Jesus on the mountain when he said; "Elijah must come first. I've been studying this parable and I don't

understand why He said Elijah must come first when Jesus was going to be crucified pretty soon. Elijah had already been taken up to heaven in a chariot.”

“Boys, give me another cup of that cool water and I’ll tell you what I learned from Pastor Joe. There’s a little more to the story than the part you read. Well, Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John, high up on a mountain, where Jesus’ appearance was completely changed to His exalted and glorified nature. His face shone as bright as the sun, and his clothes were glistening white. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, talking with Him. Moses represents the law, and Elijah, the chief of the prophets, who entered heaven without dying, represents both the living and the dead”

“Jesus, Moses, and Elijah were speaking of Jesus’ exodus - His leaving of this world - which he would accomplish at Jerusalem. As you know, Moses led the exodus out of Egypt; it was a picture of Christ's departure from this world; the death of the lamb, the sprinkling of the blood, the slaying of the firstborn

among the Egyptians, even as Christ would defeat sin, death, and hell; the triumphant coming out of Egypt, with silver and gold, that foreshadowed Christ's ascension to his Father with all his precious treasures captured from the hand of the enemy.

While Jesus was speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, softening the glory of the face of Jesus without casting any dimness on Him. It was the Shekinah cloud, which was the embodiment of Jesus' presence in the wilderness. The cloud was bright, and a voice spoke out of the cloud saying to them; 'This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased, listen to Him.' When the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were very afraid. Jesus came and touched them, and told them to get up, and to not be afraid." When they looked up, they only saw Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus told them not to tell the vision to anyone until after He had risen from the dead. His disciples asked him; "Why do those who copy down and interpret the

Scriptures say that Elijah must come first? May we tell the story of what has happened here on this mountain? Elijah has already come. If we tell this news, it may convince even those that copy down and interpret the Scriptures that You truly are the Messiah.” Jesus told them, “Elijah will first come first and restore all things. Luke 1:16-17, explains that John will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. It is he who will go as a forerunner before Jesus in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the Fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. But I tell you, that Elijah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they wanted. Like that, I will suffer at their hands.”

Then the disciples understood that he spoke of John the Baptist. John had already come in the spirit and power of Elijah and Herod put him to death, as other wicked men would deal with Jesus, whose way John the Baptist had so gloriously prepared.

“Ah, now I understand. That’s a good word picture. Thanks Dad. I guess we’ll have to call you a wise old man now.” “Well, he who seeks the Lord is wise, and the last one down the mountain has to clean up after dinner.” Jack came in second down the mountain but he didn’t mind, he gave thanks all the way down for the blessing of this time with his boys.

He was still smiling as he watched them doing the dishes under the stars. The very same stars that Jesus created and looked up at while He was on earth. Maybe while we fish tomorrow we can discuss the fish that came to the surface with the coin in its mouth.

He called out; “How about stoking that campfire. I would do it, but I’m an old man you know, he said as he laughed. Thank you Lord for these memories.”

Matthew 17:10-13 And His disciples asked Him, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” And He answered and said, “Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah

already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wanted. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.