

# AN ASSISTED DEATH

## (Sermon Summary)

**Reading: Luke 9: 28-36.**

Normally we urge people to live. If they are feeling low, we try to cheer them up. As Christians we stand opposed to efforts to make it easier for older people to choose to die. We are rightly suspicious of the motives of family members who encourage elderly and perhaps unwell relatives to end their lives.

Moses and Elijah appeared with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter was one of the eyewitnesses of this as he reports in 2 Peter 1: 16-18. Here Christ's glory was seen, most especially His divinity. Yet, at this time, when His true identity was so clearly beheld, the subject that occupied Him, Moses and Elijah was His death. They spoke about it as something that He was to accomplish and bring to pass. Moses and Elijah were not trying to deter Him as Peter did (Matthew 16:22). They encouraged the Lord in His intention to die in Jerusalem and were 'assisting' Him in His death. Were they doing wrong? Were they being morbid, immoral, or cruel? Actually, they were speaking about what was absolutely necessary for Him to do. He was the Father's beloved Son, but this was what was required of Him, that He should actively prepare for His own death and not try to prevent it happening.

### **1. Christ's upcoming death was no secret.**

Moses and Elijah were representatives of the old covenant. They represented the line of prophets, priests, and kings. They were familiar with what would be required of God's representative one day, that He would have to die for His people. They were familiar with passages like Genesis 3:14-15. We learn from 1 Peter 1: 10-12 that they were aware of the suffering that the Lord was to experience, even if they did not know all the details. Then there were all the sacrifices that were required in the old covenant, where again there was so much death that was taking place. These were daily reminders to the people then that death was required for there to be fellowship between God and His people. The incredible foretelling of what God's Messiah would do in Isaiah 53: 7-10 showed that His death was central to everything He would do.

Neither was this a secret kept from His parents (see Luke 2:36 and 49) or John the Baptist (John 1:29). The Lord knew it Himself (Luke 9:22; and Luke 18:31-33). In telling the parable of the wicked vinedressers He spoke of the people saying that they would kill the Son so as to gain His inheritance.

## **2. He accomplished His death to the letter.**

Although the hands of the wicked were employed in His death, our Lord willed, and did everything necessary to promote it. He actively worked to ensure His 'assisted death' took place. He greeted His betrayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and asked those who had come to arrest Him whom they were seeking. He did not call upon angels to defend Him, neither did He defend Himself in His trial. He did not pull rank on Pilate. He was determined that He should die in this way (Luke 13: 31-33). He refused the ways that were before Him to choose life instead. He had the help of angels in going forward with His death.

His death was not an accident, nor a mistake, nor some heavenly miscalculation.

## **3. It was accomplished for our sakes.**

All this assistance in His death, and all this willingness He brought to bear, was for our sakes. It was all for our gain and our benefit.

We are by nature victims of our own assisted death. We are busy accomplishing our own deaths. It is not Moses and Elijah in attendance as we do this but sin, the world and the devil. We are promised by the devil that we will not die if we disobey God. Liars often speak with such confidence.

Our Lord intervenes to give us 'assisted life'. This eternal life is His gift, His creation and the result of His intervention. God's beloved Son settled Himself under the cloud of God's judgment for the sake of His people.

So in turn we determine that we will listen to Him. We will take all that He offers to us. We will hear carefully what He has done for our souls.