Speaking to a “crowd with His disciples” (Mark 8:34), Jesus said this:

26“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 25For 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. 26Truly 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. (Matt. 16:26-28, NASB unless otherwise noted.)

The word “going” (Gk. mello) in verse 27 can be translated about. It is defined in Strong’s Concordance as follows:

1. to be about; 1a. to be on the point of doing or suffering something; 1b. to intend, have in mind, think to (Strong’s, 3195)

We suggest that verse 27 should have been translated, “For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.”

Mello has been rendered about in numerous other passages:

As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem… (Matt. 20:17)

…Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?… (Matt. 20:22b)

And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. (Luke 7:2)

30And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. (Luke 9:30f)

So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. (Luke 19:4)

…what will be the sign when these things are about to take place? (Luke 21:7b)

But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place… (Luke 21:36)

It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. (Luke 23:54)

31…The Jews said to him, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death.” 32to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die. (John 18:31b-32)

When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. (Acts 3:3)

Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die… (Rev. 3:2)

The foregoing list is not exhaustive. There are many more cases where mello has been translated about. We are compelled to wonder whether the eschatological views held by the translators may have influenced their translation of Matt. 16:27.

Although the majority of translations concur with the NASB, not all do:

The Son of Man will soon come in the glory of his Father and with his angels to reward all people for what they have done. (CEV)

For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his deeds. (GNB)

For, the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father, with his messengers, and then he will reward each, according to his work. (YLT)

Even the man widely considered the father of dispensationalism, John Nelson Darby, could not deny the meaning of mello:

For the Son of man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to each according to his doings. (DARBY)

Clearly, Christ was saying the Judgment was “about” to take place.

Perhaps, the most convincing proof that mello in verse 27 should be rendered about is Christ’s emphatic clarification which follows in verse 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.” Even if we accept the meaning of mello in verse 27 as simply “going,” verse 28 immediately presents a much greater problem for anyone believing that Christ has
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not already come “in His kingdom” to “REPAY EVERY
MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.”

Only those who believe that all Bible prophecy
has been fulfilled can take verse 28 at face value. They believe that most of those standing there died, but “some” were still alive when Jesus returned to
inaugurate the Kingdom of God at the destruction of
Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The literal interpretation of
verse 28 is supported by numerous other passages
including these clear statements from Luke 21:

...when these things begin to take place, straighten up
and lift up your heads, because your redemption is
drawing near. (v. 28); 31...when you see these things
happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.
32Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away
until all things take place. (vv. 31f)

Those still waiting for the Second Coming face a
seemingly insurmountable difficulty: no one alive in
the time of Jesus could be alive today. However, most
expositors think they have found a way out of
this predicament. They claim that when Jesus
mentioned “coming in His kingdom,” he was actually
referring to his Transfiguration described in the
following chapter. Radmacher claims, “In the
Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John saw a
preview of the kingdom.”† The present article will
test that interpretation.

For the Transfiguration to qualify as the
fulfillment of Matt. 16:26-28, it must include several
key elements:

1. Jesus coming “in the glory of His Father with
His angels” (v. 27);
2. People being rewarded for what they have
done, i.e., the Judgment (v. 27). This would
include people Christ was ashamed of (v. 26;
Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26). MacArthur says,
“Here…the Lord was concerned with the
reward of the ungodly—final and eternal
judgment”; 2
3. The “kingdom of God” (v. 28).

Not one of the vital components listed above was
apparent at the Transfiguration. The following is a
synopsis of Matt. 17:1-9:

1. Jesus takes Peter, James and John up a high
mountain;
2. Jesus is transfigured (his face shines and his
clothes appear white);
3. Moses and Elijah appear;
4. A bright cloud overshadows the disciples;
5. A voice says, “This is My beloved Son, with
whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”;
6. Moses and Elijah disappear;
7. Jesus says, “Tell the vision to no one until the
Son of Man has risen from the dead.”

Immediately, we notice glaring inconsistencies
between the prediction and the suggested fulfillment.
At the Transfiguration, the Son of Man was there,
and he was changed to a certain glorified state (Matt.
17:2; Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29); however, there were no
angels present, nor was there any sign of the
Judgment taking place. There was certainly no one
there Christ was ashamed of. In fact, very little at the
Transfiguration resembled Christ’s description of
“coming in His kingdom.” If Jesus was referring to
the upcoming Transfiguration when he made his
prediction, we must wonder why he mentioned the
Judgment. It was completely absent from all three
Transfiguration accounts. What was the point of
verses 26 and 27? It would be as though Jesus had
said this:

1. Here’s how the event will look;
2. Some standing here will live to see it;
3. When they do, it won’t look anything like I
just said it will look.

What a ridiculous interpretation! Yet that’s
exactly what the popular teaching amounts to, and
millions of Christians have accepted it without
question. Consider some of the details associated
with the Judgment:

†For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with
a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the

1. Earl D. Radmacher, Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible
Commentary, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson
2. John F. MacArthur, Jr., The MacArthur Study Bible (NASB)

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trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (1Thess. 4:16f)

At the Transfiguration, the Lord did not “descend from heaven.” There was a “voice out of the cloud,” but not a “shout” (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34f). There was no trumpet blast, nor any sign of the Resurrection or Rapture.

Since the Judgment was a key element of the coming Jesus predicted, he had to be referring to the Second Coming because the Judgment was predicted to take place at the same time. If the Transfiguration was supposed to be the fulfillment of Matt. 16:28, i.e., a preview of Jesus coming in his kingdom, then it should appear unquestionably like the Second Coming. However, the Transfiguration looks nothing like it. The disciples were “overshadowed” by a cloud, but it was a “bright cloud,” unlike the “clouds and thick darkness” which normally accompany a judgment of God (Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15). The disciples were not “caught up…in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” And there was much more missing from the Transfiguration: the Kingdom of God!

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,
“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.” (Rev. 11:15)

The voice from the cloud could not be described as “loud voices in heaven,” and it said nothing about “the kingdom of the world” becoming “the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” Also, we must wonder why Moses and Elijah were present. They were not mentioned in Matt. 16:28. Furthermore, if the Transfiguration was about Christ’s coming, why was his departure the topic of discussion (Luke 9:31)? All these inconsistencies make the Transfiguration interpretation appear highly questionable.

What was the Transfiguration all about? Why were Moses and Elijah in the vision? To answer these questions, it is necessary to begin at Mount Sinai:

18 All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. 19 Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die.” (Exod. 20:18f)

The people said, “we will listen.” So God began to speak to the Israelites through Moses. However, Moses would not live forever and was not even allowed to enter the Promised Land. Before his death, he warned the Israelites about the danger of taking up the ways of the heathen nations they would encounter (Deut. 18:9-14) and explained how he would be replaced:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. (v. 15)

Moses was redirecting their listening to a prophet. After Moses died, his prediction met an immediate fulfillment in Joshua:

Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. (Deut. 34:9)

First, the Israelites listened to Moses. Then, they began listening to prophets. Moses gave Israel God’s Law. After Moses, a line of prophets spoke for God and continually reminded the people to keep that Law which became known as “the law of Moses.” The Old Testament ends with this warning from the prophet Malachi:

†Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.
‡Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. (Mal. 4:4f)

That very last “Elijah” was John the Baptist (Luke 1:16; Mark 1:2-4; Matt. 11:13; 17:11-13).
Moses and the Prophets spoke for God in Old Covenant times. It’s difficult to imagine a more prestigious calling. Israel was commanded to “listen” to them. In the gospels we notice Christ’s high regard for “Moses and the Prophets” or “the Law and the Prophets” as the two great authorities in the history of Israel. Moses and the Law were synonymous. Elijah was arguably Israel’s greatest prophet after Moses (Deut. 34:10-12) having raised the dead (1Kgs. 17:17-24), and as we have seen, his name was
associated with the arrival of the Messiah (Mal. 4:5f). At the Transfiguration, we see Jesus standing with Moses (representing the Law) and Elijah (representing the Prophets). The voice from the cloud refers to Jesus and says, “listen to Him!” (Matt. 17:5). Then, Moses and Elijah disappear leaving only Jesus. Clearly, the time had come once again for God’s people to shift their attention — their listening — to a new spokesman. The purpose of the Transfiguration is never stated, but evidently, it took place to clearly demonstrate that Jesus was the successor to Moses and the Prophets. That is how the author of Hebrews portrayed Christ:

1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, “in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (Heb. 1:1f)

Now, God’s people were being commanded to “listen to Him!”

So what does any of this have to do with Matt. 16:28? Answer: Nothing! The Transfiguration had nothing at all to do with the Judgment or Christ “coming in His kingdom” with his angels. That leaves only one option: Matt. 16:28 refers to the Second Coming and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God which must have taken place in the first century because some standing there would live to see it. The Transfiguration was not a vision of that coming. Jesus paints a picture in verses 26 through 28 which is identical to his description of the Second Coming found in the Olivet Prophecy. Notice the similarities:

27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near... 31...when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place. (Luke 21:27-32); 34 But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 35 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; (Matt. 25:31f)

The key elements are the same:

1. The Son of Man coming in power and glory;
2. Redemption (reward for the righteous);
3. The Kingdom of God;
4. The timing stated emphatically: “Truly I say to you...”;
5. A first-century arrival: “this generation”;
6. Christ accompanied by angels;

To suggest the coming in Matt. 16:26-28 refers to an entirely different event from the coming described in virtually identical terms in the Olivet Prophecy is grossly inconsistent. If we “let the Bible interpret the Bible,” then we should let the Olivet Prophecy tell us the meaning of Matt. 16:26-28. Result: Verse 28 refers to the Second Coming, not the Transfiguration. Those who insist on abandoning the natural meaning of the text are motivated only by the presupposition that Jesus could not possibly have returned in the first century, not by the details recorded in the Transfiguration accounts.

Of course, if one really strains, some relationship between the two passages can be found. For instance, some argue that Moses and Elijah will be in the Kingdom; therefore, the Transfiguration was a preview of the Kingdom. However, such feeble arguments are based only on a desperate desire to defend the futurist presupposition, not on sound hermeneutical principles.

The suggestion that the Transfiguration was a preview of Jesus coming in his kingdom is unbelievable. The Transfiguration is clearly unrelated to Christ’s prediction in Matt. 16:28 since most of the key elements mentioned in verses 26 and 27 are missing, and new characters appear whom Jesus had not mentioned at all. The “coming” in verse 28 is inextricably linked to the Judgment in verse 27. It cannot be separated from the image of thousands of angels present at the Resurrection, Judgment and arrival of the Kingdom of God. In Matthew 16, Jesus is explaining the reality of the Judgment; the most

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critical moment in the life of any human being: the point at which one goes to live in heaven forever or suffers the “second death” (Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). He brings his sober warning to a climax with this startling finale: it is so close that some of those present will still be alive when it occurs! That closing statement is an exclamation mark intended to punctuate the preceding words. To divorce it from his teaching on the Judgment is to destroy his message right at the climax. Why would he halt at this crucial moment and switch to a completely unrelated event? Unbelievable!

Conclusion

The “coming” in Matt. 16:28 is the Second Coming, and since some of those standing there would still be alive when it occurred, it must have taken place during the first century. The Transfiguration interpretation of Matt. 16:28 is simply a desperate attempt to avoid that conclusion.

Objections

Objection. You claim that Moses’ prediction in Deut. 18:15 was fulfilled by Joshua. However, Peter applied it to Jesus in his Pentecost sermon:

22Moses said, ‘THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. 23And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ 24And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days. (Acts 3:22-24)

Answer. When Moses said, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him,” it’s doubtful he was thinking about Jesus. MacArthur says, “The singular pronoun emphasizes the ultimate Prophet who was to come.” However, that is not necessarily true. The singular is used to refer to Moses’ successor, Joshua, not Jesus. If Moses had been thinking ahead to Christ, it would have gone right over the heads of the people. For Moses, the issue was providing a successor after his 40 years of leadership, and the people would have understood it that way. Moses said, “you shall listen to him.” This was clearly fulfilled by Joshua who was considered a prophet: “the sons of Israel listened to him” (Deut. 34:9). The book of Joshua was included in the Former Prophets. More prophets followed Joshua:

Now Deborah, a prophetess, was judging Israel at that time. (Judg. 4:4): ...the Lord sent a prophet to the sons of Israel, and he said to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘It was I who brought you up from Egypt and brought you out from the house of slavery.’” (ch. 6:8)

The book of Judges was also listed in the Former Prophets.

Barclay writes, “In Deuteronomy the hope and belief is that God will always raise up a prophet for His people.” Of course, God could have inspired Moses to speak words that would later be reinterpreted by Peter. Other New Testament authors offer interpretations of Old Testament passages that seem quite unrelated to the original text. For instance, Matthew interprets Hos. 11:1 as a reference to Christ — “OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON” (Matt. 2:15) — “although the obvious original reference of the prophecy was to Israel,” and the original was actually an indictment against God’s “son” (Israel):

1When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. 
2 The more they called them, The more they went from them; They kept sacrificing to the Baals And burning incense to idols. (Hos. 11:1f)

Jesus too, indulges in this reworking of Old Testament passages. When indentifying Judas as the one who would betray him, he referred to Ps. 41:9:

“I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.’” (John 13:18)

Here is the original verse from the Psalm:

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Even my close friend in whom I trusted,
Who ate my bread,
Has lifted up his heel against me.

The *KJV Bible Commentary* identifies the “friend”:

This obviously refers to Ahithophel, for he is called “the man of my peace” since he was one of David’s official counselors (II Sam 15:12)...As David’s friend, Ahithophel defected from the king and joined in Absalom’s conspiracy (see II Sam 15:12, 31; 16:15–23; 17:1–23).⁷

MacArthur calls Ps. 41:9 a “prophecy.”⁸ However, before Jesus referred to it, who would have thought this verse was a prophecy? It doesn’t even contain a prediction. In fact, it speaks in the past tense. It might be called a type, but surely, no one would have considered it so if Jesus had not spoken up. It is quite common for New Testament characters to declare something “fulfilled” when the original was not a prediction and gave no indication whatsoever that it required fulfillment. Barclay explains how the Jews interpreted Scripture:

If was a Jewish belief that all scripture had four meanings—*Peshat*, which was the simple meaning which could be seen at the first reading; *Remaz*, which was the suggested meaning and the truth which the passage suggested to the seeking mind; *Derush*, which was the meaning when all the resources of investigation, linguistic, historical, literary, archaeological, had been brought to bear upon the passage; *Sod*, which was the inner and allegorical meaning. The initial letters of these words, P R D S, are the consonants of the word PaRaDiSe, and to enter into these three [sic (four?)] meanings was as if to enter into the bliss of Paradise. Now of all the meanings *Sod*, the inner, mystical meaning was the most important. The Jews were, therefore, skilled in finding inner meanings in Scripture. It was thus not difficult for them to develop a technique of Old Testament interpretation which discovered Jesus Christ all over the Old Testament.⁹

Some may find it disturbing to learn that Christ’s disciples and even Jesus himself interpreted the Old Testament in a way which to us might seem illegitimate or downright dishonest. However, that is apparently what they did. It’s doubtful anyone employing such a mystical interpretive “technique” today would be taken seriously.

In Acts 3:24, Peter connects Jesus *and* numerous other prophets to Moses’ prediction. In effect, *every* prophet would be another fulfillment of Moses’ prediction with Christ being the last and greatest prophet. So it is far from clear that Moses was referring only to Jesus in Deut. 18:15.

**Objection.** You have presented Matt. 16:26-28 as one paragraph giving the impression that Christ’s reference to the Judgment in verses 26 and 27 is connected to “coming in His kingdom” in verse 28. However, the Bible you are using, the NASB, inserts a paragraph break at verse 28 suggesting a separate thought not connected to verse 27.

**Answer.** In some Bibles, a paragraph break may appear where there was none in the Greek source text. Such is the case here. The NASB isolates verse 28 into a one-sentence paragraph. However, in the Nestle-Aland 27th edition of *The Greek New Testament* (*GkNT*), there is no break at verse 28. Incidentally, the NASB is inconsistent. The corresponding verse in Luke has *not* been separated from the description of the Judgment (Luke 9:25-27). The KJV, ESV and NLT correctly place Matt. 16:26-28 within one paragraph.

**Objection.** Mark places Christ’s prediction about coming in his kingdom with the Transfiguration at the beginning of chapter 9:

**Chapter 8**

36.“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?”

37.“For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

38.“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

**Chapter 9**

1And Jesus was saying to them, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

2Six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them;

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Answer. Chapters and verses do not exist in the original text. They were added much later and are not always consistent across the synoptic gospels:

The Bible was divided into chapters by Stephen Langton (who later became Archbishop of Canterbury) early in the 1200s. Robert Stephanus, a book printer from Paris, is credited with dividing those chapters into verses in 1551. The first complete printed Bible using the chapter and verse divisions was the Geneva Bible of 1560.10

Langton could not have been more inconsistent. In Matthew, he inserted the chapter break after Christ’s prediction; in Mark, the break appears before the prediction; in Luke’s account, there is no chapter break at all. According to the GkNT, a new paragraph should begin at Mark 9:2. This leaves verse 1 conspicuously isolated in modern Bibles. Obviously, it belongs in the previous chapter.

The intended meaning of the text is further obfuscated when uninspired topic headings are inserted by Bible editors. For instance, notice these headings beginning at Matt. 16:24 in The MacArthur Study Bible (NASB):

Revelation of Jesus’ Reward
Mk 8:34-37; Lk 9:23-25

24Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 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.

The Prophecy of the Second Coming
Mk 8:38-9:1; Lk 9:26, 27

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.”

The Transfiguration
Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36; 2Pe 1:17, 18

17Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. 18And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light...

In the GkNT, verses 21 through 28 are contained in a single paragraph. However, not only does MacArthur retain the NASB’s illegitimate paragraph break at verse 28, he inserts an uninspired topic heading. All this tampering makes it appear as though Jesus was merely dispensing random unrelated proverbs rather than presenting a single coherent message. The NASB’s isolation of verse 28 is not surprising. The futurist paradigm cannot stand to have a connection between Christ’s coming in verse 28 and the Judgment in verses 26 and 27 because it would preclude the Transfiguration interpretation. However, although MacArthur retains the paragraph break, he is unable to deny the true meaning of verse 28, and hence, cannot avoid contradicting himself.

After interpreting it as “The Prophecy of the Second Coming,” he says, “it seems most natural to interpret this promise as a reference to the Transfiguration.” To be consistent, he should have described verse 28 as A Prophecy of the Transfiguration. The problem is, such a heading would be unbelievable, and evidently, MacArthur knows it. His heading clearly indicates that he knows verse 28 refers to the Second Coming. However, he just can’t make the break from futurism, and formulates a comment that defies logic and is not the least bit helpful to Christians seeking enlightenment from his study Bible. Quite simply, if Matt. 16:28 is a prophecy of the Second Coming, then the Second Coming must be the fulfillment, not the Transfiguration or anything else.

Presumably, chapters, verses, paragraph breaks, and topic headings have been added to make Scripture more understandable. However, sometimes the result is complete destruction of the intended meaning. It’s astonishing that informed theologians are not more careful with God’s Word. We find an indication of how God feels about adding to Scripture in the book of Revelation:

18I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. (Rev. 22:18f)

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By adding all the extra clutter, MacArthur and others are taking away as well: taking away the intended meaning of the sacred Word of God and robbing Christians of their God-given right to read it free of man’s misguided editing.

**Objection.** Peter refers to the Transfiguration as the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” in 2Pet. 1:16-18:

> 16For 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. 17For 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”—18and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

So should we not conclude that the Transfiguration was a vision of the Second Coming? Many commentaries, including the Believer’s Bible Commentary, interpret the Transfiguration this way:

We are justified in viewing Christ’s transfiguration as a prepicture of His coming kingdom. Peter describes the event as “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:16). The power and coming of the Lord Jesus refer to His Second Advent.11

**Answer.** The Greek for “coming” here is parousia. It is the Greek word used for the Second Coming in Matt. 24:27, 37. However, parousia does not always imply the Second Coming. For instance, the “coming” of the “man of lawlessness” (2Thess. 2:3-10) was also a parousia. In 2Cor. 10:10, parousia is translated as “presence” and refers to Paul, not Jesus. So Peter’s use of parousia does not necessarily refer to the Second Coming and does not at all suggest the Transfiguration was “a prepicture of His coming kingdom.” The words “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” actually refer to the Transfiguration itself, not the Second Coming. The Transfiguration was a parousia, and the Second Coming was a parousia; two separate parousias. Considering the lack of consistency between the Transfiguration and Matt. 16:26-28, we are certainly not “justified in viewing Christ’s transfiguration as a prepicture of His coming kingdom.” There is no firm support for that interpretation in 2Pet. 1:16-18 or anywhere else in the New Testament. In fact, we have seen that the Transfiguration interpretation is suspect to the point of being completely unbelievable since the key features of the Judgment and other related events are entirely absent. Furthermore, other timing statements made by Jesus confirm the natural meaning of Matt. 16:28 (see Matt. 10:23; 24:34; Luke 21:28, 31f; Rev. 1:3; 22:10). When we add the numerous apostolic references to a return of Christ within the lifetimes of those in the first century, the true meaning of Matt. 16:28 simply cannot be denied. If we are then willing to believe that everything was fulfilled as predicted, there will be no need for a strained interpretation.

**Closing Comment**

Ultimately, those who take the position that all Bible prophecy has been fulfilled can believe whatever they want to on this. They are actually free to believe that the Transfiguration was the fulfillment of Matt. 16:28; that position does not affect the outcome of their eschatological system. It is only those who still wait for the Second Coming of Christ who feel compelled to accept this highly questionable interpretation for lack of anything more substantial. They perceive that Matt. 16:28, if taken at face value, would obliterate futurism. So they tell themselves that the Transfiguration provides a way out. However, the “coming” Jesus referred to in Matt.16:28 included the Judgment, which of course, was predicted to coincide with the Second Coming and arrival of the Kingdom of God; and Jesus plainly said some of those standing there that day would live to see it all. Baffled theologians, blinded by their futuristic presupposition, grasp for something to rescue their paradigm, but in the process, abandon sound exegesis and accept a bogus interpretation.

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