

To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

² Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. ³ His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. ⁴ And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” – ⁶ because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid. ⁷ And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” ⁸ Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves. ⁹ Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

Text: Mark 9:2-10 A 2/5/17 Genesis 28:10-22 2 Peter 1:16-21 Psalm 16
Hymns: 284, 657, 341, 53

THE COMFORT IN JESUS’ TRANSFIGURATION

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

There’s a great deal of comfort in Jesus’ transfiguration. As we’ll see, Jesus’ transfiguration brought comfort for His disciples who witnessed it, Jesus’ transfiguration brings comfort to you and me, and Jesus’ transfiguration brought comfort to Jesus Himself.

Jesus took three of His disciples, Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain. There, “*His clothes became shining, exceedingly white.*” Matthew adds that “*His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light*” (17:2). In His transfiguration before Peter, James, and John Jesus gave them a glimpse of His divine glory. Before and after His transfiguration while He remained on earth, Jesus had the outward appearance of a normal human being. But during His transfiguration Jesus allowed the three disciples to see some of His true glory with their own eyes. They could see with their eyes that Jesus Christ is God. They already knew this to be true by faith, and what they saw strengthened their faith in Jesus.

While they witnessed Jesus’ transfiguration, “*A cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!’*” The disciples heard God the Father speak to them directly and tell them that Jesus is His Son. Again, by faith they already knew this to be true. The heavenly Father’s words strengthened their faith in Jesus.

We’re told, “*Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.*” The disciples realized that it was Moses and Elijah, two of God’s faithful Old Testament leaders who had spoken of and longed for the coming of the Messiah. The Messiah would die to earn salvation for them and for all people. This is what they spoke with Jesus about. Peter, James, and

John were allowed to see them with Jesus and hear what they said, and this strengthened their faith in Jesus.

We aren't given the words that Jesus, Moses, and Elijah spoke to each other. But we know they talked about what the Bible tells us, that Jesus would soon be going to Jerusalem where He would sacrifice Himself on the cross for the sins of the world, and rise again. The disciples had the Old Testament Scriptures which say that this is what the Messiah would do (Job 19:25; Ps. 16:9-11; 22; Is. 53:10, 12; etc.). The animal sacrifices, which were types, or pictures of the Messiah's sacrifice, were still being offered at that time. The disciples hadn't yet put this all together and understood why Jesus had to die. But after Jesus died and rose again the Bible tells us that He *"opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures"* (Lk. 24:45). And when they did, Peter, James, and John remembered that Moses and Elijah had discussed this with Jesus in their hearing. And that strengthened their faith in Jesus.

After the disciples had witnessed Jesus' transfiguration and were going back down the mountain with Him, He told them *"that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till [He] had risen from the dead."* "So," we're told, *"they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant."* Jesus knew that at that time His disciples didn't understand what He had come into the world to do as the Messiah. If at that time the disciples had told people about seeing Jesus' transfiguration and what He would do as the Messiah, they would be confused, and they would confuse whomever they talked to. But after Jesus' death and resurrection they remembered that He had told them that He would rise again, and that knowledge strengthened their faith (Jn. 2:22). They understood the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection, and were able to tell people about it and what it meant for them, too.

In this morning's Lesson from Peter's first epistle he said that on the mount of transfiguration he, James, and John *"were eyewitnesses of [Christ's] majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic Word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place"* (1 Pet. 1:16b-19a). We weren't there to see our Savior's transfiguration, but God has recorded it for us in His Word. With the eyes of faith which God has given us, we know it took place. And that knowledge strengthens our faith in Jesus.

By faith we know that during Jesus' transfiguration the Father said, *"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"* This strengthens our faith in Jesus. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Everything Jesus says about who He is and what He did to save us is the truth.

By faith we know that Moses and Elijah spoke with Him about His death on the cross for our sins and His resurrection for our salvation, just as the Bible says they did. This strengthens our faith in Jesus.

During Jesus' transfiguration He told the disciples that after He was put to death He would come back to life again. Jesus' bodily resurrection proves that He is God, because only God could bring Himself back to life. Romans 1:3-4 says, *"Jesus Christ our Lord was declared to be the*

Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead.” Jesus’ resurrection means that all of our sins are forgiven. Romans 4:25 says that Jesus “*was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification*” (ESV). Because Jesus rose from the dead, it also means that He will raise us from the dead and take us to live with Him forever in heaven. Jesus promises us, “*Because I live, you will live also*” (Jn. 14:19).

During Jesus’ transfiguration Peter said to Him, “*Let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah*” (17:4). Although Peter couldn’t have seen Moses and Elijah before, he knew who they were. This certainly suggests that we’ll know one another in heaven.

As true Man during His life on earth, Jesus’ transfiguration also strengthened Him. Not long after His transfiguration Jesus would agonize in Gethsemane over His looming suffering and death. On the mount of transfiguration Jesus received affirmation from **Moses and Elijah** as the One God had promised and sent to die and rise again to save us. Sharing His transfiguration with Peter, James, and John, Jesus knew that their sorrow and confusion over His upcoming death would be changed into joy after His resurrection. When Jesus would cry out on the cross, “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*” (Mt. 27:46) He could think back during His transfiguration, hearing His Father say, “*This is My beloved Son.*” During His transfiguration Jesus knew that He would soon finish carrying out His Father’s will for our salvation and ascend back into heaven, where He now continually shines in all of His glory as God. On the mount of transfiguration Jesus knew that one day He will visibly return to earth in His full glory to take us all into eternal life in heaven.

The Old Testament believer Job said, “*I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*” (19:25-27). Although he never got to see the Son of God during his life, Job knew that he would see Him one day in heaven. The same is true for us. The book of Revelation informs us that in heaven there will be “*no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God [illuminates] it. The Lamb is its light*” (21:23). In heaven we won’t need the sun’s light because we’ll have the light of Jesus shining in all of His glory as God. “*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known*” – 1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV).

“Dear Jesus, thank You that through Your Word we see You now with the eyes of faith as our glorious God and Savior, and that one day we will see You face to face in all Your glory in heaven!” Amen.