

Faith in Five – Adults
Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord
August 5, 2022

1. In the New Testament, the Transfiguration of Jesus is an event where Jesus' appearance is changed and becomes radiant in glory upon a mountain. It is at the Transfiguration where



Jesus's true nature is revealed to his most intimate disciples – Peter, James and John. Here is a review of the common passages among the three Gospels, highlighted in pink (emphasis by this writer):

Matthew 17:1-8

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a **high mountain** by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. **His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.** 3 Just then **there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.**

4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up **three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.**"

5 While he was still speaking, **a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"**

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them. **"Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid."** 8 When they looked up, they

saw no one except Jesus. *(Image Source: Google).*

Mark 9:2-8

2 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a **high mountain** apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, 3 **and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them.** 4 **And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus.** 5 And Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; **let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.**" 6 For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid. 7 And a **cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."** 8 And suddenly looking around they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only.

Luke 9:28-36

28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up **onto a mountain** to pray. 29 **As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.** 30 **Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus.**

31 They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. 32 Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. 33 As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put **up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.**" (He did not know what he was saying.)

34 While he was speaking, **a cloud appeared** and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 **A voice came from the cloud**, saying, "**This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.**" 36 When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

2. In **Mark 8**, three things happened between Jesus and His disciples prior to the event of the Transfiguration:

- a. **Peter declares Jesus is the Messiah.** When asked, Peter tells Jesus He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. In Matthew 16:17–19, Jesus calls Peter blessed as the revelation [of Jesus being Messiah] was given to him by God. Jesus affirms He is both God and man.
- b. **Jesus predicts his death.** It is written that Jesus spoke plainly about this, and Peter rebuked Jesus. Jesus rebukes Peter for thinking about his own desires, not focused on God's Will.
- c. **Jesus tells his disciples to take up their cross and follow him.** "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (8:34). This is a foretelling of the cost of discipleship.

The events that follow the Transfiguration lead up to Jesus' journey into Jerusalem, where He will experience His passion, death and resurrection. The Transfiguration is significant because Jesus' divine glory is revealed, He is confirmed as the Chosen one by God.

3. Discussion of the common passages:

-They went up a mountain to pray: to go to the mountain to pray allows one to be alone, away from the distractions of the world. It may be suggested by some as a way to be as physically close as possible to God in Heaven. God revealed Himself to Moses and Elijah on Mount Sinai; Mount Tabor is what is believed to be the place identified as the Mount of Transfiguration. When we spend time alone in intentional prayer 'on the mountain' with the Lord, we come away refreshed, renewed and transformed. Our help alone is in God.

-Jesus' appearance changed: his face shone; his clothes became dazzling white (as bright as a flash of lightning). His divine nature is revealed. The glory of the Lord is in Jesus! "No longer will you need the sun to shine by day, nor the moon to give its light by night, for the LORD your God will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory" (Isaiah 60:19).

-Moses and Elijah appeared: Moses and Elijah each had personal encounters with God the Father, seeing the glory of God on a mountain. Moses is the fulfillment of the Law, Elijah the fulfillment of the prophets. Jesus said earlier to the crowds that He did not come to abolish the law or prophets, but to fulfill the Will of the Father (Matthew 5:17). Moses and Elijah finally see "the face of God" in Jesus. A new covenant through Jesus will be established.

-Let us build three shelters: In his awkwardness, Peter wants to do something in this special moment. Moses “used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the ‘tent of meeting’. Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting...” (Exodus 33:7). Moses would enter the tent to speak with God. To be in God’s presence, one had to go to a tent or tabernacle, a special dwelling place.

This reminds us that the Lord does not require us to be fearful, feverishly busy to try to please Him, “not knowing what to do”. Psalm 40:6-8: “6 Sacrifice and offering You do not desire, nor have You delight in them; You have given me the capacity to hear and obey [Your law, a more valuable service than] burnt offerings and sin offerings [which] You do not require. 7 Then said I, Behold, I come; ...8 I delight to do Your will, O my God; yes, Your law is within my heart”.

-A cloud appeared and a voice of the cloud: The glory of God the Father has been depicted as a cloud to Moses. Throughout Scripture, clouds symbolize the imminent presence and protection of God. His presence gave the people direction and instruction, requiring their faith and trust in Him. “You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live” (Exodus 33: 20). To Elijah, God was in a quiet, still small voice (1 Kings 19:11-13). God communicates to us in the way we need: sometimes in grand ways, other times in a still small voice. For us to be able to hear the still small voice requires us to humble ourselves, to listen and allow God’s will to be known and heard.

-This is my Son whom I have chosen (or whom I am well pleased), listen to Him. The Lord reminds the disciples who it is they must listen to. God no longer needs a tent or tabernacle to talk to his people; He will dwell with His people through Christ.

-Jesus encourages us by telling us to get up, continue on our journey and not be afraid. Though the disciples do not understand his meaning, the Transfiguration and Jesus’ charge to the disciples present a promise of what is to come. There is hope, because he will soon triumph over sin and death, and be raised in the fullness of glory – the glory of which they have just been given a glimpse.

We are given the same hope in Christ! We are urged to act (“get up”), continue in the Way of the Lord and not be afraid. One day we will see Him as He is! “Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is (1 John 3:2).

*All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror,
are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another;
for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:18*

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