

BIBLE STORY: THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

Matthew 17:1-9

Central Thoughts

- The transfiguration of Jesus' body which shone like the sun in brilliant white light shows Him to be the eternal Son of God.
- The appearance of the prophets Moses and Elijah with Jesus demonstrate that the Old Testament Scriptures, the Law and the Prophets, are fulfilled in Jesus ministry, death, and resurrection.
- The focus of our faith is upon Jesus only because He is the Father's beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased, because He has willingly suffered and died for our salvation.
- We are to hear only Jesus for guidance, comfort, peace, and salvation.
- In the transfiguration of our Lord, the disciples beheld the future glory that awaited them in the resurrection of the body to incorruption and immortality in Christ.

Discussion Questions

What happened after six days in the week that our Lord died upon the cross?

He rested in the tomb and then rose from the dead, never to die again.

What does the phrase, "after six days" point us toward?

The resurrection of our Lord from the dead after His suffering and death upon the cross

Who did Jesus take with Him upon the high mountain to witness the Transfiguration?

His disciples Peter, James, and John

What happened in Jesus' transfiguration?

His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light.

What does this teach us about Jesus?

He is the eternal Son of God, the great "I AM" who appeared to Moses in the burning bush.

Who appeared with Jesus when He was transfigured?

Two Old Testament prophets, Moses and Elijah, were talking with Him

When did the Lord appear in glory to them in the Old Testament?

To Moses upon Mount Sinai at the burning bush; to Elijah in the fire of Mount Carmel and in the fiery chariot that took him to heaven

What were they talking about?

Luke testifies that they spoke to Him about His coming death in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31)

Why did Peter say, "Lord, it is good for us to be here!"

It was as if they had gone up to heaven to see the glory of God

What does Peter want to do?

He wants to build three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

How is Peter's desire answered?

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

What did this glory cloud and voice from the cloud teach them?

The tabernacle of the Lord was already with them in Jesus, the beloved Son of God. They were to hear Jesus because wherever Jesus' Word is spoken there Jesus is present and heaven is opened to us.

Where did the glory cloud appear in the Old Testament?

Between the cherubim and over the mercy seat of the Tabernacle where the blood of atonement was poured; the glory cloud led them through the wilderness; the Lord was present in the cloud; now He was present in flesh of Jesus

Why was God the Father well pleased with His Son?

Because Jesus was willingly going to the cross for us out of love for His Father who had sent Him into the world to die upon the cross for our sins.

More than anything else, what does God the Father call us to do?

Hear Jesus

Why are we called to hear Jesus?

His Word alone gives us forgiveness, life, and salvation

Why do the disciples fall to the ground in fear?

They are sinful men who are afraid in the presence of the glory of God

What did Jesus do?

He came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."

What did Jesus' words mean?

They would rise from the dead because their sins were forgiven by what Jesus was doing for them in His death upon the cross.

What does it teach us that when the disciples lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only?

Jesus alone is the object of our faith and the source of our salvation

Why did Jesus instruct them to tell no one about His transfiguration until He had risen from the dead?

Jesus still needed to suffer and die; and the disciples were not yet ready to preach the Gospel

What is the discussion of the coming of Elijah about at the end of the reading?

John the Baptist came and prepared for Jesus' coming by calling the people to repentance in the same way that Elijah called sinners to repentance in the Old Testament.

What happened to John the Baptist?

He was imprisoned and was put to death for His preaching.

What would happen to Jesus?

He would also suffer and die, but it would result in our salvation from sin and our resurrection to transfigured glory with Christ.

Why is this of comfort to us?

Because we know that through Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, we shall be raised with Him to eternal glory. Our corruptible mortal flesh will be transfigured to incorruptible and immortal flesh in the resurrection.

Meditation on the Bible Story

In Jesus' transfiguration we see that Jesus is eternal God and the Father's beloved Son. He came into the world to suffer and die, as Moses and Elijah testified, in order to reconcile us to God and to bring us to eternal glory in the resurrection on the last day. In the resurrection, we will be transfigured to glory: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:53). But first we must suffer and die, even as Jesus did. Throughout our earthly pilgrimage our focus is only upon Jesus and His Word. Wherever His Word is preached and taught, and wherever His Sacraments are administered according to His Word, Jesus is present with His forgiveness, life, and salvation. Therefore, what Jesus said to Peter, James, and John, He says to us: "Arise, and do not be afraid!" "Your sins are forgiven! You will rise from the dead! Where I am there you will be forever." The Apostle John, who witnessed the transfiguration, comforts us with these words, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Prayer on the Bible Story

Heavenly Father, You proclaimed Jesus Your beloved Son when His body shone with Your eternal glory in the transfiguration. Give us ears to hear only Jesus, to delight in His Word, and to know that through His suffering and death we shall rise with Him to eternal life in the resurrection on the last day; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



The Transfiguration of our Lord

Matthew 17:1-9