

What do we learn?

Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-13, and Luke 9:28-36 contain records of what we now refer to as the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. On the mountain where Jesus went with Peter, James and John, the biblical record says that He was “transfigured” before them. The Greek word is *metamorphoo*, which means “to change from one form to another.” Our English word *metamorphosis* comes from this same word and has the same meaning.

The transfiguration of Jesus is described as (1) His face shining like the sun, and (2) His clothes becoming bright as light. Mark’s account describes the whiteness of His clothing “such as no launderer on earth can whiten them” (9:3). Luke records the fact that Jesus’ face was “altered” (9:29), which means “of a different kind.” He also says that Jesus’ robe was “glistening.” We can only imagine with awe the sight described by these writers!

But what is the point of the transformation of Jesus? We are not left to wonder! Two men appeared with Jesus at this same time, and the inspired record tells us these men were Moses and Elijah. Peter, James and John obviously recognized these men, though they had never seen them before. The record is silent as to how they knew them. Luke tells us that these two great men of the Old Testament appeared in glory and spoke with Jesus of His impending death on the cross (9:31).

Peter unwittingly aids in their own education by offering this suggestion: “...let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” (Lk. 9:33). While Luke also tells us that Peter did not know what he was saying, we might conclude that he and the others had the idea that Moses, Elijah, and Jesus were equally important and were deserving of equal honor. However, the heavenly Father corrects the misconception by saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Lk. 9:35). The conclusion is unmistakable -- we are to hear Jesus Christ in all things religious today; we are no longer to hear Moses and Elijah. And that, my good friends, is the first and chief point of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. Whatever else we might learn from this, do not forget the chief point. And by way of emphasis, when the scene was concluded, Jesus was left alone.

Hebrews 1:1-2 teach the same lesson to us today: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...” God spoke to man in previous generations by various methods: small voices, loud voices, visions, dreams, speaking animals, miraculous events, etc. And He spoke the old law through Moses. He admonished His people by way of the prophets (Acts 3:22-25). But no more! God speaks to us today through His Son, Jesus Christ! Jesus has given us His last will and testament (Heb. 8:6) which is a better covenant established upon better promises and sealed with His own blood (Acts 20:28)! It is called “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25), and cannot be improved upon. It has been given to us “once for all” (Jude 3). The knowledge of it contains everything we need to go from earth to heaven (2 Peter 1:3).

The only thing lacking in the revelation of Jesus Christ is our proper understanding of it! The apostle Paul explained that “when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:4). Those who are sufficiently interested in saving their souls can read the New Testament, understand it, and be saved by it. God has brought this knowledge down to us from heaven (Rom. 10:6-8). It requires careful study, meditation and reflection. But if we care enough, we can understand and obey it. Thus, “hear Him!”