

Glory, Power & Compassion

by Wayne Goff

Most of our readers are familiar with the transfiguration of Jesus Christ on the high mountain before Peter, James and John (Matt. 17:1-3). What a magnificent scene before these men as Jesus' face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as the light! Then Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus talking to Him about His upcoming death in Jerusalem (see Lk. 9:30-31). Imagine what it would have been like to be one of these three men who experienced this magnificent, spiritual event before their very eyes!

And if that were not enough, a *"bright cloud overshadowed them"* and God's voice declared: *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"* (Matt. 17:5). Peter mentioned this event years later when he wrote in 2 Peter 1: *"...but were eyewitnesses of His 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'"* (vv. 16-17). If anyone doubted the greatness of this transfiguration scene or its reality, Peter was there to tell them that it was not only true and real but also a tremendous outpouring of honor and glory from the *"Excellent Glory"* (the Father) to His beloved Son!

But at the time of the event, Peter, James and John were overwhelmed with great fear and probably had to contemplate what this all meant for some time afterwards. They had beheld yet another Divine Manifestation of Jesus as the only begotten Son of God, and they would never forget this event! Power, honor and glory from heaven in a way these common men had never seen or experienced.

To be honest, you and I would also be *"greatly afraid"* if we were to experience such an event. Being in the immediate Presence of Almighty God is a wonderfully frightening experience. Every example of it in the Bible resulted in man's shaking and quaking at the experience. So do not think you would take it with a grain of salt either! (See Ex. 19:16; Isaiah 6:1-5; 2 Chron. 7:2; Lk. 5:8-9; etc.)

The amazing compassion of One Who was just honored by God is seen in Matthew 17:6-7. *"And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and do not be afraid.'" How many times did Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, stop to show compassion, kindness and gentleness to those around Him who needed such comfort! What a contrast! Have we become so familiar with these Gospel stories that we miss the greatness of it all? We sometimes sing, "Jesus, the loving Shepherd" and so He was and is.*

I was contemplating the question this past week: **"Why** do we love God?" I looked up and found numerous biblical answers to this question, but in doing so felt also a *distance* between what I know is true and what I have experienced in my own life. Sometimes it's hard to understand God. But then I also understood that this was one of the reasons Jesus came to the earth — the bridge the distance between man and God — to help us understand in finite, human terms, Who God really is!

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" John 1:14. When we see Jesus, the Mighty Son of God, interacting with the poor, weak, downtrodden, and fearful, then we see the tender, loving grace that **is** God Himself. Jesus gently reminds us that when **see** Jesus, we **see** the Father (Jn. 14:9).

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