**Lesson: Transfiguration of Christ**

Jesus Christ was transfigured in the presence of three apostles. Christ appeared to them in shining glory joined by Moses and Elijah. Jesus had recently told His apostles of His impending death; then brought three of them up a high mountain to receive an extraordinary revelation. God the Father proclaimed aloud that Jesus is His Son; the only other time that occurred was at Jesus’s baptism. Thus, these two occasions represent the beginning and the end, the alpha and omega. This is a message to everybody that our eternal life begins with our commitment to Christ (as witnessed in our baptism) and ends with glory in the presence of Christ, Moses, Elijah, and the rest of the saints and hosts of heaven. The image represents Christ’s victory over death and the glory of His resurrection.

Transfiguration Sunday ushers in the season of Lent which will vary from year to year in accordance with Passover and Easter. The actual transfiguration could have been a month or two before the passion of Christ, we just don’t know for sure. The date is determined as the Sunday preceding or beginning the Lenten season, which is celebrated much like the season of advent prior to Christmas. Note that similar revelations of the ascending and descending of Christ can be found in the Old Testament: in the testimony of both Moses and Elijah.

* EXO 34:29–30 ~ Moses descended from mount Sinai with the two tablets of testimony (the Ten Commandments), not knowing that his face shone bright or why the people were afraid to come near him. Even Aaron hesitated until Moses called the leaders to him. Then the rest of the congregation assembled and Moses presented the commandments God had given them, though he veiled his face while he spoke.
* 2 KI 2:8–14 ~ Elijah took his cloak, rolled it together and struck the river; then he and Elisha crossed on dry land. Elijah gave Elisha one last request; Elisha asked for a double-portion of his spiritual strength. Elijah replied, “What you ask is a difficult thing, but if you see me as I am taken away, you will have it.” As they were speaking a fiery chariot with horses of fire descended, parting them while taking Elijah up in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha watched and cried to God, “My Father, behold the chariot and horsemen of Israel.” He ripped his clothes in two, picked up Elijah’s cloak, struck the water, and returned on dry land.
* LUK 9:28–36 ~ Eight days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the mountaintop to pray. While Jesus prayed, His countenance changed and His clothes shined as lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared with Jesus in glorious splendor; they were conversing about Jesus’s departure from this earth which would occur upon His return to Jerusalem. The apostles had been in a deep sleep and awakened to witness this. The two prophets were preparing to leave Jesus when Peter interrupted, “Master, it is good to be here; let us build three shelters for you.” Peter had no idea what he was talking about, but while he spoke, a cloud surrounded the place and the apostles became afraid for it enveloped them. A voice spoke from the cloud saying, “This is my beloved Son; listen to Him.” Then the fog cleared and Jesus stood alone with them. The apostles kept this secret until after Jesus’s resurrection. (Also recorded in MAT 17:1–9; MAR 9:1–10.)
* JOH 1:1, 14 ~ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us; and we saw His glory, the glory of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.
* 2 PE 1:16-18 ~ We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we testified of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we were eyewitnesses to His majesty. He received honor directly from God the Father, when a voice from heaven announced gloriously, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.”

We Christians will behold the glory of Christ firsthand when we see Him face to face in our own glorified bodies.

* JOB 19:25–26 ~ I know that my Redeemer lives and that He will stand upon the earth. And although my flesh will have been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.
* ISA 40:5 ~ The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all human flesh will see it together, for the Lord has said so.
* JOH 17:22–24 ~ Jesus prayed to God, “The glory that you gave me I have given to them, so that they may be one even as we are one. Just as you are in me and I in you, may they also be in us so that the world will see that you have sent me. Father, it is my wish that they also, whom you have given to me, would be with me wherever I am, so that they may behold the glory that you have given me; for you loved me before the foundation of the world.”
* ROM 8:16–18, 30 ~ The Holy Spirit testifies with our spirits that we are God’s children. If we are His children, then we are heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may later share in His glory. For I consider the sufferings of this present time to be nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed in us. Whomever He predestined, He called; and whomever He called He justified; and whomever He justified, He also glorified.
* 1 CO 13:12 ~ Presently, we see in a mirror dimly, but later face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I am fully known.
* 1 CO 15:42–44 ~ Regarding the resurrection, the body that is sown is perishable but it is raised imperishable. It is sown in dishonor but it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness but it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body but it is raised a spiritual body.
* 1 CO 15:51–58 ~ Here is a mystery of God: We will not all sleep (die) but we will all be changed. Upon Christ’s return, in a single moment when the great trumpet sounds, Christ’s own, whether alive or dead will arise into heaven to receive new, incorruptible bodies. Hence, the corruptible will have become incorruptible and the mortal will have become immortal. Then at the end, when He delivers the kingdom of God to the Father, He will destroy death. Then the statement “death is swallowed up in victory” will be true. The godly will receive spiritual bodies that will never die. The flesh is of the earth, the spirit is of heaven; thus, flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, be confident in your faith because your labor is not in vain.
* PHP 3:20–21 ~ Our citizenship is in heaven. We eagerly await our Savior, who using the same power that brought everything under His control, He will change our vile bodies into bodies like His glorified body.
* COL 3:4 ~ When Christ appears, who is our life, you also will appear with Him in glory.
* 1 JO 3:2 ~ Now we are sons of God, and what we will become is not yet known. We do know this: when He returns for us, we will be like Him, for we shall see Him as He really is.

Heavenly Father, to whom all glory and honor belong: you sent Jesus to us to show us who you are. He glorified you in His body and you glorified Him before all the world. And the whole world will see Him again, in all His glory, when He returns for His elect. We praise and thank you, for we are rich in your blessings; we pray to always watch and wait with hope and joy for that day when Jesus will bring us with Him to your heavenly kingdom. We thank you for this wonderful blessing, and we pray that we can point the way to Jesus in our lives, shining His glory as was shown on the day of His transfiguration. In His name we pray, Amen.

By Andrew V. Barber (Posted 03/03/2023)