

Mark 9:1–13 — The Transfiguration

September 29, 2019

Good morning CrossWinds. Who remembers what it was like learning to swim? Growing up my parents took me to swim lessons so I would be safe in the water. When I was young, the shallow end of the pool wasn't a problem. I could play in the kiddie section all day long. It was the deep end that was terrifying. I learned to swim in a pool. Unlike a lake, where it is murky so you cannot see the bottom, in a pool the water is clear, so you can see the depth of the water. As a child, before I learned to swim, the deep end of the pool was terrifying.

There was one way I would swim in the deep end. That was if an adult went with me. If I had an adult that was bigger than me, stronger than me, and could always save me, then I was OK in the deep end. I knew I wouldn't drown.

If you remember how scary it was in the deep end before you learned to swim, and you remember how saw you felt in deep water with an adult around, you will understand this morning's passage.

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power." And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son

of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.” And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. Mark 9:1–14 (ESV)

This is the transfiguration. It is described in Matthew and Luke. To understand the transfiguration and why it is important, we need to remember the context. The first half of the book of Mark was about answering the question, who is Jesus? At the halfway point of the book, God opened the mind of Peter to be the first human being to understand Jesus’ true identity. Peter recognized Jesus as the Christ

While Peter was busy celebrating that he was the first person in this Gospel to recognize Jesus’ identity, Jesus turned the conversation in a direction Peter didn’t want it to go. Jesus told his disciples that as the Christ, he must suffer many things, be rejected by the religious leaders of Israel, die, and rise from the dead. To Peter and the other disciples, that didn’t make sense. They were brought up to believe the Christ would be a political Messiah that would overthrow the Romans, set up an earthly kingdom and make Jerusalem the capital city of the world.

Peter was so upset at Jesus for saying he would suffer and die that Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him. It is never a good idea to try lecturing Christ about how to run the world. After Peter rebuked Jesus, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me Satan. You are not thinking of heavenly things but only earthly things.” That hurt! Jesus wouldn’t listen to Peter’s idea of being a Christ without a cross.

That brought us to the passage we studied last week where Jesus said that if anyone wants to be his disciple, he needs to know it will be costly. Disciples will need to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow him. If anyone is going to be a disciple of Jesus, they need to live their lives for Christ and even be willing to lose their lives like Christ for following him.

That sounds scarier than swimming in the deep end of the pool. If anyone was going to live his or her life for Jesus and maybe even lose his or her life like Jesus, wouldn't it be easier to do if you know you had an adult in the deep end of the pool — someone who is bigger than you, stronger than you, and who can carry you through those scary situations?

Today, we meet the person who is bigger than us and much greater than us to help us when we live for Christ. It is Jesus in all his glory and power.

Jesus promised to strengthen the faith of some.

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power." Mark 9:1 (ESV)

As we look at the first verse, we run across one of the most confusing verses in the Bible. It is a verse used by many to try and prove the Bible wrong. It says standing with Jesus at that moment were some that would not taste death — that means they would not die — before they saw the kingdom of God come in power. That sounds like some people around Jesus on that day would not die before Jesus returns.

In the previous verse Jesus was talking about the Day of Judgment when he will return in glory and power.

...of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Mark 8:38 (ESV)

It seems logical that this next verse is continuing the conversation about Jesus' return at the end of history. Therein lies the problem. Obviously, everyone with Jesus on that day has died and Jesus has not returned. Many people say, "This proves the Bible is wrong. It cannot be trusted."

Is that the right answer? Did Jesus blow it on this one or is there another answer, a more obvious answer that is sitting right under our noses that many people miss? I think there is.

Maybe instead of referring to Jesus returning in glory and power in the previous verse, maybe this is referring to Jesus displaying his glory and power in the subsequent verses where we read about the transfiguration, which happened only six days later. That would make logical sense, and it perfectly explains this verse.

Jesus just finished talking about his return in power and glory for judgment at the end of time. In the transfiguration, which are the verses that follow, we see Jesus doing exactly what he said would happen in this verse. He took some in that group, namely Peter, James, and John, up a high mountain where he was transfigured before them so they saw the glory and power of Jesus in the middle of time.

The transfiguration was a preview of the glory and power of Jesus in the middle of time. It was a preview of what Jesus will look like when he returns in glory and power at the end of time.

The idea that the transfiguration where the glory and power of Jesus is displayed in the middle of time as a preview of what his glory and power will look like at the end of time is not unique to me. The apostle Peter, who was on the Mount of Transfiguration, told us the transfiguration was a preview of Jesus' glory and power. Look what the apostle Peter said in his second letter.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 2 Peter 1:16–18 (ESV)

Peter said we are not following a myth when we talked about Jesus one day returning in power and glory. He knew Jesus coming again in glory and power is the truth because Peter had a preview of the glory and power of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Why did he say he was confident he was telling the truth? He was one of the eyewitnesses of Jesus' power and glory on the mount of transfiguration, which was simply a preview, a movie trailer for the main event, which is Christ's return. Peter said, "We saw his glory on the mountain. We heard the voice of God the Father saying Jesus was his son." Later in 2 Peter 3, Peter talked about how some say Jesus will not return, but Peter disagreed because he had already seen a preview of Jesus' coming glory and power.

Why did the transfiguration take place? Remember, it didn't take place for Peter's entertainment. It took place to help Peter, James, and John understand the true identity of Jesus, so when it came time for them to swim in the deep end of the pool — that means to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow

him — they would know who they had with them in those hard days. They had Jesus with them, filled with glory and power. If that wouldn't encourage them in those hard times, nothing would.

I know if I had the vision of Jesus full of all power and glory with me in the hard times when I was suffering for Jesus, that would help me. I am sure it would also help each one of us.

Now that we know this difficult verse actually refers to Peter, James, and John experiencing the transfiguration, which are the verses that follow, let's look at the transfiguration itself and what happened to Jesus on that mountain.

Jesus strengthened the faith of Peter, James, and John by the transfiguration.

Jesus revealed his glory and power in the transfiguration.

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.
Mark 9:2–3 (ESV)

Matthew and Luke also wrote of the transfiguration. As we study the transfiguration, I will bring in some extra details that Matthew and Luke told us about the transfiguration to give us a clearer picture of what happened on that amazing day.

Mark said it was six days after Jesus gave his hard sermon that we studied last week when Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a high mountain by themselves. If you noticed in Mark, Mark as an author almost never included time references in his book. The only other time reference in this Gospel is about Jesus' resurrection, which was three days after he died. It leaves us realizing

there must be a very good reason for Mark to talk about this mountain climbing trip that took place six days after Jesus' tough sermon.

It turns out there is a very good reason for Mark specifying six days. Mark was trying to have us make a connection between Mount Sinai in the Old Testament and the Mount of Transfiguration in the New Testament.

The Mount of Transfiguration parallels Mount Sinai.

Let me show you some of the ways Mount Sinai and the Mount of Transfiguration are similar and let me show you some of the ways they are different.

Jesus and the disciples went to hear from God after six days. Moses heard from God after six days.

That specific time reference was for a reason. Moses was also on Mt. Sinai six days before he heard from God.

Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Exodus 24:15–16 (ESV)

Jesus went up the mountain with three disciples. Moses went up the mountain with three priests.

Then he said to Moses, “Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. Exodus 24:1 (ESV)

Jesus radiated the glory of God on the mountain. Moses experienced the glory of God on the mountain.

There is a big difference there. Jesus radiated the glory of God from himself because as God he innately possessed glory. Moses only reflected glory because he had spend time with God and absorbed it like a human-size, glow-in-the-dark sticker. In both accounts the glory of God shines.

God the Father appeared in a cloud and spoke from a cloud at both Mount Sinai and at the Mount of Transfiguration.

The glory of the Lord dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Exodus 24:16 (ESV)

Is anyone seeing the similarities between Mount Sinai and the Mount of Transfiguration? Do you see the intentionality in this? Now let's look at how they are different.

On Mount Sinai, God gave us his law that we couldn't keep, which led to death. On the Mount of Transfiguration, God gave us his son who kept the law for us, which led to life.

The big difference is on Mount Sinai, God gave us his law, which no one has been able to keep. On the Mount of Transfiguration, God gave us his son, who kept the law for us, then died in our places to give us life. Mount Sinai led to our death. The Mount of Transfiguration gave us Jesus, which leads to our life. The Mount of Transfiguration is a new, better version of Mount Sinai.

The transfiguration probably took place on Mount Hermon.

Let's look at the mountain where this took place. Today, many tour guides will tell you the traditional spot for the Mount of Transfiguration is Mount Tabor, which is 2,000 feet high. Most Bible scholars do not believe the tour guides, which tell you the traditional spot is right. There are a few reasons. First, Mount Tabor is too short. It is only 2,000 feet high. Second, Mount Tabor had a city on top of it in that day, which wouldn't make for a great place to get away with three of your disciples. Third, Mount Tabor is not near Caesarea



Philippi where Jesus was currently located with his disciples. As I mentioned, most Bible scholars think the transfiguration took place on Mount Hermon. Mount Hermon is 9,000 feet high. It has snow on top of it even in the summer because it is so high.

To give you an idea of how high this is let me give you a comparison. As a teenager, I used to hike the Adirondack Mountains in New York state. I climbed 23 of the state's highest peaks. I climbed the highest mountain in the state, which is Mount Marcy. It is 5,344 feet.



As anyone climbs to the top of that mountain, the air gets thin. You start climbing slower because it is hard to breath. The trees get smaller and eventually stop because you climb above tree line. The air becomes too thin for trees to grow so the top of the mountain is just rock. Mount Hermon is another 3,700 feet higher than 5,344 foot Mount Marcy. Mount Hermon is so tall it is not just in the clouds, it is above the clouds. This mountain is likely where the transfiguration took place.

This also explains why Mark and Matthew say Jesus left on the trip to climb the mountain six days after he gave the hard sermon we studied last week. Luke says it was about eight days after Jesus gave his hard sermon that the transfiguration took place. Why was there a two-day difference between leaving for the mountain and arriving at the top of the mountain for the transfiguration? Mount Hermon is so big it takes two days to climb! This is Sherpa Jesus!

On the mountain, Jesus revealed his glory.

They got to the top, and Mark says Jesus was transfigured before them. The word transfigured in the Greek word *metamorphoo*, from where we get our word metamorphosis. If you like Marvel Comics movies where people change into superheroes before your eyes, you will like the transfiguration. That is exactly what happened to Jesus in front of Peter, James, and John, except in a much grander way than could ever take place with a comic book superhero.

Mark says Jesus went through a metamorphosis. He completely changed the way he looked. Even his clothes changed. They became radiant. His clothes changed to the point they began to shine. Mark says they become so intensely white that Jesus' clothes were whiter than Clorox could bleach them. This is where some extra details from Matthew and Luke will prove helpful.

And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. Luke 9:29 (ESV)

Luke says it was as Jesus was praying that this all took place. Apparently Jesus took Peter, James, and John up the mountain for a prayer meeting. Like Mark said, Jesus' face was altered. Look what happened to his clothing. Luke says it became dazzling white. The word dazzling in Greek means to flash like lightning. The next time you see pulsing lightning light up the sky on a hot summer night that makes pitch black night momentarily bright as day, think of Jesus and his clothing. In the transfiguration, Jesus' clothing was revealed to be flashing white lightning. Let's look at what Jesus himself was transformed to look like.

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. Matthew 17:2 (ESV)

Matthew tells us more about the metamorphosis of Jesus' body. His face began to shine. The light coming off Jesus' face was as bright as the noon sun. Nobody can stare at the sun because it is too bright. In the transfiguration, that is what Jesus' face looked like, bright as the sun. Matthew also mentions Jesus' clothing becoming white as light. Jesus' transfiguration was quite impressive. Jesus' face was bright as the sun and his clothes were flashing like white lightning. What wasn't impressive is what Peter, James, and John were doing when it happened.

Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory... Luke 9:32 (ESV)

This is one of my favorite parts. Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on the mountain to pray with him, instead of praying, they were busy sleeping. Apparently the disciples falling asleep during the prayer meeting in the Garden of Gethsemane wasn't the first time. It looks like sleeping instead of praying was a regular occurrence for the disciples. After they opened their eyes and saw Jesus bright as the sun, I am sure they were awake in a hurry.

What happened in the transfiguration? Up to this point on Earth, Jesus restrained his glory. On Earth, he appeared as nothing more than an ordinary human being. On the Mount of Transfiguration, for a little bit of time God the Father pulled away the veil of Jesus' humanity and let Peter, James, and John see what Jesus looks like in reality with all of his glory, might, and power shining from him brighter than the sun.

Jesus told his disciples he would suffer, die and rise again. He also told his disciples that anyone who follows him would also need to deny themselves to

follow him and be willing to suffer and possibly die like him. That is scary. That is worse than diving into the deep end of the pool. After seeing Jesus in all of his glory and power in this moment, I am sure Peter, James, and John found encouragement to follow Jesus, even if it cost them everything.

On the mountain, Jesus met Moses and Elijah.

And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. Mark 9:4 (ESV)

Jesus was having his prayer time while Peter, James, and John were sleeping. They opened their eyes half-awake to see Jesus glowing like the sun. As they were watching, Moses and Elijah showed up and started talking with Jesus. How did they know it was Moses and Elijah? I don't know. Maybe they introduced themselves. Maybe they wore church name tags. Maybe the disciples knew what Moses and Elijah looked like from their Facebook pages. I don't know. It doesn't tell us.

What we do know is what Moses and Elijah were discussing with Jesus.

And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Luke 9:30–31 (ESV)

They were speaking to him about his departure that he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. Jesus was going to die in Jerusalem and rise again. Apparently Moses and Elijah were giving Jesus some kind of encouragement for the hard path in front of him as Jesus prepared to die for sin.

Interestingly, the Greek word for the departure that Jesus was about to accomplish is the Greek word for exodus. Just as Moses led the Exodus and God's people out of physical slavery and physical death in the land of Egypt,

Jesus was going to be a second and greater Moses. He was going to lead an exodus of God's people from slavery to sin and eternal death. Jesus was about to accomplish a second and much greater exodus on the cross than Moses ever could have done in Egypt.

Let's briefly look at Moses and Elijah.

And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory... Luke 9:30–31 (ESV)

Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Luke 9:32 (ESV)

We already know Jesus was glowing with glory as bright as the sun. His clothing was flashing white like lightning. When Moses and Elijah showed up to talk with Jesus, they were also glowing with glory but there appears to be a difference. While Jesus is the source of all light and glory, Moses and Elijah appear to be absorbing and reflecting light and glory. They were not the source of light and glory but were just reflecting light and glory. This appears to be a very similar experience to what happened to Moses on Mount Sinai where he came down from the mountain glowing because he spent time with God.

Now Peter, who has foot-in-mouth disease, makes another big mistake.

And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Mark 9:5–6 (ESV)

Peter's mouth was always getting him in trouble. Before the cross, he denied Jesus three times. He just finished being rebuked by Jesus for telling him he shouldn't suffer and die. Now he put his foot in his mouth again for telling Jesus, Moses, and Elijah he will build them shelters.

Let's see why he said this. Notice when Peter said this.

And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. Luke 9:33 (ESV)

Peter was thrilled to have Elijah, Moses, and Jesus all glowing in front of him. Earlier, Peter was convinced that Jesus would introduce the kingdom with glory and power. Peter just saw Jesus, Moses and Elijah glowing in power. This was what he dreamed of. The problem is Moses and Elijah were fading away, and as they faded away, Peter saw his dreams of the kingdom coming with power and might fading away too. To entice Moses and Elijah to stay, he offered to build them a place to stay. Peter desperately wanted to keep his dreams of the kingdom coming with power and glory from vanishing into thin air.

While Peter was opening his mouth spouting off the silly idea of building shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah in glory so they would stay in glory, look what God the Father had to say to Peter and his silly plans.

On the mountain, God the Father rebuked Peter.

And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." Mark 9:7 (ESV)

This wasn't just any cloud. This cloud was the Shekinah glory of God. This was the same cloud that led God's people out of Egypt in the wilderness. This was the same cloud that covered the top of Mount Sinai. This was the same cloud that filled Solomon's temple when it was dedicated. This was the cloud that appeared numerous times in the Old Testament and was the manifestation of God the Father's presence on earth.

The cloud suddenly showed up not after Peter was done speaking about making booths for everyone. The cloud showed up and enveloped them while Peter was still speaking about making booths for everyone. When God the Father spoke from the cloud to Peter, God the Father cut Peter off mid-sentence. God the Father rebuked Peter for his idea of making tents for everyone to keep them in glory so his dream of the kingdom in power didn't fade. The Gospel writers made this apparent.

He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." Matthew 17:5 (ESV)

God the Father showed up and interrupted Peter mid-sentence to tell Peter that Jesus was God's son. "Peter, stop talking to him and telling Jesus what to do. Peter, start listening to him. He is the very Son of God."

As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!" Luke 9:34–35 (ESV)

This looks similar until you realize Luke is careful to include God the Father's words to Peter were emphatic. They were a rebuke. There is an exclamation point on the end.

Peter has now been rebuked by Jesus and by God the Father. If I was Peter, at that point I would hit the dirt and hope God would not destroy me, which is exactly what he did.

When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Matthew 17:6–8 (ESV)

Without question, this was the craziest prayer meeting any one of them went to. I am sure they felt bad they started out the meeting sleeping, but after

seeing the glory of Jesus and being rebuked by God the Father for not listening to him, I am sure this is a prayer meeting that changed them.

Jesus told Peter, James, and John not to speak of the transfiguration until he rose from the dead.

And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. Mark 9:9–10 (ESV)

Jesus told them to tell no one about what happened until he rose from the dead. Unlike many other people in this Gospel, they actually listened to Jesus' instructions to be quiet about the transfiguration. I think the reason they obeyed these words of Jesus is because they were too terrified to not obey him. After being rebuked by Jesus and God the Father, if you were Peter, it would be time to starting listening and obeying Jesus.

Now that they understood the true identity of Jesus, they had more questions for Jesus.

Jesus strengthened the disciples faith by answering their tough Bible questions.

And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things..." Mark 9:11–12 (ESV)

If Jesus is the Messiah, they were having trouble understanding verses in their Bible. The Bible said Elijah would come before the Christ came. Peter, James, and John said, "If you are the Christ, where was Elijah? Did we miss him? Was that brief cameo appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration it?"

They were struggling to understand a prophecy from the book of Malachi.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. Malachi 4:5 (ESV)

Peter just saw Elijah. Peter offered to build Elijah a tent, but Elijah disappeared. Was that the only cameo appearance?

Before Jesus answered their question, he gave them a tough Bible question to ponder.

And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? Mark 9:12 (ESV)

“While you are worried about the Bible saying Elijah should come first, let me point you to all the passages in the Old Testament that says the Christ must suffer and die. You have conveniently forgotten them.” Jesus could have shown them hundreds of passages like this one from Isaiah that speaks about Jesus suffering and dying for our sin, not just being a conquering Messiah.

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:5–6 (ESV)

Then Jesus said these words:

But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him. Mark 9:13 (ESV)

Jesus said the prophecy in Malachi about Elijah coming before the Christ was fulfilled. “It already happened and you missed it. They did to him whatever they pleased.” The Book of Matthew provides more details of how this prophecy was fulfilled.

...but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist. Matthew 17:11–13 (ESV)

It feels a little unfair. Peter, James, and John experienced the transfiguration. What an amazing experience. If we had an experience with Jesus like they did in the transfiguration, wouldn't it be much easier to follow Jesus today? Wouldn't it be much easier to deny ourselves, take up our crosses and follow Jesus? Wouldn't it be much easier to live for Jesus and even lose our lives like Jesus if we could see the one who is with us is Jesus in all his transfiguration glory?

I have some bad news for you and some good news for you. The bad news is we won't see Jesus as he was in his transfiguration glory. The good news is God has something even better for us than the transfiguration was for Peter, James, and John. What am I talking about?

Jesus strengthens our faith with something better than the transfiguration.

Let's go back to 2 Peter where we started.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 2 Peter 1:16–18 (ESV)

Peter said he was with Jesus on the mountain. Peter saw Jesus in his glory and power, but look what Peter said after this.

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:19–21 (ESV)

At first glance, it sounds like Peter said seeing Jesus in his glory and power on the Mount of Transfiguration confirms the Bible. That is NOT what it

says. The Greek words are very specific. *Peter said the Bible we have in our hands has greater faith confirming and building power than the transfiguration did for Peter, James, and John.* We will develop greater faith in Christ and greater courage to live for Christ from our Bible than Peter, James, and John could develop from the transfiguration.

This is why Peter said we will do well to pay attention to the Bible like a lamp shining in a dark place. In our busy world, with busy lives, it is so easy to ignore God's book. It is difficult to make time to spend in our Bible. Peter said we must remember the power of the Bible we hold in our hands. The Bible is capable of giving us a picture of Jesus in all of his might, glory, and power that is a better vision of Jesus than the transfiguration could ever offer. The Bible is capable of developing our faith and giving us more confidence in Christ than the transfiguration ever could.

We must pay attention to it. Don't be distracted away from it. Peter said everyone who holds a Bible in his or her hands has the capability of seeing Jesus in his transfiguration glory with greater clarity than Peter, James, and John ever could.

Conclusion

As we close, we all admit we wish we were at the transfiguration. We wish we could have seen Jesus in his glory and power. That would strengthen our faith for those times when it is scary to follow Jesus into the deep end of the pool. Thankfully, according to the apostle Peter, we are offered a better vision of Jesus than the transfiguration could give. We have the Bible, the prophetic word that more fully confirms our faith than the transfiguration ever could.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

© You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided (1) you credit the author, (2) modifications are clearly marked, (3) you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, (4) you include the web address (www.Christ2RCulture.com) on the copied resource.

