

# WHAT REALLY HAPPENED ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

## *A Preview of the Glory that shall be Revealed*

The Bible says,

- Ro 12.2            be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind

The nature of this transformation is truly astonishing. To explain why, it is necessary to understand firstly what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration. (For the complete picture, all three accounts should be compared (Mt 17:1-8, Mk 9:2-8 and Lk 9:28-36).)

Jesus took Peter, James and John into a high mount to pray with him (Lk 9.28).

Apparently, this continued into the night, for the disciples were heavy with sleep (Lk 9.32).

Sometime that night, when they awoke, an amazing sight met their wondering eyes.

- Jesus in glory.
- The OT Cloud of Glory.
- Two men in glory.

### ***Eyewitnesses of His Majesty***

A resplendent light had dispelled the darkness of the night. It came from Jesus.

- Lk 9.32            when they were awake, ***they saw His glory***
- Lk 9.29            ***the fashion of His face was altered***
- Mt 17.2            ***(Jesus) was transfigured ... and His face did shine as the sun***

What did it mean? The Glory of God, the Pillar of Fire, which once tabernacled behind an animal-skin veil was now tabernacle behind the veil of the flesh of the man Christ Jesus.

- Heb 10.20        the veil, that is to say, his flesh

Glimpses of that glory had been seen earlier through a chink in that veil in His miracles (Lk 13.17; John 2.11). But on the Mount of Transfiguration, the veil was pulled right back.

- Jn 1.14            the Word was made flesh and dwelt (literally, tabernacled, pitched His tent) among us, and we beheld his glory

The glory was such that even His very garments were transfigured into pure light.

- Mt 17.2            his raiment was ***white as the light***
- Mk 9.3            his ***raiment became shining, exceeding white*** as snow; so as no fuller (= launderer) on earth can white them
- Lk 9.29            his raiment was ***white and glistening*** (or, as one translation so graphically puts it, ***dazzling white, flashing with the brilliance of lightning***)

How different from Moses. After he entered the Cloud of Glory at Sinai, like Jesus, his face also shone. But there was a significant difference.

- With Moses, a mere piece of cloth put over his shining face could hide "*the glory of his countenance*" (Ex 34.29-35; 2 Cor 3.7).
- With Jesus, however, the glory was such that it transfigured even His clothes.

Why the difference?

- With Moses, the glory was ***without***. It was only ***upon*** him.
- With Jesus it irradiated from ***within***. It was ***in*** Him.

What did this mean? The disciples were given a fuller revelation of who Jesus was than anything hitherto. They were,

- 2 P 1.16      eyewitnesses of his majesty

The word “*eyewitnesses*” is significant. In the language of the day, it was applied to those few in the ancient pagan mystery religions who progressed to the final stage of initiation. Only these were granted a complete revelation of their god. So, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the apostles were admitted to a full revelation of who Jesus really was:

- 1 Cor 2.8      the Lord of glory
- Heb 1.3      the brightness of his (= God's) glory
- Jas 2.1      the Glory (= the literal translation, i.e. the Shekinah, Ro 9.4)

### ***Entering the Cloud of Glory***

As if that were not enough, the disciples saw another glorious sight:

- Mt 17.5      ***a bright cloud*** (= a cloud composed of light) ***overshadowed them***

Then,

- Lk 9.34-35      ***they entered into the cloud*** ... there came a voice out of the cloud

Peter later described this as the very Cloud of Glory that led Israel in the wilderness.

- 2 P 1.17      there came a voice from ***the excellent glory***

### ***What/Why? A Preview of the Glory that shall be Revealed***

What did it all mean?

The popularity of Jesus' early ministry was subsiding. Opposition was growing, especially from the religious leadership. To encourage the disciples and strengthen their faith, they were given a preview of Christ's coming in the glory of His Kingdom.

A few days before His transfiguration, He said,

- Mt 16:27-28      the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father ... There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

The three apostles have all long since died and our Lord has not yet come. So, what do these words mean? They must have seen something when still alive equivalent to the coming in power and glory of Christ's future kingdom. What? His transfiguration.

When they beheld Christ on the mountain, they saw Him as He will be when He comes in glory. His face shining as the sun in the night darkness was a preview of His coming kingdom:

- Rev 21:23      the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon...for the glory of the Lamb did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof

### ***Glorified together with Him***

But the disciples had a preview not only of Christ coming in glory but also of the grand finale of God's purpose in the redemption of mankind.

- Lk 9.30-31      behold...***Moses and Elias...appeared in glory***

Why is this significant? When the disciples saw Jesus in glory,

- They not only saw ***the Lord of glory***, “crowned with glory” (Heb 2:9).
- They also saw ***a glorified Man***, a preview of God's purpose to redeem man to his

original glory (1 Cor 11.7), lost at the fall (Ro 3.23; 1 P 1.24). He was the last Adam but the second man (1 Cor 15.45,47), the first of a new creation (Rev 3.14).

So, when they saw Moses and Elijah in glory they were shown a preview of that new creation and of redeemed man.

To put it in other words, they previewed not just **His** appearing in glory but also **our** appearing with Him in glory.

- Col 3.4 when Christ shall appear, then shall ye also **appear with him in glory**
- Ro 8.17-18 we shall be **glorified together with him**.

And we shall not just appear in glory. This glory shall be nothing less than His very own glory:

- Jn 17.22 **the glory which thou gavest me** I have given them
- Col 1.27 **Christ in you**, the hope of glory
- 2 Th 2.14 called ... to the obtaining of **the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**
- 1 Jn 3:2 when he shall appear we shall be **like him**

Just as Jesus' face shone as the sun on the mount, so also shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father (Mt 13:43; Cp Dan 12:3).

Oh, blessed hope (Ti 2 14)!

- Not only of the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- But also of our appearing with Him, restored to our original glory.

**But there is more ...**

But that is not all.

- Not only is this awesome scene a heart-warming preview of **Christ's future** appearing in glory at His Coming,
- Not only is it a preview of **our own future** blessed hope when we are glorified, being transformed into His likeness and appearing with Him in glory.
- We may also experience a **present** foretaste, an earnest, the firstfruits, **here and now, in this present world**, of our future transformation and glorification.

How?

By the Holy Ghost.