

THE TRANSFIGURATION

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Lessons: Matthew 17, Mark 9, or Luke 9

One of the main reasons the Lord came into the world was to show Himself to men and women and children so that they would know who He is. It is very important to know about the Lord and know who He is. In fact nothing is more important. Why? Because our life is from the Lord. Because He loves us, and wants to help us grow up to be good men and women.

You know that all good and true things are from the Lord, don't you? But how can we receive those good and true things if we don't know about the Lord and His Word? This then, is the reason why the Lord came into the world—so that we could know him and learn to obey Him and so come into heaven and live with Him forever.

But you know, when the Lord lived in the world, He looked just like any other person. When He was born in Bethlehem, he looked just like any other baby. You couldn't tell He was the Lord just by looking at Him. At first the people who followed Him and heard His teachings, thought that He was just a wonderful man—or a great prophet who could teach new things and do miracles.

At first they did not know He was the Lord—that He was God Himself come into the world. Only very gradually did they begin to realize that He was the Lord—that He was Divine.

Now why do you suppose this was? Why didn't the Lord just show Himself to His disciples—as He really is—right away? Because if He had done that, the disciples would not have been free to choose to follow Him or not—they would have been forced to believe in Him and worship Him.

The Lord did not want to do that, unless we are free we are not really human. So He very gradually let them know who He really was. Bit by bit He showed Himself to them through His teaching and His miracles.

One day He knew that three of His disciples were ready to see Him as He really is. These three disciples were Peter, James and John. The Lord took them up into a high mountain far away from the other people—and there He performed a great miracle.

Up there on the mountain, the Lord at first looked like the man the disciples knew—Jesus Christ. But suddenly—in an instant—the Lord opened Peter, James, and John’s spiritual eyes. And, wonderful to say, they all at once saw the Lord as He is seen in heaven. They saw the Lord as He really is. His face shone as the sun and His clothes were white as light. This great change is called the “Transfiguration” because the way He looked suddenly changed.

And then the disciples saw another wonderful thing. They saw Moses and Elijah talking with the shining Lord. Peter then said to the Lord, “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” Then he said that he wanted to build three tabernacles—one for the Lord—one for Moses—and one for Elijah.

But while he was still speaking a bright cloud came over them and a voice out of the cloud said “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, Hear ye Him.” This voice frightened the disciples and they fell down with their faces to the ground. Then the Lord Jesus came and touched them and told them to arise and not be afraid.

And wonderful to say when the disciples looked up they saw Jesus as He had always looked to them—just as any other man. The Lord then told them to tell no one about this wonderful vision until after He had risen from the dead. This is a very important story to learn and remember, for it tells of how we too are going to see the Lord in heaven, We will see Him in much the same way as Peter, James, and John saw Him. His face will shine and His clothes will be the brightest white. We are told about this in the Writings.

“When the Lord appears in heaven, which often occurs, He does not appear encompassed with a sun, but in the form of an angel, yet distinguished from angels by the Divine shining through from His face, since He is not there in person, for in person the Lord is constantly encompassed by the sun, but He is present by look. For it is a common occurrence in heaven for persons to appear to be present in a place where their look is fixed or is terminated, even when this place is far away from where they really are. This presence is called the presence of internal sight” (*Heaven and Hell* 121).

Yes we will see the Lord in heaven—perhaps He will also walk and talk with us, and tell us the many things we need to know. And yet, in a sense, we can see the Lord while we are still in this world, and again, in a sense He walks and talks with us.

We can see Him in His Word and there He talks with us and leads us by His teachings there. If we want to see the Lord, we must read His Word with love and humility. Then, truly, we will see Him—see Him with the eyes of our minds. For we will then learn about all His Divine qualities and come to know who and what He is.

This is the meaning of the vision of the Lord which Peter, James and John saw—this vision which is called the “Transfiguration.” This is why the Lord’s face shone and His garments glistened—because this is what the Word really is—the shining Divine good and truth of the Lord. This also is why Moses and Elijah were seen with the Transfigured Lord—for they stand for the literal sense of the Word in which is the Divine of the Lord.

Yes, we can see the Lord in His Word—There He talks to us and leads us to His heavenly Kingdom.

This should show us how important it is to read and learn from the Word. We should read it regularly—every day that we possibly can. And as we do this our idea of the Lord will change. No longer will we think of Him as just a wonderful Man. We will see Him as the Only Man—the Divine Good and Divine Truth Itself—Love and Wisdom Itself—the only source of our life. Go to the Word—for there you will meet the Lord.