

He was **Transfigured** before them!

Mark 9:2-9

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Have you ever been on stage under the spotlight? When you look out on the audience, what do you see? Nothing. You can't see anything. You're blinded by the lights. And you're actually less nervous than you'd think, because you can't see the people looking at you. James, Peter, and John couldn't see either. They were blinded by the light. They weren't on stage. They were on the mountain. And the light was unlike *anything* they'd ever seen before! It was like looking at the sun! You couldn't look for very long, without going blind!

Luke tells us the appearance of Jesus' face was altered, transformed. The Greek word is *metamorpho*. Mark says that Jesus' clothes became **radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them**. They were *otherworldly*, we could say. Why? Because of *Who* was wearing them.

Peter is overwhelmed, and terrified! He, who had always had *something* to say, was speechless. He didn't know what to say. He just blurts out something about setting up three tents. He didn't know what else to say. What would you have said? *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.

So what were they supposed to think, Peter, James, and John? Jesus hadn't prepared them for this! It just happened, without warning. Their world, it seems, *invaded* - not only with this vision of radiance, but then also with visitors from heaven: Moses and Elijah. The Law and the prophets.

There's a hymn written about this incident called, "Christ Upon the Mountain Peak". The second verse says, "*Trembling at His feet, we saw Moses and Elijah speaking. All the prophets and the law, shout through them their joyous greeting!*" Joyous greeting. Have you ever imagined it that way before? Moses and Elijah *happy* and *joyful* with Jesus. Grinning from ear to ear, not all serious and theological! The Law and the prophets *rejoicing* in this one, about whom they had been talking about, and pointing to, and waiting for - as He stood there, beaming, in all His radiant glory!

Moses and Elijah didn't shine like Jesus. Yes, they appeared in glory, His glory, but they didn't shine. They were as the moon is to the sun. They reflected the glory of Jesus, but had no glory of their own. Jesus stands alone, uniquely, as the shining One.

Then comes **the cloud**. When clouds move in you know something's up. Something's going to happen. But these aren't storm clouds. This is the God cloud. The cloud of Mount Sinai. The cloud that *led* the people through the wilderness. The cloud that *filled* the tabernacle and the temple. The cloud that signals **God** is here, hiding, so He can be *with* you. Because if He *didn't* hide, we couldn't handle it! We can't stand in God's direct and glorious presence, and live. So what does God do? He hides Himself, cloaks Himself, to be with us, for us; for our good. That cloud is for our protection.

And it **overshadows** them. When else is that term used? When the angel Gabriel comes to Mary and tells her she's going to have a son named Jesus. And now, that same cloud *overshadows* them, envelops them. Someone is present with them in the cloud. And a *voice* comes out of the cloud, "*This is my beloved Son; listen to him.*" Remind you of another time the heavens were open and God spoke? At Jesus baptism.

And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them, but Jesus only.

Jesus only. Isn't that what it's all about? Moses and Elijah. The Law and the prophets. God's ten commandments, written on stone. Keep them perfectly, and you will live - forever! Break even *one* of them, fail to love God and your neighbor just *once*, and what will happen? You will die - eternally! God's ten commandments, an expression of His perfect will, His goodness. *No one* is righteous, not even one. Certainly not you. No one is good, but God alone!

Looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them, but Jesus only. The Spotlight is on Jesus! He's what it's all about. The star of the show, from Genesis to Revelation. From eternity past to eternity future, the One and Only Savior! *Your* one and only Savior. As John saw in his revelation, "*Then I looked, and I heard around the throne*

and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

The spotlight is on Jesus, and Jesus *is* the spotlight. Jesus, shining with the glory of His divine nature, which otherwise had been veiled. Veiled by His humanity. There wasn't a brilliant light shining on Jesus. The brilliant light was coming from Him. He was the Light. When they saw Jesus, they were looking at God. When you see Jesus, you're seeing God. God hidden in human form, manifest that day on the mountain.

... though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2)

In 2 Corinthians 3, the Apostle Paul calls Moses' ministry, the ministry of the law, the ministry of death. The law brings death. *Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.*

Moses and Elijah. The great lawgiver and the outstanding prophet, representing the Old Testament Scriptures, the Law and the Prophets. *... to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ... the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them, but Jesus only. Moses (the Law – of condemnation) and its glory, is fulfilled in Jesus. Elijah and the rest of the prophets, the ones pointing to the coming Savior, are fulfilled in Jesus. The glory of the *old* covenant (of Law) is *superseded* by the glory of the *new* covenant, which fulfills the old. The spotlight is on Jesus, as it should be. Take God's advice: **listen to Jesus**. Listen. And you know what you'll hear? *I forgive you, all your sins.* Listen to Him. His words are Spirit and they are life, eternal life. Listen to Him, and no one else, but Him.

Mark says that Jesus **led them up** the mountain that day. That could also be translated that Jesus **bore them up** the mountain that day. Carried them. A picture of what Jesus did at that other mountain, Mt. Calvary, where He **bore**, He carried, *your* sins on the cross, on Himself, and will **bear** you to heaven with Him also.

Moses, Mr. Law, through whom Israel received the old covenant, the ten commandments. Elijah, Mr. Prophecy, the chief of the prophets who had been whisked off to heaven with fiery horses and chariots. They were there, standing *alongside* shining Jesus, speaking of Jesus' departure in Jerusalem.

Departure. The Greek word is "**exodus**." They were talking about Jesus "exodus" which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. His exodus is His death and resurrection which He had predicted. This would be His "passover", from death, to life. This would be His exodus bringing us and all humanity out of slavery to Sin and Death into freedom and life. His exodus. This is what Moses and Elijah had pointed to in their lives. This is what the Law and the Prophets were all about, this Jesus shining like the sun.

Today, we come to the end of the Epiphany season in the church calendar year. A calendar, telling time, not by way of the sun and moon, but by way of Christ, the Son of God. In Advent, we *anticipated* His coming. In Christmas, we've *seen* God coming in the flesh. During Epiphany we've seen that this man - is *God*, the Light of the world, come to bring us life. And in the coming season of Lent, we'll see this glorious God-man - on the *cross*, suffering, taking your place, that *you* might be transfigured, changed, transformed!

... to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ... And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. (2 Cor. 3)

And then, there was no one but Jesus alone. Just Jesus. Moses and Elijah were gone. The cloud was lifted. The shining had stopped. Just ordinary Jesus. Jesus, the Glorious One, on the way to Jerusalem, and Calvary, for *you*.

And as they were coming down the mountain, [Jesus] charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. Not until the exodus. As Jesus often told people after they'd seen something miraculous that revealed a bit of His glory, "Shhh ... My time has not yet come."

And they kept quiet and told no one anything about this. Later, after the resurrection, they would tell. Peter wrote of it in his epistle, his letter. *We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.* (2 Peter 1:16 ...)

The Apostle Paul concludes 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, **For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"** - in the beginning, in creation - **has shone in our hearts** - now! - **to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God** - not on the mount of Transfiguration, but here, now, - **in the face of Jesus Christ.**

Again, from the words of that transfiguration hymn, *Trembling at His feet, we saw Moses and Elijah speaking. All the prophets and the law, shout through them, their joyous greeting!* Verse 4 - *This is God's beloved Son: Law and prophets fade before Him. First and last, the only One, Let creation now adore Him!*

