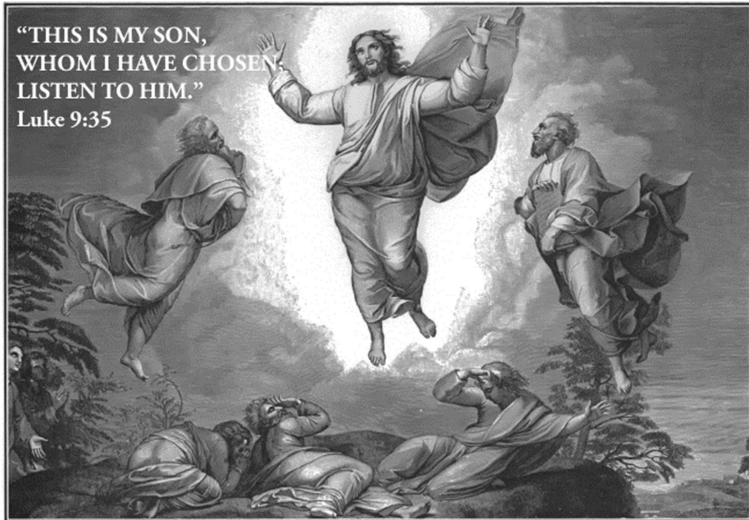


Transfiguration Of Our Lord



The season of Epiphany begins on 6th January.

On 12th January 2020 (1st Sunday after Epiphany), the Church observes the Baptism Of Our Lord.

Then, on 23rd February 2020 (7th Sunday after Epiphany), the **Transfiguration Of Our Lord** is commemorated.

The Epiphany season runs until the day before Ash Wednesday kicks in as the start of the Lent season. (This year, Ash Wednesday falls on 26th February.)

What is Epiphany? The Greek term for Epiphany means “appearance” or “manifestation”.

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, Epiphany commemorates “the first manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles,

represented by the Magi, and the manifestation of his divinity, as it occurred at his baptism in the Jordan River and at his first miracle, at Cana in Galilee.”

“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” – Mt 2:1-2

Separate from the manifestations to the Gentile public, the **Transfiguration Of Our Lord** was a stunningly amazing epiphany (revelation of Jesus’ divinity) to His disciples.

Let’s ponder on the following sequence:

- 1) **FROM** the appearance of Christ as a baby – When “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’” – Lk 2:13-14
- 2) **THROUGH** His Baptism – When ‘heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’” – Mt 3:16-17
- 3) **TO** the Transfiguration – “Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” – Mk 9:7
- 4) **INCLUDING** the numerous miracles He performed in the course of His public ministry
- 5) **WE BEHOLD** the unmistakable manifestation of Christ’s divine character!

Peter, by his absurd suggestion (Mt 17:4), was astoundingly obtuse when witnessing first-hand the extraordinariness of Jesus' face shining like the sun and His clothes becoming as white as the light together with the appearance of Moses and Elijah talking to Him. (Mt 17:2-3)

It was only upon hearing the voice of declaration from heaven (Mt 17:6) that Peter realised his inanity whereby he fell down in fear together with his fellow inner-circle disciples of Christ! Before we go too far to occupy ourselves with Peter's inanity, let us see what positive lesson we can gather from Peter.

About a week before the Transfiguration, Jesus had asked His disciples, "Who do you say I am?"

Peter ventured a good answer, "You are the Messiah."

So, before the Transfiguration, Peter already knew Jesus' divine status; or, did he really absorb the fact?

At the Transfiguration, Peter's inane suggestion betrayed the shallowness of his awareness of Jesus' divine status until a voice from heaven terrifyingly brought the epiphany to him about who Jesus is.

We also read in the Bible about how, despite Jesus' many outstanding teachings and many miracles performed during His public ministry, many would still not believe Him as Messiah.

Blessedly, there were also people who despite their initial unbelief finally believed. Nicodemus and Apostle Paul were two Pharisees whose examples of turning to Jesus inspire us. Peter, despite his early unsteadiness in faith, became a rock upon which the Lord would build His church. (Mt 16:18)

- **Are we like Peter** in his ignorance of the Lord exemplified by the inane request he made at the Transfiguration, only to be jolted by an epiphany (a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization) when some extraordinary event happens?
- **Are we like Peter** declaring solid faith with bravado only to deny Jesus (Jn 18:13-27) at the crucial moment?
- **Are we like Peter** who, despite the shortcomings he displayed of his human nature from time to time), recovers from mistakes, keeps faith in Jesus, learns the lesson of gracious forgiveness by the Lord and then becomes humbled as a devoted servant of God?

Which **“Are we like Peter ...?”** question above is most appropriate to receive a **YES** answer?

As we reflect on the Transfiguration Of Our Lord, we can have a few inspiring takeaways:

- The Transfiguration as a manifestation of Jesus’ divinity can be said to be one of the great events in the epiphany season supremely revealing our Lord’s glory and power, and it strengthened the faith of the witnesses to the belief that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, especially when they heard first-hand the voice of God declaring, “This is my Son ...” similarly as it was declared at Jesus’ baptism.
- The vision of Moses and Elijah talking to Jesus regarding “His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (Lk 9:31 NKJV) alluded to the death of Jesus in the body and the fact that God would bring Him back to life in the Spirit (1 Pet 3:18) Therefore, not only could the Transfiguration strengthen the disciples’ faith in the resurrection of Christ, it should also strengthen our faith,

with our confidence that Jesus will rule the glorious Messianic Kingdom to come.

- The Transfiguration was a confirmation of the prophetic discourse about Christ in the Bible. Some 30+ years after the Transfiguration, 65-68 A.D., Peter wrote emphatically –

*“For **we did not follow cleverly devised stories** when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but **we were eyewitnesses of his majesty**. 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 Pet 1:16-19)*

The profundity of the Truth conveyed by the **Transfiguration Of Our Lord** happening in the presence of the living disciples with the appearance of Moses and Elijah carried a significant spiritual message that Michael Ramsay (1905–1988), a 20th Century Anglican archbishop, expressed succinctly:

*“[The Transfiguration] stands as a gateway to the saving events of the gospel, and is a mirror in which the Christian mystery may be seen in its unity. Here we perceive that the living and the dead are one in Christ, that the old covenant and the new are inseparable, that the Cross and the glory are of one, that the age to come is already here, that our human nature has a destiny of glory, that in Christ the final word is uttered and in him alone the Father is well pleased. **Here the diverse elements in the theology of the New Testament meet.**”*

Meditate on the great significance of the Transfiguration to our spiritual formation!

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