

Sunday 6th August 2017

The Transfiguration of our Lord

White



Collect

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

2 Peter 1:16-19 English Standard Version (ESV)

Christ's Glory and the Prophetic Word

2¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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,^[a] with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ 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,

Footnote: a. Or my Son, my (or the) Beloved

COMMENT: This is the one reference to the Transfiguration outside of the first three Gospels. It interpreted that mysterious event as a guarantee of Christ's Second Coming in glory. This element of faith was in decline early in the 2nd century AD when this letter was composed. Although the Epistle bears the name of Peter, most scholars consider that as a pseudonym used by an unknown author early in the 2nd century to give his letter apostolic authority. The author sincerely believed, however, that he expressed Peter's views if

confronted by a similar situation. If as some speculate, the author was the leader of the church in Rome, Peter was already regarded as its prestigious apostolic founder and first bishop. Verse 19 calls to mind 1 Corinthians 13:12 “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known”. We are to work with the light that we have.

Luke 9:28-36 English Standard Version

The Transfiguration

²⁸ Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. ³⁰ And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² 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. ³³ 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. ³⁴ As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” ³⁶ And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

COMMENT: The emphasis throughout the episode is on the dazzling attestation of Jesus’ identity. We are first given the description of his transformed appearance (verse 29). The change in the appearance of his face is reminiscent of Moses’ face becoming radiant upon experiencing the presence of God in Exodus 34:29-35. But the description of the change in Jesus’ clothes distinguishes him from Moses significantly: Jesus’ clothes become “dazzling white,” words Luke uses to describe the appearance of angelic figures in Luke 24:4 and Acts 1:10. Jesus’ transformed appearance is thus not merely because he is experiencing God’s glory (like Moses) but rather because he is the very source of divine glory. The point is made explicit when the three disciples are said to see Jesus’ glory in verse 32. The appearance of Moses and Elijah in verse 30 adds to the attestation of Jesus’ identity. The two are

commonly interpreted as embodying “the Law and the Prophets,” which is no doubt a significant point. The risen Jesus himself will later assert that Moses and the prophets point toward him (Luke 24:25-27, 44-46). Luke tells us in our scene that Moses and Elijah “were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (verse 31), surely meant to anticipate Jesus’ teaching that he is the ultimate fulfilment of scripture. Yet this is not the only significance of Moses and Elijah. That Jesus was the “prophet like Moses” predicted by Moses himself is emphasized throughout Luke and Acts (seen most clearly in Acts 3:22-23, interpreting Deuteronomy 18:15). Also Elijah’s appearance was associated with the coming of the day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5). Their appearance thus points to Jesus fulfilling specific prophecies associated with them as well as the more general notion of Jesus as the fulfilment of all of scripture. The source of this passage is the Gospel of Mark (Mark 9:2-13) indicating it is an early tradition.

Psalm 97 *Dominus regnavit* Grail Psalter

℟ The Lord is king, most high above all the earth.

¹ The Lord is king, let earth rejoice,
let all the coastlands be glad.

² Cloud and darkness are his raiment;
his throne, justice and right. ℟

³ A fire prepares his path;
it burns up his foes on every side.

⁴ His lightnings light up the world,
the earth trembles at the sight. ℟

⁵ The mountains melt like wax
before the Lord of all the earth.

⁶ The skies proclaim his justice;
all peoples see his glory. ℟

⁷ Let those who serve idols be ashamed,
those who boast of their worthless gods.
All you spirits, worship him. ℟

⁸ Zion hears and is glad;
the people of Judah rejoice
because of your judgments, O Lord. ℟

⁹ For you indeed are the Lord
most high above all the earth,
exalted far above all spirits.

℟ The Lord is king, most high above all the earth.

¹⁰ The Lord loves those who hate evil;
he guards the souls of his saints;
he sets them free from the wicked. **℟**

¹¹ Light shines forth for the just
and joy for the upright of heart.

¹² Rejoice, you just, in the Lord;
give glory to his holy name. **℟**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: This psalm is one of a group of psalms celebrating the enthronement of God. The others are Pss. 47, 93, 96, 98 and 99) In many respects, the vocabulary of all these psalms is similar. This enthronement celebration occurred at each Jewish New Year. It acknowledged God's awesome power, God's justice and God's absolute supremacy over all creation.

Post Communion

Holy God, we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ: may we who are partakers at his table reflect his life in word and deed, that all the world may know his power to change and save. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Blessing

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**