

"The Transfiguration– Confirmed the True Person and Work of Our Savior"  
2/10/13 E-last INI Luke 9:28-35

Dear Fellow Redeemed by the blood of God's own Son,

"One man's dream is another man's hope." When civil rights leader, Martin Luther King preached, "I have a dream," no one asked whether it was wise to hope in someone else's dream. When King said, "I have been to the mountain," no one asked who went to the mountain with him; no one asked, "Where are the witnesses?" And yet 50 years ago, millions of people were stirred to support the cause of human rights.

Shouldn't we who are followers of Christ be even more stirred up to support His cause of saving bodies and souls from eternal death? Our sign says that we "preach a living Savior to a dying world." Is this our HOPE and cause?

King's dreams of earthly prosperity were based on the words of men in the Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution; but our Lord's promises of heavenly glory rest on the Word of Almighty God! King did not go to a mountain, and what he saw was not confirmed by any witnesses; but Jesus went up to the Mount of Transfiguration, taking three witnesses with him. Peter, James, and John received confirmation of the truth of Jesus' preaching and cause.

## **THE TRANSFIGURATION CONFIRMED THE TRUE PERSON AND WORK OF OUR SAVIOR!**

### **I.**

What if Jesus Christ were not the eternal Son of God from heaven? If he were only a man, we could not tell a fellow sinner that holy precious blood was shed for the sins of the world? We need **confirmation of Christ's divinity**. Just a week before, Peter had confessed that Jesus IS **"the Christ, the Son of the living God."** But now Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem where He was to suffer and die like a man in weakness and humility. How could His disciples retain the HOPE of salvation and share it, if they had only seen Jesus' humiliating crucifixion? That's why Jesus took them along when He went up the mountain to pray.

As He was praying His face and clothing became **"white and glistening; they shined like the sun,"** as Matthew reports in his account (Mt. 17). The word **"transfigured"** in Matthew's account

describes an inner change – not only in outward appearance.” The verb which is translated **“white and glistening”** is used in other N.T. passages to speak of the flashing of lightning – not the mere reflection of the sun.

This change actually took place within Jesus Himself, showing itself to the disciples in a miraculous manner! Jesus’ glory had been His as the Son of God from eternity. But here, on the Mt. of Transfiguration, His divinity shined through His mortal body, so that His disciples might have a wonderful confirmation of the truth concerning our Lord’s person.

## II.

Why did Moses and Elijah miraculously appear **“in glory”** at this time? And why were they speaking with Jesus? Remember that it was Moses, the “law-giver,” who prophesied that the Lord **“would raise up a prophet, like him, from the nation of Israel. Hear Him!”** Moses said.(Deut. 18:15 ff.) Elijah was the Lord’s prophet during the latter period of Israel’s great idolatry, when only 7,000 still worshiped the Lord!

These two great prophets spanned the O.T. period. They were in complete agreement regarding the way to salvation. Both were preachers of the Law, but they were also preachers of Christ and the Gospel of forgiveness! Both Moses and Elijah are mentioned in the closing verses of the O.T.. In Malachi 4, the last chapter of the O.T. Jesus is mentioned as **“the Sun of righteousness”** who would **“arise with healing in His wings.”**

The appearance of Moses and Elijah, speaking with Jesus on the Mount, was confirmation that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised “Messiah,” And that salvation has always been through His Word of grace and forgiveness! As if this was not confirmation enough, the Father spoke to the three apostles from the bright cloud, saying: **“This is My beloved Son, be hearing Him!”**

## III.

There is one more confirmation to consider: **Confirmed: Jesus must suffer before His departure to glory.** Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all report on the Transfiguration; but only Luke tells us about the conversation Jesus was having with Moses and Elijah. According to v. 31, they were not only talking about our Lord’s death, but His **“departure”**

which He was **"about to accomplish"** in Jerusalem.

The word, "departure" in the original is the word "exodus," which means "leaving." The three glorified persons on the Mount were talking about the entire WAY in which Christ would leave the earth – His suffering, His sacrificial death, His resurrection, and ascension into heavenly glory! Jesus was not taken away from the earth by death; He willingly left through death.

This subject was of great importance to Moses and Elijah. For even though they were in glory, yet their blessed state and that of all believers throughout human history depended entirely on Christ's **departure** that He was to accomplish in Jerusalem! Jesus MUST fulfill all that was written and promised concerning his suffering and dying for sinners! This had been the hope of believers for 4,000 years!

Peter must have missed this discussion. For we read in v. 33 that **"even as"** Moses and Elijah were **"parting"** from Jesus, Peter blurted out: **"Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles (tents): one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah!"** Peter didn't know what he was saying! Only a week before, Jesus had told His disciples that He MUST **"suffer many things"** in Jerusalem, be killed and rise again the third day. Do you remember what Peter did when he heard all this? He **"took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him."** Now on the Mountain top Peter sought a way to keep Jesus from going to Jerusalem! (Mt. 16:21-13)

The man, Peter, liked the glory of the Mountain! He liked the idea of spending day after day with the likes of Moses and Elijah, Jesus, James, and John. It was safe up there, away from the crowds and the enemies of the Lord's Word. If he could not argue the Lord out of going to Jerusalem to die, perhaps he and the others could make it comfortable for Jesus and themselves on the Mountain!

But no, Peter! What is the glory of the God-Man on the Mountain compared to the greater glory which shall be His when He finishes His saving work and returns to heaven? What is your moment of glory on the Mountain top, Peter, compared to the eternal glory He seeks for all people by leaving the earth through His death for sinners? Here it is **confirmed that Jesus must suffer for us all on His way to glory!** **"This is My Beloved Son,"** God says from the cloud, STOP arguing with Him! **Be**

## **hearing HIM!"**

Now, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, YOU have also been to the Mountain! Through the testimony of eye-witnesses, you have witnessed the glorious Transfiguration of your Savior. It has been good to listen to Him together. It has been good to sing and pray together in unity before Him.

But we cannot remain here, any more than Peter and the others could remain on the Mount. Get down from the Mountain, you servants and disciples of the almighty God and Savior of mankind! Get down to the wilderness of this world and the hopeless hearts of those around you!

Tend to your one great calling in life with zeal and faithful sacrifice, without a thought about what you may suffer for Him!

You have been to the mountain, not as self-proclaimed dreamers, but as witnesses of a sure and certain HOPE! Your hope has been **confirmed** by the word and testimony of the prophets, Jesus, the apostles, and the heavenly Father Himself!

That was no dream the apostles saw. That was the Light of the world, Who continues to be the only light for every person who comes into this sin-darkened world! And YOU get to be His witnesses! Amen.