

The Transfiguration of Christ

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[0 : 0 0] The Sing to God's Praise from Psalm 96, Psalm 96 from verse 4 down to verse 9.

For great's the Lord, and greatly he is to be magnified, yea, worthy to be feared is he above all gods beside. For all the gods are idols dumb, which blinded nations fear, but our God is the Lord, by whom the heavens created were.

Great honour is before his face, and majesty divine. Strength is within his holy place, and there doth beauty shine. Do ye ascribe unto the Lord of people every tribe.

Glory do ye unto the Lord, and mighty power ascribe. Give ye the glory to the Lord that to his name is due. Come ye unto his courts, and bring an offering with you.

In beauty of his holiness, O do the Lord adore. Likewise, let all the earth throughout tremble his face before.

[1 : 1 3] For great's the Lord, and greatly he is to be magnified.

For great's the Lord, and greatly he is to be magnified, yea, worthy to be feared is he above all gods beside.

For all the gods are idols dumb, which blinded nations fear.

for great's the Lord should be toxic.urbished but your goodness is the Lord all time. For heaven is created.

Western0■ If Youtube Fix with Pop Call And marches dear divine, Strengthes with endless holy bliss, And let not beauty shine, To give us drive unto the Lord, Of people and every tribe, Glory to ye unto the Lord,

[3 : 4 0] And mighty blood as I, Give ye the glory to the Lord, That to His name is you, Come ye and do His course and bring, And offer to live with you, In beauty of His holiness, O to the Lord adieu,

Like wise and only accrued, Tremble is devout, Shall we, for a short time, turn to the passage that we read?

And we're going to look at the beginning of chapter 17, the account that we have there of the transfiguration Matthew chapter 17 at the beginning of the chapter after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother and bringeth him up into an high mountain apart and was transfigured before them and his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light and so on but continuing our study in the passages of scripture that bring before us the glory of God as it is revealed to us in different forms and we're moving into the New Testament and we're just going to look at some occasions in the New Testament scriptures where we could describe what is brought to our attention as being revelations of the God of glory and the glory of that God the transfiguration as it is called is something that is recorded for us by the three synoptic gospels

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record what takes place here in varying degrees of detail it is without question a remarkable event a glorious event and yet if you read through the account carefully it is not immediately apparent if it is apparent at all what the intention of our Lord is in bringing Peter, James and John into such an experience because I believe that's although the experience is recorded in the scripture for the benefit of the whole church these three disciples we find occasionally introduced into experience experiences that others are not given insights to they hear of them and like ourselves they probably are able to read about them they will hear verbatim accounts of them as disciples so that but Peter, James or John are ones that are spoken of as the disciples that the Lord wishes to share these experiences with and yet he doesn't explain to us why this is the case why them and why this occasion we may possibly arrive at some conclusion after considering what takes place but I want us just to work our way through the passage and see some of the thoughts that occur to us even though they are probably selfish thoughts that may occur to most of you in any case but there is no harm in going over them again and reflecting upon them we can begin with the time and the place that this took place and the place is relatively easy to describe it is just a mountain a high mountain if you want to expand beyond that you can speculate along with others some the church of old were quite content to believe that it was

Mount Tabor more recently that thought has been dismissed because of the distance involved in the Lord and the disciples travelling from where they were to this mountain but it is not necessary whether it's Tabor or as some suggest Hermon or any number of different locations it's simply stated without specifying that it is a mountain and that it is a high mountain the second thing that we have here is that the Lord takes them there after six days one of the gospels says after eight days but that is considered to be simply a matter of the way that the Jews count the days after six days it says here after six days from what six days from the point at which these events occurred that we read of when the

[11 : 04] Lord took his disciples aside and questioned them regarding who people thought he was who do men say that I the son of man and that is followed by the confession of Peter the most awesome confession on the part of any individual but Peter especially is the one who makes the statement that he is Christ the son of the living God and Jesus acknowledges that such a confession is something that is not of human origin blessed art thou Simon by Jonah for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my father which is in heaven and remember that statement because

Peter's insight is not of human origin it is of divine origin Christ recognises this and acknowledges it and then shortly after that very strangely we find that Jesus discloses to the disciples what is in store for him that shortly he is going to die and that he is very detailed in the description that he gives he must go to Jerusalem suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day and the very person who has made this awesome confession that he is Christ the son of the living God is the one who says to the Lord far be it from thee this is not going to be in your experience and again the outspoken

Peter as we often find him to be has to be rebuked by the Lord and it is a severe rebuke that he receives though art an offence unto me for thou severest not the things that be of God but those that be of men and Peter finds himself chastised fernerly by Christ for refusing to recognise the necessity that there was for the son of man to die now that's the background to what follows on from six days from this taking place Jesus takes these three disciples and he takes them to be apart with himself on a high mountain and we can't just ignore the events that preceded it because they are important and

I think they're tied in with what the Lord is going to experience and what the disciples who are with him are going to experience some people some of the commentators would say that very often in the scriptures there are these silences six days it says what happened during these six days where were they what were they doing what was he saying what did they encounter as disciples were not told there are there are punctuation marks as it were in the scripture that mark out to us events that are undisclosed and that the Lord has kept him from sight but whatever took place during that time at this time he takes them up to a high mountain now in the different accounts we have offered various bits of information in

Luke's account he tells us that he went up into a high mountain to pray that's not what Matthew says he took them to a high mountain apart and I think both are accurate statements usually when the Lord separated himself from others it was with this purpose that he would spend time with them in prayer and probably Luke is more accurate in what he says but he has his reasons and the reasons probably have to do with the future ministry that the disciples who are taken with him have to fulfil but we're not told that's a simple matter we're not told what was in the heart of the master concerning his disciples but his ministry to them was very particular and very direct and subsequently although probably the apostle

[16 : 56] James in his own writings may not make direct reference to this it indicates what he has to say on occasion and Peter very directly speaks of this occasion and John as we shall see probably has not ever forgotten this like the apostle Peter verse 2 tells us that he was transfigured before them now that word transfigured covers what happens although what happens is not immediately obvious it's just a suitable description of something that took place with regard to the physical body of Christ it was transformed it was different to what they knew of Christ prior to that his face we are told did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light and we always have to remember that when the

Lord lived in this world when he spent his time with men in the world his physical presence always spoke of his humanity rather more than his divinity although he is always divine he is always God and man his Godhead his divinity is kept in abeyance it's hidden from sight but on occasion the disciples and others were given glimpses of the divine glory which they were not otherwise privy to and Christ at this moment what the disciples who were with him saw and remember it speaks clearly about what he brings them up to a high mountain apart he was transfigured before them and his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light they were able to see this transformation in his physical presence and what they saw at that moment had a bearing on their own future as well if you look at how the episode concludes in verse 9 we read as they came down from the mountain

Jesus charged them saying tell the vision to no man until the son of man be risen again from the dead they weren't allowed to speak of these things until the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ and then they were at liberty to disclose it so there is a sense in which the unveiling of Christ was something that was temporary and they as witnesses to the unveiling of Christ were charged with keeping that hidden until such time as the unveiling of Christ even by way of report would make sense and would be more readily acceptable to others you can imagine what it would be like if these three disciples came down from the mountain and began to disclose what they had seen it would be very difficult for them to be believed and

Jesus probably for that reason keeps it hidden but there's more to it than that but what we find is that he was changed physically before them his face his clothing his person reflected a heavenly glory that was unique prior to this as I said it was kept veiled but now for a time it was revealed Luke says the fashion of his countenance was altered literally the Greek word that Luke uses for that it became other sometimes the Greek is very stilted and words are added to make sense of it but what the Greek in Luke's description is Jesus became other it's as if he's struggling as you would imagine to make sense of what he saw and to describe in words that men and women can understand what was seen by him he became mother in what sense what does he mean by that well we can imagine that what they saw collectively made them struggle to explain it or describe it in words as you can imagine that would be how it was it just shows us that what they saw was unlike anything that they had seen before and perhaps you would say well they have seen many things in the presence of

Christ before they have seen him do wonders and miracles and they have heard him speak and say awesome things but compared to this these things are beyond this world they are otherworldly and the next thing we have is that they saw Moses and Elijah with Jesus again it is they see this that appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him this is their experience this is what they are witness to they are seeing Moses and Elijah along with Jesus and the discussion usually revolves around the understanding that they had that what they saw was who they saw these two persons they knew them to be

[24 : 08] Moses and Elijah so the question that is asked is how did they know how could they possibly know that these two characters who were long gone long dead well better watch my words Moses was buried but we don't know where Elijah was translated but it was long before any of the disciples were in this world so how could they possibly have recognised them from their physical presence well the question is redundant really because we we've already seen how the Lord by his spirit revealed to Peter something that Peter could not possibly have appreciated were it not for the life that the Lord gave to him Peter's confession came on the back of the spirit of God teaching him who the

Lord Jesus was that he was the son of the living God and by the same way you can probably believe that their knowledge of who these two people were was from God that God had revealed that to them you can see in the scripture and I was trying to remember and I couldn't remember exactly where it is in the Old Testament where a myriad host of angels were involved in the preservation of the Israelite army and they were hidden from view until God chose to reveal their presence to them and in many respects there are many experiences that the Christian believer has where mere understanding alone is insufficient for them to grasp the significance of what lies before them until

God reveals it to us until God gives light until God opens their eyes and the eyes of our understanding and probably in this case there's more to it than that but their knowledge of who it was is from the Lord so they knew who Moses was and they knew who Elijah was and then we have Peter's typical response I say typical because very often Peter is outspoken he immediately speaks without reflecting on the wisdom of what he is saying and he says to the Lord remember he's speaking to Jesus he says Lord it is good for us to be here if thou wilt let us make here three tabernacles one for thee and one for

Moses and one for Elias and very often people are critical of Peter because of that statement that he has not really thought it through yes the significance in these characters from the Old Testament the prophet Moses the prophet Elijah they were raised up by God to perform great things and they were his emissaries in a world that was lying in sin and the Lord used them mightily and historically they have a place in the minds and the hearts of God's people but should they at the same time be put alongside the Lord Jesus Christ and obviously the answer you would give to that surely not because whatever they were and however important they were and they were important their role in the world was to tell the world about the person of the

Lord Jesus they were not there to broadcast their own name or to testify to their own glory of their own work they were there to speak of the glory of another even Moses as the law giver the law is something that leads us to Christ Elijah the prophet was somebody who a step beyond Moses was somebody who spoke of Christ but they were speaking of him they were opening the understanding to who Christ was and Peter seems to be unaware of the foolishness of what he is saying or the carelessness rather of what he is saying I've told you I know

[29 : 45] I've told you before because I've remembered I remembered saying it but one of the first sermons I ever read as a Christian was a sermon by Theod Spurgeon on the text here in this passage in Versicht I think when they lifted up their eyes they saw no man said Jesus only I remember reading that sermon I wasn't I wasn't somebody who read sermons but at that time in my life I remember reading that and the effect that it had on me I remember clearly and at the same time what I would say is this that sermons are not meant to be read and sermons are not meant to be heard by way of CD or tape or internet the medium of the sermon is best fulfilled in the passion of hearing of each one of us that we are in passion hearing the proclamation of

God's word from a preacher in passion with the Lord's people in company with us that's the purpose for it that's the first priority it has now I'm not saying that a red sermon will not fulfil a purpose I'm not saying that a sermon that's heard by way of CD or tape does not serve a purpose but the whole package is what God means to use and that is to hear the proclamation of God's word in person with the Lord's people for there the spirit of God is at work in the reading of the word in the singing of the word in the interaction that exists between God's people as they hear the word it's important that we remember that and that we don't dismiss the relevance of it because very often

I'm hearing it so often in all the congregations I go to that following on from COVID a lot of people some of them Christians say I don't need to come to church physically I can do church at home I can sit and listen to live stream and I can hear everything that you're hearing in my own home without having to get up and rest and go out well that's all very well if the ability to go out is not there fair enough God knows that but a person I believe is passing a blessing by themselves when they do that this is just a digression but it's something that I think it's important for us to think about for ourselves who knows when the day of our opportunity will be taken from us speaking to somebody this week and they've not been able to go to church for a long time and what was said was what

I miss most is the prayer meeting Sundays yes I miss Sundays but I miss the prayer meeting and I think I miss the prayer meeting because that is where God's family are most to be found and I could understand what this person is saying and you have to remember it and you have to bear in mind that our day of opportunity might run on into the future but who knows it might not and we will we will be well we will grieve over the missed opportunities now coming back to the text here and the passage we find that while Peter was so open and ready to make this statement about the

Persians who were there he wanted to stay there let us build three tabernacles he says that not only put the Lord alongside the Persians of Moses and Elijah but he was losing sight of the fact that if anything what the Lord was meaning to teach them had a purpose for their future it was not just an experience for the present it was meant to be something that prepared them for something beyond the present now whenever a blessing comes we might want to stay where the blessing is ours and think well this is a good place to remain but the world in which we live is a world where we're not permanent residents we are in transit and the blessings that God conveys to us as we are in transit they are to be measured and marked worthwhile for what

[35 : 40] God means them to be but they are never meant to be something that says to us we'll stay where we are we must we're always on a forward trajectory we're always going on until the time comes where our going on takes us from this world into the next but Peter the words are no sooner uttered when a cloud overshadows them while he yet spake behold a bright cloud overshadowed them and behold a voice out of the cloud which said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased hear ye him there was glory attached to the transfiguration we count out that the Lord Jesus was revealed to them in a way that they hadn't seen him before but then added to that there is this experience where

God comes in the presence in person in the cloud and his glory is made known to them through the cloud the cloud is not God but God is in the cloud because he speaks from the cloud to them a voice out of the cloud which said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased hear hear him if they recognized Moses and Elijah which they did more than anything they recognized the voice of Jehovah the voice of the God of Israel speaking to them out of the cloud my beloved son my beloved son they know they knew instantly who was speaking to them they were in awe of it and if you want to understand something about the experience that

Peter had just got to Peter's remembering of this occasion in 2 Peter chapter 1 Peter recalls this occasion he says for we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but were eyewitnesses of his majesty for you received from God the father honour and glory for he received from God the father honour and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased and this voice which came from heaven we heard and when we were with him in the holy mount now Peter is there recalling the transfiguration but he's not recalling at that point

Moses and Elijah he's recalling the voice from the cloud he's recalling the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ this glory that was revealed to them no word of Moses and Elijah we were eyewitnesses of his majesty and the voice said to them hear him don't don't allow your vacillating heart to keep you back from him don't allow your trembling bones to to hide from sight the glory that I have been pleased to reveal to you when God speaks the world trembles the world does tremble when God speaks he can speak to us in providence and we tremble and we do well to tremble but they recognised the

God who was speaking to them there and some of the commentators remarked that it wasn't really fear that made them tremble but the awe and the awesome encounter that they had with the passion of God that made them an acknowledgement of who he was that they were paying homage to his glory that made them prostrate themselves as an act of worship rather than an act of terror while be that as it may required the touch of Jesus to help them recover I think when I was looking at this I was saying to myself I think that there is much more in that statement than we give credence to and Jesus came and touched them and said arise and be not afraid there is

[40 : 54] I think a sense of all connected with that act on the part of Christ a tender act a compassionate act yet an act on whose heart nevertheless that reached out to them and said don't be afraid don't be afraid of the voice of my heavenly father don't be afraid of this glory that has been revealed to you he wanted them to remember this event not with abject terror but with an understanding that the glory that was revealed to them was for their strengthening for their encouragement so that in the years to come when Peter remembered this event he would remember it because of what he saw of the glory of God I suggested that

John the apostle who's most quiet he doesn't say much he's not as vocal as Peter it seems but he is the one who is displayed as resting his head in the lap of Jesus he is the one who in the beginning of his gospel says to us there we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth now it may be that covers a whole host of experiences on the part of John but I doubt if this one was excluded from it I doubt if this experience of John's was omitted from his thinking Jesus only and that is what they were reminded of well there is a lot to be said about this passage a lot more than we've said just a brief overview of what is there when they came down as we said

Jesus told them don't tell anyone keep this to yourselves and I'm sure that that was the hardest thing that they had to do imagine keeping the lid on this imagine keeping quiet about this imagine not being able to share this with others when they themselves would have been so full of it strange that when we read about Moses when he went up unto the mount that when he was in the presence of God his face shown by virtue of his encounter with God so that when he came down people knew something about that they knew in his face that the glory that he had encountered had rubbed off on him in some way and yet we don't read that about the disciples but it's still their heart their heart would have been full of what they had seen and we're thankful to God that the day came when they were able to share that and that it empowered them to continue as they were the followers of Jesus to

God encourage us to think about this passage and all that it has to say to us let us pray Lord our God we give thanks for the amount of transfiguration for your goodness in taking these disciples to be aside to pray and that as you prayed you were changed before the very eyes and there may be some connection with the act of prayer our Lord petitioning the heavenly father and as that interaction took place the radiation of God's glory was reflected or not reflected it was revealed we cannot believe that there is anything of reflected glory in

Christ his glory is all his it is the glory of God and we give thanks for it we pray for your blessing upon your word and upon all who treat it with love and respect and to hunger and forgive our sins we pray in Jesus name amen we're concluding psalm psalm 134 and we're singing these verses in gaelic psalm 134 it's just two verses in the psalm tre O

[46 : 45] Oh, 10 of his ode.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[49 : 08] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Amen.