

Mark 9:2-9

Introduction

In the Gospel of Mark, the Transfiguration of Jesus marks a transition in the gospel. At the end of [Mark 8](#), Jesus has just foretold his death and resurrection to his disciples. The account of the Transfiguration immediately follows these words. It is after the Transfiguration that Jesus sets his face to go to Jerusalem to die and rise again.

This morning I want to show three things that the Transfiguration of Jesus teaches from Mark's gospel:

1. The transfiguration teaches about the glory of humanity.
2. The Transfiguration teaches about the relationship between the Old and New Covenants.
3. The Transfiguration Teaches about the glory of Jesus.

The Transfiguration Teaches About Humanity's Glory (vv. 2-3)

One mistake that many people make when reading the gospels is to assume that any great or amazing thing that Jesus does is a sign of his divinity. This isn't a terrible error or mistake because it is often done out of a desire to honor and glorify Jesus, who is indeed fully God and fully man. However, one of the drawbacks of this approach is that you can then miss other things that the gospel writers are revealing about Jesus.

When it comes to the the Transfiguration, it can be easy to focus so much on the shining glory and voice from heaven that we miss other details that teach us about who Jesus is.

For example, in Mark's account of the Transfiguration there are no less than six parallels with the the events at Mount Sinai in [Exodus 24, 33-34](#).

(1) Both reference going up a mountain after six days. (2) Both have a cloud covering the mountain. (3) God's voice comes from the cloud in both cases. (4) Both Moses and Jesus take three companions up the mountain. (5) Both Moses and Jesus have their appearances transformed. (6) Jesus' disciples respond in terror and the people were afraid of Moses face when it shown.

What is it then that the account of the Transfiguration teaches? What I want to show in this first point is that in his transfiguration, *Jesus reveals the glory that is intended for humanity.*

When Jesus is transfigured, it isn't to reveal so much his glory as the Second Person of the Trinity, but to show the glory humanity was destined for from the beginning. We find in opening chapters of Genesis that Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed when they were created. Made in God's image, humanity was to progress from one degree of glory to another as they obeyed God's command to keep the garden and subdue and fill the earth.

Clothing in the Bible is often associated with glory. The fact that Adam and Eve were naked hints at the fact that they were destined to enter into greater degrees of glory.

When Jesus is transfigured, his clothes become ***radiant, intensely white as no one on earth could bleach them.*** In Revelation chapter 1, the Apostle John again sees Jesus in all his glory and describes Jesus as,

one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. ([Rev. 1:13-15](#))

Both here in the Transfiguration and in John's encounter with Jesus in Revelation, Jesus reveals humanity in the fullness of its glory. Humanity was made to image the glory of God. This is part of what it means to be made in *the image of God*. Humanity's access to this glory was lost when Adam Fell and was cast out of God's presence in the Garden.

In Christ, humanity's access to this glory has been restored. Indeed, it is our destiny *in Christ*. As Paul says in [1 Corinthians 15:49](#) "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."

This is why Paul can elsewhere write to the Roman Christians, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." ([Rom 8:18](#))

Our destiny is to be transformed into the glory of Jesus. While we may walk through great suffering as he did, we can do so holding firm to this hope that we have in Christ.

The Transfiguration Teaches About the Relationship Between the Old and New Covenant (vv. 4-6)

In addition to teaching us about humanity's glory, the Transfiguration also informs us about the relationship between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

Verse 4 states that **Moses and Elijah** appear alongside Jesus and begin to talk with Jesus.

Moses and Elijah represent the "Law" and the "Prophets". What's more, they stand in as two representatives of the Old Covenant. They are fitting representatives to appear at Jesus' resurrection because both Moses and Elijah were given glimpses of God's glory.

Peter misreads the situation by suggesting, in verse 5, that he could make three tents for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Peter is likely connecting this glorious occurrence with the Feast of Booths that was one of Israel's three major annual festivals. The Feast of Booths commemorated God's provision of his people while they wandered in the wilderness after their salvation from Egypt.

With the presence of Moses and Elijah, two prophets associated with the wilderness, Peter suggests the making of tents or booths.

But Peter misunderstands what is really going on. What the Transfiguration shows is the transitory nature of the Old Covenant compared to the permanence of the New Covenant in Christ. By bringing Moses and Elijah alongside Jesus in his Transfiguration, the evangelists show that Moses and Elijah are temporary, but Jesus is permanent.

The Book of Hebrews presents this well in [Hebrews 8](#). The author of Hebrews explains that the priests of the Old Covenant served “a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things.” (v. 5) But this is not true of Jesus’ ministry in the New Covenant. Hebrews states, “Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better.”

This is not to say that the church can now ignore the words of Moses or Elijah (or any word of the Old Covenant). But rather, they must all be lead in the light of Christ, for it was of him that they were always speaking of.

The Transfiguration Teaches About the Superiority of Jesus (vv. 7-9)

My final point this morning builds upon this. The Transfiguration teaches the superiority of Jesus.

In verse 7, “***a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, ‘This is my beloved Son; listen to him.’***”

Even with Moses and Elijah present, the heavenly witness says that the one to whom the disciples should listen to is Jesus. Jesus is greater even than Moses and Elijah. Moses and Elijah are in full agreement with this because they both knew that there would be one after them who would be greater than them.

But there is one final thing I wish to point out in conclusion. Recall the end of the lives of Moses and Elijah in the Bible. Both men are shrouded in mystery. In [Deuteronomy 34](#), Moses ascends Mount Nebo and gets to see the Promised Land before he dies. But his death is mysterious, “So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, but no one knows the place of his burial to this day. Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated.” Elijah’s end is also mysterious. In [2 Kings 2](#), Elijah is taken up into heaven in a whirlwind.

What is interesting to note here is how Jesus' death stands in contrast to those of Moses and Elijah. Jesus's suffers his death in public shame on the cross.

What is important to understand about the gospels, is that Jesus' Transfiguration comes immediately after his announcement to his disciples that he will die in Jerusalem. Jesus' Transfiguration is linked to his death.

The life of Jesus and the message of the church is that of suffering and transfiguration. Jesus was to suffer a gruesome death on the cross. But before he did so, he revealed his glory to his core disciples in his Transfiguration. This was to show them that though the suffering is real, there is glory on the other side.

The message of the church and the life of the church is to be marked by the same pattern as Jesus' own life. The church is to proclaim of faith of suffering and glory and the church is to walk out a life of suffering and glory.

There are times when you will be called to all sorts of glorious things: The birth of children, weddings, the growth of a family and a heritage before the Lord. These are all wonderful blessings of glory that are to be enjoyed in the life of the church.

At other times you will be called to suffer. Death, loss, pain, and hardship are all parts of life that the church is called to walk through.

In all of this, the church can walk in confidence that She is walking no other path than the one Her Lord has walked before her. Knowing that the ultimate end is glory. Even the glory that Jesus revealed in his Transfiguration.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!