

Jesus’ Transfiguration is a *Big Deal!*

Literary

In all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), the transfiguration is closely connected to a change in Jesus’ ministry: after the transfiguration he sets his eyes on approaching the cross. It shows up in nearly the exact same form with the same theological setting in all three and is in a crux position.

Canonical

2 Peter 1:16-18	<i>“We were eyewitnesses of his majesty ... when he received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory...”</i>
John 1:14	<i>“We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father...”</i>
1 John 1:5	<i>“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”</i>
2 Corinthians 4:6	<i>“For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”</i>
Hebrews 1:3	<i>“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.”</i>
Revelation 1:16	<i>“...and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.”</i>

Theological

The connection of Jesus’ radiant glory to our present transformation and future glory shows up 1 John 3:2, Philippians 3:21, and 2 Corinthians 3:18.

The connection of Jesus’ transfiguration and our doctrine of Scripture and interpretation show up explicitly in 2 Peter 1:16-18 and implicitly in Hebrews 1, John 1, and perhaps even Old Testament prophecies and psalms where God’s word is light, or the Gentiles wait for the light of God’s law such as Isaiah 2:3-5, 9:1-2, Isaiah 42:4-6 and Psalm 43:3, 19:7-8, 36:9, 119:105.

(Just wait until I get going!)

A Better Exodus

Six direct connections to the Exodus

1. *They speak about his Exodus (v. 31) → The only place in the NT where this word shows up.*
2. *They are on a mountain (v. 28) with Moses (v. 30). → Just like the receiving of the Law.*
3. *A voice speaks from a cloud (v. 35) → A cloud led the Israelites and from there God spoke.*
4. *A shining, glorious face (vv. 29, 32) → Moses’ face also shone.*
5. *Three companions with Jesus (v. 28) → Moses brought Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu.*
6. *The presence of “tents” (v. 33) → Both the Israelites and God stayed in tents*

The first Exodus vs. the second

A better sacrifice, a better mediator, a better salvation, and a better reward

A Better Moses

Shining glory, reflection vs. source

Exodus 34:34-35 “Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, ³⁵ the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.”

This is my son, listen to him!

Deuteronomy 18:15 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.”

Grace and truth

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Grace because of Jesus’ “exodus” which he accomplished in Jerusalem, truth because he speaks to us

1. His grace is our Exodus from sin and death. We need to put his blood over the doorpost of our home.
2. His truth is the source of the word. We need to be careful to do all he says, not to add or subtract from him.

A Better Promised Land

If it’s an exodus, where are we going?

In this story, Moses stands with Christ on the promised land that he was forbidden from entering due to his sin. When did Moses reach the promised land, anyway?

- On the one hand, Moses, now by Christ’s grace and invitation, gets to receive what the law forbade.
- On the other hand, Moses, also by God’s grace, went to the ultimate promised land long ago.

Luke 23:43 “And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.’”

Questions for Personal Study

1. Why is it significant that Luke frames the transfiguration with imagery from the Exodus? How does this show us the nature of Christ’s mission?
2. Imagine being Peter, James, or John. What did you experience and learn? What were you left wondering?
3. How does Luke model the way the Old Testament prefigures the ministry and work of Jesus Christ?
4. Grace and truth go together. Do you err on one side or the other, giving truth without grace or vice versa?