

February 2, Transfiguration of the Lord

Collect BAS

Almighty God,
on the holy mount you revealed to chosen witnesses
your well-beloved Son, wonderfully transfigured:
mercifully deliver us from the darkness of this world,
and change us into his likeness from glory to glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever

Collect BCP

O GOD,
who on the holy mount didst reveal to chosen witnesses
thy well-beloved Son wonderfully transfigured:
Mercifully grant-unto us such a vision of his divine majesty,
that we, being purified and strengthened by thy grace,
may be transformed into his likeness from glory to glory;
through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14: *The book is set in the days of the exile in Babylon. Daniel is a famous character from that time. According to Ezekiel, Daniel was renowned for his piety and wisdom. In a vision Daniel received, he saw God, the “Ancient One,” take His place on the throne of judgment. Then “one like a human being” (or a son of man) came from heaven and was presented to God, who gave him a universal, eternal, unconquerable kingdom.*

As I watched,
thrones were set in place,
and an Ancient One took his throne;
his clothing was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames,
and its wheels were burning fire.
A stream of fire issued
and flowed out from his presence.
A thousand thousand served him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.

The court sat in judgement,
and the books were opened.
As I watched in the night visions,
I saw one like a human being
coming with the clouds of heaven.
And he came to the Ancient One
and was presented before him.
To him was given dominion
and glory and kingship,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that shall not pass away,
and his kingship is one
that shall never be destroyed.

2 Peter 1:16-19: *Peter wrote of the Transfiguration, affirming that, unlike false teachers drawing members from the community of Christ, he was an eye witness to God's glorification of the Lord. So, in a sense, this reaffirmed Peter's credibility. "Stop listening to false teachers!" he seemed to be saying.*

We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Luke 9:28b-36: *Jesus had predicted his suffering, death and resurrection to his disciples. He took Peter and James and John (those closest to him) up a mountain to pray (it is always a good idea to sit in God's presence before facing anything momentous!). While praying, Jesus' face changed and his clothes become "dazzling white" (signifying a transcended state). Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke privately with Jesus. Like at his baptism, a cloud overshadowed the scene and a voice was heard affirming Jesus' status and commanding all to listen to him. The Gospels tell us that the disciples, now speechless, did not tell anyone about these events until much later.*

About eight days after Jesus spoke of his death and resurrection, he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!’ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and, in those days, told no one any of the things they had seen.

The Transfiguration of the Lord shows us that the glory that once filled the tabernacle and temple, the glory that departed from Israel is now seen in Jesus. God with us. Immanuel. This isn't about how man becomes God, but how God becomes Man yet still retains the fullness of His glory. Nothing compromised. Full blast God in human flesh. And the sight was glorious.

With Jesus were Moses and Elijah from the Old Testament. Moses, through whom came the Torah. Elijah, the chief of the prophets. Mr. Torah and Mr. Prophecy, standing with shining Jesus and talking with Him the way one converses with an old friend. It's a picture of the resurrection, when we too will stand in the glory of Jesus, raised from our death. This is a little sneak preview of what lies ahead for the disciples and for you, baptized believer.

Jesus came not to abolish Moses and the Prophets, but to fulfill them. To bring them to their conclusion and purpose. And here they are flanking Jesus, bearing witness to him. Luke wrote that they were discussing Jesus' "exodus," his departure, that is, his coming death and resurrection by which Moses and the prophets are fulfilled.

Before Peter could begin his shrine building, a thick cloud covered the mountain. It was the same cloud that covered Sinai and filled the tabernacle and temple. The pillar of cloud that guided Israel. And from the cloud there came the voice of the Father, echoing Jesus' baptism. "This is my Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him."

Hear his words. His are the words of eternal life. Moses can't save you, but he can point you to the One who can. Elijah can't save you, but he can point you to the One who can. Only Jesus can save you. Only Jesus bears your sin, your death, the punishments of the Law. Only Jesus can mediate between God and Man because he is both God and Man. Moses and Elijah reflected the glory of God, but only Jesus shines with the glory of God. Moses and Elijah were like the moon reflecting the sun. But only Jesus shines like the sun with his own light. Moses and Elijah reflected the light; only Jesus is the Light of the world.

And in the end, that's what the three disciples saw. Only Jesus. He came and picked them up off the ground, raised them up out of their fear. They saw no one but Jesus only. He's all they need. He's all you need too.

We prefer the glory to the cross, not only with Jesus but also in our own lives. We prefer the stories of miraculous healings to the stories of heroic suffering. We prefer the power and the majesty of a Jesus who shines with unearthly glory than a beaten and bloodied Jesus who hangs dead and defeated.

But here's the rub: Only dead Jesus can save you. Only crucified Jesus can bear your sin. If all that Jesus ever did was appear shining and radiant on a mountain to three of his disciples, you'd still be stewing in your Sin and Death. You'd still be condemned by the Law.

The Transfiguration tells you who Jesus is – true God and true Man. Divinity in human flesh. It tells you that even though his divinity may be buried deeply in his humanity, nevertheless the fullness of deity dwells bodily in Jesus without attenuation. He is fully God and fully Man. His death and resurrection tell you who he is for you – your Lord, your Redeemer, your Saviour, God's sacrificial Lamb who died for the sin of the world.

You will see shining Jesus one day, soon enough. He's promised to appear again in glory and to raise you from the dead and give you eternal life. You will see Moses and Elijah and all the saints. And there won't be any need to build a shrine to preserve the moment, because the moment will be an eternity. And the sight will be glorious, no doubt about that.

Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Concluding Prayers

Let us pray that the church may be continually uplifted by the vision of the king in all his beauty, be rescued from all fear, and in confidence face the future.

Let us pray that the church may be conformed to Christ the Son of God, share his sufferings, become like him in his death, and know the power of his resurrection.

Let us pray that all people may hear the prophets' testimony, see you clearly in the records of those who were eyewitnesses of your majesty, and do your will, preparing for your glorious coming on the Last Day, O Lord.

Let us pray for Charles, our king, and all the world's leaders, that the nations of the earth may more and more perfect the rule of law and administer justice after the example of Moses, the lawgiver and judge of your people.

Let us pray for Todd, our bishop, and all leaders of the churches, that the whole church may heed the call of God in Christ Jesus to descend from the heights of vision and to serve those who are needy, desolate, and forgotten.

Let us pray that the suffering, the lonely, the disconsolate, the dying, and those who mourn, may know the transforming light of your presence.

Let us pray that the whole church may persevere in the proclamation of the gospel until the day dawns and Christ, the morning star who knows no setting, arises, that all the world may walk in his light.

God of majesty and power,
whose beloved Son
is your word of truth
and the light shining in our darkness,
receive the prayers of your church,
and grant that all peoples may come to know
the peace of your kingdom
and the splendour of your name.
We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all you have done for us. We thank you for the splendour of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love. We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side. We thank you for setting us tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us. We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone. Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom. Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The peace of God,
which passeth all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:
And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,
be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen.