



# Transfiguration of Jesus

Eph 1:15-23    2 Peter 1:16-21    Matt 17:1-9

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A Theophany is a “*God appearance*” in the Old Testament. Specifically, it is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, who appears on earth before His Incarnation and birth in Bethlehem<sup>1</sup>. In a *theophany*, the Lord is intervening on behalf of His People. He is **saving** them, **helping** them, **guiding** them, or **protecting** them. For instance,

- ⇒ God eats a meal with **Abraham** to show that Abraham has peace and fellowship with God; and he is invited to pray to the Lord.
- ⇒ **Jacob** wrestles with the Son of God and teaches us to pray and not give up.
- ⇒ **Moses** hears God's Son's voice in the burning bush and learns that God Himself saves His People.
- ⇒ The Son of God stands between His People and their enemies as **a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night**
- ⇒ The **Commander of the Lord's Army** fights for Joshua and the Israelites just as He will later fight Satan and his demons for us
- ⇒ The Son of God walks in the fire with **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**, protecting and defending them from danger

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<sup>1</sup> The Son of God is the “speaking God” – the *logos* – The “Word” of God who interacts with His People to save them. *Theophanies* are the *pre-incarnate* Son at work on behalf of His People in Old Testament times. God the Father is never seen, only heard, as at Jesus’ Baptism and Transfiguration; and God the Holy Spirit is only seen in the form of a dove at Jesus’ Baptism; and tongues of fire at Pentecost. But the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, interacts with His People to save them! In the Old Testament, those times when He is visibly present are called “theophanies”.

The **Transfiguration** is a different kind of theophany – an *unique, one-of-a-kind* God appearance. We heard the story today. The **Transfiguration** is **NOT** about **saving, helping, guiding, or protecting** anyone. The **Transfiguration** is about **revelation**: Jesus, the Son of God **reveals** Himself to us! Jesus takes His three closest disciples up onto a mountain. There the man **Jesus** gives them a glimpse of His divine **nature**.

Jesus took with Him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was **transfigured** before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light. Matthew 17:1-2

In the **Transfiguration**, the man **Jesus** gives the disciples a glimpse of His divine **nature**. The Son of God **reveals** Himself to us! The **Transfiguration** points both backwards and forward. It points back over Jesus' life to confirm that He is truly the Messiah, the Son of God in the flesh. Think back to:

- His **miraculous birth** of the Virgin Mary
- The **heavenly angelic announcement** to the shepherds in the fields
- God the **Father's voice** at His Baptism
- The **authority** of His teaching
- The **powerful miracles** He performed: healing lepers, opening the eyes of the blind, and even raising the dead!

The **Transfiguration** confirms that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that everything that He did in His life was from God and as God.

But just as important, the **Transfiguration** points forward. After the **Transfiguration**, Jesus heads straight for Jerusalem, to suffer and die for our sins as the Savior of the World. Jesus is letting us know that **God is suffering and dying for us**; that God Himself has taken on our sin and guilt. It is God who will die for you; it is the Son of God who will face the terrible wrath of God in your place. The next great **revelation** of Jesus' **Divinity** will be His resurrection! On the Third Day, Jesus will rise from the dead and **show the entire world** that He is the Son of God and the Savior of the World!

The **Transfiguration** is all about **revelation**:  
the man **Jesus** gives us a glimpse of His divine **nature**.

There are many important things at work in the **Transfiguration**. Let me highlight a couple more for you.

1. Ever since Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension, Jesus uses His divine, omnipotent power -- *that was seen at the **Transfiguration*** -- on behalf of His people. He is now always with you -- at all times, in all places, and through all circumstances. The same Jesus that was **Transfigured** is now with you even though you can't see Him. He promises to be present in your life, and to strengthen you, comfort you, and make everything work for good. Like we saw in the **OLD TESTAMENT THEOPHANIES**, Jesus is at work in your life to **save** you, **help** you, **guide** you, and **protect** you. Jesus, the Son of God, the **Transfigured** Savior, watches over your life with His divine, omnipotent power!

2. A second thing we learn in the **Transfiguration** is the importance of the **Word of God**. In the **Transfiguration**, *God the Father* speaks, and tells us to **"LISTEN TO HIM!"** *Jesus, the Son of God*, repeatedly teaches the importance of hearing and obeying the **Word of God**. And *God the Holy Spirit* has written His **Word** down for us to *read, hear, study, and learn*. The entire Holy Trinity confirms that we are to **"LISTEN TO HIM!"**

Think of it another way: of everything that God the Father could have said at Jesus' **Transfiguration**, He tells us to **listen to His Son!**

**IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE DOING?**

Do you read and take to heart Holy Scripture?

Do you study and learn the truths of God's Holy Word?

Are you biblically literate?

Are you doctrinally sound?

One of the truths that we learn in the **Transfiguration** is the importance of Jesus' **Word** in the middle of our lives. As God the Father said, and the Holy Spirit confirms: **"LISTEN TO HIM!"**

## Finally one of the thing.

On the **Last Day**, you will see with your own eyes, what Peter, James, and John saw that day at the **Transfiguration**. When Jesus returns on the **Last Day**, He will return in full glory and power with all the Holy Angels with Him<sup>2</sup>. On that day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord; that He is the Son of God who has risen from the dead, that He is the Savior of the world!

This great God of the **Transfiguration** is returning for you, and all who believe in Christ. He is returning in full glory and divine power to vindicate you and prove that your faith was true. He is returning to raise your body from the dead so that you will live forever in His Heavenly Kingdom. On the **Last Day**, you yourself will see the glory, power, and majesty of Jesus with your own eyes. *In a way, the **Last Day** is another Transfiguration --- but even more majestic! That **Transfiguration** will never end!*

**The **Transfiguration** of Jesus is a unique, one-of-a-kind, theophany. It reveals to us the divine nature of the Man Jesus.**

But now the light, glory, and majesty of the **Transfiguration** fades away; as Jesus, the Son of God, turns His face to Jerusalem. He willingly and intentionally carried our sins upon Himself and died on a cross. *Transfiguration Sunday leads into the Lenten Season; the Mount of Transfiguration leads to Mt. Calvary.* And we will walk with Jesus as Lent begins this Ash Wednesday. Lent will lead us to Jerusalem, to Good Friday, and to the cross. The Transfiguration teaches us that the Son of God Himself is suffering and dying for us; that God Himself has taken our sin and guilt all the way to the cross... and we are now forgiven!

Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> The **Last Day** will be the final and greatest **theophany** of all time! The Son of God will appear in full power and glory, and every single eye ever conceived will see Him! At the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:10-11)! This last and final **theophany** will be for the purpose of judging the world and taking His People to their heavenly home in their resurrected bodies! This day is coming S O O N! Make sure you are ready through repentance: turn from your sin, confess it to God, and know that you are forgiven in Christ!