

## ***The Life and Ministry of Christ, Part 23***

Peter just confessed, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* After His baptism, they heard the Father say, *“This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased”* (Matthew 3:17). They had heard Jesus call God His Father many times, (Matthew 11:27), but this time was special, and Jesus told Peter, *“Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven”* (Matthew 16:17). He told them not to tell anyone that He was Jesus the Christ. He also told them to keep His identity secret in Matthew 17:9; Mark 8:30; and Luke 7:1. The later part of the Lord’s ministry was designated to help His disciples learn and get ready. If He had been more public, it would have only made people want to make Him a political Messiah. The twelve disciples felt they were starting to understand who Jesus really was. After that revelation that He was the Messiah and the Son of God, Jesus began to talk openly about His suffering and death. When Jesus said this, Peter went to Him and told Him, *“This won’t happen to You!”* (Matthew 16:22). Everyone thought the Messiah would set up His kingdom on earth when He came. Peter’s reaction to Jesus telling Him that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer and die was exactly what you would expect from Satan. His actions and words were a protest to Calvary and the greater purpose for Christ’s coming. Most of Christ’s ministry had thus far demonstrated His power and ministry to deliver individuals from Satan’s kingdom. The disciples had been included in that ministry when Jesus sent them out to heal the sick, cast out demons and raise the dead. After telling them that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer many things, be killed, and rise from the dead, Jesus told them what was expected of every believer.

**Matthew 16:24-25 NKJV** Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

**Matthew 16:26 NKJV** For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Taking up the cross signifies a resolute commitment to enduring any hardship for Christ. Following the Lord is a life and lifestyle of true commitment to Him. The benefit of following Him is going to be rewarded when He comes in the glory of His Father.

**Matthew 16:27 NKJV** For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Everyone who takes a stand for the Lord Jesus Christ will be rewarded when He returns. Now Jesus said something that can only be understood if we combine it with what happens immediately after this statement.

**Matthew 16:28 NKJV** Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who

shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

After saying this, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain to pray.

### ***The Transfiguration - Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter 1:17-18***

The mountain may have been Mount Hermon, which was near Caesarea Philippi where they were last seen. The Gospel account of this event does not give the location but says it was a high mountain. Mount Hermon is 9,230 feet tall. Initially, this appears to be another time of prayer, but it was going to involve much more than a regular session of prayer. Luke says, Jesus prayed before the appearance of *“His face was altered, and His robes became white and glistening.”* Mark and Matthew did not say anything about the prayer. It’s important to remember that we cannot predict when a divine appointment, a special moment God has set aside for us, might come our way. We may simply be going to God in prayer and God is prepared to show us His glory.

**Matthew 17:1–2 NKJV** Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

**Matthew 17:3-4 NKJV** And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

**Matthew 17:5 NKJV** While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

**Matthew 17:6-7 NKJV** And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.”

**Matthew 17:8–9 NKJV** When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”

### ***The Transfiguration***

“Transfiguration” is from the Greek word *meta-mor-phoō*. It means “to change outwardly or visibly, to take on a different physical form or appearance.” They were with Jesus and all of a sudden, He was transfigured before them and His appearance was changed in their presence. His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light. When this happened, they saw the Lord Jesus as they had not seen Him before. They were beholding the

Lord in some of His preincarnate glory. The radiance of the glory in His face was like the sun and His garments became white as the light. Mark said they were “exceedingly white, like snow, as no one on earth could bleach them.”

**Moses had a similar experience on the mountain with God.**

**Exodus 34:29–30 NKJV** Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses’ hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

The glory of Christ’s transformation astounded the three disciples. They had witnessed several miracles, signs and wonders that demonstrated Christ’s divinity. In many ways, they were not able to understand His miracles and power. They were accustomed to the human nature of Christ, a man they could walk and talk with. As a man, the disciples saw Jesus do miracles.

**John 12:37–38 NKJV** But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? *And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*”

**John 12:39–41 NKJV** Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: “*He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.*” These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

**2 Corinthians 4:4 NIV84** The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

**Peter, James, and John were taken into a new realm of the revelation of Jesus Christ and the Father.**

On the Mount of Transfiguration, they are allowed to view the essential glory of Christ and hear the voice of the Father. The transformation revealed something they had not witnessed before.

**John 1:14 NKJV** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

They saw His glory and witnessed the radiant glory of God. The glory of God is the sum of all His attributes. To see God’s glory is to behold Him. Isaiah witnessed the glory of God when He saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple, (Isaiah 6:1-8). When Isaiah beheld the Lord on His throne, he knew he was unclean and unworthy.

When Ezekiel saw the glory of God by the River Chebar, (Ezekiel 1:4-28) he said “the brightness of His glory was like a rainbow in a cloud, and there was brightness all around Him,” (Ezekiel 1:27-28).

**Immediately after Jesus was transfigured before them, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Christ.**

Peter, James, and John were listening to the conversation.

**Mark 9:5–6 NKJV** Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” — because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

Simon Peter gave a short review of this amazing event in his epistle.

**2 Peter 1:17–18 NKJV** For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

While Peter was still talking about making three tabernacles, a glory cloud appeared.

**Matthew 17:5–6 NKJV** While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

**Matthew 17:5 AMP** “A shining cloud [composed of light] overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, This is My Son, My Beloved, with Whom I am [and have always been] delighted. Listen to Him!”

This was not an ordinary cloud but the light of God’s glory that surrounds His presence. Being confounded and afraid at the sight of the transfiguration of Christ, when the glory cloud appeared and the Father spoke, they could not stand. Why does God reveal His glory?

**2 Corinthians 3:16–18 NKJV** Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Every revelation of God’s glory possesses transformative power. Exposure to His glory will alter your life. Our greatest change is coming when we shall see Christ as He is.

**1 Corinthians 15:51–52 NKJV** Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Glory awaits us when we shall behold Him!

**Philippians 3:20–21 NKJV** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

**1 John 3:2 NKJV** Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

What kinds of miracles, signs and wonders did Jesus do that demonstrated His divinity?

What was the purpose for the transfiguration of Christ?

Is it possible for believers today to be exposed to the glory of God? If so, how does it impact our lives? 2 Corinthians 3:16–18