

The Transfiguration



One of the most remarkable events in the life of Jesus was the transfiguration. There was nothing else like this. The transfiguration is recorded in the first three gospels. John states, "we beheld His glory" (1:14). Peter would write, "we were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Pet 1:16). It is interesting that the transfiguration is not included in many books about the miracles of Jesus. Using our definition from the first lesson, that a miracle is something that nature cannot do on its own, it is an impossibility, then we must conclude that this was a miracle. Only Peter, James and John saw this.

Contextually

- A. Both Matthew and Mark tells us that the transfiguration took place "six days later."
1. This would be six days after His revelation that He was going to Jerusalem, be killed and be raised up on the third day.
 2. Peter rebuked Jesus saying, "This shall never happen to You" (Mt 16:22)
 3. Jesus reveals that He will come in "the glory of His Father" (Mt 16:27)
 - Now Jesus shows that glory
 - these things took place while Jesus was praying (Lk 9:29) and the three disciples had been sleeping (Lk 9:32)

B. Transfigured With Jesus, was Moses and Elijah

- Moses & Elijah just seem to appear. We are not told how Moses and Elijah "got" there. We are not told how the disciples knew who these were. Possibly they overheard the conversation
- Moses prophesied about a prophet after him (Deut 18:18)
- Elijah is associated with the coming of the Lord (Mal 4:5)
 - Elijah's name comes up at the Cross (Mt 27:47)
- The text doesn't say Moses represented the Law, Elijah the Prophets
 - They were discussing the "departure" or exit (Lk 9:31) of Jesus
 - Moses "departed" by God taking his life
 - Elijah "departed" by God taking him without death
 - Neither Moses or Elijah speak to the three disciples

C. Jesus also changed

Face: different (Luke); shone like the sun (Matthew)
Clothes: radiant, gleaming (Mk), white as light (Matthew)
 - it wasn't a light shining on Him. The brilliance came from within Him

The Transfiguration Showed what God looks like.

- Luke says, "They saw His glory" (9:32)
 - The disciples had seen Jesus as a man. Now they got to see Him as God.
 - Moses asked to see God's glory (Ex 33:18-23)
 - Mt 25:31 Jesus will come in His "glory"
- Jesus referred to this event as a vision (Mt 17:9)
 The three disciples were told not to tell about this until the Lord's resurrection (Mt 17:9)

The Miracles Served Two Personal Functions for the Apostles:

1. The settings often were a test of their faith (Jn 6:5-7)
2. The miracles were to be remembered as a faith tool (Mk 8:14-21)

Jesus was "transfigured" (Mt 17:2)

The word "transfigured" is from the same word that we get "metamorphosis." The word is used in Romans 12:2 "...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Matthew declares that the three disciples fell on their faces because they were very afraid (Mt 17:6)
 - Jesus touched them and told them not to be afraid

A. While Peter was speaking, God spoke. He made three declarations:

- (1) This is my beloved Son (Jn 3:16 "...His only begotten Son")
- (2) I am well pleased with Him. (This is the second time God has said this — Mt 3:17)
- (3) Listen to Him
 - by stating this, God was declaring that Jesus was superior to the Law and the Prophets
 - when they looked, only Jesus was left