

# The Transfiguration of Christ

No. 110

## Introduction.

- I. At Caesarea Philippi Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” They answered, “Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” Jesus then asked, “But who say ye that I am?” Peter exclaimed, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven.” (Matt. 16:13-17).
- II. Six days after Peter affirmed the Sonship of Jesus at Caesarea Philippi, one of the most outstanding, electrifying events in all history occurred. The apostle Matthew records it in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of his gospel. (Matt. 17:1-8).

**And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: <sup>2</sup>and he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. <sup>3</sup>And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him. <sup>4</sup>And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. <sup>5</sup>While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. <sup>6</sup>And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. <sup>7</sup>And Jesus came and touched them and said, **Arise, and be not afraid.** <sup>8</sup>And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only. ASV**

- A. In this passage we read of The Transfiguration of Christ on a high mountain in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi.
  - B. Most scholars today think Christ was transfigured on Mt. Hermon which was a high mountain six days journey from Caesarea Philippi.
- I. **Importance of Prayer** - One lesson we learn from the transfiguration of Christ is the importance of prayer in the life of the Master.
    - A. **Luke** tells us in his account of the transfiguration that Jesus went up into the mountain to pray. (Lk. 9:28).
      1. Prayer was very important in the life of Jesus. He did not regard praying as a waste of time, as many people do today, nor did He ever get too busy to pray.
      2. During Christ’s life He spent many hours in prayer and depended greatly on the power of prayer to sustain Himself.
    - B. **One of the most tragic things in our age is the little time most people spend in prayer.**
      1. Most people spend very little time praying to God. About the only time many people pray is at

meal time and even this has become a mere formality to some. As the result of this neglect most people are weak and often yield to temptations. As the result of this neglect many miss the abundant blessings of God.

2. **We need to go to the mountain to pray as Jesus did.** We need to frequently get away from the commotion of the world and spend a great deal of time in prayer and meditation. This will fortify us to meet the world as it did Jesus.

II. **Dead Still Living** - A second lesson we learn from the transfiguration of Christ is that the dead are still living.

A. While Jesus was praying He was transfigured before His disciples so that His face did shine as the sun and His garments were white as light. At that great moment Moses and Elijah, two famous Old Testament personages, appeared on the mount and began talking to Jesus. These men had been dead for hundreds of years yet they were very much alive and conversed with Jesus.

1. The transfiguration then refutes the idea that many people have concerning the state of the dead. Many people believe that the dead are asleep or have ceased to exist. The transfiguration shows that neither theory is true.
2. Jesus said. (Matt. 22:31, 32).

B. The question naturally arises at this point in our lesson, **“If the dead are alive, where are they?”**

1. The Bible gives a very clear answer to this pertinent question. (Lk. 16:19-26).

**<sup>19</sup>Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day: <sup>20</sup>and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, <sup>21</sup>and desiring to be fed with the *crumbs* that fell from the rich man’s table; yea, even the dogs come and licked his sores.**

**<sup>22</sup>And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. <sup>23</sup>And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. <sup>24</sup>And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. <sup>25</sup>But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted and thou art in anguish. <sup>26</sup>And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.**

2. In this narrative Jesus tells us of the rich man and Lazarus. He says that the rich man went to Hades when he died and was in state of torment. He also informs us that Lazarus upon dying went to Abraham’s bosom where he was in a state of bliss.
3. We learn from these statements that there is an intermediate state of the dead, for Jesus teaches the dead are in state of bliss or torment even before judgment. The righteous upon dying go to Abraham’s bosom and the wicked go to Hades, the abode of the wicked spirits. The dead remain in these abodes until the judgment when they will be sentenced to spend eternity in heaven or hell.

III. **Jesus Died Voluntarily** - A third lesson we learn from the transfiguration of Christ is that Christ died voluntarily.

- A. Luke states that Moses and Elijah spoke to Jesus about His “decease” or “death” at Jerusalem. (Lk. 9:31).
- B. **This refutes the idea the modernist advances that Christ died accidentally.** He affirms that Jesus did not plan to die, but taught some progressive ideas the people could not accept. So they killed Him.
- C. This idea certainly is not founded on the Scriptures. Our Lord did not die because He was overpowered. He came into the world to die.
  - 1. On many occasions Jesus stressed the fact He would die for man. (Jno. 3:14-16; Matt. 16:21; 20:27, 28; 26:28).
  - 2. Not only did Jesus emphasize that it was necessary for Him to die, He also emphasized the fact that He had the power to save His life. (Jno. 10:18; Matt. 26:53).

IV. **Christ God’s Son** - A fourth lesson we learn from the transfiguration of Christ is that Christ is God’s Son.

- A. When Moses and Elijah appeared on the mountain with Christ, Peter exclaimed, “It is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was yet speaking a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice came out of the cloud saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, here ye him.”
  - 1. These words had been heard several months before when our Lord was baptized in the Jordan. As He emerged from the water, God said. (Matt. 3:17).
  - 2. On both of these occasions God emphasized that Jesus was His Son.
- B. God also emphasize that **we are to hear Christ**, not Moses or Elijah who represented the law and the prophets. There was a time when man was to give ear to the law of Moses and the message of Elijah and the other prophets. This time had ceased.
  - 1. When Christ was crucified the law and the prophets were nailed to the cross. (Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:4).
  - 2. In the Christian era we are to listen to Jesus who has the words of eternal life. (Jno. 6:68).
  - 3. Jesus exclaimed before His ascension. (Matt. 28:18).
  - 4. The Hebrew writer stressed this fact. (Heb. 1:1).

V. **Another Lesson** - Another lesson we learn from the transfiguration of Christ is found in the closing part of the transfiguration account.

- A. When God spoke out of the cloud, the disciples fell on their faces and were afraid. Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one save Jesus only.”
- B. The words, “**They saw no one save Jesus only**” are very important. This is what the world needs today! It needs to see Jesus and Jesus only.

**Conclusion.**

- I. All who will accept Jesus will have a home with the Father in heaven. Those who reject Him shall be eternally lost.
- II. Accept Christ today! Give Him your life! Be buried with Him in baptism and live for Him! Come as we stand and sing!