

Theme: Jesus Revealed – By His Transfiguration

2 Peter 1:16-21

¹⁶ For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷ 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." ¹⁸ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as *they were moved by the Holy Spirit*.

That's an event I would love to have seen. When you heard Matthew's description of Jesus' Transfiguration, did it make you wish you had been there to see it also? To watch as Jesus' "**face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light**" (Matthew 17:2); to see Moses and Elijah appear with Him; to hear God the Father's voice from the bright cloud, "**This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!**" (Matthew 17:5) that would have been an incredible, faith-strengthening experience wouldn't it? It would have been one of those scenes that would drive away our doubts; a sight that would make our foolish fears take flight. We could always think back to that moment when we saw Jesus Revealed in His glory by His Transfiguration on that mountain top and our spirits would be strengthened to keep pressing on. Our eyes would have seen and our ears would have heard the *proof* that Jesus is in fact the Son of God, as He said.

This is no doubt one of the reasons Jesus chose to show this glorious scene to Peter, James, and John that day on the mountain: To "peel back the curtain" for them, so to speak, and *reveal* Himself in His glory as true God. Remember, they were about to go through the most difficult time of their lives. These three would be the ones who would witness Jesus anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, the humiliation of His suffering, and the agony of His death on Calvary's cross. The transfiguration, this "glimpse" of Jesus' glory, would have carried those men through those difficult times and would have reminded them of what they already knew and believed to be true: Jesus is the glorious, true Son of God.

While God has not yet allowed any of us to physically see Jesus in His glory with our own eyes, He hasn't left us without proof. He has left the sights and sounds of Jesus' transfiguration permanently engraved into our hearts and minds through some eyewitnesses of the Transfiguration. **Peter** was one of those eyewitnesses and it is his testimony from his second letter that is the basis of our sermon for this morning. He tells us in v. 16, "**For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.**" Not only did Peter see this scene with his physical eyes, he also heard the words of God the Father from the cloud as added proof that Jesus was indeed who He said He was. He goes on to say in our text, **For He [Jesus] 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 (v. 17-18).** Peter wanted his readers, including us, to see and hear what he saw and heard on that mountain where Jesus was transfigured. He wanted everyone who would read his inspired words to have the same comfort and confidence that he gained from being an eyewitness of Jesus' glory as true God.

Any lawyer could probably tell you the importance of an eyewitness. An eyewitness' testimony can make or break a case. It can be the pivotal evidence that proves or disproves someone's guilt. However, any lawyer could also probably tell you that eyewitness testimony is not always foolproof. Ears can deceive, eyes can be tricked, and mouths can lie. Even the most reputable eyewitnesses can be shaken and have their testimony disregarded if they are skillfully questioned and grilled by a ruthless cross examiner.

Well, Satan is that ruthless cross examiner! He is the “Great Accuser.” He tries to lead us to doubt the eyewitness testimony of Peter. He plays on our own sinful fears and doubts. He has used the words of some of the most intelligent and respected people in the world to try and convince us that the words of eyewitnesses like Peter are nothing more than just **“cunningly devised fables” (v. 16)**. In fact, this is what many modern “Bible scholars” call the Gospels: **“cunningly devised fables;”** legends about Jesus that they say were written hundreds of years after Christ lived, which became more and more exaggerated as the years went on.

Satan may be the “Great Accuser,” but we have Jesus, the “Great Advocate,” as our defender. He has given us more than just Peter as an **eyewitness of the transfiguration**. Look again at Peter’s words in **v. 19, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed…”** Now, the New King James translation doesn’t bring it out very well, but in the Greek this verb is actually a *comparative*. So what Peter is actually saying is that **“we have the prophetic word--more certain.”** Think of how incredible that statement is: Peter, an eyewitness to the transfiguration of Jesus, is telling us that we have something **“more certain”** than an eyewitness account! That **“more certain”** witness is, of course, **God’s Word**.

God’s Word is not a collection of **“cunningly devised fables.”** It is the testimony of eyewitnesses made **“more certain”** because the men who wrote them were inspired by God Himself. We read again Peter’s words from our text, **“knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (v. 20-21)**. God’s Word is the greatest witness. It is the eternal unchanging truth. It is the complete revelation of God. It is absolutely dependable; we can stake our very lives and souls on it. People can make claims and dream dreams. They can conjure up visions and prophecies and have their own “revelations.” But people can lie and deceive—and be deceived. Satan can lie and deceive. God’s Word will never lie! Any prophecy, revelation, or testimony that contradicts God’s Word, goes beyond God’s Word, or casts doubt on God’s Word is not from God! As Peter wrote, **“no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man” (v. 20b-21a)**. True **“prophecy”** comes from God and is found in His Word. That is the rock-solid foundation, the ultimate eyewitness of all that God has done for our salvation. That is why Peter says of this Word, **“you do well to heed [it] as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (v. 19)**.

When God gave us the message of salvation through His Son Jesus He did not give us a collection of **“cunningly devised fables”** that were written hundreds of years after Jesus lived. He gave us thousands of years of accurate, detailed, God-inspired prophecies of His Son, the Christ, through His hand picked prophets of the Old Testament. He gave us the multiple eyewitness accounts of the Gospels using men who were not only inspired by Him, but were also eyewitnesses of Jesus, who lived when He lived, and could have spoken with and had their reports confirmed by other eyewitnesses of Jesus.

Because we have the incredible, absolutely trustworthy eyewitness accounts of inspired men like **Peter** and the rest of the inspired writers of **God’s Word** one more group of eyewitnesses is made: **us!** That’s right, you and me! Now, it’s true none of us have seen Jesus’ brilliant glory with our physical eyes, like Peter. None of us have heard the voice of God the Father in a bright cloud like the three disciples on the mount of Transfiguration. But that doesn’t matter much. We have the **“more certain”** witness of God’s Word. Our eyes can be tricked, our ears can be deceived, but God’s Word is absolutely trustworthy and true. It has given us eyes of faith to see Jesus’ **“face shine like the sun, and His clothes become as white as the light” (Matthew 17:2)**. God’s Word has given us ears of faith to hear the voice of God the Father saying, **“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Matthew 17:5)**. God’s Word has given us hearts of faith to pay attention to what God has told us **“as a light that shines in a dark place” (v. 19)**.

This Wednesday night we will celebrate the beginning of another season of Lent. I invite you to join us as we are once again made witnesses of our salvation. Today we have witnessed Jesus' radiant glory as true God. Now we will follow Him down His road of humiliation and suffering, even to His crucifixion on the cross. There we will be witnesses of the punishment our own sins deserved. We will witness Jesus, God's own Son, forsaken by His Father and punished with the pains of hell so that we would never be. We will witness His glory again on Easter Sunday when we see the empty tomb, hear the angels proclaim, "**He is not here, He is risen!**" (**Matthew 28:6**), and see Jesus with His pierced hands and side standing alive in the midst of His disciples. It is because of Jesus' work that we are made His eyewitnesses now, by faith. It is because of Jesus' work that we will be made His eyewitnesses with our own glorified eyes in heaven, where we will "**see Him as He is**" (**1 John 3:2**). Until that day may our eyes, ears, and hearts of faith always be focused on His glory. Amen.