

When Moses came down from the holy mountain from the presence of God, his face shone with light. It reflected the brilliance of the Lord’s glory. Moses put a veil over his face so that the people of Israel would not be frightened. He kept the veil on a long time while the glory gradually faded from his skin.

Christ our Lord also hid the glory of His face. He first concealed that glory when He became Man in the womb of the virgin Mary. He continued to conceal it for most of His lifetime. But on the Mount of Transfiguration, He let the glory be seen. He removed the veil, so to speak, and allowed His face to shine out like the sun, and His clothes also gleamed pure white more than any bleach could make them.

This is a much greater illumination than Moses had. As the sun is brighter than the moon, so the light of Jesus’ face was greater than that of Moses. What Moses reflected came from the same divine majesty that gleamed from the face of Christ on the Mountain.

Also the brightness of Christ’s face would never fade. He has been the exact image of the Father’s glory from before the creation of the world, and He will remain the same exalted Son of God for all eternity. Although usually He hid the beams of heavenly glory, they were only hidden.

For the person of Christ is infinitely greater than the person of Moses. In the same way, the ministry of Christ is so much better than that of Moses. Moses came to be the prophet of God, to bring the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, and to give them the Law and the sacrificial system by God’s revelation. But Christ came to release all people of all nations from slavery to sin, death, and the devil, and to give them eternal life in the Promised Land of the new heaven and new earth. Christ became the sacrificial Lamb that made all other lambs obsolete. He was the fulfillment of the Law and the Source of all righteousness.

So also Elijah came to be a mighty prophet. He offered a bull on Mount Carmel, to show the Israelites that the Lord, not Baal nor anyone else, is God. By Elijah’s prayer, heavenly fire came down and consumed the sacrifice.

But Christ came to Mount Calvary to call down the fire of the Lord’s judgment upon Himself. He became the sacrifice to absorb all the wrath of the Godhead. Now we know that Christ is the Lord. He, and no one else, is the way to the Father.

In Christ there is a much greater Prophet than Elijah or anyone else. Christ is the Word made flesh. When He speaks, we hear truth from the heavenly Father.

That is why the Father said on the Mount of Transfiguration, “This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!”

To which we say, “Of course we always listen to Him!”

But do we? Christ is the mighty Prophet, greater than Elijah, more glorious than Moses. What would we sacrifice in order to hear His voice?

Would we come to worship every Sunday? Maybe, unless there was something else important going on, or we were not on vacation, or not hunting, or there were no important sports events, or no family events, or we had not gotten much sleep, or ... Well, I think you get the picture. We often do not treat this voice of Christ as if it is really the voice of the glorious Son of the Father.

Today the Son of God said, “I forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” And then you said, “Amen,” which is to say, these words are dependable and most true beyond a doubt. Do we really mean that? Do we really believe that this was the voice of Christ Jesus, the Son of God, not just the voice of some shmoe in funny robes?

A little later He will say, “This is My Body. ... This is My Blood.” And we will kneel before this bread and wine as if it really is the Body and Blood of the Son of God. Do we really mean that? Do we really believe

that He has said that this is not ordinary food and drink, but His most sacred meal?

Now He is preaching to you. Do you believe that? Or are you thinking, “Well, that’s your opinion, preacher.” But Christ promised, “Whoever hears you, hears Me.” This is not the voice of a mere man in the pulpit, and a rather pathetic man, at that. No, it is the voice of the glorious One, the One Moses saw, the one who sent fire down from heaven upon Mount Carmel. Do you believe He is speaking now?

If you do, then what is more important than coming and hearing this voice? What could ever be more important?

I will not speak much of Bible study, although the same should apply there. What inconvenience or what gas prices or what in all of heaven and earth should keep us from hearing the voice of the marvelous and wonderful Son?

I could also speak of our support of this Gospel ministry, whether monetary or otherwise. If we believe this is really the voice of the beloved Son, then should we not sacrifice much to make sure that this Gospel voice is not endangered on the earth? Sometimes we have sacrificed much, at other times, not.

So I tell you what the Father said. Listen to Christ. Give Him your full attention. Treat His voice as sacred. Turn away from your own failures to listen. Repent at your sinful neglect of the voice of Christ.

What He speaks about is His own glory. For His glory is more than a shining face. His true glory is what Moses and Elijah spoke to Him about on the Mountain: His exodus, His departure, His death. That is the majesty of the Son that breaks out in blinding splendor. He gave Himself. He held nothing back. He did not count His divine person something to be defended, but He let Himself be betrayed into the hands of sinful men. He let Himself be tortured like a vile criminal. The same face that shone with the sun’s brilliance was crowned with thorns and streaked with blood. The same clothing that became glistening white was stolen from Him and gambled away to greedy soldiers. The glorious Son was treated as someone to be destroyed, like garbage, and He let it happen.

That is His glory. That is what makes the Father say, “He is My Beloved Son. He is well-pleasing to Me, because He has obeyed My will. I told Him to become Man in order to sacrifice Himself for sinful mankind. He has done that.”

Therefore Christ is the perfect Son. But His perfection is not presented to us to judge us, but that we might be clothed with His

“This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!” Matthew 17:1-9 Transfiguration 2023

perfection. He is shown as the pleasing Son because through faith we become adopted as pleasing sons in His image. Now the Father looks upon you and says, “You are My beloved Child, well-pleasing to Me.”

In His Name, the only-glorious God. Amen.