

## TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

Daniel 7:9-10;13-14

Mk 9:2-10

In staging a theatrical performance, lighting is important. It is not a question of how well lit the stage may be so much as the contrast in light between the auditorium and the stage.

Today is the feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord that took place on a mountaintop where the apostles Peter, James and John saw Jesus bathed in the intense light that Scripture describes as a sign of the presence of God. When Moses returned from receiving the 10 Commandments his face shone with the radiant glory of God so much so that he wore a veil except when he met God in the Tent of Meeting.

As well as God's radiant glory, the cloud of God's glory (Shekinah) descended upon Jesus and a voice was heard that affirmed Jesus in his ministry as it had done when he began his mission at his baptism. Jesus was also seen to be in conversation with Moses and Elijah. Moses had promised the Children of Israel that God would raise up a prophet like him and the people should listen to him. The Divine voice also affirms Jesus as the royal Son of God who announces that God's Kingdom is being revealed in his ministry.

Jews also believed that Elijah would appear as the forerunner of the Messiah and he would suffer just as the Messiah would suffer. Jesus identified John the Baptist as the Elijah figure and we know that he was beheaded for speaking God's truth. Peter's response to this experience was that he should build three tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Jews would need no explanation that these tents were tents of meeting as Moses had built in which he met God and the tents when Jews meet with God at the feat of Tabernacles. Mark includes this detail as an explanation for his Gentile readers.

The Transfiguration is mentioned in the second Epistle of Peter and as it is not flattering about the apostles, it is not likely to be a fabrication by the gospel writers. It is significant because it is the trigger for a gear shift in Jesus' ministry. From this point on there is an urgency in his ministry as he heads towards Jerusalem and increases his preparation of his disciples for what they will have to face and beyond. As Moses led the people out of slavery in Egypt and offered his life for God's people, so Jesus would lead all God's people out slavery to sin and evil. It is in the Transfiguration that Jesus is known to be the Suffering Messiah of God.

Jesus leads Peter, James and John down the mountain and sets his eyes on Jerusalem.

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