

## **The Transfiguration**

*Thou wast transfigured on the mount, and thy disciples, in so far as they were able, beheld thy glory, O Christ our God; so that, when they should see thee crucified, they would remember that thy suffering was voluntary, and could declare to all the world that thou art truly the effulgent Splendour of the Father.*

*—Kontakion of the Transfiguration*

When I first heard these words sung, I marveled at the graciousness of our Saviour toward us in revealing his glory, as far as we are able to bear it. Let us touch upon three topics of Christ's transfiguration: he is God dwelling with us, he fulfills the Law and Prophets, and he brings a new age.

### **Christ Dwells with us as God**

The Transfiguration is connected to the Old Testament Feast of Booths/Tents as shown by St Peter's statement, 'I will make three tents here ...' (Mathew 17.4 ESV). The festival of booths celebrated God's dwelling with Israel in the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Leviticus 23.33). And in his prologue, the Evangelist John states, 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the father, full of grace and truth' (John 1.14 ESV). How great is this, that the dwelling place of God is with man (Revelation 21.3)!

### **Christ Fulfills the Law and Prophets**

Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets, as Moses wrote the books of the Law (Genesis through Deuteronomy), while Elijah was chief among the prophets proclaiming God's word to Israel (3 Kingdoms 17 – 4 Kingdoms 2 [1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 2]). Our Lord said while journeying to Emmaus that all the Law and Prophets point to him (Luke 24.13ff), therefore when we read Scripture, we should see him on every page. He is the fullness of the revelation of God (Hebrews 1).

### **Christ Brings a New Age**

The New Testament speaks of history as consisting of two ages: this present evil age and the age which is to come (e.g., Matthew 12.32, Mark 10.30, Luke 18.30, Ephesians 1.21). Since the Fall, we've been in slavery to our passions, death, and the Devil. In his Transfiguration, Jesus reveals his Divine Glory to show that he suffers voluntarily in his upcoming crucifixion, not being carried along by events but orchestrating them. In this, the age to come has broken into this present age (e.g., Ephesians 1, Hebrews 12, Revelation 21); Satan, the ruler of this age, has been bound (Luke 11.20-22) and cast out of heaven (Luke 10.17-20). Let us then, take courage that although we live in this present evil age, if we are in Christ, we are citizens of the age to come and shall conquer with him.

### **Conclusion**

In light of Christ's Transfiguration, let us live accordingly, for God dwells with us, Christ is the full revelation of God, and makes of citizens of heaven in the new age. Let us then lay aside every weight and run with endurance the race set before us, looking to our transfigured Lord (Hebrews 12.1-2).

*O Son of God, Who wast transfigured on Mount Tabor, save us who sing unto Thee. Alleluia!*

## Further Reading

Primary Texts:

Matthew 17.1–9,  
Mark 9.1–9,  
Luke 9.28–36, &  
2 Peter 1.16–18.

Secondary Texts:

*On the Feast of the Transfiguration*, St Anastasius the Sinaite:

<https://preachersinstitute.com/2011/07/29/on-the-feast-of-transfiguration/>

*Homily on the Transfiguration of Christ*, St Ephraim the Syrian:

[https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2016/08/homily-on-transfiguration-of-christ-st\\_6.html](https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2016/08/homily-on-transfiguration-of-christ-st_6.html)

*Sermon on the Transfiguration*, St Gregory Palamas:

<https://oca.org/fs/sermons/sermon-on-the-transfiguration>

*Homily 51: The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ*, St Cyril of Alexandria:

<https://gypojeny.wordpress.com/2013/08/19/homily-51-of-st-cyril-of-alexandria-the-transfiguration-of-our-lord-jesus-christ/>

*The Orthodox Faith: Volume 2 – Worship* “The Church Year: Transfiguration”, Fr Thomas Hopko:

<https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-year/transfiguration>

*The Transfiguration (Metamorphoses) of our Saviour*, Bishop Joseph of Arianzos:

<http://www.orthodoxchristian.info/pages/Metamorphosis.htm>