

# Matthew 17:1-4. the Transfiguration.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

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*The sermon on the Transfiguration highlights the revelation of Jesus' glory and the implications for believers regarding suffering and the afterlife.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 52:14, Luke 9:30, Romans 8:18, 1 Corinthians 15:53, 1 John 3:2

**Topics:** "Divine Glory", "Eternal Fellowship"

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## Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, where His divine glory shone through His earthly form, giving a glimpse of the future glory awaiting all saints. The presence of Moses and Elijah, who comforted Jesus in His impending suffering, signifies the immediate passing of saints into glory upon death. Peter's desire to remain on the mount reflects the affectionate heart that seeks fellowship with Christ and the saints, highlighting the joy of being in the presence of godly company despite the challenges and sufferings that must be faced.

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## Transcript

We lately read of Jesus conversing with his disciples respecting his sufferings. Now we read of his unveiling to them his glory. The prophet Isaiah foretold that his face should be more marred (or disfigured) than the face of any man. (Is. 52:14.) No doubt, therefore, he wore usually an aspect of care and sorrow; but on this occasion he permitted the glories of his divine nature to shine forth through his frail earthly tabernacle. Thus he gave us a glimpse of the glory which awaits all the saints; for when they shall see Him as he is, they shall be like Him, and their vile bodies shall be changed into the likeness of his glorious body.

The mountain upon which this change in the appearance of the Lord took place, is supposed to be Mount Tabor, in Galilee. This mountain stands alone, and its top is not pointed like that of most mountains, but broad and flat, and therefore well-suited for a resting place. Its height is not great. In one hour it may be ascended. In this retired and lovely spot our Savior was praying (as Luke informs us) with three of his disciples, when his form underwent a most glorious alteration. Have not many of his servants in all ages experienced a like glorious change in their feelings when engaged in prayer? Has not the gloom that oppressed them when they began to pour out their souls before God, been succeeded by the light of heavenly day?

The Savior was attended on the mount by two heavenly visitants, Moses and Elijah. Like their Lord, both these holy men, when on earth, had fasted for forty days in the wilderness. But all their sufferings were

over, while the bitterest sufferings of Jesus were yet to come. These prophets were well prepared, by what they had themselves endured, to comfort their Lord in the prospect of his agonizing death. That death was the subject of their discourse. The Savior could obtain no consolation from his apostles; their minds were still dazzled by hopes of earthly glory; but he could obtain the most tender sympathy from the discourse of his glorified servants.

The appearance of those departed saints on the mount, is calculated to comfort us also in the prospect of death. Are we not led from this fact, (as from many others,) to believe, that the spirits of the saints do immediately pass into glory, and that they do not wait for the general resurrection to be introduced into the presence of Christ?

How was it that Peter knew that the glorious people he beheld were Moses and Elijah? We are not informed by what means the discovery was made. But does not this circumstance give us reason to believe that we shall know the saints in glory--not only our own friends, whom we loved upon earth, but all the saints? How delightful is the prospect! What will be the raptures of fellowship with such a company! And yet this will be one of the lesser delights of heaven, for the presence of Jesus will be the chief.

Peter was delighted with the scene, and desired that it should never be interrupted. In the warmth of his feelings, he made an unwise request; he asked permission to prepare three tents, for the abode of Christ and his prophets. It was unwise, because Peter himself was not fit to continue in such a scene; flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; we must therefore all be changed, and this mortal must put on immortality. Besides this, Peter forgot the unwelcome truths that his Master had lately revealed; he forgot that Christ must be offered as a sacrifice for sin before he could enter into his glory, and that his disciples must partake of his sufferings, before they could partake of his glory. But though the request betrayed an ignorant mind, it showed an affectionate heart. Had not Peter's heart been full of love to his Lord, he would not have thought it such exceeding joy to behold Christ and his saints, and to hear their conversation. No ungodly man would feel satisfied in such company; he would feel anxious to escape to his earthly delights, and his congenial society. He would not say, "It is good for me to be here." It is a sign we have made one step in religion, if we really prefer the society of the godly to any other pleasure. Yet there may still be much that is weak and wavering in our hearts, as there was in Peter's. It is hard to attain to the feelings of Paul when he said, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18.)

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