

"WE ARE EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY!"

2 Peter 1:16-19

To the everlasting King, the immortal, invisible, and only God, be honor and glory forever and ever! {1 Tim 1:17}

Dear Redeemed in Christ,

TV news stations want to be on the cutting edge. When a story breaks, they want to be first on scene to interrupt their regular programming and report the breaking news. If they don't break into programming during the day, they want to make sure they have the full story to headline their newscasts at night.

Some news stations market themselves with the term "**Eyewitness News**". None of our local stations use that term, but I did find that term for the stations of **WFSB**, Ch 8 in Hartford, CT / **WCHS**, Ch 8 in Charleston, WVA / **KABC** Ch 7 in Los Angeles. **EYE WITNESS NEWS** – that tells the viewer they are getting the station's most accurate story based on their reporters on scene.

The Transfiguration of our Lord had no cameras, or reporters, or Eye-witness news stations covering the story. And yet we have a detailed report of exactly what happened based on the Spirit-inspired Word given to Peter in his 2nd letter. In reality, what we are hearing and seeing today is based solely on that report.

Today, Peter reports a life-changing event which impacted his life for the rest of it. Yet, he's not the only one affected. He wasn't the only one to be an eye-witness of Jesus' majesty. Peter reminds us that...

"WE ARE EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY!"

We see Jesus:

1. Transfigured on earth
2. Glorified in heaven

1

When the account of Jesus' transfiguration was read in the Gospel, did it inspire you? Did it give you goose bumps? Did it make you long for heaven? Or did those words from Matthew 17 sort of roll in one ear and out the other?

21st century Americans have a hard time getting excited about words that are over 2,000 years old, especially when they describe something we can't possibly understand or duplicate ourselves. Are we **CYNICAL**...skeptical, suspicious or pessimistic about what's been described.

Through the pen of Matthew, we are eyewitness of Jesus' majesty as He is transfigured on earth. On a mountain north of Galilee some 6 months before Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus did some mountain climbing with his three closest disciples: Peter, James, and John. They saw Jesus' appearance change to a brilliance like that of the sun. Looking at Jesus' face, and his clothing was as bright as looking at the white snowbanks in the sunshine without sunglasses, only worse. The brightness makes your eyes squint. It's overwhelming and your eyes can't handle it.

Lest we become cynical or suspicious about this, Peter report that there were two more guests on this mountaintop: **Moses & Elijah!** These O.T. legends discussed Jesus' mission ahead – namely the mission of earning the salvation of all mankind. There standing before these N.T. disciples are O.T. disciples: one to whom God gave His Law and the other whom God used as a prophet to bring his people back to His Law. And lest we think the disciples' eyes were playing tricks on them, Peter goes on report hearing the Father's voice booming from the glorious cloud that enveloped them: **THIS IS MY SON, WHOM I LOVE, WITH HIM I AM WELL PLEASED!**

How did people respond when Peter shared this experience? Our text hints that they thought him to be crazy. They accused Peter of making up stories, myths, or fiction. 'Course they were used to myths. There were the myths about gods and goddesses from the Greeks or the Romans. There were myths about the false gods which so many of the O.T. people worshipped. There were myths about our universe and trying to understand its mysteries. Why should seeing Jesus transfigured on earth be any different?

So Peter says: **WE DID NOT FOLLOW CLEVERLY INVENTED STORIES WHEN WE TOLD YOU ABOUT THE POWER AND COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BUT WE WERE EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY. FOR HE RECEIVED HONOR AND GLORY FROM GOD THE FATHER WHEN THE VOICE CAME TO HIM FROM THE MAJESTIC GLORY SAYING, "THIS IS MY SON, WHOM I LOVE; WITH HIM I AM WELL PLEASED."** **WE OURSELVES HEARD THIS VOICE THAT CAME FROM THE HEAVEN WHEN WE WERE WITH HIM ON THE MOUNTAIN.**

Today, we sit on the launching pad of Lent. We have left the cradle to begin our annual hike to the cross. We've made this trip before. We know the route. Will we be **eyewitnesses** of His suffering & death in the same way we are eyewitnesses today of his majesty? Do we truly appreciate the work which Jesus does in His passion? Is this a journey that has lost its appeal, its importance, its appeal?

If we truly dig down deep and realize why Lent had to happen, then we will have a renewed sense of the importance of eye-witnessing it again. We are no match in our battles against sin, death, and the devil. They win most of the time – if not all of the time. The “**Old Evil Foe**” still means deadly woe. He tempts us to disregard God’s Word, to sink our teeth into life’s treasures, to hunker down in our own successes, to bask in our own glory that we’ve somehow done pretty well for ourselves spiritually.

If that’s the case, then the only event we’ll witness is the first day of our eternity in hell’s judgment. Jesus has no time for those who trust themselves and on the last day, he will say: **DEPART FROM ME!**

Transfiguration is a reminder of the full glory that awaited Jesus after his suffering and death. Elijah and Moses talked to him about this to give him the strength to move forward and fight our battles. Jesus lifted the veil of his humanity to give a peek as who he truly is: **THE SON OF GOD IN THE FLESH!** He does so to encourage us, for he goes on to face the crucifixion cross where he dies– giving up his life as payment for God’s justice, giving up his perfect righteousness to be condemned with our sins. There Jesus faces the final battle with sin, Satan, and death and beats them with His power as God. He overcame those enemies and paid the wages of sin. He suffered in our place only to rise again gloriously to assure us that his glory is ours and his living from the dead means our living from the dead.

Today **WE ARE EYEWITNESSES OF JESUS’ MAJESTY** as He is transfigured on earth. Make no mistake about it – we are seeing it as it happened!

2

This eye-witness account of Jesus’ transfiguration on earth shows us his majesty. But the consequence of what we see today on that mountaintop allows us to see **JESUS GLORIFIED IN HEAVEN!**

In contrast to the “**cleverly invented stories**” which people in Peter’s day claimed he was making up, he cites his trusted resource for his confidence and peace: **WE HAVE THE WORD OF THE PROPHETS MADE MORE CERTAIN, AND YOU WILL DO WELL TO PAY ATTENTION TO IT, AS TO A LIGHT SHINING IN A DARK PLACE UNTIL THE DAY DAWNS AND THE MORNING STAR RISES IN YOUR HEARTS.** Peter and the apostles proclaimed a message of truth based on the inspired Word of God. That word, Peter says, is like a lamp that shines in a dark place. What Peter, James, and John saw was **a sneak peek** to the glory that will be revealed in us. For Jesus who came to this earth to win our salvation now sits on heaven’s throne ruling and guiding all things for the good of His church. He has accomplished His work; He has earned our forgiveness, life, & salvation! He is glorified in heaven for all eternity. And we too will be glorified with him!

Peter says that we do well **to pay attention** to the word of the prophets. There are many dark moments we must face in our lives when we have no one or nothing to turn to. But the Lord is right here – like a beacon to guide us, lead us, and pull us through those dark days. **His Gospel** is where **we can cast all our anxiety on him because he cares for us.** (1 Peter 5:7) **His Gospel** is why we believe that **all things turn out for good for those who love God.** (Rom 8:28) **His Gospel** is why we **commit our way to the Lord, trust also in him and he will bring it to pass.** (Ps 37:5) The soft glow of God’s Word comforts and sustains us through all our ups and downs this life brings. It will never fail.

Seeing Jesus transfigured on earth is seeing Jesus glorified in heaven. On this holy mountain, **we are eyewitnesses of his majesty.** One day, we will be transfigured, we will be changed and **our faces will shine like the sun and our clothes become as white as the light.** As Paul says in Colossians: **When Christ, who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory!** {Col 3:4} We will be eyewitnesses of our glory firsthand by experiencing the majesty of Christ in heaven. That means **YOU WILL SHINE.** You will shine with the glory of the Transfiguration because that is the glory revealed on Easter and on into eternity. Christ’s glory is yours! And when we stand on heaven’s mountain, we will see Peter, James, John, Moses & Elijah and together say: **LORD, IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE! AMEN**