

... **but Jesus** (Deut 34:1-12, Luke 9:28-36)

\* Dear Friends, this Sunday specifically centers round the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thinking over this subject, I noticed that the Transfiguration was posted at the end of the Epiphany season as well as the Resurrection at the end of the Lent season. Viewing both events in the very end of two seasons provides the provision of the mysterious acts of our salvation. Even though we lose the battle with death we shouldn't lose heart because this battle is not a losing ground in hope; but the very end will be signified with the exaltation of our mortal bodies to the glorious points of Jesus' transfiguration and resurrection. That war with flesh and death is already over in Christ and we are his possessions.

\* The next observation of the event says that three outstanding persons, Jesus, Moses and Elijah were prophets. It seems unique to me that the three prominent prophets from different periods of time gathered at a particular place as was described by the Synoptic Gospels, ( Mt 17:1-8; Mar 9:1-8; Luk 9:28-36). *Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them privately up a high mountain. And he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. Then Moses and Elijah also appeared before them, talking with him,* (Mat 17:1-3). Friends, we've heard and read a lot of about the account of Jesus' transfiguration, that is why it is not easy to find a fresh idea for a lunch.

\* Once I stood on a shore of the Pacific Ocean wondering about the huge energy flowing out of the deep waters and wondering how great God is, and how I'm short-armed, physically and mentally. At that time my understanding of the omnipotent Creator was associated with the panorama of a Great Ocean whose size and power were spectacularly spread out. Significantly, none of us has seen Jesus Christ in his glorious transfiguration, but all of us have seen Ocean! None of us can comprehend God --Man Jesus nailed on the cross, but all of us saw a cross! None of us was among the eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection, but all of us are Christian. Therefore we cannot comprehend the omnipotent Creator, Jesus Christ, in terms of His real significance; but we can understand our insignificance, and yet be loved by God. From this point, we may not worry too much about mysterious things as for example, Jesus' transfiguration, rather we should concern ourselves with our response to that mysterious transfiguration, and thank the Father and listen to His Son, (Luk 9:36).

\* Last year, after preaching on the account of Jesus' transfiguration, I was questioned, *Pastor why didn't you mention Moses in your sermon?* I said, as far as my sermons last around 15 min, I don't have time to reflect on all details. In addition, I would like to pick up only one topic and Moses was not suited of that time.

However, I promised to mention Moses at the next Sunday of Transfiguration. So according to that promise, I will say my piece about Moses as much as I could find about this topic.

\* According to the OT reading for today, ... Moses died in the land of Moab as the LORD had said, he was buried by God Himself in the land of Moab near Beth Peor, but no one knows his exact burial place to this very day ((Deut 34: 5,6). But Synoptic Gospels portray Moses and Elijah, side by side. Both of them, I believe, appeared in the physical bodies, not like the ghosts. From this I concluded that some days after Moses' death God raised him from the dead. Though according to the apostles Paul and John, nobody but Jesus is a firstborn from the dead. However, Moses is an exception, and that is why the archangel Michael contended with the devil about the body of Moses, (Jud 1:9). Compared with Moses, Jesus is the unique firstborn from all human races; he is the self-firstborn from the dead, (Joh 2:19), and of course this is not so with Moses or anyone else.

\* Once Moses pleaded with God to show him His glorious face, (Exo 33:18); *you cannot see my face*, God said, *for man shall not see me and live*, (v.20). So Moses didn't see God's face; but today we read that Moses saw God's glory and his face! Yet, he didn't die. Thanks be to Jesus for his cross; by Jesus' wounds Moses was justified, rose from the dead and saw the glory of the second person of eternal God, Christ Jesus! Can you see how tremendously the order of things was changed? After Jesus' glorification, God's people don't need a mediator as Moses, moreover in the very end we will see God in Christ Jesus face to face and live forever!

\* From the OT account we learn that the Lord enabled Moses' face to radiate light. It was a new gift and a sign affirming Moses as a chosen leader of Israel. *And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face*,( Deu 34:10). However, our text depicts Moses as he was talking with Jesus Christ our God, but Moses' face did not shine anymore. Significantly, now Jesus' face shines like the sun, (Mt 17:2). Can you see how tremendously the order of things was changed? During the course of times the two Covenants, Old and New were established by God and the last one is supervised over the Law given to Moses. Now God in Christ Jesus is himself Mediator, (Heb 8:13). In addition to that, among all brothers nobody can be compared with Man Jesus in any virtue or with his beauty.

\* As I noted before, there were the three most prominent prophets in attendance, Moses, Elijah and Jesus. Moses predicted in the far away future of the coming of the Last Prophet, Jesus Christ, who is one with the Father. Elijah also proclaimed the coming of the Last Prophet Jesus Christ if we consider him as John Baptist who publicly announced that Messiah was already come, (Joh 1:36). But in the holy Mountain the prophetic conversation jumped topic to the Messiah's departure, *which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem*, (v.31). In English the Greek word **eksodon** shows the variety of translations, they are as *his exit*;

*decease; death; departure; or exodus.* Significantly, Jesus exodus, or physical departure from this life signifies the liberation of human nature from the bonds of sins and death. Some liken it to the saving acts of the pre-incarnate Son, God of Israel, who led his people to freedom from under the slavery in Egypt.

But in this case there was no place for Peter's exiting because the shadow of passion had already extended its crossed shape over this scene.

\* Along with the three outstanding prophets, we also see three fishermen; they left everything and followed Jesus. They followed him everywhere. Now upon seeing the glorified Teacher surrounded by the great prophets of old, they were amazed! No doubt, they were amazed to a much greater extent than I, after seeing the Great Ocean for the first time. We are not given to see Jesus' transfiguration as those three great leaders of the Church, but we are given to follow Jesus as Peter, James, John and cloud of other faithful followers. As soon as I mentioned the word *cloud*, I remembered another cloud mentioned in the text, and that one came down from heaven and overshadowed the disciples; *And they were afraid as they entered the cloud, And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"* (Luk 9:34,35).

\* Today we again hear the prophetic voice of the Last Prophet Jesus; He says, The person who has My commands and keeps them is the one who [*really*] loves Me; and whoever [*really*] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and *I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him,* (Joh 14:21).

\* Unlike Peter, James and John, we are given the experience of Jesus' transfiguration in a sacred way. Today Jesus leads us up to the holy mountain, by way of remission of our sins, by way of trials, suffering and rejection. In this journey we are never alone; our Lord leads us to the summit of righteousness for his name's sake, his scepter saves and comforts us. Today He prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies; He anoints our heads with oil; our cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life, and we shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psa 23).

Beloved peace and grace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.