

As I was reading the Bible according to the year-long plan, I was enticed by an outstanding story from the Gospel according to Matthew. Please read this dramatic account of Jesus's transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-8: **“And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”**

In many of the miraculous stories written in the Gospels, Jesus reveals himself by doing something marvelous for someone, but in this story, Jesus reveals himself by something marvelous happening to his appearance. Matthew tells us that Jesus took his inner ring of disciples up to a high mountain by themselves. Then, he was transfigured—or his appearance was transformed—in front of them. He became extremely bright, with his face radiating the blinding brilliance of the sun, and his clothes became pure white, like light itself. Jesus's transfiguration manifests his glorious divine nature. This unique nature is indicated partially through his appearance shining like light. Take a moment to consider the wonder of light itself. Light brings protection from threats in the night. Light allows us to live and work in the day (and in the night, too, thanks to the invention of fire and the light bulb). Light brings joy and beauty as we gaze at the world coming to life with colors, glimmers, and shadows. Typically, a person's mood is lifted with a sunny day. Although we are so familiar with this essential aspect of creation, we also know that light is very different from our own nature. If you compare our flesh and blood to the light of the pale moon hovering mysteriously in the night sky, you will experience how vastly different the sun and moon are from our own created substance.

John, one of the disciples who went upon the mountain, later said in 1 John 1:5 that **“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”** Now, John does not literally mean that God's being is light itself; remember light was the first created thing, and God is the creator, not a creature. However, John is using a metaphor, which means he is saying that God is like light. By saying

this, John gives a beautiful description of God that is densely packed with meaning. By saying that God is light without any mixture of darkness, John speaks of God's purity and truthfulness. God is good, righteous, and truthful always, without any evil, injustice, or falsehood in his character. By saying that God is light, John speaks of God's glory and splendor. Even more than mesmerizing moonlight and spectacular sunsets, God is awesome and beautiful; he is worthy of all worship. Finally, by saying that God is light, John speaks of God's holiness and transcendence. No one is like God. God is incomparable. He is vastly different from our flesh and blood; he is God.

Therefore, when Jesus's appearance shines in the transfiguration, these things ought to come to mind. Jesus is pure, trustworthy, glorious, and holy. He is to be revered, worshipped, loved, adored, and feared. Do you think of him that way? Do you think of Jesus as the object of your worship? You should. You must. We should stop and stare at Jesus with the eyes of faith and enjoy him for who he is.

While there is much more to this passage, I will say only a few more things concerning the declaration from heaven. When the massive cloud appears, which signifies the presence of God, a terrifying voice thunders, claiming Jesus to be the Son of God and demanding the disciples to listen to him. How could it be more clearly shown that Jesus is the Son of God? God himself said so. God commands us to listen to his beloved Son, with whom he is well-pleased. God delights in Jesus, and he commands us to delight in him, too. He commands us to behold him, to worship him, to obey him. We should strive to develop our taste to love the things that God loves and hate the things that God hates. If something is delightful to God, then it is truly delightful. God says that Jesus is delightful and honorable.

Obey Jesus and listen to him. He is the Son of the Most High. Jesus has kindly spoken to us and has kindly allowed us to hear and read his words as they are recorded in the Bible. We must listen to him as our foremost authority. When God said 'Listen to him,' the disciples looked up and only saw Jesus. Jesus alone is to be our Master. We do not follow our heart, lean on our own understanding, or consent to our friends if they contradict what Jesus has spoken. Are you listening to him? Do you take God's command from the cloud seriously? We should be lifelong listeners of the Lord Jesus. If we do that, we will find overflowing life, not boredom. We will find joy in the one who shines like the white light of the sun.