

## ***“The Fullness of Our Inheritance”***

As we come to the close of the Season of Epiphany, remember that “epiphany” means to “make manifest, to show forth, to reveal.” What is God showing you today with the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain – and why does He give you this epiphany?

In the Collect for today it says that the Transfiguration “confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah.” What is the “testimony” of Moses and Elijah? And how does their testimony, along with the transfiguration of Jesus, confirm the mysteries of the faith?

As God reveals to us in His Word – Moses and Elijah appear on the mountain with Jesus – talking with Him. They are just as ALIVE as Jesus is!

BUT wait ... Moses and Elijah are Old Testament figures – men who lived hundreds of years before Jesus. Moses and Elijah died ..... or did they?

Moses and Elijah are unique in Holy Scripture. “Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” There is no record of him dying – only going up alive into heaven, in both body and soul. And now, on the Mountain of Transfiguration, we see him with Jesus – in heaven – because heaven is wherever Jesus is.

You see, the Mountain of Transfiguration is not just a glimpse of Jesus’ divinity (when His clothes become radiant) – but it is a glimpse of heaven itself. In the Collect we pray that the Lord would “bring US to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven.” For Elijah, the prayer has been answered.

But, what about Moses? In Deuteronomy 34 it is revealed that Moses was allowed to see the Promised Land from the top of Mt. Nebo – but the Lord said that Moses would not go over there – he would not enter the Land Promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Moses died in the land of Moab – and the Scriptures say that he was buried there – but it also says, “no one knows the place of his burial to this day.” Unlike Jacob, and Joseph, before him – the bones of Moses were not brought into the Promised Land.

So, what happened to him? I don't know any more than what the Scriptures say – but they do show us that he is alive, bodily, talking with Jesus on the Mountain of Transfiguration.

And from St. Luke's Gospel, we know what Moses and Elijah and Jesus were talking about. They were talking about Jesus' "exodus" – His departure. Moses and Elijah – alive with Jesus – talking with Him about His Passion, His Passover sacrifice --- and all of this before Jesus would descend that mountain and enter into Jerusalem.

As Jesus began His ministry, He said that He had not come to abolish Moses and the Prophets, but to fulfill them. Here we have Moses and Elijah – representing the whole Old Testament – talking with Jesus about His exodus. Jesus is here – not to abolish Moses and Elijah – but to bring their words, their lives, their ministry – to fulfillment.

All that Moses commands in the Law of God, Jesus says – done ... I have come to do all that the Father has desired ... it's all fulfilled in Me. And all that God promises through Elijah and the Prophets, Jesus says – it's all fulfilled in me.

Simon Peter is quick to speak. He says, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." In other words, let's set up camp here. Let's stay here on this mountain.

Ephraim the Syrian (a 4<sup>th</sup> century Christian theologian and hymnwriter) has this to say in one of his sermons on the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

"Simon, what are you saying? If we remain here, who fulfills the word of the Prophets? Who seals the sayings of the heralds? Who brings to perfection the mysteries of the just?

If we remain here, in whom are the words, 'They dug my hands and feet' fulfilled? To whom do the words, 'They parted my garments among them, and cast lots for my clothing' apply? To whom does, 'They gave me gall as my food, and with vinegar they quenched my thirst' relate? Who confirms, 'Free among the dead'?

If we remain here, who will tear up the record of Adam's debt? And who will pay his debt in full? And who will restore to him the garment of glory? If we remain here, how will all that I have said to you come to pass? How will the Church be built? How will you receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven from me? What will you bind? What will you loose? If we remain here, everything that was said through the Prophets will come to nothing."

Dearly beloved, Jesus is revealed to you on the Mountain of Transfiguration as the One who will fulfill Moses and the Prophets "for you." He will leave this mountain in order to climb the mountain called Calvary – to fulfill YOUR inheritance in heaven.

Jesus has kept the Law of God for you – lived a holy life of obedience to the Father in your place – shed His blood and gave up His life for you – and He is in heaven, with all who have died in the faith – awaiting the resurrection of their bodies – awaiting the resurrection of your body, your entrance into His eternal, Promised Land.

This is the testimony of Moses and Elijah – showing forth your inheritance in heaven – an inheritance that is already yours because of your adoption by grace – God making you His child through Holy Baptism.

This inheritance, your inheritance – is revealed to you in the Transfiguration of Our Lord – and will be fully revealed to you when you are with Jesus in heaven – "talking with" Him – seeing Him in all His glory, face to face. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.