

- b. **listen to Him** – Literally, “You hear Him!” God is both *commanding* and *enabling* people to stop being controlled by the world, then to → pay attention, → understand, and → respond to Jesus – thus
♦ *repent* (be sorry), ♦ *believe* (in Jesus for eternal life), and
♦ *live* (according to God’s Holy Word)!

4. **From Terror to Peace:** ⁶ When the disciples heard *this*, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. ⁷ And Jesus came to *them* and touched them and said, “Get up, and do not be afraid.” ⁸ And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.

- a. **they ... were terrified** – Literally “they feared exceedingly.” Believers **should not** be afraid of God – they are His forgiven children, but all who continue to reject Jesus Christ **should be terrified!**
- b. **do not be afraid** – Only through Jesus can our sins and fears truly be removed! Those who are rejecting Jesus and yet are **not terrified are deceived!**

Conclusion: ⁹ As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.”

Jesus had a mission: To live a sinless life for all and bear the eternal punishment for all! The more who knew He was the *Messiah, the Christ* would only complicate the fulfillment of His mission; therefore, He said: *Be quiet for now!*

But today, knowing *who He is* and *what He has done*, may God enable us to know with **absolute assurance** that *through Him we have the forgiveness of our sins!* Amen!

This and other sermons are available on Bethlehem’s website: www.blc7500.com
Please share them with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers!
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Rd., Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230

Absolute Assurance!

Based on Matthew 17:1-9 NAU (an update of the NAS in 1995)



The Transfiguration of our Lord – 2011

March 6 → 8:00 & 10:45

Introduction: Dear friends in Jesus Christ, let’s be honest, *much in life is uncertain!* With ♦our jobs, ♦our health, ♦our money, ♦our friends, ♦our nation, and ♦more, *we cannot be certain!* ☹Our jobs may end, ☹our health may fail, ☹our money may be worthless, ☹our friends may leave us, and ☹our nation may collapse! It’s not wrong for such things to be part of our lives, *but they should never consume our lives nor should we ever trust in such things!*

In today’s world of great uncertainty, *God is calling us to be absolutely sure about these important realities:*

- We are sinners who *cannot* save ourselves!
- God *promised* to send His Son to be our Savior!
- Jesus *is* God’s Son who lived and died for us and all!

- By *the Spirit through the Word* God is calling and enabling all to repent, believe, and eternally benefit!

However, *before we can believe*, we must be certain about the object of our faith – *the One upon whom God is calling us to place our faith!* **These are faith-building realities:**

- Jesus was born of a virgin!
- Jesus' birth was announced by an angel!
- The infant Jesus was visited by kings bearing gifts!
- God the Father spoke from heaven at Jesus' baptism!
- During Jesus' ministry *He preached with authority* and *God worked through Him* to perform many miracles!

Now, *on this final Sunday in the season of Epiphany*, we turn our attention to Jesus' transfiguration: ¹ **Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.**

- Six days earlier, Peter said of Jesus: ^{NAU} **Matthew 16:16** "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus foretold His *death* and *resurrection!*
- Then, six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain in order to give them **absolute assurance** that ***He is the Christ!***

1. **Much More than a Man:** ² **And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.** ³ **And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.**

- a. Transfigured – When a caterpillar changes into a butterfly, *it is called a metamorphosis*. Jesus' change was similar, even the English word "transfigured" is derived from the Greek noun μεταμορφωσις.

- b. The changes that Jesus underwent were not simply imagined – but were real! Think about Peter, James, and John, they had ♦*heard* Jesus teach with authority and ♦*witnessed* many of His miracles *but He always looked like a man*; then, *all of a sudden*, "**His face shone like the sun...**" That was God's way of helping us to be **absolutely sure** *that Jesus is God in the flesh!*

- c. Moses and Elijah – How did Peter, James, and John recognize them? Lenski wrote: "...the saints in heaven need not be introduced and named to us but are at once known through heavenly intuition." (655)

2. **Peter Speaks:** ⁴ **Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."** We cannot know why Peter said what he did, but here are some thoughts: ♦Peter had a tendency to speak when he should have kept silent; ♦Peter was enjoying the moment – "...it is good for us to be here," and ♦Peter may have been trying to prolong the experience – by making "three tabernacles," tents, temporary dwelling places. But Jesus did not answer; *something much more important was happening!*

3. **God the Father Speaks:** ⁵ **While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"**

- a. This is My beloved Son – In case anyone had any doubt, *now we know*, God the Father has spoken, Peter's earlier confession is now confirmed, Jesus truly is ^{NAU} **Matthew 16:16** "...the Christ, the Son of the living God."