**SHINE LIKE THE SON**

***Transfigured and Transformed***

“*Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was* ***transfigured*** *before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light*.” (Matt. 17:1-2)

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be* ***transformed*** *by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*.” (Rom 12:1-2)

Jesus was transfigured (Greek *METAMORPHOO*).

Christians are transformed (Greek *METAMORPHOO*).

You can see our English word metamorphosis in that Greek word. Science defines it as a biological process which involves sudden and abrupt changes in the body structure by cell growth. It is generally observed in amphibians and insects. For example, think of a tadpole being transformed into a frog. Think of a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. The idea is that of a sudden change from one thing into another.

Children can relate to this sudden change when they play with their Transformer toys. Ask your seven-year old son who Optimus Prime is and he will tell you all about the leader of the Autobots and how he is the strongest and most courageous of all Transformers. He will tell you that his role in the universe is to protect all life, including all Earth people. He will then demonstrate it by taking what looks to be an 18-wheel tractor trailer and in a matter of seconds turn it into a mighty flying fighting machine. He then goes into his deep bass voice (as much as a seven-year old can speak bass) and shouts: “I must go forth and save the world!” With a few twists and turns he exposes a battle axe in one hand and a laser machine gun in the other. We earthlings have been once again saved from extinction! Sleep in peace tonight, for the Maximals, led by Optimus Prime, are ready to defend us from the Predacons, led by the wicked Megatron. Feel better now? I know I do.

Whether we are talking about nature and the transformation of an ugly, slow caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly with wings, or a Hasbro toy that transforms from a truck into an other-worldly superhero (or evil villain), the idea is to see the concept of change from one thing into another. God is asking us to believe that if He can do it in the natural world, He can likewise do it in the spiritual world.

Jesus went through a *METAMORPHOO* when he was changed from the glory of God and the Creator of the universe into a tiny infant dependent upon the care and protection of mere mortals. It is called the Incarnation (from the Latin word *CARO*, which means “flesh”). “*In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God … The Word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:1,14). Paul describes this further when he says,

*“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the* ***form*** *of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the* ***form*** *of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man…”* (Phil. 2:5-8).

Jesus became Immanuel, “*God with us*” (Matt. 1:23). Then, 33 years later He went from the Incarnation to the Transformation in which for a few brief shining moments He was able to reveal to earthlings who He really was. On what became known to Bible readers as “The Mount of Transfiguration” Jesus showed Peter, James and John His true identity. “*His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light”* (Matt. 17:2).

Think of it, the world rubbed shoulders with Jesus from Bethlehem, to Egypt, to Nazareth, to Samaria, to Jerusalem with barely giving Him a second thought. Isaiah reminds us “*He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness, and when we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him… We hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised and we did not esteem Him*” (Isa. 53:2-3). He was as common looking as a blade of grass and few ever thought of Him as “*God with us*.”

Now think with me for a moment. Just as Peter, James and John suddenly saw Jesus for who He really was, shining in all His heavenly glory, should not we also look below the surface of the skin and see our brothers and sisters in Christ as going through a transformation, a transfiguration, from Terrestrial to Celestial beings. We are E. T. people (Extra Terrestrial) who “phone home” when we speak to God in prayer.

*“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being* ***transformed*** *into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”* (2 Cor. 3:18).

Like the ugly caterpillar slowly moving into its cocoon, only to emerge as a magnificent Monarch butterfly to spread its wings and take flight, so we ugly sinners go through a conversion in which we are transformed into saints who become “*heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ… that we may also be glorified together*” (Rom. 8:17). Truly, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through, my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.”

The world sees us as but one of nearly eight billion earthlings and gives us no second thought. God sees us as His child and writes our name on the palm of His hand (Isa. 49:16), and records it in the Book of Life (Rev. 3:5). Here I’m but an alien and pilgrim who the world calls “strange” (I Pet. 4:4), but one day I will be seen for who I really am – “*For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God… because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*” (Rom. 8:18-21).

Jesus once shone like the sun. Christians now shine like the Son.

This little Christian light of mine I’m gonna let it shine. – Rick