

La Plata

Years ago



"This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." In the name...

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all

Beware the mountain. Mountains are where our first parents walk in the cool of the day with their Creator—God Almighty. Mountains are where arks come to rest after the flood when the world is reborn—the grandeur of new birth revealed. Mountains are where the sheer power and glory of the storm-cloud of God come to rest and his finger writes the law upon tablets for a radiant-faced Moses. Mountains are where the prophets of God have a showdown with the prophets of false gods—where water itself is set aflame by the magnitude of the supremacy of God over everything at the prayer of Elijah. Mountains are where the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ sits to teach us in his Sermon on the Mount. And now Peter and James and John ascend a mountain. What glory shall be revealed this time?

Love
kids
now)

Luke has carefully set the stage for what will be revealed on the mountain in his Gospel. He has shown already the authority of Christ's teaching as one who has authority. He has shown us the sovereignty of Christ over disease. He has shown us Christ exalted above all demonic powers. He has shown us that Christ is above the storms of nature. He

has shown Christ to be superior over death—that death shall be undone by death...his death. He has taught us of the supremacy of Christ over the material world in feeding the 5000. He has given us a Christ worthy of all honor as one who restores hearing and speech. Luke then shows us a Christ supreme over every human need. And then to the mountain we go with these words hanging in our ears, “There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.”

And we will not read another few chapters and verses before he predicts his death.

So between “the kingdom of God come with power” and “they shall kill the Son of Man” stands the mountain.

I dare say I’m not fit to climb. God help my unbelief. Thank God for the three eye-witnesses. Thank God that standing between my darkened understanding and my delight in the fantastical stands history. Christ the God-man—the radiant.

Six days have passed since his assurance that the Kingdom of God shall come in power. Peter—the one whom St. Chrysostom describes as the one who “exceedingly loved Him”—is there. John also—the one who is self-described as the one exceedingly “loved of Him.” And James—he whose faithfulness was so known that Herod thought to pick him off first. These three with our Lord, knowing full well the temptation to despair with which each would be afflicted, grants them a glimpse of the glory which shall be revealed—a sensible and yet spiritual radiance of a heavenly glory which has not been seen since his birth.

With him he brings Moses and Elijah. Moses—he who denounced the slavery of Egypt. Elijah—he who denounced the depravity of Ahab.

Moses—the one who though slow of tongue rescued a nation.

Elijah—the one who though rustic in his demeanor and clothing preserved a people swept up in idolatry. Moses the meek, Elijah the jealous. The law and the prophets. And Christ between them—the perfect, unconquerable fulfillment of both whose glory and supremacy over both figures now shines brighter than the sun. To a Peter and a James and a John who are soon to meet with fear, persecution, death, poverty, dishonor, beatings, wreckages—they will be bowed so low for the sake of Christ—what could be a more ennobling vision than this?

When James is martyred, what greater mark upon his mind could be made than his: the Majestic Glory of a Heavenly Father saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” When Peter is locked away—chained to four guards in his tomb-like prison cell, could there be greater glory—greater light etched upon his mind than a glorified Christ upon the mountain whose raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them?

When John is exiled to the fate of a white martyr who shall never lay eyes upon the faithful in Christ again (in this world), could greater honor and glory from God the Father be bestowed than the resplendent, panoramic excellencies of the person of Christ as was revealed in the Transfiguration?

We also shall behold Christ. And when he comes again, writes Chrysostom, in the parousia—the second coming referenced in our epistle, “He shall come in the very glory of the Father, not with Moses and Elijah only, but with the infinite host of the angels, with the archangels, with the cherubim, with the infinite tribes, not having a cloud over His head, but with heaven itself.”

We fight with light. And people seem to know this—other authors seem to know this. The ones we expect—Tolkien has Samwise fight Shelob the great spider with the light of Galadrial’s Phial. And the ones we don’t expect—Suzanne Collins sets Katniss and Peeta ablaze in the Hunger Games to symbolize their clear victory over the evil Capital as they ride into city. The piercing brightness of unmitigated glory will conquer all. Every valley shall be exalted. Every rough place shall be made plain, and the glory of Almighty God shall be revealed. Take that into your sometimes dull and uneventful week! Take that into your ~~stinky parish hall and broken mower.~~

broken sidewalk faulty ice-maker.

I offer three final things for your consideration:

1. As Peter says, “the prophetic message is more fully confirmed.” Jesus Christ is God. God became a man—setting aside the Divine prerogative of heavenly glory to live your life and mine. Worship him.
2. The same Christ holds everything together—He is above all things, and by him all things consist. That means that everything is transfigured and bursting at the seams with

his glory. May God give us the eyes and ears to see the inner essence of glory in everything. The world is dripping with grace and glory.

3. There is nothing that so perfectly reveals this inner essence of glory than the Eucharist to which you are now invited. Sacramentalists are charged with always trying to infuse grace into material objects. To the contrary, we are those who simply affirm the Transfiguration.

*The glory
is already
here.*

For at this altar, we fall down because through the thin veil of bread and wine, the supremacy of Christ shines forth. At this altar, the blinding light of heaven pairs up with the material realities of bread to give you the virtue of the Beloved Son of God. At this altar, we ascend the holy mountain to walk in the cool of the day in the garden of his heavenly perfections. This is his beloved Son with whom He is well pleased, and we dare not build tabernacles to contain it.

In the name of the...