

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But we know that, when He is revealed, we will be like Him; for we will see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2). And St. Paul tells us - "For whom He [God] foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Romans 8:29).

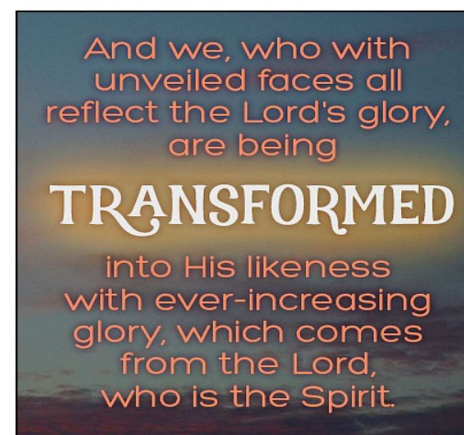
Paul also wrote - "For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will change the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21). And also - "For in Him [Christ] all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and you have this fullness in him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 3:9-10).

In conclusion, this should be our goal: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25b-27).

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Transformed Into His Likeness

by Dr. Robert D. Hosken



"The Word became flesh, and dwelled among us. We beheld His glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Right at the beginning of his Gospel, the Apostle John describes the glory of

Jesus Christ. A bit farther in this chapter, John tells us how that glory was revealed: "I saw the Spirit descending like a dove out of heaven, and it remained on Him.... I have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God" (verses 32 & 34). This is the first "Epiphany" (revelation) of Jesus as the Son of God in His glory.

In Luke 9:28–36 we read of the Transfiguration of Christ - "As He was praying, the appearance of His face was altered, and His clothing became white and

dazzling." This transfiguration is very likely what John was referring to in John 1:14, when Peter, James and John beheld His glory. St. Peter testifies of the Transfiguration - *"For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased'"* (2 Peter 1:17).

And Christ intends to share His glory with us - *"Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and virtue; by which he has granted to us his exceedingly great and precious promises; that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust"* (verses 3-4). This is St. Peter's testimony on participating in Christ's glory.

Next, St. Paul also testifies about the topic of transformation - *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Romans 12:2). The Greek word here for "transformed" is *metamorphous*, the same word used for "transfigured" in Luke 9. So it is the same process, the same action of God's Spirit in both Christ and in us.

After Moses received the Ten Commandments from God, he came down from Mt. Sinai and, having been in the presence of God, his face was shining with glory so much that he had to put a veil on his face because the Israelites couldn't bear to look at the brightness (Exodus 34:35). As St. Paul writes, however, in 1 Corinthians 3:16 & 18 - *"But whenever one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ...But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit."* Christ's glory in us is far greater than the glory that shone on the face of Moses!

As a side note, I should explain that the Church Fathers make a distinction between God's image in all mankind and His *likeness* in Christ's followers. Here's an analogy: the image is similar to the blueprint or plan or design, but the likeness is the way that a specific house or car follows the blueprint or plan or design. For example, a new Mercedes car is in the Mercedes image, but if it gets in a bad wreck it may no longer be in the Mercedes likeness. Similarly, all people are in the image of God... but if they wreck their lives, they may no longer reflect God's likeness. Christ came, however, to restore or transform us back into the divine likeness.

We can't know exactly what this will be like because it is beyond our earthly experience, but St. John tells us -