

Transfiguration Of The Lord, August 6th, 2017

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

Daniel is one of the four major prophets of the Old Testament. This is a selection from Daniel's vision in which he has seen four great beasts which represent various kings and empires.

9 As I watched: Thrones were set up Divine judgment of the kingdoms just mentioned is about to take place.¹ and the Ancient One took his throne. This means that God took His throne in heaven.¹ His clothing was snow bright, and the hair on his head as white as wool; his throne was flames of fire, with wheels of burning fire.

10 A surging stream of fire flowed out from where he sat; thousands upon thousands were ministering to him, and myriads upon myriads attended him. The court was convened and the books were opened. These books contain all the actions of men.¹ This refers to the judgment on the Last Day when the conduct of each one and the secrets of hearts will be brought to light.² (CCC 678)

13 As the visions during the night continued, I saw one like a Son of man This one is the very opposite of the beasts and he shares the human condition. We learn in verse 27 that he stands for faithful Israel. However, he is also an individual and insofar as he is given a kingdom, he is a king. This came to be interpreted as being the Messiah and Jesus Christ applied the title to himself.¹ coming, on the clouds of heaven; This means that he has been raised up by God.¹ when he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him,

14 the one like a Son of man received dominion, glory, and kingship; all peoples, nations, and languages serve him. When the Church proclaims in the Creed that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, she is saying that it was to Christ that dominion was given for "being seated at the Father's right hand" signifies the inauguration of the Messiah's kingdom and the fulfillment of this vision.¹ His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed.

2 Peter 1:16-19

This letter was probably written just before Peter's anticipated death by martyrdom somewhere between A.D. 62 and 66, from Rome. It is the last recorded words of the first recorded pope.⁴ The great aim of this letter is to encourage men to be confident in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The heretics whom Peter is attacking no longer believed in the Second Coming because it was so long delayed that they had begun to think that it would never happen at all.⁶

Beloved:

16 We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, Here Peter is reminding his readers that only Judaism and Christianity are religions of public record, eyewitnessed facts. All others are myths.⁴ "The power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" is a phrase that sums up the purpose of apostolic preaching: "power" indicates that Jesus Christ is God and is almighty like the Father. The "coming" refers to his manifestation in glory at the end of time.⁵

17 but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. Here he stresses the disciples' and his own eyewitness experience of Jesus.⁴ The writer presumes that the reader is familiar with the account of the Transfiguration in Mark.³ The reference to the "majesty" of Jesus Christ which means his sovereign power, authority and dignity, is an attribute that he always possesses because he is God.⁵ For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased." The purpose

of this recollection of the Transfiguration is to show on the testimony of apostolic eyewitnesses, that Jesus already possesses the essential qualities to be manifested at his coming: majesty, honor and glory from the Father as well as divine Sonship.³ The Transfiguration is commonly regarded as a foretaste of the Resurrection but here Peter uses it as a foretaste of the triumphant glory of the Second Coming.⁶

18We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain. This wording indicates that he is referring to the Transfiguration and not to the Baptism of our Lord. The mountain is described as “holy” because a visible manifestation of God occurred there. In the Old Testament Zion is called a “holy mountain” because God revealed himself there.⁵

19Moreover, we possess the prophetic message The “prophetic message” meant the messianic prophecies or all of the Old Testament insofar as it proclaims the enduring salvation to come.⁵ The second thing that Peter stresses is that Jesus fulfilled the written prophecies of Scripture.⁴ **that is altogether reliable. You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns** This refers to the Second Coming.³ **and the morning star rises in your hearts.** The morning star is designed to bring light and announce the coming of day. Similarly, the fullness of Revelation, which begins with the earthly life of Christ, will reach its climax when he comes in glory.⁵

Matthew 17:1-9

The Transfiguration balances out the shock of Jesus' first Passion prediction in the previous chapter. It also strengthens the faith of the three apostles destined for special leadership positions in the early Church.⁷

Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother, John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

These were three of Jesus' closest companions. They were also with him in the garden of Gethsemane and are the only apostles that Jesus renamed: Simon became “Peter”, which means “rock”, while James and John were called “Boanerges”, which means “sons of thunder.”⁷

According to Deuteronomy, to bear witness to anything the evidence of two or three must concur. Perhaps that is why Jesus wanted the apostles to be present.⁽⁸⁾ Traditionally, this is identified with Mt. Tabor, which is the New Covenant counterpart to Mt. Sinai, where Jesus manifests his divine splendor just as God revealed his glory to Moses and Elijah on Sinai.⁷

And he was transfigured before them; Like Jesus' Baptism, this event reveals the Trinity: the Father's voice is heard, the Son is transfigured, and the Spirit is present in the cloud.⁷

his face shone like the sun

and his clothes became white as light. White clothing is a frequent apocalyptic image of otherworldly glory and of the glory of the saints.³

And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, Moses was the supreme law-giver of the nation of Israel and Elijah was the first and greatest of the prophets. Together they testify that Jesus is the foretold Messiah and mediator of the New Covenant.⁷ Their presence on the new Sinai is a witness to the fulfillment of the OT in Jesus.³

conversing with him.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply,

"Lord, it is good that we are here.

If you wish, I will make three tents here,

one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” These would have been small shelters like the ones in which the Israelites dwelt during the liturgical feast of Booths. Peter requests to build these shelters in his desire to prolong the heavenly experience.⁷

While he was still speaking, behold,
a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, The cloud will be the vehicle of Christ’s Second Coming.⁹
This is an OT image to describe God’s dwelling among his people. The fact that the disciples too are overshadowed by the cloud shows that, far from being mere spectators, they are deeply involved in the mystery of Christ’s glorification as representatives of the new people of God.³
then from the cloud came a voice that said,
"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;
listen to him." This final command refers to Deuteronomy 18:15 where Yahweh promised to raise up another prophet like Moses so that just as Israel received instructions for worship and life through Moses, so they must obey the words of his prophetic successor. The Father uses this passage to identify Jesus as his prophet-like-Moses.⁷

When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate
and were very much afraid.
But Jesus came and touched them, saying,
"Rise, and do not be afraid."
And when the disciples raised their eyes,
they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain,
Jesus charged them,
"Do not tell the vision to anyone
until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." The reason for this is probably because the apostles still neither understand nor accept his suffering role. They would ignore this point in their broadcasting and kindle even more the people’s hopes that Jesus would be the type of humanly victorious Messiah they wanted. The “until” is crucial: The day will come when they will preach Jesus as risen from the dead and coming in the Father’s glory.⁹

Some of the material for this commentary was taken from: (1) “The Navarre Bible: Major Prophets,” (2) “Catechism Of The Catholic Church,” (3) “The Jerome Biblical Commentary,” (4) “You Can Understand The Bible” by Peter Kreeft, (5) “The Navarre Bible: Catholic Epistles,” (6) “The Letters Of James And Peter,” by William Barclay, (7) “Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Gospel of Mark,” With Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (8) “The Navarre Bible: St. Mark,” and (9) “Mark: Good News for Hard Times” by George T. Montague, S.M.

In loving memory of Peg Schneller, who compiled these commentaries.