

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified.

7 But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid."

8 When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus."

ELI5. It's a specific community on a website called Reddit. It stands for Explain it like I'm five. It's one of my favorite go-to places when I'm seeking a good answer to something I might have a question about. Usually, someone will ask a question about something, first identifying themselves as some kind of expert and then giving an easily understandable answer to the question. Usually, they're excellent. But when I went to ELI5 and looked for the question: Who was Jesus? The top answer was this: "Jesus was a man born in the Roman province of Judea around 4BC. He gained a small group of followers during his lifetime and was executed by Pontius Pilate by crucifixion. It appears as if his followers considered him a prophetic figure, and many consider him even today to be a great teacher." And if you would ask the vast majority of people today, who is Jesus? You may get similar answers to that. A prophet. A teacher. A man who was very in touch with his spiritual side. A man who came to disrupt the status quo and reached out in kindness to the disenfranchised of society.

Why would we read this today on the festival of Transfiguration? It's because Transfiguration is vital. One of those reasons it is so is because the answer to the question that keeps popping up for those who are with him and all of us here today: Who is Jesus? And we'll discover that it gives a much better answer, a far more comforting answer, than the one we read in our introduction.

One thing that is made abundantly clear in the transfiguration account, is that the idea that Jesus is just another teacher is absolutely false. Jesus is not one of many. Jesus is not another in a line of teachers. Not another sage. Not just another prophet. **"There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus."** Jesus is far superior and far exceeds all other prophets. Appearing with Moses, the lawgiver, and Elijah, one of the two people who never died. He's with the hall of fame here. But Jesus shows he is far greater than even them. Those prophets, great as they were never peeled back their human nature and glowed like the sun. Those prophets as faithful as they were never made their clothes shine light lightning purely from the divine essence radiating from themselves. Even Moses, when he saw God's glory, radiated purely with reflected glory, not any of his own, and it quickly faded away.

But even if that, Jesus shining and showing his glory, wasn't enough to have us separate him as greater, more glorious, more important, it becomes abundantly clear with the words of God the Father: **"While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I**

love; with him, I am well pleased. Listen to him!" With the voice of the almighty Father, Jesus is singled out as his son. He is pointed to as different from the others standing before the disciples. Greater than Moses. Greater than Elijah. The very Son of God. There is one thing you can't say about Jesus. He is not just another teacher.

The second thing we learn about who Jesus is is that the true Jesus is a divine Jesus. Many people, even in Christendom, will try to defend Jesus, defend Christianity, by pulling some of the divinity out of him. They will try to say that his miracles didn't happen. And what's important is that Jesus cared about the harmed. They take the incarnate deity and turn him into a nice guy to be emulated. The Resurrection becomes not an assurance of eternal life but a wonderful symbol about rebirth.

But Transfiguration shows us that the true Jesus is a divine Jesus. A Jesus who is God and veiled his glory for a time. And why is this so important? Why did God make a specific time when he would make it abundantly clear that he was not just another prophet? Why would God set apart a time when he made it undeniable that Jesus is divine? Why would Jesus be transfigured before his disciples, and why do we set aside a time every year to celebrate it? It's because Jesus wanted to make us confident of something. It's because Jesus came to do something.

"As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." In the transfiguration, Jesus shows us what he came to do.

After the transfiguration, Jesus begins his determined walk to Jerusalem. Jesus, the divine Son of God, born incarnate from eternity, lays aside his glory for a time to go to the cross. He, in his state of humiliation, is determined to come down from the mount of glory and suffer the sins of the entire world and to breathe his last breath. The perfect for the imperfect. The divine for the sinner. The eternal for mere mortals.

In the transfiguration, we see evidence of the mission of Jesus. Jesus came to prove his deity. Jesus came to bring the favor of God the Father to us. Jesus came to spread the word of truth, THE Truth; he desperately wants us to listen to him. Jesus came to bring comfort to sinners who are terrified of his glory. Jesus came to set aside his glory, to walk back down the mountain veiled in simple human flesh, to live and die for humans, and to rise again from the grave.

Why is this so important? Why is it so important to see the glory of Jesus? To understand him as God? To see him not just as a teacher, not just as a prophet? Well, Jesus did it all for you. If you take the divine out of Jesus, you don't have a Jesus who offers anything. If you take the divine out of Jesus, you don't have a Jesus who brings comfort when your sins assail you. If you take the divine out of Jesus, you don't have anyone to run back to when you are struggling and need some help with nowhere else to go. If you take the divine out of Jesus, there is no consolation when you face death itself.

But for you, Christian, as evidenced by the transfiguration, you do have a divine Jesus. A glorious Jesus. Since you have a divine Jesus, you can be sure of many things. You can be sure that all of your sins are forgiven because God himself died and said that they are forgiven. You can be sure that when you pray to him, he has the will and power to answer those prayers. You can be sure that since he has been raised from the grave, you, too, will be raised on the last day and live with him eternally.

ELI5. What would we write if we were going to answer that question according to the truths of the Transfiguration? Let's try. "Jesus is the very Son of God, who walked among us in human flesh, being in very nature God, he paid for the sins of the world with his perfect blood, and rose from the dead to give the assurance that all who believe in him, will have life everlasting." Amen.