

Who Is Jesus?

Luke 9:28-36

Introduction

The Transfiguration of Our Lord closes out the season after Epiphany the same way the Baptism of Our Lord opens it up. In both scenes, the entire Trinity is present as Jesus is shown to be the Son of God to those around. At His Baptism, the Father is heard in the Voice, the Son is Jesus, being baptized, and the Holy Spirit is seen in the form of a dove. Luther tells us that the Persons of the Trinity are distinguished at the Transfiguration this way: The Father is the One who speaks, the Son is the One who is being spoken about (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit is the cloud. But there is also a deeper, more thorough identification of Jesus in the Father's brief speech: *"This is My Son, My Chosen One, listen to Him!"* (v. **36**). How is Jesus identified by the Father here?

My Son

The Father is saying that Jesus is His Son and more. The phrase "My Son" reminds us of **Psalm 2** (read **Psalm 2:6-9**). This Psalm belongs to a class called Royal Psalms or Enthronement Psalms. They were used at the coronation of the king. But more than just the king of Israel, they speak of a future King. A King who would rule over all nations, the Messiah. Along with the church fathers, Luther explains how "today" shows us the psalmist is ultimately referring to the only begotten Son of God. In eternity, there is no past or future. For God, it's always now; it's always today. That's how Jesus can be "begotten of His Father before all worlds" and be said to be begotten today.

King of What?

Jesus' kingdom has three phases. There is the kingdom of power, where, as Creator, He reigns over all creation. There is the kingdom of grace, where, as our Redeemer, He reigns over the church militant in this world. And there is the kingdom of glory, where, as the Son of Man, He reigns over the church triumphant in the next world. Jesus, the Son of God, is our King.

My Chosen One

The Father's Chosen One is identified in **Isaiah 42** as His Servant (read **Isaiah 42:1**). But what kind of servant is Jesus? The most well-known of the "Servant songs" of **Isaiah** is found in **chapters 52** through **53**. We read here how the Servant was marred beyond recognition, despised, and rejected. He was oppressed and afflicted. He went through all this to carry our sin, and He did so without complaint, as a lamb led to the slaughter. In short, *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all* (**Isaiah 53:6**). As the Father's Chosen One, Jesus was the Suffering Servant, whose death was the Sacrifice that paid the price for our sins.

Listen to Him!

The phrase "listen to Him" sends us back to **Deuteronomy 18** (read **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**). God will raise up a Prophet "like Moses." This Prophet is Jesus Christ. How are Jesus and Moses alike? They are not alike in message. Moses gave the Law. Since the Law Moses gave is complete, Jesus could not add to it. He could not be repeating Moses since God puts His words in Jesus' mouth. The message

of Jesus is a different message. Jesus gives the Gospel. They are alike in authority. In both cases, God put His words into their mouths. They spoke with the authority of God. God called Moses at the burning bush. Jesus, begotten of the Father, is in the Father (Read **John 14:10-11**). Jesus is the Prophet, speaking the Word of God, the Gospel message. He still proclaims that message today. Through pastors as they preach the Word, through the Sacraments as they give us the Gospel in visible forms, and through the lives of believers as they physically proclaim the Gospel in their vocations. In all this, the Prophet is preaching the Gospel because the Word of God is the driving force.

Who Is Jesus?

In this one sentence spoken by the Father, we see that Jesus is the Suffering Servant, our Sacrifice, and our Redeemer. He is the Prophet like Moses, bringing the Word of God, the Gospel message. And He is the King, the King of creation, the King of the church militant in this world, and the King of the church triumphant in the next. This year, during our Midweek Lenten services and all the special services for Lent and Easter, we will be following our King. We'll follow Him through His passion to His cross. We'll be reminded of what it means that our King is also our Sacrifice. As we learn from Revelation, Jesus is the Son of Man, King of kings, and Lord of lords only because He was and is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Means of Grace

This is Who we meet at the Altar of Communion. Our King, Prophet, and Sacrifice comes to us and nourishes us on His body and blood. He forgives our sins and strengthens our faith by His Word through this means of grace. Who is this Jesus? Our King, our Prophet, our Sacrifice.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
