

The Mount of Transfiguration.

Our Bible readings are all taken from the first gospel, the Gospel according to Matthew. *And we begin in chapter 17, verse 1¹ ...*

And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you will, let us make here three tabernacles: one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah'.

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold, a voice came out of the cloud, saying, '*This* is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'

And when the disciples heard it, they fell upon their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and be not afraid'. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Now, chapter 26, breaking in at verse 65² ...

Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' And they answering said, 'He is worthy of death'. Then they spat in His face and buffeted Him; and some struck Him with the palms of their hands.

And finally, a few verses from the following chapter – from Matthew chapter 27 – commencing at verse 35 ...

Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots'.

Down to verse 38 ...

Then there were crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left.

And then to verse 45³ ...

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

I want us to think this evening about four simple and familiar elements in Matthew's account of the Transfiguration;⁴ namely those of our Lord's **countenance**, His **clothing**, His **companions** and the **cloud**.

First, **His countenance**. Luke tells us only that the 'fashion/appearance of His countenance/face was altered'.⁵ As we read, Matthew is more specific: 'His face shone as the sun'.

The reference to 'the sun' may suggest something of a contrast with Moses, who came down from Sinai with the skin of his face shining.

It is clear that the glory of Moses' face was a reflected glory, that which did not originate in himself but in God.⁶ If anything, the radiance of his face was more like that of the moon, which only reflects the light of the sun. But now Jesus Himself was 'transfigured', and the word 'transfigured' used here does not point to that which is merely external or which comes from outside. The word indicates rather a change in His whole being. '*His* face ('His countenance') shone as the *sun*'.

Second, **His clothing**. We know what His cousin, John the Baptist, wore; 'John ... was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist'.⁷ We know too something of what

the religious leaders wore; for example, with enlarged fringes or tassels to their garments.⁸ But we know very little about what our Saviour wore.

All three gospels inform us that His garments became 'white'.

Matthew is the briefest, telling us simply they 'became as white as the light'.

Mark tells us that 'His raiment became shining (gleaming), exceedingly white as snow, such as no fuller (launderer) on earth could whiten them'.⁹ The expression suggests the glistening, sparkling brightness of sun on snow.

And Mark's expression may well reflect (sorry!) Peter's recollection of the moment, for it is likely that the site of our Lord's transfiguration was Mount Hermon, at the base of which lay Caesarea Philippi, from which the Lord and His disciples had come just a few days before.¹⁰ Even today Mount Hermon is called the "snow mountain" and boasts a ski-resort.¹¹

Luke tells us that 'His raiment was white and glistening/gleaming',¹² 'glistening' being the word used to describe blinding flashes of lightning. The word Luke uses here (indicating intensely brilliant) is a stronger form of the word which he uses later when recording the saying of Jesus, 'just as *the lightning* which *lightens (flashes out)* from one part under heaven, shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of man will be in His day'.¹³

In summary, His clothes became as bright as the light, as sparkling as the snow, and as dazzling as the lightning.

Third, **His companions**; namely Moses and Elijah. Interestingly, there were occasions when each of the three went without food for forty days and forty nights.¹⁴ But, more of more interest, is the fact that it was Moses and Elijah who appeared on the Mount, rather than, as we might have expected, the two men whose names open this gospel, Abraham and David.¹⁵

No doubt, there are several ways in which Moses and Elijah can be viewed, but in each the Lord is greater than either of His two companions.

We might remember, for example, that Moses and Elijah both *controlled the mighty waters*. But, at the Red Sea, Moses needed a rod, a staff,¹⁶ and, at the Jordan, Elijah needed a robe, a mantle,¹⁷ whereas our Lord controlled the waters of the Sea of Galilee without neither rod nor robe. His all-powerful word was sufficient.¹⁸

Then again, Moses and Elijah were able only to direct and influence the *external* behaviour of the people; they were unable to change men's hearts. Consequently, the most outspoken (i) of the people's promises in the days of Moses ('All that the Lord has spoken we will do'¹⁹), and (ii) of the people's confessions in the days of Elijah ('The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God'²⁰), came to nothing.

But the Lord Jesus inaugurated a new covenant in His blood. 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you'.²¹ One of the terms of that covenant is that God's law is written in men's hearts; 'the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us', the writer to the Hebrews records, 'saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds"',²² the quotation coming from the Old Testament book of Jeremiah.²³

Yet again, in the face of the many problems confronting him, at one stage Moses was all set to give in. Concerning his task, he said, '*It is too heavy*'.²⁴ On one occasion, Elijah likewise found the way far too hard for him, crying, '*It is enough*'.²⁵ The Lord Jesus faced waves of opposition unknown to either prophet, and yet He continued until He could say, not 'It is too heavy' or 'It is enough', but '*It is finished*'.²⁶

Yes, there are several ways in which Moses and Elijah can be viewed. But I think we are on safe ground when we claim that, one way or the other, they appeared on the Mount as representatives of the former revelation given by God in the Old Testament.

In this connection, I note that these were the two men whose names close the Old Testament: 'Remember the *law of Moses*, my servant ... Behold, I will send you *Elijah the prophet* before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord'.²⁷ Note the two links: Moses and 'law'; Elijah and 'prophet'.

I have in mind our Lord's words spoken a little later, 'The law and the prophets were until John' (John the Baptist, that is).²⁸ And the time had now come for the representatives of both the law and the prophets to step down, for them both to depart and to disappear. And this because the revelation of God which the law and the prophets had brought, though inspired and true, had been at best piecemeal and incomplete.

But, as the writer to the Hebrews stresses in the well-known opening words of his epistle, God was *now* speaking in the person of His *Son*, who brought God's full-orbed revelation and final word to men, and who thereby towers over, not only Moses and Elijah, but *all* Old Testament prophets completely.²⁹

With all the Old Testament prophets, their only credential (their only authority to speak and to preach) lay in their introductory formula 'Thus says the Lord' – a formula which occurs no less than 416 times in the Old Testament.³⁰ It is hardly surprising therefore that James, in his epistle, characterises the prophets as those 'who spoke in the name of the Lord'.³¹

But, in stark contrast, the Lord Jesus had a unique introductory formula of His own: 'I say to you', words found on His lips well over 50 times in this gospel alone.³² So that we read, for example, His words in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, 'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". But *I say to you*, "Do not resist the one who is evil".³³

So that, whereas Moses and Elijah spoke as those *who had been commissioned by God*, He spoke as one *who was God*. Small wonder then that the Father declared, 'Hear Him'!

The names of both Moses and Elijah had been largely associated with mountains (Sinai and Carmel respectively), but on *this* mountain, they must retire, leaving us (as the three favoured disciples) to see 'no one but Jesus only'

Luke tells us that Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about His 'decease' (His departure, His exit, His *exodus* {literally}) which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Moses has no wish to discuss his exodus from Egypt, nor Elijah his exodus from earth. 'Are you listening, Peter? They have come to speak (and to speak only) *of that cross* which a week ago you had found so offensive and unacceptable, and *of that Jerusalem* from which, because you were told it held only suffering and death for the Lord Jesus, you had then sought to deflect Him'.

And then, fourthly, there was **the cloud**. 'While he was still speaking', we read, God responded instantly to Peter's thoughtless suggestion of erecting three tabernacle shelters to prolong the experience.³⁴ Moses and Elijah may speak in terms of an 'exodus' to be accomplished at Jerusalem, but Peter has no interest in the Feast of Passover. He has *his* eye on the Feast of Tabernacles!

Mark tells us that, at the time, Peter didn't know what to say. I recently came across a quote which made me smile, 'When the screen of your mind goes blank, don't forget to turn off the sound'. Peter forgot to do it! Peter 'did not know what to say', but this didn't stop him blurting out to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tabernacles, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah'.³⁵

But it was not only that Peter was lost for words. Luke observes that he didn't know what he was saying even when he was saying it.³⁶ But then Peter was not the sort of man to let a little thing like that stop him!³⁷

But the Father certainly wasn't going to let Peter's unthinking suggestion³⁸ pass, which suggestion had the effect of ranking His Son with mere mortal men. *No, not for a moment!*

It seems that the bright cloud initially *overshadowed* them, and then *fully enveloped* them, the word translated 'overshadowed', being the same used in the Greek Old Testament of Exodus 40 verse 35, 'Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud overshadowed it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle'.³⁹ This was the unmistakable manifestation and display of the presence of God.

And then, to cap it all, God spoke 'out of the cloud', repeating substantially what He had declared at Jesus' baptism, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ('in whom I

have found my delight').⁴⁰ The Father was thereby confirming Jesus' identity both as His Son (as it is written in Psalm 2, 'Thou art my Son'⁴¹) and as His Suffering Servant (as it is written in Isaiah 42, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights').⁴²

And the same divine approval which had been proclaimed by the Father at the beginning of our Lord's public ministry, is now voiced again by the Father towards its close. At the Jordan, the Father had distinguished Him from the worst of men, come to be baptised 'to repentance', 'confessing their sins'.⁴³ Now, on the mount, He distinguished Him from the best of men.

But on this occasion, to the earlier allusions to the psalms (Psa. 2) and the prophets (Isa. 42), He adds a reference to the law, to Deuteronomy 18, where God had said of the Prophet who He would raise up 'like' Moses, 'Him shall you hear'.⁴⁴ So this time we hear the voice out of the cloud declare with reference to the Lord Jesus, 'hear Him'.

Moses and Elijah must now stand down, and so, when the disciples lifted their eyes 'they saw no-one but Jesus only'.⁴⁵ Moses and Elijah had returned from whence they had come.

Clearly Peter took the point, for, when he refers back to this incident some 30 years later, he makes no mention of either Moses or Elijah, making mention only of the 'majesty' (the 'magnificence') and the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus. 'We were eyewitnesses', the apostle wrote, 'of His majesty ... when He received honour and glory from God the Father'.⁴⁶

Luke tells us that the disciples had 'feared as they entered into the cloud'.⁴⁷ And well they might.

It is clear from Luke's account that the event took place at night. He says that Jesus 'took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as He prayed ...'.⁴⁸ And we know from elsewhere in Luke's gospel that it was the Lord's practice to spend much time *at night* in prayer. For example, 'in those days He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued *all night* in prayer to God'.⁴⁹ This explains why, as Luke noted, 'Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep',⁵⁰ and why, as again noted by Luke, 'they came down from the mountain ... the next day'.⁵¹

Oh yes, given that our Lord's transfiguration took place at night, small wonder *His disciples* feared. But the bright cloud held no terror or alarm for *Him*. It was a visible symbol of His Father's presence.

Truly, heaven bent low that night. Which accounts for why Peter later wrote of the voice which 'came ('was borne') out of heaven'.⁵² And so, for the second time, the Lord Jesus turned His back on the heavenly glory, leaving Moses and Elijah to return to heaven alone.⁵³

But His time would come, and, if I understand it correctly, the cloud would return for Him; for we read in Acts 1 that 'when He had spoken these things, a cloud received Him (took Him up) out of their sight'.⁵⁴ But, first, He must go to Jerusalem, to His cross, to His death, to His exodus.⁵⁵

But before even that, He must come down from the Mount to meet the acute need of a man and his only son, a young boy who was not only possessed by an unclean spirit, but by a particularly nasty, strong and malicious spirit, as witness the Lord's statement that 'this kind does not come out except by ...'.

Our Lord's words singled out this spirit as exceptional. This was no ordinary, run-of-the-mill demon, but one who had successfully withstood the combined attempts of nine (doubtless embarrassed) apostles to expel it.⁵⁶ And, on account of the presence of the unclean spirit, the man's son was not only epileptic but both deaf and dumb: 'Deaf and dumb spirit', Jesus said, 'I command you, come out of him'. The boy was unable therefore either to hear his parents' words of loving comfort or to express anything of his own anguish, fears or distress.

But, yes, love brought our Lord down from the Mount (from the place of glory and splendour) to the place of distress and misery. Love brought Him down, from the place where heaven visited earth for a night, to the place where the powers of darkness reigned – reigned, that is, until He issued His all-powerful edict, 'Dumb and deaf spirit ... come out of him and never enter him again', following which the demon came out!

And Peter needed to learn that it was equally 'good to be here' at the foot of the mount, among the desperate needs of men, as it was to be on the heights⁵⁷ of the mount.

And we ought not miss that Luke used the very same word to describe what astonished the men *at the foot* of the mountain as Peter later used to describe what had astonished James, John and himself at the top! 'They were all amazed', Luke says, 'at the mighty power ('at the majestic greatness', 'at the majesty') of God';⁵⁸ 'we', Peter says, 'were eyewitnesses of His majesty ('His magnificence', His majestic greatness').⁵⁹ That is, the Lord's true majesty was as evident in His humble service for the needy as it was in the honour and glory which He received from God the Father on the holy mount.⁶⁰

But, as I said, a short time later, but before ever a cloud took Him up out of the sight of His disciples, He must go to Jerusalem, to His cross, to His death, to His exodus.

And, as we read, Matthew paints some very stark contrasts for us then.

His countenance, which here shone as the sun would then be disfigured; first, when members of the Jewish Sanhedrin 'began to spit upon Him, and cover up His face, and buffet Him (to strike Him with clenched fists), and say to Him, 'Prophesy'; and the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands'.⁶¹

And then when the soldiers of the governor struck Him on the head 'again and again' (as the tense of the verb is⁶²) with the sturdy reed/staff which they had put in His hand to play the part of a mock royal sceptre, the symbol of kingly authority.⁶³

As Isaiah foretold, 'His visage (appearance, countenance) was marred (Hebrew = '*disfigured*') more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men',⁶⁴ experiencing such disfigurement that He appeared barely human. Just think of it. The One now *transfigured* would then be *disfigured*!

His clothing, which, on the Mount, was radiant with His inner glory, would then be stripped from Him to provide the spoil for His four-man execution squad. We read it: 'they ... divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots'.⁶⁵

As far as we know, our Lord's garments represented the sum total of His earthly goods. Apart from these, all He could properly call His own was His 'cross'. 'He, bearing *His cross*', John had written a few verses before speaking of our Lord's garments, 'went out to a place called the Place of a Skull'.⁶⁶

We know from His teaching that our Lord felt no great concern about what He wore. 'Why are you anxious', He asked, 'about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field ... they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these'.⁶⁷

And yet His garments were certainly not the grubby rags of a beggar. Clearly the soldiers deemed His clothing to be worthwhile spoil.

It seems clear that the garments of a man executed for treason were forfeit, automatically becoming the property of the soldiers on duty, and that, for this reason, it was these men (and not 'His mother', who, we read, 'stood by the cross'⁶⁸) who effectively 'inherited' our Lord's clothing.

In his account (and we remember that, of the apostles, he alone was present at the cross), John tells us, 'Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to each soldier a part'.⁶⁹ We read in Acts 12 that, having had the apostle Peter arrested, Herod Agrippa 'put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him',⁷⁰ a quaternion being a group of four soldiers. It is hardly surprising therefore that, together with their centurion, it was four soldiers who were made responsible for our Lord's crucifixion.⁷¹

And it is these four men who, according to John 19, 'took His garments',⁷² who removed from Him the very garments which, according to John 13, He (the Lord Jesus) earlier had willingly 'laid aside', that He might perform the menial (slave-like) task of washing His disciples' feet.⁷³

Scholars are generally satisfied that, leaving aside the seamless inner tunic, the four pieces which, according to Mark's gospel, the soldiers distributed and apportioned among themselves by casting lots,⁷⁴ consisted of (i) His sandals, (ii) His outer cloak-like garment, (iii) His head-gear, and (iv) His girdle, which would each be similar in value.⁷⁵

And it was the same four men who then proceeded, by again casting lots, to decide which of them would secure for himself the star prize, worth by far the most ... our Lord's seamless inner tunic⁷⁶

And what breath-taking associations each of these garments had!

Not least, of course, in that in all likelihood these were the very same garments which had, less than a year before, shone ablaze with glory on the Mount of Transfiguration

Yet now they became the property of four unnamed soldiers.

Just imagine! One of these soldiers left the scene carrying a pair of sandals which the greatest of Israel's prophets (John the Baptist) had once confessed himself unworthy to carry, and the thong of which he had confessed himself unworthy to unloose.⁷⁷

I wonder how many miles those sandals had covered ... as, at least three times each year, the Saviour had walked the 65 miles from Galilee to Jerusalem and back, and as He made His way, among numberless other places, to Sychar's well, to Gadara's tombs and to Bethesda's porches.

What I know, is that, although my Lord had been wearing those sandals when Mary of Bethany fell 'at His feet' on the way to *Lazarus's* tomb in John 11,⁷⁸ He was most certainly not wearing them when the women 'who had followed Jesus from Galilee ... took hold of His feet' on the way from His (our Lord's) own tomb in Matthew 28!⁷⁹ And this, not only because the Risen Lord had no need for them, but because, barely two days before, a Roman soldier had carried them away from the Place of a Skull!

But if one of the soldiers walked away with a pair of sandals, the second soldier took with him a cloak-like garment, the border or fringe of which⁸⁰ had, according to Luke 8, once played an all-important role in the healing of a woman with a hemorrhage which she had failed to staunch over twelve long years.⁸¹

And I note that Luke, in that passage, intertwines his casebook account of this poor woman's healing with that of the raising of Jairus' daughter, drawing attention, on the one hand, to a man who would gladly have given all he had to hold on to something he had enjoyed for twelve years (namely, his only daughter), and, on the other hand, to a woman who had already spent all she had in a vain attempt to rid herself of something she had endured for twelve years.⁸²

But it is most unlikely that soldier number two had ever heard of how a woman from far-off Capernaum had once been healed by touching the edge of the cloak-like garment which he carried away that day.

The third soldier took away with him our Lord's head-gear, which may well have still exuded the sweet fragrance of the expensive nard with which Mary of Bethany had anointed His head, together with his feet, only a matter of days before⁸³ ... the fragrance of which had filled the whole house at the time.⁸⁴

I understand that it is by no means impossible that the 'pure nard' which Mary expended on our Lord had itself come from the pastureland of a much higher mountain than that on which our Lord had been transfigured; namely one in the Himalayas.⁸⁵

But of the reason for any lingering sweet fragrance soldier number three, of course, knew nothing.

The fourth soldier took our Lord's girdle or belt, little suspecting that the man on the central cross would soon wear, in the symbolic language of Revelation chapter 1, a girdle of gold round His breast.⁸⁶ The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that Israel's priests each had a girdle (a sash) 'girded to the breast a little above the elbows'.⁸⁷ He assures us also that the girdle (the sash) of the High Priest was distinguished from those of the ordinary priests by 'a mixture of gold interwoven'.⁸⁸ But then, as Christians, we have, not just a High Priest, but a *Great High Priest*,⁸⁹ the whole of whose girdle is gold!

But to such matters, soldier number four was, of course, oblivious.

And then, finally, in all likelihood by the toss of the same knuckle-bone dice, one of the four won himself the star prize, and, together with his other item, took away with him our Lord's

inner tunic.⁹⁰ In that this was both woven and seamless, it resembled that of Israel's High Priest, but, unlike the garment worn by the then High Priest, Caiaphas, (which, during our Lord's so-called trial, in blatant disobedience to the Law of God, he (Caiaphas) had rent) our Lord's tunic had never been torn!⁹¹

Then there were **His companions**. For the two men of immense moral and spiritual stature with Him on the mount would be replaced at Golgotha by two malefactors, two robbers: 'they crucified Him, and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst'.⁹² The evening before, He had forewarned His disciples, 'I say to you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, "And He was numbered with the transgressors"',⁹³ and *this* (in part at least) was the fulfilment of Isaiah's words.⁹⁴

It seems clear that Barabbas was one of the popular Jewish freedom fighters whom the Romans had imprisoned for participating in an uprising (an insurrection) against Rome.⁹⁵ And it is most likely that the two who were crucified with Jesus were co-rebels with Barabbas. Certainly, their crucifixion indicates they were judged guilty of more than mere robbery. In many ways, it is ironic that Jesus was crucified between two men, and in place of a third, who represented the very kind of Messiahship which Jesus had all along refused to fulfil,⁹⁶ yet of which He had been accused,⁹⁷ and for which He was now crucified.⁹⁸

And finally, **the cloud** (the 'bright cloud'), which, on the mount, enveloped Him during the *night* season would then give place to a supernatural (an uncanny) darkness which enveloped Him during the *day* season (through the early hours of the afternoon), when 'from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land'.⁹⁹ And that well-known and much-loved voice of the Magnificent Glory which here spoke out of the cloud would then be silent (would be *awfully* silent), offering no response to His agonised cry, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'¹⁰⁰

What a thought! ... that it was the very same love (i) which had once brought Him *down from heaven* (ii) which now brought Him *down from the mountain*, and (iii) which constrained Him forward to Golgotha, where He would *not come down from the cross*, when the One now so gloriously *transfigured* would then be so brutally *disfigured* ... and it was for me!

Footnotes

¹ Matt. 17. 1-8.

² Matt. 26. 65-67.

³ Matt. 27. 45-46.

⁴ With Caesarea Philippi at its base, Mount Hermon is likely the 'high mountain' on which Jesus experienced His Transfiguration (Matt. 16. 13; 17. 1).

⁵ Luke 9.28-29.

⁶ Exodus 34. 29.

⁷ Matt. 3. 4.

⁸ Matt. 23. 5.

⁹ Mark 9. 3.

¹⁰ Matt. 16. 13; 17. 1. 'Caesarea Philippi was on the south-western slope of Mount Hermon'; see <http://www.padfield.com/1996/caesphil.html>. Hermon was some 16 kilometres north of Caesarea Philippi.

¹¹ <http://www.bibleplaces.com/mthermon.htm> ; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Hermon#cite_note-4

¹² Luke 9. 29.

¹³ *Εξαστραπτων*, Luke 9. 29; *αστραπτουσα*, Luke 17. 24.

¹⁴ Moses did twice: (i) 'When I went up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the Lord made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water', Deut. 9. 9, and (ii) 'Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights', Deut. 9. 18. For Elijah, see 'And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God', 1 Kings 19. 8. For the Lord Jesus, see 'And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry', Matt. 4. 2.

¹⁵ Matt. 1. 1.

¹⁶ Exod. 14. 16.

¹⁷ 2 Kings 2. 8.

¹⁸ Matt. 8. 26.

¹⁹ Exod. 19. 8.

²⁰ 1 Kings 18. 39.

²¹ Luke 22. 20.

²² Heb. 10. 15-16.

²³ See 'the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant ... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts', Jer. 31. 31-33.

²⁴ Num. 11. 14.

²⁵ 1 Kings 19. 4.

²⁶ John 19. 30.

²⁷ Mal. 4. 4-5.

²⁸ Luke 16. 16.

²⁹ Heb. 1. 1-2.

³⁰ From Exod. 4. 22 to Zech. 8. 23. To which can be added the many 'says the Lord'; for example, Mal. 1. 2.

³¹ James 5. 10.

³² There are 52 instances in the King James Version, including Matt. 25. 40, 45.

³³ Matt. 5. 38-39. it is impossible to exaggerate the change in tone and atmosphere between the last book of the Old Testament and the first in the New Testament ... between the prophecy of Malachi (in which, within the space of just four chapters, the prophet declared his 'Thus says the Lord' no less than 25 times), and the gospel of Matthew (in which gospel alone Jesus declared His distinctive 'I say unto you' well over 50 times).

³⁴ Matt. 17. 5.

³⁵ Mark 9. 5-6.

³⁶ Luke 9. 33.

³⁷ Peter rightly recognizes that it was an enormous privilege for him and the two brothers to be present: 'Lord', he acknowledges, 'it is good for us to be here'. But then he puts his foot in his mouth: 'if you will, let us make here three tabernacles: one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah'.

³⁸ See Prov. 17. 28.

³⁹ 'Οὐκ ἠδυνάσθη Μωυσῆς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου, ὅτι ἐπεσκίαζεν ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἡ νεφέλη καὶ δόξης κυρίου ἐπλήσθη ἡ σκηνή', Exod. 40. 35 Greek Old Testament. The wording used by Mark to describe the cloud mirrors that language, Mark 9. 7.

⁴⁰ Matt. 3. 17.

⁴¹ Psa. 2. 7.

⁴² Isa. 42. 1.

⁴³ Matt. 3. 6, 11.

⁴⁴ Deut. 18. 15.

⁴⁵ Matt. 17. 8; 'No-one except *Jesus Himself only*', literally.

⁴⁶ 2 Pet. 1.16-17.

⁴⁷ Luke 9.34.

⁴⁸ Luke 9.28-29.

⁴⁹ Luke 6.12.

⁵⁰ Luke 9. 32.

⁵¹ Luke 9. 37.

⁵² 2 Pet. 1. 18.

⁵³ Luke 9. 32-33. 'Our Lord stands on the verge of the other world. Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets, both appear to welcome Him into the spiritual state. He could pass at once by a painless transition into glory if so He willed. Death is the wages of sin. He has no sin. Therefore death has no claim upon Him. 'The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me'. The offer of transition into life without enduring the sin-entailed experience must be made to the perfect human being. His perfectly natural life might advance to its perfectly natural completion. Such is the offer made upon the mountain. But it is not accepted. He turns away from the heavenly communion and the open heaven, and speaks of another conclusion to His earthly life: His decease which He must shortly accomplish at Jerusalem', W. J. Sparrow-Simpson, '*Our Lord's Resurrection*', pages 217-218.

⁵⁴ Acts 1. 9.

⁵⁵ Peter was not only an 'eyewitness of His majesty', 2 Pet. 1. 16, but a 'witness of His sufferings', 1 Pet. 5. 1.

⁵⁶ Matt. 17. 16.

⁵⁷ Probably not at the very 'top' of Hermon. See D. A Carson, '*Matthew*' in The Expositor's Bible Commentary.

⁵⁸ Luke 9. 43.

⁵⁹ 2 Pet. 1. 16.

⁶⁰ 2 Pet. 1. 17.

⁶¹ Mark 14. 65.

⁶² The imperfect tense of the verb.

⁶³ Matt. 27. 30.

⁶⁴ Isa. 52. 14.

⁶⁵ Matt. 27.35.

⁶⁶ John 19. 17.

⁶⁷ Matt. 6. 28-29.

⁶⁸ John 19. 25.

⁶⁹ John 19. 23.

⁷⁰ Acts 12. 4.

⁷¹ In marked contrast to the four women who 'stood by the cross of Jesus', as Mark tells us, 'beholding' ('looking on'), Mark 15. 40, we read of the four men who, as Matthew tells us, 'sat down and kept watch over Him there', Matt. 27. 36, presumably to prevent anyone from attempting to rescue Him.

⁷² This was, indeed, the second occasion that the soldiers had removed our Lord's own clothes from Him; cf. Matt. 27. 28.

⁷³ John 13. 4.

⁷⁴ 'When they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take', Mark 15. 24.

⁷⁵ See, for example, A. Edersheim, '*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*', page 592.

⁷⁶ A. Edersheim, *ibid.*, page 592.

⁷⁷ 'I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist', Luke 7.28; 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry', Matt. 3. 11; 'One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose', Luke 3. 16.

⁷⁸ John 11. 32.

⁷⁹ Matt. 28. 9 with Matt. 27. 55-56..

⁸⁰ See D. A. Carson, '*Matthew*' in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, on Matt. 9. 20-21.

⁸¹ Luke 8. 44; Matt. 9. 20; cf. Num. 15. 38; Matt. 23. 5, and, for separate reasons, Luke 6. 19.

⁸² Luke 8. 42-43.

⁸³ In a passage applied in the New Testament to our Lord Jesus (Psa. 45. 6-7 with Heb. 1. 8-9), Psalm 45 speaks metaphorically of the garments of our Lord Jesus as 'fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia', Psa. 45. 8.

⁸⁴ Matt. 26. 7; Mark 14. 3; John 12. 3.

⁸⁵ 'The essence of this ointment was derived from pure nard, which is an aromatic herb grown in the high pasture-land of the Himalayas between Tibet and India', W. Hendriksen, '*New Testament Commentary*', on John 12. 3. Also note the comments on that verse in the IVP *New Testament Commentary*.

⁸⁶ Rev. 1. 13. John informs us in his gospel that he was known personally to the High Priest, and that, as such, he had access to the High Priest's palace (or court), to which he was also able to secure access for Peter, John 18. 15-16. I think we can assume therefore that John was familiar with the High Priest's garments as described by Josephus, and it is at least possible therefore that John would have interpreted both the Saviour's garment to the foot and the golden sash in terms of His priesthood.

⁸⁷ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book III, Chapter VII, paragraph 2. High girding was an indication of high status; see the *Expositors Greek Testament* on Rev. 1. 13: '*A long robe reaching to the feet, was an oriental mark of dignity ... denoting high rank or office such as that of Parthian kings or of the Jewish high priest who wore a purple one. High girding (with a belt) was another mark of lofty position, usually reserved for Jewish priests, though the Iranians frequently appealed to their deities as "high-girt" (ready for action. Cf. "Vaya of the golden girdle, high-up girded, swift moving, as powerful in sovereignty as any absolute sovereign in the world")*'. *The golden buckle was part of the insignia of royalty (i Mace. x. 8, 9, xi. 58)*'.

⁸⁸ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book III, Chapter VII, paragraph 4.

⁸⁹ Heb. 4. 16.

⁹⁰ John 19. 24.

⁹¹ See Matt. 26. 65 and John 19. 24; cf. Exod. 28. 32; Lev. 21. 10.

⁹² John 19. 18.

⁹³ Luke 22. 37.

⁹⁴ Isa. 53. 12; cf. Mark 15.27-28 (KJV).

⁹⁵ Mark 15. 7.

⁹⁶ John 6. 15.

⁹⁷ Luke 23. 2.

⁹⁸ Luke 23. 38.

⁹⁹ Matt. 27. 45.

¹⁰⁰ Matt. 27. 46.