

2 Peter 1:16-19 (NIV)

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¹⁷For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

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61-01-02-Epiphany: the Unveiling

Epiphany, faith, witnessing, confession, Transfiguration

2 Pet 1:16-19

Personal epiphanies of Christ can turn us into His bold witnesses.

INTRODUCTION: (text read as Scripture Reading)

–[In *The Time Machine* (1960), the Time-Traveler shows his friends a miniature of his machine. They watch it disappear into the future but think it’s a hoax. *None had faith in what they saw*, although it was *unveiled* before their eyes.] Many doubted the revealing of God’s Son in human flesh. Yet, when His disciples saw His glory, their faith grew, and they became His *witnesses*.

–The word *epiphany* means “*unveiling, manifestation, or revelation*.”

HOM.idea. Our **text** says this was true of those disciples who saw the transfiguration of Jesus, but it can be true of us as well. *They were...*

I. Witnesses of His Credentials— v.16. *We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

A. The Gospels have various epiphany passages, where the “*power and coming*” of Christ are *unveiled* to the world... one unveiling was...

1. at His baptism, where He was publicly initiated into His earthly service [or, ministry]— **Mat 3:16-17**. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” (this epiphany was John’s cue to start *pointing others to Christ*).
2. Next was His **first miracle** (an unveiling His supernatural power at the marriage in Cana, where *He turned water into wine*— **John 2:11**. This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus **revealed** his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.
3. At His crucifixion, Jesus unveiled His heart for humanity: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (That sums up not only *our condition* but also *God’s loving attitude*.)

B. What is it in these unveilings—these *epiphanies* of Christ—that cause us to want to follow Him and be His witnesses?

1. By His baptism, we’re drawn to a God who presents Himself as a servant!— **John 13:4-5** (ESV), [He] rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with

the towel that was wrapped around him. [This wasn't the first time *God stripped Himself*. In His Incarnation, Jesus stripped Himself for the very same reason: *servanthood*– Phil 2:6-7 (ESV), ...though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a **servant**, being born in the likeness of men.]

2. *By His 1st miracle*, we're drawn to a God of the ordinary! [His 1st miracle wasn't *healing life's hurts*, but providing a *trivial need*: turning water into wine.] (IF God is concerned about small matters, how much more can we trust Him for our own *personal transformation!*)
3. *By His crucifixion*, we're drawn to a God of love, Who loves us to the point of an excruciating, self-denying sacrifice– Rom 5:8. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. // 1 John 4:10. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

TRANS: These disciples were “eye-witnesses”– 1 John 1:1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched–this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. But we too have *felt Christ's touch*. We've experienced His transforming power. **Our personal epiphanies of Christ can also turn us into His bold witnesses.** Next, these disciples had been...

- II. Witnesses of His Glory**– v.17-18, *For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.*
- A. Peter was describing *the Transfiguration* (What actually occurred there isn't explained, but it appears that 3 of the apostles got to see a preview of God's glory in the body of the *new Adam*, glorified as it would be in *His resurrection*, just as ours will one day be.)
 - B. This *unveiling* is part of the narrative in 3 Gospels, but John, also “*on the sacred mountain*,” made it top priority– John 1:14. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - C. If *Christ's Transfiguration* solidified the faith and witness of the apostles, *can that happen to us?* The answer is in 2 Cor 3:18. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (For us to be *internally changed*, we must expose the hidden areas of our lives to the glory of His life!)

TRANS: [Adam & Eve made fig-leaf wraps to *hide their skin*, thinking it would *hide their sin*. God removed their *man-made* outfits to wrap them in leather. *Innocent animals* died to clothe them, just as Jesus died to *clothe us in Himself*. If glory is to shine from us, we must strip off cover-ups and *excuses* made for our sins. Only then can we be *truly dressed*, as Paul says in Rom 13:14, “clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.”] When our *inner self* is wrapped up in Christ, His *glory shines from us*. We become *epiphanies of Christ*, *unveiling* Him to the world through the witness of our lives. Finally, *the disciples were...*

- III. Witnesses of Prophecy**– v.19, *And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*
- A. Peter watched Jesus turning OT hopes into NT certainties.
 - B. After he saw the true glory of Christ majestically unveiled at the Transfiguration, those OT prophecies of Christ's 2nd coming inspired a new level of expectation in Peter. (That *epiphany* “*on the sacred mountain*” was just a foretaste of the glory yet to come!)
 - C. In this last verse, Peter gives an exhortation:
 1. “*Pay attention*” to the fulfilled Word! *It's absolutely trustworthy!*
 2. The world is still “*a dark place*”! So, walk in the “light shining” from God's trustworthy Word that unveils His will for you!
 3. Jesus says in Rev 22:16, “I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” (Peter exhorts us, “*Stay faithful ‘until the day’ of the Lord ‘dawns,’ and Jesus, “the morning star, rises in your hearts” in His last epiphany, His final unveiling at His Return.*)
 - D. We weren't there on the Mount of Transfiguration, but we've here hearing the same voice “from the Majestic Glory” to confirm to our hearts this Word of Truth! AND, with certainty we await the glorious 2nd Coming of Christ, so clearly foretold in Scripture.

CONCLUSION:

–These *epiphanies, unveilings, manifestations* of Christ turned those disciples into believers and witnesses. *But what about us? Personal epiphanies of Christ can turn us into His bold witnesses.* *How has Jesus unveiled Himself to you personally? What epiphany has He given to you?* Let's keep our eyes spiritually open for *personal epiphanies*, and then, let's share them with others, as He leads us.