

The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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Metamorphosis

by Alan Hitchen

Have you ever looked closely at a butterfly? As it flutters from flower to flower with its graceful motion, and the brilliant colors on its wings, it is such a lovely creature. It is hard to believe an ugly caterpillar built a cocoon and changed into this butterfly. If it did not happen to millions of butterflies each year, it might stretch our credibility to believe it could happen at all! Yet because it happens so often we accept it as a common thing and gradually it loses its ability to amaze. Such is the power of our God! He makes the impossible look so easy, it becomes common place! God's everlasting power and divinity truly shine in the butterfly!

We use the Greek word “metamorphosis” to describe the amazing ability God gave to a butterfly.

“metamorphoo... to change into another form... to transfigure, transform...” (Thayer, p. 405; 3339)

We use this term to describe the amazing events that allow a butterfly to begin life as a caterpillar and then change its form into a butterfly. This is also the word the Holy Spirit chose to describe the amazing changes that were wrought in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Metamorphosis of Jesus

And He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. Matt. 17:22

By selecting the word “**transfigured**” the Holy Spirit states that Jesus went through a “**metamorphoo.**” Jesus “changed into another form.” What exactly does this mean? Matthew says His face shone as the sun and His clothing became as white as light, but these are just the outward manifestations of what was actually occurring. To fully grasp what happened to Jesus, consider what Mark and Luke add.

Mark 9:3 - His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

Luke 9:29 - ...the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening.

As Jesus transfigured (changed into a different form) before them, Luke says His face was “altered” and “shone like the sun.” Literally the countenance of His being became “something of a different kind,” as it began to shine “like the sun.” His clothing also changed, becoming “as white as light,” “exceedingly white,

like snow,” and “white and glistening!” Luke adds more detail: “And behold, here talked with Him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him” (Luke 9:30-32). Moses and Elijah appeared “in glory” and Jesus also was seen in “glory.” The strong implication is that for a few moments His true glory, hidden beneath the flesh, shone through.

This harmonizes perfectly with how the Spirit described Jesus’ “form” before He left heaven and entered the world: “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man...” (Phil. 2:5-9).

Throughout eternity, Jesus existed in the form (morphé) of God on an equality with God. He was “the word” who was “with God” and “was God” (John 1:1-2) and had “glory with” God (John 17:5). Thus the “word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Jesus changed form (metamorphoo) when he left heaven and came to dwell among us. Though He “took the form of a bondservant” and was “found in appearance as a man,” He was “Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us” (Matt. 1:23) and possessed “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).

This is such an amazing thing it is difficult for us to grasp. Think of the caterpillar. It begins in the form of a caterpillar and changes form to become a butterfly. Jesus existed in the form of God, changed for a time into the form of man. While in heaven, the word dwelt “in the form of God,” when the “word became flesh,” He dwelt in the “likeness of men”. At His transfiguration, His form was changed and his glory became evident for a few moments.

We Will be Like Him

There is one final revelation we are asked to consider regarding the form of Jesus. When He returns for His saints at the end of the age, we will not only see Him as He truly is, but we become like Him. Our bodies will be just like His. “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

When He returns, the first thing we will notice is Jesus as He really is! Not the word become flesh, but the word as God! After we see Him as He really is, and our gaze returns to our own body, **WE WILL BE LIKE HIM!!!!** Hence, even now, we await our own **metamorphosis!!!** Look carefully now at Paul’s words to the Philippians. Read it a few times and let its truths sink in. Even now we are like the fleshly caterpillar awaiting the moment when we are changed into the spiritual butterfly. “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself” (Phil. 3:20-21).

The underlined term is “**summorphos**” which means “having the same form as another!” When we see Him, we will be like Him because we will have the same outward form He does! The next time we see a caterpillar or a butterfly, we need to think of our own metamorphosis that will occur when He comes again! We too will change form, and put off the physical to put on the spiritual and eternal. To read the exciting details, see I Cor. 15:35-58.

News and Notes:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

“...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16