

St. John Chrysostom writes more about the appearance of Moses and Elias in his Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew:

But wherefore doth He also bring forward Moses and Elias? One might mention many reasons. And first of all this: because the multitudes said He was, some Elias, some Jeremias, some one of the old prophets, He brings the leaders of His choir, that they might see the difference even hereby between the servants and the Lord; and that Peter was rightly commended for confessing Him Son of God.

But besides that, one may mention another reason also: that because men were continually accusing Him of transgressing the law, and accounting Him to be a blasphemer, as appropriating to Himself a glory which belonged not to Him, even the Father's, and were saying, "This Man is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day;" and again, "For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God:" that both the charges might be shown to spring from envy, and He be proved not liable to either; and that neither is His conduct a transgression of the law, nor His calling Himself equal to the Father an appropriation of glory not His own; He brings forward them who had shone out in each of these respects: Moses, because he gave the law, and the Jews might infer that he would not have overlooked its being trampled on, as they supposed, nor have shown respect to the transgressor of it, and the enemy of its founder: Elias too for his part was jealous for the glory of God, and were any man an adversary of God, and calling himself God, making himself equal to the Father, while he was not what he said, and had no right to do so; he was not the person to stand by, and hearken unto him.

And one may mention another reason also, with those which have been spoken of. Of what kind then is it? To inform them that He hath power both of death and life, is ruler both above and beneath. For this cause He brings forward both him that had died, and him that never yet suffered this.

But the fifth motive, (for it is a fifth, besides those that have been mentioned), even the evangelist himself hath revealed. Now what was this? To show the glory of the Cross, and to console Peter and the others in their dread of the Passion, and to raise up their minds. Since having come, they by no means held their peace, but "spake," it is said, "of the glory which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem;" that is, of the passion, and the cross; for so they call it always.

St. John Chrysostom, in a continuation of the homily above, explains the deepest lesson of the Transfiguration:

But if we will, we also shall behold Christ, not as they [SS. Peter, James, and John] then on the mount, but in far greater brightness. For not thus shall He come hereafter. For whereas then, to spare His disciples, He discovered so much only of His brightness as they were able to bear; hereafter He shall come in the very glory of the Father, not with Moses and Elias only, but with the infinite host of the angels, with the archangels, with the cherubim, with those infinite tribes, not having a cloud over His head, but even heaven itself being folded up.

For as it is with the judges; when they judge publicly, the attendants drawing back the curtains show them to all; even so then likewise all men shall see Him sitting, and all the human race shall stand by, and He will make answers to them by Himself; and to some He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; "to others," Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things.

And again passing an opposite sentence, to some He will answer, "Depart into the everlasting fire, that is prepared for the devil and his angels," and to others, "O thou wicked and slothful servants." And some He will "cut asunder," and "deliver to the tormentors;" but others He will command to "be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness? And after the axe the furnace will follow; and all out of the net, that is east away, will fall therein.

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun; "or rather more than the sun. But so much is said, not

because their light is to be so much and no more, but since we know no other star brighter than this, He chose by the known example to set forth the future brightness of the saints.

Since on the mount too, when He says, "He did shine as the sun," for the same cause did He so speak. For that the comparison did not come up to His light, the apostles showed by falling down. For had the brightness not been unalloyed, but comparable to the sun; they would not have fallen, but would easily have borne it.

The righteous therefore will shine as the sun, and more than the sun in that time; but the sinners shall suffer all extremities. Then will there be no need of records, proofs, witnesses. For He who judges is Himself all, both witness, and proof, and judge. For He knows all things exactly; "For all things are naked and opened unto His eyes."

No man will there appear rich or poor, mighty or weak, wise or unwise, bond or free; but these masks will be dashed in pieces, and the inquiry will be into their works only. For if in our courts, when any one is tried for usurpation, or murder, whatever he may be, whether governor, or consul, or what you will, all these dignities fleet away, and he that is convicted suffers the utmost penalty; much more will it be so there.

Therefore that this may not be so, let us lay aside our filthy garments, let us put on the armor of light, and the glory of God will wrap us around.