

# I SPY IN MY LITTLE ICON



By Kh. Jocelyn Abyad



call Him, God answered “I am he who is” (Exodus 3:14). Those three letters in the halo represent the Greek words for God’s name, “He who is.”

On either side of Christ, you see that Moses and Elijah have appeared with Christ. Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets of the Old Testament. By standing with Christ, Jesus reaffirms his statement that He has come not to “abolish the law or the prophets ...but to fulfill.” (Matthew 5:17) Christ’s life in the New Testament is not a separate revelation of God, but the fulfillment of His promise to rescue us from sin and death, promised and foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

At the bottom of the mountain, we see Peter, James and John laying on the ground—shocked and covering their faces. These particular apostles were chosen by Jesus to see special glimpses of His divinity in three instances shared in the Bible. The first was the raising of Jairus’s daughter. The second was the Transfiguration, shared here; And the third was in the Garden of Gethsemane. We might wonder why Jesus chose these three apostles. There are several possible reasons, but generally, it is stated that Peter was the first Patriarch, James was the first martyr of the apostles, and John was present at the crucifixion. In these unique positions, these apostles were close to Christ in His suffering and also close to Him in His exaltation.

Mount Tabor has been revered as a holy site throughout history. In 1924 the Church of the Transfiguration was built there over the ruins of a much older, 5th century chapel. Many people continue to make pilgrimages to the mountain to retrace the steps of the apostles following Christ so long ago. May we all seek to follow Christ and allow Him to reveal Himself to us, in as much of His glory as we can behold!

The icon of the Transfiguration teaches us about the story of Christ showing the disciples some of His glory on Mount Tabor. They were so shocked that they literally fell down and covered their faces! You can read this story in your Bible at the beginning of chapter seventeen in the Gospel of Matthew. As you read, look for the events of the story in the icon.

Here in the icon, Christ is surrounded by a large blue mandorla which signifies His glory. Do you notice the three letters inside the halo of Christ? When Moses asked God what he should