

2025 03 02 Matthew 17:1-9

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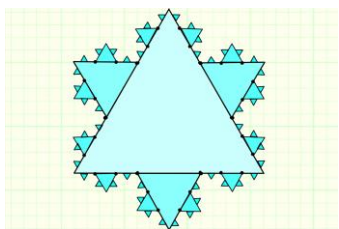
## In Front of Awe

Awe is a profound emotional response that can significantly impact our well-being and perception of the world. Have you ever experienced awe during your life's journey? Where did you get the sense of awe? Please share with me shortly. What did you feel? What did you think about yourself and God? (Awe: That transcends our usual understanding, such as viewing vast landscapes, listening to powerful music, or feeling heightened devotion and a Divine Presence connecting us all.)

How did that experience change you? Did it make you feel humble, reminding you of how small we are in the grand scheme of things? Or did it deepen your spiritual connection? Did it make you feel reverent and amazed by the divine? I'm sure experiencing awe will bring you closer to God.

I'd like to share my experience of awe. Our world is created by the word of God. When our eyes are opened to the beauty and secrets of the world, God can help us enter the awe-inspiring realm of God. During my dissertation, I encountered the concept of fractals, which endlessly unfold, evoking a sense of awe at God's incredible creating power and wisdom. What exactly is a fractal?

A fractal is any geometric pattern that occurs again and again, at different sizes and scales, within the same object. This "self-similarity" can be seen throughout nature, for example in a snowflake's edge, a river network, the splitting veins in a fern, and the crackling forks of lightning.



The repeating patterns in a snowflake are a classic example of beautiful, geometric fractals. Fractal patterns appear in the micro world, as well as macro world.

Let's take another example of a fractal. It is mathematical ratio in sound. The sound of an octave is created by the ratio of 2:1, which means halving the length of a string produces an octave higher pitch. The fifth is created by the ratio of 3:2, which means taking two-thirds of the length of a string produces a fifth higher pitch. The fourth is created by the ratio of 4:3, which is the interval from C to F.

The same principle is shown in the ratio between planets orbiting our solar system. The positions of the planets are located in the ratio of the musical sound; do re mi fa so la ti do. Wow! I started to understand the principles of things in the micro and macro world.



NASA's scientists receive constant vibrations from the universe, and they turn the gathered data into sounds, which is called sonification. We can listen to the music from the universe. Are you curious? Let's listen to just one short piece of music from the universe. It is from Jellyfish Nebula. You will hear the sound of the ocean!

Fractals begin with a simple yet infinitely repeated rule, resulting in incredibly beautiful patterns. They exhibit astonishing complexity. God's wisdom is enigmatic, boundless, and perpetually unfolding. I was captivated by the fractal theory. I was humbled by the power and wisdom displayed in His created world. Of course, these examples are merely a fraction of the countless instances of His greatness.



Now let's go into our scripture. It is the scene that his three disciples meet the Creator God, Jesus's divinity, who created all the awe and mystery. Jesus transfigured on the mountain as a glorious divine being. Jesus knew that his death was close, and his disciples needed to experience his divinity. He brought his closest disciples, Peter, James, and John. There Jesus' appearance was dramatically altered. A radiant light as bright as the sun poured from his face. And his clothing was dazzling like lightning. Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and

began talking with Jesus. Moses represented the law and Elijah represented the Prophets. They were two pillars of the Old Testament. They were talking about Jesus' Exodus from the Earth, which soon would happen through his death on the cross.

The disciples prostrate before the awe-inspiring and overwhelming magnificence of the glorious vision. We encounter a similar encounter in the Book of Revelation. In a vision, John was called to the heavenly temple to the holy place, where seven candles are located. John met Jesus in the heavenly temple, fell to the ground like a dead man. Similarly, when Isaiah encountered God in the heavenly temple, he exclaimed, "It's all over! I am doomed because I am a sinful man. My lips are filthy, and I live among a people with filthy lips."

The disciples were terrified. Jesus touched Peter, James. Jesus touches them with his hand, dispelling their intense fear of God's power. It was the touch like healing leprosy. Similarly, in Revelation, Jesus touched John, who had fallen to the ground like a dead man due to the overwhelming fear and power of the holiness. An angel touched the screaming Isaiah with a coal from the heavenly altar and cleansed his lips.



Let's check one more person. When Paul was heading toward Damascus to capture all of the believers and drag them as prisoners back to Jerusalem, he met Jesus that shone like the sun in the air. He fell from the horse to the ground. He intuitively called Jesus "Lord!" The holiness and power covered him, and he lost his sight. And when his sight was restored by Ananias, from his eyes, thick scales fell, which were physical thick scales. And he was transformed forever.

The spaces where divinity and humanity intersect are both extremely perilous and breathtakingly beautiful. Only by the grace of God can humans survive in these spaces, as the chasm between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of humanity is boundless.

Bible says that God's greatness is so vast that not even the heavens above the heavens can contain it. If you have only a glimpse of holiness, you change forever. When we are exposed to the heavenly beauty, purity, truth, and power just slightly, we are forever ruined toward the world. You get to know the beauty and pleasure of heaven. You get to know what is real reality and the truth of the world. You find there is nothing to desire in the world. You can die for the Lord. When heavenly light enters into our hearts, and we desire to stay there forever and want to have the moment of encounter again and again.

This great moment prepared them for the suffering that would come soon after Jesus' immanent death. They needed the Holy Ground. They needed heavenly power that let them go through the suffering of Jesus and their own suffering.

These encounters happen on mountaintops with a blinding light for some people. For most, they happen in the ordinary moments of our classrooms, boardrooms, and soup kitchens—any place where we make a space for the Holy to be present.



C. S. Lewis writes a final word from Aslan in *The Silver Chair*: Here on the mountain I have spoken to you clearly. I will not often do so down in Narnia. Here on the mountain, the air is clear and your mind is clear; as you drop down into Narnia, the air will thicken. Take great care that it does not confuse your mind. And the signs which you have learned here will not look at all as you expect them to look, when you meet them there. That is why it is so important to know them by heart and pay no attention to appearance. Remember the signs and believe the signs. Nothing else matters.”

By those encounters, we embark on a journey through all your life experiences, guided by thoughts of mercy, kindness, gentleness, and grace towards yourself and others. This transformative experience liberates you to explore life with God to the fullest extent. It profoundly alters your narrative with yourself, with God, and with others. God's love for you is unconditional, and you are His cherished child. He yearns for you to deepen your knowledge of Him. You are His masterpiece, a creation of love. God's affection for you mirrors His love for Jesus.

Let me conclude with the greatest divine surprise of all. Our Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we may return to live with our heavenly Father eternally. What fills me with profound awe is that our Brother Jesus Christ would willingly descend from his divine throne to suffer, bleed, and die to rescue rebellious souls like me and you. His sacrifice is sufficient to redeem, justify, and succor all of humanity, and at the same time, He personally makes us a victor of life. And Jesus in us and in you will eventually make us fully like Jesus. That is truly awe-inspiring!