

THE MAGNOLIA MESSENGER

Volume 3 Issue 08

February 21, 2021



Special points of interest:

- * "Jesus, the Original Transformer!"
- * Crossword - Olympic Sites
- * Announcements — Ash Wednesday & Family Worship!
- * "Do You Want to Fast This Lent?"
- * "Dig-In@home" Treehouse Kids at Magnolia FUMC
- * Liturgical Colors and Misc.



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Jesus, the Original Transformer!

A quick word of preface....

I did not preach from my prepared notes and this will sound a bit different than you heard.

Mark 9:2-9 *"Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, far whiter than any earthly bleach could ever make them. ⁴ Then Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus. ⁵ Peter exclaimed, 'Rabbi, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' ⁶ He said this because he didn't really know what else to say, for they were all terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him.' ⁸ Suddenly, when they looked around, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus with them. ⁹ As they went back down the mountain, he told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead." (NLT)*

The original advertisement went like this, "It's an ancient struggle between two Cybertronian races, the heroic Autobots and the evil Decepticons, comes to Earth, with a clue to the ultimate power held by a teenager."

Yes, I'm talking about those cool toys that began their lives in 1984. The Hasbro toys and cartoon series were so popular that in 1986, they inspired the first of many movies and a slew of toys, posters, and clothing! Transformers were, and are, popular. The earlier *Transformers* movies have grossed more than 3.6 billion dollars in revenue, making it one of the most successful film franchises of all time.

In case you're one of a handful of folks who are not in the know, the toys, movies, and cartoons feature the fantastic world of shape-shifting. These alien robots can disguise themselves as automobiles and morph into flying, fighting, and thinking super-machines. Great movies and a powerful money-making idea!

If the robots were the only thing on the movie screen, that would be cool enough, but the transformers do something extra special. As the name of the line states, they transform. It is really cool to watch ordinary vehicles change into powerful, awesome robots. Keep in mind, they were always powerful, awesome robots, but you could not tell it when they were in their everyday forms!

Wouldn't it be cool if our ordinary things could transform like the Transformers?

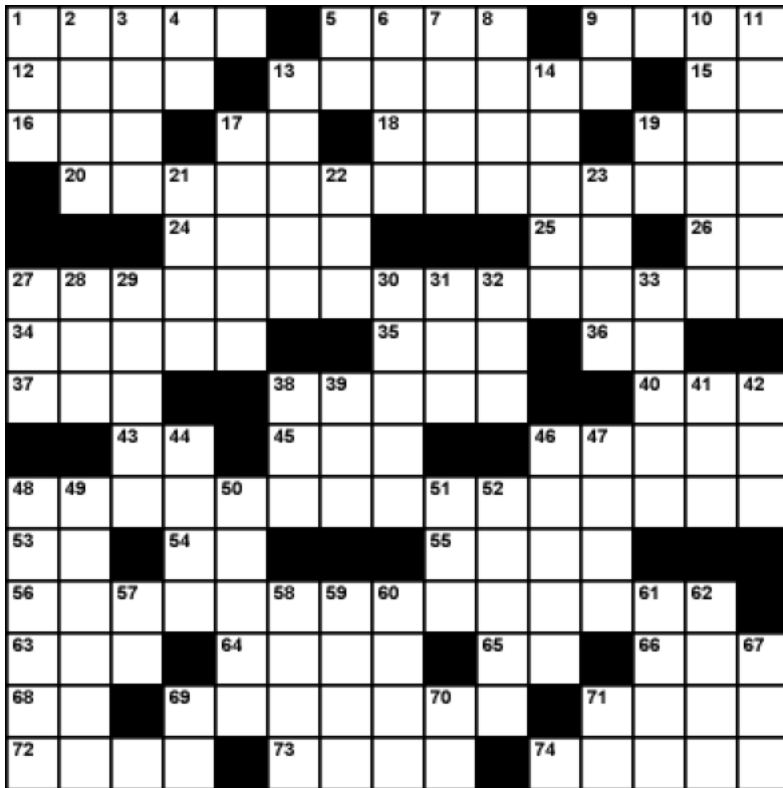
- What if your car wasn't just a car?
- What if your desk wasn't just a desk?
- What if your toaster wasn't just a toaster?
- That would be an exciting world!
- Wait, what if I could transform into what I perceive myself to be on the inside... now that would be really cool!

As innovative as the Transformer series is, our text for this morning tells us about the original transformer and how His transformation tells us about another and seemingly unlikely transformation that can occur in our lives!

Oh, and by the way, the tagline for the

Continued on Page 4

"Olympic Sites" — Crossword Puzzle



Across

1. * ___ Pierre de Coubertin: In 1896, as a result of his campaign to have the ancient Olympics revived, the first Olympics of the modern age were held in **ATHENS**, Greece (The ancient Olympics had been held at the plain of **OLYMPIA** in honor of the Greek god Zeus, and occurred periodically from 776 BC until 393 AD when Roman emperor Theodosius I banned all Pagan festivals)
 5. Bugs
 9. Stuff Spewed from a Spewer
 12. * "Chariots of Fire" (1981) recounts the true story of Harold Abrahams and ___ Liddell who both competed at the **PARIS** Games of 1924
 13. * The Olympics of 1948 were held in this country
 15. Mr. Pacino
 16. Average grade
 17. Atomic #81
 18. Aboriginal person of Japan

19. Winter ailment, commonly
 20. * Woodrow Wilson was President when the Games were held here
 24. * Wilma Rudolph was victorious at the Olympic Games hosted here (See #74A for a Related Clue!)
 25. Take notice! ___ and behold!
 26. Alphabet letter
 27. * Olympic Games locale in the **U.S.A.**
 34. Spring flower
 35. Shock treatment, commonly
 36. Hip-Hop artist: ___ Dre
 37. School org.
 38. * World famous Olympian who was a Perfect 10 (See #56A for a Related Clue!)
 40. Clean a fish
 43. Canadian prov.
 45. Silly Sounds: ___-la-la
 46. * Athlete who became a legend in **BERLIN**, in 1936
 48. * Because of laws of the land that forbade it, there was

no Boxing competition at the Games held here

53. "I'm not sure."
 54. Mr. Kenzaburo
 55. Ice-Cream Parlor item
 56. * Olympics locale
 63. Language of Indo-China
 64. Après Shower garment
 65. Bismarck is the capital here, for short
 66. Bit
 68. He (Initials) was married to Priscilla
 69. * This country was the locale of the Games of 1952
 71. Concerning, commonly
 72. Celine's beloved hubby
 73. * **SYDNEY** Olympics: ___ 15th, 2000 to Oct. 1st, 2000
 74. * Country that was the locale of the Games of 1960

Down

1. Hotel room item
 2. Locale
 3. Nice Nothing?
 4. Certain water body, for short
 5. He (Initials) starred in "The Prince of Tides" (1991)
 6. Heard in a Dentist's Office: "Some people have ___ between their front teeth, some people don't. That's life."
 7. Superficially Slick
 8. Reasonable
 9. Proprietor of a Manor, for short
 10. One who appraises things
 11. Graduates
 13. Fragrant resin
 14. Makes invalid
 17. Coin game
 19. Sound System: Hi-___
 21. It'll turn "ka" into a Carriage in Russia
 22. Curriculum Vitae, briefly
 23. Just
 27. Letters seen on a Racecar

28. Egyptian King, for short
 29. Grassy plain
 30. * The first one of the modern age was awarded at **ATHENS**
 31. Here: French
 32. It'll turn "tionery" into Paper Products
 33. Persuaded
 38. To this degree
 39. Orinoco tributary
 41. Nice one?
 42. Acronym of a certain athletic magazine
 44. Certain European
 46. Possessed
 47. Ewbank the Football Coach
 48. * The ___ Games 2000: Event held in **SYDNEY**, Australia (See #73A for a Related Clue!)
 49. * At the Games at #48A, he was called the "Greatest Athlete in the World"
 50. * Standout gymnast at the **ATLANTA** games of 1996
 51. Acronym of a type of quiz query that has a selection of possible answers
 52. Auditory sensation
 57. The 13th letter of the Greek alphabet
 58. Ages
 59. Competent
 60. Bunny hop
 61. Sicilian volcano
 62. * Standout athlete at the **LOS ANGELES** Games of 1984
 67. "The Partridge Family" (TV) name
 69. Santa follower
 70. Yellowknife's locale on an env.
 71. Particular Pronoun

February 2021 News and Announcements



Wow, 2021 brings us some new surprises with snow and sleet to adorn our streets and make travel hazardous! I'm hoping that this follow-up year to 2020 does not have any more unexpected events for us!

Ash Wednesday has come and gone, and we are now in the Lenten Season! I would like to share how wonderful it was for Melissa and me the opportunity to share our Facebook Live Ash Wednesday service from the living room at the parsonage. Many thanks go to Shelly, Pastor Melissa, and Coach Lindsey for packing our Ash Wednesday packets! Thanks also to Tracy and Amanda for loading last week's *Visitor*! You all made this a unique and blessed Ash Wednesday!

The call for this Lenten Season is that we would seek God's presence in our lives and be transformed from glory to glory into the image of Christ Jesus!

Pastor Gary

A Lenten Study of Christ's final words on the cross

6 Weeks every Sunday Evening

IT IS FINISHED

Begins 1st Sunday of Lent February 21

WRITTEN BY JASON NELSON & DAVID DORN

In-Person: Youth 4:30 PM, Adults 5:30 PM
Children & Nursery 5:30 PM (by reservation)
Zoom with Pastor Gary - 5:30 PM

Be safe, stay warm, and love one another with the love of Christ!

Blessings,

Pastor Gary



Undie Sunday

SPONSORED BY MAGNOLIA JUNIOR CHARITY LEAGUE

Postponed — TBA

MJCL is collecting new socks, undershirts, and undies for Columbia County's Schools. Please see your local church's bulletin for drop in information or any MJCL member to donate!

Crossword Puzzle Solution - "Olympic Sites"

1	B	A	R	O	N		5	N	A	G	S		9	L	A	V	A		
12	E	R	I	C		13	E	N	G	L	A	14	N	D		15	A	L	
16	D	E	E		17	T	L		18	A	I	N	U		19	F	L	U	
	20	A	N	21	T	W	E	22	R	P	B	E	L	23	G	I	U	M	
				24	R	O	M	E					25	L	O		26	E	N
27	S	T	L	O	U	I	S	30	M	I	S	S	O	33	U	R	I		
34	T	U	L	I	P			35	E	C	T		36	D	R				
37	P	T	A				38	N	A	D	I	A			40	G	U	42	T
			43	N	S		44		45	T	R	A		46	O	W	E	N	S
48	S	T	O	C	K	H	O	L	M	S	W	E	D	E	N				
53	U	H		54	O	E			55	C	O	N	E						
56	M	O	N	T	R	E	A	L	Q	U	E	B	E	C					
63	M	R	U		64	R	O	B	E		65	N	D		66	T	A	67	D
68	E	P		69	F	I	N	L	A	N	D		71	I	N	R	E		
72	R	E	N	E		73	S	E	P	T		74	I	T	A	L	Y		

Jesus, the Original Transformer!

toys and films is, *"More than meets the eye."* Isn't that true for Jesus? And the transfiguration is the moment when a small handful of His disciples got a glimpse of who Jesus really was when they saw that he was more than just a good man and rabbi. He was definitely one who was **"More than meets the eye."**

Let's briefly investigate our passage and its context for this morning...

In the preceding chapter, Jesus had fed 4,000, taught about the contamination that the Pharisees brought with them, and heard Peter's inspired declaration that Jesus was the Messiah! By the time chapter 9 finally opens, Peter will have already blown it by telling Jesus what He should and should not do! Jesus then rebuked Peter with these famous words, *"Get behind me, Satan!"*

Still stinging from Jesus' rebuke, he called together his inner circle of disciples, comprised of Peter, James, and John. The quartet ascended the 9,200 feet, what many scholars believe was the heights of Mount Hermon. After some time, Jesus' ordinary appearance was transformed-transfigured from that of their beloved rabbi and friend to reveal himself as God in human flesh.

As Mark records it, *"As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, far whiter than any earthly bleach could ever make them."* **Mark 9:2b**

Jesus was accompanied by Moses and Elijah. Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament. However great they are, Jesus is greater than Moses, Elijah, and all of the prophets put together.

If that glimpse of Mose, Elijah, and the unveiled Jesus didn't leave the disciples stunned, then the voice from Heaven saying, *"This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him"* should have clinched the deal!

And before they could blink, they were heading down the mountain with Jesus' command to tell no about what they had just witnessed until He was raised from the dead on that first Easter morning!

So why do we look at this account every year? Let's assume that the reason we tread the familiar ground of Jesus' transfiguration is not just because it's what's given to us in the lectionary for this particular Sunday, but because it's actually good for us as his disciples.

Why might that be? Here's at least one good reason. We spend a great deal of energy as people trying to transform Jesus. We try to morph and manipulate him into something he's not, something that fits our agenda. And it's good for us to be confronted with the truth that Jesus is not who we've made him out to be. Not even close. He's greater than we've assumed. He's holier than we give him credit for and better than we've imagined. We need the transfiguration because it breaks our idolatrous and self-serving ideas of Jesus and brings us back to the jaw-dropping, breathtaking truth of Jesus.

Like a child of the early 80s, pulling and twisting a tiny action figure that's promised to become something exciting if we manipulate it in just the right way, we're all guilty of trying to transform Jesus.

Let me ask you, *"Whom have you tried to make Jesus into?"*

- A. Maybe you've transformed Jesus into a political trump card to be conveniently laid out as a means of winning arguments and shutting down debate on social media or with your friends.
- B. Or perhaps you've seen him portrayed as the *"genie for the faithful."* You know how this Jesus works. If you pray enough, believe enough, or just plain try hard enough, Jesus will grant your wish for a financial breakthrough.
- C. Or maybe, you've recently talked to someone who took *"Intro to Philosophy"* class and they have tried to

Jesus, the Original Transformer!

change Jesus from God in human flesh to little more than an enlightened first-century guru and nothing more.

- Jesus is not just a great teacher. He is greater than the great teacher Moses and the great prophet Elijah. They bow to him.
- Jesus is not just an enlightened man. He's God in human flesh and his glory shines brighter than clothes could ever be bleached.
- He's not your card to be played in arguments or a puppet beholden to your commands; he's the Father's "*beloved Son*." We listen to *him*. He rules over *us*.

So, instead of us trying to transform Jesus into what we want Him to be, perhaps we should take a clue from Scripture and allow Him to transform us from ordinary folks into people who best reflect His image and love!

How's that possible? John Wesley called this process sanctification. It can happen in a moment of time, but for most of us, it takes a lifetime.

It's interesting to note that the word translated *transfiguration/transformation* is the Greek word from which we get our word metamorphosis. It's a somewhat rare word and is used only four times in the entire New Testament:

- It's used two times in relation to Jesus and the transfiguration. (Mark and Matthew use that term)
- But it's also used two times in relation to believers in Christ, that's you and me!

The first of these two times is found in **Romans 12:1-2**, where the Apostle Paul writes:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.."
 [*Metamorphoo – Transformation / Transfiguration] (NKJV)

In this passage, Paul is telling us to present our bodies as living sacrifices before God, and he continues on to tell us that we should not be molded, shaped, or conformed to this world's ways, but he says that we need to be *transformed* by the renewing of our minds.

This "*renewing of our minds*" results in an inward change of someone rather than just one of their outward appearance. But just because it's primarily an inner change doesn't mean that it cannot be detected outwardly!

The second use of the word *metamorphosis/transfiguration* in the New Testament is found in **2 Corinthians 3:18**, where the Apostle Paul tells us that we should seek to be "*steadily changed (or transformed) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord's Spirit.*"

It's the kind of transformation that needs to occur for *Spiritual Revival* to happen in our lives and our churches!

How can you get to that place? It is most commonly done by living a Holy Spirit-directed and empowered life by intentional prayer, Bible study, fasting, and walking in Invitational and Unconditional love!

It is a transformation that will allow you to touch souls for Christ, encourage the discouraged, and give hope to

A Divine Valentine!

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?

In the words of Pope Francis

Fast from hurting words and say kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and have trust in God.

Fast from complaints; contemplate simplicity.

Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from bitterness; fill your hearts with joy.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled.

Fast from words; be silent and listen.



Judges: God Sends Deborah to Help Barak

Judges 4



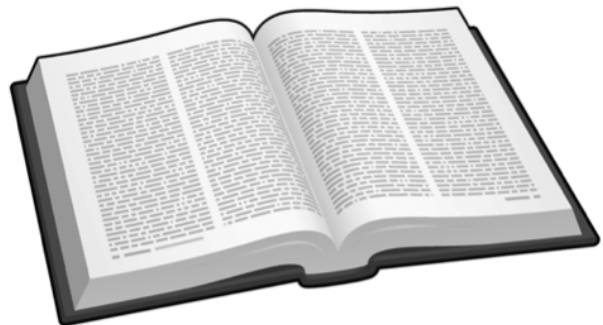
God chooses Deborah to be a prophetess and judge. She uses God's wisdom as she settles disputes, and she gives God's message to Barak about going into battle. Barak and Deborah go together, and God helps them win. God gives us wisdom, like he gave Deborah.

"This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

Family Together Time

Find wisdom in God's Word! Pick a topic to read about each day.

- Children and Parents: Proverbs 13:1; Proverbs 22:6; Proverbs 23:24-25
- Friends: Proverbs 12:26; Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 27:17
- Gossip: Proverbs 11:13; Proverbs 16:28; Proverbs 17:4
- Words: Proverbs 15:1; Proverbs 15:28; Proverbs 17:27
- Honesty: Proverbs 11:3; Proverbs 12:19; Proverbs 26:18-19
- Anger: Proverbs 14:29; Proverbs 15:18; Proverbs 29:11
- Pride: Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 16:18; Proverbs 29:23



Talk About This...

•

What's the wisest advice you can think of?

THE MAGNOLIA
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FAMILY WORSHIP 9:00 A.M.
ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:35 A.M.
GENESIS SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:35 A.M.
SANCTUARY WORSHIP 10:45 A.M.

Mailing Address:

Magnolia First United Methodist Church
320 West Main Street
Magnolia, Arkansas 71753

Phone: 870-234-4530 (Church)

Pastor: The Reverend Dr. Gary L. Maskell

Email: homiletics2002@gmail.com

Webpage: <http://www.magnoliafumc.org/home>

Lectionary Texts for this Week
February 21, 2021

1st. Sunday in Lent

Lectionary Texts:

Genesis 9:8-17,
Psalms 25: 1-10 (UMH 756),
1 Pet 3:18-22,
Mark 1:9-15

Liturgical Color: Purple

Purple can symbolize pain, suffering, and therefore mourning and penitence. It is the liturgical color for the **Season of Lent**. It is also the color of royalty, so traditionally has also been used for **Advent** and is still used in Catholic churches, although Blue Violet is also used. However, Blue is replacing purple for Advent in many Protestant churches.

Jesus, the Original Transformer!

the hopeless.

And no, you probably won't look like Jesus did on that day, or Optimus Prime, or even Bumblebee, or any of the other characters from the Transformers movies for that matter, but there will be a detectable difference in you!

Some people may not know what to make of you as you grow to be more like Jesus, and they may not even be able to put their finger on what is different about you, but different in a good and godly way, you will be!

The season of Lent is nearly here, and it's the perfect time to seek such a transformation in your life. I want to encourage you to seek God's direction for your life, be inspired by the life of Jesus, and be so filled with the Holy Spirit that transformation will happen in your life.

Always remember that you have been blessed to be a blessing, so be one!

Pastor Gary

