

It is uncertain whether this incident occurred on Mount Tabor or Mount Herman. Note that in Matthew 17:9 Matthew calls it a 'vision'. See also some parallels to the Baptism of Christ which also concerns revelations of Jesus' Messiahship. There is a vision and a voice, and the words heard are similar.

This passage appropriately follows Peter's confession of faith and is also a prelude to the Crucifixion and Resurrection and is an assurance that God's presence will be felt even during this dark time. Its impact would have been two-fold on the humanity of Christ and also on the disciples. If you compare the parallel in Matthew 17: 1-8, you will note that the reaction of the disciples (verses 6,7) is more strongly presented.

The event occurred 'after six days'. This was probably six days after the confession of faith. Note that at the other times the three disciples, Peter, James and John, seemed to have a privileged relationship with Jesus. (See Chapters 5:37, 13:3, 14:33.) The fact that they accompanied Christ means that this was not Christ withdrawing or seeking solitude but rather to expose the disciple to the significance of the time.

The appearance of **Moses and Elijah** is significant. Jesus is on a mountain and represents the New Law. Elijah was supposed to have appeared again before the new Messiah had come and before the end times. Moses and Elijah were seen as the two great representatives of the Law and the Prophets and at times when there were many false prophets, their presence was a testimony to Him as the true Christ.

Peter, forever impulsive, reveals his misunderstanding of what is happening. The booths that he wants to erect are probably similar to the ones used for the feast of the Tabernacles. Perhaps, as one commentator suggests, Peter's anxiety is heightened because he has heard Jesus anticipate the Cross. As mentioned in the sermon it is interesting that Mark alone includes the defensive remark, "*for he did not know what to say for they were exceedingly afraid*".

VERSE 7

The cloud is frequently a symbol of God's presence and protection. (See Exodus 16:10, 19:9, 24:15, 33:1.) A cloud and accompanying voices frequently occur in the Exodus accounts and at Sinai. God's appearance on Sinai. (Exodus 24:16.) Verse seven also underlines the authority of Christ as compared to Moses and Elijah. But now with this event, Jesus is seen as having transcended past Revelations. Clouds were seen also, associated with the final coming of Christ. (See Luke 21:27, Mark 13:26, 14:62, Matthew 24:30, 26:64, Rev: 1:7.)

The sermon implies that the experience was meaningful for Christ although this is not directly said by the text. For the disciples, this experience was significant in that their understanding of the Messiahship of Christ would have been deepened and intensified.

1. Our passage includes a classic “**faux pas**” by Peter. (Verse 5.)
What is the best (or worst) “faux pas” that you have ever made?
2. Have you ever had an overwhelming experience of the presence of God?
Similar to questions of other weeks, but an opportunity for deeper sharing.
3. **Read Mark 9:1-8.** Only three disciples went with Christ. (See also Mark 5:35-37, Mark 10:35-41, Mark 13:3-4 and Mark 14 32-33).
What type of experiences did the disciples have that prepared them for leadership?
The “privileged” disciples were receiving training in crisis management, in controlling ambition, in theological understanding and in coping with the anguish associated with leadership.
4. Is Peter’s outburst (Verse 5) a case of “foot and mouth disease” or is Peter reacting to the threat of the Cross? (See Mark 8:31-33)
Mark says that Peter was frightened and did not know what to say (Verse 6). However, this is not in the Matthew parallel. (Matt 17:1-8). Peter may have been expressing a preference for the Transfigured Christ rather than the One who was to be crucified.
5. What is the significance of the appearance of Moses and Elijah?
This is a link with the Old Testament and to show Jesus’ superiority over the Law and Prophets. The appearance of Moses and Elijah in the “Last Days” was common Rabbinic teaching.
6. The sermon distinguishes between contemplatives and activists. What is your tendency? How do you maintain a balance?
A sharing question where group members can learn from each other.
7. The sermon implies that this experience was a confirmation to Jesus as to who He was and where He was going. Have you ever gone through a transition where you have asked the same questions about yourself? i.e. *Who am I? Where am I going?*
People may talk about leaving home, a new job, divorce, retirement. There is a gulf of uncertainty as we go through any transition.
8. The sermon mentions that Mountain Top Experiences differ.
The giving of *Law* (Exodus 19:20) The place of *Temptation* (Matthew 4:8)
The place of *Teaching* (Matt 5:1) The mountain of *Sacrifice* (John 19:17)
The mountain of *Inspiration* (Mark 9:2-8)
 - a. **Which Mountain have you been up recently?**
 - b. **Which one do you need to climb?***Sharing together to sum up and apply the points that have been raised.*