

Jesus and his three companions had left the camp early, just as it was becoming light. There were already a few of the brethren stirring, enough to see them leaving and to whom they gave a greeting, but no explanation. James walked with John a few paces behind Jesus and Simon. He whispered to his brother.

“Do you have any idea where we’re going?”

John shook his head and answered quietly.

“He said nothing to me - I thought Simon might know.”

James shook his head.

They were wise enough by this time not to ask any questions, already schooled into following where the Master led, but it was impossible to suppress a tingle of anticipation, knowing that something special had prompted this unusual excursion. They walked quickly, almost urgently, heading high into the hills. For once, they weren’t hedged around by a huge crowd. The respite was a welcome relief. After a while the press of people became energy sapping, and some of the requests and petitions were trivial, and with such, Simon had less patience, but Jesus would listen to them all with a quiet, grave attention and offer advice which common sense should have told them was an answer to their petition. Then, there were the others, those who touched the heart, the sick, the blind and deaf, the cripples, those possessed with devils - usually led by desperate and pleading relatives. No matter who they were, Jesus touched them, healed them and talked to them, so that each went away feeling that they had experienced a personal relationship with this quiet, simple healer and teacher - who was so much more!

Simon had a thousand questions he would have liked to ask as they walked, but he

respected Jesus' silence. The Master seemed preoccupied and there was an urgency in their progress which wasn't explained. Simon exchanged glances with his silent companions. John raised his eyebrows in question and shrugged, it was clear that he and his brother knew no more than Simon.

With hardly a pause, Jesus began the ascent of a hill, they scrambled after him. When they reached the broad, flat summit, out of breath and panting. Jesus turned to them, his eyes twinkling with amusement.

"Rest for a while - I want to pray."

Thankfully, they sank down on the grass and exchanged glances again. If the purpose of their strenuous journey was simply to pray, there had been many other hills on the way! Jesus walked ahead and Simon closed his eyes, he was suddenly overcome with weariness. It had been a long and arduous walk and climb. He was nudged into alertness by the others, something extraordinary was happening!

Simon's heart started to hammer, it was surely a trick of the light, but the Master appeared to be bathed in brightness. His face was glowing in the sunlight, as if a beam of light had pierced through the rolling clouds and had focused on his face, but then, the radiance had stretched out over his clothing as well!

It was then that Simon realised that it wasn't caused by the sun!

He wondered if his eyes were playing tricks and he quickly glanced at James and John, they were staring with their mouths open. Simon looked back to Jesus and now it was quite clear that this was no ordinary radiance. Jesus' face shone like the sun itself. It glowed and appeared to give off light, rather than being in receipt of light. The same could be said for his robe, which was so dazzling white that it would have been the envy of any bleacher in the market-place trying to produce the same effect. The aura of light persisted around him and extended, so that it encompassed the ground around him for some distance. Comparatively, the area beyond the pool of light appeared to be in hazy darkness, as if a cloud had blotted out the mountain-top. Simon blinked again,

within the aura of light, two forms were emerging, coalescing - forms which became easily identifiable. He started to shake and whispered hoarsely.

“Moses and Elijah!”

The two newcomers were engaged in earnest conversation with Jesus, all three bathed in the unearthly radiance.

Simon, James and John crouched lower to the ground. The unreality of the scene, the vision of the great men of their history, and the glory of the moment, was almost too much to sustain. Simon forced himself to call out to Jesus, he babbled something, although he hardly knew what he said.

“Lord, how good it is that we’re here! If you wish, I’ll make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah!”

The words were still in his mouth, when a thick cloud rolled in across the mountain top and they were covered in it like a fog. From out of the cloud came a voice:

“This is my Son, my Beloved, on whom my favour rests; listen to him!”

At the sound of the voice, Simon, James and John fell to their faces in terror. After a few moments, Jesus walked over to them, and touched them gently on the shoulders, he said gently:

“Stand up - Simon, James, John! - and don’t be frightened!”

They looked up, still shaking with the physical reaction of the incredible event. They saw only Jesus - Moses and Elijah and the intense radiance were gone. Jesus put out his hand and drew them to their feet, one after the other, he put his arms around their shoulders and hugged them - and then, without a word of explanation, turned and led the way down the mountain. His three companions trailed after him, still dazed. After a while he stopped and turned to them.

“You understand, you are to tell no one what you saw here today - not even your brothers of the Twelve. You must say nothing about it until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead!”

They stared at him without with comprehension, then Simon cleared his throat and asked:

“Why is it that the teachers of the Law say that Elijah must come first?”

Jesus replied:

“Yes, they are right. Elijah is to come first and set everything right. But don't you realise, Elijah has already come, and they didn't recognise him, and they treated him according to their way of thinking. In much the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.”

They then realised that he meant John the Baptist.