

# THE GRAND OLD DUKE OF YORK: UP or DOWN ?

## Insights from Mark chapter 9

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1

## Richard Plantagenet (1411-1460)



*O the grand old Duke of York, he had ten  
thousand men,  
He marched them up to the top of the hill,  
and he marched them down again.  
And when they were up they were up,  
and when they were down they were  
down,  
And when they were only halfway up they  
were neither up nor down.*

[Sandal Castle, Battle of Wakefield, 30 December 1460]

2

## Part 1: UP (Mark 9:2-8)

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them **up a high mountain** apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them.

And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus.

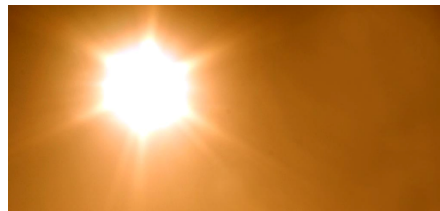
And Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid.

And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." And suddenly looking around they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only.

3

## An amazing event - transfiguration!

- Jesus changed (v2-3)
  - "transfigured" (*metamorphosis*)
  - "before their eyes" – real
  - "glistening, intensely white" (*stilbo* = *flashing*)
  - his **divine nature** broke through



4

## We are not alone...

- Two visitors – **Moses** and **Elijah** (v4)
  - Law and prophets
  - Talking about his departure (*exodos*) at Jerusalem [Luke 9:30]



5

## Two reactions and a result

- Disciples' reaction: Shock and awe (v5-7)
  - Confused and afraid
  - Attempt to capture the moment
- God's reaction: Cloud and voice (v7)
  - Visible presence – “*shekinah*” glory
  - Audible instruction – “*This is my beloved Son, listen to him*”
- Result: from **fear** to **focus** (v8)
  - They saw no-one but **Jesus only**

6

## What was that all about?

2 Peter 1:16-18

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **we were eyewitnesses of his majesty**. For when **he received honour and glory from God the Father** and the voice was borne to him by the majestic glory "*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased*", we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

7

## Part 2: DOWN (Mark 9:14-29)

[Luke 9:37-43a]

*On the next day, when they had come **down from the mountain**, a great crowd met him. A man from the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look upon my son, for he is my only child. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him till he foams, and shatters him and will hardly leave him. And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."*

*Jesus answered "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." While he was coming, the demon tore him and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And they were all astonished at the majesty of God.*

8

## Meanwhile back in the valley...

- Very difficult situation (v14-18)
  - Confusion, conflict, failure, impotence
  - Sickness and/or spiritual oppression
- They should have coped – Mark 6:7-13
  - Jesus called and sent them with authority
  - They went, preached, healed, delivered
  - Why not this time?

9

## Enter Jesus

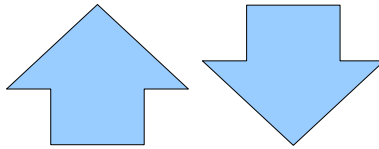
- His response
  - Disappointment
  - Compassion
  - Explanation
- What a contrast!
  - **Up** on mountain
  - **Down** in valley



10

## Final questions

- Where would you rather have been?
  - Mountain top or valley? Up or down?
- Is this a real “either-or” choice?
  - Both were happening at same time
  - Can't live on the mountain top
  - Special experiences are rare, daily life is daily!



11

## Jesus



Follow, follow,  
I will follow Jesus,  
Anywhere, everywhere,  
I will follow him.  
Follow, follow,  
I will follow Jesus,  
Anywhere he leads me  
I will follow him.

... in other words, “discipleship”

12