

Mark 09 - The Transfiguration; Elijah; Jesus Casts Out a Dumb/Deaf Demon; Jesus' Predicts His Death/Resurrection (2nd Time); Humility; Exclusion; Entrapments

IV. Discipleship teachings of the servant (Mark 8:34—10:52)

- (2) Christ's Transfiguration (9:1-13)
- (3) Importance of faith (9:14-29)
- (4) Christ's second prediction of His death (9:30-32)
- (5) Necessity of humility (9:33-37)
- (6) Necessity of not stumbling a disciple (9:38-50)

Mark 9

(2) Christ's Transfiguration (9:1-13) (Cf. Matt 17:1-13; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter 1:16-18)

1 And Jesus was saying to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God when it has come with power."

1 And Jesus was saying to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

1 Then he told them, "I tell all of you with certainty, some people standing here will not experience death until they see the kingdom of God arrive with power."

1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

- A remarkable statement: some standing in that mixed audience would not experience death before they saw a preview of the kingdom that the Son of Man would establish after He came in glory (8:38; Cf. 2 Peter 1:16-19)

— Those individuals were Peter, James and John

2 And **six days** later Jesus *took with Him Peter, James, and John, and *brought them up on a **high mountain** by themselves. And He was **transfigured** before them;

2 Six days later, Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John, and *brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them;

2 Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain to be alone with him. His appearance was changed in front of them,

2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

- "...six days" - six days followed by revelation should recall Ex 24:15-16: Moses was on Mt Sinai for six days, then God revealed Himself on the seventh

- "...a high mountain" - probably Mt. Hermon, 9,000 ft above sea level; almost 11,000 ft above the Jordan valley.

— Luke's "8 days" were inclusive (Luke 9:28)

- This was a demonstration of the glory of the future kingdom. John, who was among those present, makes reference to it (John 1:14); so does Peter (2 Peter 1:12-21)

— Despite Jesus' coming death (8:31-32), it assured His disciples of eventual glory (8:38)

- "...transfigured" - *metamorphoo*, to change into another form, to transform, from which we get the term metamorphosis, a comprehensive change from within

— An example is the caterpillar: emerging from a cocoon as a beautiful butterfly (the opposite of masquerade, a superficial outward change that does not come from within). It is the same word that appears in Rom 12.

3 and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no **launderer** on earth can whiten them.

3 and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

3 and his clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone on earth could bleach them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

- "...launderer" - originally a dresser of skins or hides; later, applied in a wider sense as above

— These garments appeared to be etherealized, glowing with a brilliancy such as no worker in linen or other material for apparel could produce

4 And **Elijah** appeared to them along with **Moses**; and they were **talking with Jesus**.

4 Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

4 Then Elijah appeared to them, accompanied by Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

- "...Elijah...Moses" - they might represent those who have died and were raptured (Moses, Deut 34:6; Elijah, 2 Kings 2:11)
- Moses would seem to represent the Law; Elijah, the prophets (Matt 5:17-18)
- "...talking with Jesus" - what were they talking about? The verb tense indicates that this was an extended conversation
- Luke tells us that they "spoke of His departure [*exodus*] which He would accomplish in Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31)

The Cross was not a tragedy, not an accident, not a disaster. It was what Jesus came into this world for! It was not an afterthought. It was the fulfillment of Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and virtually all of the rest of Scripture! [I believe that there is not passage in the Bible that you can disconnect from the Messiah Himself: His mission, His destiny, His glory!]

The three disciples had fallen asleep during Jesus' prayer and almost missed seeing Moses and Elijah and Jesus in His glory! (Luke 9:29,32). Matthew indicates that the three heard the voice from heaven and "fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. 'Get up,' He said, 'Don't be afraid.'" (Matt 17:6-7).

5 Peter responded and *said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here; let's make three tabernacles, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 Peter *said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 Then Peter told Jesus, "Rabbi, it's good that we're here! Let's set up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For he did not know how to reply; for they became terrified.

6 For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.

6 (Peter didn't know how to respond, because they were terrified.)

6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

- Some infer that this may have been about the time of the Feast of Succoth, or Feast of Booths. Peter, like many of us, cannot yield in silence.

— Many, since Peter's day, have thought to honor Christ by giving special prominence to His servants, never realizing that in thus recognizing them as worthy of such homage they have actually dishonored the Master Himself.

- Peter opposed Jesus' sufferings and death, though he was not fully aware of what he was doing (Cf. 8:32)

— He evidently believed that Jesus was going to set up His kingdom immediately (Cf. Acts 1:6)

7 Then a **cloud** formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him!"

7 Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"

7 Then a cloud appeared and overshadowed them. A voice came out of the cloud and said, "This is my Son, whom I love. Keep on listening to him!"

7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

- "...cloud" - frequently pictured God's presence and protection in the OT (Ex 16:10; 19:9; 24:15-16; 33:1; 40:34-38; Num 9:15-22; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Is 4:5)

— The cloud enveloped and concealed Jesus, Elijah and Moses rather than simply overshadowing them

- The Father interrupted Peter's suggestion, and focused their attention, not on the vision, but on the Word of God: "Hear Him"

— The heavenly voice assured the disciples that, even though the Jews would reject Jesus and the Romans would execute Him, He was still pleasing to the Father (Cf. 1:11)

— It also helped the disciples understand Jesus' superiority over the greatest of God's former servants (Cf. Deut 18:15; Ps 2:7; Is 42:1)

— Jesus is the ultimate expression of truth (Heb 1:1-2)

- The vision was not an end in itself, but a means of confirming the Word: "A more sure word of prophecy"? (2 Peter 1:12-21)

— More sure than being an eyewitness to this event? — Indeed.

8 And suddenly they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

8 All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

8 Suddenly, as they looked around, they saw no one with them but Jesus alone.

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

- Elijah and Moses disappeared, but Jesus remained

9 As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead.

9 As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead.

9 On their way down the mountain, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

- Jesus again commanded secrecy (1:34,43-44; 3:11-12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:30; 9:15,25)

— The three men were not even to tell the other nine (if they did it may have contributed to the tensions in v33-34)

— If the multitudes heard about this demonstration of Jesus' glory, it would only fuel the fires of popular messianic expectation and create pressure for Jesus to depart from God's will

— This is the only secrecy pledge Jesus gave with a time limit. The people the disciples would tell the transfiguration story to would only understand it after Jesus arose from the dead.

10 They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.

10 They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.

10 They kept the matter to themselves but argued about what "rising from the dead" meant.

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

- Their confusion is understandable. That's a tough concept, even today.

- The OT taught a resurrection of the dead (Ps 16; Is 26:19; Dan 12:2; Cf. John 11:24), but the disciples could not harmonize that revelation with Jesus' statement that He would rise three days after He died (8:31)

— The whole idea of Messiah dying was incomprehensible to them

11 And they asked Him, saying, "*Why is it* that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

11 They asked Him, saying, "*Why is it* that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

11 So they asked him, "Don't the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

- Instead of asking for clarification about the resurrection issue, the disciples raised questions about the Messiah dying

— If Jesus was the Messiah and He would die, what did the scribes' teaching about Elijah being the forerunner of Messiah mean (Mal 3:1-4; 4:5-6)?

— The OT taught that Elijah would turn the hearts of the people back to God (Cf. Mal 4:6), but Elijah had not appeared and most of the people had not repented

12 And He said to them, "Elijah does come first and he restores all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"

12 And He said to them, "Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"

12 He told them, "Elijah is indeed coming first and will restore all things. Why, then, is it written that the Son of Man must suffer a great deal and be treated shamefully?"

12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.

- Jesus affirmed the scribes' interpretation of prophecy about Elijah

- He went on to explain that their interpretation did not invalidate what He had just predicted about His own sufferings

- The confusion concerning Elijah continues even today. They knew the prophecies (Mal 3:1; 4:5-6), and it was widely recognized that these would be fulfilled before the Messiah appeared (John 1:21).

13 But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wanted, just as it is written of him."

13 But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him."

13 But I tell you that Elijah has come, yet people treated him just as they pleased, as it is written about him."

13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

- The disciples thought Elijah still had to come, but Jesus explained that he had already come

- His enemies had done to John the Baptist what the OT recorded: the OT passage to which Jesus referred was 1 Kings 19:1-3,10. In that passage, Ahab, and especially Jezebel, swore to kill Elijah. They "wished" to execute him.

- This is exactly what Herod Antipas, and especially Herodias, really did to John the Baptist

- Now we see why Mark recorded, as a flashback, the story of the death of John the Baptist (6:17-29)...it was to show that John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecies about Elijah coming.

- In this case, Scripture foretold the future not by prophecy, but by a "type." The fate intended for Elijah (1 Kings 19:2,10) had overtaken John.

- Jesus adds that in one sense, John the Baptist was Elijah. But in what sense? Answered in Matt 11:11-14; Luke 1:13-17.

- For those who trusted in Him, this "Elijah" was John the Baptist, for John had indeed "prepared the way before Him" (Cf. Luke 1:16-17)
- John denied that he was Elijah (John 1:21)

(3) Importance of faith (9:14-29) (Cf. Matt 17:14-20; Luke 9:37-43a)

Jesus Casts Out Another Dumb Demon

14 And when they came *back* to the *other* disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and *some* scribes arguing with them.

14 When they came *back* to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and *some* scribes arguing with them.

14 As they approached the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and some scribes arguing with them.

14 And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

- This discussion clarified for the disciples how Jesus' messiahship harmonized with OT prophecy that seems to contradict it

- The scribes were there to instigate the situation

15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and *began* running up to greet Him.

15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and *began* running up to greet Him.

15 The whole crowd was very surprised to see Jesus and ran to welcome him.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

- The nine disciples' failure to cast out the demon, followed by Jesus' personal appearance, produced the multitudes' extreme response

16 And He asked them, "What are you disputing **with them?**"

16 And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?"

16 He asked the scribes, "What are you arguing about with them?"

16 And he asked the scribes, **What question ye with them?**

- "...with them" - among yourselves

17 And one *person* from the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, because he has **a spirit that makes him unable to speak;**

17 And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute;

17 A man in the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a spirit that won't let him talk.

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

- "...a spirit *that makes him* unable to speak" - a type of demon; see note: **Jewish**

Exorcism in Matt 12:23

18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground, and he foams *at the mouth* and grinds his teeth and becomes stiff. And I told Your disciples so that they would cast it out, but they could not *do it.*"

18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him *to the ground* and he foams *at the mouth*, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not *do it.*"

18 Whenever it brings on a seizure, it throws him to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes stiff. So I asked your disciples to drive the spirit out, but they didn't have the power."

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

- He was both deaf and dumb (v17,25). The demon was attempting to destroy him.

— Jesus had given His disciples authority to cast out demons (3:15; 6:7); they did so successfully earlier (6:13)

— The reason the nine disciples could not cast out the dumb demon was because of their weak faith (v29)

19 And He answered them and *said, "**O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!**"

19 And He *answered them and *said,"**O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!**"

19 Jesus told them, "**You unbelieving generation! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me!**"

19 He answereth him, and saith, **O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.**

- "...O" - an emotional cry from the heart!

- Jesus' first rhetorical question expressed frustration that His presence with them had not resulted in greater faith (Cf. 4:40; 6:50,52; 8:17-21)

- His second question reveals the heavy load that their unbelief placed on Him (Cf. 3:5; 8:12)

— How often Jesus must be grieved with us when we fail to use the spiritual resources He has so graciously given to His people!

20 And they brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, the spirit immediately threw him into convulsions, and falling to the ground, he *began* rolling around and foaming *at the mouth*.

20 They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he *began* rolling around and foaming *at the mouth*.

20 So they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into convulsions. He fell on the ground and kept rolling around and foaming at the mouth.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.

21 And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.

21 Then Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" He said, "Since he was a child.

21 And he asked his father, **How long is it ago since this came unto him?** And he said, Of a child.

22 It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to kill him. But **if** You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!"

22 It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!"

22 The spirit has often thrown him into fire and into water to destroy him. But if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us!"

22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

- "...if" - the father was candid about his doubts

— Evidently the failure of the nine disciples had weakened the father's confidence in Jesus to help his son

23 But Jesus said to him, "If You can?' All things are possible for the one who believes."

23 And Jesus said to him, "If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes."

23 Jesus told him, "If you are able?' Everything is possible for the person who believes!"

23 Jesus said unto him, **If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.**

- The father thought the crucial question was whether Jesus could heal the boy
- Jesus explained that it was really whether the father could believe the Jesus could heal him
- This is one of the most abused verses in the Bible. People have ripped it out of context and made it a rationale for false confidence in personal wishes.
- Some have taught that with enough faith you can control God! This is man-made, man-centered religion.

24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief."

24 With tears flowing, the child's father at once cried out, "I do believe! Help my unbelief!"

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

- Matthew adds that the father got on his knees (Matt 17:14). Luke adds that he was an only child (Luke 9:38).
- The issue was not how strongly the father believed Jesus would heal his son. This is an important distinction.
- Modern "faith healers" usually stress the amount of trust that the person coming for help has, rather than the object of that trust.
- Later (v29), Jesus revealed that the disciples' failure to heal the boy resulted from lack of trust in Him, too.
- The father voiced his confidence in Jesus, imperfect as it was, and asked Jesus to strengthen his faith
- He declares that he believes, yet acknowledges himself to have unbelief
- These two statements contradict, but every Christian experienced both of these in themselves
- The father was an unbelieving believer; a believer whose faith was weak.

25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, **"You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again!"**

25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, **"You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again."**

25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, **"You spirit that won't let him talk or hear—I command you to come out of him and never enter him again!"**

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, **Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.**

- Jesus acted quickly to avoid greater publicity

- "...mute and deaf spirit" - the fact that the spirit was deaf and dumb heightened the difficulty of the exorcism, since the deaf spirit should not be able to hear the command — In this case, evidently Jesus first *made* the spirit to hear them, then cast him out

26 And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and *the boy* became so much like a corpse that most of *them* said, "He is dead!"

26 After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and *the boy* became so much like a corpse that most of *them* said, "He is dead!"

26 The spirit screamed, shook the child violently, and came out. The boy was like a corpse, and many said that he was dead.

26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him, and he got up.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.

27 But Jesus took his hand and helped him up, and he stood up.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28 When He came into *the* house, His disciples *began* asking Him privately, "*Why is it* that we could not cast it out?"

28 When He came into *the* house, His disciples *began* questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?"

28 When Jesus came home, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive the spirit out?"

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And He said to them, **"This kind cannot come out by anything except prayer."**

29 And He said to them, **"This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."**

29 He told them, **"This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting."**

29 And he said unto them, **This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.**

- "...This kind" - a dumb demon (Cf. Matt 12)

— He authenticates the Pharasaic observation that dumb demons were different and could not be cast out in a normal way

— He tells His disciples that the reason they could not cast out a dumb demon was because they were using the wrong method: they believed that the power Jesus gave them to cast out demons was now inherent (part of) them. It was not; it was still God's power, and it came directly from Him.

— Thus, they needed to acknowledge their dependence upon Him for power in order to be effective

- The main lesson of this miracle is the power of faith to overcome the enemy (Cf. v19,23-24; Matt 17:20). Faith must be cultivated through spiritual discipline and devotion.

— Not only did their failure embarrass them, but it also robbed the Lord of glory and gave the enemy opportunity to criticize and blaspheme. It is our faith that glorifies God (Rom 4:20).

— What His disciples should have done was not use the regular methodology that worked with other kinds of demons, but simply trust God the Father to do it for them.

Why Couldn't They Do It?

Why had the nine disciples failed? Because they had been careless in their personal spiritual walk and had neglected prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29). The authority that Jesus had given them was effective only if exercised by faith, but faith must be cultivated through spiritual discipline and devotion. It may be that the absence of their Lord, or His taking the three disciples with Him and leaving them behind, had dampened their spiritual fervor and diminished their faith. [Wiersbe]

Jesus' prayer life reflected even His dependence upon the Father. Some circumstances require more spiritual power than others, and some demons are stronger than others (Matt 12:45).

This incident taught the disciples that they needed to serve God in constant conscious dependence upon Him that expressed itself in prayer. Prayer is a discipline that reminds disciples of, and expresses their dependence upon, God.

(4) Christ's second prediction of His death (9:30-32) (Cf. Matt 17:22-23 Luke 9:43b-45)

30 And from there they went out and *began* to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *about it*.

30 From there they went out and *began* to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *about it*.

30 Then they left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus didn't want anyone to find out about it,

30 And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it.

- Jesus public ministry in Galilee was over. He wanted to pass through that area without further distractions from the multitudes.

31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later."

31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later."

31 because he was teaching his disciples, "The Son of Man will be betrayed into human hands. They will kill him, but after being dead for three days he will be raised."

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

- Jesus' teaching from here on out concentrated mainly on teaching His disciples

- Here, for the first time, Jesus revealed to the disciples that someone would "deliver" Him (or hand Him over) to His enemies

- Jesus' death is predicted in the OT (Gen 22; Ps 22; Is 53; Dan 9:26; Hosea 5:15; Zech 12:10)

— Jesus also predicted His own death and resurrection in the gospels multiple times (Matt 16:21; Mark 9:31; Luke 18:33; John 10:17-18)

- "...He will rise three days later" - Mark recorded Jesus saying that He would rise of His own power (active voice)

— Matthew said Jesus spoke of being raised (passive voice, Matt 17:23)

— Jesus probably said both in the course of His teaching

32 But they did not understand *this* statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.

32 But they did not understand *this* statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.

32 They didn't understand what this statement meant, and they were afraid to ask him.

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

- He is still reminding them of His mission: death and resurrection. They did not understand (God withheld their understanding, Luke 9:45), yet were deeply grieved (but not so grieved as to prevent their personal ambitions to lead to disputes).

— It may appear that God is working against Himself, revealing through Jesus and concealing by hardening the disciples' hearts

— However, God was working with the disciples as he had worked with the multitudes through Jesus' parables

— The disciples' ignorance was a result of divine blindness that their unbelief produced

- Their willingness to remain in ignorance and not ask Jesus to clarify His statement is the evidence of their unbelief
- Similarly, we manifest a form of unbelief when we fail to seek clarification of biblical revelation that we find confusing

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
First passion announcement	16:21-23	8:31-33	9:22
Second passion announcement	17:22-23	9:30-32	9:43-45
Third passion announcement	20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34

(5) Necessity of humility (9:33-37) (Cf. Matt 18:1-5; Luke 9:46-48)

33 They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He *began* to question them:

"What were you discussing on the way?"

33 They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He *began* to question them,

"What were you discussing on the way?"

33 Then they came to Capernaum. While Jesus was at home, he asked the disciples,

"What were you arguing about on the road?"

33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, *What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?*

- This was Jesus' last recorded activity in Capernaum

- Rather than discussing Jesus' coming death and resurrection, the disciples had been arguing about their own futures in the kingdom

34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which *of them* was the greatest.

34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which *of them* was the greatest.

34 But they kept silent, because they had argued on the road with one another about who was the greatest.

34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

- Their silence was probably the result of shame

- Did the favor shown to Peter, James and John, in selecting them to be eyewitnesses of the prefigurement of coming glory, imply a corresponding precedence in the kingdom? The three disciples hoped it did; the other disciples hoped not, and so the dispute began.

35 And sitting down, He called the twelve and *said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and *said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

35 So he sat down, called the Twelve, and told them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

- Here is Mark's special emphasis throughout his Gospel

- The spirit of service is the passport to importance in the kingdom

- The night before Jesus died, they again were arguing about who was to be greatest

- No one had condescended to be a servant and wash the other's feet

- Jesus Himself gave them an object lesson by taking a towel and a basin and washed their feet (John 13:14-16). Here, Jesus gives them a similar object lesson.

36 And He took a child and placed him among them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them,

36 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them,

36 Then he took a little child and had him stand among them. He took him in his arms and told them,

36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

- A child was the least significant person in Jewish and Greco-Roman culture

- By using a child, Jesus was saying that service involved caring about people, even insignificant people such as children

- The house they were in was in Capernaum and may well have been Simon Peter's; the child may even have been one of his

- An unspoiled child is the example of submission and humility. The words "child" and "servant" are the same in Aramaic.

37 "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."

37 "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."

37 "Whoever welcomes a child like this in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

- Jesus was one of the first ever to see how essentially precious any person is, particularly a young child

(6) Necessity of not stumbling a disciple (9:38-50) (Cf. Luke 9:49-50)

38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us."

38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us."

38 John told Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name. We tried to stop him, because he wasn't a follower like us."

38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.

- Their exclusiveness is a strange companion to their own ineffectiveness earlier!

— The anonymous exorcist was giving glory to His name, in contrast to the scene in v14-29

— The disciples objected to his actions because Jesus had not commissioned him to do so as He had the Twelve (3:14-15)

— Perhaps his success and the recent failure of the nine disciples irritated them further

— In view of what Jesus just taught about receiving little children, John wondered if the Twelve had done right in rebuking the man

- John certainly was a "Son of Thunder"! (Mark 3:17). He also was ready to call down fire from heaven! (Luke 9:54)

It is striking to note that after each of the three major prophecies of the Passion, Mark inserts a response from one of the three disciples who were closest to Jesus: Peter (8:32f); John (9:38); James, with John (10:35-37). By doing this, Mark shows that even the most privileged of the disciples failed to understand what the passion signified for their life and mission.

39 But Jesus said, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a **miracle** in My name, and be able soon *afterward* to speak evil of Me.

39 But Jesus said, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me.

39 But Jesus said, "Don't stop him, because no one who works a miracle in my name can slander me soon afterwards.

39 But Jesus said, **Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.**

- "...miracle" - *dunamis*, one of four Greek words used in the Gospels to describe Jesus' miracles

40 For the one who is not against us is for us.

40 For he who is not against us is for us.

40 Whoever is not against us is for us.

40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

- Jesus expressed the opposite truth in Matt 12:30

— Jesus' point was that the disciples should not view the exorcist as an antagonist just because he was not part of their group. The man was doing God's will and would not oppose them.

Matt 12:30: He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as *followers of Christ*, truly I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.

41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as *followers of Christ*, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.

41 I tell all of you with certainty, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to the Messiah will never lose his reward."

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to **Christ**, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

- Not only would the exorcist receive God's blessing, but anyone who does anything to help another person would receive His reward

— This help extends to the almost insignificant act of giving "a cup of water" to a thirsty person, which was much less helpful than delivering someone from demonic affliction

- "...Christ" - Messiah; this is one of the rare occasions when Jesus used this title of Himself

— His use of that title here makes the lesson more forceful: the person giving the cup of water may have only a superficial understanding of Jesus

— Yet if that person offered simple hospitality to one of Jesus' disciples—"because" he was a disciple of "Christ"—that one would receive God's blessing

42 "Whoever causes one of these **little ones** who believe in Me to sin, it is better for him if a heavy **millstone** is hung around his neck and he is thrown into the sea.

42 "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.

42 "If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a large millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

42 And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

- This verse gives the opposite side of the idea just expressed

- Anyone who discouraged a disciple of Jesus from following Him faithfully could expect severe treatment from God

- "...little ones" - a child-like disciple; a new believer; an immature Christian v36-37; Cf. Matt 18:3-14)

- "...millstone" - *mylos onikos*, a large donkey-driven millstone

- The Romans had drowned some insurrectionists in Galilee in such a manner (Cf. Acts 5:37)

- A group of Galileans had so dealt with some of Herod's supporters [Josephus]

This incident stands as a rebuke to the exclusive attitude that insists that only those who carry on their work in harmony with our own views and practices can be accepted as really doing God's work. If they demonstrate that they are on God's side in the war with Satan, even though their views may be imperfect, they must not be condemned for such work or regarded as less.

Failure in Self-Discipline (Cf. Matt 18:8-14)

43 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed, than, having your two hands, to go into **hell, into the unquenchable fire.**

43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,

43 So if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better for you to enter life injured than to have two hands and go to hell, to the fire that cannot be put out.

43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

- Jesus compared body parts to the agents of sinful activities

- The disciples should take prompt and decisive action against anything that might lead them away from their allegiance to Jesus

- Physical temptations primarily come through the hands (what we do), the feet (where we go), and the eyes (what we see)

- Disciples who are believers will suffer the loss of rewards in the kingdom if they do not exercise self-discipline

- Disciples who are unbelievers will experience eternal damnation if they fail to do so

- "...hell" - *gehenna*, from the Hebrew phrase, "the valley [ge] of Hinnom," referring to an actual valley outside Jerusalem where wicked King Ahaz worshiped Molech, the fire god, and even sacrificed his children in the fire (2 Chr 28:1-3; Jer 7:31; 19:5-6; 32:35)

Hell

Hell is often an area of confusion: The grave, or the abode of the dead, is *Sheol* in Hebrew, *Hades* in Greek. It had two compartments (Luke 16:19ff). It is always expressed in geocentric terms (Matt 12:40, et al.). Gehenna, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, is the ultimate destiny, even of *Hades*. *Hades* is temporary; *Gehenna* is forever (Rev 20:10,13-14).

44 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]

44 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]

44 In that place, worms never die, and the fire is never put out.

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

- Jesus treated hell with extreme seriousness

- Jesus quoted 3x from Is 66:24 in this passage (v44,46,48)

Is 66:24: "Then they will go out and look At the corpses of the people Who have rebelled against Me. For their worm will not die And their fire will not be extinguished; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

45 And if your foot is causing you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life without a foot, than, having your two feet, to be thrown into hell.

45 If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell,

45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

- His solemn message carries a warning to all of us to deal drastically with sin. Halfway measures won't do.

— Any encumbrance should be removed from our lives as if by surgery

46 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]

46 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]

46 In that place, worms never die, and the fire is never put out.

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if your eye is causing you to sin, throw it away; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be thrown into hell,

47 If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell,

47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It's better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

48 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT EXTINGUISHED.

48 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

48 In that place, worms never die, and the fire is never put out.

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 For **everyone** will be salted with fire.

49 "For everyone will be salted with fire.

49 Because everyone will be salted with fire, and every sacrifice will be salted with salt.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

- "...everyone" - refers to believers living in a hostile world

— As the OT priests salted the animal sacrifices, so will God season His living sacrifices with fiery trials to purify their faith

50 Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty *again*? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

50 Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty *again*? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

50 Salt is good. But if salt loses its taste, how can you restore its flavor? Keep on having salt among yourselves, and live in peace with one another."

50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

- Jews were not allowed to put leaven or honey on their sacrifices, but they were required to use salt on their sacrifices (Lev 2:11,13; Ezek 13:24; Cf. Ex 30:35)

— Salt speaks of purity, savoriness, and preservation

— The disciples were God's salt (Matt 5:13), but were in danger of losing their flavor and becoming worthless

The Big Picture

No portion of scripture provides a more succinct view of our need for a savior than Mark 9-10. When praying recently about how to best present this passage in a Bible study, the Lord

clearly said, "Get the big picture." Suddenly I saw these two chapters in a new light...the definitive presentation of the "Mission of the Messiah." It goes like this:

The Kingdom of God (Mark 9:1-8)

Mark 9 opens with a promise that some would shortly see "the Kingdom of God come with power." A week later Peter, James, and John went up the mountain with the Lord and saw him transfigured before them, with Moses and Elijah appearing also. The Majestic Glory (Holy Spirit) was there as well as the Voice of God. (Peter later described this event as involving the Second Coming; 2 Peter 1:16-18).

Elijah Explained (Mark 9:9-13)

When the disciples asked Him about the prophecy that Elijah must return before the Messiah, Jesus plainly told them that Elijah HAD come in the person of John the Baptist. It seems the prophetic requirements for the Kingdom had been met. Or had they?

Satan Bound (Mark 9:14-29)

Immediately upon descending, they were confronted with a situation involving a demon possessed boy and an argument between the religious leaders and the disciples over how to cure him. Jesus banished the demon with a word. A model of Satan bound?

First Things First (Mark 9:30-32)

Then in a private teaching Jesus outlined the coming events that would result in His death and Resurrection. They didn't understand and were afraid to ask for clarification. Why did He choose to do this here?

Hard Sayings (Mark 9:33—10:31)

Next follows a series of teachings noted for their harshness. Of all His words to us, these contain the clearest description of God's requirements and offer the least in terms of "wiggle room."

In Mark 9:33-37 He commands the kind of humility normally expressed only by one without any rights at all, which was the status of a child in that time.

Mark 9:38-41 requires a tolerance toward those whose methods may be different but whose motives are the same.

Mark 9:42-50 speaks of a holiness that would justify the amputation of any part of the body causing the person to sin. Of course He's speaking metaphorically here because only one organ of the body causes sin, and that's the heart.

In Mark 10:1-12 the standards are sacrificial love and fidelity, and the only excuse for disobedience in the entire 2 Chapter passage is given. Adultery is an acceptable cause for divorce.

Mark 10:10-16 explains that we must become as little children to inherit the Kingdom.

There is ultimately only one quality little children possess that is not automatically found in adults. Children are not accountable in God's eyes for their sins. He sees them as though they are sinless. Adults must regain this same standing before God to enter the Kingdom.

To unlock the secret of Mark 10:17-21 recall the 10 commandments. Jesus lists six of them, all having to do with the way we should treat one another. The young man claims obedience to these. The other 4 describe the required attitude toward God and this is where the young man was deficient. His wealth was more an object of worship to him than God. By giving it away and joining Jesus, he could try to keep the first 4 commandments. The disciples were shocked by these teachings, and exclaimed, "Who then can be saved?" Mark 10:27: "Jesus looked at them and said, With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Mark 10:32-34. And again He takes them aside to explain His coming death and Resurrection, and I can almost hear Him saying, "Now do you understand?" The fact that they didn't is clear by the next passage. James and John want seats of honor in the Kingdom. They are still so blinded by the things of this world, that they can't see the things of God.

The beautiful lesson of the passage is found in the healing of Bartimaeus. It presents a perfect contrast to the requests of the disciples. Being handicapped, he has no worldly position. Unlike the disciples, he's not a friend or co-worker, nor has he sacrificed as Peter points out they have. Having denied the request of the disciples, based on legitimate merit, the Lord grants the request of Bartimaeus, based solely on his faith.

These chapters offer a view of the Kingdom. The prophetic requirements are met, Satan is bound, the Dead are raised (Moses and Elijah), and some have entered while still alive (Peter, James, John). But first there's a problem to be solved. It's the Lord's standards; way too high for man to meet. The summary of these standards is bracketed by a description of the solution... His Death and Resurrection. That which is impossible for man becomes possible with God. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, not by works.