

## Mark 9

This chapter is full of events, beginning with Jesus promising to establish His kingdom during the lifetime of His audience (9:1). Next is the Transfiguration by which God reveals His glory in the body of Jesus Christ (9:2-8), followed by a brief discussion of the coming of Elijah (9:9-13), then an exorcism by Jesus which His apostles failed to achieve (9:14-29). Jesus predicts, for the second time, His death, burial, and resurrection (9:30-32). Something has motivated the apostles to argue over who was the greatest, which leads to a lesson in humility (9:33-37), followed by John asking about someone who was not part of their own group (9:38-41). The chapter concludes with Jesus giving a lesson on not causing others to stumble, which includes the first use of “hell” by Jesus in the Gospel of Mark (9:42-50).

### TRANSLATION - 9:1:

1 And He was saying to them, “Truly I say to you, that there are some here of those having stood who might not taste of death until whenever they might see the kingdom of God having come in power.”

### GREEK WORDS:

“Truly” (ver. 1) is used 129 times in the NT, first at 3:28 out of 14 times in Mark. Its related expression: “Truly I say to you” is found 13 times in Mark, out of 76 uses in the NT. “Death” is used 6 times in Mark, first in 7:10, out of 120 uses. “Kingdom” was found first at 1:15 but was used extensively in chapter 4. “Power” was used earlier at 5:30.

### GREEK GRAMMAR:

The verb “to say” is in the imperfect tense, showing that Jesus was continually saying this statement. The verb “having come,” referring to the kingdom, is in the perfect tense, which means that the coming would certainly happen *before* these people will “taste” or “experience” death.

### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

This statement is paralleled in Matthew 16:24-28 and Luke 9:23-27.

### COMMENTS:

This verse is extremely easy to understand, if one is not blinded by false teaching. For Protestants who believe that Jesus has not yet established the kingdom and will establish it one day and will reign on earth for a thousand years, this verse causes all kinds of problems. This false doctrine is known as “Premillennialism,” and it includes such false ideas as a “rapture,” and a “great tribulation,” and an “Anti-Christ” and the idea that Jesus will build a physical temple in Jerusalem, where He and Christians will reign for 1,000 years. This is not the place to critique this teaching. But, it is clear that in Mark 9:1, Jesus taught His kingdom would be established during the lifetime of His audience!

The imperfect tense of the verb “He was saying” shows that this teaching was something Jesus shared on a regular basis. The expression “truly I say to you” is used 72 times in the NT; it is Jesus’ way of emphasizing what He is about to say. To “taste” is a figurative way of saying “to experience” (see Hebrews 2:9; 6:4-5; 1 Peter 2:3).

Mark shares the statement here, perhaps because Jesus has just predicted His death (8:31) and He has insinuated that some of His own apostles will die for their faith (8:34-35). In the context of these two promises of impending death, Mark shares Jesus’ teaching that *some* of His apostles (and others in the audience) will be alive when the kingdom is established. Death, in particular Jesus’ death, will not stop the kingdom from being established. In Matthew’s parallel account (16:18-19), Jesus uses the term “church” and “kingdom” as parallels. And in that account, Jesus promises that “hades” (death) will not stop Him from establishing His kingdom.

Before His ascension, Jesus promises in Luke 24:49 that this “power” would come on the apostles while they are in Jerusalem and the power will come “from on high,” a figurative expression for “God.” In Acts 1:8, Jesus promises His apostles that this power would come on them through the Holy Spirit and then they would be witnesses of Jesus until the end of the world. All of these promises are fulfilled in Acts 2, specifically verses 1-4, which shows us that the kingdom, or church, was established in Acts 2.

We will make one more point on this verse... again in Matthew’s account (16:28), Jesus states “those who are standing here ...will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” This shows us that Jesus “came” back to earth, on the day of Pentecost, when the kingdom was established, in the person of the Holy Spirit. This should help us understand that Jesus can “come” in ways when He is not physically present (see Amos 4:12-13 and Isaiah 19:1 for two examples from the OT).

#### APPLICATION:

To reemphasize that the kingdom of the Messiah has been on earth since the days of Acts 2, please observe these passages: Colossians 1:13-14; 4:11; Hebrews 12:28; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6, 9; 5:10. To get into the kingdom, the “new birth” of John 3:3, 5, is described by the same ideas as being baptized into the church: Ephesians 5:26-27; 1 Corinthians 12:13. In other words, to be “in” the church is to be “in” the kingdom of Christ.

That kingdom, the church, is the body of saved people who will be blessed in heaven for all eternity: 2 Peter 1:11; 2 Timothy 4:18.

#### TRANSLATION - 9:2-13:

**2** And after six days, Jesus takes along Peter and James and John and leads them into a high mountain alone by themselves. And He was transformed before them, **3** And His garments became shining exceedingly white, such as a cloth refiner on earth is not able thus to whiten. **4** And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses and they were conversing with Jesus. **5** And after answering, Peter says to Jesus, “Rabbi, good it is for us here to be, and let us make three tents, for You one and for Moses one and for Elijah one.”

**6** For he had not known what he might answer, for they had become terrified. **7** And there was a cloud overshadowing them, and there was a voice out of the cloud, “This One is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him.”

**8** And suddenly after looking around, no longer no one they saw but Jesus alone with them. **9** And coming down from the mountain, He ordered them that no one what they saw they might announce, except whenever the Son of Man from the dead might arise. **10** And the word they held tightly to themselves, discussing what it is to rise from the dead. **11** And they were asking Him saying, that “The scribes say that Elijah, it is necessary, to come first...?” **12** But He said to them, “Elijah indeed after coming first is restoring all things; and how has it been written about the Son of Man that He might suffer much and He might be despised. **13** But I say to you that even Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they were desiring, even as it has been written about him.”

#### GREEK WORDS:

“To be transformed” (ver. 2) gives us the English word “metamorphosed;” it is used four times in the NT: Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18. “Garment” (ver. 3) is used 60 times in the NT, first at 2:21 in Mark. “To shine” is used only here in the NT. “White” is used 25 times in the NT, twice in Mark: 9:3; 16:5. “Cloth refiner” is used only here in the NT. The verb “to whiten” is related to the color, and is used only here and Revelation 7:14. “To appear” (ver. 4) is used 113 times, first in Mark at 1:44. “Elijah” was first mentioned by Mark at 6:15. He is mentioned in this context five times: 9:4-5, 11-13. “Moses” was mentioned first by Mark at 1:44. He is mentioned in Mark eight times: 1:44; 7:10; 9:4-5; 10:3-4; 12:19, 26. “To converse with” is used only here in Mark, out of 6 uses.

“Rabbi” (ver. 5) is the Aramaic word for “teacher.” It is found 15 times in the NT, in Mark here, 11:21, and 14:45. “Tent” could refer in some contexts to a tent for worship; it is used 20 times in the NT, only here in Mark. It might have been a shelter made with branches and leaves. “To know” is used 318 times in the NT, 21 times in Mark, first at 1:24. “Terrified” is an intensified form of the adjective, related to the noun “fear.” This word is only used here and Hebrews 12:21. “Cloud” (ver. 7) is used 25 times in the NT, three times in Mark: 9:7; 13:26; 14:62. “To overshadow” or “to cover” is used five times in the NT, only here in Mark. “Voice” was used earlier in Mark at 1:3. “Beloved” is used 61 times in the NT, first at 1:11, where God also identified Jesus as His “beloved.” “To hear” is used 428 times in the NT, earlier in Mark at 2:1. This is the only time “suddenly” (ver. 8) is used in the NT. “Looking around” was used earlier at 3:5. Out of its 7 occurrences, Mark uses the verb six times.

“To order” or “to command” (ver. 9) was used earlier at 5:43. “To announce” or “to describe” was used earlier at 5:16. This is its last use. “To rise” is used 108 times in the NT, first at 1:35. “Word” (ver. 10) was used earlier at 1:45. “To hold tightly” was used earlier at 1:31. “To discuss” was used earlier at 1:27. “To restore” (ver. 12) was used earlier at 3:5. “To suffer” was used earlier at 5:26. “To despise” is only here used in Mark.

#### GREEK GRAMMAR:

The verb “has come” (ver. 13) is in the perfect tense, denoting the finality of the event. Elijah came in the person of Elijah and there is no NT verse that suggests he will come again (*contra* Premillennialism).

#### OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Moses’ appearance on Mount Sinai has several parallels to this event with Jesus: the men he takes with him (Exo. 24:1, 9), the appearance of his face (Exo. 34:29), the cloud (24:15-16, 18), the voice speaking (Exo. 24:16), and the reaction of the crowd below (Exo. 35:30). The command to “hear Him” is likely a fulfillment of God’s statement about the prophet to come in Deuteronomy 18:15.

The “tents” or “booths” or “shelters” (ver. 6) were also used during the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23; Deut. 16) to commemorate the time spent in the wilderness, being led by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. This forty-years lasted from the time Israel left Egypt until they entered the Promised Land.

The first occurrence of the verb “to love” in the Bible is at Genesis 22:2, where Abraham is said to “love” Isaac. It is significant that the first occurrence refers to a father’s love for his son, which is appropriate as a picture of the Father’s love for Jesus.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

The “mountain” (ver. 2) where Jesus was transfigured is not known. Some suggest it is Mount Tabor; others suggest Mount Hermon. Mount Tabor is eleven miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee. Mount Hermon is on the border of modern-day Lebanon and Syria, 15 miles northeast of Caesarea Philippi. If it was necessary for us to know, God would have told us.

In order to “whiten” clothes (ver. 3) a launderer would rub white clay into stains. White garments were usually only worn by wealthy people since they required extra care.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

The “Transfiguration” is found also in Matthew 17:1-13 (see also 11:7-14) and Luke 9:28-36.

#### COMMENTS:

Mark notes that the Transfiguration takes place “six days later.” We believe Mark is referring to the discussion of Jesus’ identity from 8:27-30 as well as the subsequent prediction of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection in 8:31-33. In order to encourage the apostles, relative

to the ensuing death of Christ and His resurrection and the establishment of His kingdom, God reveals His glory through the body of Jesus, at the “Mount of Transfiguration.”

Jesus took three apostles with Him: Peter, James, and John (ver. 2). They had gone with Him into the home of the ruler of the synagogue in 5:35-43 when He raised the man’s daughter. They, along with Andrew, will also ask Jesus about the destruction of Jerusalem in 13:3 and the three will pray with Jesus, at a distance from the rest of the apostles, in 14:33. Jesus likely took the three with Him at this point due to the principle from the Law of Moses that there be two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

At this point, Jesus was “transfigured” or “metamorphosed.” What that means is given in verse 3. His garments became bright and radiant and so white that the professional launderer could not make them any more white. “White” suggests cleanness, therefore purity and holiness, relative to Christ. Luke (9:29) tells us Jesus was praying when this happened and he also tells us that Jesus’ face changed as well. Matthew tells us His face shone “like the sun” (17:2).

Two great men of faith from the Old Testament appear with Jesus on the mountain: Elijah and Moses. Both these men were leaders of Israel, God’s people, in their own way. Moses was the great Law giver and died in the presence of God and was buried by God (Deut. 34:5-7). Elijah was a well-respected prophet of God who did not die but was taken into heaven by a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11). Mark began his gospel account citing the passage from Malachi about the coming of a messenger before Jehovah God (1:1-3), whom Malachi identifies as Elijah (3:1; 4:5-6). John the baptist is “Elijah” in his spirit and in his power (Luke 1:17). Jesus explicitly identifies John as “Elijah” in Matthew 11:14; 17:11-13. Luke tells us (9:31) that they were talking to Jesus about His death; the Greek word is “exodus,” which refers to His “departure.”

Peter was excited about the opportunity, not knowing what it meant and what it could mean (ver. 5). So, he suggested to his “rabbi” (“teacher”) that they make three tents, similar to the tents in which Israel stayed while they were wandering in the wilderness. In other words, Peter did not know how long they all were staying on the mountain - could it be 40 days and nights as Moses did (Exo. 24:18; 34:28)? Mark writes that Peter suggested this because he did not know what to say because he was terrified (ver. 6).

As the cloud, representing the glory of Jehovah God (“shekinah” in Hebrew; see Exodus 13:21; 14:19; 40:35; Numbers 9:15-23), appeared frequently in Exodus, so it appears here, overshadowing all of them (ver. 7). Peter, James, and John likely expected the voice of God to now speak! The Father does speak: “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!” At Jesus’ baptism, the Father had spoken, “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased” (1:11). God again identifies Jesus as His “beloved.” In Luke’s account, God also identifies Jesus as “His chosen [Elect] one” (Luke 9:35). Then God says for mankind to listen to the Son (see also Hebrews 1:1-3).

To emphasize that man is to listen to Jesus now instead of Moses and Elijah, when the cloud disappeared, Moses and Elijah were now also gone (ver. 8)!

Descending the mountain, Jesus commanded the three not to relate the event until after He - the Son of Man - had risen from the dead (ver. 9). The men then began discussing among themselves what “rising from the dead” could mean (ver. 10). While Jesus surely knew about this discussion, He also chose not to give any further information about that. However, they then asked Him about the coming of Elijah first (ver. 11). Wasn’t Elijah supposed to come before the kingdom of Israel was restored?

Jesus has already informed them that John the baptist was Elijah (Matt. 11:14), so “Yes,” Elijah does first come and restore all things” (ver. 12). In Luke’s account (1:17), John was to return the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous and make ready a people prepared for the Lord, quoting from Malachi 4:6. John did that as he was preaching baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (1:4). Jesus uses the present tense form of the verb “restores.” In other words, John’s preaching and those who were echoing John’s message were still in the process of “restoring” all things, as they pointed the Jews to Jesus and the coming of the kingdom (Matthew 3:2). While the apostles were

expecting a physical “restoration” (cf. Acts 1:6; see also 3:21), Jesus came to show them that the restoration was a spiritual restoration, a return of the hearts to Jehovah God.

In verse 12, Jesus redirects the thoughts about Elijah to the subject of suffering. Indeed, the Son of Man must suffer many things and be treated with contempt. The image of the Messiah which the apostles had was not the accurate image of the Messiah which Jehovah God wanted them to have. But, similar to the impending sufferings of Jesus, “Elijah” has come, in the person of John, and “they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him” (ver. 13).

#### APPLICATION:

The Transfiguration of Christ also reveals to us the deity of Jesus Christ. This was not a “shared” glory; this was His inherent glory, the glory which He had before He came to earth (see John 17:5). This event also re-emphasizes the words of God that we need to listen to Him; see Hebrews 1:1-3. He is God’s final prophet and ultimate Spokesman. The Law (“Moses”) and the Prophets (“Elijah,” although he did not leave any writings) are to point us to Christ: Galatians 3:24.

Christians now may be considered the “beloved” of God because they are “in” Christ Jesus, “the” beloved one: Rom. 9:25; 16:8; Ephesians 5:1; Colossians 3:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Jude 1.

Peter will refer to the Transfiguration again in 2 Peter 1:16-18. In that text, Peter refers to the transfiguration to show that Christians have the “prophetic word more sure” *because* they heard Jehovah God speak from heaven at the transfiguration (1:19-21)!

While Christians will not, in this life, be “metamorphosized,” we are changed in Christ from an old, sinful creature to a new creature: Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18.

When John writes about Jesus’ incarnation, he uses the verb form “to put up a tent” (“dwelt”) in John 1:14.

There is no comparable idea to the Transfiguration of Jesus in any other literature.

#### TRANSLATION - 9:14-29:

**14** And after coming to His disciples a great crowd saw concerning them and scribes were discussing among them. **15** And immediately all the crowd, seeing Him they were amazed and running to Him, they were greeting Him. **16** And He asked them, “What are you discussing among yourselves?”

**17** And he answered Him, one from the crowd, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, having a mute spirit. **18** And whenever he seizes him, he throws him down, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. And I told Your disciples that they might cast him out, and they were not strong enough.”

**19** And after answering He said to them, “O unfaithful generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I tolerate you? Bring him to Me.” **20** And they brought him to Him. And seeing Him the spirit immediately convulsed him, and falling on the ground he rolled around, foaming at the mouth. **21** And He asked his father, “How much time is it since this has happened to him?” And he said, “From childhood. **22** And often even into the fire he casts him and into water in order that he might destroy him. But if anything you are able, help us, having compassion on us.”

**23** And Jesus said to him, “If you are able... all things [are] possible to the one believing.” **24** Immediately, after crying the father of the child was saying, “I believe! Help my unbelief!” **25** And after Jesus seeing that the crowd was running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit saying to him, “The mute and deaf spirit, I order you - Come out from him and no longer may you enter into him.”

**26** And after crying and convulsing much he came out; and he was like one dead, so that the crowd said that “He has died.” **27** And Jesus, seizing his hand, raised him, and he arose. **28** And after their entering into the house, His disciples alone were asking Him, “Why

were we ourselves not able to cast it out?" **29** And He said to them, "This type is by nothing able to come out except in prayer."

#### GREEK WORDS:

"Disciple" (ver. 14) was used first at 2:15-16. "Scribes" were first introduced at 1:22. "To discuss" was used earlier in this context at verse 10. "Immediately" (ver. 15) is found first at 1:3. "To be amazed or astonished" is used four times, all in Mark: 9:15; 14:33; 16:5-6. "To run to" is used three times: Mark 9:15; 10:17; Acts 8:30. "To greet" is used 59 times, twice in Mark: 9:15; 15:18. "Teacher" (ver. 17) was used earlier at 4:38. "To bring" was used earlier at 1:32. "Spirit" is used earlier at 1:8. "Mute" by its form means "not-speaking." It is used only in Mark, at 7:37; 9:17, 25. "To seize" (ver. 18) is used 15 times, only here in Mark. "To throw down" is used earlier at 2:22. "To foam at the mouth" is used only twice in the NT: 9:18, 20. "To grind or gnash" is used only here in the NT. "Teeth" is used only here in Mark, out of 12 uses. "To become stiff or rigid" was used earlier at 3:1. "To cast" was used earlier at 1:12. "To be strong [enough]" is used 28 times in the NT, first at 2:17.

"Unfaithful" (ver. 19) by its form means "no-faith." It is used only here in Mark, out of 23 uses. "To tolerate" or "to endure" is used only here in Mark, out of 15 uses. "To convulse" (ver. 20) is used only twice: Mark 9:20; Luke 9:42. "To roll around" is used only here in the NT. "Childhood" (ver. 21) is used only here in the NT. "To destroy" (ver. 22) was used earlier at 1:24. "To help" is used only in this context in Mark (9:22, 24), out of 8 uses. "To have compassion" was used earlier at 1:41. "To believe" (ver. 23) is used 241 times in the NT, first in 1:15. "To cry" (ver. 24) is used earlier at 3:11. "Unbelief" has its form as "no-faith." It is used at 6:6; 9:24; 16:14. "Child" is used earlier at 5:39.

"To run together" (ver. 25) is used only here in the NT. "To rebuke" is used earlier at 1:25. "Unclean" is used earlier at 1:23. "Deaf" was used earlier at 7:32. "To order" was used earlier at 1:27. "To convulse" (ver. 26) is used three times: 1:26; 9:26; Luke 9:39. "To die" was used earlier at 5:35. "To raise" (ver. 27) was used earlier at 1:31. "To arise" was used earlier at 1:35. "Kind" (ver. 29) is used 20 times in the NT, first in Mark at 7:26. "Prayer" is used 36 times in the NT, only twice in Mark: 9:29; 11:17.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

This event is also found in Matthew 17:14-21 and Luke 9:37-43.

#### COMMENTS:

This is the fourth and last specific account of an exorcism in Mark's account: 1:21-28; 5:1-20; 7:24-30. Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration with three of His apostles (Peter, James, and John) when a father brings his son, possessed by a demon, to the other apostles to heal. The event begins with a commotion in verse 14 with the scribes arguing with the apostles. Perhaps they were arguing over the apostles' inability to cast out the demon or something related. When the crowd sees Jesus coming (ver. 15), they immediately run to Him to greet Him, amazed that He walked up just in time.

Jesus asked what they were discussing (ver. 16), when the dad speaks up and comments (ver. 17) that he brought his son, who was possessed by a demon which made the boy mute and deaf (see ver. 25). The spirit also seized control of the boy (ver. 18) and would throw him to the ground, causing him to foam at the mouth and grind his teeth (probably from pain) and make the boy's body stiff and rigid. The dad wanted the apostles to cast out the demon, but they were not able. They had been given such power (3:14-15) and they had cast out demons before (6:12-13). But they could not do it this time.

Jesus rebukes the audience, and to some extent the dad and His apostles, by using words reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets (ver. 19): "O unfaithful generation! How long will I be with you? How long will I tolerate you?" Then He tells the dad to bring the boy to Him. As the boy is brought (ver. 20), the demon sees Jesus and, in a last act of defiance in the face of the King, throws the boy into convulsions, making him fall to the ground and roll around,

probably in pain, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the dad how long this had been happening (ver. 21), probably to show that this was a long-standing problem which Jesus is going to cure instantaneously with the power of His word. The dad answered, "From childhood" (ver. 22). He further explains that the demon had often thrown his son into fire or into water in order to destroy him. Then the dad, no doubt with tears streaming from his eyes, cries to Jesus: "But if you can do anything, help us, having compassion on us!"

Jesus responds by quoting the last sentiment of Dad (ver. 23): "'If you can...?'" Then He states a general principle relevant for those who trust in God: "All things are possible to him who believes." Once again the father cries out: "I do believe; help my unbelief" (ver. 24). The dad believed as far as his knowledge could go; now he is in desperate need of more faith so that Jesus would heal his son.

The crowd seemed to be growing even larger, perhaps congregating even more closely around Jesus and the dad (ver. 25). Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, commanding it: "You deaf and mute spirit, I order you, come out of him and do not enter him again." The authority of Jesus was clearly stated and no entity in the universe could resist the authority of its King. The spirit caused the boy to cry out one last time (ver. 26) and threw him into convulsions before it came out. The boy was left worn out, physically, emotionally, mentally, and perhaps spiritually. He was as lifeless as a corpse (ver. 26). The crowd thought he was dead.

However, Jesus took him by the hand, raised him from the ground, and the boy got up (ver. 27). There is no reason to believe he was dead, but if he was, then there were two miracles here: the exorcism and the resurrection. Separately, in the house, the disciples asked Jesus why they were incapable of casting out the demon (ver. 28). Jesus responded by saying, "This type is not cast out by anything but prayer." For Jesus to use the expression "this type" suggests that there are different kinds of demons. However, there is no further biblical information on that topic. What He does say, however, is that the apostles were not praying as they should have been in order to have the spiritual power to cast out the demon. Some manuscripts include the action of "fasting," but the original text probably leaves it out; scribes likely added it because in later history "fasting" was often associated with "prayer." This is the first "call" to prayer in Mark's gospel.

#### APPLICATION:

This is the fourth specific example of exorcisms in Mark's account. The purpose of demon possession was three-fold: 1) To prove Jesus is the Messiah; 2) To point to the establishment soon of the Kingdom of God; 3) To show that Jesus has more power than Satan does. These three points are still relevant: 1) We still need to be convicted that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior from God; 2) the Kingdom has been established and we need to be members of that kingdom; 3) Jesus has more power even today than Satan does. For that reason, we need all the more earnestly to pray for strength from God to overcome Satan's influence in our lives and hearts (see Ephesians 6:10-20).

Relative to demon possession occurring after the book of Acts, there is no further reference to this behavior in the New Testament. If it had occurred, no NT writer explains its occurrence or explains what to do if it were to happen. These are strong arguments that God stopped allowing demon possession once the kingdom became firmly established.

Christians can still be limited in their lives because of their lack of or weak trust in Jehovah God!

#### TRANSLATION - 9:30-32:

**30** From there after going out He passed through Galilee, and He was not eating that any might know. **31** For He was teaching His disciples and was saying to them that the Son of Man is being handed over into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and after being killed, after three days He will arise. **32** And they did not understand the word, and feared to ask Him.

#### GREEK WORDS:

“To pass through” (ver. 30) was used earlier at 2:23. “To teach” (ver. 31) was used earlier at 1:21. “To be handed over” or “to be betrayed” was used earlier at 1:14. “To kill” was used earlier at 3:4. “To arise” was used earlier at 1:35. “To be ignorant” or to not “understand” is used only here in 9:32. This word for “word” (*rema*) is used 68 times in the NT, only twice in Mark: 9:32; 14:72. “To fear” was used earlier at 4:41.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

Matthew’s account is found in 17:22-23; Luke’s at 9:43-45.

#### COMMENTS:

This paragraph is the second prediction of the death of Christ, or third if you want to count verse 12. The first was at 8:31-32. Jesus does not want people to know where He is (ver. 30) so that He can have rest as well as have private time with His apostles. Also, He does not need to speed-up the Father’s time table. The present tense of the verb “is being handed over” followed by the verbs in the future tense shows that the events will certainly happen.

Mark tells us while Jesus was alone with His apostles that He was teaching them that the Son of Man is being “handed over” into the hands of men. This verb can refer to the actions of Judas Iscariot (3:19; 14:10-11, 18, 21) as well as the actions of the Sanhedrin (10:33; 15:1, 10) and the actions of Pilate (15:15) and even of God Himself (Acts 2:23; Rom. 4:25; 8:32; 1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 2:20). He will be killed by men. Once He has been killed, He will rise on the third day (ver. 31), or “three days later.” Mark also tells us that the apostles did not understand specifically the statement about the resurrection, but they were also afraid to ask Him (ver. 32). Even today, we still shy from talking with people about their approaching death, even if they lay in bed all day thinking about it! The apostles could not understand how the Messiah could establish His kingdom and also die.

#### APPLICATION:

The fact that Jesus could predict His own death, burial, and resurrection shows that He was a prophet. If He was teaching accurately about this event, He surely was teaching accurately about other matters He taught.

#### TRANSLATION - 9:33-37:

**33** And they came into Capernaum. And in the house being, He was asking them, “What in the way were you reasoning?” **34** And they were silent. For to one another they argued in the way who was greatest. **35** And after sitting, He summoned the Twelve and says to them, “If any desires first to be, let him be of all last and of all a servant.” **36** And after taking a child, he stood him in their midst and after embracing him said to them, **37** “Whoever one of these children he may receive in My name, Me he receives; and whoever Me he receives, not Me he receives but the one who sent Me.”

#### GREEK WORDS:

“To reason” (ver. 33) was used earlier at 2:6, 8. “To be silent” (ver. 34) was used earlier at 3:4. “To argue” is used only here in Mark, out of 13 times, most of which are in Acts. “To summon” (ver. 35) is the verbal form of the noun “voice.” It was used earlier at 1:26. “Servant” is the word later translated “deacon.” It is used here and at 10:43 in Mark, out of 29 uses. “To embrace” (ver. 36) is used here and 10:16 in the NT. “To receive” (ver. 37) is used 56 times in the NT, first (out of three uses) in Mark at 6:11. “Name” is used 230 times in the NT, 15 times in Mark, first at 3:16. The verb “to send” is the verbal form of the noun “apostle.” It was used earlier in Mark at 1:2.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

“Capernaum” (ver. 33) was introduced by Mark at 1:21.



### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

This paragraph is also found at Matthew 18:1-5; Luke 9:46-48. For parallels to verse 35, see 10:43-44; Matthew 20:26-27; 23:11; Luke 22:26.

### COMMENTS:

In verse 33, Jesus returns to Capernaum. This village was mentioned only twice before in Mark: 1:21; 2:1. However, it appears that many of His miracles and teachings were done in the area. Having arrived in the home, probably of Peter's mother-in-law, Jesus started asking them about their topic of conversation on the way home (ver. 33). They did not want to tell Him because their discussion was juvenile. They had been arguing over who was the greatest among them (ver. 34)! Perhaps this began when Jesus took three apostles with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration (9:2); perhaps it resulted from some apostles being unable to cast out the demon in 9:18. Everyone wants to be appreciated. No one wants to be overlooked. Everyone desires to receive credit for their efforts. This human tendency led the apostles of Christ to argue over who was the greatest. Of course, in the next chapter (10:35-40), James and John will ask Jesus to allow them to sit on either side of Him when He sits on His throne in His kingdom!

Jesus sits, because "class" is about to start (9:35). He begins with a general principle: "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Jesus requires humility of all His followers. No one has a right to brag about anything they have accomplished as if no one else had anything to do with their success. Then, Jesus took a child and set him in the midst of the bickering apostles and embraced the child (ver. 36). Then He stated "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me." The "name" of Christ is a theme through this last section of Scripture; the word is found four times in verses 37-39, 41.

"Receiving" the child denotes service. Humility leads to service. Arrogance leads to wanting to be served; it leads to domineering. Receiving a "child" likely refers to a follower of Jesus (not a child in age, but in disposition), who was ignored by others. Children in first-century Rome did not have hardly any rights or respect as modern children tend to do. To some extent, Jesus is saying, "Become like one with no rights. Be humble. Serve." If one receives a child in the name of Christ, he will "receive" Christ as well. And if one receives Christ, then he receives also the Father. This is similar to the parable of the sheep and goats which portrays the judgment scene in Matthew 25:31-46.

### APPLICATION:

Among the teachings of Jesus, none were as frequent as His teaching about humility. Man must be humble toward God, first and foremost, listening to God's voice and obeying God's commands. Secondly, man must be humble toward each other. Among the passages which teach this are: Philippians 2:3-5; 1 Peter 5:5-6.

### TRANSLATION - 9:38-41:

**38** John was saying to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone in Your name casting out demons and we forbid him, because he is not following us." **39** Jesus said, "Do not forbid him. For no one who does a power by My name even he will be able to speak evil of Me. **40** For who is not against us, on our behalf he is. **41** For whoever may give to drink you a cup of water by the name because you are the Christ's, truly I say to you that he might not lose his reward."

### GREEK WORDS:

"Teacher" (ver. 38) is seen in this text at 9:17. "Demon" was seen earlier at 1:34. "To forbid" is used three times in Mark: 9:38-39; 10:14. "To follow" (ver. 38) was used earlier at 1:18. "Power," often used as a synonym for "miracle" (ver. 39), was used earlier at 5:30. "To speak evil" is used four times: Matthew 15:4; Mark 7:10; 9:39; Acts 19:9. "To give to drink" (ver. 41) is the verbal form of the word "cup" used in this verse. The verb is used 15 times, only

twice in Mark: 9:41; 15:36. The noun is used 31 times, first at 7:4. "Water" was used earlier at 1:8. "Reward" or "wage" or "salary" is used 29 times in the NT, only here in Mark.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

Luke has a parallel in Luke 9:49-50.

#### COMMENTS:

At some point during this time period, John comes to Jesus, reporting that they encountered a man who was casting out demons in the name of Christ and, since he was not part of the group closely associated with Jesus, they tried to prevent him (ver. 38).

It is commendable that John wanted to stop those who might be teaching error in the name of Christ. However, he did not grasp the significance of the man casting out demons in the name of Christ. Jesus, then, tells John not to forbid the man (ver. 39) for no one could do a miracle, by the authority and power of the Holy Spirit, and then teach error or speak falsely about Christ! Indeed, if the purpose of miracles was to verify the messenger as sent from God (John 20:30-31), then God would not allow someone who taught error to perform a true miracle. Luke will share in Luke 10 that Jesus sent out 70 disciples, in addition to the twelve. This man in Mark 9 was likely part of that group.

Jesus states a general principle in verse 40: "He who is not against us is for us." Matthew will word the statement differently: 12:30. Luke uses both versions: 9:50; 11:23. Then He goes on to re-emphasize the importance of service: "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" (ver. 41). In essence, Jesus is telling His apostles to not worry about what Jesus is doing (in sending out other workers); they should be concerned about serving others. And those who serve the apostles will also receive their reward.

#### APPLICATION:

Jesus will state in Matthew 7:21-23 that some will *claim* to perform miracles, cast out demons, and prophesy, but they are actually guilty of behaving in ways that were not authorized by Jesus Christ. A man who is a false teacher should not and cannot be encouraged, regardless how sincere he is. False teachers' mouths must be stopped (Titus 1:10-11), that is, their influence should be limited as much as possible. These men in Mark 9 were true followers of Jesus, who were casting out evil spirits by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our doctrine needs to come from Christ (through the NT) and we each must be accountable to Him, and not to others. Jesus is the judge and His words (the NT) are the standard (John 12:48).

#### TRANSLATION - 9:42-50:

**42** "And whoever may offend one of these little ones of those believing [in Me], good it is for him rather if there was hung a donkey's millstone around his neck and he has been cast into the sea. **43** And if your hand might offend you, cut it off; good it is for you crippled to enter into life than two hands having to go into Gehenna, for the fire [is] unquenchable. **44** ? See below. **45** And if your foot offends you, cut it off; good it is for you to enter into life crippled than the two feet having to be cast into Gehenna. **46** ? See below. **47** And if your eye offends you, cast it out; good for you it is one-eyed to enter into the kingdom of God than two eyes having to be cast into Gehenna, **48** where their worm does not die and the fire is not extinguished. **49** For all by fire will be salted. **50** Good [is] the salt; but whenever salt may become unsalted, by what with something will it be seasoned? Have among yourselves salt and be peaceful among one another."

#### GREEK WORDS:

"To offend" (ver. 42) was used earlier at 4:17; it is used in this paragraph at 9:42, 43, 45, 47. "Little ones" is used 46 times in the NT, first at 4:31. "To believe" is used first at 1:15. "To

hang around” is used five times: Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2; Acts 28:20; Hebrews 5:2; 12:1. “Millstone” is used four times: Matthew 18:6; 24:41; Mark 9:42; Revelation 18:22. This word for donkey is only found here and Matthew 18:6. “Neck” is found seven times, only here in Mark. “To cast” is found earlier at 2:22. “To cut off” (ver. 43) is used only in this context in Mark (9:43, 45) out of six uses. “Crippled” or “deformed” is used four times, only here in Mark. “Life” is used 135 times in the NT, four times in Mark: 9:43, 45; 10:17, 30. “Gehenna” is the Greek word for “hell.” It is used 12 times, eleven of which are from the mouth of Jesus Himself (James 3:6 is the only other use); Mark uses the word only here (9:43, 45, 47). “Fire” is used 71 times in the NT, first in Mark at 9:22. The word for “unquenchable” is *asbestos*. It is used at Matthew 3:12; Mark 9:43 and Luke 3:17. “One-eyed” is a compound word joining “only” and “eye.” It is used here and Matthew 18:9. “Kingdom” was found earlier at 1:15. “Worm” (ver. 48) is only used here in the NT. “To die” here actually means “to complete” or “to bring to an end.” In this context, it connotes “to die.” Mark uses it first at 7:10. “To be extinguished” is only used here in Mark, out of six uses: Matthew 12:20; 25:8; Eph. 6:16; 1 Thess. 5:19; Heb. 11:34. “To salt” (ver. 49) is the verbal form of the noun “salt” used in verse 50. The verb is used twice, at Matthew 5:13 and here. “Unsalted” is used only here in the NT. “To season” is used at Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34; and Colossians 4:6. “Be peaceful” is used four times: Mark 9:50; Romans 12:18; 2 Corinthians 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:13.

#### OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Verse 48 (and verses 44 & 46 in some manuscripts) is a quotation of Isaiah 66:24. It is certain that the prophet is not referring to hell. However, his sentiments relative to the enemies of God are applicable to those who will spend eternity in hell.

According to Leviticus 2:13, salt was a part of grain offerings. See also Ezra 6:9; 7:22 and Ezekiel 43:24. This perhaps led to the idea of a “covenant of salt” (Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5), which carried the notion of fellowship.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

The valley (*ge* in Aramaic) of Hinnom (*henna*) was a valley outside Jerusalem, on the southern side, where pagans worshipped and, specifically, sacrificed their children by burning them alive in the arms of an idol for Molech (Jer. 7:31-32; 32:35; 2 Chronicles 28:1-3; 33:1-6). Once Israel stopped practicing idolatry, after the Babylonian exile, the valley was turned into a garbage dump which continued burning trash. King Josiah stopped the practice (2 Kings 23:10).

Verses 44 and 46 are not found in the earliest and best Greek manuscripts. They were probably added by a Christian scribe who wanted to add symmetry to the text. Obviously, they still teach true doctrine.

Salt harvested from the Dead Sea area was not pure sodium chloride so the salt could leach out of the compound.

#### PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

The parallels are found in Matthew 18:6-9 and Luke 17:1-2.

#### COMMENTS:

Within this context, Jesus has blessed Peter, James, and John with a special mission (9:2). But then other apostles failed in their effort (9:18). So, the apostles were arguing over who was the greatest among them (9:34) and John tried to stop one from serving Christ because he did not know him (9:38). Jesus now gives a series of instructions that relate to interpersonal relationships.

First, Jesus warns His followers not to cause someone to sin against Him (ver. 42). “Little ones,” like the child in verse 36, probably refers to a follower of Christ who was easily overlooked and ignored among His followers. It would include children, but here He probably has in mind those who are rejected in society. If a follower were to cause someone to lose faith in Christ or to sin against Him, Jesus said it would be better if a large millstone, moved by a

donkey, were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea! Death by immediate drowning would be a painful way to die, which suggests that Jesus will not tolerate a disciple causing someone else to sin against Christ.

Secondly, Jesus states that if anything might cause *us* to sin against Christ, we should get rid of it (ver. 43). We should not allow anything to hinder our service to Jesus Christ. He uses hyperbole to communicate His message. If a hand causes us to sin, we should cut it off. It would be better to enter eternal life with only one hand, than have both hands, which cause us to sin, and be cast into the unquenchable fire of hell. Jesus has already pointed out that sin starts in the heart (7:19-23). It is not the hand that causes one to sin, but it is involved in the sin. Verse 44 was likely added by a Christian scribe to be a parallel with verse 48.

Thirdly, Jesus uses the foot as a figure of speech for a hard, difficult decision which has to be made (ver. 45). It would be better to enter eternal life with only one foot, than have two feet and be cast into the unquenchable fires of hell. Verse 46 is a second addition to the text.

Fourthly, Jesus adds the eye to the list of body parts that could compel someone to sin against Him. It would be better if one has only one eye and enters heaven than to have two eyes and be thrown into the unquenchable fires of hell (ver. 47). There is no doubt that verse 48 belongs in the text, where Jesus quotes from Isaiah 66:24. The unquenchable fires of hell is that place where the worm does not and cannot die and the fire is not quenched. Yes, Jesus is clearly teaching that hell is eternal and that punishment is not is never ending. If He were teaching the idea that the soul is burned up and then annihilated, the references to “unquenchable fire” would have no significance.

In Matthew 25:41, Jesus will say that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. But all those who chose themselves over the teachings of Christ will also be assigned their own place in the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Jesus came to save man from that destination!

The final paragraph has caused confusion among scholars, but we will interpret it in the context of Mark 9. The “fire” of the previous six verses leads Jesus to use it once again, but it appears that He now uses it as a figure of speech because of the expression “salted with fire.” The “everyone” makes the statement universal. Everyone will not experience the fires of hell (gehenna) so the metaphor of “salted with fire” should compel us to think in figurative terms. Both salt and fire can be viewed as means of purification. The “fire” would refer to trials and challenges of life, such as failure to meet one’s expectations (9:18) or a feeling of inferiority (9:34) or a feeling of exclusiveness (9:38). Paul conveys a similar idea in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. Everyone will be “salted” with such trials. The question is, what will we do with them?

Having mentioned salt, in verse 50, Jesus states that salt is good. It is good for flavor and good for purification and good for preservation. But, if the salt becomes saltless, if it loses its distinct flavoring, then it is not good for anything. You cannot make it salty again; you throw it out. Here, Jesus has in mind the positive influence of salt for He tells His disciples: “have salt among yourselves.” In other words, preserve the good in your relationships with others. The parallel expression leads us to interpret the phrase in this way: “be at peace with one another.” Jesus wants His followers to live at peace with each other so there is no room in the kingdom for pride (9:34) or an unnecessary exclusiveness (9:38).

#### APPLICATION:

We should be careful that we do not “sin against the brothers” (1 Cor. 8:12).

“Have peace with one another” is a verb found three more times in the NT: Romans 12:18; 2 Corinthians 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:13. Jesus urges His followers to pursue peace with each other and force themselves to maintain peace: Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 12:14.