

23S04 Mark 9:1-13 (Part 19)

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are continuing our study of the gospel according to Mark with Mark 9:1-13(Part 19) the transfiguration.

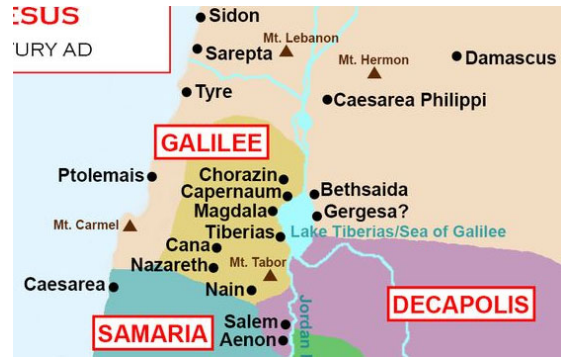
Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing book in the bible. Most historians believe Mark was the first written account of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. The identity of Mark is not known for sure, but most believe this is John Mark. John Mark is spoken of by Luke in Acts as the cousin of Barnabas, John Mark is mentioned in many other books on the New Testament. Many believe he spent time traveling with Peter, so it is thought that much of Mark's gospel is actually from the perspective of Peter. We also believe that John Mark knew Jesus. There are accounts that Jesus stayed at Mark's mother's home, there are also some unique story details in Mark that are not in either Matthew's or Luke's accounts. We will try to highlight some of these as we go through the stories in Mark.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read Mark 9:1-13 (NAS) *¹And 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." ²And 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; ³and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. ⁴And Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵Peter 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." ⁶For he did not know how to reply; for they became terrified. ⁷Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: "**This is My beloved Son; listen to Him!**" ⁸And suddenly they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone. ⁹As 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. ¹⁰They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant. ¹¹And they asked Him, saying, "Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹²And 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?** ¹³But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wanted, just as it is written of him."*

Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your words from Mark, help us see what Mark wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Okay before we get started, where is the mount of transfiguration. We don't know. Tradition says that it was Mount Tabor which is the tallest peak in Galilee. Which would make sense. You can see on the map, that is just south of the sea of Galilee. In fact, if you visit Israel today, you can take tours to the mount of transfiguration or Mt. Tabor. But even though this seems logical, the bible only says a high mountain. Also, the last story in Chapter 8, places Jesus near Caesarea Philippi. And because of this many scholars think the mount of transfiguration is actually Mount Hermon near Caesarea Philippi. But no one knows for sure today. And it's not important that we know which mountain. It could have been another high mountain. So don't let this distract us from the point of this story. God does not give us the exact location because the location is not special, what happened is what is special.



Now, let's take a closer look at these verses, Mark 9:1 (NAS) *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."*

I have heard all kinds of explanations for this verse. Some are just beyond the words or understanding. They make a lot out of these statements and make lots of assumptions to explain their concept. I actually think this is pretty straight forward. Jesus says that some standing there with him will not die until they see the kingdom of God when it has come with power. are translated from two Greek words. "elēluthian" (el-e-luth-ian) or to come or go, and "dunamei" (doo'-nam-e) miraculous power, might, strength. I see two very literal ways to interpret this. First and most obvious, the very next story is the mount of transfiguration, where James, John and Peter witness Jesus with Elijah and Moses in his full power and glory. Everything on earth is the kingdom of God, because Jesus is already king of kings. So, this is not a stretch to say this event showed the miraculous power of God in his kingdom. Another very literal interpretation is the resurrection. Jesus raising again after 3 days in the tomb is most definitely a miraculous show of God power. The resurrection was the enthronement of Jesus as king forever and ever Amen. This is what the Bible tells us. So, without making people live for thousands of years, we can see several ways this scripture has been fulfilled. This same sequence of events is in Matthew 16:28-17:13 and Luke 9:27-43 Each gospel account says that about 6-8 days later Jesus took James, John and Peter with him to the mountain to pray or the Mount of transfiguration. Matthew says "Son of Man coming in His kingdom" and Luke says it this way, "will not taste death until the kingdom of God" or some translation say until they see the kingdom of God. All of these point to the fact, that Jesus is about to reveal to people who he really is in the full splendor of his kingdom. Right there with the people he was with. Not some distant future but right there and then. The Kingdom of God is here, Jesus says over and over again in the gospel, but this is when his full glory was revealed.

Then the mount of transfiguration in Mark 9:2-4 (NAS) *²And 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; ³and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. ⁴And Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.* Just a few days after Jesus said he would reveal his full glory to some standing with him, here he is in his full glory with Peter, John and James looking on.

Mark 9:5-6 (NAS) *⁵Peter 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." ⁶For he did not know how to reply; for they became terrified.*

Poor Peter, he can't just be silent. Kind of like some of us, needing to fill the silence with words, when silence would be better.

Next Mark 9:7-8 (NAS) *⁷Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him!" ⁸And suddenly they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.*

No response from Jesus to Peter words, only darkness of a cloud closing in around them and then God's own voice from heaven. And it's over. Jesus is back to normal, no sign of God or Elijah or Moses. I guess they are all quiet now, huh?

Next Mark 9:9-10 (NAS) *⁹As 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. ¹⁰They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.*

Jesus instructs then no to share this story with anyone until after he has rose from the dead. Despite what Jesus had told them over and over, they still did not understand that Jesus would although himself to be killed, buried and then rise from the dead. It did not add up with what they believe the Christ would be like.

Next Mark 9:10-13 (NAS) *¹⁰They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant. ¹¹And they asked Him, saying, "Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹²And 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? ¹³But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wanted, just as it is written of him."*

I wonder if they are asking this question to probe if Jesus is the Messiah or not. But Elijah has not come or has he. We know Jesus is talking about John the Baptist who the bible says spoke with the spirit of Elijah. I don't think John the Baptist was Elijah reincarnated but John was a powerful speaker who spoke boldly and truthfully, as Elijah did. In the spirit of Elijah. Or at least this is how I understand this.

Let's review.

- 1) Will not taste death? I know there are a lot of opinions about this scripture. The point of this is Jesus is announcing there will be no doubt, Jesus is king. And some standing there will know this beyond any doubt.
- 2) Transfiguration? I always thought this was an odd story. What did Jesus talk with Elijah and Moses about. Why was it necessary? I had a lot of questions, but I was missing the point. Jesus was revealing his full glory. He alone knows why. I need to just recognize; this was a demonstration of who Jesus really is.
- 3) Elijah? The Old Testament prophets had foretold that Elijah would come again before the Messiah. The disciples seem a bit confused. In fact, Elijah had just shown up on the mountain. But I believe Jesus is talking about John the Baptist and in fact this is more clearly said in the other gospels. Matthew 11:14 (NAS) *And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.* That seems clear enough for me, and Jesus told his disciples this long before the mount of transfiguration.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for Bible. Help us to read and meditate on your words so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with this today. This is an amazing sequence of events captured in the gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke. It is always a good idea to read the parallel stories together for better understanding. But there are going to be things you don't understand. Ask God to help you understand. But we don't always have all the details because the details are not what we should be focused on. God said Jesus is my beloved son, listen to him. So, we need to listen to Jesus.

What does this mean for you? God will give you what you need to believe in him. But it is up to each one of us to choose. Even though Peter, James and John saw the transfiguration, they still doubted. Peter denied the Lord 3 times in the darkest hours of the passion, the other disciples ran and hid. Jesus has revealed to us who he is in these stories so we have confidence in Jesus. Jesus is the king, and we live in his kingdom. We need to choose believe Jesus or be deceived by the world. It's up to you.

Thank you for joining me for our study of the gospel of Mark. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.