

## Lesson 16: Mark 9

Chapter 8 ended with a prediction of Jesus' rejection by the elders and priests, and of His ultimate death. Jesus goes on to talk about how difficult it is to be a disciple. He explains that his disciples cannot cling to the things of this world. Doing so may cost them eternal life. The first sentence in chapter nine may be a concluding thought to the discussion on discipleship. **"Amen, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come in power."** However, there are many different interpretations to Mark 1:9. It could refer to the Second Coming of Christ. It could also refer to those disciples who would witness the Transfiguration. It could also refer to the disciples who experienced the power of God, at Pentecost, breaking into the world. The Transfiguration is mentioned in Matthew, Mark, Luke and 2 Peter. **Check your footnotes to see if there are other suggestions for the meaning of 9:1.**

### 1. Read Mark 9:1-13 and share any footnotes that are helpful.

**Read also Malachi 3:22-24 below.**

**Malachi 3:22-24** Remember the law of Moses my servant, whom I charged at Horeb with statutes and ordinances for all Israel. <sup>23</sup> Now I am sending to you Elijah the prophet, before the day of the LORD comes, the great and terrible day; <sup>24</sup> He will turn the heart of fathers to their sons, and the heart of sons to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with utter destruction.

- a. **Why is Elijah present at the Transfiguration?**
  
- b. **What part of Jewish faith tradition does Elijah represent?**
  
- c. **What did the prophet Malachi predict about Elijah?**

### 2. Read 2 Kings 2:11 and Matthew 17:10-13 below.

**2 Kings 2:11** As they walked on still conversing, a fiery chariot and fiery horses came between the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

**Matthew 17:10-13** Then the disciples asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" <sup>11</sup> He said in reply, "Elijah will indeed come and restore all things; <sup>12</sup> but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased. So also will the Son of Man suffer at their hands." <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

- a. **What is significant about the death of Elijah in 2 Kings?**
  
- b. **What does Jesus say about Elijah in Mark 9:12-13 and in Matthew 17:11-12?**

### 3. Read Exodus 34:1, 5, and 29 below.

**Exodus 34:1** The LORD said to Moses: "Cut two stone tablets like the former, that I may write on them the words which were on the former tablets that you broke. <sup>2</sup> Get ready for tomorrow morning, when you are to **go up Mount Sinai** and there present yourself to me on the top of the mountain.

**Exodus 34:5** The LORD came down in a cloud and stood with him there.

**Exodus 34:29** Moses **came down from Mount Sinai** with the two tablets of the covenant in his hands, he did not know that **the skin of his face had become radiant** while he spoke with the LORD.

- a. **What does Moses mean to the Jewish people?**
  
- b. **What in these verses from Exodus is similar to the Transfiguration as it is described in Mark 9?**
  
- c. **Reflect on the image of the glorified Jesus, Moses and Elijah. What does it mean to have these three together at this time and recorded in four different books of the New Testament?**

4. Read Mark 9:14-29 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group.
  - a. Jesus, Peter, John and James have returned from the mountain and a crowd is present. What were they arguing about?
  - b. Why are the people amazed in Mark 9:15?
  - c. Jesus cannot determine the faith of the boy, because of the demon. Whose faith does he appeal to before he heals the boy?
5. Matthew adds a bit to Jesus' explanation. Read Matthew 17:18-20 below.

**Matthew 17:18-20** Jesus rebuked him and the demon came out of him, and from that hour the boy was cured. <sup>19</sup> Then the disciples approached Jesus in private and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" <sup>20</sup> He said to them, "Because of your little faith. Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

  - a. Why were the disciples unable to exorcize the demon?
  - b. What besides faith did Jesus say was necessary to exorcize this type of demon?
  - c. What parable does Matthew add to his Gospel to explain their inability to heal the boy?
6. Read Mark 9:30-32. This is Jesus' second prediction of his death in Mark. What part of Jesus' teaching did the disciples not understand?
7. Read Mark 9:33-37 and footnotes. Share any footnotes that are helpful.
  - a. So after Jesus again warned them about his betrayal, death, and resurrection, what do the disciples agree about and discuss while they are on the way to Capernaum?
  - b. Why do you think Jesus used a child to illustrate His point about greatness in the kingdom of God?
8. Read Mark 9:38-41.
  - a. Why was John concerned about someone healing in the name of Jesus who was not a known disciple?
  - b. What can we learn from these verses about our relationship with others who do not belong to the Roman Catholic Church?
9. Read Mark 9:42-48 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes.
  - a. What steps can you take to avoid causing others to stumble in their faith journey?
  - b. What sorts of things might people be tempted to do to make this earthly life better that would in fact threaten their life after death?
10. Read Mark 9:49-50 and footnotes. Share helpful footnotes.
  - a. What was salt used for in the first century?
  - b. What is the significance of fire in these verses? What besides heat and cooking was it used for?
  - c. What is the point Jesus is trying to make here?