

Study of the Gospel of Mark

Chapter 9 (Part 1)

Background

Jesus has just concluded telling His disciples about His impending death and resurrection and has described what true discipleship involves. In the final verses of the previous chapter Jesus warned His followers not to look at Him as a means to earthly glory, but to see Him for what He really is and not to shrink from the responsibility He gives to us as His witnesses.

1. The first verse of Mark chapter 9 is actually connected with the words of Jesus from the previous chapter. It is also a verse that many people have struggled to understand. What is "the kingdom of God" which Jesus speaks of here, and how is it possible that some of His disciples would not die until they had seen it come? (*Compare the parallel accounts in Matthew 16:28 and Luke 9:27 and what Jesus says about the Kingdom of God in Luke 17:20-21. You can use a Bible Concordance to find other passages that describe "the Kingdom of God" to help you as well.*)

2. The transfiguration of Jesus served to reveal His divine nature in a visible way to His closest disciples and to support the truthfulness of what He had told them about His impending death (which they were not able to accept). How might this event have benefitted these three disciples in their understanding of Jesus work?

3. The presence of these two Old Testament figures at the transfiguration and their discussion with Jesus about His impending work (Read Luke 9:30-31) shows that Christianity is not a new, breakaway religion, but the fulfillment of God's promises to His people from the very beginning. How would the presence of Moses and Elijah prove that?

4. The appearance of Elijah at Jesus' transfiguration prompts a discussion about the prophecy of Elijah's coming before the Messiah (see Malachi 4:5-6). Who was the "Elijah" spoken of by Malachi and referred to here by Jesus? (**Hint:** compare parallel accounts in other Gospels).

Following the transfiguration, Jesus and the three disciples descend the mountain and are quickly greeted by the reality of the sinfulness and pain of this world. Jesus is confronted once again (although indirectly) by the Jewish leaders who were arguing with His disciples and with the devastating power of the devil and his evil cohorts.

5. Many critics of the Bible say that the boys described in these verses was suffering from epilepsy, rather than demon possession. But the Bible makes a clear distinction between physical sickness and those suffering from demon possession. Compare the instances healing by Jesus in the Gospel of Mark listed below.

	Physical Sickness	Demon Possession
Mark 1:23-26	_____	_____
Mark 1:29-31	_____	_____
Mark 1:40-44	_____	_____
Mark 2:3-12	_____	_____
Mark 3:1-5	_____	_____
Mark 5:1-8	_____	_____
Mark 5:25-34	_____	_____
Mark 7:31-35	_____	_____
Mark 8:22-25	_____	_____
Mark 9:14-25	_____	_____

6. What does Jesus do in cases of demon possession that He does not do in cases of physical sickness? What does this tell us about demon possession?

7. In verse 19, who does Jesus refer to as the “unbelieving generation”? (Compare Matthew 17:20 for help.)

8. What do Jesus’ words in verse 29 tell us about ourselves and the problems we face in life?
