

**Mark 9:1 ¶ 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.**

Continuing the context from the last chapter...

Jesus declared that there were some among them that would not die before seeing the kingdom of God come with power (miraculous power according to the Greek). When the kingdom of God is established on the earth, Jesus will be revealed in all His glory as the Son of God, the King of kings that will rule the world from the throne of David.

*Revelation 19:11–16 “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”*

**Mark 9:2 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.**

**Mark 9:3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.**

**Mark 9:4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.**

Six days after making the declaration in verse 1, Jesus took Peter, James and John apart with Him up a high mountain. These three disciples are often referred to as the inner circle.

At some point, Jesus was suddenly transfigured in their presence (from the Greek for “before”). His clothes began to shine as they turned white as snow—a whiter white than anyone on earth could make them. Moses and Elijah appeared with Him and began talking with Him. Significant to note is that both Moses and Elijah are alive and well; they aren’t in soul sleep.

The Greek for “transfigured” denotes metamorphosis, it is a change that takes place from within. The divine glory of Jesus showed forth through the man Jesus.

Luke provides some additional information.

*Luke 9:30–32 “And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake,*

*they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus...."*

Luke informs us that the discussion among the three men concerned the upcoming death of Jesus in Jerusalem. It was interesting to me that Luke referred to it as something that Jesus would accomplish. That is what many fail to see. God has foreordained His plan to work within the confines of man's free will. It was His plan that Jesus be killed on that cross. He didn't make those religious leaders turn on Jesus; He used their jealousy and hatred of Jesus to accomplish the sacrifice necessary to redeem man from sin. It really blows my mind when I think of how He could look down in omniscience through the ages and formulate a precise plan to accomplish His purposes, taking into account the choices of so many.

We also learn that the disciples weren't able to stay awake; it was after they woke up that they saw Jesus in His glory talking to Moses and Elijah.

We aren't told how the disciples knew that Jesus was talking to Moses and Elijah. Maybe the Holy Spirit revealed it to them or maybe they heard them address each other as they talked.

I liked Guzik's comment: "Jesus also shows in a dramatic way that cross bearers will be glory receivers. The *goal* isn't the cross. The cross is the *path* to the goal, and the goal is the glory of God."

**Mark 9:5 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.**

**Mark 9:6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.**

**Mark 9:7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.**

**Mark 9:8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.**

Not knowing what else to say after Moses and Elijah departed, Peter suggested that they make three memorial tabernacles on the spot. I don't think he realized that he was putting Moses and Elijah on the same level as Jesus; and I believe the voice of the Father affirms that thought. Jesus is the divine Son of God in flesh; Moses and Elijah are merely human.

Matthew tells us a bit more.

*Matthew 17:6-8 "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only."*

The sound of God's voice so frightened the disciples that they fell on their faces to the ground. Not surprising in light of scriptures that describe the voice of God.

*Job 40:9 "Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?"*

*Psalms 29:3–8 "The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth....The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars....The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness...."*

Jesus proceeded to touch the disciples telling them to get up and explained that they should not be afraid. When they lifted up their eyes, Moses and Elijah were gone; and it seems that Jesus was once again of normal appearance.

Why Moses and Elijah? One can only speculate. I've heard it taught that they represent the Law and the Prophets respectively. I've also read that they represent those who must experience physical death and those who are translated to new life without experiencing physical death. I believe both are true. We know that Elijah is prophesied to return and prophesy once again before Jesus returns as King of kings...

*Malachi 4:5–6 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."*

...and I think it likely that Moses returns with him as the two witnesses identified in Revelation in light of this appearance with Jesus.

*Revelation 11:3–6 "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."*

I hadn't noticed this before, but Moses and Elijah were still present when Peter made his suggestion.

**Mark 9:9 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.**

**Mark 9:10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.**

As they came down the mountain, the Lord commanded them not to tell anyone else (including the other disciples) about what they had seen until after His resurrection from the dead. They did what Jesus asked, but among themselves they questioned what He meant about rising from the dead.

It doesn't make sense that they would not understand what Jesus was saying; it seems self-explanatory. They had seen Him bring the daughter of Jairus back to life. I think the thing that stumbled them the most was their expectation that He,

as the Messiah, would establish Himself on the throne of David after delivering the nation from the Romans. They just didn't expect Him to die, though He had told them twice already.

**Mark 9:11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?**

**Mark 9:12 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.**

**Mark 9:13 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 asked Jesus why the scribes taught that Elijah must come first. That seems to tie directly to my thoughts about verse 10. That thought leads directly to their question. They believed Jesus to be the Messiah, so it was natural that they wonder why Elijah was not on the scene.

Jesus answered that it was true that Elijah would first come to "restore" all things. The Greek states, "reconstitute (in health)." I believe that is a reference to spiritual health—to getting the Jewish people to repent of their sins and prepare to meet their Messiah.

Jesus then reminded them that it was also true that the scripture prophesied that the Son of man must suffer many things and be despised (from the Greek for "set at nought"). That immediately brings to my mind the words of Isaiah in reference to the Messiah.

*Isaiah 53:3 "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."*

The next statement must have surprised them. Jesus said that Elijah had already come as the scripture had foretold and was not treated with respect.

Matthew tells us more.

*Matthew 17:12–13 "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."*

Jesus declared that they would treat the Son of man just like they had treated the prophet. The disciples understood that He was talking about John the Baptist. John was obviously not Elijah, but his ministry was very much similar to what Elijah's ministry will be before Jesus returns to set up the kingdom.

That the disciples understood this inference so clearly yet couldn't understand a direct statement about the resurrection of Jesus is certainly puzzling.

**Mark 9:14 ¶ And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about**

them, and the scribes questioning with them.

**Mark 9:15** And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him.

**Mark 9:16** And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

**Mark 9:17** And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

**Mark 9:18** 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.

When they returned to the rest of the disciples, Jesus saw a great crowd around them; and the scribes were questioning them.

The people were greatly surprised when they recognized Jesus and ran to greet Him.

Jesus asked the scribes why they were questioning His disciples. One of men in the crowd quickly spoke up and answered that he had a son with a dumb spirit; he couldn't talk. He explained that the spirit caused his son to lose self-control; he made him convulse (from Greek for "teareth"), foam at the mouth, gnash his teeth and caused his skin to shrivel (from Greek for "pineth away"). He went on to say that he had come to the disciples hoping that they would cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn't.

**Mark 9:19** 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.

Jesus answered the man by addressing the group, but it seems directed more toward His disciples. His answer indicates that He was frustrated. He basically questioned how long it would take before they became men of faith. Then He told the man to bring his son to him.

**Mark 9:20** 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.

**Mark 9:21** And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

**Mark 9:22** 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.

**Mark 9:23** Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.

**Mark 9:24** And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

As soon as they brought the son to Jesus, the spirit immediately threw him into convulsions; and he fell on the ground foaming at the mouth. He asked the father how long the spirit had afflicted his son. The man answered that he had been that way since he was a child; this indicates to me that he was a young man by this time. The father declared that the spirit often threw his son into fire and

water, trying to kill him. He begged Jesus to have compassion on them and help them if He could.

Jesus told the man that if he could believe, ALL things are possible to the one that has faith. The father immediately cried out in tears with words that I have often repeated, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

We know that Jesus answered that prayer by what happened next.

I liked this quote from Spurgeon regarding the father's cry: "While men have no faith, they are unconscious of their unbelief; but, as soon as they get a little faith, then they begin to be conscious of the greatness of their unbelief."

**Mark 9:25 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.***

**Mark 9:26 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.****

**Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.**

Jesus saw that the crowd was getting larger. He rebuked the evil spirit and said, "Dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never return." The spirit screamed and caused him to have terrible convulsions as he came out of him. The young man appeared to be dead and others began to declare him dead. However, Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he got up. In other words, I don't think Jesus had to exert any strength to get the young man to stand up.

**Mark 9:28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, **Why could not we cast him out?****

**Mark 9:29 And he said unto them, **This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.****

Once Jesus and the disciples were back in the house where they were staying, they asked Him privately why they could not cast out the evil spirit. I think they didn't understand why this should have been any different than what they had done when He had sent them out by twos.

Jesus then told them that "this kind" can only be cast out by prayer and fasting. This indicates that not all evil spirits are the same; some are more powerful than others. I think that is what was taught by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians.

*Ephesians 6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

Matthew tells us a bit more.

*Matthew 17:20–21 "And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say*

*unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."*

Jesus clearly stated that it was due to their lack of faith that they could not cast out the evil spirit. He explained that if one would but have faith the size of a mustard seed—just the tiniest bit—he would be able to move a mountain (a word picture of doing what seems impossible). In fact, nothing would be impossible to them. He did qualify, however, that the type of demon that possessed the young man could not be cast out except by prayer and fasting. Prayer entails intimate and impassioned communication with the Father and fasting declares one's sincerity and commitment to the objective sought through the willingness to deny self.

These are hard words to understand. I'm sure the disciples reasoned like I do that their faith in Jesus was at least comparable to a mustard seed. The greater truth is that pure faith, no matter how small, leaves no room for any doubt. What prompted their lack of faith, I don't know. Maybe they had begun to take their ability for granted and were not really focusing on the fact that they were acting "in the name of Jesus." I know the main thing that prompts my doubt is being unsure of God's will about what I am praying. I know that many times it is God's will for one to experience suffering or go without or \_\_\_\_\_ in light of greater spiritual benefit—to self and/or others. I have no doubt that "God can," but I am ever unsure of "God will." I am confident that if God wants to work a miracle through me, He will also give me the strength of faith to do it.

**Mark 9:30 ¶ And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*.**

**Mark 9:31 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.**

**Mark 9:32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.**

Jesus and His disciples left the area going through Galilee. They tried to get away without anyone knowing because He wanted some personal time to teach them. Once again, Jesus tells the disciples that He is going to be delivered into the hands of men that will kill Him; however, after He is killed, He will raise back up to life on the third day after His death.

This is not the first time He has told the disciples what He was going to suffer. Still they did not understand what He meant and were afraid to ask Him. Their understanding was clouded by their expectation. I think they were afraid to ask because they didn't want to disappoint Him yet again.

**Mark 9:33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?**

**Mark 9:34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest.**

Eventually, they came to Capernaum, returning to Peter's home, I assume. He had evidently heard them arguing among themselves as they were walking and asked them what the dispute was about. No one spoke up because they were ashamed, I think, to admit that they had been arguing about who among them would occupy the highest position in the kingdom under Jesus.

**Mark 9:35 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.**

**Mark 9:36 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,**

**Mark 9:37 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.**

Though they did not answer Him, I believe the Holy Spirit revealed the truth to Him. He sat down and called the twelve to gather around. I'm sure it surprised them when He addressed the subject of their argument. He basically said, If one wants to hold the highest position, he must position himself last as servant of all. With His statement Jesus confronted the disciples with their thoughts of selfish ambition. He basically said that one who is willing to humble self in obedience before God is most valuable to Him.

Jesus took a child and placed him among them. Then he picked up the child to hold him, saying that anyone that receives/accepts a child in His name, in effect, received Him. Anyone that receives Him is in actuality receiving the One that sent Him—implied, God the Father in heaven. I think He used a child to represent the truth that every person is important to Him, no matter how insignificant in the eyes of anyone else.

Matthew adds a bit more.

*Matthew 18:6 "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."*

A millstone is a large heavy stone that was used to grind grain. Jesus declared that it would be better for a person to drown himself than to prevent one person from coming to faith in Him. He is reinforcing the truth declared by Peter.

*2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance."*

**Mark 9:38 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.**

**Mark 9:39 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.**

**Mark 9:40 For he that is not against us is on our part.**

John made a remark that seemed out of context to me; but I think the connecting factor is the thought of acting in the name of Jesus. He told Jesus that they had seen another man casting out devils in His name. Since he was not one of their followers, they told him to stop.

Jesus answered that they should not have done that. He explained that no man doing a miracle in His name would readily speak evil of Him. Those who aren't against them are for them in that they aren't actively working to discredit Jesus.

Guzik made a good point: "Paul saw many men preaching Jesus from many motives, some of them evil - yet he could rejoice that Christ was preached."

*Philippians 1:15–18 "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."*

**Mark 9:41 ¶ 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.**

**Mark 9:42 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.**

**Mark 9:43 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:**

**Mark 9:44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.**

**Mark 9:45 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:**

**Mark 9:46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.**

**Mark 9:47 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:**

**Mark 9:48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.**

**Mark 9:49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.**

**Mark 9:50 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.**

The word for "hell" in this section is the Greek word gehenna, a word of Hebrew origin, that references the place of everlasting punishment as described in Revelation.

*Revelation 20:10, 13-15 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever....and the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man*

*according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Jesus closes this teaching as follows (my paraphrase): Whoever gives so much as a cup of water to one of My (Jesus) followers in My name will be rewarded. Whoever entices a young believer to sin would better have drowned in the ocean. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it would be better to enter eternity maimed than to be trapped forever in the fires of hell with two hands. If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it would be better to enter eternity crippled than to be trapped forever in the fires of hell with two feet. If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it would be better to enter eternity with one eye than to be trapped forever in the fires of hell with two. The fires of hell are eternal; it is a place where no one dies and the fires never go out. Everyone who follows me (Jesus) will be purified with fire, the trials of this life. Every sacrifice we make in this life contributes to that purification. Salt is good unless it loses its saltiness; how could you possibly restore its flavor. Preserve the salt of your character and live in peace with one another.

Jesus makes the point that it is not the size or value of the gift given that matters, it is the motive in the heart of the one making the gift that matters.

I think the point Jesus was making is that we should be willing to make whatever sacrifices are necessary to follow Him in faith and obedience and avoid the fires of hell.

The New Bible Commentary made an important point: "Jesus spoke of hell to believers in warning, not to sinners in condemnation."

It was interesting to read the thoughts of the different commentators on "their worm." Frankly, I think it is an apt picture of the wicked lost soul.