

# Mark 9 Commentary

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John Mark

**MARK: THE SERVANT JESUS**

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll-right side of page

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST SHOWING COVERAGE BY MARK (SHADED AREA)**

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

**Mark 9:1 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 after it has come with power."**

NET Mark 9:1 And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, there are some standing here who will not experience death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

NLT Mark 9:1 Jesus went on to say, "I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power!"

ESV Mark 9:1 And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

NIV Mark 9:1 And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

GNT Mark 9:1 Κα λεγεν α το ς, μ ν λ γω μ ν τι ε σ ν τινε ς δε τ ν σ τη κ τ ω ν ο τινε ς ο μ γε σω ν ται θ αν του ω ς ν δ ω σιν τ ν βα σι λε αν το θε ο λ η λ υ θ υ αν ν δ υ ν μ ει.

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:1 And he said to them, 'Verily I say to you, That there are certain of those standing here, who may not taste of death till they see the reign of God having come in power.'

ASV Mark 9:1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.

CSB Mark 9:1 Then He said to them, " I assure you: There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come in power."

NKJ Mark 9:1 And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

NRS Mark 9:1 And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

- **That:** Mt 16:28 Lu 9:27
- **taste:** Lu 2:26 Joh 8:51,52 Heb 2:9
- **the kingdom:** Mt 24:30 25:31 Lu 22:18,30 Joh 21:23 Ac 1:6,7
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Matthew 16:28+ "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death

until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Luke 9:27+ But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”

**Daniel Hill** - In the previous chapter we saw Peter confess his faith in Christ. We also saw Peter rebuke the Lord when he spoke of his suffering and his death. Then we saw the challenge given to those who wish or desire to follow Jesus Christ - a challenge even for us today. Now the last verse of chapter eight and the first verse of chapter nine really go together. In Mark 8:38 the Lord spoke of his coming in the glory of the Father. After the rejection, the suffering, and the death, there would be resurrection and glory. Suffering precedes exaltation. Of course all Peter heard back in Mark 8:31 was that his friend, Jesus, was going to suffer and die. Now is told again that he will rise from the dead. Peter, like many of us, had selective hearing and heard only so much and then, what is always worse, acted upon the partial information he heard. Mark 9:1 is a promise that reinforces the statement that the Lord will be glorified, that he will rise from the dead, and that any suffering, even to the point of death, is just a prelude to exaltation. ([Mark 9](#))

**Grassmick** - This verse is the positive side of Mk 8:38 (cf. Matt. 10:32–33; Luke 12:8–9) and provides a reassuring conclusion to this section (Mark 8:34–9:1) ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** - It takes faith to accept and practice this lesson on discipleship (Mark 8:34-38), so six days later, the Lord gave a dazzling proof that God indeed does transform suffering into glory (See [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament](#))

**Lenski** - What Jesus says in warning about the final judgment in Mk 8:38 is sealed by the assurance that some of those standing right here ( δε ) in the crowd shall see the beginning of that judgment before they die. (See [The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel](#))

**And Jesus was saying to them, Truly I say to you - Was saying** is [imperfect tense](#) indicating He said this repeatedly in the message to the multitude and the disciples. **Truly** is [amen](#) which emphasizes that what is being said is a solemn declaration of what is true. **I say** refers to what Jesus is about to say as authoritative! The transfiguration truly transpired! The pronoun **them** limits this promise to just some of those standing there.

**Truly I say** in Mark - Mk. 3:28; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 10:15; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 11:23; Mk. 12:43; Mk. 13:30; Mk. 14:9; Mk. 14:18; Mk. 14:25; Mk. 14:30

**there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death**- Most commentaries link Mark 9:1 with the preceding section serving as a conclusion to His beginning discourse in Mk 8:34 when "He summoned the crowd with His disciples." Therefore **Some of those who are standing here** would be some in the crowd with the disciples. **Will not** is a double negative (ou me) = absolutely will not. **Taste death** means die and is used in Heb 2:9 of to describe Jesus "taste death for everyone." .

**until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power**- Jesus' words assert that the arrival of the **kingdom of God in power** will transpire within the lifetime of the persons addressed (again the crowd and the disciples in Mk 8:34). So this is a prediction of a future event. While a number of possibilities have been mentioned, if one lets the context rule in interpretation, it would seem clear that this refers to Jesus' **transfiguration** for as described in the following passages, the three disciples saw the King of the **Kingdom of God** in His glory.

**Osborne** - the best understanding is to see the fulfillment in the transfiguration as proleptically anticipating Jesus's death and resurrection, ascension, and possibly Pentecost. So this becomes a promise that the power and majesty of God and his kingdom would be evident very soon and would make themselves known to the disciples in stages. There is no need to be discouraged, for the victory of God's people is assured, and God's power is already at work. As the theme of 1 Peter makes clear, suffering is the path to glory (1 Peter 1:6–7).([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

Jesus transfiguration was a preview as well as a guarantee of His future coming

**Daniel Hill** - Jesus Christ had declared upon coming to Galilee that the presence of the King meant the presence of the kingdom: Mark 1:15 "And Jesus was saying, The time is fulfilled, and the **kingdom of God is at hand**; repent and believe in the gospel." Why is **the Kingdom of God at hand**? Because Jesus Christ the **King** is present. And when His Glory is seen by a few who are present, they will get a glimpse at the glory of the divine, the God-man, Jesus Christ as he will be forever. ([Mark 9](#))

**Hiebert** on what **kingdom** they would see - "Among those advocated are (1) the transfiguration; (2) the resurrection and ascension; (3) Pentecost; (4) the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; (5) the manifestation of the kingdom in the church. In my judgment, the most probable view is that the primary reference was to the transfiguration serving as a visible type of the eschatological coming of the kingdom. This interpretation was accepted by most of the church Fathers."...Cranfield feels that the expression "the kingdom of God come with power" is a fair description of what the three saw on the mount as a type of the future kingdom in manifestation. 2 Peter 1:16–18 indicates that the early church saw an eschatological significance in the transfiguration. The glory of the Lord which

the disciples saw there was in essence the very glory which will receive an open manifestation when Christ returns to establish His visible kingdom. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Henry Morris** - The fact that Matthew, Mark and Luke all record this remarkable promise immediately before the experience of Peter, James and John on the mount of transfiguration indicates that they understood the experience to be the fulfillment of the promise. In effect, the three disciples were translated in a vision (Mt 17:9) to the glory of the future kingdom (see notes on Mt 17:3,5,8).

**Believer's Study Bible** - The proximity of this verse to the following context indicates that the transfiguration is the event designated by Jesus as "the kingdom of God present with power." Others have seen this as a reference to either Christ's crucifixion, His resurrection, His ascension, or His return.

**NET Note** - Several suggestions have been made as to the referent for the phrase the kingdom of God come with power: (1) the transfiguration itself, which immediately follows in the narrative; (2) Jesus' resurrection and ascension; (3) the coming of the Spirit; (4) Jesus' second coming and the establishment of the kingdom. The reference to after six days in 9:2 seems to indicate that Mark had the transfiguration in mind insofar as it was a substantial prefiguring of the consummation of the kingdom (although this interpretation is not without its problems). As such, the transfiguration was a tremendous confirmation to the disciples that even though Jesus had just finished speaking of his death (8:31; 9:31; 10:33), he was nonetheless the promised Messiah and things were proceeding according to God's plan.

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**QUESTION - [Was Jesus' statement that "some who are standing here will not taste death" in Luke 9:27 \(also Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:1\) incorrect? |](#)**

**ANSWER** - Luke 9:27 says, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God." See also Matthew 16:28 and Mark 9:1 for the parallel quotes. In each of the synoptic Gospels, the next event immediately after this promise from Jesus is the transfiguration. Rather than interpreting Jesus' promise as referring to His coming to establish His kingdom on earth, the context indicates that Jesus was referring to the transfiguration. The Greek word translated "kingdom" can also be translated "royal splendor," meaning that the three disciples standing there would see Christ as He really is—the King of heaven—which occurred in the transfiguration.

The "transfiguration" refers to the event described in the above cited passages when Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of the mountain, where He met with Moses and Elijah—representing the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament—and spoke with them. The disciples saw Jesus in all His glory and splendor, talking with a glorified Moses and Elijah. This is a glimpse of what will occur in Jesus' kingdom. The disciples were dumbstruck at the sight and "fell on their faces" (Matthew 17:6).

It seems most natural to interpret this promise in Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:1; and Luke 9:27 as a reference to the transfiguration, which "some" of the disciples would witness only six days later, exactly as Jesus predicted. In each Gospel, the very next passage after this promise from Jesus is the transfiguration, which shows Jesus in all His glory which will be seen again in the Kingdom of God. The contextual links make it very likely that this is the proper interpretation. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 9:2 Six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them;**

- **six days:** Mt 17:11-13 Lu 9:28-36
- **Peter:** Mk 5:37 Mk 14:33 2Co 13:1
- **high:** Ex 24:13 1Ki 18:42,33 Mt 14:13 Lu 6:12
- **transfigured:** Mk 16:12 Ex 34:29-35 Isa 33:17 53:2 Mt 17:2 Lu 9:29 Joh 1:14 Ro 12:2 2Co 3:7-10 Php 2:6-8 3:21 2Pe 1:16-18 Rev 1:13-17 20:11
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Resources:**

Matthew 17:1-2+ Six days later Jesus \*took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and \*led them up on a high mountain by themselves. 2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

Luke 9:28-29+ Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His

clothing became white and gleaming.

**Rod Mattoon** on **praying** - Jesus prayed and His countenance was changed. Let me say that prayer will change your countenance, too. The power of prayer can replace perplexity with peace, fear with faith, consternation with confidence and courage, discouragement with dedication and determination, and hopelessness with hope. There is a bumper sticker that says, "Prayer changes things." It does. Prayer changes you. This is why we are to pray for our enemies because this not only helps to change our enemies, it changes us. Fellowship and communion with God is essential to a transformed life. ([Treasures from the Scripture](#))

**Steven Cole** on **while He was praying** - Why would the eternal Son of God need to pray? Because He took on human flesh, yet without sin, and He lived in perfect dependence on the Father to show us how we, too, should live. In the incarnation, Jesus' glory was veiled and He voluntarily limited the use of certain of His divine attributes as He took on the form of a servant and became obedient to death on the cross (Php 2:5-8). He did not surrender any of His divine attributes or He would have ceased to be God (which is impossible), but He took on the limitations of our humanity, apart from sin. As a man, Jesus needed to pray....while as a man in dependence on the Father, Jesus was praying, that His glory burst forth like the sun coming from behind a cloud. This was the intrinsic glory of Jesus that He shared with the Father before the creation of the world (Jn 17:5). It is the glory He now possesses as He sits at the right hand of God. When the apostle John later saw the glorified Jesus, he fell at his feet as a dead man (Rev 1:17). Jesus is undiminished deity and perfect humanity united in one person forever. ([Luke 9:27-36](#))

Mt Hermon just north of Caesarea Philippi - [click to enlarge](#)

The Transfiguration by Raphael, c. 1520

**Daniel Akin** has some interesting introductory thoughts on the Transfiguration (He Was God Incognito) - Things are not always as they seem." "Looks can be deceiving." Never was this more true than when the Son of God left heaven and came to earth, when "the Word became flesh and took up residence among us" (John 1:14), when the fullness of deity came and dwelt in a body (Col 2:9), when the essence of God "did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead, He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men" (Phil 2:6-7). The transfiguration of Jesus confirms that, despite having the outward appearance of a mere mortal man, Jesus of Nazareth is in His nature and essence God—deity dressed in a body. Although He is not the kind of Messiah Savior the nation of Israel was expecting, He is exactly the Messiah Savior they needed. He looks defeated, but He is actually victorious. He dies and is buried by men, but He will be raised and exalted by God. He looks like a regular dude, but in actuality He is deity! The transfiguration is something of "a preview of coming attractions." (Borrow [Exalting Jesus in Mark](#) Christ-Centered Exposition)

**Six days later** - This is one of the few times Mark gives a specific time -- he wants to make sure we see the word "later" and link it with the prediction in verse 1 lest we begin to suggest all manner of interpretations which is what the commentaries in fact do! They ignore the golden rule of interpretation that **CONTEXT IS KING!** And without having to conjecture, it is obvious that this time refers to 6 days after the promise in Mk 9:1. Luke 9:28+ says "some (or about) eight days after" which is not a contradiction because this includes the day Jesus made the prediction and the day of the fulfillment in the transfiguration. Six days is simply the days between the prediction and the consummation.

**Constable** - Perhaps the reference to six days followed by revelation should recall Exodus 24:15–16+. Moses was on Mt. Sinai for six days and then God revealed Himself on the seventh. This is the most precise date in Mark's Gospel before the passion story. It also connects this fulfillment with Jesus' prediction in verse 1. Mark placed Elijah in the prominent position (v. 4) probably because he was to be Messiah's forerunner (Mal. 3:1; 4:5).

**Osborne** has a note to help us establish the context of **why does the transfiguration occur now** - This event (TRANSFIGURATION) is intimately connected with what has preceded. Most of the Jewish people have only rumors, no realization of the identity of Jesus (Mk 8:28), while the disciples slowly begin to glimpse the reality, confessing Jesus as Messiah (Mk 8:29–30). Yet when Jesus clarifies that His messianic office involves Him as the Suffering Servant, they vociferously object (Mk 8:31–33), leading Jesus to clarify the **true meaning of discipleship as suffering and sacrifice** (Mk 8:34–38). Now God reveals the final stage of this key Christological section: Jesus is actually the glorious Lord, the final Moses in whom God's Shekinah glory is revealed. ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John** (recall that latter two are brothers) - These 3 disciples are clearly Jesus' "inner circle" and experienced events the other disciples did not such as raising of Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:37) and Jesus' Gethsemane experience (Mk 14:33+).

**Warren Wiersbe** on **Peter and John and James** - Peter, James, and John had accompanied Jesus when He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (Luke 8:51ff), and they would accompany Him when He prayed in the Garden (Matt. 26:36-46). These three occasions remind me of Philippians 3:10, "That I may know Him [the Transfiguration], and the power of His resurrection [raising the girl], and the fellowship of His sufferings [in the Garden]." (Borrow [Be compassionate](#) )

**MacArthur** adds that "those three men, along with Andrew, made up the innermost circle of the apostles (cf. Lk 8:51; Mark 14:33). Jesus' choice of three men reflects the law's requirement that "on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed" (Deut. 19:15; cf. Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28)." (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#).)

**David Garland** observes that "In Mark's Gospel, the greater the revelation, the smaller the number of people who witness it: three male disciples behold Jesus' transfiguration, and three women followers discover the empty tomb and first learn of Jesus' resurrection (16:1-8). The three disciples mentioned here figure prominently in this Gospel. They were the first called (1:16-20), and their names head the list of the Twelve (3:16-17). Jesus also chose them to come with him when he raised Jairus's daughter from the dead (5:37-43). Peter is the first to confess Jesus as the Christ (8:27-30); and James and John will be the first to try to exploit their close ties to Jesus to get seats of power in his kingdom (10:35-45). During the dark hours in Gethsemane, Jesus will take these three with him when he separates himself from the other disciples to pray (14:33). Then they will witness his great distress and agitation; now they witness his glory as he is "altered to a purer and brighter essence." They also hear the same divine voice that spoke at Jesus' baptism and identified him as God's unique Son. These select disciples are therefore the first persons in the Gospel to receive information about Jesus that only the readers of the prologue and the malevolent demons know." ([NIVAC-Mark](#))

**Peter and James and John - POSB** asks the question "Why were these three chosen to receive these additional revelations? What is known is this. Each was being chosen for a very special leadership role. They were not aware of it yet, but they were to fill unique positions.

1. Peter was to be the leader of the early church, the one who was to open the door of the gospel to both Jew and Gentile after Pentecost (Acts 2:1f; Acts 10:1f).
2. James was to be the head of the first great church which was to be at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13).
3. John was to receive The Revelation from God to close out the Scripture. (See [The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Mark](#))

**Daniel Hill** - Now why just these three? One reason is that as seen with Peter, they knew enough of what the Lord was saying to have some real questions about why he had to suffer and die. If you do not know anything about a given topic you do not even know enough to know what you don't know. But these three had some doctrine, but not enough, so the Lord was going to let them see that suffering and death are a mere prelude to eternal glory. ([Mark 9](#))

**MacArthur** points out that "Jesus took them with Him in accord with the Law's requirement that truth be confirmed by two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:6; cf. Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28). ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**And brought them up on a high mountain by themselves**- NET = "led them alone up a high mountain privately (**by themselves**)." The point is that no one else was present on the mountain. **Led up** "seems to suggest a steep and difficult ascent as they climbed the high mountain." (Hiebert) Luke says they "went up on the mountain to pray." (Luke 9:28+ ) While not identified in any of the Gospel accounts, in the map above the high mountain (9200 feet), [Mt Hermon](#), is only about 15 miles north of Caesarea Philippi. So it may have been that mountain per se or some of the foothills surrounding it. Some have suggested [Mt Tabor](#) but it is not a high mountain (only 2000 feet) and it is far south of Caesarea Philippi. **Hiebert** adds "The traditional identification of the place with Mt. Tabor is improbable since it is too far south, was not a high mountain, and apparently had a fortification on it at the time. A southern spur of Mt. Hermon, which is truly a high mountain, is now generally accepted, but one of the three different mountains, each over four thousand feet high, southeast of Caesarea Philippi, is also possible." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - Because it is "a mountain apart," Mount Tabor convinces others that it was the place of the transfiguration. The church at the summit has a glorious mosaic in gold, which is illuminated by the sun's rays through the western window at the end of the day and reminds viewers of the transfiguration itself. THIS IS THE PROBLEM WITH SO-CALLED "HOLY PLACES" IN THE HOLY LAND -- THEY ARE MANY TIMES MEN'S CONJECTURE AND AS DISCUSSED MOUNT TABOR IS ALMOST SURELY NOT THE SITE OF THE TRANSFIGURATION.

**Brooks** remarks, "The exact site, however, is unknown and unimportant. What is significant is that a high mountain in the Bible was often the place of revelation.

**Hill** - In Luke 9:32 the parallel account tells us that Peter, James, and John took a nap after arriving to the mountain. We are also told that while they were sleeping, Jesus was praying. And it was while he was praying that he was transfigured:

**Brought up** (399)(**anaphero** from **ana** = up, again, back + **phero** = bear, carry) literally means to cause to move from a lower position to a higher, take, lead, bring up.

**And He was transfigured before them- Before** is emprosthen which means in front of them. Luke 9:29 indicates the transfiguration took place "while He was praying," In the transfiguration Jesus exhibited a change on the outside which came from His inside, His true nature, His divinity. Christ's nature, of course, could not change; only His appearance. Jesus' glory shone through His humanity and His garments demonstrating to the disciples what Jesus really was on the inside. The glory which was Jesus' essential and eternal divine nature, shone outward, for a brief time and to a limited degree.

Note the phrase before them, before the three disciples. And clearly the transfiguration made a vivid impression on Peter who later wrote...

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"— 18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 So we have the prophetic word made more sure (MORE SURE THAN THE TRANSFIGURATION), to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. memorable (2 Peter 1:16-19+)

**Hiebert** - transfigured is our word metamorphosed and means changed into another form. It denotes a visible change of the outward form as expressive of the true inner nature. The aorist tense simply records the historical fact, while the passive voice indicates that the change was wrought by the Father. Matthew employed the same verb, but Luke used the expression "was altered," literally, "became different." It was the glorification of the physical body of His humiliation, the divine crowning of His perfect humanity. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**Wuest on transfigured** - The simple verb refers to the act of giving outward expression of one's inner character, that outward expression coming from and being truly representative of that inner character. The prefixed preposition signifies a change, here of the outward expression. The translation expanded, thus reads, "The manner of His outward expression was changed before them, that outward expression coming from and being truly representative of His inner nature." The usual outward expression of our Lord in His humiliation was that of the Man Christ Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, the One acquainted with grief. He, to the world, was the travel-stained, itinerant preacher, the claimant to the Jewish Messiahship. What the world saw was a peasant from Galilee, clad in homespun, the son of the carpenter of Nazareth. But now, that outward expression was changed. Out from within the inmost being of the Son of God, there shone that dazzling glory of the essence of Deity which He possesses co-eternally with God the Father and God the Spirit. It shone right through the clay walls of His humanity and through the clothing He wore. It was that same dazzling radiance which the angels saw in His preincarnate state (Phil. 2:6), but given through a physical medium, not a spiritual one as in the case of the angels. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**MacArthur** - Jesus had possessed essential glory from all eternity (John 17:5) but veiled it until this moment. His glory will be fully revealed to the whole world in the future when "the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and ... all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30; cf. 25:31 and the description of that event in Rev. 19:11-16). ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**Wiersbe** says "transfigured describes a change on the outside that comes from the inside. It is the opposite of 'masquerade,' which is an outward change that does not come from within."

**Transfigured** (3339)(**metamorphoo** from **metá** = change of condition + **morphoo** = inward condition that which produces an outward expression which proceeds from and is representative of inward character and nature) has the basic meaning of changing into another form and is the term from which we get metamorphosis, as with a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. **Metamorphoo** describes the process by which that on the inside shows forth to the outside such that that everyone can see. The believer's inner redeemed (divine - 2Pe 1:4+) nature is to continually be manifest outwardly in our daily thoughts, words and deeds. 4x in NT - Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2; Rom. 12:2; 2 Co. 3:18 Romans 12:2+ and 2 Corinthians 3:18+ refer to the transformation in the lives of believers brought about by salvation and progressive sanctification (from glory to glory becoming more like our Savior!). As Uteley points out "In a sense this refers to the restoration of the divine image in mankind, lost in the Fall of Gen. 3. Jesus enables us to become truly human, truly Christlike." (cf 2 Peter 1:4+)

**J Vernon McGee** comments on metamorphoo - That which took place is like the experience of the caterpillar; first you have the caterpillar, then it encases itself in the cocoon, and out comes a beautiful butterfly. The

Transfiguration does not set forth the deity of Christ, but the humanity of Christ. Transfiguration is the goal of humanity. When you see the Lord Jesus Christ transfigured there on the mount, you are seeing exactly what is going to take place in that day when we are translated. The dead shall be raised, and those who are alive shall be changed; that is, they shall undergo metamorphosis. Then they will all be translated and brought into the presence of God. (Borrow [Luke](#) - Thru The Bible)

**Guzik** points out that "This was not a new miracle, but the temporary pause of an ongoing miracle. The real miracle was that Jesus, most of the time, could keep from displaying His glory. "For Christ to be glorious was almost a less matter than for him to restrain or hide his glory. It is forever his glory that he concealed his glory; and that, though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor." (Spurgeon). Jesus did this because He just told His disciples that He was going the way of the cross (Mark 8:31) and that spiritually they should follow Him in the way of the cross (Mark 8:34–38). It was easy for them to lose confidence in Jesus after such a negative statement.. But now, as Jesus displayed His glory as King over all God's Kingdom, the disciples knew that Jesus knew what He was doing. If He was to suffer, be rejected and killed, He was still in control.. Jesus also dramatically showed that cross bearers would 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.

**Wiersbe** applies the truths of Jesus "metamorphosis" to the daily life of believers - there is also a practical lesson here, for we can have a spiritual "transfiguration" experience each day as we walk with the Lord. Romans 12:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 tell us how. As we surrender body, mind, and will, the Lord transforms us from within so that we are not conformed to the world. As we behold Him in the Word (the mirror), we are "transfigured" by the Spirit "from glory to glory." The theological name for this experience is *sanctification*, the process by which we become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Father's goal for each of His children (Rom. 8:19; 1 John 3:2). Note that our Lord was once again praying, which suggests that prayer is one of the keys to a transformed life. (Borrow [Be compassionate](#))

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### **Oswald Chambers - The sphere of exaltation**

Jesus leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves. Mark 9:2.

We have all had times on the mount, when we have seen things from God's standpoint and have wanted to stay there; but God will never allow us to stay there. The test of our spiritual life is the power to descend; if we have power to rise only, something is wrong. It is a great thing to be on the mount with God, but a man only gets there in order that afterwards he may get down among the devil-possessed and lift them up. We are not built for the mountains and the dawns and aesthetic affinities, those are for moments of inspiration, that is all. We are built for the valley, for the ordinary stuff we are in, and that is where we have to prove our mettle. Spiritual selfishness always wants repeated moments on the mount. We feel we could talk like angels and live like angels, if only we could stay on the mount. The times of exaltation are exceptional, they have their meaning in our life with God, but we must beware lest our spiritual selfishness wants to make them the only time.

We are apt to think that everything that happens is to be turned into useful teaching, it is to be turned into something better than teaching, viz., into character. The mount is not meant to teach us anything, it is meant to make us something. There is a great snare in asking—"What is the use of it?" In spiritual matters we can never calculate on that line. The moments on the mountain top are rare moments, and they are meant for something in God's purpose.

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### **QUESTION - [What was the meaning and importance of the transfiguration?](#)**

**ANSWER** - About a week after Jesus plainly told His disciples that He would suffer, be killed, and be raised to life (Luke 9:22), He took Peter, James, and John up a mountain to pray. While praying, His personal appearance was changed into a glorified form, and His clothing became dazzling white. Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus about His death that would soon take place. Peter, not knowing what he was saying and being very fearful, offered to put up three shelters for them. This is undoubtedly a reference to the booths that were used to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Israelites dwelt in booths for 7 days (Lev. 23:34–42). Peter was expressing a wish to stay in that place. When a cloud enveloped them, a voice said, "This is My Son, whom I have chosen, whom I love; listen to Him!" The cloud lifted, Moses and Elijah had disappeared, and Jesus was alone with His disciples who were still very much afraid. Jesus warned them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after His resurrection. The three accounts of this event are found in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36.

Undoubtedly, the purpose of the transfiguration of Christ into at least a part of His heavenly glory was so that the "inner circle" of His disciples could gain a greater understanding of who Jesus was. Christ underwent a dramatic change in appearance in order that the disciples could behold Him in His glory. The disciples, who had only known Him in His human body, now had a greater realization of the deity of Christ, though they could not fully comprehend it. That gave them the reassurance they needed after hearing the shocking news of His coming death.

Symbolically, the appearance of Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets. But God's voice from heaven – "Listen to Him!" - clearly showed that the Law and the Prophets must give way to Jesus. The One who is the new and living way is replacing the old – He is the fulfillment of the Law and the countless prophecies in the Old Testament. Also, in His glorified form they saw a preview of His coming glorification and enthronement as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The disciples never forgot what happened that day on the mountain and no doubt this was intended. John wrote in his gospel, "We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only" (John 1:14). Peter also wrote of it, "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain" (2 Peter 1:16-18). Those who witnessed the transfiguration bore witness to it to the other disciples and to countless millions down through the centuries. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the Mount of Transfiguration? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### QUESTION - [Why did Jesus choose Peter, James, and John to be His inner circle?](#)

**ANSWER** - Jesus officially chose His [twelve disciples](#) in Luke 6:12–16. That group comprised Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot. Of those twelve, three disciples (Peter, James, and John) seem to have been the closest to Jesus and acted as an "inner circle" to Christ.

Peter, James, and John were among the earliest of Jesus' disciples who had been with Him the longest (Luke 5:4–11). But the Bible does not say why Jesus chose Peter, James, and John as His inner circle. These three men were present with Jesus during special events, being eyewitnesses of Jesus' transfiguration (Mark 9:2–3), witnessing Jesus raise Jairus's daughter from the dead (Luke 8:49–56), and accompanying Him while He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36–38). Thus, these three witnessed Jesus' greatest moments of glory and His darkest trials. They were His closest friends.

Perhaps the reason why Peter, James, and John were chosen to be Jesus' inner circle was that He was making a special effort to prepare these three for the leadership roles they would later occupy in the fledgling church. Peter, whose nickname meant "the rock," was the first of the disciples to express faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God (Matthew 16:16). After his failure and denial of Jesus, the Lord restored him, and Peter went on to be a leader in the early church (John 21:15–19). Significantly, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter boldly preached to the crowd, and the Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of the listeners, so that 3,000 people put their faith in Jesus that day (Acts 2:41).

James and John, who were nicknamed "[Sons of Thunder](#)" because of their boldness (Mark 3:17; Luke 9:54), also became prominent leaders in the early church. They both expressed a willingness to be martyred because of their faith in Jesus (Matthew 20:22), and they both suffered for Christ. James was the first of the disciples to be slain for Christ (Acts 12:1–2), and John was the last of the Twelve to die, after being exiled for his faith (Revelation 1:9).

Jesus deliberately chose His twelve disciples and purposefully chose His inner circle, as well. At the ascension of Christ, the eleven remaining apostles were given the same mission, to spread gospel and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18–20). Peter, James, and John, Jesus' "inner circle," were instrumental in fulfilling that mission. Having been eyewitnesses to several amazing events in Jesus' ministry, the three were well-prepared for their future service.

The special attention Jesus gave to Peter, James, and John was, according to author Michael Hyatt, part of Jesus' leadership strategy. Rather than try to build a broad reach for His ministry, Jesus shunned popularity and "focused on true depth and long-term impact" ("The Leadership Strategy of Jesus," [michaelhyatt.com/the-leadership-strategy-of-jesus](http://michaelhyatt.com/the-leadership-strategy-of-jesus), accessed 5/27/20). Jesus' teaching was rooted deeply in these three men, and each one made a lasting impact in the church for the glory of God. These three fishermen were truly made into "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).[GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Mark 9:3 and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.**

Wuest - And His garments became glittering ones, exceedingly white, such as a fuller on earth is not able

thus to whiten. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

- **His garments:** Ps 104:1,2 Da 7:9 Mt 28:3 Ac 10:30
- **exceedingly:** Ps 51:7 68:14 Isa 1:18 Rev 7:9,14 19:18
- **no:** Mal 3:2,3
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Resources:

Matthew 17:2+ And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

Luke 9:29+ And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming.

Transfiguration by Bellini  
Much more accurate than [Raphael's Painting](#)

## SUPER-EARTHLY WHITENESS OF JESUS' CLOTHES

As noted on the caption of the painting by Bellini, the [painting by Raphael](#) is not Biblically accurate. The point is this -- do not get your doctrine/teaching from paintings (or even from commentaries like the one you are reading) but directly from the pure word of God!

**and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white ([leukos](#)), as no launderer on earth can whiten them** - Mark says nothing about His face but **Matthew** has "**His face shone like the sun**" (NOTE: NOT BECAUSE OF THE SUN HE HAD CREATED! THIS WAS OUR LORD'S INNER NATURE SHINING FORTH) and Luke "**the appearance of His face became different**" Mark accentuated the whiteness of His clothing **as no launderer on earth can whiten them. Radiant** is **stilbo** a verb (in [present tense](#) participle = indicates the shining was active = the transfiguration was a real, active experience, not an illusion, not a dream, not a reflection of the sun) used only here in the NT and describes an effect of radiating very bright light or casting rays of light. The word is used of a flashing sword and of sunshine on shields.

**David Garland** - The Transfiguration, therefore, serves to confirm that the suffering Jesus will endure is not incompatible with his glory. The scene functions like a hologram. For a brief moment, the disciples glimpse the truth as divine glory shines through the veil of suffering. It foreshadows the time when God will gloriously enthrone Jesus after the degradation on the cross. This white flash of the splendor to come brightens the dark cloud of tribulation that presently hangs over Mark's first readers and confirms Jesus' promise that those who follow and suffer for him will not have done so in vain. ([NIVAC-Mark](#))

**POSB** - The full glory of the Godhead was not shining through Jesus. No man could ever stand in the full glory of the Lord's presence, not in man's present physical body. As Scripture says, "Our Lord Jesus Christ...the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Ti. 6:14-16). Apparently God allowed only a small degree of the glory, only what the three disciples could bear to shine through the body and clothing of Jesus. ...God's glory is so brilliant there is no need for a sun (Rev. 21:23; Rev. 22:5). (See [The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Mark](#))

**THOUGHT** - Just like with these three disciples, our Lord will always give us a glimpse through His Word of what is in store for us not only in time but in eternity. HALLELUJAH! The glory of Christ's body at the transfiguration was a preview of the glory of the believer throughout eternity. 1 John 3:2 says "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, **we will be like Him**, because **we will see Him just as He is**." This is our "Blessed Hope" (not a worldly "hope so," but a godly "hope sure!") (Titus 2:13+). And this SURE BLESSED HOPE should motivate us to holy living for John goes on to add "And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. " (1 Jn 3:3+) And just to nail down this point Paul adds " Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Cor 15:49) And Jesus Himself saves "He who overcomes (ALL BELIEVERS, NOT JUST "SUPER" SAINTS! SEE 1 John 5:4-5+) **will thus be clothed in white garments**; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." Finally, in Revelation 19:7-8+ John describes our wedding raiment "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

So dear weary, tested, trusting saint, may God's Spirit grant that today you rejoice and again I say rejoice. In Jesus' Name. Amen

**Wuest** - Here was no borrowed radiance, even from the skies, which might shine on the Lord Jesus. This effulgence of glory came from within, and was an inherent possession of the Lord of Glory. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible** – Mark. - *the glory* of His Godly nature was allowed to shine through His body. "The glory which [He] had with the Father before the world was" emanated through His body right on through His clothes ([John 17:5](#)). (See [The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Mark](#))

**Robertson on white** - Probably the snow-capped summit of Hermon was visible on this very night. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

Commenting on the grace of God, **Charles Spurgeon** said, How great a stoop from the height of His throne to a dunghill! How wonderful that power which occupies itself in rescuing beggars, all befouled with the filthiness in which they lay. For He lifts them out of the dunghill, not disdainingly to search them out from amidst the base things of earth that He may by this means bring to naught the great ones, and pour contempt upon all human glorying.

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**White** ([3022](#))(*leukos*) is an adjective which means (1) bright, shining, gleaming Mt 17:2; Lk 9:29 or (2). white (Mt 5:36; Mk 9:3; 16:5; Lk 9:29; J 4:35; Ac 1:10; Rv 1:14; 2:17; 6:2; 7:9, 13; 19:11, 14; 20:11). In the Septuagint *leukos* was used to describe manna (Ex 16:31), a sign of skin disease (Lev 13:3, 4, et al), the Ancient of Days (Da 7:9), horses (Zech 1:8, 6:3, 6). Compare our English words leukocyte (white blood cell), etc. The adjective *leukos* comes from a root that means "bright" or "radiant" and is the general term for the color white.

**R Kent Hughes** writes that "bright" here is *leukos*—"white"—the grand apocalyptic color, the color representative of what is beyond; cf. Rev. 2:17; Rev. 6:2; Rev. 20:11 (Preaching the Word – Luke, Volume I: That You May Know the Truth)

**Zodhiates on leukos** - of clothing sometimes in the sense of bright (Matt. 17:2; 28:3; Mark 9:3; 16:5; Luke 9:29; John 20:12; Acts 1:10); of hair (Matt. 5:36; Rev. 1:14); of harvest meaning ripe (John 4:35); of stone (Rev. 2:17); symbolically (Rev. 3:4, 5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:14); of a horse (Rev. 6:2; 19:11, 14); of a cloud (Rev. 14:14); of the throne of God (Rev. 20:11). (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek *leukos* describes, among other things, the color of snow, hair, stones, clothing, and dust. Like the opposite color *melas* ("black"), *leukos* assumes a figurative meaning, with the former symbolizing that which is morally evil and the latter symbolizing purity, holiness, and divinity. In classical texts *leukos* is the color of sacrificial animals and priestly clothing. Indeed, Plato suggests that the color white is pleasing to the gods (cf. *Liddell-Scott*). Septuagint Usage = The religious practices of the Hebrews indicate that they held white in similar esteem. In addition to its ordinary literal usages, *leukos* appears in the Septuagint as the color of priestly garments. Figuratively *leukos* symbolizes purification from sin (Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 1:18), and a vision of God is dominated by the color *leukos* (Daniel 7:9). Apart from the four instances mentioned in the previous paragraph, the New Testament uses *leukos* as the color associated with heaven. Most references are to white clothing, as in the descriptions of the transfiguration of Jesus, the post-Resurrection appearances of angels, or the heavenly citizens in the Book of Revelation. (See, for example, Matthew 17:2; Matthew 28:3; Acts 1:10; Revelation 3:4,5.) Even the throne of God is white (Revelation 20:11). Revelation 1:14 portrays the victorious Christ in terms reminiscent of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9; both of these scenes are dominated by white. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Vincent on leukos** - In classical Greek very indefinite as an expression of color; being used, not only of the whiteness of the snow, but of gray dust. Its original sense is *clear*. All three evangelists use the word, but combined with different terms. Thus, Matthew, *as the light*. Mark, *στ λβοντα, glistening* (see Mark 9:3). Luke, *ξαστρ πτων* (only here in New Testament), *flashing as with the brilliance of lightning*. Rev., *dazzling*.

**Leukos** - 25x in 23 verses - all translated white Matt. 5:36; Matt. 17:2; Matt. 28:3; Mk. 9:3; Mk. 16:5; Lk. 9:29; Jn. 4:35; Jn. 20:12; Acts 1:10; Rev. 1:14; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 3:4; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 4:4; Rev. 6:2; Rev. 6:11; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 7:13; Rev. 14:14; Rev. 19:11; Rev. 19:14; Rev. 20:11

**Leukos** - 30x in 26v in the Septuagint - Gen. 30:35; Gen. 30:37; Gen. 31:8; Gen. 49:12; Exod. 16:14; Exod. 16:31; Lev. 13:3; Lev. 13:4; Lev. 13:10; Lev. 13:13; Lev. 13:16; Lev. 13:17; Lev. 13:19; Lev. 13:20; Lev. 13:21; Lev. 13:24; Lev. 13:25; Lev. 13:26; Lev. 13:42; Lev. 13:43; Eccl. 9:8; Cant. 5:10; Dan. 7:9; Zech. 1:8; Zech.

**WHITE CLOTHING** - Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. Eccl 9:8

In any area with strong sunlight, white clothing is preferred because white reflects the sunlight and so decreases the heating effect of it. In addition, white garments in the East were symbols of purity, and so were worn on certain special occasions. The symbols and custom were adopted by the West and is reflected especially in the wedding ceremony. The oil was symbolic of joy. Together they signified purity and the joy of festive occasions. In the Bible there are several references to white garments symbolizing purity, righteousness, or holiness. In Daniel 7:9, the clothing worn by the "Ancient of Days ... was as white as snow." When Jesus was transfigured, "his clothes became as white as the light" (Matthew 17:2). The angels appeared in white robes when they appeared to the soldiers guarding Jesus' tomb and when the women went to the tomb after He had risen (Matthew 28:3, Mark 16:5, Luke 24:4, and John 20:12), and also when Christ ascended into heaven (Acts 1:10). In the ages to come, the redeemed will be clothed in white (Revelation 7:13 and 19:14).

Clothes were laundered by fullers in Bible times. The English term fuller means "one who washes" or "one who treads." The professional fuller would clean garments by stamping on them or beating them with a stick in a tub of water. Jeremiah 2:22 and Malachi 3:2 tell us that nitre and soap were used as cleaning agents. Other substances were also used for cleaning, such as alkali and chalk. To whiten garments, fullers would rub "fuller's earth" (cimolite) into them.

The trade of the fuller created an offensive odor, so it was done outside the city. A place called the "fuller's field" on the northern side of the city of Jerusalem was where fullers washed and dried their clothes. Their water supply came from the upper pool of Gihon on the northern side of the city. Scripture tells how the king of Assyria sent soldiers against Jerusalem from this northern direction (2 Kin. 18:17). It is interesting to note that the fuller's field was so near the city walls that the Assyrian ambassadors standing in the field could be heard on the ramps. (Illustrated Manners and Customs)

#### Mark 9:4 Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

- **appeared:** Mt 11:13 17:3,4 Lu 9:19,30,31 24:27,44 Joh 5:39,45-47 Ac 3:21-24 1Pe 1:10-12 Rev 19:10
- **Elijah:** Moses was the founder of the Jewish polity, and Elias the most zealous reformer and prophet of the Jewish church; and their presence implied that the ministry of Christ was attested by the law and the prophets. 2Ki 2:11,12, Elijah
- **Moses:** De 34:5,6
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Resources:

Matthew 17:3+ And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Luke 9:30-32+ And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31 who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him.

Malachi 4:5-6+ "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible **Day of the LORD**. 6 "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

**Elijah appeared to them** - Elijah's return had been prophesied in Mal. 4:5-6+. **To them** = the three disciples. The point is that they actually saw them even though they had been sleep (cf Luke 9:32+). See [Who was Elijah in the Bible?](#)

**Utley on appeared** - This term is used of angelic appearances in Luke 1:11 and Lk 22:43, and of Jesus in Luke 24:34. [Mark 9 Commentary](#)

**Robertson on Elijah and Moses** - Matthew and Luke (REVERSE THE ORDER) have "Moses and Elijah." Both, as a matter of fact were prophets and both dealt with law. Both had mysterious deaths. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** - The verb **appeared**, occurring only here in Mark, is generally used of the sudden appearance of a heavenly form and implies the objective presence of the form. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**David Garland** comments that "Their (ELIJAH AND MOSES) presence with Jesus on the high mountain, therefore, rouses Jewish hopes about the final redemption of Israel and suggests that the time has been fulfilled. **The kingdom of God has drawn near** (Mk

1:15+)." ([NIVAC-Mark](#))

**MacArthur** has an interesting comment - Elijah and Moses existed as glorified spirits in heaven (Heb. 12:23), awaiting the resurrection of their bodies at the end of the future tribulation (Dan. 12:1–2), yet they appeared in visible, glorious (Luke 9:31) bodies. They evidently either received those bodies temporarily for this occasion, or God gave them their permanent resurrection bodies early. The apostles would not, of course, have recognized the two glorified men, so either they introduced themselves, or the Lord did. ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**Along with Moses** - There was no OT prediction of Moses' returning. [Who was Moses in the Bible?](#)

**Hiebert** - Moses and Elijah are commonly accepted as the illustrious representatives of "the law and the prophets," which bore witness to Jesus. Their presence with Jesus testified to Him as the true Messiah. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**Robertson** - The Jewish apocalypses reveal popular expectations that Moses and Elijah would reappear. Both had mystery connected with their deaths. One represented law, the other prophecy, while Jesus represented the gospel (grace). ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**And they were talking with Jesus** - Lk 9:31+ says they "were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." The point is clear that these OT saints now with the Lord were aware of these events on earth. Did they encourage their Lord in His mission? Given that in His manhood this was a daunting task, it is very possible these saints did encourage Him.

**Wuest on they were talking** - We have a periphrastic construction here. It consists of the verb of being in the imperfect tense and the present tense participle. The emphasis is upon durative action. Mark wishes to convey to the reader the impression that the conversation with these two heavenly visitors was a protracted one. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**MacArthur** - Christ's death is the truth for which the transfiguration was intended to prepare the disciples. Jesus was to die, but that could not negate God's plan and the glory that was to come. The testimony of these two very important men confirmed the reality that the Lord Jesus would die. ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**Utley** - This is a PERIPHRASTIC IMPERFECT, which implies a long conversation. Luke 9:31 says they were discussing Jesus' departure (i.e. exodus) from Jerusalem. There is an amazing corollary between this passage and Exod. 24:12–18: (1) the time element of six days (v. 16); (2) the place, on a high mountain; (3) the presence of a cloud and God's speaking from it (vv. 15–17); and (4) the mention of glory on Moses' face and here Jesus' face (v. 18; Exod. 34:29–30). ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Daniel Akin** notes that "There are some remarkable parallels in this account of our Lord's transfiguration and a visit to a mountain made by Moses recorded in Exodus 24 and 34. What happened to Moses in the early stages of redemptive history prefigured and anticipated a greater Moses, a greater Exodus and a greater salvation. Note the following:

| MOSES   | JESUS  |
|---|--|
| Moses goes with three named persons plus seventy of the elders up the mountain (Ex. 24:1, 9). | Jesus takes three disciples up the mountain (Mark 9:2).  |
| Moses' skin shines when he descends from the mountain after talking with God (Ex. 34:29).     | Jesus is transfigured and his clothes become radiantly white (Mark 9:2-3).                     |
| God appears in veiled form in an overshadowing cloud (Ex. 23:15-16, 18).                      | God appears in veiled form in an overshadowing cloud (Mark 9:7).                               |
| A voice speaks from the cloud (Ex. 24:16).  | A voice speaks from the cloud (Mark 9:7).  |
| The people are afraid to come near Moses after he descends from the mountain (Ex. 35:30).     | The people are astonished when they see Jesus after he descends from the mountain (Mark 9:15). |

## Related Resources:

- [Why must Elijah return before the end times \(Malachi 4:5-6\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Was John the Baptist really Elijah reincarnated? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 9:5 Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."**

- It is: Ex 33:17-23 Ps 62:2,3 84:10 Joh 14:8,9,21-23 Php 1:23 1Jn 3:2 Rev 22:3,4
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Resources:

Matthew 17:4+ Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Luke 9:33+ And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not realizing what he was saying.

## THE SLEEPER'S SUGGESTION

**Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi"** - Peter is never at a loss for words and despite being sternly rebuked in Mark 8:32,33, he proceeds to interrupt the conversation between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah blurting out "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Matthew's parallel has "Lord" and the Luke parallel has "Master." On the basis of these three names **MacArthur** concludes "Peter's use of all three titles reveals that he repeated his request and how overwhelmed and humbled he and the others were. Holy fear mingled with exhilarating wonder at this glorious and incomprehensible experience." ([MNTC-Mk](#))

"Rabbi" was a title of respect for one recognized as an authoritative teacher, but what he has just seen should have told him that Jesus was much more than a teacher or rabbi.

**Rabbi** (4461) ([rhabbi](#) from Hebrew [rab](#) 07227 = >400x in OT - great one, master, chief) means my master (most common rendering in KJV) or my teacher. It was an respectful title of honor by which one would address a teacher who was recognized for their expertise in the Mosaic Law or Scriptures. Jesus' disciples repeatedly address Him as **Rabbi** (Jn. 4:31; Jn. 6:25; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 11:8) The suffix **-bi** signified "my master" and was a title of respect by which teachers were addressed. The suffix soon lost its specific force, and in the NT the word is used as courteous title of address." (Vine) It is interesting that in Mt. 23:7-8 Jesus forbade His disciples to desire to use it ("do not be called **Rabbi**"). " ([Was Jesus a rabbi?](#))

**Wuest** adds - The Greek word is the transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning "much, great." It was a term of honor and respect among the Jews, meaning "My great one, my honorable sir." The Jews used this term when addressing their teachers, and also honored them by using it when they were speaking of them. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**it is good** ([kalos](#) - beautiful, useful, pleasant, fit) **for us to be here** - Good is an understatement! Peter (and the other two disciples) were probably just waking from sleep (Lk 9:32).'

**Hill** - **It is good for us to be here.** The verb *be* (*estin*) is in present tense, indicating that Peter wanted to stay. ([Mark 9](#))

**Utley** on **good** - What an awesome spiritual and physical experience this must have been; what a confirmation of the person of Jesus as the promised OT Messiah. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Good** (2570) ([kalos](#)) "There are two words for "good" in Greek, [agathos](#) which speaks of intrinsic goodness, and [kalos](#) (καλος) which speaks of goodness as it is seen from without. The word [kalos](#) (καλος) has also the idea of "beautiful." It was used by the Greeks of anything so distinguished in form, excellence, goodness, usefulness, as to be pleasing. Hence, it can refer to anything which is handsome, useful, excellent, suitable, commendable, excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well adapted to its ends. The latter is used here." (Wuest)

**Hiebert** - Peter listened to the conversation. He had not been addressed, but impulsively he felt that the situation demanded a response from him. He replied to the occasion. Luke records that Peter spoke as Moses and Elijah were about to depart. Peter aimed to prolong the glorious experience by detaining the two heavenly visitors. He directed his suggestion to Jesus as at once the most exalted and most familiar of the three glorious personages. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

It would have been good for Peter if he had known the saying....

"Never pass up an opportunity to keep your mouth shut."

-- American proverb

**Let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah** - There is still something in Peter's exhortation that is calling for the Lord to bypass the Cross....we can just stay here! His thoughts are not totally ill-founded for in Mk 9:1 Jesus had promised they would "see the kingdom of God." Peter misunderstood what this meant. **Three tabernacles** refers to the temporary shelters made of the branches of trees, such as the Israelites used during the [Feast of Tabernacles/Booth/Sukkot](#). Notice that there is no record that Peter was addressed during this visit of Moses and Elijah. "Here is impetuous, unpredictable Peter, intruding himself into the conversation." ([Wuest](#))

**Wuest on let us** - The words "let us" do not mean "allow us." The Greek construction is a hortatory subjunctive, exhorting others to join the one exhorting to do something in company with him. Peter said "Let us, Jesus, Peter, James, John make three tabernacles," (the word **tabernacle** being) from a word meaning "to cover." The word here referred to a tent made of green boughs, skins, or other materials. Peter had in mind just a tent in which to find shelter, not the Tabernacle as it was set up in Israel in Old Testament times." ([Wuest Word Studies - Erdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Tabernacles** (dwellings, tents) ([4633 skene](#)) is a tent, booth, hut, tabernacle, any covered or shaded place. It was a place of shelter, freq. of temporary quarters in contrast to fixed abodes of solid construction. **Skene** is used in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) to translate the Hebrew noun [mishkan \(word study\)](#) which was the dwelling place of God. The verb from which mishkan is derived is shakan which gives rise to the term **Shekinah** ([wikipedia](#)), not found in the Bible but introduced in the Talmudic literature to describe the cloud of glory over the Holy of holies in the Tabernacle (and later the Temple), which was the visual manifestation of the presence of Jehovah (See on site discussion of the [Shekinah glory cloud](#))

**Utley** - This would have been a structure similar to the temporary thatch huts used during the Festival of Booths. The implication of Peter's statement was that if the glorified OT visitors would stay a while, they could stay a while longer, too! ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** has an interesting comment that "The transfiguration took place in the month of Tishri, six months before the Passover. At that time the Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths), which commemorated the exodus from Egypt, was being celebrated. What better time, Peter may have reasoned, for the Messiah to lead His people out of bondage to sin and into His righteous kingdom than during the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16–19)? ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**David Garland** has some interesting comments on what Peter meant by mentioned that they build three tabernacles on the mountain - He chatters on about building shelters: "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." Surprisingly, he calls Jesus "Rabbi" when he has just confessed him to be the Christ and has just witnessed his Transfiguration. His desire to build shelters (booths, tents, or tabernacles) is also a perplexing feature. The reader needs some explanation for them as we have for the Jewish customs in 7:3–4, and one can only guess what Peter intended. Are the shelters meant to recall the Exodus and an elusive reference to the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39–43)? Are they intended to recall the ancient battle cry, "Every man to his tent, O Israel!" in anticipation of a military uprising (2 Sam. 20:1; 1 Kings 12:16; 2 Chron. 10:16)? Does Peter want to set up the messianic headquarters here on the mountain? Maybe he only wants to prolong the blessed moment and offers the three figures hospitality since tents were regarded as the habitations of divine beings (Ex. 25:1–9; Acts 7:43; Rev. 21:3). Does he mistakenly believe "that the eschatological rest in which God and his heavenly retinue would dwell upon earth had already begun"? If he does, then he fails to realize that before this final rest occurs, Jesus must go through suffering. ([NIVAC-Mark](#))

**Grant Osborne** - In 1992 astrophysicist Michael Hart wrote a book titled *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, Revised and Updated for the Nineties. The book contains biographies of each person and ranks them in order from the most influential to the least influential (of the top one hundred). Hart also includes the reasons for his ranking of each individual. Hart lists Jesus as number three. The disciples had a similar perspective regarding Jesus; it appears that they saw him as equal to Moses and Elijah. The transfiguration, and the words of the Father from heaven identifying Jesus as his Son to whom the disciples were to listen, changed that perspective. Jesus cannot be compared to Muhammad, Isaac Newton, the Buddha, Moses, or Elijah. He alone is God's Son. ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

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**Anselm - Mark 9:5** - If the contemplation of Christ's glorified manhood so filled the apostle with joy that he was unwilling to be sundered from it, how shall it fare with them who attain to the contemplation of His glorious Godhead? And if it was so good a thing to dwell with two of His saints, how then to come to the "heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all"—these not seen through a glass darkly but face to face?

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Mark 9:2-29

Austrian Peasant - One day an Austrian peasant spotted three men in hunting garb. Thinking they looked tired, he offered them a ride in his cart. The men accepted and struck up a conversation.

"Who are you?" the driver asked one of the passengers.

"I'm the king of Saxony," was the reply. The peasant nodded and asked the next man the same question.

"The king of Bavaria," said the second passenger.

"And you," the peasant went on skeptically to the third passenger, "I suppose you're the emperor of Austria?"

The amazing thing is that it was the emperor of Austria! The man was Francis Joseph I, emperor of Austria from 1848-1916. Would that peasant have acted differently if he had known that we was addressing his sovereign? Of course! - Today in the Word, 1995

**Mark 9:6 For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.**

- Mk 16:5-8 Da 10:15-19 Rev 1:17
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PETER'S EXTREME FEAR

This is probably a parenthetical note by Mark to explain why Peter spoke up in verse 5.

**For (gar)** is a term of explanation (ACTUALLY TWO "FORS" [GARS] IN SUCCESSION). What is Mark explaining? In context he is explaining why Peter spoke up!

**He did not know what to answer** And yet Peter still spoke in verse 5. "Whenever Peter did not know what to do, he talked!" (Utley)

**Wuest on answer** - The Greek word for "answered" is [apokrinomai](#). [Krino](#) means "to form a proper appreciation of anything by discriminating between two or more things," thus, "to form a judgment" of it. The prefixed preposition ([apo](#)) means "off." Thus, the compound verb means "to give off from one's self a judgment." This act of course, in the Greek mind, presupposed deliberation. It is not necessary to suppose that a question had been asked Peter here. There is no record of any one addressing him at this point.

**Peter had been listening to the conversation and offered his judgment as to what ought to be done** (IMAGINE ENTERING INTO AN ONGOING CONVERSATION BETWEEN JESUS, ELIJAH AND MOSES!!!). ([Wuest Word Studies - Erdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Hill** - Peter was exceedingly afraid, which is understandable. But his fear should have lead him to silence, not answering when not asked a question. This was like nervous banter that was not required, needed, or right. Peter was right in that it was good to be there but the good should have been the encouragement he received. As Moses and Elijah encouraged Jesus, this scene should have encouraged the three disciples. When Peter wanted to stay there he was rejecting reality. A reality he had been taught, that Jesus must be rejected, suffer, and die before he is raised in glory. Peter was having a mountain top experience, and he did not want to go back to the lowlands of reality. But the whole purpose of this exercise was to show Peter and the others that reality must be faced but eternal glory is the sure result. In Peter's desire to stay on the mountain top he parallels many believers today who go for the spectacular and do not face reality. They want the glory without the problems of life. They want to hid away on a mountain top and never are willing to bring their relationship with Christ into the arena of reality. Peter, also in his nervous banter, rejected the supremacy of Christ by suggesting that they make three tents, one for Christ, one for Moses, one for Elijah. But Jesus Christ is above Elijah and before Moses and we must never put others on His unique level.. When were are told that Peter said these things to Christ a present tense verb is used to indicate that he just kept on talking and talking - so the next verse tells us how he stopped talking. ([Mark 9](#))

**for (gar) they became terrified** - "The whole glorious scene caused the three disciples to become terrified, seized with extreme

alarm. The feeling accounted for Peter's ill-advised words." (Hiebert)

**Terrified** (1630) (**ekphobos** from **ek** = out, used as an intensive + **phobeo** = to terrify, to frighten) is an adjective which means stricken with fear or terror, exceedingly frightened, terrified, intensely afraid. In both uses of this adjective we see that men who knew God (Moses, disciples Peter and James and John) were still gripped by a healthy, holy fear of His awesome Being. Both of the NT uses of **ekphobos** are related to mountains (Mt Sinai, Mt of Transfiguration Mk. 9:6; Heb. 12:21. **Wuest** adds that "the word **fear**" is intensified as to its meaning by the prefixed preposition. It is ekphobos, literally, I am "frightened out or away." It makes me think of times when I was "frightened out of my mind!" at some horrendous experience on earth. **Wuest** adds that "The verbal form means "to throw into violent fright." Peter certainly did not know what to say, for he was terribly frightened. But he was not called upon to say anything. It was an occasion where silence would have been the wisest procedure."

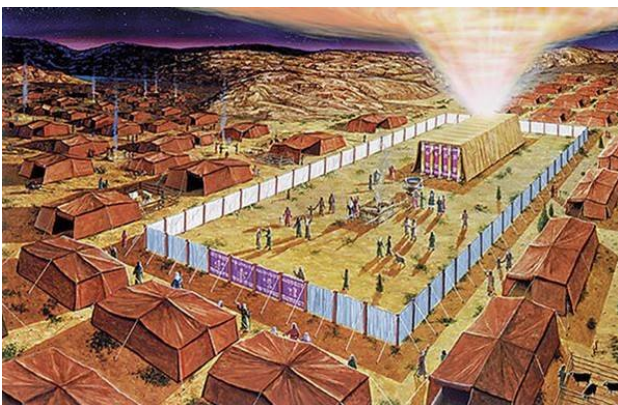
**Mark 9:7 Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son,listen to Him!"**

- **a cloud:** Ex 40:34 1Ki 8:10-12 Ps 97:2 Da 7:13 Mt 17:5-7 26:64 Lu 9:34-36 Ac 1:9 Rev 1:7
- **This:** Mk 1:11 Ps 2:7 Mt 3:17 26:63 27:43,54 Joh 1:34,49 3:16-18 Joh 5:18,22-25,37 6:69 9:35 19:7 20:31 Ac 8:37 Ro 1:4 2Pe 1:17 1Jn 4:9,10 5:11,12,20
- **listen:** Ex 23:21,22 De 18:15-19 Ac 3:22,23 7:37 Heb 2:1 12:25,26
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Resources:

Matthew 17:5 -7+ While he (PETER) was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. 7 And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid."

Luke 9:34-35+ While he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"



SHEKINAH GLORY OVER TENT OF MEETING

## THE SHEKINAH GLORY CLOUD

The [Shekinah glory cloud](#) was a manifestation of God's presence in the Old Testament, and this seems to be a NT example.

**Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them** - Notice that Peter's proposal received no response from Jesus! But there was a sudden, remarkable change of scenery which this time interrupted Peter! (cf Mt 17:5+) **Overshadowing** means to throw a shadow upon or to envelope in shadow (see episkiazo below). Luke's version indicates that the disciples also **entered the cloud** (Lk 9:34+).

**And a voice came out of the cloud** - This is the second time God the Father has spoken in Mark, the first time was at the baptism of Jesus in Mark 1:11+ = "and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."" So the first time the declaration was directed to Jesus Himself, but here the declaration is directed to the three disciples. All 3 synoptics record

this quote and Peter also alludes to it in 2 Peter 1:17.

**Then a cloud formed** is more literally "And there came a cloud" of which **Wuest** comments "The words "there was" are the translation of egeneto "to become," ingressive aorist signifying entrance into a new condition. The word is used by Mark to speak of the suddenness of the appearance of the cloud and the remarkable nature of the event. The word "cloud" here is **nephele** speaking of a cloud that has definite form and is of a limited size, as against **nephos**, **which speaks of the shapeless collection of vapor obscuring the heavens. This cloud was of course, not a cloud of vapor, but the Shekinah glory cloud** which guided Israel out of Egypt, which rested above the Mercy Seat beneath the golden Cherubim in the Holy of Holies." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Thayer** says: "From a vaporous cloud that casts a shadow, the word is transferred to a shining cloud surrounding and enveloping persons with brightness." He applies this meaning to this event.

**Overshadowing** (1982)(**episkiazo** from **epi** = upon + **skia** = shadow) "literally, as darkening by partially blocking out a source of light" (Friberg) and so to throw a shadow upon as in Acts 5:15. To cover as with a cloud as in the cloud of Shekinah glory (Exodus 40:34). Even as the **Shekinah glory cloud** was a visible manifestation of the glory and holy, powerful presence of God, this same divine power which was with Moses and others in the Old Testament and performed a unique work in the life of Mary in Luke 1:35+! The more common literal use of **episkiazo** is used in all three accounts of the **transfiguration** where a cloud formed (probably the **Shekinah glory cloud** from Hebrew = **shakan**) and **overshadowed** Jesus and the 3 disciples Peter and John and James (Matt. 17:5+; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34+).

**Utley** adds **episkiazo** "reflects the OT sense of the special cloud of YHWH's presence providing shade (i.e. protection) and guidance to the people of God during the Wilderness Wandering period (i.e. 38 years). This cloud reappears three times related to Jesus: (1) at His conception Mary is overshadowed by the Spirit (cf. Luke 1:35+); (2) at His baptism Jesus is addressed by a voice from heaven (the cloud itself is not specifically mentioned, cf. Matt. 3:17+); and (3) at the Transfiguration a voice is heard (cf. Matt. 17:5+; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34-35+). This term is used two other times in the NT, once in relation to Peter's shadow falling on people and resulting in their healing (cf. Acts 5:15) and a compound form of the term (**kataskiazo**) in Heb. 9:5, referring to the Cherubim overshadowing the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the covenant. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Utley on voice** - This is either (1) related to YHWH speaking out of the cloud in the wilderness or (2) a **Bath Kol**" (i.e. a voice from heaven [SEE [VOICE OF GOD](#)]), which was God's way of revealing His will during the intertestamental period when there was no prophet (cf. Mark 1:11)...The rabbis called the heavenly voice a **Bath Qol**, which was the method of affirming God's will during the interbiblical period when there was no prophet. This would have been a powerful divine affirmation to those familiar with rabbinical Judaism. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!** - As we have stated before the verb "**Listen**" ([present imperative](#) = keep on listening as the habitual practice of one's life) does not mean to just hear sound waves but to obey what one hears. That is what God the Father commanded the three disciples (and by extension all disciples of all ages - Are you "listening" to Jesus?) Notice the voice does not say Listen to Moses (and the Mosaic Law), but listen to the Son, "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17+) Matthew adds that "when the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified." (Mt 17:6+) In a sense the Father's command to **listen to Him** was a rebuke to Peter who spoke before listening. You cannot listen and speak at the same time! In context what Peter and the other two disciples needed to hear was the conversation about His departure (His coming death). They needed to understand this truth.

The command to **listen** to Jesus recalls the OT prophecy of the prophet like Moses, but greater than Moses, that is Jesus...

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall **listen to him**.....18'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you (Moses), and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 'It shall come about that whoever will not **listen** to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; 19+)

Notice from this OT prophecy that one reason the Father wants us to listen to Jesus is because the Father has placed His own words in Jesus' mouth. And so when Jesus speaks, He speaks the words of God the Father (cf Jesus' always does the will of the Father - see Jn 5:19-20, Jn 5:30, 8:28)

In John Jesus clearly explains why it is so important to listen to Him (to hear and heed)...

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who **hears My word**, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. (John 5:24)

**Wiersbe** on the Father's command "**Listen to Him**" - As wonderful as these experiences are, they are not the basis for a consistent Christian life. That can come only through the Word of God. Experiences come and go, but the Word remains. Our recollection of past experiences will fade, but God's Word never changes. The farther we get from these events, the less impact they make on our lives. That was why the Father said, "Hear Him!" and why Peter made this same emphasis on the Word in his report (2 Peter 1:12-21) (**Ed comment:** Compare especially 2 Pe 1:16-18 with 2 Peter 1:19+ - "we have **the prophetic word made more sure**, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts."). Our own personal "transfiguration" comes from inner renewal (Rom. 12:1-2), and that comes from the Word (2 Cor. 3:18+). (Borrow [Be compassionate](#))

**Hendriksen** adds "Now if these men knew their Bible and interpreted it correctly, they realized that the voice—ending with "listen to him"—was a clear confirmation of Jesus' messiahship, for it reflected Deut. 18:15, a messianic passage (see Acts 3:22; 7:37) containing similar words ("to him y o u must listen"). (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

**Utley** on **beloved Son** - These two titles unite the royal aspect of the Messiah (Ps. 2:7) to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Isa. 42:1). ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Wuest** on **beloved Son** - The Greek has it, "This is my Son, the Beloved One," emphasis being placed equally upon the two facts, that the Messiah is God's Son, and that He is the Beloved One. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Scroggie** on **beloved Son** - "it is taken from the three divisions of the Old Testament Scriptures, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Law, (1) Ps. 2:7; (2) Isa. 42:1; (3) Deut. 18:15."

**NET Note** on **beloved Son** - or "my Son, the beloved [one]." The force of (agapetos is often '**pertaining to one who is the only one of his or her class, but at the same time is particularly loved and cherished.**"

**Beloved** (27)(**agapetos** from **agapao** = to love, **agape** = unconditional love borne by Spirit - Gal 5:22+) means beloved, dear, very much loved. **Agapetos** describes the love of another, this love being called out of the "giver's" heart by preciousness of the recipient of the love (the "beloved"). Agapetos is used of Christians as united by the New Covenant with God and/or with each other in love. **Agapetos** describes "one who is in a very special relationship with another" (BDAG) and in secular Greek is used mostly of a child, especially an only child to whom all the love of his parents is given (cf use by the Father describing His only Son and Abraham describing his "only son" in Ge 22:2). **Beloved** is a term of endearment and is someone that you love, and someone you are deeply devoted to. In the context of the New Testament agape love speaks of God's divine and infinite love, a love that seeks the ultimate spiritual welfare of the one loved.

**Constable** - The heavenly voice assured the disciples that even though the Jews would reject Jesus and the Romans would execute Him, He was still pleasing to the Father (cf. 1:11). It also helped these disciples understand Jesus' superiority over the greatest of God's former servants (cf. Deut. 18:15; Ps. 2:7; Isa. 42:1)...This revelation should encourage every disciple of Jesus. The Son of Man's humiliation will give way to His glorification. He will certainly return to earth and establish the kingdom that the biblical prophets predicted. The faithful disciple can anticipate a glorious future with Him as surely as the beloved Son could look forward to that kingdom (cf. 8:35).

**Peter** testifies to this event in his second epistle...

For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "**This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased**"—and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:17,18+)

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**Cloud:** the cloud enveloped both Jesus and the three disciples. The cloud and the voice of God terrified the disciples and caused them to fall immediately upon their faces, prostrate and unable to look up. As mortal men they were paralyzed in fear. Note three facts.

1. The cloud was "a bright cloud." This was the Shekinah glory, the cloud that symbolized God's presence. It was the cloud that guided Israel out of Egypt and that rested upon the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-38) and above the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place. God "only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. 6:16). God dwells in unapproachable light upon which no man can look. Peter later called it "the excellent glory" (2 Peter 1:17).

2. The "bright cloud" overshadowing Jesus is in contrast to the dark and threatening cloud that overshadowed the giving of the old covenant to Moses, that is, the law (Exodus 19:18; Exodus 20:21). There is a point to be

made here. The law (old covenant) was dark and threatening (see Deeper Study #2—Galatians 3:10); the new covenant (the love of Christ) is bright and is given to save and bless, not to threaten and condemn (Hebrews 12:18-24. Cp. Hebrews 8:6-13.)

3. The voice speaking actually says in the Greek, "This is My Son, the Beloved One." Note the two facts stressed. Jesus is God's Son, and He is the Beloved One. The idea is that Jesus is the "only begotten Son" who was to be given for the world (John 3:16). (See [The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Mark](#))

**Mark 9:8 All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.**

- Lu 9:36 24:31 Ac 8:39,40 10:16
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Resources:

Matthew 17:7-8+ And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.

Luke 9:36+ And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

## THE PREVIEW OF THE KINGDOM ABRUPTLY ENDS

**All at once** - NET = "**Suddenly**" "The word "suddenly" is [exapina](#), found only here in the New Testament. It does not qualify the verb "looked around," but refers to the change in the situation which they discovered on looking around."

**they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone** - Matthew 17:7+ recorded "Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid." "When the disciples dared to lift their faces and look around, they suddenly realized that the glory was gone." (Hiebert) So the high level conference came to an abrupt end. Jesus is not in the same natural state He had before His transfiguration.

**Looked around** (4017)([periblepo](#) from [peri](#) = around + [blepo](#) = to look) means literally to glance at or look around in various directions. All but one of the 7 NT uses describe Jesus looking around. In the NT [periblepo](#) is found only in the [middle voice](#) (reflexive voice) meaning to look round about oneself. Mk. 3:5; Mk. 3:34; Mk. 5:32; Mk. 9:8; Mk. 10:23; Mk. 11:11; Lk. 6:10

**Hiebert** sums up the **transfiguration** - The natural simplicity of the synoptic accounts and their sober insistence upon the detailed features powerfully testify to the historical reality of the event. 2 Peter 1:16–18 asserts the historicity of the occurrence. But the accounts of the event have evoked much critical discussion. In accepting the scriptural accounts as factual, we readily recognize that nowhere in the Gospels are we led further into that which is beyond ordinary human experience than in this singular occurrence. Beyond the confirmatory assertion in 2 Peter, Scripture makes no comment on the significance of the event. It obviously had a value for Jesus Himself, encouraging Him and assuring Him of the divine approval of His fitness to be our sinbearer on the cross. To the disciples, it confirmed the necessity of the coming cross and impressed them with the divine endorsement of Christ's teaching concerning His impending sufferings. But it also inseparably linked the teaching of His suffering with His glory and gave them a vision of the future glory of the reigning Messiah ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

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#### Question - [What was the meaning and importance of the transfiguration?](#)

**Answer:** About a week after Jesus plainly told His disciples that He would suffer, be killed, and be raised to life (Luke 9:22), He took Peter, James, and John up a mountain to pray. While praying, His personal appearance was changed into a glorified form, and His clothing became dazzling white. Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus about His death that would soon take place. Peter, not knowing what he was saying and being very fearful, offered to put up three shelters for them. This is undoubtedly a reference to the booths that were used to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Israelites dwelt in booths for 7 days (Lev. 23:34–42). Peter was expressing a wish to stay in that place. When a cloud enveloped them, a voice said, "This is My Son, whom I have chosen, whom I love; listen to Him!" The cloud lifted, Moses and Elijah had disappeared, and Jesus was alone with His disciples who were still very much afraid. Jesus warned them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after His resurrection. The three accounts of this event are found in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36.

Undoubtedly, the purpose of the transfiguration of Christ into at least a part of His heavenly glory was so that the “inner circle” of His disciples could gain a greater understanding of who Jesus was. Christ underwent a dramatic change in appearance in order that the disciples could behold Him in His glory. The disciples, who had only known Him in His human body, now had a greater realization of the deity of Christ, though they could not fully comprehend it. That gave them the reassurance they needed after hearing the shocking news of His coming death.

Symbolically, the appearance of Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets. But God’s voice from heaven – “Listen to Him!” - clearly showed that the Law and the Prophets must give way to Jesus. The One who is the new and living way is replacing the old – He is the fulfillment of the Law and the countless prophecies in the Old Testament. Also, in His glorified form they saw a preview of His coming glorification and enthronement as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The disciples never forgot what happened that day on the mountain and no doubt this was intended. John wrote in his gospel, “We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only” (John 1:14). Peter also wrote of it, “We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.’ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain” (2 Peter 1:16-18). Those who witnessed the transfiguration bore witness to it to the other disciples and to countless millions down through the centuries. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

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### Mark 9:8 Jesus only.

The fullness of heaven is Jesus Himself.

The duration of heaven is the eternity of Jesus.

The light of heaven is the face of Jesus.

The joy of heaven is the presence of Jesus.

The melody of heaven is the name of Jesus.

The harmony of heaven is the praise of Jesus.

The theme of heaven is the work of Jesus.

The employment of heaven is the service of Jesus.

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### Mark 9:9 As 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.

Wuest And while they were coming down out of the mountain, He charged them that they should narrate the things which they saw to not even one person, except when the Son of Man should arise out from amongst the dead. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:9 As they were coming down from the mountain, he gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

NLT Mark 9:9 As they went back down the mountain, he told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

ESV Mark 9:9 And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

NIV Mark 9:9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

GNT Mark 9:9 Καταβαίνωντων ατν κ τ ο ρους διεστε λατο α το ς να μηδεν εδον διηγωνται, εμταν υς το νθρ που κ νεκρ ν ναστ .

KJV 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.

- **He gave them orders:** Mk 5:43 8:29,30 Mt 12:19 17:9
- **until the Son of Man:** Mk 9:30,31 8:31 10:32-34 Mt 12:40 16:21 27:63 Lu 24:46
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passage:

Matthew 17:9+ As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead."

Luke 9:36-37+ And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

## COMING DOWN FROM A "MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE"

**Akin** - The summit on the mountain has concluded. The three disciples have learned that despite his earthly, outward appearance, Jesus is God. The transfiguration has proven that beyond any reasonable question. But, might the transfiguration not be an evidence of the soon triumph of the Messiah without the cross? Might the Christ enter into His glory and establish His kingdom in power now given the breath-taking display they had just witnessed? Who says the cross must come before the crown? Jesus does. What He has just experienced has not weakened His resolve to go to Calvary. It has emboldened Him to go and drink the very last drop of the cup of divine wrath in the place of unworthy and helpless sinners ([Sermon](#))

**As they were coming down from the mountain** - Talk about descending to the "lowlands of reality." These three men had seen the King of glory. They had received a preview of coming attractions, the Messianic Kingdom on earth. They saw something no other men had ever seen. So they were coming down in elevation, but surely they were coming down in elation! But they would never forget this time of Jesus' transfiguration.

**He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen** - (Similar to Mk 1:34, 43–44; Mk 3:11–12; Mk 5:43; Mk 7:36; Mk 8:30) - **Them** refers to the three disciples for only they knew about what had transpired at the transfiguration. It would be part of the truth that would contribute to their radical transformation into men willing to die for what and in Whom they believed. Some would classify this as a so-called "Messianic Secret (click for more detail)." Luke tells us Peter, James and John obeyed Jesus' orders "And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen." (Luke 9:36-37+) Others had not obeyed similar orders (Mk 1:40–45; Mk 7:36).

**Gave orders** ([1291](#)) [diastello](#) from **dia** = [asunder](#), intensifies + **stello** = to send) means to send through referring to giving an explicit command that is unambiguously, unmistakably clear. It means to draw asunder, to distinguish, to set forth distinctly, to command. **Diastello** is a stronger verb than [entellomai](#) (to command) as we see for example in Mk 7:36 where Jesus "**gave** them **orders** not to tell anyone (that He had healed a deaf man)." **BDAG** - to "define or express in no uncertain terms what one must do" and so to give strict orders (Heb 12:20). When **diastello** is followed by a negative it means to prohibit or forbid (Mt 16:20, Mark 5:43; 7:36; 8:15; 9:9; ). It is used 8x in the NT only in the middle voice

**Relate** ([1334](#)) ([diegeomai](#) from **diá** = through + [hēgéomai](#) = to lead) means to conduct a narration through to the end. To recount in full, giving a detailed account as did the Gadarene townspeople in Mk 5:16+ who described in detail Jesus' encounter with the demoniac (and the swine drowning) which prompted the whole town to beg Him to leave!

**Until** - This is a very important expression of time. Until means something will continue to happen up to a point and then it will not happen. In this case what would continue until Jesus rose from the dead was their SILENCE on the transfiguration. After the resurrection, proclamation is the order of the day!

**The Son of Man rose from the dead** - Jesus' favorite self-designation was **Son of Man** and it speaks of His divinity and His humanity. Once Jesus had risen from the dead the disciples could speak of the transfiguration.

**Son of Man** - Mk. 2:10; Mk. 2:28; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 8:38; Mk. 9:9; Mk. 9:12; Mk. 9:31; Mk. 10:33; Mk. 10:45; Mk. 13:26; Mk. 14:21; Mk. 14:41; Mk. 14:62; The "Son of Man" title appear only twice in the first half of Mark (Mk 2:10, 28). Now it will occur with great regularity especially in the context of His suffering (Mk 8:31; 9:9, 12; 10:33, 45; 14:21, 41).

**Constable** - The Old Testament taught a resurrection of the dead (Dan. 12:2; cf. John 11:24), but the disciples could not harmonize that revelation with Jesus' statement that He would rise three days after He died (8:31). The whole idea of Messiah dying was incomprehensible to them.

**Hurtado** writes "It is only in the light of the crucifixion and resurrection that Jesus' true person can be understood, for he is not just a wonderful visitor from heaven or an especially favored man given mystic glory but one called to 'give his life to redeem many people'

### Oswald Chambers - Why are we not told plainly?

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 9:9.

Say nothing until the Son of man is risen in you—until the life of the risen Christ so dominates you that you understand what the historic Christ taught. When you get to the right state on the inside, the word which Jesus has spoken is so plain that you are amazed you did not see it before. You could not understand it before, you were not in the place in disposition where it could be borne.

Our Lord does not hide these things; they are unbearable until we get into a fit condition of spiritual life. “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” There must be communion with His risen life before a particular word can be borne by us. Do we know anything about the impartation of the risen life of Jesus? The evidence that we do is that His word is becoming interpretable to us. God cannot reveal anything to us if we have not His Spirit. An obstinate outlook will effectually hinder God from revealing anything to us. If we have made up our minds about a doctrine, the light of God will come no more to us on that line, we cannot get it. This obtuse stage will end immediately His resurrection life has its way with us.

“Tell no man ...”—so many do tell what they saw on the mount of transfiguration. They have had the vision and they testify to it, but the life does not tally with it, the Son of man is not yet risen in them. I wonder when He is going to be formed in you and in me?

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### QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man?](#)

**ANSWER** - Jesus is referred to as the “Son of Man” 88 times in the New Testament. In fact, *Son of Man* is the primary title Jesus used when referring to Himself (e.g., Matthew 12:32; 13:37; Luke 12:8; John 1:51). The only use of *Son of Man* in a clear reference to Jesus, spoken by someone other than Jesus, came from the lips of Stephen as he was being martyred (Acts 7:56).

***Son of Man* is a title of humanity.** Other titles for Christ, such as [Son of God](#), are overt in their focus on His deity. *Son of Man*, in contrast, focuses on the humanity of Christ. God called the prophet Ezekiel “son of man” 93 times. In this way, God was simply calling Ezekiel a human being. *Son of man* is simply a periphrastic term for “human.” Jesus Christ was truly a human being. He came “in the flesh” (1 John 4:2).

***Son of Man* is a title of humility.** The Second Person of [the Trinity](#), eternal in nature, left heaven’s glory and took on human flesh, becoming the Son of Man, born in a manger and “despised and rejected by mankind” (Isaiah 53:3). The Son of Man had “no place to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). The Son of Man ate and drank with sinners (Matthew 11:19). The Son of Man suffered at the hands of men (Matthew 17:12). This intentional lowering of His status from King of Heaven to Son of Man is the epitome of humility (see Philippians 2:6–8).

***Son of Man* is a title of deity.** Ezekiel may have been a son of man, but Jesus is *the* Son of Man. As such, Jesus is the supreme example of all that God intended mankind to be, the embodiment of truth and grace (John 1:14). In Him “all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9). For this reason, the Son of Man was able to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6). The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). The Son of Man came to save lives (Luke 9:56; 19:10), rise from the dead (Mark 9:9), and execute judgment (John 5:27). At His trial before the high priest, Jesus said, “I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:64). This statement immediately ended the trial, as the court accused the Lord of blasphemy and condemned Him to death (verses 65–66).

***Son of Man* is a fulfillment of prophecy.** Jesus’ claim before the high priest to be the Son of Man was a reference to the prophecy of Daniel 7:13–14, “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” Daniel saw glory, worship, and an everlasting kingdom given to the Messiah—here called the “Son of Man”—and Jesus applied this prophecy to Himself. Jesus also spoke of [His coming kingdom](#) on other occasions (Matthew 13:41; 16:28). The author of Hebrews used a reference to the “son of man” in the Psalms to teach that Jesus, the true Son of Man, will be the ruler of all things (Hebrews 2:5–9; cf. Psalm 8:4–6). The Son of Man, in fulfillment of [Old Testament prophecy](#), will be the King.

Jesus was fully God (John 1:1), but He was also fully human (John 1:14). As the Son of God and the Son of Man, He is deserving of both titles. [GotQuestions.org](#)

## Mark 9:10 They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.

Wuest And the foregoing matter they kept carefully and faithfully to themselves, all the while discussing with one another what that particular thing, namely, to arise out from amongst the dead, was. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:10 They kept this statement to themselves, discussing what this rising from the dead meant.

NLT Mark 9:10 So they kept it to themselves, but they often asked each other what he meant by "rising from the dead."

ESV Mark 9:10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.

NIV Mark 9:10 They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

GNT Mark 9:10 κα τ ν λ γον κρ τησαν πρ ς αυτο ς συζητο ντες τ στιν τ κ νεκρ ν ναστ ναι.

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

YLT Mark 9:10 and the thing they kept to themselves, questioning together what the rising out of the dead is.

ASV Mark 9:10 And they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean.

CSB Mark 9:10 They kept this word to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

- **they:** Ge 37:11 Lu 2:50,51 24:7,8 Joh 16:17-19
- **what:** Mk 9:32 Mt 16:22 Lu 18:33,34 Lk 24:25-27 Jn 2:19-22 12:16,33,34 Joh 16:29,30 Ac 17:18
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DISCIPLES QUESTION RISING FROM THE DEAD

This detail is found only in the Mark's Gospel.

**They seized upon that statement** ([logos](#) = "a word," the matter spoken of) - **Seized** is a strong verb [krateo](#) which has been used several times in Mark of literally taking hold (Mk. 1:31; Mk. 3:21; Mk. 5:41; Mk. 6:17) but here is used figuratively describes the three disciples in a sense "grasping hold of" this particular statement by Jesus. The NET helps understand the meaning of [krateo](#) here, rendering it "They **kept** this statement to themselves."

**Hiebert** suggests that the strong verb [krateo](#) " meaning "to take hold of, to seize," more probably means that the three disciples fastened their thoughts on the saying about His resurrection. This they did by questioning among themselves, discussing its possible meaning." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Daniel Hill** makes the point that the three disciples "obeyed the command not to tell others of what they had seen." Principle: Obedience even in the midst of lack of understanding. Illustration: A man was visiting an African Mission center and the missionary was showing him around the compound. A missionaries son was playing under a tree when the missionary turned and shouted, "Down on the ground," and then he ordered "Crawl towards me," it was only after the boy was safely away from the tree that the visitor saw the poisonous snake hanging from the limbs over where the boy was playing. The boy was obedient, even though he did not know what was going on. How obedient would we be in a similar situation? Peter, James, and John did not understand. But they were obedient. ([Mark 9](#))

**Discussing with one another** - **Discussing** is [suzeteo](#) which in the [present tense](#) means they continued to carry on a conversation. [Suzeteo](#) sometimes had the sense of debating or disputing, but while possible this meaning is not obvious from the context. The point is they wanted to know what Jesus was talking about. The implication seems clear that their ongoing discussion/dialogue/debate indicates they were perplexed by Jesus' words.

**Hiebert** - The doctrine of the future resurrection was familiar to them, being one of the central tenets of the Pharisees and a teaching commonly accepted among the Jews. Their perplexity concerned Jesus' strange reference to His own resurrection from among the dead as something to take place soon. It conveyed the unwelcome implication of His coming death. This confused them, because they associated the idea of reigning, rather than dying, with the Messiah. They still had no conception of the fact that the death and resurrection of Christ would constitute the center of the gospel. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** is similar on **discussing with one another** - They had seen Jesus raise people from the dead (Matt. 11:5; cf. Matt. 9:24–25; Luke 7:14–15; John 11:43–44) and had even done so themselves (Matt. 10:8). The disciples also understood from the Old Testament that there would be a general resurrection (Job 19:26–27; Dan. 12:1–2). They were not having a discussion about the nature of resurrection in general but about the resurrection of Jesus in particular. They were confused about His death and rising, which did not fit into their view of the Messiah's mission. ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**What rising ([anistemi](#) - see notes on Mk 8:31) from the dead meant** - This is amazing because Jesus had already discussed His resurrection before. But their dullness would be seen again when Jesus made a similar statement in Lk 9:32.

**Utley** - The disciples did not understand the distinction between “the Second Coming” (8:38) and “the Resurrection” (9:9). The Jews of Jesus' day expected only one coming of the Messiah into history and this coming was related to the military victory and supremacy of national Israel on a global scale. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

The failure of the disciples to understand **what rising from the dead meant** recalls similar passages in John's Gospel...

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” 20 The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 **So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.** (John 2:19-22+)

### Mark 9:11 They asked Him, saying, "Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

NET Mark 9:11 Then they asked him, "Why do the experts in the law say that Elijah must come first?"

NLT Mark 9:11 Then they asked him, "Why do the teachers of religious law insist that Elijah must return before the Messiah comes? "

ESV Mark 9:11 And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?"

NIV Mark 9:11 And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

GNT Mark 9:11 κα πηρ των α τ ν λ γοντες, τι λ γουσιν ο γραμματε ς τι λ αν δε λθε ν πρ τον;

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

YLT Mark 9:11 And they were questioning him, saying, that the scribes say that Elijah it behoveth to come first.

- Mk 9:4 Mal 3:1 Mal 4:5 Mt 11:14 17:10,11
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 17:10+ And His disciples asked Him, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

**Constable** explains that "The appearance of **Elijah** on the mountain led to a discussion of his role as Messiah's forerunner. This conversation developed as the disciples followed Jesus down the mountain."

**Akin** has an interesting thought - The presence of Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration, references to resurrection from the dead, and the recognition that Jesus is the Messiah would constitute a compelling argument that the end of the age is near. Therefore that prompts a question in the disciples mind recorded in v. 11. ([Sermon](#))

**They asked Him - Asked** (questioned) is in the [eperotao](#) indicating the asked over and over.

**Saying Why is it that the scribes ([grammateus](#)) say that Elijah must come first** - Note the verb **must** ([dei](#)) which speaks of the absolute necessity that this must occur. **Come first** means before the arrival of the Messiah. This is a logical question in light of Scripture in Malachi 4 (below) and their experience on the mountain

**Utley on Scribes** - These were the culturally respected OT interpreters who explained the OT and how it applied to their day. In this time most of the scribes were Pharisees (ED: WHO BELIEVED IN A LITERAL RESURRECTION).. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

Their question is based on the OT prophecy in Malachi -

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me (THIS WORK DESCRIBED IN Isaiah 40:3-4). And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.(Mal 3:1+)

Malachi 4:5+ identified the "messenger" in the preceding passage...

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of the LORD.

**COMMENT** - This prophecy will not be fulfilled until the end of this age when either an "Elijah-like" figure or the literal Elijah returns. Most see this fulfillment as one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3ff.

**Hiebert** comments that "The disciples had already recognized Jesus as the coming Messiah. How did the appearing of Elijah, whom they had just seen on the mount, accord with the scribal teaching?" ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** adds that "The prediction that the actual Old Testament person of Elijah would be the forerunner of the Messiah and His judgment was well-known to Jews of Jesus' day (**ED: THIS ACCORDS WITH THE QUESTION BY THE DISCIPLES = 'the scribes say'**) Therefore, as Peter, James, and John came down the mountainside with the Lord, **they could not have helped wondering how the appearance of Elijah they had just witnessed fit in with Malachi's prophecy**" "If You are the Messiah, as you have declared and we have believed," they asked, in effect, "why did Elijah not appear *before* You began Your ministry?" It was doubtlessly that same concern that many of the Jewish leaders used to justify rejecting Jesus' messiahship. And it was probably Malachi's prophecy that caused some people to think that Jesus was Elijah rather than the Messiah (Matt. 16:14). "Despite His great miracles," they may have reasoned, "Jesus cannot be the Messiah, because Elijah has not yet come. So He must Himself be Elijah." ([MNTC-Mk](#)) (Bolding added)

**Mark 9:12 And He said to them, "Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"**

NET Mark 9:12 He said to them, "Elijah does indeed come first, and restores all things. And why is it written that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be despised?"

NLT Mark 9:12 Jesus responded, "Elijah is indeed coming first to get everything ready for the Messiah. Yet why do the Scriptures say that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be treated with utter contempt?"

ESV Mark 9:12 And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"

NIV Mark 9:12 Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected?"

GNT Mark 9:12 δ φη α το ς, λ α ς μ ν λ θ ν π ρ τον ποκαθιστ νει π ντα· κα π ς γ γραπται π τ υ ν το νθρ που να πολλ π θ κα ξουδενηθ ;

KJV 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.

- **restore all things:** Mk 1:2-8 Isa 40:3-5 Mal 4:6 Mt 3:1-12 11:2-18 Lu 1:16,17,76 3:2-6 Joh 1:6-36 3:27-30
- **He will suffer many things:** Ps 22:1-31 69:1-36 Isa 53:1-12 Da 9:24-26 Zec 13:7
- **be treated with contempt:** Ps 22:6,7 69:12 74:22 Isa 49:7 50:6 52:14 53:1-3 Zec 11:13 Lu 23:11,39 Php 2:7,8
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 17:11+ And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; 12 but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands."

**COMMENT:** The sequence of thought is as follows: (1) Elijah is coming as the restorer (Mal. 4:5); (2) he came, unrecognized, in the person of John the Baptist, and was killed; (3) the Son of Man faces a like fate. The disciples seem to grasp only the first two points. (Ryrie)

## THE SCRIBAL TEACHING WAS CORRECT

**And He said to them, "Elijah does first come and restore all things** - Matthew's has "'Elijah is coming and will restore all things." Jesus' answer may have surprised the three disciples. Jesus affirms that the disciples are correct that Elijah does come before the Messiah and prepare **all things** for His coming.

**Hiebert** - Elijah's work of restoration is spiritual, bringing the hearts of the people in repentance and faith to the scriptural principles and practices of the fathers (Mal. 4:5–6+). ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt**- This is the part that the disciples did not expect. The same divine Scriptures that predicted the coming of Elijah prior to the Day of the Lord also predicted a suffering Messiah. The **Son of Man** of course is Jesus referring to Himself. And while He does not give the specific prophecies that described His suffering and death (cf. Ge 3:15, Ps. 22+; Ps 69+; Isa. 53+; Zech. 12:10+), His question was straightforward. How could He be the Messiah, if He did not fulfill these prophecies of the "Suffering Servant?"

**Hiebert on suffer many things and be treated with contempt** - This was the important point. The treatment awaiting Him explained His assertion about His coming resurrection. His many sufferings would result in His being set at naught, ignored, **treated with contempt** as though He were nothing. That evaluation of Him would lead to His death. Thus the Old Testament predictions of His suffering (Isa. 53; Ps. 22) would be fulfilled. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

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**Contempt** (1847)(exoudeneo from **ek** , an intens., + **oudenōō** = to bring to naught. **Exoudenoō**, closely related to [exoutheneo](#), is a strong verb that means to treat as nothing, to despise, to scorn, to set at naught, or to reject with contempt. Built from ek ("out of," used here intensively) and a root related to ouden ("nothing"), it carries the idea of reducing someone in your estimation to nothing, regarding that person or thing as worthless, insignificant, or unworthy of honor. It is not merely inward dislike, but an attitude that expresses itself in open contempt, disregard, and dismissal. Thus the word moves beyond simple disagreement and describes a response in which a person is belittled, dishonored, and treated as though he does not matter.

In Scripture the term can describe varying shades of contempt, but the core idea remains the same: to count as negligible and therefore to reject or scorn. In the Septuagint it is used often for despising God's word, God's chosen servants, or what God values (for example, 1 Samuel 15:23, 26; 16:1; 2 Kings 19:21; Ecclesiastes 9:16). In the New Testament the form exoudenoō appears in Mark 9:12, where Jesus says that the Son of Man must "suffer many things and be treated with contempt," showing that the Messiah would not merely be opposed, but humiliated and regarded as of no account. Related spellings such as exoutheneō carry the same essential force: to consider or treat someone as despicable and contemptible. The word therefore speaks of a heart posture that devalues, a mind that dismisses, and an action that casts aside with scorn. In biblical terms, to exoudenoō someone is to strip him of worth in one's eyes, whether that person is a prophet, a king, wisdom, or supremely the Son of Man Himself (Mark 9:12).

**Mark 9:13 "But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him."**

- **Elijah**: Mt 11:14 17:12,13 Lu 1:17
- **and they**: Mk 6:14-28 Mt 14:3-11 Lu 3:19,20 Ac 7:52
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Matthew 17:12-13+ but I say to you that **Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him**, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands."13 **Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.**

Luke 1:17+ "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him **in the spirit and power of Elijah**, (ED: NOTE THIS INDICATES NOT A LITERAL ELIJAH BUT ONE WHO IS "ELIJAH-LIKE") TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Matthew 11:14+ "And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.

**COMMENT:** This can be a bit confusing. John MacArthur has a helpful note writing that "Jesus' point was that if the Jews received John's message as God's message and received the Messiah he proclaimed, he would indeed be the Elijah spoken of by Malachi. But if they refused the King and His kingdom, another Elijah-like prophet would be sent in the future. Because Israel did not accept the message of John the Baptist, John could not be Elijah and the kingdom could not be established. Another prophet like Elijah is therefore still yet to come, perhaps as one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11:1-19." (**ED:** AND SOME THINK HE WILL NOT ONLY BE "ELIJAH LIKE" BUT HE WILL IN FACT BE ELIJAH - WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL Rev 11 TRANSPIRES TO KNOW WITH CERTAINTY!) (MNTC-Matthew)

John 1:21 They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he \*said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" (**ED:** THIS ALLUDES TO THE PROPHET MOSES PREDICTED IN Dt 18:15 A PROPHECY IN FACT OF JESUS) And he answered, "No."

**COMMENT** - He denied being Elijah because, though he knew of the prophecy of Lu 1:17+ (THAT HE WOULD COME "**in the spirit and power of Elijah**"), like Jesus, he realized the question was about a literal, reincarnated Elijah. Many people (even many modern Bible teachers) have said that John was Elijah returned (Mal 4:5), but John explicitly denied this.

**Daniel Hill** - Now remember the reason for this dialogue. The disciples were having a hard time accepting the fact that Jesus had to suffer and die. They knew Jesus was the Messiah, the promised King of the Old Testament prophecies. They wanted him to usher in His kingdom now and forget about any suffering and death. But Jesus is telling them that suffering is necessary if exaltation is to result. ([Mark 9](#))

**But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come** - So Jesus is explaining to the disciples this prophecy has been fulfilled and you can imagine their puzzled looks at His statement. As Luke had stated John the Baptist would "go as a forerunner before Him **in the spirit and power of Elijah**, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

**And they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him** - Jesus is referring to John the Baptist who was imprisoned and suffered a ruthless, arbitrary death at the hands of evil Herod and Herodias. They rejected John's message and killed him and will do the same with Jesus. John fulfilled his assignment given from God and Jesus would fulfill His assignment.

The phrase just as **it is written of him** (of Elijah and the Elijah-like figure John the Baptist) is confusing - Constable has a good thought that "The Old Testament passage to which Jesus referred was 1 Kings 19:1-3, 10. There Ahab, and especially Jezebel, swore to kill Elijah. They "wished" to execute him. This is exactly what "King" Herod Antipas, and especially Herodias, really did to John the Baptist. Now we see why Mark recorded the story of John's death (Mk 6:17-29). It was to show that John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecies about Elijah coming." Swete adds that ""In this case Scripture had foretold the future not by prophecy but by a type. The fate intended for Elijah (1 Kings 19:2, 10) had overtaken John."

In Matthew's parallel account we read "I say to you that **Elijah already came**, and **they did not recognize him**, but **did to him whatever they wished**. So also the **Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands**" (HE WILL BE KILLED JUST LIKE JOHN) 13 Then (WHEN? WHEN JESUS MADE THE PREVIOUS STATEMENT) the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

**John Grassmick** writes that "John the Baptist fulfilled the Elijah prophecy (Mal. 4:5-6) **typically** at Christ's First Advent. Yet, Malachi's prophecy (Mal. 4:5-6) indicates that Elijah himself [or one in the spirit of Elijah like John the Baptist] will also appear just before Christ's Second Advent (cf. Rev. 11:3ff+). ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Constable** - Evidently Mark did not mention John the Baptist as the fulfillment of this prophecy, as Matthew did, because his identity is obvious to the careful reader. The fulfillment was not complete, however, because someone will come in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way before Messiah's second coming (Mal. 4:5; cf. Rev. 11:3ff+). This discussion clarified for the disciples and for Mark's readers how Jesus' messiahship harmonized with Old Testament prophecy that seems to contradict it. Disciples of Jesus must have no doubts about His being the Son of Man, especially since they can anticipate testing through suffering for their faith. The importance of strong faith comes through in the next incident that Mark recorded.

**MacArthur** explains that "Although the disciples now realized that Jesus was referring to John the Baptist (Matt. 17:13), Israel had failed to recognize John's significance (Matt. 17:12) and did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him. The religious leaders rejected him (Matt. 21:25; Luke 7:33), and Herod imprisoned and killed him (Mark 6:17-29)—the fate intended for Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-10). No specific Old Testament prophecies predicted the death of Messiah's forerunner, so the phrase **it is written of him** is best understood as having been fulfilled **typically** by John. Had Israel realized who John was and accepted his message, he would indeed have been the Elijah who was to come (Matt. 11:14). But since they did not, John was a preview of another who will

come in the spirit and power of Elijah before the second coming (possibly one of the two witnesses; cf. Rev. 11:3–12). **The biblical pattern is clear. Elijah was rejected and persecuted; Messiah's forerunner, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, was rejected and killed, and Messiah Himself was rejected and murdered. In the future, however, the prophesied Elijah will come, the Lord Jesus Christ will return, and the kingdom will be established.** ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**Wuest** is similar to **MacArthur** - On the question of Jesus, Expositors says; "The aim is to awaken thought in the minds of the disciples by putting together things incongruous. All things to be restored in preparation for Messiah; Messiah Himself to suffer and be set at naught: what then can the real function and fate of Elijah the restorer be? Who is Elijah?" In Matthew 11:14, our Lord identifies John the Baptist as Elijah. We are not to understand that he was the actual Elijah of the Old Testament, nor that his appearance and ministry to Israel fulfilled the prophecy of the future coming and ministry of Elijah, but that he came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the hearts of Israel for the first Advent of Messiah as Elijah will do for His second Advent. Elijah was persecuted by Jezebel, as John was beheaded at the request of Herodias, and as Elijah will in the future be crucified by Antichrist (Rev. 11:8, "where also our Lord was crucified"). ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**D Edmond Hiebert** summarizes the various interpretations regarding the **coming of Elijah** - Clearly, John the Baptist was the spiritual fulfillment of the Elijah prophecy for the first advent.

- Will it also have a literal fulfillment in connection with the Second Coming? Many reply with a categorical no.
- Others admit that the view of a double fulfillment is possible but decline to commit themselves.
- Still others insist that when all the Elijah references are taken together (Mal. 3:1; 4:5–6; Matt. 11:11–14; 17:10–13; Mark 9:11–13; Luke 1:17; John 1:19–23), a consistent explanation points to two comings: John was the **typical fulfillment** of the prophecy for the first advent, but there will be a **literal, personal return of Elijah** in connection with the second advent. This view recognizes John's unique moral position in relation to Christ's first coming (Mal. 3:1; Matt. 11:11–14; Mark 9:11–13; Luke 1:17) but maintains that the prophecy in Malachi 4:5–6 relates to Elijah personally and will have its true fulfillment at the eschatological Day of the Lord. Therefore John categorically denied that he was Elijah (John 1:21). This view of a double fulfillment was accepted by important church fathers. We regard it as the most probable view. (THIS WRITER ALSO AGREES). ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

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**Daniel Akin - Why was Jesus gloriously transfigured? Why did the God who came incognito, just for a moment, reveal His true identity and nature in an unmistakable fashion?** Let me close with a summation:

1. It was to reveal the true nature of Jesus as God incarnate.
2. It was to strengthen Christ as He began His march to the cross.
3. It was to fortify the disciples in obeying the call to radical discipleship.
4. It was to demonstrate that Messiah Jesus was the fulfillment of the Law (Moses) and Prophets (Elijah) as God's final, complete and climatic revelation.
5. It was a confirmation of Peter's confession (Mk 8:29).
6. It was to teach that the Messiah who was crucified is the same Messiah who will reign over His kingdom in glory.
7. It was to encourage the disciples in light of Jesus' prediction of His passion (Mk 8:31-32).
8. It fulfilled, at least in part, the promise of Mark 9:1.
9. It reaffirmed the Father's love and delight in His Son (cf. Mk 1:11).
10. It calls us to trust and follow the One and only One who is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15) and the very "radiance of the glory of God" (Heb. 1:3). In Jesus and Jesus alone we can see the glory and greatness of God and live!

The wonderful British preacher **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** said it so well, "**The Son of God became man that the children of men might become children of God**" (God the Father, God the Son, 265). Jesus Christ: 1) He is the hero of the Bible, 2) God in a body, 3) The Savior of sinners, 4) The final sacrifice, 5) The glory of God made flesh. He took the 3 disciples up a mountain for a glimpse of glory. He wants to take you and me up to heaven to glory forever. Will you follow Him? Will you trust Him? You become what you behold! May we all behold Jesus now and forever. ([Sermon](#))

**Mark 9:14** When they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them.

Wuest And having come to His disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes wrangling with

them. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:14 When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and experts in the law arguing with them.

NLT Mark 9:14 When they returned to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd surrounding them, and some teachers of religious law were arguing with them.

ESV Mark 9:14 And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them.

NIV Mark 9:14 When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.

GNT Mark 9:14 Κα λθη ντες πρ ς το ς μαθητ ς ε δον χλον πολ ν περ α το ς κα γραμματε ς συζητο ντας πρ ς α το ς.

KJV Mark 9:14 And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

- **when:** Mt 17:14-21 Lu 9:37
- **the scribes:** Mk 2:6 11:28 12:14 Lu 11:53,54 Heb 12:3
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Luke 9:37+ On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him.

## JESUS RETURNS TO FIND DISCIPLES IN DEBATE

This next section covers Mark 9:14-29 and deals with the cure of the demon possessed boy which shows that with God all things are possible. This section has parallels in Matthew 17:14–20 and Luke 9:37–43a. All the synoptics place this event immediately after the transfiguration. Mark's account is much more detailed and twice the length of the parallel passages. Cranfield remarks, "The wealth of detail and great vividness of the section strongly suggest that it is based directly on personal reminiscence—probably Peter's."

**Garland** summarizes this section - The first scene (9:14–19) begins with crowds gathered around the helpless disciples, engaged in a debate, and climaxes in Jesus' lament over this faithless generation. The second scene (9:20–24) brings Jesus face to face with a desperate father and culminates in the man's moving confession of uncertain faith. The third scene (9:25–27) shows faith at work as Jesus drives out a spirit that has tormented the boy and struck him down as dead. The final scene (9:28–29) returns to the disciples' failure to accomplish the exorcism themselves and connects that failure to insufficient prayer. ([NIVAC-Mark](#))

**Grant Osborne** says "This event is another fulcrum in the book, as three primary Markan themes coalesce: (1) the power and compassion of Christ, (2) demonic conflict, and (3) discipleship failure. This is a classic example of the mountaintop/valley experience. The innermost circle of disciples experienced the glory of God in Jesus, as great a spiritual "high" as anyone in history has known. Now they are about to join the rest of the Twelve as they descend into the valley and face one of the lowest of failures the disciples have ever experienced. This again parallels the exodus story—particularly when Moses came off the mountain to face the apostasy and idolatry of the Jewish people in the "golden calf" incident (Exod. 32)...The three who had been with Jesus had experienced peace and awe as they encountered the presence and majesty of God. Now they return to the real world of debate and dissension. ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**MacArthur** contrasts the mountain top experience - The episode took place immediately after the transfiguration, and the contrasts between the two events are striking. The transfiguration happened on a mountain; this happened in the valley below. In the transfiguration, there was glory; here there was suffering. In the transfiguration God dominated the scene; here Satan did. In the transfiguration, the heavenly Father was pleased; in this incident, an earthly father was tormented. In the transfiguration there was a perfect Son; here there was a perverted son. At the transfiguration, fallen men were in holy wonder; in this story, there was a fallen son in unholy horror. ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**When they came back to the disciples** - So the events in Mark 9:9-13 transpire with Peter, James and John returning with Jesus. Where the nine disciples had been left is not stated. Was it the bottom of the mountain? We cannot be certain. **Luke** tells us it was **the next day**, which would be the day after the transfiguration.

**They saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with** (pros = face to face, imagine our saying "in your face!") **them** - Can you envision the crowd encircling the nine hapless disciples? They were getting a foretaste of what ministry would be like on their own! Wuest has "scribes wrangling with" the nine disciples. **Arguing** is in the [present tense](#) (continually arguing) and is the same verb [suzeteo](#) translated **discussing** in Mark 9:10. In Mark 8:11, the Pharisees '**began to argue (suzeteo) with**' Jesus and now the other division of the religious leaders was arguing with Jesus' disciples. We soon discover not only are the 9 disciples arguing, but they have been unable to cast the demon out of a young boy. They are in great need of Jesus' presence! (Aren't we all!). In context, the scribes may well have been arguing over their inability to cast out the demon and use this as an opportunity to question Jesus' authority! As **Lane** comments "the messenger of a man is as the man himself" (NICNT-Mk)

**Utley on large crowd...scribes arguing** - Both of these things characterized Jesus' ministry and now the disciples were experiencing a foreshadowing of Jesus' existential situation and also their coming ministry. These were recurrent problems, but also opportunities. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Garland** - The disciples' abortive attempt to exorcise a demon from a lad ignited the squabble. Jesus had deputized them to cast out demons (Mk 3:15; 6:7), and they had success (Mk 6:13-14), but not with this difficult case. Mark describes the boy's horrific afflictions in graphic detail. ([NIVAC-Mark](#))

**Wuest** - This is peculiar to Mark, but the situation is easily conceivable: the disciples have tried to heal the boy and failed (v. 18); the scribes, delighted with the failure, taunt them with it, and suggest by way of explanation, the waning power of the Master, whose name they had vainly attempted to conjure with. The baffled nine make the best defence they can, or perhaps listen in silence." To this, the crowd was listening. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Akin** - Mountain top experiences are wonderful and we need them from time to time for spiritual nourishment and the recharging of our spiritual batteries. However, God never intended for us to stay there. He wants us "down here" preaching the gospel to and ministering among the hurting and suffering. He wants us living with and serving real people devastated by the ravages of the Fall and sin. And, as His agents of redemptive love, we go in His Name and with the promise of His presence. To forget this is to open ourselves up to all sorts of difficulty, challenges, and even failure, as 9 of His disciples with pain and humiliation discovered. Peter wanted to stay on the mountain top (Mk 9:5), but Jesus was headed to Jerusalem and the cross (Mk 8:32). He leads them down the mountain (Mk 9:9) to rejoin the other disciples and to minister to the hurting on the way to Jerusalem and His passion (Mk 9:30)

#### **Mark 9:15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him.**

Wuest And immediately, all the crowd, having seen Him, was completely amazed, and having run to Him, gave Him greeting. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:15 When the whole crowd saw him, they were amazed and ran at once and greeted him.

NLT Mark 9:15 When the crowd saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with awe, and they ran to greet him.

ESV Mark 9:15 And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him.

NIV Mark 9:15 As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

GNT Mark 9:15 κα εθς πς χλος δ ντες ατν ξεθαμβθησαν κα προστρ χοντες σπ ζοντο ατν.

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

YLT Mark 9:15 and immediately, all the multitude having seen him, were amazed, and running near, were saluting him.

- **were:** Mk 9:2,3 Ex 34:30
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Matthew 17:14+ When they came to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, falling on his knees before Him and saying,

Luke 9:37-43+ On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him.

## RUNNING TO JESUS BUT FOR WRONG REASON

Notice Luke says "on the next day" which would be the day after the transfiguration, a detail only mentioned in Luke.

**Immediately** ([euthus](#)) - One of Mark's favorite words also in Mk 9:20, 24.

**When the entire crowd saw Him** - Recall Jesus had **summoned the crowd** in Mark 8:34 so presumably some of these were in that group. Mark describes three reactions when the crowd saw Jesus coming - amazed, running , greet.

**They were amazed** ([ekthambeo](#)) - Only Mark gives this detail, but does not specify why they were amazed, actually even utterly amazed, "trembling astonishment that verges on alarm." (Edwards) It could be as simple an explanation that His absence was very obvious and they were excited for Him to return. A few commentaries say it was because Jesus' face was still glowing but there is absolutely no evidence that was the case (cf also Mark 9:8) and the crowd would hardly be running to greet Him, but might have run from His glory (cf reaction to Moses' face - Ex 34:30+) or at least might have fallen on their faces. Also if He demonstrated residual glory it would have contradicted His command that the disciples tell no one what had happened on the mountain. As an aside astonishment in Mark everywhere but here takes place after a miracle (Mk 1:27; 2:12; 4:41; 5:42; 6:51; 7:37).

**Expositor's on amazed** "The Master reappears, when He is not looked for, when He is needed, and when His name is being taken in vain, perhaps not without a certain sympathy on the part of the volatile crowd not accustomed hitherto to miscarriage of attempts at healing when the name of Jesus was invoked. In that case their feeling would be a compound of confusion and gladness—ashamed and yet delighted to see Him, both betrayed in their manner."

**Hiebert** has an interesting thought that "the entire crowd which had flocked around the frustrated disciples had been so intent on what was taking place that the approach of Jesus had been unobserved. The sudden realization of His presence evoked an immediate strong reaction." The strong reaction is adequately accounted for by Jesus' sudden, unexpected, and opportune appearance at the very time He was the center of unsympathetic discussion. "They had been so engrossed in their argument that they had not seen him come, and now, just when the moment was right, here he was in the midst of them." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**And began running up to greet** ([aspazomai](#)) **Him** - Even after His sobering message on the cost of true discipleship, He is still a popular figure with the crowd.

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**Amazed** (1568) ([ekthambeo](#) from **ek** = out + **thambos** = amazement) means to be quite astonished, greatly amazed, moved to a relatively intense emotional state because of something causing great surprise or perplexity, be very excited. In Mark 14:33 it means be distressed, greatly disturbed, describing Jesus' deep distress at Gethsemane. In Mk 16:5 it means be frightened or alarmed at seeing sitting in Jesus' empty tomb.

Used 4x all in Mark - Mk. 9:15; Mk. 14:33; Mk. 16:5; Mk. 16:6 and not in Septuagint.

**Greet** (782) ([aspazomai](#) from **a** + **spao** = draw out as a sword, pull, breathe) means to enfold in arms, to welcome, to embrace. To salute one (not in a military sense), greet, bid, wish well to. In classical literature *aspazomai* can also be used of physical expressions of welcome, such as "embrace" and "kiss." The only other use in Mark is Mark 15:18 where the soldiers mocked Jesus and "began to **acclaim** Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

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**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - "The people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him."—Mark 9:15**

How great the difference between Moses and Jesus! When the prophet of Horeb had been forty days upon the mountain, he underwent a kind of transfiguration, so that his countenance shone with exceeding brightness, and he put a veil over his face, for the people could not endure to look upon his glory. Not so our Saviour. He had been transfigured with a greater glory than that of Moses, and yet, it is not written that the people were blinded by the blaze of his countenance, but rather they were amazed, and running to him they saluted him. The glory of the law repels, but the greater glory of Jesus attracts. Though Jesus is holy and just, yet blended with his purity there is so much of truth and grace, that sinners run to him amazed at his goodness, fascinated by his love; they salute him, become his disciples, and take him to be their Lord and Master. Reader, it may be that just now you are blinded by the dazzling brightness of the law of God. You feel its claims on your conscience, but you cannot keep it in your life. Not that you find fault with the law, on the contrary, it commands your profoundest esteem, still you are in nowise drawn by it to God; you

are rather hardened in heart, and are verging towards desperation. Ah, poor heart! turn thine eye from Moses, with all his repelling splendour, and look to Jesus, resplendent with milder glories. Behold his flowing wounds and thorn-crowned head! He is the Son of God, and therein he is greater than Moses, but he is the Lord of love, and therein more tender than the lawgiver. He bore the wrath of God, and in his death revealed more of God's justice than Sinai on a blaze, but that justice is now vindicated, and henceforth it is the guardian of believers in Jesus. Look, sinner, to the bleeding Saviour, and as thou feelest the attraction of his love, fly to his arms, and thou shalt be saved.

### Mark 9:16 And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?"

Wuest And He asked them, What is it that you are questioning them about? (Wuest)

NET Mark 9:16 He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?"

NLT Mark 9:16 "What is all this arguing about?" Jesus asked.

ESV Mark 9:16 And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?"

NIV Mark 9:16 "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.

GNT Mark 9:16 κα πηρ τησεν α το ς, Τ συζητε τε πρ ς α το ς;

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

YLT Mark 9:16 And he questioned the scribes, 'What dispute ye with them?'

ASV Mark 9:16 And he asked them, What question ye with them?

- **What:** Mk 8:11 Lu 5:30-32
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?"** - NET = "What are you arguing about with them?" **Discussing** is same verb ([suzeteo](#)) in Mark 9:10. Jesus asks them a question before they have a chance to draw him into the argument. Presumably Jesus addresses the question to the scribes but one cannot exclude He was speaking to the entire crowd. In the next verse Jesus discovers the subject of the dispute, is the inability of the nine disciples to cast out this wretched demon.

**Lenski** - Jesus at times uses his divine power to know something, but as a rule he does not. So he here makes inquiry and thus learns what the situation is. We may also surmise the cause of the dispute. The scribes were delighted by the failure of the disciples and taunted them and shamed them before the crowd; and the disciples were defending themselves as best they could. The situation was painful indeed. (ISMG)

### Mark 9:17 And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute;

Wuest And there answered Him one of the crowd, Teacher, I brought my son to you, who has a dumb spirit. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:17 A member of the crowd said to him, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that makes him mute.

NLT Mark 9:17 One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, "Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won't let him talk.

ESV Mark 9:17 And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute.

NIV Mark 9:17 A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.

GNT Mark 9:17 κα πεκρθη α τ ε ς κ το χλου, Διδ σκαλε, νεγκα τ ν υ ν μου πρ ς σ , χοντα πνε μα λαλον.

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

- **Teacher, I brought:** Mk 5:23 7:26 10:13 Mt 17:15 Lu 9:38 Joh 4:47
- **spirit which makes him mute:** Mk 9:25 Mt 12:22 Lu 11:14
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 17:14-15+ When they came to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, falling on his knees before Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

Luke 9:38+ And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy,

**And one of the crowd answered Him** - Don't miss that fact that in Matthew 17:14+ the man "came up to Jesus, **falling on his knees before Him**" and in Matthew 17:15 the father calls Jesus "**Lord**" and begs "**have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill.**" In Lk 9:38 adds that the father shouted ([boao](#)) "**Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy.**" (don't miss that detail - his "only" son) Can you not feel the agony and emotional pain in the heart of this father?

**Swindoll** - The father of the afflicted boy dismissed both sides of the theological debate to focus on his son's need. (See [Insights on Mark](#) Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Mark).

**POSB** notes that as the story unfolds "The man lacked personal knowledge and faith in Jesus' power, but He cried for the compassion of Jesus—if Jesus really did have the power to help. There was no way Jesus would turn away from the man's cry for mercy (see Lu. 18:13).....It is not so much our faith as it is our cry for mercy and compassion that arouses God to help us." (See [The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Mark](#))

**Teacher** ([didaskalos](#) title of respect, also calls Him **Lord**) **I brought You my son, possessed with a** (v25 "deaf and mute") **spirit which makes him mute** ([alalos](#)) - He initially **brought** his **son** to see Jesus but ended up with the substitutes, the second team (in more ways than one)! "Master, or "teacher," indicates reverence and respect and denotes that he regarded Jesus as a miracle-working rabbi." (Hiebert) NLT has "He is possessed by an evil spirit that won't let him talk." In v25 the demon is called "deaf and mute" presumably because he rendered the boy deaf and mute. **Possessed** is the verb [echo](#) (to hold, possess in the [present tense](#)).

**Wuest** on **mute** - The word emphasizes the sound of the word rather than the meaning. Hence, the boy could not utter a speech sound. The boy was demon-possessed. The demon had bound the boy's tongue and vocal organs. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**MacArthur** on **spirit** - Demons have been actively doing Satan's bidding in the world ever since the fall. They do not usually make their presence known, choosing rather to operate covertly by disguising themselves as angels of light (cf. 2 Cor. 11:14). During Jesus' earthly ministry, however, they launched an all-out assault against Him, manifesting themselves more often openly and to some degree more willingly than is their normal practice. But Jesus unmasked them, forcing them to reveal themselves even when they were unwilling to do so. This demon would likely have preferred to have remained undiscovered in the boy. Although his father had discerned that his son's condition was the result of demonic activity, others may have diagnosed him as having some kind of a mental disorder. (See [Mark 9-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Utley** - The Gospels make a definite distinction between demon possession and physical illness. In this particular case there seems to be a blurring of this distinction. The symptoms described by the father and the implication of several Greek words in the text imply epilepsy, especially a grand mal seizure. This physical element was aggravated or instigated by demonic possession. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Akin** - There is an old hymn entitled **Just When I Need Him Most**.....The disciples have a ways to go before they learn this lesson. A father with a suffering son, on the other hand, is about to plumb the depths of this marvelous truth

Just when I need Him, Jesus is near,  
Just when I falter, just when I fear;  
Ready to help me, ready to cheer,  
Just when I need Him most.

Refrain:

Just when I need Him most,  
Just when I need Him most,

Jesus is near to comfort and cheer,  
Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him, Jesus is true,  
Never forsaking, all the way through;  
Giving for burdens pleasures anew,  
Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him, Jesus is strong,  
Bearing my burdens all the day long;  
For all my sorrow giving a song,  
Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him, He is my all,  
Answering when upon Him I call;  
Tenderly watching lest I should fall,  
Just when I need Him most.

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**Lord** (in Matthew 17:15)(2962)(**kurios**) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership rights and uncontested power. **Kurios** is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing, the same word used by the Syrophenician woman in Mk 7:28.

**Teacher** (1320) **didaskalos** from **didasko** = teach to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught <> cp **didaskalia**) is one who provides instruction or systematically imparts truth. The **teacher** teaches in such a way as to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught. Someone has said that "The great teacher is the one who turns our ears into eyes so that we can see the truth." Henry Brooks added that "A (Bible) teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."

**Mute** (216) (**alalos** from **a** = negative + **laleo** = speak) means speechless, unable to articulate, speak or talk. 3x in NT - Mk. 7:37; Mk. 9:17; Mk. 9:25. In Mark 9:17, 25, "dumb spirit" is a malignant spirit, dumb or silent through obstinacy or imposed by a higher power which is contrary to one's usual character (see Mark 1:24, 34; 5:7), hence Christ says this type of demon is difficult to be cast out (Mark 9:29)

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### James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE DEVIL-POSSESSED SON Mark 9:17-29

On the platform of this narrative we see the characteristics of Heaven, earth, and hell. (1) Compassion and power; (2) Doubt and weakness; (3) Hate and misery. But the power of the compassionate Christ can overcome the weakness of His disciples and the work of the devil. We have here—

**I. Satanic Influence.** The Lord Jesus Christ believed in personal wicked spirits. We think lightly of them, but He had to face them and overcome. This evil influence had—

1. AN EARLY BEGINNING. "Of a child" (v. 21). Being born in sin, the natural soil of the heart is at once favourable to the seeds of evil. The Psalmist says, "We go astray as soon as we be born" (Psa. 58:3), and we keep going astray like lost sheep until we are born again.
2. AN OVERPOWERING MASTERY. "He teareth him, and oft-times casteth him into the fire, and into the waters" (vv. 18, 22). He was simply led captive by this devil, having no power at all to resist him. His purpose was to kill and to destroy. Such is the power of sin. Has sin dominion (mastery) over you? Are you dominated by principles you know to be contrary to your conscience and your God? Are you under law or grace? (Rom. 6:14).
3. A FEARFUL EFFECT. Mark's pen is graphic here. What a terrible catalogue of evils, "Teareth, foameth, gnasheth, pineth, wallowing, foaming, cast him into the fire, into the water, and rent him sore" (v. 20). Just one thing awaiting, the awful "for ever," to make his hell complete. Those under the power of the devil, if they escape the tearing, the gnashing, the wallowing, and fire in this life, will not escape in the next (Matt. 13:40-42; Rev. 20:15).

**II. Disciples' Failure.** "I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out, but they could not" (v. 18). Great things are expected from those who belong to Christ, and justly so (Phil. 4:13). Peter and John said to the lame man, "Look on us" (Acts 3:4). They knew what possibilities were within their reach through faith in the risen Saviour.

They could not because of—

1. FAILURE IN FAITH. The Lord rebuked them with, "O faithless generation, all things are possible to him that believeth" (v. 23). Their lack of faith brought dishonour upon the Name of their Master. "Abraham was strong in faith, giving God the glory" (Rom. 4:20). Yes, strong faith glorifies God. Our unbelief is a stumbling-block in the way of others. "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).

2. FAILURE IN PRAYER. "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting" (v. 29). Prayer means communion with God; communion means power for service. Those who have only fixed times for prayer may be often caught napping in weakness and inability. The spirit of prayer is better than seasons of prayer.

3. FAILURE IN FASTING (v. 29). Prayer and fasting forms the two-edged sword that gets the victory. It is questionable if we really pray as we ought, unless we esteem it better than our daily food. If preaching and feasting would cast out devils, then there would be a general exodus. This overcoming power does not belong to us merely as disciples. There are many powerless disciples. This Christ-honouring authority can only abide with those who abide in fellowship with Him by continual prayer and hearty self-denial for His sake. This is one of the things that are hidden from the worldly-wise, but revealed to the humble, trustful babes.

**III. Christ's Victory.** The disciples having failed him, the young man's father carried his request to Jesus Himself, saying, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion and help us." If the followers of Christ have disappointed you, try the Lord Himself. Don't be discouraged by the powerlessness of His professing people. He who wept over Jerusalem will compassionate your case Notice the order of deliverance—

1. THE INVITATION. "Bring him unto Me." "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Let there be an entire yielding up of ourselves in all our helplessness and misery into His hands. As a physician He had never failed. Is there anything tearing your heart and causing your life to pine away? Bring it to Him. Any wayward son possessed with a deaf and dumb spirit toward God and the things of eternity? "Bring him to Me," says the Redeemer of men.

2. THE WORD OF POWER. Jesus said, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him" (v. 25). He speaks and it is done. He sent His Word and healed them. The deliverance was complete, the evil spirit must enter no more into him. In obeying His invitation we shall find His Word to be with power. He can separate between you and your sins. He can give us the victory over all our enemies.

3. THE UPLIFTING HAND. "Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up" (v. 27). When the veil is cast out we are lifted up into newness of life. Made a new creation by Christ Jesus. The Word and the hand of Christ work together for the salvation of those who flee to Him for refuge. The Word of grace, the hand of power, both moved by a heart of love.

**Mark 9:18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it."**

Wuest And wherever it takes possession of him, it throws him into convulsions, and he foams, and grinds his teeth, and falls into a motionless stupor. And I spoke to your disciples that they should cast it out, and they did not have the power to do so. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they were not able to do so."

NLT Mark 9:18 And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn't do it."

ESV Mark 9:18 And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."

NIV Mark 9:18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."

GNT Mark 9:18 κα που ν α τ ν καταλ β σσει α τ ν, κα φρ ζει κα τρ ζει το ς δ ντας κα ξηρα νεται· κα ε πα το ς μαθητα ς σου να α τ κβ λωσιν, κα ο κ σχυσαν.

KJV 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.

- **seizes him, it slams him to the ground**, Mk 9:26 Mt 15:22 Lu 9:39
- **he foams at the mouth**: As these symptoms accord very much with those of epileptic persons, some have ventured to assert that it was no real possession; but the evangelist expressly affirms that he had a "dumb spirit" which tare him, that our Lord charged him to "come out of him," etc. Mk 9:20 Jude 1:13
- **grinds his teeth**: Job 16:9 Ps 112:10 Mt 8:12 Ac 7:54
- **and they**: Mk 9:28,29 11:23 2Ki 4:29-31 Mt 17:16,19-21 Lu 9:40
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 17:15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16 "I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him."

Luke 9:39+ and a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling ([suntribo](#) - crushing, breaking in pieces) him as it leaves. 40 "I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not."

## HORRIBLE EFFECTS OF DEMON POSSESSION

**And whenever it seizes ([katalambano](#)) him, it slams ([rhegnumi](#)) him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds ([trizō](#)) his teeth and stiffens out ([xeraino](#)).** Mark has four horrific descriptions of this possessed boy to help give us an appreciation of the severity of the affliction and the desperation of the father - Mk 9:17-18, 20, 22, 26, the most striking descriptions of demon possession in the Scripture (Gadarene demoniac is close). Use your imagination at the pain this scene must have caused this father! This scene had apparently transpired before the 9 disciples and they were powerless to relief the boy's suffering. **Whenever it seizes him** refers to the unclean spirit. **Whenever** indicates the seizures could occur any place, any time and in verse 22 we see this is described as "often." **Seizes** is [katalambano](#) means to lay hold of to make one's own and is "the picture of seizing something and pulling it down." "The seizures prostrated the boy and were accompanied by his sudden screams (Luke 9:39)." (Hiebert) All four of the "action" verbs are [present tense](#) signifying continual action! Talk about stress on a father and the rest of the family! Mt 17:15 says he is "epileptic" (Mt 17:15ESV) but the Scripture describes these symptoms as produced by the demon and Jesus dealt with the case as being a case of demon possession. Do not think epilepsy is caused by demons today. As a medical doctor I can assure you it is not! Note the pronouns "it" referring to the demon and "he...his" referring to the boy himself. **Stiffens** ([xeraino](#)) was the verb used earlier by Mark to describe a "man was there (IN SYNAGOGUE) whose hand was **withered** ([xeraino](#))." (Mk 3:1+).

**Grant Osborne** - Demons possess people not because they wish they had a body but rather to torture and kill those who are made in God's image. This is a central element in their war against God. The details (convulsions, foaming at the mouth, gnashing of teeth, paralytic rigidity) are descriptive of epileptic seizures. Yet the source of the epilepsy for Mark is demonic. Evil spirits often utilize human illness as part of their wicked repertoire. ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**Swindoll** - Earlier, we read of the "man from the tombs" in the region of the Gerasenes (Mk 5:1-20), who could be heard shrieking at all hours; this boy, however, had been rendered mute. The father described what could be mistaken for epilepsy, a condition often misunderstood during medieval times in Europe. But both Mark and Matthew recorded the underlying cause as demonic, not psychological or physiological (cf. Mt. 17:15, 18-19). In this case, modern medicine could not have helped. The father came to Jesus for help, but he found only His students. These disciples should have been able to help the boy; they had been given authority to cast out demons (Mark 3:15) and had successfully cast out demons in the past without Jesus present (Mk 6:13). Yet, in this case, they failed. (See [Insights on Mark](#). Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Mark).

**I told Your disciples ([mathetes](#)) to cast it out ([ekballo](#)), and they could ([ischuo](#)) not do it."** - "they did not have the strength." Luke adds he begged the disciples (Lk 9:40+). The father says the disciples were absolutely not strong enough and/or did not have the resources to accomplish the objective.

**MacArthur** - Jesus was not present when the incident began, so the disciples were challenged to walk by faith, not by sight—and failed miserably. They were a work in progress, characterized by lack of understanding and shallow faith. In Mark 8:17 Jesus had chided them, "Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?" and reiterated in verse 21, "Do you not yet understand?" (See [Mark 9-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

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**Seizes** (2638) ([katalambano](#) from **katá** = adds intensity verb + **lambáno** = take) means to take eagerly, grasp with force, lay hold of, seize with hostile intent (this literal meaning vividly depicted by the demon who seizes the son and dashed him to the ground in Mark 9:18). **Katalambano** was used in the sense of laying hold of so as to gain control of. Only use of this verb in Mark. John 1:5ESV+ says "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not **overcome** (Katalambano) it." Our word "[catalepsy](#)" comes from the Greek word. Greek writers used it when speaking of fits.

**Slams** (4486)([rhegnumi](#)) means to separate or cause to separate abruptly. To tear in pieces (wineskin - Mk 2:22, attack by a animal Mt 7:6). In classical Greek **rhegnumi** has a variety of meanings much like the various usages of the English word break. It is used of breaking through a battle line, of a ship being broken up or wrecked at sea, of a river breaking over its banks, of breaking out into song, and of infants beginning to speak. Here and in Mk 9:18 it speaks of of a demonic attack on a demon-possessed person by throwing them into a fit or dashing them to the ground (Mk 9.18) **Vincent** adds the form **rhesso** is used in classical Greek of dancers beating the ground, and of beating drums. Later, in the form **rhassein**, a term of fighters: to fell, or knock down. (This gives us a vivid, dramatic picture of what the demon is doing to this boy!)

**Stiffens** (3583) [xeraino](#) from **xeros** = dry) means to become dry, to dry up and figuratively to become stiff (Mk 9:18).

6/15 NT uses are in Mark - Matt. 13:6; Matt. 21:19; Matt. 21:20; Mk. 3:1; Mk. 4:6; Mk. 5:29; Mk. 9:18; Mk. 11:20; Mk. 11:21; Lk. 8:6; Jn. 15:6; Jas. 1:11; 1 Pet. 1:24; Rev. 14:15; Rev. 16:12

**Grinds** - The verb is **trizō** (used only here) "to squeak, utter a shrill cry," when used in connection with the teeth, "to grind or gnash the teeth."

**Disciples** (3101)([mathetes](#) from [manthano](#) = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher.

**Cast out** (1544)([ekballō](#) from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). To throw out of an area or object, throw out, jettison (Mt 21:39 Acts 27:18). Frequently used of casting out demons (Mt 7:22, Mt 8:16, 31,9:34, 10:1, etc). Used of casting or throwing unbelievers into outer darkness (hell). In Luke 6:22 **ekballo** means to scorn one's name ("cast it out" so to speak). Mark 1:12 "Immediately the Spirit **impelled** Him (Jesus) to go out into the wilderness."

**Could** (2480)([ischuo](#)) means to be strong in body or in resources. **ischuo** can speak of physical power (Mk 2:17, 5:4, 9:12). It can speak of having the required personal resources to accomplish some objective as here in Php 4:13 or conversely with the negative speaks of that which is good for nothing (Mt 5:13+). **ischuo** is the equivalent of to have efficacy, to avail or to have force.

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**POSB - Power, Lack of:** What happens when the servants of God have no power? What are the results of a powerless life and ministry?

- ⇒ No power causes embarrassment and shame.
- ⇒ No power causes the world to question and ridicule and belittle.
- ⇒ No power questions the deity (validity) of Christ and God.
- ⇒ No power causes the questioning of God and His ability to deliver. (See [The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Mark](#))

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**QUESTION - [Is epilepsy mentioned in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - An account of a boy with epileptic-like seizures is recorded in three of the four Gospels (Matthew 17:14–18; Mark 9:14–29; Luke 9:38–42). Only in Matthew's account (in the ESV and NKJV) is the word *epileptic* used to describe the boy; the NASB and KJV say "lunatic," based on the original Greek word's meaning of "moonstruck." The NIV says, "He has seizures." In Mark and Luke, the father of the boy states that his son is "possessed by a spirit" and "a spirit seizes him." Comparing the three accounts in the Gospels, the boy's symptoms included sudden screaming, foaming at the mouth, lack of speech, falling, rigidity, and self-harm.

Matthew 17:14–18 says, "When they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, said, 'Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.' And Jesus answered, 'O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.' And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly" (ESV).

It is important to note that epilepsy was the *father's* assessment of his son's situation. Jesus, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all call it a demon, and Jesus cast it out as He did other demons. The seeming discrepancy in the three biblical accounts is probably due to the

fact that the father said a *lot* of things in trying to get Jesus' attention. He was distraught, desperate for help, and at a loss to describe what was happening to his son. The fact that the father speaks of epilepsy in Matthew's account and calls it a "spirit" in the other two Gospels does not create an irreconcilable difference. The father could easily have said all of the above as he described his son's condition. He did not know what was wrong. He only knew that he needed help.

The term *epileptic* is used only twice in the New Testament, in Matthew 17:15 and Matthew 4:24. The word translated "epileptic" comes from the Greek word for "lunatic." In those days, the term could be applied to any type of seizures or behavior that resembled insanity. In New Testament times, people had no way to differentiate between brain disorders and demonic possession. Little was known about the causes or treatment of epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, or dementia, so it is understandable that the father in Matthew 17 would describe his son's behavior as epilepsy. But we know from Jesus' treatment of this boy that the child was in fact demon possessed (Mark 9:26).

However, the Bible does mention epilepsy as a condition separate from demon possession. Matthew 4:24 says, "So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, **epileptics**, and paralytics, and he healed them" (emphasis added). Here epilepsy is listed with other physical ailments, indicating that epilepsy is a medical condition that can cause symptoms similar to demonic possession. Jesus healed epileptics, and He also cast out demons. The two conditions were not synonymous.

Although many inexplicable behaviors that affect the personality can be attributed to demonic oppression, we should never rush to judgment. Demons are still active and can [possess and oppress people](#). Prayer and spiritual warfare can enable us to help those who are oppressed (2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:12–17). But brain abnormalities or injury can also affect human behavior and can respond to medical treatment. Jesus always treated the individual, and He rarely healed the same disease in the same way. This shows us that we should also respond to individuals with sensitivity and discernment, using everything at our disposal to help and heal any way we can. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 9:19 And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!"**

NET Mark 9:19 He answered them, "You unbelieving generation! How much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I endure you? Bring him to me."

NLT Mark 9:19 Jesus said to them, "You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

ESV Mark 9:19 And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me."

NIV Mark 9:19 "O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

GNT Mark 9:19 ὁ ἀπισθογενὴς ἡ γενεὰ, ὡς πῶς ἔτι με ἔσονται; ὡς πῶς ἐνέξομαι ὑμῶν; φέρετε αὐτὸν πρὸς μέν.

KJV 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.

- **O unbelieving generation:** Mk 16:14 Nu 14:11,22,27 32:13,14 De 32:20 Ps 78:6-8,22 106:21-25 Mt 17:17 Lu 9:41 24:25 Joh 12:27 20:27 Heb 3:10-12
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 17:17+ And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and **perverted** ([diastrepho](#) in [perfect tense](#) = their state) generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me."

Luke 9:41+ And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and **perverted** ([diastrepho](#) in [perfect tense](#) = their state) generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here."

**And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving ([apistos](#)) generation ([genea](#)), how long shall I be with you? - Luke 9:41+ adds "You unbelieving and perverted ([diastrepho](#) - twisted, crooked) generation."** Note the order - first unbelieving and then the fruit of unbelieving which is perversion. Since Jesus used the designation generation, He is clearly primarily speaking to the entire

nation, but in the present context He is also clearly alluding to the "littleness" of the faith of His 12 disciples. Why was their faith so little? First, they had been clearly told they had power to cast out ALL demons (Lk 9:1+), with no qualifications about whether it was a stronger (like the present case) or weaker demon. Second, they themselves had experienced the power. They had believed Jesus' bestowal of power and authority (Lk 9:1) and they had acted with faith on that word as described in Mt 10:8+.

In the OT we read a similar rebuke of the nation of Israel in the Song of Moses (Dt 32:1-43) for her lack of faith...

Deuteronomy 32:5+ "They have acted corruptly toward Him, They are not His children, because of their defect; But are a **perverse and crooked generation**.

Deuteronomy 32:20+ "Then He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a **perverse generation**, Sons in whom is no **faithfulness** (Lxx uses [pistis](#) = faith, faithfulness and modifies it with the Greek adverb "ouk" signifying strong negation)

**Osborne** on to whom **unbelieving** refers - The antecedent of the "faithless" (apistos [NIV: "unbelieving"]) is quite difficult to determine. It could be the crowd and the scribes who were debating with the disciples, or the disciples who were unable to cast out the demon, or everyone present then as emblematic of the unbelief of the nation. I believe that it is both the disciples and the people as a whole, but the nearest context describes the failure of the disciples ("I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not" [v. 18]), so Jesus is especially exasperated with the "unbelief" (= "hardness of heart" in Mk 6:52; 8:17) of his own followers. ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**MacArthur** - O unbelieving generation," was aimed primarily at the disciples (ED: IN HIS [LUKE COMMENTARY](#) HE SAYS ""encompassed the entire nation of Israel, whom He denounced on other occasions"). It reveals that the cause of their inability to cast out the demon was their failure to believe. The interjection **O** expresses emotion on Jesus' part (cf. Luke 13:34; 24:25), revealing that the disciples' weak faith was painful to Him. His rebuke was harsh; Luke 9:41 adds that He also called them a "perverted generation" (cf. Mark 8:38; Deut. 32:5, 20). After all the time they had spent with Him, such lack of trust was inexcusable. (See [Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** - **Them** seems to embrace the crowd as a whole, including all the faithless elements represented. **But the nine disciples** (ED: Peter, James and John get a pass on this one since they were on the mount of transfiguration!) **seem to be specifically in view**, since it was **their lack of faith** that had caused the painful situation. It showed that they too must be ranked as belonging to that faithless generation among which He found Himself. The historical present saith takes the reader to the very scene as Jesus uttered His lament. In Greek the **O** is seldom used with direct addresses; its use here points to His deep emotion. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**How long shall I put up with (anechomai) you?** - Luke 9:41 adds **how long shall I be with you and put up with (anechomai) you? - How long...how long?** Not long at all! These two questions are an allusion to the Cross which is soon to become His reality. Jesus expresses His exasperation. Other places He says "You of little faith!" (Mt. 6:30; Mt 14:31) and, "You men of little faith! (Mt. 8:26; Mt 16:8).

**Hiebert** - the repeated **how long**, "until when," indicates His disappointment and weariness. He questions until what time it will be necessary for Him to remain "with you" in a relationship of intimacy and fellowship before His mission is realized. **Put up with** gives the picture of holding one's self up under a load to support another; it indicates that their spiritual dullness was a heavy load to the Lord. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**Grant Osborne** comments "Will there be sufficient time to transform their self-centered unbelief (again, especially the disciples) into faith and understanding?" ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**Bring him to Me** - Command in [present imperative](#). Jesus will now rectify what His disciples were unable to handle. "the command was a promise. Fully conscious of His power, He indicated that He would act where weakness had failed. The present imperative bring, "be bringing," has a plural subject; it was directed to the crowd generally. The boy was now not with the father; he had been taken to a place of safekeeping not far away." (Hiebert [Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

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**Put up with (430)** ([anechomai](#) from **aná** = in, up + **echomai**, the [middle voice](#) of **echo** = to have, to hold) means literally to hold one's self up, erect, upright and by extension firm against a person or thing. Thus **anechomai** means to put up with, to bear with (equanimity or evenness of mind especially under stress), to tolerate, to forbear, to be patient with.

**Unbelieving (571)** ([apistos](#) from **a** = without + **pistos** = believing, faithful) means lacking in faith, faithless, unbelieving. It is used once to describe that which is incredible (Acts 26:8), but most NT uses describe those without faith, not trusting, unfaithful. Among classical writers it was used in both the active (e.g., of a person who is "mistrusting") and passive (e.g., of a person "not to be trusted"). Its range of definition spans from "incredible, unbelievable" to "untrusting, untrustworthy." Most of the uses below

(especially in the Corinthian letters) refer to "unbelievers," those who do not believe the Gospel (or have not yet believed the Gospel).

**Apistos - 21v - incredible(1), unbeliever(4), unbelievers(7), unbelieving(10), unbelieving one(1).** Matt. 17:17; Mk. 9:19; Lk. 9:41; Lk. 12:46; Jn. 20:27; Acts 26:8; 1 Co. 6:6; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:13; 1 Co. 7:14; 1 Co. 7:15; 1 Co. 10:27; 1 Co. 14:22; 1 Co. 14:23; 1 Co. 14:24; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 6:14; 2 Co. 6:15; 1 Tim. 5:8; Tit. 1:15; Rev. 21:8

**Generation (1074) genea** gives us our English genealogy) literally refers to those descended from a common ancestor and in this sense refers to a race, a clan or descendants.

**Genea - 37v - generation(32), generations(10), kind(1).** Matt. 1:17; Matt. 11:16; Matt. 12:39; Matt. 12:41; Matt. 12:42; Matt. 12:45; Matt. 16:4; Matt. 17:17; Matt. 23:36; Matt. 24:34; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 8:38; Mk. 9:19; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 1:48; Lk. 1:50; Lk. 7:31; Lk. 9:41; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 11:31; Lk. 11:32; Lk. 11:50; Lk. 11:51; Lk. 16:8; Lk. 17:25; Lk. 21:32; Acts 2:40; Acts 8:33; Acts 13:36; Acts 14:16; Acts 15:21; Eph. 3:5; Eph. 3:21; Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:26; Heb. 3:10

**Perverted (1294) (diastrepho** from **dia** = separation, in two, throughout + **strépho** = turn, English = diastrophism = the process of deformation that produces in the earth's crust its continents and ocean basins) is literally to twist throughout or to distort thoroughly. To turn different ways. To twist about. **Diastrepho** is used metaphorically in the NT meaning to pervert or to distort. The idea is to cause one to depart from an accepted standard of oral or spiritual values. In the [perfect tense](#) it describes a permanently distorted condition (literally the perfect tense pictures permanently "turned aside") (see parallel description in Mt 17:17; See Paul's uses in Acts 20:30-[note](#); Php 2:15-[note](#)). As an aside, the verb [epistrepho](#) which means "be converted" uses the same root, but the different prefix makes it mean "to turn" around instead of "to be twisted". the perverted need to be converted! The twisted are going in the wrong direction (to hell) and need to be turned around (toward heaven) by the Gospel!

**Diastrepho - 7v - make crooked(1), misleading(1), perverse(1), perverse things(1), perverted(2), turn...away(1).** Matt. 17:17; Lk. 9:41; Lk. 23:2; Acts 13:8; Acts 13:10; Acts 20:30; Phil. 2:15

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### C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - "Bring him unto me." —Mark 9:19

Despairingly the poor disappointed father turned away from the disciples to their Master. His son was in the worst possible condition, and all means had failed, but the miserable child was soon delivered from the evil one when the parent in faith obeyed the Lord Jesus' word, "Bring him unto me." Children are a precious gift from God, but much anxiety comes with them. They may be a great joy or a great bitterness to their parents; they may be filled with the Spirit of God, or possessed with the spirit of evil. In all cases, the Word of God gives us one receipt for the curing of all their ills, "Bring him unto me." O for more agonizing prayer on their behalf while they are yet babes! Sin is there, let our prayers begin to attack it. Our cries for our offspring should precede those cries which betoken their actual advent into a world of sin. In the days of their youth we shall see sad tokens of that dumb and deaf spirit which will neither pray aright, nor hear the voice of God in the soul, but Jesus still commands, "Bring them unto me." When they are grown up they may wallow in sin and foam with enmity against God; then when our hearts are breaking we should remember the great Physician's words, "Bring them unto me." Never must we cease to pray until they cease to breathe. No case is hopeless while Jesus lives.

The Lord sometimes suffers his people to be driven into a corner that they may experimentally know how necessary he is to them. Ungodly children, when they show us our own powerlessness against the depravity of their hearts, drive us to flee to the strong for strength, and this is a great blessing to us. Whatever our morning's need may be, let it like a strong current bear us to the ocean of divine love. Jesus can soon remove our sorrow, he delights to comfort us. Let us hasten to him while he waits to meet us.

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Mark 9:19 Bring The Boy To Me - [Jesus] answered him and said, ". . . Bring him to Me." —Mark 9:19

"I don't believe in God and I won't go," Mark said.

Amy struggled to swallow the lump in her throat. Her son had changed from a happy boy to a surly and uncooperative young man. Life was a battleground, and Sunday had become a day to dread, as Mark refused to go to church with the family. Finally his despairing parents consulted a counselor, who said: "Mark must make his own faith journey. You can't force him into the kingdom. Give God space to work. Keep praying, and wait."

Amy waited—and prayed. One morning the words of Jesus that she had read echoed through her mind. Jesus' disciples had failed to help a demon-possessed boy, but Jesus had the answer: "Bring him to Me" (Mark 9:19). The sun shone through the window at Amy's side, making a pool of light on the floor. If Jesus could heal in such an extreme situation, then surely He could also help her son. She pictured herself and Mark standing in that light with Jesus. Then she mentally stepped back, leaving her son alone with the

One who loved him even more than she did.

Every day Amy silently handed Mark to God, clinging to the assurance that He knew Mark's needs, and would in His time and in His way, work in his life. By Marion Stroud

Father, I lift my beloved to You, knowing that  
You love him even more than I do and  
You understand just what to do to meet  
his need. I commit him to Your care.

Prayer is the voice of faith trusting that God knows and cares.

**Mark 9:20 They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth.**

NET Mark 9:20 So they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell on the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

NLT Mark 9:20 So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth.

ESV Mark 9:20 And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

NIV Mark 9:20 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

GNT Mark 9:20 κα νεγκαν α τ ν π ρ ς α τ ν. κα δ ν α τ ν τ πνε μα ε θ ς συνεσπ ραξεν α τ ν, κα πεσ ν π τ ς γ ς κυλ ετο φρ ζων.

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:20 and they brought him unto him, and he having seen him, immediately the spirit tare him, and he, having fallen upon the earth, was wallowing -- foaming.

- **the spirit:** Mk 9:18,26 1:26 5:3-5 Job 1:10-12 2:6-8 Lu 4:35 8:29 9:42 Joh 8:44 1Pe 5:8
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CONVULSIONS COMMENCE WHEN DEMON SEES JESUS

**They brought the boy to Him** - So apparently the lad had not been present during the argument of the 9 disciples with the scribes or the subsequent dialogue by Jesus. And this is when the "action" began!

**When he saw Him** - **He** refers to the demonic spirit in the boy's body. Luke 9:42 adds "While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion." It is interesting that the demon just now becomes aware of Jesus' presence. This would indicate that while demons are very powerful, they are not omniscient and in this case were not aware of the presence of Jesus.

**Hiebert** - the demon, knowing that he would soon lose his control over his victim, upon seeing Jesus, immediately vented his rage on the boy, throwing him into a complete convulsion. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

As **Osborne** points out "When evil spirits encounter Jesus, there is always a violent reaction (Mk 1:23–26, 34; 3:11–12; 5:6–13),but on every occasion the pain and convulsions are visited upon the unfortunate person possessed. Jesus is the ancient enemy, but he is unassailable and always triumphant." ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**immediately** ([euthus](#)) **the spirit threw him into a convulsion** ([susparasso](#)), **and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth** - Medically this has features of a [grand mal seizure](#) but clearly it was brought on by the demonic spirit. **Began rolling around** (kulio) is in the vivid [imperfect tense](#) depicting the boy continually twisting and turning, rolling over and over even while he was foaming at the mouth! Mark has painted quite a dramatic picture which cannot help but take the reader into this

unforgettable scene!

**Immediately** (2117) **euthus** when used as an **adjective** literally means straight or a straight line and figuratively to what is proper or right. The uses below will give you a good sense of these literal and figurative meanings of **euthus**. **Euthus** is also used as **adverb** to mean immediately, right away, at once (AS IN Mk 9:20). The use of **euthus** with the meaning of **immediately** is a key word in the Gospel of Mark as evidenced by 11 uses just in Mark 1:1-45!

**Euthus in Mark** - Mk. 1:3; Mk. 1:10; Mk. 1:12; Mk. 1:18; Mk. 1:20; Mk. 1:21; Mk. 1:23; Mk. 1:28; Mk. 1:29; Mk. 1:30; Mk. 1:42; Mk. 1:43; Mk. 2:8; Mk. 2:12; Mk. 3:6; Mk. 4:5; Mk. 4:15; Mk. 4:16; Mk. 4:17; Mk. 4:29; Mk. 5:2; Mk. 5:29; Mk. 5:30; Mk. 5:42; Mk. 6:25; Mk. 6:27; Mk. 6:45; Mk. 6:50; Mk. 6:54; Mk. 7:25; Mk. 8:10; Mk. 9:15; Mk. 9:20; Mk. 9:24; Mk. 10:52; Mk. 11:2; Mk. 11:3; Mk. 14:43; Mk. 14:45; Mk. 14:72; Mk. 15:1

**Convulsion** (4952) (**susparasso** from **sun** = with, together + **sparasso** = to mangle, convulse) means to tear or lacerate altogether, completely. To throw into strong spasms. To "pull about, rend in pieces, tear; as the effect of a demonic attack on the human body convulse, throw into convulsions, cause a fit" (Friberg) *Susparassō* is not found in any extant Greek texts prior to the New Testament, although its related term *sparassō* ("rend, tear apart, convulse") is found in both classical Greek and the Septuagint (2 Sa 22:8; Jer 4:19). **Gilbrant** - The demon was "tearing violently" or "pulling apart" the boy. Luke's medical background provided vivid details of the physical effects of demonic possession in this instance. (Ibid)

**Mark 9:21 And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.**

NET Mark 9:21 Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.

NLT Mark 9:21 "How long has this been happening?" Jesus asked the boy's father. He replied, "Since he was a little boy.

ESV Mark 9:21 And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.

NIV Mark 9:21 Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered.

GNT Mark 9:21 κατηρητησεντηνπατραατο, Πσοσχρονοστησ τοτο γγονενατ; δεπεν, κ παιδιθεν.

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

YLT Mark 9:21 And he questioned his father, 'How long time is it since this came to him?' and he said, 'From childhood,

- How: Mk 5:25 Job 5:7 14:1 Ps 51:5 Lu 8:43 13:16 Joh 5:5,6 9:1,20,21 Ac 3:2 4:22 9:33 14:8
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Keep in mind in the background the demon is playing havoc with the boy! Jesus remains calm!

**And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood** - So essentially his entire life he had been in the horrible condition! This would underscore the father's sense of desperation. MacArthur adds "The healing miracles Christ performed reveal the compassion of God and that He cares about human pain and suffering. Jesus allowed this suffering man to unfold his heart to the sympathetic and merciful Lord." ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**Mark 9:22 "It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!"**

NET Mark 9:22 It has often thrown him into fire or water to destroy him. But if you are able to do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

NLT Mark 9:22 The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and

help us, if you can."

ESV Mark 9:22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

NIV Mark 9:22 "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

GNT Mark 9:22 κα πολλ κικς κα ες π ρ α τ ν βαλεν κα ες δατα να πολ σ α τ ν· λ λ ε τ ι δ ν , βο θησον μ ν σπλαγχνισθε ς φ μ ς.

KJV Mark 9:22 And ofttimes 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.

YLT Mark 9:22 and many times also it cast him into fire, and into water, that it might destroy him; but if thou art able to do anything, help us, having compassion on us.'

- **if:** Mk 1:40-42 Mt 8:2,8,9 9:28 14:31
- **take:** Mk 5:19 Mt 15:22-28 20:34 Lu 7:13
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy**([apollumi](#)) **him** - Note the time phrase "**often!**" More detail of demonic attempts to destroy! In John 8:44 Jesus rightly said Satan "He was a **murderer from the beginning**," (Ge 3:1-5+, Ro 5:12+) and his evil unclean spirits are "like father, like son!" One is reminded of Jesus' words "The thief comes only **to steal and kill and destroy**; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. ." (John 10:10)

**Hiebert** - after indicating that it was a long-standing case ("FROM CHILDHOOD" - Mk 9:21), the father added further particulars to show its critical nature. Occurring **often**, the seizures were frequent and unpredictable. They might occur while the boy was near the **fire** or near **the water**. Neither term has the definite article in the original—near "fire" or different "bodies of water." To be thrown into either might prove fatal....the father recognized that these dangerous occurrences were not accidental. Behind them he saw demonic malice (**to destroy him**). ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**But** - Term of contrast - "with but, the father placed the possible power of Jesus over against the need." (Hiebert)

**if You can do anything, take pity** ([splanchnizomai](#)) **on us and help** ([boetheo](#)) **us** - He is begging Jesus to be deeply moved in His inner being, in those "bowels" characterized by sympathy and compassion. See word studies on **pity** and **help** below. Notice the father's request reveals some degree of doubt whether (1) Jesus would show **pity** and (2) had power to **help** them.

**Hiebert** - The original order is, "*Help us, having had compassion on us.*" **Help** was a desperate cry for immediate aid. His "**us**" instinctively identified the father with the misery of his son. Deliverance for the son would be deliverance for the father. His **help** given would be evidence of Jesus' compassion. Of that compassion he had no doubt. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Lenski** - He uses the plural in his appeal: "**help us, having compassion on us**," and includes himself and his family. We see the great weakness of the man's faith, yet we see that faith is present. (See [The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel](#))

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**Destroy** ([622](#))([apollumi](#)) rom **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy <> root of **apollyon** [Re 9:11] = destroyer) means to destroy utterly but not to cause one to cease to exist. Jesus would use this same verb again in Mark 9:41 " truly I say to you, he **will not lose** his reward." He had just used **apollumi** in His solemn warning in Mark 8:35+ "**will lose** it."

**Take pity** ([4697](#))([splanchnizomai](#) from [splanchnon](#) = bowel, viscera - see [splanchnon](#) note below) means to experience a deep visceral feeling for someone, to feel compassion for, to feel [sympathy](#), to take [pity](#) on someone. [Compassion](#) is the sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. This verb expresses an outward flow of one's life in contrast to our natural tendency toward self centeredness. It is notable that 8/12 NT uses describe this deep seated emotion in Jesus. It follows that if we desire to imitate Jesus, we need to be men and women of deep compassion!

All NT uses - Matt. 9:36; Matt. 14:14; Matt. 15:32; Matt. 18:27; Matt. 20:34; Mk. 1:41; Mk. 6:34; Mk. 8:2; Mk. 9:22; Lk. 7:13; Lk. 10:33; Lk. 15:20

**Help**(come to aid - [aorist imperative](#) = cry of urgency) ([997](#))([boetheo](#) from [boe](#) = a cry, exclamation + [théō](#) = to run) means to run on hearing a cry, to give assistance (especially to those in danger) or meet an urgent distress call. To supply urgently needed help. To render assistance to someone in need, furnish aid. **TDNT** adds it means "to hasten to the help of the oppressed," and then "to

help." **Boethéo** means to **succor** (KJV reads "He is able to **succour** them that are tempted") which is a word you may not be too familiar with, but which means literally to run to or run to support hence, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering; as, to **succor** a besieged city; to **succor** prisoners. (**succor** is derived from Latin succurrere = to run up, run to help, from **sub-** = up + **curre** to run).

8 uses in NT - Matt. 15:25; Mk. 9:22; Mk. 9:24; Acts 16:9; Acts 21:28; 2 Co. 6:2; Heb. 2:18; Rev. 12:16

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### **Mark 9:22–23 F. B. Meyer Our Daily Homily**

#### **If Thou canst.... And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst!**

Yes, there was an if in this sad case. But the father put it in the wrong place. He put it against Christ's power, "If Thou canst do anything." But it was really on the side of his own ability to believe. If only he believed, all else would be easily possible. Even though his faith were small, it would suffice; the tiniest seed can appropriate the chemical products of the soil, and transmute them into digestible products; the narrowest channel will suffice for the passage of the waters of the whole ocean, if you give time enough. Let us not worry about the greatness or smallness of our faith; the main point is as to whether it is directed towards the living Savior.

There are many issues to which these words may be applied. If Jesus can save me from the power of sin! No; if thou canst believe, He can. If Jesus can deliver out of a mesh of temptation and perplexity! No; if thou canst believe, He will. If Jesus can revive his work mightily to the upbuilding of his Church and the ingathering of the lost! No; if thou canst believe for it.

Dost thou want that faith? It may be had thus. Look away from difficulty and temptation to Jesus; consider Him; feed thy faith on its native food of promise; familiarize thyself with fellowship with the promises; study what He has done for others: thus thou wilt believe. For every thought of thy little faith take ten thoughts of his faithfulness.

"All things are possible to God,  
To Christ the power of God in man;  
To me, when I am all subdued,  
When I in Christ am formed again,  
And witness from my sins set free,  
All things are possible to me."

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### **Mark 9:22, 23 - IF - If thou canst do any thing.... If thou canst believe.... Mark 9:22, 23.**

Martha and Mary said, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (John 11:21). Jesus said, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God" (John 11:40). The father of the demonized boy had the wrong if There are no ifs about what God can do. The ifs are on our side. That harassed father finally got around to the solution: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). He confessed unbelief but took sides with his faith. We are so inclined to say, "I doubt, help Thou my faith." We need to stop being iffy and be not faithless but believing. (Vance Havner)

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### **"If Thou Canst—" "If Thou canst do anything.... If thou canst believe...." Mark 9:22, 23**

The father of the afflicted boy was looking at the wrong **if**." Our Lord speedily corrected him. It is not a matter of Christ's ability to help; it is always a matter of our willingness to believe. "According to your faith be it unto you."

Nor is it a matter of his willingness. The leper put it, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." At once Jesus clears that point: "I will; be thou clean" (Matt. 8:2, 3).

We have continually tried to saddle the responsibility for our meager and miserable condition on the Lord. He threw the issue clearly on us. If we do not reign in life it is because we do not receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17). After these centuries of preaching we do not yet believe that "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). Of course, this does not mean just any kind of faith in anything or anybody. All things are possible to him that believeth if he believes in him with whom all things are possible.

It is up to you: "If thou canst believe." If we can get a real faith the signs will follow, we shall have the miracles. The day of miracles has not passed but the day of faith has. "According to your faith" is the measure of what God will do for you. (Vance Havner)

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### **Mark 9:22-23 "Only Believe"**

When the father of a demon-possessed boy brought his son to Jesus, he said, "If thou canst do any thing...." Jesus replied, "If thou

canst believe" (Mark 9:22, 23). There are no "ifs" about what God can do. The "if" is with us. Anything is possible within the limits of God's Word and God's will, our need and our faith. Believing God is not religious auto-suggestion. It is not the flesh engaged in positive thinking. It is the Christian, the one in whom Christ lives, taking God at His Word.

God's Word and will, our need and our faith do impose certain restrictions. We often want what we do not need. God did not remove Paul's thorn in the flesh but He did something better, perfecting His strength in Paul's weakness. Within these limitations there are blessings innumerable if we only believe.

Chanting, "I believe," does not guarantee results as though we had a magic password. Exploring God's Word we will discover blessings we did not know were in His will. And we need some intensive investigation of what we really need. There are rich people riding around in limousines who have never found out what they really need. And there are sickly Christians living on crackers and cheese when they have a standing invitation to the feast of the grace of God. What a shake-up in status there is when we find out what is ours now in Christ Jesus!

Positive thinking will not do it unless we balance it with some good negative thinking that says "no" to the devil while it says "yes" to God. To put on the Lord Jesus and make no provision for the flesh is a good sample of true positive-negative thinking. "Only believe" depends on whom you believe and why. (Vance Havner)

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### Mark 9:23

Misplaced "If"- The man to whom Jesus spoke these words had a son with a mute spirit. Having just seen the disciples powerless to cast out the spirit, he doubted whether their Master could help him. Therefore he said to Jesus, "But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us" (Mark 9:22).

Now there was an if in his plea, but the poor, trembling father had put the if in the wrong place. Jesus didn't command him to retract the if, but He put it where it belonged. He seemed to say, "There should be no if about My power or willingness—the if lies somewhere else." Jesus countered the father's if with another if. "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." The man's trust was strengthened, and he humbly asked for help to overcome his unbelief. Instantly Jesus spoke the word, and the boy was healed.

Like this man, we often see an if in relation to our problems. And we too put it in the wrong place. "If Jesus can help me overcome this sinful habit." "If He can change my life." No, the real issue is, if we can believe, He both can and will respond.

Is there something you know is God's will for your life but you have doubts? Maybe you've misplaced your if. - H. G. Bosch , Our Daily Bread (Bible.org)

### Mark 9:23 And Jesus said to him, "'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes."

NET Mark 9:23 Then Jesus said to him, "'If you are able?' All things are possible for the one who believes."

NLT Mark 9:23 "What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes."

ESV Mark 9:23 And Jesus said to him, "'If you can!' All things are possible for one who believes."

NIV Mark 9:23 "'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

GNT Mark 9:23 ὁ ἡσο ἔπειν αὐτ, τ ε ἴν, π ντα δύνατ τ πιστε οντι.

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

YLT Mark 9:23 And Jesus said to him, 'If thou art able to believe! all things are possible to the one that is believing;'

ASV Mark 9:23 And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth.

CSB Mark 9:23 Then Jesus said to him, "'If You can?' Everything is possible to the one who believes."

- **If:** Mk 11:23 2Ch 20:20 Mt 17:20 21:21,22 Lu 17:6 Joh 4:48-50 11:40 Ac 14:9 Heb 11:6
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And Jesus said to him, "'If You can (dunamai)'?** - The NLT paraphrase renders it "What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus replied with more of an exclamation than a true question. How many countless cases had He healed!

**Hiebert** - The exclamation point (ASV = "If thou canst!") effectively reveals their exclamatory force. Jesus indicated that it was not a question of His ability but of the father's doubt. Lack of faith lay at the bottom of the pathetic situation. Jesus first of all challenged the father's lack of faith. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - His faith was weak and incomplete; he correctly perceived that Jesus was willing to deliver his son, but he was not sure that He had the power to help him. But he was desperate. (See [Mark 9-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Swindoll** - Jesus responded first to the issue of power. As God in human flesh, Jesus affirmed His omnipotence to accomplish anything He determined to do. The only limitation is the person in need of God's aid. The Lord has determined to make His activity contingent upon belief in Him. (See [Insights on Mark](#) Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Mark).

**All things are possible ([dunatos](#)) to him who believes ([pisteuo](#))** - Yes this is true but ultimately the will of God, of course, governs all things, including this promise.

*The lesson that faith is essential to access the power of God...*

**MacArthur** - **All things are possible to him who believes,** is the lesson Jesus intended to teach. This was not the first time He had spoken of the importance of faith (cf. Mark 5:34–36; 6:5–6), nor would it be the last (cf. Mark 10:27; 11:22–24). The lesson that faith is essential to access the power of God applied to all the unbelieving crowd, the father, who was struggling to believe, as well as to the disciples, whose faith was weak and wavering. The disciples especially needed to learn this lesson, since after Christ's death, they would need to access divine power through believing prayer (Matt. 7:7–8; 21:22; Luke 11:9–10; John 14:13–14; 15:7; 16:24; 1 John 3:22; 5:14–15). (See [Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** - The mighty power of faith was placed over against the father's doubt. "To him that believeth" is not a reference to Jesus Himself but a challenge to the father to have faith. He was assured that all things can be done for the one who is characterized by faith. "One who has faith will set no limits to the power of God." **But the faith that has such mighty results will submit to the will of God in making its petitions. Faith-prompted prayer asks in harmony with the will of God.** ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#)) (NOTE WELL HIEBERT'S QUALIFYING PHRASE MENTIONED TWICE FOR EMPHASIS = "THE WILL OF GOD." JESUS IS **NOT** TEACHING "NAME IT, CLAIM IT!")

**Swindoll** points out that "Jesus' promise in Mark 9:23 is often misquoted by false teachers of the "[Word of Faith](#)" movement. This heretical system of teaching declares that God has given the power to believers to "**name and claim**" virtually anything, including health and prosperity, and that people only need to exercise enough belief in order for their wish to come to pass. But this is not what Jesus taught. Here, the object of faith is crucial. **He calls us to believe in God's power and goodness.** Regardless of what we desire to have, we surrender our will to His, trusting that God knows what we need better than we do. **Trust in His power and goodness** means we trust that God will do everything He desires to do in us and through us. Very few of us doubt God's ability to do anything He pleases to do; we more often struggle with His willingness to be kind or merciful because, in our selfishness, we think that getting what we want is a sign of God's kindness and that being denied our desires indicates God's displeasure. Personally, I have lived long enough to thank God for unfulfilled requests! Gaining the benefit of twenty-twenty hindsight has often revealed that what I thought I wanted would have been disastrous for me. (See [Insights on Mark](#) Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Mark).

**MacArthur** comments - Jesus did not usually call for faith in those He healed. In this case, however, He intended to use this man as an illustration for the apostles of what even imperfect faith in Him can accomplish. In brutal honesty "the boy's father cried out and said, 'I do believe; help my unbelief'" (v. 24). Desperately, he pleaded for Jesus to give him whatever was lacking in his faith.... "All things are possible to him who believes," is the lesson Jesus intended to teach. This was not the first time He had spoken of the importance of faith (cf. Mark 5:34-36; 6:5-6), nor would it be the last (cf. Mark 10:27; 11:22-24). The lesson that faith is essential to access the power of God applied to all the unbelieving crowd, the father, who was struggling to believe, as well as to the disciples, whose faith was weak and wavering. The disciples especially needed to learn this lesson, since after Christ's death, they would need to access divine power through believing prayer (Matt. 7:7-8; 21:22; Luke 11:9-10; John 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:24; 1 John 3:22; 5:14-15). (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Is the Word of Faith movement biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Are faith healers for real? Does a faith healer heal with the same power as Jesus?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about the prosperity gospel?](#)
- [What is seed faith? What is a seed faith offering?](#)
- [What is the Trinity Broadcasting Network \(TBN\)?](#)
- [Are all prosperity preachers charlatans and/or false teachers?](#)

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**QUESTION - [What does it mean that all things are possible to him who believes \(Mark 9:23\)?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Jesus' statement in Mark 9:23 regarding the power available to him who believes is a controversial one. The context of Mark 9, however, establishes a clear understanding of Jesus' statement. Mark 9 presents a scene where a father is seeking aid from Jesus' disciples in casting a demon out of his son. Jesus approaches and asks what is happening. The father's answer is that the disciples have failed to cast out the demon. Jesus replies, "You unbelieving generation, . . . how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?" (Mark 9:19). The father then asks Jesus to take pity on them and cast out the demon (Mark 9:22). Jesus then says, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23, NKJV).

The word for "believes" is a participle that literally translates as "the believing one." Jesus provides the means for everything to be possible—one must believe in Him! The Amplified Bible translates Jesus' statement more fully: "All things are possible for the one who believes and trusts [in Me]!" Faith is an important ingredient in this story. Some have argued that the *strength of one's belief* is what Jesus is discussing. The issue at hand, however, is not how strongly or boldly the father believed Jesus would heal his son. The issue is the *object of one's belief*. The disciples didn't need *more* faith but more *focused* faith. Put another way, the disciples needed to place their belief in the correct object—Jesus Christ.

In Mark 9:22, the father asks for Jesus' help, beginning his appeal with "If you can do anything." Jesus' initial response to the father in Mark 9:23 takes issue with how the father framed his request: "What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asks. "Anything is possible if a person believes" (NLT). Proper belief in who Jesus is would have given the father confidence in Jesus' ability to cast out the demon. After hearing this, the father exclaims that he does believe, and if there is any deficiency, he requests that Jesus help his unbelief (verse 24). Mark 9:25–29 reveals the person and power necessary to cast out the demon. As Jesus states in verse 29, prayer is necessary because the Person needed for such a task is God Himself. The object of one's faith is critical.

Jesus makes a remarkable statement in Mark 9:23. If we misunderstand the statement that "all things are possible to him who believes," we set ourselves up for disappointment. Jesus' words are not a promise that we can do whatever we want; rather, He makes it clear that the believing one has power only due to *whom* he believes in; namely, Jesus, the Son of God. The power is God's, accessed through faith and prayer according to His will (see 1 John 5:14). It is because of God that the believing one can accomplish much. It is by God's grace the disciples would accomplish incredible and miraculous things after Jesus' departure (cf. Acts 3:1–10). As we live for Jesus, let us focus on the object of our belief (Hebrews 12:2). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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

OUR unbelief is the greatest hindrance in our way; in fact, there is no other real difficulty as to our spiritual progress and prosperity. The Lord can do everything; but when he makes a rule that according to our faith so shall it be unto us, our unbelief ties the hands of his omnipotence.

Yes, the confederacies of evil shall be scattered if we can but believe. Despised truth shall lift its head if we will but have confidence in the God of truth. We can bear our load of trouble, or pass uninjured through the waves of distress, if we can gird our loins with the girdle of peace, that girdle which is buckled on by the hands of trust.

What can we not believe? Is everything possible except believing in God? Yet he is always true; why do we not believe him? He is always faithful to his word; why can we not trust him? When we are in a right state of heart faith costs no effort: it is then as natural for us to rely upon God as for a child to trust its father.

The worst of it is, that we can believe God about everything except the present pressing trial. This is folly. Come, my soul, shake off such sinfulness, and trust thy God with the load, the labour, the longing of this present. This done, all is done.

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**Spurgeon's Morning and Evening - "All things are possible to him that believeth." —Mark 9:23**

A certain man had a demoniac son, who was afflicted with a dumb spirit. The father, having seen the futility of the endeavours of the disciples to heal his child, had little or no faith in Christ, and therefore, when he was bidden to bring his son to him, he said to Jesus, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Now there was an "if" in the question, but the poor trembling father had put the "if" in the wrong place: Jesus Christ, therefore, without commanding him to retract the "if," kindly puts it in its legitimate position. "Nay, verily," he seemed to say, "there should be no 'if' about my power, nor concerning my willingness, the 'if' lies somewhere else." "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." The man's trust was strengthened, he offered a humble prayer for an increase of faith, and instantly Jesus spoke the word, and the devil was cast out, with an injunction never to return. There is a lesson here which we need to learn. We, like this man, often see that there is an "if" somewhere, but we are perpetually blundering by putting it in the wrong place. "If" Jesus can help me—"if" he can give me grace to overcome temptation—"if" he can give me pardon—"if" he can make me successful? Nay, "if" you can believe, he both can and will. You have misplaced

your “if.” If you can confidently trust, even as all things are possible to Christ, so shall all things be possible to you. Faith standeth in God’s power, and is robed in God’s majesty; it weareth the royal apparel, and rideth on the King’s horse, for it is the grace which the King delighteth to honour. Girding itself with the glorious might of the all-working Spirit, it becomes, in the omnipotence of God, mighty to do, to dare, and to suffer. All things, without limit, are possible to him that believeth. My soul, canst thou believe thy Lord to-night?

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### **Spurgeon’s Morning and Evening - “All things are possible to him that believeth.” —Mark 9:23**

Many professed Christians are always doubting and fearing, and they forlornly think that this is the necessary state of believers. This is a mistake, for “all things are possible to him that believeth”; and it is possible for us to mount into a state in which a doubt or a fear shall be but as a bird of passage flitting across the soul, but never lingering there. When you read of the high and sweet communions enjoyed by favoured saints, you sigh and murmur in the chamber of your heart, “Alas! these are not for me.” O climber, if thou hast but faith, thou shalt yet stand upon the sunny pinnacle of the temple, for “all things are possible to him that believeth.” You hear of exploits which holy men have done for Jesus; what they have enjoyed of him; how much they have been like him; how they have been able to endure great persecutions for his sake; and you say, “Ah! as for me, I am but a worm; I can never attain to this.” But there is nothing which one saint was, that you may not be. There is no elevation of grace, no attainment of spirituality, no clearness of assurance, no post of duty, which is not open to you if you have but the power to believe. Lay aside your sackcloth and ashes, and rise to the dignity of your true position; you are little in Israel because you will be so, not because there is any necessity for it. It is not meet that thou shouldst grovel in the dust, O child of a King. Ascend! The golden throne of assurance is waiting for you! The crown of communion with Jesus is ready to bedeck your brow. Wrap yourself in scarlet and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day; for if thou believest, thou mayst eat the fat of kidneys of wheat; thy land shall flow with milk and honey, and thy soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. Gather golden sheaves of grace, for they await thee in the fields of faith. “All things are possible to him that believeth.”

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### **W W Page - If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.**

What inexhaustible possibilities lie in faith! God Himself is the unseen Author of the visible universe and it was by faith that the worlds were framed, so that things that are seen were not made of things that do appear. In the sublime galaxy woven with divine hand all in and through the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the light that shines from every star is faith. It was this that carried Noah across the flood. It was this that gave strength to Moses to deliver the people of God from Egypt, to train them in the wilderness, and to transfer them to the Promised Land. It was this that enabled Israel to hold to the hope of the promise until Jesus came. This animated the feeble few of Galilee to carry the Gospel to the perishing world. This is the power by which every sainted Christian has triumphed in life and in death and entered home at last. Our blessed Saviour is Himself the Author and the Finisher of faith.

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### **Holy Fools**

John 12:27-50

If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes. —Mark 9:23

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 12:1-5

When God spoke to Abram, he obeyed at once, departing for an unknown land based only on a promise. Childless, he trusted God to make of him “a great nation” (Gen. 12:2).

God often does His work through “holy fools”—dreamers who strike out in ridiculous faith. Yet I tend to approach my decisions with calculation and restraint.

My church in Chicago once scheduled an all-night vigil of prayer during a major crisis. At length we discussed the practicality of the event before finally putting it on the calendar. The poorest members of the congregation, a group of senior citizens from a housing project, responded the most enthusiastically. I wondered how many of their prayers had gone unanswered over the years, yet they showed a childlike trust in the power of prayer. “How long do you want to stay—an hour or two?” we asked, thinking of van shuttles. “Oh, we’ll stay all night,” they replied.

One woman in her 90s explained, “We can pray. We got time, and we got faith. Some of us don’t sleep much anyway. We can pray all night if needs be.” And so they did.

Meanwhile, a bunch of yuppies in a downtown church learned an important lesson: Faith often appears where least expected and falters where it ought to thrive. By: Philip Yancey ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Faith looks across the storm—it does not doubt  
Or stop to look at clouds and things without.  
Faith does not question why when all His ways  
Are hard to understand, but trusts and prays.  
—Anon.

Prayer is the voice of faith.

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### Oswald Chambers - The sphere of humiliation

If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Mark 9:22.

After every time of exaltation we are brought down with a sudden rush into things as they are, where it is neither beautiful nor poetic nor thrilling. The height of the mountain top is measured by the drab drudgery of the valley; but it is in the valley that we have to live for the glory of God. We see His glory on the mount, but we never live for His glory there. It is in the sphere of humiliation that we find our true worth to God, that is where our faithfulness is revealed. Most of us can do things if we are always at the heroic pitch because of the natural selfishness of our hearts, but God wants us at the drab commonplace pitch, where we live in the valley according to our personal relationship to Him. Peter thought it would be a fine thing for them to remain on the mount, but Jesus Christ took the disciples down from the mount into the valley—the place where the meaning of the vision is explained.

"If Thou canst do anything ..." It takes the valley of humiliation to root the scepticism out of us. Look back at your own experience, and you will find that until you learned Who Jesus was, you were a cunning sceptic about His power. When you were on the mount, you could believe anything, but what about the time when you were up against facts in the valley? You may be able to give a testimony to sanctification, but what about the thing that is a humiliation to you just now? The last time you were on the mount with God, you saw that all power in heaven and in earth belonged to Jesus—will you be sceptical now in the valley of humiliation?

**Mark 9:24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief."**

NET Mark 9:24 Immediately the father of the boy cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

NLT Mark 9:24 The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"

ESV Mark 9:24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

NIV Mark 9:24 Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

GNT Mark 9:24 ε θ ς κ ρ ξ α ς π α τ ρ τ ο παιδ ου λεγεν, Πιστε ω βοθει μου τ πιστ .

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

YLT Mark 9:24 and immediately the father of the child, having cried out, with tears said, 'I believe, sir; be helping mine unbelief.'

ASV Mark 9:24 Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

CSB Mark 9:24 Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe! Help my unbelief."

- **with:** 2Sa 16:12 2Ki 20:5 Ps 39:12 126:5 Jer 14:17 Lu 7:38,44 Ac 10:19,31 2Co 2:4 2Ti 1:4 Heb 5:7 12:17
- **help:** Lu 17:5 Eph 2:8 Php 1:29 2Th 1:3,11 Heb 12:2
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### WHAT A PLAINTIVE POWERFUL PRAYER!

**Plaintive** expresses a mournful, sorrowful cry. It is a cry from one who is deeply grieved in his soul as was this desperate father.

**Lenski's** translation - Immediately the father of the child with a yell went on to say, I do believe! Be helping my unbelief!

**Immediately** ([euthus](#)) **the boy's father cried out** ([krazo](#)) **and said I do believe** ([pisteuo](#)); **help** ([boetho](#)) **my unbelief** ([apistia](#)) - He humbled himself and confessed his unbelief but boldly cried out for Jesus to **help** his unbelief. He again uses the great verb [boetho](#).

but this time in the [present imperative](#), a cry for continual help with his faith. "**Cried out** indicates that he responded with deep emotion as he sought to rise to the demand for faith made on him." (Hiebert)

**THOUGHT** - Is this not the crying need of every one of our hearts which too often manifest feeble, faltering faith? I think it is (and will certainly speak for myself). God, hear our prayer for supernatural help for our weak faith, for Your glory and honor. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

"I believe; help my unbelief" is at once a statement of faith and an admission that our faith is far from perfect.

-- [GotQuestions.org](#)

**John Trapp** - "Lord, I believe," etc. This act of his, in putting forth his faith to believe as he could, was the way to believe as he would.

O help us, through the prayer of faith,  
More firmly to believe;  
For still the more Thy servant hath,  
The more shall he receive.  
Milman.

**Hiebert** - He did have faith as required, but his second exclamation frankly acknowledged his consciousness of its weakness. Help calls for the Lord's continued help in rising to a stronger faith. Mine unbelief is his designation of his half faith that needed strengthening by the removal of the remaining unbelief to bring it to effectiveness. A faith which declares itself openly and at the same time recognizes its weakness and pleads for help is a growing faith. "Both are the frequent experience of disciples of all times." The father realized that in order to secure help for his son, he must have help himself. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - Just as he pleaded in desperation for Jesus to deliver his son from the demon, so also did he plead for Jesus to **help** him be delivered from his unbelief. The Lord is not limited by imperfect faith; even the strongest faith is always mixed with a measure of doubt. (See [Mark 9-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Lenski** - we should not forget that he who calls himself "unbelief" has just cried aloud, "I believe." Only such a man could ask help of Jesus in his unbelief. (See [The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel](#))

**Swindoll** - The boy's father understood **immediately**. The only barrier to seeing his son cleansed of the demon was his own disbelief in God's power or goodness. Therefore, he pleaded for mercy, not for his son's condition, but for his own underdeveloped confidence in God. His plea is a paradox that almost every Christian can appreciate: "I do believe; help my unbelief." It is also a request God delights to hear and will always honor. (See [Insights on Mark](#) - Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Mark).

**Henry Morris** - This is a remarkable statement of faith, to which the Lord responded. This indicates that Christ recognizes that faith itself must be given by God (Ephesians 2:8,9) and welcomes not only our prayer of faith but also our earnest prayer for more faith.

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.  
Romans 10:13+

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**Cried out** (2896)(**krazo**) refers to a loud cry or vociferation, and is a strong word expressing deep emotion. **Krazo** is one of those [onomatopoeic](#) words, the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry of the raven ([listen](#)), and can be an inarticulate and brutish sound or an exclamation of fear or pain. Abbott-Smith says "generally used of inarticulate cries, *to scream, cry out* (Aesch., etc.)" It is used of the cry of an animal, the barking of a dog and two men in a quarrel, trying to bawl each other down (so Aristophanes, Knights, 1017)" "The prophet in awful earnestness, and as with a scream of anguish, cries over Israel" (Morison)" **Krazō** was also a technical, rabbinic term to refer to the loud summons of a prophet, needing to be heard. In Lk 18:39+ the blind beggar cried "to cry clamorously; to scream or shriek." (You can almost hear him shrieking! He is motivated because he is blind and thinks this Man might help him see!)

**Believe** (4100) **pisteuo** from **pistis**; **pistos**; related studies [the faith](#), the [obedience of faith](#)) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of. **Pisteuo** means to entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence. To believe in with the implication of total commitment to the one who is trusted. As discussed below Christ is the object of this type of faith that relies on His power and nearness to help, in addition to being convinced that His revelations or disclosures are true.

**Unbelief (570) apistia** from **a** = without + **pistós** = believing, faithful) means literally not believing = faithlessness, distrust, lack of belief. It describes an unwillingness to commit oneself totally to another (in this case God's) word.

**Apistia - 11v - unbelief(10), unbelieving(1).** Matt. 13:58; Mk. 6:6; Mk. 9:24; Mk. 16:14; Rom. 3:3; Rom. 4:20; Rom. 11:20; Rom. 11:23; 1 Tim. 1:13; Heb. 3:12; Heb. 3:19

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**QUESTION - [What is the meaning of “I believe; help my unbelief” in Mark 9:24? - See accompanying video](#)**

**ANSWER** - In seeking the Lord's help, a man came to Jesus once, fell to his knees weeping, and said, “I believe; help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24, ESV). The man's request, startling in its paradoxical phrasing, is quite thought-provoking. How can the man say he believes and at the same time ask for help in overcoming unbelief?

The full context of the man's prayer, “I believe; help my unbelief!” helps make his meaning clearer. Jesus had just returned from the mount of transfiguration when He came upon a large crowd surrounding His disciples. An argument was taking place, and people were stirred up. Jesus asked what was going on, and a man from the crowd explained that the disciples had been trying to cast a demon out of his son but had failed in their attempt. Jesus said, “You unbelieving generation, . . . how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me” (Mark 9:19).

The boy was brought to Jesus, but “when the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth” (Mark 9:20). After the boy's father further explained his son's condition, he said to Jesus, “If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us” (verse 22). Jesus assured the man that “everything is possible for one who believes” (verse 23). “Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’” (verse 24).

Upon hearing the man's request, “I believe; help my unbelief!” Jesus immediately spoke to the unclean spirit and permanently cast it out of the boy. Later, Jesus' disciples inquired why they were unable to cast the demon out. Jesus told them, “This kind can come out only by prayer” (Mark 9:29).

The dominant theme in this passage is faith and doubt. Jesus' initial response to hearing of the boy's condition expresses His disappointment in a lack of faith: “You unbelieving generation, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?” The boy's father initially seems to display a lack of faith as well. He asks Jesus to do something for the boy “if you can” (Mark 9:22). Jesus picks up on this doubt, repeating the man's conditional statement (verse 23). In essence, He responds by saying, “What do you mean, IF I can?” He goes on to assure the man that anything is possible if he has faith. (On at least two previous occasions, Jesus had linked healing to faith in Him—Mark 5:34 and 36). It appears that the only thing preventing the man's son from being healed is his faith, and he realizes that he has already betrayed a lack of faith. He wants to express faith but at the same time be genuine. So he says, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (verse 24). In essence, he says, “My faith is far from perfect. I may not have enough faith. If my faith is not enough, please help me to have enough.” The CEV puts it like this: “I do have faith! Please help me to have even more.” Jesus is pleased with this response and heals the boy.

Most Christians can identify with this man from time to time. It is the acknowledgement of our inadequacy that allows God to work in our lives. This is true at the point of salvation. Salvation comes to inadequate sinners who realize their need and ask for forgiveness. It is impossible for “righteous” people to be saved (see Luke 18:9–14). In the same way, Christians know what the Bible says, and we do trust God to take care of and direct our lives, but sometimes we are faced with something that seems to overpower our faith. We don't seem to have enough faith to follow Him in that moment, so we ask for more faith. We acknowledge that even our faith comes from God. It is His work in our lives that enables us to believe and obey.

As always, we can ask for what we need. When we doubt, we can ask for more faith. When we are wavering in our resolve to follow, we can ask for more resolve. When we are unwilling to obey, we can ask to be made willing. An unbeliever has no interest in having more faith or being made willing to obey. The believer knows that his faith and obedience are always deficient, and he will frequently ask God to enable him to live the life that pleases God. If left to our own strength and our own faith, we would never make it.

“I believe; help my unbelief” is at once a statement of faith and an admission that our faith is far from perfect. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**QUESTION - [Why do so many people struggle with a lack of faith?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The apostle Paul exhorts Christians to “walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). What we see here is a contrast between truth and perception—what we know and believe to be true and what we perceive to be true. This is where the Christian struggle with a lack of faith finds its basis. The main reason why so many Christians struggle with a lack of faith is that we follow our perceptions of what is true rather than what we know to be true by faith.

Perhaps before going any further it may be helpful to come up with a working definition of *faith*. Faith, contrary to popular opinion, is not “belief without proof.” This is the definition that many skeptics give for *faith*. This definition reduces faith to mere [fideism](#)—i.e., “I believe despite what the evidence tells me.” Skeptics are right to reject this concept of faith, and Christians should reject it, too. Faith is not belief without proof or belief despite the evidence; rather, faith is a complete trust or confidence in someone or something. That trust or confidence we have in someone is built up over time as he proves himself faithful time and time again.

Christianity is a faith-based religion. It is based on faith in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. God has provided us with His Word, the Holy Bible, as a testimony of His faithfulness to His people all throughout history. In its bare essentials, Christianity is faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ claimed to be the promised Messiah and the Son of God. His life was one of perfect righteousness according to the revealed Law of God, His death was an atoning sacrifice for the sins of His people, and He was raised to life three days after His death. When we place our faith and trust in Christ alone for our salvation, God takes our sin and places it on the cross of Christ and awards us, by grace, with the perfect righteousness of Christ. That, in a nutshell, is the Christian message. As Christians, we are called to believe this message and live in light of it.

Despite this, Christians still struggle with believing the biblical account because it doesn’t match up with our perception of reality. We may believe that Jesus was a real person, we may believe that He died by crucifixion at the hand of the Romans, we may even believe that He led a perfect life according to God’s Law, but we don’t “see” how faith in Christ makes us righteous before God. We can’t “see” Jesus atoning for our sins. We can’t “see” or “perceive” any of the great truths of Christianity, and, therefore, we struggle with lack of faith. As a result of this lack of perception, our lives often do not reflect the fact that we really believe what we claim to believe.

There are many reasons for this phenomenon among Christians. The main reason we struggle with faith is that we don’t truly know the God in whom we profess to have faith. In our daily lives, we don’t trust complete strangers. The more intimately we know someone and the more time we have had to see him “in action,” the more likely we are to believe what he says. But, if God is essentially a stranger to us, we are less likely to believe what He has said in His Word. The only cure for this is to spend more time in God’s Word getting to know Him.

The world, the flesh, and the devil often distract us. By “the world” is meant the accepted “wisdom” of the unbelieving world and the culture in which we find ourselves. For those of us living in Europe and North America, that dominant worldview is naturalism, materialism, skepticism, and atheism. “The flesh,” refers to our sinful nature that still clings to Christians and with which we struggle on a daily basis. “The devil” refers to Satan and his horde of evil spirits who excite and entice us through the world and our senses. These things all afflict us and cause us to struggle with faith.

That is why Christians need to be constantly reminded of what Christ has done for us and what our response should be. The apostle Paul says, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). Our faith is built up as we have the gospel continually preached to us. Our churches need to be built on the solid preaching of the Word and the regular observance of the ordinances. Instead, too many churches spend their time, energy, and resources on the creation of “programs” that neither feed the sheep nor draw a clear distinction between godliness and ungodliness.

Consider the example of the Israelites in the Old Testament. God had performed great miracles in rescuing His chosen people from slavery in Egypt—the Ten Plagues, the pillar of smoke and fire, and the crossing of the Red Sea. God brings His people to the foot of Mount Sinai, gives them the Law and makes a covenant with them. No sooner does He do this than the people begin to grumble and lose faith. With Moses gone up on the mountain, the people convince Aaron, Moses’ brother, to construct an idol (against God’s clear prohibition) for them to worship (Exodus 32:1–6). They were no longer walking by faith, but by sight. Despite all the clear miracles God did in their redemption, they lost faith and began to go on their perception.

That is why God instructed the new generation of Israelites before going into the Promised Land to continually remind themselves of what God had done for them: “And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). God knows that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Mark 14:38), and so He commands His people to be in constant remembrance of these things.

In conclusion, we need to heed the example of the disciple Thomas. When Thomas heard the stories of the resurrection, he wouldn’t believe them until he saw Jesus with his own two eyes. Jesus accommodated Thomas’ lack of faith by making an appearance to him and allowing him to see and touch Him. Thomas responds in worship, and Jesus says to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Many skeptics today echo Thomas’ sentiment: “Unless I see Jesus face to face, I will not believe!” We must not behave as the unbelievers do. We need to continually keep in mind Paul’s exhortation to walk by faith rather than sight. We learn in the book of Hebrews that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6) because faith is believing the Word of God and acting upon it, not responding to our perceptions. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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## Related Resource:

- [What does the Bible say about faith? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I overcome the fact that I am struggling with faith?](#)
- [Can faith change God's plan? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I keep the faith? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Faith vs. fear - what does the Bible say? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I overcome the fact that I am struggling with faith? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Mark 9:24 - FEED YOUR FAITH AND STARVE YOUR DOUBT!**- Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. Mark 9:24.

This father of a demonized boy had both faith and unbelief, but he took sides with his faith against his unbelief. Whatever we feed grows stronger. What we starve dies eventually. Your faith may be small, even as a grain of mustard seed, but feed it on the Word and exercise it unto godliness and it will gain strength by the day. Pay no attention to your doubts, no matter how feelings may clamor, and they will grow weaker. It is as simple as that. I did not say as easy as that, for Christian maturity is not reached easily, but it is as plain as that if we but follow it. (Vance Havner)

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**Spurgeon Sermon Notes on Mark 9:24**—“And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

Here was a man fully aroused to anxiety, prayer, and the use of means, and yet his desire was not at once granted to him.

Even so, many are in earnest about their souls, and yet do not immediately find conscious salvation.

This drives them to yet deeper grief.

Perhaps this father's case may help them to understand their own.

His child was not cured, but even appeared to be worse than ever.

Yet the matter came to a happy issue through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us note the case carefully, and observe—

### I. THE SUSPECTED DIFFICULTY.

1. The father may have thought it lay with the disciples.

Yet alone they could never have done anything.

Had their Lord been with them, they could have done everything.

The main difficulty was not with the disciples, though it was partly there.

2. He probably thought that the case itself was well-nigh hopeless.

The disease was—

So fitful and mysterious.

So terribly violent and sudden in its attacks.

So deep-seated, and of such long continuance.

So near to utterly destroying life.

But, after all, it is not our own case, or the case of those for whom we plead, which presents any unusual impediment to divine power. The Lord delights to work impossibilities.

3. He half hinted that the difficulty might lie with the Master. “If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.”

“If thou canst.” Had he seen the transfiguration, he would have known the power and glory of the Lord.

“Have compassion.” Could he have read the Lord's heart, he would have felt sure that the Saviour's pity was already aroused.

Rest assured, O anxious heart, that the difficulty of your case lies alone in your want of faith!

### II. THE TEARFUL DISCOVERY. “He said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

The Lord Jesus repudiated the insinuation that there was any question as to his power, and cast the “if” back upon the father with “If thou canst believe.” Then—

1. The man's little faith discovered his unbelief.
2. He was distressed and alarmed at the sight of his own unbelief.
3. He turned his thoughts and prayers in that direction. It was now not so much “Help my child,” as “Help my unbelief.”
4. He became deeply sensible of the sin and danger of unbelief.

Let us look in the same direction personally, and we shall see that unbelief is an alarming and criminal thing; for it doubts—

The power of Omnipotence.

The value of the promise of God.

The efficacy of Christ's blood.

The prevalence of his plea.  
The almightiness of the Spirit.  
The truth of the gospel.

In fact, unbelief robs God of his glory in every way, and therefore it cannot receive a blessing from the Lord. Heb. 11:6.

III. THE INTELLIGENT APPEAL. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

In his great perplexity he cries to Jesus only.

1. On the basis of faith,—“Lord, I believe.”
2. With confession of sin,—“mine unbelief.”
3. To One who knows how to help in this matter,—“Lord, help.”
4. To One who is himself the best remedy for unbelief,—“help thou.”

Unbelief is overcome when we fly to Jesus, and consider—

The majesty of his divine nature.  
The tenderness of his humanity.  
The graciousness of his offices.  
The grandeur of his atonement.  
The glorious object of his work.

Come to Jesus with any case, and in every case.

Come with your little faith and with your great unbelief, for in this matter also he can help as none other can.

## HELPS

There is no sin which may not be traced up to unbelief.—Mason.

A young man, in the seventeenth century, being in deep distress of mind, applied to Dr. Goodwin for advice and consolation. After he had laid before him the long and black list of sins that troubled his conscience, the doctor reminded him that there was one blacker still, which he had not named. "What can that be, sir?" he despondingly asked. "The sin," replied the doctor, "I refer to is that of refusing to believe in Christ Jesus as a Saviour." The simple word banished the anxious one's guilty fears.

There was once a good woman who was well known among her circle for her simple faith, and her great calmness in the midst of many trials. Another woman, living at a distance, hearing of her, said, "I must go and see that woman, and learn the secret of her holy, happy life." She went; and accosting the woman, said, "Are you the woman with the great faith?" "No," replied she, "I am not the woman with the great faith; but I am the woman with a little faith in the great God."

A friend complained to Gotthold of the weakness of his faith, and the distress this gave him. Gotthold pointed to a vine, which had twined itself around a plant, and was hanging loaded with beautiful clusters, and said, "Frail is that plant; but what harm is done to it by its frailty, especially as the Creator has been pleased to make it what it is? As little will it prejudice your faith that it is weak, provided only it be sincere and unfeigned. Faith is the work of God, and he bestows it in such measure as he wills and judges right. Let the measure of it which he has given you be deemed sufficient by you. Take for pole and prop the cross of the Saviour, and the Word of God; twine around these with all the power which God vouchsafes. A heart sensible of its weakness, and prostrating itself continually at the feet of the divine mercy, is more acceptable than that which presumes upon the strength of its faith, and falls into false security and pride. Can you suppose that the sinful woman, who lay and wept at the Lord's feet, was less approved than the swelling and haughty Pharisee?"—Christian Scriver.

**Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again."**

NET Mark 9:25 Now when Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

NLT Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. "Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak," he said. "I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!"

ESV Mark 9:25 And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

NIV Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf

and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

GNT Mark 9:25 δ ν δ ἡ σο ς τι πιουντρ χει χλος, πετ μησεν τ πνε ματι τ καθ ρτ λ γων α τ , Τ λαλον κα κωφ ν πνε μα, γ πιτ σω σοι, ξελθε ξ α το κα μηκ τι ε σ λθ ς ε ς α τ ν.

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:25 Jesus having seen that a multitude doth run together, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'Spirit -- dumb and deaf -- I charge thee, come forth out of him, and no more thou mayest enter into him;'

ASV Mark 9:25 And when Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

CSB Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly coming together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you: come out of him and never enter him again!"

- **he rebuked:** Mk 1:25-27 5:7,8 Zec 3:2 Mt 17:18 Lu 4:35,41 9:42 Jude 1:9
- **deaf and mute spirit,**: Isa 35:5,6 Mt 9:32,33 12:22 Lu 11:14
- **command you:** Lu 8:29 Ac 16:18
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 17:18+ And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once.

Luke 9:42+ While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

**When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering- Radidly gathering** is *episuntrecho* used only here and meaning *run together besides others already gathered*. "The historical present, rendered "came running together," vividly views the multitude as in the act of running together, converging on the place where Jesus was. The people, realizing that something exciting was about to take place, hurried together to observe it." (Hiebert)

**He rebuked the unclean spirit** - All the synoptics recorded the fact of His rebuke to the demon, but only Mark preserved His very words.

**Saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command ([epitimaō](#)) you, come out of him and do not enter him again."** - Jesus gives first a command for deliverance from the demonic power and then a command to ensure future protection from the demon entering the boy again (the preceding description does suggest that the demon would enter and leave the boy, but Jesus' command closed the door of entry forever!) (cf. Mt 12:43–45+).

**Hiebert** - His emphatic I, in "I command thee," stressed His authority; it was the Master Himself, not one of His weak disciples, now commanding the demon. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

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**He rebuked** ([2008](#))([epitimaō](#) from **epi** = upon + **timao** = to honor) means literally to put honor upon and then to mete out due measure and so then to find fault with, to censure severely, to rebuke, to express strong disapproval of, or to denounce (cp the incredible example in Mt 16:22). Note that one may **rebuke** another without producing conviction of guilt, either because, as in Mt 16:22 (Jesus rebuked by Peter, cp similar uses in Mt 19:13; Mk 8:32; 10:13; Lk 18:15; 19:39) the one rebuked is not guilty of any fault or the rebuke may be insufficient to produce acknowledgement of fault by the offender (cf the repentant thief's rebuke of the non-repentant thief on the cross = Lk 23:40). **Epitimaō** also conveys the sense of to command or warning which includes an implied threat (Lk 8:24; Mt 16:20)

**Epitimaō - 30v - rebuke(6), rebuked(13), rebuking(3), sternly telling(2), sternly told(1), warned(5).** Matt. 8:26; Matt. 12:16; Matt. 16:20; Matt. 16:22; Matt. 17:18; Matt. 19:13; Matt. 20:31; Mk. 1:25; Mk. 3:12; Mk. 4:39; Mk. 8:30; Mk. 8:32; Mk. 8:33; Mk. 9:25; Mk. 10:13; Mk. 10:48; Lk. 4:35; Lk. 4:39; Lk. 4:41; Lk. 8:24; Lk. 9:21; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 9:55; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 18:15; Lk. 18:39; Lk. 19:39; Lk. 23:40; 2 Tim. 4:2; Jude 1:9

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#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession?](#)
- [What are unclean spirits? Are unclean spirits demons?](#)

- [What does the Bible say about demonic oppression?](#)
- [Is epilepsy mentioned in the Bible?](#)
- [Can a Christian be demon possessed? Can a Christian be demonized?](#)
- [How do we distinguish a psychological disorder from demon possession?](#)
- [What does it mean that the name of the demon was Legion?](#)
- [Who were the seven sons of Sceva?](#)
- [Can a Christian today perform an exorcism?](#)
- [How much emphasis should be given to demonic deliverance in the Christian life?](#)

**Mark 9:26 After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!"**

NET Mark 9:26 It shrieked, threw him into terrible convulsions, and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He is dead!"

NLT Mark 9:26 Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, "He's dead."

ESV Mark 9:26 And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead."

NIV Mark 9:26 The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead."

GNT Mark 9:26 κα κρ ξας κα πολλ σπαρ ξας ξ λθεν· κα γ νετο σε νεκρ ς, στε το ς πολλο ς λ γειν τι π θανεν.

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:26 and having cried, and rent him much, it came forth, and he became as dead, so that many said that he was dead,

ASV Mark 9:26 And having cried out, and torn him much, he came out: and the boy became as one dead; insomuch that the more part said, He is dead.

CSB Mark 9:26 Then it came out, shrieking and convulsing him violently. The boy became like a corpse, so that many said, "He's dead."

- **After crying out:** Mk 9:18,20 1:26 Ex 5:23 Rev 12:12
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 17:14-20+ 18And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once.

Luke 9:42+ While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

### THE DEMON'S LAST EFFORT TO DESTROY THE BOY

**After crying out ([krazo](#)) and throwing ([sparasso](#)) him into terrible convulsions ([sparasso](#)), it came out** - The demon makes one last throw, but Jesus rebuked the demon and cast him out. "The spirit screamed in rage and wreaked final fierce vengeance on his victim before coming out. The convulsion was violent and prolonged." (Hiebert)

**What the Bible Teaches** – The final effort of the demon to keep the boy within his power is characteristic. In Mark 1:23-27 the man in the synagogue at Capernaum was just about to be delivered when the unclean spirit made one last, mighty effort to hold him or destroy him. Rev 12:12 refers to a coming day, but we are seeing a great display of Satan's rage in these last days because he knows that his time is short and the church is about to be delivered forever out of his reach. We have often seen Satan make a

gigantic last effort to hold a sinner who is on the very threshold of salvation. We should not miss Luke's statement that the Lord did three things: He "rebuked the unclean spirit", "healed the child", and "delivered him again to his father". The healing of the child was a necessary thing for Mark says that when the spirit was commanded to come out of him, it "rent him sore ... and he was as one dead". It was a complete deliverance, for He commanded the spirit never to enter into him again (Mark 9:25). The Lord does not give a partial deliverance.

**and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!"**([apothnesko](#)) - After total body seizures the body may indeed look like a stiff corpse.

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**Throwing... into a convulsions** ([4682](#)) [sparasso](#) means to convulse, throw into a (violent) spasm, shake to and fro, to pull to and fro. Three times in the NT - Mk. 1:26; Mk. 9:26; Lk. 9:39. **Liddell-Scott** adds *sparasso* means -to tear, rend in pieces, mangle, Lat. lacerare, Eur., Ar.:Med., to tear one's hair, Eur. 2. to rend asunder, Aesch. 3. metaphorically. to pull to pieces, attack, In non-biblical usage the word can mean "to tear, maul," or "rend asunder (as by violent animals), to attack violently, to retch in spasms". Medical writers used **sparasso** of the convulsive action of the stomach

**Dead** ([599](#)) [apothnesko](#) from **apo** = marker of dissociation implying a rupture from a former association, separation, departure, cessation + **thnesko** = die literally means to die off (that is, to die and thus be *away from* this earthly realm). *Apothnesko* speaks of literal physical death (Ro 6:9+) but figuratively (metaphorically) of a believer's death to **sin** (Ro 6:2+, Ro 6:7+, Ro 6:8+, Col 3:3+), **self, Satan, the law** (Ro 7:6+, Gal 2:19+) and **the world** (Col 2:20+, cp Gal 6:14+ - *crucified* used instead of *died*) which was effected when Christ was crucified and when by faith we believed in Him and in God's reckoning (albeit a "mysterious" teaching) were crucified with Him (Ro 6:6+).

**Apothnesko** in Mark - Mk. 5:35; Mk. 5:39; Mk. 9:26; Mk. 12:19; Mk. 12:20; Mk. 12:21; Mk. 12:22; Mk. 15:44

### Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.

NET Mark 9:27 But Jesus gently took his hand and raised him to his feet, and he stood up.

NLT Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up.

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

NIV Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

GNT Mark 9:27 ὁ ἡσο ἡ κρατῶν τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ ἔγειρεν αὐτὸν, καὶ ἐστή.

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

YLT Mark 9:27 but Jesus, having taken him by the hand, lifted him up, and he arose.

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

CSB Mark 9:27 But Jesus, taking him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up.

- Mk 1:31,41 5:41 8:23 Isa 41:13 Ac 3:7 9:41
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE TOUCH OF JESUS COMPLETES THE CURE

**But** - Term of contrast. The crowd thought him dead, but the truth was that Jesus had restored him. The demon was gone but the boy was in a post-epileptic state.

**Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up** - When Jesus delivers and heals, it is complete. The boy was lying still but the touch of Jesus brought him back to full consciousness. Luke says Jesus "healed the boy and gave him back to his father." (Lk 9:42+) Mark makes no statement about the effect of the miracle on the crowd. Luke 9:43+ says "And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples,"

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**Mark 9:28 When He came into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?"**

NET Mark 9:28 Then, after he went into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we cast it out?"

NLT Mark 9:28 Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, "Why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit?"

ESV Mark 9:28 And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

NIV Mark 9:28 After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

GNT Mark 9:28 κα ε σελθ ντος α το ε ς ο κον ο μαθητα α το κατ δ αν πηρ των α τ ν, τι με ς ο κ δυν θημεν κβαλε ν α τ ;

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

YLT Mark 9:28 And he having come into the house, his disciples were questioning him by himself -- 'Why were we not able to cast it forth?'

ASV Mark 9:28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, How is it that we could not cast it out?

CSB Mark 9:28 After He went into a house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

- **began questioning:** Mk 4:10,34 Mt 13:10,36 15:15
- **Why:** Mt 17:19,20
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 17:19+ Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?"

## A PRIVATE CONFERENCE

**When He came into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?"- We** is emphatic "we nine." They were puzzled and confused for they had cast out demons before (Mk 6:13+). **Questioning** is in the imperfect tense picturing the disciples asking over and over "Why not?"

**Believer's Study Bible** - The disciples had previously found success in casting out demons (Mk 6:13), but in this incident they were powerless. Jesus' answer to their question of inability is instructive. The disciples needed to recognize that spiritual ability comes through complete dependence on God's power, which is available to us through prayer. Like the disciples, we cannot afford to become dependent on our past successes (which can cause us to become self-dependent). Reliance on God through prayer is a constant process.

**Mark 9:29 And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."**

NET Mark 9:29 He told them, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

NLT Mark 9:29 Jesus replied, "This kind can be cast out only by prayer. "

ESV Mark 9:29 And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

NIV Mark 9:29 He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer. "

GNT Mark 9:29 κα ε πεν α το ς, Το το τ γ νο ς ν ο δ εν δ ναται ξελθε ν ε μ ν προσευχ .

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

YLT Mark 9:29 And he said to them, 'This kind is able to come forth with nothing except with prayer and fasting.'

ASV Mark 9:29 And he said unto them, This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer.

CSB Mark 9:29 And He told them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer [and fasting]."

- **This:** Mt 12:45 Lu 11:26
- **by prayer:** 1Ki 17:20-22 2Ki 4:33,34 Mt 17:21 Ac 9:40,41 2Co 12:8 Eph 6:18 Jas 5:15
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 17:20+ And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly 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; and nothing will be impossible to you.

**And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer (proseuche)"** - "this kind may be taken generally to denote the genus evil spirit, but more probably the meaning is "this class or sort of demon." Jesus elsewhere taught that there are differences between the demons (Matt. 12:45) and here indicated that this kind was particularly difficult to expel. It could successfully be driven out only through prayer. Rather than castigating them for their failure, Jesus pointed them to the true source of power to meet such a condition. They had failed to realize that there was no hope to dislodge it except through a believing appeal to the power of God. They had failed to maintain their continued sense of dependence upon God's power through continued communion with Him. Having known the power to cast out demons, they had taken it for granted. This demon's stubborn refusal to obey their command resulted from their failure to resort to prayer for God's power to overcome the demon." (Hiebert [Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** agrees adding "The implication is that emboldened by their earlier successes, the disciples depended on their own power and neglected to pray. The lesson for them was that humble, dependent prayer is the highway that faith takes to the power of God. Matthew's account adds that Jesus rebuked them for the **littleness of their faith** (Mt 17:20; cf. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Luke 12:28), revealing that it was that weakness that kept the disciples from praying. But if they had faith the size of a mustard seed, they would have been able to unleash the power of God and overcome any difficulty. The mustard seed, the smallest seed used in agriculture in Israel, does not represent a level of faith to be achieved but rather the minimal faith that believers already have—such as that illustrated by the father. Jesus healed many without faith, but here the miracle is connected to **faith** because that is the necessary lesson for the disciples in the future. Their power will come by **believing prayer**. That man's weak faith was sufficient to bring the power of God to bear on his son's situation. **In the same way imperfect but persistent (cf. Luke 11:5–10; 18:1–7) faith is sufficient.** It is those who do not ask who do not receive divine power to overcome life's difficulties (James 4:2). The disciples' failure set them up for this invaluable lesson on the necessity of believing, persistent prayer. ([MNTC-Mk](#)) (Bolding added)

**Henry Morris** - The words "and fasting" were apparently dropped (or possibly added) from (or to) the original account since a few of the ancient manuscripts do not have them. In any case, the Lord was stressing that this type of continuing demonic possession, combined with actual illness (probably epilepsy, combined with deafness and dumbness), was extremely difficult and required intense prayer. Fasting would almost inevitably accompany such single-minded prayer. Christ Himself, being the unlimited, omnipotent Creator, could respond instantly to the father's earnest faith and sincere desire for stronger faith.

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**Prayer** (4335) [proseuche](#) from **pros** = toward or immediately before + **euchomai** = to pray or vow) is the more general word for prayer and is used only of prayer to God. The prefix **pros** would convey the sense of being immediately before Him and hence the ideas of adoration, devotion, and worship. The basic idea is to bring something, and in prayer this pertains to bringing up prayer requests. In early Greek culture an offering was brought with a prayer that it be accepted. Later the idea was changed slightly, so that the thing brought to God was a prayer. In later Greek, prayers appealed to God for His presence.

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#### Oswald Chambers - The sphere of ministration

This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting. Mark 9:29.

"Why could not we cast him out?" The answer lies in a personal relationship to Jesus Christ. This kind can come forth by nothing but by concentration and redoubled concentration on Him. We can ever remain powerless, as were the disciples, by trying to do God's work not in concentration on His power, but by ideas drawn from our own temperament. We slander God by our very eagerness to work for Him without knowing Him.

You are brought face to face with a difficult case and nothing happens externally, and yet you know that emancipation will be given because you are concentrated on Jesus Christ. This is your line of service—to see that there is nothing between Jesus and yourself. Is there? If there is, you must get through it, not by ignoring it in irritation, or by mounting up, but by facing it and getting through it into the presence of Jesus Christ. Then that very thing, and all you have been through in connection with it, will glorify Jesus Christ

in a way you will never know till you see Him face to face.

We must be able to mount up with wings as eagles; but we must also know how to come down. The power of the saint lies in the coming down and the living down. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," said Paul, and the things he referred to were mostly humiliating things. It is in our power to refuse to be humiliated and to say—'No, thank you, I much prefer to be on the mountain top with God.' Can I face things as they actually are in the light of the reality of Jesus Christ, or do things as they are efface altogether my faith in Him, and put me into a panic? (My Utmost for His Highest)

**Mark 9:30 From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know about it.**

- **through:** Mt 27:22,23
- **He did not want anyone:** Mk 6:31,32
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know about it-** Go through is in the [imperfect tense](#) which pictures them moving from place to place with no prolonged stays. Because of the miracle spread in the region of the place where the transfiguration had taken place, privacy was no longer available, so they moved on to Galilee and ultimately to "home base" in Capernaum (Mk 9:33). This detail is only found in Mark's Gospel.

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### Candidates For Humility

He who is least among you all will be great. — Luke 9:48

Today's Scripture: Mark 9:30-37

"What do you think of the candidates?" That's what a reporter for a news magazine asked a young woman at Dartmouth University after a debate among presidential hopefuls. She didn't say a word about their positions on the issues or their skill at debate. She simply remarked, "None of them seems to have any humility."

Benjamin Franklin, the early American statesman, made a list of character qualities that he wanted to develop in his own life. When he mastered one virtue, he went on to the next. He did pretty well, he said, until he got to humility. Every time he thought he was making significant progress, he would be so pleased with himself that he became proud.

Humility is an elusive virtue. Even Jesus' disciples struggled with it. When Jesus learned that they had been arguing about who was the greatest, He responded, "If anyone desires to be first, he should be last of all and servant of all" (Mk. 9:35). Then He took a little child in His arms and indicated that we need to humbly serve others as if we were serving Christ.

If a news reporter were to talk to our friends, neighbors, or fellow church members and ask them to describe us, would they use the word humble? By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

True greatness does not lie with those  
Who strive for worldly fame;  
It lies instead with those who choose  
To serve in Jesus' name.  
—DJD

Humility can be sought but never celebrated.

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### Surprised By Top Honors

If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all. —Mark 9:35

Today's Scripture: Mark 9:30-37

When Mike Peters won the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for political cartoons, he wasn't expecting the honor. He described his response by saying, "It is like you are asleep and it is 2 in the morning and you are hugging your pillow and you are in your funny pajamas and somebody bursts through the door and they come over and start shaking you and they say, 'Wake up, wake up!' And you say, 'What is it?' And they say, 'You have just won the Boston Marathon!' And you say, 'But I'm not running in the Boston Marathon.' And they

say, "Doesn't make any difference, you won."

We can find at least one element that is common to both Mike Peters' analogy and the account in Mark 9. Jesus taught that heaven too will hold some surprises. Honor and glory will be granted for behavior that was so natural, so undistinguished, and so noncompetitive.

Take, for instance, the simple illustration of receiving a child in Jesus' name. He was talking about having a humble servant attitude, being willing to reach out and help the lowliest of people so that we might show them the love of Christ. Such simple acts will be greatly rewarded.

Yes, many of God's children will be surprised to find that their faithful service has brought them top honors. By: Mart DeHaan

To live for self and get ahead  
Brings limited reward,  
But if we care for others' needs,  
We're honored by the Lord.  
—DJD

Work well done for Christ will receive a "well done" from Christ.

**Mark 9:31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later."**

- **The Son:** Mk 9:12 Mk 8:31 Mt 16:21 20:18,19,28 21:38,39 26:2 Lu 9:44 18:31-33 Lu 24:26,44-46 Joh 2:19 3:14 10:18 Ac 2:23,24 4:27,28 2Ti 2:12
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JESUS' SECOND PASSION PROCLAMATION

**For (gar)** term of explanation. What is Mark explaining? Clearly he was explaining why Jesus was moving in such a manner as to remain unrecognized. He sought seclusion with His disciples which had begun when He had left for Tyre (Mk 7:24). "His public ministry in Galilee was ended, and Jesus was devoting His efforts to preparing the disciples for the future." (Hiebert)

**He was teaching (didasko) His disciples (mathetes) and telling them** - This is the second time He predicts His death and resurrection (See Mk 8:31). **Teaching** and **telling** are both in the [imperfect tense](#) this crucial truth about His mission! Given this obvious repetition about His passion Bruce says this was very likely "the text of Christ's whole talk with His disciples as they went along."

**The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed** - This is the second prediction of His death (see Mk 8:31, third prediction in Mk 10:33-34) The new detail is delivered which means to be given over to the power of another. There is clearly a hint of the coming act of betrayal by Judas who will make possible the giving over of Christ to the authorities. Indeed the same verb is used of the act of betrayal by Judas as well as of God's delivering up Jesus for our redemption (Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:32).

Mark 10:33 saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man **will be delivered** ([paradidomi](#)) to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles.

**Delivered** (betrayed, handed over) ([3860](#))([paradidomi](#) from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another. Uses in Mark - Mk. 1:14; Mk. 3:19; Mk. 4:29; Mk. 7:13; Mk. 9:31; Mk. 10:33; **READ ABOUT HIS BETRAYAL IN SEVERAL OF THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES** = Mk. 13:9; Mk. 13:11; Mk. 13:12; Mk. 14:10; Mk. 14:11; Mk. 14:18; Mk. 14:21; Mk. 14:41; Mk. 14:42; Mk. 14:44; Mk. 15:1; Mk. 15:10; Mk. 15:15

**He will rise three days later** - Despite the simplicity of this statement, the disciples still did not understand as the next verse explains.

**Hiebert on will rise** - Mark again uses the [active voice](#), indicating that Jesus would rise in His own power and might. Matthew uses

the passive (DIVINE PASSIVE), pointing to God as the agent of the resurrection. In His teaching Jesus kept His death and resurrection together. They are the foci around which the whole Gospel story moves. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - Not only did the disciples struggle with the reality that the Jews and Romans would kill Him but also that when He had been killed, He would rise three days later. They understood Jesus' power over death, having seen Him raise dead people. But the question that must have troubled them was that if He died, who would raise Him? Thus, they did not understand this statement. ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**NET Note** - Mark 8:27–10:52. The entire section Mk 8:27–10:52 is built around three passion predictions of Jesus (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33). These predictions form the structure of the section, the content for the section (Jesus' suffering, death, and the meaning of genuine discipleship) and the mood of the section (i.e., a somber mood). What is interesting is that after each passion prediction, Mark records both the misunderstanding of the disciples and then Jesus' teaching on the nature of his death and what genuine discipleship is all about: (1) denying oneself (Mk 8:34–38); (2) humility and serving (Mk 9:33–37); (3) suffering, humble service, and not lording it over people (Mk 10:35–45). For further discussion of the structure of the passage, see W. L. Lane, *Mark* (NICNT), 292–94.

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### Summary of Jesus' Nine Prophecies of His Passion

|                                    | Matthew      | Mark         | Luke         |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>First passion announcement</b>  | Mt 16:21–23+ | Mk 8:31–33+  | Lk 9:22+     |
| <b>Second passion announcement</b> | Mt 17:22–23  | Mk 9:30–32+  | Lk 9:43–45+  |
| <b>Third passion announcement</b>  | Mt 20:17–19  | Mk 10:32–34+ | Lk 18:31–34+ |

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### QUESTION - [How many times did Jesus predict His death?](#)

**ANSWER** - Jesus' death was the final sacrifice that paid the debt of sin for all (Hebrews 9:28). His death was the ultimate purpose of His ministry. In fact, Jesus predicted His death at least three times in the [Synoptic Gospels](#) (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), and the book of John offers even more predictions.

The first time Jesus predicted His death is detailed in Matthew 16:21–23, Mark 8:31–32, and Luke 9:21–22. Jesus had just fed the multitudes, and He said that the "Son of Man must suffer many things" (Mark 8:31); be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes; be killed; and be raised again. Peter then rashly began to rebuke Jesus, and Christ responded, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matthew 16:33; Mark 8:33). Jesus knew that His death must happen. It was necessary in God's plan to save the world.

Jesus predicted His death a second time in Matthew 17:22–23, Mark 9:30–32, and Luke 9:43–45. This occurred shortly after the Transfiguration, when Peter, James, and John saw Christ in His heavenly glory. Perhaps this was the reason the disciples were so confused by Jesus telling them He was going to die. At this point, they believed His kingdom was just around the corner. Despite their lack of understanding, they were "afraid to ask" for clarification (Mark 9:32; Luke 9:45).

Matthew 20:17–19, Mark 10:32–34, and Luke 18:31–34 describe the third time Jesus predicted His death. He spoke to His disciples as they were heading up toward Jerusalem for Passover, and He told them how He would be mocked, scourged, crucified, and then rise again. On this occasion also, the disciples did not understand Jesus' saying because the meaning was hidden from them. They would soon learn what Jesus meant in the events of Good Friday and following.

The Gospel of John gives a few more predictions of Jesus's death, but they are slightly more subtle. For instance, when Mary anointed Jesus with the costly perfume, and Judas asked if she should have sold it for the poor, Christ said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me" (John 12:7–8). While not an explicit prediction like the previous three, this statement of Jesus clearly pointed to His coming death and burial. Again, in John 13:33, Jesus hinted that His time was short as He told the disciples, "Where I am going you cannot come." Finally, in John 14:25, Jesus talked about giving the Holy Spirit in His absence, which hinted at His death as well as the future of the church.

Jesus intentionally came to earth to die for our sins. Jesus gave His disciples predictions about His death and the events that followed "so that when it does take place you may believe" (John 14:29). - [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 9:32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.**

- **they:** Mk 9:10 Lu 2:50 9:45 18:34 24:45
- **were:** Mk 7:18 8:17,18,33 16:14 Joh 4:27 16:19
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Luke 9:45+ But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

## MENTAL DULLNESS DIVINE KINDNESS

**But they did not understand ([agnoeo](#)) this statement** - So again they are somewhat dull regarding the meaning of Jesus' clear words. Did not understand is in the [imperfect tense](#) picturing this as an ongoing issue --one can envision one disciple asking another and he says "I do not understand" either, etc, etc. Luke said that "it was hid from them, that they perceived it not" (Lk 9:45). It would appear that in the providence of God their failure to understand was allowed in order to spare them the agony of the prospect of the Passion.

**Hiebert** - Their views of a reigning Messiah made His words utterly enigmatical to them. What He appeared to be saying just did not make sense. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**And they were afraid to ask Him** - Why might they have been afraid? One consideration is Jesus' rebuke of Peter in Mk 8:32-33.

**Hiebert** - they remembered the rebuke that Peter had received (8:33); in view of His obvious seriousness about the teaching, they feared that critical inquiry would certainly draw another sharp reprimand. Their natural reluctance to discuss the whole unpleasant idea made them unwilling to ask for further information. They were more interested in their future status in the kingdom (cf. v. 34) than in the thought of coming suffering...Matthew noted that the teaching caused them to be "exceeding sorry" (Mt 17:23). They understood enough of what He meant to make them very uneasy about their hopes for the future. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Did not understand** (50) ([agnoeo](#) from **a** = not + **noéo** = perceive, understand) not have information about, to not know, to not understand (Mk 9:32, Lk 9:45), to be unaware of, to not recognize (Ac 13:27), to be ignorant of (to lack information concerning something). *Agnoeo* conveys the nuance of lacking the ability to understand in He 5:2 and of inexcusable moral/ethical ignorance (even disregard) in Ro 10:3).

**Mark 9:33** They came to [Capernaum](#); and when He was in the house, He began to question them, "What were you discussing on the way?"

- **He was in the house;** Mt 17:24
- **What were you discussing:** Mk 2:8 Ps 139:1-4 Joh 2:25 21:17 Heb 4:13 Rev 2:23
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Capernaum](#) - "Home Base" in Galilee

## TEACHING THE DISCIPLES IN CAPERNAUM

**Hiebert** - This section, containing occasion-inspired teaching to the Twelve, has a partial parallel in Luke 9:46–50+. Matthew 18:1–35 gives a more extended account of the teaching, but omits reference to John's confession. All three of the synoptics record similar teaching given on other occasions. In this paragraph Jesus gave the disciples needed teaching about greatness in the kingdom (Mark 9:33–37), answered John's report of his zealous action (vv. 38–41), and showed the seriousness of causing offense (vv. 42–50). ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**They came to [Capernaum](#); and when He was in the house** - This may have been [Peter's house](#). They have probably been gone about 5 months (a rough estimate).

**Hiebert** - The third withdrawal from Galilee (Mk 7:24–8:13+) had been of considerable duration, and there is no evidence that Jesus had returned to [Capernaum](#) before the fourth withdrawal (Mk 8:14–9:32+). This is the last event in the Gospels connected directly

with Capernaum. The great Galilean ministry began (1:21) and ended in Capernaum. Before reporting this teaching, Matthew records the incident of the inquiry concerning the temple tax (Mt 17:24–27). ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

He *began to question them, "What were you discussing on the way?"* - NIV says "What were you arguing about on the road?" **Question** and **discussing** are both in the imperfect tense picturing them as doing so over and over.

**Question** (1905) [eperotao](#) from **epí** = an intens. + **erōtáō** = to ask, inquire of, beg of) in the NT means "to consult or put a question to someone." **Eperotao** in Mark -Mk. 5:9; Mk. 7:5; Mk. 7:17; Mk. 8:23; Mk. 8:27; Mk. 8:29; Mk. 9:11; Mk. 9:16; Mk. 9:21; Mk. 9:28; Mk. 9:32; Mk. 9:33; Mk. 10:2; Mk. 10:10; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 11:29; Mk. 12:18; Mk. 12:28; Mk. 12:34; Mk. 13:3; Mk. 14:60; Mk. 14:61; Mk. 15:2; Mk. 15:4; Mk. 15:44

**Discussing** (1260) [dialogizomai](#) from **dia** = intensifies meaning + **logizomai** - to reason, reckon, consider. Related to our English word "[dialogue](#)" a conversation between two or more people) means to consider, reason or reckon thoroughly. *Dialogizomai* has a negative tone in the NT. They suggest thinking issues through in a calculated, thorough way; but they are closely linked in Greek culture with the teaching of philosophers. In the NT, they suggest the efforts of unaided human beings to arrive at significant truth. 15v in NT (only in synoptic Gospels) - Mtt. 16:7; Mt. 16:8; Mt. 21:25; Mk. 2:6; Mk. 2:8; Mk. 8:16; Mk. 8:17; Mk. 9:33; Mk. 11:31; Lk. 1:29; Lk. 3:15; Lk. 5:21; Lk. 5:22; Lk. 12:17; Lk. 20:14

**Mark 9:34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest.**

Wuest But they kept on being quiet. For with one another they discussed along the road who was to be the greatest. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:34 But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

NLT Mark 9:34 But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest.

ESV Mark 9:34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

NIV Mark 9:34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

GNT Mark 9:34 ο ὁ σιπων· πρς ἄλλους γρ διελχθησαν ντ ὁ τς μεζων.

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

YLT Mark 9:34 and they were silent, for with one another they did reason in the way who is greater;

ASV Mark 9:34 But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another on the way, who was the greatest.

CSB Mark 9:34 But they were silent, because on the way they had been arguing with one another about who was the greatest.

- **they had:** Mt 18:1-5 20:21-24 Lu 9:46-48 22:24-30 Ro 12:10 Php 2:3-7 1Pe 5:3 3Jn 1:9
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 18:1-5 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me;

Luke 9:46-50+ An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest. 47 But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great." 49 John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow

along with us." 50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."

## WHEN SILENCES SPEAKS VOLUMES

**MacArthur** is "spot on!" - The Lord had just spoken to them about **His humiliation** (Mk 9:30–32), but all they could think about was **their exaltation!** ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**But they kept silent** - KJV "they held their peace" They knew that they were wrong for discussing this topic. They were convicted and now were ashamed. Jesus' direct question proved embarrassing to the disciples. Too ashamed to respond, not one of the disciples answered. In Matthew we read their question "At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in **the kingdom of heaven?**" Matthew's version suggests that they were clearly thinking of the coming Messianic reign of their Messiah Master and they wanted to have a prestigious place in His Kingdom! Their basic desire was not bad, but their selfish attitude was inexcusable.

**Wuest** - The Greek has it, "But they kept on being quiet." No wonder. Our Lord was facing a cruel death, and they were nursing their ambitions. They were ashamed. Swete says that the dispute as to who should be greatest, was probably suggested by the selection of the Three for the mysterious ascent of Hermon, and the prominence of Peter among the three. ([Wuest Word Studies - Erdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

Of course their silence could not hide the truth from Jesus for Lk 9:47+ says "But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart." There is that ugly heart problem again! Our problems always originate from our fleshly heart, and in the case of the disciples was a mixture of "evil thoughts...deeds of coveting...envy...pride, foolishness." (Mk 7:21-22+).

**Anderson** - Faced with the question posed by the one prepared to surrender himself to the lowliness and obscurity of the cross, they whose thoughts are all of their own status and prestige can have nothing to say."

**Silent** (4623) **siopao** from **siopē** = silence, a hush, properly, muteness, i.e. involuntary stillness, or inability to speak) means to be silent, hold one's peace, say nothing (Mt 26:63; Mk 3:4; 9:34; 14:61; Acts 18:9). To stop speaking or become quiet (Mt 20:31; Mk 10:48; Lk 18:39, 19:40) and here in Luke 1:20 meaning to lose the ability to speak. In one use Jesus commands the wind (and waves) to "Hush!" or quieten down, becoming calm (Mk 4:39). In classic Greek it was a command to "be silent" (Iliad 23.568; Odyssey 17.513) Socrates before a jury. (Cf Plato before the popular assembly on Aegina, on trial for his life "did not say a single word.")

**for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest**- ESV = "they had argued with one another about who was the greatest." **Discussed** is probably a bit euphemistic, for more likely they were disputing or arguing about who got to sit on the right of Jesus when He took the throne. At this time they all still had a bit of the "Judas Iscariot" syndrome (cf Jn 12:6) in their hearts! This is mind boggling. The Leader has said it would die and they totally forget Mark 8:34-38 and focus on self, not Savior! This continued until even the Last Supper.

And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. (Lk 22:24+).

**Hiebert - Disputed** indicates that the disciples had been vigorously discussing, or arguing, a disputed point. The imperfect implies that it continued for some time. Mark does not indicate whether Jesus knew because He had overheard them or knew intuitively; Luke 9:47 implies the latter...among themselves is emphatic by its position at the beginning of the clause in the original and indicates that the argument had been carried on in a close face-to-face relationship. They had argued on the way back to **Capernaum**...The argument apparently was stimulated by the privileges which had been given to Peter, James, and John. Supposing that obtaining rank now among them would assure rank in the future kingdom, they argued about who would have the chief place under Jesus in the messianic kingdom. Questions of rank were important to the Jews and arose repeatedly among them (cf. Luke 14:7–11). "Pride and ambition are temptations in every age." The dispute shows that the disciples did not regard Peter as having been assigned a position of primacy among them at Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:17–19). ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Discussed** (1256) **dialogomai** from **diá** = denoting transition or separation + **légo** = speak; English = **dialogue**; noun derived = **dialektos** = speaking a specific language of a country) means to engage in an interchange of speech. It means to think different things with oneself, to mingle thought with thought and so to ponder or revolve in one's mind. To reason as one might do using thoughtful arguments to persuade another. Most uses in Acts - Mk. 9:34; Acts 17:2; Acts 17:17; Acts 18:4; Acts 18:19; Acts 19:8; Acts 19:9; Acts 20:7; Acts 20:9; Acts 24:12; Acts 24:25; Heb. 12:5; Jude 1:9

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## QUESTION - [Who is greatest in the kingdom?](#)

**ANSWER** - The greatest person in [the kingdom](#) will of course be Jesus. After that, ranking the greatest is full of surprises. Matthew 18:1–5 records, “At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ [Jesus] called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me’” (see also Mark 9:35–37; Luke 9:46–48).

This incident occurred after the [Transfiguration](#) and after Jesus’ second prediction of His death. Jesus had also just spoken about paying temple taxes, essentially claiming exemption as the Son of God yet miraculously providing for both Peter’s tax and His own so as not to cause offense. Too, Jesus had healed a demon-possessed boy whom His disciples were unable to heal (Matthew 17:14–21). Jesus’ power was evident, and the disciples recognized Him as Messiah and King. Evidently, they were interested in what their roles would be in Jesus’ kingdom. Rather than provide qualifications for the greatest or talk about a hierarchical structure, Jesus said those who became like children—humble—were the greatest (Matthew 18:4).

Interestingly, after Jesus talks about the greatest being like a child, John tells Jesus that he had tried to stop others who were casting out demons in Jesus’ name (Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49). Apparently, the lesson had not quite sunken in, or perhaps John was convicted by Jesus’ words and chose to confess his mistake. Jesus explained that what mattered was not who was doing the works but the Name in which the works were being done. It is God who deserves the glory, not an elite group of His followers. We also see in Matthew 20 and Mark 10 a request from John and James to sit with Jesus in His kingdom. Jesus replied by asking them if they were able to suffer as He was going to suffer. He then said, “To sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father” (Matthew 20:23). Being great in God’s kingdom is not about prestige or privilege. Rather, it involves responsibility and sacrifice. Jesus told His disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done” (Matthew 16:24–27). To be great is to serve self-sacrificially. Being great in God’s kingdom is about giving oneself for the sake of God’s glory and for the benefit of others.

Luke 22 tells about another dispute among the disciples about who was the greatest, this time during the [Last Supper](#). Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:25–27). This is the same night Jesus performed the service of the lowest of servants by [washing His disciples’ feet](#). John 13 tells us Jesus did this because of His love for the disciples and also fully knowing His own relationship with the Father. Again, we see that the greatest is not the one with power or prestige, but the one who is secure in the Father’s love and willing to serve.

Consistent in Jesus’ teaching is that His kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world. Humans tend to be concerned with social status, political clout, and pecking order. We tend to rank people according to how things look to us in this world, but Jesus warned that using earthly criteria will never give us an accurate picture of rank in God’s kingdom. Human judgment will give way to God’s some day: “Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first” (Matthew 19:30).

Rather than strive to be the greatest in this world, we should simply trust in Jesus and serve others, thereby serving Him. Positions of power are meant to be positions of service. Rather than lord power over others, we are to use any influence or resources we have to serve others. The greatest in the kingdom are those who have the humility of a child and the meekness of Jesus. “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). What is valued in God’s kingdom is loving the way He loved us—selflessly. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 9:35** **Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."**

Wuest And having sat down, He called the twelve and says to them, If, as is the case, anyone is desiring to be first, let him be last of all and a servant of all. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:35 After he sat down, he called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

NLT Mark 9:35 He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

ESV Mark 9:35 And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

NIV Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

GNT Mark 9:35 κα καθ σας φ νησεν το ς δ δεκα κα λ γει α το ς, Ε τις θ λει πρ το ς ε ναι, σται π ντων σχατο ς κα π ντων δι κονο ς.

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:35 and having sat down he called the twelve, and he saith to them, 'If any doth will to be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all.'

ASV Mark 9:35 And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.

CSB Mark 9:35 Sitting down, He called the Twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

NKJ Mark 9:35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

NRS Mark 9:35 He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

- **If** (first class conditional = assumed to be true): Mk 10:42-45 Pr 13:10 Jer 45:5 Mt 20:25-28 Lu 14:10,11 18:14 Jas 4:6
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 10:42-45+ Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. 43 "But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant ([diakonos](#)); 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. 45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Matthew 18:2+ And He called a child to Himself and set him before them,

Luke 9:47+ But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."

### THE WAY UP IS DOWN! WOE!

See [Spiritual Paradoxes in the Christian Life](#)

These details are only in Mark.

**Sitting down, He called the twelve** - Taking this position Jesus assumed the traditional position of a teacher which suggested an important lesson was about to unfold! (Mt. 5:1; Mt 13:1; Luke 5:3; John 8:2)

**Gilbrant** has a good suggestion that "Perhaps jealousy had developed among the Twelve because three had been privileged to witness the Transfiguration; now they all needed to be instructed in Kingdom greatness." (CBL-Mark)

**Wuest** - Expositors says: "Every word here betokens a deliberate attempt to school the disciples in humility. The Master takes His seat, calls His scholars with a magisterial tone." Swete says: "The intention of the Master is not to enact 'a penal provision against seeking the mastery,' but to point out the way to true greatness. The spirit of service is the passport to eminence in the Kingdom of God, for it is the spirit of the Master who Himself became servant of all." The word "servant" here is diakonos (δῆκονος), used of one who ministers to another. The "if" Jesus uses is the particle of a fulfilled condition. Jesus recognizes that they wanted to be

first. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**And said to them, "If anyone wants ([thelo](#) in the [present tense](#) = continually desires) to be first - Wants** speaks of resolve, determination to be first or chief among peers. And so this assumes that they really have that desire ("if" = assumed to be true - 1st class conditional), the "want to," to do it the right way. It is not wrong to desire it (cf Paul's words in 1 Ti 3:1), but is wrong to desire to attain it in the wrong way (self-serving) and for the wrong reasons (vain ambitions). Jesus proceeds to give a two step plan for "stepping up" in the eyes of the Lord. (1) last place and (2) lowest place (servant). This is Jesus' radical, revolutionary definition of greatness! And if we need some motivation to pursue this downward call, all we need to do is memorize and meditate on Jesus' words in Mark 10:45+! It will give us a chance to practice the radical discipleship He calls for in Mk 8:34-38!

Jesus taught that the passport to eminence in the Kingdom is the spirit of voluntary service to others.

-- Gilbrant

**Hiebert** - Desire or "will," indicates his continuing resolve or determination to occupy the position of being first, not absolutely but in relation to those around him ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Williamson** - Jesus does not despise the desire to be first, but his definition of greatness stands the world's ordering of priorities on its head and radically challenges a fundamental assumption about achievement."

**Utley on IF...wants** - This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE, which is assumed to be true from the author's perspective. Jesus did not condemn ambition, but defined it in terms of the new ethic of the Kingdom of God. Greatness is linked to service (cf. 10:31, 45; Matt. 20:26; 19:30; John 13:5), not control or power! God's Kingdom is so different from human societies. These words are a good example of how Jesus repeated His teachings in different settings and at different times (cf. Mk 10:43-44; Matt. 23:11; Luke 22:24-25). ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Wants** (desires, wills wishes) ([2309](#)) [thelo](#) see study of derivative [thelema](#); see synonyms [boule](#) and [boulomai](#)) is a very common NT verb (208x) which primarily refers to exercising of one's will with the underlying sense of to be willing, to desire, to want or to wish (in [Jn 15:7](#) in context of prayer). To apply oneself to something (or to will). Thelo "expresses not simply a desire, but a determined and constant exercise of the will." (W E Vine) The reader should realize that **thelo** is one of those Greek words that is somewhat difficult to define with absolute consistency. For example, some sources state that **thelo** refers to a thoughtful, purposeful choice, not a mere whim or emotional desire, while Kenneth Wuest says **thelo** expresses "a desire that comes from one's emotions" and "boulomai a desire that comes from one's reason." (see more detailed discussion below). W E Vine says thelo "chiefly indicates the impulse of the will rather than the tendency (boulomai). The different shades of meaning must be determined by the teaching of the Scriptures generally or by the context." **Thelo** expresses not only desire, but executive will, active volition and purpose (1Cor 10:20). **Thelo** will still be expressed by men and women who have in this life said they were "not willing" to believe in Christ and thus they were thrown in the place of eternal torment (see Luke 16:26), where they will still possess wishes, desires and wants, which can no longer be satisfied or fulfilled! This to me is simply a horrible thought, but it is what Scripture teaches. May such a dire end prompt us, yea, even impel us to boldly, lovingly proclaim the Gospel to any and all who will listen!

**he shall be last of all** - Don't miss the two "all's!" (last of all...servant of all) **Shall be last** is best taken as a volitive (speaks of volitional choice) future; "he will be last" by his own deliberate choice. This is the absolute antithesis of pride (Note the middle letter of pride is "i" and it is the "BIG I" the selfish center of our being, our essence, our rotten core!), he will voluntarily humble himself to assume the position of being last. Beloved, don't attempt this in reliance on your own strength! Self does not like to "step down." In short, this is not natural, but supernatural...and can be accomplished no other way! This principle echoes of one of Jesus' sayings on the Sermon on the Mount "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 5:3+) Notice the paradoxical principle again = paupers become rich.

**And servant of all** - This is the "Jesus way" of achieving the position of being first. The point of **servant of all** is that being a servant will express itself in voluntary services to others. **Servant** is [diakonos](#), used only one other time by Mark (Mk 10:43+). Play **A Servant of All** ([western style](#) or [another version](#))

**Hiebert** - True humility is not self-depreciation and humiliation, but an attitude of unselfishness and self-forgetfulness which seeks the welfare of others. Humility and service are not only the passport to greatness in Christ's kingdom but also the very essence of greatness in His kingdom. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Servant** (minister, deacon) ([1249](#)) ([diakonos](#) see related words [diakoneo](#), [diakonia](#)) is of uncertain origin. Some say it is from **dia** (through) + **konis** (dust) which denotes one who hurries through the dust to carry out his service. (**Thayer** and others doubt this derivation for technical reasons). **Vine** says that **diakonos** is

probably from **diako** which means to hasten after, to pursue and so to run on errands. "Then the root idea is one who reaches out with diligence and persistence to render a service on behalf of others. This would imply that the deacon reaches out to render love-prompted service to others energetically and persistently." (Hiebert) This word group ([diakonos](#), [diakoneo](#), [diakonia](#)) focuses on the rendering or assistance or help by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature, and including such mundane activities as waiting on tables or caring for household needs, activities that to many would seem to be without dignity (not true of course in God's eyes, Pr 15:3, Rev 22:12+). In summary, the basic idea of this word group is that of humble, submissive, personal service, with less emphasis on a specific office or a particular function. John MacArthur adds that "Diakonos has the idea of "serviceability," or "usefulness." Those who serve Christ are called to excellence in their usefulness to His cause."

Those whom God will employ are first struck with a sense of their unworthiness to be employed.  
-- Matthew Henry

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Mark 9:35,33-41

IN Jesus' day, people couldn't go to a refrigerator and take out a bottle of cold water or chill a beverage by adding ice cubes. To give a cup of cold water required going to a spring—maybe far away on a hill among rocks. Or it meant going to a deep well, letting down a bucket, and pulling it back up. In other words, giving a cup of cold water required sacrifice.

Many people wait a lifetime to do something great, overlooking what they could have accomplished by countless small deeds done with self-sacrifice and love. The size of a loving deed is not what counts the most. Rather, it's the motive behind it and the sacrifice that accompanies it.

A poet has written, "It was only a cup of water with a gentle grace bestowed, but it cheered the lonely traveler upon life's dusty road. None noticed the cup of water as a beautiful act of love, save the angels keeping the records away in the land above. The trifles in secret given, the prayer in the quiet night, and the little unnoticed nothings are great in our Savior's sight!"

If all you can give is a cup of water, make sure it is cold and refreshing and give it with love and sacrifice. Whatever you do in Christ's name, taking no credit for yourself, is sure to be a blessing to those who are needy.—H G Bosch

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**QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about being a servant / servanthood?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Bible has a great deal to say about servanthood because the central theme of the Bible is the Servant of all—Jesus Christ. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). When we give Jesus Christ His rightful place as Lord of our lives, His lordship will be expressed in the way we serve others (Mark 9:35; 1 Peter 4:10; John 15:12-13). How can we demonstrate love for God? Our love for God will be expressed in our love for others. "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

True leadership is servanthood, and the greatest leader of all time is Jesus Christ. Servanthood is an attitude exemplified by Christ "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:6-7). The five words in the New Testament translated "ministry" generally refer to servanthood or service given in love. Serving others is the very essence of ministry. All believers are called to ministry (Matthew 28:18-20), and, therefore, we are all called to be servants for the glory of God. Living is giving; all else is selfishness and boredom.

It has been rightly stated, "Rank is given you to enable you to better serve those above and below you. It is not given for you to practice your idiosyncrasies" (General Bruce C. Clarke, USA, Ret). Let's serve others by serving Christ (Colossians 3:23-24). God the Father has served us by sacrificing Christ on the cross for our sins, and we should serve others by giving the gospel and our lives to them (1 Thessalonians 1:5-6). Those who desire to be great in God's kingdom must be the servant of all (Matthew 20:26). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Mark 9:36 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them,**

Wuest And having taken a little child, He stood him in their midst; and when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:36 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them,

NLT Mark 9:36 Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them,

ESV Mark 9:36 And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them,

NIV Mark 9:36 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them,

GNT Mark 9:36 κα λαβ ν παιδ ον στησεν ατ ν μ σ α τ ν κα ναγκαλισ μενος ατ ε πεν α το ς,

KJV 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,

YLT Mark 9:36 And having taken a child, he set him in the midst of them, and having taken him in his arms, said to them,

ASV Mark 9:36 And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them: and taking him in his arms, he said unto them,

CSB Mark 9:36 Then He took a child, had him stand among them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them,

NKJ Mark 9:36 Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,

NRS Mark 9:36 Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them,

NAB Mark 9:36 Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them,

NJB Mark 9:36 He then took a little child whom he set among them and embraced, and he said to them,

- Mk 10:16 Mt 18:2 19:14,15
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 18:2-3+ And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 9:47-48+ But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."

JESUS TAKING A CHILD

## AN INDELIBLE ILLUSTRATION

**Taking ([lambano](#)) a child, He set him before them** (Mt 18:1–18, Lk 9:46-49) - Matthew 18:2 says "He called a child to Himself and set him before them." Some have suggested that the child may have been Peter's. Here in Mk 9:36 **before** (Greek = "en mesos") is literally "in the middle" (or "midst") and thus pictures the child directly in view in front of all the disciples. They would have no excuses for not clearly seeing Jesus' demonstration. Note that in context, Jesus is not speaking about a literal child, but is using the child as an illustration of new believers, those who have recently entered God's family as children (cf Jn 1:12+, 1 Jn 3:1+).

**Gilbrant** - It is noteworthy that Jesus did not scold the disciples for their materialistic and Utopian ambitions. Instead He directly addressed their question by the use of this visual parable. (CBL-Mark)

**MacArthur** - Jesus used young children several times as illustrations of humility. They have not yet accomplished or achieved anything; they have no power or honor but are weak, dependent, and ignored (rabbis considered it a waste of time to teach the Torah to a child under the age of twelve). ([MNTC-Mk](#))

**And taking him in His arms, He said to them** - **Taking him in his arms** is the rare verb (here and Mk 10:16+; Lxx- Pr 6:10) enagkalizomai (from agkale = arm when bent - only in Lk 2:28+) which means to take something into the crook of their arms for the purpose of holding close. **Louw-Nida** says the idea is "to put one's arms around someone as an expression of affection and concern —'to embrace, to hug, to put one's arms around.'" As **Hiebert** says this entire "scene demonstrated the submission and trustfulness of the child. It was a touching picture of Jesus' tenderness and love for children." On another level He undoubtedly wanted His

grown disciples to have that same "child-like" trust and dependence (and He still does for all us beloved of God!)

**Wuest** - Jesus uses the child as a rebuke to the disciples. Swete says that the answer to the question as to who is greatest, is found in the character of the child, "the most childlike and trustful, the least self-conscious and self-sufficient. He who recognizes and welcomes such, because he sees in them the type of character which Christ Himself approved and exhibited, recognizes and welcomes Christ Himself—is a true and loyal disciple." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

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#### Related Resources:

- [How did Jesus interact with children? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus loves the little children? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 9:37 "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."**

Wuest Whoever receives one of such little children in my Name, receives Me. And whoever receives Me, does not receive Me but the One who sent Me. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:37 "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

NLT Mark 9:37 "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me."

ESV Mark 9:37 "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

NIV Mark 9:37 "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

GNT Mark 9:37 ς ν ν τ ν τοιο των παιδων δ ξηται π τ ν ματ μου, μ δ χεται· κα ς ν μ δ χηται, ο κ μ δ χεται λλ τ ν ποστε λαντ με.

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:37 'Whoever may receive one of such children in my name, doth receive me, and whoever may receive me, doth not receive me, but Him who sent me.'

ASV Mark 9:37 Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

CSB Mark 9:37 "Whoever welcomes one little child such as this in My name welcomes Me. And whoever welcomes Me does not welcome Me, but Him who sent Me."

NKJ Mark 9:37 "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

NRS Mark 9:37 "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

- **receives:** Mt 10:40-42 18:3-5,10 25:40 Lu 9:48
- **receive:** Lu 10:16 Joh 5:23 10:30 12:44,45 14:21-23 1Th 4:8
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 18:4-5+ Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me;

Luke 9:48+ and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."

## WELCOMING A CHILD

**Whoever...whoever** - This blessing is open to all comers, to anyone.

**Receives one child (paidion) like this in My name receives (dechomai) Me - In My name** is "upon the basis of My Name," or in the character of Jesus. But take note that Jesus is not saying His Name is "magical" like we could say "Shazam Jesus" and something supernatural would transpire! The supernatural power is not in the letters that spell "J.E.S.U.S" but in the Person Who carries that glorious Name and Who dispenses His supernatural power through His indwelling Spirit (referring to believers after Pentecost) according to His good and acceptable and perfect will and ultimately for His great glory and honor, not that of the one who even properly uses His great Name! We are but conduits, pious pipelines for His power for His glory (cf "vessels of honor" 2 Ti 2:21+).

**Utley** adds "The power comes from knowing Jesus and emulating His actions. Our loving response to others because we are followers of Jesus is a way to express our love for Him (cf. Mt 25:31–45). From Acts 19:13–16+ we know that Jewish exorcists used Jesus' name, but with surprising results. From Matthew 7:21–23+ we know that it is the personal relationship with Christ that is crucial, not just the flippant or even repeated mentioning of the Name." ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Receives** (1209)([dechomai](#) = [middle voice](#) of a primary verb) means to to receive something offered or transmitted by another (Luke 2:28). To take something into one's hand and so to grasp (Luke 2:28, 22:17). To be receptive to someone (Mt 10:14, 40). To take a favorable attitude toward something (Mt 11:14). The idea is to "put out the welcome mat!"

**Hiebert** - "They are to be 'welcomed,' not because they seem to be 'great' by worldly standards, but because they are Christ's." Such a kindly reception of even one of these young, *insignificant* disciples means that he "receiveth Me." **Me** is emphatic by position, "**Me** he receives." **Christ regards the act as done to Himself.** "As a servant loses his identity by serving others, he takes on the identity of his Master (cf Mk 10:45+)." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**And whoever receives (dechomai) Me does not receive (dechomai) Me, but Him Who sent (apostello) Me** - He speaks of the Father Who sent Him. And as Jesus frequently does, here he affirms the exalted Father ([play song](#) and since you enjoyed that one play [He is Exalted](#) and take a moment to worship Him!).

**Hiebert** - It terminates not with Christ but also involves reception of the heavenly Father, who sent Him and whose representative He is. There is a spiritual unity between the humble believer, Christ the sent one, and the Father who commissioned Him. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Gilbrant** - Having set the scene of trustfulness, submission, and dependence, as represented by this child, Jesus was able to teach His disciples concerning true greatness. The disciples were to identify with little children who have no pretensions about rank, prominence, position, or class. "Whosoever" leaves the promise of blessing open to anyone who will fulfill the requirements. "**Receive**" should be understood as a kindly welcome, a warm hospitable reception (Mk 6:11). The reception is to be of "one of such children." The child appearing before them was a representative of a class, a class of simple trusting individuals. "One" is in the emphatic position; to welcome just one, only one of these little ones, is to welcome Christ. This reduces it to the lowest case possible: only one, and a little one at that. **This reception is to be done in Christ's name, as if it was Christ. Even though one be a child, if duly credentialed and delegated by his sender, he must be welcomed as if Jesus himself was the sender. To welcome graciously a dependent unassuming follower of Jesus is to welcome Jesus.** There is also a further spiritual unity with the Father. Whoever welcomes Jesus by welcoming a little one also welcomes the Father. To welcome a humble believer is to welcome a representative of Christ; and to welcome Christ, the representative of the Father, is to welcome the Father. There is a mystical family relationship of the humble believer, his Saviour, and the Father. To treat a fellow believer with loving hospitality and consideration is, in the final analysis, an acceptance of God himself. In summary, instead of asking who is the greatest, the followers of Jesus should seek true greatness through loving concern for those who seem to be the least; the young, the weak, and the straying. (CBL-Mark)

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### A Coat In His Name

Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me. —Mark 9:37

Today's Scripture: Mark 10:13-16

It was a bitterly cold morning at the inner-city church. Among the 130 or so worshipers, the pastor took special notice of Ken, a young boy who arrived for Sunday school wearing just a sleeveless T-shirt, jeans, and tennis shoes with no socks.

After the worship service and a special luncheon, the pastor's wife took the 6-year-old to the church's clothing closet to pick out a coat. Then the pastor and his wife drove him and his older brother John home. As they got out, John said, "Thank you for giving my brother a coat." The two boys became Sunday school regulars, and the pastor had a chance to visit with their mom and explain the gospel.

Are there any children in our world who need help with some basic necessities—a coat, a meal, a ride home? We might be tempted to say the problem is too big—that we can't help everyone, but that misses the point. Jesus placed great value on the life of a child. He said to His disciples, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mk. 10:14). He also told them, "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me" (9:37).

A coat, a cup, a kind word. Given in Jesus' name, these are the tools of true ministry. Are we using them? By: Dave Branon

Help us, Lord, while we are living,  
To be faithful, kind, and true;  
Jesus, bless our humble giving  
So that others may find You.  
—Johnson

We show our love for Christ by what we do with what we have.

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### **The Value Of A Child**

Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me. —Mark 9:37

Today's Scripture: Mark 9:33-37

The young girl lived halfway around the world in war-ravaged Cambodia. She had been abandoned to the streets, destined to a life of much poverty and little love.

That was before Paul and Linda Zwart heard about her and sought to adopt her. "We did a lot of praying," Paul told a newspaper reporter.

For more than 2 years, the Zwarts dedicated themselves to bringing this girl, whom they named Caitlin, to their home in Holland, Michigan. They filled out mountains of paperwork. They even took one hopeful trip to Cambodia in 1996, only to come back empty. But they kept praying.

In late 1997, Paul took another trip, spending several frustrating weeks trying to gain custody of Caitlin. Finally, Linda got a phone call from Paul. He asked, "Guess who I have with me?" and his family erupted in cheers. Dad and daughter arrived home on Christmas Eve.

What a reminder of the pricelessness of a child! Each one is worth whatever it takes to care for him or her properly. Whether the child is a member of our family or a child we don't know—each is precious to God. Each needs love. Each needs to learn about Jesus, the One who by words and example taught us the value of a child (Mark 9:36-37). By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reaching out to needy children,  
Showing them our love and care,  
Is one way that God can use us  
To bring hope in their despair.  
—Sper

Your biggest investment may be helping a little child.

---

### **Help The Children**

Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me. — Mark 9:37

Today's Scripture: Psalm 82:1-8

Eat your beans! There are children in this world who'd give anything to have those!" What child hasn't heard that kind of speech coming from parents who love them enough to encourage good nutrition?

Actually, millions of children have never heard that line—children who wouldn't recognize a good meal if they saw one, who live on the streets instead of in a house, who'll never see the inside of a school.

According to one estimate, 100 million children worldwide have no mom or dad to give them a meal and a place to call home. These kids are outcasts and treated as trash to be discarded.

This sobering fact should cause us to take a different approach. If we have the comforts that a good job and a modern society offer through God's graciousness, we should not cite examples of starving children as a way to get our kids to eat. We should try to help the starving children instead.

The hurting children of the world need two things: First, the gospel of Jesus, who told us that in helping them we would be doing His work (Mk. 9:37). And second, they need the hope that comes from someone who cares enough to feed, clothe, and shelter them.

What can your family do to help the children? By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reaching out to needy children,  
Showing them our love and care,  
Is one way that God can use us  
To bring hope to their despair.  
—Sper

Give hope to a child—share the love of Christ.

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#### **Take The Time -**

Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me. --Mark 9:37

A legend is told about a rabbi from a small Jewish town. The people had gathered in the synagogue on the eve of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), but when the time came for the most important service of the Jewish year to begin, the rabbi was nowhere to be found.

During the delay, a young mother went home to check on her little daughter, whom she had left sleeping. To her surprise, she saw the rabbi sitting quietly in a chair, holding the child in his arms. He had been walking by her home on the way to the synagogue when he heard the infant crying and stopped to help. He held the little one until she fell asleep.

There's a lesson for us in this rabbi's example and in Jesus' love for people (Mt. 9:18-26). In our hectic and busy lives, we tend to get so caught up with our own concerns that we lose our sense of compassion for others. We must take time to observe and respond to individuals--whether they are little children, parents, or older believers.

Somewhere amid all the demands on you as a servant of Jesus Christ, take the time to hold the hand of an aging believer, to comfort a tired mother, or to cradle a child until she sleeps. --D C Egner - ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How good to be an instrument  
Of grace that He can use  
At any time, in any place,  
However He may choose!  
--Guirey

Great occasions for service come seldom--little ones surround us daily.

**Mark 9:38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us."**

NET Mark 9:38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he was not following us."

NLT Mark 9:38 John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he wasn't in our group."

ESV Mark 9:38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us."

NIV Mark 9:38 "Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."

GNT Mark 9:38 φη ατ ω ννης, Διδ σκαλε, ε δομ ν τινα ν τ ν ματ σου κβ λλοντα δαιμ νια κα κωλ ομεν α τ ν, τι ο κ κολο θει μ ν.

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:38 And John did answer him, saying, 'Teacher, we saw a certain one in thy name casting out demons, who doth not follow us, and we forbade him, because he doth not follow us.'

ASV Mark 9:38 John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us.

CSB Mark 9:38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in Your name, and we tried to stop him because he wasn't following us."

NKJ Mark 9:38 Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."

NRS Mark 9:38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us."

- **Teacher:** Nu 11:26-29 Lu 9:49,50 11:19
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Luke 9:49+ John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us."

## THE IRONIC COMPLAINT OF A MISGUIDED DISCIPLE

**John said to Him, "Teacher ([didaskalos](#)), we saw someone casting out demons ([daimonion](#)) in Your name - Casting out** implies that the man was effective in his efforts and the [present tense](#) indicates it was more than one successful "exorcism." The phrase "**in Your Name**," speaks of the authority of the Name of Jesus to expel them. The Name per se was not the power. The power was God's power. It was Jesus' power. It was power God allowed to be manifest through this man because he relied totally on Jesus' power (probably also even praying further showing his humility and complete dependence), not his own inadequate fleshly power.

**Hiebert** - this passage clearly shows "how powerfully the word and work of Jesus had awakened in individuals even beyond the circle of His constant followers a higher power, which even performed miracles." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**Casting out** (throwing, send, driving) ([1544](#))([ekbállō](#) from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). To throw out of an area or object, throw out, jettison (Mt 21:39 Acts 27:18). Frequently used of casting out demons (Mt 7:22, Mt 8:16, 31,9:34, 10:1, etc). Used of casting or throwing unbelievers into outer darkness (hell). In Luke 6:22 *ekballo* means to scorn one's name ("cast it out" so to speak). Mark 1:12 "Immediately the Spirit **impelled** Him (Jesus) to go out into the wilderness." Uses in Mark - Mk. 1:34; Mk. 1:39; Mk. 1:43; Mk. 3:15; Mk. 3:22; Mk. 3:23; Mk. 5:40; Mk. 6:13; Mk. 7:26; Mk. 9:18; Mk. 9:28; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 9:47; Mk. 11:15; Mk. 12:8; Mk. 16:9; Mk. 16:17;

**And we tried to prevent him** - NLT = "we told him to stop" **Tried to prevent** suggests they were unable to prevent it.

**Prevent** (forbid, hinder) ([2967](#))([koluo](#) from **kólos** = docked, lopped, clipped, **kolazo** = curtail) means to cut off, to cut short, to weaken and generally to hinder, to prevent, to check, to restrain or to forbid by word or act. The idea is to cause something not to happen. **Koluo** can describe the keeping back of something from someone (Acts 10:47 referring to the Holy Spirit ).To hinder means to make slow or difficult the progress of something by

interfering in some way with the activity or progress thereof. In short **koluo** means to make it difficult for someone to do something or for something to happen.

**Because** - Term of explanation. What are the disciples explaining? Why they tried to prevent him! Answer: He was not one of us. And by extension he is not a "follower" of Jesus. John is judging his heart and his motives.

**He was not following us** - Think about their complaint. What had they themselves just recently (talk about "bad memory!") been unable to do for the boy with the deaf and mute spirit? The utter irony is they themselves could not cast it out, but here we have a man successfully casting out demons and doing it in Jesus' Name. **Following** is typically a verb used to describe one acting as a disciple of the one they are following. So here the thought is that this person (in the perverted thinking of John) was not a follower of the disciples (Mk 1:17,18+ = first call in Mark, cf Mt 4:19, 20,22+) and thus not a follower of Jesus. That is not sound logic as Jesus explains in the next passage.

**Following** (190)(**akoloutheo** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. To follow (closely) and was used of soldiers, servants and pupils. To go after someone or something (not as a true disciple however as we see with the crowds who physically followed Jesus, following however without a willingness to commit wholly to Him! cf John 6:60-65, 66) Early in the history of the Greek language **akoloutheo** came to mean to imitate or follow someone's example. This dual meaning colored the New Testament use of our word **akoloutheo**. **Akoloutheo** is a technical term in Hebrew and Greek for the reactions and relationships of a disciple to his teacher. The essence of Christianity in fact lies in the words "to follow Jesus." When we walk with Him, He promised we would never walk in darkness! (Jn 8:12). He is our Lamp wherever we walk, always walking with us, His Spirit within us enabling us to "Walk by the Spirit." (Gal 5:16) Paul expressed walking after Jesus as being His imitator (1 Cor 11:1) When He says go, I go. When He says stop, I stop. His sheep know His voice and follow Him (Jn 10:27) Sadly , some declined to follow (Mt 19:21-23). Akoloutheo in Mark - Mk. 1:18; Mk. 2:14; Mk. 2:15; Mk. 3:7; Mk. 5:24; Mk. 6:1; Mk. 8:34; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 10:21; Mk. 10:28; Mk. 10:32; Mk. 10:52; Mk. 11:9; Mk. 14:13; Mk. 14:54; Mk. 15:41;

**Swete** says: "This is the only remark attributed by the Synoptists specifically to St. John, ... and it creates an impression of candour and conscientiousness not unworthy of the future theologian. His words are a response to the teaching just received. He and one or more of the other disciples, probably during their recent journey through northern Galilee, had prohibited a non-disciple from using the Master's Name for the purpose of exorcising demoniacs. Ought they rather have welcomed Him as a brother? The words, 'He does not follow with us,' are a frank confession of jealousy for the honor of the Apostolate. In the light of the Lord's words, the action had begun to wear a different aspect to the mind of John."

**Garland** quotes - Harry Fledderman, "The Discipleship Discourse (Mark 9:33-50)," CBQ 43 (1981): 66, notes that Mark is not interested in any details about the strange exorcist who is simply identified as a "certain one." Mark cares only about the disciples' reaction and Jesus' correction of their attitude. He comments: "Like the dispute about greatness the episode of the strange exorcist reflects an attitude of the disciples that leads to conflict. In both cases Jesus intervenes. The disciples' exclusivism is rejected, as was their self-seeking." ([NIVAC-Mark](#))

**Gilbrant** - Jesus' teaching concerning the power of His name and the spiritual unity of true disciples prompted John to ask concerning an unauthorized disciple who was casting out demons. Several things must have come to John's mind; this man was not one of the Twelve who had received authority to cast out demons (Matthew 10:8), he was probably not even a member of the Seventy who had been commissioned (Luke 10:1), further he refused to cease his activities when the disciples endeavored to restrain him.

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Mark 9:38 "Oh," said a woman to me the other day, "do you belong to us?" "Well," said I, "who are 'us?' That is a new denomination to me. I belong to Him." I like the Augustinian Creed: "A whole Christ for my salvation, whole Bible for my study, the whole church for my fellowship, and the whole world for my parish, that I may be a true catholic and not a sectarian." - Rev. Charles Inglis, in {Record of Christian Work}

**Mark 9:39** But Jesus said, "**Do not hinder** him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me.

NET Mark 9:39 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, because no one who does a miracle in my name will be

able soon afterward to say anything bad about me.

NLT Mark 9:39 "Don't stop him!" Jesus said. "No one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me.

ESV Mark 9:39 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.

NIV Mark 9:39 "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me,

GNT Mark 9:39 ὁ ἠσο ς ε πεν, Μ κωλ ετε α τ ν. ο δε ς γ ρ σ τ ι ν ς ποι σει ὁ να μ ι ν π τ ν μα τ μου κα ὀ υ ν σε ται τα χ κα κο λο γ σα με·

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:39 And Jesus said, 'Forbid him not, for there is no one who shall do a mighty work in my name, and shall be able readily to speak evil of me:

ASV Mark 9:39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me.

CSB Mark 9:39 "Don't stop him," said Jesus, "because there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name who can soon afterward speak evil of Me.

NKJ Mark 9:39 But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.

NRS Mark 9:39 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.

- **Do not hinder him:** Mk 10:13,14 Mt 13:28,29 Php 1:18
- **for there is no one:** Mt 7:22,23 Ac 19:13-16 1Co 9:27 13:1,2
- **be able soon afterward:** 1Co 12:3
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Luke 9:50+ But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."

**But** Term of contrast. Jesus reverses the direction so to speak and counters John's faulty assessment of another man's heart. We all need to hear and heed Jesus' wisdom, for we all have a tendency in our fallen flesh to "judge" others, even other believers because they are not doing it exactly the way we are doing it (teaching, preaching, witnessing, etc, etc). We are not the judge of their hearts nor the authenticity of their ministry. This is not saying we are not to be discerning, but there is a distinction between discerning and judging.

**Jesus said, "Do not hinder him (present imperative with a negative)** - Means stop hindering them or don't begin hindering them.

**Hinder** (forbid) (2967) see above on [koluo](#)

**for** - Term of explanation. Jesus explains why they are not hinder this man.

**There is no one who will perform a miracle in My name**- Casting out a demon is performing **a miracle**. Doing it **in My Name** is under the authority and for the glory and honor of Jesus.

**Miracle** (1411)([dunamis](#) from [dunamai](#) = to be able, to have power) power especially achieving power. It refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way (power, might, strength, ability, capability), the power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. All uses in Mark - Mk. 5:30; Mk. 6:2; Mk. 6:5; Mk. 6:14; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:39; Mk. 12:24; Mk. 13:25; Mk. 13:26; Mk. 14:62

**And be able (dunamai) soon afterward (tachu) to speak evil (kakologeo) of Me** - Since he was a legitimate follower of Jesus, this man would proclaim the truth about Him. Notice here that the idea is also introduced that one can be a "follower" of Jesus even though not physically following Him. We disciples today are thankful for the example of this man who was not physically following Jesus, but was following Him in his heart, for he is in a sense a prototype "disciple" for we who are Jesus' disciples and follow Him

even though He is not physically present!

**Swete** "The sincerity of the speaker, saves him from censure: the Lord merely corrects the error. He does not say 'Receive him,' for the man's motive did not appear; but the attitude of His disciples towards such an one should have at least been neutral.... Whatever his intention, the man is for the time practically committed to a course of action which at least cannot be unfriendly." Expositors says: "Use of Christ's name in exorcism incompatible with hostile or unappreciative thought and speech of Him."

**Speak evil** (2551)([kakologeō](#) from [kakos](#) = evil + [legō](#) = to speak) means literally to speak evil of, to curse (e.g., of parents in Mt 15:4, Mk 7:10). [Kakologeō](#) means to use unjustified and abusive language against someone. **Kakologeō** is used in Mark 9:39 in regard to someone who was casting out demons. **Louw-Nida** says [kakologeō](#) means to revile or "to insult in a particularly strong and unjustified manner." The derivative word **katalogos** was a "slanderer." Hellenistically, [kakologeō](#) means to imprecate evil on, to curse someone (Lxx - Pr. 20:20; Ezek 22:7; Ex 22:28).4x - Mt 15:4; Mk. 7:10; Mk. 9:39; Acts 19:9.

#### Mark 9:40 "For he who is not against us is for us."

NET Mark 9:40 For whoever is not against us is for us.

NLT Mark 9:40 Anyone who is not against us is for us.

ESV Mark 9:40 For the one who is not against us is for us.

NIV Mark 9:40 for whoever is not against us is for us.

GNT Mark 9:40 ζ γ ρ ο κ σ τ ι ν κ α θ μ ν , π ρ μ ν σ τ ι ν .

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

YLT Mark 9:40 for he who is not against us is for us;

ASV Mark 9:40 For he that is not against us is for us.

CSB Mark 9:40 For whoever is not against us is for us.

NKJ Mark 9:40 "For he who is not against us is on our side.

NRS Mark 9:40 Whoever is not against us is for us.

- Mt 12:30 Lu 11:23
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 12:30+ "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

Luke 11:23+ "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

### NO ROOM FOR MIDDLE OF THE ROAD!

**For (gar)** - Term of explanation. Further explains the general attitude of those who are with and not against Jesus.

**He who is not against us is for us**- **Against** is the preposition **kata** which basically describes downward movement and in this context is figuratively describing a hostile attitude toward another (cf the "enemy" in our own body = "fleshly lusts" 1Pe 2.11+). And so the absence of a hostile attitude toward Jesus (and His followers) indicates that the individual is amicable toward Jesus and His followers. Notice there is not neutral ground in Jesus' words. One or the other. No "hedging your bets." One is either "all in" or "all out." One is either a true follower of Jesus or a false follower destined for eternal separation from Jesus.

**Utley** - Jesus often used cultural proverbs in His teaching (cf. Mk 2:17, 21, 22; 3:27; 4:21, 22, 25; 7:15; 8:35, 36, 37; 9:40, 50; 10:25, 27, 31, 43–44). Compare this with Matt. 12:30 and Luke 11:23. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Gilbrant** - It is impossible not to have an opinion about Jesus—there is no middle road. Either one follows Jesus and resists the devil, or one follows Satan and rejects Jesus. Jesus sharply condemned any noncommittal attitudes the Pharisees might have had. "Gathering and scattering" is an image from the life of the shepherd. Whoever fails to guard the flock scatters it. (Complete Biblical

**Gilbrant** - In the absence of declared hostility, a person should provisionally be considered a friend. And in the case in question, there was something better than neutrality, for the man had made use of Jesus' Name. Matthew and Luke express this same truth in reversed manner, "**He that is not with me is against me**" (Matthew 12:30; Luke 11:23). **These two complementary statements exclude the possibility of neutrality toward Christ.** Either one is for Christ, however imperfect the faith (ED: "MUSTARD SEED" SIZED, ETC), or else against Him. The anonymous healer should have been recognized as a friend, not an enemy. Jesus acknowledged His disciples as an integral part of His ministry by the use of "**us.**" (Complete Biblical Library – Mark)

**Wiersbe** - Mark 9:40 should be compared with Matthew 12:30, "He that is not with Me is against Me." Both statements declare the impossibility of neutrality when it comes to our relationship with Jesus Christ. Since we cannot be neutral, if we are not for Him, we must be against Him; if we are not against Him, we must be for Him. The anonymous exorcist was bringing glory to His name, so he had to be for the Saviour and not against Him.

**Mark 9:41 "For 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.**

Wuest For whoever will give you to drink a cup of water because you belong to Christ, truly I am saying to you, he will positively not lose his reward. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 9:41 For I tell you the truth, whoever gives you a cup of water because you bear Christ's name will never lose his reward.

NLT Mark 9:41 If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I tell you the truth, that person will surely be rewarded.

ESV Mark 9:41 For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

NIV Mark 9:41 I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.

GNT Mark 9:41 ς γ ρ ν ποτ σ μ ς ποτ ριον δατος ν ν μαπι τι Χριστο στε, μ ν λ γω μ ν τι ο μ πολ σ τ ν μισθ ν α το .

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:41 for whoever may give you to drink a cup of water in my name, because ye are Christ's, verily I say to you, he may not lose his reward;

ASV Mark 9:41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

CSB Mark 9:41 And whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of My name, since you belong to the Messiah-- I assure you: He will never lose his reward.

NKJ Mark 9:41 "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

NRS Mark 9:41 For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

- **whoever:** Mt 10:42 25:40
- **because:** Joh 19:25-27 Ro 8:9 14:15 1Co 3:23 15:23 2Co 10:7 Ga 3:29 5:24
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 10:42+; "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

Matthew 25:40 "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of

these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

2 John 1:8 **Watch** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

Colossians 4:17+ Say to Archippus, "**Take heed** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

**THOUGHT** - What is your ministry? You have one! It may not be to preach, teach, etc, but you have been given a gift (1Cor 12:7, 11+) and with it a ministry (service) "for the common good." As Peter says "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1Pe 4:10-11+) **Don't waste your once in a lifetime opportunity** to fulfill your ministry, for if you do (enabled by the Spirit, Word and prayer), you will receive a FULL REWARD. And Jesus declared this reward ("your fruit) would "remain" (or abide) forever. So **redeem the time** now while you still have the time to redeem!

**For**- Term of explanation. And again this is even further explanation of the general attitude of those who are with and not against Jesus.

**Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ** - Carrying out this action would be an example of being a servant. It would be an act of hospitality as if done to Christ Himself. **Your name** as followers of Christ is in essence a preview description of the name "Christian" (Acts 11:26+)

**Wiersbe** - But it is not necessary to perform great miracles to prove our love for Christ. When we lovingly receive a child or compassionately share a cup of cold water, we are giving evidence that we have the humble heart of a servant. After all, we are serving Christ, and that is the highest service in the world (Matt. 25:31–46). (See [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament](#))

**Truly** ([amen](#) - speaks of certitude of following) **I say to you, he will not lose his reward** - The humble act of servitude is guaranteed an eternal reward. **Not** is the strong double negative (ou me) signifying "absolutely not!"

**Gilbrant** - To claim allegiance to Christ is to do kind deeds, and to do them as if they were being done to Christ himself. The believer is not his own, he belongs to Christ, and any act of kindness is an evidence of faith and obedience. It is interesting that Jesus used His title "Christ," rather than His favorite "Son of Man." God remains no man's debtor, so even the smallest token of love will receive its reward. In the present life there is contentment, satisfaction, and peace of mind; in the future life there is an inheritance of participation in the eternal Kingdom. Those who share in the extension of Christ's ministry here on earth will also share in reigning with Him in the coming Kingdom. This reward should not be thought of as meritorious, rather it is a gift of God given in response to loving obedience. ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

**Swete** says: "The thread of the teaching, broken off at verse 38 by John's question, is now resumed. The spiritual significance of help offered to a brother for Christ's sake is independent of the material value of the gift. A cup of water may be judged worthy of an eternal recompense." The possessive pronoun "my" does not appear with "name." The double negative appears with "lose," making an emphatic negation.

**Hiebert** - This brief incident stands as a firm rebuke to the spirit of sectarianism. It condemns that exclusive attitude which insists that only those who carry on their work in harmony with one's own views and practices can be accepted as really doing God's work. If they demonstrate that they are on God's side in the war with Satan, even though their views may be imperfect, they must not be condemned for such work or regarded with abhorrence. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**Utley** - this verse mentions kingdom rewards for those who faithfully serve (cf. 9:41; 10:21, 28–31 and several times in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:12, 46; 6:5–6, 16–18, 19–21). ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Will...lose** (622)([apollumi](#) from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy <> root of **apollyon** = destroyer) means to destroy utterly. **Apollumi** as it relates to men, is not the loss of being per se, but is more the loss of well-being as Jesus described in Mk. 8:35+. It means to ruin so that the thing (in this case one's reward) so that it is no longer useful. All uses of **apollumi** in Mark - Mk. 1:24; Mk. 2:22; Mk. 3:6; Mk. 4:38; Mk. 8:35; Mk. 9:22; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 11:18; Mk. 12:9

**Reward** (wage) (3408)([misthos](#)) literally refers to pay which is due for labor performed or dues paid for work. **Misthos** is used in two general senses in the NT, either to refer to wages or to reward, recognition or recompense. In this latter figurative usage, **misthos** refers to rewards which God bestows for the moral quality of an action, such rewards most often to be bestowed in eternity future. Jesus associates **rewards** with giving, fasting and praying teaching that are dependent upon one's motive (Mt 6:1; 6:2+; Mt 6:5+). Note especially future rewards for having suffered for the Name of Christ in this life (Mt 5:12+; Lk 6:23+).

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**Mark 9:41** A CHRISTIAN businessman picked up a young man who was hitchhiking in lightweight clothing on a very cold day. This small kindness eventually led to the salvation of the young man, his family, and some of his friends.

A twelve-year-old boy named Cliff Miller went daily to the fence surrounding the athletic field at Georgia State Penitentiary to talk with and witness to inmate Harold Morris. These contacts played a large part in Harold's eventual conversion. Since receiving a pardon, Harold has spoken to thousands of young people around the country about Jesus Christ.

We sometimes think that if we can't do something big for Christ we might as well do nothing. But even a smile can make someone's day go better. In the name of Jesus we can say an encouraging word, run an errand, mow a lawn, take a meal, care for a baby, or do a variety of other small favors. They will make an impact. Even if they do not produce immediate and spectacular results, God takes note of them.—H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Thank You, Lord, for using and rewarding small acts of kindness. May I not be stingy with words of encouragement and acts of service.

**Mark 9:42 "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.**

NET Mark 9:42 "If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone tied around his neck and to be thrown into the sea.

NLT Mark 9:42 "But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone hung around your neck.

ESV Mark 9:42 "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

NIV Mark 9:42 "And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.

GNT Mark 9:42 Κα ς ν σκανδαλ σ να τ ν μικρ ν το των τ ν πιστευ ντων [ε ς μ ], καλ ν σπιν α τ μ λλον ε περ κειται μ λος νικ ς περ τ ν τρ χηλον α το κα β βληται ε ς τ ν θ λασσαν.

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:42 and whoever may cause to stumble one of the little ones believing in me, better is it for him if a millstone is hanged about his neck, and he hath been cast into the sea.

ASV Mark 9:42 And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

CSB Mark 9:42 "But whoever causes the downfall of one of these little ones who believe in Me-- it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

NKJ Mark 9:42 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

NRS Mark 9:42 "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea.

- **to stumble:** Mt 18:6,10 Lu 17:1,2 Ro 14:13 15:21 16:17 1Co 8:10-13 1Co 10:32,33 2Co 6:3 Php 1:10 1Ti 5:14 2Pe 2:2
- **it would be better :** Mt 25:45,46 Ac 9:4 26:11-14 2Th 1:6-9 Rev 6:9,10 16:6,7
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 18:6-7 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 "Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man

through whom the stumbling block comes!

#### A HEAVY MILLSTONE

It is reported that a [millstone](#) in Bible times could weigh up to 3300 pounds!

**Utley** points out that "There is a sharp contrast between Mark 9:38–41 and Mark 9:42–48. Those not officially connected with Jesus are affirmed in their good deeds, but those who know Him are warned in strong metaphors about their responsibility to new believers. This shocking paradox illustrates the truth of Mark 9:33–37. ([Mark 9 Commentary](#))

**Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe** ([pisteuo](#) in the [present tense](#) - continually believe) **to stumble** - This warning is very clear. If we cause a believer (whether new in the faith or older) to sin, we will pay a dear price! The disciples had been in danger of offending the anonymous disciple who was casting out a demon, and Jesus pointed to the seriousness of their attitude. Compare **these little ones to child** in Mark 9:37.

**Hiebert on to stumble** - The verb basically means "to entrap, ensnare" and is commonly used to mean "to cause to sin, lead into sin" (cf. Mk 4:17), either by bad example or direct seduction. It denotes the causing of a moral fall resulting in serious damage. The one injured is "one of these little ones that believe in me." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Causes...to stumble** (4624)([skandalizo](#) from [skandalon](#)= a trap = put a snare or stumbling block in way; English = scandalize = to offend the moral sense of) means to put a snare (in the way), hence to cause to stumble, to give offense. To entrap, trip up, or entice to sin, offend. So here in Mt 5:29-30 **skandalizo** is used in the active sense which conveys the idea to cause to do wrong, to entice to commit sin. In the passive sense it means to be led into sin, to be caused to do wrong. In the passive some uses mean to be offended (Mt 11:6), the idea being that one is taking offense at Jesus and/or refusing to believe in Him. Finally, **skandalizo** can mean to furnish an occasion for some to be shocked, angered, or offended (Mt 17:27). **Skandalizo** is derived from [skandalon](#) which refers to stick in a trap on which the bait is placed and which springs up and shuts the trap at the touch of the careless, unwary animal. It follows that the idea is to put a stumbling block or impediment in one's way, upon which another may trip and fall. All uses - Matt. 5:29; Matt. 5:30; Matt. 11:6; Matt. 13:21; Matt. 13:57; Matt. 15:12; Matt. 17:27; Matt. 18:6; Matt. 18:8; Matt. 18:9; Matt. 24:10; Matt. 26:31; Matt. 26:33; Mk. 4:17; Mk. 6:3; Mk. 9:42; Mk. 9:43; Mk. 9:45; Mk. 9:47; Mk. 14:27; Mk. 14:29; Lk. 7:23; Lk. 17:2; Jn. 6:61; Jn. 16:1; 1 Co. 8:13; 2 Co. 11:29

To emphasize the seriousness of causing a believer to sin, Jesus says it would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone around one's neck. This would bring certain death, since the millstones were quite heavy—some weighing several tons, requiring a donkey or ox to turn them

**It would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone**([see note](#)) **hung around his neck** - Literally the Greek reads "is better for him if a millstone turned by a donkey is hung" [NET Note](#) adds **heavy millstone** is "the millstone of a donkey." This refers to a large flat stone turned by a donkey in the process of grinding grain

**Gilbrant** - To offend willfully even the most obscure, insignificant, or weak believer is a matter of most serious consequence. Physical death of the most repulsive sort would be preferable to causing one of Jesus' disciples to stumble. The millstone of which Jesus spoke was the top stone of two large grinding stones. It had a hole in the middle for the grain to pass through, and was drawn by a donkey. With this stone around the neck, the guilty would surely drown.

**He had been cast into the sea** - In other words that he had been drowned to death, a horrible way to die as one slowly suffocates from lack of oxygen! This statement that "it is better to die a horrible death by drowning than to cause another Christian to sin—must have shocked His hearers." (MacArthur)

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Mark 9:42-48

FOR years, scaffolding in the Sistine Chapel has partially obscured the view of Michelangelo's sixteenth-century frescoes. Restorers have been carefully removing the dulling residue of candle smoke, incense, and dust.

Some people are critical of the project and say the colors on the ceiling are now too strong. But officials insist that the restoration enables visitors to see what the Renaissance master wanted them to see.

The debate is sure to continue, especially when the even sootier painting The Last Judgment is restored. The renewing of that scene, with its crowded figures crying out in hell, has a spiritual parallel that is just as soiled. Our generation has become accustomed to a very dull portrayal of the last judgment described by Jesus. Countless jokes and profanities have obscured the

vivid picture Christ gave us. And many who believe in Him do not take Him seriously when He talks about a fire that will never be quenched.

To restore Christ's picture of hell, we need to look at what He said and to sense its reality. When we do, we will be thankful for our salvation and stimulated to pray for those who, if they continue in unbelief, will not escape God's wrath.—M R De Haan II. ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

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#### QUESTION - [What is a millstone in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - A millstone is a stone used to grind grain. When grain is milled, two stones are actually used: the bed stone, or base, which remains stationary; and the runner stone, which turns on top of the base, grinding the grain.

In Bible times the millstone was a common item, and it is mentioned in several contexts in the Bible. The millstone was in fact so integral a part of society that the Mosaic Law forbade taking someone's millstone in pledge (Deuteronomy 24:6). The millstone was needed to grind grain to make bread and sustain life, so taking someone's millstone would be like taking his or her life in pledge.

A millstone was both extremely hard and exceedingly heavy, and it provided a vivid illustration for anyone who had experience with millstones. In the book of Job, God mentions the millstone in His description of a beast called Leviathan. This animal was so strong that God compared its impenetrable skin to a millstone: "Its chest is hard as rock, hard as a lower millstone" (Job 41:24). The "lower" millstone is the base stone upon which the upper millstone turns. A millstone was also chronicled as an instrument of death. A woman killed Gideon's son Abimelech by dropping an upper millstone (the runner stone) from a tower. The stone landed on his head and crushed his skull (Judges 9:53; 2 Samuel 11:21).

Perhaps the most famous mention of a millstone in the Bible is in Jesus' warning against leading His children astray. He said, "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea" (Mark 9:42). Causing a child of God to sin will bring severe judgment. If you would find it hard to swim with a millstone hanging around your neck, you should think twice before tempting God's child.  
[.GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 9:43 "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,**

NET Mark 9:43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter into life crippled than to have two hands and go into hell, to the unquenchable fire.

NLT Mark 9:43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better to enter eternal life with only one hand than to go into the unquenchable fires of hell with two hands.

ESV Mark 9:43 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.

NIV Mark 9:43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.

GNT Mark 9:43 Καὶ ἂν σκανδαλίζῃ σε χεὶρ σου, πκοψον αὐτή· καλὸν στή σε κυλλὸν ἐσελθεῖν εἰς τὸ ζῶν τὸ οὐ χερρᾶς χοντὰ πελθεῖν εἰς τὸ γένναν, εἰς τὸ πρὸ σβεστον.

KJV 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:

YLT Mark 9:43 'And if thy hand may cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is better for thee maimed to enter into the life, than having the two hands, to go away to the gehenna, to the fire -- the unquenchable --

ASV Mark 9:43 And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire.

CSB Mark 9:43 And if your hand causes your downfall, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and go to hell-- the unquenchable fire,

NKJ Mark 9:43 "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched--

NRS Mark 9:43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.

- **If your hand:** De 13:6-8 Mt 5:29,30 18:8,9 Ro 8:13 1Co 9:27 Ga 5:24 Col 3:5 Tit 2:12 Heb 12:1 1Pe 2:1
- **to stumble:** Mk 9:45,47
- **crippled:** Mt 15:30,31 Lu 14:13,21
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 18:8-14 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire.

Matthew 5:29; 30+ "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

### DEAL DRASTICALLY WITH SIN

If the previous warning dealt with the dread consequences of ensnaring others, this passage deals with the even more horrible consequences of ensnaring one's self! The previous passage warned of a horrible death in time, but the present (and subsequent passages) warns of an indescribable death in eternity!

**Gilbrant** - As easy as it may be to seduce immature and weak believers into sin, it is easier to allow one's self to fall into sin. Temptations can come from without, but they also come from within our members. And as it is better to submit through surgery to the loss of a body part than to lose the whole body to disease and death, so also in the spiritual realm radical surgery may be necessary in the light of eternity. Three valued body parts—the hand, the foot, and the eye—are mentioned. These body parts can be used for evil or for good, but they do not act independently of the will. The hand symbolizes what is done, the foot where one goes, and the eye what is seen.

**If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off** - **Cut it off** is in the [aorist imperative](#) which is a command to "Do it now!" do not procrastinate or delay! The need to accomplish this cutting off is urgent! Jesus' point is that anything or anyone that morally traps us (by our senses, visual, touch, and by expansion not excluding the other senses such as hearing), and causes us to fall into sin should be eliminated, radically and quickly. If we do not make every necessary effort to control our surroundings, what we watch and read, who we keep company with and speak with, etc, then those things will control us. If you cannot control something, it needs to be "jettisoned" to keep the boat afloat so to speak.

The Old Testament account of Samuel hacking Agag to pieces (1 Sa 15:33) is a good analogy for the need for Christians to take drastic steps to defeat the sin that remains in their lives.

**Stumble** ([4624](#)) see note above on [skandalizo](#)

**Cut it off** ([609](#))(**apokopto** from **apo** = dissociation + **kopto** = cut) means to cut off literally (Jn 18:10, 26, Acts 27:32+) or to cut off a limb. It is used figuratively in Mk 9:43, 45, for clearly Jesus is not advocating maiming one's literal body. Apokopto was used of removing male testicles and thus castrating, emasculating or making a eunuch of. Paul uses apokopto sarcastically in Galatians 5:12+ of carrying an error in doctrine to its logical extreme.

**Used 6x in NT** - cut...off(2), cut away(1), cut off(2), mutilate(1). Mk. 9:43; Mk. 9:45; Jn. 18:10; Jn. 18:26; Acts 27:32; Gal. 5:12. **Apokopto** in the Septuagint - Deut. 23:1; Deut. 25:12; Jdg. 1:6; Jdg. 1:7; Jdg. 5:22; 2 Sam. 10:4; Ps. 77:8

**it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire**- Jesus now explains why He issued this radical, urgent command! And remember He was not calling for mutilation of our members, because we would still have the problem in our heart! His description is radical to GET OUR ATTENTION!!!

**Life** ([2222](#)) see note below on [zoe](#)

**Hell...the unquenchable fire** - The main idea is that the cost to the soul in hell is so utterly devastating that if anything interferes with a man's right standing before God, causing him to stumble, that item should be eliminated regardless of cost. Nothing is

valuable enough to cause us to miss the future consummation of God's kingdom. The only alternative is hell (gehenna). Surely, the actualization of hell is even worse than the visualization of it. Jesus often spoke warnings of hell, with the entire passage (Mk 9:42-50) being a prime example. The undying **worm** indicates never-ending disintegration and the **unquenchable** fire indicates eternal suffering, however they may be implemented. The contemplation of such a future ought to drive men to "flee from the wrath to come" (Mt 3:7+) and believers to ceaseless praise and thanksgiving (1Th 1:10+ 2Th 1:9,10+) Instead this truth often impels skeptics to even more adamant unbelief and believers to an indifference and to an antinomian or "cheap grace" attitude toward their costly "so great a salvation" (Heb 2:3). The loving Creator is issuing this solemn warning because time is short and eternity is long and one need to be certain of their eternity in Heaven (cf 2 Cor 13:5+).

**Grant Osborne** - In verse 42 the danger is external...Here the danger is internal...The next three verses (vv. 43, 45, 47) use critical parts of the body (hand, foot, eye) as metaphors for the danger of falling into sin (see Job 31:1-8; Pr. 6:16-18). The command to amputate these parts is an element of the imagery and not intended literally. Jesus uses hyperbole to emphasize the violent rejection of temptation that is necessary to be victorious over sin. ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** - Jesus did not intend physical mutilation of the body. However, He does indicate in the strongest possible terms that a radical evil demands a radical cure. The main idea is that the cost to the soul in hell is so utterly devastating that if anything interferes with a man's right standing before God, causing him to stumble, that item should be eliminated regardless of cost.

**Hell (Gehenna)** (1067)(**geenna** from Hebrew **gay** = valley + **Hinnom**) is literally the **valley of Hinnom**, the ravine or valley south of Jerusalem where the refuse and filth, bodies of dead animals, and bodies of criminals were cast and burned. These fires were continually kept burning, all a fit symbol of the future home of all unrepentant, unregenerate wicked men and women. It was a foul, forbidding place where the fire, smoke, and stench never ceased. It is thus fitting that geenna is where sin and unrepentant sinners will one day find it's "resting place". Gehenna, a valley W. and S. of Jerusalem, also a symbolic name for the final place of punishment of the ungodly.

**Gehenna** - 12v - Matt. 5:22; Matt. 5:29; Matt. 5:30; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 18:9; Matt. 23:15; Matt. 23:33; Mk. 9:43; Mk. 9:45; Mk. 9:47; Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6 tongue "set on fire by **hell**."

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#### QUESTION - [What is Gehenna?](#)

**ANSWER** - The word *gehenna* is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *ge-hinnom*, meaning "Valley of [the sons of] Hinnom." This valley south of Jerusalem was where some of the ancient Israelites "passed children through the fire" (sacrificed their children) to the Canaanite god Molech (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:2-6). The place is called "Tophet / Topheth" in Isaiah 30:33. In later years, Gehenna continued to be an unclean place used for burning trash from the city of Jerusalem. Jesus used Gehenna as an illustration of hell.

God so despised the [false god Molech](#) that He explicitly forbade the Israelites from having anything to do with him in Leviticus 18:21. He even warned them of the impending judgment He would send their way if the Jews didn't keep their attention and worship directed toward Him. In another prophetic warning, God re-named the Valley of Hinnom as the Valley of Slaughter (Jeremiah 19).

But the Israelites didn't listen, and evil kings of Judah such as Ahaz used the Valley of Hinnom for their demonic practices (2 Chronicles 28:3). To punish Judah, God brought Babylon against them, and that pagan nation carried out His judgment against Judah's idolatry and rebellion. It wasn't until after 70 years of exile that the Jews were allowed back into Israel to rebuild. Upon their return the Valley of Slaughter was re-purposed from a place of infanticide to an ever-burning rubbish heap (2 Kings 23:10). Child sacrifice and other forms of idol-worship ceased in Israel. Gehenna became a place where corpses of criminals, dead animals, and all manners of refuse were thrown to be destroyed.

The Gehenna Valley was thus a place of burning sewage, burning flesh, and garbage. [Maggots and worms](#) crawled through the waste, and the smoke smelled strong and sickening (Isaiah 30:33). It was a place utterly filthy, disgusting, and repulsive to the nose and eyes. Gehenna presented such a vivid image that Christ used it as a symbolic depiction of hell: a place of [eternal torment](#) and constant uncleanness, where the fires never ceased burning and the worms never stopped crawling (Matthew 10:28; Mark 9:47-48).

Because of Jesus' symbolic use of Gehenna, the word *gehenna* is sometimes used as a synonym for *hell*. In fact, that's how the Greek word is translated in Mark 9:47: "hell." The occupants of the lake of fire/gehenna/hell are [separated from God](#) for all of eternity. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Related Resources:**

- [Study of Eternal Punishment](#)
  - [Who will go to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [How can I not go to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - [Where is hell? What is the location of hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
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**QUESTION - [Did Jesus mean we should literally pluck out our eyes and cut off our hands?](#)**(Matthew 5:29–30 Matthew 18:8–9, Mark 9:43)

**ANSWER:** In the [Sermon on the Mount](#), Jesus says something that must certainly have seized His hearers' attention: "If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell" (Matthew 5:29–30). Jesus repeats the admonition in Matthew 18:8–9, except there He adds the need to dispense with a foot as well as a hand and an eye.

The graphic word pictures of Matthew 5 and Matthew 18 still grab attention today, and they raise the question of how literally we should take Jesus' commands in these passages. Does Jesus actually mean to say that we should pluck out our eyes or sever a hand if we are prone to sin? It may be of comfort to know that Jesus' instructions in these particular verses are not meant to be taken literally. We need not mutilate our bodies as a punishment for our sin. Rather, Jesus means that we should be prepared to make exceptional sacrifices if we want to follow Him (see Matthew 16:24).

Jesus had just warned His audience against using their eyes for lustful purposes (Matthew 5:28), so His prescribed remedy for lust—to pluck out an eye—makes sense, in a radical sort of way. But it is the radical nature of His statement that makes it so memorable.

When Jesus advises us to pluck out a sinful eye or cut off an unruly hand, He is employing a figure of speech known as hyperbole. Hyperbole is an obvious exaggeration or an intentional overstatement. Examples of hyperbole in modern speech would include statements like "This bag of groceries weighs a ton," "I've been waiting forever," and "Everyone knows that." The apostle Paul uses hyperbolic language in Galatians 4:15. Hyperbole, like other figures of speech, is not meant to be taken literally.

Jesus' purpose in saying, hyperbolically, that sinners should pluck out their eyes or cut off their hands is to magnify in His hearers' minds the heinous nature of sin. Sin is any action or thought that is contrary to the character of God. The result of sin is death, from which Jesus wants to preserve us (see Hebrews 2:9). Jesus warns of [hell](#) because He doesn't want people to go there (Matthew 5:29–30).

[Sin](#) takes people to hell (see Revelation 21:8), and that makes sin something to avoid at all costs. Jesus says that, whatever is causing you to sin, take drastic measures to get that thing out of your life. "It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. . . . It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell" (Matthew 18:8–9). *Nothing* is worth missing heaven for. *Nothing* is worth going to hell for. Nothing.

God takes sin seriously—seriously enough to sacrifice His only begotten Son to destroy it. We must take sin seriously as well. A lack of repentance is a crime punishable by eternal death. It is better to deny our flesh—to pluck out an eye or cut off a hand, as it were—than to risk sinning against God. God demands holiness (1 Peter 1:15), but we naturally tend to pamper ourselves and excuse our sin. That is why we need Jesus' shocking, radical hyperbole to wake us from our spiritual complacency. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Guilt, In The Lake Of Fire: Could Not Quench It-** Last evening the members of Neptune Engine Company, No. 7, of Brooklyn, attended in a body the Second Baptist church, on Leonard street, to listen to a sermon by Rev. A. B. Earle. As the announcement was made public, the attendance at the church was so great that nearly half that came could not get inside.

"The services were opened by prayer, followed by singing, after which Mr. Earle delivered his discourse. He spoke in a plain but earnest manner, engaging the deep attention of his audience.

The text selected was from Mark 9:44 (cp Mk 9:48) 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' He said he should call their attention more particularly to the latter clause of the text. He thought nothing would grieve them more than to meet with a fire which they could not put out; they would go home sorrowful at heart should such an event happen to them. They had often met and subdued this enemy--fire; they had always quenched it; but he should speak to them of a fire which could never be quenched.

"He then divided his text into two parts; first, What the worm is that dieth not, and why it does not die; second, What the fire is that is not quenched, and why it is not quenched.

"The worm that never dies is guilty memory,--the remembrance of past guilt. Memory is like a living, gnawing worm, producing a restless pain in the soul, as a gnawing worm would do in the vitals of the body. Impressions once made upon the mind can never be

effaced. A name once heard or mentioned, though forgotten for a time, will return in after years when circumstances shall recall it. Incidents of childhood carry their recollection to the grave. Memory is active when all else is still. In moments of peril the memory is more vivid and active, and thoughts of the past crowd upon the brain with inconceivable rapidity.

"Instances are often related of men in peril, by sea or land, who have seen the events of former days; recalled by memory; words and deeds they had thought forgotten have returned to them; their past life has seemed to come before their mental vision with startling reality. When the soul shall have dropped its fetters, and passed beyond the restraints of flesh, memory will still be fresh and active. This memory which tenants the body during life, and clings to the spirit hereafter, is the gnawing of the deathless worm. This worm draws all its nourishment from this world.

"He cited as an instance of the activity of memory, and its effects, the case of a prisoner who was removed from one prison to another, where the treatment was better. The man said he did not like the new prison as well as the old one, although he did not have to work as hard, had better food and kinder keepers; but in the new prison the convicts were not allowed to speak to each other; and in this terrible silence his memory was ever active--it was all think, think, think. So it will be hereafter: we shall be constantly thinking. We should therefore be careful how we store the memory, since its recollections will ever be present with us.

"In the second part of his discourse he considered the fire that can never be quenched.

"They might believe that no fire could break out in the city which, by their skill and activity, they could not put out; and their fellow-citizens, confident in their ability, went to their repose, feeling that by the vigilance, tact, and energy of the firemen their lives and property were secure. But there is a fire that cannot be quenched: it is remorse, or the realization of our sin in the dark world of despair. The Saviour says it is better to have but one eye than to be cast into hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

"The fire of God's wrath is the sinner's realization of his wickedness, and a guilty remembrance of the past. The reason this fire cannot be quenched is, there is nothing there with which to quench it. Suppose a building was wrapped in flames, and the firemen brought their engines to the spot, but could find no water; they would be powerless, however good their intentions. So with the fire of God's wrath--the guilty remembrance in the world of despair; there will be nothing with which to put it out; there is nothing here that can quench it but the blood of Jesus.

"He called their attention to the heroic fireman, young Sperry, of New Haven, who went into a burning building to save a child supposed to be there, and lost his own life. He felt assured there was not one among that company whom he addressed but would rush, as Sperry did, into the flames to save a fellow-creature's life. So if he (the speaker), by rushing into the flames of perdition, could drag a brother out of the fire, how readily would he do it.

#### **Mark 9:44 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.**

- **their:** Mk 9:46,48 Isa 66:24
- **the fire:** Isa 33:14 Mt 3:12 25:41,46 2Th 1:9 Rev 14:10,11 20:10,15 21:8
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Note:** Many manuscripts. do not contain verses 44 and 46, which are identical to verse 48.

#### **NOT IN BEST MANUSCRIPTS**

#### **Mark 9:45 "If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell,**

NET Mark 9:45 If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off! It is better to enter life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.

NLT Mark 9:45 If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better to enter eternal life with only one foot than to be thrown into hell with two feet.

ESV Mark 9:45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell.

NIV Mark 9:45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have

two feet and be thrown into hell.

GNT Mark 9:45 καὶ ἡ πόδι σου σκανδαλίζῃ σε, πικροῦν αὐτὸν· καλὸν στίβον σε εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸ ζῶν χωλὸν τοῦ ὀπίσθου χοντὰ βλήθῃναι εἰς τὸ γένναν.

KJV 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:

YLT Mark 9:45 'And if thy foot may cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into the life lame, than having the two feet to be cast to the gehenna, to the fire -- the unquenchable --

ASV Mark 9:45 And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell.

CSB Mark 9:45 And if your foot causes your downfall, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into hell-- [the unquenchable fire,

NKJ Mark 9:45 "And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched--

NRS Mark 9:45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell.,

#### ■ **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Matthew 18:8 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire.

**If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off - Cut it off** again is in the [aorist imperative](#) which is a command to **"Do it now!"** Gilbrant comments that "The imperative "cut it off" implies that sometimes unsparing radical spiritual surgery must be done to spare the soul. It must be done immediately and decisively, no halfway measure will do." (See [related note above](#))

**Stumble** ([4624](#)) see note above on [skandalizo](#)

**Cut it off** ([609](#)) see note above on [apokopto](#)

**it is better for you to enter life lame** - This speaks of entering into the Kingdom of God and eternal life with Jesus and fellow followers forever and ever. Amen!

**Life** ([2222](#))([zoe](#)) in Scripture is used to refer to **physical life** (Ro 8:38+ Php 1:20+, etc) but more often to **supernatural life** in contrast to a life subject to eternal death (Jn 3:36+). Zoe speaks of a quality of life of fullness which alone belongs to God the Giver of life and is available to His children now (Ro 6:4+ Ep 4:18+) as well as in eternity future (Mk 10:30+, Titus 1:2+). Uses of **Zoe** in Mark - Mk. 9:43; Mk. 9:45; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 10:30.

The ethical and spiritual qualities of this **life** which God is, are communicated to the sinner when the latter places his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, and this becomes the new, animating, energizing, motivating principle which transforms the experience of that individual, and the saint thus lives a Christian **life**.

**than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell**- While there is no classic term of contrast (like "but") there is hardly a more dramatic contrast in all time and eternity than between eternal life and eternal death, eternity in Heaven versus eternity in Hell!

**Hell (Gehenna)** ([1067](#)) see note above on [geenna](#) (See also [discussion of gehenna](#))

**NET Note** - The word translated hell is "Gehenna" (ge,enna, geenna), a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew words ge hinnom ("Valley of Hinnom"). This was the valley along the south side of Jerusalem. In OT times it was used for human sacrifices to the pagan god Molech (cf. Jer 7:31; 19:5–6; 32:35), and it came to be used as a place where human excrement and rubbish were disposed of and burned. In the intertestamental period, it came to be used symbolically as the place of divine punishment (cf. 1 En. 27:2, 90:26; 4 Ezra 7:36). This Greek term also occurs in vv. 45, 47.

**Wiersbe** - After an army chaplain told his men that he did not believe in hell, some of them suggested that his services were not needed. After all, if there is no hell, then why worry about death? But if there is a hell, then the chaplain was leading them astray! Either way, they would be better off without him!

**Mark 9:46 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.**

- Lu 16:24-26
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NOT IN BEST MANUSCRIPTS - [See note below](#)**

**Mark 9:47 "If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell,**

NET Mark 9:47 If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out! It is better to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,

NLT Mark 9:47 And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. It's better to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,

ESV Mark 9:47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell,

NIV Mark 9:47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,

GNT Mark 9:47 καὶ ἄν φθαλμὸς σου σκανδαλίζῃ σε, κβάλε αὐτόν· καλὸν σὺ σὺν ἑνὶ ὀφθαλμῷ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ χοντὰ βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γένναν,

KJV 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:

YLT Mark 9:47 And if thine eye may cause thee to stumble, cast it out; it is better for thee one-eyed to enter into the reign of God, than having two eyes, to be cast to the gehenna of the fire --

ASV Mark 9:47 And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell;

CSB Mark 9:47 And if your eye causes your downfall, gouge it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,

NKJ Mark 9:47 "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire--

NRS Mark 9:47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell,

- **your eye:** Ge 3:6 Job 31:1 Ps 119:37 Mt 5:28,29 10:37-39 Lu 14:26 Ga 4:15 Php 3:7,8
- **causes you to stumble,** Mk 9:43
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Matthew 18:9 "If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell.

Job 31:1+ "I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?

Psalms 119:37+ Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways.

Psalms 101:3 I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me.

Galatians 5:16-17+ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

**MacArthur** - The mention of body parts—**hand, foot, and eye**—emphasizes that the battle against sin includes all aspects of believers' lives; what they do, where they go, and what they see....Jesus called for radical, severe action against anything that hinders the pursuit of holiness, righteousness, and purity throughout the Christian life. (See [Mark 9-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out** - See [Related Note](#) above. **Cause you to stumble** is in the **present tense** signifying that this "eye problem" is not an intermittent lapse into sin, but a continual practice of giving your eyes over to immoral filth, wickedness, debauchery and degradation that they should not be allowed to see! Notice also that the verb cause...to stumble" is in the **active voice**. You are probably saying "So what's significant about that?" Here is the point - the active voice describes a choice of one's will, a volitional choice to commit sin. This is not "accidental" stumbling but willful, presumptive stumbling! And if not radically remedied will stumble one's soul into eternal damnation!

**THOUGHT** - (You probably won't like this "Thought") -- Let's cut to the chase! The internet has unleashed a torrent of pictorial sewage that is powerfully seductive (especially to men, but also to women). This problem is literally ravaging the Church of Jesus Christ! This may seem to be secret sin on earth but is open scandal in heaven. And as Moses wrote in Numbers 32:23+ "**BE SURE YOU SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT!**" Don't think that because your wife or husband does not know, that you are "safe." In fact you may be in deep deception and potentially in danger of entering into the unquenchable fire of hell! You may be a professor of Christ, but not a possessor of Christ. For those who profess to know Christ and are absolutely unable to keep their flesh under self-control, but continue to practice iniquity as their lifestyle, their habitual practice, they could be in grave (pun intended) danger! So they (and all of us) need to read 2 Corinthians 13:5+ "**Test** yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?"

**Throw it out** is in the [aorist imperative](#) which is a command to "**Do it now!**" do not procrastinate or delay! The need to accomplish this is urgent! Jesus' point is that anything or anyone that morally traps us (by our senses, visual, touch, and by expansion not excluding the other senses such as hearing), and causes us to fall into sin should be eliminated, radically and quickly. If we do not make every necessary effort to control our surroundings, what we watch and read, who we keep company with and speak with, etc, then those things will control us. If you cannot control something, it needs to be "jettisoned" to keep the boat afloat so to speak.

**Causes...stumble** ([4624](#)) see note above on [skandalizo](#)

**it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell** - In Mark 9:43, 45 Jesus refers to entering "life" but here to entering "the kingdom of God." Clearly the two are used synonymously in this context and both refer to eternal life in the presence of the King of the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

**Hell (Gehenna)** ([1067](#)) see note above on [geenna](#)

See [What is Gehenna?](#)

**MacArthur** - The name **gehenna** derives from the Old Testament valley of Hinnom, located just south of Jerusalem (Josh. 15:8; 18:16; 2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Neh. 11:30; Jer. 7:31–32; 19:2, 6; 32:35). There the apostate Jewish people sacrificed infants to Molech, the abominable false god of the Ammonites (1 Kings 11:7), by burning them to death (2 Kings 17:17; 21:6; Jer. 32:35)—an appalling practice that God strictly prohibited (Lev. 18:21; 20:2–5) and strongly condemned (Jer. 7:31–32; 32:35). Both the wicked kings Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:3) and Manasseh (before he repented, 2 Chron. 33:6) sacrificed their children in the valley of Hinnom. Because of those sacrifices, the place became known as Topheth, which derives from a Hebrew word meaning drum. Evidently drums were beaten loudly to drown out the screams of the babies being burned alive. As part of his reforms, the godly king Josiah destroyed that place of sacrifice. The valley of Hinnom was turned into Jerusalem's garbage dump, where a fire burned continually in the midst of the rubbish. It thus became a graphic illustration of eternal hell, a place where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched (cf. Isa. 66:24). (See [Mark 9-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Mark 9:48 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.**

NET Mark 9:48 where their worm never dies and the fire is never quenched.

NLT Mark 9:48 'where the maggots never die and the fire never goes out.'

ESV Mark 9:48 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'

NIV Mark 9:48 where " 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'

GNT Mark 9:48 που σκληξ ατ νο τελευτ κα τ προ σβ ννυται.

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

YLT Mark 9:48 where their worm is not dying, and the fire is not being quenched;

ASV Mark 9:48 where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

CSB Mark 9:48 where Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

NKJ Mark 9:48 "where`Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.'

NRS Mark 9:48 where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

- Mk 9:44,46
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**MacArthur** - These words compose the strongest call to discipleship our Lord ever gave. He challenges everyone to either deal radically with sin, or be cast into the eternal garbage pit of hell, "the outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12), "the furnace of fire" (Matt. 13:42), where "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 22:13). (See [Mark 9-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

#### **where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.**

From Isa 66:24 (cp Je 7:20 Rev 21:8 ) Jesus often spoke warnings of hell, with this entire passage (Mk9:42-50) being a prime example. The undying worm may indicate never-ending disintegration (see uses of skolex in Lxx [Dt 28:39 Isa 66:24 Jon 4:7]) and the unquenchable fire indicates eternal suffering, however they may be implemented. The contemplation of such a future ought to drive men to "flee from the wrath to come" (Mt3:7), but instead it often impels them to even more adamant unbelief. Nevertheless, it was their very Creator who was here issuing the warning.

**Henry Morris - WORM DOES NOT DIE.** Jesus often spoke warnings of hell, with this entire passage (Mark 9:42-50) being a prime example. The undying worm indicates never-ending disintegration and the unquenchable fire indicates eternal suffering, however they may be implemented. The contemplation of such a future ought to drive men to "flee from the wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7), but instead it often impels them to even more adamant unbelief. Nevertheless, it was their very Creator who was here issuing the warning.

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#### **Norman Geisler - MARK 9:48—Why did Jesus say worms would not die in hell?**

**PROBLEM:** Jesus said that hell is a place "where `their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched' " (Mark 9:48). But what do everlasting worms have to do with hell?

**SOLUTION:** Jesus is not speaking of earthworms, nor any other kind of animal here. He is speaking about the human body. Notice, He did not say "where the worm does not die" but, rather, "where their worm does not die." The antecedent of "their" is a human being who sins and dies without repentance (cf. 9:42–47). "Worm" is simply a way to refer to the human "worm," or shell known as the body. This fits with the context where He is speaking of the parts of the body, such as, "hands" and the "foot" (9:43–45). Jesus said here that we should not fear the one (man) who could destroy our body, but not our soul, but, rather, to fear the One (God) who could send soul and body into the everlasting flames (Luke 12:4–5; cf. Mark 9:43–48) (When Critics Ask)

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**Mark 9:48 OBLIVIOUS TO ETERNAL DISASTER!** - There is a place where their worm does not die but many refuse to believe. They are like the people in the following illustration - There was a report in the news recently about a subway train in New York City that veered onto the wrong tracks. It happened on the A Line when the train operator pulled onto the wrong tracks as he left the Canal Street Station. He headed uptown on the downtown rails. The dispatcher saw what was happening and frantically tried to radio the train but the crew later said they never heard the emergency broadcasts. The driver continued for several stops unaware of his mistake until he saw the headlights of a southbound train coming toward him. Both trains managed to stop in time or it could have been a disaster. Interestingly, the passengers had no idea they were on the wrong tracks or that their lives were in danger. They sat there napping or reading their newspapers or listening to their earphones, oblivious to the potentially fatal mistake.

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the worm that will not die in Mark 9:48?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Jerusalem's ancient garbage dump—a place called Gehenna—was illustrative of the ceaseless agonies of [hell](#). This dump was on the south side of Jerusalem. In Old Testament times, children had been sacrificed to idols there (2 Kings 23:10); in Jesus' day, it was a place burning with constant fires to consume the waste that was thrown there. The material burned there

included everything from household trash to animal carcasses to convicted criminals (Jeremiah 7:31–33). Needless to say, the Jews considered Gehenna a cursed place of impurity and uncleanness.

The word translated “hell” in Mark 9:43 is the Greek word *Gehenna*, which comes from the Hebrew name for a place called the “Valley of Hinnom.” Jesus uses this place to paint a vivid image of what hell is like. The Jewish people often associated the Valley of Hinnom with spiritual death.

In Mark 9:48, when Jesus says, “Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched” (ESV), He is quoting from Isaiah 66:24: “They will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.” In both texts the word translated as “worm” literally means “grub” or “maggot.” A maggot would have an obvious association with a dump like Gehenna where dead bodies are thrown; however, the maggot Christ speaks of “will not die.”

Taken at face value, this text is one of the most horrific descriptions of what hell is like. The thought of eternal torment, likened to maggots eating away at a rotting corpse, is undoubtedly ghastly. Hell is so awful that Christ said, figuratively speaking, it’s better to cut off the hand that causes you to sin than to end up in hell (Matthew 5:30).

Mark 9:48 does not mean that there are literal worms in hell or that there are worms that live forever; rather, Jesus is teaching the fact of unending suffering in hell—the “worm” never stops causing torment. Notice that the worm is personal. Both Isaiah 66:24 and Mark 9:48 use the word *their* to identify the worm’s owner. The sources of torment are attached each to its own host.

Some Bible scholars believe the “worm” refers to a man’s [conscience](#). Those in hell, being completely cut off from God, exist with a nagging, guilty conscience that, like a persistent worm, gnaws away at its victim with a remorse that can never be mitigated. No matter what the word *worm* refers to, the most important thing to be gained from these words of Christ is that we should do everything in our power to escape the horrors of hell, and there is only one thing to that end—receiving Jesus as the Lord of our lives (John 3:16). [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### **Mark 9:49 "For everyone will be salted with fire.**

NET Mark 9:49 Everyone will be salted with fire.

NLT Mark 9:49 "For everyone will be tested with fire.

ESV Mark 9:49 For everyone will be salted with fire.

NIV Mark 9:49 Everyone will be salted with fire.

GNT Mark 9:49 π ς γ ρ πυρ λιθη σετοι.

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

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

ASV Mark 9:49 For every one shall be salted with fire.

CSB Mark 9:49 For everyone will be salted with fire.

NKJ Mark 9:49 "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.

NRS Mark 9:49 "For everyone will be salted with fire.

- **everyone:** Lev 2:13 Eze 43:24
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For everyone will be salted with fire** - This is a difficult verse to interpret.

Some understand this to refer to the refining trials of believers.

**NET Note** - The statement everyone will be salted with fire is difficult to interpret. It may be a reference to (1) unbelievers who enter hell as punishment for rejection of Jesus, indicating that just as salt preserves so they will be preserved in their punishment in hell forever; (2) Christians who experience suffering in this world because of their attachment to Christ; (3) any person who experiences suffering in a way appropriate to their relationship to Jesus. For believers this means the suffering of purification, and for unbelievers it means hell, i.e., eternal torment.

**ESV Study Note** - For everyone will be salted with fire is a puzzling statement that occurs only in Mark, and many interpretations have been proposed:

(1) Against the background of Lev. 2:13, “with all your offerings you shall offer salt” (see also Ezek. 43:24), some think Jesus means that believers themselves are now what is being offered to God (cf. Rom. 12:1), and the “salt” that is in them is the purifying “fire” of God’s Holy Spirit. The cleansing and purifying properties of salt support this idea, but this is surely an obscure way to refer to the Holy Spirit, and the connection to the larger context of Mark 9:43-48 is unclear.

(2) A second interpretation also views believers as a sacrifice to God against that same OT background but understands the salt to represent purification by the “fire” of suffering and hardship, which is related to the costliness of discipleship implied in the willingness to give up even a hand or an eye (vv. 43-48). In other words, “Be willing to give up anything (vv. 43-48), and also to suffer for Christ’s sake, for something costly and painful will come into everyone’s life (v. 49).” But the “salt” and the “fire” also make the sacrifice pleasing to God and have a purifying effect on the believer. And as salt does not destroy but preserves food, so the suffering will not destroy the believer.

(3) Others think that “everyone” means both believers and unbelievers, and thus the verse teaches that unbelievers will undergo the terrible fire of God’s judgment (cf. vv. 47-48), but believers, while not experiencing hell, will still in this life undergo the purifying, cleansing fire of God that comes through hardship and suffering. Interpretations (2) and (3) are similar, (2) being perhaps the best. (See [ESV Study Bible - Google Books Result](#))

The mention of salt leads to a contrast in v50. The disciples have already been told that they are the salt of the earth (Mt 5:13). As preservatives in a decaying order and as seasoners in a tasteless society, believers are to maintain their usefulness through walking with the Lord.

[Believer's Study Bible](#) - v. 49,50) Interpretation of these verses, which are unique to Mark’s Gospel, is admittedly difficult. Verse 49 must be related to the discussion which precedes it. Therefore, the passage should be understood as the awesome announcement by Christ that all unbelievers will exist eternally in fire in the day of punishment. The mention of salt leads to a contrast in v. 50. The disciples have already been told that they are the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13). As preservatives in a decaying order and as seasoners in a tasteless society, believers are to maintain their usefulness through walking with the Lord.

**Ryrie** - Just as salt preserves, everyone who enters hell will be preserved through an eternity of torment. Some understand this to refer to the refining trials of believers.

**Grant Osborne** - Most likely the background is the use of salt as a purifying agent, especially its presence in the cereal (Lev. 2:13) and burnt offerings (Ezek. 43:24) to symbolize a pure sacrifice. This is probably not the image of eternal hellfire but rather considers the life of discipleship as a sacrifice to God and the process by which God purifies one’s life via testing and trials (the “refiner’s fire” in Mal. 3:2). ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**Swindoll** - Mark alone records the enigmatic statement “For everyone will be salted with fire.” It seems like a strange mix of metaphors until you study the Hebrew sacrifices. God required the Hebrews to bring unblemished animals for their sin offerings, which were to be consumed entirely upon the altar. Salt, a symbol of the covenant (Num. 18:19), was a necessary ingredient in sacrifices (Lev. 2:13). Jesus used these Old Testament symbols to illustrate the cost of discipleship, which would involve suffering and sacrifice. Discipleship—citizenship in the kingdom of God—demands complete, unreserved commitment, even to the point of sacrificing one’s body before succumbing to sin (Rom. 12:1). Fortunately, a relatively brief period of suffering here on earth will have been nothing compared to the “glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18)..(See [Insights on Mark](#)).

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### **William MacDonald on Mark 9:49-50**

Verses 49 and 50 are especially difficult. Therefore we will examine them clause by clause.

“For everyone will be seasoned with fire.” The three main problems are: (1) Which fire is referred to? (2) What is meant by seasoned? (3) Does everyone refer to saved, to unsaved, or to both?

Fire may mean hell (as in vv. 44, 46, 48) or judgment of any kind, including divine judgment of a believer’s works, and self-judgment.

Salt typifies that which preserves, purifies, and seasons. In eastern lands, it is also a pledge of loyalty, friendship, or faithfulness to a promise.

If everyone means the unsaved, then the thought is that they will be preserved in the fires of hell, that is, that

they will suffer eternal punishment.

If everyone refers to believers, the passage teaches that they must: (1) be purified through the fires of God's chastening in this life; or (2) preserve themselves from corruption by practicing self-discipline and self-renunciation; or (3) be tested at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

"And every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt." This clause is quoted from Lev. 2:13 (see also Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5). Salt, an emblem of the covenant between God and His people, was intended to remind the people that the covenant was a solemn treaty to be kept inviolate. In presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1, 2), we should season the sacrifice with salt by making it an irrevocable commitment.

Mark 9:50 "Salt is good." Christians are the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13). God expects them to exert a healthful, purifying influence. As long as they fulfill their discipleship, they are a blessing to all.

"But if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it?" Salt without saltiness is valueless. A Christian who is not carrying out his duties as a true disciple is barren and ineffective. It is not enough to make a good start in the Christian life. Unless there is constant and radical self-judgment, the child of God is failing to achieve the purpose for which God saved him.

"Have salt in yourselves." Be a power for God in the world. Exert a beneficial influence for the glory of Christ. Be intolerant of anything in your life that might lessen your effectiveness for Him.

"And have peace with one another." This apparently refers back to verses 33 and 34, where the disciples had argued over which of them was the greatest. Pride must be put away and replaced by humble service for all.

To summarize, verses 49 and 50 seem to picture the believer's life as a sacrifice to God. It is salted with fire, that is, mixed with self-judgment and self-renunciation. It is salted with salt, that is, offered with a pledge of unalterable devotedness. If the believer goes back on his vows, or fails to deal drastically with sinful desires, then his life will be savorless, worthless, and pointless. Therefore he should eradicate anything from his life that would interfere with his divinely-appointed mission, and he should maintain peaceful relations with other believers. (See [Believer's Bible Commentary: Second Edition](#))

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### Walter Kaiser, et al - Saltless Salt? Mark 9:50

One can use salt to season meat or bread, but if the salt that one was going to use loses its saltiness, what can be used to season it?

But how can salt lose its saltiness? If it is truly salt, of course, it must remain salt and retain its saltiness. But probably in the ordinary experience of Galilean life, salt was rarely found in a pure state; in practice it was mixed with other substances, various forms of earth. So long as the proportion of salt in the mixture was sufficiently high, the mixture would serve the purpose of true salt. But if, through exposure to damp or some other reason, all the salt in the mixture was leached out, what was left was good for nothing. As Luke, in his amplified version of the saying, puts it, "it is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill" (Lk 14:35 RSV). It might have been thought that the dunghill was all that it was fit for, but Jesus may have used a word that meant "manure": "it is no good for the land, not even as manure." Matthew says, "It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men" (Mt 5:13), that is to say, people throw the useless stuff out into the street.

The figure of insipid salt appears in the words of the rabbis, with reference (it seems) to Israel's role as the salt or purifying agency among the nations of mankind. Matthew's version of Jesus' saying begins with the words "You are the salt of the earth" (Mt 5:13) addressed to his disciples. This implies that the disciples have a particular function to perform on earth, and if they fail to perform it, they might as well not exist, for all the good they will do. In what respect they are said to be salt is not specified, so the nature of their function has to be inferred from the context and from what is known of the effect of salt. They may be intended to have a preserving and purifying effect on their fellows, or to add zest to the life of the community, or to be a force for peace. The idea of an insipid Christian ought to be a contradiction in terms. One way in which the quality of saltiness can be manifested is in one's language. "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt," Paul writes to the Colossians (Col 4:6), where the "salt" seems to be that ready Christian wit or wisdom (specially apt in the answering of questions about the faith) which is far removed from the slanderous and unsavory talk deprecated earlier in the same letter (Col 3:8).

Since the disciples are spoken of as the salt of the earth in the same context of the Sermon on the Mount in which they are also spoken of as the light of the world and a city set on a hill (Mt 5:14), it is evidently their public life that is in view. They must be seen by others as living examples of the power and grace of God, examples which others are encouraged to follow.

Mark adds some other sayings in which salt figures. These "salt" sayings follow the warning that it is better to enter into life maimed than to be consigned with all one's limbs to the "Gehenna of fire" (Mk 9:43-48). A transition between that warning and the "salt"

sayings is provided by the sentence "Everyone will be salted with fire" (Mk 9:49). The fires which burned continuously in the Gehenna or municipal garbage dump south of Jerusalem reduced the risk of disease, which might have arisen from the decomposing organic matter; fire had a purifying effect, as salt also had. The point of Jesus' words in this "transitional" sentence may be that the fire of persecution will have a purifying or refining effect in the disciples' lives (see 1 Pet 1:6-7). Some texts of Mark append here a quotation from Leviticus 2:13 (where the reference is more particularly to the cereal offering): "Season all your grain offerings with salt." This clause is probably not original in this context, but those who were responsible for inserting it (being moved to do so probably by the common theme of salt) may have intended it to mean "Every Christian, by enduring persecution, will be cleansed thereby and so become a more acceptable offering to God."

Then, after the saying about the salt that has lost its saltiness, Mark concludes this series of sayings with "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another." Again, we should understand this injunction better if we knew the situation in which it was originally spoken. "Have salt in yourselves" might mean "Have salt among yourselves" and might refer to the eating of salt together, an expression of fellowship at table and therefore of peaceful relations. If this is so, then "be at peace with one another" is a nonfigurative explanation of "have salt among yourselves." But we cannot be sure. ([Hard Sayings](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [What is a salt covenant? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He described His followers as the salt of the earth? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 9:50** "Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? **Have salt** in yourselves, and **be at peace** with one another."

NET Mark 9:50 Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other."

NLT Mark 9:50 Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other."

ESV Mark 9:50 Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

NIV Mark 9:50 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other."

GNT Mark 9:50 Καλὸν ἔστι τὸ ἅλας· ἡ δὲ τὸ ἅλας ἀλάττων γίνεται, ἐν τίνι αὐτὸ ῥησέτε; ἔχετε ἑαυτοὺς ἁλοκαίερον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.

KJV 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.

YLT Mark 9:50 The salt is good, but if the salt may become saltless, in what will ye season it? Have in yourselves salt, and have peace in one another.'

ASV Mark 9:50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another.

CSB Mark 9:50 Salt is good, but if the salt should lose its flavor, how can you make it salty? Have salt among yourselves and be at peace with one another."

NKJ Mark 9:50 "Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another."

NRS Mark 9:50 Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

- **is good:** Job 6:6 Mt 5:13 Lu 14:34,35
- **Have salt:** Eph 4:29 Col 4:6
- **peace:** Ps 34:14 133:1 Joh 13:34,35 15:17,18 Ro 12:18 14:17-19 2Co 13:11 Ga 5:14,15,22 Eph 4:2-6,31,32 Php 1:27 2:1-3 Col 3:12 2Ti 2:22 Heb 12:14 Jas 1:20 3:14-18 1Pe 3:8
- **Mark 9 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JESUS' CALL FOR RADICAL OBEDIENCE

**Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.**" - Jesus commands **Have salt** which is a [present imperative](#) and calls for us to [depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#).

**John MacArthur** explains that "Jesus' command, **Have salt in yourselves**, is a call to **radical** obedience; to a holy life preserved by righteousness. He then gave the disciple a direct practical application, commanding them to "**be at peace with one another**"—a fitting challenge to those proud, self-serving, hypercompetitive men who were constantly bickering over which of them was the greatest (cf. 9:34; Matt. 18:1-4; 20:20-24; Luke 22:24). When believers engage in **radically** loving, pure, sacrificial, obedient discipleship, they will be **radical** witnesses. Christians are the only true "salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13+). There are **no other spiritual influences for modeling the truth** other than the lives of true disciples of Jesus Christ, who are known by the radical nature of their discipleship. (See [Mark 9-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**THOUGHT** - Are you a "salty" disciple? Are you making others thirsty for a drink of Jesus? (Salt stimulates thirst).

**Hiebert - Salt is good**"—the definite article the salt points to the particular salt just spoken of. It is good, or excellent, because of its wholesome, sanctifying effect....The warning is against losing that precious preserving power which must characterize Christ's disciples....There is no salt for salt. The salt of true Christian character is an excellent thing, but when it becomes corrupted, it is worse than useless. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

Christ's followers are to be permeated with this preserving power, which influences the world for good.

Salt is marked by its ability to flavor with only a little of its presence. Adding zest to an otherwise dull meal, it was a valuable commodity in the ancient world. It even was used as money. Christians should give the world the gospel flavor.

**James McGowan** - Finally, Jesus commands the disciples, "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another." They had been striving for places of honor and disputing over who would be the greatest. Now Jesus laid down the law as it were, telling them that peace must reign in their hearts toward one another! Peace would be greatly needed if they were to survive the difficult days ahead. (Twenty-first Commentary)

[Reformation Study Bible](#) - Have salt in yourselves. The image of salt describes true discipleship. Salt is a preservative. Jesus is telling His disciples to use humility and service to preserve the peace of the church, rather than dividing it through a desire to be great (v. 34).

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**Mark 9:50 Influence:** Jerry and his son, Rick, farmed together. Often, as they worked in the fields, Jerry would urge Rick to attend church with him. Most times Rick declined, electing to spend his Sunday mornings relaxing at home with his new wife. One day, as Rick operated the combine, Jerry jumped on to ride a few passes across the field with him. This time they talked about soybeans... how theirs were doing, and whether they should sell them at the current prices. As they talked, Jerry spotted a large rock in the combine's path. Rocks and combines do not mix. If ingested into the combine, a rock can do several hundred dollars worth of damage. Jerry jumped down and picked up the rock, placing it on the combines platform until he could put it somewhere out of harm's way. The next pass took them to the border of Leo's field. Jerry and Leo had been at odds for some time over a land dispute. As Rick drove the combine beside Leo's field, Jerry lifted the large rock and heaved it into Leo's field, where maybe his combine might find it. As he returned to the cab and closed the door, Rick looked at him. "If that's what being a Christian is all about," he said, "I want nothing to do with it."

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MATTHEW 5:13. Ye are the salt of the earth.

The salt in Judea was a native salt mingled with various earthy substances. When exposed to the atmosphere and rain, the saline particles in due time wasted away and what was left was an insipid earthy mass, looking like salt, but entirely destitute of a conserving element, and absolutely good for nothing. It was not only good for nothing, but absolutely destructive of all fertility wherever it might be thrown; therefore it was cast into the streets to be trodden under foot of men. The carcass of sheep or bullock might be buried deep in this worthless mass, and the process of corruption not be delayed a moment.

What an illustration is this of the absolute worthlessness of the form of godliness when the power is utterly lacking! "If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" How can its salting, conserving property be recovered? What can you do with it? So your savorless religion is not only worthless in its influence on others, but of no good to yourself. It will save neither them nor you from corruption. How sad for one to have lost the power that belongs to the Christian calling, and instead of being the instrument of

saving others, becoming a means of their perdition! Well does the Saviour say, in another place, "Have salt in yourselves." D. D. DEMAREST

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**Impact of Religion: Little Difference** - The Princeton Religion Research Center has measured the impact of religion on day-to-day work. Comparing the "churched" with the "unchurched" on a wide range of behaviors like pilfering supplies, overstating qualifications on resumes, calling in sick when not sick and overstating tax deductions, the center finds "little difference in the ethical views and behavior of the churched and the unchurched." What differences there are "are not significant or are of marginal significance." If faith in God makes no difference in how we spend our money, how we use our time, how we behave on the job, then how important can it really be? - William Hendricks, Christianity Today, 11-25-91, p. 12 (Bible.org)

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**Here is a related devotional from James Smith**

**CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE. Matthew 5:13-16 (commentary).**

Salt and light represent what every Christian should be— a penetrating and illuminating influence, something both to be seen and felt, a power to attract and transform. Notice the—

I. Twofold Sphere.

1. THE EARTH. "Ye are the salt of the earth." The earth is the place of the curse, and may represent the heart of man as the seat of his affections and the source of his desires "Thy will be done in earth" (Matt 6:10)—in the heart of man as in Heaven Purify the spring (2 Kings 2:21).
2. THE WORLD. "Ye are the light of the world." The world here may mean the sphere of man's mind and thought. Apart from the light of revelation, this is a world of spiritual darkness. "No light in them."

II. Twofold Action.

1. IT PERMEATES LIKE SALT. Invisible, but effectual in its working. Must first get into touch with the corruptions of ungodliness before it can heal. It represents unconscious influence.
2. IT ILLUMINATES LIKE LIGHT. This is something to be seen. The light is not something put on. It is the outcome of a flame kindled The Christian's life is the light. The life is the light of men. If there is abundance of life there will be a brightness of light. A living Christ within will make a steady light without.

III. Twofold Nature.

1. The salt must have savour. Salt is good, but savourless salt is good for nothing. The mere name and form without this is powerless. The savour is an emblem of the Holy Spirit. We may bear the name Christian and have the form of godliness, but without the Holy Ghost we are savourless salt, "good for nothing." "Have salt in yourselves" (Mark 9:50). Salted with the fire of the Holy Spirit. It is the savour that is precious and powerful. "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).
2. The candle must have light. Here again the mere name and form are useless without the living flame. A candle must be lighted; it cannot light itself. God hath shined into our hearts, giving us the light. "Thou hast lighted my lamp, O Lord."

IV. Twofold Purpose.

1. TO SALT THE EARTH. If Christians lose their savour, wherewith shall it be salted? If the world does not see Christ in the Christian, where will it see Him? If the ungodly don't feel the power of Christ's presence in the actions of His people, how will they feel it?
2. TO GLORIFY THE FATHER (v. 16). The light is to shine, not that men may praise the light, but that they may be led to trust and glorify the Father. Let your light so shine.

V. Twofold Hindrance.

1. IN LOSING THE SAVOUR. "If the salt lose its savour, it is thenceforth good for nothing," trodden under foot of men. Sad picture of a powerless Christian! A withered branch. Samson was savourless salt when the Spirit departed from him (Judges 16:20). Quench not the Spirit.
2. IN HIDING THE LIGHT. If God hath shined in our hearts, it is to give the light (2 Cor. 4:6). Let it shine forth in a bold, steady testimony for Christ. The fear of man is often the bushel that hides the light, or the bed of selfish ease. Remember that a covered light may be suffocated

