

“The Gospel According to Mark: The Beginning of the Good News”

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A prominent theologian once described the Gospel of Mark as a “Passion Narrative with an extended introduction.” From its opening announcement of this work as the “beginning of the good news of Jesus the Christ,” Mark’s story draws us into the story of Jesus’ journey to the cross with repeated foretelling of Jesus’ coming suffering, death, and resurrection. At the same time we are at times left somewhat breathless and puzzled by the motifs of secrecy and mystery that compel us as readers.

From Sessions 1 & 2 “The Beginning of the Good News of Jesus the Messiah” 1:1-3:35 “The Mystery of the Kingdom” 4:1-8:21

Mark 1:14-15 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

Mark 3:6 6 The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Mark 3:35 34 35 And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Mark 4:11f. 11 And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; 12 in order that 'they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.'" 13 And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables?"

Mark 8:17f. 17 Jesus said to them, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? 18 Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear?.....21 Then he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

Mark’s Special Story

<p>Beginnings and Endings Begins with a Fanfare:... good news...a voice crying out Ends with a whimper:.....and they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid (Mark 1:1; 16:8, cf Matthew and Luke)</p> <p>Urgency and Movement: Plunges directly into the story of Jesus’ baptism and ministry “immediately” (14 times in first 3 chapters)</p>	<p>Hiddenness or Secrecy “See that you say nothing to anyone”</p> <p>Disciples Misunderstanding seems to grow as the story progresses (cf. 10:35-40)</p> <p>Overwhelming presence of Jesus’ Passion 3:6: the Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him</p>
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Session 3 “Discipleship and the Passion of Jesus” Mark 8:22-10:52

This section of Mark (see Outline, III), with Peter’s bold Confession and immediate denial of sorts is the climactic turning point of the gospel. Three foretellings of his Passion, now move us inexorably to Jesus’ Passion, death, and Resurrection. Each foretelling has a common structure:

- Passion prediction
- Misunderstanding of the Disciples
- Teaching on Discipleship

The whole section is framed thematically, beginning and ending, by two healing stories of the "giving of sight." The final words of the second one—"and followed Jesus on the way"—bring us to the very gates of Jerusalem and the story of Jesus' Passion.

Mark 8:22-6 Jesus Heals a Blind Man

22 They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. 23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?" 24 And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." 25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26 Then he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even go into the village."

Mark 8:27-30 Peter's Confession

27 Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29 He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." (cf. 1:1) 30 And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Mark 8:31-9:1 Jesus Foretells Passion #1

31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Misunderstanding

32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Teaching on Discipleship

34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. 36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38 Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." 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 already come with power."

Mark 9:2-29 Transfiguration on the Mountain

2 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. 5 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 6 He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" 8 Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

Mark 9:9-13 Disciples are Puzzled

9 As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean. 11 Then they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" 12 He said to them, "Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt? 13 But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him."

Mark 9:14-29 Jesus Teaches and Heals

27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. 28 When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" 29 He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer."

Mark 9:30-37 Jesus Foretells Passion #2

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; 31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again."

Misunderstanding

32 But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him. 33 Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What

were you arguing about on the way?"³⁴ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest.

Teaching on Discipleship

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."³⁶ Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them,³⁷ "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Mark 9:38-10:31 Further Teaching on Discipleship

^{10:17} As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: . . .²⁰ He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. ²³ Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴ And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible." ²⁸ Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age-- houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions-- and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

Mark 10:32-52 Jesus Foretells the Passion #3

³² They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to

him,³³ saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles;³⁴ they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."

Misunderstanding

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."³⁶ And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?"³⁷ And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."³⁸ But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"³⁹ They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."⁴¹ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John.

Teaching on Discipleship

⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:46-52 Jesus Heals a Blind Man

⁴⁶ They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside.⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"⁴⁸ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"⁴⁹ Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you."⁵⁰ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.⁵¹ Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again."⁵² Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-13)

“Beginning”... in the wilderness; John the Baptist, Jesus’ Baptism; Temptation

II. JESUS’ MINISTRY IN GALILEE (and beyond) (1:14-8:21)

Transitional Summary: “Kingdom of God is at hand” 1:14 - 15

A. Jesus Son of God: Authority in Word and Deed 1:16-3:6

Call of Disciples, Healings, Teaching, Conflict Stories

Transitional Summary: Multitudes follow from everywhere 3:7 - 12

B. Jesus Son of God: Rejected by his own people 3:13-6:6

Parables (ch. 4); Miracles (ch. 4-5); Rejection at Nazareth 6:1-6

Transitional Summary: Teaching among the Villages 6:6b

C. Jesus Son of God: Misunderstood by his own disciples 6:7 – 8:21

Mission of the 12

Feeding 5000 (6:30-44)-----Feeding 4000 (8:1-10)

Crossing Sea (6:45-52)-----Crossing Sea (8:11-20)

Transitional Summary: Do you not understand? (8:21)

III. JESUS ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM (8:22-10:52)

Jesus the Messiah who Suffers – Discipleship in light of the Passion

GIVING OF SIGHT STORY 8:22-26

PETER’S CONFESSION 8:27-30

A. Passion Prediction # 1 8:31
Misunderstanding 8:32-33
Teaching on Discipleship 8:34-9:1

B. Transfiguration 9:2-8
Disciples puzzled 9:9-13
Teaching to Disciples 9:14-29

C. Passion Prediction # 2 9:30-31
Misunderstanding 9:32-34
Teaching on Discipleship 9:35-37

Collection of Teaching Materials: First, last; Last, First 9:38-10:31

D. Passion Prediction # 3 10:32-34
Misunderstanding 10:35-41
Teaching on Discipleship 10:42-45

GIVING OF SIGHT STORY 10:46-52

IV. JESUS IN JERUSALEM (11:1-16:8)

Ministry before the Passion (ch. 11-13)

Triumphal Entry; Cleansing of the Temple; Conflicts with Leaders

Apocalyptic Discourse: Watch! (ch. 13)

Passion Narrative (14:1-15:47)

Resurrection (16:1-8)