

# Mark

## Chapter Nine

### Introduction

According to Jesus, the kingdom of God has already come with power. Speaking to His twelve disciples in the first century, Jesus clearly said,

Mark 9:1 ..."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."

Other Bible versions say "the kingdom of God having come with power,"<sup>1</sup> or "the kingdom of God has come with power,"<sup>2</sup> or "the kingdom of God after it has come with power."<sup>3</sup> The main thought is the same in each translation: Several first century disciples would see the kingdom of God having already come with power.

According to Jesus, the kingdom of God will also come with power in the future! The future coming of the kingdom of God is seen when Jesus speaks to His disciples about the prophet Elijah. The Old Testament book of Malachi said that Elijah would return to announce the King before the coming of the kingdom of God on earth. In verse thirteen Jesus told His disciples that, in one sense, Elijah had already come. But, in verse twelve, Jesus told them that Elijah was also coming in the future:

Mark 9:12 Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"

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

Speaking to His disciples about Elijah, Jesus made it clear that, in one sense, Elijah had already come to announce the kingdom of God with power. When Jesus came to earth, He was announced as King by John the Baptist. Both Jesus and John announced that the

---

<sup>1</sup>Margin, NKJV

<sup>2</sup>NRSV

<sup>3</sup>NASB

kingdom of God was present with power. John the Baptist fulfilled the Old Testament prophesy concerning Elijah. Speaking of John, Jesus said in Matthew 11:14, "And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come."

But, remember, Jesus indicated that Elijah would also come again in the future to announce the kingdom of God coming with power. John the Baptist was a fulfillment of Malachi's prophesy, but there will be another, future fulfillment of it as well.

The kingdom of God has come with power, *and* it is coming with power. How can that be? How can the kingdom of God have already come but also be coming?

Jesus answers that when He says, "...how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt?" Jesus was speaking of His death on the Cross. His death on the Cross, and the events that follow His death on the Cross, explain how the kingdom of God can have both already come and also be coming.

The kingdom of God had already come...But John was beheaded, and Jesus would be crucified. The kingdom of God was therefore not literally established on the earth at Jesus' first coming. His crucifixion was followed by His resurrection from the dead; His resurrection from the dead was followed by His ascension into heaven; His ascension into heaven will be followed by His second coming to earth; His second coming to earth will be followed by the literal establishing of the kingdom of God on earth!

It is perfectly biblical to say that the kingdom of God has already come with power, *and* is also coming with power.

You live between the first and second comings of Jesus. Jesus wants you to let others know that His kingdom has already come and is also coming. In chapter nine of Mark's Gospel you are told how you do this: #1 Jesus Was Transfigured To Show You That The Kingdom Of God Has Come And Is Coming With Power, and #2 You Are Transformed To Show Others That The Kingdom Of God Has Come And Is Coming With Power.

#1 Jesus Was Transfigured To Show You That The Kingdom Of God Has Come And Is Coming With Power (9:1-13)

History is moving towards the return of Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom on earth. Prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments describe Jesus' return as literal, and His kingdom on earth as literal. These first verses of Mark Nine show you that the King has come, and that His kingdom has come and is coming.

The King has come...

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."

Mark 9:2 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.

Mark 9:3 His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

Jesus was "transfigured." The Greek word is where we get our word *metamorphosis*. It describes an outward change that reflects the inward reality. The disciples were shown, and became witnesses of, the reality of the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:4 And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

The Gospel of Luke tells you that they spoke of Jesus' "departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."<sup>4</sup>

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

Before moving on, it's important to note that the disciples recognized Elijah and Moses - men they had never seen, even in pictures! You get a glimpse into what heaven will be like...

Peter spoke of "tabernacles." He's not suggesting that they erect what we would call shrines or monuments. The Jews annually celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. It was a seven day period in the seventh month of the year during which the Jews dwelt outdoors in temporary tabernacles to commemorate their wandering in the

---

<sup>4</sup>Luke 9:31 NRSV

wilderness. During their wilderness wanderings, God was present with His people in the Tabernacle. The Feast of Tabernacles looks forward to the coming of God to permanently "tabernacle" with His people. Peter, seeing Jesus revealed, seeing Elijah, seeing Moses, believed that the time for the kingdom of God on earth had arrived!

Mark adds this comment:

Mark 9:6 because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

Most commentators think that Peter was Mark's eyewitness source for his gospel. How precious of Peter to admit that he didn't know what to say, and that he and the others were afraid. Beloved, when you are able to admit your weaknesses, then God is able to strengthen you.

Mark 9:7 And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

Mark 9:8 Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.

Peter's speculation needed to give way to submission. The Father speaks from heaven, calling upon the disciples to hear and to heed Jesus. They would need to remember the words of their Lord because their own ideas of the King and His kingdom would be radically challenged in the days to come! The King had come, had been revealed to them; the kingdom had come with power - but there were things about the future establishing of God's literal kingdom on earth they couldn't yet fully understand.

The kingdom has come and is coming...

...is the subject of their questions and Jesus' comments.

Mark 9:9 Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Mark 9:10 So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

The disciples had no understanding that the Messiah would die for the sins of the world, then be raised from the dead in triumphant

victory over Satan and sin. They assumed that Messiah would come and immediately establish His kingdom on earth.

Imagine their difficulties. They had seen Jesus transfigured; they had seen clearly that Jesus was Messiah and King. But He didn't remain transfigured; in fact He spoke of dying! Furthermore, they had always been taught to believe that Elijah would return just before the kingdom was established. When you saw Elijah, it was kingdom time! They *had* seen Elijah - but he had evidently returned to heaven, making no announcement of the kingdom.

They questioned Jesus about Elijah:

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

Mark 9:12 Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"

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

We've already dealt with these verses. John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah; he was a fulfillment of the prophecy. But there is coming a time in the future when Elijah will come, and then all things will be restored and the kingdom will be established.

The disciples had kingdom confusion, and asked kingdom questions. They were told by the Father to "hear" Jesus. The kingdom has already come, *and* it was also coming. After His resurrection, after His ascension, and especially after the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples began to more fully understand God's already present yet coming kingdom. Jesus had been transfigured before them to show them that the kingdom had come and was coming with power.

#2 You Are Transformed To Show Others That The Kingdom Of God Has Come And Is Coming With Power  
(9:14-50)

Jesus was "transfigured," and we said the Greek word was where we get our word *metamorphosis*. The same word that

describes Jesus being "transfigured" is used to describe you being "transformed":

Romans 12:2 ...do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Using the same word, *metamorphosis*, the Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18,

2 Corinthians 3:18 ...we all...are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

As you *live* out the Christian life, you are *letting* out the glory of the Lord! Jesus shines out of you, and others can see that the kingdom of God has already come and is also coming.

Jesus had ascended the mountain of transfiguration. The nine disciples Jesus had left behind were unable to help a demon-possessed boy. They were unable to show others the kingdom of God with power.

You and I, like the nine disciples, have, in a sense, been left behind by the Lord! He has ascended into heaven. We are left here on earth between His first and second comings to show others that the kingdom of God has come and is coming. We have not been abandoned to ourselves: We have received God the Holy Spirit and are being *transformed* by His indwelling presence.

Still, don't we often find ourselves unable to show others the kingdom of God with power? Don't we often feel as helpless as the nine disciples?

The answer to both questions is, "Yes." I don't like that answer! I want to show others God's kingdom power. The solution is to show others how I have been transformed by Jesus. In these verses Jesus highlights several areas in which I can and should show others I have been transformed.

First let's quickly review the setting:

Mark 9:14 And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.

Mark 9:15 Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him.

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

Mark 9:17 Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit.

Mark 9:18 "And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

Mark 9:19 He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me."

Mark 9:20 Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

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

Mark 9:22 "And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

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

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

Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!"

Mark 9:26 Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead."

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

The father of this boy, by coming in the first place, showed that he believed that Jesus could heal his son. Jesus was absent, having ascended the mountain; His disciples were unable to help the father at all. As a result, the father began to have doubts about Jesus' ability to help and to heal! That's why he says, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

Beloved, people are hurting. Like this father, they sometimes come looking for Jesus. They find that Jesus has ascended; they find only His disciples left behind; they find only *you*. Unless we show the Lord to them by our transformed lives, they will doubt Jesus' ability to help and to heal them.

Here, then, are some of the ways you show your transformation:

Your transformation is shown in your secret activities:

Mark 9:28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

Mark 9:29 So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

The disciples had been negligent in their secret spiritual disciplines. They had neglected prayer and fasting and were unprepared to minister.

What you do in secret shows your transformation...Others "see" it in the ministry you perform.

Your transformation is shown in your serving others:

Mark 9:30 Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it.

Mark 9:31 For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."

Mark 9:32 But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

Mark 9:33 Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"

Mark 9:34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.

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."

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,

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."

The disciples could not understand the Cross because they were expecting Jesus to establish the kingdom on earth. They were arguing about who would be the greatest - *in the kingdom*.

Jesus calls a child over to Himself and tells His disciples that true greatness is in serving others, especially those from whom you can derive no advantage.

Serving others shows them your transformed life; it lets the glory of Jesus shine out of your life...

Your transformation is shown in the scope of your ministry:

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."

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."

Mark 9:40 "For he who is not against us is on our side.

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.

John had a typically narrow, self-centered approach to ministry. Because this other person was not officially sanctioned by Jesus, not officially one of the twelve, John wanted his ministry stopped. Notice that this man was successful in casting out demons, whereas the disciples had recently failed.

We all too easily fall into this way of thinking...We need to enlarge the scope of our ministry to include all those who truly name the Name of Jesus.

This is not always easy! There are many people and groups we must not associate with. Remember, Jesus *also* said,

Matthew 7:22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

Matthew 7:23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Enlarge your scope, but do so with discernment.

Your transformation is shown in your sensitivity towards the saints:

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.

Christians ought to be concerned about the effect of their words and their ways upon God's dear saints. If you rush forward in your own Christian liberty without considering others, it's hard to see how you've been transformed... If you lead others into areas of sin by your own immaturity, it's hard to see how you've been transformed....

Your transformation is shown in your personal struggle against sin:

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;

Mark 9:44 "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.'

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;

Mark 9:46 "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.'

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;

Mark 9:48 "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.'

These verses are universally understood by commentators to refer to your radical struggle against indwelling sin. Sin is to your inner person what gangrene is to your body. If your hand or foot were gangrenous, you'd cut them off to save the rest of you. Just so, in the spiritual realm, you cannot afford to let sin run its course; it will destroy you.

Jesus speaks of "hell." The word is *gehenna*, a combination of two words meaning "The Valley of Hinnom." This was a place outside of Jerusalem where children were once sacrificed to the idol Molech. Later the site became Jerusalem's refuse dump where fires burned continually to consume regular deposits of worm-infested garbage. This imagery of fire and worms vividly portray the place of future punishment for the unsaved.<sup>5</sup>

Beloved, if you cannot struggle against sin, you are not saved! We learned in First John that if you say you don't sin you are a liar. But we also learned that believers cannot continuously practice sin. Believers struggle against sin. They are not sinless; but they do *sin less!* In your struggle against sin you show your transformation.

Your transformation is shown in your salting yourself:

Mark 9:49 "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.

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."

Most modern Bible's, using more reliable early manuscripts, translate verse forty-nine, "everyone will be salted with fire," and omit the words, "and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt." Here is what I believe Jesus means.

---

<sup>5</sup>*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* - NT, p. 147.

Salt was used mostly as a preservative. Everyone, believer and unbeliever, will be preserved for all eternity. The unbeliever will be preserved in punishment of hell-fire for all eternity. The believer will be preserved in purity by the fire of God's reward seat for all eternity.

In verse fifty, Jesus applies this truth to your daily living. He speaks of you salting yourself. In Jesus' day the salt was not pure; it had other minerals in it and after time lost its saltiness; it lost its ability to preserve foods. You had to constantly add salt. Just so, as you walk through this world, you do not remain pure; you pick up impurities. You must constantly add "salt"; you must constantly deal with those things in your life which are displeasing to God which, left alone, will rot and spoil your walk.

Taken together, these qualities show others that a transformation has taken place in your inner person. They let out the glory of a relationship with Jesus as you live them out before others.

## Conclusion

Jesus was transfigured to show you that the kingdom of God has come and is coming. You are transformed to show others that the kingdom of God has come and is coming.

Moses and Elijah spoke to Jesus about His departure. They may be the same two persons who spoke to the disciples about Jesus' second coming, in Acts 1:11, saying

Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Moses, you remember, died and his body was buried by God. Elijah was miraculously caught up into heaven, raptured by God, without ever experiencing death.

Before Jesus returns in His second coming, He will raise the bodies of the saints who have died and He will rapture the living saints! Then, at His second coming, we will return with Him as He establishes His kingdom of heaven on earth.