

## Preaching Through the Bible Chapter 18 Mark 8:31-9:1

### The heart of Mark's gospel

Mark 8:31 to 9:13 is the heart of the Gospel of Mark. It is about half-way through and it is the point where the disciples at last begin to make progress in grasping the marvel of Jesus' person and Jesus' work upon the cross.

### 3. The next stage - hearing about the cross

**3. When they come to see who He is, they must then be ready to see what He will do.** When the apostles can state clearly who Jesus is, they are ready for the next stage of Jesus' revelation; He now proceeds to tell them of His cross.

### The Son of Man

We also have a strong hint here that *Son of Man* has a higher meaning than its use as an equivalent to *I* or *This man here*. Jesus has referred to Himself as "**Son of Man**" <sup>1</sup>. Now, it becomes clear that He must mean more in this than simply *I* or *This human being here*. '**Son of Man**' was a title taken from the glorious vision of *Daniel 7:13*. In *Daniel chapter 7*, a human-like figure comes to God and receives a kingdom. '**Son of Man**' in *Daniel 7:13* is not a title but simply a description of the human figure seen in the vision in *Daniel chapter 7*.

<sup>1</sup> 2:10, 28

### Isaiah's suffering servant becomes Daniel's glorious Son of Man

The phrase means *a human being*. It was not a phrase that was used in Jesus' day to refer to the expected Messiah. Jesus used it as the title for Himself. He implies that the '**Son of God**', the Messiah of *Mark 8:29* is also the '**Son of Man**', the fulfilment of *Daniel 7*.

Jesus calls Himself "**Son of Man**" and then makes it clear what He means by the term. Picking up from what Peter has said, He now implies that "**Son of Man**" and "**Christ**" refer to the same person.

It is an amazing statement. "**The Son of Man must suffer...**" In *Daniel 7:13* the Son of Man rides upon '**the clouds of heaven**' in great glory and comes to God to receive a kingdom. But Jesus says, "**The Son of Man must suffer...**" <sup>1</sup>. There was nothing about suffering in *Daniel 7*. What Jesus has done is put together the glorious figure of *Daniel 7* and the suffering figure of *Isaiah 53*. The one who gets to the glory of *Daniel 7* will do so via the suffering of *Isaiah 53*.

<sup>1</sup> 8:31

### 4. The necessity of the cross

**4. Jesus insists upon the necessity of the cross.** Peter thinks this is just depression in Jesus and presumes to rebuke Jesus for being so depressed <sup>1</sup>. But any suggestion that Jesus should avoid the cross can come only from Satan <sup>2</sup>. Peter is the tool of Satan in saying such things and is thinking in typically worldly terms <sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 8:32

<sup>2</sup> 8:33

<sup>3</sup> 8:33

### 5. The cross is the route to glory and honour

**5. Jesus insists upon the cross for those who want to get to glory as He is getting to glory.** He gives an invitation: "**If anyone wishes to come after me...**" It is an invitation to get to resurrection-glory and honour via the cross, just as Jesus will get to resurrection-glory and honour via the cross. It is a personal matter: "**If anyone...**". It is a voluntary matter: "**If anyone wishes...**".

### Following Jesus to glory and honour

Such glory and honour requires:

(i) Self-denial, a repudiation of the sinfulness that is very instinctive to the human heart;

(ii) Acceptance of the cross, a willingness to accept Jesus' cross (unlike *Peter* in 8:32) and a willingness to accept any *crucifying chastening* that Jesus puts upon the would-be disciple;

(iii) Involvement in *following* Jesus, travelling with Him and becoming part of His ministry team.

In modern language, it involves:

- (i) Serious amendment of life;
- (ii) Submission to God's discipline;
- (iii) Involvement in the work of God's Kingdom.

Jesus presses the demand on His disciples. It is the only way of really getting *life* from God <sup>□1</sup>. It is the only way of rightly valuing our lives<sup>□2</sup>. Only those who acknowledge Jesus will themselves be acknowledged on the day of reward <sup>□3</sup>. And the coming of God's Kingdom might be sooner than one thinks <sup>□4</sup>. Some of those standing there would still be alive some decades later when the Romans marched on Jerusalem. *Mark 9:1* refers to the fulfilment of *Daniel 7:13* (which has been implicitly mentioned because Jesus has used the term "**Son of Man**").

In *Daniel 7* the human figure comes to (not from) the Father to receive a kingdom. In the events that followed Jesus' death, things would happen that would reveal that Jesus had come to the Father and had received His kingdom. The resurrection, the scattering of the apostles, and especially the fall of Jerusalem; these would all be forms of *the coming of the kingdom*. (It is a mistake to tie this language to the coming of Jesus to earth. The coming of Jesus in final judgement is only one way in which it is seen that Jesus has come to the Father and has received His kingdom. '**Coming**' refers to more than one direction in biblical language. The later language of the Christian church, when it speaks of Jesus' *coming* must not confuse us. Jesus *coming* to the Father took place within a generation. His *coming* to earth was always totally undated: '**...of that hour no one knows...**'. But the coming to the Father and the revelation of the kingdom would start soon, within a generation.)

Jesus' point is that a day of judgement might be nearer than we think. Some of those standing listening to Jesus' voice in the AD 30s would go through tumultuous days.

Some would be present when the Romans marched on Jerusalem. At such a time Jesus' words would come back to them: "**...what can a person give in exchange for his life?**" He who loses his life will find it; he who holds on to his life might lose it, especially in the turbulent days that would be ahead for the people of Israel. The point is, a day of reckoning might be nearer than we think.

**The coming of the Kingdom**

**Nearer than we think**

□1 8:35  
□2 8:36-37

□3 8:38  
□4 9:1

# Study 18

## The Revelation of the Cross

Read Mark Chapter 8:31-9:1

Read: **Preaching Through the Bible: Mark**, Chapter 18

### A. Introduction

1. Mark 8:31 to 9:13 is the h..... of the Gospel of Mark.
2. Once the disciples had understood about the marvel of Jesus as a person the next thing they needed to understand was His work upon t..... c..... .

### B. Hearing about the cross

1. At this stage it becomes clear that Son of Man, as Jesus refers to himself, has a higher meaning than simply .....or t..... m..... h.....
2. He takes the title from the glorious vision of D ..... 7:13 where a h..... like figure is described coming to God to r..... a k..... .
3. This expression was not used in Jesus day as a title for the M..... .
4. Jesus uses these words in a *new way* - as a title for H..... .
5. Picking up from what P..... has said, Jesus implies that S..... of ..... and M..... refer to the same person - H..... .
6. Jesus says that the Son of Man must s..... .
7. In Daniel there is mention of gl..... but no mention of s..... .
8. Jesus combines the suffering figure of I..... 53 with the gl..... figure of D..... 7.

### C. The necessity of the cross

1. Peter does not u..... .
2. Peter r..... Jesus.

3. But Peter is speaking S.....'s words by suggesting that Jesus should a..... the  
c..... .
4. Peter is thinking in w..... t..... .

#### **D. The cross is the route to glory and honour**

1. Jesus gives an i..... .
2. It is a p..... matter (if anyone)
3. It is a v..... matter (anyone wishes)
4. To attain this glory and honour ( the Jesus way), requires:
  - a. S..... d.....
  - b. Acceptance of the cr..... .
  - c. F..... Jesus
5. In modern words the three points above could be expressed as:
  - a. ....
  - b. ....
  - c. ....
6. Jesus speaks about the c..... of God's Kingdom. This has many aspects:
  - a. Jesus c..... to the father (Daniel 7) to r..... His k..... .
  - b. The c..... of the kingdom on earth when the d..... were scattered.
  - c. The c..... of the kingdom in the fall of J..... .
  - d. The c.....of the kingdom in the final j..... .
7. Which aspect was uppermost in Jesus' mind at this time? .....
8. Jesus is making the point that a d..... of j..... might be nearer than we think.
9. Some of those hearing His words went through t..... days especially the f..... of J..... .

## E. For further thought and discussion

1. What does *denying yourself and taking up your cross* mean for you? Give an example.
2. Can you think of a situation when you were thinking in worldly terms, like Peter, and you had to change your mind?
3. When Christians talk about the cross, there are two different things in mind. The first is the cross of Christ and the second is the cross in the life of a follower or disciple of Jesus. If you had to explain the difference between these two and their connection to someone, what would you say?
4. ‘*Come to Jesus. All your troubles will be over.*’ Is that an accurate Gospel invitation? Explain the reasons for your answer.
5. Imagine a young Christian says to you, “*I don’t really like the idea of taking up my cross or suffering. I think I’d rather not.*” How would you reply? You might wish to incorporate thoughts from other parts of scripture in your answer.
6. Scripture reveals other paradoxical truths. When Paul said, ‘***When I am weak, then I am strong.***’ This is an example. Can you think of any others and how does understanding them help us in our Christian lives?

## F. Notes

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