Mark

Lesson #9

Turning Point,

Peter's Confession of Faith

(8: 27 – 9: 32)

Logos BIBLE STUDY.com

Review

In Lesson #8 Jesus' work in Galilee has drawn the attention of Jerusalem's religious leaders, who travel to Galilee to question him, asking why he and his disciples "eat with unwashed hands," referring to the customary *Netilat Yadayim,* the ceremonial hand washing and prayer before eating meals. Juxtaposed to the murder of John the Baptist and Jesus' night on the mountain, their question ignites a deep rage within Jesus, and he lashes out at them: "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites . . ." (7: 6). When his disciples question him about the heated encounter, Jesus blasts them, too: "Are you likewise without understanding" (7: 18)?

Logos Bible Study.com

Review

With that, Jesus leaves Galilee in anger and frustration, heading north toward Tyre, putting as much distance between himself and Galilee as possible. Once in Tyre (nearly a 100 mile journey) he meets a Syrophoenician woman whom he deeply insults, calling her a "dog."

Significantly, the Syrophoenician woman's humble and respectful response seems to cut through Jesus' anger and frustration, bringing him clarity and insight. As Jesus continues another 35 miles north, he apparently reconsiders his actions, for once at Sidon he turns back to Galilee, taking a long, circuitous route through the eastern Decapolis, where he reengages the crowds.

Logos Bible Study.com

Preview

Until now in the *Gospel according to Mark*, the big question has been: "Who is this man who can say and do such things?" As we enter Lesson #9 Jesus takes his disciples 30 miles north to Caesarea Philippi, where he poses this very question to his disciples: *"Who do people say that I am"* (8: 27). After some discussion, Peter replies on behalf of the disciples: "You are the Messiah" (8: 29). Peter's "confession of faith" is then validated by God the Father—in the presence of two credible witnesses, Moses and Elijah—on the Mount of Transfiguration (9: 2-13). Finally, we all—Jesus; Jesus' disciples; and us, Mark's readers—fully understand who he is!

After Peter's response, the second half of the gospel will focus on a new question: "What are the *implications* of Jesus being the Messiah, the Son of God?

If Mark's gospel is addressed to Christians in Rome during the persecution under Nero, A.D. 64-68, then this is an urgent question for his intended audience—and for us.

Logos Bible Study.com

"Now Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages around Caesarea Philippi" **(8: 27).**

Logos Bible Study.com

Logos Bible Study.com

Caesarea Philippi

- The pagan Greek city of Panias dated back to the 2nd century B.C.
- Panias was renovated by Herod the Great's son Phillip II in A.D. 14, and he renamed the city Caesarea Philippi in honor of Caesar Augustus.

Logos Bible Study.com

Caesarea Philippi

- In Greek times Panias was the center of worship for the god, Pan, the god of the fields, groves and wooded glens. Consequently, Pan was associated with springtime and fertility.

- The English words "*pan*ic" and "*pan*demonium" derive from his name.

- With the hindquarters, legs and horns of a goat and the upper body of a man, Pan is famous for his sexual prowess, often appearing with a *huge* phallus.

- Pan is the original "party animal!"

Logos Bible Study.com

William Bouguereau. ***Nymphs and Satyr*** **[Pan] (oil on canvas), 1873.**
Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts.

Logos Bible Study.com

Trail to the cave and the “Temple of Pan” at Caesarea Philippi.

Photography by Ana Maria Vargas

Logos BIBLE STUDY.com

Caesarea Philippi and the Banias River, flowing out from beneath the cave. In Jesus' day it gushed out of the cave itself.

Photography by Ana Maria Vargas

Logos Bible Study.com

Archaeological remains of the “Temple of Pan”

Photography by Ana Maria Vargas

Logos Bible Study.com

More archaeological remains of the “Temple of Pan”

Photography by Ana Maria Vargas

Logos Bible Study.com

Why would Jesus take his disciples to Caesarea Philippi, a center of pagan worship?
I've wondered that myself.
Logos Bible Study.com

At Caesarea Philippi Jesus asks his disciples "Who do people say that I am?" *in direct contrast* to what they see before them: the pagan gods of the Greco-Roman world.

Logos Bible Study.com

Jesus' disciples reply, as we have already read in 6: 14-15—

- John the Baptist
- Elijah
- One of the prophets

"But who do *you* say that I am?"

(*A literal translation reads: "But you, who do you say I am?" Placing "you" at the head of the sentence, and then repeating it, emphasizes the contrast between the "people" and "you." "You" is grammatically a 2nd person plural, both times; Jesus is addressing his group of disciples.*)

Then Peter responds as spokesman for the group:

"You are the Messiah."

Logos Bible Study.com

Once Jesus' disciples truly recognize who he is, the next question becomes: "What are the *implications* of Jesus being the Messiah:

- **for him;**
- **for his disciples; and**
- **for us, Mark's readers?**

Logos Bible Study.com

For Jesus:

- the Son of Man must suffer greatly;
- be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes;
- be killed; and
- after three days rise.

(8: 31)

Logos Bible Study.com

For his *disciples* and *us*:

"Whoever wishes to come after me must"—

- **deny himself;**
- **take up his cross;**
- **follow me.**

(8: 31)

Logos Bible Study.com

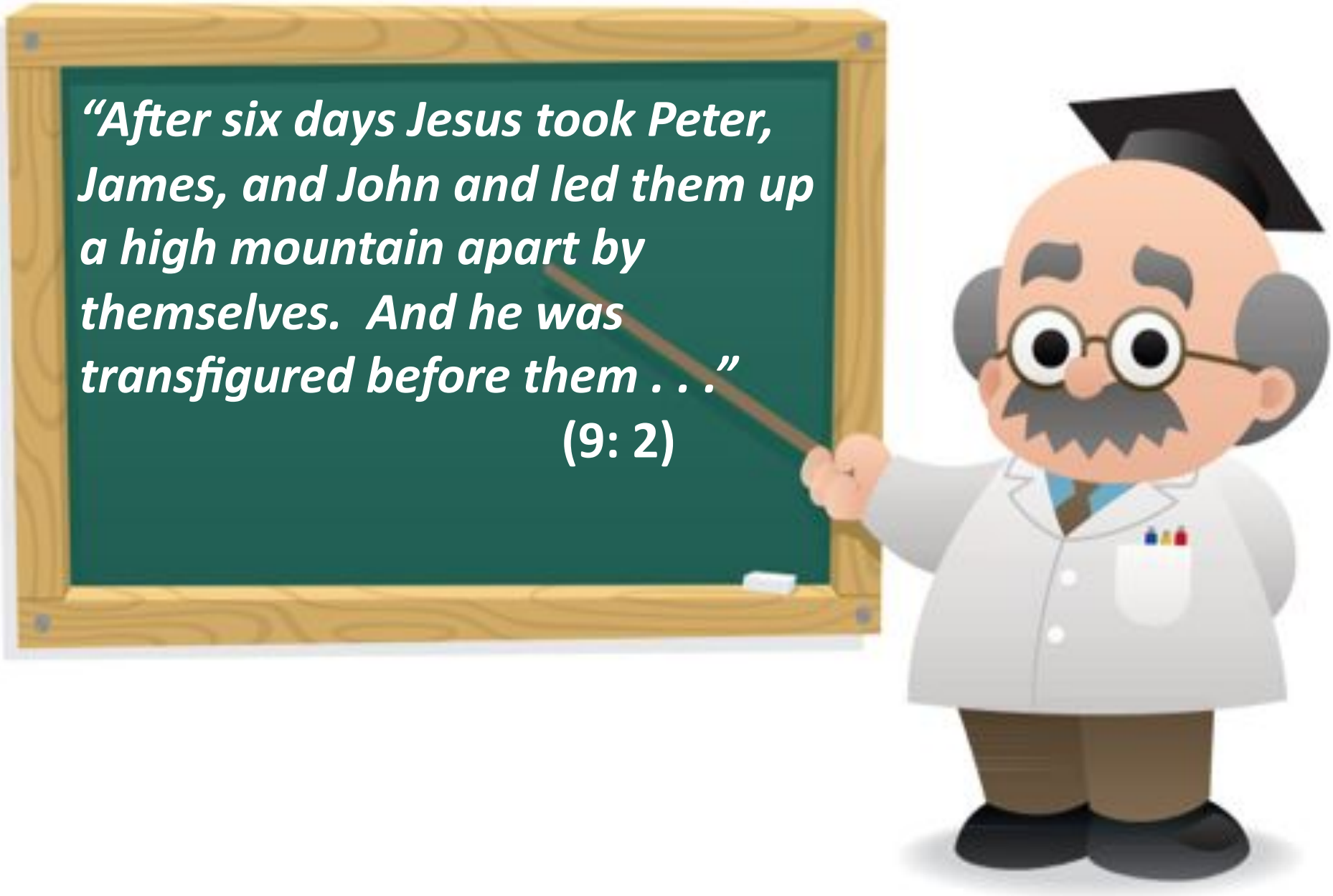
Excuse me, but what does Jesus mean that "some will not see death" until they see that the "Kingdom of God has come in power?

Logos Bible Study.com

There are two lines of thought on this:

1) Some think that Jesus refers to the establishment of God's power on earth in and through his Church;
2) Others think that Jesus refers to his imminent return after his death, burial, resurrection and ascension, the "*parousia*," or "2nd coming."

Logos Bible Study.com


“After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them . . .”
(9: 2)

Logos Bible Study.com

Mt. Hermon on the Israel/Lebanon border, 43 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. The mountain range stretches 50 miles!

Photography by Ana Maria Vargas

Logos BIBLE STUDY.com

Four major runoff streams from Mt. Hermon form the upper Jordan River:
W to E, the Ayun, Hasbani, Dan and Banias Rivers.
This is the Dan River, with cascading rapids.

Photography by Ana Maria Vargas

Logos BIBLE STUDY.com

This is the Upper Jordan River, flowing south into the Sea of Galilee.

Photography by Ana Maria Vargas

Logos Bible Study.com

Giovanni Bellini. ***Transfiguration of Christ*** **(oil on wood), 1487-1495.**
Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples.

Logos BIBLE STUDY.com

. . . he was transfigured before them . . . **(9: 2)**

The Greek word translated "transfigured" is μεταμορψόω **[meta-mor'-phoo]. "Meta" means "to change"; "morphe" means "form." Jesus is *changed in form*, as a caterpillar is changed into a butterfly.**

Up until this point, Jesus' divine nature as the Son of God has been "veiled" by his human form (Hebrews 10: 20); the transfiguration is a parting of the veil, a glimpse into divine reality and Jesus' divine glory.

Moses and Elijah (representing the Law and the Prophets) witness God's testimony that "this is my beloved Son," fulfilling the requirement in Deuteronomy 19: 15 of two or three witnesses for a valid testimony.

Logos Bible Study.com

Jesus' Transfiguration draws us into the philosophical proposition of a "veiled reality," a reality independent of that in which we live.

Our reality consists of past, present and future, a reality of measurable, sensible "stuff."

But beneath our reality—supporting, enveloping and permeating it—is the ever-present "now" of God, a reality beyond the reach of our day-to-day life and of our limited understanding.

Only a paper-thin veil separates the two. At the Transfiguration, the veil is parted.

We have another such "parting of the veil" at Dothan in 2 Kings 6: 14-17, when Elisha prays that God open the eyes of Elisha's servant, and his servant then sees a mountainside "filled with fiery chariots and horses around Elisha."

Logos Bible Study.com

In the transfiguration, God the Father *validates* Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi in the presence of two credible witnesses, Moses and Elijah.

If there had been any doubt remaining about Jesus' identity as the "Son of God," that doubt is definitively removed at the transfiguration.

Logos Bible Study.com

The disciples ask Jesus, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" That's a good question!
Not to me.
Logos Bible Study.com

And the answer is easy! Malachi, the last book in the Hebrew Scriptures ends by saying:

Now I am sending to you Elijah the prophet, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and dreadful day; he will turn the heart of fathers to their sons, and the heart of sons to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with utter desolation.

(Malachi 3: 23-24)

In the *Gospel according to Mark* Elijah comes, in the person of John the Baptist.

Logos Bible Study.com

When Jesus comes off the mountain with his inner-circle of Peter, James and John, they meet Jesus' other disciples who have been attempting unsuccessfully to drive a particularly intransient demon out of a boy.

Logos Bible Study.com

***Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry*, Fol. 166r (illuminated manuscript), c. 1412-1416 (with additions, 1440s; 1485-1489). Musée Condé, Chantilly, France.**

Logos Bible Study.com

Logos Bible Study.com

"The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise."

(9: 31)

After Peter's confession of faith, the remainder of this section is framed by Jesus focusing on the *implications* of his identity (8: 31-33; 9: 31-32), setting up the 2nd half of Mark's Gospel.

Questions for discussion and thought

1. What is the significance of Jesus taking his disciples to Caesarea Philippi?
2. In Peter's "confession of faith" scene, why does Mark omit the lengthier section that is in Matthew 16: 17-19, giving Peter the keys to the Kingdom and the authority to forgive sins?
3. What is the primary function of the Transfiguration scene, and what does it reveal about Jesus?
4. The implications for Jesus being Messiah and Son of God are suffering, death and resurrection. What are the implications for his disciples?
5. What are the implications for us?

Logos BIBLE STUDY.com

Copyright © 2014 by William C. Creasy

All rights reserved. No part of this course—audio, video, photography, maps, timelines or other media—may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage or retrieval devices without permission in writing or a licensing agreement from the copyright holder.

Logos BIBLE STUDY.com