



Series: The Person and Purpose  
Title: Christ's Glory

Date: January 8, 2023  
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**MARK 9:1-13**  
(OT: Ex 24:12-18; 34:29-35; NT: Rev 1:9-18)

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### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

- First half of Mark's gospel largely focuses on the *person* of Jesus – who he is.
- Now, after Peter's confession – “You are the Christ” – focus shifts to the *purpose* of Jesus – why he came.
- Today's passage serves as transition between the two. Let's read it together [Mk 9:1-13].

### INTRODUCTION

- You go to the movie theater...
  - Buy your ticket, find your seat, recline all way back, wait for movie to start.
  - Before it does, the previews come on.
    - Short clips to advertise new movies that are about to come out.
    - Pack as much action as possible into 2 mins to entice you to come back.
- Grab your popcorn/silence phone bc this passage gives us greatest previews of all time.

### CONTEXT

- In V1 Jesus says to his disciples: 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.
  - Strange, enigmatic words – what is he referring to?!?!
  - Read on...
- V2: After six days – time stamp unusual in Mark, ties this verse to previous verse – Jesus took with him Peter and James and John – some of those who had been standing there – and led them up a high mountain by themselves.
  - Not told which mountain.
  - Commentators suggest Mount Hermon:
    - Highest mountain in Israel, over 9,000 feet.
    - Located near Caesarea Philippi where previous chapter took place.
- There Jesus is going to show them what he said in V1: KoG coming in power. HOW?
  - By showing them himself...
  - Witherington: “The transfiguration reveals the kingdom by unveiling the king.”<sup>1</sup>

**Transition:** In this passage Jesus gives us 5 previews of his glory.

- You tracking with me?
- 5 previews – snapshots, pictures – of how glorious Jesus is → Let's watch them together.

### CONTENT

#### 1. Preview #1: The Appearance

- We see this in V2 where we read that Jesus was transfigured before them.
  - Transfigured is strange word → not one we ever use.
  - But it's actually not too complicated.

- *Trans* means change → *Figure* means form/appearance.
- *Transfigured* simply means that Jesus's appearance changed before them.
  - Went up mountain looking like an ordinary 1C Jewish man.
  - But then his face shone like the sun (Mt 17:2).
  - And his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them (V3).
- Imagine how you would have squinted if you'd been there...
  - Light switch on in morning → Leave movie theater in middle of day → Lay on beach or stand in snow...
  - Brilliance of sun is overpowering.
 

*In same way, glory of Jesus is overwhelming...*
- And note that it's different to Moses in passage we read earlier:
  - Moses's face shone bc been with God → Glory of God shone on him/left a mark.
  - But Jesus doesn't reflect the glory of God – he *is* the glory of God.<sup>2</sup>
    - **Heb 1:3: He is the radiance of the glory of God.**
    - All the beauty of God shines in the face of Christ.

*Jesus is glorious.*

## 2. Preview #2: The Visitors

- **V4: And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.**
  - Elijah/Moses – two OT dudes show up from heaven for a chat.
  - Seems a little random – Why do they appear?!?!
- Various theories...<sup>3</sup>
  - Both powerful figures in Israel's history → Both had mountaintop revelations from God → Perhaps here to represent the law and the prophets...
  - But most important aspect seems to be this:
 

***Both men – Elijah/Moses – were precursors to the coming of the Messiah.***
- What on earth does that mean – can we use some normal English here?!?!
  - If you go to see favorite band, always some opening acts.
    - Went to see Ed Sheeran and Snow Patrol played first – played *Chasing Cars* and it was awesome.
    - Their job to ready crowd – prepare the way – for main event.
  - Elijah and Moses did that for Jesus.
- We read this about **Elijah** in book of **Malachi**:
  - **3:1:** Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me.
  - **4:6:** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.
- We read the same thing about **Moses** in **Deuteronomy**:
  - **18:15:** The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.
  - **18:18:** I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command.
- Now here they both are – the precursors, the opening acts – with Jesus:
  - One they pointed to → One fulfills OT promises → One who is Savior of world.
  - Astounding that two men can appear from heaven and not be the main event!
  - But such is the glory of Jesus → they are just opening act.

*Jesus is glorious.*

**3. Preview #3: The Fear**

- **V5:** Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”
  - All sorts of speculation as to what this is about.<sup>4</sup>
    - Tents have something to do with feast of tabernacles?
    - Tents meant to be shrines to honor the three?
  - In the end, doesn’t really matter, since Peter only said this bc, **V6: he did not know what to say.**
    - Peter’s great – always ready/willing to dive in.
    - Even if – perhaps especially when – he doesn’t know what talking about.
- More important point comes end of **V6:** Didn’t know what to say, **for they were terrified.**
  - Confronted with the glory of Christ – Peter/James/John are rightly afraid.
  - Calls to mind that great scene we read from **Rev 1.**
    - When John saw glory of X, **fell at his feet as though dead (1:17).**
    - To see Jesus is to see something so awesome that you fear for life.
- Remember being on safari in the Serengeti of Tanzania.
  - Came across an injured zebra...
    - On one side, a crocodile lay menacingly still.
    - On other side, a lion stalked ready to kill.
  - Rosie and I held breath → felt small/felt awe/felt fear before power of nature.
- Wonder how many of us feel this when we consider X?
  - Culture has reduced him to Scandinavian looking nice guy – whose blue eyes/blond beard would fit nicely on cover of Bee Gees album.
  - Reduced him to wet, maudlin figure who’ll hand out hugs in our time of need.
- But that is not our Savior → we saw him in **Rev 1:**
  - He is clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.
  - Hairs of his head are white, like white wool, like snow.
  - Eyes are like flames of fire.
  - Feet are like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace.
  - Voice is like the roar of many waters.
  - Holds the stars in his hands → Face like sun shining in full strength.
    - If you see him as really is → you’re right to be terrified.
    - If you see him as really is → you’re right to fall at his feet as though dead.

*Jesus is glorious.*

**4. Preview #4: The Voice**

- **V7a:** A cloud overshadowed them... As God had brought his presence to the people of the OT → He does so again here...
- **V7b:** and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.”
  - God spoke these words **directly to Jesus** at his baptism: **You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased (Mk 1:11).**
  - Now God speaks these same words **directly to disciples:**

- **This is my beloved Son...** Exalts him – lifts him up – in their presence → Wants them to know the pleasure he takes in his son.
- Then adds: **listen to him...** Commands obedience to X → Bc he is King.  
*Jesus is glorious.*

## 5. Preview #5: The Mission

- In V8 cloud lifts and Elijah/Moses disappear → disciples stagger and see that now they are alone with Jesus.
  - Then Jesus directs their attention to two aspects of his mission:
    - His **suffering**: V12: **It is written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt.**
      - This glorious king has come to die.
      - It seems strange that one so glorious/powerful would suffer like this...
      - But in our eyes, doesn't his suffering make him yet more glorious?
      - That he would use his power to die for us?
    - Then after his suffering, his **resurrection**: In V9 Jesus charges disciples not to tell anyone what they've seen until the Son of Man has **risen from the dead.**
      - He has a timetable that's to be followed.
      - It will involve suffering but it will not end in death.
        - Jesus will rise again...
        - That's who he is – the King who will suffer/rise to bring us life.
- Jesus is glorious.*

**Transition:** What supposed to do with these previews? How do we respond to the glory of X?

## CONSEQUENCE

- Here's one answer for today: Order your life around it.
  - Order your life around the glory of X.
  - Don't do anything until you've looked at Christ's glory first.
- Living in the presence of *this* Jesus changes everything.
- Let me give you some examples...

### 1. Maybe you came to church this morning feeling a little BORED...

- Do you ever find yourself feeling bored with your faith?
  - I've been in a bit of a funk recently.
    - Not doubting that any of these things are true.
    - Just not that compelled by them in my day-to-day-routine.
  - We all have seasons like that, don't we?
    - Where we feel spiritually flat.
    - Not having a great crisis of faith but also not that excited about it.
  - Maybe you're struggling with that right now.
    - Think of Xn life and it seems like a list of rules.
    - If you're honest with yourself, there are other things you'd rather do.
      - Could follow Jesus but you can think of better things to do with your time, your money, your body...
      - Those things seem like they'd be more fun.
- Friends, we have a glory problem...

- Solution isn't to double down on what we should do and follow all the rules.
- Solution is to see the glory of X:
  - Remember who he is → Put yourself on that mountain today.
  - The appearance, the visitors, the fear, the voice, the mission...
- If he came into church just now:
  - You wouldn't be bored...
  - You'd fall at his feet as though dead!
  - And then you'd feel more alive than you've ever felt.
- It's funny isn't it: Nothing will make you feel more alive than something that makes you want to fall down dead.
  - Like riding a rollercoaster: Whip, whirl, speed, dive...
  - Get off feeling dizzy but also very much alive!

***If you're feeling bored (spiritually flat) – behold the glory of Jesus.***

## 2. Maybe you came to church this morning and you're STRUGGLING...

- You also need to order your life around the glory of X.
- Don't look at your struggles until you've looked at Christ's glory first.
- Bc our struggles... they look different in the presence of *this* Jesus.
  - **Loneliness** feels different when we remember this glorious Jesus is our friend.
  - **Fear** feels different when remember this glorious Jesus holds future in his hands.
  - **Cancer** feels different when remember this glorious Jesus has conquered death.
- Bring your struggle into his presence:
  - His transfigured/Rev 1, white robed, sash wearing, eyes flaming, voice roaring, star holding, face shining presence.
  - And remember that this glorious Jesus loves you.
- Your struggles won't disappear, but you'll carry them differently.
 

***If you're struggling – behold the glory of Jesus.***

## 3. Maybe you came to church this morning HAPPY...

- Order your joys around the glory of X.
- Don't look at your celebrations until you've looked at Christ's glory first.
- Bc they also look different in the presence of *this* Jesus.
  - The **breakfast** you enjoyed was a gift from his generous hand.
  - The **job** you enjoy is his gift of purpose in your life.
  - The **friends/family** who mean so much to you are his gift for your health.
    - I can eat breakfast and go to work and catch up with friends without thinking about him.
    - But these blessings are so much better when I remember they've come from his hand.

***If you're happy – behold the glory of Jesus.***

### Summary:

- Bored, struggling, happy – all of the above or somewhere in between...
  - Order your life around the glory of X.
  - Don't do anything until you've looked at Christ's glory first.
- Living in the presence of *this* Jesus changes everything.

## **THE CLOSE**

- And the next time you watch a movie, remember these previews.
- We have a glorious Savior → And he loves you just as you are today.

## RESOURCES AND ENDNOTES

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### Resources

This list contains some of the resources that were used to prepare this sermon series. Check them out if you want to dig a little deeper.

- John Mark Comer, *Gospel of Mark*.
- William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark*.
- Tim Keller, *The Decline and Renewal of the American Church*.
- Tim Keller, *Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God*.
- Logos Bible Software.
- William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*.
- Donald MacLeod, *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement*.
- Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*.
- Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*.
- Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*.
- N. T. Wright, *How God Became King*.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 262.

<sup>2</sup> I owe this point to Tim Keller, *Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God*, 123.

<sup>3</sup> See Mark L. Strauss's commentary on this verse in The Gospel Coalition online commentary.

<sup>4</sup> See Strauss.