

MARCH 8, 2020

## Beyond belief

Chapter 9 is all about the dramatic contrast of Jesus's glorious reality and his followers' inability to grasp what he's truly capable of – including his role in the salvation of God's people. On the mountain-top, his glory is revealed, and he is identified *with* the ancient prophets and *by* the Father as “beloved.” Coming down from the mountain, he is faced with unbelief and resistance – even from those who claim to trust him. As you study this passage, seek more of Jesus's ability and humanity's inability. May you seek *his* strength in the face of *our* weakness.

- Focus on the transfiguration seen in verses 2-8. How is Peter missing the point of this experience? (vs.5-6)
- What do you know of the prophet Elijah? What is his role in the “restoration of all things”? (see Malachi 4:4-6)

In verse 10, the three disciples “seized upon that statement.” In short, they were physically bewildered at the concept of the Son of Man being raised from death.<sup>1</sup>

- What problem does Jesus encounter when he arrives back to the other disciples? (v.17)
- How does Jesus use the father's partial belief to explain more about himself? How might the man's prayer teach us something about our own prayers and requests of Jesus? (v.24)
- What, if anything, seems unique about this particular healing story? (vs.20-27)
- Why do you think the disciples' power was limited? (v.18) What can we learn about such spiritual forces when Jesus says “this kind cannot come out by anything but prayer”? (v.29)
- **Apply it.** How have you experienced God's glory? When you experience the limits of your faith (and disappointments), how might you step closer to God?

## MARK 9:9-31 NASB

<sup>2</sup>Six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; <sup>3</sup>and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. <sup>4</sup>Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup>For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified. <sup>7</sup>Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “**This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!**” <sup>8</sup>All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

<sup>9</sup>As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. <sup>10</sup>They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant. <sup>11</sup>They asked Him, saying, “*Why is it* that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” <sup>12</sup>And He said to them, “Elijah does first come and restore all things. And *yet* how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? <sup>13</sup>But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”

<sup>14</sup>When they came *back* to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and *some* scribes arguing with them. <sup>15</sup>Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and *began* running up to greet Him. <sup>16</sup>And He asked them, “What are you discussing with them?” <sup>17</sup>And one of the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; <sup>18</sup>and whenever it seizes him, it slams him *to the ground* and he foams *at the mouth*, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not *do it*.” <sup>19</sup>And He answered them and said, “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!” <sup>20</sup>They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he *began* rolling around and foaming *at the mouth*. <sup>21</sup>And He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. <sup>22</sup>It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!” <sup>23</sup>And Jesus said to him, “If You can? All things are possible to him who believes.” <sup>24</sup>Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.” <sup>25</sup>When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.” <sup>26</sup>After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and *the boy* became so much like a corpse that most of *them* said, “He is dead!” <sup>27</sup>But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. <sup>28</sup>When He came into *the* house, His disciples *began* questioning Him privately, “Why could we not drive it out?” <sup>29</sup>And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.”

<sup>30</sup>From there they went out and *began* to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *about it*. <sup>31</sup>For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.” <sup>32</sup>But they did not understand *this* statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.

<sup>1</sup> The phrase could *also* mean that they “took hold” of Jesus's instruction and *obeyed* by remaining silent.