

# The Gospel of Mark

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*Mark 8:27-16:8*

## The Structure of Mark

- A. The Announcement of the Messiah (Mark 1:1-1:13)
- B. Power of the Messiah (Mark 1:14-8:26)
- C. The Apostles' affirm the Messiah, but fail to See the Way (Mark 8:27-10:51)
- D. The Suffering Messiah (Mark 10:52- 15:47)
- E. The Victory of the Messiah (Mark 16:1-8)

## The Apostles Affirmation of the Messiah (Mark 8:27-8:30)

Up to this point in the Gospel story, Mark has been telling the good news of Jesus teaching, preaching and healing. Through Jesus' words and powerful deeds, the authority and presence of God is manifest. The question that keeps being asked throughout the story is: "Who is this?" Several answers are posited: He is a prophet (the crowds, 6:15), he is John the Baptist raised from the dead (Herod 6:16), he is insane (his family, 3:21), he has a demon (the religious leaders, 3:22), and he is the Son of God (the demons, 3:11).

The question is finally raised by Jesus himself to his disciples: "Who do people say that I am?" And "Who do you say that I am?" Peter's affirms, "You are the Christ." The affirmation of Peter is the turning point of the Gospel, however it is part of a larger central section in Mark about what it truly means to see and follow Jesus on the Way.



*"And Jesus strictly charged them to tell no one about him."*

**Mark 8:30**



## *Mark's Central Section: "Seeing" on the Way to the Cross (Mark 8:22—10:52)*

As Jesus journeys from Bethsaida and Caesarea Philippi and from to Jericho and Jerusalem, he instructs his disciples on what it truly means to follow him. Peter's confession reveals that he only has partial insight into Jesus. The disciples perceive and understand who Jesus is as the Christ, the Messiah. What they do not understand or accept is what the Christ came to do. Likewise, they are beginning to understand who they are as Jesus' disciples, but they do not understand or "see" what it truly means to follow him "on the way".

The structure of the section is built around three Passion predictions, each of which is followed by the misunderstanding of one or more of the disciples, and further teaching by Jesus about the requirements of true discipleship.

## Structure<sup>18</sup>:

[Transition/preface: 8:14-21 - The "blindness" of the disciples!]

8:22-26 - The **Two-Stage** Restoration of Sight to a Blind Person at Bethsaida, north of the Sea of Galilee

8:27-30 - Peter's Confession near Caesarea Philippi: "You are the Christ"; but Jesus orders them "not to tell anyone about him"

**8:31 - First Passion Prediction** (Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise after three days)

8:32-33 - *Peter misunderstands* and "rebukes" Jesus, who "rebukes" Peter in return

8:34–9:1 - *Jesus teaches*: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it."

9:2-30 - Transfiguration; Coming of Elijah; Exorcism of an Epileptic Spirit

**9:31-32 - Second Passion Prediction** (Son of Man will be betrayed, be killed, but rise after three days)

9:33-34 - *All the disciples misunderstand*, arguing who among them was the greatest

9:35-50 - *Jesus teaches*: "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

10:1-31 - Teaching on Divorce; Blessing of Children; the Rich Man

**10:32-34 - Third Passion Prediction** (Son of Man will be handed over, condemned to death, mocked, spat upon, scourged, put to death, but will rise after three days)

10:35-40 - *James and John misunderstand*, asking for the seats of honor when Jesus is in "glory"

10:41-45 - *Jesus teaches*: "Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

10:46-52 - The **Immediate** Restoration of Sight to Blind Bartimaeus outside of Jericho, "on the way" to Jerusalem—and he follows him "in the way".

## Contrasting Mark's Two Stories of Jesus Healing Blind People:

Mark 8:22-26	Mark 10:46-52
22 – Intro: Blind man at Bethsaida, Request to touch	46 – Intro: Jesus leaving Jericho, Blind beggar Bartimaeus
23 – Jesus touches the man's eyes ( <i>with spittle</i> )	47 – Bartimaeus cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy"
24 – The man can see unclearly ( <i>trees walking?</i> )	48a – People rebuke and try to silence him
25a – Jesus touches the man's eyes again	48b – Bartimaeus cries again, "Son of David, have mercy"
25b – The man's sight is restored; he sees clearly	49-50 – Jesus stops & calls him; Bartimaeus approaches Jesus
26 – Jesus sends the man home ( <i>not into the village</i> )	51 – Dialogue: "What do you want?" – "Lord, I want to see!"
.	52 – "Go, your faith has saved you"; Bartimaeus follows Jesus

<sup>18</sup> <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark-Outlines.htm>

## **The Suffering Messiah (Mark 10:52- 15:47)**

### ***Faith and Fruitlessness (10:46-12:12)<sup>19</sup>***

- A Jesus, Son of David: Identified acclaimed and followed by a blind man (10:46:52)
- B The Messianic King Revealed and Acclaimed as he enters the Temple (11:1-11)
  - C The Withered fig Tree and the Fruitless Temple (Three sayings on Prayer) (11:12-25)
- B' The Messiah's Authority Challenged by the Temple Leadership (11:27-33)
- A' Jesus Son of God: revealed and Attacked by Vinedressers (12:1-12)

The coming of the Messiah/YHWH to his Temple is marked with a triumphal entry and joyful acceptance. However, when the Messiah/YHWH inspects his Fig Tree/Temple he expect fruit and finds nothing but leaves. The condemnation of the temple is in turning a House of Prayer for the nations into a den of robbers. While the people are “astonished at his teaching” the religious leaders became resolved in seeking a way to destroy him. They were the evil tenants of the vineyard.

### ***3 Questions for Jesus and 1 from Him (Money, Theology, Power and Politics)***

- The Herodians and Pharisees and their Tax debate: Whose image Caesar or God? (12:13-17)
- The Sadducees: Wrong about the Power of God and Wrong about the Word of God (12:18-27)
- The Wise Scribe (12:28-34)
- The Royal Riddle (12:35-37)
- Faithful Widows and Hypocritical Scribes (12:38-44)

As the conflict with the religious leaders intensifies, they seek to trap Jesus with questions about some of the more difficult issues of the day such as whether to pay taxes, theological debates on the resurrection and the Law of Moses. The tables are turned when they realize that he not only answers their questions well, but has a good question of his own. The royal riddle concerning David's Lord/Son is at the heart of Jesus and Mark's Gospel—the Jesus is both the Messiah and YHWH God! This is precisely the conclusion of Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost: “Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” (Acts 2:36)

### ***The Judgment of the Temple and the Second Coming (13:1-37)***

End of the temple and fall of Jerusalem (1-13)  
Tribulation (14-27)  
End of the Temple and Fall of Jerusalem (28-31)  
Parousia and watchfulness (32-37)

The key to understanding the Olivet Discourse is recognizing that Jesus is speaking about to different events which he uses the language of “these things” for the fall and judgment of Jerusalem and “that

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<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Bailey, *The Text of the Gospel of Mark: A Rhetorical Analysis of its Narrative Mosaics* (New Wilmington, PA, 2005) p. 59.

day” for the parousia or second coming where the heavens and earth will be destroyed. See the Gospel of Mathew (Lesson 6) for more in depth discussion.

### ***The Last Two Days (14:1-53)***

- A      The Authorities Seek to Arrest Jesus (1-2)
  - B          A Woman Faces Jesus Death: The Anointing (3-9)
    - C            Judas Betrayal Initiated (10-11)
      - D              Passover Preparations (12-16)
      - D’            Passover Celebrations (17-26)
    - C’            Peter’s Denial Foreseen (27-31)
  - B’          Jesus faces his own Death: The Garden (32-42)
- A’      Jesus is Betrayed and Arrested (43-53)

The final two days leading to Jesus crucifixion are dark days. The very people that should have embraced Jesus as their Lord and King seek to arrest and destroy him. He is betrayed by one of his own and publically denied by his number one disciple. The central focus of the chapter is Jesus association of his own death with the Passover. His body and blood would be the covenant that would satisfy the judgment of a Holy, Holy, Holy God and cover with forgiveness the sins of a sinful people. What we see is the absolute necessity of the Cross and the Passover sacrifice. The question of its necessity is raised by Jesus himself, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” (14:35-36) The need for Jesus to drink the cup is seen in the sin and failings of everyone in the chapter: the Jewish leaders and soldiers, Judas betrayal, the Disciples weak flesh and Peter’s denial. This is why the anointing of Jesus for burial with the expensive perfume was not a waste but rather the most precious action a human could offer to the one who would serve humanity in such a way and “give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

### ***The Trials: Jewish and Gentile (14:54-15:20)***

#### **The Jewish Trial**

1. Peter Follows (14:54)
2. The Sanhedrin tries Jesus (14:55-64)
3. Mockery and beating by temple guards (14:65)
4. Peter’s denials (14:66-72)

#### **The Roman Trial**

1. Pilate examines Jesus (15:1-5)
2. Pilate chooses between Bar Abba and Bar Abba (15:6-15)
3. Mockery and brutality by the soldiers (15:16-20)

The failure of the Jewish leadership is sandwiched between the telling of the failure of Peter in his denials. One cannot help but to wonder whether Peter saw his own denials and failures as equivalent to the Jewish Sanhedrin as a whole. The heart of the Sanhedrin trial is idea of bearing witness or making a testimony. False witnesses and testimony was brought, yet Jesus would not answer their falsehoods. Yet

when asked directly whether he was the “Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One” he affirmed it with crystal clarity:

*“I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” –Mark 14:62*

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Jesus would be rejected not on the basis of false testimony but on the basis of his own true testimony about himself. Are Mark’s readers willing to stand and testify to the truth of Jesus?

The Romans and the crowds exchanged the murder Bar-Abba (Hebrew, father’s son) for the King of the Jews. The irony is that the King of the Jews is the Bar-Abba (see Psalm 2, 2 Sam. 7). With the substitution the ransom is exchanged, a son for a son. The King of the Jews will die in the place of his people. While the Romans make a mockery of his royalty. They will one day confess Jesus as the Roman soldier at the foot of the cross: “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

**Next Week: Crucifixion and Resurrection in Mark/ Intro to Luke**