

**Chapter 1 : Sermons From Mark - The Blind Man At Bethsaida ( )**

*Mark New International Version (NIV) Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida. 22 They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. 23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village.*

He is teaching a large crowd, "about four thousand men", [4] in a remote place, and everyone is hungry; they only have seven loaves of bread and an imprecise number of small fish. Jesus takes the bread, gives thanks to God, and breaks the bread and the disciples then distribute it. He also blesses the fish and commands that these be set before the crowd. Matthew also records this in chapter 15. They leave in a boat and go to Dalmanutha, which is listed in Matthew as Magadan and some early manuscripts of Mark as Magdala, home of Mary Magdalene. There Jesus encounters the Pharisees who ask him to perform a miracle for them. I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it. Matthew and Luke say only the Sign of Jonah will be given Matthew. See also Signs Gospel. They leave in a boat. On the other side of the lake, presumably the Sea of Galilee, they find they have only brought one loaf of bread. Jesus tells his disciples to be careful and to "watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod. His disciples think he is scolding them for not having enough bread, but Jesus instead scolds them for not understanding him: Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up? This miracle is only related in Mark. Jesus fed Jewish listeners in Mark 6 and he most probably feeds a Gentile crowd here. He refuses to perform a miracle for the Pharisees, who ask for one, but performs miracles for the Gentiles, who do not. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: The twelve of the first feeding might be a reference to the Twelve tribes of Israel and the seven of the second feeding the seven pagan nations originally surrounding Israel. Confession of Peter and Jesus predicts his death Mark begins the second half of his book with Jesus and the disciples traveling to Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asks them who people think he is. John the Baptist or Elijah, they reply. Jesus asks them what they think. Peter declares that Jesus is "the Christ", the Anointed One. Jesus tells them to keep this a secret. Jesus tells them that he must be persecuted by the priests and teachers and killed, and after three days rise again. Peter takes Jesus to one side and begins to rebuke him; Jesus turns back to look at his disciples and rebukes Peter in return both verses 32 and 33 use the Greek: Get thee behind me, Satan: If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life or soul will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? Anglican biblical scholar Edward Plumptre states that the division of chapter 8 and chapter 9 "is obviously wrong".

*Mark ~ Scripture Verses The Healing of a Blind Man at Bethsaida 22 They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. 23 He took t.*

These verses are crucial for understanding the Gospel according to Mark as a whole and for fathoming what it means to be Christian. Here he poses the question: Before the scene ends, Jesus announces, for the first of multiple times, his impending suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection. He also -- finally! Already he has beckoned some to follow and appointed apostles 3: Now we see where this road of discipleship will lead: Following will also make a particular kind of statement, since crosses figure in the equation. The few intertestamental Jewish texts that mention "the Christ" paint a very different picture. Everything Jesus describes in verse 31 would appear to disqualify him from being that person. Good thing Peter is there to straighten him out and show him the path the Christ is supposed to follow. Peter gets the title right, but the meaning wrong. His confession uses technically accurate language, but he cannot yet see what this language entails. And so Jesus -- just like the Gospel author -- embarks on a project of recasting who "the Christ" is and what he will do. In verse 34 he addresses "the crowd with his disciples," and he invites "any" who want to follow him. Want to see who he really is? The imperatives "let them deny themselves" and "let them take up their cross" risk becoming trite aphorisms if we forget they are about following this guy, the one who has just described his fate. These important ideas could be the focus of a whole sermon. I have explored them elsewhere , for those who desire more detail. Self-denial a notion John Calvin said constitutes "the sum of the Christian life"<sup>2</sup> is not primarily about squashing our desires or delaying gratification. Jesus calls us to separate ourselves from what defines us. Jesus calls people to embrace new understandings of identity. Disciples join a community defined by association with Jesus who himself denies conventional understandings of who he must be; see Mark 3: Self-denial is not self-annihilation, but complete redefinition. Self-denial does not mean seeking or embracing abuse for its own sake, as if suffering itself is redemptive or a mark of virtue. Jesus has spent over seven chapters alleviating needless suffering or oppression whenever he encounters it; how could he be endorsing these things here? Do not allow this text to perpetuate or excuse victimization. The kind of suffering Jesus acknowledges as a reality in this passage verse 35 is a particular kind: Self-denial and redefinition come with their risks. Likewise, cross-bearing means much more than patience or obedience. Crosses imply rejection; those who bore crosses in the Roman imperial world were publicly declaring that their society or their leaders had denied them. That is, as Jesus discloses more and more about his identity and fate in this and subsequent passages, he also describes what it means to participate with him. Following Jesus is not a wandering voyage; it points a particular direction, ending up at crucifixion and resurrection. Want to learn who Jesus really is? What does it mean to follow him, to truly participate in the kingdom he proclaims and the work to which he calls us? It means to expect the same consequences he faced in life and in death. We would rather define Jesus according to our own priorities. Following Jesus, with its self-denial and cross-bearing, becomes a lived, enfolded means of orienting us to who Jesus is and how he becomes known. Remember, this book concludes with no one still following Jesus, at least in a literal sense. Everyone has fled him by then. But Jesus never denies his followers, even the would-be ones who are bedeviled by so many distractions and competing commitments. In Greek, these are singular; that is, Jesus addresses each individual.

*Mark Common English Bible (CEB) A blind man is healed. 22 Jesus and his disciples came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch and heal him. 23 Taking the blind man's hand, Jesus led him out of the village.*

This miracle, which is only recorded by the Evangelist Mark, has about it several very peculiar features. Both of them have these points in common: But this miracle had another peculiarity in which it stands absolutely alone, and that is that the work is done in stages; that the power which at other times has but to speak and it is done, here seems to labour, and the cure comes slowly; that in the middle Christ pauses, and, like a physician trying the experiment of a drug, asks the patient if any effect is produced, and, getting the answer that some mitigation is realised, repeats the application, and perfect recovery is the result. It is to that question that I wish to turn now; for I think that the answer will open up to us some very precious things in regard to that great Lord, the revelation of whose heart and character is the inmost and the loftiest meaning of both His words and His works. I take these three points of peculiarity to which I have referred: I see in them these three things: First, then, here we have Christ isolating the man whom He wanted to heal. What that was it is not necessary for us to inquire here, but this is worth noticing, that in obedience to this wish, on His own part, for privacy at the time, He covers over with a veil His miraculous working, and does it quietly, as one might almost say, in a corner. He never sought to display His miraculous working; here He absolutely tries to hide it. This fact, of a miracle done in intended secrecy, and shrouded in deep darkness, suggests to us the true point of view from which to look at the whole subject of miracles. People say they were meant to be attestations of His divine mission. Yes, no doubt that is true partially; but that was never the sole nor even the main purpose for which they were wrought; and when any one asked Jesus Christ to work a miracle for that purpose only, He rebuked the desire and refused to gratify it. He wrought His miracles, not coldly, in order to witness to His mission, but every one of them was the token, because it was the outcome, of His own sympathetic heart brought into contact with human need. And instead of the miracles of Jesus Christ being cold, logical proofs of His mission, they were all glowing with the earnestness of a loving sympathy, and came from Him at sight of sorrow as naturally as rays beam out from the sun. Then, on the other hand, the same fact carries with it, too, a lesson about His character. He dares not wrap His talent in a napkin, He would be unfaithful to His mission if He hid His light under a bushel. Christ did not invest the miracle with any of its peculiarities for His own sake only. All that is singular about it, will, I think, find its best explanation in the condition and character of the subject, the man on whom it was wrought. What sort of a man was he? Well, the narrative does not tell us much, but if we use our historical imagination and our eyes we may learn something about him. First he was a Gentile; the land in which the miracle was wrought was the half-heathen country on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. In the second place, it was other people that brought him; he did not come of his own accord. Then again, it is their prayer that is mentioned, not his-he asked nothing. And suppose he was a man of that sort, with no expectation of anything from this Rabbi, how was Christ to get at him? It is of no use to speak to him. His eyes are shut, so cannot see the sympathy beaming in His face. There is one thing possible-to lay hold of Him by the hand; and the touch, gentle, loving, firm, says this at least: And is it not in parable just exactly what Jesus Christ does for the whole world? Is there not in it, too, a lesson for all you good-hearted Christian men and women, in all your work? If you want to do anything for your afflicted brethren, there is only one way to do it-to come down to their level and get hold of their hands, and then there is some chance of doing them good. We must be content to take the hands of beggars if we are to make the blind to see. And then, having thus drawn near to the man, and established in his heart some dim expectation of something coming, He gently led him away out of the little village. I wonder no painter has ever painted that, instead of repeating ad nauseam two or three scenes out of the Gospels. These two things, the expectation and the surrender, have in them, at all events, some faint beginnings and rude germs of the highest faith, to lead up to which is the purpose of all that Christ here does. And is not that what He does for us all? He loves to deal with single souls. Our lives, many of them, can never be outwardly alone. We are jammed up against one another in such a

fashion, and the hurry and pressure of city life is so great with us all, that it is often impossible for us to secure outward secrecy and solitude. But a man maybe alone in a crowd; the heart may be gathered up into itself, and there may be a still atmosphere round about us in the shop and in the market and amongst the busy ways of men, in which we and Christ shall be alone together. Unless there be, I do not think any of us will see the King in His beauty or the far-off land. I am with you always, even to the end of the world. We have Christ stooping to a sense-bound nature by the use of material helps. No doubt there was something in the man, as I have said, which made it advisable that these methods should be adopted. If he were the sort of person that I have described, slow of faith, not much caring about the possibility of cure, and not having much hope that any cure would come to pass-then we can see the fitness of the means adopted: These make a ladder by which his hope and confidence might climb to the apprehension of the blessing. And that points to a general principle of the divine dealings. God stoops to a feeble faith, and gives to it outward things by which it may rise to an apprehension of spiritual realities. Is not that the meaning of the whole complicated system of Old Testament revelation? Is not that the meaning of the altars, and priests, and sacrifices, and the old cumbrous apparatus of the Mosaic law? Was it not all a picture-book in which the infant eyes of the race might see in a material form deep spiritual realities? Is not that the meaning of His own Incarnation? It is of no use to talk to men about God-let them see Him; no use to preach about principles-give them the facts of His life. Revelation does not consist in the setting forth of certain propositions about God, but in the exhibition of the acts of God in a human life. It exists in order that, as a parable and a symbol, it may proclaim the things that are unseen and eternal. He healed her because there was a spark of faith in her superstition, but she had to I earn that it was not the hem of the garment but the loving will of Christ that cured, in order that the dross of superstitious reliance on the outward vehicle might be melted away, and the pure gold of faith in His love and power might remain. Instead of these it is almost surly, or at any rate strangely reticent-a matter-of-fact answer to the question, and there an end. As our Revised Version reads it better: A dim glimmer had come into the eye, but there is not yet distinctness of outline nor sense of magnitude, which must be acquired by practice. The eye has not yet been educated, and it was only because these blurred figures were in motion that he knew they were not trees. He was healed slowly because he believed slowly. They often wanted only the outward miracle, but He wanted to make it the means of insinuating a better healing into their spirits. Now, both the gradual process of illumination and the rate of that process as determined by faith, are true for us. How dim and partial a glimmer of light comes to many a soul at the outset of the Christian life! How little a new convert knows about God and self and the starry truths of His great revelation! Christian progress does not consist in seeing new things, but in seeing the old things more clearly: We do not grow away from Him, but we grow into knowledge of Him. But then let me remind you that just in the measure in which you expect blessing of any kind, illumination and purifying and help of all sorts from Jesus Christ, just in that measure will you get it. You can limit the working of Almighty power, and can determine the rate at which it shall work on you. You will get as much of God as you want and no more. Expect Him to do it, and He will do it. May that be your experience and mine, through His mercy! Benson Commentary Mark 8: And he cometh to Bethsaida &€” Where he had done many mighty works, without their producing the desired effect, the people remaining in impenitence and unbelief, Matthew The following miracle, it may be observed, is recorded by Mark only; a plain proof that he is not to be considered as a mere abridger of Matthew. He took and led him out of the town &€” Declaring hereby, that those of Bethsaida, who had seen so many miracles in vain, were unworthy to behold this: His expression may be easily accounted for, on supposition that he was not born blind, but had lost his sight by some accident; for if that was the case, he might have retained the idea both of men and trees. Their light, like that of the morning, shines more and more unto the perfect day. Let us, then, inquire if we have any sight of, or acquaintance with, those things of which faith is the evidence; and if, through grace, we have any true knowledge of them, we may hope that it will increase more and more, till we are fully translated out of our natural darkness of ignorance and folly, into the marvellous light of truth and wisdom. And he sent him away, saying, Neither go into the town &€” Where probably some who had seen Christ lead him out of the town, were expecting to see him return; but who, having been eye-witnesses of so many miracles, had not so much as the curiosity to follow him. Such therefore were not to be gratified with the sight of him when he was

cured, that would not show so much respect to Christ as to go a step out of the town to see the cure wrought. Nor tell it to any in the town — Christ does not forbid him to tell it to others, but he must not tell it to any of the inhabitants of Bethsaida. Bethsaida, in the day of her visitation, would not know the things that belonged to her peace, and therefore they are now hid from her eyes. Therein appeared the faith of those that brought him. If those who are spiritually blind, do not pray for themselves, yet their friends and relations should pray for them, that Christ would be pleased to touch them. Christ showed in what method those commonly are healed by his grace, who by nature are spiritually blind. At first, their knowledge is confused; but, like the light of the morning, it shines more and more to the perfect day, and then they see all things clearly. And they bring a blind man unto him - The healing of the blind man of Bethsaida is recorded only by Mark. Besought him to touch him - That is, to heal him, for they believed that his touch would restore his sight. This miracle is only mentioned by Mark particularly, possibly because of two singularities in it: With reference to the signs he used. With reference to the gradual cure. Our Saviour sometimes used some signs in his miraculous operations, sometimes he used none, but by the word of his power alone healed them; in the signs he used, to let the people understand there was nothing in them, he often varied; sometimes he laid his hands upon them, sometimes he took them by the hand, sometimes he used one sign, sometimes another. He takes the blind man by the hand. He leads him out of the town, the inhabitants being not worthy to see a miracle: He spit on his eyes: Then he twice put his hands on him. Christ was wont to heal at once; here he healeth by degrees; so as the healing of this blind man was a true pattern of his healing spiritual blindness, which usually is done gradually, but perfected at last as this bodily cure was. The city of Andrew, Peter, and Philip, John 1: The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "they came"; Christ, and his twelve apostles, who landed at this place:

**Chapter 4 : The Way of the Cross | Mark | calendrierdelascience.com**

*Jesus gives His disciples five arguments that show the wisdom for following through with His admonition about denying himself and taking up his cross daily and following Him: ' whoever wishes to save his life will lose it '.*

In our last study, we looked at verses of Mark chapter 4. How is it that you have no faith? The three synoptic gospel writers also write of a story that happened later on in which the disciples were crossing the sea by themselves when a storm came upon them and they thought they were going to perish, and then Jesus came walking up to them and stilled the storm. Peter walked on the water in that story. What day, the day that Jesus had been teaching the things Mark has recorded prior to this. We have seen that Jesus was teaching the multitudes many parables all throughout this day. He evidently taught all of His kingdom parables as well, and perhaps many other things as well. So, Jesus had had a long and arduous day of ministry and when the evening came He told the disciples to get in the boat He had been teaching them from, and cross over the Sea of Galilee. When we think of the price that Jesus paid for us, we tend to think of Calvary and the horrors Jesus endured upon the cross. However, every day that Jesus lived He paid a price for us. He was obedient even unto death. He laid down His life every day during the three years of His ministry, laid it down in His godliness and obedience, and in His tenacity and perseverance teaching and preaching to His disciples and the multitudes. Jesus on this day taught the multitudes all through the day, and they were most likely pressing upon Him all through the day. What a faithful Lord and Savior Jesus was and is. When we consider the fact that we cannot take anything with us past this life except the ones we win to Christ and the crowns we earn , then it is only the smart thing to do for us to be rich in the things that make for eternal life. In the book of Hebrews, we read that Jesus was tempted in all ways that we are, yet without sin, and therefore He sympathizes with us in our temptations and trials. Here we see that Jesus understands what it is like to be tired and exhausted. Further, He understands what it is like to be exhausted in the work of God. When you are exhausted, then be aware that God understands what you are going through. Ministry is a consuming work and does take a toll on us. There are always people around us who do not know the Lord, and if we are concerned for their souls and eternal destination, then we too will become exhausted at times. Jesus was exhausted, and just as all of us need rest a times, so He too needed rest. Down in the stern back of the boat, Jesus slept amongst the nets and equipment, and He had room to lay down upon a cushion that was down there. As the storm brewed and the wind and the waves pounded fiercely upon the boat, Jesus slept peacefully the rest of the godly. This terrain creates its own weather patterns and abrupt temperature changes, and these cause big storms to often come up quickly upon the lake. Plus the fact that the northern portion of the lake is unprotected causes it to be susceptible to big winds. A Commentary Critical And Explanatory includes this: Twice in the gospels the disciples get into trouble on the lake because of these storms, and Jesus in both situations calms the storm and saves their lives. As the winds began to blow on this evening, the waves began to grow in size and white cap. Then, finally we find that big breakers were coming over the side of the boat, and the boat began to fill up with water: But, they were not keeping up with the water that was landing in the boat. The disciples learned on this day that learning from Jesus and serving Him does not exempt anyone from trials and temptations, in fact we should learn to expect them as we serve the Lord. The disciples went right from hearing Jesus teach and learning from and serving Him into a boat and a storm comes up. When I was growing up, our family often went on long boat trips and would fish and water ski as we camped on the big lakes in Arizona. Several times, when we were heading back to the marina after a camping trip on Lake Powell , the waves began to grow and white cap, and water began to come into our boat. On one trip, our new boat began to leak a little bit at the plug in the back. As my dad drove the boat, the rest of us were using coffee cans and whatever we could to bail the water out of the boat. Once when I had been fishing outside the mouth of the Columbia River in WA state, we were heading back into the river and as we were heading back over the bar a storm had begun to come up, and the waves were growing higher and higher and the bow of our boat would go over the crest of one wave just to crash into the trough before the next, and the waves would come over the top. The captain told me that once on this same trip in a storm he had seen a boat split right in two when the bow crashed down over the crest of

a wave. The disciples should have kept it in mind what Jesus had said to them. He told them that they were going to the other side of the lake, and when Jesus tells you to go to the other side of the lake, you are going to the other side of the lake. The Bible Exposition Commentary states the following about how Jesus planned to use this situation to teach His disciples: Of course He did! It would help the disciples understand a lesson that they did not even know they needed to learn: Jesus can be trusted in the storms of life. Many people have the idea that storms come to their lives only when they have disobeyed God, but this is not always the case. Jonah ended up in a storm because of his disobedience, but the disciples got into a storm because of their obedience to the Lord. He let them struggle for a while, and then He would come and meet their need. We see that, for instance, with the raising of Lazarus He waited a couple of days before coming after hearing Lazarus was very sick, among other stories. Finally, when Jesus arrived Lazarus had been dead a few days, and Mary and Martha told Jesus that if He had only been there that Lazarus would never have died. Then, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and increased their faith. Jesus waits and lets us struggle for a while so that He can teach us greater lessons after He has delivered us. We Christians tend to think that our greatest problems are our trials and difficulties, but this story reveals that our greatest problems are within us. Unbelief in our hearts is our biggest problem! As the disciples were laboring, Jesus was sleeping. But, when Jesus slept as humanity, He continued to watch over His people as God. Awake, do not reject us forever. Have you not heard? His understanding is inscrutable. God never sleeps, as this poem says: There is an eye that never sleeps, Beneath the wing of night; There is an ear that never shuts, When sink the beams of light; There is an arm that never tires. When human strength gives way; There is a love that never fails, When earthly loves decay. The disciples should have kept it in their minds the fact that the Lord was in their boat. How can a person really worry if they realize that the Lord of all creation is in their boat with them? If Jesus is in your boat then He is going to provide for you and protect you and really there is nothing you need to worry too much about. We can be like the man who bought a ticket for an ocean liner and then the day he boarded he stowed away down in an engine compartment and stayed there in the most horrible of conditions. I wonder if when the disciples woke Jesus up if they were expecting Him to take His turn rowing, or if they wanted Him to start bailing water too? Maybe they just wanted Him to pray for them? Did they expect that if they woke Him up that He might still this storm? Most importantly it was directed to the Lord. The disciples should have seen from the peace that Jesus had in the midst of this danger and trial that they had nothing to fear or worry about. This fact alone should have encouraged them. Jonah slept during a storm because he had a false sense of security, even though he was running from God. In the 27th chapter of the book of Acts, we read the story of Paul on the ship in a huge storm in the Mediterranean as he was being transported to Rome to stand trial. The Lord revealed to Paul that they were all going to make it out of the storm they were in, but only if they stayed in the ship. Many times we get into a storm and the trials of life hit us and we think that if we jump ship that we will be saved from the storm and trials. But, that just means that we will enter into more and probably greater trials. People divorce many times when the pressure of the trials of life hit them, yet this just brings them a whole different set of trials and difficulties that are much worse. Mark makes a point here in verse 36 to say that there were other boats that went with Jesus and the disciples to the other side of the lake: The people in these other boats surely got into trouble with the waves along with the disciples, and it must have been the case also that when Jesus stilled the waves and saved the disciples in His boat, that they the people in these other boats saw what Jesus had done and were spared as well. The disciples boat with Jesus in it symbolizes the church, small as it is, in relation to the people of this world that is in rebellion against the Lord. When God works in our lives, people in this world benefit as well and we have a testimony to them of the greatness and ability of our Lord. We need to have victory in the midst of our temptations and trials though so that we can be a testimony to the lost people in our lives. When a storm hits a large body of water, the waves that are created compound one another and they continue to bounce around and reflect off of each other and other objects, including the shore, and it is quite some time after a storm has left before the waves are completely calm and still. In other words, the Greek says that the wind and the waves were immediately perfectly still as soon as Jesus began to speak to them. In verse 40, we see that Jesus rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith. Their response in this situation of fear and then of accusing Jesus of not caring about them

or watching over them came about because of their unbelief. However this time they were afraid because they realized that He was God, they understood that only God could do such a thing as He had done. Know that God does not sleep and that He cares and is always looking down upon your life and aware of all of your struggles. Realize that your great problems are within you, just as Hebrews 3: You will encounter dangers and trials, but know that if you do that Jesus is in your boat, and you need to not be fearful but just ask Him to come to your aid and save you. When you embark upon that which you believe that the Lord has called you to do, and suddenly circumstances seem to get out of hand and there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel you are in, then realize that if God called you to be there that He will be with you and enable you to do what He has called you to do.

**Chapter 5 : Cost of Following Jesus Mark Preschool Bible Lesson – calendrierdelascience.com**

*When Peter declared his belief that Jesus was the Christ, he declared his belief that Jesus was the Promised One from Genesis Peter was essentially saying, "We believe that you are the anointed One, the anointed prophet, the anointed priest, and the anointed king.*

They had removed the robe with which they had dressed him, and put his own clothes on him again, but there is no reference to the crown of thorns being removed. So the traditional image we have of Christ wearing it while hanging on Golgotha could well be the truth. Often the chosen route to the place of execution would not have been the most direct way but it would have been taken in order that the condemned men would be seen by the most people, the execution party walking along the main streets, via the city gates and squares and market places. The Romans wanted everyone to be stirred by this dark sight and be afraid of law-breaking. Today I want to be like these soldiers and get as many of you as I can to look at Jesus on his way to Calvary and on the cross. A condemned man would be enclosed by a hollow square of four soldiers and preceded by another soldier who would bear a placard stating the crime of which the prisoner had been found guilty. The other two men had been condemned to die some days earlier and so their crosses had already been set up. Perhaps Jesus had to carry the upright portion. We think that that is the most likely shape. There had to be a place above the head of Jesus where the placard accusing him of his crimes was soon to be nailed. Did he totter and collapse, lying in a deep faint on the road with the cross on top of him? He had hardly slept and then his head had been hit again and again with a rod so that Jesus knew extreme weakness and loss of blood. We can appreciate the fact that as a true man he was no longer strong enough to carry this heavy beam of wood a single step further, and he collapsed under it. This is the man who for the rest of Good Friday morning and afternoon has to grapple hand to hand with the armies of hell and the dread of everlasting death, and that he must do so while as weak as a kitten. Keep me and give me strength for these next hours to resist temptation. Keep me loving you and loving my persecuting neighbours as myself. Who was this man? Simon was an African. Cyrene was a centre in north Africa where the Jewish faith had been established for centuries. There it had established its synagogues and schools and evangelism. Its businessmen and traders were familiar figures in the Mediterranean basin and many Cyrenians visited Jerusalem. Some have suggested that he was an older man who had come to retire in the promised land in sight of the temple, but we think it unlikely that a Roman soldier would have chosen an old man – or a woman or child – to carry the cross to Golgotha. It is rather vague; he does not seem involved in any mission. He is certainly not returning at this early hour from working in the fields. Did Simon own an estate? Was he simply on his way into the market – going shopping from out of town? Simon is hidden in obscurity, and yet we know his name as well as the names of his sons. What else do we know about him? The word which the Mark uses in this connection is found only twice in the New Testament, and in both cases it means coercion. The word actually comes from the Persian language; it is derived from the days of the Persian Empire and the primitive postal service that took orders from the Emperor to his distant ambassadors. So the word entered Europe and became used of any similar activity, of the conscription of men to fight for the state, of a soldier constraining a man to carry his kitbag for a mile. During the war a government takes on extra powers; it requisitions land and villages for tank training and for armed personnel carriers to practise their manoeuvres. Jesus Christ was one such great king and he had the right to exercise authority over his whole creation, over a fish to take up in its mouth a coin and swim into a net, over the wind to cease blowing, over the Sabbath silence to show mercy to people in need. This was the authority King Jesus had when he entered his royal city telling men that the kingdom of God had come because the King himself had come. He made men acknowledge this. They were constrained to obey him. Yet now a very stark contrast is being set up. Jesus seems to be stripped of all authority. Before him as he goes through the city gate walks a man bearing a placard on which his crime is being displayed. Around him are four soldiers, and behind him walks a disgruntled African carrying this wretched cross, and yet this is the same city gate through which Jesus had entered in triumph less than a week earlier. Crowds had been hanging on to his words as he preached in the temple day after day. This same city is now throwing him out as a condemned

criminal and soon it will be mocking him for hours as he hangs on the cross, and yet it is the same city that had offered him a room for the last supper a day earlier. From his place of headship at that table in this very city he had laid out the teaching which would be the foundation of his kingdom and the world wide mission of his church. As a King he had requisitioned a donkey and proclaimed his right to enter Jerusalem to the plaudits of its citizens; as a Priest he had requisitioned a room in which to establish a holy communion for all his people, but now he is staggering and falling on his way to be nailed to this very cross that Simon is being forced to carry. Less than a week has passed since the cries of Hosanna rent the air; less than 24 hours have passed since the Last Supper was celebrated but what now of all his claims to royal glory and priestly glory? They have Jesus in their power after the little blip of the crowds waving palm branches; they are marching Jesus off to his death. We are requisitioning you. Now Christ has stopped making any demands; he has no rights of requisition; he is a condemned criminal; no one listens to him; no one gives him anything. He will soon be dead and that will be the end. Pride comes before a fall. We thought he would have been the one who would have redeemed Israel. Simon was a man on holiday in Jerusalem, a sightseer, a bystander, not wanting to get involved, not wanting to be pressurised about religion and Jesus. This is a private debate. Before he knew it it seemed that everybody in Jerusalem was gazing at him, an African carrying a cross, following this beaten-up unsteady man surrounded by four soldiers. Simon was ashamed, embarrassed and resentful. He was annoyed with the soldier for seizing on him, and angry with the prisoner for not shouldering his own burden. The edges of the cross dug into his shoulder as they plodded round and round the streets of Jerusalem. However, things are not as they first appear. In fact we suspect that Simon never actually said those words. What a day it was for Simon, never to be forgotten. If he had been on his way in from the country an hour later he would have missed it all. Think of Joseph going at a certain moment to take a message from his father to his brothers and they are seething with resentment and hatred towards him, and soon a party of slave-traders is heading for Egypt with Joseph taken there. In Egypt he is bought by Potiphar and soon his wife is plaguing the young slave with her seductions. Yet God is preserving and governing the life of Joseph in every action. He makes him ruler of Egypt and the deliverer of his brethren in seven years of famine. A criminal tries one more crime but this time he gets caught and sentenced to crucifixion. He is a man who rebukes the official wailing women mourners rejecting their pity. He is a man who prays for those crucifying him that they might be forgiven. He was exactly where he should be, hearing Jesus Christ speaking to him. Think of the providence of God that put a Christian in your office, on your street, or perhaps taking the same course as yourself, and how she shared her faith in Christ with you, and invited you to meetings and the rest is the history of new life. I write letters to a man in Brighton whose name is Michael W. Phelan and he told me of the providence which transformed him for good. He had had no connection with any Jewish or Christian individual or organisation, but one day he noticed a book whose title caught his eye. Without the aid of any other human, immediately and comprehensively, I was granted the realisation that what I was reading was absolutely and eternally True. The impact this recognition made upon me was life-changing, and brought a feeling of joy combined with wonder and awe. For me, there could be no going back: Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me! Joseph was alive, and Simeon was being cared for by Joseph and soon all of them would be provided for through the seven years of famine. There are times when we think that we are in the wrong place at the wrong time, but God is in it all intent on working everything together for our good. How do we know that this is the right place and the right time? I will tell you; if I learn from the experience the answer to the most important questions of all, how can I become a follower of God, and how can I save my life? For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. I must have space. What do you put on your tombstone? So we have to lose our own lives. I also accept that there are various personal issues that I need to address and have started taking the difficult, yet necessary steps to resolve them. I want to apologise to all the people I have let down because of my behaviour which has reflected badly on my family, friends, co-workers, business associates and others. The support and love I have received are invaluable. My life will never do. Help me to take up my cross and follow Christ. How can I say that? What evidence can I bring to back that statement up? First see how Mark describes Simon, not only telling us where he was from but giving us names of his two sons, Alexander and Rufus.

Simon was known and loved and chosen by God from before the foundation of the world. God was determined to save him; God had made up his mind and so he moves a hardened soldier to requisition Simon and bring him and Jesus together. They all became Christians through what happened that day. He is now a leader of the church in Antioch with other Christians from Cyrene , and they are about to send out Paul and Barnabas on the very first mission to the Gentile nations â€” a church-based mission to bring Christ to the whole world. Christianity was not going to stay in the ghetto of Israel ; it was going to spread through the entire world so that 2, years later and thousands of miles from Jerusalem we Gentiles in Wales would be loving and serving Jesus Christ.

*Ah! brethren, here is a lesson from all this-if you wish Jesus Christ to give you His highest gifts and to reveal to you His fairest beauty, you must be alone with Him. He loves to deal with single souls.*

One wonders whether Jesus fed crowds often or, for some reason unknown to modern Western interpreters, this event is repeated. In the OT the Jews assigned the seat of the emotions to the lower viscera. Jesus loves people cf. These people had been rejected by rabbis all their lives. The Jews counted days from evening twilight to evening twilight. Any part of a day was counted; therefore, this does not necessarily refer to three full, 24 hour days. They could not pull themselves away even to buy more food. They had now eaten all they had brought. Jesus is not asserting that they are all on the point of physical collapse, but some are sick and weak and might faint. They had used all the food they brought and had been fasting. Desperate people go anywhere, try anything for help! They failed again cf. This is so similar to 6: Jews always prayed before eating. The miracle of multiplication occurred when Jesus broke the bread as in Mark 6: These baskets were very large cf. These remaining pieces were collected for later use. However, from Mark 8: There were probably not a large number of women and children in this isolated area, but there were surely some. Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. They could not deny His authority, power, or popularity, so they tried to trick Him into answering questions which would alienate part of His audience. See Special Topic on Pharisees at Mark 2: Jesus had showed them His authority already by deed and word, but their spiritual blindness remained. It has the same connotation in Mark The term "spirit" is used in Mark for 1. When compared to Matt. Jesus had given them many signs i. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember, 19when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up? This term is characteristic of Mark i. It is a present active imperative, which implies continuing diligence to maintain proper vigilance. Both of these sharp commands are from different Greek words meaning "to see" i. The overwhelming Greek manuscript attestation is genitive cf. See Special Topic on the family of Herod at Mark 1: This may be a word play in Aramaic because the terms "leaven" and "word" are very similar. They must constantly be on guard against it. The Herods represented the opposite problem—the worldliness, the status quo at any cost! The disciples had not learned the lesson yet. Jesus will supply all needs! The NKJV adds the word "saying" into this abbreviated sentence as do many later minuscule Greek manuscripts following Matt. The NASB accomplished the same purpose by the addition of italicized words i. His disciples, His family, His hometown, the crowds, and the religious leaders all did not have spiritual eyes or ears! Possibly this is a way to show the spiritual climate before the fullness of the Spirit comes at Pentecost or the Messianic Secret is revealed in the crucified, risen Lord. This is exactly what will happen to Judas Iscariot. The OT prophets spoke the word of God, but were misunderstood because of the spiritual condition of their hearers. These OT quotes are in a grammatical form which expects a "yes" answer. This phrase also has an OT orientation cf. This is the term used in Mark 6: He is reminding them of the previous miraculous feeding. They had not made the connection cf. And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him. Physical blindness is an OT metaphor for spiritual blindness cf. This same play on physical and spiritual blindness is graphically seen in John 9. This is the only partial healing or healing in stages that is recorded in the Gospels. Then the action switches to the man cf. He must focus and look intently cf. When he cooperates, his sight immediately is restored. The Textus Receptus i. Jesus did not want to be known as a healer. The miracle stories that affirm the power, authority, and deity of Jesus cease. From this point on the emphasis is the crucifixion. In this case reason 1 is predominate. It was controlled by Herod Philip, not Herod Antipas. This is the central religious question. In this private setting He accepts, even seeks this title. The parallel of Matt. They knew the title but not the mission! And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. Here 1 is implied by the context, but there is another imperfect in Mark 8: This was exactly the type of predictive sign the Pharisees were seeking in Mark 8: In Jewish thought the Messiah was seen as a descendant of David, a militaristic champion of Israel. But He would also be a priest, as in Psalm and

Zechariah This dynamic leadership role expectation seemed totally separate from a suffering, dying Messiah. Jesus tried several times to inform the disciples about His prophesied suffering cf. He did not fit their expectations. See Special Topic at Mark It is interpreted in a similar way in the Aramaic Targum on this verse. However, Jesus seems to be making an allusion to Jonah 1: This type of predictive sign was exactly what the Pharisees were asking for in Mark 8: This type of prediction was the basis of defining a true prophet according to Deut. Jesus gave them sign after sign, but they could not, would not see! There it meant "began," but here it might refer to repeated action i. He spoke to them plainlyâ€”no parables, no symbols, no metaphors cf. It is used of Jesus in Mark 1: In this context Peter "scolded" or "censured" Jesus for His remarks. Surely his motive was to protect Jesus, not condemn Him. Jesus rebukes Peter in Mark 8: This has OT connotations of rejection i. Without realizing it, Peter was tempting Jesus in the very same way that Satan did in the wilderness cf. Satan tried to get Jesus to win human allegiance in any way but Calvary i. Often the most painful and subtle temptations come from friends and family! The Kingdom of God, not personal preferences, personal privileges, or personal goals, is the highest priority cf. Usually this event is seen as a private teaching time, but obviously others were present. This crowd would have included many non-Jews and probably no Pharisees or religious leaders because it was out of the traditional promised land in a Gentile area. It is to this crowd that Jesus reveals the true cost of discipleship, the radical, total surrender needed to follow Him. He bids them follow, but clearly states the cost!

**Chapter 7 : Mark CEB - A blind man is healed - Jesus and his - Bible Gateway**

*Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. Luke Then Jesus said to all of them, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*

There are three pieces of evidence to consider: Further, this testimony is universal in connecting this gospel with Peter. Papias, for example, writes: For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but he came laterâ€”as he said with reference to Peter who taught whenever the need arose, 5 but he did not [teach] according to the arrangement of the oracles of the Lord, 6 with the result that Mark did not err 7 when he thus wrote certain things as he recalled them. For he planned out one goal ahead of time, 8 namely, to leave out nothing which he heard and not to falsify any [of the words of Peter]. It is doubtful, therefore, that his name was picked out of thin air as it were. If this were the case, there would certainly be less than universal attestation. Such restraint speaks volumes for the rest of the NT where they do affirm apostolic authorship.

**Internal Evidence** There is not much evidence within either Mark or the rest of the NT to connect him with this gospel. Still, there is nothing against this supposition. The evidence is as follows. There is therefore the likelihood that the church met there from the mid 50s on. He may have stayed in Jerusalem until the famous Council at Jerusalem met to decide the status of Gentile converts. Hence, if Peter was in Rome during that time, once again Mark would certainly have had contact with him. He may have been out of the capitol city since his departure in c. 60. However, there is more. This suggests not only that Mark may have gotten the individual stories about Jesus from Peter, but that he also got a framework for the life and ministry of Jesus from Peter. Not only does Jesus rebuke him for wanting a Messiah without the cross, but if the gospel ends at The latter has fewer problems with itâ€”and in fact argues implicitly that Mark not only got much of his message from Peter, but that he recorded it faithfully. In sum, Mark had an ongoing and close relationship with Peter for at least ten or twenty years before he penned his gospel. At the same time, he had an ongoing and close relationship with Paul and Barnabas. Besides this connection with Peter, there is some other internal evidence which may suggest Markan authorship. In other words, Luke may be subtly indicating that John Mark wrote something about the life of Jesus and that Luke himself used this writing.

**Summary** In conclusion, there is no reason to doubt that John Mark, companion of both Peter and Paul, wrote the gospel which bears the name Mark. The MSS and patristic testimony are unanimous, and the internal evidence certainly corroborates this, even if only in subtle ways. When we examine the issue of date, we will look more carefully at some of the evidence, but for now Markan authorship, at least, is assumed.

**Date** The issue of the date of this gospel also revolves around external and internal evidence.

**External Evidence** Not only does the early patristic evidence argue for Markan authorship, but it also makes a connection between Mark and Peter. As we have seen, Papias was the first to make this connection, and it is important to note certain features of his report. This suggests at least that even if Clement borrowed some of his information from Papias, he also had other sources which stated the same thing, for Papias did not mention a Roman destination. However, here it seems that he wishes to refute Papias, for to him it was important that the first gospel be written by an apostle. Although most scholars believe that Irenaeus is correct about Mark being written after the death of Peter and Paul, they reject his testimony about Matthew being written during their lifetimes. Thus they want to have their cake and eat it too. There is another way of looking at the data, however. The early external evidence can be summed up this way: The earliest testimony Papias suggests that Peter was still aliveâ€”and Papias claims an earlier source for this as well. This is confirmed by Clement of Alexandria who adds other information Roman destination , showing some independence from Papias. But this is not new information, but contradictory information. Moreover, he is further removed from the apostles than was Papias. Our conclusion from the external evidence is that Mark wrote his gospel while Peter was still alive, sometime before Matthew wrote his gospel based on our conclusion about the synoptic problem. We will see that other considerations corroborate this.

**Internal Evidence** There are several strands of internal evidence to be considered regarding the date. In some respects, the most important is outside of Mark, though within the NT. Much of this was

covered earlier Synoptic Problem, Matthew , and only needs a brief review here. Most scholars hold to Markan priority and that Mark was written at the beginning of the Jewish War. If we could treat Mark in isolation of the other gospels, this might make sense. If it be admitted that Jesus himself predicted the event, Mark The phrase used to describe the event is of such vagueness. But if Jesus could predict the future, and if the Olivet Discourse neither has all the earmarks of vaticinium ex eventu nor was indeed completely fulfilled in , then there should be every reason for dating all three synoptics before the fall of Jerusalem. If this is the case, then the ending of Acts may well give us a terminus ad quem of c. Several scholars make mush of this, arguing that the only Sitz im Leben which fits this gospel well is sometime after the Neronian persecutions of 64 CE began. But does this mean that it all started with Nero? The evidence within the gospel is insufficient to indicate this. Just because it was not a governmentally-sanctioned persecution did not make it less painful to the Christians involved. But even though suffering and persecution are definite themes in this gospel, they are not the only onesâ€”nor, indeed, the most predominant ones. One could argue equally well that the focus is on Christ as the fulfillment of the Law, thus rendering it null and void for Gentile believers. Further, no gospel was produced for only one purpose, or had merely one occasion in its background. When we come to occasion and purpose, we will see that a multivalenced approach accounts for all the particulars better. Sometime in the mids is most probable. In all likelihood, he lived there too. Although some scholars do not think the Latinisms carry much weight, 31 others see them as quite significant. The first of these examples is particularly instructive, for the quadrans was not in circulation in the east. Occasion and Purpose As we have suggested before, all the gospels had more than one reason for their production. Further, one of the strange features of this gospel is that its purpose is especially enigmatic. Guthrie lists the following options that scholars have seen: The occasion, if not found in the Neronian persecutions, must also be multivalenced. One of the factors hardly ever taken into account however is the fact that Mark is writing to Gentiles, though he got his material from Peter, the apostle to the Jews. Further, what is neglected is the fact that Mark had a strong connection with Paulâ€”and that at one point was out of sorts with Paul. Bringing these data to bear on the issue, we would like to propose the following tentative hypothesis: The evidence, though quite speculative in places, is as follows. The church at Rome was established before the Jerusalem Council met in c. The church was probably established shortly after Pentecost, since proselytes and Jews came from Rome Acts 2: The church would have been quite immature since these converts had very little information about Jesus on which to base their lives. Still, it could have been founded by them. Even though Peter and Paul ended up in Rome in the early-mid 60s, we have no record of either of them getting there in the 50s. It is very doubtful that any apostle founded the church cf. The fact that he is in Rome when Paul commends him may be no accident. Though it is impossible to date this precisely, it must have occurred in the early 50s. Further, this may not have been the first time Paul expressed such an intention, even though it is the first mention by Luke. One of the reasons why Paul wanted to get to Rome would have been the lack of apostolic guidance in that church. If the church was begun by proselytes returning from Pentecost in 33 CE, it would have had only hit-or-miss instruction about the faith for some time. There is some evidence that even though Paul did not found the church at Rome, it already had a distinctive Pauline flavor to it. Further, there is independent evidence that Mark wrote his gospel in the mids. He then composed the gospel for the Roman Christians. The Ending of Mark Although not intending to belittle this issue, there is excellent evidence both that the last twelve verses are not original Rather than get into the reasons why, our approach to the outline and argument will simply assume this. We might modify this slightly: In his stern rebuke of Peter, the servant-attitude of Jesus is thus seen to be intrinsically related to his own suffering. The verse which capsulizes this is There is no genealogy, for the credentials of a servant are his actions. In some ways, the book divides neatly into two halves: In our approach, the geography plays an important role: He then calls four fishermen near the Sea of Galilee to become his disciples at least one of whom was already a disciple of John according to John 1: This sets the stage for both rounds of confrontations with the religious leaders 2: In spite of this powerful demonstration of his authority, the religious leaders reveal their animosity toward him 2: In Capernaum, the city which Jesus made his home as an adult 2: In this miracle we see a glimpse, a foreshadowing, of the suffering servant, for the canceling of a debt can only come through a payment and the forgiveness of sins requires a substitutionary

death. In these confrontations Jesus reveals three other aspects of his role as servant: It begins with a summary of his ministry 3:

Chapter 8 : Mark 8, New King James Version (NKJV) | The Bible App

*Scripture: Mark Exegetical Idea: Jesus reveals God's plan for the Messiah; He teaches His followers about the cost of following Him.. Pedagogical Idea: As the Messiah, Jesus will suffer, die, and be raised from the dead.*

To a person in the first-century, the cross meant one thing and one thing only: Two thousand years later, Christians view the cross as a cherished symbol of atonement, forgiveness, grace, and love. Because the Romans forced convicted criminals to carry their own crosses to the place of crucifixion, bearing a cross meant carrying their own execution device while facing ridicule along the way to death. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? Although the call is tough, the reward is matchless. Wherever Jesus went, He drew crowds. Although these multitudes often followed Him as Messiah, their view of who the Messiah really was—and what He would do—was distorted. They thought the Christ would usher in the restored kingdom. They believed He would free them from the oppressive rule of their Roman occupiers. When Jesus began teaching that He was going to die at the hands of the Jewish leaders and their Gentile overlords Luke 9: Many of the shocked followers rejected Him. Truly, they were not able to put to death their own ideas, plans, and desires, and exchange them for His. Following Jesus is easy when life runs smoothly; our true commitment to Him is revealed during trials. Jesus assured us that trials will come to His followers John Discipleship demands sacrifice, and Jesus never hid that cost. When Jesus questioned them further, their commitment was half-hearted at best. They failed to count the cost of following Him. None was willing to take up his cross and crucify upon it his own interests. Therefore, Jesus appeared to dissuade them. How different from the typical Gospel presentation! The number of false converts would likely decrease! In some places of the world, these consequences are reality. If there comes a point in your life where you are faced with a choice—Jesus or the comforts of this life—which will you choose? Commitment to Christ means taking up your cross daily, giving up your hopes, dreams, possessions, even your very life if need be for the cause of Christ. Only if you willingly take up your cross may you be called His disciple Luke The reward is worth the price.

**Chapter 9 : Mark 8 - Wikipedia**

*(Jesus often used questions in His teaching to stir up faith in his students. He seemed less interested in pounding in knowledge as He was in stimulating thought and belief.) In this passage, Jesus asks about their perceptions of Him, then challenges their ideas about "the Christ".*

Your browser does not support the audio element. It is the only one he ever performed in two stages, the only one which involved a process instead of immediate healing. Mark is the only one who records this miracle for us, and for that reason it is rather obscure. Nevertheless it is a very significant miracle, and it has direct bearing on the startling change in the message of Jesus which follows this incident. This account brings us to the turning point in the book of Mark, the place where the message of Jesus takes a new direction. It marks the halfway point in the teaching of this book. I hope it will be the turning point in many of your lives, as well. And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man, and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, "Do you see anything? One is the process our Lord followed in this healing, and the other is the prohibition he imposed on this man. The process is unique. No other miracle is like this one. In a sense that is not strange, because Jesus never did two miracles alike. We tend to fall into patterns and habits. And when a change is made, it takes people abruptly unaware. But our Lord was not that way. He did things according to what the situation demanded, and so no two miracles are really the same. But this one is very remarkably different, because of two unusual aspects. The first that captures our attention is that he spit on the eyes of this man. We saw in our last study that, in the healing of the man who was deaf and dumb, Jesus spit upon his own fingers before he touched the ears of the man. There Jesus spit on the ground, mixed clay with it, and used that to anoint his eyes. Now he spits directly on the eyes of this blind man. So there is some continuing use of spit in this way. It is difficult to know exactly why. Many of the commentators have wrestled with this problem. People do immediately put to their mouth a finger that is cut or burned to soothe it. That may well be where this belief arose, and there may be some weight to the suggestion. But it does not explain fully what our Lord was doing. They were parables in action, pictures of the truth he was attempting to convey. And in this case, spit becomes a symbol of the Word of God. It is the visible form of that which issues from the mouth. Our Lord was perhaps awakening the faith of this blind man, who could feel but could not see. And through the application of spit to his eyes, he sensed that something was going to happen which would involve the power of the spoken Word of God. At any rate, Jesus was certainly teaching his disciples this lesson. The author of the letter to the Hebrews tells us that we understand it is by the Word of God that the worlds were framed out of things which do not appear Hebrews This is what I believe is symbolized here. The second unusual aspect of this miracle is the incompleteness of the healing. In every other circumstance he spoke the word, and instantly the person was made whole. He leaped, if he were lame; opened his eyes and saw, if he were blind; or rose from the dead. But for this miracle alone a two-stage process was involved. Again, many have wondered about this. I cannot subscribe to that "double-whammy" school of thought. Our Lord always had adequate power to deal with any situation because, as he tells us so frequently himself, it was not his power; it was the power of God the Father at work in him. And, again and again through the pages of the Scriptures, God teaches us that nothing is impossible to him. It was thus he challenged the faith of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, when he told them she would have a child, after her body had long since passed the age of childbearing. Sarah laughed in disbelief. And God said to her, "Is anything too hard for God? Some commentators have suggested that perhaps this was a very stubborn case of blindness here, much more difficult than the usual. Rather, we must see this as a deliberate act, done for the benefit of the disciples. Jesus is teaching them again. He is teaching them lessons by what he does and what he says. Here he deliberately does this in a two-stage fashion, because he wants these disciples to see that they are like this blind man -- they, and we who read this account -- and that we need our eyes opened in two stages, as this blind man did. Therefore this miracle is symbolic of the developments which follow this account. If we read it this way, we will see it as a very accurate introduction to what follows. But before we continue, look briefly at

the prohibition our Lord laid upon this man: And he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village. Our Lord had done many miracles there. But now he keeps the man from entering. This surely is in line with what we have seen many times. This explains why miracle workers gain such large crowds, and attract so much attention. People long to see these supernatural activities happen right before their eyes. But Jesus continually played that down. He did heal physically, and there were miracles, but he was never happy with the reaction of those who simply wanted to see miracles. Now he exerts an even stricter control. He will not even let the man go into the village, lest the man should break his charge, as others had done before him, and tell what Jesus said he should not tell. So he limits this man in order to play the miracle down, for he always sought to strike at the real need of man -- the spiritual hurt within -- and to heal that. And Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am? It is evident that our Lord was on his way to Mount Hermon, deliberately, in order that the Transfiguration which follows immediately might take place on that high mountain. He understood that this was about to happen. He knew he was to be transfigured before several of these men, and they were on their way. We must link this, then, with the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountaintop. On the way, Mark tells us, he asked two questions of the disciples: The question concerning the view of the people elicited the answer that some people thought he was John the Baptist, risen from the dead. Or, others thought he was Elijah, the prophet, because there are Scripture references in the Old Testament which say Elijah is to come before the great and terrible day of the Lord, and they were looking for him. It is still true today in orthodox Jewish ceremonies that a chair is set out for Elijah at the Passover feast. So some said, "This is Elijah; he has arrived. Then people would ask, "Who is he? That is why these powers are at work in him. They still thought he was one of the great Hebrew prophets. This indicates that they held him in very high regard, for these were the great names of Israel. But never once is it recorded that the populace had even the slightest inkling that this is the Messiah. They thought of him as one who was looking for another yet to come, and there is no indication that they ever got beyond that view. Before we leave this I would like to make one observation aside. Notice that the expectation of the multitude was not centered in what is called today "reincarnation. Many feel that the Scriptures teach reincarnation. Such is not the case. We sometimes hear startling accounts of people who have been taken back by some kind of hypnotic trance into a "previous existence," in which perhaps they were of a different sex, even, and who recount all kinds of strange things happening to them. Many people, even Christians, are misled by this, and think that the Scriptures suggest this may be true. Some have claimed that a passage such as this supports the doctrine of reincarnation. No, it does not. There is absolutely nothing at all in Scripture that ever supports the notion of reincarnation. They thought it was the same old prophets back again -- not a reincarnation, but the reappearance they were expecting of the same individuals who had lived hundreds of years before. This account, therefore, lends no support to the idea of reincarnation. Paul speaks of, taught by lying spirits who deceive men and make them believe this kind of thing in order to gain control over them. But let us go on to the question Jesus asked the disciples themselves. He said to them, "But who do you say that I am? They mean exactly the same thing. And it is not a name, but a title.