

The Ultimate Good News/Bad News

Scripture: Mark 8:27–33

Code: 41-40

We come now to Mark chapter 8...Mark chapter 8. I have in my mind the desire to move somewhat rapidly through the gospel of Mark, hoping that some time next summer we may be able to finish this book. And I think we can do that. We'll take some chunks and stay close to the text of Mark and not deviate unless the Lord causes us to go another direction. That's kind of the plan. So we're looking forward to just a great time together as we cover the second half of this wonderful history.

In the eighth chapter we come to verses 27 and following, verses 27 down to verse 33. This is a portion of Scripture that we've looked at before, not in Mark but a parallel text is in Matthew 16, and another parallel text is in Luke 9. It is little wonder that these three synoptic gospels, as they are called, they each give us a synopsis of the life of Christ, all feature this particular event because it is such a monumental one.

I have chosen to call this message, "The Ultimate Good News/Bad News" experience. And we've all had those. We've all had somebody say to us, "I have good news and bad news." We know that. Sometimes it is trivial, and sometimes it is serious. But this is the ultimate good news/bad news experience. This is so extreme for Peter and the Apostles who are the ones to whom this good news and bad news are delivered. This is the ultimate trauma, the highest high followed by the lowest low.

In Peter's case, the greatest commendation he ever received followed by the greatest condemnation he ever received, or for that matter anyone ever received. At first, the news couldn't have been better and suddenly it couldn't have been worse. Here's the moment, let me read it to you, verse 27.

"Jesus went out, along with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them 'Who do people say that I am?' And they told Him, saying, 'John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.' And He continued by questioning them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said to Him, 'You are the Christ.' And He warned them to tell no one about Him. And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, 'Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interest, but man's.'"

This is just a compelling passage. This is the high point of the entire gospel of Mark. Everything prior leads up to it. Everything after, flows from it. This is the moment in time when the disciples settle the matter of the person of Jesus. This is the moment when they believe and are convinced and confess as to who His person is, He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, as Peter gives us in the full statement recorded in Matthew.

But there is still great confusion about...not the person, but the plan. They affirm the person, they deny the plan. From the perspective of Peter and the disciples, the good news was the affirmation

that they understood the person, Jesus Christ, to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God. To a hopeful Jew, that is the ultimate revelation. That is the greatest revelation that could ever come. For centuries as a nation, for a lifetime as an individual, the Jews had anticipated the coming of their Messiah, and with the coming of Messiah, the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promise from the very beginning of the Old Testament, through to the end, just replete with promises that were attached to the arrival of the Messiah, promises of salvation, the expanded land, the Kingdom, blessing, prosperity, the earth changing, the land of Israel changing, glory coming, Israel being the most prominent powerful nation on the face of the earth, Messiah reigning, all joy, all peace, all blessing.

That's what they waited for. They had followed Jesus, these men had, including the Twelve Apostles and others called disciples. They had followed Him for over two years. And all along they had hoped that He would be the Messiah. They had hoped He would be the Messiah, now they know it. Here they finally affirm they know it.

However, fast on the heels of that most glorious of all revelations, that most wondrous of all knowledge and conviction and confidence, comes the incomprehensible bad news that the Messiah is going to be killed and I'm not sure after that they heard the part about the resurrection. Shocking news, so shocking that Peter goes from being a hero to being an anti-hero. So shocking that he goes from being a spokesman for God, to being a spokesman for Satan. Such is the paradox of this hour, two colliding revelations. He is Messiah, the one whose life will bring salvation and blessing to Israel and the world, yet He will be killed by the people of Israel and the world.

Finally, these disciples have come to the place where they can say, "You're the Christ. You are the Christ." Already they have said, "Truly You're the Son of God," that's as to His person, being Christ is as to His work as the deliverer and the anointed one, the Prophet, Priest and King promised. They said, "Truly You're the Son of God," when He walked on water after the feeding of the five thousand. They have confirmed His deity and now they confirm His messianic office. And both of these come in just a few weeks. They've come to the rarified air, you might say, of the Mount Everest of revelation, they've come to the summit. You're the Son of God and You are the Christ, only to be knocked off the summit into the lowest valley below. It is an oxymoron to them that the Messiah, the source of life, would be killed, that the Messiah, the King of Israel would be rejected by Israel. These are colliding realities that constitute the good news and the bad news.

So let's look, first of all, at the good news...the good news, verses 27 to 30. "Jesus went out," now we'll stop there just long enough to go back to remember in verses 22 to 26, the prior passage, they were in Bethsaida which is on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, a little bit east of Capernaum. This town was the home of three of the Apostles. A familiar place, Jesus had done many, many miracles there, many works there. In fact judgment was pronounced on that town because there were so many works there that their punishment in the day of final judgment will be worse than the punishment of Tyre and Sidon, two idolatrous pagan cities, because of the revelation of Jesus that they had.

Well He's back in a very familiar place, and familiar to the Apostles, a familiar town to all of them there on the north shore where many of them plied their trade as fishermen in the hometown of at least three. The conclusion of His ministry there was the healing of a blind man in private. He says to the blind man in verse 26, "Go home, don't go into the village." This is another one of those things in the gospel of Mark where Jesus says, "I don't want this spread around." And we'll look at that in a

moment.

So He's finished that one final miracle, as it were, in the town of Bethsaida, now developing into a city. And then it says in verse 27, "He went out." So we can assume that He left Bethsaida and went straight north because it says He went along with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. That would be 25 miles straight north of Bethsaida which was very near the Sea of Galilee called Fishing House, so we would assume its connection with fishing, that is Bethsaida, straight north to Caesarea Philippi. That is on the...that is the last outpost in Galilee, that's the last outpost in Israel. It's very near the ancient town of Dan. And you remember back in Judges chapter 20 and in 1 Chronicles, when you wanted to know the length of the land of Israel, you would say that it went from Dan to Beersheba...Beersheba was the southernmost outpost on the border and Dan was the northernmost outpost on the border. And Caesarea Philippi was up there on that northern border, mostly a Gentile city, it was mostly occupied by Gentiles although officially it was in the territory of Galilee in Israel. Originally its name was Paneas, it had been named by the pagans who lived there once and dominated that city for the god Pan. Have you ever heard of a pan flute? It is because in Greek mythology, Pan is a half-man, half-goat who plays a flute. And supposedly, this mythical character was born in a cave in this vicinity and so it came to be identified with that. There would have been a shrine to Pan still there, although his name had been replaced. And the reason it was replaced was that Herod the Great had been given that territory by Caesar Augustus and he had been given responsibility of that and all of Israel to rule on behalf of Rome, really over the Jews.

When he died, he split his realm into four parts. Gave it to his four sons. This part fell into the hands of his son Philip, Herod Philip the Tetrarch as he is known, who also ruled the area where Bethsaida was. This area fell into the hands of Philip the Tetrarch and it was a political thing to do when you got an area to do deference to Caesar to keep him on your good side. So he changed the name to Caesarea, which is a form of Caesar. It's not to be confused, by the way, with the southern coastal Caesarea, west of Jerusalem. But, you know, naming cities after Caesar was something lots of folks wanted to do, to curry political favor. This was, however, Caesarea Philippi, connected with Philip the Tetrarch.

It is, as I said, a Gentile area. If you go 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, you get into the shadow of the foot of Mount Hermon which rises nine thousand feet up and this area would have been one of the three headwaters for the water that flowed down into and made up the Jordan River. A place filled with idols because filled with Gentiles, because connected with idolatry in the past. The temple was there to Caesar Augustus. He was a mortal deity, if there is such a thing. Paneas was a mythical deity, he was a mortal deity.

The area was generally hostile to Judaism. It was generally hostile to Scripture. And so it's a good location for the Lord to clarify that not all religions are, after all, acceptable. There's only one Lord, one living God and when Peter says, "You're the Son of the living God," he had to be playing off all the dead idols that made up the panoply of deities which people in Gentile realms worshiped.

So they're in that area, in that region. They are on the way, it says, to Caesarea Philippi and they have an ongoing conversation. You can't...you can't expect when you read a text of Scripture that that's all that was said, okay? I think we understand that, right? We get a synopsis of what was said, we get a summary of what was said. This is conversation going on as they move through the villages that made up the region around the city of Caesarea Philippi.

They've been with our Lord for two and a half years. Luke adds in Luke 9:18 his section on the same event that Jesus had been praying, as, of course, was His custom. Comes back from praying and He gets together with the disciples. And then Mark says He questioned His disciples.

Now look, they've had two and a half years of school, it's time for the exam. "Two and a half years they have been 24/7 with our Lord, two and a half years of divine revelation, two and a half years of thousands of miracles, two and a half years of the most profound teaching imaginable, and unimaginable, two and a half years for them to see everything they needed to see to learn everything they needed to learn. And recently it seemed as though His power had been ramped up, that vast powerful miracle of creating enough food for nearly 25 thousand people, let's say, and then it followed a few weeks later, that in the area near Bethsaida with another similar feeding in Decapolis that perhaps approached 20 thousand people and He created food out of nothing. And there was that walking on the water episode of which Peter was an eyewitness, for he did it himself under the power of the Lord. And then there were the great healings, healing of Gentiles on the little tour in the Gentile areas and healings of Jews. There may have been a flurry of these things recently, but the massive miracles of creating food, creative miracles visible in every sense should have been sort of the final culminating evidences they needed to affirm that this is indeed their Messiah. They've had enough revelation to be believers.

Now let me say this. Galilee had had enough revelation to be damned. Okay? They were, in the words of Romans 1, without excuse. They had enough revelation to be judged. There's no question about that. And Jesus judges them. There's a passage in John 12 in verse 36 where Jesus says, "While you have the light, believe in the light so that you may become sons of light." He says in the verse before, "Walk while you have the light so the darkness will not overtake you." And then it says, "These things Jesus spoke," verse 36, "and He went away and hid Himself from them." You've had the light, you've had the light, you've had the light, no more light.

This incident comes at the end of His life, just before the Upper Room discourse in His passion week. It's over. He went away. Verse 37, "Though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him."

Was this a shock and a surprise? No. It fulfills the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke, "Lord, who has believed our report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For this reason they could not believe." You will not believe and now you cannot believe. You've passed the point where it's even possible.

Listen, if there was enough revelation to condemn unbelievers, there is enough revelation to convince believers. They shouldn't have been asking these questions. Why does it take them so long to make this confession? And I remind you that this is the first time any person, any human in the gospel of Mark makes this confession about who Jesus is. The Father makes it at the baptism. The demons make it several times. But it's not until now, two and a half years into this, with only some months left until the cross, that they finally make this confession. It's about time.

So, when we come to this passage then, first comes the good news, and that is the confession, and it launched by an exam. I love these kinds of exams, there's only two questions in this exam...I like a two-question exam, get right to the point. Two questions: question number one, "He was questioning His disciples saying to them," and this is in conversation back and forth, ebb and flow, "Who do the people," *hoi anthroi*, it's a generic term, "Who do the people say that I am? Just another prophet?

Who do they say I am?" the people. Luke 9:18 says, "He also said, as the conversation went on, 'What do the crowds say about Me?' and He used the word *ockchlos* meaning crowd, or masses. Luke's favorite word to refer to the uncommitted crowds who followed for the miracles and the entertainment, but were impenitent, hard-hearted, self-righteous, indifferent and unbelieving. "Who do they say I am?"

In fact, in Matthew He adds that He said, "Who do they say I the Son of Man am?" What's human insight? Give me the answer of human insight?

The response comes in verse 28, and again, you remember the questions being asked and answered and battered around a little bit? "And so they said to Him, 'Somebody said John the Baptist,'" that seemed to always lead the parade of options. "And somebody else says Elijah, and there are others who think one of the prophets."

And you can imagine in the conversation as it goes back and forth that they're giving Him these names...John the Baptist? That's the most common notion. How could it be John the Baptist, he was dead? Had his head chopped off. Don't you remember Matthew 14:1 to 4, Luke 9:7 to 9, that Herod who chopped off his head when he heard about Jesus going everywhere, doing all these miracles said, "John the Baptist has come back from the dead?" Back from the dead. That seems to be the popular notion because you couldn't deny that Jesus was a prophet. You couldn't deny that He was a miracle worker. So maybe He was a resurrected John the Baptist.

Well others had other opinions. Some thought He was Elijah. Why would they pick Elijah? Well they would pick John the Baptist because John the Baptist was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. John even declared himself to be the forerunner of the Messiah. And Elijah, according to Malachi chapter 3 and chapter 4 was to come to the earth just prior to Messiah's arrival. So if it's not John the Baptist, maybe He's not John the Baptist raised from the dead, maybe He's Elijah. Elijah, after all, according to 2 Kings 2, had been taken to heaven and didn't die. Well maybe he's come back as Malachi said he would. And according to Matthew, somebody else said Jeremiah, some think You're Jeremiah. Now why would they pull Jeremiah out? Well there was a very kind of bizarre tradition among the Jews at this time that Jeremiah in anticipation of the Babylonian captivity realizing what was coming, went to the temple and took the altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant, took them away and put them somewhere at Mount Nebo, and according to the tradition, before Messiah returned, Jeremiah would return and he would go get the altar of incense, he would go get the ark and when he recovered the ark, then Messiah would come in His glory.

So there were all these possibilities. By the way, they were all wrong. The tradition about Jeremiah shows up in 2 Maccabees, that intertestamental apocryphal book, but they were all short of the truth. But here's what they all had in common...they knew that Jesus had to be a prophet. They knew He had to be from God. But they also were convinced that He could not be the Messiah, not possible, absolutely not possible.

Why could He not be the Messiah? Because they had a very highly developed Messianic concept, political ruler, military power, overthrows Rome, destroys all Israel's enemies, brings blessedness to Israel, prosperity to Israel, permanent peace to Israel, elevates Israel to be the greatest nation on the face of the earth, all other nations are under the shadow of Israel. The Messiah reigns in Israel and dominates the world, righteousness flows. They took all the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, the desert blossoms like a rose, Isaiah's prophecies about the character of the Kingdom,

all of that, the promises to David all fulfilled, the promises to Abraham all fulfilled, the promise of the New Covenant to Jeremiah, the salvation of Israel fulfilled and the salvation of Gentiles as the gospel extends to the earth.

Where was all this? Their messianic concept was highly developed and so they couldn't get to the point where they saw Jesus as the Messiah, cause He didn't fit that. He wasn't a military leader. He wasn't the conqueror. He wasn't a destroyer of armies. He didn't look like a king, act like a king. So they come up short. John 3:1 to 2, "We know You are a teacher come from God because nobody can do what You do except God be with him." So we get that...we get it, You are a prophet from God. And that's what they're all saying, that's the popular view...John the Baptist, Jeremiah, Elijah and I'm sure they threw in some others. That's question number one on the test.

The second question in verse 29, "He continued by questioning them, 'But who do you say that I am?'" And, by the way, that is the most important question that you will ever answer. That is the most important question that any human being will ever answer...who is Jesus Christ? Everybody on this planet is accountable to God eternally for the answer to that question. Wrong answer means hell. Right answer means heaven. Common people have answers to that, philosophers have answers, pseudo-scholars have answers, liberal theologians have answers, Muslims have answers to that, Jews have answer to that, secularists, atheists, humanists, religionists...answers, however, that condemn them, wrong answers.

And then we're all exposed to the endless books on the search for the historical Jesus. Articles that have been written, television seminars and series that have been portrayed as searching for the real Jesus. Whenever you see anybody searching for the real Jesus, you know it's a satanic operation. What it is, is a veil to attack on the Bible. It's not hard to find them if you read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. I haven't found it difficult at all...not at all.

In fact, they...the disciples...conclude exactly what John says the gospels were written to prove. John 20:31, "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." That's why the four gospels are written, John 20:31. It comes at the end of the fourth gospel...they're all written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. What is Peter's confession? According to Matthew's full presentation, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter confesses exactly what the gospels are demonstrating. He doesn't have the gospels, he's there, he lives it.

So he comes to the conclusion that any good faithful gospel reader has to come to, so don't give me any nonsense about your searching for the historical Jesus outside the gospels. That is a pretext for trying to destroy the scriptures and that is Satan's game.

So, the question...who do you say that I am? Peter answered, he is now the established spokesman, and I'm sure they were talking about this all the time. I'm sure as they went around day after day were always talking about...Is He...Is He not? Who is He? But this is the first time a confession is made in Mark. "You are the Christ." That's the second time the word "Christ" has been used in the gospel of Mark. The first time is in 1:1, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We haven't heard that word in eight chapters. *Christos*, Hebrew equivalent for anointed. *Christos* is not a name, Jesus is His name. You should call His name Jesus. The name above every name given to Him after the resurrection is Lord. Jesus is His name, Lord is His ultimate title.

What is Christ? That is the word for anointed that defines His work. He is God's promised King, prophet, priest. In fact, if you read Luke, the full statement of Peter, "You are the Christ of God." If you read Matthew, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." I don't think Peter said one thing, I think he repeated it several ways in the conversation. You are...they got it right...You're the Christ, the Son of the living God...according to Matthew 16.

You say, "Well what are they thinking for two and a half years?" Oh, they were thinking that He was. They were thinking He was God, Son of God. They were thinking He was the Messiah. Of course they were. In fact, they were...they were mostly convinced that He was, why else would they turn their backs on Judaism, right? Why else would they walk away from the darkness? Why else would they follow Jesus to this extent?

By the way, many of His disciples had long since departed, right? John 6, they didn't walk with Him anymore. He said things that scared them away. But they're still here. Do they believe that He is the Son of God? They said it on the lake when He walked on the water, "Truly You are the Son of God." Do they believe He's the Messiah? They have...they have to some degree believed it all along. Why? John the Baptist, John 1:34 said, "You're the Son of God," He's the Son of God. John the Baptist said, "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." John the Baptist identified Him as the Messiah. They accepted that. And in John 1:41, Andrew proclaims Jesus to be the Messiah. And Nathaniel calls Him the Son of God, the King of Israel.

So at the very outset based on the testimony of John the Baptist before they had seen anything, they acknowledged that Jesus could be the Messiah. And they said it, "He's the King of Israel, He's the Son of God, He's the Messiah." But through the years, they struggle with that. They don't struggle because there's no evidence of divine power. They just struggle because He doesn't conform to their preconceived patterns. It's like, "He that is convinced against his will is unconvinced still." It's just a really hard hurdle to get over. They struggle with doubts because as the people concluded, He can't be the Messiah, so He has to be somebody short of the Messiah, John the Baptist, the forerunner to the Messiah, Elijah who will come back before the Messiah, Jeremiah who will come back before the Messiah. But nobody is saying He's the Messiah. He doesn't fit the preconceived theological package. He's maybe obviously a prophet of God, we'll grant Him that. But He just hasn't done what the Messiah will do. Where's the conquest? Where's national independence? National freedom? Power? Blessing? Where's the overthrow of Rome? And He's so meek and lowly and humble and submissive and pays taxes to Rome and He's hated by the leaders of Israel.

In fact, it was so bewildering compared to their messianic view that even John the Baptist got confused. John the Baptist, the one who was His forerunner, the one who was related to Him, the one whose mothers were related, who talked about all these issues? John the Baptist must have heard from his own family all the story about how the angel came and announced to his mom and dad that he would be born and that he would be the forerunner of the Messiah and they must have told him about how Mary came and bore the child who was the Messiah, and Jesus was his relative and he knew who He was, and it was all angelic, divine revelation, and he heard perhaps again and again the incredible stories of the annunciation and the birth of the Messiah, and yet he gets confused. Why?

Well he's in prison. This doesn't look like the right plan here. So he sends some of his disciples and they come to Jesus and they say, "We want to know whether You're the Messiah or we should look

for somebody else.” That was the question everybody had. It can’t be You. Are You just another prophet and then the Messiah?

So you can understand they’re fluctuating between fear and doubt. And it’s not so much that they don’t accept that He’s the Son of God, the Messiah, it’s really not deniable. It’s just that they can’t take full ownership of it because it doesn’t look the way they think it should look. But here at last, the truth of His deity and Messiahship is settled. And though they continue to have doubts and fears about the plan, they don’t have doubts and fears about the person anymore, okay? They settle that here.

Jesus was the Son of Man, He also was the Son of God, by nature, man, and by nature, God. He’s not a mythical deity like Pan, and He’s not a mortal deity like Caesar. This confession comes out of Peter’s mouth, but it’s collective. But it isn’t just the result of experience. It isn’t just the result of empiricism. It isn’t just the result of human reason. It isn’t just connecting the obvious dots because when Peter says, “You’re the Christ, the Son of the living God,” immediately this is what Jesus said to him, recorded in Matthew 16:17, “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonas, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you but My Father who is in heaven.”

Human reason doesn’t get all the way. Empiricism doesn’t get all the way. Experience doesn’t get all the way. It requires divine intervention to make this confession. That’s why 1 Corinthians 12:3 says, “No man can confess Jesus as Lord but by the Holy Spirit.” It’s a divine work and this is the moment. There were moments before this. There was a moment on the sea when they said, “Truly You are the Son of God.” That was a divine revelatory moment, “Truly You are the Son of God.” But Messiah, You just don’t fit the picture. Now they say, “You are the Christos, You are the Anointed One, You are Messiah, the One who has come as the prophet, priest and king to reign and rule, You are.”

And I would just extend this reality to say to you that no one makes the full confession of Jesus as Lord and Christ but by the intervention of God. No one is fully convinced unless God gives understanding. No man comes unto Me, Jesus said in John 6, unless the Father draws Him.” First Corinthians he says, “The only way you’ll know the truth is when the Spirit of God teaches you...the Spirit of God teaches you. The natural man understands not the things of God, they’re known only to those who are taught by the Holy Spirit.”

I love Matthew 11 and verse 27, along this same line, because it affirms that truth which I have just articulated to you. “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.” You can’t know God unless the Son reveals Him to you. You can’t know Christ unless the Spirit reveals Him to you.

So here comes the revelation from God as to who Jesus is. The remaining doubts disappear. It doesn’t mean they didn’t doubt the plan. Oh, they doubt the plan. But it does mean from here they don’t doubt the person. And that’s where you start, isn’t it? The truth of Jesus Christ was then believed because the full revelation came from God to them. Jesus was confessed as the Messiah because the work of God and the work of the Holy Spirit had been done in their hearts. They confess the truth in clear and deliberate contrast to the popular viewpoints. Everybody says You’re something other than Messiah, we say You’re Messiah. And they were the few who found the narrow way.

The good news ends with a familiar warning in verse 30. He warned them to tell no one about Him. And we covered that so many times...warning, *epitimaō*, strong, strong word...to command, to warn, to rebuke, very strong compound word, sternly commands them, "Do not...do not spread this around. Don't tell anybody about Me."

Why? Did He not want to excite His enemies? Some people think that. Did He not want to excite His friends? And now that He has said He's the Messiah, they're going to escalate something like they did in John 6 when they tried to make Him King by force, remember that?, after He had fed them. Is it because He doesn't want to excite His enemies or His friends? No...no. He's not going to...He's not going to diminish the hatred of His enemies, right? They're still going to be after Him and they're going to hate Him all the way till they get Him on the cross. And He's still not going to be able to quell the excitement of some of His superficial friends, witness a few months down the road when He enters into Jerusalem at the triumphal entry and the whole city is screaming at Him as the King, as the Messiah. He's not simply trying to keep His enemies off His back and keep His friends from pushing Him into things He doesn't want to do. I've told you before and I say it again, the reason He says "Don't tell anyone about this" is because He's instructing the disciples that this is not the full message. He didn't want miracles spread around because it wasn't the full message that He was a miracle worker. To say He's the Messiah is not the full message. You can pronounce Jesus as the Messiah, but that's not the full message because it's missing the gospel.

Well that's evident because of the next verse, the bad news. Don't tell anyone, you've got more to learn. "And He began," which means this began the theme of His teaching from here on out, "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again."

Bad news. The best news ever just pronounced, followed by the worst news. What a blow. The last thing they would expect on the hills of a grand moment of revelation and clarity was a death announcement. How could the Messiah of God, the Redeemer of Israel, the conqueror of all God's enemies suffer? Suffer?

By the way, "began to teach," it becomes the theme. Chapter 9 verse 31, "As they go He was teaching His disciples, telling them, 'Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men.'" when He's been killed, He'll rise three days later. Chapter 10 verse 33, "Behold, we're going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes will condemn Him to death, hand Him over to the Gentiles. They'll mock Him, spit on Him and scourge Him and kill Him. Three days later He'll rise again."

What's the point of all of this? Well He says it in verse 45 of chapter 10. "The Son of Man didn't come to be served, but to give His life a ransom for many," as Phil was singing about. He came to give His life a ransom for many. He would unfold that for them. Why You going to die? Why You going to die? You must suffer? It's a little particle, *de*, it means it's necessary, it is required that You suffer many things. What do You many things? Betrayal, arrest, denial, abandonment, injustice, prison, mockery, beating, crucifixion, disaffection from His disciples, etc., etc. You're going to suffer many things, the Father determined, and be rejected, *apodokimazo*. *Dokimazo* means to test something to see if it's true, to validate it, to access it. This is a compound form of that and it means to reject after investigation.

Jesus will suffer many things. One of those things will be an investigation. First Annas, Caiaphas,

then Herod, then Pilate, all the mock trial. The verb is carefully selected. After examination, after assessment, after testing, He will be rejected as flawed and faulty and false but not without some kind of form of careful consideration. All of this comes to a head in the trials of Jesus. And the strange, bizarre aspect of it is that it's not going to be by pagans and it's not going to be by self-confessed, wicked, godless men, but all of this is going to come by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes. The Sanhedrin conducted all of that. They were the ones responsible for His betrayal. They bought Judas for His arrest. They were the ones who brought about the mock trials. They were the ones who handed Him over to the Romans for all the physical abuse. They were the ruling counsel of Judaism. They were the elite, 70 men, they were made up of elders, judges, tribal heads, chief priests...those would be the temple system priests, the Sadducees, the religious liberals, and then there were the scribes who would be the Pharisees. So it was a coalition government made up of Pharisees, Sadducees who were enemies theologically, and other important leaders in the community and judges and they constituted this coalition, religious governing body over Israel and it was they who would be responsible for the killing of the Messiah.

How could they ever process this? I guess they didn't think of Isaiah 53, "He would be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace would fall on Him and by His stripes we would be healed." Isaiah 53 lays it out. The suffering servant, the servant will suffer and die. And so the bad news comes on the heels of the good news and it's the worst news imaginable, it's incomprehensible, they can't even process it. I don't think they even heard the last part, "And after three days rise again." He had said that before early in His ministry before these guys even were a part of His life when He said, "Destroy this body and in three days I'll raise it up." Here He says it again. Did they know Psalm 16, "That the Holy One will not see corruption but the Lord will show them the path of life," a prophecy of the resurrection. Peter preached on that resurrection passage, didn't he?, on the day of Pentecost. When Peter preached the resurrection on the first day that the church was born and the Spirit came, he chose Psalm 16 which proves the resurrection. Did they not know Isaiah 53 ends in verses 10 to 12 that the Messiah will be glorified and exalted and lifted up after His substitutionary death in which He dies as a substitute for transgressors? The resurrection is certain. It's as certain as the crucifixion.

So the bad news is really good news cause He's going to be killed but He's going to be killed for you. He's going to die in your place. He's going to be basically punished for your sins, made sin for us, 2 Corinthians 5:21. He's become a curse for us, Galatians 3. And then Matthew 16:21 says, "From that time on, Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, scribes, be killed, be raised up third day." I think this was daily conversation from here on out. No questions anymore about the person but they struggle with the plan. They really struggle with the plan.

The struggle was not because Jesus wasn't clear. Please notice verse 22, He was stating the matter plainly, *parrhesia*, it means clearly. I'd like that to be my life verse. "He was stating the matter clearly." Clear is good, clear is good. Only here He's stating something crystal-clear, unmistakable. You don't have to be a scholar to figure out what He said. It's not esoteric mystical language. He was stating it clearly⁷. Their confusion then comes not from His communication. But they can't accept the plan.

So Peter, the middle of verse 32, took Him aside. Grabbed Him. "Come with me, Lord, Son of God, Messiah, come with me." Brash? Yeah. Presumptuous? Absolutely. Drunk with privilege? Sure. Encouraged by a sense of importance from the Lord's affirmation that you receive what you receive

from God, He is full of love and kind intentions. There's no question about the person but he's got some questions about the plan. So he grabs the Lord and pulls Him away.

Now if you ever questioned the humanity of Jesus, this is one of the greatest illustrations in the gospels of how human Jesus was. He treated Him like a man because He was a man.

Pulls Him aside. He has to give Him a better understanding of this whole Messiahship responsibility. And then it says, "He began to rebuke Him." He began to rebuke Him. Wow! It's the same word used before when Jesus rebuked them or warned them not to tell anybody, strong, strong word. He goes after Jesus and he really takes Him on.

Matthew says it this way, "God forbid, Lord, this shall never happen to You." He's not asking questions, he's making statements. Idiomatically, an interesting phrase in Matthew, "May God grant You better than that. Whoa! This isn't going to happen and we're not going to allow this."

Well, verse 33, "Turning around and seeing His disciples, He had been pulled away by Peter, He rebuked Peter so they could all hear." Same word again, third time it's used...strong, and said, "Get behind Me, Satan." Whoa! First of all, Matthew says, he said, "You're a stumbling block, you're in the way, you're a hindrance." Then the real blow, "Get out of My sight, Satan," that's literally what it says. "Get out of My sight, Satan." It's a bad idea for followers to play God. When you put yourself in the place of God, you end up putting yourself up in the place of Satan. He says, "You're not setting your mind on God's interests but man's." That's an indictment of Peter. Peter didn't want a cross. These guys were looking for glory. Do we remember that Peter in...that James and John had come with their mother to ask if they could sit on the right and the left in the Kingdom? I mean, it was all about elevation, glory, power, prosperity. Jesus says, "You are an offense to Me," according to Matthew. "You're a *skandalon*. *Skandalon* means you're a trap, you're a baited trap. You're a Satan trap. You're a Satan stumbling block. If you're trying to dissuade Me from the cross, you're on Satan's side. Get out of My sight."

Boy, has ever a man been so high and so low so fast? Whoa. Peter and the others were caught in the narrowness of the present and failed to grasp the echoes of the past prophets and the future glories of the resurrection. "You're the stumbling block if you try to stop Me from the cross, which itself will be the stumbling block."

Peter must have been crushed. But man's way and Satan's way is the path to glory and blessing and power without suffering, without pain. God's way is glory, blessing, power through suffering...through suffering. Peter learned, he really did. It would be good to close by looking at 1 Peter, just a couple of comments.

First Peter 2:21, Peter writes, "You've been called for this purpose since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps. He suffered and so will you. He committed no sin nor was any deceit found in His mouth...verse 22...while being reviled, He didn't revile in return. While suffering, He uttered no threats but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously."

He's writing to suffering believers who are being persecuted and he's saying, "This is the path to glory and the model is your Savior." This is Jesus' path to glory, this is our path as well. And then verse 24 shows he understood the substitutionary atonement of Christ. "He Himself bore our sins in

His body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.” And he did now understand Isaiah 53, for he draws this final statement from it, “By His wounds you are healed.”

So he understood the substitutionary atonement and he understood the path to glory through suffering, for even the Savior as well as for all who follow the Savior. So he says in chapter 4 verse 12, “Don’t be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you. Don’t be surprised.” Verse 13, “Through the degree you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing.” Verse 19, “Those who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. Learn to suffer, it’s the path, it’s the path to glory.” Chapter 5 verse 10, “After you’ve suffered a little while, the God of all grace who called you to His eternal glory in Christ will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.” And then here is a doxology that must have come from his own experience, “To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Peter needed to be perfected, confirmed, strengthened, establish, didn’t he? And it was a path of suffering that took him there.

The good news, Jesus is Messiah, the Son of God. The bad news, He’s going to die. The good news, He’s going to rise. And the really good news is called the gospel that Jesus died and rose again for the salvation of all who believe in Him.

Father, this is why we’re here to worship, cause of the glory of the gospel. Confirm it to our hearts, we pray in Christ’s name. Amen.

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