

## **Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Session 14, Yeast, Blindman, Peter's Confession (Mark 8:14-9:1) Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Jennings, Mark, Session 14, Yeast, Blindman, Peter's Confession (Mark 8:14-9:1), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Mark Jennings' lecture on Mark 8:14-9:1 analyzes a pivotal section of the Gospel. The discussion begins with Jesus warning the disciples about the "yeast" of the Pharisees and Herod, highlighting their lack of spiritual understanding despite witnessing miracles. Jennings interprets the subsequent healing of a blind man in stages as a metaphor for the disciples' gradual comprehension of Jesus' identity. This leads to Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah, which is immediately followed by Jesus' teaching about his necessary suffering, death, and resurrection, a concept Peter initially rejects. The lecture concludes with Jesus' call to true discipleship, involving self-denial and a willingness to suffer, and a controversial prediction about some present seeing the kingdom of God come with power, which Jennings connects to the resurrection.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Jennings, Mark, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in  
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]  
Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament →  
Gospels → Mark).**



**Jennings\_Mark\_Ses  
sion14.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Jennings, Mark, Session 14, Yeast, Blindman, Peter's Confession (Mark 8:14-9:1)**

#### **Briefing Document: Mark 8:14-9:1 - Yeast, Blind Man, Peter's Confession**

##### **Overview:**

This lecture by Dr. Mark Jennings focuses on a pivotal section in the Gospel of Mark (8:14-9:1), marking a transition from the presentation of Jesus' authority to the theme of his suffering and journey to Jerusalem. The passage encompasses Jesus' warning about the "yeast" of the Pharisees and Herod, the healing of the blind man in two stages, Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus' subsequent teaching about his impending suffering and resurrection, Peter's rebuke and Jesus' strong response, and Jesus' call to true discipleship. Jennings emphasizes the disciples' lack of understanding, the symbolic nature of the blind man's healing, the significance of Peter's confession as a turning point, and the radical implications of following a suffering Messiah.

##### **Main Themes and Important Ideas:**

#### **1. The Disciples' Lack of Understanding (8:14-21):**

- Following the feeding of the 4,000, the disciples are preoccupied with their lack of bread, demonstrating a failure to grasp the significance of Jesus' miraculous provisions.
- Jesus warns them to "Be careful... Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod" (Mark 8:15). The disciples misinterpret this as a concern about physical bread.
- Jennings highlights the "comical" aspect of this misunderstanding, emphasizing the disciples' "forgetfulness" and their focus on human concerns rather than the spiritual significance of Jesus' presence and actions.
- Jesus rebukes them with a series of questions drawing parallels to Old Testament passages (Jeremiah 5:21, Ezekiel 12:2, Isaiah 6:9, echoed in Mark 4:11-12): "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? And don't you remember?" (Mark 8:17-18).

- Jennings argues that their concern over bread reveals a mindset closer to the Pharisees and Herod, who were focused on human traditions and power and ultimately sought Jesus' death.
- The "yeast" metaphor, according to Jennings, represents the pervasive and corrupting influence of the Pharisees' and Herod's ideologies. He also connects the call to "remember" to the Old Testament emphasis on recalling God's great acts, suggesting the disciples are failing to remember Jesus' miraculous deeds in this crucial way.
- The repetition of Jesus' question, "Do you still not understand?" (Mark 8:21), underscores their incomplete comprehension of who Jesus is and what he is doing.

## **2. The Healing of the Blind Man as a Parable (8:22-26):**

- The healing of the blind man in two stages is presented not as a failure of Jesus' power, but as a deliberate act with symbolic meaning. "Jesus purposefully did this in a two-stage miracle. Not accidentally or unable, an inability."
- The initial partial sight ("I see people. They look like trees walking around" - Mark 8:24) represents the disciples' current state of understanding – they have some insight but lack full clarity.
- The second touch restores his sight fully, symbolizing the future clarity the disciples will eventually attain. "This becomes a picture of what is happening to the disciples. That they could not see... they're starting to see, but not clearly. But there's hope. This miracle presents hope that they will eventually see clearly."
- Jennings suggests this miracle serves as an explanation to the reader of Mark regarding the disciples' imperfect understanding at this point in the narrative.

## **3. Peter's Confession and the Turning Point (8:27-30):**

- Jesus' question to his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" (Mark 8:27), marks the first time Jesus directly inquires about his own identity. The answers reflect various popular beliefs (John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets).
- The crucial question follows: "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" (Mark 8:29). Peter, speaking as the leader of the disciples, declares, "You are the Messiah" (Mark 8:29).

- Jennings emphasizes Peter's role as the disciples' spokesperson and suggests the other eleven are in agreement with this confession.
- Jesus' warning to them "not to tell anyone about him" (Mark 8:30) implies acceptance of Peter's confession while also highlighting the need for the timing and nature of his messiahship to be understood correctly.

#### **4. Jesus' Teaching on the Suffering Son of Man (8:31-33):**

- Following Peter's confession, Jesus "began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, that he must be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). This marks a significant shift in Jesus' teaching focus towards his impending suffering and resurrection.
- Jennings highlights the "preordained quality" of this suffering, emphasizing the use of "must." He connects the "Son of Man" title to Daniel 7 imagery and notes the blending of the Messianic confession with the concept of the suffering servant from Isaiah.
- The use of "killed" instead of "crucified" and "after three days rise again" instead of "on the third day" are noted as details that potentially support the historicity of the account, as later church writings might have used different phrasing.
- Jesus speaks "plainly" about this (Mark 8:32) to the disciples, contrasting with his use of parables for the crowds.

#### **5. Peter's Rebuke and Jesus' Strong Reprimand (8:32-33):**

- Peter, unable to reconcile the idea of a suffering Messiah with his understanding, "took him aside and began to rebuke him" (Mark 8:32).
- Jesus' immediate and forceful response is to "turn and look at his disciples, and he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God but merely human concerns'" (Mark 8:33).
- Jennings stresses the severity of this rebuke, comparing Peter's mindset to that of Satan, who opposes God's plan. He also draws a parallel to Jesus' earlier rebukes of the Pharisees for prioritizing human traditions over God's commands.
- This incident reveals that the disciples' understanding of the Messiah is still rooted in human expectations rather than God's design.

## 6. The Call to True Discipleship (8:34-9:1):

- Jesus then calls "the crowd to him along with his disciples" (Mark 8:34) and lays out the cost of true discipleship: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34).
- This involves a complete rejection of worldly concerns and a willingness to embrace suffering, mirroring Jesus' own path. "True discipleship mirrors the path of the king, of the master. And Jesus has just said he must suffer. That means true discipleship also means an understanding of the necessity of suffering."
- The concept of losing one's life to save it is presented as a central paradox of following Jesus.
- The warning against being "ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation" (Mark 8:38) echoes the Old Testament theme of Israel's unfaithfulness and carries the consequence of the Son of Man being ashamed of them at the final judgment.
- The concluding statement in 9:1, "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power," is interpreted by Jennings not as a failed prediction of the Second Coming, nor solely as a reference to the transfiguration six days later. He argues that it most likely refers to the power demonstrated in the resurrection of Jesus, which will validate his claims about his identity and the nature of the kingdom.

### Key Takeaway:

This section of Mark's Gospel is a crucial turning point. Peter's confession acknowledges Jesus' messianic identity, but the subsequent revelation of the necessity of suffering clashes with the disciples' expectations. The healing of the blind man serves as a powerful metaphor for their ongoing journey towards spiritual understanding. Jesus' teaching on the cost of discipleship and his strong rebuke of Peter highlight the radical and counter-cultural nature of following the suffering Messiah. The promise in 9:1 points towards the ultimate demonstration of God's power in the resurrection.

## 4. Study Guide: Jennings, Mark, Session 14, Yeast, Blindman, Peter's Confession (Mark 8:14-9:1)

Study Guide: Mark 8:14-9:1

### Key Themes:

- The Disciples' Lack of Understanding
- The Nature of True Discipleship
- Jesus as the Suffering Messiah and Son of Man
- The Turning Point in Mark's Gospel

### Outline of the Passage:

- **Mark 8:14-21: The Yeast Warning and the Disciples' Forgetfulness:** Jesus warns the disciples about the "yeast" of the Pharisees and Herod, but they mistakenly interpret this literally as a concern about their lack of bread. Jesus rebukes their lack of understanding and their failure to remember the miraculous feedings.
- **Mark 8:22-26: The Healing of the Blind Man at Bethsaida:** Jesus heals a blind man in a two-stage process, where the man initially sees unclearly before his sight is fully restored. This miracle serves as a metaphor for the disciples' gradual but incomplete understanding of Jesus.
- **Mark 8:27-30: Peter's Confession:** Near Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asks his disciples who people say he is, and then specifically asks for their own understanding. Peter, speaking for the group, declares that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus then warns them not to tell anyone about this.
- **Mark 8:31-33: Jesus Predicts His Suffering and Peter's Rebuke:** Jesus begins to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, killed, and rise again. Peter rebukes Jesus for this prediction, and Jesus sharply rebukes Peter in return, identifying his perspective as aligned with "human concerns" rather than "the concerns of God."
- **Mark 8:34-9:1: The Cost of Discipleship:** Jesus calls the crowd and his disciples to him, teaching that true discipleship requires self-denial, taking up one's cross, and following him. He emphasizes the importance of losing one's life for his sake and the gospel. He warns against being ashamed of him and his words, and concludes

by stating that some present will see the kingdom of God come with power before they die.

### **Points for Deeper Consideration:**

- How does the disciples' concern about physical bread highlight their spiritual blindness?
- What does the metaphor of "yeast" signify in the context of the Pharisees and Herod?
- In what ways does the two-stage healing of the blind man mirror the disciples' journey of understanding?
- Why is Peter's confession a pivotal moment in Mark's Gospel?
- What is significant about Jesus' prediction of his suffering and resurrection immediately following Peter's confession?
- Why does Jesus react so strongly to Peter's rebuke?
- What are the implications of Jesus' teaching on the cost of discipleship?
- How does the idea of the "suffering Son of Man" challenge common expectations of the Messiah?
- What might Jesus mean by saying that some will see the kingdom of God come with power before they die?
- How does this section of Mark transition from demonstrating Jesus' authority to focusing on his suffering?

### **Quiz: Mark 8:14-9:1**

1. What was the disciples' immediate misunderstanding of Jesus' warning about the "yeast" of the Pharisees and Herod? Why is this significant?
2. Describe the unique aspect of the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida. How does Dr. Jennings interpret the significance of this two-stage miracle in relation to the disciples?
3. What question does Jesus ask his disciples near Caesarea Philippi that marks a shift in the narrative? What is Peter's response, and what does it indicate about the disciples' understanding at that moment?

4. Following Peter's confession, what crucial teaching does Jesus begin to impart to his disciples? How does this teaching contrast with typical expectations of the Messiah?
5. How does Peter react to Jesus' prediction of his suffering and death? What does Jesus' sharp rebuke of Peter reveal about Peter's perspective?
6. According to Jesus, what are the essential requirements for anyone who wants to be his disciple? What does the imagery of "taking up their cross" signify in this context?
7. What does Jesus mean when he asks, "What good is it for you to gain the whole world and yet forfeit your soul?" What point is he trying to emphasize about priorities?
8. How does Jesus connect being "ashamed" of him and his words with the "adulterous and sinful generation"? What Old Testament parallel does Dr. Jennings suggest for this phrase?
9. What promise does Jesus make in Mark 9:1 regarding the kingdom of God? What are the different interpretations discussed in the lecture regarding the fulfillment of this promise?
10. How does the narrative in Mark 8:14-9:1 represent a turning point or "hinge" in Mark's Gospel, according to Dr. Jennings? What is the major shift in focus that occurs?

**Answer Key: Mark 8:14-9:1**

1. The disciples thought Jesus was literally concerned about their having forgotten to bring enough bread for the boat. This is significant because it demonstrates their focus on physical needs and their failure to grasp the spiritual implications of Jesus' words and actions, despite witnessing his miracles.
2. The healing of the blind man at Bethsaida occurred in two stages, with the man initially seeing people indistinctly like "trees walking around" before his sight was fully restored. Dr. Jennings interprets this as a parable for the disciples' gradual and incomplete understanding of Jesus' identity and mission, with the hope of eventual clarity.
3. Jesus asks, "Who do you say I am?" This question shifts the focus from public opinion to the disciples' personal understanding. Peter answers, "You are the Messiah," indicating a recognition of Jesus' messianic identity, but as the



subsequent events show, their understanding of what this entails is still incomplete.

4. Jesus begins to teach that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the religious authorities, be killed, and rise again after three days. This teaching contradicted the prevailing Jewish expectation of a triumphant and powerful Messiah who would overthrow their oppressors.
5. Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, showing his rejection of the idea of a suffering Messiah. Jesus' sharp rebuke, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things," reveals that Peter's perspective aligned with worldly expectations rather than God's plan.
6. Jesus states that whoever wants to be his disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. "Taking up their cross" signifies a willingness to embrace suffering, sacrifice, and the potential for rejection and even death, mirroring Jesus' own path.
7. This rhetorical question emphasizes the ultimate value of one's soul over any earthly gain. Jesus is highlighting that true fulfillment and eternal life are found in following him, even if it means sacrificing worldly possessions and status.
8. Jesus links being ashamed of him and his words to the "adulterous and sinful generation," evoking the Israelites who lacked faith and disobeyed God in the wilderness. Dr. Jennings suggests this connects to the ongoing rejection of God's provision and covenant relationship.
9. Jesus states, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power." Interpretations include the transfiguration, the resurrection, or even the growth of the early church, with Dr. Jennings leaning towards the resurrection as the more contextually likely fulfillment related to the theme of suffering and subsequent power.
10. This section marks a critical transition in Mark's Gospel from primarily demonstrating Jesus' authority through miracles and teachings to focusing on the necessity of his suffering, death, and resurrection. Peter's confession serves as the high point of the first phase, leading into Jesus' explicit teaching about his impending passion and the true nature of discipleship.

## Essay Format Questions: Mark 8:14-9:1

1. Analyze the interactions between Jesus and his disciples in Mark 8:14-21, focusing on the theme of understanding and memory. How does their reaction to Jesus' warning about "yeast" and his subsequent questions reveal their spiritual condition at this point in the narrative?
2. Discuss the significance of the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26) within the broader context of Mark's Gospel, particularly in relation to the disciples' developing comprehension of Jesus' identity and mission. Consider the two-stage nature of the miracle and its potential symbolic meaning.
3. Examine the pivotal moment of Peter's confession in Mark 8:27-30 and Jesus' immediate response in Mark 8:31-33. How does this exchange serve as a turning point in the Gospel? What does Peter's rebuke reveal about his (and likely the other disciples') understanding of the Messiah, and why does Jesus react so strongly?
4. Explore Jesus' teachings on the cost of discipleship in Mark 8:34-9:1. What are the key demands Jesus makes of his followers, and how do these demands relate to his own impending suffering and death? How does the concept of "taking up one's cross" challenge conventional notions of success and power?
5. Evaluate the claim that Mark 8:14-9:1 functions as a "hinge" in Mark's Gospel. In what ways does this section signal a shift in focus, themes, and the portrayal of Jesus and his disciples? Support your argument with specific examples from the text and the lecture.

## Glossary of Key Terms: Mark 8:14-9:1

- **Yeast (in this context):** A metaphor used by Jesus to represent the corrupting influence and teachings of the Pharisees and Herod, likely referring to their hypocrisy, legalism, and political motivations.
- **Pharisees:** A Jewish religious and political party known for their strict adherence to the Law and oral traditions, often in opposition to Jesus.
- **Herod (Antipas):** The tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, known for his involvement in the death of John the Baptist and his curiosity about Jesus.
- **Messiah:** The promised deliverer and king of the Jewish people, expected to bring salvation and establish God's kingdom. Peter identifies Jesus as the Messiah.

- **Son of Man:** A title Jesus frequently used for himself, drawing from Daniel 7, emphasizing his authority, future glory, and, as revealed in this section, his suffering.
- **Suffering Servant:** An implicit reference to the figure in Isaiah 53 who would suffer and be rejected for the sins of others. Dr. Jennings suggests Jesus blends the identities of Messiah, Son of Man, and Suffering Servant.
- **Peter's Confession:** Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Messiah (Mark 8:29), a crucial moment that marks a recognition of Jesus' identity by the disciples.
- **Rebuke:** To express sharp disapproval or criticism. Peter rebukes Jesus for predicting his suffering, and Jesus sharply rebukes Peter for his lack of spiritual understanding.
- **Discipleship:** The state of being a follower or learner of Jesus Christ, involving commitment to his teachings and way of life. Jesus outlines the cost of true discipleship in this section.
- **Take up their cross:** A metaphor for self-denial, sacrifice, and willingness to endure hardship and suffering for the sake of following Jesus.
- **Kingdom of God:** God's reign and rule, both present in Jesus' ministry and future in its fullness. Jesus speaks of its coming with power.
- **Transfiguration:** A later event in the Gospels (Mark 9:2-8) where Jesus' divine glory is revealed to Peter, James, and John, often considered in discussions of Mark 9:1.
- **Historicity:** The quality of being based on historical facts or evidence. Dr. Jennings discusses the historicity of Peter's confession and the surrounding events.
- **Pedagogical:** Related to teaching. Some scholars have argued that the events around Peter's confession are too pedagogically structured to be entirely historical.
- **Christological:** Relating to the study of Christ, particularly his nature and person. Peter's confession is a key Christological statement.

## **5. FAQs on Jennings, Mark, Session 14, Yeast, Blindman, Peter's Confession (Mark 8:14-9:1), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions on Mark 8:14-9:1**

#### **1. Why does Jesus warn the disciples about the "yeast of the Pharisees and Herod" immediately after they discuss forgetting bread?**

Jesus' warning about the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod is not primarily about literal bread. Instead, "yeast" serves as a metaphor for the pervasive and corrupting influence of their beliefs and practices. The Pharisees were focused on rigid adherence to human traditions and sought signs to validate Jesus, while Herod was concerned with earthly power and had John the Baptist executed. The disciples' preoccupation with their lack of physical bread reveals their lack of understanding and trust in Jesus' provision, making them susceptible to the flawed perspectives represented by this "yeast." Jesus is urging them to be wary of these mindsets, which prioritize human concerns and reject his true identity and mission.

#### **2. What does Jesus mean when he asks the disciples, "Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened?"**

This series of questions highlights the disciples' spiritual blindness and lack of comprehension despite witnessing Jesus' miraculous works, specifically the feeding of the 5,000 and the 4,000. Their concern over a shortage of bread demonstrates that they have failed to grasp the significance of these events and the power and provision of Jesus. The reference to "hardened hearts" echoes Old Testament passages (like Jeremiah and Ezekiel) describing Israel's disobedience and resistance to God. Jesus is rebuking their inability to learn from his previous actions and to truly understand who he is and what he is doing.

### **3. How does the two-stage healing of the blind man at Bethsaida serve as a picture for the disciples' understanding?**

The unusual nature of this miracle, where the blind man initially sees people "like trees walking around" before his sight is fully restored, is intentionally symbolic. It mirrors the disciples' gradual and incomplete understanding of Jesus. They have been called by Jesus and are in his presence, hearing his teachings, and witnessing his power. This has begun to open their eyes, but their vision is still blurry and imperfect. The two-stage healing offers hope that their understanding will eventually become clear and complete, just as the blind man's sight was fully restored. It also serves as an explanation to the reader of Mark why the disciples seem so obtuse despite their close proximity to Jesus.

### **4. What is the significance of Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah in Mark's Gospel?**

Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi marks a crucial turning point in Mark's narrative. It signifies the culmination of the first major section, which focused on establishing Jesus' authority and identity through his words and deeds. Peter, as the leading disciple and spokesperson, acknowledges the truth about Jesus. This confession is implicitly accepted by Jesus, setting the stage for the second major section of the Gospel, which will focus on the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Messiah. It acts as a hinge between demonstrating Jesus' power and explaining the necessity of his suffering.

### **5. Why does Jesus immediately follow Peter's confession by teaching about the necessity of his suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection?**

Despite the accuracy of Peter's confession, Jesus knows that the disciples, like many at the time, held a different understanding of what it meant for the Messiah to come. They likely expected a powerful, conquering king who would establish an earthly kingdom. Jesus' teaching about the necessity of his suffering and death directly challenges these expectations. He reveals that his messianic role is intertwined with the suffering servant motif from Isaiah and the apocalyptic Son of Man figure from Daniel, necessitating rejection and sacrifice before ultimate triumph and resurrection. This teaching is crucial for correcting their flawed understanding of the Messiah.

**6. How does Peter's rebuke of Jesus after this teaching reveal a continued lack of understanding?**

Peter's strong reaction to Jesus' prediction of suffering and death, taking him aside and rebuking him, demonstrates that he, and by extension the other disciples, still do not grasp the true nature of Jesus' messianic mission. Peter's human understanding of the Messiah is one of power and glory, not suffering and rejection. His attempt to correct Jesus highlights the conflict between earthly, human perspectives and God's divine plan. It underscores the point that even after acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah, the disciples' comprehension of what that entails is still deeply flawed and aligned more with human expectations than divine necessity.

**7. What does Jesus mean when he tells Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the concerns of God but merely human concerns"?**

This harsh rebuke underscores the seriousness of Peter's misunderstanding and his opposition to God's will. By telling Peter to "get behind me, Satan," Jesus is not literally calling Peter Satan, but rather identifying his perspective at that moment as being aligned with the forces that oppose God's plan. Peter's focus on avoiding suffering and death is characterized as "merely human concerns," contrasting with "the concerns of God," which necessitate Jesus' sacrifice for the salvation of humanity. This rebuke serves as a strong correction to the disciples' flawed understanding and emphasizes the radical nature of true discipleship, which must embrace God's will, even when it involves suffering.

**8. How do Jesus' subsequent teachings about self-denial, taking up one's cross, and the shame of acknowledging him relate to the themes developed in this section?**

Jesus' call for his followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and not be ashamed of him directly stems from his teaching about his own impending suffering and the disciples' lack of understanding. Following Jesus as the suffering Messiah means embracing a similar path of self-sacrifice and potential rejection. "Taking up one's cross" symbolizes a willingness to endure hardship and even death for the sake of Christ and the gospel. The warning against being ashamed of Jesus in a "sinful generation" connects to the earlier judgment against those who lack faith and understanding. True discipleship requires a radical shift in priorities, valuing eternal life over worldly gain and aligning oneself with the seemingly paradoxical path of a suffering Savior. The promise of the kingdom of God coming with power likely refers to the transformative reality brought about by Jesus' resurrection, which will vindicate his suffering and establish his ultimate authority.