

Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Session 15, Transfiguration, Boy with Demon (Mark 9:2-50) Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Jennings, Mark, Session 15, Transfiguration, Boy with Demon (Mark 9:2-50), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mark Jennings' lecture focuses on Mark 9:2-50, covering the **Transfiguration of Jesus**, the **healing of a boy with a demon**, and **teachings on discipleship**. The lecture examines the **significance of the Transfiguration**, comparing it to Moses' experiences and highlighting the presence of Elijah. Jennings analyzes **Peter's response** and the **divine affirmation of Jesus as the Son of God**. The session further explores the **disciples' inability to cast out a demon**, Jesus' teaching on the necessity of prayer, and his **predictions of his suffering, death, and resurrection**, which the disciples struggled to understand. Finally, Jennings discusses Jesus' lesson on true greatness through **humility and servanthood**, using a child as an illustration of low status.

2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Jennings, Mark, Session 15 – 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).



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3. Briefing Document: Jennings, Mark, Session 15, Transfiguration, Boy with Demon (Mark 9:2-50)

Briefing Document: Mark 9:2-50 - Transfiguration, Boy with Demon, Discipleship (Dr. Mark Jennings, Lecture 15)

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Mark Jennings in his lecture on Mark 9:2-50. The lecture focuses on three key events: the Transfiguration of Jesus, the healing of the boy with a demon, and Jesus' teachings on discipleship. Dr. Jennings emphasizes understanding these events not in isolation but within the broader context of Mark's narrative and Jesus' preparation for his ultimate mission.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. The Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-13):

- **Preparation and Foreshadowing:** The Transfiguration is not an isolated event but one that Mark has been preparing the reader for. It also foreshadows Jesus' future glory and resurrection.
- "As we work through the Transfiguration, we remember we're also working through this not as an event in and of itself but also how Mark has been preparing us for the Transfiguration and what the Transfiguration itself prepares us for."
- **Parallels with Moses' Mount Sinai Experience:** Dr. Jennings highlights several parallels between the Transfiguration and Moses' encounter with God on Mount Sinai, including taking select disciples up a mountain, radiant appearance, and the presence of an overshadowing cloud (theophany). However, he stresses that the event with Jesus is greater.
- "When we come to the transfiguration here, one of the things that immediately stands out is there are some interesting parallels between this event and Moses going up on the mount."

- **The Significance of Moses and Elijah:** Their appearance is not simply as representatives of the Law and the Prophets (though Moses represents the Law). Instead, Dr. Jennings argues they are present because both had theophany experiences on mountains and figure prominently in eschatological expectations.
- "Both of them had a theophany experience on a mountain, no less. Both of them factor into the eschatological anticipation. Malachi 4:5 speaks of Elijah and Moses as Elijah's return. And look forward to the days of Elijah. Deuteronomy 18 speaks forward for when the one who is a prophet like Moses would come."
- **Peter's Response and Misunderstanding:** Peter's suggestion to build three tents (tabernacles) for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah can be seen as an attempt to honor Jesus by placing him among these great figures and perhaps drawing on the imagery of the Feast of Tabernacles. However, he misses the point that Moses and Elijah are witnesses to Jesus, not equals.
- "I think in some respects, we recognize that what Peter is doing first is seemingly making an incredibly high statement about Jesus... But, of course, he misses some of the significance here. For example, one of his mistakes is that he wants to make three instead of one."
- **The Voice from the Cloud:** The divine voice declaring, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him," echoes Jesus' baptism and reinforces his identity and authority. It also connects to Deuteronomy 18:15, suggesting Jesus is the prophet like Moses whom they should heed.
- "And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son, listen to him."
- **The Messianic Secret and the Resurrection:** Jesus charges the disciples not to tell anyone about the Transfiguration until after the Son of Man has risen from the dead, linking the full understanding of his glory to his resurrection. The disciples' confusion about the resurrection reflects their understanding of it as a future, collective event, not a singular event in the present.
- "And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So, they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean."
- **The Question about Elijah:** The disciples' question about why the scribes say Elijah must come first connects to the popular belief and the earlier question of

Jesus' identity. Jesus affirms Elijah's coming to restore all things (Malachi 4:5-6) but then connects it to the suffering of the Son of Man.

- "And they asked him, why do the scribes say that Elijah must come, that first Elijah must come? And he said to them, Elijah does come first to restore all things."
- **John the Baptist as Elijah:** Jesus reveals that Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist, who suffered as prophesied. This requires a rethinking of the nature of restoration, linking it to suffering and the path of the Messiah.
- "But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."

2. The Healing of the Boy with a Demon (Mark 9:14-29):

- **Contrast with the Transfiguration:** The scene shifts abruptly from the glory of the mountain to the struggles and failures of the disciples in the valley.
- **The Disciples' Failure:** The disciples were unable to cast out the demon, despite having been given authority to do so earlier. This highlights their dependence on Jesus and the potential for their faith to waver.
- "So, I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able to."
- **Jesus' Rebuke of a "Faithless Generation":** Dr. Jennings interprets this rebuke as connecting the present lack of faith to the doubt of the Israelites in the wilderness.
- "And he answered them, O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?"
- **The Father's Plea and the Nature of Faith:** The father's plea, "If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us," reveals a doubt stemming from the disciples' failure. Jesus' response, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes," challenges the father to exercise faith.
- "But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us. And Jesus said to him, if you can, all things are possible for one who believes."
- **The Paradox of Faith:** The father's cry, "I believe; help my unbelief!" is seen as a profound statement of discipleship, acknowledging both the presence of faith and the need for it to be strengthened by Christ.

- "Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, I believe, help my unbelief."
- **The Necessity of Prayer:** When the disciples ask why they could not cast out the demon, Jesus replies, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer." Dr. Jennings interprets "prayer" not as a specific formula but as a posture of dependence on God, suggesting the disciples may have been relying on their own abilities.
- "When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could we not cast it out? And he said to them, This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

3. Teachings on Discipleship (Mark 9:30-50):

- **The Second Passion Prediction:** Jesus again predicts his betrayal, death, and resurrection, but the disciples fail to understand and are afraid to ask. This reinforces their ongoing difficulty in grasping the necessity of his suffering.
- "For he was teaching his disciples saying to them, the son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill him and when he is killed after three days he will rise. But they did not understand the saying and were afraid to ask."
- **The Argument about Greatness:** The disciples' argument about who is the greatest reveals their misunderstanding of true leadership in God's kingdom, which is characterized by humility and service.
- "But they kept silent for on the way they argued with one another about who was the greatest."
- **The Teaching on True Greatness:** Jesus teaches that true greatness is found in being the last and the servant of all, reversing conventional notions of status and power.
- "He sat down and called the 12 that had that idea of seating, who had the idea that now there was going to be a lesson on it. And he said to them, if anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."
- **Receiving a Child in Jesus' Name:** Jesus uses a child as an example to illustrate this teaching. In the ancient world, children held low social status. Receiving such a child in Jesus' name signifies welcoming someone of low status who is a follower of Jesus, which is equivalent to receiving Jesus himself and, ultimately,

the Father. Dr. Jennings emphasizes that the child is a symbol of low status, not necessarily innocence.

- "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me. And whoever receives me receives not me, but him who sent me."
- "Children were a group that lacked status. Children were a group that had no sort of social significance if you will. They were dependent; they were weak, and they were unable to contribute. And so, when we look, Jesus has said, he's talking about this distinction between this argument the disciples are having about who's going to be the greatest, and to display the importance of this reversal of first and last, he picks not something innocent, but something of low status and low value."
- **The Connection Between Receiving Followers and Receiving Jesus:** Jesus consistently links the treatment of his followers to the treatment of himself and the one who sent him.

Conclusion:

Dr. Jennings' lecture provides a detailed analysis of Mark 9:2-50, highlighting the interconnectedness of the Transfiguration, the healing of the demon-possessed boy, and Jesus' teachings on discipleship. He emphasizes the importance of understanding these events within their historical and theological context, particularly concerning the nature of the Messiah, the role of faith, and the true meaning of greatness in God's kingdom. The lecture underscores the disciples' initial struggles to grasp Jesus' identity and mission, setting the stage for the events leading up to the cross.

4. Study Guide: Jennings, Session 15, Transfiguration, Boy with Demon (Mark 9:2-50)

Mark 9: Transfiguration, Demon-Possessed Boy, and Discipleship Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. Describe the scene of Jesus' transfiguration as recorded in Mark 9:2-4. Who was present and what happened to Jesus?
2. What was Peter's reaction to the transfiguration, and what might his suggestion to build three tents signify?
3. Explain the significance of Moses and Elijah appearing with Jesus during the transfiguration. Why are these two figures particularly relevant?
4. What did the voice from the cloud declare during the transfiguration, and how does this relate to Deuteronomy 18:15?
5. Why were the disciples confused about Jesus' command to keep the transfiguration a secret until the Son of Man had risen from the dead?
6. Summarize the situation the disciples faced when they came down from the mountain (Mark 9:14-18). What problem were they unable to solve?
7. Describe the interaction between Jesus and the father of the demon-possessed boy. What crucial statement of faith did the father make?
8. What explanation did Jesus give to his disciples in private as to why they were unable to cast out the demon? What does this imply about their ministry?
9. What was the subject of the disciples' argument on the way to Capernaum, and how did Jesus address their dispute?
10. Explain Jesus' teaching about true greatness using the example of a child in Mark 9:36-37. What aspect of a child does Jesus highlight?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a high mountain where he was transfigured before them. His clothes became radiant white, and Elijah and Moses appeared, talking with Jesus. This event revealed Jesus' divine glory to his inner circle of disciples.

2. Peter suggested building three tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. This might indicate Peter's awe and desire to prolong the moment, perhaps placing Jesus on the same level as these great figures of the past, though missing Jesus' unique significance.
3. Moses represents the Law, and Elijah is associated with the prophets and the anticipation of the Lord's return. Their presence signifies that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, marking a pivotal moment in God's plan.
4. The voice from the cloud declared, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him." This echoes Psalm 2:7 and directly connects Jesus to the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:15 about a prophet like Moses whom the people should heed, affirming Jesus' authority.
5. The disciples struggled to understand the concept of the Son of Man rising from the dead because their understanding of resurrection was generally associated with a future, collective event at the end of history, not a singular occurrence in the present.
6. Upon returning, the disciples were surrounded by a large crowd and scribes arguing. A man had brought his demon-possessed son to them, but they were unable to cast out the spirit, highlighting their limitations despite previous successes.
7. The father pleaded with Jesus to help if he could, expressing doubt rooted in the disciples' failure. Jesus challenged the "if you can" by stating that all things are possible for one who believes, leading the father to cry out, "I believe; help my unbelief!"
8. Jesus told his disciples that "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer." This suggests that their failure may have stemmed from a lack of reliance on God through prayer and a potential overconfidence in their own abilities.
9. The disciples were arguing about who was the greatest among them. Jesus responded by teaching that true greatness is found in being last of all and the servant of all, reversing conventional notions of status and power.
10. Jesus took a child, a figure of low social status and dependence in the ancient world, and said that whoever receives one such child in his name receives him. He uses the child as a symbol of humility and lack of worldly importance to illustrate true receptivity and service.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the significance of the transfiguration event in the Gospel of Mark. How does it build upon previous themes and foreshadow future events in Jesus' ministry and passion?
2. Compare and contrast the roles of Moses and Elijah in Jewish tradition and their appearance at the transfiguration. What does their presence reveal about Jesus' identity and mission according to Dr. Jennings?
3. Discuss the interactions between Jesus and his disciples in Mark 9:2-50, focusing on their misunderstandings, questions, and the lessons Jesus imparts. What do these interactions reveal about the nature of discipleship?
4. Examine the incident of the demon-possessed boy in Mark 9:14-29. What does this passage reveal about the power of Jesus, the limitations of the disciples, and the importance of faith?
5. Explore Jesus' teaching on true greatness and servanthood in Mark 9:30-50, considering the cultural context of honor and shame. How does Jesus redefine greatness, and what are the implications for his followers?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Transfiguration:** The supernatural event where Jesus' appearance was gloriously changed in the presence of Peter, James, and John on a high mountain.
- **Theophany:** A visible manifestation of God to humankind, often accompanied by dramatic natural phenomena like clouds and voices.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the "end times" or the ultimate destiny of humanity and the world, often involving expectations of God's final acts.
- **Messianic Secret:** A recurring motif in the Gospel of Mark where Jesus commands his followers to not reveal his identity as the Messiah.
- **Son of Man:** A title Jesus frequently used for himself, which has roots in Old Testament prophecy (Daniel 7) and emphasizes both his humanity and divine authority.
- **Passion Prediction:** Instances in the Gospels where Jesus foretells his suffering, death, and resurrection.
- **Faithless Generation:** A phrase used by Jesus to describe the lack of belief and understanding prevalent in the people of his time, often drawing parallels to the Israelites' lack of faith in the wilderness.
- **Exorcism:** The act of driving out or expelling a demon or evil spirit from a person or place.
- **Prayer (in this context):** Not just a formula of words, but a posture of dependence and recognition of God's ultimate power and authority.
- **Honor and Shame:** Foundational social values in the ancient Mediterranean world, where a person's status and reputation were crucial and influenced social interactions.

5. FAQs on Jennings, Mark, Session 15, Transfiguration, Boy with Demon (Mark 9:2-50), Biblealearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Mark 9:2-50

- 1. What is the significance of the Transfiguration event in Mark 9:2-9?** The Transfiguration is a pivotal moment where Jesus reveals his divine glory to Peter, James, and John. It echoes Moses' experience on Mount Sinai, with radiant clothing and the appearance of Elijah and Moses, representing the law and the prophets. However, Mark emphasizes Jesus' supremacy, indicated by Elijah appearing with Moses (unusual order) and the voice from the cloud declaring, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him." This event confirms Jesus' identity and foreshadows his future glory after his resurrection, aligning with eschatological hopes.
- 2. Why did Moses and Elijah appear during the Transfiguration?** Moses and Elijah's presence is significant as they were key figures in Jewish history and eschatological expectation. Moses, the lawgiver who also experienced a theophany on a mountain, prefigured a coming prophet like himself (Deuteronomy 18). Elijah was expected to return before the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Malachi 4:5) to restore all things. Their appearance alongside Jesus signifies that the anticipated climax of God's plan is at hand, and they serve as witnesses to Jesus' identity and mission.
- 3. How should we understand Peter's response during the Transfiguration, proposing to build three tents?** Peter's suggestion to build three tents (or tabernacles) for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah reveals his awe and perhaps an attempt to honor these great figures. While seemingly elevating Jesus by placing him alongside them, it also misses the central point. Peter treats them as equals rather than recognizing Moses and Elijah as witnesses to Jesus' unique role. His suggestion might also be influenced by the Feast of Tabernacles, a festival with historical and eschatological significance. Ultimately, Peter's response, born out of terror and confusion, highlights the disciples' incomplete understanding at this stage.
- 4. What is the meaning of the command for the disciples to remain silent about the Transfiguration until after the resurrection?** Jesus' instruction to the three disciples to not share what they had witnessed until after his resurrection is part of the "Messianic secret" theme in Mark. This secrecy serves several purposes. It prevents premature and potentially misunderstood notions of Jesus' messiahship, particularly one focused solely on glory without suffering. The full significance of the Transfiguration, especially the

affirmation of Jesus as the beloved Son, can only be truly grasped in light of his death and resurrection, which will ultimately reveal the nature of his kingdom and glory.

5. How does Jesus address the disciples' question about Elijah's coming before the Messiah? The disciples' question about Elijah's prior return reflects a common scribal teaching based on Malachi 4:5. Jesus initially affirms that Elijah does come first to restore all things. However, he then connects this to the prophecy of the suffering Son of Man, challenging their understanding of restoration and victory. He reveals that Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist, who suffered and was rejected, mirroring the fate awaiting the Son of Man. This implies that the restoration brought by Elijah and the victory of the Messiah are intertwined with suffering and rejection, a concept the disciples struggled to grasp.

6. What is the significance of the story of the boy with the unclean spirit in Mark 9:14-29, especially in contrast to the Transfiguration? The account of the disciples' inability to cast out the demon from the boy immediately following the glorious Transfiguration highlights the stark contrast between spiritual heights and the realities of earthly ministry. It underscores the disciples' limitations and their need for faith and prayer. Jesus' frustration with the "faithless generation" points to a broader spiritual deficiency. The father's desperate plea, "I believe; help my unbelief!" is a powerful expression of the struggle of faith and dependence on Jesus. This episode emphasizes that true power in ministry comes not from human ability but from reliance on God through prayer.

7. What does Jesus teach his disciples about true greatness in Mark 9:33-37? After the disciples argue about who is the greatest, Jesus teaches them a paradoxical lesson on true greatness. He states that "if anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." To illustrate this, he takes a child, a figure of low social status and dependence in that culture, and says that whoever receives such a child in his name receives him, and whoever receives him receives the Father. This teaching reverses conventional notions of power and status, emphasizing humility, servanthood, and valuing those considered insignificant as central to following Jesus.

8. What is the meaning of Jesus' statement that the disciples' failure to cast out the demon was because "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer"? Jesus' response to his disciples' inquiry about their failure to exorcise the demon emphasizes the crucial role of prayer in spiritual warfare. It suggests that certain deep-seated or powerful evil requires a profound dependence on God, expressed through prayer. It wasn't a specific formula they lacked, but perhaps a posture of self-reliance rather than a reliance on God's power. Prayer, in this context, signifies a recognition of God's sovereignty and an acknowledgment of their own inadequacy without divine assistance.