

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 185 – Mark 8:1-33

Day 921: Mark 8:1-7

Verses 1-10

Cf. Mt 15:32-39. "Understood by most commentators as recording an incident in the primarily non-Jewish territory of the eastern shore, and thus as continuing the theme of Jesus' ministry among the Gentiles." France.

Verse 1

Ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις πάλιν πολλοῦ ὄχλου ὄντος καὶ μὴ ἐχόντων τί φάγωσιν, προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς μαθητὰς λέγει αὐτοῖς,

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, those
πάλιν see 7:31

"πάλιν underlines Mark's belief that this was a sequel to an earlier and similar event, and alerts the reader to compare and contrast the two stories." France.

φάγωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl ἐσθίω
προσκαλεσάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc,
m nom s προσκαλεομαι call to
oneself, summon

Verse 2

Σπλαγχνίζομαι ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον ὅτι ἤδη ἡμέραι τρεῖς προσμένουσίν μοι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν τί φάγωσιν·

σπλαγχνίζομαι Cf. 6:34
ἤδη adv now, already
τρεῖς, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three
προσμενω remain, stay with

"Mark does not say whether the three-day period has been spent in teaching or in healing, or in both, but to remain so long away from home and food supplies suggests a remarkable enthusiasm and persistence among this presumably largely Gentile crowd." France.

Verse 3

καὶ ἐὰν ἀπολύσω αὐτοὺς νήστες εἰς οἶκον αὐτῶν, ἐκλυθήσονται ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ· καὶ τινες αὐτῶν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἤκασιν.

ἀπολυω release, send away, dismiss
νήστες Noun, acc pl νηστις, ιδος m & f
hungry, without food
ἐκλυομαι give up, faint
ὁδος, ου f way, path, road, journey
μακροθεν adv far off, from a distance
ἤκασιν Verb, pres act indic, 3 pl ἤκω
come, have come

Verse 4

καὶ ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι Πόθεν τούτους δυνήσεται τις ὧδε χορτάσαι ἄρτων ἐπ' ἐρημίας;

ἀποκρίνομαι answer, reply
ποθεν interrog adv. from where, how
ὧδε adv here, in this place
χορτάσαι Verb, aor act infin χορταζω
feed, satisfy
ἐρημια, ας f deserted place, uninhabited
region

"The disciples' incredulity at the suggestion (not here, as in 6:37, a direct instruction) that food should be found for the crowd was natural enough in 6:37, but one might expect them to have learned from that experience... But the failure of the disciples to learn from the events they witness and to recognise the new dimensions which Jesus' ministry involves will become an increasingly prominent theme in the next act of Mark's story, and it will be precisely the point of Jesus' rebuke to his disciples in 8:17-21 that they have failed to learn from repeated experience." France.

Verse 5

καὶ ἠρώτα αὐτούς, Πόσους ἔχετε ἄρτους; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν, Ἑπτά.

ἠρωτω ask, request
ποσος, η, ον how much(?), how many(?)

Cf. 6:38.

ἑπτα seven

Verse 6

καὶ παραγγέλλει τῷ ὄχλῳ ἀναπεσεῖν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· καὶ λαβὼν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἄρτους εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ἵνα παρατιθῶσιν καὶ παρέθηκάν τῷ ὄχλῳ.

παραγγελλω command, instruct
ἀναπεσεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἀναπιπτω
sit, sit at table, lean
γη, γης f earth
λαβων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λαμβανω
εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks
κλαω break (only of bread)
ἐδίδου Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s διδωμι
παρατιθῶσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl
παρατιθημι place before, distribute
παρέθηκάν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl
παρατιθημι

Verse 7

καὶ εἶχον ἰχθύδια ὀλίγα· καὶ εὐλογήσας
αὐτὰ εἶπεν καὶ ταῦτα παρατιθέναι.

ἰχθυδιον, ου n small fish, fish
ὀλιγος, η, ον little, small; pl. few

Emphasises how inadequate this supply is for
such a crowd.

εὐλογεω speak well of, bless

εὐλογήσας αὐτὰ "The various readings
(αὐτὰ or ταυτα; order of participle and
pronoun; omission of pronoun) do not affect
the sense. εὐλογήσας αὐτὰ is probably the
best attested. The omission of the pronoun
may have been caused by discomfort over the
inclusion of a different object (the fish) rather
than leaving it to be assumed that God is
'blessed', though the same idiom occurs clearly
in Lk 9:16; 1 Cor 10:16." France.

Day 921: Mark 8:8-13**Verse 8**

καὶ ἔφαγον καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν, καὶ ἦραν
περισσεύματα κλασμάτων ἑπτὰ σπυρίδας.

ἔφαγον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl ἐσθιω
χορταζω see v.4

αἶρω take, take up

περισσευμα, τος n overflow, pieces left
over

κλασμα, τος n fragment, piece

σπυρις, ιδος f basket (larger than the
κοφινος)

Again, the crowd are fully satisfied.

Verse 9

ἦσαν δὲ ὡς τετρακισχίλιοι. καὶ ἀπέλυσεν
αὐτούς.

τετρακισχιλιοι, αι, α four thousand
ἀπολυω see v.3.

Verse 10

Καὶ εὐθὺς ἐμβὰς εἰς τὸ πλοῖον μετὰ τῶν
μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἦλθεν εἰς τὰ μέρη
Δαλμανουθά.

ἐμβαινω get into, embark

πλοιον, ου n boat, ship

μερος, ους n part

"The various forms of the name Δαλμανουθά,
the different ways of designating it as a
destination (τα μέρη, το ὄρος, το ὄρια), and
the substitution of different forms of a more
familiar name (Μαγεδαν, Μαγδαλα, both
found in the textual tradition of the parallel Mt
15:39) all result naturally from the presence in
the text of an otherwise unknown name. τὰ
μέρη Δαλμανουθα is the reading which best
explains the rest." France.

Verses 11-13

Cf. Mt 16:1-4; Mt 12:38f; Lk 11:29. "After
his first feeding miracle Jesus had crossed the
lake and immediately come into conflict with
Pharisees in Galilee (7:1-23); now after the
second feeding miracle he returns again across
the lake from Gentile territory, and again his
arrival in Galilee brings him face to face with
Pharisaic opposition... Jesus' refusal of a
σημειον ... represents a conscious decision to
terminate both his dialogue with the religious
leadership and his public ministry in Galilee.
Those who have not yet been convinced of his
message will not now be offered any further
incentive to believe. The pregnant phrase
ἀφεις αὐτούς marks a decisive abandonment
of the Pharisees, rather than any attempt to win
them, just as Jesus will later 'go out from' the
temple, uttering a dramatic prediction of its
destruction, to mark the end of his appeal to
the hierarchy in Jerusalem (13:1-2)." France.

Verse 11

Καὶ ἐξῆλθον οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ ἤρξαντο
συζητεῖν αὐτῷ, ζητοῦντες παρ' αὐτοῦ
σημεῖον ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, πειράζοντες
αὐτόν.

"Whereas in 3:22; 7:1 opposition has come
from Jerusalem scribes, Mark here gives the
impression that the source of the demand is the
local (Galilean) Pharisees, who, on his arrival
at Dalmanutha, ἐξῆλθον (from their homes,
presumably) to confront him. Conscious of
their (self-imposed?) role as guardians of
religious orthodoxy and practice in the area,
and perhaps feeling threatened by the wide
popularity and influence of this unorthodox
teacher, they aim to put him in his place by
demanding to see his credentials." France.

ἤρξαντο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 pl ἀρχω
midd begin

συζητεω discuss, question

ζητοῦντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s

ζητεω seek, look for

σημειον, ου n miraculous sign, sign,
miracle

"The Synoptists use σημειον to denote an outward compelling proof of divine authority – something which unbelief demands but Jesus resolutely refuses to give... The Fourth Evangelist, on the other hand, though he does sometimes use the word σημειον in the Synoptist's sense (2:18; 4:48; 6:30) uses it characteristically of the miracles regarded as signs pointing to the secret of Jesus' person, an effective manifestation of his glory for those who already believe, but for others, unconvincing." Cranfield.

οὐρανος, ου m heaven

"Given the number of remarkable events already recorded in Mark's gospel, some at least of what should have been known to these Pharisees, it is not easy to see what more they required, but perhaps they had not yet personally witnessed any of the miracles, and were not prepared to trust to hearsay. It must be remembered, too, that the scribes in 3:22 did not doubt the occurrence of Jesus' exorcisms, but attributed them to demonic rather than to divine power. For them, even admitted miracles needed some authenticating sign to show that they were 'from heaven'." France.

πειραζω test, put to the test, tempt

France comments that signs authenticating a prophet or other person claiming divine authorisation are common in the OT – citing particularly Moses and Elijah. He adds, "So the desire for a sign is not in itself self-evidently wrong. By adding πειραζοντες αυτον, however, Mark indicates that the request was disingenuous... Coming from the Pharisees, the request denotes not a readiness to be convinced, but an excuse for refusing to respond to the clear evidence already available in Jesus' teaching and ministry."

Verse 12

καὶ ἀναστενάξας τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ λέγει, Τί ἢ γενεὰ αὕτη ζητεῖ σημεῖον; ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, εἰ δοθήσεται τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ σημεῖον.

ἀναστενάξας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
ἀναστενάζω give a deep groan

Cf. 7:34.

γενεα, ας f generation, age

Cf. 8:38; 9:19.

For ἀμην λεγω ὑμιν cf. 3:28.

δοθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s διδωμι

εἰ δοθήσεται A Hebrewism expressing strong denial. "The εἰ being the equivalent of the Hebrew *'im* used as an imprecation. In 2 Kings 6:31 the full form is illustrated, while Ps 95 (LXX 94):11 provides an example of the usage with the apodosis omitted, the isolated protasis remaining as a form of strong negative as here." Cranfield. Ps 95:11 is quoted also in Heb 3:11; 4:3, 5.

Verse 13

καὶ ἀφείς αὐτοὺς πάλιν ἐμβὰς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸ πέραν.

ἀφείς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἀφιημι
leave

παλιν again, once more

ἐμβαινω get into, embark

Some MSS add εἰς τὸ πλοῖον.

περαν i) prep with gen beyond, across; ii)
τὸ π. the other side

"He gets into the boat to leave Galilee and its crowds, in order to concentrate on the instruction of the disciples who now go with him εἰς τὸ περαν." France.

Day 923: Mark 8:14-21**Verses 14-21**

Cf. Mt 16:5-12; Lk 12:1. "This elusive dialogue contains a striking (and rather shocking) echo of the language of chapter 4. In 8:11-13 the Pharisees have been left in the position of unenlightened 'outsiders' of 4:11. But the language of Is 6:9-10, which in 4:12 was used to describe those 'outsiders', is now applied in vv 17-18 no less starkly to the disciples themselves, despite the fact that in 4:11 it was they who were described as the privileged possessors of the 'secret' hidden from the outsiders. Act One thus comes to an end on a sombre note; even where divine enlightenment has been given, it has not yet produced true understanding (note the repeated use of συνιημι in vv 17, 21, as well as other ways of expressing the same idea in vv 17, 18). This paradoxical note, already sounded clearly in 6:52 where very similar language has been used about the disciples' lack of understanding, will be maintained throughout the gospel: the patient re-education of the disciples during chapters 8-10 will leave them still bewildered by the turn of events in Jerusalem, running away in Gethsemane and leaving the women to watch the end in Golgotha, while even the women, privileged to receive a special announcement that Jesus is risen, bring the gospel to a dismal end by saying nothing to anyone, 'for they were afraid'. This pericope is thus not an incongruous note in the course of a steady upward progress, but rather sets the tone for a denouement for which the enthusiasms and enlightenment of the earlier chapters have left the reader hitherto largely unprepared." France.

Verse 14

Καὶ ἐπελάθοντο λαβεῖν ἄρτους, καὶ εἰ μὴ ἓνα ἄρτον οὐκ εἶχον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ.

ἐπελάθοντο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 pl

ἐπιλανθάνομαι forget, neglect

λαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin λαμβανω

ἄρτος, ου m bread, a loaf, food

εἰ μὴ except

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

πλοῖον, ου n boat

Verse 15

καὶ διεστέλλετο αὐτοῖς λέγων, Ὁράτε, βλέπετε ἀπὸ τῆς ζύμης τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ τῆς ζύμης Ἡρώδου.

διεστέλλετο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s

διαστελλομαι order, command

"The imperfect tense of διεστέλλετο suggests that Jesus' warning against the Pharisees and Herod is not an isolated and unprovoked exclamation, as might at first appear, but rather a summary of a more extended discourse." France.

ὄραω see, make sure, see to

βλέπω see, beware of, watch out

ζυμη, ης f yeast

"In the N.T. (1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9) and also in Rabbinic Judaism leaven is a common metaphor for the evil tendency in a man which, though it may seem only a small thing, nevertheless corrupts the whole man. (In the N.T. it stands for something good only in Mt 13:33 = Lk 13:21). Mt 16:11 explains ζυμη in reference to teaching; Lk 12:1 glosses it by ἥτις ἐστὶν ὑποκρισις... [The reference to Herod is] a warning against the godlessness of a man of the world, while the reference to the Pharisees is a warning against inconsistent piety." Cranfield.

The juxtaposition of the singular Ἡρώδου with the plural Φαρισαίων, and the fact that Ἡρωδιανοὶ are associated with Φαρισαῖοι in 3:6 and 12:13 has led to the substitution of τῶν Ἡρωδιανῶν for Ἡρώδου in P⁴⁵ and other MSS.

"The inclusion of Herod (Antipas) is ... surprising, since Mark has not presented Antipas hitherto as a direct enemy of Jesus, though Antipas's interest in Jesus and linking him with John the Baptist (whom he had already executed) has alerted the reader to him as a potential threat (6:14-29), and in 9:12-13 Jesus will imply that John's fate at the hands of Antipas is a foreshadowing of his own." France.

Verse 16

καὶ διελογίζοντο πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὅτι Ἄρτους οὐκ ἔχουσιν.

διαλογίζομαι discuss, reason, question

"The imperfect διελογίζοντο probably indicates that they 'went on discussing', this having been the problem raised in v. 14, before Jesus' warning about the Pharisees and Herod, which is thus brushed aside by their more important concerns." France.

ἄλληλων, οἰς, οὖς reciprocal pronoun **one another**

Many MSS include λεγοντες after ἀλληλων (cf. Mt 16:7) and have the form of the final verb in the *first* person plural.

Verse 17

καὶ γνοὺς λέγει αὐτοῖς, Τί διαλογίζεσθε ὅτι ἄρτους οὐκ ἔχετε; οὐπω νοεῖτε οὐδὲ συνίετε; πεπωρωμένην ἔχετε τὴν καρδίαν ὑμῶν;

γνοὺς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s γνωσκω
οὐπω not yet

νοεω understand, discern

συνιμι and συνιω understand,
comprehend

πεπωρωμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s
πωρωω make stubborn, make hard,
make insensitive

"Both συνιμι and καρδια πεπωρωμενη have already occurred in Mark's editorial comment on the disciples in 6:52, which in turn recalled the reference to Is 6:9-10 in 4:12." France.

Verse 18

ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες οὐ βλέπετε καὶ ὧτα ἔχοντες οὐκ ἀκούετε; καὶ οὐ μνημονεύετε,

"The specific use of the metaphor of blindness prepares the way for the next pericope, where the healing of a blind man will be used to symbolise the enlightenment which the disciples so obviously need. Jesus' attempt to provide that enlightenment, set over against the continued obtuseness of the disciples, will be a major theme of Act Two of Mark's gospel, now about to begin." France.

οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

"Reminiscent of Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2 and also Isa 6:9f. The last of these was quoted in 4:12 with reference to 'them that are without'." Cranfield.

μνημονευω remember, keep in mind

"The final words of v. 18 (καὶ οὐ μνημονεύετε) can be construed (as by UBS, GNB, etc.) as the main clause introducing the ὅτε clause that follows, but are probably better construed (as in most English versions) as a further staccato question." France.

Verse 19

ὅτε τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους ἔκλασα εἰς τοὺς πεντακισχιλίους, πόσους κοφίνους κλασμάτων πλήρεις ἤρατε; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Δωδεκα.

ὅτε conj when, at which time

πέντε (indeclinable) five

κλαω break (only of bread)

πεντακισχιλιοι, αι, α five thousand

ποσος, η, ον how much(?), how many(?)

κοφινος, ου m basket

κλασμα, τος n fragment, piece

πληρης, ες (sometimes not declined) full,
complete

ἤρατε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl αἶρω take,
take up, take away

δωδεκα twelve

Cf. 6:43

Verse 20

Ὅτε τοὺς ἑπτὰ εἰς τοὺς τετρακισχιλίους, πόσων σπυρίδων πληρωματα κλασμάτων ἤρατε; καὶ λέγουσιν [αὐτῷ], Ἑπτὰ.

ἑπτα seven

τετρακισχιλιοι, αι, α four thousand

σπυρις, ιδος f basket (larger than the
κοφινος)

πληρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness,
fulfilment

σπυριδων πληρωματα κλασματων. "The first two words are equivalent to a simple noun, 'basketfuls'... and κλασματων is a genitive of content dependent on them." Cranfield.

Verse 21

καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, Οὐπω συνίετε;

οὐπω not yet

συνιμι see v.17

"What they should have grasped from οἱ ἄρτοι is not merely that they have a ready supply of food available, but something more fundamental about Jesus himself. In view of the question which he will put to them in v. 29, ὑμεῖς τίνα με λεγετε εἶναι; it appears that he has been hoping for a more adequate grasp of his authority and mission as the Messiah, and that their inappropriate concern about food for the journey has highlighted this deeper inadequacy in their understanding." France.

Day 924: Mark 8:22-26**Mark 8:22-10:52**

France refers to 8:22-10:52 as Act Two of Mark. It's focus is upon Jesus' movement from Galilee to Jerusalem. It is 'framed' by two accounts of the healings of a blind man (8:22-26; 10:45-52) which France sees as also symbolic of the 'blindness' of the disciples. The incomprehension of the disciples is central to this section which now focuses on Jesus' private instruction of them. Jesus is seeking to prepare them for what he will suffer in Jerusalem in fulfilment of his messianic mission.

Verses 22-26

Verses 22-26 are unique to Mark. Cf. 7:31-37 for a similar healing story. France comments, "In discussing 7:31-37 we noticed the significance of the healing of the deaf and dumb man in the light of Is 35:5-6. That prophecy begins with the opening of the eyes of the blind, a work which is attributed to God also in Ps 146:8; Is 29:18. In the light of such OT passages these two pericopes together add up to a very impressive claim with regard to who Jesus is..."

"There are, then, good reasons for believing that Mark included the story at this point in his narrative because for him it illustrated a fundamental theme of the journey to Jerusalem, the curing of the disciples' blindness. But the symbolic does not exclude the literal. In this story, as in the cure of the deaf-mute in Decapolis, Mark offers also a carefully observed account of another miracle of healing, unusual in its detail, but equally a testimony to the unique authority of Jesus at the physical as well as the spiritual level."

Verse 22

Καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς Βηθσαϊδάν. καὶ φέρουσιν αὐτῷ τυφλὸν καὶ παρακαλοῦσιν αὐτὸν ἵνα αὐτοῦ ἄψηται.

φέρω bring, carry, bear, lead
 τυφλός, η, ον blind
 παρακαλεῶ exhort, encourage, urge
 ἄψηται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 s ἄπτω
 midd. take hold of, touch

Verse 23

καὶ ἐπιλαβόμενος τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ τυφλοῦ ἐξήνεγκεν αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς κωμῆς, καὶ πτύσας εἰς τὰ ὄμματα αὐτοῦ, ἐπιθείς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῷ, ἐπήρωτα αὐτόν, Εἶ τι βλέπεις;

ἐπιλαβόμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s ἐπιλαμβάνομαι take hold of, sieze

χειρ, χειρός f hand, power
 ἐκφέρω bring out; lead out
 ἐξω out, outside, away
 κωμη, ης f village, small town

Cf. 7:33. The use of the term κωμη suggests that Jesus may have been in an outlying settlement rather than in the city of Bethsaida itself.

πτύω spit
 ὄμμα, τος n eye
 ἐπιθείς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἐπιτίθημι place on, place, put
 ἐπήρωτα Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἐπερωτῶ ask, question
 βλέπω see, be able to see

"The exploratory question appropriately introduces the uniquely 'tentative' nature of this healing story; normally Jesus has no need to ask any question, as the healing is immediate and obvious." France.

Verse 24

καὶ ἀναβλέψας ἔλεγεν, Βλέπω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ὅτι ὡς δένδρα ὁρῶ περιπατοῦντας.

ἀναβλεπῶ look up, regain one's sight

"In 10:51 ἀναβλεπεῖν means 'recover one's sight'; but here it more probably means 'look up'." Cranfield.

δένδρον, ον n tree
 ὁρῶ see, observe, perceive
 περιπατεῶ walk, walk about

"The contrast with seeing τηλαυγῶς in v. 25 makes it clear that this is intended as a description of indistinct sight; he sees moving shapes, which because they are walking about ought to be people, but he cannot yet see them clearly enough to identify them – they might as well be trees!" France.

Verse 25

εἶτα πάλιν ἐπέθηκεν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ, καὶ διέβλεψεν, καὶ ἀπεκατέστη, καὶ ἐνέβλεπεν τηλαυγῶς ἅπαντα.

εἶτα adv. then, and then
 πάλιν again, once more

ἐπέθηκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐπιτιθημι
 διαβλεπω see clearly
 ἀπεκατέστη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
 ἀποκαθιστημι reestablish, restore
 ἐμβλεπω look straight at, see

"Note the careful distinction of tenses: the aorist διεβλεψεν indicating the definite point at which the man achieved clear sight, and the imperfect ἐνεβλεπεν denoting continued action." Cranfield.

τηλαυγως clearly, plainly
 ἅπας, ασα, αν (alternative form of πας) all, whole; pl everyone, everything

"The argument for a symbolic intention is strengthened by the peculiar character of this healing, as one accomplished in two stages. The 'blindness' of the disciples is similarly dispelled only gradually. Already in 4:11 they are declared to have received special revelation concerning το μυστηριον της βασιλειας του θεου, and yet that revelation has left them with much still to learn (6:52; 7:18; 8:17-18, 21). The new phase of the narrative which is now beginning will focus on their further enlightenment, but it will not be completed in a single 'cure'. Successive examples of their failure to understand will each be followed by further re-education, but even when the journey is complete and the narrative reaches its climax in Jerusalem the disciples will be characterised more by dulness and failure than by the dynamic new perspectives of the kingdom of God. Even Peter, the spokesman whose ringing declaration of Jesus' messianic status is the foundation of the disciples' new perspective, will a few verses later be rebuked for viewing Jesus' mission from the human, not the divine angle (8:29-33). He has 'seen', but not yet clearly. Of all this the two-stage healing of the blind man at Bethsaida offers an apt illustration." France.

Verse 26

καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτὸν εἰς οἶκον αὐτοῦ λέγων, Μηδὲ εἰς τὴν κωμὴν εἰσέλθης.

ἀπέστειλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
 ἀποστελλω send
 μηδε negative particle nor, and not

Many MSS add μηδε εἰπης τινα ἐν τη κωμη. France comments, "The wide range of expanded readings appear to be attempts to spell out the purpose of Jesus' instruction not to return to the village by making the 'secrecy' theme explicit. It is more likely that such explanation was added than that an originally more explicit instruction was made enigmatic."

Day 925: Mark 8:27-33

Verse 27-33

Cf. Mt 16:13-23; Lk 9:18-22.

"We conclude that in these verses we are near to the personal reminiscence of Peter and here before us is a section based on sound historical tradition." Cranfield.

"8:27-30 (or better, the fuller complex 8:27-33) is conventionally said to be the watershed in Mark's narrative. Up to this point the tension has been building up towards its climax in the eventual recognition of who Jesus is, while from this point on, the christological question having been explicitly posed and answered, the plot sets off downhill again towards the fulfilment of Jesus' messianic mission of the cross and in his resurrection, with 8:31 and its subsequent echoes in 9:31 and 10:33-34 providing the agenda for this second part of the story." France.

Verse 27

Καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς κώμας Καισαρείας τῆς Φιλίππου· καὶ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἐπηρωτᾷ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ λέγων αὐτοῖς, Τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι;

τὰς κώμας Καισαρείας τῆς Φιλίππου
 "Here the plural together with the name of the city in the genitive clearly indicates small settlements associated with the city rather than the city itself; as a regional capital, Caesarea Philippi controlled a wide area which would contain many smaller settlements." France.
 Cf. 8:23.

ὁδος, ου f way, path, road, journey
 ἐπηρωτᾷ Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s
 ἐπερωτᾶω see v.23

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

"The christological issue is approached by asking first the more comfortably 'objective' question." France.

Verse 28

οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες [ὅτι] Ἰωάννην τὸν βαπτιστὴν, καὶ ἄλλοι, Ἰηλίαν, ἄλλοι δὲ ὅτι εἷς τῶν προφητῶν.

βαπτιστης, ου m Baptist, baptiser

Cf. 6:14-16.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
 Ἰηλιας, ου m Elijah

"To the multitude he [Jesus] seemed to be a prophet (cf. Mt 21:11): his Messiahship was concealed from them (see on 11:1-10). When Peter in the next verse confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, his words do not echo popular opinion, but run counter to it." Cranfield.
 "Jesus is popularly perceived as a prophet. This is undoubtedly a positive, indeed a highly laudatory, assessment. But the sequel will show that it falls short of the truth about Jesus. Like many today who express their appreciation of Jesus (often alongside other religious leaders) as a great teacher, the people of his own day, as reported by the disciples, have not yet grasped the full significance of his ministry." France.

Verse 29

καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπηρώτα αὐτούς, Ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι; ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει αὐτῷ, Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός.

The ὑμεῖς is emphatic, 'as for you...' "Jesus' ὑμεῖς δὲ indicates that a better answer is still needed, and that it is the responsibility of the disciples to supply it. If they have been entrusted with τὸ μυστήριον τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ (4:11), surely by now they are in a position to evaluate the significance of the one through whom it has come into being." France.

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s
 ἀποκρίνομαι answer, reply

Cranfield points out that the term 'Messiah' means anointed and that prophets, priests and kings were all anointed with oil. He continues, "*Masiah* carries with it the idea of consecration to God's service, of being specially chosen by him for a particular task and specially endued by him with power (1 Sam 10:1,6; 16:13; Isa 61:1 – with the Spirit of the LORD) to fulfil it... In the time of Jesus the term was used particularly of the hoped-for ruler who was to restore the kingdom of David to more than its former glory and prosperity... though it is important to realise that there was a great variety of messianic expectation." Peter's words expressed the truth, though he did not then rightly understand what he affirmed.

Verse 30

καὶ ἐπέτιμήσεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ λέγωσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ.

ἐπιτιμῶ command, order

"The strength of the verb (used previously for silencing demons [cf. 3:12]) is remarkable." France.

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing

Implies Jesus' acceptance of Peter's confession. "The popular enthusiasm for Jesus, and the hope that he might be persuaded to take a more political role as the leader of a Jewish uprising (see on 6:31-44 and 6:45-46), would mean that messianic language should be seriously misunderstood on the part of both friends and enemies. In view of what Jesus is about to reveal concerning his real mission in v. 31 there could hardly be a more unfortunate misunderstanding, or one more calculated to derail his enterprise as it approaches its decisive phase in the journey towards Jerusalem. So language about Jesus as ὁ Χριστός is forbidden." France.

Verse 31

Καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν καὶ ἀποδοκιμασθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστῆναι.

"The first prediction of the Passion is the immediate sequel of Peter's confession." Cranfield.

ἄρχω midd begin

διδασκῶ teach

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must

A necessity grounded in the will and word of God. "There have indeed been plenty of indications already of the growth of hostility towards Jesus and his followers, and occasional hints that that hostility will end in death (2:20; 3:6). But what is new here is the conviction that his death will come not as the triumph of the opposition but as the fulfilment of the divine purpose, to be welcomed rather than bewailed." France.

υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (cf. 2:10) is a designation used by Jesus of himself. "It seems extremely probable on the basis of Dan 7:13, it was also fairly commonly used as a 'messianic' title." Cranfield.

Jesus may have preferred this designation to that of Messiah because the term 'Messiah' carried with it a set of unhelpful expectations among his contemporaries. "What Jesus is going to say about his fate is in sharp contrast to what ὁ Χριστός would naturally convey, and so this more elusive title is more suitable to his purpose. To speak of rejection, suffering, and death as the necessary destiny of the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is indeed shocking enough, for the vision in Dn 7:13-14 from which the phrase derives is of a conquering, majestic figure in heavenly authority. Verse 38 will use the same title in a context which echoes the more natural connotation. But because the phrase ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου would not yet be understood to refer to a recognised messianic figure, there was no popular 'blueprint' for the mission of such a figure which would make it psychologically impossible to grasp the concept of suffering and death as his role, however unexpected such an idea might be." France.

παθεῖν Verb, aor act infin πασχω suffer
ἀποδοκιμαζω reject
πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder
ἀρχιερευς, εως m high priest
γραμματευς, εως m scribe, expert in
Jewish law

Cf. Ps 118 (LXX 117):22.

ἀποκτενω kill, put to death

Cf. Is 52,53.

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

"Mark's phrase reflects Jewish usage, whereby 'after three days' would mean 'the day after tomorrow', but in a broader cultural context this idiom might not be understood, resulting in the embarrassment of a discrepancy between prediction and fact, in that all the gospels agree on a period of only some thirty six hours between Jesus' burial and resurrection. The phrase used by Matthew and Luke [φη τριτη ἡμερα] is therefore apologetically safer, even if in a Jewish context its meaning is not significantly different." France.

ἀναστῆναι Verb, 2nd aor act infin
ἀνιστημι rise, come back to life

Cf. 9:31; 10:33-34.

Verse 32

καὶ παρησίᾳ τὸν λόγον ἐλάλει. καὶ προσλαβόμενος ὁ Πέτρος αὐτὸν ἤρξατο ἐπιτιμᾶν αὐτῷ.

παρησια, ας f openness, frankness

Jesus now begins to teach the disciples openly and plainly concerning his coming death.

προσλαβόμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m
nom s προσλαμβανομαι take aside
ἐπιτιμαω command, rebuke

Suggests a confident and confrontational approach by Peter.

Verse 33

ὁ δὲ ἐπιστραφεὶς καὶ ἰδὼν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἐπετίμησεν Πέτρῳ καὶ λέγει, "Ὑπαγε ὀπίσω μου, Σατανᾶ, ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

ἐπιστραφεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
ἐπιστρεφω turn round, turn

ἰδων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄραω
see

Suggests that Peter may have been acting as a spokesman for the disciples rather than having expressed a purely personal viewpoint. For the sake of the other disciples, a public rebuke of Peter was necessary.

ὑπαγω go, go one's way, depart
ὀπίσω prep with gen after, behind, away
from

Σατανας, α the Adversary, Satan

Cranfield thinks this to be a blunt order 'Get out of my sight, Satan', rather than a command that Peter get back in his place as a disciple, following after Jesus rather than seeking to lead him. However, Jesus words in vv 34f, using the same phrase ὀπίσω μου, leave this open to question.

France comments, "It functions here as more than just an extravagant term of abuse (a use for which there is in any case no other evidence), and implies that Peter's protest, even though properly described as 'human' thoughts (φρονεῖς τα τῶν ἀνθρώπων), is so much at odds with the thoughts of God as to be attributed to a more supernatural source. By opposing the will of God (θεῖ) for his Messiah, Peter and those who agree with him are acting as spokesmen of God's ultimate enemy (cf. Satan's role in 'taking away the word' [of God] in 4:15)." France.

φρονεω think, have in mind

Here in the sense 'taking the side of'. "The characterisation of Peter's ideas as τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων as opposed to τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ sums up the problem which we have seen in considering the call to secrecy in v. 30. The divine purpose revealed in v. 31 makes no sense in human terms. If even the privileged disciples are unable to get beyond their 'human' understanding of the Messiah's role, what hope is there for people in general to get it right? The problem lies not at the level of competing loyalties (as is suggested by the RSV translation 'on the side of'), but at that of incompatible ideologies, of a human perspective which cannot grasp the divine purpose." France.