

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 187 – Mark 9:30-10:16

Day 931: Mark 9:30-37**Verses 30-32**

Cf. Mt 17:22-23; Lk 9:43b-45. "The process of re-educating the disciples which began in 8:31 with the first announcement of Jesus' coming rejection and death is now resumed with a second such announcement (9:30-32). As in 8:32-33, the disciples again respond by revealing how completely they have misunderstood the values of the kingdom of God, and Jesus offers a further lesson in the reversal of natural expectations (9:33-37)." France.

Verse 30

Κάκειθεν ἐξελθόντες παρεπορεύοντο διὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν ἵνα τις γνοῖ·

κάκειθεν and from there – formed from
καὶ ἐκειθεν

I.e. from the house mentioned in v.28 or from the region.

ἐξελθόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m pl nom
ἐξερχομαι

παραπορευομαι pass by, go through
ἤθελεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s θελω
wish, will

γνοῖ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s γινωσκω

Verse 31

ἐδίδασκεν γὰρ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι Ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, καὶ ἀποκτανθεὶς μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀναστήσεται.

διδασκω teach

παραδιδωμι hand over, deliver up

"A futuristic present which conveys a note of assurance." Taylor. "The future course of events is already decided." France. Cranfield suggests that beyond the idea of human betrayal and manipulation there is also "that of Jesus being delivered by God into the power of men (cf. Rom 8:32 and also 4:25)."

χειρ, χειρος f see v.27

ἀποκτενοῦσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl
ἀποκτείνω and ἀποκτενῶ, -ννω
kill, put to death

ἀποκτανθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
ἀποκτείνω

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

ἀναστήσεται Verb, fut midd indic, 3 s
ἀνίστημι rise, come back to life

Verse 32

οἱ δὲ ἠγνόουν τὸ ῥῆμα, καὶ ἐφοβοῦντο αὐτὸν ἐπερωτῆσαι.

ἠγνόουν Verb, imperf act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
ἀγνοεω not know, fail to understand

Cf. 4:13, 40; 6:52; 7:18; 8:17; 9:10.

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter

φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of)

ἐπερωταω see v.28

"They understood enough to be afraid to ask to understand more." Best.

Verses 33-37

Cf. Mt. 18:1-5; Lk 9:46-48.

Verse 33

Καὶ ἦλθον εἰς Καφαρναοῦμ. καὶ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ γενόμενος ἐπηρωτα αὐτοῦς, τί ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ διελογίζεσθε;

ἦλθον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3 pl ἐρχομαι

The house mentioned is presumably that of Peter.

γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι

ἐπηρωτα Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s
ἐπερωταω

ὁδος, ου f way, road, journey

διαλογιζομαι discuss, argue, consider

"Τί ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ διελογίζεσθε; is not an attempt to gain new information, for Jesus is clearly aware (through supernatural insight or from having overheard their argument?) of what has been going on. It is a challenge to bring into the open a debate of which they are apparently ashamed, aware that Jesus will not approve. Hence their silence." France.

Verse 34

οἱ δὲ ἐσιωπων, πρὸς ἀλλήλους γὰρ διελέχθησαν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ τίς μείζων.

ἐσιωπων Verb, imperf act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
σιωπαω be silent, be quiet

ἀλλήλων, οὐς, οὐς reciprocal pronoun one
another

διελέχθησαν Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 pl
διαλογιζομαι

μείζων, ον and μείζοτερος, α, ον (comp
of μεγας) greater, greatest

"Schlatter points out that the question of precedence was specially important in Palestine and was incessantly arising, whether in the synagogue service, judicial proceedings or at meals." Cranfield. "The question, τίς μείζων may have been sparked by the selection of Peter, James, and John for the trip up the mountain, leaving the others feeling aggrieved – and the more so after their humiliation over the failed exorcism. Perhaps also they have already grasped sufficient of what Jesus has been saying to realise that his death is a real possibility, which then leaves the pressing question of who is to take the lead after he is gone. The issue will surface more powerfully in the bid for leadership by James and John and in Jesus' response to it in 10:35-45." France.

Verse 35

καὶ καθίσας ἐφώνησεν τοὺς δώδεκα καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Εἴ τις θέλει πρῶτος εἶναι ἔσται πάντων ἔσχατος καὶ πάντων διάκονος.

καθίζω sit down, sit

"Jesus normally sat to teach, like the Rabbis. Cf. Mt 5:1." Cranfield. "It conveys the sense a deliberate, even formal, piece of instruction." France.

φωνεῶ call

After Jesus' original question the disciples may have fallen to muttering one with another or have drifted away in embarrassment. Jesus sits down and calls them to come and listen to what he has to say to them. Here is something he particularly wants them to understand.

δώδεκα twelve

θελῶ see v.30

πρῶτος, ἡ, ον first, leading, foremost

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἶμι

ἔσχατος, ἡ, ον adj last

διάκονος, ου m & f servant, helper

Cf. 10:43; Mt 20:26; Lk 9:48b; 22:26; Mt 23:11.

Verse 36

καὶ λαβὼν παιδίον ἔστησεν αὐτὸ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐναγκαλισάμενος αὐτὸ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,

λαβὼν Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λαμβανῶ παιδίον, ου n child

"The use of a child as a teaching aid, both here and with a slightly different introduction in Mt. 18:1-5, has explicitly (in terms of context) to do with status, not with any character traits supposedly typical of children. The child represents the lowest order in the social scale." France.

ἔστησεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἵστημι
set, place

μεσος, ἡ, ον middle; ἐν μ., εἰς μ. in the middle, among

ἐναγκαλισάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s ἐναγκαλιζομαι take into one's arms, put one's arms around

"Only Mark adds here and in 10:16 the homely picture of Jesus ἐναγκαλισάμενος the child, which makes the message visual as well as verbal." France.

Verse 37

Ὃς ἂν ἐν τῶν τοιούτων παιδίων δέξηται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐμὲ δέχεται· καὶ ὃς ἂν ἐμὲ δέχεται, οὐκ ἐμὲ δέχεται ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με.

ὃς ἂν whoever

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one τοιούτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind

δέξηται Verb, aor act subj, 3 s δεχομαι receive, accept, welcome

ὄνομα, τοσ n name

"The meaning could be 'because the παιδιον belongs to me – as a believer' or 'because the παιδιον (in his human need and without necessarily being a believer) is my representative' (cf. Mt 25:40, 45) or 'because this action is something I desire'." Cranfield.

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγώ

ἀποστείλαντά Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s ἀποστελλῶ send, send out

Day 932: Mark 9:38-41**Verses 38-40**

Cf. Lk. 9:49f. "The effect of the pericope is to encourage a welcoming openness on the part of Jesus' disciples which is in stark contrast to the protective exclusiveness more often associated with religious groups, not least within the Christian tradition... There is a clear resemblance to the story of Eldad and Medad in Nu. 11:26-29, with John taking up the protective role of Joshua in that story, and Jesus echoing Moses' open-minded attitude and repudiation of the 'jealousy' of his loyal follower... This pericope follows hard on the story of the disciples' failure in exorcism in 9:14-29. To see an 'outsider' apparently succeeding where they, the chosen agents of Jesus, have failed is doubly distressing." France.

Verse 38

Ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰωάννης, Διδάσκαλε, εἶδομέν τινα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἐκβάλλοντα δαιμόνια, καὶ ἐκωλύομεν αὐτόν, ὅτι οὐκ ἠκολούθει ἡμῖν.

ἔφη Verb, imperf act ind, 3s φημι say
διδασκαλος, ου m teacher
εἶδομέν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl ὄραω see,
observe

ἐκβάλλω see v.28

δαιμονιον, ου n demon, evil spirit

Cf. Acts 19:13ff.

ἐκωλύομεν Verb, imperf act indic, 1 pl
κωλυω hinder, prevent, forbid

"Translate: 'We tried to prevent him' – conative imperfect." Cranfield.

ἄκολουθεω follow, accompany

The last clause ὅτι οὐκ ἠκολούθει ἡμῖν is subject to textual variations and is omitted by a number of witnesses. Cranfield is of the view that, "Probably we should follow the Western text and omit the ὅτι clause, which looks like an assimilation to Lk." – the Western text reads ... δαιμονια ὡς οὐκ ἀκολουθεῖ ἡμῖν καὶ ἐκωλύσαμεν αὐτόν. France thinks the repetition of the phrase (both as a description of the man and as a reason for the prevention) "while not so well supported, would be typical of Mark's style, especially here to emphasise the man's dubious allegiance, and would be a prime candidate for scribal tidying up by assimilation to the Lucan text." (i.e. the text favoured by UBS).

Of ἡμῖν France writes, "What John is looking for is not so much personal allegiance and obedience to Jesus, but membership in the 'authorised' circle of his followers. We should perhaps understand ἡμεῖς here as specifically the Twelve, regarded as having an exclusive link with and commission from Jesus, so that other people's association with him must be through their mediation. Even if such a possessive doctrine is not explicit, it fits John's restrictive action and explains the terms of Jesus' response."

Verse 39

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Μὴ κωλύετε αὐτόν, οὐδεὶς γάρ ἐστιν ὃς ποιήσει δύναμιν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου καὶ δυνήσεται ταχὺ κακολογῆσαί με·

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
δυνήσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s
δυναμαι

ταχυ adv quickly, soon

κακολογεω speak evil of, curse

Verse 40

ὃς γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν καθ' ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἔστιν.

Cranfield draws attention to the sayings in Mt 12:30 and Lk 11:23 which seem to contradict this one. He suggests that these sayings need to be understood in the context of Jesus' messianic veiledness. While people still do not see who Jesus is we should not quickly assume they are opposed to Jesus. Once the point of recognition is reached, there can be no middle ground and Mt 12:30 holds.

Verse 41-50

Cf. Mt 18:6-9; Lk 17:1f; 14:34f; Mt 5:13.

Verse 41

Ὁς γὰρ ἂν ποτίσῃ ὑμᾶς ποτήριον ὕδατος ἐν ὀνόματι ὅτι Χριστοῦ ἐστε, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσῃ τὸν μισθὸν αὐτοῦ.

ποτίσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ποτιζω
give to drink, water

ποτηριον, ου n cup

ὑδωρ, ὕδατος n water

The use of Χριστοῦ here is striking. "It is *that* name which gives this kind of act its specific significance and justifies the reward. This is not mere benevolence, but the demonstration that a person is ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν by means of practical help given specifically to those who belong to Jesus." France.

ἀπολλυμι lose
μισθος, ου m wages, reward

"The language of reward, which is so prominent in Matthew, appears explicitly only here in Mark (though see 10:28-30 for the idea). It is a paradoxical term to use in connection with a gift of water, which is so basic a feature of Eastern hostility as to require no reward. But even so small an act betokens a person's response to Jesus in the person of his disciples (cf. Mt 25:31-46), and as such will not be unnoticed.

"The three sayings collected in vv 39-41 thus illustrate in different ways the open boundaries of the kingdom of God, where both committed disciple and sympathetic fellow traveller find their place." France.

Day 933: Mark 9:42-50

"We are ... apparently dealing here with a little complex of sayings which lacked a fixed narrative context, and which occur together in this form only in Mark. They are linked together by repeated key words (σκανδαλιζω, vv. 42 and 43-47; πυρ, vv. 43-48 and 49; ἄλας, vv. 49 and 50). It is generally agreed that the complex was collected together on this catchword basis, for easier memorisation, before coming to Mark." France.

Verse 42

Καὶ ὃς ἂν σκανδαλίση ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων [εἰς ἐμέ], καλὸν ἐστὶν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον εἰ περικείται μύλος ὄνικος περὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ βέβληται εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν.

ὃς ἂν see v.37

σκανδαλιζω cause (someone) to sin,
cause (someone) to give up the faith

"The verb here means to cause someone to stumble in his faith, to destroy someone's faith." Cranfield.

"This is Mark's only use of μικροὶ to denote disciples, a use which Matthew has developed more fully (Mt. 10:42; 18:6, 10, 14; cf. 25:40, 45). The description of them as πιστευόντες ... makes it clear that Mark is using the term in a similar sense, even though the lack of a clear narrative context makes it difficult to identify the immediate referent of τούτων." France.

πιστευω believe (in), have faith (in)

"The absolute use of οἱ πιστευόντες as a synonym for disciples (as in Acts 2:44; 4:32, etc.) would be unique in Mark, though 9:23 partially prepares for it. The addition of εἰς ἐμε would thus be a natural 'improvement' as well as an assimilation to Mt. 18:6, and the range of authorities which omit it is sufficiently broad (x D Δ and some OL MSS) to favour the shorter reading." France.

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper
μαλλον adv more; rather, instead
περικειμαι be placed around
μυλος, ου m mill; millstone (μ. ὄνικος
large millstone drawn by a donkey)
ὄνικος, η, ον of a donkey
τραχηλος, ου m neck
βέβληται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s βαλλω
θαλασσα, ης f sea

Verse 43

Καὶ ἂν σκανδαλίση σε ἡ χεὶρ σου, ἀπόκοψον αὐτήν· καλὸν ἐστὶν σε κυλλὸν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν ἢ τὰς δύο χεῖρας ἔχοντα ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὴν γέενναν, εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον.

ἂν if

σε Pronoun, acc s ου
χειρ, χειρος f hand
ἀποκοπτω cut off, cut away
κυλλος, η, ον crippled
εἰσερχομαι enter, go in
ζωη, ης f life
ἢ or, than

δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυοσιν two
γεεννα, ης f hell

"The name of a valley to the south of Jerusalem... which had been the scene of human sacrifices to Molech (Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35), but had been desecrated by Josiah (II Kings 23:10) and used for burning ofal. It came to be used to denote the place of divine punishment (e.g. Enoch 27:2; 90:26f; 4 Ezra 7:36)." Cranfield.

πυρ, ος n fire
ἀσβεστος, ον unquenchable

"The phrase εἰς τὴν γένναν seems a firmly established part of the text in both verses [43 and 45] (its omission in f¹ f¹³ etc. in v. 43 [noted in UBS³, not in UBS⁴] probably reflecting a desire to drop the unfamiliar Semitic term in favour of something more universally recognised; assimilation to Mt. 18:8 is another factor). The presence of εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἀσβεστόν (which parallels but is not identical with the Matthean phrase εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον) at some point in the tradition seems necessary to account for the presence of this or a variant in many witnesses of both verses, and the decision of UBS⁴ to retain it in v. 43 but not in v. 45 (where its support is rather less, and it would naturally have been repeated from v. 43) seems appropriate." France.

Verse 44

Verses 44 and 46, identical in wording to v. 48 in TR, are omitted by κ B C L W f¹ k sy^s co fa and appear to have been copied from v.48.

Verse 45

καὶ ἐὰν ὁ πούς σου σκανδαλίζη σε, ἀπόκοπον αὐτόν· καλόν ἐστίν σε εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν χωλὸν ἢ τοὺς δύο πόδας ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γένναν.

πους, ποδος m foot

"The metaphor of amputation could hardly be more shocking; this is a matter of ultimate seriousness. Nothing less than eternal life or death is at stake. Christians who disparage 'hell-fire preaching' must face the awkward fact that Mark's Jesus (and still more Matthew's and Luke's) envisaged an ultimate separation between life and γέννα which demanded the most drastic renunciation in order to avoid the unquenchable fire, and that he did not regard even his disciples as immune from the need to examine themselves and take appropriate action." France.

Verse 47

καὶ ἐὰν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου σκανδαλίζη σε, ἔκβαλε αὐτόν· καλόν σέ ἐστίν μονόφθαλμον εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ δύο ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γένναν,

μονοφθαλμος, ον one-eyed

τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ is equivalent to τὴν ζωὴν (vv. 43, 45).

Verse 48

ὅπου ὁ σκωληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται·

ὅπου adv. where

σκωληξ, ηκος m worm

τελευταω die

σβεννυμι extinguish, put out

Cf. Is 66:24. "It is evocative language, which is better appreciated in its awful deterrence than analysed as to precisely how the two methods of destruction relate to each other, or just what is the function of the worm." France.

Verse 49

πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται.

ἀλισθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s ἀλιζω salt, restore flavour to (salt)

Of the textual variants in this verse, Metzger writes, "The opening words of this verse have been transmitted in three principal forms: i) "For everyone will be salted with fire" (B L Δ *al*). ii) "For every sacrifice will be salted with salt" (D it^{a,b} *al*); and iii) "For everyone will be salted with fire and every sacrifice will be salted with salt" (A K Π *al*). The history of the text seems to have been as follows. At a very early period a scribe, having found in Lev 2:13 a clue to the meaning of Jesus' enigmatic statement, wrote the Old Testament passage in the margin of his copy of Mark. In subsequent copyings the marginal gloss was either substituted for the words of the text, thus creating reading ii), or was added to the text, thus creating reading iii). Other modifications also arose."

"Apart from general considerations of the metaphorical use of both fire and salt in biblical literature (each of which yields a variety of possible lines of interpretation, but it is the use of the two together which is unusual and arresting), the most promising line of approach is via Lv. 2:13, the requirement that grain offerings (which were burned) must be accompanied by salt, together with the more sweeping generalisation, 'With all your offerings you shall offer salt'. Salt is not mentioned elsewhere in the Levitical regulations for sacrifice, but Ezra 6:9; 7:22 include salt among the provisions required for restoring the temple ritual, and Ezk. 43:24 mentions salt added to animal burnt offerings in the restored temple. To be 'salted with fire' seems then to evoke the imagery of temple sacrifice, but the victims who are 'salted' are now the worshippers themselves. Their dedication to the service of their suffering Messiah is like that of a burnt offering, total and irrevocable. Fire occurs frequently as an image for eschatological suffering. The inclusion of the image of salt surprises the modern reader, since fire alone would have made this point. But anyone familiar with sacrificial ritual would not find it out of place. And once introduced, it contributes further nuances. The salt of Lv 2:13 is described as 'salt of the covenant with your God' (cf. 'covenant of salt', Nu 18:19; 2 Ch 13:5), while in Ex 30:35 salt, as an ingredient of the sacred incense, is linked with the qualities 'pure and holy'. These are among the resonances which the striking image of salting with fire might evoke from someone familiar with OT sacrificial language, and indeed with the ritual as it actually continued in Jerusalem up to AD 70. In this context it speaks of one who follows Jesus as totally dedicated to God's service, and warns that such dedication will inevitably be costly in terms of personal suffering." France.

Verse 50

Καλὸν τὸ ἄλας· ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἄλας ἀναλον γένηται, ἐν τίνι αὐτὸ ἀρτύσετε; ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἄλα, καὶ εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις.

ἄλας, ατος n salt
ἀναλος, ον without salt, insipid
γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι
ἀρτυω season, restore flavour

Cf. Lk 14:34; Mt 5:13.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/herself, itself

Cf Mt 5:13. Cranfield says "Salt was a necessity of life in the ancient world... it preserved from putrefaction food which without it would become putrid. So the disciples of Jesus are set, like salt, as a source of life and health in the midst of a world that left to itself must go bad. But they are warned of the possibility of their losing the very property that makes them precious, and so becoming like salt that has lost its saltiness." Cranfield links these words with 8:35-38. France comments concerning the link with v. 49, "The sequence may not be entirely arbitrary, however, since the disciple's character may be understood to derive from the sacrificial dedication symbolised in v. 49; the process of 'salting with fire' produces a 'salty' disciple."

εἰρηνεω live or be at peace

ἄλληλων, οισ, ους reciprocal pronoun one another

This is part of what it means to maintain our savour – a challenge to those who think that maintaining distinctiveness requires constant division and separation. "While salt as a metaphor for peacefulness is in itself an unusual use, in the OT salt symbolises a covenant (Lv 2:13; Nu 18:19; 2 Ch 13:5) while in some rabbinic writings salt stands for wisdom or pleasing speech (cf. Col 4:6), which a sound basis for good relationships." France.

Day 934: Mark 10:1-9

Verses 1-12

Cf. Mt 19:1-12 and also Mt 5:31f; Lk 16:18.

Verse 1

Καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἀναστὰς ἔρχεται εἰς τὰ ὄρια τῆς Ἰουδαίας [καὶ] πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, καὶ συμπορεύονται πάλιν ὄχλοι πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ ὡς εἰώθει πάλιν ἐδίδασκεν αὐτούς.

ἐκεῖθεν from there

I.e. Capernaum, cf. 9:33.

ἀνιστημι rise, stand up
ὄριον, ου n territory, region
Ἰουδαιος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish, Judean
περαν prep with gen beyond, across
Ἰορδανης, ου m Jordan River

"Mark is probably describing Jesus final journey up to Judea." Cranfield.

The reading δια του περαν while secondary, probably gives the right sense. και περαν may be an assimilation to Mt. 19:1.

France comments, "As in 7:31, Mark's description of the itinerary is not clear, but in his narrative context the two terms Ἰουδαία and περαν του Ἰορδανου serve to indicate progress towards Jerusalem, and bring Jesus into what is unfamiliar and potentially hostile territory (remembering the ominous implications of the two mentions of Jerusalem in 3:22 and 7:1, and the goal of Jesus' journey)."

συμπορευομαι go along with, walk along with

παλιν again, once more

εἰωθα pf. with pres. meaning) be

accustomed to; το εἶωθος custom

διδασκω teach

Verse 2

καὶ προσελθόντες Φαρισαῖοι ἐπηρωτων αὐτὸν εἰ ἔξεστιν ἀνδρὶ γυναῖκα ἀπολῦσαι, πειράζοντες αὐτόν.

"The introduction in 10:2-9 of a discussion with outsiders rather than a private dialogue with disciples ... shifts the scene for a time, even though from 10:10 onwards the disciples become again the focus of attention." France.

προσερχομαι come or go to, approach

There are several variants here. France comments, "Most of the variants make little difference to the sense, but the reading of D etc. omits Pharisees altogether. Since it would be very natural for a scribe to specify unidentified interlocutors as Pharisees, the 'expected' opponents of Jesus (especially in a matter of halakhah), the shorter reading seems more probable, and the more so since Pharisees would naturally be inserted to assimilate Mt. 19:3."

ἐπερωτω ask, interrogate, question

ἔξεστιν impersonal verb it is permitted, it is lawful, it is proper, it is possible

ἀνηρ, ἀνδρος m man, husband

γυνή, αικος f woman, wife

ἀπολυω release, dismiss, divorce

πειραζω test, put to the test, tempt

"Their intention is presumably to see whether Jesus will say something which can be used against him – either to show him contradicting the Law or to compromise him in Herod's eyes (cf. 6:17f). Πειραζειν has to mean to 'test someone's defences', 'try to get someone off his guard'." Cranfield.

France comments, "In view of the fate of John the Baptist (6:17-29) an injudicious reply concerning divorce might well also land Jesus (the 'second Baptist') in trouble with Antipas and his wife, especially as Jesus has now moved into the area both of John's activity and of his death at Machaerus in Perea."

France provides the following background:

"While the permitted grounds of divorce were debated in the rabbinic world, the admissibility of divorce (of a wife by her husband, not vice versa: Josephus, *Ant.* 15:259) as such was not questioned: Dt 24:1-4 (the only legislation relating specifically to divorce in the Torah) was understood to have settled the issue. The more restrictive interpretation of the school of Shammai (only on the basis of 'unchastity', *m. Git.* 9:10) was almost certainly a minority view. More typical, probably, is Ben Sira 25:26: 'if she does not accept your control, divorce her and send her away', or Josephus's laconic comment (*Life* 426): 'At this time I divorced my wife, not liking her behaviour.' Josephus paraphrases Dt 24:1, 'He who wants to be divorced from the wife who shares his home for whatever cause – and among people many such causes arise – ...' (*Ant* 4:253), and the school of Hillel allowed this to cover a spoiled meal, or even, so R. Akiba, 'if he found another fairer than she' (*m. Git.* 9:10)."

Verse 3

ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, τί ὑμῖν ἐνετείλατο Μωϋσῆς;

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s

ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply

ἐνετείλατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

ἐντελλομαι command, order

"Jesus directs them back to the Law." Cranfield.

Verse 4

οἱ δὲ εἶπαν, Ἐπέτρεψεν Μωϋσῆς βιβλίον ἀποστασίου γράψαι καὶ ἀπολῦσαι.

ἐπιτρεπω let, allow, permit

"The verbs in this opening exchange are interesting. Jesus asks about commands (ἐντελλομαι), but they reply in terms of permission (ἐπιτρεπω). This reflects the equivocal nature of the legal basis of divorce in Dt 24:1-4. That passage does not specifically 'command', or even 'permit', divorce but rather regulates (in v.4) the situation which results after divorce has taken place and been duly certified: vv. 1-3 consists only of conditional clauses setting up the scenario for which v. 4 provides a legal ruling (that the husband who divorced his wife may not remarry her). The divorce which created that situation is presupposed but is not itself the subject of the legislation. βιβλίον ἀποστασίου γράψαι καὶ ἀπολύσαι is thus not a quotation from Dt 24, but a summary of what is assumed to be its 'permission'. To interpret this even as permission for divorce is a matter of inference from the fact that divorce is envisaged without express disapproval. It certainly falls short of a 'command' (as Matthew's Pharisees boldly make it, Mt 19:7). Jesus' interlocutors here, therefore, show some sensitivity towards the rather ambivalent sanction which Dt 24:1-4 provides for divorce. But since there is no other relevant legislation in the Pentateuch, it had to serve." France.

βιβλιον, ου η book, written statement
ἀποστασιον, ου η written notice of
divorce (with or without βιβλιον)
γραρω write

"The regulation about giving a certificate of divorce in Deut 24:1 assumes the practice of divorce and provides some protection for the woman." Cranfield.

Verse 5

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν ἔγραψεν ὑμῖν τὴν ἐντολὴν ταύτην.

σκληροκαρδια, ας f stubbornness (of persons hard to teach)

"Moses' ἐντολη must refer to the whole long sentence Dt 24:1-4, which does indeed conclude with an injunction (that the divorced and remarried wife may not subsequently return to her original husband), rather than to the words βιβλίον ἀποστασίου γράψαι καὶ ἀπολύσαι, which are not in fact what Moses 'wrote', nor do they represent what the law actually 'commands'. It is the whole complex sentence, with its recognition of the reality of divorce and remarriage, which Jesus now declares to be directed towards τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν, where the ὑμεῖς represents presumably the people of Israel in general rather than the specific group he is addressing." France.

ἐντολη, ης f command, order, instruction

"In this and the following verses Jesus is not setting the commandment of God against that of Moses, nor is he brushing aside the scripture. Rather he is bringing out the real meaning of Deut 24:1. A distinction has to be made between that which sets forth the absolute will of God, and those provisions which take account of man's actual sinfulness and are designed to limit and control its consequences... Human conduct which falls short of the absolute command of God is sin and stands under the divine judgement. The provisions which God's mercy has designed for the limitation of the consequences of man's sin must not be interpreted as divine approval for sinning. When our sinfulness traps us in a position in which all the choices still open to us are evil, we are to choose that which is least evil, asking for God's forgiveness and comforted by it, but not pretending that evil is good." Cranfield.

Verse 6

ἀπὸ δὲ ἀρχῆς κτίσεως ἄρσεν καὶ θήλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς·

ἀρχη, ης f beginning, origin

κτισις, εως f creation

ἀρσην, εν gen ενος male, man

θηλυς, εια, υ adj female

Metzger comments, "The insertion of ὁ θεος as the subject of ἐποίησεν must have seemed to copyists to be necessary lest the uninstructed reader imagine that the previously mentioned subject (Moses) should be carried on. Several witnesses omit αὐτούς as superfluous."

Verse 7

ἔνεκεν τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα [καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ],

ἔνεκα (ἔνεκεν and εἶνεκεν) prep with gen
because of, for the sake of
καταλείπει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s
καταλειπω leave, leave behind
προσκολληθήσεται Verb, fut pass dep
indic, 3 s προσκολλαομαι be united in
marriage

"The clause καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ omitted by κ B etc. seems so central to the argument that it is hard to imagine the quotation from Gen 2:24 being made without it. But by the same token it is hard to explain its deliberate omission if it were once in the text. It is therefore probably safer to assume that the clause dropped out accidentally (as the first of the two lines both begin with καὶ). Within the line, the construction πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα which corresponds to the better-supported text of the LXX, is more likely, since τῇ γυναίκεῖ is both stylistically more elegant and assimilates to Mt 19:5." France.

Verse 8

καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν· ὥστε οὐκέτι εἰσὶν δύο ἀλλὰ μία σὰρξ.

ἔσονται Verb, fut indic, 3 pl εἶμι
δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυοσιν two
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh

"The word σαρξ here is puzzling. Are we to take it as equivalent to σωμα (cf. 1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:28-31), the meaning being that the two become one *person*? Or are we rather to understand it in light of passages like Gen 29:14; 37:27; Jud 9:2; Rom 11:14, the meaning being that a man and a woman by marriage cease to be merely members of two different families and become one *kindred*?" Cranfield.

εἷς, μια, ἓν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
ὥστε so that, with the result that
οὐκέτι adv no longer, no more

"They are no longer two independent beings who may choose to go their own way, but a single indivisible unit." France. In modern terms, 'an item.'

Verse 9

ὁ οὖν ὁ θεὸς συνέζευξεν ἄνθρωπος μὴ χωριζέτω.

συνέζευξεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
συζευγνυμι join together

χωρίζω separate

"If marriage was instituted as a permanent 'one flesh' union of man and woman, then it must always be against the will of God for it to be broken. The legal provision of Moses in Dt 24 was not intended as a statement of God's purpose for marriage, but as a regrettable but necessary means of limiting the damage when that purpose had already been abandoned. It is a provision to deal with human σκληροκαρδια, not a pointer to the way things ought to be..."

"If we are to do justice to Mark's understanding of Jesus, we will do so not by attempting to weaken his bold statement of God's purpose for marriage but by recognising any broken marriage for what it is, a breach of God's standard, and by regarding any resultant provision for divorce not as good, but as, like the Mosaic legislation in Dt 24:1-4, a regrettable concession to σκληροκαρδια. Modern society shows us what can happen when a provision for damage limitation comes to be regarded as a right or even a norm. In such a context Jesus' clear-sighted return to 'the way it was meant to be' has a refreshing and compelling simplicity, and must not be relegated to the category of an 'ideal' which we all admire but do not seriously expect to be implemented. God's design for unbroken, lifelong marriage is not an 'ideal' in that sense, but the realistic standard to which we are expected to conform and on which the health of human society depends. Mark's Jesus allows us no lower aim." France.

Day 935: Mark 10:10-16**Verse 10**

Καὶ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν πάλιν οἱ μαθηταὶ περὶ τούτου ἐπηρώτων αὐτόν.

παλιν again, once more
ἐπερωτω ask, question

Cf. 4:10; 7:17 etc.

Verse 11

καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ὃς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ γαμήσῃ ἄλλην μοιχᾶται ἐπ' αὐτήν,

ὃς ἂν whoever

ἀπολυω see v.2

γαμήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s γαμεω
marry

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

μοιχομαι commit adultery

"According to Rabbinic law a man could be said to commit adultery against another married man, and a wife could be said to commit adultery against her husband, but a husband could not be said to commit adultery against his wife. So Jesus goes beyond Rabbinic teaching by speaking of a husband committing adultery against his wife." Cranfield.

Verse 12

καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὴ ἀπολύσασα τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς γαμήσι ἄλλον μοιχᾶται.

"Mark's second statement is perhaps the most surprising, as it presupposes the possibility of the wife initiating a divorce, which was not envisaged in Jewish law, though it was in Roman." France.

Postscript to verses 1-10

"The practical application of this teaching in a society in which both adultery and divorce are common and legally permissible cannot be straightforward. But Mark's Jesus offers no direct guidance on the problem, simply a clear, unequivocal, and utterly uncompromising principle that marriage is permanent and divorce (together with the resultant remarriage) is wrong. Whatever the other considerations which pastoral concern may bring to bear, some of them no doubt based on values drawn from Jesus' teaching on other subjects, no approach can claim his support which does not take as its guiding principle the understanding of marriage set forth in vv 9 and 11-12." France.

Verses 13-16

Cf. Mt 19:13-15; Lk 18:15-17; Mt 18:3.

Verse 13

Καὶ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παιδιά ἵνα αὐτῶν ἄψηται· οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἐπετίμησαν αὐτοῖς.

προσφέρω present, bring (before)

"The unspecified subject of προσέφερον may reasonably be assumed to be the parents of the children. Their very anonymity helps to make the point about status: they, and their children, are not anybody special." France.

παιδιον, ου n child

ἄψηται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 s ἅπτω
midd. take hold of, touch

I.e. lay his hands on them and bless them.

ἐπιτιμαω command, rebuke

"Presumably the disciples meant to save Jesus from being troubled." Cranfield.

"Lest the words ἐπετίμησαν αὐτοῖς be taken to mean that it was the children who were rebuked, a wide variety of witnesses expanded the text to read ἐπετιμων τοις προσφερουσιν... The reading adopted by the text is strongly supported." Metzger.

Verse 14

ἰδων δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἠγανάκτησεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ἄφετε τὰ παιδιά ἔρχεσθαι πρὸς με, μὴ κωλύετε αὐτά, τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἰδων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄραω

see

ἠγανάκτησεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἀγανακτεω be indignant, be angry

"It covers both irritation at their failure to learn and repugnance at their attitude in itself. Only a few verses earlier they have been found hindering someone whom Jesus approved (9:38-39), and the repetition of κωλυω here brands them as obstructionists who stand in the way of the generous intentions of Jesus." France.

ἄφιμι allow

κωλυω hinder, prevent, forbid

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun
and adjective such, of such kind

"The genitive is possessive, the meaning being that the kingdom 'belongs to such' (cf. Mt, 5:3,10) – not that it 'consists of such'. ... To find the reason why the kingdom of God belongs to children in any subjective qualities of the children is surely to misunderstand: the reason is rather to be found in their objective humbleness, the fact that they are weak and helpless and unimportant, and in the fact that God has chosen 'the weak things of the world' (1 Cor 1:26ff; cf. Mt 11:25 = Lk 10:21). Cranfield.

France comments similarly, "If in 9:37 the focus was, as we have argued, not on children as such but on those whom the child in that pericope represents, the 'little ones' of the kingdom of God, the meaning here is likely to be the same. In that case the pronouncement τῶν τοιούτων ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is not only or even mainly about children, but about those who share the child's status. It is to such people, the insignificant ones who are important to Jesus (who will of course include, but not be confined to, children) that God's kingdom belongs. It is the literal children whom Jesus tells the disciples to allow to come to him, but the reason is that they belong to and represent a wider category of οἱ τοιοῦτοι, who are the ones who matter to God."

Verse 15

ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὃς ἂν μὴ δέξηται τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς παιδίον, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν.

"The fourteen ἀμὴν sayings of Mark are generally understood to mark out particularly important pronouncements, and several of them convey promises or warnings about spiritual rewards and penalties (see 3:28; 9:1; 9:41; 10:29). Here, too, there is a warning against failing to enter the kingdom of God." France.

δέξηται Verb, aor act subj, 3 s δεχομαι
receive, accept

"While 'entering' it apparently refers to eternal destiny, 'receiving' it relates more to a person's attitude and response towards God's demands in this life. To 'receive the kingdom of God' means to be God's willing subject, gladly embracing the radical values which Jesus has come to inculcate. It is such 'reception' now which is the key to 'entry' hereafter." France.

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

"The reference in ὡς παιδίον again is not to the receptiveness or humility or imaginativeness or trustfulness or unselfconsciousness of children, but to their objective littleness and helplessness. To receive the kingdom as a little child is to allow oneself to be given it, because one knows one cannot obtain it as one's right or attempt to earn it. (To think of any subjective qualities of children here is to turn faith into a work.)" Cranfield.

Verse 16

καὶ ἐναγκαλισάμενος αὐτὰ κατευλόγει
τιθεὶς τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ' αὐτά.

ἐναγκαλισάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc,
m nom s ἐναγκαλιζομαι take into
one's arms, put one's arms around

Cf. 9:36.

κατευλογεω bless

τιθεὶς Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s τιθημι
place

χεῖρ, χεῖρος f hand