

## Mark 9

**Read Mark 9:1-13:** We have to die before we go to heaven, but haven (in the form of Jesus) can come to us though. The Kingdom of Heaven includes us on earth and those in heaven. People want to know what it is like in heaven, which is after our spirit separates from our flesh. There are places in scripture that give us clues about heaven. Here we see Jesus and Elijah and Moses (representing the prophets and the Law) in a brilliant white and shining state. After all, God is light. When Moses stood before him the brilliant light from God made Moses literally glow for a while.

*<sup>29</sup> Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. <sup>30</sup> So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. <sup>31</sup> Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. <sup>32</sup> Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. <sup>33</sup> And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. <sup>34</sup> But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. <sup>35</sup> And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him. (Exodus 34)*

Paul or his acquaintance went to heaven and was unable to properly communicate what he saw and heard there.

*<sup>2</sup> I know a man in Christ, who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven. <sup>3</sup> And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—<sup>4</sup> was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. (2 Corinthians 12)*

The angels are also even beyond our comprehension.

*<sup>4</sup> As I looked, behold, a high wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing intermittently and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like gleaming metal in the midst of the fire. <sup>5</sup> And within it there were figures resembling four living beings. And this was their appearance: they had human form. <sup>6</sup> Each of them had four faces and four wings. <sup>7</sup> Their legs were straight and their feet were like a calf's <sup>[e]</sup>hoof, and they sparkled like polished*

bronze. <sup>8</sup> Under their wings on their four sides were human hands. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, <sup>9</sup> their wings touched one another; their faces did not turn when they moved, each went straight forward. <sup>10</sup> As for the form of their faces, each had a human face; all four had the face of a lion on the right and the face of a bull on the left, and all four had the face of an eagle. <sup>11</sup> Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each had two touching another being, and two covering their bodies. <sup>12</sup> And each went straight forward; wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go, without turning as they went. <sup>13</sup> In the midst of the living beings there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches moving among the living beings. The fire was bright, and lightning was flashing from the fire. <sup>14</sup> And the living beings ran back and forth like bolts of lightning. <sup>15</sup> Now as I looked at the living beings, behold, there was one wheel on the ground beside the living beings, for <sup>[k]</sup>each of the four of them. <sup>16</sup> The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship was like sparkling topaz, and all four of them had the same form, their appearance and workmanship being as if one wheel were within another. <sup>17</sup> Whenever they moved, they moved in any of their four directions without turning as they moved. <sup>18</sup> As for their rims, they were high and awesome, and the rims of all four of them were covered with eyes all around. <sup>19</sup> Whenever the living beings moved, the wheels moved with them. And whenever the living beings rose from the earth, the wheels rose also. <sup>20</sup> Wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go in that direction. And the wheels rose just as they did; for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels. <sup>21</sup> Whenever those went, they went; and whenever those stopped, they stopped. And whenever those rose from the earth, the wheels rose just as they did; for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels. <sup>22</sup> Now over the heads of the living beings there was something like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal, spread out over their heads. <sup>23</sup> Under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward the other; each one also had two wings covering its body on the one side and on the other. <sup>24</sup> And I also heard the sound of their wings, like the sound of abundant waters as they went, like the voice of the Almighty, a sound of a crowd like the sound of an army camp; whenever they stopped, they let down their wings. <sup>25</sup> And a voice came from above the expanse that was over their heads; whenever they stood still, they let down their wings. <sup>26</sup> Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. <sup>27</sup> Then I noticed from the appearance of His waist and upward something like gleaming metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. <sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day,

*so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking. (Ezekiel 1)*

Our physical bodies could not survive for a second in heaven. The noise would be deafening. Our eyes could take in the whole spectrum of light; and we would be blinded by its intensity. God re-suits us in new bodies. Otherwise, it would be sensory overload.

*<sup>13</sup> Now then, if I have found favor in Your sight in any way, please let me know Your ways so that I may know You, in order that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people.” <sup>14</sup> And He said, “My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.” <sup>15</sup> Then he said to Him, “If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. <sup>16</sup> For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are on the face of the earth?” <sup>17</sup> The Lord said to Moses, “I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name.” <sup>18</sup> Then Moses said, “Please, show me Your glory!” <sup>19</sup> And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion to whom I will show compassion.” <sup>20</sup> He further said, “You cannot see My face, for mankind shall not see Me and live!” (Exodus 33)*

The scriptures do tell us that Elijah will precede the second coming of Jesus. Elijah is a *type* or caricature of the Holy Spirit. He changes hearts towards God. He is that inner voice that calls to us.

*<sup>5</sup> “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. <sup>6</sup> He will turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and strike the land with complete destruction.” (Malachi 4)*

*And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” <sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. <sup>6</sup> These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. <sup>7</sup> When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill*

them. <sup>8</sup> And their dead bodies will lie on the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup> Those from the peoples, tribes, languages, and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not allow their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. <sup>10</sup> And those who live on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who live on the earth.

<sup>11</sup> And after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. <sup>12</sup> And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. (Revelation 11)

Jesus speaks of John the Baptist (the ultimate precursor), who came in the power of Elijah commemorating his first coming.

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. <sup>14</sup> You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice over his birth. <sup>15</sup> For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1)

<sup>13</sup> For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. <sup>14</sup> And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come. <sup>15</sup> The one who has ears to hear, let him hear. <sup>16</sup> "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces, who call out to the other children, <sup>17</sup> and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a song of mourning, and you did not mourn.' <sup>18</sup> For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!' <sup>19</sup> The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a heavy drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' And yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." (Matthew 11)

**Read Mark 9:14-29:** Life is full of ups and downs. One minute you have a mountain-top experience, the next minute you are experiencing aggravation and conflict. The disciples were unable to cast out the demon from a certain woman. That was clearly in their job description. It was not only about the administrator of God's power. It was also about the recipients and observers.

*And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach,<sup>15</sup> and to have authority to cast out the demons. (Mark 3)*

Commentators tell us that Jesus was essentially scolding his disciples for not having enough faith to fast and pray. That doesn't quite feel right to me. Jesus typically does not criticize those who are at least trying to do right. He helps coach them to get it right. In this case, the first question Jesus asks is to his disciples. He says: "Why are you arguing with the scribes"? Why would he do that? Could it be that he told them not to waste time on posers and those who are not truly looking for God. They are selling *themselves* as God's appointed representatives...but they are not even know God. I do not think that he was telling his disciples that they were the *unbelieving generation*. That language is used for unbelievers elsewhere. Jesus gives us another clue when he says: "How long will I be with you?" He is not talking about immature believers. He is talking about those who resist the Spirit of God.

*<sup>3</sup> Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not remain with man forever, because he is also flesh; nevertheless his days shall be 120 years." ....<sup>5</sup> Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of mankind was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup> So the Lord was sorry that He had made mankind on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. <sup>7</sup> Then the Lord said, "I will wipe out mankind whom I have created from the face of the land; mankind, and animals as well, and crawling things, and the birds of the sky. For I am sorry that I have made them." (Genesis 6)*

Jesus also repeats the question, as if to add emphasis. What do you mean, if... I can heal him? He is healing everybody he encounters, except a few.

*<sup>54</sup> And He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, with the result that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man acquire this wisdom and these miraculous powers? <sup>55</sup> Is this not the carpenter's son? Is His mother not called Mary, and His brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man acquire all these things?" <sup>57</sup> And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not dishonored except in his hometown and in his own household." <sup>58</sup> And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief. (Matthew 13)*

They believed that Jesus was healing people, because they all saw it; but they did not think it was because he was God. That is the part that ties into salvation and is the basis of the purpose of the healings. The idea is about getting people born

again; not just making them feel better. Besides, pain is one of the biggest motivators to pray and find God.

Jesus gently told his disciples that all things require prayer. Fasting adds to it; and is a way of devoting yourself more fully. It puts life on hold until this issue is taken care of. It essentially puts your skin in their game.

*<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him. (Hebrews 11)*

**Read Mark 9:30-50** : It is not that Jesus *wanted* the people to misunderstand him; but there was not a spiritual bone in their bodies. It was a cultural religion. They were not on his page, because there had been no spiritual conversations (prayer). Parables acted as a filter, allowing the unspiritual but perhaps moral people getting the gist of the issues he spoke of. The true believers got the applications. Jesus does not want us to be more responsible and have raised accountability on added truths that we have no intention of obeying.

The greatest issue on the minds with the disciples was: Who is going to get in on the ground floor and share the upside mobility with this outpouring of God's power in this man? Jesus tells them that he is looking for leaders who build up their own team, and add to their team. That is probably why he admired the Roman centurions. They were chosen because they *deeply cherished* their men, and built them up in every way. The church does not need people with too much self-importance trying to lead us. They are supposed to teach us how to follow by following. We learn more by observing than listening.

Jesus squashed any notion of competition against other groups accomplishing God's work. That is great news.

*<sup>26</sup> But two men had remained in the camp; the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other, Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (and they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp. <sup>27</sup> So a young man ran and informed Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." <sup>28</sup> Then Joshua the son of Nun, the personal servant of Moses from his youth, responded and said, "My lord Moses, restrain them!" <sup>29</sup> But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? If only all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11)*

What happens when a demon is cast out, or a deaf man hears, or God piles quail in your camp 36" high? Does that result in praise? Nope! We are nearly impossible

to save and change over to true faith. It may have been the first *Happy Meal*; but their god was their appetite was always for something more.

*<sup>19</sup> whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who have their minds on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our lowly condition into conformity with His glorious body, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Philippians 3)*