

THE PROPHECIES AND THE GOSPEL

Mark 9:9-13

Introduction:

The total length of Jesus' ministry here on earth was about 3½ years. It has often been divided into segments by years. The first year is the year of inauguration, beginning with his baptism and time of temptation in the wilderness. The second is the year of popularity, as his fame and reputation spread and people came from everywhere looking for miracles and following him. The third is the year of opposition, as the animosity of the Pharisees and scribes increased toward him.

As we have made our way through the gospel account as it is given by Mark, we have already passed through most of those three key years of his ministry. By the time we get to chapter 9 we are into the last two or three months leading up to his crucifixion.

Of course, we know that the cross and his death on that cross was the very reason he had come into the world – see Mark 10:43-45 – He came to give his life as a ransom for many; that includes you and me.

But the cross was what the disciples could not understand. They could not wrap their thinking around the idea that their Messiah would suffer and die. We've have seen that throughout the messages as we have gone through this book of Mark. In 8:31-33, Jesus plainly told them what was to happen, and that it was necessary for him to die, but that he would rise again. But they couldn't get it.

In our message last week, as Peter, James and John were taken up on the mountain and saw the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ, it seems like all they could think of was the glory of the kingdom that was coming. But, while they were concerned about setting up the kingdom, God the Father spoke to them saying, *"This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him."* Pay attention to what he is trying to tell you. You're not listening to the message about his suffering and death.

Well, as they are coming down from the mountain, another discussion takes place. That is what we want to look at this morning – vv. 9-13.

John MacArthur suggests that there are 3 features to be seen in these verses. I am going to borrow those thoughts and use them as an outline – a prohibition that comes from Christ, the prophecies that come from the Scriptures and a preview that comes by way of John the Baptist.

The prohibition that comes from Christ

After all that they have seen and heard up there on the mountain, I'm sure they must have been filled with thoughts of grandeur. Just wait until the others hear about what happened up there! But, as they come down the mountain, Jesus issues a clear prohibition. He says to them, "Don't tell anyone what you just saw until after the Son of Man has risen from the dead."

Wow! How do you keep quiet about something like that? And why did Jesus not want them to say anything about it? I believe that the main reason is the same reason that he often told people he healed not to say anything. It's because they don't have the whole story. It is easy to present Christ as a healer, even as the Messiah, as the Lord, but all of those descriptions are incomplete. They are not the whole truth. They are not the gospel message. The gospel message is that Jesus died on the cross for sin, he was buried and He rose again for our justification. The gospel message is in the death and resurrection of Jesus. And they would never understand that until after it happened.

In v. 10, the disciples are confused – *read it*. Their question and confusion is not about resurrection in general. The Jewish rabbis had a pretty good theology regarding the resurrection and the disciples would have been familiar with that. Their confusion was over the resurrection of Jesus. They still could not get their heads around the idea that He was going to die. So, Jesus says, don't tell anyone, until the whole story becomes clear.

The prophecies that come from the Scriptures

Note the disciple's question in v. 11 – *read it*. The experts in the Law were teaching that before the Messiah would come, Elijah would come as a forerunner, a herald, who would prepare the way, to ready the people for his coming. This was revealed by the prophet, Malachi.

In the very last verses of the OT we read these words, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”* (Mal. 4:5-6)

John MacArthur explains those verses like this :

Before the day of the Lord, before the final judgment of the ungodly on the face of the earth and the establishment of the kingdom, before the Lord comes to do that, Elijah will come. Elijah will come to restore, to bring the message of repentance. The people will believe and they will escape the curse. That’s the prophecy. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. He will bring people together around the faithful belief in the true and living God.

So, the disciples are now wondering, if Jesus is the Messiah, where is Elijah? Doesn’t he have to come first to prepare the way? How can the Messiah be here to establish his kingdom if Elijah has not come?

Note Jesus response in v. 12 - *read v. 12a*. They are right, Elijah does have to come before the kingdom is established. But they are missing something. So, Jesus responds to their question with a question of his own – *read v. 12b*. You see, the OT prophets also predicted that the Messiah would suffer.

We don’t have time to go into all the OT passages that speak of a suffering Messiah – like Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 and others. Somehow, the teachers of the Law missed those passages. They were looking for a victorious warrior king, not a suffering servant.

So the disciples are asking, how can you be the Messiah if Elijah hasn’t come? Jesus responds by asking, how can I be the Messiah if I don’t suffer? They still did not understand what He was trying to tell them—that he must suffer and die and be raised again. That’s why God told them on the mountain, listen to Him, listen to what he is trying to tell you.

- The prohibition that comes from Jesus – don’t tell anyone what you have seen.

- The prophecies that come from the Scriptures – Elijah will come to prepare the way for the arrival of the kingdom, but in the meantime, the Messiah must suffer and die.

A preview that comes by way of John the Baptist

Read v. 13. What does he mean that Elijah has come? *Explain...* Matthew gives us the insight that as they thought about it, the disciples realized that he was speaking about John the Baptist. Look at the words of Luke 1:13-17 – *explain the context and read the verses*.

It is not that John was Elijah, but he was a preview of the final Elijah. Elijah will come before the Lord comes to judge and establish the Kingdom. But when he came the first time, there was a forerunner, one who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare people for his arrival.

Conclusion

Well, we really need to wrap this up. What is the lesson in this for us? We need to see how God is working out his plan. I want to conclude with this quote from John MacArthur as he says it so well.

*What we need to learn from this is the tremendous consistency of Scripture’s pattern. The death and resurrection of Christ, the coming glory, are all assured realities affirmed by the Old Testament, even as to the individual players, affirmed by our Lord Jesus, affirmed by the presence of the glorified saints... Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, affirmed by the Father Himself, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” [and His] statement, “Listen to Him as He tells you about His cross.” ... there’s no glory without the cross and the resurrection. There’s no gospel without the cross and the resurrection. **They** needed to understand it and they needed to know it all fit with the prophecies.*

And friends, we need to understand that, as well. We need to see and understand how everything fits together—the OT and the NT, the prophets and the gospel writers. All of history is one cohesive story. It is His story, and it is revealed in the pages of His Word.