

**Passage: Mark 8:27-38 (prepared 9/07/09; preached 9/14/09)**

**Background<sup>1</sup>**

27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

28 They replied, "Some say **John the Baptist**<sup>2</sup>; others say **Elijah**<sup>3</sup>, and still **others**<sup>4</sup>, one of the **prophets**<sup>5</sup>."

29 "But **what about you**<sup>6</sup>?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the **Christ**<sup>7</sup>."

30 Jesus warned them **not to tell anyone**<sup>8</sup> about him.

31 **He then began**<sup>9</sup> to teach them that the **Son of Man**<sup>10</sup> **must**<sup>11</sup> **suffer**<sup>12</sup> many things and be rejected by the **elders, chief priests and teachers of the law**<sup>13</sup>, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

32 He spoke plainly about this, and **Peter took him aside**<sup>14</sup> and began to **rebuke**<sup>15</sup> him.

33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "**Get behind**<sup>16</sup> me, **Satan**<sup>17</sup>!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "**If anyone**<sup>18</sup> would come after me, he must **deny himself**<sup>19</sup> and **take up his cross**<sup>20</sup> and **follow me**."

35 For whoever wants to **save his life**<sup>21</sup> will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?

37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

<sup>1</sup> Assuming that this arrangement is not by chance, Mark uses the account of the opening of the blind man's eyes to symbolize and anticipate the opening of the understanding of the disciples as to the true nature of the messiahship of Jesus. (EBC)

<sup>2</sup> John the Baptist had a preparatory role, even he was looking for someone more important than himself (EBC)

<sup>3</sup> Elijah would have been preparatory as well as his historical role was that of a forerunner, as well (EBC)

<sup>4</sup> It is remarkable that not one person said "Messiah" in their straw poll... especially since the Demons had been indicating this for quite some time in Mark's account! (ExBC)

<sup>5</sup> Because many Palestinian Jews believed that prophets in the Old Testament sense had ceased, ranking Jesus among the prophets would have been radical – but it was not radical enough to grasp His true identity. In fact, by many it would have been a lowering of Jesus status! (EBC) (BBC)

<sup>6</sup> Who do you, my most trusted and intimate friends – in contrast to the other people who neither know me nor understand me – think I am? (EBC)

<sup>7</sup> Christ = Messiah or "anointed one" – not just any anointed one but the anointed king descended from David who would restore sovereignty to Israel. To be anointed carries with it the idea of chosenness by God, consecration to his service, and endowment with his power to accomplish the task assigned. The ideas that clustered around the title "Messiah" tended to be political and nation in nature and they all revolved around an earthly deliverance and earthly kingdom. This is probably why Jesus seldom uses the term. Because Jesus was reluctant to use the term "Messiah" does not mean that he did not believe himself to be the Messiah. He clearly accepted its use by others, however, what Peter means by the term and what Jesus means by it are entirely different at this point. (BBC, EBC) The title, applied to Jesus, designates him as the true meaning and fulfillment of the long succession of Israel's anointed kings and priest, the King and Priest...; the Prophet anointed with the spirit of God, who fulfills the long line of Israel's prophets; and the One in whom the life of the whole nation of Israel finds its fulfillment and meaning, in whom and for whose sake the people of Israel were, and the new Israel now is, the anointed people of God (Cranfield). What is the point where our hopes and dreams and longing and desires meet? For them, it was in the Messiah! (GMS)

<sup>8</sup> Jesus' injunction of silence arose out of his knowledge of the disciple's defective view of his messiahship. They still needed to learn of the Messiah's suffering, rejection, and death, as the following incident reveals.

<sup>9</sup> A new section of the book of Mark begins here. What had previously been veiled is now stated openly; the Son of Man must go up to Jerusalem, suffer and die... and be raised from the dead. (EBC) This is, for them, crazy talk!

<sup>10</sup> In Ezekiel this term occurs over 90 times, it is the particular name by which God addresses the prophet. It is the term Daniel uses for the "son" who came from the Ancient of Days imbued with His authority, glory, and sovereign power with an indestructible kingdom.

<sup>11</sup> The necessity arises, first from the hostility of men; secondly, from the spiritual nature of his work, which made it impossible for him to oppose force to force; and thirdly from the providential purpose of God, who made the death of Jesus the central thing in redemption. (EBC)

<sup>12</sup> To follow Jesus is to follow the path of suffering and even death!

<sup>13</sup> These three groups made up the Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Court. (EBC)

<sup>14</sup> Words like Simon Peter's, trying to turn Jesus aside from the cross, show Satan's thoughts, not God's (NBC)

<sup>15</sup> The word used here is the one used previously (1:25; 3:12) for silencing the demons. (EBC) (In other words, Peter was saying that Jesus was speaking for the wrong team! He was telling Jesus to "shut up")

<sup>16</sup> The proper position of a disciple is "behind" his master, "following" him; "Get behind me" is calling Peter back to his rightful position of subservience. (BBC)

<sup>17</sup> Satan originally meant "adversary" but in early Christian and most early Jewish writings it refers specifically to the devil. Peter is just like Satan in preferring the worldly to the divine. (BBC)

<sup>18</sup> In rhetorically strong terms, Jesus describes what all true disciples must be ready for; if they follow him, they must be ready to face literal scorn and death, for they must follow to the cross. Because life is worth more than the world itself, giving one's life in this world to gain it in the world to come is a wise transaction. (BBC)

<sup>19</sup> To deny self means refusing to follow any natural inclination, however innocent, that runs contrary to Christ's path for us (NBC) It is to cease making self the object of one's life and actions.

<sup>20</sup> To take up the cross was more than mere annoyance – rather it is to accept a shameful slave's death. (NBC) This would have been especially poignant to the Roman Christians who will be this Gospel's audience. To know that Christ has this path as normative, and walked it himself, brings comfort to them.

<sup>21</sup> One's physical life may be saved; but one's eschatological life (his eternal life, his salvation) will be lost.