



“Be Not Affrighted”

Mark 8:22 – 16:20

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Introduction

This lesson covers the second half of Mark’s book, starting at 8:22 with the healing of a blind man and ending with the death of Jesus. As with the first half, Mark continues to use the structure of his book to convey important messages, such as the healing of two blind men bracketing three accounts of teaching disciples that don’t understand his true meaning (more below). Starting in chapter 8, Jesus begins his journey to Jerusalem. Along the way he heals and teaches, showing signs and proclaiming to his disciples who he is. It is in these chapters that Jesus first speaks of his death and resurrection, though admittedly in somewhat vague, third-person terms. Upon arrival in Jerusalem, Jesus confronts the Jewish leadership and teaches other doctrines in the temple and the nearby areas. He is anointed, has a final meal with his disciples, institutes a new ordinance by which they should remember him, goes to Gethsemane, is arrested and abandoned by his followers, is tried and sent to the Romans for crucifixion, and dies on the cross. His body is claimed by a supporter and placed in a tomb. Women return Sunday morning to complete the hastily done burial rituals, only to find the tomb empty.

Outline of Mark

An overall outline for the book of Mark is as follows (with the focus of this lesson in bold):

1. Prologue: The Wilderness (1:1-13)
2. Preaching and Healing (1:14-45)
3. Five Stories of Conflict (2:1 – 3:6)
4. Ministers in Galilee (3:7 – 6:6)
5. The Twelve Sent, Teaching and Feeding (6:7 – 8:21)
6. **The Journey to Jerusalem (8:22 – 10:52)**
7. **In Jerusalem (11:1 – 12:44)**
8. **Olivet Discourse (13:1-37)**
9. **Last Supper, Passion, and Burial (14:1 – 16:8)**
10. **Postlude: The Longer Ending (16:9-20)**

Note: In each lesson on the gospels, where there are overlapping or parallel texts, those will be noted in the heading. References in bold are the preferred reading(s) and will be the principal section of analysis, though some unique points in the current gospel will be noted, as well as helpful JST changes.¹

The Journey to Jerusalem (8:22 – 10:52)

A significant bracketing section begins and ends with Jesus healing two blind men. The first is the blind man healed in stages, where he first sees “men as trees, walking,” then with a second administration is fully healed (8:22-26). The second is Bartimaeus on the highway leading out of Jericho, who cries out for mercy who throws off his garment (perhaps his only possession) to go to Jesus, receives his sight, and immediately follows after Jesus (10:46-52). Between these accounts are three efforts by Jesus to teach his disciples who he is and what his true mission will be, but they do not understand. Thus the healings of the blind men contrast how the disciples were blind to Jesus’ mission while the healed men better understand who he is, foreshadowing both the disciples

¹ Not all JST changes are noted, only those of textual or doctrinal interest. Interested readers are encouraged to see Wayment, *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament* or the manuscripts themselves on the Joseph Smith Papers website (josephsmithpapers.org).

inability to fully understand his mission at first (like the man healed in stages), that they are in need of healing, and only once fully enlightened do they completely commit to him (like Bartimaeus).

With the brackets of blindness, Mark also shows deliberate organization through his use of the three passion predictions, or prophecies about Jesus' suffering and death (8:31-9:8; 9:30-41; 10:33-45). Each one follows a similar pattern: 1) a prophesy; 2) a failure to understand; 3) teaching about discipleship; and, 4) an indication of Jesus' exceptional nature. The three prophecies are arranged climactically, starting with more general statements and ending with very specific declarations. The reactions also change, from a stern rebuke of Jesus in the first one, to not understanding in the second, to stunned silence in the third, as illustrated in the table below.

Reference	Prophecy	Failure to understand	Discipleship	Jesus' nature
8:31 – 9:8	8:31, he will suffer and be killed	8:32-33, Peter rebukes him for saying this	8:34-38, Take up the cross and follow him	9:1-8, transfiguration
9:30-41	9:31, men will kill him but he will rise the third day	9:32, they don't understand	9:33-37, be the servant of all	9:38-41, men do miracles in his name
10:32-45	10:32-34, the most specific: Jewish leaders will condemn and kill him, he will be scourged and spit upon, but he will rise the third day	10:35-40, James and John ask for privileges, but they don't know what they ask	10:41-44, the greatest needs to be the minister and servant to all	10:45, Jesus gives his life as a ransom for others

Blind man healed at Bethsaida – Mark 8:22-26

This story begins the extensive intercalation (bracketing or sandwiching) that goes Mark 10:45. The first blind man is unnamed but is a faithful, obedient servant to Jesus after being healed; Jesus asked him to tell no one, and that appears to be exactly what he did.

8:22 **he cometh to Bethsaida.** Perhaps meaning 'house of the fisher,' Bethsaida was on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee, somewhat opposite of Capernaum, which was on the northwest side. Jesus has been taking a boat to his various destinations in previous chapters, but starting here the boat is not mentioned; he seems to be on foot from now on.

This uniquely Markan story recounts Jesus healing a blind man in stages. Some scholars see this as some kind of failure on Jesus' part, that he didn't get it right the first time or it was too hard for him, and he had to try again.² But others see it as symbolic of Jesus' disciples, who are just beginning to understand him, but not fully, and are still in need of more healing to be full disciples. It's possible that Mark placed this specific healing here, at the beginning of this section, to echo Jesus' words just a few verses before: "Having eyes, see ye not?"

8:22 **they bring a blind man unto him.** Nowhere in the OT is a blind person healed. For this reason, many Jews believed that giving sight to a blind person was a sure sign of the Messiah.

8:23 **led him out of the town.** Many of Jesus' miracles are very public and the center of attention. In this case, however, he took the man away from the crowds of the town and out where there might be more privacy.

8:24 **when he had spit on his eyes.** Many in that day believed that saliva could have a healing effect, especially from a holy man. Perhaps because the man could not see him, this act helped the man make a stronger connection

² Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:254.

with Jesus. It could also be a symbolic term since Mark the less literal term *omma* instead of the more typical *ophthalmos*; the latter always refers to physical eyes, whereas *omma* can imply a vision, light, and spiritual sight.³

8:24 ***I see men as trees, walking.*** This shows that the man was not born blind but had seen at some point in his life because he knew what men and trees looked like. It's possible this is simply what he saw. But it's also possible that with the symbolic meaning of his eyes (see 8:24 above), that this instead represents a vision. Some see it as a potential vision of Jesus' own crucifixion, which takes place on a "tree." But more likely is an association with Jeremiah 1:11-13, where the Lord asked Jeremiah what he saw (as Jesus did with the man here), and Jeremiah replied that he saw a branch of a tree. The Lord confirmed Jeremiah's vision and that it represents things to come that the Lord will do. Likewise, Zechariah 4:1-6 had the Lord ask Zechariah what he saw, which was (in part) trees, which he was told represent the word of the Lord by the Spirit. If the symbolic meaning is correct, then Jesus first healed the man to understand the things of the Spirit, then healed him to see also the things of the world.

8:25 ***saw every man clearly.*** After Jesus laid his hands on the man's eyes a second time and had him look up, his sight was fully restored.

8:26 ***Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any.*** For once, the text does not tell us that the man healed did anything but what Jesus asked; there is no reference to him sharing it with anyone, though all who knew he was blind would certainly wonder and ask what happened.

Peter testifies of Jesus – Mark 8:27-30 (Matt 16:13-20; Luke 9:19-21)

See Matthew. While up north in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples what people were saying about his identity, and they shared several speculations. But when asked what they said, Peter quickly announced that Jesus was the Messiah, the anointed one. Jesus commanded them to tell this to no one.

8:29 ***JST***

KJV	JST
And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.	And he said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

Harmonizing with Matthew's version, JST Mark adds here that Jesus is not just the anointed Messiah but the son of God, making this the first human declaration of Jesus' divine status in the book.

Jesus foretells his death and resurrection – Mark 8:31-38 (Matt 16:21-28; Luke 9:22-27)

See Matthew.

8:35 ***JST***

KJV	JST
For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.	For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; or whosoever will save his life, shall be willing to lay it down for my sake; and if he is not willing to lay it down for my sake, he shall lose it; but whosoever shall be willing to lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

These JST additions extend the paradox Jesus presented about saving and losing one's life from taking action to being willing (or not) to do so.

8:38 ***JST***

KJV	JST

³ LSJ Lexicon, #30685, *ομμα*.

Whosoever ~~therefore~~ shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Therefore deny yourselves of these, and be not ashamed of me. Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. **And they shall not have part in the resurrection when he cometh. For verily I say unto you, that he shall come; and he that layeth down his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall come with him, and shall be clothed with his glory, in the cloud, on the right hand of the Son of man.**

Continuing the same thought developed in v. 35, JST Mark commands the disciples to give up the world and not be ashamed of Jesus. The promise of being in the resurrection at the Second Coming is given, then joining the “Son of man” in glory in the clouds, at his right hand. The JST change continues the third-person approach of Mark with the promise, even as it is enhanced and enlarged.

The transfiguration – Mark 9:2-13 (Matt 17:1-13; Luke 9:28-36)

See Matthew. There is no other event in Mark’s story that matches this one in terms of teaching many aspects of Jesus’ divine nature. Jesus was glorified and approved by a voice from heaven, which is the very voice of God. Though Peter, James, and John are witnesses, they don’t appear to have understood the event, with Peter weakly offering to construct a remembrance stone of some kind. Even so, Jesus instructed them not to talk about it until the enigmatic “Son of man” was risen from the dead; perhaps they wouldn’t fully understand this event until after that other one. The fact that Mark is telling the story now is a testimony that Jesus is, indeed, risen from the dead.

9:2 *JST*

KJV	JST
And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.	And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John, who asked him many questions concerning his sayings and Jesus leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

The JST account offers at least one reason why Peter, James, and John were privileged to be with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration—they spent a lot of time with Jesus asking him to explain his teachings. Their interest and hunger for knowledge was rewarded with this marvelous visionary experience.

9:4 *JST*

KJV	JST
And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.	And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses, or in other words, John the Baptist and Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

This is the only reference to John the Baptist being on the mount. In this case, the wording would tend to make one believe that Joseph Smith was substituting John the Baptist for Elias (Elijah), but because he didn’t do that in Matthew and Luke, it has led some to interpret this as meaning John was there *in addition* to Elijah. I suspect that it played into Joseph Smith’s growing understanding of the role of an Elias as a forerunner and restorer. This is further developed in the explanatory verses that follow.

9:8 *JST*

KJV	JST

And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.	And suddenly, when they had looked round about with great astonishment , they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. And immediately they departed.
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Capturing the emotion of the three disciples who had just witnessed ancient prophets and heard a voice from heaven, JST Mark also adds another instance of the use of the word “immediately” in Mark’s book, one of his characteristic terms.

9:12 *JST*

KJV And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.	JST And he answered and told them, saying , Elias verily cometh first, and prepareth all things; and teacheth you of the prophets ; how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.
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The role of Elias is shifted from restoring in KJV to preparing in JST Mark, which is a key characteristic of John the Baptist’s mission in Mark 1:2-3. Jesus also emphasized in JST Mark that teaching the people from the prophets about the suffering servant (“the Son of man”) was another role of the forerunner, John (Mark 1:7-8).

9:13 *JST*

KJV But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.	JST Again I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, but they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, and even as it is written of him; and he bore record of me, and they received him not. Verily this was Elias.
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This passage in KJV Mark is generally understood to be about John the Baptist. In the JST, Jesus affirms that John’s role was preparatory, not restorative and that he bore record of Christ and was rejected by the Jewish leaders. These activities made John an Elias.

Heals a deaf and mute – Mark 9:14-29 (Matt 17:14-21; Luke 9:37-43a)

Jesus had given his disciples authority to teach, bless, and heal, and in his absence on the mountain, they seem to have exercised that authority. But one case evaded them, and they could not a deaf and mute young man that everyone believed was possessed by a devil. Jesus used the opportunity to teach them more about prayer and preparedness.

9:14 **when he came to his disciples.** Coming down from the mountain on which he was transfigured, Jesus found the rest of the Twelve and likely other disciples in a group, with even a larger group surrounding them, including some of the scribes.

9:15 **running to him.** As he approached the group, the reason for the large crowd became clear—they were looking for Jesus, and ran to him to get his attention first.

9:16 **what question ye with them?** “What are you arguing about with them?” (NRSV; NIV; ESV; NJB). It’s not clear to whom Jesus is speaking—disciples, scribes, or the larger crowd—but he seems to have wanted to get to the core of the problem: what are you all talking about?

9:17 **I have brought unto thee my son.** Either the disciples were silent or the man spoke up quickly. Either way, he explained that his son’s situation was the source of the conversation. He brought him here for Jesus to heal him, but Jesus was not present.

9:17 *JST*

KJV	JST
And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;	And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, who hath a dumb spirit that is a devil ;

The father of the young man expressed his understanding that the problem the son was experiencing was one of possession, which JST Mark explains is not just any spirit, but “a devil.” In the NT, “devil” is usually from the Greek *diabolos*, which means a ‘slanderer’ or ‘accuser,’ similar to the Hebrew *satan*, which is an adversary.

9:18 ***I spake to thy disciples.*** After describing his son’s condition, which many believe sound more like epileptic seizures,⁴ the father explained that since Jesus was not there, he requested that his disciples heal the boy, “and they could not.” Many things that in the ancient world would be attributed to evil spirits that today would be diagnosed as a mental or physical illness.

9:19 ***O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?*** In response to the disciples’ failure and perhaps to the reaction of the crowd and even the father, Jesus decried their lack of faith but perhaps more significantly asked the question of how long he would be with them. Having just come from the transfiguration experience, which was in part to prepare him for his passion, the question of how long he had left was certainly on his mind.⁵

9:20 ***he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.*** “he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth” (NASB). The boy had a seizure as he was brought to Jesus, making manifest to all present just how serious his condition was.

9:20 *JST*

KJV	JST
And they brought him unto him : and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tore him ; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.	And they brought him unto Jesus : and when the man saw him, immediately he was torn the spirit; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

KJV Mark has unclear second-person pronouns; we can’t easily tell if Mark is speaking of the boy, the father, or Jesus. JST Mark clarifies the pronouns, showing that the boy was brought to Jesus, and that when the possessed saw Jesus, that triggered the seizure. It refers to the possessed person as “the man,” indicating his age and agreeing with v. 21 that he had been this way for some time. “Straightway” in the KJV is changed to the more common “immediately,” which is a good translation of the Greek *euthys*.

9:21 ***How long is it ago since this came unto him?*** Perhaps echoing his own words about how long he would remain among them, Jesus queried the father how long the young man had suffered from his condition.

9:21 ***Of a child.*** The father’s answer demonstrates that the boy was no longer a child; the father (and presumably the mother, though she is never mentioned) have been grappling with this situation for many years.

9:22 ***if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us.*** The father joins his son’s condition to his own, requesting Jesus to be moved with compassion toward them. We can sense the burden this must have been on their family.

9:23 ***If thou canst believe.*** “What do you mean, ‘if you can’? (CJB). The word “believe” is not in the oldest mss.⁶ The sense from the Greek is that Jesus is repeating back the statement from the man in v. 22, “if thou canst,” and emphasizing the absurdity of the question. How many people had Jesus healed? But the disciples had not been able to heal this very boy, so perhaps the man was simply reacting to that recent experience.

⁴ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, 1:259.

⁵ Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, “The Transfiguration,” in Holzapfel and Wayment, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ*, vol. 2, 60.

⁶ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 85.

KJV	JST
Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.	Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt believe all things I shall say unto you, this is possible to him that believeth.

JST Mark enlarges the traditional interpretation that Jesus is inviting faith, explaining that what the man needs to have faith in are Jesus' words, which will lead to all things being possible.

9:24 ***I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*** As Jesus repeated back the man's words (vv. 22-23), so the man echoes Jesus' (v. 23). This is a verse we can all relate to. We want so badly to believe, to do right, and to trust God. But we are scared, uncertain, sinful, or otherwise hold back, and must plead for grace that he will help our lack of faith. Fortunately, faith is a gift from God (Moroni 10:11; BD, "faith"), and as we build our relationship with God through our own challenges, he will help our unbelief (see Alma 32). As someone in a class once pointed out, perhaps he wanted to believe, but when suddenly faced with the realization that his lack of faith might keep his son from getting healed, he plead for help. So the father is a symbol for the disciples in Mark's story; even as the disciples express belief in Jesus, they are still struggling to have faith in his words.

9:25 ***come out of him, and enter no more into him.*** Though the young man is deaf, yet Jesus' verbal command is sufficient to heal him. Interesting that Jesus specifically said for the evil spirit to never enter the young man again; this is the only instance where I found Jesus casting out a devil and additionally commanding no return.

9:26 ***he was as one dead.*** He was not dead but had that appearance, whether it was his complete stillness, likely for the first time from the father's description, or some physical appearance that gave him the pallor of a dead person. It set up a dramatic moment: did Jesus cast out the devil, only to cause the young man to lose his life?

9:27 ***Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up.*** As with other healings (but not all), Jesus' physical touch was a part of the miracle. Though he had only spoken the words to cast out the demon, he used touch to complete the process and bring the young man to his feet.

9:28 ***when he was come into the house.*** The house referred to is unknown. If it was Jesus' house (probably Peter's) in Capernaum, then there was a bit of a journey before the disciples could ask their question. If a house local to the event, the time could have been much shorter.

9:28 ***Why could not we cast him out?*** This disciples asking this have had success with other aspects of healing or miraculous experiences, including casting out devils (e.g., Mark 6:13), so their question is very specific; why not this one? Of course, the question almost sounds like a procedural one: 'We did what we saw you do, and yet we were not successful. Did we miss a step? Were our words wrong? Where did we make a mistake?' Exorcists of that day believed that they could gain power over evil spirits if they had the right combination of words, charms, and actions.

9:29 ***This kind can come forth by nothing. . . but by prayer.*** The phrase *kai nēsteia* ('and fasting') is not in the oldest manuscripts.⁷ Instead, this kind of demon comes out by prayer. Perhaps Jesus was more prepared than the disciples because he had spent his previous night in prayer.⁸ Jesus' reply shows that their failure had nothing to do with procedure but everything to do with spiritual power, which they had not achieved; more prayer would have helped. Matthew makes it even more clear: "Because of your unbelief" (Matthew 17:20). Some Greek manuscripts here use the word *oligopistia* meaning 'of little faith,' as contrasted with how he describes the people in general in Matthew 17:17, *apistia*, having 'no faith.' The disciples' faith may be weak, but they have manifested at least some faith by their following him and keeping his words.

⁷ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 85.

⁸ Holzapfel, "The Transfiguration," in Holzapfel and Wayment, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ*, vol. 2, 54.

Prediction of death – Mark 9:30-32 (Matt 17:22-23; Luke 9:43b-45)

See Luke. This is the second prophecy of his own death and resurrection, again delivered in the third person (“Son of man”). In this occurrence, the disciples did not understand but were also afraid to ask Jesus about it. The imperfect verb tense of the word “taught” in v. 31 indicates that though Mark records this as a second event, it was an ongoing conversation; Jesus may have been saying it frequently as he journeyed with his disciples.

Become as a child – Mark 9:33-37 (Matt 18:1-5; Luke 9:46-48)

On the road back to Capernaum, the disciples were debating who was the greatest among them. Jesus perceived the discussion and asked them about it when they were back in the town. The disciples were afraid to admit the topic of their conversation, but knowing it, Jesus said the greatest was like a powerful, disenfranchised child, and that those who offered hospitality to such were paradoxically the greatest in the kingdom. Because women cared for children in their society, Jesus was telling his male Twelve disciples and others that the children and women were the greatest among them.

9:33 **he came to Capernaum, and being in the house.** After traveling around the Galilee (9:30), Jesus again returned to Capernaum, to the house where he was staying.

9:33 **he asked them, What was it that ye disputed.** In the privacy of “the house” (probably Peter’s), Jesus asked them what they were arguing about during the journey. He already knew, of course, as Luke emphasizes: “Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart...” (Luke 9:47).

9:33 **by the way.** “The way” is also the path, symbolic of discipleship. The disciples should have been following Jesus in the way, but instead were focused on their own status. Mark uses the phrase again in the next verse to tie their actions back to Jesus’ question.

9:34 **But they held their peace.** The Greek is simply, “But they were silent” (NRSV). This wonderful phrase was coined by William Tyndale in his original NT translation in 1534. The disciples were understandably reluctant to reveal their conversation because they had been arguing about who was the greatest among them. Even more interesting is the possibility that they were discussing this because they were beginning to understand what he was saying about dying, and wondered who might replace him.

9:34 **JST**

KJV	JST
But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.	But they held their peace being afraid: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who was the greatest among them.

JST Mark adds the reason for the disciples remaining silent; they were afraid. Of what? Knowing the topic of their conversation, they were likely afraid of Jesus’ reprimand, or perhaps that he would continue to talk about his death.

9:35 **he sat down.** Jesus put himself in the attitude of teaching by sitting down, meaning he was sitting in the position of authority. He taught the apostles several related lessons in this session, all outlined below.

9:35 **If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last.** Jesus presented a paradox of service, that he himself modeled as he taught and journeyed with them, and which he is about to model powerfully with a child. To be the greatest in the kingdom, you humbled yourself to become the lowest “servant of all.”

9:36 **took a child, and set him in the midst of them.** This was not something the rabbis of the day would have done. No one would have told their disciples to become like children. Children were disenfranchised, powerless members of society. They were dependent, vulnerable, unlearned, and subject to the authority of their fathers. They had no authority or rights. To say, ‘become as a child’ was to say, ‘recognize your insignificance’. For us, it brings to mind King Benjamin’s sermon: “...what have ye to boast? And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth” (Mosiah 2:25). “For the natural

man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19). Jesus’ paradox extended to his own actions: he sat in the teaching position of authority but taught them to become powerless, and then demonstrated doing that by equating himself with a child, thus living what he taught.

9:37 **receiveth not me, but him that sent me.** To “receive” is to ‘welcome,’ ‘accept,’ or ‘approve.’ In other words, Jesus taught that to welcome a child (representing the humblest servant in the kingdom of God) is the same as accepting him, which is the same as accepting and embracing the father.

9:37 **JST**

KJV	JST
Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name , receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.	Whosoever shall humble himself like one of these children and receiveth me, ye shall receive in my name. And whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me only , but him that sent me, even the Father.

JST Mark removes the potentially confusing parable about welcoming a child and turns it back to the earlier comment about being like a child in our acceptance of Jesus and instructs the disciples to receive someone who is thus child-like in Jesus’ name. Furthermore, it teaches that receiving Jesus isn’t identical to receiving the Father, but an act of embracing and accepting both Father and Son. In that sense, this passage is also a statement on the unity of purpose but separateness of physicality of the godhead, taught by Joseph Smith.

One casting our devils – Mark 9:38-42 (Matt 18:6; Luke 9:49-50)

John asked Jesus about a man who was casting out devils in Jesus’ name, but wasn’t one of their inner circle who had been sent out specifically with that power by Jesus. The question is ironic because we just learned that the disciples were unable to cast out a demon, even though they were in the inner circle. The unknown exorcist is thus a role model for the disciples. The discussion of this section likely led into the next (vv. 43-50).

9:38 **we forbid him, because he followeth not us.** In Numbers 11:26-30 there is a similar experience when Eldad and Medad were prophesying and Joshua asked Moses to have them stop. But Moses replied, “would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!” This man was not a member of the Twelve but perhaps was a righteous priesthood holder acting in faith.

9:40 **he that is not against us is on our part.** “Whoever is not against us is for us” (NRSV). A proverbial statement that nevertheless has application here; someone doing good works in Jesus’ name could well end up as a close follower.

9:41 **he shall not lose his reward.** As simple an act as giving a disciple a drink of water that advances the work of the kingdom will be rewarded.

9:42 **whosoever shall offend one of these little ones.** To “offend” here (Greek *skandalizo*) is used to put a stumbling block in the path, reflecting the earlier discussion of being “in the way.” To deliberately block the path of or impede the progress of a disciple of Jesus merits a punishment that would make being thrown into the sea with a huge, heavy millstone around his neck look like a good thing.

Offending parties – Mark 9:43-50 (Matt 18:6-9; Luke 17:1-2)

See Matthew. Jesus calls on the imagery of three body parts (hand, foot, eye) somehow causing offense. Some relate this to a prohibition to sexual sin (hand to touch in improper ways; foot as a euphemism for genitals; and eye for looking inappropriately),⁹ but the meaning could be broader, relating to taking action, going places, and seeing the

⁹ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 1:261.

world. If we do those things with evil intent or results, we'd be better off without the offending body part. See the JST verses below for an alternate explanation.

9:43 *JST*

KJV	JST
And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:	Therefore if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: or if thy brother offend thee, and confess not, and forsake not, he shall be cut off. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell; for it is better for thee to enter into life without thy brother, than for thee and thy brother to be cast into hell; into the fire that never shall be quenched:

JST Mark greatly clarifies that this was how the apostles, as the priesthood leaders of the Church and fresh from the reception of priesthood keys, were to handle members, especially leaders, who were sinning without repentance. The risk to the Church was great, so they needed to be dealt with harshly, but the teachings he gave next balanced this stern perspective with lots of love. Given when this revelation was given, these verses were also a powerful lesson to the young Prophet, Joseph Smith, about the need for church discipline under certain circumstances.

9:45-48 *JST*

KJV	JST
And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:	And again , if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: for he that is thy standard, by whom thou walkest, if he come a transgressor, he shall be cut off. It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:
Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.	Therefore, let every man stand, or fall by himself, and not for another; or not trusting another. Seek unto my Father, and it shall be done in that very moment what ye shall ask, if ye ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive.
And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:	And if thine eye, which seeth for thee, him that is appointed to watch over thee to shew thee light, become a transgressor and offend thee, pluck him out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:
Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.	For it is better that thyself should be saved, than to be cast into hell with thy brother, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Interestingly, the words Joseph Smith deleted (basically all of verse 46 in the KJV) are not in many of the oldest Greek manuscripts and are likewise deleted from nearly all modern translations. They are redundant with verse 48. Instead, the verse picks up the theme of not following unrighteous leaders, teaching instead that everyone needs to rely on their own light of the Spirit. This does not negate the need for righteous leaders or the importance of following them; the emphasis in verses 45 and 47 are on the leader who may “become a transgressor.” Having that personal light allows us to receive the blessings we ask for, sometimes just in the moment of greatest need.

9:50 *JST*

KJV	JST
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Salt ~~is~~ good: ~~but~~ if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

But the salt must be good. For if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it (the sacrifice)? Therefore it must needs be, that ye have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Verses 49-50 in the KJV are difficult to interpret, because to be “salted with fire” is not understood, and salt cannot lose its “saltness.” One possibility is that salt is associated with wisdom in some Jewish thinking, so Jesus was advocating wisdom in ourselves that is pure and not based on contaminations.

Marriage and divorce – Mark 10:1-12 (Matt 19:1-12)

See Matthew. As part of opening the eyes of the disciples, Jesus taught a law of marriage that not only placed the Law of Moses at a lower position than other laws of God but pushed the male disciples to potentially think of their wives in a new light, as God-given companions that required their full commitment and dedication, and as their own bodies belonging to their wives. This was extending the cultural subjugation of women to men in that day to the opposite relationship—men were to be subject to women for a healthy marriage. God’s plan for men and women did not start with divorce in mind, though that does not mean that in our fallen and evil world, that divorce is not allowed. Sin has consequences for both the sinner and the victim, and there are times when breaking a marriage covenant is not only right, but necessary for temporal and spiritual salvation.

Blessings for little children – Mark 10:13-16 (Matt 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17)

See Matthew. When children were brought to Jesus, the disciples tried to keep them away. But Jesus did not want to limit anyone’s access to him, especially when he can use the opportunity to reinforce a lesson about approaching God with humility.

The rich ruler – Mark 10:17-22 (Matt 19:16-22; Luke 18:18-23)

A man came to Jesus asking what was needful for eternal life. Jesus recited some commandments and he asked, “What lack I yet?” which elicited the invitation to sell everything and give it all to the poor. Asking ourselves, ‘What lack I yet’ seems a good idea on a regular basis. If we are humble, teachable, and willing to act, the Spirit will whisper what thing we lack this year, this month, this day, this hour. Salvation, trials, and blessings are achieved one individual and one day at a time, custom-tailored to our own situation and needs. Nephi’s words echo in the ears: “Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do. Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark. For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do. Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3-6).

10:17 **there came one running, and kneeled to him.** Luke informs us that this man was a “ruler,” meaning a civic or synagogue leader. His running and bowing down to Jesus show his anxiety about getting an answer to his question.

10:17 **Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?** Normally, inheritances come by virtue of birth or position, not because of something someone does. Jesus has just taught that children—and those like them—are those that make up the kingdom of God. This man has been obedient and done the right things all his life, yet he feels as if eternal life is still escaping him. Attuned to the common Jewish belief that keeping God’s law perfectly is required, he wonders that else he can possibly do.

10:18 **Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.** Jesus reaction is unexpected, as are his words. It was common in the day to compliment another in order solicit a reciprocating comment. Perhaps the ruler was looking for Jesus to acknowledge his own ‘goodness’ (the Greek word means excellent, distinguished, or honorable). But Jesus diverted all attention away from the two of them to the Father.

10:19 ***Thou knowest the commandments.*** This lends support to the idea that he was a ruler in the synagogue, for such a man would know the commandments well. Jesus quoted four of the ten commandments in Exodus 20, in the same order.

10:20 ***Master, all these have I observed from my youth.*** Hearing Jesus' critique, the man shifts titles, calling Jesus his teacher instead, even as he boldly stated that he has observed the commandments Jesus listed, and others, from his youngest years.

10:21 ***Jesus beholding him loved him.*** Mark alone offers this detail about how Jesus felt talking to this man. We can imagine the teacher reaching out and embracing the man as he gives him the next invitation. Though he knew his heart, he also knew there was goodness in the man, and the Savior's heart went out to the man before him.

10:21 ***sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor.*** This is not a commandment given to everyone but specifically to this man. Jewish law taught against selling all of a person's possessions because it would make him dependent on others, like a beggar. Additionally, in that day, most believed that someone only got rich by defrauding another. The rich build up surpluses for themselves at the expense of others. Jesus may be asking him to redistribute his ill-gained wealth to those who have real needs of food and clothing.

10:21 ***come, take up the cross, and follow me.*** The phrase "take up the cross" is not in the oldest Mark manuscripts, so was likely added later.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the call to follow Jesus is like what he had used when calling Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

10:22 ***went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*** "As you know, the young man went away sorrowful, 'for he had great possessions' (Matt 19:16-22). And we are left to wonder what intimacies he might have shared with the Son of God, what fellowships he might have enjoyed with the apostles, what revelations and visions he might have received, if he had been *able* to live the law of a celestial kingdom. As it is he remains nameless; as it might have been, his name could have been had in honorable remembrance among the saints forever" (Bruce R. McConkie, *Ensign*, May 1975).

Riches and Rewards – Mark 10:23-31 (Matt 19:23-30; Luke 18:24-30)

See also Matthew. Having just watched the rich man walk away sad at his inability to respond to Jesus' invitation to give it all up, Jesus taught his disciples more about the relationship of wealth and eternal rewards.

10:23 ***hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!*** "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" (NASB). Not impossible, just difficult, speaking especially of the example of the man who just walked away sad.

10:24 ***how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom.*** Some of the older manuscripts (but not all) omit the phrase "for them that trust in riches." This reading has Jesus say that it is hard for *everyone* to enter into the kingdom of God. In some manuscripts, vv. 24 and 25 are reversed, thus giving a progression—first it's hard for the rich, then for everyone else.

10:25 ***It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.*** Someone over the years tried to portray this as the name of a date which a camel could pass through on his knees, but that is pure fiction. Jesus created an absurd image—a massive animal trying to pass through the smallest of openings. The camel is also an excellent symbol of a rich person, who is laden with many things (of the world).

10:26 ***who then can be saved?*** If a rich person cannot be saved, who was considered blessed of God by virtue of his wealth, the disciples are amazed at how hard it must be for anyone.

10:27 ***With men it is impossible, but not with God.*** Jesus taught the power and essentialness of grace. Men of themselves can never be saved, but with God, anything is possible. Though they did not understand it, the disciples were being taught about the power of the Atonement that Jesus was about to perform on their behalf.

¹⁰ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 89.

Foretells his death and resurrection – [Mark 10:32-34](#) (Matt 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34)

10:32 ***began to tell them what things should happen unto him.*** For the third time, Jesus made an announcement of his death and resurrection. This last one was the most specific, mentioning being put into the hands of the leaders of the Jews who would condemn him to death and hand him over to Gentiles, who would mock, scourge, spit on him, and kill him, after which he would rise the third day.

Ambition of James and John – [Mark 10:35-45](#) (Matt 20:20-28)

See also Matthew. In Mark, James and John approach Jesus directly; in Matthew's account, it was James' and John's mother who came to Jesus on their behalf. To ask for such preference was to show a complete lack of understanding of the many teachings recently given, such as blessing the children and the parable of the vineyard workers.

10:39 ***Ye shall indeed drink of the cup.*** Not that they would experience exactly what Jesus will, but that the apostles will also do the things that God requires of them.

10:44 ***servant of all.*** We miss the power of this statement in the KJV. A "servant" is slave, someone with no rights and who must obey every command of his master. To be a slave was to be the lowest member of society with your very life in the hands of those over you. Roman law said that a slave did not have the right to refuse. To say the greatest among them must be the slave of everyone else is the ultimate paradox—yet verse 45 makes it clear that that is exactly Jesus' role.

Blind man healed near Jericho – [Mark 10:46-52](#) (Matt 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43)

The end of the bracket of "blindness" which started in 8:22. This second blind man 'sees' Jesus for who he is even as he requests a blessing from him, which the disciples simply try to keep him from slowing Jesus down.

10:46 ***Jericho.*** They had been journeying through and teaching in Perea for several weeks and it was near the time for the final Passover. The company left Perea and crossed the river Jordan into Jericho where two events happened. From Jericho, they soon made the final ascent to Jerusalem.

10:46 ***blind Bartimaeus.*** In Matthew's account, there are two unnamed blind men. In Mark's account, the single blind man has a name—or at least a title. Bar means 'son of' and Timaeus was his father's name, which Mark helpfully explains.

10:47 ***Jesus, thou Son of David.*** Bartimaeus called Jesus by a royal title—not Messiah/Christ or Lord or Master/Teacher, but Son of David, which is the only time this title is used in Mark.

10:48 ***many charged him that he should hold his peace.*** Blind people had few rights, were generally impoverished and forced to beg for survival, could not attend the temple, and in the views of some rabbis could not expect to attend the Messianic banquet, representative of salvation. The crowd viewed his cries as an annoyance.

10:50 ***casting away his garment.*** His coat would have been on the ground to collect any coins thrown his way. It may have been his only possession. Showing his faith, he left it behind—even pushing it aside—to go meet Jesus.

10:52 ***followed Jesus.*** Bartimaeus became Jesus' disciple.

10:52 ***Go thy way and in the way.*** These phrases are translated from two Greek words. The first is *hupago* meaning 'to go away, to depart.' The second at the end of the verse is *hodos* meaning 'a traveler's journey' but also 'a way of thinking and feeling and living.' *Hodos* in the NT, especially later in Acts and in some of the epistles, became a codeword or nickname for the church itself. To be a 'follower of *hodos*' meant to be a believer in Christ (see for example, Acts 9:2; 18:26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; 1 Corinthians 12:31; Hebrews 10:20; and 2 Peter 2:15, 21).

In Jerusalem (11:1 – 12:44)

When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem (for the first time, in Mark's gospel), he dealt with and even instigated confrontations with Jewish leaders in the capital city. Mark recounts five stories of controversy in these two chapters, with the first four coming to Jesus in the form of questions, and the last being Jesus firing back at his questioners:

1. Mark 11:27 – 12:12 Jesus' authority challenged
2. Mark 12:13-17 Tribute to Caesar
3. Mark 12:18-27 Marriage after the resurrection
4. Mark 12:28-34 The greatest commandments
5. Mark 12:35-37 Jesus ask the scribes about Christ

The triumphal entry – Mark 11:1-11 (**Matt 21:1-11**; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19)

See Matthew.

Cleansing the temple – Mark 11:15-19 (**Matt 21:12-17**; Luke 19:45-48)

See Matthew.

Jesus' authority challenged – Mark 11:27-33 (**Matt 21:23-27**; Luke 20:1-8)

See Matthew.

Parable of the wicked husbandmen – Mark 12:1-12 (**Matt 21:33-46**; Luke 20:9-19)

See Matthew.

Tribute to Caesar – Mark 12:13-17 (**Matt 22:15-22**; Luke 20:20-26)

See Matthew.

Marriage after the resurrection – Mark 12:18-27 (**Matt 22:23-33**; Luke 20:27-39) –

See Matthew.

The greatest commandments – Mark 12:28-34 (**Matt 22:34-40**)

See Matthew, with one note. In Mark's version of this event, the scribe is apparently touched and humbled by Jesus' response. Disarmed by the Spirit, he replies that Jesus' words are true, and that love is indeed greater than sacrifice. Jesus, who sees the sincerity in the man's reply, encourages him: "Thou are not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34).

Jesus asks the scribes about Christ – Mark 12:35-37 (**Matt 22:41-46**; Luke 20:40-44)

See Matthew.

Warns against scribes and Pharisees – Mark 12:38-40 (**Matt 23:1-36**; Luke 20:45-47)

See Matthew.

Widow's mite – **Mark 12:41-44** (Luke 21:1-4)

12:42 **a certain poor widow**. The last passage about Jesus in the temple is praise for a widow who greatly sacrifices for God. Thirteen chests with openings like funnels stood in the Court of the Women to receive donations. They were labeled for different kinds of offering, with six of them for freewill gifts, such as Jesus observed. The rich, with a great show, would bring their coins and cast them into the chests. But the poor widow, with only two *lepta* (1/64th of a day's wages), quietly made her gift to the temple and God. Jesus knew her heart and her circumstances and praised her for her great sacrifice. Whether she heard the praise or not is unclear, but most importantly, it probably would not have mattered to her either way.

After this, Jesus left the temple for the last time in his mortal life. The rest of his time was spent teaching privately his key disciples, preparing them for the coming events of that weekend.

Olivet Discourse (13:1-37)

Olivet discourse – Mark 13:1-37 (**Matt 24:1-51**; Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:1-55; Luke 17:20-37; 21:5-38)

See Matthew, where the discourse is both chapters 24 and 25. Note that in the JST, the Prophet changed Mark 13 to be nearly identical to the altered version of Matthew 24 (or Joseph Smith-Matthew).

Last Supper, Passion, and Burial (14:1 – 16:8)

The last two and a half chapters of Mark are devoted to the last day of Jesus' life and to the events leading up to his resurrection. These events are sometimes referred to as Jesus' "Passion," coming from the Latin *passio* which means 'suffering.' Chapter 14 has a number of important events, but in at least three cases, Mark uses short intercalations (bracketing) to focus our attention on them, with two preparation events between them:

The plot against Jesus (14:1-2)
Jesus' anointing (14:3-9)
Judas joins the plot (14:10-11)

Preparation for the Passover (14:12-16)

The prophecy of Judas' betrayal (14:17-21)
Last Supper (14:22-25)
The prophecy of Peter's denial (14:26-31)

Preparation for his suffering (14:32-52)

Peter in place to deny Jesus (14:53-54)
Jesus before the Sanhedrin (14:55-65)
Peter denies Jesus (14:66-72)

Each of the middle scenes of each bracket raises the question of who Jesus is. Between the three sets of brackets are two scenes of preparation: first, the preparation for the Passover (14:12-16) and second the preparation for his suffering (14:32-52). One or both should also have prepared the disciples for what was about to happen, but Mark shows that they were not ready nonetheless.

Judas arranges the betrayal – Mark 14:1-2, 10-11 (Matt 26:1-5, 14-16; Luke 22:1-6)

14:1 **After two days**. This phrase means that the Passover feast will start in two days on the Jewish calendar. On our calendar, it would be the day before, or Wednesday. The feast started with the killing of the lamb on Thursday afternoon, followed by the Passover meal Thursday evening after sunset (which makes it Friday in the Jewish calendar, since days begin at sunset).

14:1 **Passover**. Mark uses *pascha* which is the Aramaic term for the feast (we say Paschal lamb from it). The word "Passover" was invented by William Tyndale in his translation of the Old Testament, to represent the angel passing over the children of Israel in Egypt. Later translations picked it up and added it to the New Testament vocabulary.

14:2 **lest there be an uproar of the people**. The Jewish leaders not only feared that they would have difficulty taking Jesus with a crowd around, but that a riot might break out which would bring the Roman army down upon them, as had happened in the past. Many Jews came to Jerusalem each year for Passover, estimates ranging anywhere from 85,000 up to a million. To help avoid problems, the Romans moved hundreds of soldiers to

Jerusalem during this time also, and the governor typically came from his home in Caesarea to stay at the Antonia Fortress next to the temple.

14:10 **to betray him**. At the end of this verse, the JST adds some insight into why Judas decided to betray Jesus: “**for he turned away from him, and was offended because of his words.**” Luke says, “Then entered Satan into Judas” (Luke 22:3), and John echoes, “. . . the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him” (John 13:2). This event is on a truly cosmic scale: God versus Lucifer, through their chosen agents, Jesus and Judas.

We don’t know exactly what of Jesus’ life or teaching offended Judas, but this account in Matthew and Mark immediately follows the anointing of Jesus at Simon’s house, contrasting Judas’ greed with the woman’s generosity. John informs us that Judas was a thief who stole from the group’s funds (John 12:6, where the KJV says, “he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein”; “bare” is better translated ‘stole’).

The anointing – Mark 14:3-9 (**Matt 26:6-13; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:1-8**)

See Matthew. Mark’s telling of the story takes place at the home of a leper, which could be someone Jesus healed or simply his house (he was not present). It could also be a way to prefigure the anointing, since lepers were considered ‘dead’ to society. When the woman anoints him, she is truly making Jesus the Christ, which like the Hebrew Messiah, means ‘anointed one.’

Disciples arrange for the Passover meal – Mark 14:12-16 (**Matt 26:17-19; Luke 22:7-13**)

See Luke.

The start of the last supper – Mark 14:17 (**Matt 26:20; Luke 22:14-18**)

See Luke.

Prophecy of Judas’ betrayal – **Mark 14:18-21** (**Matt 26:21-25; Luke 22:21-23; John 13:21-30**)

14:18 **sat and did eat**. The Greek word is ‘reclined.’ They did not sit at a table on chairs, but reclined on pillows on the floor, with a low table in front of them.

14:19 **Is it I?** How easy it would have been for them to point the finger at others. But instead these men, hand-chosen by the Savior, showed their humility and desire to improve by asking, “Is it I?” When things are bad, when there are problems, when there has been a wrong committed, can we take the attitude instead of jumping to judgment against another: ‘It is I, Lord? How can I improve? What can I do differently?’

14:20 **It is one of the twelve**. There are subtle hints in the gospels that the last supper included others besides the Twelve, such as this verse. Jesus announced in verse 18 that one of them eating dinner that night will betray him and then gave the clarification that it was one of the Twelve. That information would be useless if only he and the Twelve were eating the meal together. Instead, his response narrows the list of suspects from everyone in the room to just his closest associates, meaning the larger crowd included many more than just he and the Twelve.

Mark has Jesus predict three betrayals: Judas’ (14:18-21), the disciples as a group (14:27), and Peter’s (14:29-31). Matthew and Luke give the same predictions, but in Mark it is portrayed with more tragedy and a sense of abandonment.

The sacrament – **Mark 14:22-25** (**Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:19-20**)

This incident not only installed the sacrament as a gospel ordinance, but served as a prophecy through a symbolic act, as Jesus used the bread and wine to represent his body and blood which would shortly be bruised, broken, and spilled, all for the benefit of those eating those symbols at this meal—and everyone else.

The first chronological mention of the sacrament is actually found in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, given that Paul wrote that letter before these gospels were written down.

14:22 **took bread, and blessed, and brake**. Early in the meal, the host presented to the group three pieces of unleavened bread. The middle one was removed from the other two, broken, and hidden, to be found later by children in the company. Jews argued over the symbolism of the three pieces, but it is clearly suggestive to us of the Godhead—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The middle piece, the Son, is removed, broken, and set aside, just as Jesus would be removed from the presence of the Father, broken, killed, and buried in a tomb. Then he would be found—resurrected. The second piece of bread, found by the children, was considered the sweetest of all, a great treat. It was possible that when this bread was ‘found’ and brought to Jesus as the honored guest, that he took that bread, which represented him and his impending sacrifice, and distributed it among the disciples, saying, “Take it, and eat. Behold, this is for you to do in remembrance of my body.”

14:22 **JST**

KJV	JST
And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake <i>it</i> , and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.	And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake <i>it</i> , and gave to them, and said, Take it and eat: Behold , this is for you to do in remembrance of my body; for as oft as ye do this you will remember this hour that I was with you.

Jesus taught that to take these emblems was to remember him.

14:23 **he took the cup**. This was probably the third cup of the Seder, where the company all recited a prayer that Elijah would soon come and usher in the coming of the Messiah, ending with, “May He who is most merciful, make us worthy to behold the day of the Messiah.” This cup was known by the name, “I Will Redeem You.” Like all Passover wine, it was red in color, symbolizing the blood of the lambs spread on the doorposts. Jesus applied it to himself.

14:24-25 **JST**

KJV	JST
And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many .	And he said unto them, This is in remembrance of my blood, which is shed for many, and the new testament, which I give unto you; for of me, ye shall bear record unto all the world. And as oft as ye do this ordinance, you will remember me in this hour that I was with you, and drank with you of this cup, even the last time in my ministry.
Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.	Verily I say unto you, Of this ye shall bear record; for I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine with you , until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And now they were grieved, and wept over him.

“A forceful pronouncement that he is face-to-face with death; in other words, this is a farewell meal, the last one he will share with his disciples until he comes into his Father’s kingdom.”¹¹

Prophecy of disciples scattering, Peter’s denial – Mark 14:26-31 ([Matt 26:31-35](#); [Luke 22:31-38](#); [John 13:36-38](#)) –

See Matthew, with one note.

14:28 **JST**

KJV	JST

¹¹ Holzapfel, *A Lively Hope*, 35.

But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. **And he said unto Judas Iscariot, what thou doest, do quickly; but beware of innocent blood. Nevertheless, Judas Iscariot, even one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests to betray Jesus unto them; for he turned away from him, and was offended because of his words. And when the chief priests heard of him, they were glad, and promised to give him money; and he sought how he might conveniently betray Jesus.**

This change by the Prophet is unique to Mark but does draw on language from the other gospels.

Gethsemane – Mark 14:32-42 (Matt 26:36-46; Luke 22:40-46; John 18:1)

See Matthew, with two notes.

14:32 In the JST, in Gethsemane, just as Jesus is taking upon him the sins of the world, it is the disciples, not Jesus, who are “sore amazed” and “heavy,” and begin “to complain in their hearts,” questioning if Jesus really is the Messiah.

14:36 In Gethsemane while praying, it is Mark that has Jesus use the intimate Aramaic term for his Father, *Abba*, as he declared that all things are possible to God and hopes to have the cup taken away.

Betrayal and arrest – Mark 14:43-52 (Matt 26:47-56; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12)

14:48 ***Are ye come out, as against a thief.*** This is better translated, ‘Am I leading a rebellion that you need such an army?’ He reminded them that he was peacefully teaching in the temple several times that very week.

14:50 ***they all forsook him, and fled.*** Other accounts clarify that Jesus requested safe departure for his disciples, but Mark is emphasizing the untested nature of his followers, that they left him alone when he needed them most, just as they slept when he was in agonizing prayer. This mission was one that Jesus had to do alone.

14:51 ***a certain young man.*** We don’t know who this was, but perhaps it was Mark himself, at whose house the Last Supper had likely taken place, who could have followed them to the garden and fallen asleep with the rest, wearing only his linen tunic. When someone in the arresting party tried to grab him, he wriggled away, leaving his outer garment behind, and “fled from them naked,” meaning only wearing his loin cloth.

Before Annas and Caiaphas – Mark 14:53-65 (Matt 26:57-68; Luke 22:54-55, 63-65; John 18:13-16, 18-24)

See John, with notes from Mark here.

14:56, 59 During the trial, it is only from Mark that we learn that the false witnesses brought by the Jewish leaders in their hastily arranged trial could not agree with each other (14:56, 59).

14:61 ***Son of the Blessed.*** Avoiding the use of the name of God, the high priest (Joseph Caiaphas; Matthew 26:57) attempted to show his own piety in speech while all the while unjustly condemning Jesus.

14:63 ***rent his clothes.*** Tearing the collar of one’s clothing was a sign of distress. In the *Mishnah* (about A.D. 200), it is described as the symbol for guilt in a trial for blasphemy. Jesus’ comments were considered blasphemous because he claimed the authority to “sit on the right hand” of God, and that he would be “coming in the clouds of heaven,” a reference to the right to judge mankind. Jews considered both statements presumptuous and blasphemous because only God could judge.

Peter's denial – Mark 14:66-72 (Matt 26:69-75; Luke 22:56-62; John 18:17, 25-27)

14:67 **thou also wast with Jesus.** Peter was readily identified as a follower of Jesus. This shows that Jesus was not the only one that had some notoriety, but many of his disciples, including the senior apostle himself.

14:68, 72 Mark also uniquely has the rooster crow twice in these verses, which matches Jesus prediction in Mark that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed twice (14:30).

14:70 **thy speech agreeth thereto.** The Galileans must have had an accent that distinguished them from others, must like the Ephraimite who said a certain word ("Shibboleth") in such a particular way that his ancestry was immediately recognized (Judges 12).

14:72 JST

KJV	JST
And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.	And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the words which Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and fell upon his face, and wept bitterly.

Peter's grief at his actions are more poignant in the JST. Both Matthew and Luke record in the KJV that he "wept bitterly" but JST Mark adds that he also fell on his face in sorrow. The addition in Mark is especially interesting if the premise that Mark was written as Peter's gospel is true; Peter would surely state the nature of his personal feelings more powerfully than the others.

First appearance before Pilate Mark 15:1-5 (Matt 27:2, 11-14; Luke 23:1-7; John 18:28-38)

See John.

Second appearance before Pilate – Mark 15:6-19 (Matt 27:15-30; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-40, 19:1-16a) –

See Matthew, Luke, and John.

Led to Golgotha – Mark 15:20-22 (Matt 27:31-33; Luke 23:26-33a; John 19:16b-17)

15:21 **Alexander and Rufus.** Mark alone mentions these two men as being the sons of Simon the Cyrenian. It is possible that his audience knows them, which would indicate that they had become followers of the Christian faith since their father carried the crossbeam of Jesus' cross.

15:22 **the place Golgotha.** In Matthew, Mark, and John, the JST changes the provided translation of "Golgotha" from "skull" to "burial." Golgotha comes from the Aramaic *gulgaltha*, which is the Hebrew *gulgoleth*, meaning 'a skull.' The word "Calvary" in Luke is from the Latin term (*calvaria*) with the same meaning, inserted by the KJV translators. Luke actually calls the place *kranion* which means 'skull' in Greek, the equivalent to *gulgaltha* in Aramaic. Why it is 'burial' in the JST is unknown. Note that the Hebrew word for 'burial' is *qeburah* (*thaptō* in Greek).

Crucifixion – Mark 15:23-26 (Matt 27:34-37; Luke 23:33b-34; John 19:18-27)

15:23 JST

KJV	JST
And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh : but he received it not.	And they gave him to drink vinegar mingled with gall ; and when he had tasted the vinegar, he would not drink.

The soldiers were pretending to give Jesus refreshment but instead gave him something that tasted horrible and could even have been poisonous.

15:25 **the third hour**. Mark alone gives us the time of the crucifixion, which would be about 9:00 a.m.

15:26 **JST**

KJV	JST
And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.	And Pilate wrote his accusation and put it upon the cross, THE KING OF THE JEWS. There were certain of the high priests who stood by that said unto Pilate, Write that he said, I am king of the Jews. But Pilate said unto them, What I have written, I have written.

As with Matthew, the JST adds substantially to the story here relating to Pilate putting up the *titulus*, harmonizing the accounts of John and the synoptics.

Derided on the Cross – Mark 15:27-32a (**Matt 27:38-43**; Luke 23:35-38)

See Matthew.

Two Thieves – Mark 15:32b (**Matt 27:44**; **Luke 23:39-43**)

See Luke, with one JST note.

15:32 **JST**

KJV	JST
Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.	Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And one of them who was crucified with him reviled him also, saying, If thou art the Christ, save thyself—and us.

This change harmonizes Mark with Luke, making Luke's expansion of this story a little less unique.

Jesus' Death – Mark 15:33-39 (**Matt 27:45-54**; **Luke 23:44-48**; John 19:28-30)

See Matthew and Luke but with one Mark note.

15:37 **cried with a loud voice**. Mark records nothing that Jesus said on the cross; Jesus endured all the mocking and scorn in dignified silence. Only just before death did he loudly cry out, though his words are respectfully left out of Mark's record.

Women Witness at the Cross – **Mark 15:40-41** (**Matt 27:55-56**; Luke 23:49; John 19:25-27)

15:40 **James the less**. The JST changes this to "James the **less younger**" which is a completely appropriate translation of the Greek *mikros*. This is another wonderful example of Joseph Smith's skill at translating a language about which he knew nothing!

15:41 Matthew and Luke both mention women at the cross, but Mark provides greater detail, alerting us that these women were his disciples in Galilee, that they ministered unto him (supported him financially), and had come to Jerusalem with him.

Burial – **Mark 15:42-47** (**Matt 27:57-61**; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42)

15:42 **the preparation**. The day before the Sabbath (Friday before sunset) was a preparation day in the sense that many activities had to happen to allow the family to worship appropriately, including finishing all business, ending journeys, preparing food, and filling and lighting lamps. Though a small change, the JST add "the preparation **day**," which aligns with modern translations and captures the sense of the Greek phrase.

15:43 **went in boldly**. Or, "gathered up courage" (NASB). Joseph was following a Jewish custom of burying the dead before sunset but was breaking the Roman custom of leaving them on the cross as a visible reminder of crimes and

then burying them in a common grave. It was a bold and potentially dangerous move. Additionally, by entering Pilate's residence, he was making himself ritually unclean, a significant sacrifice.

15:44 **Pilate marveled if he were already dead.** It was somewhat unusual for a victim of crucifixion to die the same day (assuming they survived the flogging), unless the soldiers broke their legs to hasten death. Pilate had to verify with the centurion in charge, but with that assurance, released the body to Joseph.

15:47 **beheld where he was laid.** The women were nearby during the crucifixion and burial but not participating. It would be that they did not know Joseph and so kept their distance while he took care of Jesus' body (most likely with servants to do the work so that he would not come into contact with a dead body and defile himself).

At the tomb – Mark 16:1-8 (Matt 28:1-8; Luke 24:10-12; John 20:1-13)

16:1 **brought sweet spices.** Bodies were wrapped in cloth soaked in spices to help with the odor. Because of the haste in burying Jesus on Friday before the Sabbath starting at sunset, they probably couldn't do a proper burial. So now they return to finish the job after the Sabbath. It was also the custom to check a tomb on the third day just to make sure the person was really dead!

16:3 **who shall roll us away the stone.** Only Mark captures the concern of the women at not being able to move the stone. They apparently didn't know the guards were there (Mark doesn't mention them) or feared the Romans would not be responsive to their request for help. It's a simple detail but one that adds reality to the account.

16:5 **a young man.** As with Matthew, in the JST there are two angels at the tomb, sitting on the stone; these changes make the three Synoptics parallel on this issue.

16:7 **his disciples and Peter.** Peter gets special mention, another indication that this is his record captured by John Mark.

16:8 **neither said they anything to any man.** Few men would have believed the women anyway. The JST makes special note (just prior to this statement) that the women “**entering into the sepulchre, saw the place where they laid Jesus,**” and that he was gone. Women were not allowed to be witnesses in courts of law in those days, so their testimonies were not valid in legal matters, but this shows that their testimonies were valued among the followers of the Savior. Jesus' teachings about the value and equality of women were unparalleled in his day. It also is a strong case for the veracity of these stories, since no man wanting to add credibility to his account would make women the first and chief witnesses.

Postlude: The Longer Ending (16:9-20)

Some ancient manuscripts of Mark, even some of the oldest and thus presumably best ones, conclude (on a seemingly unsatisfactory note) at the end of verse 8. Because of this, scholars typically consider Mark 16:9-20 as a late addition designed to give Mark a 'happier' ending. They cite an abrupt change in writing style, vocabulary, and narrative flow as further evidence. They conclude that Mark's readers already knew the resurrection stories and so Mark's ending at verse 8 became one of irony and almost suspense. The controversy is reflected in some modern translations leaving out the verses, while the KJV, based on a Greek text accepted in the 16th and 17th centuries, includes them. They appear to borrow stories from the other gospels and summarize them as a suitable ending to the cliff-hanger that are verses 1-8.

Whether these were Mark's original words, added by a later scribal addition, or the combination of Mark with another witness (or yet another explanation not yet determined), these verses teach truth and fit nicely with the other scriptures in the New Testament. If they are not part of Mark's original writing, then that also fits with LDS theology: “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly” (Article of Faith 8).

Mark's gospel is a well-crafted composition that endeavors from the first verse to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He shows how those around him struggled with that concept even though Jesus taught it by word and deed. He shows Jesus' power and authority and goes into great detail about this final week in mortality. In the end,

Mark gives us hope that we can endure our own trials and challenges, and with faith in Christ that is merited by the proofs Mark has provided, can anticipate joining with him in his great triumph when he finally reigns on the earth in fulfillment of his messianic mission.

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- ESV – English Standard Version
- JST – Joseph Smith Translation
- KJV – King James Version
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- NLT – New Living Translation
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