



## Mark 8—9:1

### ———— “Who Do You Say I Am?”

**F**or many months, Jesus’ disciples have watched him. He has taught crowds of people, healed different diseases, cast out evil spirits, controlled a raging storm, brought a dead child back to life, fed a large multitude. His disciples are beginning to discover who Jesus really is. Verse 29 marks the turning point of Mark’s Gospel, and the title *Messiah* is used here for the second time in his account. Look for the new element and emphasis that now appear in Jesus’ teaching.

#### **Read Mark 8:1-10**

1. At first reading this incident seems to be the same as the one in Mark 6:30-44, but what are the distinct differences?
2. In each incident Jesus acts out of compassion for the people. How can you express your concern for the spiritual and physical needs of others?

## Read Mark 8:11-21

3. What sort of sign may the Pharisees have in mind (verses 11-13)?

How does Jesus respond to the Pharisees at this point? Why?

4. Jesus warns his disciples against being like the Pharisees or Herod (verse 15). What attitude was typical of the Pharisees (chapter 7)?

What attitude or way of life was typical of Herod (chapter 6)?

How are these opposite ways of life equally dangerous?

5. How do the disciples misunderstand Jesus' warning (verse 16)?

What does Jesus try to make them recognize by his series of questions?

## Read Mark 8:22-26

6. Who initiates this incident?

How does Jesus involve the man in the healing process, and how might this stimulate the man's faith?

## Read Mark 8:27-33

7. Locate the place Jesus now takes his disciples.

*Note: Jesus keeps trying to get time alone with the disciples. The crowd ruined their day off (6:31) and a desperate mother found them near Tyre (7:24-25).*

8. What is the significant difference between the two questions Jesus asks his disciples?

If Jesus asked you both of these questions today, how would you answer each?

9. Review the focus on Jesus' identity:

1:11, 24

3:11

4:41

6:2-3

6:14-15

10. How does Peter, speaking for the group, answer Jesus' second question?

After the disciples grasp and confess who Jesus is, what specific things does Jesus begin to teach them about the Messiah?

11. How and why does Peter react to this teaching?

How does Jesus' reaction indicate that the situation is ripe with temptation for him (verse 33)?

12. Why is Peter's response to Jesus' teaching about his death the human point of view rather than God's point of view?

**Read Mark 8:34—9:1**

13. What would the words **whoever** and **if anyone** indicate to the crowd and the disciples?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. What do the three qualifications in verse 34 teach about the cost of discipleship?

Why does Jesus say to deny your *self*, rather than to deny yourself *things*?

*Note: Here, Mark mentions the cross for the first time. At the time of Jesus, the **cross** meant the instrument of public execution by the Romans.*

15. What two possibilities does Jesus state are open to every person (verse 35)?

What is the only way to save your life?

16. What is the best that people living for themselves can do?

With what result?

*Note: When Alexander the Great had conquered the empires of his day, he wept that there were no more worlds to conquer.*

17. Why may some people be ashamed of Jesus and of his words (verse 38)?
  
18. How is Jesus' prophecy of his return in power and glory both a warning and an encouragement to those hearing his words?

## **SUMMARY**

1. What things led the disciples to conclude that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah?
  
2. What demands does Jesus make on anyone who wants to be his disciple?
  
3. Why is commitment only the first step of true discipleship?

## **CONCLUSION**

After the disciples return from their preaching trip (chapter 6), Jesus tries to get away from the multitudes to question and instruct them privately. Now that the disciples finally grasp who he is, Jesus announces his death and resurrection and the cost of following him.

## **Instructions for the next meeting**

To prepare for the Review of Mark 1—8, look at the opening explanation on page 67.