



## The Gospel of Mark - Chapter Eight

- II. Mark 1:14-8:26 - Demonstration of Jesus' Authority (continues/concludes)
- II.c Mark 6:6b-8:26 - Work beyond Galilee (continues/concludes)
- II.c.vii Mark 7:31-8:26 - Additional miracles in Decapolis and Bethsaida (continues/concludes)

### Summary of Chapter Eight

Jesus had travelled to the region of the Decapolis, a mainly Gentile region, where he attracted a large crowd to him in a remote place. After teaching them for three days, it was decided that he would again feed a multitude from a small provision of natural food, feeding about 4,000 with just seven loaves of bread and a few small fish. This was a different occasion to the time he fed 5,000 men and has a different symbolic meaning.

Jesus travelled from there by boat to the region of Dalmanutha, modern day Migdal, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. On arriving there, some Pharisees asked Jesus to show them a sign to authenticate his claim to be from God. They were not happy with just seeing him perform multiple miracles over nature, the spirit realm and over diseases; they wanted a sign directly from heaven! Although in reality it was just a ploy to trap Jesus.

Jesus warned his disciples to beware of the yeast or leaven of the Pharisees and Herod, something they took literally, thinking that he was referring to ordinary bread, something they had forgotten to bring for the journey. Jesus reminded them of the two miracles of feeding the two multitudes with small amounts of bread and always having some left over, demonstrating they had missed the point of the miracles, which were not physical but spiritual.

In Bethsaida, Jesus restored the sight of a blind man. He did so away from the crowds and, unusually, the healing was performed in two distinct stages. This was again to aid the disciples' understanding of Kingdom principles.

Jesus reached the farthest point to the north that is recorded in his ministry, Caesarea Philippi, where he questioned his disciples about the public

perception of who he was. They replied that opinion was split between a resurrected John the Baptist, the awaited prophet Elijah, or another prophet, similar to those of the OT. Jesus then asked who the disciples thought he was. Peter acknowledged for the first time that Jesus was the Christ; something Jesus ordered them to keep to themselves.

Jesus then told his disciples that the Messiah must suffer and die at the hands of the religious leaders; although after three days he would rise again to life. This was something they had failed to understand, for Peter rebuked Jesus for such talk. Jesus, in turn, rebuked Peter for failing to understand the ways of God.

Jesus, speaking to his disciples and a crowd that had gathered, told them of the true cost of being his disciple. Those who would choose not to acknowledge Jesus in this life would be disowned by Christ on the day of his Second Coming, his *Parousia*.

## II.c.vii.2 Mark 8:1-13 - Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

The feeding of the four thousand shows that Jesus is the living bread for Gentiles as well as for the Jews, since the event most likely occurred in Gentile territory.

<sup>1</sup> During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, <sup>2</sup> “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat.

### Mark 8:1-2

During those days may seem to be imprecise. It simply refers to the time when Jesus was operating in and around the region of Galilee. It is a common term used throughout the bible: <<*In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit*>> (Judges 17:6), <<*In those days it was not safe to travel about, for all the inhabitants of the lands were in great turmoil*>> (2 Chronicles 15:5), <<*Also, in those days the nobles of Judah were sending many letters to Tobiah, and replies from Tobiah kept coming to them*>> (Nehemiah 6:17), <<*In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem*>> (Joel 3:1), and: <<*In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa*>> (Matthew 3:1).

Another large crowd gathered. Jesus’ popularity continued to grow wherever he went, irrespective of the opposition he faced from the religious leaders. It also appears that it was his teaching rather than miraculous works that were attracting these crowds, as this group stayed with him in a remote place for three days.

Since they had nothing to eat. It was unlikely these people had not eaten for three days but had run out of the food that they had brought with them, perhaps not expecting this teaching session to last as long as it did. Even so, it gave testimony to Jesus’ teaching that the crowd remained, until he had finished his teaching and would dismiss them, despite their lack of food. Perhaps it was a case of: <<*The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing*>> (Psalm 34:10). Jesus will never send anyone away empty that comes to him for the right reasons and with an open heart.

I have compassion for these people. The people would have been used to the disdain that the Pharisees would normally show to such people as these. Indeed, as there were probably a significant number of Gentiles in the crowd then the Pharisees would have had nothing to do with them at all. Jesus stated this explicitly for his disciples so that they would have absolute understanding of how important this is to Jesus. The modern church is required to adopt this same level of compassion for all people.

Three days. At times, Jesus' teaching ministries lasted several days. Three days is also a symbolic time period. For example, it was the time that Joseph's two cell mates had to wait for judgement following their dreams: <<***"This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer"***>> (Genesis 40:12-13), and: <<***Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh"***>> (Genesis 40:19), darkness covered Egypt for that length of time: <<***So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days"***>> (Exodus 10:22), for God's punishment with relation to David's illegal census: <<***So Gad went to David and said to him, "Shall there come on you three years of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me"***>> (2 Samuel 24:13). It was the amount of time the exiled Jews had to rest on their return before the hard work began: <<***So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days"***>> (Ezra 8:32), the amount of time Jesus went absent from Joseph and Mary when he was just 12 years old: <<***After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions"***>> (Luke 2:46), and of course it was the amount of time between the death and resurrection of the Christ: <<***They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it"***>> (Mark 9:30-32). Also see comments made in reference to Jonah spending three days inside the fish at v.12. There are, in fact, sixty such references to this time period in the NIV translation of the bible, 40 in the OT and 20 in the NT.

<sup>3</sup> If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."

<sup>4</sup> His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?"

#### Mark 8:3-4

Where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them? This seems like a strange response, for his disciples should have remembered Jesus' previous miracle of feeding the 5,000, which is recorded in Mark 6:31-44. According to v.17 and vv.32-33, however, they were constantly captive to their

own very limited frame of reference: <<*I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it. "But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices. "If my people would only listen to me, if Israel would only follow my ways">> (Psalm 81:10-13).*

<sup>5</sup> "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven," they replied.

### Mark 8:5

Seven is highly significant in Scripture and is usually symbolic of perfection or completion; here the number may symbolise the fullness of God's provision for all peoples, now including the Gentiles. As Israel rejected the Kingdom, Gentiles increasingly came into view. The determination of how little food was available made the contrast of the multiplication all the greater.

On the previous occasion Jesus fed considerably more than 5,000 people with just five loaves and two small fish. Here he fed around 4,000 people with seven loaves and a few small fish. On each occasion he took all that was given to him, multiplied what was given to ensure that all his people were satisfied with what they then received and then enabled a harvest to be gathered from the remnant. Discipleship sometimes requires people to give all they have in faith, time, effort, possession, money, etc. They will see it used greatly by God and will receive the rewards of the faith they displayed in their original giving: <<Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it">> (Malachi 3:10).

<sup>6</sup> He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so.

### Mark 8:6

He told the crowd to sit down, which would simply make the distribution of the food easier to each group of people. Although serving so many people would still have been a difficult task in itself. It is likely the disciples would have taken the food to a nominated person in each group and have them pass the food round to each individual.

Given thanks, breaking bread, i.e. he broke them, and distributing it were common elements in a Jewish meal. His disciples were again personally involved in passing on that which Jesus multiplied, a key lesson in their training in servanthood, although it also allowed the miracle of multiplication to take place through their hands. This is how they would build the early church - multiplying disciples by teaching the Word and imparting the Holy Spirit on those that believe.

<sup>7</sup> They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them.

### Mark 8:7

He gave thanks for them also. Jesus never took anything for granted, teaching that the people should be thankful to God for the smallest and simplest of provision, for all good things come from the Father.

<sup>8</sup> The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

### Mark 8:8

Another great surplus, seven basketfuls of broken pieces, to go with: <<*and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish*>> (Mark 6:43), and: <<*When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted”*>> (John 6:12), underscoring the fact that Jesus is capable of providing beyond satisfaction.

On the previous occasion, when more than 5,000 were fed, it was recorded: <<*They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish*>> (Mark 6:42-43). The fact that only seven basketfuls of broken pieces were recovered on this occasion should not be seen as a lesser miracle, for the number seven was significant to the Jews and something that should not have been missed by his disciples. See comments made on v.5.

<sup>9</sup> About four thousand were present. After he had sent them away, <sup>10</sup> he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

### Mark 8:9-10

Having fed about four thousand people, Jesus now felt it was appropriate for them to start their journey home, so he sent them away so that he could head off to his next location to continue his own work.

Jesus got into the boat and crossed the Sea of Galilee, travelling westward to the region of Dalmanutha, which is modern day Migdal.

<sup>11</sup> The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven.

### Mark 8:11

The Pharisees demanded to be given a sign from heaven – not just a miracle, but a conclusive sign directly from God, to confirm that the promise had been fulfilled. If only they had opened their hearts and minds they would have realised that a sign had been prophesied to them: <<*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel*>> (Isaiah 7:14), given at his birth: <<*But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in*

*cloths and lying in a manger”>> (Luke 2:10-12), and John the Baptist’s testimony concerning Jesus’ baptism: <<Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One”>> (John 1:32-34). Their demand for a sign, however, excluded the one essential demand that Jesus required: a fundamental change of heart and mind.*

To test him. These men did not believe the claims that Jesus made or the authenticity of his teaching, despite the wonders he performed in front of them all. Their sole motivation was not to determine his true identity; it was to discredit him in front of the people who were increasingly turning to him. Their ploy would not succeed: <<So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”>> (John 12:19).

This is an excellent example of how it is not for God to justify himself before men. Asking for signs and miracles is not what people should be doing; they should be turning to Jesus in faith that he will provide them with what they need, which is not necessarily what they want!

<sup>12</sup> He sighed deeply and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.”

### Mark 8:12

Jesus sighed deeply on account of the attitude underlying and driving the demand for a sign from God. Mark has often indicated the types of emotions that Jesus expressed on such occasions: <<Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!”>> (Mark 1:41), <<He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored>> (Mark 3:5), and: <<He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, “Ephphatha!” (which means “Be opened!”)>> (Mark 7:34).

This generation. In a comparable account, it is recorded that Jesus gave a more expressive description of the people: <<He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah>> (Matthew 12:39). This is similar to: <<They are corrupt and not his children; to their shame they are a warped and crooked generation>> (Deuteronomy 32:5), <<“I will hide my face from them,” he said, “and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful”>> (Deuteronomy 32:20), <<For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways’>> (Psalm 95:10), and: <<“You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me”>> (Mark 9:19). Jesus often quoted from Deuteronomy and may have done so on these occasions.

Although that generation was honoured above all others in that it had eyewitness testimony for their Messiah actually came to them and dwelt among

them, and yet so many of them failed to recognise him, they were probably no worse than many of the generations of Jews that had gone before them and failed to abide with God. They appear to be certainly no worse than many of the generations that have followed, particularly that of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century who have so much evidence confirming Jesus as the Christ, with scientific evidence to support the order of creation, yet still wilfully choose to ignore him at best, and at worst openly oppose the work he is still trying to achieve through those who do believe.

No sign. As seen in the reference from Matthew 12:39, Jesus offered the sign of Jonah in response. Jonah was rescued from the sea when God arranged for a large fish to swallow him and after three days to vomit him back up onto the beach (Jonah 1:17-2:10). This was a sign to the people of Nineveh that Jonah's message was from God. Jesus' death and resurrection would likewise be God's sign to that present generation. An open heart, together with Jesus' demonstrations of divine authority, should have been more than enough for them to have seen that he truly is the Messiah of God.

<sup>13</sup> Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

### Mark 8:13

Once again Jesus crossed over the Sea of Galilee (v.10), this time travelling generally east.

### II.c.vii.3 Mark 8:14-21 - The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

Jesus gave a general warning to his disciples and his church to be aware that what some people say and teach should not always be accepted at face value and should always be tested to see if it is authentic and of value to the church.

<sup>14</sup> The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup> "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."

### Mark 8:14-15

The mention of bread introduces a discussion between Jesus and his disciples (vv.15-21).

Although it is translated yeast in the NIV, yeast was quite rare in Palestine in that era and it probably refers to leaven, which was fermented dough, a little of which would be left from the previous week to be added to a new lump of dough.

By analogy, the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod, the untruths and misinterpretations they taught, would always spread its destructive consequences throughout the whole community. It was also a figurative description of the self-centred, self-reliance of the Pharisees, Herod Antipas and his supporters: <<*Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy"*>> (Luke 12:1), <<*Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a*

*little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth>> (1 Corinthians 5:6-8), and: <<You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. “A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.” I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty>> (Galatians 5:7-10). Jesus warned his disciples against such an attitude.*

Sadducees were often followers of Herod and were the dominant group in the Sanhedrin; yet were not even men of true faith. They had gained their influential positions mainly through their wealth and it was from this group that the high priests were often chosen. Normally, Pharisees and Sadducees do not work well together, but their determination to rid themselves of Christ was a motivating factor for them to do so. Jesus had once been warned: <<At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, “Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you”>> (Luke 13:31), although that may have been a ploy by the Pharisees in Galilee to get Jesus to leave their region. After his arrest, Jesus did appear before Herod: <<When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort>> (Luke 23:8). For more information on the Sadducees, refer to comments made on Acts 4:1 of this series.

<sup>16</sup> They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.”

### Mark 8:16

They discussed translates the Greek word *dielogizonto*, which can be translated they reasoned or they disputed, showing that there may have been some contention between them as to who was responsible for not making appropriate provision for the journey. Such a quarrel or dispute among disciples underlines a lack of trust or faith in God for their *daily bread*.

Something that is not apparent in Mark is that this happened some considerable time after they had received instruction from Jesus in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus instructed his disciples not to concern themselves over their daily needs and provisions: <<**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well**>> (Matthew 6:33).

Have no bread. The disciples take the term yeast or leaven from v.15 literally, showing their ongoing inability to grasp spiritual truths (vv.17-21).

<sup>17</sup> Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? <sup>18</sup> Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don’t you remember?”

## Mark 8:17-18

Aware of their discussion. It is not clear whether Jesus simply overheard their conversation or he knew what they were discussing in his divine spiritual nature, for he even knew people's thoughts: <<**Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall">> (Luke 11:17).**

Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? The disciples' hearts were still partially closed to the depth of Jesus' teaching and his real character, for he asked if they did not yet perceive or understand. Although Jesus did not rebuke them as hard-hearted hypocrites, as he did the Pharisees and the teachers of the law: <<**He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: 'These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me'>> (Mark 7:6),** they still lacked full understanding of who Jesus really is. While the Pharisees reject Jesus' teaching outright, the disciples were simply slow to appreciate it.

The figurative reference to eyes and ears once again echoes the healings of the deaf man: <<**After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means "Be opened!"). At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly>> (Mark 7:33-35),** and the blind man in vv.22-26. Jesus wanted to open the spiritual ears and eyes of the disciples' hearts and minds.

<sup>19</sup> When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

"Twelve," they replied.

## Mark 8:19

Twelve was symbolic of the sons of Jacob, who became the patriarchs of the twelve tribes, and therefore represents the people of Israel themselves. It also allowed each of the twelve apostles to retrieve a basketful.

<sup>20</sup> "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

They answered, "Seven."

## Mark 8:20

Seven is symbolic of perfection and completeness, indicating God's provision for all and that Jesus is everything that the whole of mankind needs.

<sup>21</sup> He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

## Mark 8:21

When Jesus had twice multiplied food, the disciples were supposed to understand the significance of these miracles, that is, he who stood before them was none other than the eternal creator, giver and sustainer of life: <<*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross*>> (Colossians 1:15-20).

### II.c.vii.4 Mark 8:22-26 - Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida

This is the first account in Mark of a blind man having his sight restored and is a different account to that given in all three synoptic Gospels of those healed at Jericho in Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52, and Luke 18:35-43. John also gives a unique account of healing a blind man in Jerusalem in John 9:1-7.

Jesus remained on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, as noted in v.13; he travelled northwards to Bethsaida, close to where Jesus fed the 5,000, refer to comments made on Mark 6:53, and eventually travelled further north to Caesarea Philippi (v.27). The details of the two-stage healing of the blind man (vv.22-26) are unique to Mark.

<sup>22</sup> They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.

## Mark 8:22

They came to Bethsaida. Bethsaida was north from their current location on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Excavation geology at the primary location for this town, which is Et Tell, show that it was once closer to the sea than it is today.

Some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. The man was blind and could not get to Jesus on his own. The key point here though is that it was his friends who had faith for him to be healed just by being touched by Jesus. This is a reminder of the man lowered down by his friends through the roof to Jesus' feet: <<*When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven"*>> (Mark 2:5). Similarly, here it does not indicate whether or not the blind man himself had faith to be healed; just that his friends did.

<sup>23</sup> He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

<sup>24</sup> He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

<sup>25</sup> Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

<sup>26</sup> Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."

### Mark 8:23-26

He took the blind man by the hand. Jesus took personal responsibility to guide this man to the place where he would heal him: <<*I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame*>> (Job 29:15).

Jesus led the blind man outside the village, probably to be away from elements of unbelief and hostility as seen when he raised Jairus' daughter to life: <<*After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was*>> (Mark 5:40b), and with his healing of the man that was both deaf and mute: <<*After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue*>> (Mark 7:3). Some of Jesus' healings were undertaken publically with the probable aim of supporting his Gospel message, while at other times it appears Jesus wanted to keep them low key, either with respect for the person's own dignity, or because he didn't want the publicity at that time or in that place. Those who did witness such miracles did not always accept them in faith anyway, and: <<*He was amazed at their lack of faith*>> (Mark 6:6).

Outside the village. For simple privacy, Jesus could have taken the man into a nearby house but perhaps he wanted to disassociate this healing from the whole town due to the woes he had pronounced upon it, which had come about because of their lack of faith: <<*"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes*>> (Matthew 11:21). That would also account for why Jesus said to him after he was healed: don't even go into the village.

He spit on the man's eyes, put his hands on the man's eyes. This two stage action was very much a physical intervention and not just healing with a word that Jesus had done so frequently. This physical touch perhaps represented providing salve for the eyes of those who were spiritually blind: <<*I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see*>> (Revelation 3:18).

This two stage healing lacked the immediacy of other examples: <<*Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed*>> (Mark 1:42), <<*Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished*>> (Mark 5:42), and: <<*"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road*>> (Mark 10:52). It also demonstrates that Jesus did not have a set pattern to follow when healing, which is interesting, for the modern church often has fixed methods or even special words that need to be said by people in order for them to come to faith. Jesus' own actions seem to dispute that. However, what is most important is that Jesus always completes what he starts: <<*When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With*

*that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit*>> (John 19:30). Two stage revelation perhaps reflects our own experience where God does not appear in our lives all at once, but gradually, perhaps in the same way that a photograph being processed comes into view on the paper.

Do you see anything? In the context of Mark 7:31-8:26, and especially in light of Jesus' focus on the disciples' lack of understanding (vv.17-21), the man's answer may be analogous to their limited apprehension of Jesus. They saw him vaguely (v.29), just as the blind man now saw people merely like trees walking. Jesus' healing of the man in two stages may have been intended to emphasise this fact. Those who were formally blind can now see: <<*The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day*>> (Proverbs 4:18), and: <<*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it*>> (John 1:5).

This interpretation is supported by the fact that vv.22-26 contain no less than nine terms related to sight. The disciples would soon understand that Jesus is the Messiah (vv.27-30), but they will not yet fully grasp that he was to be a suffering Messiah (Mark 8:31-9:1).

Sometimes an image of God does not come as clearly as we would like, perhaps in the way that Eliphaz perceived the Spirit: <<*A spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood on end. It stopped, but I could not tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice*>> (Job 4:15-16).

### III Mark 8:27-16:8 - Testing Jesus' Authority in Suffering

This major section is believed to represent the last six months of Jesus' earthly ministry, at least the period leading to the Cross, for he would remain on earth for 40 days following his resurrection. Having displayed his messianic authority and power in the foregoing major section (Mark 1:14-8:26), Jesus is now to be tested as the Messiah of God.

#### III.a Mark 8:27-10:52 - Journey to Jerusalem

This section tells of three predictions of Jesus' death and resurrection, which is followed by instructions relating to the cost of discipleship; both then and now. It also marks the start of his southerly journey to Jerusalem and his destiny with the Cross, and all the suffering, ignominy and glory that entails.

##### III.a.i Mark 8:27-30 - Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

A lot has been written about the doctrine that Jesus taught, the miracles that he performed in various locations to the amazement of the crowds and the disdain of the religious and political leaders. Mark now takes a short interlude from this fast paced narrative to contemplate why this account has been written. The apostle John describes it so well: <<*But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name*>> (John 20:31). This discourse which Christ had with his disciples will assist all his disciples throughout the ages in making the necessary reflections upon the miracles of Christ, and a right use of them.

His miracles prove that he is the true Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. The miracles he did and the words he spoke witnessed concerning him; and thus his disciples, who were the eye-witnesses of those works, here profess their true belief in him, which cannot but be a satisfaction to all disciples in subsequent generations who make the same inference from them.

Near to the source of the Jordan River, Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Messiah of God must die and be raised again (v.31). Each of the major predictions of Jesus' death and resurrection was followed by teaching on discipleship (vv.32-38, Mark 9:32-50 and Mark 10:34-45).

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

### Mark 8:27

Cæsarea Philippi. This marks the furthest recorded point to the north that Jesus operated in. From here he would gradually make his way south on his final journey to Jerusalem and his destiny with the Cross. Cæsarea Philippi was some 25 miles or 40 km north of the Sea of Galilee, and had been a centre of the worship of Baal, then of the Greek god Pan, and then of Cæsar.

At that time Cæsarea Philippi was an important Greco-Roman city, with a primarily pagan Syrian and Greek population. In fact, its name had recently been changed from Panæas to Cæsarea Philippi by Philip the Tetrarch, the son of Herod the Great, in honour of himself and Augustus Cæsar. Excavations at the site have revealed coins minted to depict the temple built to honour Augustus Cæsar, and a pagan cave dedicated to Pan, with shrines and cult niches that are still visible today.

Who do people say I am? There were many rumours circulating concerning the true identity of Jesus, none of which were fully accurate, although the majority showed that he was generally held in high esteem by the ordinary people and quite a number of influential people as well. In addition to those listed in v.28, there were others who saw him simply as the carpenter from Nazareth: <<*Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?*>> (Mark 6:3), and religious leaders who thought he was in league with the Devil: <<*And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons"*>> (Mark 3:22). Jesus' questions here prepare the way for his teaching. He needed to clarify that the Messiah of God had to be humbled (v.31): <<*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*>> (Mark 10:45), and exalted (v.38), for the sake of his people. This went against popular expectations in Jewish culture and thinking.

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

<sup>29a</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

### Mark 8:28-29a

Some say John the Baptist. The disciples came up with three of the commonly held beliefs that Jesus was a resurrected John the Baptist, who had been beheaded by Herod Antipas; some that he was the promised Elijah, whose return was prophesied by Malachi, a prophecy fulfilled by John the Baptist according to Jesus; or that he would be a prophet like one of those from the OT. For more details on these options, refer to comments made on Mark 6:14-15.

Who do you say I am? Jesus was not interested in popular opinion or speculation; he wanted to test his closest followers to determine what they truly believed.

<sup>29b</sup> Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

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

### Mark 8:29b-30

Peter spoke on behalf of the Twelve, something he did frequently as he was perhaps seen as the senior disciple, despite there being no apparent hierarchy within the group, and confessed Jesus to be the Christ, i.e. the divinely anointed leader and Messiah, so frequently spoken of in Scripture: <<*I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever*>> (2 Samuel 7:14-16), <<*Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, “Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.” The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, “I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.” I will proclaim the Lord’s decree: He said to me, “You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.” Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him*>> (Psalm 2), and: <<*“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour*>> (Jeremiah 23:5-6), who they expected to liberate the Jewish people from the oppressive yoke of Rome: <<*Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself*>> (John 6:15), and to re-establish their former glorious status in the world that was enjoyed during the reigns of Kings David and Solomon. Even his closest apostles expected this after his resurrection: <<*Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”*>> (Acts 1:6).

Peter's confession was God-given: <<Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven">> (Matthew 16:17), although incomplete (vv.31-33), for the messianic Son of Man is both divine: <<The Lord says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." The Lord will extend your mighty sceptre from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of your enemies!" Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendour, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning's womb. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath">> (Psalm 110:1-5), <<In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed">> (Daniel 7:13-14), and: <<While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'" David himself calls him 'Lord'. How then can he be his son?" The large crowd listened to him with delight">> (Mark 12:35-37), and he was destined to suffer. This is why Jesus charged his disciples not to tell anyone about him. Refer to the series material on Isaiah Chapter 53 for more information on the prophesied suffering of the Christ.

Peter would again profess Jesus to be the Christ on the day of Pentecost: <<"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah">> (Acts 2:36).

### III.a.ii Mark 8:31-33 - Jesus Predicts His Death

Jesus informed his disciples for the first time that he would be killed by the authorities, something they failed to grasp either in terms of its reality, its significance or indeed its necessity.

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

#### Mark 8:31

Jesus corrected the disciples' messianic expectation by stressing that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be killed and be raised to life again after three days. Christ's death was necessary because the eternal, messianic rule of God began with the atonement for sin, i.e. the sacrifice that would bring about reconciliation between God and all mankind.

Be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the teachers of the law. The leaders, who would reject Jesus, belonged to factions of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court in Israel. While the opponents sought to kill Jesus: <<Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might

**kill Jesus**>> (Mark 3:6), God's appointed will was that the Messiah would atone for all the sins of mankind.

To **rise again** must have puzzled the disciples. They expected only the general resurrection of all mankind at the end of the age, prior to judgment: <<**Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt**>> (Daniel 12:2).

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

### Mark 8:32

**He spoke plainly about this.** Plainly is the Greek word *parresia*, which means freely and openly. Jesus did not speak to his disciples in parables or using ambiguous expressions, but in language they should have understood, or at least asked about the things that were not clear. At times, they failed to comprehend him: <<**Jesus went on to say, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."** At this, some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father?'" They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying">> (John 16:16-18). Later though, they would come to understand: <<**Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God"**>> (John 16:29-30).

**Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.** The phrase **took him aside** is the Greek *proslabomenos auton*, which means that he physically took hold of Jesus in order to prevent or hinder him from doing what he had just told them. Peter was taking the initiative with what he thought was in Jesus' and their best interest. He took him away, out of the hearing of the others, to tell him that he must not submit himself to such treatment, for Peter and the others would no doubt endeavour to protect him.

Having been with Jesus for such a long time and seen the power of God being displayed in all he did and said, Peter and the others should have realised that Jesus could not be compelled by men to suffer, for if he could overcome the elements of nature, the most potent of diseases and disabilities, and multitudes of demons, even the Roman army would not have been a match for his power. Jesus indicated this in the presence of Pilate: <<**Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place"**>> (John 18:36), and again: <<**"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin"**>> (John 19:10-11). What Jesus was telling them would have to have been the will of God.

What Peter clearly and understandably failed to comprehend was that the offence of the Cross was not that Jesus was conquered; it was that he became

the conqueror. For through it, he not only overcame death and hell, he made a clear pathway for all of mankind to come back into relationship with his Father. For the disciples, any idea that the Messiah would suffer and die did not fit with the image they had of a king in the mould of David, who would rid their land of all its enemies, restoring their kingdom and their national pride.

Peter and the others looked upon Jesus' death only as a martyrdom, like that of the prophets of old, which Peter thought could be prevented, if either Jesus would take a little more care not to provoke the chief priests, or to keep out of their way; but Peter did not know that what was absolutely necessary for the glory of God, the destruction of Satan, and the salvation of all mankind, was that the author of salvation must be made perfect through sufferings, and so bring many sons to glory with him.

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

### Mark 8:33

Turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. The fact that Jesus looked at all the disciples implies that his rebuke of Peter was intended for all of them, and indeed throughout the generations, otherwise he would not have done it so publically, which must have hurt Peter, who possibly felt humiliated.

Get behind me, Satan! It was only Peter's thought, not him personally, that Jesus rejected as satanic. This rebuke must have been a real body blow to Peter. It shows the character of the man to accept the rebuke and continue to serve Jesus as his Lord and master. Although, in reality, he had very little choice: <<*From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God"*>> (John 6:66-69).

You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns. Although he had just confessed Jesus to be the long awaited Messiah, Peter did not recognise that the messianic ruler of God's eternal kingdom had come to die for his sins. That was not something he had contemplated.

Peter spoke as one that did not rightly understand, nor had duly considered, the nature of Christ's kingdom; he took it to be temporal and human, whereas it is spiritual and divine. Paul used a similar phrase, translated here as you do not have in mind, in his epistle to the Romans: <<*Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires*>> (Romans 8:5), which demonstrates the kind of understanding that is required. It is always easier to think of the things of this world, such as personal safety and wellbeing, than what is required for the eternal Kingdom. Men are better at dealing within their own sphere of knowledge: <<*The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this*>>

*world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light>> (Luke 16:8).*

### III.a.ii Mark 8:34-9:1 - The Way of the Cross

The cost of discipleship includes being able to follow Jesus and to confess him courageously, no matter what the personal cost may be in terms of verbal abuse, rejection, financial loss, physical abuse or even death, the ultimate price that would be paid by eleven of his apostles, and indeed, by many more disciples then and ever since.

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

#### Mark 8:34

Following the first major prediction of his death and resurrection (v.31), Jesus gave instructions in discipleship to all those who would come after me. The goal of self-denial and taking up one’s cross is not pathological self-abasement or a martyr complex, but being free to follow the Messiah: <<*So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him*>> (Luke 5:11), and: <<*After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him*>> (Luke 5:27-28). Self-denial means letting go of self-determination: <<*Why should I fear when evil days come, when wicked deceivers surround me – those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches? No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them – the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough – so that they should live on forever and not see decay*>> (Psalm 49:5-9), and replacing it with obedience to and dependence on the Messiah.

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

#### Mark 8:35

Jesus’ paradoxical statement demands two different senses of the word life:

- Whoever lives a self-centred life focused on this present world, i.e. wants to save his life, will not find eternal life with God, i.e. will lose it.
- Whoever gives up his self-centred life of rebellion against God, i.e. loses his life for the sake of Christ and for the Gospel, will find everlasting communion with God, i.e. will save it.

One of the great things about becoming a disciple of Christ in those days was that he made it perfectly clear that it would be a life of strife, peril, tests and trials, although there are many more good things to be had as well. Jesus did not try to mask the hardships that would inevitably come upon his followers. It is important that the church today does not try to sell their faith as a panacea for all ills or try to make Jesus out to be Father Christmas or some form of

magician. People need to know the truth but they need to know that it is still the right choice to make, both for this life and for the one to come.

<sup>36</sup> What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

### Mark 8:36-37

This passage, in essence, is saying ‘why strive for wealth, status, possessions and rewards in this life, if the cost of doing so will be eternal damnation?’ No man has anything that is of value to God, other than himself, given totally over to God’s service and will, offering praise to God in exchange for the life he has. There is nothing else he can give in exchange for his soul.

<sup>38</sup> 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.”

### Mark 8:38

Those who choose to follow Christ must do so openly by acknowledging him as their Lord and Saviour. To do otherwise would indicate they were ashamed of me and my words.

The Son of Man will be ashamed. Jesus claims divine authority in final judgment. For those who fail to acknowledge Jesus as Lord during their earthly life will not be accepted by him in eternity: <<***Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’***>> (Matthew 7:23); words that no one wants to hear on that day!

Letting go of self-centred, self-determination (v.34) leads to glimpses of future glory at Jesus’ transfiguration (Mark 9:1-8), just as the death (v.31) and glory (v.38) of the Messiah are to be seen together.

This subsection ends with Mark Chapter Nine v.1, which will be dealt with in this chapter for completeness and continuity.

<sup>1</sup> And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

Some who are standing here will not taste death probably points toward the three disciples who accompanied Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration, which occurred within a week of Jesus saying this (Mark 9:2-13), although other options are available and will be discussed shortly.

To see that the kingdom of God has come with power refers to an anticipation of this future event in the transfiguration: <<***For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred***>>

**mountain>>** (2 Peter 1:16-18), which prefigures the overwhelming glory of Christ in his return: <<*“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. “I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this. “So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ‘The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever – yes, for ever and ever.’ “Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws – the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell – the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. “He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. ““But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him”>>* (Daniel 7:13-27), <<*“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom”>>* (Matthew 16:28), and: <<*At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens>>* (Mark 13:26-27).

There are several options for interpreting the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom:

1. Jesus’ transfiguration (Mark 9:2-13).
2. His resurrection (Luke 24:1-2).
3. The giving of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:2-4).
4. The spread of the Kingdom through the preaching of the early church.
5. The destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in AD 70.
6. The Second Coming and final establishment of the Kingdom.

The immediate context seems to indicate the first view, the transfiguration, which immediately follows, see also Matthew 17:1-8 and Luke 9:28-36. There, some of Jesus' disciples saw what Jesus will be like when he comes in the power of his Kingdom. This interpretation is also supported by 2 Peter 1:16-18, where Peter equates Jesus' glory with his transfiguration, of which Peter was an eyewitness, as recently noted.

At the same time, interpretations 2, 3 and 4 are also quite possible, for they are all instances where Jesus came in the powerful advance of his Kingdom, which was partially but not yet fully realised. Some interpreters think that Jesus is more generally speaking of many or all of the events in views 2 through 4.

View 5 is less persuasive because the judgment on Jerusalem does not reflect the positive growth of the Kingdom.

View 6 is unacceptable, for it would imply that Jesus was mistaken about the timing of his return.