

2026-02-08

What Is Most Important to Know

Mark 8:27-33

We are now just over halfway through the gospel of Mark chapter 8. How many chapters are in the gospel of Mark? There are 16. So, we are about halfway through the gospel. We believe that the ministry of Jesus lasted at least three years and up to three and a half years. So, since we are halfway through the gospel of Mark, where are we at in the ministry of Jesus? Some people might assume that we are about halfway through His ministry. That is not true. About half of each of the gospels deal mostly with the last 6 months of the ministry of Jesus. This is true of the gospel of Mark. Jesus has been **educating, teaching, training, leading** these disciples for two-and-a-half to three years already at this point in His ministry. He has demonstrated to them who He is by healing the sick and the crippled, casting out demons, raising the dead, feeding thousands with a few loaves of bread. He has walked on water, calmed storms, taught about the kingdom of God in parables, and forgiven a person's sins. He even sent the disciples out to teach what He taught them. What Jesus has not done yet is ask them face to face to confess who He is. The time has come for the disciples to confess who Jesus is. The disciples needed to make this connection and make their confession to Jesus.

Mark 8:27 *“Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, ‘Who do men say that I am?’”* Jesus has led His disciples to one of the most pagan areas in their region. It is in the area of Caesarea Philippi. It seems like they did not go into the town itself. Instead, they went to where many pagan gods were worshipped, where there were at least 14 temples to different gods along with a temple where people went to worship Caesar. The area had a natural spring which flowed into the Jordan river. Many people have referred to this area as the **“Gates of Hell.”** As they journeyed to this place, Jesus kept asking the disciples, *“Who do men say that I am?”* Jesus did not ask His disciples this question only one time. He asked it over and over as the disciples gave different responses and probably gave their opinion why the people thought that way. Remember, these disciples have gone out among all the 240 Galilean towns preaching the kingdom of God and calling people to repent. They would have heard lots of people talking about Jesus, especially since Jesus Himself had been to all these towns preaching the kingdom of God and healing all people who came to Him.

Verse 28 *“So they answered, ‘John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah’ and others, one of the prophets.”* At this time John the Baptist had been murdered by Herod. Jews

were taught and believed that Elijah would return before the coming of the Messiah. Malachi prophesied these words from God, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord”* (4:5). People thought that if it is possible for Elijah to return to the living then, maybe it is possible for other prophets to do so as well. It was also prophesied that God’s Messenger needed to come to *“prepare the way of the Lord”* (Isaiah 40:3 / Malachi 3:1). I wonder how the disciples responded to these statements about Jesus? Most Jews seemed to have viewed Jesus as this messenger who had come to prepare the way for the Lord. They missed that John the Baptist was this Messenger preparing the way of the Lord (Matthew 11:14) and Jesus is the Lord! He is the Messiah Savior.

Verse 29 *“He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered and said to Him, ‘You are the Christ.’”* It does seem within Jesus’ character that He would lead the disciples into the midst of this pagan area to deal with this most important question of who is Jesus. As the disciples had talked about who people thought Jesus was while they walked along the road, now, in this place, they see people going in and out of various temples to worship different gods. Jesus asked the disciples *“Who do you say that I am?”* Is Jesus just a good man, even a great man who proclaims the way of God like one of the prophets as the Jews were thinking? Or, is Jesus just another god to worship along with all the other idols that people have? Who is Jesus? Peter is the disciple who speaks out first, as he typically does. Matthew and Luke record Peter’s response a bit differently. Each statement though, makes the same confession. Jesus is the Messiah of God. Peter is the first disciple to make this confession in scripture. Peter is acknowledging that Jesus is Savior, Redeemer and Deliverer. Peter is proclaiming that Jesus is God in human flesh. All of His actions and all of His teachings have proved that Jesus is the Messiah of God (Isaiah 61).

This is the most important lesson in life to know! I like what Jesus said to Peter after he made this confession. Jesus told Peter, *“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven”* (Matthew 16:17). I believe that **everyone who has truly come to this same conclusion and made this same confession has received this revelation from God Himself**. There are people in the world who believe who Jesus is because their parents believe it or their preacher believes it or someone they trust believes it. Maybe it is the thing to do. But, when you believe who Jesus is because God Himself has revealed this most important truth to you, something special can happen. You can become a new creation of God (2 Corinthians 5:17). God can establish a personal relationship with you. You can let God change you. Probably all the disciples looked at Peter and then at Jesus. I would hope that all the disciples began making this same confession. But I do not think they did, at least Judas Iscariot did not.

Verse 30 *“Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.”* This was not the right place or the right time for the disciples of Jesus to make any proclamations about Jesus. Jesus could have been mobbed, arrested and killed before they got out of town. That was not God’s plan for the Messiah Jesus. There would come a time when the disciples would openly proclaim Jesus as their Messiah. They needed to **understand what the Messiah of the world had come to do**. The Jews had been taught that when the Messiah came, He would rule over the nations. They get this from **Psalm 2:7-9**. *“I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’”* Matthew’s record of Peter’s confession is revealing of what he was thinking. Peter said, *“You are the Christ, the **Son of the Living God**”* (16:17). Since Jesus is the Son of God, He has come to rule the nations. No doubt, Peter is very excited about what he thinks is coming soon. But, what does Jesus begin to do?

Verse 31 *“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”* This would be shocking news to the disciples. Didn’t Jesus know the prophecies? Didn’t He understand His role, what He was supposed to do? Of course, Jesus knows the prophecies! He knows everything. The problem was the disciples thought they knew the truth. They listened to Jesus in unbelief about what He was teaching. Jesus explained in detail what was going to happen to Him. How could the Messiah suffer severely and die. Why would this happen?

Verse 32 *“He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.”* Jesus spoke plainly. No parables. No symbolism. He told them the truth about what was going to happen to Him in the coming months. Peter gave time for Jesus to finish explaining what was going to happen to Him. But someone needed to explain to Jesus that He was wrong about His suffering and death. We miss the force of the words, *“then Peter took Him aside.”* What Peter did was he grabbed Jesus and forcefully pulled Him aside and began **to rebuke Jesus** for speaking such nonsense, such blasphemy. If the Messiah is going to rule and reign over the nations, Peter will make sure this happens. Peter carried this thought even when Jesus was being arrested. All four gospel writers record that a disciple pulls out a sword and swings it at one of those arresting Jesus, cutting off his ear (Matthew 26:51 / Mark 14:47 / Luke 22:50). John is the writer that names the disciple. It was Simon Peter (John 18:10). John also tells us the man Peter tried to kill. His name was Malchus. Even during His arrest, Jesus showed compassion. Jesus kept the violence from getting worse and He took the time to heal Malchus (Luke 22:51).

Verse 33 “*But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’*” Jesus listened to Peter. We are not told what Peter said. We are to understand that all the other disciples had heard Peter’s rebuke. In Peter’s rebuke, Jesus is being tempted once again by Satan to avoid the cross and receive the kingdoms of the world by other means. When Jesus had turned around, He realized that all the disciples had heard what Peter said to Jesus. So, what Jesus said to Peter needed to be heard by all the disciples. I would have liked to see the look on those disciples’ faces. **Jesus rebuked Peter.** The words used lets us know that Peter did not realize the dreadful thing he had done was wrong. Jesus accused Peter of being influenced by Satan. Jesus was not going to give into any temptation of the devil. The devil does not have his mind set on the things of God. Evil works on us to keep our minds set on the things of the world and not the things of God.

Why did Peter rebuke Jesus? After Peter made his great confession, “*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,*” Jesus told Peter that God had revealed this truth to him. Peter probably thought that God was using him to reveal this rebuke to Jesus. But he was wrong. This time it was Satan. **How quickly a person can be so godly one moment and then become so ungodly the next.** It can happen to us if we do not keep our minds set on the things of God. What the **Jews did not know** in Jesus’ day and the vast majority of them do not know today is that the Messiah would come twice. This is the most important lesson to know. Prophecy in the Bible reveals that **the Messiah would come twice.** The first time as a sacrifice for sins (Psalm 22 / Isaiah 53) and a second time as king and ruler of all nations (Psalm 2 / Isaiah 66). It is all about Jesus! Do you believe who He claims to be? Do you believe what He claims to do for us? (Acts 4:12) If you do not believe who He is and what He has done for you, “*you will die in you sins*” (John 8:24). Believe Jesus!

Questions to ask yourself: Who is Jesus? Your answer and actions will determine your eternity. Is your mind set on the things of God or the things of the world?

Actions to take: If God has revealed to you that Jesus is your Messiah Savior, confess your sins, repent and trust Jesus as your Lord. Set your mind on the things of God (Romans 12:2 / Philippians 4:8 / Colossians 3:2). Do God’s will.

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