



Jesus and the Rich Young Man (Mark 10:17–13)

8. Mark 8:31–10:52

On the road to Jerusalem:
The passion predictions begin: “the shadow of the cross falls across the narrative”

Structure of 8:31–10:52

- **Cycle 1:** Prediction, misunderstanding, instruction (8:31–9:1, correction narrative)
 - *Jesus foretells his death and resurrection*
- The Transfiguration (9:2–13, apocalyptic vision)
- Healing the young demonic (9:14–29, healing story)
- **Cycle 2:** Prediction, misunderstanding, instruction (9:30–37, correction narrative)
 - *Jesus again foretells his death and resurrection*
- Teachings (9:38–10:31, teaching sayings)
- **Cycle 3:** Prediction, misunderstanding, instruction (10:32–45, correction narrative)
 - *Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a third time*
- The healing of blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52, healing story)

Another Look at Structure:

The Blindness of the Disciples (8:22–10:52)

- Jesus cures a **blind** man (in stages, 8:22–26)
 - Peter's Declaration (8:27–30; knows **who** Jesus is, but does he know **what** he will do?)
 - Cycle 1: Prediction, misunderstanding, instruction: Jesus foretells his death and resurrection (8:31–9:1)
 - Miracle Narratives (9:2–29, including the Transfiguration)
 - Cycle 2: Prediction, misunderstanding, instruction: Jesus again foretells his death and resurrection a second time (9:30–37)
 - Teaching narratives (9:38–10:31)
 - Cycle 3: Prediction, misunderstanding, instruction: Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a third time (10:32–45)
- The healing of **blind** Bartimaeus (10:46–52)
 - Though blind, he **knows** who Christ is!

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“The Son of Man”

- “And he began to teach them, that **the Son of man** must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” (8:31, **passion prediction**)
- “Son of Man” the most common title of Jesus for himself
 - 81 times in the gospel and not used elsewhere in the NT
 - In Ezekiel it is used repeatedly to refer to the prophet as a **mortal**
 - Daniel 7:13–14 for a heavenly eschatological figure **entrusted with authority, power, and glory by God**
 - Cf. “Man of Holiness” of Moses 6:57, 7:35 (also “Son Ahman” of D&C 78:20, 95:17) > Jesus is **Son of the Father**
- Juxtaposed here with Peter's declaration that Jesus is “the Christ” (8:29)
 - In Matthew 16:16-17's account of Peter's declaration, Jesus “**the son of God**” was juxtaposed with Simon “son of Jonah”
 - Mark first uses at 2:10 to focus on his **authority**
 - Emphasis here and subsequently (8:38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62) **focuses on the Lord's suffering**
 - He must be a mortal in order to die!

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“Correction” Narrative 1 (8:31–38)

- First of three **modified controversy narratives** (rather than controversy with *outsiders*, **he corrects insiders**)
 - Christ **predicts** his suffering and resurrection
 - A specific kind of quoted prophecy (discourse), a **passion prediction**
 - Disciples **misunderstand** his meaning or act contrary to the expectations of authentic discipleship
 - Christ **discourses** on true discipleship
- The rebuke that follows Peter’s declaration that Christ will not suffer: “Get thee behind me, Satan” (8:33)
 - **Peter’s attempt to keep the Lord from going to the cross** is similar to Satan’s temptation at the beginning of the ministry (Matt. 4:8–10 . . . although this is “cross-textual contamination!”)
 - “Get behind me” not “get away from me”
 - The proper place of a disciple is to follow his master
- **Corrective instruction (8:34–38)**
 - Deny self and take up cross
 - Lose life for Christ’s sake: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (8:36)
 - Do not be ashamed of Christ and his words

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“There be some of them that stand here . . .”

- “. . . There be **some** of them that stand here, **which shall not taste of death**, till they have seen **the kingdom of God come with power.**” (9:1)
- **Who are the “some” and what is “the empowered kingdom” predicted here?**
 - Prophecy of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)
 - Reference to John the Beloved’s post-translation career?
 - **Reference to the Transfiguration (less than a week later, see 9:2)**
 - Notice “some,” not one!
 - **Segue into the Transfiguration episode that follows . . .**

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The Transfiguration

(9:2-13, vision report in a dramatic episode)

- “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.” (9:2, vision report)
 - The raising of Jairus’ daughter and Peter’s declaration had helped prepare the inner circle for this event
 - Possible sites: Mt. Tabor (traditional) or Mt. Hermon (geographically more probably)
 - Echoes the Mt. Sinai experience, “nature’s temple”
- “And there appeared unto them Elias [Grk. Elijah] with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.” (9:4, vision report continues)
 - Moses and Elijah represented “the Law and the Prophets,” the old order fulfilled by Christ
- “Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.’” (9:5)
 - Tabernacles = sukkot, tents or “booths”; also the portable temple in the wilderness
 - Probably coincided with the Jewish feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles)
- “There was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.” (9:7, vision report resumes)
 - Presence of God the Father veiled
 - Repeat of baptismal affirmation that Christ is the Son of God

Transfiguration Symbolism

- Exodus imagery
 - Cloud (*Shekinah*)
 - Voice of God
 - Moses' shining face (Exodus 34:29-30) when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone."
 - Sukkot commemorated the travels of Israel through the wilderness and the giving of the Law
- Apocalyptic imagery
 - kingdom of God come with power
 - shining and white raiment
 - Sukkot took on eschatological significance
 - Zechariah 14:16, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."
- Apostolic witnesses
 - John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and **we beheld his glory**, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."
 - 2 Peter 1:16-18, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **were eyewitnesses of his majesty**. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**. And **this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.**"

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On Elias/Elijah

- *Elias* is the Greek form of "Elijah"
- Elias is both a prophetic figure and a prophetic type (s.v. "Elias," BD, 663)
 - An authority at the time of Abraham and Melchizedek (see D&C 27:7 and 110:12)
 - Both a preparer (e.g. John the Baptist) and restorer (e.g., Jesus, Joseph Smith)
- JST Mark 9:3, "And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses, *or in other words*, John the Baptist and Moses"
 - "The curious wording of JST Mark 9:3 does not imply that the Elias at the Transfiguration was John the Baptist, but that in addition to Elijah the Prophet, John the Baptist was present." (BD, 663)
 - "John the Baptist, previously beheaded by Herod, apparently was also present. It may well be that other unnamed prophets, either coming as translated beings or as spirits from paradise, were also present . . . It is not to be understood that John the Baptist was the Elias who appeared with Moses to confer the keys and authority upon those who then held the Melchizedek Priesthood . . . rather, for some reasons that remains unknown—because of the partial record of the proceedings—John played some other part in the glorious manifestations . . . perhaps he was there, as the last legal administrator under the covenant, to symbolize that the law was fulfilled." " (McConkie DNTC 400)
 - John's presence could symbolize the closing of the old order, final OT witness, etc.; fits neatly with earlier Marcan collocation of the Twelve and John

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Latter-day Insights on the Transfiguration

Look at now, but we will discuss in lecture 13 on Matthew 17:1–13

- “The Priesthood is everlasting. The Savior, Moses, and Elias, gave **the keys** to Peter, James and John, on the mount, when they were transfigured before him.” (Joseph Smith Teachings, 158)
 - In Matthew’s account of Peter’s declaration, Jesus explicitly promised Peter “the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . .” (Matt 16:19)
 - This is not just the sealing power to bind and loose, but to “seal” all ordinances, especially those of the House of the Lord
 - **These priesthood keys were restored by the same characters in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836** (Passover that year; see D&C 110:11–16)
 - **Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery saw a glorified Jesus Christ on this occasion** (D&C 110:1–10)
- “I am convinced in my own mind that when the Savior took the three disciples up on the mount, which is spoken of as the ‘Mount of Transfiguration,’ **he there gave unto them the ordinances that pertain to the house of the Lord and that they were endowed.** That was the only place they could go. That place became holy and sacred for the rites of salvation which were performed on that occasion.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, DS 2:165)
 - More to come with Matthew and Luke’s accounts . . .

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Questions about Elijah (9:11–13)

- “And as they came down from the mountain, **he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.**” (9:9)
 - Context of the “**Messianic Secret**,” his full nature and purpose could only be understood after his mission was fulfilled
- “And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that **Elias must first come?**” (9:11)
 - Malachi 4:5–6 said that Elijah would come **before the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord**
 - Christ had been ministering for over two years, and Elijah had just come at the Mount
 - The Atonement still lay ahead . . .
- Three applications of the Malachi prophecy
 - Christ taught that **John the Baptist had come in the spirit and power of Elijah**
 - “I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.” (9:13)
 - **Elijah had come with Moses to strengthen the Savior for his coming ordeal with the Passion**
 - **Elijah would come again as part of the Restoration to usher in the last days**
 - See again BD, “Elias,” 663; and McConkie *DNTC*, 1.406

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Healing the Boy with the Dumb Spirit

(9:14–29, healing story)

- “He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, **how long shall I be with you?**” (9:19)
 - Even healing stories begin to **reflect the coming Passion**
- “. . . if thou canst do any thing, **have compassion on us, and help us.**
 - “And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. And he will take upon him death, that **he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy,** according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.” (Alma 7:11–12)
- Jesus said unto him, ‘**If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.**’ And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, ‘**Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.**” (9:22–24)

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“Correction” Narrative 2 (9:30–37)

- **Prediction:** “For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is **delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.**” (9:31, **passion prediction**)
- **Misunderstanding:** Dispute over who is the greatest (9:33–34)
- **Teaching:** the attributes of those who would follow the Messiah
 - “If any man desire to be first, [the same] shall be last of all, and servant of all.” (9:35)
 - “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.” (9:37)

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Teaching at Capernaum

(9:38–50, teaching sayings)

- “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.” (9:39)
 - Not necessarily not a disciple, but perhaps not one of the Twelve or the inner circle
 - “Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. **For he that is not against us is on our part.**” (9:39–40)
- “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off . . .” (9:43)
 - **Hyperbole: a figure of speech that exaggerates to make a point**
 - Verses 42–50 consist of a chain of sayings regarding **radical self-sacrifice** that may have been originally detached
 - Mark places them here in the narrative to illustrate that ***as Christ is preparing to make the ultimate sacrifice, so too must authentic disciples be prepared for any sacrifice***

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Teachings on the Borders of Judea (10:1–31)

The Ethics of Discipleship

- **On Marriage** (10:1–12)
 - Herodian context: Christ is boldly teaching the principle that cost John the Baptist his life
 - Although traveling to Judea, “beyond the Jordan” (Perea) was still in Herod Antipas’ tetrarchy
 - “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (10:7-9)
 - The absolute **prohibition against divorce** appears to be more relaxed in Matt. 5:32; 19:9; and 1 Cor. 7:10-16, but is **still admissible for one cause: adultery**
- **On Receiving the Kingdom as a Child** (10:13–16)
- **On Worldliness: The Rich Young Man** (10:17–31)
 - “Then Jesus **beholding him loved him**, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest. . .” (10:21)
 - “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:25)
 - One of Jerusalem’s gates was called the “Eye of the Needle” (unsubstantiated historically)
 - Textual problem: camel (*kamēlos*) vs. rope (*kamilos*)
 - **Rabbinic exaggeration: camel one of the largest animals in the Near East, a needle’s eye one of the smallest openings**

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Contrasts: The Rich Young Man and the Disciples

- “Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.” (10:26–27)
- **A - Question about Eternal Life (10:17)**
 - B - Rich man cannot leave possessions and follow (10:21–22)
 - C - Jesus’ explanations and disciples’ reactions (10:23–27)
 - B’ - Disciples have left possessions and followed (10:28)
- **A’ - Answer to Eternal Life Question (10:29–31)**
 - “Then Peter began to say unto him, **Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.**” (10:28)
 - “And Jesus answered and said, ‘Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, **But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.**” (10:29–30)
 - **“But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”** (10:31)

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“Correction” Narrative 3 (10:32–45)

- “And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid . . .” (10:32)
 - “astonished” or “in a daze” . . . Apprehension over what lay ahead in Jerusalem
- **Prediction:** “. . . And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and *the Son of man shall be delivered* unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and *they shall condemn him to death*, and shall *deliver him to the Gentiles*: And *they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him*, and *shall kill him*; and *the third day he shall rise again.*” (10:32–34, **passion prediction**)
- **Misunderstanding:** James and John desire leading positions in the Kingdom of God (10:35–37)
- **Teaching**
 - ***They will, in the end, suffer for Christ*** (10:39)
 - “. . . **whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:** And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.” (10:33–34)
 - **“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”** (10:45)

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