

Ben Leney / General

Salvation's Plan

Mark 10:32 "Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him:"

This interesting separation: they're amazed, and afraid. The NIV splits this up (I don't want you to think the NIV is awful, by the way, it's a very respectable translation, just that I'm more used to the New King James):

| Mark 10:32 (NIV)

| ³² They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid.

1. Any thoughts? Why are they astonished? Why are they afraid?

They're aware of the reputation Jesus has, of the dim view the Jewish authorities take of Jesus.

John 7:4–5 "For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For even His brothers did not believe in Him."

But then we read:

John 7:10 "But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret."

Mark 10:33–34 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; 34 and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.""

Just to remind you of the summary from Witherington about the three predictions:

| It also needs to be noted that in fact the three passion predictions do not simply duplicate but supplement one another, none of them telling the entire tale. Only the first mentions the rejection by the authorities explicitly; only the second mentions the betrayal; only the third mentions the condemnation to death, the scourging, mocking, and spitting by Gentiles. Together they gradually reveal to the reader or hearer an ever fuller portrait of the passion narrative.¹¹ Witherington, B., III (2001) *The Gospel of Mark: a socio-rhetorical commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., p. 243.

Notice this is the first time Jesus has said his death will take place in Jerusalem.

Nowhere in any of the three predictions does it say his death will be a crucifixion, and I don't believe any of the Old Testament predictions mention that either.

Acts 2:23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;"

"There was nothing involuntary and unforeseen in our Lord's death. It was the result of His own free, determinate, and deliberate choice." J.C. Ryle

Brooks points out that this isn't the sequence of events in Mark's gospel: mock, scourge, spit and kill is the order that Jesus predicts it in.

You might want to listen to Roger Price's talks on fulfilled prophecy, all accessible on the website, BBS 39-42. He suggests there are at least 35 prophecies that are fulfilled within 72 hours connected with Jesus' betrayal onwards. It's incredible.

Mark 10:35 "Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.""

Mark 10:36 " And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?""

Mark 10:37 "They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.""

On the one hand he is promising they will come into incredible rewards, but on the other hand that their destiny will be tough and will include suffering. Remember Peter said: 'We've left all and followed you.'

Psalms 110:1 "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.""

James and John want the place of honour. Morna Hooker has suggested this:

| The Gospel according to Saint Mark (15 The Cost of Discipleship (10:35–45))
| what they have in mind is nothing less than the best positions in the messianic kingdom which they believe Jesus is about to set up. They perhaps imagine that Jesus is entering Jerusalem in order to claim the Davidic throne and rule the nation.

So in this earthly kingdom they want precedence. They are probably envisaging Jesus enthroned in Jerusalem, with all the nations coming up to seek him:

Isaiah 56:7 "Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.""

There are few references to Jesus' glory in Mark. Mark 2.12 God is glorified, and Mark 8.38 Jesus refers to himself in the third person coming in the glory of His Father. Even the transfiguration there is no reference to glory - or in Matthew. Luke refers to Elijah and Moses appearing in glory at this point. We get the reference here later on:

Mark 13:27 "And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from

the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.”

2. Why are there so few references to glory? The same applies in Matthew, by the way. What do we think?

Romans 8:17 “and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

Mark 10:38 “But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?””

We have two metaphors here - a cup and a baptism.

The New Living Translation of this verse is interesting:

| Mark 10:38 (NLT)

| ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?”

A cup in the OT is normally the cup of God’s wrath. When I preached on Jeremiah I found that the cup was one of the images of judgment.

Jeremiah 25:15–16 For thus says the Lord God of Israel to me: “Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.””

This imagery of a cup comes up later in Mark:

Mark 14:36 And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.””

Jesus ended up drinking the cup of wrath, and it becomes a cup of blessing for us.

This idea of baptism, or dipping, is not so much Mark 1 the beloved son with whom I am well pleased. Not the anointing of the Spirit, but calamity or disaster - it’s like getting flooded or overwhelmed, that lies behind this meaning.

Luke 12:50 “But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!”

Mark 10:39 “They said to Him, “We are able.” So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized;”

I thought it is interesting that at the Passover Jesus gets ALL the disciples to drink from the same cup - is this a partial fulfilment of what Jesus says here?

Mark 14:23 “23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.”

There is a reference to martyrdom. There is an allusion to potential martyrdom, but more broadly speaking, suffering. Jesus says you will suffer for my name. James is martyred.

Acts 12:2 "Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword."

John, although there is a minor tradition that John was martyred, most people think he lived to a ripe old age, but he did experience suffering, for example exile.

Mark 10:40 "but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.""

But Jesus does not deny his divinity here. There are some limitations on the Son - he has some self-imposed limitations. Let's see that:

Mark 13:32 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

This implies maybe the Father decides who will sit on the right and the left.

Can we get James and John off the hook here? Can we justify their request at all? At least in Matthew it's their mother who asks this request!

There is a theory that James and John were first cousins of Jesus - that their mother Salome was Mary's sister. But Richard Bauckham in his scholarly book *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* - whom we drew on when looking at the rift between Jesus and his family - observes there is little evidence to suggest that Salome was Mary's sister (p.13). So it's not really a justification for them.

Perhaps this reference in Luke explains James and John's request (also found in Matt 19.28)

Luke 22:28–30 "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.""

Mark 10:41 "And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John."

James Brooks says this:

| Mark ((5) The Ambition of James and John (10:35–45))

| 10:41 The reaction of the ten is no more commendable than the arrogance of the two. Probably they were angry because they wanted the positions for themselves

3. Ever wondered - how DID the other disciples hear of it? Any thoughts?

Were they overheard by a child, or one of the lesser followers? Unlikely that Jesus would have mentioned it to the others. Is it likely that James or John would have done so? They've been snubbed, not been given those seats. I'd keep quiet about that if I were them.

Now the NKJV apparently translates the Greek word poorly here, see this:

In the Gospels, *aganakteō* never means indignation or displeasure but anger. When the mother of Zebedee's two sons asks that they be seated at Jesus' left and right, "the ten, when they heard, were angry at the two brothers" (Matt 20:24, *ēganaktēsan peri*; Mark 10:41). The leading priests and scribes, seeing the wonders worked by Jesus and the way in which the children were praising him, "became irritated" (Matt 21:15), as the ruler of the synagogue was angry at Jesus' violation of the law of Sabbath rest (Luke 13:14, *aganaktōn hoti*) and as Jesus himself "became angry" when his disciples forbade parents to bring their children to him.

Spicq, C. and Ernest, J.D. (1994) *Theological lexicon of the New Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

"It is not humility to underrate yourself," said Charles Spurgeon. "Humility is to think of yourself as God thinks of you. It is to feel that, if we have talents, God has given them to us. And let it be seen that, like freight in a vessel, they tend to sink us low. The more we have, the lower we ought to lie."

Mark 10:42–43 "But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant."

He refers to the Gentiles. It's probable he's referring to the likes of Herod. There aren't equivalent tyrants in Israel, as it is a downtrodden nation, so he has to look to the Gentiles. There is the sense here of inappropriate use of power, abuse of power.

4. How do we cultivate true humility? Any ideas?

Truth on Its Head: Unusual Wisdom in the Paradoxes of the Bible (We Must Cultivate True Humility)

Do I have true humility? I can find out by answering these questions honestly. How do I respond to compliments and criticisms? If I am being completely ignored, do I deliberately call attention to myself? Do I frequently compare myself to others and inwardly criticize them and praise myself? Pride makes us envious and envy makes us critical. Do I judge others more severely than I judge myself? Do I major in criticism or seek ways to compliment and encourage others? Do I forgive others or carry grudges? Do I rejoice when I have opportunities to help others anonymously, or do I have to blow a trumpet and call attention to myself (Matt. 6:1–4)? If God has given me enviable intelligence, do I call attention to it, or simply use it to help others? Anglican clergyman Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667) wrote, "To be proud of learning is the greatest ignorance in the world." "Pride makes us artificial," wrote Thomas Merton (1915–1968), "and humility makes us real."

Mark 10:44–45 "44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Quickly dealing with v.44 we've got the word servant and then slave, *diakoneo* and *doulos*, very closely interlinked, and Paul uses these words a lot in his epistles.

So v.45, to quote JC. Ryle:

"This is one of those expressions which ought to be carefully treasured up in the minds of all true Christians. It is one of the texts which prove incontrovertibly the atoning character of Christ's death" J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Mark*

We might be sinners but Jesus has borne our sins. We might be debtors but he has paid out debts - Ryle again: "it was a public payment by an almighty representative of the debts of sinful man to a holy God."

This saying of Jesus is a simple and pictorial way of saying that it cost the life of Jesus to bring men and women back from their sin into the love of God. It means that the cost of our salvation was the cross of Christ. Beyond that we cannot go, and beyond that we do not need to go. We know only that something happened on the cross which opened for us the way to God.¹¹ Barclay, W. (2001) *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Mark*. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press (The New Daily Study Bible), p. 301.

The word "ransom" is *lutron* (λυτρον) in the Greek, meaning 'redeem'.

This is giving us the doctrinal importance of Jesus' death.

We get a sense of 'redeem' in various passages in Exodus and Numbers, and even in the ancient nations where some awful thing would happen, and the ruler of a city would take their firstborn son or daughter, and offer their firstborn as a sacrifice, to rescue the people. This is the same sort of picture: God the Father giving His son. It's about redeeming and buying back. It's a shocking picture, a powerful picture, even the Son of Man did not come to serve.

Also this verse is influenced by Isaiah 53. Don Carson says:

"It is simply a concise summary of how his death as Isaiah's servant effects Israel's redemption...Mark's Jesus declares that he dies for Israel's sins as indeed is effectively the case in Isaiah 53:4-6." *Expositor's Bible Commentary Revised Edition Vol 9*.

Isaiah 53:11 "He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities."

This makes us think of a 'ransom for many'. But 'many' means a vast number, the emphasis is on how many will be saved, not on the small number who may never be saved.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served." This is where Jesus is shattering the whole Jewish expectation of the Son of Man. He's done it before but he's doing it again, but here he moves it forward, as he is giving the *purpose* of his death: as a ransom for many.

It is worth saying that the Jews thought there might be two Messiahs - a servant, and a king. In fact, there was one Messiah - who would come twice. Once as a servant and once as a king. I'm grateful to Roger Price for this observation.

Hooker says this:

| The Gospel according to Saint Mark (15 The Cost of Discipleship (10:35–45))

| What Mark 10:45 does is to remind us that suffering and victory belong to each other, and that it is only through the former that the latter is achieved.

Like having to drink unpleasant medicine, like the pain of childbirth or the drag of self-sacrifice on our self-esteem and vanity, the glory of the Kingdom requires us to serve. He did it - so we're only copying him, as Peter reminds us:

1 Peter 1:11 "11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."