

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: May 3, 2009

Title: The Event at Caesarea Philippi: Peter’s Confession, Christ’s Revelation

Text: Mark 8:27-9:1; 9:30-32 (Gospel Parallels – Matt. 16:13-28; Luke 9:18-27)

Theme: The Christ, the Son of the living God must die if His people would live; this is the plan of God for the redemption of man.

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2009

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: May 3, 2009
 Title: The Event at Caesarea Philippi: Peter's Confession, Christ's Revelation
 Text: Mark 8:27-9:1; 9:30-32 (Gospel Parallels - Matt. 16:13-28; Luke 9:18-27)

Theme: The Christ, the Son of the living God must die if His people would live; this is the plan of God for the redemption of man.

Introduction:

The tone throughout His ministry has been one of open jubilation and harsh opposition. The religious establishment and political authorities saw Him as a threat. He came to seek and to save those who were lost. Although God's purpose was for His Son to suffer voluntarily and vicariously, He now makes known the mystery of a suffering servant. All of this was foretold and pre-figured, yet the magnitude of what was about to unfold shocked those who saw in Him the fulfillment of the promise. Our path leads us to the cross.

The events surrounding Caesarea Philippi are pivotal. They form a theological watershed for the Gospel accounts. From this point forward Jesus begins speaking openly of His impending death, burial, and resurrection. Situated 25 miles north of Bethsaida and at the base of Mt. Hermon (i.e., the Mt. of Transfiguration), Caesarea Philippi is the location of one of the largest springs feeding the Jordan River.

From this point onward, Jesus begins to openly speak of His death, burial, and resurrection. Why now and why here? Peter, as unofficial spokesman for the group, finds this thought repulsive. It went completely contrary to his theological presuppositions. He, they, fully expected the Messiah to bring deliverance from all that oppressed. Whoever this deliverer might be and whatever this might look like, it did not include the idea of death and burial. We find fault with Peter's brashness, but none can fault his sincerity. And even though we speak of Peter, there can be little doubt that his thoughts reflect that of the larger group.

Jesus openly speaks of how what He spoke is the mind of God and not that of men. What Jesus said is "the Word of the Cross," and such thinking is a "stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:23). Yet the real "fatal blow" comes to His disciples when He, in essence, says to them, "not only must I go the way of the cross, but you must also if you would be saved." No one can follow me who does not come the way of the cross. There is no other way for humanity to be saved unless they come the way of the cross. A cross-less Christianity is a Christ-less Christianity. And a Christ-less Christianity is no Christianity at all. What Jesus speaks of in His death, burial, and resurrection is the gospel. He is the gospel. There is no good news that does not flow from, through, and to Jesus.

Everything up to this moment in Mark's account points to Him as the fulfillment of God's promise. God determined before fashioning the world and placing within it personable beings that He would send His Son to be the Savior of the world. He wrote

this moment into His story. Jesus did not die simply because men refused to accept Him, or because the religious establishment sought His demise or because He posed a threat to the political machinery of His day. Jesus died because God the Father in compliance with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit determined that through this means He would receive glory by the delivering of His people from their sins.

Yet this moment, in the story, marks a “shift from Galilee, where most of Jesus’ public ministry reported by Mark took place, to Jerusalem and the closing days of Jesus’ life on earth. In this section Jesus defines the true meaning of ‘Christ’ as the title applies to Him”.¹

The die was cast before the foundation of the world, but now it would be fully played out in time (1 Pet. 1:19, 20; Rev. 13:8). The story was written and is now read. May we, like God, place this event as the centerpiece of our thinking and our living.

THE BIG PICTURE:

- The Healing of the Blind Man (Mark 8:22-26)
 - Continued confirmation that He is all His audience claims Him to be.
- **Peter’s Confession and Jesus’ Revelation** (Mark 8:27-9:1; 9:30-32).
 - The Christ, the Son of the living God must die if His people would live and this is the plan of God for the redemption of man.
- The Disciples’ Assured - The Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-13).
 - Jesus assures His disciples that He is all He claims to be. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Its Eternal Value:

Jesus Christ is the victory of God over humanity’s rebellion.

The Problem:

Our problem is in viewing His death as God’s alternative plan had not His original purpose succeeded. Our problem is in viewing His death as a response to His desired will failing. The cross is not a catastrophe; it is His conquest. The cross is a triumph, not a tragedy. Jesus came to offer Himself up as a blood sacrifice in order to atone for the sins of His people. His name is Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

What was the mindset of the Jewish people toward the nation and her deliverance? “In between the Testaments were written a whole flood of books which were dreams and forecasts of this new age and the intervention of God. As a class they are called **Apocalypses**. The word literally means *unveiling*.”² There are nine summarizing ideas (pp. 194-198).

1. Before the Messiah came, there would be a time of terrible tribulation.
2. Into this chaos there would come Elijah as the forerunner and herald of the Messiah.
3. Then there would enter the Messiah.

4. The nations would ally themselves and gather themselves together against the champion of God.
5. The result would be the total destruction of these hostile powers.
6. There would follow the renovation of Jerusalem.
7. The Jews who were dispersed all over the world would be gathered into the city of the New Jerusalem.
8. Palestine would be the center of the world and the rest of the world subject to it.
9. Finally, there would come the new age of peace and goodness which would last forever.

“These were the Messianic ideas which were in the minds of men when Jesus came. They were violent, nationalistic, destructive, and vengeful. True, they ended in the perfect reign of God, but they came to it through the bath of blood and a career of conquest.”³

The Storyline:

Throughout Mark’s account “Jesus is not just *announcing* the kingdom. He thinks he’s the king.”⁴ Jesus Christ is the lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world was poured. God, from the beginning, wrote rebellion into the script. He spoke of its ugly face and resultant separation. He also spoke of deliverance and rescue. This event is not in response to His rejection by the religious establishment. His death was not a failure on the part of “Plan A.” His foretold tell and physical resurrection are “Plan A.”

Questions:

1. What question did Jesus pose to His disciples?
2. How did the disciples answer the question?
3. What does their answer tell you about those who heard Him?
4. Why does Jesus address His disciples directly?
5. What did Peter reveal about himself in His answer?
6. Why did Jesus tell them not “to tell anyone about Him?”
7. Verse 31 is the first time Jesus tells of His death. How do you believe the disciples received this news? What was their understanding of the Messiah and how did this clash with this view?
8. Did Jesus state His thoughts openly?
9. What was Peter’s response to the Lord’s statement?
10. What did Jesus say to Peter and why?
11. What does this tell you about the purpose of God for the redemption of His people?
12. How do verses 34-38 fit into what Jesus just said about Himself?
13. Is Jesus speaking of initial salvation (i.e., justification) or is He speaking of simply following Him (i.e., sanctification)? In other words, can a person be saved if they are not embracing the ideas of verses 34-38?
14. Jesus calls those who follow Him “disciples.” What might determine whether or not a person is a disciple of Jesus?

15. Notice all the “for” beginning verses 34-38. How do they function in relation to what Jesus just said to His audience?
16. How do you view the statements of verses 34-38?

Mark 9:30-32

17. Jesus is in transition. He is heading toward the cross. Why did He not want anyone to know about His movement as He went through Galilee?
18. What was Jesus telling His disciples?
19. Why do you think He was telling them these things?
20. What changed as to why He might be telling them these things?
21. Although He spoke of His death, what else did He teach? Did His disciples understand this?
22. Why might His disciples be afraid to ask Him?
23. Does the bible ever speak in a cultural or historical vacuum? Does it speak in a moral or religious vacuum? How does His answer correspond to the Hebrew Scripture?
24. Why do you think Mark dropped this passage in his narrative?
25. How does this passage relate to the overall flow of Mark’s story?
26. What part does this paragraph have to the storyline of the Bible?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know the plan of God for the redemption of His people.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose His way over our own.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in His finished work.

Outline:

- I. The Question and the Confession (vv. 27-30).

“I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.”⁵

“As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene....No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.”⁶

- A. What do others say about me?

The dialogue that ensues between Jesus and His disciples is most revealing and forms a fundamental moment in His ministry. For close to three years large crowds saw what He did and heard what He spoke. There was a strong element of anticipation and hope

present. Many were looking for and found in Him the One promised and pictured. Yet despite all of this, many still identified Him as a resurrected John the Baptist, or a reincarnate Elijah or, at the least, one of the prophets. Each thought spoke of a belief that God was on the move. They knew the forerunner would come before the Messiah and both John and Elijah were placed into that mold. As flattering as all this might appear to be, none were adequate or sufficient to fully capture who He is in His person and work. The only correct answer is the one provided for us by Peter. His response reflects the prevailing thinking of the other eleven. Again, Jesus warns them not to make know the idea publicly (Mark 1:44; 3:12; 5:43; 8:26; 7:36; 9:9).

Jesus was asking for the popular opinion, not that of the religious establishment or the political powers. Listen to several blasphemous statements. **Spirituality without Jesus is like water without wet.**

Astara (Earlyne Chaney). Jesus is "the Master Mystic of all time" who realized the Christ, a state of higher consciousness. Jesus is not the Savior from sin and only incarnation of God.⁷

Christian Science (Mary Baker Eddy). "Jesus Christ is not God, as Jesus Himself declared, but is the Son of God."⁸

New Thought. "We revere Jesus the man ... as one who exemplified ... the great Principle of perfection and wholeness. Jesus was a Way- Shower-the Savior-in the sense that He drew us out of our limitations."⁹

Rosicrucianism/AMORC (H. Spencer Lewis). "Nowhere in the teachings and practices of Jesus can we find the least intimation that His great system was intended to bring salvation to the physical body of man. Even the salvation of the soul was not taught by Jesus, and all references in the Christian Bible to the salvation of the soul constitute a misinterpretation, a misunderstanding, of the secret [Rosicrucianism] principle that Jesus taught."¹⁰

Although what others said of Him would be flattering for a mere mortal, any title other than "the Christ, the Son of the Living God" is woefully inadequate and eternally damnable.

B. What do you believe about me?

Peter speaks in behalf of the group. Here is where the proverbial rubber meets the road. Who do you believe Him to be? "To be a Christian indeed, is, sincerely to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and to act accordingly; and that he is so, plainly appears by his wondrous works."¹¹

"Three MSS. and some versions add, the Son of the living God."

“Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” (Matt. 16:16).

“Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.’” (John 6:68, 69).

²⁴ **“Martha said to Him,** ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ ²⁵ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ²⁷ She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.’” (John 11:24-27).

Everything up to this point in the narrative is preparing the offering for the sacrifice. Our redemption, the redemption of the world is a result of His perfect life and His voluntary and vicarious death. The intent of His life is not for a good showing or simply as a revelation of who God is, but to show the perfection of the lamb who would be offered to redeem His people and restore creation to its rightful state.

The two thoughts of “You are the Christ” and “the Son of God must die, be buried, and rise again the third day” are inseparably linked. Both are indispensable to the story. In the absence of either, both are invalid.

John’s Gospel carefully marks out the design and means of God by using the word “hour.” Because His hour was not yet, He called men to silence. We are beyond this point in the storyline. God now calls us to preach the gospel to every creature. We are no longer called to silence, but public proclamation.

What they knew was correct, but they did not comprehend the full extent of the story. Their ignorance is apparent when Jesus begins to unveil His impending death, burial, and resurrection.

II. The Revelation and the Confusion (vv. 31-33).

Very few, if any, actually understood the greater idea that the Messiah would suffer and die. The prevailing thought was the Messiah’s arrival and the defeat of those who opposed God by subjugating the nation of Israel.

There is nothing up to this point in Mark’s Gospel that would suggest or hint at what is about to unfold. Although the entire Old Testament Scripture prepares us for this moment by way of prediction and type, His audience was still reluctant to accept it in full.

A. God's purpose (v. 31).

God's purpose all along included a creation, transgression, condemnation, and redemption sequence. What I find of interest is the open testimony concerning His equally imminent resurrection, but the impact this had on them was of no consequence compared to the shock of His death. There are five thoughts present in His communication.

1. His suffering is necessary ("must suffer")

The word used by Mark (**dei**) speaks of something that is essential and indispensable to the entire story.

2. His suffering is startling ("suffer, rejected, killed")

Notice the language in the text, "The Son of Man must be . . . killed." He should be worshipped, crowned, adored, loved, elevated, and exalted. Instead He will suffer, be rejected, and be killed.

3. His suffering is incongruous

"The Jewish Sanhedrin was generally designated by thus naming the three constituent parts." Jesus identifies the perpetrators of this crime.

Elders, chief priests, and scribes, the men who were supposed to be watchmen for the people, those from whose circles the Sanhedrin was chosen, are going to kill Israel's own Messiah!"¹²

The guards at the gate of the city were asleep. Those who were to stay awake and watch for His arrival were consumed with their own interests and advantages.

4. His suffering is temporal ("after three days rise again")

Although His disciples missed this, He spoke of triumph and victory even as He spoke of suffering, rejection, and death.

5. His suffering is clear ("He was stating the matter plainly")

"He held back nothing, told it all, without reserve, to all of them. Imperfect tense 'to speak,' shows that Jesus did it repeatedly."¹³

B. Man's problem (vv. 32-33).

Satan knew that this plan was his total defeat. Humanity's underlying sin is one of self-sufficiency. We refuse to believe we can't and only God can. Peter's sin is not one of rebellion, but of sincerity. Regardless, he got it wrong.

How often are our good intentions working counter to God's eternal purpose? We groan when a loved one believes God is setting them apart for full-time ministry or leads them to go to the hard work of church planting in geographical or culturally distinct places. We can be sincere, but wrong.

"It is a strange thing, and sometimes a terrible thing, that the tempter sometimes speaks to us in the voice of a well-meaning friend."¹⁴

There is great stealth and deception present in this narrative. Once more the devil tempts Jesus. The first was in the desert and now here with His disciples. What makes this so evil is the means by which he attacks. Our most stinging cuts are often at the hands of those who mean us well.

"This was not the language of the least authority, but of the greatest affection."¹⁵

III. The Explanation and the Challenge (vv. 34-38).

Our Lord is not saying our cross is efficacious or vicarious, only that it is necessary.

A. The Challenge (v. 34).

"Mark alone notes the unexpected presence of a crowd up here near Caesarea Philippi in heathen territory."¹⁶ Although Jesus was always surrounded by a throng of people, He made a distinction between those who come to Him out of curiosity and those who would come to Him through the cross. There is no "cheap grace" with Jesus. The only reason you and I are blessed by grace is because He provided us everything through *the* work.

His statement is direct and sharp. Not only must I die, but you must as well if you are to be my follower. We have already labored long in this text when we studied, "The Way of His Cross." It is enough for us to note the symmetry of what He says. **All that we are must submit to all that He is.**

"The order is not chronological but logical. Together the three indicate true conversion, followed by a life-long sanctification."¹⁷

William Barclay says this of verse 34. "This part of Mark's gospel is so near the heart and center of the Christian faith that we must take it almost sentence by sentence. If each day a man could go out with only one of these sentences locked in his heart and dominating his life, it would be far more than enough to be going on with."¹⁸

“Love of self was the ruin of the first man. If he had not loved himself in the wrong order, he would have been willing to be subject to God, preferring God self.”¹⁹

B. The Consequences (vv. 35-38).

“In the next four verses the obligation to be converted, etc., and the reward that results are brought into sharp contrast with the loss experienced by those who refuse to end themselves . . . and follow Jesus.”²⁰

This is what following Jesus looks like. I find this of great interest. We invite all to follow Jesus, but only those whose lives are shattered will truly follow. It is not for us to determine who will or will not come. We invite, God draws and those who respond in faith will deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. In Mark 4 we have the parable of the soils. Three of the soils show those who really do not believe. It is only the fourth soil that exhibits the truth of Mark 8:34-38.

Again, we have noted this passage elsewhere, but let us be reminded what the cross does to those who die on it.

1. The cross and self-preservation (v. 35).
2. The cross and personal possessions (vv. 36, 37).
3. The cross and social popularity (v. 38).

The cross acts without compromise. It does not permit your dreams and aspirations to co-exist with its design or intended purpose. All of these “things” must bow before God when one is saved from self and its horrible consequence of eternal separation.

“The right reordering of our earthly loves is made possible only by grace.” (Caesarius of Arles in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament Mark*, 105). It is only as we die to self that we can properly order life, wealth, and opinion.

IV. The Invasion and the Conviction (v. 38; 9:1).

“And Jesus was saying to them, ‘Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.’” (Mark 9:1).

“One thing leaps out from this passage – the confidence of Jesus. He has just been speaking of his death; he has no doubt that the Cross stands ahead of him; but nonetheless he is absolutely sure that in the end there will be triumph.”²¹

Just as He is the Christ and just as He will be killed, buried, and rise again the third day, so also will He come in power to establish His kingdom. When Jesus spoke these words was He only thinking of the Second Coming or is there something more to be considered by us, the reader? I believe there is an “already-not yet” truth at work in our text.

“Consider the situation. At the moment Jesus had only once been outside Palestine, and on that occasion he was just over the border in Tyre and Sidon. Only a very few men in a very small country had ever heard of him. Palestine was only about 120 miles from north to south and about 40 miles from east to west; her total population was 4,000,000 or thereby. To speak in terms of world conquest when he had scarcely ever been outside such a small country was strange. To make matters worse, even in that small country, he had so provoked the enmity of the orthodox leaders and of those in whose hands lay power that it was quite certain that he could hope for nothing other than death as a heretic and an outlaw. In face of a situation like that there must have been many who felt despairingly that Christianity had no possible future, that in a short time it would be wiped out completely and eliminated from the world. Humanly speaking, these pessimists were right. Now consider what did happen. Scarcely more than thirty years later, Christianity had swept through Asia Minor; Antioch had become a great Christian church. It had penetrated to Egypt; the Christians were strong in Alexandria. It had crossed the sea and come to Rome and swept through Greece. Christianity had spread like an unstoppable tide throughout the world. It was astonishingly true that in the lifetime of many there, against all expectations, Christianity had come with power. So far from being mistaken, Jesus was absolutely right.”²²

The cross does not speak to defeat, but victory. There is no tragedy to the cross, only the triumph of God. You and I are to embrace the cross and see that “who He is, so also are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). Let us leave here believing the victory of God.

Shepherding the Sheep (What’s the NEXT STEP?)

1. Know and openly profess Jesus as the Christ.
2. Be careful that your words and actions are not working against God’s redemptive purpose.
3. As a Christian, you have died with Christ nevertheless you live. Do you know this truth and do you live this truth?
4. We live under the curse, Jesus has conquered the curse, and one day He will forever removed the curse. Let this hope fill us with endurance as we live Christ in the world.

¹ *The NIV Study Bible* on Mark 8:31-10:52

² William Barclay, *Mark*, 194.

³ William Barclay, *Mark*, 199.

⁴ N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 108.

⁵ (H.G. Wells - <http://www.tentmaker.org/Quotes/jesus-christ.htm>)

⁶ Albert Einstein - <http://www.tentmaker.org/Quotes/jesus-christ.htm>

⁷ Earlyne Chaney, *Reincarnation* [booklet] [Upland, CA: Astara, 1967], pp. 6-7; Robert Chaney, *Mysticism: Me Journey Within* [Upland, CA: Astara, 1979], pp. 117, 163-73.

⁸ Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* [Boston: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1934], p. 361.

⁹ *New Thought* [periodical], Autumn 1978, p. 11.

¹⁰ Spencer Lewis, *The Secret Doctrine of Jesus* (San Jose, CA: Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC), pp. 186-87, 189-91.

¹¹ *Matthew Henry's Commentary* on Mark 8:27.

¹² William Hendriksen, *Mark*, NTC [Baker Academic, 1975], 327.

¹³ A.T. Robertson's *Word Pictures* on Mark 8:32.

¹⁴ William Barclay, *Mark*, 200.

¹⁵ *Matthew Henry's Commentary* on Mark 8:27.

¹⁶ A.T. Robertson's *Word Pictures* on Mark 8:34.

¹⁷ William Hendriksen, *Mark*, NTC [Baker Academic, 1975], 330.

¹⁸ William Barclay, *Mark*, 201.

¹⁹ (Caesarius of Arles, "Sermons 159," in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament Mark*, 105.

²⁰ William Hendriksen, *Mark*, NTC [Baker Academic, 1975], 330.

²¹ William Barclay, *Mark*, 207).

²² William Barclay, *Mark*, 208, 209.