

# Mountain Majesty: The Prolepsis



## Mark 9:1-13

Open to Mark chapter 9 as we continue the second half of the gospel according to Mark. Many of you know this about me. I was reared in a small country Baptist church on the eastside of Calloway County. I grew up with a tradition where I sat every Sunday by my Granny Bogard because she would give me Juicy Fruit chewing gum. My Granddaddy Bogard sat in front of me, and we were about four rows from the preacher. While that preacher would be preaching, my Granddaddy Bogard would be doing something. He would be saying, "Amen," quite often. I just interpreted an amen in a Baptist church to mean that my granddaddy, who was listening, was agreeing with what the preacher was saying based on the Word of God. So I loved as a grandkid to sit in the church service and hear my Granddaddy Bogard say amen. Now, I have to be honest with you, there were times when he would not be saying amen, and I didn't know what was going on. Because of my Granddaddy Bogard's influence over me, I wasn't sure if the preacher was preaching the truth or not. I needed my Granddaddy Bogard to say amen so I knew he was, so when there would be a long time of silence, I would get a little worried. When I would really get worried was when Granddaddy would be flipping through his Bible while the pastor was preaching, and he never amen'ed. Then I would wait and watch, and as soon as the service was over, the preacher would walk to the back porch, (it was really the front porch) he would stand there, everybody would go out, but my granddaddy would not wait to the end of

the line, he would be about the third person in line with his Bible open, and he and the preacher would have a debate over their two different interpretations of the Bible. The rest of the church in line would hear that debate. You have got to imagine how shocked I am when I read my New Testament and not see amen used that way, to where a listener is responding to the speaker. letting them 'I am with you,' 'I agree with you'...'amen,' 'let it be so,' 'I trust you,' 'I believe you.' See, Jesus used amens, not when someone else was talking, but while He was talking. He would amen Himself. When he amen'ed Himself, here's what He was saying to His disciples. Get your spiritual antennae up; I'm fixing to say something you need to hear. As a teacher, He would be saying get your notebook out, get your pen ready because you don't want to miss what I'm fixing to say.

If you're ready, let's stand and hear Jesus begin a teaching, really, end a teaching that ends a thought but begins a new chapter. That's kind of strange. What the translators of the New Testament are doing for us is telling us that they believe even though what Jesus says ends what He was just talking about, it's actually beginning a new section. So they begin the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter with the end of a paragraph that started in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter. It begins with 'amen.' You won't see amen; you will see "truly." If you read a KJV of the Bible, you will see "verily." As a matter of fact, sometimes Jesus got so excited about what He was saying He didn't amen once, He amen'ed twice, "Verily, verily." It is literally, amen, amen.

## **Scripture**

***"And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power." And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were***

***terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.***

***And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."***

(Prayer)

Father, we ask You to add Your blessing to the reading of this Your Word. Thank You for this church. Thank You for a church that's not just wanting people to come, they want them to get equipped and then leave us to literally go other places around the world, around the nation, around the community telling people about Your Son Jesus. How honored we are to be the church that's going to hold the rope of prayer for Kyle and Molly as they go to Southeast Asia. How honored we are to be the church that holds the rope for Josh and Stacey as they're in Malawi. Thank You, Father, for Your blessing upon this body. In Your precious Son's name we ask You now to anoint us, not just to hear and to speak, but to be doers of what we speak about and what we listen to, amen.

Do you have your pencils ready? Do you have your notebooks out? Do you have your spiritual antennae up? Jesus is going to close out this thought, His teaching about Him going to Jerusalem to die, be buried, and rise again. Peter has incomplete knowledge of who He is as the Messiah. As He turns from just teaching His disciples to address the crowd at large, He

encourages them that they need to deny themselves, take up a cross, and follow Him. Then looking at that group of people, He makes this statement, 'believe Me when I say to you...' now, the apostles have heard this before, and they're on edge. He says 'there are some of you standing here who will not taste death until you see the Kingdom of God come after in power.' Wow! You've got to remember, up until this point, when Jesus would teach about the Kingdom of God, He would say things like the Kingdom of God is like a man who sowed seed in his field and it fell on different types of soil. You got the idea that most people weren't going to respond positively to the gospel message, but there was some good soil out there. When it fell on that good soil, there would be a hundredfold harvest, possibly. He talked about how the Kingdom of God would be like a mustard seed, the tiniest of seeds you plant in the garden, but when it fully matures, it's the largest plant in a Palestinian garden. You've got to realize they've got messianic expectations based on their belief in what the Old Testament Scriptures teach. Now Jesus looks out at this group of people, many of them who are following Him, a loyal group around Him of twelve, and He says there are some of you who are standing here who before you taste death, you will see the Kingdom of God in power. You understand what that means, right. Not everybody in the group would see it. Do you think, possibly, any one of the twelve might have thought am I going to see it, or will I possibly not see it? Does anybody remember who didn't get to see it? Yeah, Judas never saw the Kingdom of God reigning in power, but the rest would. Watch this. All the gospel writers agree, because they follow Mark's narrative, that immediately after Jesus making this statement, six days later He takes three of His apostles up to a high mountain, and we all call that the mount of transfiguration, which was actually Mount Hermon, a huge mountain in the northern part of Israel.

Have any of you ever seen a premiere? I haven't. Wouldn't you love to be invited to a premiere? Let's suppose you're like me and your favorite Disney movie is Lion King. I love Lion King, "remember who you are." You know they're doing a remake on it, which is coming out later this month. Imagine this. Imagine Disney knows I am a fan, and they hear that I'm one of the biggest fans of the Lion King, it's one of my favorite Disney movies of all their movies, and they invite me to the premiere. Get this picture. I get to go to the premiere and sit in an audience in a theatre, and

I get to see the premiere of the Lion King. But not only do I get to see the movie first, in the audience with me are some of the very actors who gave their voice to the characters. In the audience with me are the very people who made this movie happen, and here I am in the audience. Do you not agree that would be cool? So if any of you have pull, get me in!

Now, let me tell you what's going to happen this morning. As Jesus just says what He says about some of them will be here when the Kingdom comes in power, you see, the Kingdom is already here and the King of the kingdom has been working miracles. But Mark is telling us they are all following Him for the wrong reason. Now all of a sudden, He's changing His narrative and He's started talking about having to go to Jerusalem, die on a cross, be buried, and rise again, but they never hear Him say, rise again, because they can't fathom Him being the Messiah and dying. So here's what Jesus does. When Mark has Jesus taking those three apostles up on the high mountain, they've just been invited to a prolepsis. Can you imagine being Peter, James, and John, and you don't realize it, but when you get to the top of the mountain and that experience is over, later you'll look back on it and go, wow, He invited us to the prolepsis!

Now, I know this is a word that here in Hardin and Dexter we throw out a lot. You've probably used this word at least two times this week! But there's a possibility that some of you aren't from Dexter or Hardin and you don't use this word, prolepsis, a lot. Maybe I need to define it for you. Here's what you will read if you open up a dictionary. A prolepsis is a representation of a future act or event that's happening right now as if the future event was already accomplished.

Here's what's going to happen. When Jesus invites James, Peter, and John to go up on that mountain, they're going to see the Kingdom of God in full power, but it's actually pointing to something that's going to happen later. This is going to seal the deal that what's going to happen later is going to happen later, because in this event, God is going to reveal to them who Jesus really is. Now, let me define the Kingdom of God for you. The Kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God in the hearts and lives of His people. That's the Kingdom of God, the rule and reign of God in the hearts and lives of His people. So here's what Jesus does. They climb Mount Hermon, (we don't know exactly how high they go) and when they get to a

certain place, here's what Mark says. Remember, Mark's trying to get us to Jerusalem, so he's going to use few words, so he said 'they are by themselves.' What Mark is trying to tip us off to is this whole event of the prolepsis is about the disciples. It's not about Jesus, it's not about God; it's about them.

As we read through this passage, you're going to keep hearing the phrases, 'by themselves,' 'to them,' and 'for them.' If I were young like Kory, I would have one of those slides like he puts up. You know how he highlights certain words (isn't that cool!). I thought about calling him at 3:00 this morning and see if he would make me one of those slides. I didn't, but that would be so cool. I can't do that, so you just have to trust me, you have to look at your Bible; they are by themselves, James, Peter, and John. Then, Jesus transfigures before them. His clothes became intensely white to the point that no earthly launderer could have ever got clothes this white, no matter what kind of bleach they used. That's all Mark says. But when he says He transfigured before them, he uses a word that literally means there was a change in form. All of a sudden, the very nature of Jesus, Son of God, second person of the triune God who is veiled in flesh, the disciples don't have a clue who He really is! They think He's just a good man who's been anointed to carry out a purpose from God, and He's the Messiah. Now they're going to see who He really is, and all of a sudden, His inner being, His inner nature begins to shine so that His face began to look like the sun. Light began to come from inside, and as it penetrates His flesh, the clothes that are on the outside of His flesh, the light is so intense that they become white. So white that Matthew and Luke tell us that they actually look like radiated light. It's wasn't a whiteness like the white on our walls, but a white that is so brilliant that it looks like light! Can you fathom that? Can you fathom going up on a mountain with Jesus, and all of a sudden Jesus is before you, revealing to you who He really is, the eternal second person of the triune godhead? I don't even have a vocabulary for this!

A couple of nights ago I went over next door to my son's and Katie's house, and as soon as I pulled up, three grandboys come running out of the house. It was right at dusk. I got big hugs. All of a sudden, I looked and the last one out was a little girl who is my heart; she's just beautiful.

She's out in the sun a lot. It's right at dusk, she comes running out saying, "Papaw, papaw!" I looked at her and I thought Evie was getting ready for bed because she came running to me with her little tan body in only her little white panties. Being a Papaw, she was just precious! She comes running and gets close to me and I go, "Evie Kate! You don't have panties on!" She was buck naked, so to speak! Her little body was so tanned except one little part of her. It was so white it looked like she had panties on! Can you imagine that in reverse? Not a light that tans you, but a light that takes your clothes and turns them into radiance.

Then, Mark says Elijah with Moses appeared to them. To whom? To James, Peter, and John. Mark says they talked to Jesus. Here they are in glory and here Jesus is in full God glory. James, Peter, and John are terrified! I think they're like Isaiah in Isaiah chapter 8, face down on the floor, crying out, 'Oy vey is mir---woe is me!' But they get to hear Moses and Elijah talk to Jesus. Mark, because he's trying to get to Jerusalem, doesn't even take time to tell us what they talk about. Luke, writing a more thorough detailed gospel, using Mark's as the blueprint, says that they talked about His Exodus, which He would accomplish in Jerusalem. If you read ESV, it says 'departure.' It's actually the Greek word from where we get the word, Exodus, from. The man who led the Old Testament Exodus and one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament who would use the Exodus to remind the children of Israel of what God would do if they didn't get it right and stay faithful, now talks to Jesus about His Exodus. Can you imagine that conversation? Moses could talk about taking on Pharaoh. Jesus would talk about taking on Satan. Moses could talk about parting the sea, Jesus would talk about parting our sin. Moses could talk about carrying a stick, and Jesus would talk about carrying a cross. Moses could talk about leading us to the Promised Land, and Jesus would talk about leading us to the Father. They talked to Him about His Exodus. They talked about Him going to a cross and laying His life down so that He could redeem the world from sin! James, Peter, and John get to hear that conversation. While they're hearing it, Peter gets enough composure to say, Lord it's good we're here, how about letting us build a booth for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah! Get this.

Now, about that time, a cloud came down over the mountain. Moses would have been used to this because he was on Mount Sinai when the cloud came and God spoke to him from the cloud, but this is a first for James, Peter, and John. Luke tells us that while Peter was actually talking (many times when you're talking you're so absorbed in what you're thinking and you want to communicate what you believe, what you want to be done, that you're oblivious to what's going on around you) this cloud overshadows them. Celisa and I have been on the Smoky Mountains a few times and sometimes it would be clear, then all of a sudden, those mountains just have clouds that develop and you can't see anything because you're in a cloud. That's what happened, except the cloud spoke while Peter was speaking and basically said shut up, Peter! The gospel writer says he was so terrified he didn't know what to say. Like some of us when we don't know what to say, we think we've got to say something anyway. Out of this cloud, God speaks, "This is beloved Son, listen to Him." Watch this. The cloud disappears and the next thing Mark tells us is that James, Peter, and John see no one but Jesus. Did you catch this? That cloud came on the mountain and God spoke, redirecting Peter's attention to who he should be focused on, Jesus, when that cloud left and Peter, James, and John looked around, Moses and Elijah were gone. Whoa!

Can I make an interpretation you may not agree with? I feel like I'm out on a limb when I say what I'm going to say next, but I actually believe this is from the Lord. Scripture teaches that when Jesus was resurrected before He ascended, He was here forty days. For those forty days, He taught things concerning the Kingdom of God, Acts 1. In Acts 2, Luke records Peter preaching the first message on the day of Pentecost being a message of, you killed the Messiah who is both Lord and Savior, but when you killed Him, you actually fulfilled what the Old Testament promised to David. God would raise up one of his descendants and set him on his throne at the right hand side of God. What Peter is preaching is that through the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, He took His seat on David's throne fulfilling that Old Testament prophecy that one of David's sons would sit on his throne and reign over His Kingdom forever.

Are you with me? Right before this, every time Jesus starts to speak about going to Jerusalem to die and be buried, Peter rebukes Him. As Kory said,

Jesus rebukes Peter and says get behind me Satan, and He's saying that to the disciples because they all had a wrong concept about the messianic kingdom. Why did they all have the wrong concept? It was because they had misinterpreted their Bible. They had read their Old Testament law and their Old Testament prophets, symbolized by Moses and Elijah, and they came up with a radical concept that one day God would send the Messiah, He would elevate the Jews to a place of priority in the nation, the Gentiles would bow down to the Jews, and they would set up a kingdom where the Jews were in power and not the Gentile nations. The Jewish people longed for that coming kingdom, but it was wrong. It's wrong, not the Old Testament is wrong, the Old Testament is right. The Old Testament is inerrant, infallible; it's the Word of God. The early apostles, like so many Jewish people, misinterpreted the Old Testament.

So, they are on the mountain, and God the Father redirects their attention that the one they should be listening to is Jesus. Why? Because in Jesus, they're going to see the King is here and they're going to see the Kingdom has come with power. When are they going to see this? They're going to see this when Jesus Christ dies on a cross and He will pay the sin debt of the world, He's going to be buried, and three days later, God is going to reach down and raise Him back from the dead. When God raises Him back from the dead, Paul said in Romans 1:3-4, that Jesus, according to the flesh, is a descendant of David, the rightful heir to the throne, but He was, by the resurrection, declared to be the Son of God by the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ the Messiah. Did you catch that? Paul says how do we know Jesus is who He says He is? We know He is who He says He is, the Son of God, because God proved He is who He is when He reached down and raised Him back alive. He said He declared Him to be the Son of God with power! What did the powerful Jesus Christ, King of the Kingdom do? When He was resurrected from the grave, He taught His disciples forty more days about the Kingdom, He ascended back to the Father's right hand side, He took His seat at the Father's right hand side, and ten days later they poured out the Holy Spirit upon the church, and the church, the Kingdom of God, received its power, power to take the gospel to the end of the world and lives be radically changed!!

Two times the New Testament writers declare that you and I are being transformed as believers. In other words, meaning there will come a time in our lives when that inner nature of who we really are is going to shine through our fleshly activities and people are going to really see us for who we are, and that is children of God! Wow! The Kingdom of God is here today. It's the rule and reign of God in your heart and in my heart! Just look at some of you! I know you. You know me. I look at some of you who used to be...you know what you used to be on, you know what had a hold on you, you know what you lived your life for, and look at you now! Look at you now! Look in the mirror! You're living a radically different life! Why? Because you're part of the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ is ruling and reigning in your heart!

We accept a cross, but the early apostles couldn't accept a cross. It went against everything they believed. Now they see Jesus in His full glory, which will fully be revealed at His resurrection to them. That is why this is the prolepsis. I had this thought. I was reading this forgetting what I had read in other parts of the Bible, and I just thought, wow, if I were James, Peter, and John and just saw Jesus transfigured before me and we get to go down on the mountain, I'm going to grab the other apostles and say, "You're not going to believe what I just saw! You're not going to believe what He did! The next time I get invited to go somewhere to speak, I'm going to tell everybody you've got to follow this guy because let me tell you what He did! I saw it with my very own eyes!" Listen to me. Jesus tells them in Mark in verse 9, again, don't tell anybody, except, for the first time, He adds this condition, "...until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." I've got to wait until He's raised from the dead before I can tell this!

Now, Mark says the apostles kept all of these things and rolled them over in their mind, and they questioned what He meant by the rising from the dead. Now that sounds like ok, they're responding positively to what Jesus said, which was not to say anything, so they're just thinking about it. In the Greek text, this word can also mean they 'squashed' it. Have you ever squashed anything? Do you know why they didn't tell anybody? It was not just because Jesus told them not to tell. They didn't tell it because they didn't believe it. Do you know why they couldn't believe in a rising from the

dead? It was because they couldn't believe He was going to die. They just realized He is the King; the messianic kingdom is here.

Then, coming down off that mountain, they asked, "Why do the scribes say Elijah had to come first?" Does anyone find that a strange question? Here's their thought. They've had this thought that before God sends the messianic kingdom, the old testament prophet is going to come again and get everybody ready for the coming Messiah. They just saw Elijah come, be there for just a short while, and then be gone, so they can't figure out why Elijah had to come first. It didn't make sense. So Jesus said, "Elijah did have to come first and restore all things, and the Son of Man must suffer and face contempt as it is written of Him." All of a sudden, Jesus takes that Son of Man theme from Daniel where the Jews rolled up this coming kingdom to where the Son of Man would rule and reign over Gentiles and the Jews would be at His right and left hand side, and He identifies Him with the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. Yeah, He's got to die. He's got to die for the sin of the world. He's got to be buried. Then He will rise again. Then, you will see the Kingdom in full power. Then Jesus says Elijah has come already and the treated him the way they wanted to with full contempt, just as it was written. Mark doesn't give us any commentary, but Matthew and Luke are following his blueprint, and Matthew (writing to the Jews later) will say this in Matthew 17, "This He spoke about John the Baptist." If you misinterpret the Old Testament Scriptures, you'll think Elijah is coming back before Christ comes, but if you listen to Jesus and read your Old Testament the way you're supposed to, which is through Jesus, you see in Jesus what the Old Testament writers did not see. You see that Elijah was never coming back, but a person like Elijah, a person anointed like Elijah was coming. That person was John the Baptist, and he prepared the way, and then he stepped out of the way and Jesus took center stage.

The kingdom is here; it's here in power. We've seen it, and we've experienced it. That's why our life is the way it is. I would have loved to see the transfiguration of Jesus. I didn't get to see it, but do you know what I am getting to see? I'm getting to see your transfiguration, and I love it. I love seeing what God is doing in your life. I love seeing how others around you are beginning to see you really are who you say you

are. I've got to say this...some of us haven't seen it yet. Some of us haven't experienced it yet. That's why our life still looks like it's always looked. We're still in bondage to sin. We're still in bondage to self. It's still all about us, and we're wanting to add God to us so He will bless us so we can ultimately get what we want, and that's the life we want. I'm sorry, but Jesus says I will not have anything to do with that. You've got to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him. He's ordained suffering because suffering in the life of His child makes us more like His only begotten Son, and that's what this is all about, you and I being like His Son.