

WEEK 39

c. early 5th century  
Catacombs of St. Domitilla, Rome, Italy  
Christ on a throne among two groups of apostles  
before two deceased individuals



**Mark 8:31-9:1**

**The Prophecy of the Passion and  
The Requirements for Following Jesus**

# Journey to Jerusalem | The events of 8:31-10:52

- *The primary purpose is to explain what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah. Following Peter's confession of faith that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus immediately prophesies his rejection and suffering (8:31-33 and again in 9:31, 10:33).*
- *In no other gospel do these 3 announcements of humiliation form such a structured function as in Mark by establishing the framework, tone, and subject for the entire section.*
- *In the movement of the gospel, it serves to bring Christ near to Jerusalem where his suffering will be accomplished. So there is sustained emphasis on Christ's journey to Jerusalem.*
  - *Already in 8:27 Jesus and the 12 are "on the way" among the villages of Caesarea Philippi.*
  - *In 9:30 they make their way through Capernaum.*
  - *By 10:1 they have entered Judea.*
  - *In 10:17 they are "on the way" again.*
  - *And in 10:32 the destination is finally announced, "we are going to Jerusalem."*

# Journey to Jerusalem | The events of 8:31-10:52

— *Jesus' 3 announcements concerning his suffering follow a preset pattern –*

<i>Pronouncement of suffering in fulfillment of the will of God</i>	<i>Misunderstanding</i>	<i>Call to true Discipleship</i>
<i>8:31-33</i>	<i>Peter rebukes Jesus 8:32</i>	<i>8:34-38</i>
<i>9:31</i>	<i>Disciples did not understand, were afraid to ask, and reasoned who was greater 9:32-34</i>	<i>9:33-37</i>
<i>10:33</i>	<i>Disciples amazed and afraid, James and John ask for places of glory, and others were indignant 10:35-37, 41</i>	<i>10:38-45</i>

- *Mark regarded these parallel themes as so essential for his community that he made them the heart of his gospel.*
- *In the cross and resurrection of Jesus, the secret of the Kingdom is thoroughly veiled and gloriously revealed. (Rom 1:16-17, remember Paul is reading Mark, not Mark reading Paul).*

# The Prophecy of the Passion | 8:31-33

- *It is imperative for Jesus to teach his disciples, and us, what it means to be the Messiah. Jesus' statement of his impending death and resurrection is a prophetic utterance.*
- *But this prophecy, like most OT prophecy, is not intended to record history in advance. But to provide certainty that when events took place, they represented what God had planned and fulfilled.*
- *The full intent of prophecy cannot be grasped until after the event (examples Jhn 2:17, 22; 12:16, Mark 11:20-21, 14:72).*
- *This is more than a prophecy. It also serves to explain the command in verse 30 not to speak to anyone about Jesus' identity. This is the only time in Mark an injunction to silence where the need for silence is explained. And the clarity on this one occasion explains all the previous injunctions.*
- *It was not necessary that the people recognize Christ as the Messiah until after he had fulfilled his messianic mission through death and resurrection.*

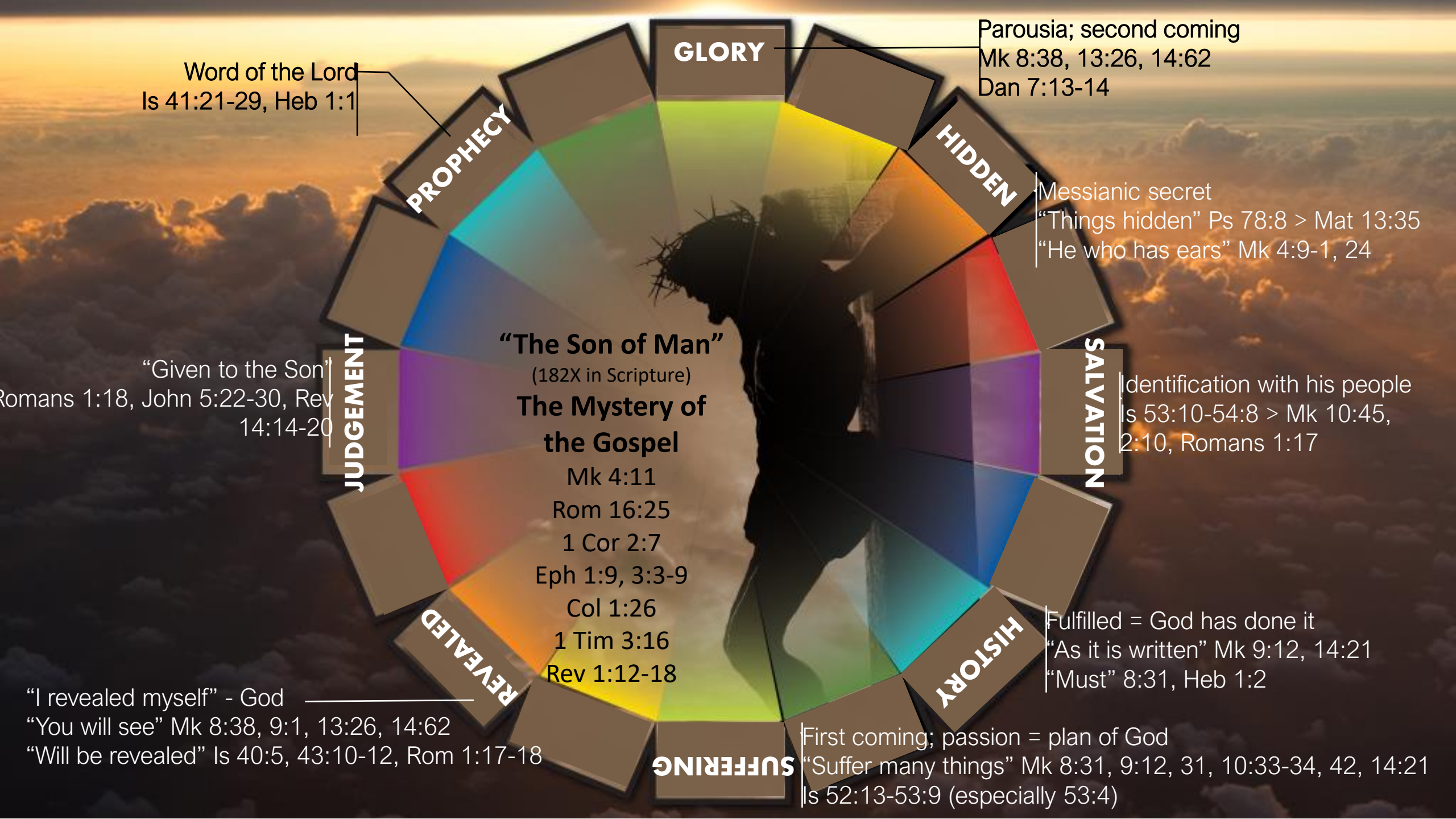
# The Prophecy of the Passion | 8:31-33

- *In 8:31 Jesus makes clear the passion is rooted in the intention of God. Christ's earthly ministry is accomplished according to the plan of God as an expression of the will of God.*
- *That plan, though announced in Scripture, was unrecognized in Israel. Jesus' pronouncement makes clear what the disciples should have known if they had possessed the thought of God as expressed in Scripture. Hence the violent reaction to Peter in 8:33.*
- *Jesus is leading the disciples beyond confession of the Messiah to an awareness of the dimensions of the Messiah as defined by the revealed will of God.*
- *This explains why Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man. Whether the disciples understood the reference or not, Jesus was expanding on the first reference to the Messiah as the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14. Now their understanding needed to include humiliation and death.*

# The Son of Man in Mark –

- *The Son of Man was Jesus' favorite self-designation. He uses it 84 times of himself in the gospels, 14 times in Mark.*
- *Mark clearly understands the comprehensive theology of history where Christ extends from glory (Daniel 7:13-14) through humiliation (8:31) returning to glory (8:38)*

2:10	<i>The authority to forgive sins</i>
2:28	<i>The Lord of the Sabbath</i>
8:31	<i>Prophecy of the Passion</i>
8:38	<i>Will come in glory</i>
9:9	<i>Resurrection</i>
9:12	<i>Sufferings</i>
9:31	<i>Prophecy of the Passion</i>
10:33-34	<i>Prophecy of the Passion</i>
10:45	<i>Gives life a ransom for many</i>
13:26	<i>Will come on the clouds</i>
14:21	<i>Goes to death, betrayed</i>
14:41	<i>Betrayed</i>
14:62	<i>Will come on the clouds</i>



Word of the Lord  
Is 41:21-29, Heb 1:1

**PROPHECY**

**GLORY**

Parousia; second coming  
Mk 8:38, 13:26, 14:62  
Dan 7:13-14

**HIDDEN**

Messianic secret  
"Things hidden" Ps 78:8 > Mat 13:35  
"He who has ears" Mk 4:9-1, 24

**SALVATION**

Identification with his people  
Is 53:10-54:8 > Mk 10:45,  
2:10, Romans 1:17

**"The Son of Man"**  
(182X in Scripture)  
**The Mystery of  
the Gospel**

Mk 4:11  
Rom 16:25  
1 Cor 2:7  
Eph 1:9, 3:3-9  
Col 1:26  
1 Tim 3:16  
Rev 1:12-18

**HISTORY**

Fulfilled = God has done it  
"As it is written" Mk 9:12, 14:21  
"Must" 8:31, Heb 1:2

**SUFFERING**

First coming; passion = plan of God  
"Suffer many things" Mk 8:31, 9:12, 31, 10:33-34, 42, 14:21  
Is 52:13-53:9 (especially 53:4)

**REVEALED**

"I revealed myself" - God  
"You will see" Mk 8:38, 9:1, 13:26, 14:62  
"Will be revealed" Is 40:5, 43:10-12, Rom 1:17-18

**JUDGEMENT**

"Given to the Son"  
Romans 1:18, John 5:22-30, Rev  
14:14-20

# The Prophecy of the Passion | 8:31-33

- *Disciples were amazed at openness of Jesus' statement. Even privately Jesus had never spoken so plainly. Term = open speech, nothing concealed. Peter's reaction shows it was impossible to miss.*
- *Peter was reacting to his understanding of the Messiah, not to the reference to the Son of Man. His reaction is understandable as a rejected Messiah was incompatible with Jewish convictions and hopes. The word Mark uses for Peter's "rebuke" is the same as 1:25, 3:12.*
- *To understand how difficult it was to reconcile the Messiah with suffering, look to the Targum (First century Jewish Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible. It combines translation of biblical text with additional material, ranging in size from a word to several paragraphs. The additions provide important insights into ancient Jewish biblical interpretation) on Isaiah 53, where the positive statements are interpreted to apply to King Messiah but the sufferings to the people.*
- *Jesus was emphatic that the sufferings apply to King Messiah. His declaration was radically new and the disciples totally unprepared to receive it.*



# The Prophecy of the Passion | 8:31-33

- *The presence of the other disciples necessitated a strong and open rebuke of Peter's presumption.*
- *Peter was tempting Christ to deny the revealed will and authority of God that the Messiah was to achieve victory over of evil through the shame of the cross. Christ subjects these evil forces to open shame because he was willing to endure shame. (Col 2:15).*
- *Peter's counsel frustrated the humiliation necessary to lead to Christ's enthronement as the Son of Man, the salvation of his elect, and the judgment of the world (8:38).*
- *Peter's response was therefore tantamount to an unregenerate response. Christ therefore unmask's Peter's evil thought and commands him to return to his rank as a true disciple.*
- *To accept the will of God, we must accept a suffering Savior.*

# The Requirements for Following Jesus | 8:34-38

- *These verses consist of a group of short, pointed sayings addressing personal commitment to Jesus in circumstances that require courage and sacrifice.*
- *These move beyond the historical narrative of Jesus to the church in Rome harassed by persecution with ranks decimated by overt and subtle pressures.*
- *Jesus calls us to the realization that suffering is not only his destiny but ours. The humiliation of the Messiah (8:31) is the mysterious prototype of the Christian.*
- *Calling the crowd indicates that the conditions for following Christ are for all believers not just the disciples. Cross-bearing is not just for church leaders but for all of who confess Jesus as Messiah. Christ's intention is that those who follow him should not be detached observers of his passion but those who grow in faith and understanding through participation in his sufferings.*

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# The Requirements for Following Jesus | 8:34-38

- *Jesus stipulates that those who follow him must be prepared to shift the center of gravity in their lives from concern for self to reckless abandon to the will of God. This is a sustained willingness to say “No” to self so that we may say “Yes” to God. Self-idolatry must die.*
- *This demand is reinforced through the horrifying image of a death march. “Bearing the cross” was not a Jewish metaphor and would have sounded repugnant to the crowd. It evokes a condemned man going to die and forced to carry the instrument of execution.*
- *Cross-bearing was a reality for the early church. And a reality for Jesus (15:21).*
- *This statement exposes the ambivalent concept of life. For life is precious if we are to use it to answer the call to disown self and sacrifice life (8:34).*
- *Christians in Rome were threatened with life for affirming “Jesus and the gospel.”*

# The Requirements for Following Jesus | 8:34-38

- *The contrast between ordinary human life and life as an expression of salvation indicates the irony of “save” and “suffer loss” in verse 35. Jesus appreciates the frailty and fleetingness of life. So he enjoins us to “save” it in a deeper sense than ordinary travelers through time.*
- *The linchpin around which salvation swings is “Jesus and the gospel.” Exclusivity is demanded. The locus of commitment is Jesus himself. Only Mark makes this connection.*
- *To make his point, Jesus employs the language of commerce – profit, gain, loss, exchange. The advantage is gained – “the whole world” – but the payment is eternal – “for his soul.” These values cannot really be compared. Winning the world is not even worth a human life, let alone an eternal life. (Psalm 49:7-9f)*
- *The absurdity of a man who secures his own life in preference to participation in the salvation provided by God underscore the fateful stakes of denying Jesus.*

# The Requirements for Following Jesus | 8:34-38

- *Each of Jesus' successive statements reinforces the irony of verse 38.*
  - *The commitment to Christ permits no turning back. And a willingness to submit to the will of God even to the cross.*
  - *Suffering with the Messiah is what permits sharing in his glory (Rom 8:17).*
  - *Loss is now defined referring to the final judgment committed to the Son of Man.*
- *The motive for denying Christ is born out of anxiety of one's life and a basic unwillingness to be made an object of contempt by the world. Peter would fall prey to this (14:66-72).*
- *In 38a, Jesus refers to himself in first person. But in 38b, he uses the most appropriate name for the glory of the Parousia when he will come for judgment. The ironic significance is that the Son of Man and Jesus are one and the same. To deny Christ is to deny the final Judge himself. The criteria for man's acceptance or rejection before the Son of Man is his loyalty or disloyalty to Jesus now.*

# The Requirements for Following Jesus | 8:34-38

- *The reference to the Father's glory and to the train of angels frames the entire ministry of Jesus as a doxology – a liturgical formula to praise God. (1 Tim 3:16).*
  - *Jesus can accomplish his mission only if his glory means nothing and the Father's glory means everything.*
  - *But God does not fail to recognize Christ's submission to his will and the humiliation of the cross. And the hour comes when the Son of Man is glorified by the Father for whose glory he lived and died.*
  - *In Jesus' commitment, we find our paradigm of commitment to the glory of God.*

