

Mark: The Mysterious Messiah

Week 18: Mark 9:11-

Introductory Exercise: How does one acquire faith?

Who is speaking to Jesus at the beginning of today's reading? Why do they have Elijah on the mind in 9:11? What Old Testament teaching do they have in mind when they ask these questions? How does Jesus interpret those Old Testament passages?

When the four men return to the other disciples, what is the scene? What attributes does this "super-demon" possess that echo other exorcism and healing scenes in Mark?

Previous Mark passage	Affliction(s)	Significance
Mark 7:31-36		
Mark 5:1-13		

By using the same language that the earlier accounts used, what effect does Mark create in describing this spirit?

When, in Mark 9:22-23, Jesus and the possessed man's father exchange words about the ability to do something about the situation, what immediate events are informing the way that the father frames the request? How does Jesus reframe the question, and what response does his reframing elicit?

Jesus rebukes (note the important verb here) the spirit when the crowd gathers. What differences are there between this exorcism and previous exorcisms in Mark? Why might Mark have given more detail here? What cryptic diagnosis does Jesus give at the end of the episode, and what in the world might it mean?

In Mark 9:31, Jesus repeats the teaching that he gave in 8:31. How has the setting changed, and what has transpired in the story since the first iteration? What combination among those factors has the disciples afraid to ask about the saying?

What discussion have the disciples been conducting in Mark 9:33-34? What point do we Christian-era readers get that the disciples have entirely missed? How does Jesus begin to address this lack of discernment, and what about the child illustrates what Jesus says in 9:35? How important is the powerless being in the divine economy of hospitality?