

**Mark 9:30-50, Second Announcement of the Passion**  
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**Overview**

1. 9:14-10:52, focuses on the need for faith and the simplicity of salvation.
  - a) Public: Begins and ends with a healing that depends on faith
    - 1) 9:14-29, Healing & Faith: Demoniac Boy and his Father
    - 2) 10:46-52, Healing & Faith: Bartimaeus
  - b) Private: Then an alternation between announcement of the passion and the disciples' failure to appreciate the cost (application of the lesson from the initial chiasm)
    - 1) 9:30-32, Second Announcement of his Passion
    - 2) 9:33-50, Inappropriate Response: Who shall be first?
    - 3) 10:32-34, Third Announcement of his Passion
    - 4) 10:35-45, Inappropriate Response: James and John
  - c) Public: In the center, 10:1-31, three encounters by the way, illustrating the soils once again, with the good soil in the middle, the simple faith of children.
2. This entire section moves monotonically toward Jerusalem:
  - a) Route markers
    - 1) 8:27, region of Caesarea Philippi, at the foot of Mount Hermon.
    - 2) 9, transfiguration probably on Mount Hermon, healing of demoniac boy at its foot.
    - 3) 9:30, 33, now moves south toward Capernaum
    - 4) 10:1, toward Judea by way of far side of Jordan
    - 5) 10:32, in the road going up to Jerusalem
    - 6) 10:46, Jericho
  - b) Note prominence of the expression "in the road" *en tw/ hodw/*: 6x in Mark, all between 8:3 and 10:52. The noun overall appears 16x, or an average of one per chapter, but in chapters 9 and 10 there are six occurrences, or three per chapter:

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Compare distribution of "sea," 19x overall:

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c) Significance of this movement: the three announcements of the Lord's coming sacrifice. He is going to Jerusalem to die. Deliberate, fully in control, sacrificing himself.

d) As we have noted, each announcement includes his death and resurrection. Each also contrasts with the others on certain common features:

1) Ref:	8:31	9:31	10:33f
2) Theme:	Judgment by Jews	Betrayal by his own	Humiliation by Gentiles
3) Error:	Peter	The Twelve	James & John
4) Lesson:	Deny yourself (cf 8:34) 8:35-9:1	Take up cross 9:43-48	Follow Me 10:38-45

**A. 9:30-32, Second Announcement**

1. Setting: Note the function of "for" in 31. He sought secrecy BECAUSE he wished to teach the disciples. The road to Jerusalem has a number of opportunities for public ministry, but he must also prepare the Twelve for what awaits them, and their preparation centers around these announcements of his coming passion. Lesson: the importance of private teaching to a small group as well as broad public ministry.
2. Announcement: Set apart by the mention that "the Son of man is delivered into the hands of men ...." Greek *paradidomi*, 121x in NT, 40x translated "betray." This is the verb that is used consistently throughout the gospels to describe the activity of Judas in betraying the Lord Jesus. Just as the unexpected feature of the first announcement was the role of the Jewish leaders, so the unexpected feature of the second is the role of his own disciple.
3. Response: They did not understand, and were afraid to ask. The first would not be nearly so bad, were it not for the second.

*Their ignorance leads them all to two bloopers that recall Peter's after the first announcement of the passion. Each of the three announcements of the Lord's passion is followed by one or more errors that show their lack of understanding, and in turn by an exhortation from the Lord along the lines of 8:34: "deny himself, take up his cross, follow me." The first and second are in focus here. The disciples commit two errors that show they have not denied themselves; the Lord goes on to exhort them to take up the cross.*

**B. 33-34, First Error: Seeking priority among those within.**

While he has been trying to get across the notion of his coming death, they have been planning cabinet assignments for the kingdom!

**C. 35-37, First Correction: Honor within the Assembly**

The Lord corrects their attitude in two ways: with an explicit exhortation, and with an example.

1. 35, The explicit exhortation can be read in two ways: as a warning of the punishment to fall on those who seek preeminence, or as an encouragement to humility. See Shoebox database frstlast.db.
  - a) Both are in fact true; of the eighteen statements of this sort in the gospels, thirteen are symmetric (cf. 10:31), and five (like this one) are asymmetric.
  - b) All the other asymmetric ones are commands ("If you want such an such an outcome, then behave this way"), as evidenced either by the use of imperative in the apodosis, or the context (as in 10:42, where the Lord's use of himself as an example suggests we should read it as an encouragement to humility). Luke 9:23 shows that indicative in the protosis is no impediment to reading as a command.
  - c) Furthermore, all of the symmetric ones are predictions ("If you behave in such and such a way, this will be the result"). We expect the converse to be true also, otherwise the Lord would sometimes be warning of judgment without pointing the way to salvation, which would be contrary to his way of dealing with the twelve.
  - d) Also: predictions are in general terms (be first or last, save soul or lost it), while commands are more specific (take up cross, serve others). In fact, much of the confusion is that this verse combines the "first/last" vocabulary of the predictions with the "servant" vocabulary of the commands.
  - e) Conclude: read 9:35 as a command, not a prediction. "Do you want to be first, very good: the way is to be servant of all."The only other asymmetrical instances are 10:42 and its parallel in Matt,
2. 36-37, Example of a child. What will happen to you if you do take the lowest place? Which would you rather be in the church, one of the elders with prestige and responsibility for decisions, or one of the little children who just go to SS? By the Lord's standards, even the youngest believers, those with least prestige in the assembly, deserve the honor that is due to him and to the father. Even if you were to take this humble a position, the church should still honor you as a member of the body of Christ.

NB: the point of this text is not to bless children per se, but

to exhort the disciples to take the humble place of a child, and recognize that even that place is blessed.

**D. 38, Second Error: Putting down those without.**

1. The setting

a) The Lord has gathered his Twelve around him. Clearly, they are exactly where they ought to be. Nothing could be better than to have intimate, personal fellowship with him.

b) They have seen someone casting out demons in the Lord's name, someone not part of their group, and they have forbidden him. Possible motives:

1) Pride: desire to "corner the market," to be the exclusive channel through which people come to Christ.

2) Insecurity. They have just failed to cast out a demon, while these others seem to have better success. Maybe it wasn't really necessary to leave those nets and that tax box and set off after the Lord.

c) Modern parallels: rivalry among Christian groups. If we're right, why shouldn't everyone else have to come through us? and why do they seem to enjoy such success? Maybe we're not right, after all. Leads to two possible errors:

1) Opposing the work others are trying to do for the Lord;

2) Abandoning the light the Lord has given us; feeling that it doesn't matter and we shouldn't be so narrow in our discipline.

**E. 39-50, Second Rebuke: Don't offend others or fall short yourselves**

Two commands here, to avoid these two possible errors that we may fall into when we contemplate other believers.

1. 39-41, Don't offend other believers

Don't try to oppose the ministry that others offer in the name of Christ, even those who do not share your convictions. Gives three motives:

a) 39, the glory of Christ. If the Spirit sees fit to bless their ministry with fruit, the fact that they do it in the name of Christ brings glory to him. Cf. Paul in Phil. 1:14-18, where he rejoices even over the preaching of those who seek thereby to hurt him! (Perhaps rival preachers jealous of his preeminence, seeking to enlarge their own congregations through a competitive spirit.)

b) 40, the benefit of the doubt. Need to compare this with other similar statements in the gospels:

- 1) Here the MT actually has "you" rather than "us." Luke 9:50, the same episode, has "us," as does the AV here. In both cases, the default is to assume they are for us if they don't explicitly oppose.
  - 2) Mt 12:30 (when the Pharisees are accusing him of casting out demons by Satan), "He that is not with me is against me." Now the default is against; he who is not clearly and definitely for Christ is to be assumed to be against him.
  - 3) The difference between the two is in the standard being offended. We owe the benefit of the doubt to those who are lifting up the Lord Jesus, even if they differ from our order, our customs. But we owe no such presumption of honor to those who are not explicit about their devotion to the Lord Jesus.
- c) 41, the golden rule. Consider how you would want others to treat you, supporting your ministry for the sake of Christ, and offer him the same kindness.
2. 42-48, Don't abandon your own principles.  
Four warnings about things that might "offend" or "cause to stumble."
- a) 42, External threats  
"The little ones" are not the children he has presented (note that "these" is in italics and should be omitted), but believers who take the humble position that the children illustrate. While you are tolerant of those who differ, don't let them cause you to turn away from your own principles, and recognize that God will judge those who do.
  - b) 43-48, Internal threats  
Three highly parallel sections, one devoted to each of three vital organs: the hand, the foot, the eye.
    - 1) The point seems to be that while rival groups do pose a danger of offending us, the even greater danger is from our own flesh.
    - 2) "Cut off the hand," "cut off the foot," "pluck out the eye" all are specific manifestations of the command from 8:34, "take up his cross." Cf. Gal. 5:24, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." We are to show no mercy on the flesh.
    - 3) So should we dismember ourselves? If it really were a specific physical member that were causing the problem, yes. But the problem of the flesh is not localized in any specific member. Mark 7:21. Cut off a thief's hand, and he will still covet. The Lord's language is hyperbolic, to emphasize that

a> the greatest threat to our spirituality is not rival Christian groups, but our own carnality;

b> our spiritual health is so important that no sacrifice is too great to make if it maintains it.

### 3. 49-50, the lesson from salt

#### a) Background

For us, salt is a cheap, common substance, used mainly to flavor food, and we are most conscious of it as something that physicians try to get us to avoid. In ancient times, it was much more rare, thus precious. Roman soldiers received part of their pay in salt, a payment called *salarium*, from which we get our modern word "salary." In addition, it was more than a seasoning, though it was that (Job 6:6). But it was also important as a medicine and a preservative for food. In this sense the Lord here uses it as a metaphor for something important in the Christian's life.

#### b) 49, the value of salt

Two sayings about being "salted." There are two OT passages that speak of being "salted." The second saying clearly alludes to the second; I think the first saying perhaps alludes to the first.

##### 1) "Everyone shall be salted with fire."

a> Ezek 16:4 shows young babies were rubbed with salt, to toughen their skin and guard against infection. Without this care, the child cannot stand the harsh environment that the world presents.

b> *Application:* In Ezek 16:4, it is the Lord who provides the salt to toughen and protect the infant Israel. He is often depicted as a consuming fire (Deut 4:24; Heb 12:29). According to Mal 3:2,3, he is like a refiner's fire, purging out all that is unclean. Isa 33:13-17 declares that only the righteous can abide in the presence of "devouring fire" and "everlasting burnings." So when we stand before the Lord, our works shall be "tried by fire," 1 Cor 3:13. The fire of God's presence that destroys the wicked in 9:43-48 also purges and strengthens the believer. "Take up your cross," recognize that God purposes to kill whatever in you is displeasing to him.

c> In this context, warns against the response of Pride; cf. Isa 57:15, where the ones who can endure the Lord's presence are "of a contrite and humble spirit."

##### 2) "Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

a> Quoted from Lev 2:13. Grain offerings must be

accompanied with salt, and must not have leaven or honey in them. Leaven and honey promote fermentation; salt preserves food and protects it from spoilage. The offerings that we bring to the Lord should not be liable to change and deteriorate on their own, but should be stable.

b> *Application*: Now the salting element comes, not from the Lord, but from the believer. We are responsible to guard against corruption; to "hold fast the faithful word as [we have] been taught" (Titus 1:9).

c> In this context, warns against insecurity and abandoning our distinctives in the face of challenges from others.

c) 50a, the risk of losing salt

There is no danger that the fire of God's presence will lose its heat, but the salt of our commitment may grow slack, so the Lord warns against this.

1) Salt that has lost its savor: refers to rock salt deposits; sometimes the salt is mingled with gypsum, or else the rain has washed the salt out leaving only tasteless minerals that cannot preserve. So we must guard against becoming insipid in our commitment to the Lord.

2) This saying appears in three different contexts, in Mt, Mk, and Lk.

a> Mt 5:13, in the Sermon on the Mount, along with the light of the world, in the context of persecution. Don't let opposition tempt you into being nondistinctive. Dare to stand out for the Lord.

b> Here, in an exhortation to respond correctly to differing Christian groups. Don't abandon what the Lord has showed you.

c> Lk 14:34, in context of the need to take up the cross and follow him, a warning to the multitudes (14:25) of the needed sacrifice. Basic exhortation to distinctiveness.

d) 50b, summary exhortation

Recapitulates both of the lessons stimulated by the encounter with the other exorcists.

1) "Have salt in yourselves." Hold fast what the Lord has showed you. Don't let others sweep you away with their successes.

2) "Have peace one with another." Let God's purging fire do away with all wrath, envy, and bitterness, and be charitable toward all who glorify the Lord Jesus.

## Analysis

Here the ptc + fv clauses seem to introduce sections, which are filled out by the simple clauses.

- A. 9:30-33a, Second Announcement of his Passion
1. 30 Ka)kei^qen e)celqo/ntes pareporeu/onto dia\ th^s Galilai/as,
  2. \* kai\ ou)k h)/qelen i(/na tis gnoi^:
  3. \* 31 e)di/dasken ga\r tou\s maqhta\s au)tou^
  4. \* kai\ e)/legen au)toi^s o(/ti
    - a) \* (O ui(o\s tou^ a)nqrw/pou paradi/dotai ei)s xei^ras a)nqrw/pwn,
    - b) \* kai\ a)poktenou^sin au)to/n,
    - c) kai\ a)poktanqei\s meta\ trei^s h(me/ras a)nasth/setai.
  5. \* 32 oi( de\ h)gno/oun to\ r(h^ma,
  6. \* kai\ e)fobou^nto au)to\n e)perwth^sai.
  7. \* 33a Kai\ h)^lqon ei)s Kafarnaou/m.
- B. 9:33-50, Inappropriate Response: Who shall be first? (private)
1. 33-34, First Error: Seeking priority among those within
    - a) 33b kai\ e)n th^| oi)ki/a| geno/menos e)phrw/ta au)tou/s,
      - 1) Ti/ e)n th^| o(dw^| dielogi/zesqe;
    - b) \* 34 oi( de\ e)siw/pwn,
    - c) \* pro\s a)llh/lous ga\r diele/xqhsan e)n th^| o(dw^| ti/s mei/zwn.
  2. 35-37, First Rebuke: Anticipation of "Follow me"
    - a) 35, Explicit teaching  
35 kai\ kaqi/sas e)fw/nhsen tou\s dw/deka kai\ le/gei au)toi^s,
      - 1) Ei)/ tis qe/lei prw^tos ei)^nai e)/stai pa/ntwn e)/sxatos kai\ pa/ntwn dia/konos.  
Link to 10:42-45, just as 8:34 looks forward to all three rebukes.
    - b) 36-37, Example of a child  
Even the youngest, simplest believer is worthy of the honor you would pay to me, and thus to my Father.
      - 1) 36 kai\ labw\n paidi/on e)/sthsen au)to\ e)n me/sw| au)tw^n
      - 2) kai\ e)nagkalisa/menos au)to\ ei)^pen au)toi^s,
        - a> 37 (\Os ea)\n e(\n tw^n toiou/twn paidi/wn de/chtai e)pi\ tw^| o)no/mati/ mou, e)me\ de/xetai:
        - b> kai\ o(\s ea)\n e)me\ de/chtai, ou)k e)me\ de/xetai a)lla\ to\n a)postei/lanta/ me.
  3. 38, Second Error: Putting down those without.
    - \* 38 )/Efh au)tw^| o( )Iwa/nnhs,
    - a) Dida/skale,
    - b) ei)/dome/n tina e)n tw^| o)no/mati/ sou e)kba/llonta daimo/nia,
    - c) (os ouk akolouqei (hmin



d) kai\ e)kwlu/omen au)to/n,  
e) o(/ti ou)k h)kolou/qei h(mi^n.

4. 39-50, Second Rebuke: Don't offend other believers or yourselves  
\* 39 o( de\ )Ihsou^s ei)^pen,

a) Immediate command: Don't offend other believers

1) Mh\ kwlu/ete au)to/n,

2) Motives:

a> ou)dei\s ga\r e)stin o(\s poih/sei du/namin e)pi\ tw^|  
o)no/mati/ mou kai\ dunh/setai taxu\ kakologh^sai/ me:

b> 40 o(\s ga\r ou)k e)/stin kaq' h(mw^n, u(pe\r h(mw^n  
e)stin.

c> Contrast p

1> 41 (\Os ga\r a)\n poti/sh| u(ma^s poth/rion u(/datos  
e)n o)no/mati o(/ti Xristou^ e)ste, a)mh\n le/gw  
u(mi^n o(/ti ou) mh\ a)pole/sh| to\n misqo\n au)tou^.

b) Extension: Don't offend yourselves.

1) General principle

42 Kai\ o(\s a)\n skandali/sh| e(/na tw^n mikrw^n tw^n  
pisteuo/ntwn ei)s e)me/, kalo/n e)stin au)tw^| ma^llon ei)  
peri/keitai mu/los o)niko\s peri\ to\n tra/xhlon au)tou^  
kai\ be/blhtai ei)s th\n qa/lassan.

2) The Hand

a> 43 Kai\ e)a\n skandali/zh| se h( xei/r sou, a)po/koyon  
au)th/n:

b> kalo/n e)sti/n se kullo\n ei)selqei^ ei)s th\n zwh\n  
h)\ ta\s du/o xei^ras e)/xonta a)pelqei^ ei)s th\n  
ge/ennan, ei)s to\ pu^r to\ a)/sbeston.

1> 44 o(/pou o( skw/lhc au)tw^n ou) teleuta^| kai\ to\  
pu^r ou) sbe/nnutai:

3) The Foot

a> 45 kai\ e)a\n o( pou/s sou skandali/zh| se, a)po/koyon  
au)to/n:

b> kalo/n e)sti/n se ei)selqei^ ei)s th\n zwh\n xwlo\n h)\  
tou\s du/o po/das e)/xonta blhqh^nai ei)s th\n ge/ennan.

1> 46 o(/pou o( skw/lhc au)tw^n ou) teleuta^| kai\ to\  
pu^r ou) sbe/nnutai:

4) The Eye

a> 47 kai\ e)a\n o( o)fqalmo/s sou skandali/zh| se,  
e)/kbale au)to/n:

b> kalo/n se/ e)stin mono/fqalmon ei)selqei^ ei)s th\n  
basilei/an tou^ qeou^ h)\ du/o o)fqalmou\s e)/xonta  
blhqh^nai ei)s th\n ge/ennan,

1> 48 o(/pou o( skw/lhc au)tw^n ou) teleuta^| kai\ to\  
pu^r ou) sbe/nnutai:

c) 49-50, the lesson from salt

1) 49 pa^s ga\r puri\ a(lisqh/setai.

- 2) kai pasa qusia ali alisqhsetai.
- 3) 50 Kalo\n to\ a(/las:
- 4) e)a\n de\ to\ a(/las a)/nalon ge/nhtai, e)n ti/ni au)to\  
a)rtu/sete;
- 5) e)/xete e)n e(autoi^s a(/la,
- 6) kai\ ei)rhneu/ete e)n a)llh/lois.