

# Gospel of Mark: Jesus- Light into Darkness

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[ 0 : 00 ] 9, starting in verse 2 through 229, and you'll find it in your church Bibles on 1012. So starting at verse 2.

After six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him and led them up a high mountain where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

And there appeared before Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

He did not know what to say. They were so frightened. Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud. This is my son, whom I love. Listen to him.

Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

[ 1 : 02 ] They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what rising from the dead meant. And they asked him, Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first? Jesus replied, To be sure, Elijah does come first and restores all things.

Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him.

When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

What are you arguing with them about? he asked. A man in the crowd answered, Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground.

He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not. Oh, one believing generation, Jesus replied, How long shall I stay with you?

[ 2 : 03 ] How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me. So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

Jesus asked the boy's father, How long has he been like this? From childhood, he answered. It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us. If you can, said Jesus, everything is possible for him who believes. Immediately, the boy's father exclaimed, I do believe. Help me overcome my unbelief.

When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. You deaf and mute spirit, he said, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again. The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently, and ran out and came out.

The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, He's dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, Why couldn't we drive it out?

[ 3 : 06 ] He replied, This kind can come out only by prayer. Thank you.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Almighty God, you sent your Son, the Lord Jesus, to call us out of darkness and into your brilliant light.

Help us to understand what that means. And we pray that as we see Jesus in this passage this morning, that we ourselves would understand him better and be able to reflect the light of Christ as

we enter into the darkness of the world.

Lord, pour out your Spirit upon us and help us. And may not one of us leave this morning without being impacted, without being changed by you today.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, as is our custom, while on holiday, Ethan, Rebecca, and I climbed up a mountain.

[ 5 : 15 ] Some were not as adventurous and took the chairlift. Isn't that right, Kirsty? It was a long struggle, but the experience at the top was breathtaking.

The clear skies, the beautiful sunshine, the cool breeze blowing through the trees, the silence, and the panoramic views of the River Rhine meandering down through the valley.

I could have stayed there all day, basking under the shade of the trees. It was a spectacular sight. But we soon had to go back down into the valley.

The stifling, sweaty heat. The hustle and bustle of the town. Dirty roads and noisy traffic. The contrast could not be greater.

I longed to be back on top of the mountain. Well, in Mark's account, we are all taken to the top of a high mountain.

[ 6 : 31 ] There we are to witness the beauty and the brilliance of Jesus. But before we can stay and enjoy it, we are taken down into the valley.

And there we experience the darkness and the disorder of the world. The contrast could not be greater. The light of Jesus on the mountain and the darkness of Satan in the valley.

How the disciples longed to stay on the mountaintop. But Jesus surprisingly takes them down into the depths of the valley.

Let's follow them as they take their journey. First, we are taking up the mountain.

Look at verse 2. After six days, Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain where they were all alone.

[ 7 : 44 ] And something extraordinary happens. There he was transfigured before them. Literally, the outward appearance of Jesus was completely changed and transformed.

Verse 3. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. The brightness from this pure light was dazzling and blinding.

But what was it all about? Well, we should know from the Bible that mountains are always seen as significant places.

Primarily, mountains are where God appears and reveals himself to his people because he has something important to say. Look at verse 4.

And there appeared before them on the mountain Elijah and Moses who were talking with Jesus. You remember Elijah and Moses, the great prophets, the great leaders from the past.

[ 8 : 55 ] They had both had their mountaintop experience. They had both met God on a mountain. God had come down to them and spoken to them and through these prophets displayed his awesome power as they went out to lead the people.

But now, the focus is all on Jesus. Elijah and Moses are now in the presence of Jesus.

They were only a picture of God's chosen king who was to come. So can we begin to see what this is?

God is saying that Jesus is my promised king with supreme authority and absolute power. Verse 7. Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them and a voice came from the cloud. This is my son whom I love. Listen to him.

[ 10 : 05 ] It's all about Jesus. He is the light who has come to dispel the darkness. He is the one to restore and to renew.

Peter later writes what he experienced on this mountain. The quote is there for you on the screen. This is what he says. We were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory saying, This is my son whom I love.

With him I am well pleased. The majestic king with all power and all authority Jesus is.

But they're in for a surprise. Look at verse 9. As they were coming down the mountain Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

[ 11 : 19 ] Jesus is the Son of Man. The Son of Man is a title which signifies his universal rule his unrivalled power.

And now he's talking about rising from the dead which means only one thing doesn't it? If you're going to rise from the dead it means you have to die first. The disciples were clearly confused. Verse 10. They kept the matter to themselves discussing what rising from the dead meant. I mean we've just seen him up on the mountain. This majestic king with all glory and honour the brilliance and the brightness. He's the one who's to come with the armies from heaven to destroy the enemy. What's he talking about dying for? Kings don't die when they're going into battle. Verse 11. And they asked him why did the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first? [12:31] They knew their Bibles well and they knew that the scriptures taught that the promise had been made that there was an Elijah type prophet who was going to come again and restore and put everything that was right and put everything good into order and he was going to prepare the way for God's promised king who was going to establish his perfect kingdom and everything was all beginning to match up.

The pieces of the puzzle were all together. They've just seen Elijah on the mountain and Jesus is obviously this great king so why on earth is he talking about having to die? That piece doesn't fit. Well Jesus explains it all to us verse 12. Jesus replied to be sure Elijah does come first and restores all things. Why then is it written that the son of man must suffer much and be rejected? Oh yes you're quite right he says the scriptures look forward to an Elijah who's going to restore and prepare the way for the king but read the rest of your Bibles he says because the scriptures also talk about the king who will have to suffer the king who will be rejected and die. He's already told them that but they don't seem to get it into their heads. Chapter 8 verse 31 just back a few verses chapter 8 verse 31 Jesus began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders the chief priests and the teachers of the law and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. [14:20] Jesus is saying to them and to us I am the one with all power and all authority but the way that full complete restoration is going to come is not through the waving of a sword but through my suffering and death on a cross.

He says if you are to share in my glory if you want to be part of my kingdom if you want this mountaintop experience to last for all eternity if that's what you're after I've got to die I've got to die but that was not the only shock look at verse 13 he says I tell you Elijah has come and they have done to him everything they wished just as it is written about him Elijah had come Elijah was the John the Baptist character that we met in chapter 1 he was the one who came to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and what happened to John the Baptist well his brutal death has gone down in history everybody knows what happened to him he was sent to the executioner and beheaded you see like the disciples we much prefer to stay on the mountain don't we where everything is bright and beautiful and perfect like Peter we want to set up our little shelters and we want to stay there and to take it all in and just to enjoy it all we want to stay and rest in the beauty and the brilliance of it we want the glory now we want everything to be bright and beautiful now we want all the suffering and the evil to go now but says

Jesus the glory is going to come my kingdom will be established but we must prepare to suffer first John the Baptist suffered I'm going to suffer and if you follow me you too will suffer we can't stay on this mountain we must go into the valley of darkness and confront the forces of evil with the light the glory is going to come but suffering comes first so they venture off the mountain and down into the valley of darkness verse 14 when they came to the other disciples they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them as soon as all the people saw Jesus they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him was there something about the brightness of Jesus still there what are you arguing with them about he asked clearly there's a problem and no one seems to be able to do anything about it verse 17 a man in the crowd answered teacher I brought you my son who is possessed of a spirit that has robbed him of speech this is no ordinary sickness in this case it is very specific it is the work and influence of an evil spirit and it has left a young boy on the edge of death and it has left his father full of fear verse 18 whenever it seizes him it throws him to the ground he foams at the mouth gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid it's a desperate hopeless situation something this poor family have lived with through their whole life down at verse 21 Jesus asked the boy's father how long has the child been like this from childhood he answered it has often thrown him into the fire or into the water to kill him the evil spirit is

destructive and death threatening and the problem to them all is this go back up to the end of verse 18

I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit but they could not the boy the parents and now the disciples are left facing the reality of a broken and disordered world which they can do nothing about they are confronted with the darkness of evil and the destructive work of Satan and they are completely hopeless isn't this the world we live in broken and disordered isn't this what we see and experience all around us the images that we've seen on the television this week the violence and the bloodshed that is crippling

[ 20 : 37 ] Egypt and Syria men women and children maimed blown apart poisoned the hundreds of thousands of children who have been subject to slavery working in the sweatshops others who've been sold into the sex industry the brutal regime of a North Korea or a Zimbabwe that have left countless millions in poverty ruined and broken and then think of the countless acts of unreported murder rape all kinds of abuse corruption and greed breaking and destroying individual lives ruining families and relationships every single day and yes people are responsible but behind it all stands the sinister work of

Satan God the Bible tells us that our struggle see it on the screen there our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers against the authorities against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil now we must be very careful not to assign every illness and sickness to an evil spirit does my daughter Rebecca have an evil spirit is that why she is deaf no we simply live in a world that is broken where disease and disorder and death and the darkness of evil is at work all around us and like the disciples in the face of it we are powerless to do anything about it well the reason

Jesus came down into the valley was to confront the forces of evil full on the brilliance and the brightness of God's king has come down to deal with the darkness and the disorder of Satan look at verse 19 let's read and let's get this story what's happening here oh unbelieving generation Jesus replied how long shall I stay with you how long shall I put up with you bring the boy to me come come here come here so they brought him and when the spirit saw Jesus it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion the spirit could see that in Jesus was supreme authority and absolute power and he fell to the ground and rolled around foaming at the mouth

Jesus asked the boy's father how long has he been like this from childhood he answered it it has often thrown him into the fire and water to kill him but if you can do anything take pity on us and help us if you can if you can said Jesus everything is possible for him who believes Jesus invitation to this hopeless and helpless and broken father is just to say to him believe trust in who Jesus claims to be that he is the God man with absolute power and supreme authority he is the majestic king who rules and who reigns verse 24 immediately the boy's father exclaims oh I do believe help me overcome my unbelief you see it's not about the measure of his faith or even the quality of his faith it's not anything to do with us but who we have faith in where we place our faith in this world that's what's important and Jesus is making it clear to us and to the father here it's not about you it's not about your ability it's all about me and what I am able to do and what I am willing to do for you this is why

I have come do you not understand oh unbelieving generation verse 25 when Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene he rebuked the evil spirit you deaf and mute spirit he said I command you come out of him and never enter him again the spirit shrieked convulsed him violently and came out the boy looked so much like a corpse that many said he's dead but Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet and he stood up the little broken boy renewed and restored running and playing and talking talking for the first time the light has come and the darkness has gone and life reigns where death once threatened one of my favorite scenes from the lord of the rings trilogy is the battle at helms deep you may remember that scene surrounded by the evil forces of

[ 27 : 51 ] Sauron they're fighting for their survival and then Aragorn he remembers the words of Gandalf look to my coming at first light on the fifth day at dawn look to the east and then as they ride out into the battle this light appears on top of the mountain and Gandalf is there in his brilliant dazzling white light and his white horse and he rides down the mountain into the valley and his brightness blinds the evil forces and they're defeated well Jesus came from the mountain down into the valley but ultimately

Jesus has come down from the glory of heaven to this sin broken world his journey was going to take him into a much darker valley to the cross itself and there at the cross he defeated the power of sin and death and the one who holds the power of death Satan himself he destroys it once and for all and three days later he proved his victory by rising from the dead and promised to return again that is why he had to die the story invites us to put our trust in the light of who Jesus is look at verse 28 after Jesus had gone indoors his disciples asked him privately why why couldn't we drive it out

Jesus replied this kind can come out only by prayer you see prayer is the means by which we express our faith it is a cry of desperation an expression of our trust that the power is not in ourselves but it's in God's son and we must follow the example of the struggling father who said in verse 24 I do believe but help me overcome my unbelief faith is recognizing our weakness our frailty and our inability and asking God for the ability to trust in him alone who is able to restore the brokenness and renew the disorder we live in a dark and broken world and we know people who are facing the darkness and are in it yet

Jesus has come to save us and to rescue us and his invitation to us is to cry out in prayer and to trust in him alone of course that does not mean that every illness will be healed or that every act will be overcome immediately but what it does tell us for sure is that he will heal all sickness and he will banish all evil when he comes again in his glory and from the darkness of the valley where we walk we are people of faith who continue to cry out in faith and look forward in faith to his coming we long for the day when Jesus appears in his brilliant dazzling light just as he did on the mountain on that day we will watch and the light of glory will banish the forces of darkness once and for all the light will rid the suffering and the evil will be gone and all who follow him and all who have trusted in him and cried out like the father here will share in his glory for all eternity the glory of the mountain is coming but for now we walk through the darkness of the valley and as we walk in this darkness we shine the light of the gospel of Jesus

Christ we bring the hope the only one who can deal with it and pray that people will put their trust in him lord i do believe help me overcome my unbelief let's pray father each one of us here has our own stories to tell of very difficult situations that friends are in or family are in or perhaps we are in and we walk through the valley of the darkness and we cry out afresh lord i do believe help me overcome my unbelief help me to look with the eye of faith to the coming of christ in all his brightness and glory where he will dispel once and for all all evil satan will be no more sickness and suffering will be gone father help us to keep walking in faith and to trust you and please will you help us as we walk out into this world please help us to point people to jesus may they find in him one who has compassion and one who has mercy and one who will help because he is able come lord jesus come amen he he

[ 35 : 35 ] Amen.