Intro:

- For those of you who are new with us and for those of you who are regulars, I am going to do a very brief review of where we have been in our series of Mark. This book is 16 chapters long, and we are just over halfway through the series where we have been taking the book section by section. This is message 31. And you might say “31”? How long is this series? And my answer is “as long as it needs to be” because these things are important, and they are eternal and they deserve to be carefully examined, understood, and applied.

- This book is the very word of God and what is written in here matters. This is why I want you to have your Bible open and weigh anything that is said against it. If what is being said matches up to the Word, receive it, believe it, hold on to it, and act upon it. If anything that is said does not line up with the Word, don’t believe it and get rid of it. And if you’re not sure, then investigate and research, and then act accordingly.

- The book of Mark opens up with this line:

Mark 1:1 ESV
The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

- This whole book is about the “good news” of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God. Mark tell us about Jesus, who He was, what He did, what He taught, what happened and why it matters. As you page through the text, you see Jesus’s connection to the Old Testament, His baptism and commissioning into ministry, and His temptation in the wilderness. We see Him gathering His disciples, teaching with authority, casting out demons, healing all kinds of diseases - including leprosy, paralysis, and blindness. We even read about Him raising people from the dead. He also calmed storms, multiplied food, and walked on water.

- Crowds swarmed to Him from everywhere, from inside the country and from outside the country. People came to Him from remote places and the biggest cities. He was forced to find solitary places to pray and to be with and further teach and train His disciples. Everyone was talking about Him, from the peasants, to the politicians, to the priests, and they were all trying to figure Him out, who He was and what He was really about. Some were curious, some were confused, some were convinced, and some wanted to kill him. Everywhere He went, He caused a commotion. Just like everyone during that time, you also will have to make up your mind as to who you think He is and then make a choice to either follow Him or not.

- In the last chapter (8), we saw Peter make the confession that he believed Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah. Next Jesus clearly tells the disciples what is to come:

Mark 8:31 ESV
That the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.
• After this, Peter rebukes Him, correcting Jesus on His plan and tempting Him to take an easier route. Jesus would have none of it and strongly rebukes Peter. Then Jesus tells them all that if anyone wants to follow Him:

Mark 8:34-35 ESV
let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.

• He then goes on to tell them that some of them will physically see the Kingdom of God when it comes in power. This is where we pick up our text for today in Mark Chapter 9 verse 2. This account is also recorded in Matt. 17:1-8 and Luke 9:28-36 and we will be drawing from these passages as well as they give us some more details as to what happened here.

The transfiguration

Mark 9:2-3 ESV
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, 3 and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

• Okay, so what is going on here? This passage starts out with a connection to what had happened over six days ago. In Luke’s telling of this story, he says, “now about eight days after these sayings” (Luke 9:28). Both of these descriptions are accurate because this is the way at that time that they said “about a week later.” All three of the descriptions of this account start this way, and they are making a connection to what had just been taught and Peter’s response to Jesus. So this is a clue that helps us to understand this passage.
• Jesus took three people with Him, “Peter and James and John,” who were becoming His inner circle. Three people were always preferred to firmly establish the truthfulness of any event, so Jesus had three of them with Him (and by the way these were the same three that were with Him at the raising of Jairus’s daughter and at the Garden of Gethsemane).
• Jesus lead them up a “high mountain by themselves” and Luke records that they went up there to “pray” (Luke 9:28). They probably had to go up a “high mountain” to get away from all the people, and historically in the Old Testament, this is often a place where people met with God. They were there through the night because Luke also records:

Luke 9:32 ESV
Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.

• They hiked up this high mountain to get away from the people and to pray. And while they were praying, Peter, James, and John fell asleep, just like at the Garden of Gethsemane. (And how often are we “asleep” attending to other things when we are to be praying?)
• I don’t know how this all happened, but perhaps someone rolled over or looked up and then saw Jesus glowing, and they became “fully awake.” I think you would have as well if you saw what they saw.
• Mark records:

Mark 9:2b-3 ESV
And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

• Matthew says:

Matt 17:2 ESV
And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

• Luke adds:

Luke 9:29-30 ESV
And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.

• The “transfiguration” consisted of Jesus’s face being “altered” so that His face “shone like the sun,” and His clothing became “radiant, dazzling, intensely white,” whiter than anyone on earth could bleach them.

• Okay, so what is this about? The Greek word translated “transfigured” is the word “metamorphoo,” from which we get our word “metamorphosis,” which means to be changed or altered or transformed. So, Jesus was changed, so that His face “shone like the sun.” There is one other time where someone’s face was changed and said to be glowing. Do you know who it was? If you said “Moses” you are right. It is recorded of him that:

Ex 34:29-30 ESV
When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30 Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

• Being in God’s presence, being in His word and talking with Him changes us. It makes us become more glorious and it makes us become more like Christ. The more we are with Him, the more we become like Him. Paul puts it this way:

2 Cor 3:18 ESV
And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

• The word in this verse “being transformed” is the same Greek word that is used to describe the “transfiguration” in the Gospels. When we spend time with Jesus, “beholding the glory of the
Lord,” we are being transformed into His image by the power of the Spirit. The same Greek word is used in Romans where we are told:

**Rom 12:2 ESV**

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

- We are changed into something else when we renew our minds by being in God’s word, in God’s presence talking with Him. This happens to us as well from one degree to another when we spend time with Him. We become more like Him because His Spirit changes us.
- It happens to us in degrees, but in Jesus it was just revealed to them with glory. Now Moses’ shining was absorbed and reflected, but the glory of Jesus was “like the sun.” His shining was not a reflection, but He was indeed the source of the Glory. He indeed was the “light” that had come into the world.
- Not only was His face changed, but His clothing as well. This was something new. There was no one in the Old Testament that had his clothing transformed as well. It did not even happen to Moses on the mountain. There are three creatures that are described in the Bible wearing white cloths. First, God the Father is described this way in Daniel:

**Dan 7:9 ESV**

“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool;”

- If the transformation of Jesus’s clothing were pointing to this, His hair would be changed as well, but it was not. This is not what this transformation was pointing to.
- The second time we see a creature dressed in white is an angel of the Lord at the tomb:

**Matt 28:2-3 ESV**

an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

- We know that Jesus was not an angel, so we can rule this out.
- The third place that white clothing is mentioned is in the book of Revelation where Jesus says:

**Rev 3:5 ESV**

The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments.

- The transformation of Jesus’s clothes was a foreshadow of what He was going to do. It points out that not only was He the radiance of God, but also that He was the one who would overcome and conquer both sin and death. The transformation was to show who He truly was and what He was going to do. This was illustrated to them, who still did not know fully who He was and were confused and questioned what He was going to do. That was not the only point that was being made here, and we have other things in this passage to investigate.

The conversation
Mark 9:4 ESV
And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

- Okay, so what was this about? Luke helps us by giving us some more information:

Luke 9:30-31 ESV
And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

- There were these two men, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory, which I take to mean that they had glorified clothing and appearance as well, and they were talking with Jesus about “his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” So they were talking to Jesus about His death, how it was to happen, and what it would accomplish.
- Why Moses and Elijah? Both met with God on a mountain (Ex. 34, I Kings 19), and both of them were told about their “departure” (Numbers 27:12, 2 Kings 2). There were personal similarities and experiences that they all shared. But I believe the main reason it was these two on the mountain with Jesus was because Moses wrote the beginning of the Old Testament and Elijah was the last person mentioned at the end of the Old Testament (Mal. 4:5-6). They were the representatives of the whole Old Testament and they embodied the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah).
- With these two, God was communicating that all of the Old Testament points toward and speaks to Jesus and what He would accomplish in and through His death. The Old Testament points to who Jesus was, what He would do, and what this means for everyone who has ever lived. Look for these things when you read the Old Testament. Paul describes it this way:

2 Cor 3:7-11 ESV
Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses’ face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. 10 Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

- The Old Testament had a certain kind of glory that was to fade away – namely it taught us that we and lawbreakers and therefore must pay the penalty. But the glory of the New Testament is that by the power of the Spirit we could be made righteous, and this new glory was far better and lasting than the old. The New Testament was built upon the Old Testament but supersedes and surpasses it. This is now the age that we are living in, and this is how we are to interpret the Bible.
- Another point for us in this conversation between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah is that those who have lived on the earth are just “departed” from it. They are still alive and are recognized as to who they are. They may also have an awareness and knowledge of things on earth. This means that we do not have to fear death, that those who are in Christ will live in the presence of Glory for all eternity. If you are concerned about your death, don’t be. The real thing that you should
be concerned about is that your name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Death will not have the final word, and death is not the worst thing that can happen to you.

• What happens next is of great importance as well.

The **exaltation**

**Mark 9:5-8 ESV**
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.” 6 For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” 8 And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

• When Peter, James, and John saw Jesus and saw Moses and Elijah they were “terrified.” You would be too if you saw what they saw. And it gets worse. When the cloud came, they were “afraid as they entered it” and then when the voice rang out Matthew records:

**Matt 17:6-8 ESV**
When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.”

• Do you know what is the number one response that people have when they truly encounter God? Fear and terror. God must always help people in their fear. Don’t make God out to be some figment of the imagination or something we can comprehend or manage. But thank God that Jesus helps us with our fear of God and reaches out to us and makes us rise.

• What God communicated to them is of utmost importance. The first time we heard the voice of God was to Jesus and for Jesus at His baptism.

**Mark 1:11 ESV**
You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.

• This “voice from heaven” was for the benefit of Jesus as a confirmation of God’s love and pleasure in Him. The second “voice from heaven” was not speaking to Jesus, but He was speaking directly to the disciples:

**Mark 9:7b ESV**
“This is my beloved Son; listen to him.”

• This voice was to let them know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus was indeed The Son of God, that He was beloved, that He was the “Chosen One” (Luke 9:35), and that God was “well pleased with Him” (Matt. 17:5). This was a further confirmation of who He was and that they were to “listen to Him!” It emphasized that the voice of Jesus was greater than the Old Testament, that the words of Jesus were authoritative, that Jesus was to be listened to and followed, not dismissed or corrected or dissected but listened to, honored, and followed. The most important thing is where we stand with Jesus and His word.
• Now in your life currently, are you listening to Jesus? Are you looking to what He is saying to you through His word being illuminated by His Spirit? There are a ton of “voices” that are calling and speaking to us all the time. Which voice are you listening to? The voice that God tells us to listen to and focus on and know is the voice of Jesus.

John 10:27-30 ESV
My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

• If you are His sheep, you will hear His voice, you will know Him, and He will know you and you will follow Him. Make sure you are listening to and focused in on what Jesus is saying to you among all the other voices that are vying for your attention.
• After all these things happened, they came down the mountain, and we have one final conversation before this passage ends.

The expectation

Mark 9:9-13 ESV
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. 10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. 11 And they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” 12 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? 13 But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

• Jesus told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the resurrection. At that time, they would have a full understanding of what had happened on the mountain, but until then they were to keep quiet about it. At that time, they did not understand what “rising from the dead” might mean. They were still puzzled about what this was about, so they asked Jesus – if you are going to suffer and die and rise again, what was the point of Elijah coming first? Wasn’t Elijah to “prepare the way of the Lord and make straight paths for Him” (Mark 1:2-3)? Didn’t that mean that everyone who was opposing and in the way of Jesus would be taken out?
• They did not understand yet that this preparing was a cleansing of sin through repentance, so that they could receive the King of Glory in their hearts. They were still struggling with the understanding of the suffering King. Jesus told them that indeed Elijah did come, (which was John the Baptist, Matt. 17:13), and they did to Him whatever they pleased, as was written about him. They will also do whatever they please to Jesus, as it is written about Him. They were to see what was written in the Old Testament for what it really says and know that what it says will happen. What we see in the New Testament will also happen as well.

Conclusion

• Hopefully by now you have a better understanding of what is going on in this passage, what happened, what it is all about, and what it means for you and your life. Jesus truly is the Son of God, and you should listen to Him above all other voices. Focus on what He is saying to you especially right now. Listen to Him and follow what He says.
• Spending time in God’s word, spending time in His presence, and communicating with Him changes us to be like Him and His glory. Make sure to spend time with Him.
• Know that when you die, it is not the end but a “departure” for a time. You will still be alive. So you don’t have to worry about death. But make sure that you know Jesus, and that He knows you, that you listen to His voice and you follow Him!
• Prayer.