

BAPTIST BIBLE SEMINARY

DISCOURSE FUNCTION OF VERBAL ASPECT IN MARK 8:27-9:1

A PAPER SUBMITTED TO
DR. RODNEY DECKER
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE
EXEGESIS OF MARK
NT811

BY
PAUL E. BUSSOM

CLARKS SUMMIT, PA
APRIL 15, 1999

PERFECTIVE ASPECT (AORIST)

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT (PRESENT/IMPERFECT)

27 Kai; **ephlqen** ol jhsou" kai; oilmaqhtai; aujtou eij" ta;" kwma" Kaisareia" th" Filippou; kai; ejh th/obw/ **ephrwta** tou;" maqhta;" aujtou legwn aujtoi": tina me **legousin** oilaqrwpoi eihai

; 28 oilde; **eipan** aujtw/ legonte" »ofti% jlwannhn ton baptisthn, kai; a||loi jHlian, a||loi de; oftí eij" tw n profhtwn.

29 kai; aujto;" **ephrwta** aujtou!": uhei" de; tina me **legete** eihai; apokriqei;" ol Petro" **legei** aujtw/ su; ei\ol cristol".

30 kai; **epetimhsen** aujtoi" iha mhdeni; **legwsin** peri; aujtou.

31 Kai; **hrxato** didaskein aujtou;" oftí dei ton uibn tou aqrw pou polla; paqein kai; apodokimasqh nai upo; tw n presbuterwn kai; tw n arcierewn kai; tw n grammatewn kai; apoktanqh nai kai; meta; trei" hmera" ajnasth nai:

32 kai; parrhsia/ ton logon **ejal ei**. kai; prosl abomeno" ol Petro" aujton **hrxato** epitiman aujtw/

33 oilde; epistrafei;" kai; idwn tou;" maqhta;" aujtou **epetimhsen** Petrw/ kai; **legei**: upage opisw mou, satana, oftí ouj **fronei**" ta; tou qeou a||la; ta; tw n aqrw pwn.

34 Kai; proskalesameno" ton oql on sun toi" maqhtai" aujtou **eipen** aujtoi": eij ti" **qel ei** opisw mou aqolouqein, **aparnhsasqw** eauton kai; **ajratw** ton stauron aujtou kai; aqolouqeitw moi.

35 o|" gar ejan **qel h/** thn yuchn aujtou swsai **apolesei** aujthn: o|" d/ ah **apolesei** thn yuchn aujtou efeken ejnou kai; tou eujagel iou **swsei** aujthn.

36 tivgar **wfeli ei** aqrwpon kerdhsai ton kosmon oql on kai; zhmiwqh nai thn yuchn aujtou;

37 tivgar **doi** aqrwpo" ajtal lagma th" yuch" aujtou

; 38 o|" gar ejan **epaiscunqh**/me kai; tou;" ejnou;" logou" ejh th/ genea/ tauth/ th/ moical idi kai; amartwlw/, kai; oluib;" tou aqrw pou **epaiscunqh setai** aujton, oftan **elqh/** ejh th/doxh/ tou patro;" aujtou meta; tw n aggel wn tw n agiwn.

1 Kai; **el egen** aujtoi": ajmh n **legw** umin oftí **eisin** tine" wde tw n esthkoitwn oi{ tine" oujm h; **geuswntai** qanaitou efw" ah **idwsin** thn basileian tou qeou eij hl uqian ej dunamei.

PERFECTIVE ASPECT (AORIST)

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT (PRESENT/IMPERFECT)

27 And Jesus **went out**, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He **questioned** His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people **say** that I am?”

28 And they **told** Him, saying, “John the Baptist; and others *say* Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.”

29 And He *continued* by **questioning** them, “But who do you **say** that I am?” Peter ***answered** and ***said** to Him, “Thou art the Christ.”

30 And He **warned** them **to tell** no one about Him.

31 And He **began** to teach them 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.

32 And He was **stating** the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and **began** to rebuke Him.

33 But turning around and seeing His disciples, He **rebuked** Peter, and ***said**, “**Get behind** Me, Satan; for you **are not setting your mind** on God’s interests, but man’s.”

34 And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and **said** to them, “If anyone **wishes** to come after Me, **let him deny** himself, and **take up** his cross, and **follow** Me.

35 “For whoever **wishes** to save his life shall **lose** it; but whoever **loses** his life for My sake and the gospel’s shall **save** it.

36 “For what **does it profit** a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

37 “For what shall a man **give** in exchange for his soul?

38 “For whoever is **ashamed** of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man **will also be ashamed** of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

1 **AND** He **was saying** to them, “Truly I **say** to you, there **are** some of those who are standing here who shall not **taste** death until they **see** the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

exh qen	3SAPI > ex ercomai	PERFECTIVE
ep hrwta	3SIAI > e perwtaw	IMPERFECTIVE
legousin	3PPAI > legw	IMPERFECTIVE
eip an	3SAAI > legw	PERFECTIVE
ep hrwta	3SIAI > e perwtaw	IMPERFECTIVE
legete	2PPAI > legw	IMPERFECTIVE
legei	3SPAI > legw	IMPERFECTIVE
ep etimhsen	3SAAI > e pitinaw	PERFECTIVE
legwsin	3PPAS > legw	IMPERFECTIVE
h xato	3SAMI > a xw	PERFECTIVE
dei	3SPAI > dei	IMPERFECTIVE
e al ei	3SIAI > l al ew	IMPERFECTIVE
h xato	3SAMI > a xw	PERFECTIVE
ep etimhsen	3SAAI > e pitinaw	PERFECTIVE
legei	3SPAI > legw	IMPERFECTIVE
u page	2SPAM > u pagw	IMPERFECTIVE
fronei"	2SPAI > fronew	IMPERFECTIVE
eip en	3SAAI > legw	PERFECTIVE
qel ei	3SPAI > qel w	IMPERFECTIVE
ap arnhsasqw	3SMM > ap arnhsasqw	PERFECTIVE
ar atw	3SAAM > ar w	PERFECTIVE
ak ol ouqeitw	3SPAM > ak ol ouqeitw	IMPERFECTIVE
qel h/	3SPAS > qel w	IMPERFECTIVE
ap ol e sei	3SFAI > ap ol l umi	
ap ol e sei	3SFAI > ap ol l umi	
sw sei	3SFAI > swzw	
w fel ei	3SPAI > w fel ew	IMPERFECTIVE
doi	3SAAS > didwmi	PERFECTIVE
ep aiscunqh/	3SAPS > ep aiscunomai	PERFECTIVE
ep aiscunqh setai	3SFPI > ep aiscunomai	
e qh/	3SAAS > e x comai	PERFECTIVE
e egen	3SIAI > legw	IMPERFECTIVE
legw	1SPAI > legw	IMPERFECTIVE
eij sin	3PPAI > eijni	IMPERFECTIVE
geuswntai	3PAMS > geusomai	PERFECTIVE
i dwsin	3PAAS > eij on	PERFECTIVE

The aspect of the verbs has significant functions within any narrative, and especially in discourse. This paper will analyze the function of aspect in Mark 8:27-9:1. The three areas discussed are verbal opposition, planes of discourse, and visualization.

By choosing one aspect over another, the original writer made a decision of emphasis and meaning. The aorist, or perfective aspect, is the least heavily weighted and carries the least significant meaning. The imperfective aspect is more heavily weighted, and to use it in opposition to the perfective implies greater significance. The stative is the most heavily weighted and carries a greater significance than all other forms.¹

How does this pericope use verbal opposition? First, note that there are no verbs with stative aspect. All the verbs vary between perfective, imperfective, and no aspect. Most places where the aspect is different are best understood in the area of planes of discourse, which will follow. But verse 8:34, 8:36-38 and 9:1 use verbal opposition to indicate some significance.

In Mark 8:34 the first two verbs of Jesus' quote have perfective aspect and the last one (ἀκολουθεῖτω) has imperfective aspect. Since this is more heavily weighed, the emphasis of this verse is on the "follow me" theme, not the first two. But that does not mean the other two are to be neglected.

In Mark 8:36-38 Jesus' quote continues to vary between imperfective and perfective aspect. The reason for the shift between Mark 8:36 and Mark 8:37 might be that Mark 8:36 poses a question and Mark 8:37 rephrases the same question. The shift in Mark 8:38 seems to emphasize the warning that Jesus will be ashamed of those who do not follow him in the way he prescribes.

¹ Porter, Stanley E., *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academics Press, 1996), 21-27.

Lastly, Mark 9:1 also shifts in the use of aspect. Though, the significance is uncertain, it is obvious that the last two verbs are the least weighted in this passage. Ironically it is these two verbs, and their context, that causes much debate.

Another way aspect is used is in planes of discourse. The aorist “forms the basis of the discourse”². The present and imperfect “introduces significant characters and makes appropriate climatic references to concrete situations.”³ This pericope is a good example of this use of aspect. To look just at the aorists, one can get a feel for what is happening. For example, look at Mark 8:27-34 (below). Mark 8:35-9:1 does vary in its use of verbal forms, but for the purpose of verbal opposition.

Jesus went out
They told him
He warned them
He began to teach
(Peter) began to rebuke
He rebuked Peter
(Jesus) said to them

The third way aspect is used is visualization. How did the original writer intend use to view the actions he wrote about. A few examples from Mark 8:32-34 will be most useful in demonstrating how visualization is important to understanding the passage. In Mark 8:32 *dei* is imperfective, which means it describes the action as a process. This makes sense since Jesus is predicting what he must endure. He is (or they are, depending how you look at the situation) in the process of accomplishing these things. In Mark 8:34, *qel ei* is imperfective, *aparnhsasqw* is perfective, *ajratw* is perfective, and *ajkolouqeitw* is imperfective. Mark wants us to understand “wishes” as being in process,

² Ibid., 23.

³ Ibid., 23.

which makes logical sense since Jesus is posing a challenge to the listeners. The next two verbs are perfective, which means the action is described as a whole, without comment to whether it is or is not a process. Perhaps these two words are Jesus' way of describing a salvation experience. The last verb is imperfective, so the idea of "follow me" is to be understood as an action in process, which probably refers to continued obedience beyond denying oneself and taking up one's cross.

As shown above, aspect does serve particular functions in the discourse of Mark 8:27-9:1. By understanding aspect, the emphasis and intended meaning of the original writer, Mark, can be grasped more fully. Also, the aspect of the verbs, along with the grammatical structure should impact the homiletical use of this pericope.