



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V23 N3 January 17, 2021

KING JESUS

"A Preview of Coming Attractions"

Mark 9:2-13

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Authority of the Bible

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17



To whom
are Christ
followers to
listen?

While God's words to Peter, James, and John on transfiguration mountain concern how they as disciples should regard Jesus, not the Bible, they do concern *what* or in this case *who* has the right to command the beliefs and actions of Christ followers. A cloud appeared on that high mountain and out of that cloud came a voice saying, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" (Mk 9:7; cf., Mt 17:5; Lk 9:35). Given the imagery, there can be no doubt that God spoke to the disciples that day, directing them to listen to and to obey his Son. Since he addressed them as disciples, what God said to them applies to all disciples. Christ followers are to believe that Jesus, the incarnate word of God, has the right to command their belief and action. Of course, what can be said about the *incarnate* word can also be said about the *written* word; both speak with divine authority.

From the cloud, God directed the disciples to *listen to Jesus*, a command that has two-fold implications. First, it implies that they are to *believe* what Jesus tells them, even if what he tells them is *hard to comprehend*. From the immediate context, they are to believe Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God (Mk 8:29; cf., Mt 16:16). And they are to believe Jesus' prediction that he, 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" (v. 31) — hard words for them to swallow since they do not comprehend how Jesus can be the Messiah and yet, be destined to die. What's more, they are to believe the Son of Man, will "rise from the dead" (v. 32). Obviously, they believe in the resurrection of the dead at the end of time as pious Jews do (Da 12:2; cf., Jn 11:23-24), but they cannot wrap their minds around the resurrection of anyone prior to then. And finally, there is the *problem* of Elijah. They are to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and the kingdom has drawn near (1:1; 8:29), but according to the teachers of the law, Elijah, whom God promised to send, must come first (Mk 9:11), which he had not. Jesus resolves the problem by affirming the scribes' interpretation of Malachi's prophecy (Mal 4:5) but

correcting their assumption that Elijah had not come. He has come in the person of John the Baptist (Mt 17:13), but according to Jesus, "they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him" (9:13).

Second, God's command to disciples implies that they are to *do* what Jesus tells them, even if what he tells them is *hard to do*. One commentator is too quick to dismiss the implications of God's command for *discipleship*. He writes: "The second aspect of the voice's message, 'Hear him,' is often interpreted as an allusion to Deut. 18:15 (Marcus 1992: 81) and a reference to the need to listen to Jesus' teaching on discipleship found in 8:34-38. It is better, however, to interpret this as a rebuke of Peter's (and the disciples') refusal to accept Jesus's teachings concerning his passion, that is, to 8:32b-33 (J. Edwards 2002: 268)" (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 419). In fact, it is far better, to interpret it as both. The command clearly has implications for what disciples are to believe. They are to *believe* what Jesus tells them — in this context about his upcoming death and resurrection. But it just as clearly has implications for what disciples are to *do*. Jesus specifically tells those who want to be his disciples to "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (8:34). In the same breath, he goes on to warn them, "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels" (v. 38). Consider the following more balanced interpretation of God's command, "Listen to him!" He writes: "The exhortation has bearing upon *all of Jesus' words*, but has particular relevance to the new instruction Jesus had been giving to his followers concerning the necessity of his suffering and of *their participation in his humiliation*. [8:34-38] There can be no doubt that Mark intended his congregation in Rome to take this word to heart" (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT, 321, italics added).

Christ followers submit to a higher authority, namely, that of the incarnate word and of the written word. They recognize the right of divine authority to command their belief and action.

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. 3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. 4 And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

5 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." 6 (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

7 Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

8 Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

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. 10 They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

11 And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

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? 13 But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him."

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "After six days" in v. 2.
- Circle "high mountain" in v. 2.
- Circle "was transfigured" in v. 2.
- Underline "Elijah and Moses" in v. 4.
- Circle "a cloud" in v. 7.
- Highlight "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" in v. 7.
- Bracket "what 'rising from the dead' meant" in v. 10.
- Circle "first" in v. 11.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 13.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The transfiguration occurred “after six days.” After what?
 2. What has Mark told his readers about Peter, James, and John? (See 1:16-20; 3:16-17; 5:37-43; 8:27-30.)
 3. What did the three see when Jesus was *transfigured*?
 4. Explain the *significance* of the appearance of Elijah and Moses. (See note on v. 4.)
 5. What do you make of Peter’s “three shelters” suggestion?
 6. Comment on the “cloud” and the “voice.”
 7. Unpack the implications of the command, “Listen to him!”
 8. Coming down from the mountain, the three debated what “rising from the dead” meant. What didn’t they understand?
 9. Identify an excuse the teachers of the law used to reject Jesus and his message and how Jesus replied to it.
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about the *various* truths affirmed by the story of the transfiguration.
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Commentary On The Text

Mark tells his readers that the transfiguration occurred “after six days,” that is, six days after the events recorded in 8:27-9:1, which include Peter’s confession (8:29), Jesus’ prediction of his suffering, death, resurrection (vv. 31-32), and future glory (v. 38) as well as his instruction regarding discipleship (vv. 34-38). This chronological link ties 9:2-13 to 8:27-9:1, thereby providing the context in which to interpret the meaning of the divine voice’s command regarding Jesus, “Listen to him!” (9:7). What’s more, this time reference recalls Moses’ six-day preparation before God appeared to him on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:16). Commentators typically divide verses 2-13 into two parts—the first, pertaining to the transfiguration (vv. 2-8), that is, what happened *on* the “high mountain” and the second, pertaining to a question concerning Elijah (vv. 9-13), that is, what happened *on the way down* from the mountain. On the significance of the transfiguration and its place in Mark’s narrative, one commentator, who sees it as a “bridge” between Jesus’ public ministry in Galilee and his passion in Jerusalem, writes: “A turning point, indeed a crisis, in the narrative is reached when Jesus announces his passion. In the minds of most, talk of death surely implied defeat and failure of mission. What is needed is a convincing and dramatic indication that Jesus continues to be God’s agent of redemption. The transfiguration serves this purpose. It is intended to reassure Mark’s readers that the necessity of Jesus’ death does not result from a withdrawal of heavenly favor. Jesus’ mission and purpose have not been compromised. God is just as much with Jesus after the announcement of his passion as he was after his baptism, and he still claims Jesus as his unique Son” (Craig A. Evans, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34B, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 38-39).

As the story goes, Jesus took Peter, James and John, his inner circle of disciples, with him up a high mountain where they found themselves all alone. There Jesus was “transfigured,” that is, “His appearance changed from the inside out, right before their eyes” (Msg). The change was in Jesus rather than in his clothes; his dazzling white garments merely attested to that change. The other Gospel writers agree. According to Matthew, “His face shown like the sun” (17:2), and according to Luke, “the appearance of his face changed” (9:29). Clearly, what the disciples saw was the blinding brilliance of the essential glory that inherently belonged to Jesus, God’s incarnate Son (cf. Jn 1:14; 2Pe 1:16-18). One commentator describes it this way: “This was the glory that belongs to God which was revealed in the tabernacle (Exod. 40:34-38). This glory was revealed again in the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11). It was that glory which departed from the temple because of Israel’s apostasy and unbelief (Ezek. 10:18; 11:22-23). Now this glory was on the earth in the person of Jesus Christ. This glory would be revealed to Stephen (Acts 7:55-56), to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:3; 22:6, 11; 26:13), and once again to John (Rev. 1:16). This glory will be revealed to the world when Jesus Christ comes to this

earth again (Matt. 24:30; 25:31)” (J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 256). On transfiguration mountain, God gave the disciples a proleptic glimpse of the glory “all the peoples on earth” (Mt 24:30) will see in the future when the Son of Man “comes in his Father’s glory with his holy angels” (Mk 8:38). No wonder Elijah and Moses appeared before them; both were featured in end-time hopes.

And then, immediately after Peter’s misguided “three shelters” proposal (vv. 5-6), all six characters were engulfed in a cloud, denoting God’s presence, and out of the cloud, the divine voice attested again to the identity of Jesus. At Jesus’ baptism, God’s words indicated he was speaking to *Jesus* for *his* benefit: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” (Mk 1:11). At Jesus’ transfiguration, they indicated he was speaking to the *disciples* for *their* benefit: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” The divine command implied first, that the disciples were *to believe* what Jesus taught regarding who he was, namely, the Messiah and the Son of God (8:29b-30), and what lay in store for him, namely, suffering, death, resurrection (v. 31), and future glory (v. 38), and second, that they are *to do* what he has directed disciples to do, namely, “deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (v. 34). After the sudden disappearance of Moses and Elijah, the disciples were left alone with Jesus, suggesting that they were to follow him alone, that is, to obey everything he commanded (cf., Mt 28:20).

On the way down the mountain, Jesus ordered the disciples to keep what they had seen to themselves until after “the Son of Man had risen from the dead” (v. 9), which they apparently did (see Lk 9:36). Nevertheless, they continued to debate the meaning of “rising from the dead” since “there was no precedent of an individual rising from the dead before the general resurrection at the end of history” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 211). However, they did stop debating long enough to ask Jesus a question: “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?” (v. 11). The scribes and Jesus’ other opponents had apparently concluded that Jesus could not be the Messiah (8:29) and the kingdom of God could not have drawn near (1:1) because Elijah had not yet come. In reply, Jesus agreed with them: “To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things” (v. 12). And yet still, “the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected” (v. 12), because the Old Testament anticipated “not only a Messiah who would reign but also a Messiah who would suffer and die to provide salvation for sinners. The death of Christ had to precede the reign of Christ” (Pentecost, 258). But Jesus also disagreed with them: “But I tell you, Elijah has come” (v. 13a)—namely, in the person of John the Baptist, as indicated by his following words: “they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him” (v. 13b; cf., Mt 17:13). What Jezebel had tried unsuccessfully to do to Elijah (1Ki 19:1-3), Herodias did successfully do to John the Baptist with Herod’s cooperation (Mk 6:17-28).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 2 *after six days*

“The chronological notation ‘after six days’ recalls Exod 24:16. It was after six days that God spoke out of the cloud to Moses” (Craig A. Evans, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34B, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 35). “The chronological note, ‘after six days,’ also expressly connects the Transfiguration to the previous incident. Peter confesses Jesus to be the Christ, and Jesus divulges his future suffering, warns of the coming judgment when the Son of Man comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels, and promises that some present will see the kingdom coming in power before they died (8:27-9:1)” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 343).

v. 2 *high mountain*

Mark does not identify the “high mountain.” Suggested identifications include: Mount Hermon about 15 miles north-east of Caesarea Philippi (8:27), and Mount Tabor about 30 miles south-east of Capernaum and 11 miles west of the Sea of Galilee. According to one commentator, “A more plausible possibility [since Jesus and the disciples are in Capernaum in 9:33 and they are apparently moving south towards Jerusalem] is Mount Meiron, about 50 miles (80 km) from Caesarea Philippi and 10 miles (16 km) east of Meroth (see comment on 8:34) as the crow flies, on the northern boundary of Upper Galilee” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 209). “The height of the mountain implies contact with heaven (or, as Gundry, 457, puts it ‘a suburb of heaven’). The heavenly voice in v 7 is therefore not out of place or unexpected” (Evans, 35).

v. 2 *was transfigured*

Cf., Mt 17:2; 24:27, 30; Lk 9:29; Jn 1:14; 2Pe 1:16-17. The Greek verb (*metamorphōthē*, cf., Eng. “metamorphosis”), which means “to change in a manner visible to others” (BDAG, 639) is a *divine passive*, meaning God was responsible for the transfiguration. “It is a proleptic glimpse of the glory of the Son of Man/Son of God in his future coming (8:38), when the kingdom comes in power (9:1). In light of the understanding of the transfiguration in Matt. 16:28 and 2 Pet. 1:16-18 as a foreshadowing of the parousia, and above all by Mark’s placement of 8:38 and 9:1 before the present account, it seems best to understand the theological meaning of the transfiguration as an anticipation of the future manifestation of the Son of Man/Son of God when he comes in glory and thus as the fulfillment of the promise made in 9:1” (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 417).

v. 4 *Elijah and Moses*

Two explanations for the appearance of these two figures are: (1) “Both Elijah and Moses featured in end-time hopes: Elijah was expected to return (Mal. 4:5) . . . and there were tradi-

tions that a ‘prophet like Moses’ would come (Deut. 18:15-19; cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37) . . . (2) Both Elijah and Moses encountered God on Mount Sinai (Horeb) and heard his voice (Exod. 19-24; 1 Kgs 19). Now Jesus, on another high mountain, meets with them before God speaks, again, from the cloud, confirming him in their presence as the messianic Son who brings to fulfilment the promises of God” (Schnabel, 210).

v. 7 *a cloud*

“The cloud – which probably covered the entire mountain top: it *overshadowed* (NRSV) Jesus, the disciples and the two visitors – symbolizes God’s presence on the mountain, as in the Sinai narrative (Exod. 19:9, 16; 24:15-16; 34:5) when God’s voice spoke from the cloud (Exod. 19:9; 24:16; 24:18-25:1; 34:5)” (Schnabel, 210).

v. 7 *my Son, whom I love*

Cf., “my beloved Son” (ESV); “my one dear Son” (NET). “*Grk* ‘my beloved Son,’ or ‘my Son, the beloved [one].’ The force of [*agapētos*] is often ‘pertaining to one who is the only one of his or her class, but at the same time is particularly loved and cherished’ (L&N 58.53; cf. also BDAG 7 s.v. 1)” (*The NET Bible*, 25^{tn} on Mk 9:7). “These words echo those spoken at Jesus’ baptism (Mark 1:11), but in the present instance the address is in the third person because God is speaking to the disciples and not to Jesus” (Evans, 38).

v. 10 *rising from the dead*

“Most Jews in the first century believed in the resurrection (Mark 12:18-27); even Herod knows of it (6:14, 16). The phrase ‘the rising from the dead,’ therefore, does not refer to resurrection in general but specifically to the Son of Man’s rising from the dead (9:9)” (Garland, 346-47; see also Stein, 424). The disciples are bewildered “since there was no precedent of an individual rising from the dead before the general resurrection at the end of history” (Schnabel, 211).

v. 11 *first*

Cf., Mt 17:13. “If Jesus’s death, resurrection, and return (8:31, 38; 9:9) are intimately associated with the coming of the kingdom of God in power (9:1, 2-8), and if the OT promise (Mal. 4:5-6) says that Elijah would return before that time (i.e., the day of the Lord) to restore all things, then why has Elijah not returned? . . . The scribal objection, however, errs in not recognizing that Elijah has already returned” (Stein, 425, 26).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Disciples are to listen to Jesus, that is, *believe* what he taught and *do* what he commanded, for he is the Messiah and the beloved Son of God.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

We have a new puppy in the house and it's totally like having a newborn baby. Our world has turned completely upside down and I have so many questions. How do we kennel train? How much food does she get? How big will this Lab-ish puppy get? Will I ever sleep again? Honestly, I need a *Dogs for Dummies* book. One important part of asking questions is finding a reliable "go to" source. The internet can be pretty overwhelming. Friends are a great place to start but I really don't want to bother anyone during the 3:00 a.m. yapfest. And, if I'm being totally honest, I'm a little prideful; I feel like I should be able to work this out on my own. Throughout our faith journey we're bound to have questions. Where's the book of Habakkuk? What does this scripture mean? Why did Peter say that? We might even have personal questions of God. Why is this happening to me? Why did you say "no" when I prayed so hard? How comfortable are you going to God with questions? How comfortable are your kids asking questions? God doesn't turn His back on us when we humbly go to Him hoping for clarification. He doesn't scold us when we don't understand His Word. He won't be angry when we ponder things related to Him. Our faith isn't diminished when we doubt. In fact, I believe it's strengthened. Go ahead and ask those hard questions. Enjoy pondering things of God with your whole family. When we seek Him with our whole heart, He promises we will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13).

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Mark 9:2-13.

1. List all the people with Jesus on the mountain.
2. What did Peter want to build?
3. What did the voice in the cloud say?

What Do You Think?

Why did Jesus tell the disciples not to tell anyone about what happened?

What Do You Do?

What questions do you have for Jesus? Have each member of the family make a list of five questions to ask Jesus and share them at dinner.

CORE COMPETENCY: Authority of the Bible

I believe the Bible is God's book that tells me what to believe and do.

MEMORY VERSE: Luke 11:28

"He replied, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.'"

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for 12 years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org