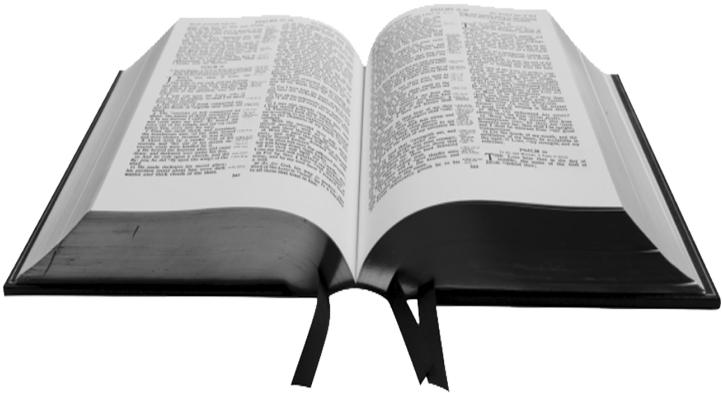


MARK

A Devotional Study



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FOREWORD

The volume you find before you was never intended to appear in book form, at least at the first. The information was gathered and presented as part of devotional studies for the students of Christ's Way Bible Institute. It is our belief that the gospel of Mark, while being a smaller work, is a perfect way to introduce the power and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ to the lost, as well as, new converts to Christianity. The gospel of John is, for many, their starting point of faith and individual copies of his gospel have been printed and circulated for many years in evangelism by the denominations, while the gospel of Mark has been neglected, overlooked, or just plain spoken against; especially the last few verses.

I consider the gospel of Mark, in its sixteen chapters, to be a great outline to the work and salvation of Jesus the Christ. Using these chapters and comparing the work to the other gospels gives one a point of reference to the life and work that has literally changed the world. This work in by no means original with me, but was compiled from many other sources to aid the students in our school. Upon consideration that this information in devotional form would provide aid in developing the faith of others, we have made the undertaking to present it in the format you presently find.

It is our prayer that as we have benefited through the years from these great works associated with the study of Mark, more will come to a better understanding of his view of the life and work of our Savior.

As with any earthly undertaking, the shortcomings and mistakes are mine. The glory, both now and forever, is His.

May God bless your journey of understanding,

- Brian L. Barrett

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this work to my beautiful and wonderful wife, Nina. You have been the force behind my successes in life and a great motivator to better my work and myself. We have both made sacrifices to continue the Lord's work and I pray our lives together may still accomplish much more for the kingdom of heaven.

A Devotional Study of the Book of **MARK**

An Introduction to the Study:

Because this is intended to be a devotional study and not a thesis study, we will attempt to cover the various thoughts and ideas of the work of Brother Mark. We will follow along in this book by starting from the first verse of chapter one, to the last verse of chapter 16, in that order. Just as it was written.

May I encourage you to take your time and think about what is being said and not try to just speed through the studies. Mark's gospel although short, compared to the other gospels, can be a very powerful testimony of Christ, none the less. While many denominations prefer John's gospel for various reasons, Mark's has a powerful testimony of Christ as God's son, as having the power of God, and our Savior. Where Biblical cross-references are given, take time to turn and read so you may see how they apply to the verse at hand. Ask questions and discuss the various ideas you may have along the way. This is how we grow in the knowledge of God: 2 Tim. 2:15.

Throughout the study we will make reference to various works used to create the devotional. These shall be enclosed in brackets: [].

Here is a list of the referenced works used and their abbreviations, which will be used in the brackets...

Adam Clarke [AC]

Albert Barnes [AB]

Biblical Illustrator [BI]

Expositor's Bible [EB]

Jamieson Fausset Brown [JFB]

Matthew Henry [MH]

Preacher's Homiletical [PH]

As we enter into our study let us ask: Who Was Mark?

He was also known in the New Testament as John Mark. Mark was his surname and it was of Roman decent: Marcus.

- 1) Had a godly mother: Acts 12:12
- 2) Was related to Barnabas, who himself was a traveling partner of Paul on Paul's first missionary journey: Col. 4:10
- 3) Helper with Paul & Barnabas: Acts 12:25
- 4) Early years have been questioned: Acts 13:13 & Acts 15:38
- 5) Later years was a coworker again of Paul: Col. 4:10 & 2 Tim. 4:11
- 6) Was a companion to Peter: 1 Pet. 5:13

When was the Gospel of Mark written? While the dates vary, it would have been before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Why you may ask? The answer would be that the prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction was given and included in chapter 13. If it was written after 70 A.D. it could be argued that it was a prophecy after the fact and therefore of little value. If, however, it was written before 70 A.D. to warn of the destruction, it would show how Christ had fore-knowledge of future events, thus more evidence of His Deity. It is my view therefore that it was written to the next generation after Jesus' death who were either very young or not yet born when the events of Jesus' life took place. This would place it somewhere around 60-67 A.D. The value then of this gospel would be seen in its first verse:

Mar 1:1... The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

The Gospel has had three beginnings, yet it is right to speak of each as the beginning.

- 1) The beginning as seen in the Divine counsels, when the Gospel was but a thought and plan in the mind of God...

1 Pet. 1:18-20 and Acts 2:23. Let us understand here at this point that there are at least 300 prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament.

- 2) The beginning as seen in the Incarnation, when the Gospel became a person: John 1:1-5.
- 3) The beginning as seen in its believers, when the Gospel becomes a new creation in the heart of the believer: Acts 2:1-47. We need and must understand our role in this...The gospel becomes new today every time a lost soul is introduced to Jesus the Christ. When we explain how God loved us and gave Jesus to save us from our sins. Matthew 28:18-20 & Mark 16:15-16.

Mar 1:2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Mar 1:3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Isa 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isa 40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

Isa 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Mar 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Mar 1:5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

The coming of John the Baptist was the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy in Mal. 4:5-6. The angel that appeared to John's father explains this as such in Luke 1:14-17. Jesus

also states that John was the one of whom the scripture refers: Matthew 11:7-15.

Yet “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ” is a profound agitation and widespread alarm. Lest the soothing words of Jesus should blend like music with the slumber of sinners at ease in Zion, John came preaching repentance, and what is more, a baptism of repentance; not such a lustration as was most familiar to the Mosaic law, administered by the worshipper to himself, but an ablution at other hands, a confession that one is not only soiled, but soiled beyond all cleansing of his own. Formal Judaism was one long struggle for self-purification. The dawn of a new system is visible in the movement of all Judea towards one who bids them throw every such hope away, and come to him for the baptism of repentance, and expect a Greater One, who shall baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire. And the true function of the predicted herald, the best leveling of the rugged ways of humanity for the Promised One to traverse, was in this universal diffusion of the sense of sin. For Christ was not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. [EB]

Note: Jesus was not saying that there were some who needed no repentance, but rather His coming was to make us all see the need to repent: Romans 3:10-23. To seek and save: Luke 19:10.

Mar 1:6 And John was clothed with camel’s hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

Note: John’s dress was of Camel’s Hair, not Camel Shin. What was Camel’s Hair? It was hair from the Camel that was used to make rough material cheaply for sack cloth. Much like our burlap sacks of today. Why did John wear such clothing?

It was the clothing of Repentance: Jonah 3:1-9. A very fitting picture in John’s day of God’s coming judgment and

their need of repentance. Also we might remark that John first came wearing this clothing as a sign of his repentance also.

Mar 1:7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

It is the very purpose of Mark's gospel to help them, as well as us today, to understand the question: Why is this so? Let us keep this question at the heart of our studies into this wonderful gospel. "Why was/is Jesus so worthy?"

Mar 1:8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

See: Mark 9:1. Acts 2:1 and following. Acts 10:44-47.

Mar 1:9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

Mar 1:10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

Joh 1:32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

Joh 1:33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

Joh 1:34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. God sent John with this as the sign of who the savior would be.

Mar 1:11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

God, the Father, makes sure that those around the baptism of Jesus did not miss the importance of who Jesus was in relationship to Him: My Son. See also God's declaration in: Mathew 17:1-8.

Mar 1:12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

Mar 1:13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Before Jesus would speak of other's battle with sin, He Himself, did battle with sin and temptation, even the Devil himself: Becoming victorious. Heb. 4:14-16. We must here comment that temptation is not sin. Giving into temptation is: James 1:12-15.

We may read in more detail from Matthew 4:1-11.

Mar 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

Mar 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

We should understand that while both John and Jesus were preaching at the same time, after Christ's baptism, Mark here records that when John was put in prison Jesus truly began to take the lead to establish His' disciples and prepare them for the Cross and the coming of the church.

Mar 1:16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

Mar 1:17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

Mar 1:18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

Mar 1:19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

Mar 1:20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

While Mark's gospel could leave some with the idea that Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John knew nothing of Jesus before He called them, John's first chapter explains otherwise. As we have explained, Jesus and John were preaching together before John was imprisoned. But it was after John's public ministry that Jesus made a more formal and public effort to present Himself and calling the disciples, later to be called Apostles, was a step forward in taking the message of the kingdom to all of Galilee and Judea, along with a short stay in Samaria.

Mar 1:21 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

God's people, the Jews, met for study and worship in the synagogue every Sabbath, which was Saturday and a part of keeping the day Holy unto the LORD.

Luk 4:16 And he (Jesus) came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Christ had made it His custom, or habit, to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath. That was the day of worship. Today we worship on the Lord's Day (Sunday) and it should be our custom to be where the people of God now meet in the assembly of the church... Hebrews 10:22-25.

Mar 1:22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

How did He teach, what things did He say? An example of His teaching can be found in Matthew 5:1 to 7:27 where it is also stated...Mat 7:28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

Mat 7:29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Mar 1:23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

Mar 1:24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

Mar 1:25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

Mar 1:26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

Mar 1:27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

Mar 1:28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

What was an unclean spirit? They are also called evil spirits, or demons. Jesus demonstrates His power over the spirits of darkness to help us answer that first great question we ask..."Just who was/is Jesus"?

Eph. 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Eph 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

Eph 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Eph 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Eph 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Who could possibly have power over such forces? Mark wants us to think about this power and the one who possessed it. Mark states that this took place immediately and without the need for time. Mark has stated Jesus was the Son of God, we have seen that John recognized Him as the Christ and the Father Himself acknowledged Jesus as “My Son.”

Mar 1:29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

Mar 1:30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.

Mar 1:31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

Simon (Peter) had a wife, and thus a mother-in-law. Here she was sick of a fever and lay in bed. The implication is that she was too sick to be up. How long did it take for Jesus to heal her? Immediately! This is a perfect example of one of Jesus' miracles. Miracles do not require either time or the person's faith. Jesus can alter the laws of nature to bring about healing at anytime. Who is this Jesus?

How can He do these things? This is what Mark wants his readers to consider. He has power over the spiritual world and now shows that He can alter the physical world. Who could do this?

Mar 1:32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

Mar 1:33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

Mar 1:34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

With such an one as Jesus in their midst, all who had been suffering came looking for relief from their various problems, either caused by the physical or spiritual world.. Mark says He healed many that evening as time would allow.

Mar 1:35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

Mark tells us of Jesus relationship with the Father in prayer. If Jesus wanted to be alone and have a quiet time to interact with God, Do we not need these things more?

Mar 1:36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.

Mar 1:37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.

Mar 1:38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

Mar 1:39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

As we have commented, Jesus is now moving into a very public time in His ministry and thus He must begin to travel to spread the gospel of the Kingdom (the church). People did not need to just hear of Him from a great distance, or from someone else, they needed to view Him and the works He was doing, in person. By doing this, they could determine for themselves who they believed Him to be.

Heb 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

Heb 2:4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Mar 1:40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

Mar 1:41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

Mar 1:42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

Mar 1:43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

Mar 1:44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Mar 1:45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

It is difficult for many to understand just how much people suffered from this disease. In Christ's day to see a leper would have no doubt brought great fear to individuals as they contemplated their chance to acquire such a terrible affliction. While people may have longed for healing, few found it.

Yet, Jesus was neither afraid of, nor lacking in ability, to not just treat, but to cure. How long did it take to heal the leper? It happened immediately. Christ can control nature and not only heal. But cure and cleanse.

The Hebrew writer tells us that these miracles confirmed the things being taught. How would one know, in that day, that what Jesus said was true and that He was not just some false prophet that had come to deceive? The miracles gave a lasting confirmation. Every time people saw the cured leper, they would think of who healed him. Every time they saw the one who had a devil or evil spirit, they would know of Christ's power. Yes, even long after Christ went on to another city His works caused people to question...Who is this man?

CHAPTER TWO

Mar 2:1 And again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

Mar 2:2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

Jesus now returns to Capernaum, after traveling through the area of Galilee, and into what would probably be Peter's home. It was here, at Peter's that He was staying in the first chapter of Mark's gospel.

As we can, and will see, the good news of Christ began to be published throughout the region of Galilee. This area was the northern region around the Sea of Galilee, and below this was Samaria, and then Judea. First the people were more interested in what Jesus could do for them, and then later began to consider more closely His teachings. A miracle worker who could cure the problems which had plagued them was not common. Their first hope was for healing, later they would have a deeper understanding of Christ and His work, which would bring to them an eternal hope of Heaven itself.

We can get an idea from these scriptures that Christ was able to draw exceedingly large groups of people together. This is but one event in many of Christ's three year preaching ministry. It is believed He began His earthly ministry at about the age of thirty and continued for about three and a half years.

Mar 2:3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

Mar 2:4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and

when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

The palsy was a disease that affected the nervous system and caused paralysis. It may have affected people in different ways and in different parts of their bodies. This individual was so affected that he had to be carried on a stretcher by four others. When they came close to the house, what a disappointment it must have been to see that there were so many others there that kept them from getting close to Jesus. How could they get Christ's attention with so many there?

They made a choice to go up on the roof and take up the roof so as to be able to let the man be lowered on the stretcher. What desperation, what determination, and what love these four people must have had for the man with the palsy.

Mar 2:5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

We today as we read, would expect Christ to say to the sick man that he was healed and to arise and walk, as He had done no doubt, for many others.

Yet, rather, Jesus uses this event as a teaching moment for certain of the scribes who were thought of as being experts of what the law said. By saying...Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Mar 2:6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

Mar 2:7 Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

This is the question Jesus hoped they would ask. It is a question we need to consider. Who can forgive sins but God? The answer is none. No one other one other than God could offer forgiveness. So, who does this make Jesus to be?

Anyone can claim to be God. There has been many false gods, false prophets, and false teaches who have come

through the history of the world. How do we know the truth? Let us continue and see...

Mar 2:8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

Notice that Jesus did not **hear them say** this, but rather perceived this in His spirit. **He was able to read their minds!** Knowing their thoughts, Jesus then asked...

Mar 2:9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

Which would be easier? Any one can say anything. But, how do we, how does He, prove it?

Mar 2:10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

Mar 2:11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

Mar 2:12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

He heals the man. He had healed many before, but now He teaches us something more, He gets us to think more about who He was. The miracles confirm the teachings. He taught and did the miracle so that we might know that He is God. Mark starts his book with the thought that Jesus was the son of God, but now we are moving forward into an understanding that He was also God in the flesh.

We note that this healing was immediate. How can someone who has a nervous system disorder immediately get up and walk? Even today, with our best medical treatments, if he could be healed, it would take time, how could one who has lain on a bed for so long learn to walk

again, even if it was possible? For us today, it would take weeks or months of physical therapy just to walk. How can one just get up, pick up the bed (stretcher), and walk with it? Miracles are much more than just a healing. They accomplish more than just a cure. It shows the power of the creator, to be able to change the very substance of the person's physical being from damaged to complete. Think about what would have to be accomplished... in their muscles, nerves, and many other parts of the body.

What do we make of this? Jesus was God, and not only could He heal, but forgive sins. Remember: Jesus came that we might be forgiven of our sins... Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Mar 2:13 And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

The city of Capernaum was by the Sea of Galilee. It was here that Peter, Andrew, James, and John had been fishermen. As Christ goes by the sea, the multitude comes looking for Him. It is here that He uses the sea side as a place of teaching and learning. We should never believe that the teaching of God's will and word much take place in a certain building or place.

In this thought let us consider what John records of Jesus speaking to the woman of Samaria...

Joh 4:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Joh 4:20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Joh 4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Joh 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

Joh 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

Joh 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Whether we worship and study in our homes, a church building, or in the open...If we worship and study in the right spirit and seek and follow truth, God sees and knows, and will bless our efforts... Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Mar 2:14 And as he passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

Levi is another name for Matthew. He was writer of the first gospel in the New Testament..

Sitting at the receipt of toll (tax), in the act of levying from his own nation(the jews) the dues of the conqueror (Roman Taxes), Levi the publican (tax collector) received the call to become an Apostle and Evangelist. It was a resolute defiance of the pharisaic judgment. It was a memorable rebuke for those timid slaves of expediency who nurse their influence, refuse to give offense, fear to “mar their usefulness” by “compromising themselves,” and so make their whole life one abject compromise, and let all emphatic usefulness go by.

Here is one upon whom the bigot scowls more darkly still than upon Jesus Himself, by whom the Roman yoke is pressed upon Hebrew necks, and apostate in men’s judgment from the national faith and hope. And such judgments sadly verify themselves; a despised man easily becomes despicable.

But however Levi came by so strange and hateful an office, Jesus saw in him no slavish earner of vile bread by

doing the foreigner's hateful work. He was more willing than they who scorned him to follow the true King of Israel. It is even possible that the national humiliations to which his very office testified led him to other aspirations, longings after a spiritual kingdom beyond reach of the sword or the exactions of Rome. For his Gospel is full of the true kingdom of heaven, the spiritual fulfillments of prophecy, and the relations between the Old Testament and the Messiah. [EB]

Here it would also seem, at a light reading of this scripture, that Jesus just calls Matthew to the service of the Kingdom and he without much thought follows Christ. With the multitudes hearing and coming to Christ's teaching, Matthew would have had to have heard of Jesus and know, if just from others, the things Christ was doing.

Mar 2:15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

Since Levi (Matthew) was a tax collector and most of the Jewish teachers avoided them in fellowship, and even grouped them with sinners, who were Levi's friends? Who were they that Matthew had some influence upon? The answer: Other tax collectors (publicans). And so it was that Matthew introduced them to Christ.

Mark 2:16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

Too many religious people forget that in order to teach the lost, we must keep company with them. To seek the lost, we must go where they are. We must also make note that Jesus did eat and drink with them. But, Christ did not commit sin with them.

Paul had an interesting thought for the church at Corinth...

1Cor. 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

1 Cor. 5:10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

1 Cor. 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

Notice Paul teaches the church that while we should not be sinners, it is impossible not to inter act with them. How else could we buy food, clothes, or medical treatment, just to name a few? If we must avoid sinners at all cost, we would have to leave this world, go out of this world. For this world is filled with sin, and sinners. However, we should not continue to fellowship a person who says they are a Christian, if they choose to live in sin.

Jesus prayed in the Book of John... John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Joh 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Christians are not of this world we belong to the **Kingdom of God.**

Mar 2:17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Jesus lets the religious leader know that Christianity is not about putting on a show, of how better we are than the world, but to lead people lost into salvation. If the world was so good and sinless Christ would not have had to die on the cross for our sins.

Rom 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Rom 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

Rom 3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Rom 3:13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:

Rom 3:14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:

Rom 3:15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood:

Rom 3:16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways:

Rom 3:17 And the way of peace have they not known:

Rom 3:18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

The Righteousness of God Through Faith

Rom 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Rom 3:22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Mar 2:18 And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

John the Baptist's disciples, as well as those of the Pharisees, ask why Jesus disciples do not fast. Fasting has been a way that many have used to gain power over the physical body and its temptations. For some it was seen as a sign of sorrow. By withholding food for a set time, we can give ourselves to prayer and thus learn to overcome temptation and control the body, rather than the body controlling us. It was never commanded, but was a popular way to gain self control. Some however, used it as a sign of piety. They would appear more religious for their suffering. Neither Jesus, nor the New Testament, commands such.

Mar 2:19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

Mar 2:20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

This time, was a time of joy for the followers of Jesus, as they were with Him. The time may very well come, after Jesus has gone that through persecution or other problems the disciples would be forced by situations and circumstances beyond their control to go hungry. Many people today are hungry and fast not by their choice. Hunger in and of itself is not religion or piety.

Mar 2:21 No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

Here Jesus speaks a parable lesson to teach spiritual understanding...

New things in Christianity

Christianity sets up a new kingdom, a kingdom within men, a reign over the spiritual in man. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy

in the Holy Ghost." It publishes a "new law," and gives men "a new commandment." "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Christianity introduces us into a "New Jerusalem," "the Jerusalem which is the mother of us all." Everything in the city is new. The Temple is new; it is a spiritual temple; spiritual men "are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." "What! know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" The Altar is new; "we have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." The Sacrifice is new; it is the "offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." The Incense is new;

"the sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." The Priesthood is new; "we have a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens for us, even Jesus, the Son of God." The Way into the "Holiest" is new; it is "a new and living way consecrated for us." The Worship is new; the hour has come when the character, and not the scene of worship, is everything. The song is new; we sing "a new song." The Ritualism is new; "for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." God sustains a new relation to us; He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We come to God and say, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not." "Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant." The days have come when God has made a new covenant with man. The Spirit is new; even the Comforter, proceeding from the Father and the Son. The gospel is new; "God hath spoken unto us by His Son." The phraseology is new; "we preach Christ crucified." The symbolism is new; "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Since everything in Christianity is new, we must ourselves be new; we must be "born again." There must be the passage from death to life. The life we live in the flesh must be a new life. "Old things must pass away; all things must become new." (*H. J. Bevis.*) [BI]

New things in Christianity

- I. That the spirit of Christianity is new. It is “new wine.” Judaism was the body; Christianity is the soul. The one was materialism; the other is spiritualism. The one was “the letter;” the other is “the spirit.” The one was a “ministration of death;” the other a “ministration of life.” “The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.” We have got beyond the shadow, we have the substance. “We behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord.”
- II. That the thoughts and words of Christianity are new. New thoughts require new utterances. The people said of Christ, “Never man spake like this Man.” New things want new words. The everlasting Son has taken our nature and become our brother. The gospel calls this “the mystery of godliness.” God hath given His Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might have eternal life. Even the gospel seems to want words here, and can only say, “God so loved.” The gospel takes us by the hand and leads us to the cross; and as we look on the Crucified, it unfolds the record, and bids us read, “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” We want not old forms. We have *truth* for the understanding; we have *love* for the heart. We have new thoughts and new words, the utterances of which are as the divinest music to the soul that is seeking a Saviour. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.”
- III. The manifestations of Christianity are new. “There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” Christianity is from heaven. God’s work is not to be improved by man. Where there is real religion in man, its own manifestations will not be wanting in a Divine life, in all the graces of the Spirit, in godlikeness.

IV. The ritualism of Christianity is new. It has few symbols, but these are most expressive and appropriate. It meets us on the very threshold of life with its washing of water, and water is the universal and undying type of purity. It gives us, as Christians, the memorials of Christ's death (the Communion). You may content yourselves with mere outward acts of reformation, but these are manifestly insufficient. This is but a new piece of cloth on an old garment. This is the world's attempt to mend human nature. Christianity requires "a new heart and a right spirit." You must be a "partaker of the Divine nature," "a new creature in Christ Jesus," to be a Christian. The "inner man" must have its new attire. You must put off the old garment and put on the new. You must "put on Christ Jesus the Lord, and walk in Him." Do not try to mend the old nature Seek a new one. Old habits will not do for a new spirit, and yet we cling to them, or they cling to us There is often little agreement between our principles and our practice. (*H. J. Bevis.*) [BI]

Mar 2:22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

Here Jesus continues to speak a parable lesson to teach spiritual understanding...

Old bottles and new wine

Christ gave his replies to John's disciples and the Pharisees. The first had a temporary application; the other a permanent one.

1. Fasting was a sign of sorrow; but how could these disciples sorrow while Jesus was with them? it was like trying to weep in the midst of a wedding feast. Christians have alternations of experience. Sometimes the Bridegroom is with us; sometimes far away.

2. The other answer sets forth the essential difference between the new dispensation and the impossibility of confining it by the old forms and ceremonies of religion. Now, these bottles represent religious forms, and wine represents religious spirit or life.

Consider-

- I. The superior energy of Christianity over Judaism. It is new wine. Judaism was wine; but this (Christianity) is newer, and also better. But this is not the point of comparison. The point is, that the gospel has a freshness, expansiveness, and power, beyond what we find in Judaism, so that it is like new, working and fermenting wine as compared with old acetic wine, now cold and still. See it in a few particulars:-
 1. Its earnest aggressive spirit and aim. It was meant for the world, to go out to all nations. Judaism was for the Jews, or if for Gentiles, it was by these coming to the Jews as proselytes. Its agency is the same.
 2. Its potent and stimulating motives. Christ's love and death constrain us; and the apocalypse of the eternal world is made more impressive and influential. Compare these with Jewish types, etc.
 3. The ardour of affection awakened in the followers of Christ. Their whole nature is elevated and vivified by a new love and a new hope.
 4. The accompanying energy of the Holy Ghost.
- II. The unsuitableness of old Jewish forms to the new Christian spirit. All are too narrow, cold, and cramping. As fastings, sacrifices, priestly exclusiveness, and even the Sabbath (Saturday observances).
- III. Yet Christianity has its own forms. The wine is not spilt on the ground, but kept in bottles-the Christian Church in its New Testament simplicity, the ordinances, the Lord's day, spiritual modes of worship. All these naturally come out of the spirit of the gospel. The life

makes its own body. Truly, this law has been tampered with most grievously by men, and the energy of the gospel has suffered; its freedom has been trammelled, and its life deadened. Lessons:

1. Our supreme concern should be to get the life of the gospel into our souls.
2. We should avoid a superstitious stickling for mere forms, however old and elegant, if they are but arbitrary and mechanical.
3. We should be willing to endorse and adopt the simple, natural, and living forms of the New Testament-joining the church, engaging in worship, etc.
4. We should apply it to our whole deportment and life-all must be renewed, and new wine put in new bottles. Let all our habits be determined and controlled by the inner spirit of piety. Things once pleasant to us will now be unpleasant and irksome. Many amusements and pleasures will be instantly abandoned, when we have got the right spirit within us; whereas, otherwise, it would be vain to contend and argue against them. (*Congregational Pulpit.*) [BI]

Mar 2:23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

Mar 2:24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

What is happening here is the disciples were traveling to the synagogue to worship, and as they journeyed they were picking the tops of the wheat, and rolling them in their hands to eat the kernels. The Pharisees accused the disciples of breaking the Sabbath's work restrictions. Thus they were saying the disciples were reaping on the Sabbath.

Mar 2:25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him?

Mar 2:26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

To vindicate his disciples, he referred them to a similar case, recorded in the Old Testament, and therefore one with which they ought to have been acquainted. This was the case of David. The law commanded that twelve loaves of bread should be laid on the table in the holy place in the tabernacle, to remain a week, and then to be eaten by the "priests only." Their place was then supplied by fresh "bread." This was called the "showbread," Lev 24:5-9. David, fleeing before Saul, weary and hungry, had come to Ahimelech the priest; had found only this bread; had asked it of him, and had eaten it contrary to the "letter" of the law, 1 Sa 21:1-7. David, among the Jews, had high authority. This act had passed uncondemned. It proved that in "cases of necessity the laws did not bind a man" - a principle which all laws admit. So the "necessity" of the disciples justified them in doing on the Sabbath what would have been otherwise unlawful. [AB]

Mar 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

Here Jesus gets to the heart of why the Sabbath was given to the Jews in the first place. Deut. 5:12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.

Deu 5:13 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work:

Deu 5:14 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

Deu 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

Mar 2:28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

As we study we come to understand that it was Christ who was with the Children of Israel in the Old Testament as they traveled from Egypt to the Promised Land:

1Co 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

1Co 10:2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

1Co 10:3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

1Co 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

If Christ was the one who gave the law to Israel to start with, Jesus was Lord on the Sabbath also. Christ had the right by not only being the son of God, but God Himself to change the Law. As we have seen the Old Testament, with its worship and practices, would be replaced by the New Testament given by Christ and the Apostles who followed Him.

Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jer 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant

they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

Jer 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Again, this New Covenant, is the New Testament and Christianity.

CHAPTER THREE

A MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND

Mark 3:1 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

As we left off in chapter two, we find Jesus on the way to the Synagogue for Sabbath Day worship with His disciples. When He arrives, Mark tells us there was one there with a “withered hand.” By looking into the Greek text, we would find that this man’s hand must have been whole at one time. Either by stroke, accident, or other means, the hand was not useable as we would understand the term. His hand was not in its original condition as he was born.

Mar 3:2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

While the word “they” could mean everyone there, it is clear by the context that the ones most interested in whether Jesus would be willing to heal inside the Synagogue were the Jewish leaders. These leaders were looking for a reason to accuse Him.

Many who oppose Christianity are always looking for some reason to accuse us of not being what we claim. Notice what Peter tells us...

1Pe 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

1 Pe 2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Paul tells Timothy...

1Ti 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an

example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

We might consider Peter again...

1Pe 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

1Pe 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

1Pe 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

1Pe 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

1Pe 4:16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Yes, even as there where those who wanted to oppose Christ, they will do likewise to us. As Christians, we must always understand that others are watching us in everything we do.

Mar 3:3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

Mar 3:4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

Jesus uses this event as a teaching moment with His question...

Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?

While the Jewish leaders were using the Sabbath Day as a reason to accuse Him, we might apply this to all our life...

Gal 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

May I suggest that there be a discussion of this question... When is a good time to do good?

When should we not do good? When should we do evil?

In this verse of Mark, we find that the leaders would not, or did not, give an answer. They waited to see what He would do.

Mar 3:5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Jesus took time after His question to look around the room to each of the leaders to see if they would take the right stand and decide to support a good deed but found none. Because of their hardness of their hearts, Christ was angry that they would not agree together to let this man be healed.

While Jesus did not need their permission, He had hoped they might understand and change their hearts. This would not be the last time they would not agree. Even without their change of heart, Christ heals this man's hand. The healing was complete, and the hand was restored whole. A divine miracle! Just think what such a healing would require to the physical structure of the hand, along with all its nerves, bones, blood flow, etc.

Mar 3:6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

The leaders move forth with a council of how they might destroy Him. This idea covers every degree from first destroying His reputation to finally taking His life.

As we will continue to see, their hatred will only increase, as well as the confrontations over anything they might use against Him.

This might be a good time to discuss exactly who where the Pharisees and Herodians?

Pharisees. A religious party or school among the Jews at the time of **Christ**, so called from **perishin**, the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word, **perushim**, “separated”. The chief sects among the Jews were the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, who may be described respectively as the Formalists, the Freethinkers and the Puritans.

A knowledge of the opinion, and practices of the Pharisees, at the time of **Christ**, is of great importance, for entering deeply into the genius of the Christian religion. A cursory perusal of the Gospels is sufficient to show that **Christ’s** teaching was, in some respects, thoroughly antagonistic to theirs. He denounced them, in the bitterest language; *See Mat 15:7-8; Mat 23:5; Mat 23:13-15; Mat 23:23; Mar 7:6; Luk 11:42-44 and compare Mar 7:1-5; Mar 11:29; Mar 12:19-20; Luk 6:28; Luk 6:37-42.* To understand the Pharisees is, by contrast, an aid toward understanding the spirit of uncorrupted Christianity.

*The fundamental principle of all of the Pharisees, common to them with all orthodox modern Jews, is that, by the side of the written law, regarded as a summary of the principles and general laws of the Hebrew people, there was on oral law to complete, and to explain the written law, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and transmitted by him by word of mouth. The first portion of the Talmud, called the **Mishna** or “second law”, contains this oral law. It is a digest of the Jewish traditions and a compendium of the whole ritual law, and it came at length to be esteemed far above the sacred text.*

While it was the aim of **Jesus** to call men to the law of God itself as the supreme guide of life, the Pharisees, upon the pretense of maintaining it intact, multiplied minute precepts and distinctions, to such an extent that the whole life of the Israelite was hemmed in, and burdened on every side, by instructions so numerous and trifling, that the law was almost if not wholly lost sight of. These "traditions" as they were called, had long been gradually accumulating.

Hero'dians. (*from Herod*). Mat 22:15 ff.; Mar 12:13; ff. Canon Cook describes these persons as, "that party among the Jews who were supporters of the Herodian family as the last hope of retaining for the Jews a fragment of national government, as distinguished from absolute dependence upon Rome as a province of the empire." Supporters of the family of Herod, who held their dominions by the grant of the Roman emperor, would be in favor of paying tribute to the supreme power.

Mat 22:16.

Both definitions are from Smith's Bible Dictionary.

The Pharisees were a religious division (party or denomination) in and of the Jewish faith. They had much influence in the Synagogues. Many of the Jewish Rabbis of today are the descendants of their teaching.

The Herodians were a political party that supported the Roman Government among the Jewish people.

The conspiracy against Jesus, as we might call it, to destroy Jesus and His influence begins to combine both Political and Spiritual parties and sets on a path to have Him betrayed and killed.

Mar 3:7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea,

Mar 3:8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great

multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

Mark in his gospel begins later into Jesus life and ministry than the other writers. John's gospel in the first four chapters covers the time before this, while both Jesus and John the Baptist were preaching in Judea together. John tells us that while preaching and baptizing in Judea that ...

Joh 4:1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

Joh 4:2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) Joh 4:3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

Jesus had already taught many people from the southern regions of the Holy Land, as well as John before coming into Galilee. These are the people that began to journey up to the Northern Region looking to find Jesus. It was the combining of all these that moves the "Multitude" to a "Great Multitude."

Mar 3:9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

There were so many people that Jesus requested a boat to take Him out from the shore, because so many people were pressing in upon Him. He needed safe space to teach. The word "throng" means to "compress" such as pressing grapes for juice.

Mar 3:10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

Mar 3:11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

Mar 3:12 And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

As in many other places, people came to be healed, and they were made whole as all the others. Jesus reputation continues to grow.

The Twelve Apostles

Mar 3:13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth *unto him* whom he would: and they came unto him.

Mar 3:14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

Mar 3:15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: Mar 3:16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

Mar 3:17 And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

Mar 3:18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

Mar 3:19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

We have reached a crisis in the labors of the Lord where hatred has become deadly. The Pharisees are aware, by a series of experiences, that His method is destructive to their system, that He is too fearless to make terms with them, that He will strip the mask (of hypocrisy) off their faces. Their rage was presently intensified by an immense extension of His fame. And therefore He withdrew from the plots which ripen most easily in cities, the hotbeds of intrigue, to the open coast. It is His first retreat before opposition from His enemies. [EB]

Mar 3:20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

Mar 3:21 And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

Such was the crowds and noise that they could not sit down to eat. Jesus went out into the group of people to try

and disburse them. His disciples believed that they needed to go out of the house and get Him to return inside before He was hurt by the pressing in of the people. They believed that He was not thinking clearly in tempting fate in such a crowd.

Mar 3:22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

Here is the first organized attack Mark records against Jesus by the religious leaders. Remember the Pharisees and Herodians conspired to destroy Him. What better way they thought than to have the so-called experts of the Word of God, the scribes, declare that His power came from Satan himself?

They seem to believe if they could make people believe that, yes He healed, but at the cost of their souls, they would abandon Him. If their good fortune was at the cost of eternity how could they keep following Jesus?

Thus, through the Jewish Leaders plot, they gave disrespect to the true power of His healing...The Holy Spirit.

Mar 3:23 And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

Mar 3:24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mar 3:25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Mar 3:26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

Mar 3:27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

Mar 3:28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

Mar 3:29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

Mar 3:30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

The Holy Spirit was the source of all the miracles of Christ and His disciples. Without belief in the true source of miracles, they would not believe the teachings...

Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

Heb 2:4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Mar 3:31 There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

Mar 3:32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

His mother and family members came seeking to see Him and could not get close because of the people. They had to send word to Him that they were there and seeking to be with Him. Such was the multitude of followers.

Mar 3:33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

Mar 3:34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

Mar 3:35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

See the honour and dignity of good Christians that believe in Christ. There is a most near union between Christ and them, even as near as between natural parents and children, or between those that are of nearest kindred by natural birth: therefore He accounts them as His spiritual

kindred, as dear and near to Him as His mother and brethren. And what an honour is this, to be of the spiritual kindred of Christ Himself, to be called and accounted His brother or His sister. If it be an honour to be of the blood-royal, or of the kindred of some noble personage, how much more honourable to be the brother or sister of Christ Jesus! Let all believers think of this dignity vouchsafed to them; and let it comfort them (as well it may) against all the contempt they meet with in the world. The grace of faith engrafts the believer into the stock of Christ, and brings him within His pedigree, making him to be of most near kindred with Him in a spiritual manner: it makes

Christ and the believer as near to each other as natural parents and children; yea, as husband and wife, for it marries them together, whence it is that Christ is said to be the Husband of the true Church. Let this move us to labour for true faith in Christ. If we had been born and lived about the time when He was upon earth, would we not have been glad to be in the number of His natural brethren and sisters? How much more desirous should we be to be His brethren and sisters by faith? Never rest till thou know thyself a believer in Christ, and one of His kindred spiritually engrafted into Him; without this thou art miserable, though thou hast kinship by natural blood with all the princes and great men in the world. [BI]

CHAPTER FOUR

Mar 4:1 And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

Mar 4:2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

As we learned in the last chapter, Jesus began to be challenged by the religious leaders in both His actions and Teachings while He was in the Synagogue. Because of the large gatherings and this opposition, Jesus returns to teaching by the Sea of Galilee. Before we continue into our study of chapter four, we must discuss what is a “Parable?”

Many times we will find in the scriptures Jesus teaching those following Him in Parables. To understand we will start with the simple question...” What would a traveling preacher or teacher use in order to help His disciples to better understand and remember His teachings?

Today, we have seen preachers use charts, printed books, computer and projectors. Others have used chalk boards or marker boards, Jesus had none of these items and even if He did, many of those who came to Him for the teaching could not have read what was written. He spoke to a multitude of people and He traveled with the clothes on His back from city to city and place to place, and could only take a very few items with Him, which were probably in a bag over the shoulder. The use of the “Parable” became His tool of choice in public speaking.

A parable seeks to present spiritual truths through examples and stories of common everyday items, events, and persons. Many preachers today use excessively big words to try to prove they are educated. This many times

confuses the average listener, who many times does not know the word's meaning, and cannot remember it anyway. While Jesus taught as one having authority, He taught in a way that allowed the average person not only to understand but remember...the Parable.

One short example would be in Mathew 7:24-27...

Mat 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Mat 7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Mat 7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

Mat 7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

In concluding His sermon on the mount Christ had said...

Mat 7:21 Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Mat 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

Mat 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

How could His hearers understand the importance of the things He had taught in all of Chapters Five through Seven of Mathew and be motivated to apply them to their daily life?

He tells them a parable of two men building separate houses. One uses a solid foundation of rock, the other one of

sand. He then speaks of the storm that comes, one home stands and the other home falls because of the foundations they choose to build on. Jesus lets His hearers understand that in life there are also spiritual storms, relationship storms, and we can expect difficult events. His teachings when applied provide a solid foundation to keep us from being overcome by events and to gain a life pleasing to Him so we will not hear Him say depart from me I never knew you.

The worth of parables as instruments of teaching lies in their being a test of character as they are presented to the reader or listener. Each parable usually has at least two individuals and two choices. One is a path to be rewarded and the other path or choice rejects truth and suffers.

When Jesus would speak in Parables the true disciples of Jesus would seek Him out to inquire further of their meaning and application. Those who just listened with little interest, would go away with little further understanding.

Jesus, therefore, used the parables as a way to separate out the true followers (disciples), from those only interested in what He could physically do for them without considering the eternal teachings. The parable when time is invested to understand its meaning will leave the hearer or student of the teachings with a clear image they can take away and apply.

In the Old Testament we find the Book of Proverbs. Wisdom teachings which used short memorable sayings to convey eternal truths. The New Testament uses the Parable form of teaching.

Now, with an understanding of what a parable is, let us continue into Mark's gospel...

Mar 4:3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

Mar 4:4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

Mar 4:5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

Mar 4:6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

Mar 4:7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

Mar 4:8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

Mar 4:9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

This section is most often called The Parable of the Sower. I prefer to think of it as The Parable of the Soils.

Jesus, as we have seen, has started to gain the attention of the religious leaders, and they are beginning to find disagreements with Him and His actions, as well as teaching. They will begin to oppose Him the more and more until His crucifixion. Then they will persecute His disciples the Church. Even today, those who follow Jesus and His word The New Testament, suffer persecution from others. We see those who follow false gods and the teaching of men and denominations rather than Christ.

Many times, in life we ask ourselves...Why doesn't everyone just follow the Bible and do as God requires? Why can't I get my family, friends, or coworkers to listen and obey the gospel? We speak with people and they just will not even try. Or perhaps, they start to follow Christ and become Christians, but then after time, fall away back into their old ways. Only a few remain faithful throughout life to receive God's reward of eternal life. Why?

This parable helps us to understand the human heart and its various reactions to the teaching of the truth. Here, the soils are different types of hearts or attitudes.

Mar 4:10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

There were those who departed, but the true disciples along with the twelve Apostles remained and asked Jesus to explain the Parable. And so He did...

Mar 4:11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, *allthesethings* are done in parables:

Mar 4:12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *theirsins* should be forgiven them.

If we want to understand, we must be students of the word. Many put forth no effort and are not really that interested. The cost will be the loss of their eternal reward.

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Mar 4:13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

They must learn His teaching style and how it works. We have discussed that above already... The Parable. Here is His explanation:

Mar 4:14 The sower soweth the word.

The sower is the preacher or teacher of the word of God. Therefore, the seed is the New Testament today, the word of God. This is what we doas we are sharing the good news of the gospel of Christ. We plant the teachings of God in the hearts or minds of mankind.

Mar 4:15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

The “wayside” is the walkway which was used to keep people from walking all over the field of grain and destroy the crops. It provided a clear path all travelers were welcome to walk through. However, as the people continued to walk on this path day by day, it made the ground so hard that seeds cannot get into the soil. Many in Jesus day had seen such a path. Today we see dirt paths or roads that become extremely hard from the traffic on them.

This represents the heart that is hardened by daily sin and participation in sinful pleasures and delights. These people’s hearts have been hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

Heb 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

These are the people that will not even take the time to consider the Word. Satan snatches it away from their hearts, because of their sinful ways, too much time enjoying the lusts of the flesh.

Mar 4:16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

Mar 4:17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended.

We have had family or friends that seem to believe and accept the teachings of the gospel. They seem to do so with great joy. However, their commitment is lacking. When affliction, suffering, or persecution comes, they fall away from the truth back into a world of sin. These Jesus says

lack root. They have not properly developed their understanding and commitment to the word. Seeds falling into rocky areas will sprout but not last. So if heart or mind is divided, it will not give the word room to grow.

Col 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

Col 1:22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

Col 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Notice we must be grounded and settled in the word or we will be in danger of moving away, thus return back into the things of the world.

Mar 4:18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

Mar 4:19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Then, there are those who receive the word of the gospel, obey the truth and are baptized. They appear to become devoted to Christ and His word, but they have so many things they are involved in outside the church, their faith is choked by having little time to grow.

1Ti 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

1Ti 6:7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it* is certain we can carry nothing out.

1Ti 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

1Ti 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

1Ti 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1Ti 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

1Ti 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Mar 4:20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Those of the good soil, good open honest hearts devoted to God and the truth, are those who receive the truth and go on to make application of it to their lives. They grow in knowledge, grace and peace...

2Pe 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2Pe 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

2Pe 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2Pe 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

2Pe 1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

2Pe 1:7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

2Pe 1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2Pe 1:9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

2Pe 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

2Pe 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

While every faithful Christian is not the same, they will bear fruit in their lives if they submit to God's will. Some more than others.

Joh 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Joh 15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Joh 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Joh 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Joh 15:5 I am the vine, *ye are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

The Parable of the Lamp or Candle Under a Basket

Mar 4:21 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

Mar 4:22 For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

Mar 4:23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

Why do we study the word? Why make application of it to our lives? Why are you a Christian? We must have good reason for what we do in order to keep doing it. Who we are as Christians. What we believe: For some, the study of God's word is a hobby to spend time, to find interesting facts and challenge others. Yet, they never live the Christian life.

Being a Christian was never intended to be a secret. Just like a lamp or candle is lit to give light to all, so the word of God should be shared and seen in our lives.

While Jesus taught His disciples in various places and various ways, the days were coming when the word of God must be taken to all the world. To everyone...

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mar 4:24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

“What you hear”: Many Christians have been turned away from the truth by listening to false teachers of other religions and denominations. We should very carefully consider what we hear by the truth, compare and search to see if what we are being told is true. If we do not measure what we hear by the Bible and especially the New Testament, we stand in danger of being deceived.

2Th 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

2Th 2:9 *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

2Th 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2Th 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

2Th 2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Mar 4:25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

The more we study, the greater our faith and the better we are prepared to understand the deeper teachings from God.

Rom 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

If we want a greater faith, we must study and know more of God's word and make application of it to our lives. But, and if, we neglect our studies and its application, we will forget even what we have already learned. We will go backwards in our faith.

The Parable of the Seed Growing

Mar 4:26 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

Mar 4:27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

Mar 4:28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

Mar 4:29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

The ides of the church and the gospel did not just start when Jesus began to teach, but was in the mind of God from before the world began...

1Pe 1:18 Foras much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as silver and gold*, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

1Pe 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1Pe 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

1Pe 1:21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Act 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Act 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Act 2:24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Eph 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

Eph 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

Eph 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

Eph 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Eph 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Eph 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

The Old Testament contains over 300 prophecies of the coming of Christ. His life, death, and resurrection. God was working all through human history to make salvation a reality and to be known of all. Yet most of the time the operations of God were secret until Christ appeared and the church was established...

1Co 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

1Co 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Gal 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Gal 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Generations of people came and went, not knowing the full Plans of God until the fullness of time...Christ came. The church was established. Even today we do not know everything God is doing or when Christ will return...

Mat 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Mat 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth *noman*,no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Mar 4:30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

Mar 4:31 *It is*like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

Mar 4:32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

When we compare the mustard seed to other seeds, it is small and would be easy to overlook. Yet, when planted, can continue to grow into a plant large enough plant that the birds of the air to build nests and raise their young.

The church started small. The teachings of it to a few. Slowly Jesus and His disciples grow the understanding of the people until after Christ's death it began to grow out unto all the world...

Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

In Acts Chapter Two, the church was planted in Jerusalem and as we study the book of Acts see it grow to fill the known world. It started with 3000 baptized the first day, we see it grow and become 5000 and then it is spoke of as a multitude (very many). It continues to go into the world today through the gospel preaching and teaching.

Mar 4:34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Self explanatory. Parables were Jesu chosen mode to teach.

Jesus Calms a Storm

Mar 4:35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

Mar 4:36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

Mar 4:37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

Mar 4:38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

Mar 4:39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Mar 4:40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

Mar 4:39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Jesus and His disciples had been in the area of Capernaum. A city located at the North West top of the Sea of Galilee. After the people return to their Homes and He explains the parables to the close disciples, Christ tells them of His plan to go across the sea to the other side. We will see in Mark Chapter Five that it would be the area of the Gadarenes. This would have been across to the South East side of the Sea. Thus, going the whole distance from North to South and from one side to the other. A full journey across.

Jesus will use this situation as both a test of their faith in Him, and a learning opportunity. Christ went as He was, there were no special plans or provisions made. He the disciple and others in little ships began their journey.

Mar 4:37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

It was night and dark and this great storm comes upon them which tosses the sea and the ships to the point they take on water and the disciples were afraid that the ships would sink. Where was Christ?

Mar 4:38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

How was this a test of their faith? Jesus had said they were going to the other side. Jesus did not say He was taking them out to sea to drown. Many times in life when we experience adversity we take our faith from Christ and replace it with fear and worry. Jesus asks us to trust Him...

Heb 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Heb 13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

How has your faith been tested? What difficult times do you experience? Where is your trust and faith? Important questions.

Mar 4:39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Mar 4:40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

Fear kills our faith. Trust in God, even in adversity builds our faith.

Jas 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Jas 1:3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Jas 1:4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Jas 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Jas 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Jas 1:7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

Finally we will end this Chapter with Christ's power over nature...

Mar 4:39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Mar 4:41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Yes, what kind of man is this? Who can control nature, storms, the wind other than God?

The end of this chapter challenges us, the reader, to understand that Jesus was no ordinary man. He must be God!

CHAPTER FIVE

Mark chapter five continues the journey started by Christ and His disciples in chapter four.

Mar 5:1 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.

Gadara, says Josephus, was the metropolis of Peraea, or the region beyond Jordan; and he also observes that it was sixty furlongs, or about eight miles from Tiberias. It is therefore rightly placed opposite Tiberias, at the southeast end of the lake. Pliny says it was called Hippodion, was one of the cities of Decapolis, and had the river Hieromax, or Jarmouk, flowing before it. It was of heathen jurisdiction; whence perhaps it was destroyed by the Jews; but was rebuilt by Pompey, and joined to the province of Syria. Augustus afterwards gave it to Herod, on whose death it was again annexed to Syria. It is now called Om Keis; its ruins are in a very mutilated state, and when visited by Burckhardt it had not a single inhabitant. The remains of the sepulchral caverns in which the demoniacs abode are still to be seen.

[TSK Cross Reference]

Mar 5:2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

Mar 5:3 who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains,

Mar 5:4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.

Mar 5:5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

Here we find a poor man who has been taken over by the forces of evil and has not just one, but even many evil spirits afflicting him. This account is given us to understand Christ's great power over evil. The man was well known in his area, not for the good that he had done, but rather the terror he had brought to those who dwelled there.

He was not able to live among the regular population and his actions explain why they had often bound him with shackles and chains. Trying to control his actions to no success. If Christ could control the evil afflicting him, what else could Jesus do?

Mar 5:6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. That is, he fell down before Jesus.

Mar 5:7 And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me."

The evil spirits confess their knowledge of who Christ really is. Seeing that Jesus was God in the flesh, the evil spirits would have known Him for a very long time. They refer to Him as "Son of the Most High God."

We have been learning more about Jesus and who He was by Mark revealing to us several events to help us come to the conclusion on our own, and now even the evil spirits clearly tell us who He was and is. Mark allows us to consider if this is true by what we have already experienced through the word.

The evil spirits confess that Jesus can torment them if He should choose to do so. Matthew records that Hell is prepared for the Devil and his angels...

Mat 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

Mar 5:8 For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" Mar 5:9 Then He asked him, "What is your

name?” And he answered, saying, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

Many evil spirits had controlled this man which gave him great physical strength. The name given is “Legion” for we are many.

Legion. The chief subdivision of the Roman army, containing about 6000 infantry, with a contingent of cavalry. The term does not occur in the Bible in its primary sense, but appears to have been adopted in order to express any large number, with the accessory ideas of order and subordination.

Mat 26:53; Mar 5:9.

[Smith]

Mar 5:10 Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

Mar 5:11 Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. Mar 5:12 So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.”

There have been many thoughts put forth by commentary as to why they would not want to go out of that country. It is apparent that because there were many swine in the area it was not populated by devout Jews, seeing that swine was a food prohibited to them. Therefore, the people were and would be easier to manipulate with evil. These people were either not knowing, or perhaps not caring, about God’s will. God (Jesus) allows their request and they are cast into the swine. The Evil Spirits’ desires are overthrown by the swine themselves...

Mar 5:13 And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

What a violent and terrifying scene. Two thousand swine all at once become unrestful and charge downhill into

the sea and are drown. Think for a moment what this must have looked like to see two thousand dead pigs/hogs laying dead in the water by the seashore. To the people there, what would they think? What would the disciples think?

Mar 5:14 So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened.

It seems that when bad things happen, the news travels fast through the population. Even today when a tragedy happens, people feel compelled to go and see for themselves. So it was there. I am sure such events did not just happen and few had seen such a scene as this. It would be difficult for the average person to believe, even today.

Mar 5:15 Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon- possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

The people together of that area had not been able to control the man with the devils, even though they had used chains and fetters. To see what happened to the swine and hear of how that happened, along with seeing the man clothed and setting with Jesus in his right mind, was terrifying to the inhabitants. If Jesus has such power, what would He do to them? The people from that area were afraid...

Mar 5:16 And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine.

Mar 5:17 Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

The people want Jesus to leave their country. He was not welcome there.

Mar 5:18 And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon- possessed begged Him that he might be with Him.

How would you feel about having to live among people you had terrorized? Many today who have committed sin

and been involved in unpopular things want to leave the area where they have lived when they change their lives and become Christians. It is difficult to not be embarrassed sometimes by our past.

Mar 5:19 However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."

Jesus will not allow the man to go with Him, or to run away from his past. Jesus rather, sends him back to his home and friends to tell them of the great change in his life and how it came about, through the power of Christ.

Some of the best preachers and teachers have come from those who were living sinful lives and were then converted to Christianity. Knowing both ways of life, they can reach those that others could not. Think of Saul of

Tarsus, who persecuted the church. When converted, became the beloved Apostle Paul.

Mar 5:20 And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

The man does just as Christ requested, and he begins to proclaim to all the area what Jesus had done for him. Not just the city where he lived, but the whole area of Decapolis. Many will learn of Christ and His power and as we will see later, when Jesus returns to this area of Decapolis, many will be waiting to see Him because of what the man who had been possessed had declared.

Leaving this area as they requested, Jesus returns back to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, where He has had much success with the people...

Mar 5:21 Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea.

As soon as people learn that Jesus has returned, they begin to seek Him out and it does not take long until a great

multitude gathered to Him. What a wonderful difference to those of the other side. These have taken time to see and hear Jesus and to consider what He does and teaches. They others did not give Him a chance. This is much the same as Paul experienced in his travels...

Act 17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

Act 17:2 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

Act 17:3 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.”

Act 17:4 And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas. Act 17:5 But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took

some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the

city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

Act 17:6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

Act 17:7 Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus.”

Act 17:8 And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things.

Act 17:9 So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

Act 17:10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Act 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.

Some will hear and delight in the things of God and His word, but others will reject and even become violent. Yet, those who will search the scriptures and check for themselves will be blessed.

2Ti 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2Ti 2:16 But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

2Ti 2:17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,

2Ti 2:18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the

resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

2Ti 2:19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Mar 5:22 And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet

Mar 5:23 and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."

We do not know if this was one of the Jewish leaders that had been planning against Jesus for His teachings. But

it is interesting when Jesus is the last hope how much faith and trust people find for Him. Many today, use Jesus and the church only to get what they need for the moment and have no devotion to the things of God.

Nevertheless, Jesus went with him to his home...

Mar 5:24 So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

Many followed Jesus to the house of Jairus. So many that once again, they were thronged by the crowds pushing and shoving to get to Jesus and gain His attention. One such person of desperation seeks Jesus at this time...

Mar 5:25 Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, Mar 5:26 and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.

This poor woman had problems in her female organs for over 12 years. She had suffered much and had tried many physicians. They had not been able to cure her problems. She had spent all that she had, but was not better. Even today we find those of desperation due to medical problems will try anything and anyone who might be able to help.

For our discussion here, we need to understand that she had exhausted all options and found no cure, Jesus was her only hope...

Mar 5:27 When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment.

Mar 5:28 For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

What faith this woman had in Jesus after that she had heard of what He had done for others. How that He had cured the incurable. That was who she was!

The power of Christ was immediate...

Mar 5:29 Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction.

Mar 5:30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My clothes?”

Mar 5:31 But His disciples said to Him, “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’”

What an amazing account of Christ’s healing. Immediately she was cured, and she could feel the healing taking place in her body. It was not slow or conditional, no medicine, no direct cost, just healing.

Jesus makes notice of this women not to embarrass her, but rather to show her great faith...

Christ asks who touched me? The disciples were confused at first and ask Him the question: You see all these people? How can we or anyone know who touched you?

Mar 5:32 And He looked around to see her who had done this thing.

Mar 5:33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

Mar 5:34 And He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.”

It was not that her faith alone had healed her. Christ and His power had healed her, but she had the faith to seek out Jesus and expend the energy in her sickness to be near Him. A powerful miracle. Yet, an even greater is about to happen...

Mar 5:35 While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue’s *house* who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?”

Each one of us has received this news at one time or the other. Someone we love is dead. What a finality. The world

stops. There is no retuning, no cure, no hope, our hearts are broken, and deep sadness sets into our lives.

There was no longer a need to bring Jesus, there was nothing He could do. It was over. Or was it?

Mar 5:36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

What could Jesus do? Were these just kind words friends speak at such a time as this? Let us see...

Mar 5:37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.

Mar 5:38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly.

This is not a time for multitudes. This is a very deep and personal time for friends and family to comfort one another. Only Peter, James, and John are allowed to journey the remainder of the way with Christ. When they enter the house they see what we have seen many times: Deep sorrow, weeping, confusion.

Mar 5:39 When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

Mar 5:40 And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying.

What could Jesus mean? People know when someone they love is dead. The people assembled in the home ridicule Christ. Why would He say such a thing? How cruel could someone be to those in mourning?

Mar 5:41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."

Mar 5:42 Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement.

What power is this?

No one has or could have power over death. Or can they? Who could bring life to the dead, but God?

What are we and what were they, to make of this amazing event? Was Jesus God?

What do you believe?

This is what Mark calls us to answer for ourselves with his writing. What is Jesus to you?

What are your beliefs about Him?

These are especially important questions we must ask and answer to build our faith.

Mar 5:43 But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus requests that they tell no one of these things. People would think all kinds of things if they were to know. They had already accused Him of casting out devils by the prince of Devils. Yet, can or could they not say anything?

He requests that they give her food, both to refresh the body and to also show she was alive and not just a spirit or ghost.

CHAPTER SIX

Mar 6:1 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him.

Jesus come back to the community from where He had grown up from child to man. Where He was known as a neighbor to those of that area of Nazareth.

The term “country” here is used as a rural type area verses an large city and its surroundings. It is not intended to mean a country separate from Galilee.

Into His hometown Christ enters with His disciples. Here He is to be reunited with friends and family.

Mar 6:2 And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!

It was Jesus’ custom to be in the synagogue on the sabbath day and so when He returns home, that is where He goes along with His disciples. Using the opportunity to teach as He had in other cities and towns that He had visited.

Christ had left the area some time before and had been traveling through the areas of Judea and around Galilee. Those who had known Him before are now amazed at His wisdom and teachings and the wonderful works He had done. It would seem by the reaction of the people that He had not spent much time, if any, in this area since He began His earthly ministry after seeking out John the Baptist and was immersed by him. Jesus has changed more that these people can easy find an explanation for.

Mar 6:3 Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

These people believe they “knew” Jesus. To them He was a village carpenter, no scholar or teacher. He had not spent time in a school to be skilled with the Word of God as the Rabi. He worked with His hands, a common laborer of the working class. They knew His mother, Mary. They knew His family: James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. Even His sisters lived in that area. None had traveled far from their parent’s home. Because of these things they were “offended” at Him. They must have believed that He was just pretending to be some great teacher and they knew better. They knew where He come from.

Mar 6:4 But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."

This is a remarkably interesting statement made by Jesus, but none the less true. Sometimes the people who we feel the closest to, and expect to encourage us, have no faith in our abilities. They become difficult to speak to about the gospel and do not believe we have what it takes to succeed in the service of God. Thus, no honor is bestowed upon the teacher. Other cities, towns, and churches will hear us gladly, but not at home.

Mar 6:5 Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

Mar 6:6 And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

These people had no faith to place in Jesus, they were offended at who He acted to be before them, so they did not bring their sick and desired very little from Him. No doubt preferring to distance themselves from Him who they believed to be fake.

Mar 6:7 And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

Mar 6:8 He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts—

Mar 6:9 but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

After the events in His hometown area, He begins to prepare the disciple to become the leaders, teachers, and true Apostles of the New Testament church He has called them to be. He sends them out together in pairs of two, thus six working teams of disciples. This gives them experience at being on their own, rather than just following Jesus as leader. They will be the teachers, they will make decisions, they will answer questions. People will begin to follow them as disciples of their teachings and will begin to learn of Jesus, the true teacher and master. The disciples will make even more people aware of Christ and His teachings.

They were not to make special preparation for their journey. He commands that they take nothing for the journey except these things:

1. A staff (walking stick)
2. Sandals (the shoes on their feet)
3. One Tunic (the clothes on their backs)

They could not take:

1. A carry bag (luggage)
2. Bread (no extra food)
3. Coins (no money)

Why did He make such requests? They were to learn to depend on God for the things they had need of. If God genuinely wants something done, He will prove the means by which it can be accomplished.

Mar 6:10 Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place.

As they journeyed into the various cities assigned to them, they were to depend on the hospitality of those who offered it to them. They were to stay with those of that home until they departed that city to teach in another.

This was so the people of the area might know where to find them easier and not to be an insult to the one providing the hospitality.

Mar 6:11 And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!"

Just as in Jesus' hometown, not every city or village will welcome them as they travel. They should not become discouraged, and carry that discouragement into the next town, but rather shake the dirt even from their feet. The next city must be entered into with hope and a desire to fulfill their mission, not be hindered by past events.

Mar 6:12 So they went out and preached that people should repent.

This was the message of John the Baptist and Christ. To repent for the kingdom of God was at hand. (Mark 1:4 & 1:15) Both John and Jesus taught a baptism of repentance for the remission of sin.

Mar 6:13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.

They went as they were commanded. They took what they were required to take, and the blessings of God took care of their needs during their journeys. None was unable to complete the task given to them by Christ.

The Death of John the Baptist

With the six teams out preaching and teaching of the kingdom along with performing miracles as well as Jesus, the news of these events reaches Herod the king...

Mar 6:14 Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

Mar 6:15 Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."

Mar 6:16 But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!"

Having heard of Jesus and His teaching, Herod becomes troubled. He believes that Jesus is John the Baptist whom he had killed and the John has come back from the dead.

Others believe that some great prophet has returned from the dead to teach and lead the people. But Herod can not believe it is anyone but John. Herod had a very guilty conscience due to his actions toward John. Neither were correct. Jesus was His own person.

Mar 6:17 For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.

Mar 6:18 Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

Mar 6:19 Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not;

Mar 6:20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Mar 6:21 Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee.

Mar 6:22 And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you."

Mar 6:23 He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

Mar 6:24 So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"

Mar 6:25 Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

Mar 6:26 And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.

Mar 6:27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison,

Mar 6:28 brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother.

Mar 6:29 When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Mark records the events that surround the death of John the Baptist, along with Herod's and other's part in the event. An account of a marriage that was not lawful and the evil heart of one involved to the point of committing murder. We find in this account the evil that rules in the hearts of people as sin. We want what we can not have. We lust and plot to get or keep the forbidden fruits of our desires.

James explains as...

Jas 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Jas 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

Jas 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Jas 1:15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Jas 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

Jas 4:2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

Jas 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

Jas 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Jas 4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

Jas 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "GOD RESISTS THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

Jas 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Mar 6:30 Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

As the Apostles return to Jesus at the appointed time and place, they tell Him of all the events that have taken place during their travels and teaching. Each team reports of their accomplishments by God's grace and provision.

Mar 6:31 And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Mar 6:32 So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

Having sent time, effort and energy to complete the tasks given them, Jesus wants to take the Apostles away from the crowds of people to a place where they may rest

for a while and recover from their trips. A short respite of sorts.

Mar 6:33 But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.

The crowds would not be easily left behind. Many were coming to depend on Jesus as a leader, teacher and healer. They sought to follow Him were ever He was going. In a way they were becoming like the child who cries when their parents leave them behind. Faith is one thing, absolute dependance, not so good, for either Christ or them. Few places could hide Jesus and His from their growing reputation.

Mar 6:34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.

The people had suffered for a long time under the teachings of the Priests, Rabbis, Pharisees and others. Placing heavy religious burdens upon them but lifting few. Jesus can not help but be moved by their desperation. So, Jesus begins once again to teach them and provide the nurture they require.

Mar 6:35 When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late.

Mar 6:36 Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat."

Jesus had desired a quiet, separate place to be with the Apostles. He had tried to go to a place unpopulated. This was intended to be in a deserted place were the twelve and Himself could be alone. The multitude had come and were making no effort to leave, and the day was ending. They had

no food for the people, and they must be made to go into the cities to get food before it was too late in the day. The disciples asked Jesus to send them away.

Mar 6:37 But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?"

Jesus, rather than sending the people away, tells the disciples to feed them. The Apostles were confused. Did Jesus want them to go into the cities and bring back enough food to feed the people? That would require more than they had and more effort than they could muster.

Mar 6:38 But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish."

This must have been a strange question to the Apostles. They knew that there was not enough food for all the people. Jesus must have known how much they had brought with them. They had only brought enough for them and no doubt, just for that day. Jesus wanted an inventory of what they brought so that when He performed the miracle of creating food. If no one else knew, the disciples would know, Christ created food!

Mar 6:39 Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass.

Mar 6:40 So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties.

Mar 6:41 And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all.

Mar 6:42 So they all ate and were filled.

Here, we find the miracle of creation. Something from nothing. All thing was made by Him. Speaking of Jesus...

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Mar 6:43 And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.

Mar 6:44 Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

What a wonderful miracle. 5000 men, this would not include any women or children that may have been in attendance. We know this because the Greek word "Aner" is used. This word only applies to males. Had the total included men, women and children the word used would be "Anthropos." What are we to make of this? Were there only men present? Were they just counting the men? It would be difficult to believe that only men were there, based on other events where Jesus had been and taught. The people gathered wherever He went both male and female. So, in this situation, we most likely find that even many more present than this count.

Mar 6:45 Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.

Mar 6:46 And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.

As soon as they had eaten, Christ sends the multitude away and requires the disciples get into the boat and go back to the other side, while Jesus departs into the mountain to pray. We must always consider that Christ had an active prayer life with the Father. He sought out times to be alone

in quite reverence of God and to enter to communion with Him. If Christ sought this time and needed this time, what about us today? Should we not be people of prayer also?

Mar 6:47 Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land.

It was quickly approaching evening when the disciples left for the other side and Christ sent the multitude away. Now, after Jesus has His time of prayer, it is night. It is dark. He is on the Seaside, while the disciples travel on into the Sea.

Mar 6:48 Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.

While the disciples were rowing across the lake, another storm arises, and the disciples are rowing against the wind. Christ is aware that they are expending much effort for any progress.

It was the fourth watch. A watch was a period of three hours. First was 6-9 pm, Second was 9-12, Third was 12-3 am. Now Christ is at the Fourth Watch which was 3-6 am. It was late nearing more morning that night. At this time Christ comes to them, after they have labored all night to make the journey across the sea. But He is not in a boat, He is walking on the sea! He had waked as far as they had rowed all night. Mark said that He would have walked on by to the other side and met them there.

Mar 6:49 And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out;

It would be a very scary thing to see something going by walking on the water. How could this be? They supposed that it was a ghost or spirit, and they were terrified, so much so that these men screamed and cried out.

How could this be? Who can walk on water? This is not possible. Yet Jesus did it and the disciples saw Him do it.

Mar 6:50 for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

Because of their fear, He speaks to them to calm them down. He informs them that it is only Himself, Christ.

Mar 6:51 Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.

Jesus had calmed the wind and storms before on the sea, as we have studied, a miracle in and of itself, but now He walks on water also. Miracle on top of miracle. What are we to believe? Just who was Jesus?

Mar 6:52 For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

It is amazing how fast we can forget or go back into our old ways of thinking. Even after the miracles that they themselves have performed, and all the miracles they have seen Christ perform, they are still amazed.

Mar 6:53 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there.

Now comes an amazing set of events. The area or land of Gennesaret is the larger area around the land of the Gadarenes (Mark 5:1).

Yes, this is the expanded area where Jesus cast the Legion of demons out of the man into the swine. This is the area where they were so afraid of Jesus that they requested He leave their shores. Let us notice what happens on this occasion...

Mar 6:54 And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him,

Mar 6:55 ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was.

What has changed? Jesus is still the same. The people even recognized who He was. Why did they not question

why He had returned? Why did they not ask Him to once again leave their coast?

Why would they run into the countryside and start bringing the sick to Him? Here is the answer...

Mar 5:17 Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

Mar 5:18 And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon- possessed begged Him that he might be with Him.

Mar 5:19 However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."

Mar 5:20 And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

The demonic man whom, Christ restored to his former self, had been preaching of Christ's power since He had left. All surround this area they marveled at the testimony of the man as they saw him standing whole and in his right mind. The people of this areas had come to understand that had meant them no harm. They had missed a great opportunity. But, when Jesus returns, they will not miss it again.

Mar 6:56 Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.

Sometimes we do not understand why God does not answer our prayers as we want. Why we are made to endure things we would choose not. Here is at least one answer... Perhaps by going through what we would not desire, God can use us to bring much glory to Him, as we set an example before others of our devotion to His cause. Such was the case of this man.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Mar 7:1 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem.

Jesus is still in Galilee and the Pharisees and scribes make a journey there to see Him. Not for some higher motive, but rather to continue to try to turn people away from His teachings and to destroy Him and His influences. How do we know this? Mark records the fact it did not take long to find fault and to start a confrontation. These Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem would be more established and trained than those of Galilee. These would present more authority than local rabbis and religious leaders, after all, they came from the very heart of Jewish culture: Jerusalem itself.

Today people still place more importance on where people come from and what their credentials are rather than what the Bible says. Today, those from Rome or some other city central to whatever denomination church authority carry respect and honor. If one challenges their authority, they can expect to quickly find themselves out of the church and without respect from its followers. This is the plot among the Pharisees, that is, those in authority reject Him and His teaching. These come looking for actions to disagree with.

Mar 7:2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault.

A light reading might, at first, seem to speak to the fact that the disciples were not clean hygienically. That they would not wash their hands before eating and there was visible dirt on their hands. A more careful understanding is that they were speaking of ritual cleansing rather than hygiene.

Mar 7:3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders.

Let us look at the last part of this statement first: Pharisees and the scribes that worked with them had views of the scriptures and their use along side the traditions of the elders (those of older days). The Pharisees taught that there were two laws working together as one. First, that which was written down by Moses and came to be known as the Torah or Pentateuch. That is the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Second, there was the Oral Law, which was never written down, but rather taught and shared from religious leaders from generation to generation. These Oral Laws came to be referred to as the Mishnah.

Mishnah | Definition of Mishnah at Dictionary.com

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/mishnah>

Mishnah definition, the **collection of oral laws compiled** about A.D. 200 by Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi and forming the basic part of the Talmud.

The Pharisees and Scribes held that both laws were legally binding upon all Jews. While the other group of the Jews, the Sadducees, accepted only the written word of Moses. This discussion was, did the disciples of Christ violate the Laws of God by these actions. What was this special way?

The law had imposed certain restrictions upon the chosen race, restrictions which were admirably sanitary in their nature, while aiming also at preserving the isolation of Israel from the corrupt and foul nations which lay around. All such restrictions were now about to pass away, because religion was to become aggressive, it was henceforth to invade the nations from whose inroads it had heretofore sought a covert. But the Pharisees had not been content even with the severe restrictions of the law. They had not

regarded these as a “fence” for themselves against spiritual impurity, but as an elaborate and artificial substitute for love and trust. And therefore, as love and spiritual religion faded out of their hearts they were the more jealous and sensitive about the letter of the law. They “fenced” it with elaborate rules, and precautions against accidental transgressions, superstitiously dreading an involuntary infraction of its minutest details.

Certain substances were unclean food. But who could tell whether some atom of such substance, blown about in the dust of summer, might adhere to the hand with which he ate, or the cups and pots whence his food was drawn? Moreover, the Gentile nations were unclean, and it was not possible to avoid all contact with them in the market-places, returning whence, therefore, every devout Jew was careful to wash himself, which washing, though certainly not an immersion, is here plainly called a baptism. Thus an elaborate system of ceremonial washing, not for cleansing, but as a religious precaution, had grown up among the Jews. [EB]

Thus, the tradition of the elders was not established upon true Law, but as the scriptures say: Tradition of the elders.

Traditions can be enormously powerful. They can keep us together as a family or people. They can give us a sense of purpose and unity. However, they can also mislead and keep us from doing God’s will. For example, traditions based upon the word of God can make us stronger and help new converts to learn the basics of Christianity. Take the Lord’s Supper, it is observed each week and has become a tradition among the churches of Christ. It is also based upon scripture teaching...Act 20:7 Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

Now, on the other hand, at our congregation we meet at 11:00 Sunday morning for worship. This is our tradition. It is helpful so all know when to be at the church building every week so as not to miss the worship. The time is not based on any scripture even though the church is to meet on the first day by scripture. If I make this tradition binding upon all churches everywhere and make it a condition of fellowship, I have no Biblical authority. If I make someone a sinner for meeting at 9:00 or Noon, that is the type of problem we find with the Pharisees. Jesus was God, the author of the Old Law. He knew what it said and what it meant. This is the confrontation we see in these verses of Mark chapter seven, Man's traditions verses the Word of God.

We have had many occasions where man's tradition has divided the body of Christ. You may have seen some yourselves. Some insist on using only one cup in the Communion. Others will not use any bread that is not presented in one piece and broke as the Communion is underway. Some will not allow classrooms or not help strangers. We could find many traditions that are seen as matters of fellowship Jesus' disciples were seen as unfaithful and if He allowed the eating without this ceremonial washing He also was breaking tradition with the people of God. Mar 7:3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders.

Mar 7:4 When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

All this was due to the belief that by washing the hands and these other items that it would separate them from the sins of the people.

Mar 7:5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

Mar 7:6 He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME.

Mar 7:7 AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.’

Today many worship God by manmade traditions and customs not found in scripture. Some of these customs replace the truth of God’s word with lies.

Over the last 2000 years, many traditions have been introduced into the church and Christianity. Some have aided in being faithful, as we have seen, and others have been destructive to unity and faithfulness. Christ here quotes from:

Isa 29:13 Therefore the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

Isa 29:14 Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hidden.”

Isa 29:15 Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, And their works are in the dark; They say, “Who sees us?” and, “Who knows us?”

Mar 7:7 AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.’

Plans made by man to replace the word of God, will not stand. Just as Isaiah teaches many think that no one will know or care when they change the commandments, but God sees. They think that the church is theirs’s to do with as they please. Rather than the church of Christ.

Sprinkling and pouring is just one change introduced in the process of time changing the truth of God into man’s lies. Can you name other changes?

Vain worship means worship that has no purpose or use in the eyes of God. It is useless worship which can never please God who is the object of our worship. Vain means hollow or empty. Many add instrumental music to make worship fun and entertaining, the clapping of hands and dancing.

Mar 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”

Traditions of men apart from the scriptures lay aside the teachings of God. Replacing them with the word of men. Do you think that it doesn't matter when others change the things of God?

Mar 7:9 He said to them, “*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.

It is nothing less that rejecting the commandment for our wishes and desires.

Gal 1:6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, Gal 1:7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Gal 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Gal 1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Mar 7:10 For Moses said, ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER’; and, ‘HE WHO CURSES FATHER OR MOTHER, LET HIM BE PUT TO DEATH.’

Exo 20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Exo 21:15 “And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

Exo 21:17 “And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

Mar 7:11 But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban”—’ (that is, a gift *to God*),

Mar 7:12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,

Mar 7:13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

Part of honoring Father and Mother included taking care of them financially and with food, clothing and housing to just name a few. Yet, the Pharisees had created a custom that if you wanted to give a gift to God and it left you unable to care for your parents, that was ok.

1Ti 5:4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.

1Ti 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Mar 7:14 When He had called all the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, “Hear Me, everyone, and understand:

Mar 7:15 There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.

Mar 7:16 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Mar 7:17 When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable.

Mar 7:18 So He said to them, “Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him,

Mar 7:19 because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?”

Mar 7:20 And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. Mar 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

Mar 7:22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

Mar 7:23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” Compare with James teaching of sin and defilement...

Jas 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Jas 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

Jas 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Jas 1:15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

It is the evil desires of our heart (the inward person) that leads us into sin.

Mar 7:24 From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it*, but He could not be hidden.

The area of Tyre and Sidon was in the region west of the Sea of Galilee.

Tyre. (*a rock*). A celebrated commercial city of Phoenicia, on the coast of the Mediterranean. Its Hebrew name, **Tzor**, signifies *a rock*; which well agrees with the site of *Sur*, the modern town, on a rocky peninsula, formerly an island. There is no doubt that, previous to the siege of the city by Alexander the Great, Tyre was situated on an island; but, according to the tradition of the inhabitants, there was a city on the mainland, before there was a city on the island; and the tradition receives some color from the name of Palaetyrus, or Old Tyre, which was borne in Greek times, by a city on the continent, thirty stadia to the south.

Notices in the Bible. — In the Bible, Tyre is named for the first time, in the Book of Joshua, Jos_19:29, where it is adverted to as a fortified city, (in the Authorized Version, “the strong city”), in reference to the boundaries of the tribe of Asher. But the first passages in the Hebrew historical writings, or in ancient history generally, which actual glimpses of the actual condition of Tyre, are in the book of Samuel, 2Sa_6:11, in connection with Hiram, king of Tyre, sending cedar wood and workmen to David, for building him a palace; and subsequently, in the book of Kings, in connection with the building of Solomon’s Temple.

It is evident that, under Solomon, there was a close alliance between the Hebrews and the Tyrians. Hiram supplied Solomon with cedar wood, precious metals and workmen, and gave him sailors for the voyage to Ophir and India, while, on the other hand, Solomon gave Hiram supplies of corn and oil, ceded to him some cities, and permitted him to make use of some havens on the Red Sea. 1Ki 9:11-14; 1Ki 26-28; 1Ki 10:22.

[Smith]

Zi’don. Gen 10:15; Gen 10:19; Jos 11:8; Jos 19:28; Jdg 1:31; Jdg 18:28; Isa 23:2; Isa 23:4; Isa 23:12; Jer 25:22; Jer 27:3; Eze 28:21-22; Joe 3:4; Joe 4:4; Zec 9:2; Mat 11:21-22; Mat 15:21; Mar 3:8; Mar 7:24; Mar 7:31; Luk 6:17; Luk 10:13-14.

An ancient and wealthy city of Phoenicia, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, less than twenty English miles to the north of Tyre. Its Hebrew name, **Tsidon**, signifies *fishing* or *fishery*. Its modern name is *Saida*. It is situated in the narrow plain between the Lebanon and the sea.

From a biblical point of view, this city is inferior in interest to its neighbor **Tyre**; though in early times, **Sidon** was the more influential of the two cities. This view is confirmed by Zidonians being used as the generic name of Phoenicians or Canaanites. Jos 13:6; Jdg 18:7. From the time of Solomon, to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, Zidon is not often directly mentioned in the Bible, and it appears to have been subordinate to Tyre.

When the people called “Zidonians” are mentioned, it sometimes seems that the Phoenicians of the plain of Zidon are meant. 1Ki 5:6; 1Ki 11:1; 1Ki 11:5; 1Ki 11:33; 1Ki 16:31; 2Ki 23:13.

[Smith]

Mar 7:25 For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet.

Mar 7:26 The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

While it appears that many Jewish people or Israelites were in this area, it was also populated by Greeks and persons of other nations (Gentiles). This was due to its location on the Mediterranean Sea.

Mar 7:27 But Jesus said to her, “Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.”

While on the surface, it seems that Jesus is insulting the woman, this is not the case. It is but another parable teaching

that when we serve food, we feed those it is intended for first before others, it was not.

Jesus was sent to minister to the Jewish people. The gospel was to the Jew first, then the Greek...

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Let us also consider Matthew's account of the same situation...

Mat 15:21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

Mat 15:22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

Mat 15:23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

Mat 15:24 But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Mat 15:25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" Mat 15:26 But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

Mat 15:27 And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

Mat 15:28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Mat 15:24 But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Thus, Jesus' was sent only to Israel as a fulfillment of promises made to them. The gospel will go into all the world, but not that day.

Mar 7:28 And she answered and said to Him, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.”

Mar 7:29 Then He said to her, “For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.”

Mar 7:30 And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Just as Jesus said. However, the miracle was performed from a distance. Here, Jesus did not go and into her home, neither did He have to touch her. How could Jesus do this? He was God.

Mar 7:31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee.

Mar 7:32 Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him.

Another request to heal and we should notice that they request that Christ lay His hands on the man to heal him. Was this necessary? No. We have just seen Jesus cast out a demon from a distance. Yet Jesus fulfills their request.

Mar 7:33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue.

Mar 7:34 Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.”

Sometimes people need to “see” something done. They trusted that if Jesus would touch the man he could be healed. Perhaps their faith was not yet strong enough to believe Christ could heal from a distance. Jesus shows compassion upon the man and those who brought him to Christ by reaching out and touching the man. The process Christ uses, may seem strange to us today, however the ceremony or what ever you wish to call it, was what they needed.

Mar 7:35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.

Mar 7:36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.

Mar 7:37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

We are back to this question: “Who is Jesus?”

CHAPTER EIGHT

Mar 8:1 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, Mar 8:2 "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

Mar 8:3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.

Chapter eight begins with a very great multitude of people following Jesus to hear His teachings. They have been with Him three days and have nothing to eat. How wonderful it must have been to set or stand and hear Jesus speak the things of the Kingdom. People could literally do so for days. Christ understands that if they have not eaten in the past few days, they will not have the strength to travel back to where they may find food. Jesus comments that some have already traveled far just to be with Him.

Mar 8:4 Then His disciples answered Him, How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?

An interesting question to ask here is: Did they say this to see if Jesus would perform another miracle? Or had they forgot already of the great miracle already performed in feeding the 5000?

Mar 8:5 He asked them, How many loaves do you have?; And they said, Seven.

Christ has the disciples do an inventory of the food they had left on hand.

Seven loaves, and a few small fish as we will find out later. This is done to acknowledge that Jesus did not have food hidden but will do another miracle of creation. The Apostles would clearly know the food was created.

Mar 8:6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude.

Mar 8:7 They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them.

Mar 8:8 So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments.

Not only were all the people fed, but they had more food leftover in the end than at the beginning.

Mar 8:9 Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, Jesus had plans to leave the area, but He first fed the people then sent them away...

Mar 8:10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

Dalmanutha also know as Magdala. (a tower). The chief manuscripts and versions exhibit the name as Magadan, as in the Revised Version. Into the limits of Magadan, Christ came by boat, over the Lake of Gennesareth, after his miracle of feeding the four thousand on the Mountain of the eastern side, Mat 15:39, and from thence, he returned in the same boat to the opposite shore.

In the parallel narrative of St. Mark, Mar 8:10, we find the & parts of Dalmanutha, on the western edge of the Lake of Gennesareth. The Magdala, which conferred her name on Mary the Magdalene one of the numerous migdols, that is, towers, which stood in Palestine, was probably the place, of that name, which is mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud, as near Tiberias, and this again, is as probably the modern el-Mejdel, a miserable little Muslim village, of twenty huts on the water's edge at the southeast corner of the plain of Gennesareth. It is now the only inhabited place on this plain. [Smith]

The Pharisees Demand a Sign

Mar 8:11 Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him.

The hatred of Jesus is growing among the Pharisees, as we now see. He no longer gets out of the boat when they begin to confront Him with demands.

This time for some sign in the heavens.

I. What did they mean by asking a sign? Had they not His wonderful works? And why did He say that no sign should be given when in fact He was giving signs innumerable and conclusive? It is quite plain that Christ's works did not convince them. It is therefore also plain that we greatly overrate the force of miracles as an evidence of Christianity. In those times few, if any, followed Christ because of the miracles. They followed Him because of that all prevailing power which accompanied the simple words "Follow Me," because never man spake as He spoke, because the message of Divine love carried with it its own overwhelming evidence. And then we know that vast multitudes witnessed the miracles and yet persistently refused to believe.

Some other sign they wanted, something besides curing the blind and cleansing the leper and raising the dead. They asked for some imposing display in the heavens, some disclosure of the Messiah magnificently seated on a material throne, which would confound, amaze, and convince all beholders. Now that the Saviour would not give. He refused, first, because they had no right to dictate how much evidence must needs be forthcoming.

Part of our trial here consists, in fact, in God's so adjusting the evidence to our moral condition that, while there is amply enough to determine the acceptance of the honest and good heart, there is no lavishing of proof.

II. Suppose the "sign from heaven" given.—Suppose that in the sky above Jerusalem had been disclosed the form

of the Son of Man as the sun in his strength, ten thousand times ten thousand of the heavenly hosts on the right hand and the left, the first effect would doubtless have been unspeakable and overwhelming awe. But remember, belief in the Christ meant trust in the Christ, the homage of heart and soul. Do you think that the most magnificent display in the heavens would secure that?

III. No outward proof alone can determine belief in truths moral and spiritual.—Every kind of truth has its proper evidence. Mathematical truth has its evidence; but to crave mathematical proof outside its own proper region is unphilosophical, and may lead us to suspect that the absorbing study of mathematics disqualifies for, rather than aids, the search after truth of other kinds. Historical truth again is reached through its own proper evidence; but it is here that we touch upon the very point before us.

Christianity rests on an historical basis, and because it does so sceptics are apt to assume that its truth or falsehood is merely matter of historical evidence. Doubtless the historical evidence must be sound; but is every one qualified to judge of its soundness? And so we have to point out that Christianity has a moral and spiritual basis also. Suppose there has appeared on the page of history One whom our own hearts and the universal consent of the civilized world pronounce to be perfect goodness, unrivalled purity, Divine dignity, love unequalled. Will not good men yield their love and devotion to Him who is perfect goodness? Will not bad men shrink from Christ and from His perfect purity, and be predisposed to question the historical evidence, because they hope thereby to free themselves from His claim upon their allegiance? For such men there are no signs from heaven.

They are not given, simply because they would be useless (Luk 16:31).

IV. Obedience is the condition of faith. Obedience to what we know leads to faith in what is yet to be revealed.

The good ground in the parable of the sower, the only ground that brought forth fruit, is explained to be “the honest and good heart,” honest, and therefore receptive of everything true; good, and therefore in closest sympathy with the noble, the loving, and the pure. But this is alone of Him from whom comes every good and perfect gift. Canon Jacob.

Mar 8:12 But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.

The “sign” refused. It was, we may be sure, no mere intellectual deficiency in His hearers which drew this sigh from the Gracious Saviour. In the request that He would give them a sign there was some secret spiritual wrongness over which Christ grieved. [PH]

Mar 8:13 And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side.

The Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

Mar 8:14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat.

Mar 8:15 Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

Once more Jesus left them; and crossed the lake. The disciples found themselves with but one loaf, approaching a wilder district, where the ceremonial purity of food could not easily be ascertained. But they had already acted on the principle which Jesus had formally proclaimed, that all meats were clean. And therefore it was not too much to expect them to penetrate below the letter of the words, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod. In giving them this enigma to discover, He acted according to His usage, wrapping the spiritual truth in earthly phrases, picturesque and impressive; and He

treated them as life treats every one of us, which keeps our responsibility still upon the strain, by presenting new moral problems, fresh questions and trials of insight, for every added attainment which lays our old tasks aside. But they understood Him not. Some new ceremonial appeared to them to be designed, in which everything would be reversed, and the unclean should be those hypocrites, the strictest observers of the old code. Such a mistake, however blameworthy, reveals the profound sense of an ever-widening chasm, and an expectation of a final and hopeless rupture with the chiefs of their religion. It prepares us for what is soon to come, the contrast between the popular belief and theirs, and the selection of a rock on which a new Church is to be built. In the meantime the dire practical inconvenience of this announcement led to hot discussion, because they had no bread. And Jesus, perceiving this, remonstrated in a series of indignant questions. Personal want should not have disturbed their judgment, remembering that twice over He had fed hungry multitudes, and loaded them with the surplus of His gift. Their eyes and ears should have taught them that He was indifferent to such distinctions, and His doctrine could never result in a new Judaism. How was it that they did not understand?

Thereupon they perceived that His warning was figurative. He had spoken to them, after feeding the five thousand, of spiritual bread which He would give, even His flesh to be their food. What then could He have meant by the leaven of the Pharisees but the imparting of their religious tendencies, their teaching, and their insincerity?

Was there any real danger that these, His chosen ones, should be shaken by the demand for a sign from heaven? Did not Philip presently, when Christ spoke of seeing the Father, eagerly cry out that this, if it were granted, would suffice them? In these words he confessed the misgiving which haunted their minds, and the longing for a heavenly

sign. And yet the essence of the vision of God was in the life and the love which they had failed to know. If they could not see Him in these, He must forever remain invisible to them. [EB]

Mar 8:16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

Mar 8:17 But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?

Mar 8:18 Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?

And do you not remember?

Mar 8:19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him,

Mar 8:20 Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up? And they said,

Mar 8:21 So He said to them, How is it you do not understand?

How is it that ye do not understand? — “do not understand that the warning I gave you could not have been prompted by any such petty consideration as the want of loaves in your scrip.” Abundant as were our Lord’s miracles, we see from this that they were not performed at random, but that He carefully noted their minutest details, and desired that this should be done by those who witnessed, as doubtless by all who read the record of them. Even the different kind of baskets used at the two miraculous feedings, so carefully noted in the two narratives, are here also referred to; the one smaller, of which there were twelve, the other much larger, of which there were seven. [JFB]

Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida

Mar 8:22 Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him.

Bethsaida. (house of fish). Bethsaida, of Galilee. Joh 12:21. A city which was the native place of Andrew, Peter and Philip, Joh 1:44; Joh 12:21, in the land of Gennesareth, Mar 6:46, compare Mar 6:53, and therefore, on the west side of the lake. By comparing the narratives in Mar 6:31-53 and Luk 9:10-17, it appears certain that the Bethsaida, at which the five thousand were fed, must have been a second place of the same name, on the east of the lake.

(But, in reality, there is, but one Bethsaida, that known on our maps as Bethsaida Julias. L. Abbot in *Biblical and Oriental Journal*. The fact is that Bethsaida was a village, on both sides of the Jordan, as it enters the sea of Galilee on the north, so that the western part of the village was in Galilee and the eastern portion in Gaulonitis, part of the tetrarchy of Philip.

This eastern portion was built up into a beautiful city by Herod Philip, and named by him Bethsaida Julias, after Julia, the daughter of the Roman emperor, Tiberius Caesar. On the plain of Butaiha, a mile or two to the east, the five thousand were fed. The western part of the town remained a small village. Editor). [Smith]

Here they begged with Jesus to touch the blind man. The reaction and actions of Jesus should be viewed considering the request of the friends of the man who was blind, to touch him. They wanted to “see” Jesus do something. While Christ could have cured him of his blindness from afar, they wanted to “see” something done.

Mar 8:23 So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

While this may seem to us as a vile thing, they wanted to see Jesus do something and so He did.

Mar 8:24 And he looked up and said, I see men like trees, walking.

Certain moving forms about him, but without the power of discerning their shape or magnitude; trees he should have accounted them from their height, but men from their motion. [Johnson]

Mar 8:25 Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up.

And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

Some have questioned why Jesus did the miracle this way. Some assume and thus teach that Christ had difficulty and had to redo or double up His efforts. How foolish. Of all that Mark records, do we honestly think Christ had difficulty? Then why the show? Because that is what the friends wanted to “see” and so then have faith. Some people require much more to have faith than others.

Mar 8:26 Then He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town.

To reduce the demands upon Jesus for healing, Christ requests that he wait a period of time before showing others what a miracle Jesus had done. Jesus did not forbid him for all time from going into town or telling other, just to wait a little while.

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

Mar 8:27 Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, Who do men say that I am?

Mar 8:28 So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.

Mar 8:29 He said to them, But who do you say that I am? Peter answered and said to Him, You are the Christ.

Mar 8:30 Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.

For notes on Peter's confession of Christ, see Mat_16:13-20. Compare

Luk 9:18-21. Cæsarea Philippi was a heathen town, in the extreme north of Palestine, near the foot of Mount Hermon, and one of the sources of the Jordan. [Johnson]

He asked His disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am? And they told Him, saying, John the Baptist: and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets. And He asked them, But Who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto Him, Thou art the Christ. And He charged them that they should tell no man of Him. 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.

And He spake the saying openly. Mar 8:27-32 (R.V.)

We have now reached an important stage in the Gospel narrative, the comparative withdrawal from evangelistic effort, and the preparation of the disciples for an approaching tragedy. We find them in the wild country to the north of the Lake of Galilee, and even as far withdrawn as to the neighborhood of the sources of the Jordan. Not without a deliberate intention has Jesus led them thither. He wishes them to realize their separation. He will fix upon their consciousness the failure of the world to comprehend Him, and give them the opportunity either to acknowledge Him, or sink back to the lower level of the crowd. [EB]

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

Mar 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Many have taught that Jesus came to setup the Kingdom, but the Jewish leaders rejected Him and killed Him and this prevented Him from doing as God planned,

and He was forced to set up the church to make do until He could return as King. This teaching makes both God the Father and Christ look weak. How powerful could God be if men alone could force Him to change His plans?

This verse tells us that Christ and the Father were in full understanding of not only what the Jewish leaders would do, but that they would not change anything already purposed by God. Peter speaking later will acknowledge...

Act 2:22 Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know

Act 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Act 2:24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Act 2:25 For David says concerning Him: I FORESAW THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE MY FACE, FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, THAT I MAY NOT BE SHAKEN.

Act 2:26 THEREFORE MY HEART REJOICED, AND MY TONGUE WAS GLAD; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL REST IN HOPE.

Act 2:27 FOR YOU WILL NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HADES, NOR WILL YOU ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION.

Act 2:28 YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF JOY IN YOUR PRESENCE.

Act 2:29 Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Act 2:30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,

Act 2:31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

Act 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

Mar 8:32 He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

Peter also at the time Jesus first began to try to explain the future had great difficulty believing such could happen to Jesus. I do not believe that this was because of little faith, but rather having seen all Jesus could do, he believed that no one could do anything like that to Jesus.

To that we might now add... unless Christ allowed it. Which Christ did.

Mar 8:33 But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.

Peter did not understand at that time what God had planned, however, the attitude expressed by Peter was more with the plans of Satan, than God.

Why? If Christ did not die, if He were not buried, and if Christ did not resurrect, there would be no forgiveness possible. Satan would have delighted in that.

Mar 8:34 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Mar 8:35 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

Christ calls us not just to follow Him where ever He goes, but to change our lives to match the goals and plans of God. Before we are Christians, we may do as we please. But, after we are Christians, we live our life for Him. What life we may have lived must be exchanged for the life He wants us to live.

As revealed in the New Testament. One life lost, one life gained.

Mar 8:36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Mar 8:37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Questions all should carefully answer for themselves. Life has eternal consequences. It is not a game or intended to be lived only for our pleasure.

We only get one chance to set our destiny...

Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

Heb 9:28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Mar 8:38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

This should make all Christians carefully consider how we present Christianity to the world.

CHAPTER NINE

Mar 9:1 And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

Men who were standing there would see the beginning of the end, the approach of the kingdom of God with power, the fall of Jerusalem, and the removal of the Hebrew candlestick out of its place.

Act 2:1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Act 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Act 2:3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Act 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

Act 2:15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

Act 2:16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Act 2:17 'AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS, SAYS GOD, THAT I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL FLESH; YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS.

Act 2:18 AND ON MY MENSERVANTS AND ON MY MAIDSERVANTS I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT IN THOSE DAYS; AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY.

Spoken in Joel 2:28-32

The Transfiguration

Mar 9:2 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.

Mar 9:3 His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

Mar 9:4 And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

Mar 9:5 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, Mar 9:6 because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

Mar 9:7 And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

Mar 9:8 Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.

Mar 9:9 Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Mar 9:10 So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

Mar 9:11 And they asked Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

Mar 9:12 Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

Mar 9:13 But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him."

Parallel accounts may be found starting in Matthew 17:1 & Luke 9:28.

While Matthew and Mark's account are almost the same, Luke adds some interesting information.

Luk 9:32 But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.

They were heavy with sleep. This would imply that the event took place late at night or in the early hours of the morning. So the transfiguration was in the dark. An interesting addition to the other accounts, in that the glistening white of Jesus, Moses and Elijah, would be so much more powerful in the darkness.

Luke further tells us that they spoke of Christ's "decease". The word meaning exit or exodus, and therefore speaking of His death. The discussion no doubt was not just His death, but all the various things that took place surrounding the cross. Christ had just been speaking to the disciples a week earlier as we have seen in Mark 8 of the death and events awaiting Him as the savior of mankind.

The idea of Christ's transfiguration is that He was changed, or transformed. Changed into what? Transformed into what? He was as Moses and Elijah: Existing in a glorified state, transformed from mortal into immortal for the meeting. Moses represents the Law and Elijah the prophets.

Peter was extremely impressed with the event and states: "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"

Peter wishes to make tabernacles (tents) to honor all three, however God the Father has other plans: Mar 9:7 And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

Jesus alone will be honored in the New Testament. The Old will pass away.

Heb 8:13 In that He says, "A NEW COVENANT," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Mar 9:9 Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Mar 9:10 So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

The disciples still has problems understanding the events yet to unfold in Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

I. The scene. It was when the Master was in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, far away in the north of Palestine, that the event occurred. To any one visiting the spot, and seeing the stupendous form of snowy Hermon rising before him, till its summit has left the valley eleven thousand feet below, it appears almost certain, it is said, that this was the high mountain to which the Saviour led His chosen disciples. Through a scene of surpassing loveliness they wend their way. At every step the prospect expands, till at length a glorious panorama opens before them, "embracing a great part of Syria, from the sea to Damascus, from the Lebanon and the gorge of the Litany to the mountains of Moab; or down the Jordan valley to the Dead Sea; or over Galilee and Samaria, and on to Jerusalem," all bathed in the splendours of the setting sun. But these sunset glories presently fade. Night falls. The stars one by one shine forth. The moon rises in silvery radiance, reflected back in dazzling beauty from the broad patches of snow on the mountain-side. And now we see Jesus bowed in prayer in the moonlight, His disciples praying with Him a short distance apart, till, overcome by fatigue, they sink in slumber. But what sudden light is that which bursts forth upon the scene, hiding by its dazzling brilliancy all the glories of the moonlit night? The disciples are wakened by the

splendour, and their astonished eyes behold a marvellous sight. Jesus is transfigured before them. His face shines with the brightness of the noonday sun; His raiment is white and glistening; and as they gaze in a transport of awe, behold! two shining forms appear with Him in glory, whom they, by the intuition which is given to the spirit in moments of ecstasy, recognise to be none other than Moses and Elias. The apostles gaze in wonder and adoration, till presently there comes a bright cloud, which enwraps in its folds of light the three figures. It is the Shechinah, and the apostles fear as they see the face of Christ and the faces of Moses and Elias disappearing within it. And now from out that cloud of awful glory comes a voice, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him."

II. Its purpose. 1. It was intended to strengthen and brace the spirit of Jesus Christ for the solemn and awful work which lay before Him, culminating in Gethsemane and Calvary. 2. As regards the purpose of the Transfiguration with reference to Moses and Elias, it is difficult to speak with any degree of positiveness. Remembering, however, what St. Peter tells us, that the angels bend over the mystery of redemption as the cherubim bent over the mercy-seat on the ark, desiring "to look into" its secret meaning, we may infer that glorified saints, such as Moses and Elias, must have felt the most earnest and absorbing desire to understand the mystery of the atonement which Christ was about to make for their sins and for the sins of the whole world. For them the Transfiguration must have been a new revelation of the wisdom and glory of God, in the consummation of His eternal purpose to redeem a ruined world. 3. So far as the three apostolic witnesses of the Transfiguration were concerned, its intent is perfectly clear. They could not grasp the conception of a suffering Messiah. It was an offence to them. So they are taken up into the Holy Mount, and shewn the great lawgiver and the great prophet of Israel engaged in ecstatic converse with their glorified Master concerning

the decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. The lesson was plain; they had misread the prophecies: the Messiah of Moses and the prophets must be a suffering, dying Messiah. And this Jesus, whom they are almost ready to forsake, because He tells them He is to die the shameful death of the Cross, God the Father, on the Mount of Transfiguration, crowns with honour and glory.

III. Its significance. 1. It marks the topmost step in the progressive glorification of the manhood of Jesus Christ. He rose to that height of glory because of the inner power of His holy life, because of the transfiguring virtue of His consecrated soul. The doors of eternal glory open before the Son of Man: He has only to enter in, to step up from the summit of Hermon into the presence of God Himself, and to sit down in glory for ever! But He puts aside this possible glorification; He leaves all that glory which He might have had with the angels of God and the glorified saints, and descends into the valley of humiliation, into this desert of sin and sorrow and suffering, into the dark and gloomy depths of Gethsemane and Calvary, in order to redeem a world! 2. It may be looked upon as the inauguration of the New Covenant. As on rugged Sinai was inaugurated the law which proved a ministration of death, so on snowy Hermon, amid a scene of exquisite natural beauty, was inaugurated the gospel by that voice from the excellent glory. God proclaims Him the Head and Lord of all. "HEAR YE HIM." You have heard and obeyed Moses, you have heard and obeyed the prophets: now hear and obey Christ the Son of God. 3. It represents to us the investiture of Jesus Christ as High Priest. From this point on to the end Christ's prophetic office appears to recede more and more, while His priestly office comes into prominence. From Hermon He descended into the valley of humiliation, and moved right on to the altar of sacrifice, even His Cross on Calvary. 4. It is above all designed to exhibit to us the transcendent value of the

sufferings and death of Christ. In the Basilica at Ravenna there is a mosaic of the sixth century representing in emblematical form the Transfiguration of Christ,—a jewelled cross set in a circle of blue studded with golden stars, in the midst of which appears the face of Christ, the Saviour of the world; while from the cloud close by is thrust forth a Divine hand that points to the Cross. Those early artists were right in their reading of this sublime event. The Transfiguration sets the Cross of Christ in the centre, surrounds it with a radiant firmament of God's promises and of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and shews us the hand of God Himself emerging from the cloud of glory and pointing to the Cross, as though God the Father would say to man what John the Baptist said: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." 5. Its prophetic significance. Standing on Hermon with these three apostles, a long vista stretches out before us into the distant future, including in its scope that great day when the Son of God shall take to Himself His power, His mighty power, in order to reign. His kingdom has come at last; and what is the manner of it? It is a kingdom of redeemed men—of men who stand like Moses and Elias with Christ in glory, not only redeemed, not only delivered from sin and suffering and sorrow and trial and pain, but transformed and transfigured with that same glory by which the person of Jesus is enwrapped. 6. It symbolises the transformation and transfiguration of our spirits, our whole reasonable, moral, and spiritual nature, into the image of Jesus Christ our Lord. [PH]

Jesus Heals a Boy with an Unclean Spirit

Mar 9:14 And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.

Mar 9:15 Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him.

Mar 9:16 And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?"

Mar 9:17 Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought Your son, who has a mute spirit.

Mar 9:18 And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

Mar 9:19 He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me."

While Jesus, Peter, James and John were on the mountain the other disciples were left behind. In the absence of Jesus, they had problems believing they could cast out the evil spirit.

Mar 9:20 Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

Mar 9:21 So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.

Mar 9:22 And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

Mar 9:23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

Mar 9:24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

An interesting statement made by the young man's father. "I believe, help my unbelief." This is the case of many today, while they know what God is capable of doing; they do not have a faith as strong as it should be, because there still exists a certain degree of unbelief which blocks faith from having its full force in life. Romans 10:17 shows how we build our faith. From hearing the word of God.

Mar 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!"

Mar 9:26 Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead."

Mar 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

Mar 9:28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

Mar 9:29 So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

Once again, we see the discussion of prayer and fasting connected with the lack of faith of the disciples. While fasting is not commanded, prayer is. Prayer strengthens our relationship with God and fasting brings control over our physical nature.

Jesus Again Foretells Death, Resurrection

Mar 9:30 Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it.

Mar 9:31 For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."

Mar 9:32 But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

Just as Peter, James and John has learned of the events of the cross while with Him on the mount of Transfiguration, Jesus spends time explaining to the other disciples (nine others) about the events awaiting Him in Jerusalem.

Yet while they did not understand, they did not ask for clarification out of fear. Fear can keep us from doing or knowing God's will in our lives.

I. He explained to them His present state: “The Son of Man is delivered.” 1. He had already been delivered by the Father in purpose, promise, and deed to stand in our room. 2. He had delivered Himself to law and justice, to be a curse for us. 3. He was about to be delivered by a traitorous disciple. Among the twelve He seems to have for a while a retreat; but He is betrayed. 4. The Father and Himself, in thus acting, shewed love— Judas, avarice.

II. He told them the parties into whose power He had been given; “Into the hands of men.” 1. To be delivered into the hands of men is to be put into their power—to do to Him and with Him as they chose. 2. They could have this power only by special permission—from the Father and Himself. 3. It is marvellous that He should have been delivered into the hands of men. God in humanity. (1) It tested their character, and brought out their desperate wickedness. (2) It proved the voluntariness of His obedience. (3) It shewed how blind sin is in its supposed triumphs—how God brings glory out of rebellion.

III. He told them what must befall Him at the hands of men: “They shall kill Him.” 1. That Christ was to die was not now foretold for the first time. (1) In sacrifice He had been slain since the beginning of the world. (2) His sufferings had been predicted. (3) He had been hated in His law. (4) Killed in His people. (5) His life had been sought already. (6) The death of Christ was no singular event in the display of human character involved. 2. Conscience tells man that death is penal, and he uses it as such, and as the height of punishment. Man proclaimed Christ guilty. 3. Intensity of revenge leads him sometimes to add torture to death. Man proclaimed his own hatred to Christ. 4. This death of Christ was necessary. 5. Did take place—religion—law—power—people.

IV. He revealed to them the future by telling them of His resurrection.—1. Man’s power and agency ended with His death. 2. Christ’s resurrection was the result of an agency

neither human nor satanic, but Divine. (1) Scripture prophecy called for it. (2) His office and undertaking called for it. (3) Divine justice called for it. (4) The exalted connexion of His humanity called for it. (5) The defeat of him who had the power of death led to it. 3. Christ followed man to death. Man follows Christ to life.

V. We see that Christ had His sufferings ever in view. 1. He knew Judas' part, and the priests' and the people's. He saw in their bosoms the fire, etc. 2. He anticipates the Father's. He knew His ire. 3. The feelings with which He approached these are mentioned, Luk 12:50; Joh 12:27.

VI. He also kept in view that which was to follow. 1. He contemplated the whole truth, and the one part balanced with the other. 2. "For the joy that was set before Him," etc. Jas. Stewart.

Who Is the Greatest?

Mar 9:33 Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"

Mar 9:34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.

We have another explanation for why they did not seek clarification in the things Jesus spoke of, in His death, burial and resurrection: They were too busy disputing about whom (which one of them) would be greatest in the kingdom of God.

Mar 9:35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

The path to greatness is in service to others not to be served ourselves.

Mar 9:36 Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,

Mar 9:37 "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

A small child represents humility not pride. They seek to be pleasing to others so they may be embraced and loved. The child illustrated in a double sense the rule of greatness which He had laid down. So great is lowliness that Christ Himself may be found in the person of a little child. And again, so great is service, that in receiving one, even one, of the multitude of children who claim our sympathies, we receive the very Master; and in that lowly Man, who was among them as he that serveth, is manifested the very God: whoso receiveth Me receiveth not Me but Him that sent Me. [EB]

The Church the guardian of the children.—The care taken of these little ones may be regarded as among the tests of the sound state of any branch of the Church to which they have been so lovingly commended by her Lord; they, in outward shew, poor, helpless, weak, ignorant, having everything to learn to the eye of faith, cleansed in their Redeemer's blood, waited upon and guarded by the highest angels, clad in the white robes of their baptismal purity, rich in invisible treasures, insensible to our poor outward world, and wrapped in a world unseen, and set forth as our example that we should become such as they. Of a truth, whether we contemplate them in their purity, or our Saviour's "woe on such as cause them to offend," one would alike shrink from the duty of forming what is of so great price and yet so frail, but that a duty is laid upon us, yea, "woe is on us, if we do it not"; and it is not we alone who do it, but He who saith, "Whoso receiveth one such little child in My name receiveth Me"; He whose face their angels in heaven do always behold.—E. B. Pusey, D.D.

"Such children."—The term includes all who are in any way like such children: as, for instance, all who are helpless,

as children are; all who are simple-minded, or even weak in mind; or, particularly, all who are young in the faith, who, like children, require the "milk" of the Word, and not its "strong meat."—M. F. Sadler.

"In My name."—That is, for My sake; not only because they are baptised or belong to Christian parents, though these are good reasons indeed, but because they partake of the nature which Christ took upon Him, because they belong to the race which Christ redeemed—because like Him they are poor, and have no settled homes, or because He may be honoured in their after-life. Such children are received in Christ's name not only in orphanages or in Sunday-schools, but by many of the Christ-loving poor who have children of their own, and yet take into their homes some poor waif or stray, and cherish it as their own flesh and blood for no reward except the Lord's approval.—Ibid.

"Receiveth Me,"—The grace of this promise seems almost incredible. What an honour would any Christian have esteemed it if he had been permitted to receive Christ under his roof for a single hour, and yet that receiving might have been external and transitory; but the Lord here undoubtedly promises that to receive a little one in His name is to receive Him effectually. [PH]

Anyone Not Against Us Is for Us

Mar 9:38 Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."

Mar 9:39 But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.

Mar 9:40 For he who is not against us is on our side.

Mar 9:41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

The disciples, John specifically, speaks of some who were casting out demons in Christ's name, but who were not directly following after Christ and the Apostles. They forbade them because they felt that they should be following with them and subject to them, to work such works. As we have seen, there were problems with the disciples as to who would be the greatest in the kingdom. If they left these individuals alone to do by themselves, how would the Apostles get the glory and honor that they desired? Disciples pride... Jesus' answer: "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.

Mar 9:40 For he who is not against us is on our side.

Mar 9:41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

How difficult these thought must have been to the Apostles, as they struggled for supremacy among themselves while not knowing or still understanding the truth of the kingdom (church) and the spread of Christianity.

Temptations to Sin

Mar 9:42 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

We need to be very clear and direct in our personal responsibilities as Christians. There are no individuals God is not concerned about from the least to the greatest. For judgment along with punishment and reward will test each before the judgment seat of Christ.

Mar 9:43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—

Mar 9:44 where 'THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.'

Mar 9:45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—

Mar 9:46 where 'THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.'

Mar 9:47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire—

Mar 9:48 where 'THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.'

While many would be tempted to take these teaching literally they have far reaching applications:

The hand, or the foot, or the eye represents any instrument by which sin may be committed; and it applies to those who may be the means of drawing us into sin. If your relative or your friend, who is useful or dear to you as your hand, your foot, or your eye, is drawing you into sin, cut him off from you, lest he should draw you into hell, into the unquenchable Gehenna. Gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom, lay to the south of Jerusalem. Originally a pleasant suburb of the city, it became in later times the scene of the worship of Molech, "the abomination of the children of Ammon." On this account the valley was polluted by King Josiah. It thus became the receptacle of everything that was vile and filthy. These noisome accumulations were from time to time consumed by fire; and the things which were not consumed by fire were the prey of worms. Hence "Gehenna" became the image of the place of eternal punishment, where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." These terrible images are conclusive as to the eternity of future punishment, so far as our nature is concerned and our knowledge reaches. They are the symbols of certain dreadful realities; too dreadful for human language to describe or human thought to conceive. [PC]

Mar 9:49 "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.

The Lord's people are represented as being themselves offered up to Him, as His spiritual sacrifices, both by Isaiah and St. Paul. It was a custom ordained of God in the Levitical code (Lev_2:13) that "Every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt." Collecting, then, the points to which we have adverted, we have seen that believers are represented as the Lord's sacrifices: that His sacrifices were anciently purified by the typical salt; that the object of the salt, or grace, is to preserve them from the corruption of the worm of indwelling sin and the fire of ultimate judgment; and that in the whole chamber of imagery is inculcated the duty of sacrificing the lusts of the flesh in order to our being edified in the spirit, and promoting the edification of others. We recognize in the text a force and a beauty not discernible to the superficial student, in the declaration of the gracious effect of those sanctifying trials and mortifications in which all believers have their share; "for everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Let us, therefore, consider the teaching of the Spirit in this text to imply, first, an awful denunciation on the man of unmortified lusts—"Every" such "one shall be salted with fire;" secondly, the gracious result of fleshly mortification—"every sacrifice shall be salted with salt;" that is, every believer who "presents his body a living sacrifice," "shall be salted with salt"—that is, not with fire to consume, but with salt to preserve. This is the contrast: on the one hand penal destruction; on the other, gracious preservation.[BI]

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Rom 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may

prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Therefore we must make sacrifices in this life to bring about the type of person God will be pleased with.

Mar 9:50 Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another."

Salt

- I. Look at what is here so expressively symbolized. Salt is necessary to sacrifice.
 1. Christ is the symbol of the covenant of everlasting mercy, but of everlasting mercy as the basis of a sinner's new life.
 2. Salt symbolizes not only God's covenant of mercy with man, but man's covenant with God. The life of the animal was devoted and offered with salt to signify-not only the Divine fact of atonement, but the human fact of self-surrender: and the worshipper said, "I have given the life of the animal to Thee to signify that henceforth my own life is forever Thine."
 3. Salt is also the principle of counteractive grace-"Have salt in yourselves."
 4. Salt signifies the preventive, corrective, life-nourishing power of the Christian society in the world-"Ye are the salt of the earth."
 5. Salt is also the principle of peace. It destroys the unbenevolent passions.
- II. The Saviour's lesson concerning the deterioration of the salt.
 1. The possibility of deterioration-"If the salt have lost its savour."

2. Christ marks here three things as characteristic of men in this state.
 - (1) They are useless,.
 - (2) They are contemptible.
 - (3) They are rejected with disdain. (Preachers Monthly.)

CHAPTER TEN

TEACHING ABOUT DIVORCE

Mar 10:1 Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.

Jesus leaves the land of His youth, Galilee, and begins His journey to Judea and Jerusalem and thus the cross. Now he is east of Jerusalem and east of the Jordan River. Here gathered the people as they learned of His location and along with the multitude came some of His enemies, the Pharisees.

Mar 10:2 The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?” testing Him.

In Jesus’ day as well as ours, there are questions that those opposed to the truth use to divide, misdirect, and create arguments. Then as now, divorce is one of them. Notice the statement “testing Him.” It is not about truth, but rather what will He say and how can we use it against Him.

We no doubt have seen questions arise over baptism, instrumental music, one cup communion, classrooms, etc. Not seeking truth, but to create arguments. People take sides and little is accomplished after that.

So it was with divorce...

Mar 10:3 And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

Mar 10:4 They said, “Moses permitted *a man* to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her*.”

Mar 10:5 And Jesus answered and said to them, “Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

Mar 10:6 But from the beginning of the creation, God 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.'

Mar 10:7 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE,

Mar 10:8 AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.

Mar 10:9 Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

The Pharisees come to Him with a question dangerous in itself, because there is no conceivable answer which will not estrange many, and especially dangerous for Jesus, because already, on the Mount, He has spoken upon this subject words at seeming variance with His free views concerning sabbath observance, fasting, and ceremonial purity. Most perilous of all was the decision they expected when given by a teacher already under suspicion, and now within reach of that Herod who had, during the lifetime of his first wife, married the wife of a living man. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" It was a decision upon this very subject which had proved fatal to the forerunner (John the Baptist).

But Jesus spoke out plainly. In a question and answer which are variously reported, what is clear is that He carefully distinguished between a command and a permission of Moses. Divorce had been allowed; yes, but some reason had been exacted, whatever disputes might exist about its needful gravity, and deliberation had been enforced by demanding a legal document, a writing of divorcement. Thus conscience was bidden to examine its motives, and time was gained for natural relenting. But after all, Jesus declared that divorce was only a concession to their hardness of heart. Thus we learn that Old Testament institutions were not all and of necessity an expression of the Divine ideal. They were sometimes a temporary concession, meant to lead to better things; and expedient rather than a revelation.

To whatever concessions Moses had been given, the original and unshaken design of God was that man and woman should find the permanent completion of their lives each in the other. And this is shown by three separate considerations...

The first is the plan of the creation, making them male and female, and such that body and soul alike are only perfect when to each its complement is added, when the masculine element and the feminine "each fulfills defect in each... the two-celled heart beating with one full stroke life." Thus by anticipation Jesus condemned the tame-spirited verdict of His disciples, that since a man cannot relieve himself from a union when it proves galling, "it is not good" to marry at all. To this He distinctly answered that such an inference could not prove even tolerable, except when nature itself, or else come social wrong, or else absorbing devotion to the cause of God, virtually canceled the original design. But already He had here shown that such prudential calculation degrades man, leaves him incomplete, traverses the design of God Who from the beginning of the creation made them male and female.

Christ's second proof that marriage cannot be dissolved without sin is that glow of heart, that noble abandonment, in which a man leaves even father and mother for the joy of his youth and the love of his espousals. In that sacred hour, how hideous and base a wanton divorce would be felt to be.

Now man is not free to live by the mean, calculating, selfish afterthought, which breathes like a frost on the bloom of his noblest impulses and aspirations. He should guide himself by the light of his highest and most generous intuitions.

And the third reason is that no man, by any possibility, can undo what marriage does. They two are one flesh; each has become part of the existence of the other; and it is simply incredible that a union so profound, so interwoven with the

very tissue of their being, should lie at the mercy of the caprice or the calculations of one or other, or of both. Such a union arises from the profoundest depths of the nature God created, not from mean cravings of that nature in its degradation; and like waters springing up from the granite underneath the soil, it may suffer stain, but it is in itself free from the contamination of the fall. Despite of monkish and of Manichean slanders, impure dreams pretending to especial purity, God is He Who joins man and woman together in a bond which “no man,” king or prelate, may without guilt dissolve. [EB]

Mar 10:10 In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter.

Mar 10:11 So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.

Mar 10:12 And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

See also:

Mat 19:7 They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?”

Mat 19:8 He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

Mat 19:9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”

Old Law’s Teaching Concerning Divorce

Deu 24:1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house,

Deu 24:2 when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's *wife*,

Deu 24:3 if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife,

Deu 24:4 *then* her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance.

The scribes, Pharisees and Rabbis argued over the statement of "some uncleanness in her." (Deut. 24:1). Here we are not speaking of physical dirt and thus uncleanness, but rather some spiritual failing that would make her unfit as a wife. So, some argued the stricter interpretation of some sexual sin, while the liberal interpretation would be for any cause whatsoever.

Whatever that interpretation was, Jesus sets the record straight for the hears then as well as now.

Mat 19:10 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not to marry."

But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given — that is, "That the unmarried state is better, is a saying not for everyone, and indeed only for such as it is divinely intended for." But who are these? they would naturally ask; and this our Lord proceeds to tell them in three particulars. [JFB]

Mat 19:11 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only *those* to whom it has been given:

Mat 19:12 For there are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept *it*, let him accept *it*."

For there are some eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb — persons constitutionally either incapable of or indisposed to marriage.

and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men — persons rendered incapable by others.

and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake — persons who, to do God's work better, deliberately choose this state. Such was Paul (1 Cor. 7:7).

He that is able to receive it, let him receive it — “He who feels this to be his proper vocation, let him embrace it”; which, of course, is as much as to say - “he only.” Thus, all are left free in this matter. [JFB]

Let the Children Come to Me

Mar 10:13 Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them*.

Mar 10:14 But when Jesus saw *it*, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.

Mar 10:15 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”

Mar 10:16 And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.

Whosoever shall not receive - Whosoever shall not manifest the spirit of a little child.

The kingdom, of God - The gospel. The new dispensation by the Messiah, “or the reign of God through a Mediator.”

As a little child - With the temper and spirit of a child teachable, mild, humble, and free from prejudice and obstinacy.

Shall not enter therein - Shall not be a Christian; shall not be a “real” member of the family of Christ on earth. though he may be a “professor,” and shall never enter heaven.

Took them up in his arms - These were small children.

Blessed them - Prayed for them, sought a blessing on them, or gave them the assurance of his favor as the Messiah. How happy would it be if all parents thus felt it to be their privilege to present their children to Christ! T [AB]

The Rich Young Man

Mar 10:17 Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

Mar 10:18 So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, *that is*, God.

There is none good but one, that is God. You, who use the word so freely, you are wasting, as a mere title of courtesy, what is the highest attribute of God.” The answer was addressed to two great deficiencies in the inquirer’s character and mind. (1) His standard and level of goodness was too low and too conventional of what was good in himself, of the good to be aimed at, of the distance at which he stood from the fountain and model of goodness. And (2) his sluggishness of will and effort was unequal to the task on which he had entered, and the race which he professed to be running; and his mind and conscience had to be disturbed and alarmed by presenting before it the call that a real estimate and sense of what goodness means, would make upon it. To be what he proposed to be, to be what he asked about, to have that which he supposed he saw in our Lord, was nothing less than to aim at being perfect, as the Father in heaven is perfect. [SB]

There is not any one thing that anyone can do in order to guarantee salvation. Heaven is not open to bids or

purchase. Salvation is the gift of God. You can not just buy a ticket and be done with it. It requires a life lived in God's service and devotion.

Rev 2:10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Thus, Jesus merely tells him to live a faithful life from the commandments...

Mar 10:19 You know the commandments: 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,' 'DO NOT MURDER,' 'DO NOT STEAL,' 'DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS,' 'Do not defraud,' 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.'"

Mar 10:20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

Mar 10:21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

Jesus knew this man's heart and was aware that he loved riches more than God. To prove, not to Christ, but to the man Christ offers him the greatest opportunity of all. To follow Jesus could have led to many opportunities, we will never know. Perhaps, had he did as Jesus said, he would have been one to qualify to take Judas' place who betrayed Christ as revealed in Acts chapter one. So sad the words "what might have been."

Mar 10:22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Mar 10:23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mar 10:24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them,

“Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!

While some interpret “Kingdom of God” to mean Heaven itself, I believe Jesus was speaking about becoming a disciple in this life and a part of the church now.

1Co 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

1Co 1:22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

1Co 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,

1Co 1:24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1Co 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1Co 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.

1Co 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

1Co 1:28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

1Co 1:29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

1Ti 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

1Ti 6:7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.

1Ti 6:8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

1Ti 6:9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

1Ti 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The Perils of Wealth...

- I. Note the hardness of Christian self-denial to the rich. Self-denial lies at the foundation of the Christian character. The influence of great possessions unfits men for any self-denial whatever. Few can resist the temptation of wealth to luxurious habits, modes of life that become more and more exacting. Pleasure is a tyrannous master; indolence is begotten of easy circumstances; reflection languishes while desire is nursed. It is so easy, too, to purchase Christian labor: "We will give and others will work;" thus many men seek relief from the call of Christian duty. This is the reason why many a man trained up in a godly home, and familiar with Christ's teaching, is yet not one of Christ's followers. He knows the Christian life to be a self-denying life, and he has wholly unfitted himself for self-denial; sadly, drearily, hopelessly he turns away. He cannot follow Christ; he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
- II. Self-knowledge, again, is especially hard to the rich. The question of the disciples, "Who then can be saved?" expresses the common wonder. The glamour of wealth is upon us all, and we cannot see eternal truth. So easily do we flatter ourselves that where there is no uncomeliness of manners the heart must be right; and the rich are surrounded by flatterers. A man may go through life never knowing what is in him, if all his desires are gratified, and everyone about him echoes

his fond self-complacency. "Who then can be saved?" Well may the disciples wonder. Christ's latter words have only enlarged the circle of those who find it hard to enter the kingdom of God. Trust in riches is not confined to the rich. "If only I had a little more," say one and another, say almost all, "If I had a little more, what a different man I should be. My piety would so gain if I were delivered from my cares, I could serve God so fully if I had but a competency." It is the common feeling, the almost universal search. Since all are seeking to be wealthy, since all are showing their trust in riches, who then can be saved? Men are seeking possessions as if these could ensure everything as if possessions were the highest end of life. And Christ looks round with tender, awful eyes and says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." [SB]

Mar 10:25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Mar 10:26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

By the reaction of His disciples, we understand that Jesus had spoke clearly and that they understood the difficulty, if not impossibility, of what He had just said. "Who then can be saved?"

Mar 10:27 But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men *it is impossible*, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

Salvation is indeed an impossibility when left to mankind and our devises alone. We cannot devise a system God would or should accept. He must set the conditions of His grace and we must follow or obey.

The plan of salvation as revealed in the scriptures work only because God has set them...

Rom 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

Mar 10:28 Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.”

Mar 10:29 So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s,

Mar 10:30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.

When one becomes a Christian, we become a part of a family bigger and greater than we could imagine. Throughout the world we find brothers and sisters in Christ who now share His love and care. I have traveled across our nation and attended many churches of Christ in their worship. There I not only found friendly people, but family. The Christian family. Without knowing me or my wife we have been invite to dinner and to the members homes. Even now I address Christian family in India, and I believe if I were there I would also be embraced as part of the Family of God. Would I find food? Shelter? I have no doubt. I have lost some things to follow Christ but gained much more. It is worth considering.

Mar 10:31 But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.”

First and last.—On occasions that call for a great prompt sacrifice in the interests of a worthy cause, or upon the altar of truth and principle, have you not seen, now and again, some very religious and virtuous people wonderfully outdone by someone who had had but little credit for conscientiousness or moral seriousness, men to whom you would never have looked for anything like the magnanimous spirit and conduct that distinguish them? The very greatest are often behind others for a while, like your dull, slow schoolboy, who turns out afterwards a brilliant man, while

his more brilliant schoolmate, who got all the praise and prizes, dims and fades beside him. *S. A. Tipple.*

1Co 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called.*

1Co 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time

Mar 10:32 Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him:

Mar 10:33 “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles;

Mar 10:34 and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

This is the point in time that God has been moving toward all through the scriptures. Christ is its fulfillment. Christ is our hope. The cross is the center of history. We even date our time as before Christ (B.C.) or after His birth (A.D.). Christ continues to prepare the disciples for what the next week will involve. Ending in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Jesus went before them - In the manner of an intrepid, fearless leader and guide, exposing “himself” to danger and death rather than his followers.

And they rather amazed ... - They were afraid that evil would befall him in the city; that the scribes and Pharisees, who had so often sought to kill him, would then

do it. Their fear and amazement were increased when he told them what would befall him there. They were amazed that, when he knew so well what would happen, he should still persevere in going up to the city.

[AB]

We learn from John's Gospel that the resurrection of Lazarus precipitated the determination of the Jewish authorities to put Christ to death; and that immediately thereafter there was held the council, at which, by the advice of Caiaphas, the formal decision was come to (John 11:45-53). Thereupon our Lord withdrew himself into the wilderness which stretches south and east of Jerusalem, and remained there for an unknown period, preparing Himself for the cross. Then, full of calm resolve, He came forth to die. This is the crisis in our Lord's history to which my text refers. The picture has not attracted the attention that it deserves. I think, if we ponder it with sympathetic imagination helping us, we may get from it some very great lessons and glimpses of our Lord's inmost heart in the prospect of His cross.

I. We have here what, for the want of a better name, I would call the heroic Christ. I use the word to express simply strength of will brought to bear in the resistance of antagonism; and although that be a side of the Lord's character which is not often made prominent, it is there and ought to have its due importance. We speak of Him, and delight to think of Him, as the embodiment of all loving, gracious, gentle virtues, but Jesus Christ as the ideal man unites in Himself what men are in the habit, somewhat superciliously, of calling the masculine virtues, as well as those which they somewhat contemptuously designate the feminine. We are to look to Jesus Christ as presenting before us the very type of all which men call heroism, in the sense of an iron will, incapable of deflection by any antagonism, and which coerces the whole nature to obedience to its

behests. Christ is the pattern of heroic endurance, and reads to us the lesson, *resist* and *persist*, whatever stands between us and our goal,

II. We see here not only the heroic, but what I may call the self-sacrificing Christ. We have not only to consider the fixed will which this incident reveals, but to remember the purpose on which it was fixed, and that He was hastening to His cross. The very fact of our Lord's going back to Jerusalem with that decree of the Sanhedrim still in force was tantamount to

His surrender of Himself to death. He recognized that now that *hour* of which He spoke so much had come, and of His own loving will offered Himself as our Sacrifice.

III. This incident gives us a glimpse of what I may call the shrinking Christ. Do we not see here a trace of something that we all know? May not part of the reason for Christ's haste have been that desire which we all have, when some inevitable grief or pain lies before us, to get it over soon and to abbreviate the moments that lie between us and it. Was there not something of that feeling in our Lord's sensitive nature when He said, for instance, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished"? And may we not see in that swift advance in front of the lagging disciples, some trace of the same feeling which we recognize to be so truly human? Christ did shrink from His cross. There was shrinking, which was instinctive and human, but it never disturbed the fixed purpose to die. It had so much power over Him as to make Him march a little faster to the cross, but it never made Him turn from it. And so He stands before us the Conqueror in a real conflict, as having yielded Himself up by a real surrender, as overcoming a real difficulty, "for the joy that was set before Him, having endured the cross, despising the shame."

IV. So, lastly, I would see here the lonely Christ. In front of His followers, absorbed in the thought of what was

drawing so near, gathering together His powers in order to be ready for the struggle, with His heart full of the love and the pity which impelled Him, He is surrounded as with a cloud which shuts Him out of their sight as afterwards the cloud of glory received Him. There never was such a lonely man in the world as Jesus Christ. Never one that carried so deep in His heart so great a purpose and so great a love which nobody cared a rush about. And those that were nearest Him and loved Him best, loved Him so blunderingly and so blindly that their love must have been often quite as much of a pain as of a joy. And all this solitude, the solitude of unappreciated aims, and unshared purposes, and misunderstood sorrow during life, and the solitude of death with all its elements ineffable of atonement, all this solitude was borne that no human soul, living or dying, might ever be lonely any more. "Lo I," whom you all left alone, "am with you," who left Me alone, "even till the end of the world."

A. Maclaren, *Christian Commonwealth*, Nov. 11th, 1886

The Request of James and John

Mar 10:35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

Mar 10:36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Mar 10:37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

Here we see the true mark of humanity and personal desires. Jesus has just been speaking of the events to come in the next week leading to His death and the disciples are still striving for a place of prominence in the Kingdom!

Not just a place of prominence, but right at the point of being second only to Christ by setting on His right and left.

Mar 10:38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

The cross and crucifixion. This is the cup and baptism Christ refers. Suffering beyond imagination. That is the cost of being First.

Heb 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Heb 12:3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

2Co 5:18 Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

2Co 5:19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2Co 5:20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

2Co 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

What is the cost of being Second?...

Mar 10:39 They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized;

James will be killed by the sword. While John will live a long life, he will witness much grief and the death of all those he holds dear in Christ. Being, as supposed, the last Apostle to die.

Mar 10:40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared."

Christ does not have authority over the Father...

1Co 15:27 For "HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET." But when He says "all things are put under *Him*," *it is*

evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. [That is the Father]

1Co 15:28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. [That is the Father]

Acts 2:33 says Christ is seated on God the Father's right hand. Thus, God the Father is on Christ's left hand. This is not a fitting desire or place for either James or John.

Mar 10:41 And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John.

We would ask if they were greatly displeased because of what James and John ask, or perhaps that James and John beat them to ask the question and make the request that they themselves were going to make?

Mar 10:42 But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

There is structure and order in most human endeavors. Among the nations (gentiles) one rules over another and everyone is striving to be on the top. Rome was ruled by the Caesars, and their history is one of deceit and murder to get to the top and stay there. Such striving will not be the way of Christianity. There will be but one head of the church: Christ.

Eph 1:20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

Eph 1:21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Eph 1:22 And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,

Mar 10:43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

Mar 10:44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.

Mar 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

The greatness of the world is measured by authority and lordliness. Even there it is an uncertain test; for the most real power is often wielded by some anonymous thinker, or by some crafty intriguer, content with the substance of authority while his puppet enjoys the trappings. Something of this may perhaps be detected in the words, “They which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them.” And it is certain that “their great ones exercise authority over them.” But the Divine greatness is a meek and gentle influence. To minister to the Church is better than to command it, and whoever desires to be the chief must become the servant of all. Thus shall whatever is vainglorious and egoistic in our ambition defeat itself; the more one struggles to be great the more he is disqualified: even benefits rendered to others with this object will not really be service done for them but for self; nor will any calculated assumption of humility help one to become indeed the least, being but a subtle assertion that he is great, and like the last place in an ecclesiastical procession, when occupied in a self-conscious spirit. And thus it comes to pass that the Church knows very indistinctly who are its

greatest sons. As the gift of two mites by the widow was greater than that of large sums by the rich, so a small service done in the spirit of perfect self-effacement, — a service which thought neither of its merit nor of its reward, but only of a brother’s need, shall be more in the day of reckoning than sacrifices which are celebrated by the historians and

sung by the poets of the Church. For it may avail nothing to give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned; while a cup of cold water, rendered by a loyal hand, shall in no wise lose its reward. [EB]

Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus

Mar 10:46 Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

Mar 10:47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Mar 10:48 Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Mar 10:49 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

Mar 10:50 And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

Mar 10:51 So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

Mar 10:52 Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

As we read St. Mark's account, we are struck by the vividness of the whole picture, and especially by the robust personality of the blind man. The scene is neither Jerusalem, the city of the Pharisees, nor Galilee, where they have persistently sapped the popularity of Jesus. Eastward of the Jordan, He has spent the last peaceful and successful weeks of His brief and stormy career, and Jericho lies upon the borders of that friendly district. Accordingly, something is here of the old enthusiasm: a great multitude moves along with His disciples to the gates, and the rushing concourse

excites the curiosity of the blind son of Timaeus. So does many a religious movement lead to inquiry and explanation far and wide. But when he, sitting by the way, and unable to follow, knows that the great Healer is at hand, but only in passing, and for a moment, his interest suddenly becomes personal and ardent, and "he began to cry out" (the expression implies that his supplication, beginning as the crowd drew near, was not one utterance but a prolonged appeal), "and to say, Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." To the crowd his outcry seemed to be only an intrusion upon One Who was too rapt, too heavenly, to be disturbed by the sorrows of a blind beggar. But that was not the view of Bartimaeus, whose personal affliction gave him the keenest interest in those verses of the Old Testament which spoke of opening the blind eyes. If he did not understand their exact force as prophecies, at least they satisfied him that his petition could not be an insult to the great Prophet of Whom just such actions were told, for Whose visit he had often sighed, and Who was now fast going by, perhaps forever. The picture is one of great eagerness, bearing up against great discouragement. We catch the spirit of the man as he inquires what the multitude means, as the epithet of his informants, Jesus of Nazareth, changes on his lips into Jesus, Thou Son of David, as he persists, without any vision of Christ to encourage him, and amid the rebukes of many, in crying out the more a great deal, although pain is deepening every moment in his accents, and he will presently need cheering. The ear of Jesus is quick for such a call, and He stops. He does not raise His own voice to summon him but teaches a lesson of humanity to those who would fain have silenced the appeal of anguish, and says, Call ye him. And they obey with a courtier-like change of tone, saying, Be of good cheer, rise, He calleth thee. And Bartimaeus cannot endure even the slight hindrance of his loose garment, but flings it aside, and rises and comes to Jesus, a pattern of the importunity which prays and never

faints, which perseveres amid all discouragement, which adverse public opinion cannot hinder. And the Lord asks of him almost exactly the same question as recently of James and John, What wilt thou that I should do for thee? But in his reply there is no aspiring pride: misery knows how precious are the common gifts, the every-day blessings which we hardly pause to think about; and he replies, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight. It is a glad and eager answer. Many a petition he had urged in vain; and many a small favor had been discourteously bestowed; but Jesus, Whose tenderness loves to commend while He blesses, shares with him, so to speak, the glory of his healing, as He answers, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. By thus fixing his attention upon his own part in the miracle, so utterly worthless as a contribution, but so indispensable as a condition, Jesus taught him to exercise hereafter the same gift of faith.

“Go thy way,” He said. And Bartimaeus “followed Him on the road.” Happy is that man whose eyes are open to discern, and his heart prompt to follow, the print of those holy feet. [EB]

CHAPTER 11

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Mar 11:1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples;

St. Matthew (Mat 21:1) says, “When they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and came unto Bethphage.” St. Mark mentions the three places together, because Bethphage and Bethany, being near together, were also both of them close to Jerusalem. The distance from Jericho to Jerusalem (about seventeen miles) would involve a journey of about seven hours. The country between Jerusalem and Jericho is hilly, rugged, and desolate. It is from the height overhanging Bethany that the finest view of Jerusalem is gained. It appears from St. John (Joh 12:1) that our Lord on the preceding sabbath had supped, and probably passed the night, at Bethany; and that on the following day (Sunday) he had come still nearer to Jerusalem, namely, to Bethphage. [PC]

Mar 11:2 and He said to them, “Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it.

Mar 11:3 And if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it,’ and immediately he will send it here.”

Mar 11:4 So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it.

Mar 11:5 But some of those who stood there said to them, “What are you doing, loosing the colt?”

Mar 11:6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.

From here he sent two of his disciples for the ass and the colt. So his way to Jerusalem was from Bethany by Bethphage, the Mount of Olives, and the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The Valley of Jehoshaphat, through which flows the brook Kedron, lies close to Jerusalem. Bethphage literally means "the house of green figs," as Bethany, lying a short distance west of it, means "the house of dates." The date palm growing in the neighbourhood would furnish the branches with which the multitude strewed the way on the occasion of our Lord's triumphal entry. **He sendeth two of his disciples.**

Mark mentions only the colt. Matthew mentions the ass and the colt. But Mark singles out the colt as that which our Lord specially needed; the mother of the animal accompanying it as a sumpter. Animals which had never before been used were alone admissible for sacred purposes. We read in Numbers (Num. 19:2) of "the heifer on which never came yoke." Our Lord here beholds things absent and out of sight, as though they were present. So that he revealed this to his disciples by the gift of prophecy which his divinity added to his humanity. Here, therefore, is a manifest proof of his divinity. It was by the same Divine power that he revealed to Nathanael what had taken place under the fig tree.

Mar 11:3 **And if any one say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him back hither.** The Greek, according to the best authorities here, is literally, *straightway he sendeth it back hither again*, The verb here in the present may represent the verb in the future, "he will send it back." returned to them. It was the will and purpose of Christ, who for these three years had gone about on foot, and traveled over the whole of Palestine in this way, to show himself at length the King of Judah, that is, the Messiah and Heir of David; and so he resolves to enter Jerusalem, the

metropolis, the city of the great King, with royal dignity. But he will not be surrounded with the "pomp and circumstance" of an earthly monarch. He rides on an ass's colt, that he might show his kingdom to be of another kind, that is, spiritual and heavenly.

And so he assumes a humble equipage, riding upon a colt, his only housings being the clothes of his disciples. And yet there was dignity as well as humility in his equipage. The ass of the East was, and is, a superior animal to that known amongst us. The judges and princes of Israel rode on "white asses," and their sons on asses' colts. So our Lord rode upon an ass's colt; and there were no gleaming swords in his procession, or other signs of strife and bloodshed. But there were palm branches and garments spread all along his path—the evidences of devotion to him. So he came in gentleness, not that he might be feared on account of his power, but that he might be loved on account of his goodness. [PC]

Mar 11:7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.

An interesting case of the fulfilment of prophecy is presented to us here. Nearly five hundred years before it had been written by Zechariah the prophet (Zec 9:9). The disciples of our Lord themselves, we are informed by St. John (Joh 12:16), did not at the time think of this prediction, or view what was occurring as the fulfilling of it; but "when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done such things unto Him." And thus it is that events best explain the prophetic Word. We have, like the disciples, to "company with" Christ, and stand by the interests of His kingdom, whatever measure of development they may have attained, working, watching, and praying, and that measure will assuredly go on to increase till the world shall be bright with Messiah's glory. The fulfilment of prophecy in the case

before us strikingly confirms our believing expectations of the future. For this prediction, as it stands in Zechariah, is directly connected with references to the ultimate triumphs of the Saviour. And certainly as the former part of the prediction was accomplished, so certainly "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth." [PH]

Mar 11:8 And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road.

Mar 11:9 Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'

Mar 11:10 Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Hosanna

Hosanna. (*save now*). "Save, we pray!", the cry of the multitudes, as they thronged in our Lord's triumphal procession into Jerusalem. Mat 21:9; Mat 21:15; Mar 11:9-10; Joh 12:13.

The Psalm from which it was taken, Psalms 118, was one with which they were familiar from being accustomed to recite the 25th and 26th verses, Psa. 118:25-26, at the **Fest of Tabernacles**, forming a part of the great hallel. Psalms 113-118. [Smith]

Religious excitement

How are we to deal with religious emotions when they are awakened in a more than ordinary degree?

1. We should make them subservient to the promotion of the rectitude of our nature and of our life. With the kindling of our religious emotions there comes strength for action, and our care should be to use that strength for *right* action.

2. It is not always safe to act under the impulse of strong feelings; therefore we need, at such seasons, to be more than ordinarily prayerful; and at such times conscience ought to be more than ever consulted.
3. If a man, under the influence of religious excitement, does not do what conscience and God's law clearly require of him, there is little reason to expect that he will do so when the excitement shall have passed away. There are certain lessons taught us by this subject.
 - (1) That religious excitement has its sphere of usefulness in the development of religious life;
 - (2) but it is a grievous mistake to regard emotional excitement as the very essence and substance of religion. (*F. Wagstaff.*)

Mar 11:11 And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

He went out to Bethany with the twelve. After entering the city and temple and observing the condition of things within the sacred building he retired to Bethany for the night. As far as we know he passed all his nights of the last week of his earthly life at Bethany, save Thursday, perhaps to avoid the rulers in the hours of rest and to have an opportunity for private conference with his disciples, which he could not have in crowded Jerusalem. Besides, he had loving friends at Bethany, who delighted to have him under their roof. [Johnson]

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

Mar 11:12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry.

Mar 11:13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

Mar 11:14 In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it.

Let us first consider that Jesus placed a curse upon the tree..., "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." Jesus did not use evil speech. Jesus was not profane or use profanity, He just called the tree to account and it was found lacking and was judged to die.

- I. What is "fruit." The fruit of a tree is that which the sap formed in the branch; the sap, springing out of the root, passes through the stem, circulating through every little spray and tendril, deposits there the germ of fruit; and that fed by the same sap, warmed by the sun that shines on it, and strengthened by the wind, gets stronger and grows larger, till ripe and fit for the gathering. This is the operation in the kingdom of nature. Now look at that in the kingdom of grace. The Spirit of God is always flowing from the roots of the everlasting covenant of the Father's love, and it all flows through the Lord Jesus Christ. With those who are grafted into Christ there is a passage by which the Spirit may come to them. The sunshine of mercy and the wind of trial come, and these, operating together, soften and strengthen, and the individual takes the savour of the Spirit that flows into it; it sweetens, it grows, it fructifies. It is like that from which it comes; it is fit for the Father's use, and this is "fruit." Therefore, you see how much is required to make the action really pleasing to God. (1) First, you must be a member of the Lord Jesus Christ, or else you are cut off from any interest in the love of God. In Christ alone is life you must be a branch. (2) The action must take its existence, its strength, its colour, its character, from God's own Spirit. (3) The action, which is single, must have in it the flame of God's love.
- II. As it is the intention of nature that everything shall be subservient to the production of fruit, the leaves are

only to minister to the fruit. The plant produces fruit, first that it may bear fruit, and then the leaves protect the fruit after it is formed. So in grace, a thousand things a man may make ends which were never intended to be ends. And one is holiness of life. It is a beautiful leaf, like the longing of the soul; but the fruit is when you carry away a mind more humble under the truth, a mind more active for the service of God. Or perhaps your familiarity with Divine subjects increases, so that you are able to grasp the Word; understanding more its meaning, its mysteries being more unfolded to your view. It is well! These things feed the soul; but it is only a leaf, unless the heart thereby has taken a firmer hold upon Christ, and been watered in Divine things.

J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 36.

The Barren Fig-tree.

- I. When our Lord pronounced His curse upon the barren fig-tree, He taught men a great lesson by an acted parable. It was not about fig-trees that He really spake. Doth the Lord take care for fig-trees? or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written; and the lesson that it teaches is that what He requires of His people is reality, not profession; truth in the inward heart, not outward appearance of goodness; not a fair show which man can see, while God sees that the inside is very different from that show; fruit the real fruit of true holiness and inward devotion to God not leaves; not the semblance and reputation and outward character only, without any corresponding clinging of the heart in faith and good works to God.
- II. There can be no doubt that the first application of this very significant act of our Lord was to the Jewish nation. It was like a fair-looking fig-tree, full of leaves. The hill of Sion was a fair place and the joy of the whole nation. But there came One who, seeing afar this fine-looking

tree having such a profusion of leaves, came nearer, if haply He might find the fruit thereon which those leaves should have indicated. Alas for the nation! The temple was doomed; not one stone, ere fifty years had passed, should be left standing on another. Under all the thick, fine, flourishing leaves not a single fruit was to be found; no faith, no love, no Divine knowledge, no real understanding of the Scriptures, nor of the prophets, read in their synagogues every Sabbath day.

- III. The case of the barren fig tree applies also to individuals. We too each one of us, have to look to it very seriously, as in the sight of God, that our religion be not fair-seeming leaves only, but fruit too; not only outward show, but true earnest, inward reality. God forbid that we should be satisfied with ourselves. God forbid that we should rest in the consciousness that, in the sight of man or in our own overweening thoughts, we put out fair leaves and a good show; when in fact and as God sees us, there is no fruit of holy, humble, self-distrusting love; no good fruit of that sacred fear of God which alone keeps the heart of man watchful and sober and faithful in Christ until the end.

G. Moberly, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 169.

References: Mar 11:12-14.—G. Macdonald, *Miracles of our Lord*, p. 252; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 36; H.

M. Luckock, *Footprints of the Son of Man*, p. 240; A. Lloyd, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 493. Mar 11:12-19.—W. Hanna, *Our Lord's Life on Earth*, p. 377. Mar 11:12-23.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 119.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Mar 11:15 So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

Mar 11:16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.

Mar 11:17 Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL

NATIONS' ? But you have made it a 'DEN OF THIEVES.'"

WITH the authority of yesterday's triumph still about Him, Jesus returned to the temple, which He had then inspected. There at least the priesthood were not thwarted by popular indifference or ignorance: they had power to carry out fully their own views; they were solely responsible for whatever abuses could be discovered. In fact, the iniquities which moved the indignation of Jesus were of their own contrivance, and they enriched themselves by a vile trade which robbed the worshippers and profaned the holy house.

Pilgrims from a distance needed the sacred money, the half-shekel of the sanctuary, still coined for this one purpose, to offer for a ransom of their souls (Exo_30:13). And the priests had sanctioned a trade in the exchange of money under the temple roof, so fraudulent that the dealers' evidence was refused in the courts of justice.

Doves were necessary for the purification of the poor, who could not afford more costly sacrifices, and sheep and oxen were also in great demand. And since the unblemished quality of the sacrifices should be attested by the priests, they had been able to put a fictitious value upon these animals, by which the family of Annas in particular had accumulated enormous wealth.

To facilitate this trade, they had dared to bring the defilement of the cattle market within the precincts of the House of God. Not indeed into the place where the Pharisee stood in his pride and "prayed with himself," for that was holy; but the court of the Gentiles was profane; the din which distracted and the foulness which revolted Gentile worship

was of no account to the average Jew. But Jesus regarded the scene with different eyes. How could the sanctity of that holy place not extend to the court of the stranger and the proselyte, when it was written Thy house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?

Therefore Jesus had already, at the outset of His ministry, cleansed His Father's house. Now, in the fullness of His newly asserted royalty, He calls it My House: He denounces the iniquity of their traffic by branding it as a den of robbers; He casts out the traders themselves, as well as the implements of their traffic; and in so doing He fanned to a mortal heat the hatred of the chief priests and the scribes, who saw at once their revenues threatened and their reputation tarnished, and yet dared not strike, because all the multitude was astonished at His teaching. [EB]

Mar 11:18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.

Mar 11:19 When evening had come, He went out of the city.

But the wisdom of Jesus did not leave Him within their reach at night; every evening He went forth out of the city.

Did they now recall their own reflections after the earlier cleansing of the temple? and their Master's ominous words? They had then remembered how it was written, The zeal of thine house shall eat Me up. And He had said, Destroy this temple, and in three days I shall raise it up, speaking of the temple of His Body, which was now about to be thrown down. [EB]

The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree

Mar 11:20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

Mar 11:21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

Mar 11:22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.

Mar 11:23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

Mar 11:24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.

"And on the morrow, when they were come out from Bethany, He hungered. And seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find anything thereon: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season of figs.

And He answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit from thee henceforward forever. And His disciples heard it."

"And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree withered away from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto Him, Rabbi, behold, the fig-tree which Thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them. And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Mar 11:12- 14; Mar 11:20-25 (R.V.)

NO sooner has Jesus claimed His kingdom, than He performs His first and only miracle of judgment. And it is certain that no mortal, informed that such a miracle was

impending, could have guessed where the blow would fall. In this miracle an element is predominant which exists in all, since it is wrought as an acted dramatized parable, not for any physical advantage, but wholly for the instruction which it conveys. Jesus hungered at the very outset of a day of toil, as He came out from Bethany. And this was not due to poverty, since the disciples there had recently made Him a great feast, but to His own absorbing ardor. The zeal of God's house, which He had seen polluted and was about to cleanse, had either left Him indifferent to food until the keen air of morning aroused the sense of need, or else it had detained Him, all night long, in prayer and meditation out of doors. As He walks, He sees afar off a lonely fig-tree covered with leaves, and comes if haply He might find anything thereon. It is true that figs would not be in season for two months, but yet they ought to present themselves before the leaves did; and since the tree was precocious in the show and profusion of luxuriance, it ought to bear early figs. If it failed, it would at least point a powerful moral; and, therefore, when only leaves appeared upon it, Jesus cursed it with perpetual barrenness, and passed on. Not in the dusk of that evening as they returned, but when they passed by again in the morning the blight was manifest, the tree was withered from its very roots.

Yet He came not to destroy men's lives but to save them. And, therefore, while showing Himself neither indifferent nor powerless against barren and false pretensions, He did this only once, and then only by a sign wrought upon an insentient tree.

Retribution fell upon it not for its lack of fruit, since at that season it shared this with all its tribe, but for ostentatious, much-professing fruitlessness. And thus it pointed with dread significance to the condition of God's own people, differing from Greece and Rome and Syria, not in the want of fruit, but in the show of luxuriant frondage, in

the expectation it excited and mocked. When the season of the world's fruitfulness was yet remote, only Israel put forth leaves, and made professions which were not fulfilled. And the permanent warning of the miracle is not for heathen men and races, but for Christians who have a name to live, and who are called to bear fruit unto God.

While the disciples marveled at the sudden fulfillment of its sentence, they could not have forgotten the parable of a fig-tree in the vineyard, on which care and labor were lavished, but which must be destroyed after one year of respite if it continued to be a cumberer of the ground.

And Jesus drove the lesson home. He pointed to "this mountain" full in front, with the gold and marble of the temple sparkling like a diadem upon its brow, and declared that faith is not only able to smite barrenness with death, but to remove into the midst of the sea, to plant among the wild and stormswept races of the immeasurable pagan world, the glory and privilege of the realized presence of the Lord. To do this was the purpose of God, hinted by many a prophet, and clearly announced by Christ Himself. But its accomplishment was left to His followers, who should succeed in exact proportion to the union of their will and that of God, so that the condition of that moral miracle, transcending all others in marvel and in efficacy, was simple faith. [EB]

Mar 11:25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

Mar 11:26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

To this promise Jesus added a precept, the admirable suitability of which is not at first apparent. Most sins are made evident to the conscience in the act of prayer. Drawing nigh to God, we feel our unfitness to be there, we are made conscious of what He frowns upon, and if we have such faith

as Jesus spoke of, we at once resign what would grieve the Spirit of adoption. No saint is ignorant of the convicting power of prayer. But it is not of necessity so with resentment for real grievances. We may think we do well to be angry. We may confound our selfish fire with the pure flame of holy zeal, and begin, with confidence enough, yet not with the mind of Christ, to remove mountains, not because they impede a holy cause, but because they throw a shadow upon our own field. And, therefore, Jesus reminds us that not only wonder-working faith, but even the forgiveness of our sins requires from us the forgiveness of our brother. [EB]

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

Mar 11:27 Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.

Mar 11:28 And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

The elders.—"The ancient senators or representatives of the people. With the chief priests and scribes they constituted on this occasion a formal deputation from the Sanhedrin. We find the earliest notice of *the elders* acting in concert as a political body in the time of the Exodus (Exo 19:7; Deu 31:9). Their authority, which extended to all matters of the common weal, they exercised under (*a*) the Judges (Jdg 2:17; 1Sa 4:3); under (*b*) the Kings (1Sa 30:26; 1Ch 21:16; 2Sa 17:4); during (*c*) the Captivity (Jer 29:1; Eze 8:1); after (*d*) the Return (Ezr 5:5; Ezr 6:7; Ezr 6:14; Ezr 10:8; Ezr 10:14); under (*e*) the Maccabees (1Ma 12:6; 2Ma 1:10); in (*f*) the time of our Lord, when they denoted a distinct body in the Sanhedrin, amongst whom they obtained their seat by election, or nomination from the executive authority." [PH]

Mar 11:29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell

you by what authority I do these things:

Mar 11:30 The baptism of John was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.”

Mar 11:31 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’

Mar 11:32 But if we say, ‘From men’ “they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed.

Mar 11:33 So they answered and said to Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

- I. How they designed hereby to run Jesus aground, and embarrass him. If they could make it out before the people, that he had not a *legal mission*, that he was not duly *ordained*, though he was ever so well qualified, and preached ever so profitably and well, they would tell the people that they *ought not to hear him*. This they made the last refuge of an obstinate unbelief; because they were resolved not to receive his doctrine, they were resolved to find some flaw or other in his commission, and will conclude it invalid, if it be not produced and ratified in their court. Thus the Papists resolve their controversy with us very much into the mission of our ministers, and if they have but any pretence to overthrow that, they think they have gained their point, though we have the scripture ever so much on our side. But this is indeed a question, which all that act either as magistrates or ministers, ought to be furnished with a good answer to, and often put to themselves, *By what authority do I these things? For how can men preach except they be sent?* Or how can they act with comfort, or confidence, or hope of success, except they be authorized? Jer 23:32.
- II. How he effectually ran them aground, and embarrassed them, with this question, “What are your thoughts

concerning *the baptism of John? Was it from heaven, or of men?* By what authority did John preach, and baptize, and gather disciples? *Answer me*, Mar 11:30. Deal fairly and ingenuously, and give a categorical answer, one way or the other.” By this resolve of *their* question into *this*, our Saviour intimates how near akin his doctrine and baptism were to John’s; they had the same original, and the same design and tendency - to introduce the gospel kingdom. Christ might with the better grace put this question to *them*, because they had sent a committee of their own house to examine John, Joh 1:19. “Now,” saith Christ, “what was the result of your enquiries concerning him?”

They knew what they *thought* of this question; they could not but think that *John Baptist* was a man sent of God. But the difficulty was, what they should *say to it* now. Men that oblige not themselves to speak *as they think* (which is a certain rule) cannot avoid perplexing themselves thus.

1. If they own the baptism of John to be *from heaven*, as really it was, they *shame themselves*; for Christ will presently turn it upon them, *Why did ye not then believe him*, and receive his baptism? They could not bear that Christ should say this, but they could bear it that their own consciences should say so, because they had an art of stifling and silencing them, and because what conscience said, though it might gall and grate them a little, would not *shame them*; and then *they* would do well enough, who looked no further than Saul’s care, when he was convicted, *Honour me now before this people*, 1Sa 15:30.
2. If they say, “*It is of men*, he was not sent of God, but his doctrine and baptism were inventions of his own,” they *expose themselves*, the people will be ready to do them a mischief, or a least clamour upon them; for *all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed*, and

therefore they could not bear that he should be reflected on. Note, There is a carnal slavish fear, which not only wicked subjects but wicked rulers likewise are liable to, which God makes use of as a means to keep the world in some order, and to suppress *violence*, that it shall not always *grow up into a rod of wickedness*. Now by this dilemma to which Christ brought them,

- (1.) They were confounded and baffled, and forced to make a dishonourable retreat; to pretend ignorance - *We cannot tell* (and that was mortification enough to those proud men), but really to discover the greatest malice and wilfulness.

What Christ did by his wisdom, we must labour to do by our well doing - *put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*, 1Pe 2:15.

- (2.) Christ came off with honour, and justified himself in refusing to give them an answer to their imperious demand; *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things*. They did not deserve to be told; for it was plain that they contended not for truth, but victory; nor did *he* need to *tell them*, for the works which he did, told them plainly that he had authority from God to do what he did; since no man could do those miracles which he did unless God were with him. Let them wait but three or four days, and his resurrection shall tell them who gave him his authority, for by that he will be *declared to be the Son of God with power*, as by their rejecting of him, notwithstanding, they will be declared to be the enemies of God. [MH]

CHAPTER 12

THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS

Mar 12:1 Then He began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around *it*, dug a *place* for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.

Mar 12:2 Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. Mar 12:3 And they took *him* and beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed.

Mar 12:4 Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully treated.

Mar 12:5 And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some.

Mar 12:6 Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

Mar 12:7 But those vinedressers said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’

Mar 12:8 So they took him and killed *him* and cast *him* out of the vineyard. Mar 12:9 “Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. Mar 12:10 Have you not even read this Scripture: ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE. Mar 12:11 THIS WAS THE LORD’S DOING, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES?’” Mar 12:12 And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.

THE rulers of His people have failed to make Jesus responsible to their inquisition. He has exposed the hollowness of their claim to investigate His commission, and formally refused to tell them by what authority He did these things. But what He would not say for an unjust cross-examination, He proclaimed to all docile hearts; and the skill which disarmed His enemies is not more wonderful than that which in their hearing answered their question, yet left them no room for accusation. This was achieved by speaking to them in parables. The indifferent might hear and not perceive: the keenness of malice would surely understand but could not easily impeach a simple story; but to His own followers it would be given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

His first words would be enough to arouse attention. The psalmist had told how God brought a vine out of Egypt, and cast out the heathen and planted it. Isaiah had carried the image farther, and sung of a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. The Well-beloved, Whose it was, cleared the ground for it, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower, and hewed out a wine-press, and looked that it should bring forth grapes, but it had brought forth wild grapes. Therefore He would lay it waste. This well-known and recognized type the Lord now adopted, but modified it to suit His purpose. As in a former parable the sower slept and rose, and left the earth to bring forth fruit of itself, so in this, the Lord of the vineyard let it out to husbandmen and went into a far country. This is our Lord's own explanation of that silent time in which no special interpositions asserted that God was nigh, no prophecies were heard, no miracles startled the careless. It was the time when grace already granted should have been peacefully ripening. Now we live in such a period. Unbelievers desire a sign. Impatient believers argue that if our Master is as near us as ever, the same portents must attest His presence; and, therefore, they recognize the gift of tongues in hysterical clamor, and stake the honor of

religion upon faith-healing, and those various obscure phenomena which the annals of every fanaticism can rival. But the sober Christian understands that, even as the Lord of the vineyard went into another country, so Christ His Son (Who in spiritual communion is ever with His people) in another sense has gone into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return. In the interval, marvels would be simply an anachronism. The best present evidence of the faith lies in the superior fruitfulness of the vineyard He has planted, in the steady advance to rich maturity of the vine He has imported from another clime.

At this point Jesus begins to add a new significance to the ancient metaphor. The husbandmen are mentioned. Men there were in the ancient Church, who were specially responsible for the culture of the vineyard. As He spoke, the symbol explained itself. The imposing array of chief priests and scribes and elders stood by, who had just claimed as their prerogative that He should make good His commission to their scrutiny; and none would be less likely to mistake His meaning than these self-conscious lovers of chief seats in the synagogues. The structure of the parable, therefore, admits their official rank, as frankly as when Jesus bade His disciples submit to their ordinances because they sit in Moses' seat. But He passes on, easily and as if unconsciously, to record that special messengers from heaven had, at times, interrupted the self-indulgent quietude of the husbandmen. Because the fruit of the vineyard had not been freely rendered, a bondservant was sent to demand it. The epithet implies that the messenger was lower in rank, although his direct mission gave him authority even over the keepers of the vineyard. It expresses exactly the position of the prophets, few of them of priestly rank, some of them very humble in extraction, and very rustic in expression, but all sent in evil days to faithless husbandmen, to remind them that the vineyard was not their own, and to receive the fruits of righteousness. Again and again the

demand is heard, for He sent “many others;” and always it is rejected with violence, which sometimes rises to murder. As they listened, they must have felt that all this was true, that while prophet after prophet had come to a violent end, not one had seen the official hierarchy making common cause with him. Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? was their scornful question. But the answer was plain, As long as they built the sepulchers of the prophets, and garnished the tombs of the righteous, and said, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets, they confessed that men could not blindly follow a hierarchy merely as such, since they were not the official successors of the prophets but of those who slew them. The worst charge brought against them was only that they acted according to analogy, and filled up the deeds of their fathers. It had always been the same.

The last argument of Stephen, which filled his judges with madness, was but the echo of this great impeachment. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which showed before of the coming of the Righteous One, of Whom ye have now become the betrayers and murderers.

That last defiance of heaven, which Stephen thus denounced, his Master distinctly foretold, And He added the appalling circumstance, that however they might deceive themselves and sophisticate their conscience, they really knew Him Who He was. They felt, at the very least, that into His hands should pass all the authority and power they had so long monopolized: “This is the Heir; come let us kill Him and the inheritance shall be ours.” If there were no more, the utterance of these words put forth an extraordinary claim.

All that should have been rendered up to heaven and was withheld, all that previous messengers had demanded

on behalf of God without avail, all “the inheritance” which these wicked husbandmen were intercepting, all this

Jesus announces to be His own, while reprehending the dishonesty of any other claim upon it. And as a matter of fact, if Jesus be not Divine, He has intercepted more of the worship due to the Eternal, has attracted to Himself more of the homage of the loftiest and profoundest minds, than any false teacher within the pale of monotheism has ever done. It is the bounden duty of all who revere Jesus even as a teacher, of all who have eyes to see that His coming was the greatest upward step in the progress of humanity, to consider well what was implied, when, in the act of blaming the usurpers of the heritage of God, Jesus declared that inheritance to be His own. But this is not all, though it is what He declares that the husbandmen were conscious of. The parable states, not only that He is heir, but heir by virtue of His special relationship to the Supreme. Others are bondservants or husbandmen, but He is the Son. He does not inherit as the worthiest and most obedient, but by right of birth; and His Father, in the act of sending Him, expects even these bloodstained outlaws to reverence His Son. In such a phrase, applied to such criminals, we are made to feel the lofty rank alike of the Father and His Son, which ought to have overawed even them. And when we read that “He had yet one, a beloved Son,” it seems as if the veil of eternity were uplifted, to reveal a secret and awful intimacy, of which, nevertheless, some glimmering consciousness would have controlled the most desperate heart.

But they only reckoned that if they killed the Heir, the inheritance would become their own. It seems the wildest madness, that men should know and feel Who He was, and yet expect to profit by desecrating His rights. And yet so it was from the beginning. If Herod were not fearful that the predicted King of the Jews was indeed born, the massacre of the Innocents was idle. If the rulers were not fearful that

this counsel and work was of God, they would not, at Gamaliel's bidding, have refrained from the Apostles. And it comes still closer to the point to observe that, if they had attached no importance, even in their moment of triumph, to the prediction of His rising from the dead, they would not have required a guard, nor betrayed the secret recognition which Jesus here exposes. The same blind miscalculation is in every attempt to obtain profit or pleasure by means which are known to transgress the laws of the all-beholding Judge of all. It is committed every day, under the pressure of strong temptation, by men who know clearly that nothing but misery can result. So true is it that action is decided, not by a course of logic in the brain, but by the temperament and bias of our nature as a whole. We need not suppose that the rulers roundly spoke such words as these, even to themselves. The infamous motive lurked in ambush, too far in the background of the mind perhaps even for consciousness. But it was there, and it affected their decision, as lurking passions and self-interests always will, as surely as iron deflects the compass. "They caught Him and killed Him," said the unfaltering lips of their victim. And He added a circumstance of pain which we often overlook, but to which the great Minister of the circumcision was keenly sensitive, and often reverted, the giving Him up to the Gentiles, to a death accursed among the Jews; "they cast Him forth out of the vineyard."

All evil acts are based upon an overestimate of the tolerance of God. He had seemed to remain passive while messenger after messenger was beaten, stoned, or slain. But now that they had filled up the iniquity of their fathers, the Lord of the vineyard would come in person to destroy them, and give the vineyard to others. This last phrase is strangely at variance with the notion that the days of a commissioned ministry are over, as, on the other hand, the whole parable is at variance with the notion that a priesthood can be trusted to sit in exclusive judgment upon doctrine for the Church.

Mark goes straight on to record that, besides refuting their claim by the history of the past, and asserting His own supremacy in a phrase at once guarded in form and decisive in import, Jesus also appealed to Scripture. It was written that by special and marvelous interposition of the Lord a stone which the recognized builders had rejected should crown the building. And the quotation was not only decisive as showing that their rejection could not close the controversy; it also compensated, with a promise of final victory, the ominous words in which their malice had seemed to do its worst. Jesus often predicted His death, but He never despaired of His kingdom.

No wonder that the rulers sought to arrest Him, and perceived that He penetrated and despised their schemes. And their next device is a natural outcome from the fact that they feared the people, but did not discontinue their intrigues; for this was a crafty and dangerous attempt to estrange from Him the admiring multitude. [BE]

Paying Taxes to Caesar

Mar 12:13 Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in *His* words.

Mar 12:14 When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

Mar 12:15 Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see *it*."

Mar 12:16 So they brought *it*. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription *is this*?" They said to Him, "Caesar's."

Mar 12:17 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at Him.

THE contrast is very striking between this incident and the last. Instead of a challenge, Jesus is respectfully consulted; and instead of a formal concourse of the authorities of His religion, He is Himself the authority to Whom a few perplexed people profess to submit their difficulty. Nevertheless, it is a new and subtle effort of the enmity of His defeated foes. They have sent to Him certain Pharisees who will excite the popular indignation if He yields anything to the foreigner, and Herodians who will, if He refused, bring upon Him the colder and deadlier vengeance of Rome. They flatter, in order to stimulate, that fearless utterance which must often have seemed to them so rash: "We know that Thou art true, and carest not for any one, for Thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God." And they appeal to a higher motive by representing the case to be one of practical and personal urgency. "Shall we give, or shall we not give?"

Never was it more necessary to join the wisdom of the serpent to the innocence of the dove, for it would seem that He must needs answer directly, and that no direct answer can fail to have the gravest consequences. But in their eagerness to secure this menacing position, they have left one weak point in the attack. They have made the question altogether a practical one. The abstract doctrine of the right to drive out a foreign power, of the limits of authority and freedom, they have not raised. It is simply a question of the hour, Shall we give or shall we not give?

And Jesus baffled them by treating it as such. There was no longer a national coinage, except only of the half shekel for the temple tax. When He asked them for a smaller coin, they produced a Roman penny stamped with the effigy of Caesar. Thus they confessed the use of the Roman currency.

Now since they accepted the advantages of subjugation, they ought also to endure its burdens: since they traded as

Roman subjects, they ought to pay the Roman tribute. Not He had preached submission, but they had avowed it; and any consequent unpopularity would fall not upon Him but them. They had answered their own question. And Jesus laid down the broad and simple rule, "Render (pay back) unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they marveled greatly at Him." No wonder they marveled, for it would be hard to find in all the records of philosophy so ready and practical a device to baffle such cunning intriguers, such keenness in One Whose life was so far removed from the schools of worldly wisdom, joined with so firm a grasp on principle, in an utterance so brief, yet going down so far to the roots of action.

Now the words of Jesus are words for all time; even when He deals with a question of the hour, He treats it from the point of view of eternal fitness and duty; and this command to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's has become the charter of the state against all usurpations of tyrannous ecclesiastics. A sphere is recognized in which obedience to the law is a duty to God. But it is absurd to pretend that Christ taught blind and servile obedience to all tyrants in all circumstances, for this would often make it impossible to obey the second injunction, and to render unto God the things which are God's, — a clause which asserts in turn the right of conscience and the Church against all secular encroachments. The point to observe is, that the decision of Jesus is simply an inference, a deduction. St. Matthew has inserted the word "therefore," and it is certainly implied: render unto Caesar the things which you confess to be his own, which bear his image upon their face.

Can we suppose that no such inference gives point to the second clause? It would then become, like too many of our pious sayings, a mere supplement, inappropriate, however excellent, a make weight, and a platitude. No example of such irrelevance can be found in the story of our

Lord. When, finding the likeness of Caesar on the coin, He said, Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's, He at least suggested that the reason for both precepts ran parallel, and the image of the higher and heavenlier Monarch could be found on what He claims of us. And it is so. He claims all we have and all we are. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof:" and "I have made thee, thou art Mine." And for us and ours alike the argument holds good. All the visible universe bears deeply stamped into its substance His image and superscription. The grandeur of mountains and stars, the fairness of violet and harebell, are alike revelations of the Creator. The heavens declare His glory: the firmament showeth His handiwork: the earth is full of His riches: all the discoveries which expand our mastery over nature and disease, over time and space, are proofs of His wisdom and goodness, Who laid the amazing plan which we grow wise by tracing out. Find a corner on which contrivance and benevolence have not stamped the royal image, and we may doubt whether that bleak spot owes Him tribute. But no desert is so blighted, no solitude so forlorn.

And we should render unto God the things which are God's, seeing His likeness in His world. "For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things which are made, even His everlasting power and divinity."

overwhelming us with its victories over time and space. "In apprehension how like a God." Alas for us! if we forget that the Spirit of knowledge and wisdom is no other than the Spirit of the Lord God. [BE]

The Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection

Mar 12:18 Then *some* Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying:

Mar 12:19 "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves *his* wife behind, and leaves no

children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

Mar 12:20 Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring.

Mar 12:21 And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise.

Mar 12:22 So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also.

Mar 12:23 Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.”

Mar 12:24 Jesus answered and said to them, “Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? Mar 12:25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Mar 12:26 But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *burning bush passage*, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’?

Mar 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken.”

Their objection, stated in its simplest form, is the complication which would result if the successive ties for which death makes room must all revive together when death is abolished. If a woman has married a second time, whose wife shall she be? But their statement of the case is ingenious, but only because they push the difficulty to an absurd and ludicrous extent, but much more so because they base it upon a Divine ordinance. If there be a Resurrection, Moses must answer for all the confusion that will ensue, for Moses gave the commandment, by virtue of which a woman married seven times. No offspring of any union gave it a special claim upon her future life. “In the Resurrection, whose wife shall she be of them?” they ask,

conceding with a quiet sarcasm that this absurd event must needs occur.

For these controversialists the question was solely of the physical tie, which had made of twain one flesh. They had no conception that the body can be raised otherwise than as it perished, and they rightly enough felt certain that on such a resurrection woeful complications must ensue.

Now Jesus does not rebuke their question with such stern words as He had just employed to others, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" They were doubtless sincere in their conviction, and at least they had not come in the disguise of perplexed inquirers and almost disciples. He blames them, but more gently: "Is it not for this cause that ye err, because ye know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God?" They could not know one and not the other, but the boastful wisdom of this world, so ready to point a jibe by quoting Moses, had never truly grasped the meaning of the writer it appealed to.

Jesus, it is plain, does not quote Scripture only as having authority with His opponents: He accepts it heartily: He declares that human error is due to ignorance of its depth and range of teaching; and He recognizes the full roll of the sacred books "the Scriptures."

It has rightly been said, that none of the explicit statements, commonly relied upon, do more to vindicate for Holy Writ the authority of our Lord, than this simple incidental question.

Jesus proceeded to restate the doctrine of the Resurrection and then to prove it; and the more His brief words are pondered, the more they will expand and deepen.

Paul has taught us that the dead in Christ shall rise first (1Th 4:16). Of such attainment it is written, Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first Resurrection (Rev 20:6).

Now since among the lost there could be no question of family ties, and consequent embarrassments, Jesus confines His statement to these happy ones, of whom the Sadducee could think no better than that their new life should be a reproduction of their existence here,—a theory which they did wisely in rejecting. He uses the very language taken up afterwards by His apostle, and says, “When they shall rise from the dead.” And He asserts that marriage is at an end, and they are as the angels in heaven. Here is no question of the duration of pure and tender human affection, nor do these words compromise in any degree the hopes of faithful hearts, which cling to one another. Surely we may believe that in a life which is the outcome and resultant of this life, as truly as the grain is of the seed, in a life also where nothing shall be forgotten, but on the contrary we shall know what we know not now, there, tracing back the flood of their immortal energies to obscure fountains upon earth, and seeing all that each has owed half unconsciously to the fidelity and wisdom of the other, the true partners and genuine helpmeets of this world shall forever drink some peculiar gladness, each from the other’s joy. There is no reason why the close of formal unions which include the highest and most perfect friendships, should forbid such friendships to survive and flourish in the more kindly atmosphere of heaven.

What Christ asserts is simply the dissolution of the tie, as an inevitable consequence of such a change in the very nature of the blessed ones as makes the tie incongruous and impossible. In point of fact, marriage as the Sadducee thought of it, is but the counterpoise of death, renewing the race which otherwise would disappear, and when death is swallowed up, it vanishes as an anachronism. In heaven “they are as the angels,” the body itself being made “a spiritual body,” set free from the appetites of the flesh, and in harmony with the glowing aspirations of the spirit, which now it weighs upon and retards. If any would object that to

be as the angels is to be without a body, rather than to possess a spiritual body, it is answer enough that the context implies the existence of a body, since no person ever spoke of a resurrection of the soul. Moreover it is an utterly unwarrantable assumption that angels are wholly without substance. Many verses appear to imply the opposite, and the cubits of measurement of the New Jerusalem were "according to the measure of a man, that is of an angel" (Rev 21:17), which seems to assert a very curious similarity indeed.

The objection of the Sadducees was entirely obviated, therefore, by the broader, bolder, and more spiritual view of a resurrection which Jesus taught. And by far the greater part of the cavils against this same doctrine which delight the infidel lecturer and popular essayist of today would also die a natural death, if the free and spiritual teaching of Jesus, and its expansion by St. Paul, were understood. But we breathe a wholly different air when we read the speculations even of so great a thinker as St. Augustine, who supposed that we should rise with bodies somewhat greater than our present ones, because all the hair and nails we ever trimmed away must be diffused throughout the mass, lest they should produce deformity by their excessive proportions (*De Civitate Dei*, 22:19). To all such speculation, he who said, To every seed his own body, says, Thou fool, thou sowest not that body that shall be. But though Jesus had met these questions, it did not follow that His doctrine was true, merely because a certain difficulty did not apply. And, therefore, He proceeded to prove it by the same Moses to whom they had appealed, and whom Jesus distinctly asserts to be the author of the book of Exodus. God said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: ye do greatly err."

It is solemn to observe how Jesus, in this second part of His argument, passes from the consideration of the future of the blessed to that of all mankind; "as touching the dead

that they are raised.” With others than the blessed, therefore, God has a real though a dread relationship. And it will prove hard to reconcile this argument of Christ with the existence of any time when any soul shall be extinguished.

“The body is for the Lord,” said St. Paul, arguing against the vices of the flesh, “and the Lord for the body.” From these words of Christ he may well have learned that profound and far-reaching doctrine, which will never have done its work in the Church and in the world, until whatever defiles, degrades, or weakens that which the Lord has consecrated is felt to blaspheme by implication the God of our manhood, unto Whom all our life ought to be lived; until men are no longer dwarfed in mines, nor poisoned in foul air, nor massacred in battle, men whose intimate relationship with God the Eternal is of such a kind as to guarantee the resurrection of the poor frames which we destroy.

How much more does this great proclamation frown upon the sins by which men dishonor their own flesh. “Know ye not,” asked the apostle, carrying the same doctrine to its utmost limit, “that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?” So truly is God our God.[BE]

The Great Commandment

Mar 12:28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

Mar 12:29 Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE.

Mar 12:30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’ This is the first commandment.

Mar 12:31 And the second, like *it*, is this: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mar 12:32 So the scribe said to Him, "Well *said*, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He.

Mar 12:33 And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Mar 12:34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." But after that no one dared question Him.

The Lord answered him with great solemnity and emphasis. He might have quoted the commandment only. But He at once supported the precept itself and also His own view of its importance by including the majestic prologue, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all they strength."

The unity of God, what a massive and reassuring thought! Amid the debasements of idolatry, with its deification of every impulse and every force, amid the distractions of chance and change, seemingly so capricious and even discordant, amid the complexities of the universe and its phenomena, there is wonderful strength and wisdom in the reflection that God is one. All changes obey His hand which holds the rein; by Him the worlds were made. The exiled patriarch was overwhelmed by the majesty of the revelation that his fathers' God was God in Bethel even as in Beer- sheba: it charmed away the bitter sense of isolation, it unsealed in him the fountains of worship and trust, and sent him forward with a new hope of protection and prosperity. The unity of God, really apprehended, is a basis for the human will to repose upon, and to become self-consistent

and at peace. It was the parent of the fruitful doctrine of the unity of nature which underlies all the scientific victories of the modern world. In religion, St. Paul felt that it implies the equal treatment of all the human race, when he asked, "Is He the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also, if so be that God is one." (Rom 3:29 R.V.). To be one, he seems to say, implies being universal also. And if it thus excludes the reprobation of races, it disproves equally that of individual souls, and all thought of such unequal and partial treatment as should inspire one with hope of indulgence in guilt, or with fear that his way is hid from the Lord.

But if this be true, if there be one fountain of all life and loveliness and joy, of all human tenderness and all moral glory, how are we bound to love Him. Every other affection should only deepen our adoring loyalty to Him Who gives it. No cold or formal service can meet His claim, Who gives us the power to serve. No, we must love Him. And as all our nature comes from Him, so must all be consecrated: that love must embrace all the affections of "heart and soul" panting after Him, as the hart after the water brooks; and all the deep and steady convictions of the "mind," musing on the work of His hand, able to give a reason for its faith; and all the practical homage of the "strength," living and dying to the Lord. How easy, then, would be the fulfillment of His commandments in detail, and how surely it would follow. All the precepts of the first table are clearly implied in this.

In such another commandment were summed up also the precepts which concerned our neighbor. When we love him as ourselves (neither exaggerating his claims beyond our own, nor allowing our own to trample upon his), then we shall work no ill to our neighbor, and so love shall fulfill the law. There is none other commandment greater than these.

His enemies had been defeated and put to shame, their murderous hate had been denounced, and the nets of their

cunning had been rent like cobwebs; they had seen the heart of one of their own order kindled into open admiration, and they henceforth renounced as hopeless the attempt to conquer Jesus in debate. No man after that durst ask Him any questions.

He will now carry the war into their own country. It will be for them to answer Jesus.

Whose Son Is the Christ?

Mar 12:35 Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How *is it* that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?

Mar 12:36 For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: "THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, TILL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES YOUR FOOTSTOOL." "

Mar 12:37 Therefore David himself calls Him 'LORD'; how is He *then* his Son?" And the common people heard Him gladly.

JESUS, having silenced in turn His official interrogators and the Sadducees, and won the heart of His honest questioner, proceeded to submit a searching problem to His assailants. Whose son is the Messiah? And when they gave Him an obvious and shallow answer, He covered them with confusion publicly. The event is full of that dramatic interest which St. Mark is so well able to discern and reproduce. How is it then that he passes over all this aspect of it, leaves us ignorant of the defeat and even of the presence of the scribes, and free to suppose that Jesus stated the whole problem in one long question, possibly without an opponent at hand to feel its force?

This is a remarkable proof that his concern was not really for the pictorial element in the story, but for the manifestation of the power of his Master, the "authority" which resounds through his opening chapter, the royalty which he exhibits at the close. To him the vital point is that

Jesus, upon openly claiming to be the Christ, and repelling the vehement attacks which were made upon Him as such, proceeded to unfold the astonishing greatness which this implied; and that after asserting the unity of God and His claim upon all hearts, He demonstrated that the Christ was sharer of His throne.

The Christ, they said, was the Son of David, and this was not false: Jesus had wrought many miracles for suppliants who addressed Him by that title. But was it all the truth? How then did David call Him Lord? A greater than David might spring from among his descendants, and hold rule by an original and not merely an ancestral claim: He might not reign as a son of David. Yet this would not explain the fact that David, who died ages before His coming, was inspired to call Him my Lord. Still less would it satisfy the assertion that God had bidden Him sit beside Him on His throne. For the scribes there was a serious warning in the promise that His enemies should be made His footstool, and for all the people a startling revelation in the words which follow, and which the Epistle to the Hebrews has unfolded, making this Son of David a priest forever, after another order than that of Aaron.

No wonder that the multitude heard with gladness teaching at one so original, so profound, and so clearly justified by Scripture.

But it must be observed how remarkable this question of Jesus follows up His conversation with the scribe. Then He had based the supreme doctrine of the Divine Unity. He now proceeds to show that the throne of Deity is not a lonely throne, and to demand, Whose Son is He Who shares it, and Whom David in Spirit accosts by the same title as his God?

Mark is now content to give the merest indication of the final denunciation with which the Lord turned His back upon the scribes of Jerusalem, as He previously broke with those of Galilee. But it is enough to show how utterly beyond

compromise was the rupture. The people were to beware of them: their selfish objects were betrayed in their very dress, and their desire for respectful salutations and seats of honor. Their prayers were a pretense, and they devoured widows' houses, acquiring under the cloak of religion what should have maintained the friendless. But their affected piety would only bring upon them a darker doom.

It is a tremendous impeachment. None is entitled to speak as Jesus did, who is unable to read hearts as He did. And yet we may learn from it that mere softness is not the meekness He demands, and that, when sinister motives are beyond doubt, the spirit of Jesus is the spirit of burning.

There is an indulgence for the wrongdoer which is mere feebleness and half compliance, and which shares in the guilt of Eli. And there is a dreadful anger which sins not, the wrath of the Lamb. [BE]

Beware of the Scribes

Mar 12:38 Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, *love* greetings in the marketplaces, Mar 12:39 the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts,

Mar 12:40 who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

Mark is now content to give the merest indication of the final denunciation with which the Lord turned His back upon the scribes of Jerusalem, as He previously broke with those of Galilee. But it is enough to show how utterly beyond compromise was the rupture. The people were to beware of them: their selfish objects were betrayed in their very dress, and their desire for respectful salutations and seats of honor. Their prayers were a pretense, and they devoured widows' houses, acquiring under the cloak of religion what should have maintained the friendless. But their affected piety would only bring upon them a darker doom.

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The Widow's Offering

Mar 12:41 Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much.

Mar 12:42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.

Mar 12:43 So He called His disciples to *Himself* and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury;

Mar 12:44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

WITH words of stern denunciation Jesus forever left the temple. Yet He lingered, as if reluctant, in the outer court; and while the storm of His wrath was still resounding in all hearts, observed and pointed out an action of the lowliest beauty, a modest flower of Hebrew piety in the vast desert of formality. It was not too modest, however, to catch, even in that agitating hour, the eye of Jesus; and while the scribes were devouring widows' houses, a poor widow could still, with two mites which make a farthing, win honorable mention from the Son of God. Thus He ever observes realities among pretenses, the pure flame of love amid the sour smoke which wreathes around it. What He saw was the last pittance, cast to a service which in reality

was no longer God's, yet given with a noble earnestness, a sacrifice pure from the heart.

1. His praise suggests to us the unknown observation, the unsuspected influences which surround us. She little guessed herself to be the one figure, amid a glittering group and where many were rich, who really interested the all-seeing Eye. She went away again, quite unconscious that the Lord had converted her two mites into a perennial wealth of contentment for lowly hearts, and instruction for the Church, quite ignorant that she was approved of Messiah, and that her little gift was the greatest even of all her story. So are we watched and judged in our least conscious and our most secluded hours.
2. We learn Paul's lesson, that, "if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, and not according as he hath not."

In war, in commerce, in the senate, how often does an accident at the outset blight a career forever. One is taken in the net of circumstances, and his clipped wings can never soar again. But there is no such disabling accident in religion. God seeth the heart. The world was redeemed by the blighted and thwarted career of One Who would fain have gathered His own city under His wing, but was refused and frustrated. And whether we cast in much, or only possess two mites, an offering for the rich to mock, He marks, understands, and estimates aright.

And while the world only sees the quantity, He weighs the motive of our actions. This is the true reason why we can judge nothing before the time, why the great benefactor is not really pointed out by the splendid benefaction, and why many that are last shall yet be first, and the first, last.

3. The poor widow gave not a greater proportion of her goods, she gave all; and it has been often remarked that she had still, in her poverty, the opportunity of keeping back one half. But her heart went with her two mites.

And, therefore, she was blessed. We may picture her return to her sordid drudgery, unaware of the meaning of the new light and peace which followed her, and why her heart sang for joy. We may think of the Spirit of Christ which was in her, leading her afterwards into the Church of Christ, an obscure and perhaps illiterate convert, undistinguished by any special gift, and only loved as the first Christians all loved each other. And we may think of her now, where the secrets of all hearts are made known, followed by myriads of the obscure and undistinguished whom her story has sustained and cheered, and by some who knew her upon earth, and were astonished to learn that this was she. Then let us ask ourselves, Is there any such secret of unobtrusive lowly service, born of love, which the future will associate with me? [BE]

MARK: CHAPTER 13

The Gospel of Mark: By Mark A. Copeland, 2011

The Olivet Discourse - I Mark 13:1-23

INTRODUCTION 1. A challenging passage in the Bible is Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives... a. Given shortly after He left the temple with His disciples b. Recorded in Mt 24, Mk 13, Lk 21 c. Commonly referred to as "The Olivet Discourse" — Our focus in this study will be primarily on Mark's account 2. It's difficulty becomes apparent as one considers the diversity of interpretations... a. Some maintain it is entirely about events preceding the Lord's second and final coming b. Others that it is entirely about events related to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. c. Yet others believe it contains reference to both events 3. Even those who say it refers to both events differ as to when a particular event is described... a. Some say that vs. 5-23 refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and vs. 24 begins the discussion about the Lord's second coming - cf. J.W. McGarvey b. Others contend that vs. 32 begins talking about the second coming c. Others say Jesus switches back and forth throughout the discourse [At this time, I view "The Olivet Discourse" in Mk 13 as depicting the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D., though it foreshadows His second coming. To see why, let's start with...] I. THE SETTING OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE A. THE WORDS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

1. His parables depicting Israel's rejection of Him, and its consequence a. The parable of the wicked vinedressers - Mk 12:1-12; cf. Mt 21:33-46 b. Matthew includes the parable of two sons - cf. Mt 21:28-32 c. Also the parable of the wedding feast - cf. Mt 22:1-14
2. His condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees a. The warning against the pretentious scribes - Mk 12:38-40 b. Matthew records a more elaborate condemnation -

cf. Mt 23:1-28 c. Who would fill up the measure of their fathers' guilt - Mt 23:29-32 d. Who kill, crucify, scourge, and persecute the prophets, wise men, and scribes He would send to them - Mt 23:33-34 e. Upon whom the blood of all the righteous would come, upon that very generation

- Mt 23:35-36 3. His lamentation over Jerusalem, recorded by Matthew a. The city who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her - Mt 23:37 b. The city unwilling to accept the love shown to her - Mt 23:37 c. Whose house would be left desolate - Mt 23:38-39 B. THE PROPHECY OF JESUS ABOUT THE TEMPLE. 1. After his disciples were showing Him the buildings of temple - Mk 13:1 Mark A. Copeland Sermons From The Gospel Of Mark 175 2. Declaring that not one stone would be left upon another - Mk 13:2 C. THE QUESTIONS OF THE DISCIPLES 1. In Mark's gospel, two questions are asked - Mk 13:4 a. "When will these things be?" b. "What will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?" 2. In Luke's gospel, the two questions are similar - Lk 21:7 a. "When will these things be?" b. "What sign will there be when these things are about to take place?" 3. In Matthew's gospel, the second question is worded differently - Mt 24:3 a. "When will these things be?" b. "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" 4. Observations regarding these questions: a. Only Matthew makes reference to a "coming" and "end of the age" a. Matthew wrote his gospel for a Jewish audience 1) Who would likely view the destruction of temple as a judgment against Jerusalem and the complete end of the Jewish age (as evidently His disciples did) 2) Re: the end of the Jewish age - the end began with the death of Jesus making the OT covenant obsolete (He 9:15-16); it ended in fullness with the destruction of the temple and cessation of its OT covenantal sacrifices (cf. He 8:13) b. Mark and Luke wrote their gospels to Gentiles 1) To avoid misunderstanding by non-Jewish readers, the disciples' questions are worded to

reflect what the Olivet discourse is about 2) the destruction of the temple (i.e., “these things”) and the sign when its destruction would be imminent [When the setting leading up to “The Olivet Discourse” is carefully considered, the subject becomes clear. The destruction of the temple is under consideration, not the second coming of Christ. Now let’s proceed to examine more closely...] II. THE OLIVET DISCOURSE A. WHAT WILL NOT BE THE SIGN. 1. Be careful that none deceive you, claiming to be the Christ - Mk 13:5-6 2. Don’t be troubled by wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilence - Mk 13:7-8 a. Such things will come, but the end (destruction of the temple) is not yet b. They are only the beginning of sorrows (not the sign of the end) 3. Anticipate persecution and hard times - Mk 13:9-13 a. You will be killed and hated for His name’s sake b. Many will be offended, betray one another, and hate one another c. False prophets will deceive many d. The love of many will grow cold because of lawlessness e. But he who endures to “the end” will be saved — “the end” refers here: 1) Not to the second coming (implying one must live until Christ comes again) 2) Nor to the destruction of Jerusalem (implying once one has survived that event, one’s salvation is secured) 3) But to the end of one’s life - cf. Re 2:10 4. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all nations - Mk 13:10 a. As a witness to all the nations - cf. Mt 24:14 Mark A. Copeland Sermons From The Gospel Of Mark, b. Then the end (the destruction of the temple) will come - cf. Mt 24:14 1) This would end the Jewish sacrifices, and other remnants of OT worship 2) That which was nailed to the cross, abolished by Jesus’ death, would pass away - cf. Col 2:14-17; Ep 2:14-16; He 8:13 c. Was the gospel preached to all nations prior to the destruction of the temple? 1) Note what Paul wrote prior to 70 A.D. - Ro 10:16-18; Col 1:23 2) Whether we take Jesus’ and Paul’s words as literal or accommodative, according to Paul it had! B. WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN. 1. The “abomination of desolation” - Mk 13:14 a.

Standing where it ought not (the holy city Jerusalem)
 b. As foretold by Daniel - cf. Dan 9:26-27

2. When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies -
 cf. Lk 21:20 a. Luke therefore explains the “abomination of
 desolation” b. In 70 A.D., Roman armies surrounded
 Jerusalem prior to destroying it and the temple 3. Thus
 Jesus answers the disciples’ question: “What sign will there
 be when these things are about to take place?” C. WHAT TO
 DO WHEN YOU SEE THE SIGN.

1. Those in Judea are to flee to the mountains - Mk 13:14-
 20 a. Don’t delay by going to your homes and getting your
 clothes b. It will be a difficult time for pregnant and nursing
 mothers c. Pray that your flight be not in winter (when travel
 is difficult) or on the Sabbath (when city gates are closed to
 travel) d. For there will be “great tribulation”, though
 shortened for the elect’s sake 1) Luke specifies the nature of
 this tribulation - Lk 21:23b-24

2) A Jewish general taking captive by the Romans just
 prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 offered this
 summary: a) All the calamities which had befallen any nation
 from the beginning of the world were but small in
 comparison with those of the Jews b) In the siege of
 Jerusalem, no fewer than 1,100,000 perished (it was during
 the time of the Passover, when more than 3,000,000 Jews
 were assembled) c) In surrounding provinces 250,000 were
 slain d) 97,000 were taken captive, some killed by beasts in
 Roman theaters, some sent to work in Egypt, others sold as
 slaves Flavius Josephus, Jewish Wars, quoted by Barnes on
 Matthew

3) The “elect” were Christians, spared by a shortened
 siege a) The Jews in the city engaged the Romans in battle b)
 Titus, the Roman general, being called to return to Rome,
 proceeded to end the siege and stormed the city - Barnes
 Commentary on Matthew 2. Don’t be misled by false christ
 and false prophets - Mk 13:21-23 a. Even those who show

great signs and wonders to deceive b. For the coming (judgment) of the Son of Man will be like lightning across the sky 1) Do not expect to find Him in the desert or in inner rooms 2) When He comes in judgment, it will be swift - cf. Lk 17:22-24 CONCLUSION (Part One) Mark A. Copeland Sermons From The Gospel Of Mark 177 1. So far, all this depicts a local, escapable judgment...

a. Where Jesus warned those in Judea of what is to come - Mk 13:23 b. Where they are given a sign to let them know when to flee - Mk 13:14 2. It does not fit a worldwide, inescapable judgment... a. As will characterize the second coming of Christ - 2Pe 3:10-12 b. As Paul taught the Christians in Thessalonica - cf. 1Th 5:2-3; 2Th 1:7-10 3. Our next study will continue to examine "The Olivet Discourse", starting with verse 24... a. Which certainly sounds like the second coming of Christ, but is it? b. Or was Jesus still describing events pertaining to the destruction of Jerusalem? Eusebius (ca. 300 A.D.) in his "Ecclesiastical History" wrote that Christians heeded the warnings of Jesus in Matthew 24, and fled Jerusalem when it was surrounded by the Roman army. May we likewise heed the words of Jesus: • not be misled by false prophets and false christs • not be troubled by wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, or even persecution • enduring to the end by remaining faithful to Him ...looking forward to His final coming at the Last Day! Mark A. Copeland Sermons From The Gospel Of Mark 178 The Olivet Discourse - II Mark 13:24-37 INTRODUCTION 1. In our previous lesson, we covered the first half of Mark 13... a. Commonly called "The Olivet Discourse", delivered by Jesus on the Mount of Olives b. A challenging passage of scripture, believed to discussing either... 1) The destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70 A.D. 2) The second coming of Christ, which is yet to occur 3) Or both events, described either in turn or intertwined 2. I've proposed that the discourse foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, based first upon the setting... a. Jesus' words spoken previously in

the temple 1) His parables about Israel's rejection of Him - cf. Mt 21:28-32,33-46; 22:1-14 2) His condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees - cf. Mt 23:27-36 3) His lamentation over Jerusalem - cf. Mt 23:37-39 b. Jesus' prophecy regarding about the temple - Mk 13:1-2 c. The disciples' questions, which when Mark and Luke's account is considered, appear to be: 1) "When will these things be?" 2) "What will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?" — Cf. Mt 24:3; Mk 13:4; Lk 21:7

3. We then saw that in vs. 5-23, Jesus describes... a. What will not be the sign (other than the gospel preached to all nations) - Mk 13:5-13 b. What will be the sign - Mk 13:14 1) The abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel - Dan 9:26-27; 12:11 2) Which Luke explains to be Jerusalem surrounded by armies - Lk 21:20 c. What to do when they saw the sign - Mk 13:15-23 1) Those in Judea were to flee to the mountains to avoid a great tribulation 2) They were not to be misled by false christs or false prophets [Up to vs. 24, Jesus described a local, escapable judgment to befall Jerusalem. He does not describe the worldwide, inescapable judgment taught elsewhere in the Scriptures. But with vs. 24, many believe Jesus now addresses His second coming (cf. J. W. McGarvey's Fourfold Gospel). As we continue with our study, I propose that the destruction of Jerusalem is still under consideration...] II. THE OLIVET DISCOURSE (continued) D. WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT

1. Events to occur "after the tribulation of those days" a. Cosmic disturbances - Mk 13:24-25 1) The sun will be darkened

2) The moon will not give its light 3) The stars of heaven will fall 4) The powers in the heavens

will be shaken b. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory Mark A. Copeland Sermons From The Gospel Of Mark 179 - Mk 13:26

1) The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven - cf. Mt

24:30 2) All the tribes of the earth will mourn - cf. Mt 24:30
 c. The elect will be gathered - Mk 13:27 1) For with a great
 sound of the trumpet, angels will be sent - cf. Mt 24:31 2)
 They shall gather the elect from the four winds, from the
 farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven 2. Such
 events certainly sound like the second coming of Christ, but
 consider two reasons why they may not be referring to Jesus'
 coming at the Last Day... a. The events were to occur
 "immediately after the tribulation of those days" ("in those
 days, after that tribulation") - Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24 1) They
 are connected in time to the tribulation described in Mk
 13:15-28 2) This "coming" of Jesus was to occur at the
 conclusion of the siege of Jerusalem b. The events are similar
 to those used to foretell God's judgment of other nations 1)
 Babylon - Isa 13:1,6-13 2) Egypt - Isa 19:1-2; cf. Eze 32:2,7-
 9 2) Tyre - Isa 23:1; 24:21-23 3) Edom - Isa 34:4-6 4) Nineveh
 - Nah 1:1-5 5) Israel - Am 8:9 6) Judah - Jer 4:5-6,23-28 3.
 Jewish prophets foretold God's judgment upon such
 nations...

a. Using figures of worldwide destruction, even though
 the judgment was local b. Perhaps because such judgments
 foreshadow God's Final Judgment to come upon the entire
 world at the Last Day 4. Like other Jewish prophets, Jesus
 used figurative language to depict: a. The judgment to befall
 the religious leaders of Israel (in terms of worldwide
 destruction) b. The provision made for faithful disciples of
 Christ (in terms of the gathering by angels) 5. Therefore I
 suggest that even in Mk 13:24-27 Jesus refers to the
 destruction of Jerusalem E. ADMONITIONS TO BE
 PREPARED. 1. The parable of the fig tree - Mk 13:28-29
 a. New branches and leaves indicate summer is near b. When
 you see these things (Jerusalem surrounded by armies), the
 time is near 2. It would happen before "this generation"
 passed away - Mk 13:30 a. Some define "generation" as a
 race of people (i.e., the Jews) - cf. McGarvey, B. W. Johnson
 b. But note its use by Jesus just prior to this discourse - cf.

Mt 23:33-36 (esp. 36) c. The destruction of Jerusalem came to pass within forty years! 3. The words of Jesus will come to pass - Mk 13:31 a. Heaven and earth shall pass away one day - cf. 2Pe 3:7,10 b. But Jesus' words will by no means pass away 4. Of that day and hour, only the Father knows - Mk 13:32 a. Many believe at this point Jesus begins to talk about the second coming - e.g., France, NIGTC; Short, NIBC b. The disciples might discern the general timing with the advance of armies toward Jerusalem c. But the day and hour when the siege would begin, only the Father knew 5. Therefore, take heed, watch and pray! - Mk 13:33-37 Mark A. Copeland Sermons From The Gospel Of Mark 180 a. You don't know when the time is - e.g., Ac 1:7 b. Don't be caught off guard, like a servant caught sleeping when his master returns c. Be ready, for the Son of Man will come when you not expect Him d. The siege of Jerusalem might begin promptly, so flee Judea promptly when you see the armies surrounding Jerusalem! CONCLUSION 1. Admittedly, there is much in "The Olivet Discourse" that alludes to our Lord's second coming at the Last Day... a. But it no different than prophecies by other Jewish prophets who foretold God's judgment upon nations and cities b. Such figurative language was a common motif used by Jewish prophets c. We should not be surprised to see Jesus using the same motif in this context — And rightly so, for God's judgments upon nations in the past are types and shadows of the Final Judgment to befall the entire world when Jesus comes again 2. In addition to the setting leading up to the discourse, there is the natural flow of the discourse itself that leads me to conclude it is entirely about the destruction of Jerusalem... a. Jesus' disciples are told what will not be the sign - Mk 13:1-13 b. They are told will be the sign that His coming is near - Mk 13:14 c. They are told what to do when they see the sign - Mk 13:14-23 d. His coming in judgment (the fall of Jerusalem) is described in terms reminiscent of other Jewish prophets who foretold of God's judgments upon various nations - Mk

13:24-27 e. Admonitions are given for them to be prepared and watchful, for all these things will happen before the current generation passed away, though the exact time was unknown - Mk 13:28-37 So I view "The Olivet Discourse" to describe a local, escapable judgment which occurred as Jesus foretold in 70 A. D. However, there is still the worldwide, inescapable judgment at the Last Day. Are you ready for that Day? The admonitions to be prepared and productive are very similar: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?"

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;" - 2 Peter 3:10-14

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

Mar 14:1 After two days was *the feast of the passover*, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

Mar 14:2 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

Of the *malice of Christ's enemies*, and the preparation made by them to do him mischief.

1. The chief priests, his open enemies, consulted how they might put him to death, Mar 14:1, Mar 14:2. The feast of the passover was now at hand, and at that feast he must be crucified, (1.) That his death and suffering might be the more public, and that all Israel, even those of the dispersion, who came from all parts to the feast, might be witnesses of it, and of the wonders that attended it. (2.) That the Anti-type might answer to the type. Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us, and brought us out of the house of bondage, at the same time that the paschal lamb was sacrificed, and Israel's deliverance out of Egypt was commemorated.

Now see, [1.] How spiteful Christ's enemies were; they did not think it enough to banish or imprison him, for they aimed not only to silence him, and stop his progress for the future, but to be revenged on him for all the good he had done. [2.] How subtle they were; Not on the feast-day, when the people are together; they do not say, Lest they should be disturbed in their devotions, and diverted from them, but, Lest there should be an uproar (Mar 14:2); lest they should rise, and rescue him, and fall foul upon those that attempt any thing against him. They who desired nothing

more than the praise of men, dreaded nothing more than the rage and displeasure of men.

[MH]

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

Mar 14:3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

Mar 14:4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

Mar 14:5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

Mar 14:6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

Mar 14:7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

Mar 14:8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

Mar 14:9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

This beautiful incident took place on the Tuesday evening of Passion Week, while the chief priests were gathered in the house of Caiaphas to plot the Lord's death, Mat 26:3-5. Simon had probably been healed by Jesus, and the feast was held in his house, as being larger than Martha's. Jesus was intimate with Lazarus and his sisters, and this unnamed woman was Mary, Joh 12:2-3. Alabaster resembled white marble, and the perfume was carefully sealed to preserve it. Its cost would amount to about fifty dollars, and would represent the work of three hundred days,

Mat 20:2. Loveless hearts cannot understand the expenditure of love-they count it waste; but how quickly Jesus steps in to vindicate His own! Probably, of all His followers, Mary alone had understood His references to His death, and as she could not be present to perform the last offices of love, she rendered them in advance. Judas, who led the murmuring, seems to have been goaded to this act by the contrast of Mary's spirit with his own, and by Christ's gentle rebuke. [FBM]

Judas to Betray Jesus

Mar 14:10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

Mar 14:11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

Why would Judas do such a thing? Let us hear the testimony of John in his gospel...

Joh 12:4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him,

Joh 12:5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

Joh 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Judas was angry, it would seem, because he lost out on an opportunity to make personal profit from the gift of Mary if she had not "wasted" it as he proclaimed. Therefore, he went to the enemies of Christ to make back the financial gain.

The Passover with the Disciples

Mar 14:12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

Mar 14:13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

Mar 14:14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Mar 14:15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us.

Mar 14:16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Mar 14:17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

Mar 14:18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

Mar 14:19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one,

Is it I? and another *said, Is it I?*

Mar 14:20 And he answered and said unto them, *It is* one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.

Mar 14:21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

Mar 14:12. The first day, etc. 14th Nisan on Jewish calendar. The previous day had been spent in seclusion at Bethany, which “was reckoned as regards religious purposes part of Jerusalem by the Rabbis, and the lamb might be eaten there, though it must be killed at the Temple” (Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.*).

Mar 14:13. Two of His disciples. Peter and John (Luk 22:8). **A man bearing, etc.** It being essential to

Christ's plan that He should not be arrested before His celebration of the Passover, He did not divulge to His apostles until the last moment the place where it was to be held. Probably He had made some private arrangement with a trusty disciple living in Jerusalem to send a man-servant (instead of a woman, as was usual) for water at a particular time of day. Possibly the man-servant was also a disciple and in the secret.

Mar 14:14. The guest-chamber. *My lodging-place:* rendered "inn" in Luk 2:7.

Mar 14:15. Furnished. The couches for reclining on set in order and spread with carpets. **Prepared.** *Ready* for the due celebration of the Passover, so far as the room was concerned every particle of leaven having been cleared out. **There make ready.** By procuring the lamb, the unleavened cakes, the cups of wine and water, the bitter herbs, and the sauce. Some of these would perhaps be provided by the master of the house, but there is great uncertainty as to what exactly took place.

Mar 14:16. The Passover. An account of the ritual may conveniently be inserted here. (1) Two or three flat cakes of unleavened bread, and four cups of red wine mixed with water, were placed before the master of the house, or the most eminent person present, who was called the Celebrant or President. (2) All present having reclined, he took one of the cups, known as the "Cup of Consecration," gave thanks, tasted the cup, and passed it round.

(3) Water was brought in, and the President washed his hands ceremonially.

(4) There were placed on the table the bitter herbs (lettuce, endive, beet, succory, horehound), the sauce called "Charoseth" (made of dates, raisins, figs, vinegar, etc., pounded and mixed together), and the Passover lamb.

(5) After again thanking God for the fruits of the earth, the President took a

portion of the bitter herbs “the size of an olive,” dipped it in the Charoseth and ate it, and his example was followed by the rest. (6) The second cup of wine was filled, after which began the “Haggadah” or “Shewing forth” (1Co 11:26). A child or proselyte inquired, “What mean ye by this service?” (Exo 12:26), and the President answered according to a prescribed formula. The first part of the “Hallel” (Psalms 113, 114) was then sung, and the second cup solemnly drunk. (7) The President again washed his hands (the rest doing so also), and taking two of the unleavened cakes, broke them, gave thanks, and distributed to the company. Each, on receiving his portion, wrapped bitter herbs round it, dipped it in the “Charoseth,” and ate it. (8) The flesh of the lamb was then eaten. (9) After thanksgiving, the third cup (“Cup of Blessing”) was handed round. (10) Thanks were given for the food received and for redemption from Egypt, the fourth cup (“Cup of Joy”) was drunk, the second part of the “Hallel” (Psalms 115-118) was sung, and the company dispersed.

Mar 14:17. In the evening.—After sunset which was the beginning of 15th Nisan—the proper paschal (Passover) night. **Mar 14:18. Sat. Reclined** on the divans. The original standing posture (Exo 12:11) had long been abandoned. Render last part of verse: *One out of you* (among you, but not of you) *will deliver Me—he that is eating with Me.*

Mar 14:21. The order of the words in the last clause, and the intrinsic meaning of *êâëüü*, incline one to render thus: *An excellent thing were it for Him* (the Son of Man) *if there had not been born that man* (the man who, while an apostle, becomes a traitor); and the meaning may perhaps be, that the burden pressing on Christ’s soul would have been infinitely easier to bear had His apprehension not come about by the agency of His own familiar friend. Earlier in the verse He exclaims, *Alas for that man!* thinking, apparently, of the self-reproach that would overwhelm Judas, almost the moment the deed was done. [PH]

Institution of the Lord's Supper

Mar 14:22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

Mar 14:23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and they all drank of it.

Mar 14:24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

Mar 14:25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Christ and the Communion.

I. This service carries us back over dim tracks of time to the beginning of the Gospel. We think of scattered bands of our ancient brethren, in the midst of surrounding heathenism, gathering as we do now around the Table of our Lord. They regard the crucified Jesus as the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. It is not altogether difficult to place ourselves in the position of those ancient saints, and to enter into their state of heart as they gathered round the Lord's Table. There was an unconscious recognition all the more profound and joyful that it was unconscious of their being one through the love that embraced them all. It was not, however, that their minds were occupied about one another. It was the Lord Himself whom they thought upon; His holy form it was that rose up before the eye of faith; the festival was one of love, and memory, and hope, bringing up to faith the sacred Person of the Lord, and kindling all blissful emotions. In such experiences believing men may share today, to the same extent as believing men of the first century.

II. What is this communion to our Saviour? What was in His heart when He established this ordinance? The answer rises to our lips at once. (1) There was undying love to His

own. That love is the abiding mystery of the Gospel. Never before did it get such utterance; never before did it appear so tender and intense, so full and overflowing. (2) There is another thing beyond even this. It tells out His desire for fellowship with His own just as when He took Peter and James and John with Him into the garden, and said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with Me." There is unfathomable mystery here—that He, so to speak, should lean on us, but it is part of the blessed mystery of His brotherhood. Brotherhood is no mere name with Him; but a blissful verity. In all, save sin, His heart was like our own; and just as we have pleasure in the love that our friends bear toward us, and in knowing that we live in their memory, so does He delight in the love with which saved men love Him. It is part of the reward of His sorrows, part of the joy that was set before Him, for which He endured the Cross, despising the shame.[SB]

Mar 14:26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Mar 14:27. An hymn. **It is probable that this was the second part of Hallel (Psalms 115- 118.); for no doubt the first part (113, 114) had been sung in its usual place earlier in the evening. These Psalms were part of the Jewish celebration of Passover.**

Jesus Foretells Peter's Denial

Mar 14:27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

Mar 14:28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

Mar 14:29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

Mar 14:30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow

twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Mar 14:31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

Mar 14:27

All ye shall be offended. The words “*Shall be offended*”, literally, *shall be caused to stumble*. Our Lord was to prove “a stone of stumbling” to many, not excluding his own disciples. Even they, under the influence of terror, would for a time lose confidence and hope in him. For it is written, **I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad.** This is a quotation from Zechariah (Zec 13:7), “Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd.” This passage brings out in a remarkable manner the Divine agency in the death of Christ. *The sheep shall be scattered abroad.*

The disciples all forsook him and fled, when they saw him actually in the hands of his enemies. They felt doubtful for the moment whether he was indeed the Son of God. “They trusted that it was he who should redeem Israel;” but now their hopes gave way to fear and doubt. They fled hither and thither like frightened sheep. But God gathered them together again, so that when our Lord rose from the dead, he found them all in the same place; and then he revived their faith and courage. Our Lord and his disciples had no settled home or friends in Jerusalem; so they had no other place to flee to than that upper chamber, where, not long before, Christ had kept the Passover with them. The owner of that house was a friend; so thither they went, and there Christ appeared to them after his resurrection.

Mar 14:28

Howbeit, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. This our Lord said to reassure them. Galilee was more like home to them than Jerusalem, and they would there be less afraid of the unbelieving Jews.

Mar 14:29

But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. Our Lord had just distinctly stated that they would all be offended, and therefore these words of St. Peter were very presumptuous. Conscious of his own infirmities, he ought to have said, "I know that through my own infirmity this may easily happen. Nevertheless, I trust to thy mercy and goodness to save me." Just such is the Christian's daily experience. We often think that we are strong in the faith, strong in purity, strong in patience. But when temptation arises, we falter and fall. The true remedy against temptation is the consciousness of our own weakness, and supplication for Divine strength.

Mar 14:30

Verily I say unto thee, that thou to-day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, shalt deny me thrice. The day had begun. It began at six in the evening. It was already advanced. This second crowing of the cock is mentioned by St. Mark only; and it forms an additional aggravation of Peter's sin. The "cockcrowing" was a term used for one of the divisions of the night. But it appears that there were three times at which the cock-crowing might be expected—namely,

- (1) early in the night, between eleven and twelve;
- (2) between one and two; and
- (3) between five and six.

The two cock crowings here referred to would be the two last of the three here mentioned. It would probably be about 2 a.m., when the first trial of our Lord took place in the house of Caiaphas.

Mar 14:31

But he spake exceeding vehemently, If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee. The right reading in Greek implies that he kept asserting over and over again. He

was, no doubt, sincere in all this, but he had yet to learn his own weakness. [PC]

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

Mar 14:32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

Mar 14:33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

Mar 14:34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

Mar 14:35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

Mar 14:36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

Mar 14:37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?

Mar 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

Mar 14:39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

Mar 14:40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.

Mar 14:41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Mar 14:42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

It is possible so to argue about the metaphysics of the Agony as to forget that a suffering human heart was there, and that each of us owes his soul to the victory which was decided if not completed in that fearful place. The Evangelists simply tell us how He suffered.

Let us begin with the accessories of the scene, and gradually approach the center.

In the warning of Jesus to His disciples there was an undertone of deep sorrow. God will smite Him, and they will all be scattered like sheep.

However dauntless be the purport of such words, it is impossible to lose sight of their melancholy. And when the Eleven rejected His prophetic warning, and persisted in trusting the hearts He knew to be so fearful, their professions of loyalty could only deepen His distress, and intensify His isolation.

In silence He turns to the deep gloom of the olive grove, aware now of the approach of the darkest and deadliest assault.

There was a striking contrast between the scene of His first temptation and His last; and His experience was exactly the reverse of that of the first Adam, who began in a garden, and was driven thence into the desert, because he failed to refuse himself one pleasure more beside ten thousand. Jesus began where the transgression of men had driven them, in the desert among the wild beasts, and resisted not a luxury, but the passion of hunger craving for bread. Now He is in a garden, but how different from theirs. Close by is a city filled with foemen, whose messengers are already on His track. Instead of the attraction of a fruit good for food, and pleasant, and to be desired to make one wise, there is the grim repulsion of death, and its anguish, and its shame and mockery. He is now to be assailed by the utmost terrors of the flesh and of the spirit. And like the temptation in the wilderness, the assault is three times renewed.

As the dark "hour" approached, Jesus confessed the two conflicting instincts of our human nature in its extremity — the desire of sympathy, and the desire of solitude. Leaving eight of the disciples at some distance, He led still nearer to the appointed place His elect of His election, on whom He had so often bestowed special privilege, and whose faith would be less shaken by the sight of His human weakness, because they had beheld His Divine glory on the holy mount. To these He opened His heart. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; abide ye here and watch." And He went from them a little. Their neighborhood was a support in His dreadful conflict, and He could at times return to them for sympathy; but they might not enter with Him into the cloud, darker and deadlier than that which they feared on Hermon. He would fain not be desolate, and yet He must be alone.

But when He returned, they were asleep. As Jesus spoke of watching for one hour, some time had doubtless elapsed. And sorrow is exhausting. If the spirit do not seek for support from God, it will be dragged down by the flesh into heavy sleep, and the brief and dangerous respite of oblivion.

It was the failure of Peter which most keenly affected Jesus, not only because his professions had been so loud, but because much depended on his force of character. Thus, when Satan had desired to have them, that he might sift them all like wheat, the prayers of Jesus were especially for Simon, and it was he when he was converted who should strengthen the rest.

Surely then he at least might have watched one hour. And what of John, His nearest human friend, whose head had reposed upon His bosom? However keen the pang, the lips of the Perfect Friend were silent; only He warned them all alike to watch and pray, because they were themselves in danger of temptation.

That is a lesson for all time. No affection and no zeal are a substitute for the presence of God realized, and the

protection of God invoked. Loyalty and love are not enough without watchfulness and prayer, for even when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak, and needs to be upheld.

Thus, in His severest trial and heaviest oppression, there is neither querulousness nor invective, but a most ample recognition of their good will, a most generous allowance for their weakness, a most sedulous desire, not that He would be comforted, but that they should escape temptation.

With His yearning heart unsoothed, with another anxiety added to His heavy burden, Jesus returned to His vigil. Three times He felt the wound of unrequited affection, for their eyes were very heavy, and they wist not what to answer Him when He spoke.

Nor should we omit to contrast their bewildered stupefaction, with the keen vigilance and self-possession of their more heavily burdened Lord.

If we reflect that Jesus must needs experience all the sorrows that human weakness and human wickedness could inflict, we may conceive of these varied wrongs as circles with a common center, on which the cross was planted. And our Lord has now entered the first of these; He has looked for pity but there was no man; His own, although it was grief which pressed them down, slept in the hour of His anguish, and when He bade them watch. [EB]

Mat 26:38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

Mat 26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

As we look at Matthew's account we are struck by these words... "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." While it

speaks of the cup (trial) of Jesus' suffering, it also teaches a much greater lesson:

It was not possible to save the world or to be saved without Jesus and His death, burial and resurrection. We remember these words...

Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

Mar 14:43 And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

Mar 14:44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead *him* away safely.

Mar 14:45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.

Mar 14:46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

Mar 14:47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Mar 14:48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take me?

Mar 14:49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

Mar 14:50 And they all forsook him, and fled.

I. Here is a band of rude miscreants employed to *take* our Lord Jesus and make him a prisoner; *a great multitude with swords and staves*. There is no wickedness so black, no villany so horrid, but there may be found among the children of men fit tools to be made use of, that will not

scruple to be employed; so miserably depraved and vitiated is mankind. At the head of this rabble is Judas, *one of the twelve*, one of those that had been many years intimately conversant with our Lord Jesus, had prophesied in his name, and in his name cast out devils, and yet *betrayed* him. It is no new thing for a very fair and plausible profession to end in a shameful and fatal apostasy.

How art thou fallen, O Lucifer!

II. Men of no less figure than the *chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders*, sent them, and set them on work, who pretended to expect the Messiah, and to be ready to welcome him; and yet, when he *is come*, and has given undeniable proofs that it is he that *should come*, because he doth not make court to them, nor countenance and support their pomp and grandeur, because he appears not as a temporal prince, but sets up a spiritual kingdom, and preaches repentance, reformation, and a holy life, and directs men's thoughts, and affections, and aims, to another world, they set themselves against him, and, without giving the credentials he produces an impartial examination, resolve to run him down.

III. Judas betrayed him *with a kiss*; abusing the freedom Christ used to allow his disciples of kissing his cheek at their return when they had been any time absent. He called him, *Master, Master, and kissed him*; he said, *Rabbi, Rabbi*, as if he had been now more respectful to him than ever. It is enough to put one for ever out of conceit with being called of men *Rabbi, Rabbi* (Mat 23:7), since it was with this compliment that Christ was betrayed. He bid them take him, and *lead him away safely*. Some think that he spoke this *ironically*, knowing that they could not secure him unless he pleased, that this Samson could break their bonds asunder as threads of tow, and make his escape, and then he should get the money, and Christ the honour, and no harm done; and I should think so too, but that Satan was

entered into him, so that the worst and most malicious intention of this action is not too black to be supposed. Nay, he had often heard his Master say, that, being *betrayed*, he should be *crucified*, and had no reason to think otherwise.

IV. They arrested him, and made him their prisoner (Mar 14:46); *They laid their hands on him*, rude and violent hands, and *took him* into custody; triumphing, it is likely, that they had done that which has been often before attempted in vain.

V. Peter laid about him in defence of his Master, and wounded one of the assailants, being for the present mindful of his promise, to venture his life with his Master. He was *one of them that stood by*, of them that *were with him* (so the word signifies), of *those three* disciples that were *with him* in the garden; he *drew a sword*, and aimed, it is likely, to cut off the head, but missed his blow, and only *cut off the ear*, of a servant of the high priest, Mar 14:47. It is easier to *fight* for Christ, than to *die* for him; but Christ's good soldiers overcome, not by taking other people's lives, but by laying down their own, Rev 12:11.

VI. Christ argues with them that had seized him, and shows them the absurdity of their proceedings against him.

1. That they came out *against him*, as against a *thief*, whereas he was *innocent* of any crime; he *taught daily in the temple*, and if he had any wicked design, there it would some time or other have been discovered; nay, these officers of the *chief priests*, being *retainers* to the temple, may be supposed to have heard his sermons there (I was *with you* in the temple); and had he not taught them excellent doctrine, even his enemies themselves being judges? Were not *all the words of his mouth in righteousness*? Was there any thing *froward or perverse in them*? Pro 8:8. By his fruits he was known to be a good tree; why then did they come out against him *as a thief*?
2. That they came to take him thus *privately*, whereas he was neither *ashamed* nor *afraid* to appear *publicly* in the

temple. He was none of those *evil-doers* that *hate the light*, neither come *to the light*, Joh 3:20. If their masters had any thing to say to him, they might meet him any day in the temple, where he was ready to answer all challenges, all charges; and there they might do as they pleased with him, for the priests had the custody of the temple, and the command of the guards about it: but to come upon him thus at midnight, and in the place of his retirement, was base and cowardly. This was to do as David's enemy, that *sat in the lurking places of the villages, to murder the innocent*,

Psa 10:8. But this was not all. 3. They came *with swords and staves*, as if he had been in arms against the government, and must have the *posse comitatus* raised to reduce him. There was no occasion for those weapons; but they made this ado, (1.) To secure themselves from the rage of some; they came armed, because they *feared the people*; but thus *were they in great fear, where no fear was*, Psa 53:5. (2.) To expose him to the rage of others. By coming *with swords and staves to take him*, they represented him to the people (who are apt to take impressions this way) as a dangerous turbulent man, and so endeavored to incense them against him, and make them cry out, *Crucify him, crucify him*, having no other way to gain their point.

VII. He reconciled himself to all this injurious, ignominious treatment, by referring himself to the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah. I am hardly used, *but I submit, for the scriptures must be fulfilled*, Mar 14:49.
1.

See here what a regard Christ had to the *scriptures*; he would bear any thing rather than that the least jot or tittle of the word of God should fall to the ground; and as he had an eye to them in his sufferings, so he has in his glory; for what is Christ doing in the government of the world, but *fulfilling the scriptures*? 2. See what use we are to make of the Old Testament; we must search for Christ, the true *treasure hid*

in that field: as the history of the New Testament expounds the prophecies of Old, so the prophecies of the Old Testament illustrate the history of the New.

VIII. All Christ's disciples, hereupon, deserted him (Mar 14:50); *They all forsook him, and fled*. They were very confident that they should adhere to him; but even good men know not what they will do, till they are tried. If it was such a comfort to him as he had lately intimated, that they had hitherto *continued with him* in his lesser trials (Luk 22:28), we may well imagine what a grief it was to him, that they deserted him now in the greatest, when they might have done him some service - when he was abused, to protect him, and when accused, to witness for him. Let not those that suffer for Christ, think it strange, if they be thus deserted, and if all the herd shun the wounded deer; they are not better than their Master, nor can expect to be better used either by their enemies or by their friends. When St. Paul was in peril, none *stood by him*, but *all men forsook him*, 2Ti 4:16. [MH]

A Young Man Flees

Mar 14:51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his naked body*; and the young men laid hold on him:

Mar 14:52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

It strikes me that this "certain young man" was none other than Mark himself. He was probably asleep; and, aroused by a great clamour, he asked what it was about. The information was speedily given—"The guards have come to arrest Jesus of Nazareth." Moved by sudden impulse, not thinking of what he was doing, he rises from his bed, rushes down, pursues the troopers, dashes into the midst of their ranks, as though he alone would attempt the rescue, when all the disciples had fled. The moment they lay hold upon him his heroic spasm is over; his enthusiasm evaporates; he

runs away, leaves the cloth that was loosely wrapped about his body behind, and makes his escape. There have been many who acted like Mark since then. First, however, you will say, "Why suppose it to be Mark?" I grant you it is merely a supposition, but yet it is supported by the strongest chain of probabilities. It was common among the evangelists to relate transactions in which they themselves took part without mentioning their own names. Whoever it was, the only person likely to know it was the man himself. I cannot think that anyone else would have been likely to tell it to Mark. Again, we know that such a transaction as this was quite in keeping with Mark's common character: the evangel of Mark is the most impulsive of all the evangels. He is a man who does everything straightway; full of impulse, dash, fire, flash; the thing must be done, and done forthwith. Once more: the known life of John Mark tends to make it very probable that he would do such a thing as is referred to in the text. As soon as ever Paul and Barnabas set out on their missionary enterprise they were attended by Mark. As long as they were sailing across the blue waters, and as long as they were in the island of Cyprus, Mark stuck to them. Nay, while they travelled along the coast of Asia Minor, we find they had John Mark to be their minister; but the moment they went up into the inland countries, among the robbers and the mountain streams-as soon as ever the road began to be a little too rough, John Mark left them. His missionary zeal had oozed out. For these reasons, the supposition that it was John Mark appears to me not to be utterly baseless. [BI]

Jesus Before the Council

Mar 14:53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

Mar 14:54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

Mar 14:55 And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.

Mar 14:56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

Mar 14:57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

Mar 14:58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

Mar 14:59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

Mar 14:60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

Mar 14:61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

Mar 14:62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Mar 14:63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

Mar 14:64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

Mar 14:65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

We have now to see the Judge of quick and dead taken from prison and judgment, the Preacher of liberty to the captives bound, and the Prince of Life killed. It is the most solemn page in earthly story; and as we read St. Mark's account, it will concern us less to reconcile his statements

with those of the other three, than to see what is taught us by his especial manner of regarding it. For St. Mark is not writing a history but a Gospel, and his readers are Gentiles, for whom the details of Hebrew intrigue matter nothing, and the trial before a Galilean tetrarch would be only half intelligible.

John, who had been an eye-witness, knew that the private inquiry before Annas was vital, for there the decision was taken which subsequent and more formal assemblies did but ratify. He therefore, writing last, threw this ray of explanatory light over all that the others had related. Luke recorded in the Acts (Act 4:27) that the apostles recognized, in the consent of Romans and Jews, and of Herod and Pilate, what the Psalmist had long foretold, the rage of the heathen and the vain imagination of the peoples, and the conjunction of kings and rulers. His Gospel therefore lays stress upon the part played by all of these. And St. Matthew's readers could appreciate every fulfillment of prophecy, and every touch of local color.

Mark offers to us the essential points: rejection and cruelty by His countrymen, rejection and cruelty over again by Rome, and the dignity, the elevation, the lofty silence and the dauntless testimony of his Lord. As we read, we are conscious of the weakness of His crafty foes, who are helpless and baffled, and have no resort except to abandon their charges and appeal to His own truthfulness to destroy Him.

He shows us first the informal assembly before Caiaphas, whither Annas sent Him with that sufficient sign of his own judgment, the binding of His hands, and the first buffet, inflicted by an officer, upon His holy face. It was not yet daylight, and a formal assembly of the Sanhedrin was impossible.

But what passed now was so complete a rehearsal of the tragedy, that the regular meeting could be disposed of in a single verse.

There was confusion and distress among the conspirators. It was not their intention to have arrested Jesus on the feast day, at the risk of an uproar among the people. But He had driven them to do so by the expulsion of their spy, who, if they delayed longer, would be unable to guide their officers. And so they found themselves without evidence, and had to play the part of prosecutors when they ought to be impartial judges. There is something frightful in the spectacle of these chiefs of the religion of Jehovah suborning perjury as the way to murder; and it reminds us of the solemn truth, that no wickedness is so perfect and heartless as that upon which sacred influences have long been vainly operating, no corruption so hateful as that of a dead religion. Presently they would cause the name of God to be blasphemed among the heathen, by bribing the Roman guards to lie about the corpse.

And the heart of Jesus was tried by the disgraceful spectacle of many false witnesses, found in turn and paraded against Him, but unable to agree upon any consistent charge, while yet the shameless proceedings were not discontinued. At the last stood up witnesses to pervert what He had spoken at the first cleansing of the temple, which the second cleansing had so lately recalled to mind. They represented Him as saying, "I am able to destroy this temple made with hands." or perhaps, "I will destroy" it, for their testimony varied on this grave point "and in three days I will build another made without hands." It was for blaspheming the Holy Place that Stephen died, and the charge was a grave one; but His words were impudently manipulated to justify it. There had been no proposal to substitute a different temple, and no mention of the temple made with hands. Nor had Jesus ever proposed to destroy anything. He had spoken of their destroying the Temple of His Body, and in the use they made of the prediction they fulfilled it.

As we read of these repeated failures before a tribunal so unjust, we are led to suppose that opposition must have

sprung up to disconcert them; we remember the councilor of honorable estate, who had not consented to their counsel and deed, and we think, What if, even in that hour of evil, one voice was uplifted for righteousness? What if Joseph confessed Him in the conclave, like the penitent thief upon the cross?

And now the high priest, enraged and alarmed by imminent failure, rises in the midst, and in the face of all law cross-questions the prisoner, Answerest Thou nothing? What is it which these witness against Thee? But Jesus will not become their accomplice; He maintains the silence which contrasts so nobly with their excitement, which at once sees through their schemes and leaves them to fall asunder. And the urgency of the occasion, since hesitation now will give the city time to rise, drives them to a desperate expedient. Without discussion of His claims, without considering that some day there must be some Messiah, (else what is their faith and who are they?) they will treat it as blasphemous and a capital offense simply to claim that title. Caiaphas adjures Him by their common God to answer, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? So then they were not utterly ignorant of the higher nature of the Son of David: they remembered the words, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. But the only use they ever made of their knowledge was to heighten to the uttermost the Messianic dignity which they would make it death to claim. And the prisoner knew well the consequences of replying. But He had come into the world to bear witness to the truth, and this was the central truth of all. "And Jesus said, I am." Now Renan tells us that He was the greatest religious genius who ever lived, or probably ever shall live. Mill tells us that religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this Man as their ideal representative and guide of humanity. And Strauss thinks that we know enough of Him to assert that His consciousness was unclouded by the memory of any sin. Well then, if anything in the life of Jesus

is beyond controversy, it is this, that the sinless Man, our ideal representative and guide, the greatest religious genius of the race, died for asserting upon oath that He was the Son of God. A good deal has been said lately, both wise and foolish, about Comparative Religion: is there anything to compare with this? Lunatics, with this example before their eyes, have conceived wild and dreadful infatuations. But these are the words of Him whose character had dominated nineteen centuries, and changed the history of the world. And they stand alone in the records of mankind.

As Jesus spoke the fatal words, as malice and hatred lighted the faces of His wicked judges with a base and ignoble joy, what was His own thought? We know it by the warning that He added. They supposed themselves judges and irresponsible, but there would yet be another tribunal, with justice of a far different kind, and there they should occupy another place. For all that was passing before His eyes, so false, hypocritical and murderous, there was no lasting victory, no impunity, no escape: "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven." Therefore His apostle Peter tells us that in this hour, when He was reviled and reviled not again, "He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1Pe 2:23).

He had now quoted that great vision in which the prophet Daniel saw Him brought near unto the Ancient of Days, and invested with an everlasting dominion (Dan 7:13-14). But St. Matthew adds one memorable word. He did not warn them, and He was not Himself sustained, only by the mention of a far-off judgment: He said they should behold Him thus "henceforth." And that very day they saw the veil of their temple rent, felt the world convulsed, and remembered in their terror that He had foretold His own death and His resurrection, against which they had still to guard. And in the open sepulcher, and the supernatural

vision told them by its keepers, in great and notable miracles wrought by the name of Jesus, in the desertion of a great multitude even of priests, and their own fear to be found fighting against God, in all this the rise of that new power was thenceforth plainly visible, which was presently to bury them and their children under the ruins of their temple and their palaces. But for the moment the high-priest was only relieved; and he proceeded, rending his clothes, to announce his judgment, before consulting the court, who had no further need of witnesses, and were quite content to become formally the accusers before themselves.

The sentence of this irregular and informal court was now pronounced, to fit them for bearing part, at sunrise, in what should be an unbiased trial; and while they awaited the dawn Jesus was abandoned to the brutality of their servants, one of whom He had healed that very night. They spat on the Lord of Glory. They covered His face, an act which was the symbol of a death sentence (Est 7:8), and then they buffeted Him, and invited Him to prophesy who smote Him. And the officers "received Him" with blows. [EB]

Peter Denies Jesus

Mar 14:66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

Mar 14:67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

Mar 14:68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

Mar 14:69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

Mar 14:70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilaeen, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

Mar 14:71 But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

Mar 14:72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

The fall of Peter has called forth the easy scorn of multitudes who never ran any risk for Christ. But if he had been a coward, and his denial a dastardly weakness, it would not be a warning for the whole Church, but only for feeble natures. Whereas the lesson which it proclaims is this deep and solemn one, that no natural endowments can bear the strain of the spiritual life. Peter had dared to smite when only two swords were forthcoming against the band of Roman soldiers and the multitude from the chief priests. After the panic in which all forsook Jesus, and so fulfilled the prediction "ye shall leave Me alone," none ventured so far as Peter. John indeed accompanied him; but John ran little risk, he had influence and was therefore left unassailed, whereas Peter was friendless and a mark for all men, and had made himself conspicuous in the garden. Of those who declaim about his want of courage few indeed would have dared so much. And whoever misunderstands him, Jesus did not. He said to him, "Satan hath desired to have you (all) that he may sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for thee (especially) that thy strength fail not." Around him the fiercest of the struggle was to rage, as around some point of vantage on a battlefield; and it was he, when once he had turned again, who should stablish his brethren (Luk 22:31-32).

Peter was a loving, brave and loyal man. But the circumstances were not such as human bravery could deal with. Resistance, which would have kindled his spirit, had been forbidden to him, and was now impossible. The public was shut out, and he was practically alone among his

enemies. He had come "to see the end," and it was a miserable sight that he beheld.

Jesus was passive, silent, insulted: His foes fierce, unscrupulous and confident. And Peter was more and more conscious of being alone, in peril, and utterly without resource. Moreover sleeplessness and misery lead to physical languor and cold, and as the officers had kindled a fire, he was drawn thither, like a moth, by the double wish to avoid isolation and to warm himself. In thus seeking to pass for one of the crowd, he showed himself ashamed of Jesus, and incurred the menaced penalty, "of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh." And the method of self-concealment which he adopted only showed his face, strongly illuminated, as Mark tells us, by the flame.

If now we ask for the secret of his failing resolution, we can trace the disease far back. It was self-confidence. He reckoned himself the one to walk upon the waters. He could not be silent on the holy mount, when Jesus held high communion with the inhabitants of heaven. He rebuked the Lord for dark forebodings. When Jesus would wash his feet, although expressly told that he should understand the act hereafter, he rejoined, Thou shalt never wash my feet, and was only sobered by the peremptory announcement that further rebellion would involve rejection. He was sure that if all the rest were to deny Jesus, he never should deny Him. In the garden he slept, because he failed to pray and watch. And then he did not wait to be directed, but strove to fight the battle of Jesus with the weapons of flesh. Therefore he forsook Him and fled. And the consequences of that hasty blow were heavy upon him now. It marked him for the attention of the servants: it drove him to merge himself in the crowd. But his bearing was too suspicious to enable him to escape unquestioned.

The first assault came very naturally, from the maid who kept the door, and had therefore seen him with John.

He denied indeed, but with hesitation, not so much affirming that the charge was false as that he could not understand it. And thereupon he changed his place, either to escape notice or through mental disquietude; but as he went into the porch the cock crew. The girl however was not to be shaken off: she pointed him out to others, and since he had forsaken the only solid ground, he now denied the charge angrily and roundly. An hour passed, such an hour of shame, perplexity and guilt, as he had never known, and then there came a still more dangerous attack. They had detected his Galilean accent, while he strove to pass for one of them.

And a kinsman of Malchus used words as threatening as were possible without enabling a miracle to be proved, since the wound had vanished: "Did I myself not see thee in the garden with Him?" Whereupon, to prove that his speech had nothing to do with Jesus, he began to curse and swear, saying, I know not the man. And the cock crew a second time, and Peter remembered the warning of his Lord, which then sounded so harsh, but now proved to be the means of his salvation. And the eyes of his Master, full of sorrow and resolution, fell on him. And he knew that he had added a bitter pang to the sufferings of the Blessed One. And the crowd and his own danger were forgotten, and he went out and wept.

It was for Judas to strive desperately to put himself right with man: the sorrow of Peter was for himself and God to know.

What lessons are we taught by this most natural and humbling story? That he who thinketh he standeth must take heed lest he fall. That we are in most danger when self-confident, and only strong when we are weak. That the beginning of sin is like the letting out of water. That Jesus does not give us up when we cast ourselves away, but as long as a pulse of love survives, or a spark of loyalty, He will

appeal to that by many a subtle suggestion of memory and of providence to recall His wanderer to Himself.

And surely we learn by the fall of this great and good apostle to restore the fallen in the spirit of meekness, considering ourselves lest we also be tempted, remembering also that to Peter, Jesus sent the first tidings of His resurrection, and that the message found him in company with John, and therefore in the house with Mary. What might have been the issue of his anguish if these holy ones had cast him off?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN**JESUS DELIVERED TO PILATE**

Mar 15:1 And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried *him* away, and delivered *him* to Pilate.

With morning came the formal assembly, which St. Mark dismisses in a single verse. It was indeed a disgraceful mockery. Before the trial began its members had prejudged the case, passed sentence by anticipation, and abandoned Jesus, as one condemned, to the brutality of their servants. And now the spectacle of a prisoner outraged and maltreated moves no indignation in their hearts. [EB]

Mar 15:2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*.

Jesus response to the question seems strange to some, however it merely means what you are saying is true or as you say.

Mar 15:3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

Mar 15:4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

Mar 15:5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

While Mark does not go into as great of detail as do other writers of the gospels, he covers the context of the hearing before Pilate in very brief and to the point detail...

1. There were many accusations. None proved.
2. Pilate offered Him a chance to counter the accusations.
3. Jesus chose not to do so.

Isa. 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Isa 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.

Isa 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isa 53:5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

1Pe 2:20 For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

1Pe 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

1Pe 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

1Pe 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

1Pe 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

1Pe 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

Mar 15:6 Now at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

Mar 15:7 And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

Mar 15:8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them.

Mar 15:9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

Mar 15:10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

Mar 15:11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

These verses show us that Pilate “knew the only reason Jesus was there before him was because of the Jewish leaders “envy” or “Jealously.” Pilate seems to have purposely offered the worst of prisoners to release, or Jesus. Believing they would not release a violent offender back into society and thus Jesus would be chosen. However, Pilate underestimated the degree of hatred the leaders had for Christ and they moved the people to request they release Barabbas instead of Jesus.

Mar 15:12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto him* whom ye call the King of the Jews?

Mar 15:13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

Mar 15:14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

Pilate offered them a choice of punishment, again, believing they would not desire the death of such an innocent man. The leaders were not willing to settle for anything less than death. They had tried for some time to get Him in a position where He might be killed, now was their time they would not be denied this victory over Him. We notice Pilate's question, “, Why, what evil hath he done?” There was no answer. Just cries for His death.

Mar 15:15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *him*, to be crucified.

This verse speaks for itself, in the sad lack of Pilate to stand with the truth. Jesus was an innocent man. Pilate chose to give the majority what they wanted.

Jesus Is Mocked

Mar 15:16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band.

Praetorium = The hall of the “praetor,” or Roman governor, where he sat to administer justice.

Mat 27:27

Into the common hall - The original word here means, rather, the governor's palace or dwelling.

The trial of Jesus had taken place outside of the palace. The Jews would not enter in Joh 18:28, and it is probable that courts were held often in a larger and more public place than would be a room in his dwelling. Jesus, being condemned, was led by the soldiers away from the Jews “within” the palace, and subjected there to their profane mockery and sport.

The whole band - The “band” or cohort was a tenth part of a Roman legion, and consisted of from 400 to 600

men, according to the size of the legion. Compare the notes at Mat 8:29.

Mar 15:17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*,

Mar 15:18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

Mar 15:19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped him.

Mar 15:20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

Mat 27:28

And they stripped him - That is, they either took off all his upper garments or removed all his clothing, probably the former.

A scarlet robe - Mark says they clothed him in “purple.” The “scarlet” color was obtained from a species of fruit; “purple” from shell-fish.

See the notes at Isa 1:18. The ancients gave the name “purple” to any color that had a mixture of “red” in it, and consequently these different colors might be sometimes called by the same name. The “robe” used here was the same kind worn by Roman generals and other distinguished officers of the Roman army, and also by the Roman governors. It was made so as to be placed on the shoulders, and was bound around the body so as to leave the right arm at liberty. As we cannot suppose that Pilate would array him in a new and splendid robe, we must suppose that this was one which had been worn and cast off as useless, and was now used to array the Son of God as an object of ridicule and scorn.

Mat 27:29

Had platted - The word “platted” here means “woven together.” They made a “wreath” of a thorn-bush.

A crown - Or perhaps, rather, a wreath.

A crown was worn by kings, commonly made of gold and precious stones. To ridicule the pretensions of Jesus that he was a king, they probably plucked up a thornbush growing near, made it into something resembling in shape a royal crown, so as to correspond with the old purple robe, and to complete the mockery.

Of thorns - What was the precise species of shrub denoted here is not certainly known. It was, however, doubtless, one of that species that has sharp points of very hard wood. They could therefore be easily pressed into the slain and cause considerable pain. Probably they seized upon the first thing in their way that could be made into a crown, and this happened to be a “thorn,” thus increasing the sufferings of the Redeemer. Palestine abounds with thorny shrubs and plants. “The traveler finds them in his path, go where he may. Many of them are small, but some grow as high as a man’s head. The Rabbinical writers say that there are no less than 22 words in the Hebrew Bible denoting thorny and prickly plants.” Professor’s Hackett’s *Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 135. Compare Pro 24:30-31; Pro 15:19; Jer 4:3.[AB]

While there is no clear understanding of what thorny plant they used, I read once of some who believed it was the Rose Bush. It seems the Romans prized and enjoyed roses planted in their flower gardens. It would then seem to be the better choice, rather than to go seeking some thorn bush outside the palace area, to make a crown, roses would have been a convenient source. The stems could easily be shaped into a crown.

And a reed in his right hand - A reed is a straight, slender herb, growing in marshy places, and abundant on the banks of the Jordan. It was often used for the purpose of

making staves for walking, and it is not improbable that this was such a staff in the possession of some person present. The word is several times thus used. See 2Ki 18:21; Isa 36:6; Eze 29:6. Kings commonly carried a “sceptre,” made of ivory or gold, as a sign of their office or rank, Est 4:11; Est 8:4. This “reed” or “staff” they put in his hand, in imitation of a “sceptre,” to deride, also, his pretensions of being a king.

And they bowed the knee - This was done for mockery. It was an act of pretended homage. It was to ridicule his saying that he was a king. The common mode of showing respect or homage for kings was by kneeling or prostration. It shows amazing forbearance on the part of Jesus that he thus consented to be ridiculed and set at naught. No mere human being would have borne it. None but he who loved us unto death, and who saw the grand results that would come from this scene of sufferings, could have endured such mockery.

Hail, King of the Jews! - The term “hail” was a common mode of salutation to a king, or even to a friend. It implies, commonly, the highest respect for office as well as the person, and is an invocation of blessings. Here it was used to carry on what they thought to be the farce of his being a king; to ridicule in every possible way the pretensions of a poor, unattended, unarmed man of Nazareth, as if he was a weak impostor or was deranged.

Mat 27:30

And they spit upon him - This was a token of the deepest contempt and insult.

And took the reed - The cane, probably so large as to inflict a heavy blow.

And smote him on the head - Not merely to injure him by the force of the blow, but to press the “thorns” into his head, and thus to add cruelty to insult. [AB]

The Crucifixion

Mar 15:21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

Mar 15:22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

Mar 15:23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.

Mar 15:24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

Mar 15:25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

Mar 15:26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Mar 15:27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

Mar 15:28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

Mar 15:29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days,

Mar 15:30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

Mar 15:31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

Mar 15:32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

At last the preparations were complete and the interval of mental agony was over. They led Him away to crucify Him. And upon the road an event of mournful interest took place. It was the custom to lay the two arms of the cross upon the doomed man, fastening them together at such an

angle as to pass behind his neck, while his hands were bound to the ends in front. And thus it was that Jesus went forth bearing His cross. Did He think of this when He bade us take His yoke upon us? Did He wait for events to explain the words, by making it visibly one and the same to take His yoke and to take up our cross and follow Him?

On the road, however, they forced a reluctant stranger to go with them that he might bear the cross. The traditional reason is that our Redeemer's strength gave way, and it became physically impossible for Him to proceed; but this is challenged upon the ground that to fail would have been unworthy of our Lord, and would mar the perfection of His example. How so, when the failure was a real one? Is there no fitness in the belief that He who was tempted in all points like as we are, endured this hardness also, of struggling with the impossible demands of human cruelty, the spirit indeed willing but the flesh weak? It is not easy to believe that any other reason than manifest inability, would have induced His persecutors to spare Him one drop of bitterness, one throb of pain. The noblest and most delicately balanced frame, like all other exquisite machines, is not capable of the rudest strain; and we know that Jesus had once sat wearied by the well, while the hardy fishers went into the town, and returned with bread. And this night our gentle Master had endured what no common victim knew. Long before the scourging, or even the buffeting began, His spiritual exhaustion had needed that an angel from heaven should strengthen Him. And the utmost possibility of exertion was now reached: the spot where they met Simon of Cyrene marks this melancholy limit; and suffering henceforth must be purely passive.

They led Him to a place where the rounded summit of a knoll had its grim name from some resemblance to a human skull, and prepared the crosses there.

It was the custom of the daughters of Jerusalem, who lamented Him as He went, to provide a stupefying draught

for the sufferers of this atrocious cruelty. "And they offered Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He received it not," although that dreadful thirst, which was part of the suffering of crucifixion, had already begun, for He only refused when He had tasted it.

In so doing He rebuked all who seek to drown sorrows or benumb the soul in wine, all who degrade and dull their sensibilities by physical excess or indulgence, all who would rather blind their intelligence than pay the sharp cost of its exercise. He did not condemn the use of anodynes, but the abuse of them. It is one thing to suspend the senses during an operation, and quite another thing by one's own choice to pass into eternity without consciousness enough to commit the soul into its Father's hands.

"And they crucify Him." Let the words remain as the Evangelist left them, to tell their own story of human sin, and of Divine love which many waters could not quench, neither could the depths drown it.

Only let us think in silence of all that those words convey.

In the first sharpness of mortal anguish, Jesus saw His executioners sit down at ease, all unconscious of the dread meaning of what was passing by their side, to part His garments among them, and cast lots for the raiment which they had stripped from His sacred form. The Gospels are content thus to abandon those relics about which so many legends have been woven. But indeed all through these four wonderful narratives the self-restraint is perfect. When the Epistles touch upon the subject of the crucifixion they kindle into flame. When Peter soon afterwards referred to it, his indignation is beyond question, and Stephen called the rulers betrayers and murderers

(Act 2:23-24; Act 3:13-14; Act 7:51-53) but not one single syllable of complaint or comment mingles with the clear flow of narrative in the four Gospels.

The truth is that the subject was too great, too fresh and vivid in their minds, to be adorned or enlarged upon. What

comment of Mark, what mortal comment, could add to the weight of the words "they crucify Him"? Men use no figures of speech when telling how their own beloved one died. But it was differently that the next age wrote about the crucifixion; and perhaps the lofty self-restraint of the Evangelists has never been attained again.

Mark tells us that He was crucified at the third hour, whereas we read in John that it was "about the sixth hour" when Pilate ascended the seat of judgment (Joh 19:14). It seems likely that John used the Roman reckoning, and his computation does not pretend to be exact; while we must remember that mental agitation conspired with the darkening of the sky, to render such an estimate as he offers even more than usually vague.

The small and bitter heart of Pilate keenly resented his defeat and the victory of the priests. Perhaps it was when his soldiers offered the scornful homage of Rome to Israel and her monarch, that he saw the way to a petty revenge. And all Jerusalem was scandalized by reading the inscription over a crucified malefactor's head, The King of the Jews.

It needs some reflection to perceive how sharp the taunt was. A few years ago they had a king, but the scepter had departed from Judah; Rome had abolished him. It was their hope that soon a native king would forever sweep away the foreigner from their fields. But here the Roman exhibited the fate of such a claim, and professed to inflict its horrors not upon one whom they disavowed, but upon their king indeed. We know how angrily and vainly they protested; and again we seem to recognize the solemn irony of Providence. For this was their true King, and they, who resented the superscription, had fixed their Anointed there.

All the more they would disconnect themselves from Him, and wreak their passion upon the helpless One whom they hated. The populace mocked Him openly: the chief priests, too cultivated to insult avowedly a dying man,

mocked Him “among themselves,” speaking bitter words for Him to hear.

The multitude repeated the false charge which had probably done much to inspire their sudden preference for Barabbas, “Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it again in three days, save Thyself and come down from the cross.”

They little suspected that they were recalling words of consolation to His memory, reminding Him that all this suffering was foreseen, and how it was all to end. The chief priests spoke also a truth full of consolation, “He saved others, Himself He cannot save,” although it was no physical bar which forbade Him to accept their challenge. And when they flung at Him His favorite demand for faith, saying “Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe” surely they reminded Him of the great multitude who should not see, and yet should believe, when He came back through the gates of death.

Thus the words they spoke could not afflict Him. But what horror to the pure soul to behold these yawning abysses of malignity, these gulfs of pitiless hate. The affronts hurled at suffering and defeat by prosperous and exultant malice are especially Satanic. Many diseases inflict more physical pain than torturers ever invented, but they do not excite the same horror, because gentle ministries are there to charm away the despair which human hate and execration conjure up. To add to the insult of His disgraceful death, the Romans had crucified two robbers, doubtless from the band of Barabbas, one upon each side of Jesus. We know how this outrage led to the salvation of one of them, and refreshed the heavy laden soul of Jesus, oppressed by so much guilt and vileness, with the visible firstfruit of His passion, giving Him to see of the travail of His soul, by which He shall yet be satisfied.

But in their first agony and despair, when all voices were unanimous against the Blessed One, and they too must needs

find some outlet for their frenzy, they both reproached Him. Thus the circle of human wrong was rounded.

The traitor, the deserters, the forsworn apostle, the perjured witnesses, the hypocritical pontiff professing horror at blasphemy while himself abjuring his national hope, the accomplices in a sham trial, the murderer of the Baptist and his men of war, the abject ruler who declared Him innocent yet gave Him up to die, the servile throng who waited on the priests, the soldiers of Herod and of Pilate, the pitiless crowd which clamored for His blood, and they who mocked Him in His agony, not one of them whom Jesus did not compassionate, whose cruelty had not power to wring His heart. Disciple and foeman, Roman and Jew, priest and soldier and judge, all had lifted up their voice against Him. And when the comrades of His passion joined the cry, the last ingredient of human cruelty was infused into the cup which James and John had once proposed to drink with Him.[EB]

The Death of Jesus

Mar 15:33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Mar 15:34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Mar 15:35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

Mar 15:36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

Mar 15:37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

Mar 15:38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

Mar 15:39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

Mar 15:40 There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

Mar 15:41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

Three hours of raging human passion, endured with Godlike patience, were succeeded by three hours of darkness, hushing mortal hatred into silence, and perhaps contributing to the penitence of the reviler at His side. Here we find another miracle: It was a supernatural gloom, which an eclipse of the sun was impossible during the full moon of Passover. Or was it the shadow of a still more dreadful eclipse, for now the eternal Father veiled His countenance from the Son in whom He was well pleased?

In some true sense God forsook Him. And we have to seek for a meaning of this awful statement — inadequate no doubt, for all our thoughts must come short of such a reality, but free from pervarication and evasion.

It is wholly unsatisfactory to regard the verse as merely the heading of a Psalm, (Psa 22:1-31) cheerful for the most part, which Jesus inaudibly recited. Why was only this verse uttered aloud? How false an impression must have been produced upon the multitude, upon St. John, upon the penitent thief, if Jesus were suffering less than the extreme of spiritual anguish. Nay, we feel that never before can the verse have attained its fullest meaning, a meaning which no experience of David could more than dimly shadow forth, since we ask in our sorrows, Why have we forsaken God? but Jesus said, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?

And this unconsciousness of any reason for desertion disproves the old notion that He felt Himself a sinner, and

“suffered infinite remorse, as being the chief sinner in the universe, all the sins of mankind being His.” One who felt thus could neither have addressed God as “My God,” nor asked why He was forsaken.

Still less does it allow us to believe that the Father perfectly identified Jesus with sin, so as to be “wroth” with Him, and even “to hate Him to the uttermost.” Such notions, the offspring of theories carried to a wild and irreverent extreme, when carefully examined impute to the Deity confusion of thought, a mistaking of the Holy One for a sinner, or rather for the aggregate of sinners. But it is very different when we pass from the Divine consciousness to the hearing of God toward Christ our representative, to the outshining or eclipse of His favor. That this was overcast is manifest from the fact that Jesus everywhere else addresses Him as My Father, here only as My God. Even in the garden it was Abba Father, and the change indicates not indeed estrangement of heart, but certainly remoteness. Thus we have the sense of desertion, combined with the assurance which once breathed in the words, O God, Thou art my God.

Thus also it came to pass that He who never forfeited the most intimate communion and sunny smile of heaven, should yet give us an example at the last of that utmost struggle and sternest effort of the soul, which trusts without experience, without emotion, in the dark, because God is God, not because I am happy.

But they who would empty the death of Jesus of its sacrificial import, and leave only the attraction and inspiration of a sublime life and death, must answer the hard questions, How came God to forsake the Perfect One? Or, how came He to charge God with such desertion? His follower, twice using this very word, could boast that he was cast down yet not forsaken, and that at his first trial all men forsook him, yet the Lord stood by him (2Co 4:9; 2Ti 4:16-17). How came the disciple to be above his Master?

The only explanation is in His own word, that His life is a ransom in exchange for many (Mar 10:45). The chastisement of our peace, not the remorse of our guiltiness, was upon Him. No wonder that St. Mark, who turns aside from his narrative for no comment, no exposition, was yet careful to preserve this alone among the dying words of Christ.

And the Father heard His Son. At that cry the mysterious darkness passed away, and the soul of Jesus was relieved from its burden, so that He became conscious of physical suffering; and the mockery of the multitude was converted into awe. Thereupon the anguish that redeemed the world was over; a loud voice told that exhaustion was not complete; and Jesus "gave up the ghost."

Through the veil, that is to say His flesh, we have boldness to enter into the holy place; and now that He had opened the way, the veil of the temple was rent asunder by no mortal hand, but downward from the top. The way into the holiest was visibly thrown open, when sin was expiated, which had forfeited our right of access.

And the centurion, seeing that His death itself was abnormal and miraculous, and accompanied with miraculous signs, said, Truly this was a righteous man. But such a confession could not rest there: if He was this, He was all He claimed to be; and the mockery of His enemies had betrayed the secret of their hate; He was the Son of God.

"When the centurion saw" ... "There were also many women beholding." Who can overlook the connection? Their gentle hearts were not to be utterly overwhelmed: as the centurion saw and drew his inference, so they beheld, and felt, however dimly, amid sorrows that benumb the mind, that still, even in such wreck and misery, God was not far from Jesus.

When the Lord said, It is finished, there was not only an end of conscious anguish, but also of contempt and insult.

His body was not to see corruption, nor was a bone to be broken, nor should it remain in hostile hands.

Respect for Jewish prejudice prevented the Romans from leaving Jesus' body to molder on the cross, and the approaching Sabbath was not one to be polluted. And knowing this, Joseph of Arimathea boldly went in to Pilate and asked for it. It was only secretly and in fear that he had been a disciple, but the deadly crisis had developed what was hidden, he had opposed the crime of his nation in their council, and in the hour of seeming overthrow he chose the good part. Boldly the timid one "went in," braving the scowls of the priesthood, defiling himself moreover, and forfeiting his share in the sacred feast, in hope to win the further defilement of contact with the dead.

Pilate was careful to verify so rapid a death; but when he was certain of the fact, "he granted the corpse to Joseph," as a worthless thing. His frivolity is expressed alike in the unusual verb: he "freely bestowed," he "gave away" not "the body" as when Joseph spoke of it, but "the corpse," the fallen thing, like a prostrated and uprooted tree that shall revive no more. Wonderful it is to reflect that God had entered into eternal union with what was thus given away to the only man of rank who cared to ask for it. Wonderful to think what opportunities of eternal gain men are content to lose; what priceless treasures are given away, or thrown away as worthless. Wonderful to imagine the feelings of Joseph in heaven today, as he gazes with gratitude and love upon the glorious Body which once, for a little, was consigned to his reverent care.

John tells us that Nicodemus brought a hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes, and they together wrapped Him in these, in the linen which had been provided; and Joseph laid Him in his own new tomb, undesecrated by mortality.

And there Jesus rested. His friends had no such hope as would prevent them from closing the door with a great stone.

His enemies set a watch, and sealed the stone. The broad moon of Passover made the night as clear as the day, and the multitude of strangers, who thronged the city and its suburbs, rendered any attempt at robbery even more hopeless than at another season.

What indeed could the trembling disciples of an executed pretender do with such an object as a dead body? What could they hope from the possession of it? But if they did not steal it, if the moral glories of Christianity are not sprung from deliberate mendacity, why was the body not produced, to abash the wild dreams of their fanaticism? It was fearfully easy to identify. The scourging, the cross, and the spear, left no slight evidence behind, and the broken bones of the malefactors completed the absolute isolation of the sacred body of the Lord.

The providence of God left no precaution unsupplied to satisfy honest and candid inquiry. It remained to be seen, would He leave Christ's soul in Hades, or suffer His Holy One (such is the epithet applied to the body of Jesus) to see corruption?

Meantime, through what is called three days and nights a space which touched, but only touched, the confines of a first and third day, as well as the Saturday which intervened, Jesus shared the humiliation of common men, the divorce of soul and body. He slept as sleep the dead, but His soul was where He promised that the penitent should come, refreshed in Paradise.[EB]

Jesus Is Buried

Mar 15:42 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

Mar 15:43 Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

Mar 15:44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

Mar 15:45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

Mar 15:46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

Mar 15:47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses beheld where he was laid.

Mar 15:42

And when even was now come. The sabbath commenced on the Friday evening at six o'clock. The evening commenced at three o'clock. Our Lord must be buried before six o'clock.

Mar 15:43

Joseph of Arimathaea. Jerome says that this city was called Ramathaim- Zophim (the lofty place), where dwelt Elkanah and Hannah of old, and where Samuel was born. Joseph was most probably a native of Arimathaea; but he was now a citizen and counsellor of Jerusalem. He was an honorable counsellor, *a councillor of honorable estate* (Revised Version). Matthew says he was a rich man. It is evident that he regarded himself as a settled inhabitant of Jerusalem, since he had thus provided himself with a place of sepulture. **He was waiting for** literally, *looking for the kingdom of God*. St. Matthew (Mat 27:57) says that he was a disciple of Jesus. These circumstances explain his desire to bury our Lord.

He boldly went in literally, *he took courage and went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus*. A poor man would not have dared to approach Pilate for such a purpose as this. Chrysostom says, "The courage of Joseph

is greatly to be admired, in that, for the love of Christ, he exposed himself to the danger of death.” The fact that he was “looking for the kingdom of God” explains his conduct. It shows that he believed in Christ, and through his grace hoped for everlasting salvation; and in this hope he thought little of shelving his reverence for Christ, and so” boldly went in unto

Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.” Mar 15:44

And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. It must have Been somewhat early in the afternoon, probably not long after three o’clock, when Joseph went. The day being the Preparation, the Jews were anxious to satisfy the letter of the Law (Deu 21:13), and that, more especially, because the coming sabbath was a “high day.” So they had gone early to Pilate to obtain permission to accelerate the deaths of the sufferers by the terrible additional punishment of breaking their legs. This violence was not inflicted upon our Lord, because he was already dead; and so another Scripture was fulfilled, “A bone of him shall not be broken.” But it was necessary that Pilate should be assured of the fact that death had taken place before he gave up the body; and thus, in the providence of God, another evidence was given of the reality of Christ’s death. Joseph asked for the body. Then Pilate asked the centurion “whether he had been any while dead.” Literally, *if he died some time ago.*

Mar 15:45

And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

Mar 15:46

And he bought a linen cloth. This was a fine linen garment, or shroud, something like that in which the young man fled the night before. **And taking him down.** It appears from these words that Joseph himself, assisted

probably by Nicodemus and others, actually took the body of our Lord down from the cross, and laid him in his own new tomb, which had been hewn out of the rock. The word rendered “tomb” is, as being intended to be a memorial of the departed. **And he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.** The door here means “the opening,” or “entrance.” Thus, while our Lord died with the wicked, he was with the rich in his death (Isa 53:9).

Mar 15:47

And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid; literally, *were beholding where he was laid*. These women were two of the group mentioned at Mar 15:40. They remained, after the body of our Lord had been deposited, in sad and silent contemplation. The women appear to have broken up into two groups. One group went alone to purchase spices and ointments, which it was necessary for them to do before six o'clock, when the sabbath commenced; in readiness for the embalming.

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses and Salome appear to have bought them after six o'clock on the Saturday night.

THE ENTOMBMENT. In preparation for this the body was taken down from the cross, was wound in linen bought for the purpose, being enfolded in fragrant myrrh and aloes. Joseph was the owner of a garden near to Calvary, where in the solid rock was hewn a tomb, destined probably for the reception of his own remains—what we might term a family vault. In this suitable and peaceful sepulcher Joseph, aided (as John tells us) by Nicodemus, laid the sacred form in which the Lord of life and glory had labored and suffered for mankind. Against the entrance of the grave a huge stone was rolled, to secure the resting-place from intrusion. Thus, as in a garden Christ had endured his agony, in a garden he rested in the repose of death. How cherished in the memory

and heart of Christendom were and are these sad and sacred scenes, none can be ignorant. Christ's "precious death and burial" have been celebrated in Christian hymns, commemorated in Christian ordinances, embalmed in Christian liturgies of prayer and intercession. The crucifixion, the descent from the cross, the mourning of the faithful women (the *pieta*), the entombment of the Savior, all these have been favorite and congenial themes with Christian painters. And of all subjects of Christian preaching, none are so pathetic, so melting, so fitted to awaken contrition for sin, so fitted to produce contempt for the world, as the topics suggested by these mournful incidents. It is solemnly affecting to think of this earth as being, during those sacred hours, the sepulcher of the Son of God.

THE WITNESSES OF CHRIST'S BURIAL. It is observable that the holy and faithful women, who had ministered to Jesus in his public career, who had stood in the neighborhood of the cross, and who had seen him die—they who were to be the first witnesses of his resurrection,—these were present at the entombment, as loth to part from the Lord whom they honored and loved, as lingering for the last look upon the form of him to whose words they had so often listened with joy, and at whose hands they had received blessings priceless and immortal.

APPLICATION

1. The moment when sin seems triumphant is the moment when Divine Providence is preparing for its confusion and destruction. To Christ's enemies his death appeared simply the end of his holy ministry, and when his lifeless form was committed to the grave they deemed his influence for ever at an end. Yet, in truth, now was about to commence the reign of him who tasted death for every man, but was about to ascend to the throne of spiritual empire.

2. The burial of our Savior is to us the token of his love and of the completeness of his mediatorial work. That he did not shrink from even the ignominy and the weakness of the grave should be to us an assurance of his perfect humanity, his complete sympathy, and a pledge that the salvation which he did and suffered so much to secure shall be thorough and complete, shall be sure and everlasting.
3. The burial of Christ is to be, in a spiritual sense, shared by all his believing and renewed people. We are one with Christ, in his death and in his resurrection. And, as if to show how thoroughly we participate in our Savior's death unto sin, we are represented as even buried with him. By baptism or consecration unto his death we are said to enter, as it were, his tomb; that, dying unto sin, we may rise again and live unto righteousness, holiness, and God.
4. The interment of our Lord seems to cast most precious and consolatory light upon our own and our friends' mortality. That there is naturally a repulsiveness in the grave and in dissolution is not denied. Yet to know that our gracious Lord deigned to taste death for every man, and to be laid to rest in a cave of the earth, is to be fortified against the unpleasing and distressing associations which are all that unbelievers connect with dissolution. When the lifeless form of a good man is borne to the grave, let us think of such an event in close connection with the burial of him who was and is the Lord of life.
5. Secret disciples should take encouragement from the conduct of Joseph and Nicodemus. Remember this, that whilst you have less excuse than they had for concealing your faith and disguising your attachment to Jesus, you have more reasons and stronger inducements to open confession. The Lord Jesus has not hidden his love for

you; he has expressed it in words, and proved it by sufferings as well as actions. And he expects that you should boldly avow yourselves his, that you should confess him before men. Then he will not be ashamed of you before his Father and the holy angels.[PC]

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE RESURRECTION

All mankind is destined to die. This is a very real, and sad fact of living our lives out here upon the earth. Death is an appointment we must keep (Heb 9:27). Some through the powers of God have been brought back from death into this life, such as Lazarus, the friend of Christ. Yet being brought back to life is not the same as a resurrection. Those who were brought back to life, died once more. Jesus being resurrected, dies no more:

Rom 6:9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

Rom 6:10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

The resurrected body is eternal:

1Jn 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

1Jn 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1Jn 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1Co 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Rom 1:3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

Rom 1:4 And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Mar 16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Simply, *bought spices*. No time specified, merely the fact stated. From Luk 23:56 we gather (unless, indeed, there were two companies of women) that the purchase was made before the Sabbath began. Mark's point is, that the women *bought spices some time or other*—no matter when—in order that when the Sabbath was over they might come and anoint the body of the Lord. They seem to have wished to complete the imperfect embalming which Joseph and Nicodemus had hastily begun. See Joh 19:39-40.

Mar 16:2 And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

They come (so as to be) *at the sepulchre when the sun had risen*. That is, they start from home very early, with the object of reaching their destination soon after daylight.

Mar 16:3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

Mat 27:57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:

Mat 27:58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

Mat 27:59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

Mat 27:60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

Mat 27:61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Mar 16:4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

Mar 16:5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

Mar 16:6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

Mar 16:7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Mar 16:8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man*; for they were afraid.

The assurance that was given them by an angel, that the Lord Jesus was risen from the dead, and had taken leave of his sepulchre, and had left him there to tell those so who came thither to enquire after him.

1. They *entered into the sepulchre*, at least, a little way in, and saw that the body of Jesus was not there where they had left it the other night. He, who by his death undertook to pay our debt, in his resurrection took out our acquittance, for it was a fair and legal discharge, by which it appeared that his satisfaction was accepted for all the purposes for which it was intended, and the matter in dispute was determined by an incontestable evidence that he was the Son of God.
2. They saw a *young man sitting on the right side* of the sepulchre. The angel appeared in the likeness of a *man*, of a *young man*; for angels, though created in the beginning, grow not *old*, but are always the same perfection of beauty and strength; and so shall glorified

saints be, when they are *as the angels*. This angel was *sitting on the right hand* as they went into the sepulchre, *clothed with a long white garment*, a garment down to the feet, such as great men were arrayed with. The sight of him might justly have encouraged them, but they were *affrighted*. Thus many times that which should be matter of comfort to us, through our own mistakes and misapprehensions proves a terror to us.

3. He silences their fears by assuring them that here was cause enough for triumph, but none for trembling (Mar 16:6); *He saith to them, Be not affrighted*. Note, As angels rejoice in the conversation of sinners, so they do also in the consolation of sinners. Be not affrighted, for, (1.) “Ye are faithful lovers of Jesus Christ, and therefore, instead of being *confounded*, out to be *comforted*. *Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified*.” Note, The enquiries of believing souls after Christ, have a particular regard to him as *crucified* (1Co 2:2), that they may know him, and the fellowship of his sufferings. His being *lifted up from the earth*, is that which *draws all men unto him*. Christ’s cross is the ensign to which the Gentiles seek. Observe, He speaks of Jesus as one that *was crucified*; “The thing is *past*, that scene is over, ye must not dwell so much upon the sad circumstances of his crucifixion as to be unapt to believe the joyful news of his resurrection. He was *crucified in weakness*, yet that doth not hinder but that he may be raised in power, and therefore ye that seek him, be not *afraid of missing* of him.” He *was crucified*, but he *is glorified*; and the shame of his sufferings is so far from lessening the glory of his exaltation, that that glory perfectly wipes away all the reproach of his sufferings. And therefore after his entrance upon his glory, he never drew any veil over his sufferings, nor was shy of having his cross spoken of. The angel here

that proclaims his resurrection, calls him Jesus that *was crucified*. He himself owns (Rev 1:18), *I am he that liveth, and was dead*; and he appears in the midst of the praises of the heavenly host as a *Lamb that had been slain*, Rev 5:6. (2.) "It will therefore be good news to you, to hear that, instead of anointing him dead, you may rejoice in him living. *He is risen, he is not here*, not dead, but alive again. We cannot as yet show you *him*, but hereafter you will see him, and you may here see *the place where they laid him*. You see he is gone hence, not stolen either by his enemies or by his friends, but *risen*."

4. He orders them to give speedy notice of this to his disciples. Thus they were made the apostles of the apostles, which was a recompence of their affection and fidelity to him, in attending him on the cross, to the grave, and in the grave. They first came, and were first served; no other of the disciples durst come near his sepulchre, or enquire after him; so little danger was there of their coming by night to *steal him away*, that none came near him but a few women, who were not able so much as to *roll away the stone*.

(1) They must tell the *disciples*, that *he is risen*. It is a dismal time with them, their dear Master is dead, and all their hopes and joys are buried in his grave; they look upon their cause as sunk, and themselves ready to fall an easy prey into the hands of their enemies, so that there remains no more spirit in them, they are perfectly at their wits' end, and every one is contriving how to shift for himself. "O, go quickly to them," said the angel, "tell them that *their Master is risen*; this will put some life and spirit into them, and keep them from sinking into despair." Note, [1.] Christ is not ashamed to own his poor disciples, no, not now that he is in his exalted state;

his preferment doth not make him shy of them, for he took early care to have it *notified* to them. [2.] Christ is not extreme to mark what *they* do amiss, whose hearts are upright with him. The disciples had very unkindly deserted him, and yet he testified this concern for them. [3.] Seasonable comforts shall be sent to those that are lamenting after the Lord Jesus, and he will find a time to manifest himself to them.

- (2) They must be sure to tell Peter. This is particularly taken notice of by this evangelist, who is supposed to have written by Peter's direction. If it were told the disciples, it would be told Peter, for, as a token of his repentance for disowning his Master, he still associated with his disciples; yet he is particularly named: *Tell Peter*, for, [1.] It will be good news to him, more welcome to him than to any of them; for he is in sorrow for sin, and no tidings can be more welcome to true penitents than to hear of the resurrection of Christ, because he rose again for *their justification*. [2.] He will be afraid, lest the joy of this good news do not belong to him. Had the angel said only, *Go, tell his disciples*, poor Peter would have been ready to sigh, and say, "But I doubt I cannot look upon myself as one of them, for I disowned him, and deserve to be disowned by him;" to obviate that, "Go to Peter by name, and tell him, he shall be as welcome as any of the rest to *see* him in Galilee." Note, A sight of Christ will be very welcome to a true penitent, and a true penitent shall be very welcome to a sight of Christ, for there is joy in heaven concerning him.
- (3) They must appoint them all, and Peter by name, to give him the meeting in Galilee, as *he said unto you*, Mat 26:32. In their journey down into Galilee they

would have time to recollect themselves, and call to mind what he had often said to them there, that he should suffer and die, and *the third day be raised again*; whereas while they were at Jerusalem, among strangers and enemies, they could not recover themselves from the fright they had been in, nor compose themselves to the due entertainment of better tidings. Note, [1.] All the meetings between Christ and his disciples are of his own appointing. [2.] Christ never forgets his appointment, but will be sure to meet his people with the promised blessing in every place where he records his name. [3.] In all meetings between Christ and his disciples, he is the most forward. *He goes before you.* [MH]

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

Mar 16:9 Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. Mar 16:10 *And* she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

Mar 16:11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

1. She brings notice of what she had seen, to the disciples; not only to the *eleven*, but to the rest that followed him, *as they mourned and wept*, Mar 16:10. Now was the time of which Christ had told them, that they should *mourn and lament*, Joh 16:20. And it was an evidence of their great love to Christ, and the deep sense they had of their loss of him. But when their *weeping* had *endured a night* or two, comfort returned, as Christ has promised; *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice*. Better news cannot be brought to disciples in tears, than to tell them of Christ's resurrection. And we should study to be comforters to disciples that are

mourners, by communicating to them our experiences, and what we have *seen of Christ*.

2. They could not give credit to the report she brought them. They heard that *he was alive*, and had been seen of her. The story was plausible enough, and yet *they believed not*. They would not say that she made the story herself, or designed to deceive them; but they fear that she is *imposed upon*, and that it was but a fancy that she *saw him*. Had they believed the *frequent* predictions of it from his own mouth, they would not have been now so incredulous of the report of it. [MH]

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

Mar 16:12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

Mar 16:13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

He appeared to two of the disciples, *as they went into the country*, Mar 16:12. This refers, no doubt, to that which is largely related (Luk 24:13, etc.), of which passed between Christ and the two disciples *going to Emmaus*. He is here said to have appeared to them in *another form*, in another dress than what he usually wore, in the form of a *traveller*, as, in the garden, in such a dress, that Mary Magdalene took him for the gardener; but that he had really his own countenance, appears by this, that *their eyes were holden, that they should not know him*; and when that restraint on *their eyes* was taken off, immediately they *knew him*, Lu. 24:16-31. Now,

1. These *two* witnesses gave in their *testimony* to this proof of Christ's resurrection; *They went and told it to the residue*, Mar 16:13. Being *satisfied* themselves, they were desirous to give their brethren the *satisfaction* they had, that they might be comforted as they were.

2. This did not gain credit with all; *Neither believed they them*. They suspected that their eyes also deceived them. Now there was a wise providence in it, the proofs of Christ's resurrection were given in thus *gradually*, and admitted thus *cautiously*, that so the assurance with which the apostles preached this doctrine afterward, when they ventured their all upon it, might be the more satisfying. We have the more reason to believe those who did themselves believe so slowly: had they swallowed it presently, they might have been thought *credulous*, and their testimony the less to be *regarded*; but their *disbelieving* at first, shows that they did not believe it afterward but upon a full conviction.

The Great Commission

Mar 16:14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

Mar 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

The *commission* which he gave them to set up his kingdom among men by the preaching of his *gospel*, the glad tidings of reconciliation to God through a Mediator. Now observe, *to whom* they were to preach *the gospel*. Hitherto they had been sent only to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, and were forbidden to go into the *way of the Gentiles*, or into any city of the Samaritans; but now their commission is enlarged, and they are authorized to *go into all the world*, into all parts of the world, the habitable world, and to *preach the gospel* of Christ to *every creature*, to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; to every human creature that is capable of receiving it. "Inform them concerning Christ, the history of *his life*, and *death*, and *resurrection*; instruct them in the *meaning* and *intention* of these, and of the advantages which the children of men have,

or may have, hereby; and invite them, without exception, to come and share in them. This is *gospel*. Let this be *preached* in all places, to all persons." These eleven men could not themselves preach it to all the world, much less to *every creature* in it; but they and the other disciples, seventy in number, with those who should afterward to be added to them, must *disperse* themselves several ways, and, wherever they went, carry the gospel along with them. They must send *others* to those places whither they could not *go themselves*, and, in short, make it the business of their lives to send those glad tidings *up and down the world* with all possible fidelity and care, not as an amusement or entertainment, but as a solemn message from God to men, and an appointed means of making men happy. "Tell as many as you can, and bid them tell others; it is a message of universal concern, and *therefore*, ought to *have* a universal welcome, because it *gives* a universal welcome." [MH]

Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; that is, he that believeth, and upon his faith accepts Christ's baptism (Acts 2:38), and working out his own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), and remains faithful until death (Rev. 2:10) shall be saved. *But he that disbelieveth shall be condemned*. The condemnation anticipates the doom which will be incurred by continual unbelief. It is evident that those who will not accept Christ will not be saved:

2Th 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 2Th 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

2Th 1:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Mar 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

Mar 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

THE CREDENTIALS ACCOMPANYING THE PUBLICATION OF THE GOSPEL.

1. What they were. There are enumerated: power to exorcise demons, power to speak with tongues, immunity from harm by poison or by serpent-bite, the ministry of supernatural healing.
2. Why they were given. It was to authenticate the message and the messengers. As in Christ's ministry spiritual authority was indicated by miraculous works, so was it in the ministry of Christ's followers and apostles. As a matter of fact, attention was thus drawn to the Word of life.

Heb 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

Heb 2:4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Mar 16:19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Mar 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

WE have reached the close of the great Gospel of Jesus, His toils, His manner, His searching gaze, His noble indignation, His love of children, the consuming zeal by virtue of which He was not more truly the Lamb of God than the Lion of the tribe of Judah. St. Mark has just recorded how He bade His followers carry on His work, defying the serpents of the world, and renewing the plague-stricken race of Adam. In what strength did they fulfill this commission? How did they fare without the Master? And what is Mark's view of the Ascension?

Here, as all through the Gospel, minor points are neglected. Details are only valued when they carry some aid for the special design of the Evangelist, who presses to the core of his subject at once and boldly. As he omitted the bribes with which Satan tempted Jesus, and cared not for the testimony of the Baptist when the voice of God was about to peal from heaven over the Jordan, as on the holy mount he told not the subject of which Moses and Elijah spoke, but how Jesus Himself predicted His death to His disciples, so now he is silent about the mountain slope, the final benediction, the cloud which withdrew Him from their sight and the angels who sent back the dazed apostles to their homes and their duties. It is not caprice nor haste that omits so much interesting information. His mind is fixed on a few central thoughts; what concerns him is to link the mighty story of the life and death of Jesus with these great facts, that He was received up into Heaven, that He there sat down upon the right hand of God, and that His disciples were never forsaken of Him at all, but proved, by the miraculous spread of the early Church, that His power was among them still. St. Mark does not record the promise, but he asserts the fact that Christ was with them all the days. There is indeed a

connection between his two closing verses, subtle and hard to render into English, and yet real, which suggests the notion of balance, of relation between the two movements, the ascent of Jesus, and the evangelization of the world, such as exists, for example, between detachments of an army cooperating for a common end, so that our Lord, for His part, ascended, while the disciples, for their part, went forth and found Him with them still.

But the link is plainer which binds the Ascension to His previous story of suffering and conflict. It was “then,” and “after He had spoken unto them,” that “the Lord Jesus was received up.” In truth His ascension was but the carrying forward to completion of His resurrection, which was not a return to the poor conditions of our mortal life, but an entrance into glory, only arrested in its progress until He should have quite convinced His followers that “it is I indeed,” and made them understand that “thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day,” and filled them with holy shame for their unbelief, and with courage for their future course, so strange, so weary, so sublime.

There is something remarkable in the words, “He was received up into heaven.” We habitually speak of Him as ascending, but Scripture more frequently declares that He was the subject of the action of another, and was taken up. St. Luke tells us that, “while they worshipped, He was carried up into heaven,” and again “He was received up... He was taken up” (Luk 24:51; Act 1:2; Act 1:9). Physical interference is not implied: no angels bore Him aloft; and the narratives make it clear that His glorious Body, obedient to its new mysterious nature, arose unaided. But the decision to depart, and the choice of a time, came not from Him: He did not go, but was taken. Never hitherto had He glorified Himself. He had taught His disciples to be contented in the lowest room until the Master of the house should bid them come up

higher. And so, when His own supreme victory is won, and heaven held its breath expectant and astonished, the conquering Lord was content to walk with peasants by the Lake of Galilee and on the slopes of Olivet until the appointed time. What a rebuke to us who chafe and fret if the recognition of our petty merits be postponed.

And He “sat down at the right hand of God.” The expression is, beyond all controversy, borrowed from that great Psalm which begins by saying, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand,” and which presently makes the announcement never revealed until then, “Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psa 110:1; Psa 110:4). It is there for an anticipation of the argument for the royal Priesthood of Jesus which is developed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Now priesthood is a human function: every high priest is chosen from among men. And the Ascension proclaims to us, not the Divinity of the Eternal Word but the glorification of “the Lord Jesus;” not the omnipotence of God the Son, but that all power is committed unto Him Who is not ashamed to call us brethren, that His human hands wield the scepter as once they held the reed, and the brows then insulted and torn with thorns are now crowned with many crowns. In the overthrow of Satan He won all, and infinitely more than all, of that vast bribe which Satan once offered for His homage, and the angels forever worship Him who would not for a moment bend His knee to evil.

Now since He conquered not for Himself but as Captain of our Salvation, the Ascension also proclaims the issue of all the holy suffering, all the baffled efforts, all the cross-bearing of all who follow Christ.

His High Priesthood is with authority. “Every high priest standeth,” but He has forever sat down on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a Priest sitting upon His throne (Heb 8:1; Zec 6:13). And therefore it is His

office, Who pleads for us and represents us, Himself to govern our destinies. No wonder that His early followers, with minds which He had opened to understand the Scriptures, were mighty to cast down strongholds. Against tribulation and anguish and persecution and famine and nakedness and peril and sword they were more than conquerors through Him. For He worked with them and confirmed His word with signs. And we have seen that He works with His people still, and still confirms His gospel, only withdrawing signs of one order as those of another kind are multiplied.

Wherever they wage a faithful battle, He gives them victory. Whenever they cry to Him in anguish, the form of the Son of God is with them in the furnace, and the smell of fire does not pass upon them. Where they come, the desert blossoms as a rose; and where they are received, the serpents of life no longer sting, its fevers grow cool, and the demons which rend it are cast out.

Extra Study Pertaining to whether Mark 16:9-20 is a valid scripture text:

Question:

Does Mark 16:9-20 really belong in our Bibles?

Answer:

The following is an excellent review of the question. I also placed some interesting quotes from various reference works at the end. For details on the question, see *The Authenticity of Mark 16:9-20* by Jim Snapp.

Is Mark 16:9-20 Spurious or Genuine?

Howard See Nashville, Tennessee

Truth Magazine XIX: 29, pp. 454-455

May 29, 1975

In a recent, late-night television interview of a snake handling preacher from East Tennessee, the text of Mark

16:9-20 was attacked as being spurious. This was an effort to try to offset the teaching in Mark 16:18, "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" The attack on the genuineness of the passage is reminiscent of sectarian arguments in an effort to offset the teaching on baptism being essential to salvation in verse 16. Even if it could be shown that this portion of Mark's Gospel is spurious, it would help neither those who want to offset Mark 16:18 nor those who wish to offset Mark 16:16. There are other passages that teach that signs and miracles followed the early Christians to confirm the word, just as there are other passages which teach that baptism is essential to salvation. Neither is it necessary to claim that Mark 16:9-20 is spurious in an effort to offset the practice of handling snakes, drinking poison, etc., as applying to Christians today. There are other passages which teach that the miraculous gifts of the spirit were to cease, fail and vanish away (cf. 1 Cor. 13:8). History also confirms that the miraculous signs did cease. It was interesting to note that when a caller pointed out that these miraculous signs were to cease, fail and vanish away, that the host of the show did not give the preacher an opportunity to make a reply.

In regard to the inspiration of Mark 16:9-20, it needs to be first pointed out that the authenticity of this passage (i.e. the historical accuracy and correctness of its teaching) has never been questioned by scholars. The only question that has been raised as to its genuineness pertains to whether or not it was written by Mark and whether it should be considered a part of Mark's original manuscript. Since the accuracy and correctness of the teaching cannot be successfully denied, for the passage to be attached to the close of Mark's Gospel does not render it any less valuable even though some other Apostle or inspired writer should have been its author.

The basis of the spurious argument is twofold. First, it is claimed to be spurious because the passage is omitted

from the Vatican and the Sinaitic Manuscripts. These being two of the older known manuscripts (the Sinaitic dating in the fourth century, around 340 A.D.; the Vatican manuscript also dating in the fourth century, probably around 350 A.D., some think as early as 325 A.D.) and since Mark 16:9-20 is omitted, it is argued that the passage was not a part of Mark's Gospel.

Jerome and some fourth century writers are also quoted to say that the passage was absent in some of the Greek copies of their day. Second, it is said that there are words and phrases found in Mark 16:9-20 that are not found in the rest of Mark's Gospel. From this it is concluded by some that this passage was written by someone other than Mark. A thorough examination of these arguments, however, will not only show that the passage is authentic in all its details, but will also show that there is no real reason to doubt that it was also written by Mark.

The genuineness of Mark 16:9-20 may be seen from the following:

1. The facts stated in Mark 16:9-20 are mentioned in the Gospels (cf. Luke 8:2; John 20:1-8, etc.) and the promise concerning the signs was fully verified by miracles practiced by the Apostles and Christians as listed in the book of Acts. Hebrews 2:4 and other passages further confirm that such signs did follow the believers.
2. Mark 16:9-20 is found in nearly all of the other Ancient Manuscripts. These include the Alexandrian (dated around 450 A.D.) which is next to the Vatican in accuracy and importance.
3. Justin Martyr quoted from Mark 16:9-20 about A. D. 160. Among other second century writers quoting this passage are Irenaeus and Tatian. It was also quoted by Hippolytus and Dyonisius of Alexandria in the third century. All of these lived and wrote from one hundred to two hundred years earlier than the earliest existing

manuscript was written or before Jerome indicated that the passage was not found in some of the Greek manuscripts of his day. The words of Irenaeus indicate that the passage was part of the Gospel of Mark in the second century and that Mark was regarded as its author. He stated, "But Mark, in the end of his Gospel, says; and the Lord Jesus, after that he had spoken to them was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God." It is therefore apparent that this passage was a part of the Gospel of Mark and was written by Mark.

4. It is interesting to note that all of the ancient versions of the New Testament contain Mark 16:9-20. This of necessity emphasizes that the passage was a part of the Greek text from which these translations were made. Among these versions are the Peshito Syriac, the Old Italic, the Sahidic and the Coptic. All of these existed long before the Vatican and the Sinaitic Manuscripts and long before Jerome. It is altogether unreasonable to argue that since it was omitted from these two manuscripts that it is spurious since all of the Ancient Versions, including those that existed long before these two manuscripts, included it as a part of the text of Mark's Gospel.
5. Further it seems highly improbable that Mark would have so abruptly closed his Gospel at the end of verse 8. The first eight verses of Mark 16 discuss the resurrection of Christ. Verses 9-11 discuss the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection. Verses 12-13 discuss the Lord's appearance to two disciples on the way to Emmaus (cf. Luke 24:13-35). Verses 14-18 discuss the appearance of Jesus to the eleven, state the commission which Jesus gave the disciples to preach the gospel state the conditions of salvation, and promise signs for

- confirming the Word as being the truth of God. Verses 19 - 20 of Mark 16 speak of the ascension of Christ and affirm that the Lord confirmed their word with signs as he had promised. What more logical way would there have been for Mark to have brought his Gospel to a close.
6. The same two manuscripts that omit Mark 16:9-20 also omit other passages of scripture. Notably among these are John 7:53-8:11. These same verses are omitted in both manuscripts. Yet those who argue that Mark 16:9-20 is spurious because both manuscripts omit these verses, never argue that John 7:53-8:11 is spurious. When it is remembered that the Monks were using the pages of the Sinaitic Manuscript to light the Monastery fires when Dr. Constantine Tischendorf found them in the "Monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai" in 1844, there seems to be a rather rational explanation as to why this and other passages were not found to be a part of the Manuscript.
 7. The forty-seven translators of the Authorized Version, or the King James translation put Mark 16:9-20 in the text. Further the one hundred and one translators of the American Standard Version put Mark 16:9-20 in the text. Dr. Phillip Schaff, who served as president of the American Revision Committee said of Mark 16:9-20, "The section is found in most of the Uncial and in all the existing Greek and Syriac lectionaries as far as examined; and Irenaeus, who is a much older witness than any of our existing Manuscripts, quotes verse 19 as a part of the Gospel of Mark. A strong intrinsic argument for the genuineness is also derived from the extreme improbability (we may say impossibility) that the evangelist should have intentionally closed his Gospel with 'for they were afraid' " (Companion to the Greek New Testament, page 190). Alexander Roberts,

also an imminent member of the American Revision Committee said, with emphasis, that the author of Mark 16:9-20 was surely "one who belonged to the circle of apostles," and that it "is inserted, without the least misgiving, as an appendix to that gospel in the Revised Version" (Companion to the English New Testament, page 63).

We have noted that some attempt to argue that Mark 16:9-20 is spurious and was not written by Mark since there are words and phrases found in these last twelve verses of Mark 16 that are not found in the rest of Mark's Gospel. It has been observed that there are no less than seventeen words and phrases in this passage that are not used elsewhere by Mark.

In response to this argument, J. W. McGarvey observed that Prof. John A. Broadus, a Baptist of Greenville, S.C., published in an article in the Baptist Quarterly for 1869, a list of exactly seventeen words and phrases used by Mark in the twelve verses immediately preceding Mark 16:9-20 that are used nowhere else by Mark. Yet critics of Mark 16:9-20 never question the authorship or genuineness of these twelve verses. McGarvey emphasized that the fact that the same argument could be made against the preceding twelve verses "is at once a surprising fact and a startling exposure of the fragile foundation on which this famous critical structure has been erected. It shows that the same use of the Greek Concordance which led to the origin of this criticism, if pushed a little farther, would have smothered it in its birth, and would have saved some distinguished critics from being detected in a flimsy though pretentious fallacy" (Commentary on Mark, page 380). McGarvey applied the same test to the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Luke and found that there are nine words found in these verses which are used by Luke nowhere else in his gospel. Not only so, but four of these words are found nowhere else in the New

Testament. However, none of the critics of Mark 16:9- 20 never question the authorship or genuineness of authorship of Luke 24:42-53. Other examples of this kind could probably be found in the New Testament. These are sufficient however, to show that this reasoning on the part of the critics is shallow sophistry. That which is spurious is their argument, not the text of Mark 16:9-20. It is evident, therefore, that the voice of scholarship negates the spurious claim. There is absolutely no reasonable basis to claim that Mark 16:9-20 is anything other than the inspired word of God and that it was written by Mark as a part of his Gospel.

Some Bible scholars doubt the authenticity of 16:9 -20, insisting that Mark did not write this portion. These verses are not found in two early manuscripts, the Vatican Codex and the Sinaitic Codex. However, they are found in the overwhelming majority of early manuscripts. Those who reject verses 9 -20 have attempted to support their opinion by a process called hapax legomena, the citing of some terms found here and not elsewhere in the Gospel. It is one of the least scientific or scholarly methods used to criticize authorship. The futility of such a process may be seen easily by applying it to an equal part of the writings of most any erudite scholar. Some of the same ones who reject these verses also say that Paul did not write Ephesians because they have found 36 words in that epistle, not found elsewhere in Paul's writings.

The authenticity of these verses (Mark 16:9 -20) should not be doubted: (1) They are found in nearly all Greek manuscripts and have been accepted in the church from the Second Century A.D. (2) Nothing in these verses contradicts anything in the rest of the Scriptures

The Complete Biblical Library Study Bible, Mark, Ralph W. Harris Executive editor, 1986, While *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* takes the view that the ending of Mark is doubtful, it is interesting to note that they have

this to say, “They are certainly very early, perhaps as early as 100 AD, and have the support of ACDXrdz, all late unicals, all cursives, most VSS and Fathers, and were known to the scribes of (aleph) and B, who, however, do not accept them.”

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