

MARK CHAPTER ONE

The book of Mark is the shortest of the four gospels and is probably the oldest. Written by John Mark, the young disciple who deserted Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. He later redeemed himself and went on to do a great work for the Lord. FWIW, he is also believed to be the naked man in the garden. (14:51-52)

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

The gospel here refers not to the whole book but to the person Jesus Christ. Jesus is His given name; Christ is not His last name but is His title. Jesus means The Savior, and Christ means the Anointed One. Son of God shows Jesus' deity, and stresses His unique relationship to the Father.

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

The prophets had foretold not only the Messiah but also the forerunner. Mark quotes from Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 to introduce John the Baptist.

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

John the Baptist was born and lived for one purpose, and that was to proclaim the coming of Christ. He had one message, the kingdom gospel. It was repent and be baptized for the Lord is coming. God, throughout the Bible, picked out a specific person and called them to do a specific job for Him. He was to use his voice to proclaim the coming of the Lord.

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

John was a common Jewish name in New Testament times and means "the Lord is gracious." Baptism was the distinctive mark of John's ministry., his baptism differed from the ritual Jewish washings in that it was a one-time act. A Christian being baptized is actually testimony. We are baptized into a water grave, and we are following Jesus in His resurrection. We rise again to newness of life in Jesus.

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.

After centuries without a prophetic voice in Israel, John's ministry generated an intense amount of interest. There, strangely enough, was no rejection by the people of John the Baptist. We see here, that many people went to great trouble to go into the wilderness and be baptized by John in the River Jordan. In Matthew 21:26, we see that the people believe John to be a true prophet. Isn't it strange they believed he was a prophet and did not believe the message he brought that Jesus Christ is Messiah?

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;

Mark's description of John's diet and dress create a connection between Elias and the New Testament prophet.

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.

Even though John must have been a powerful preacher, his message of repentance is based on one "mightier than I". John's comment about being unworthy to loose the latches on Jesus sandals is revealing since that would have been the work of a slave.

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

John baptized his followers with water while Jesus baptizes His followers with the Holy Ghost. As John was used by God to administer immersion in water, Jesus will serve to bring men under the influence of the Holy Spirit. You can easily see from this that the baptism of repentance, which John the Baptist preached, was not the same baptism. John's baptism is of water, and Jesus' baptism is of the Holy Ghost.

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

To some people this would seem so unusual that the Savior of the world would come to be baptized. Of course, Jesus had no sins to repent of. He was without sin. In everything, Jesus is the ultimate example. I believe his coming to be baptized was simply an example for us to follow. Very little is known of Jesus, since His trip with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. We assume that He worked with Joseph in the carpenter's shop. The fact that Mary knew that Jesus could turn water into

wine at the wedding indicates to me that this was the first recorded miracle, not necessarily the first one. Jesus from the time He was twelve until the wine incident was possibly ministering locally, but none of this is recorded.

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

In order to come up out of the water you must first go down into the water. Furthermore, it would be ridiculous for two grown men to go down into the water to dip up a cup full of water to with which to sprinkle someone.

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

When Jesus comes to be baptized by John, God makes a statement he has made about no other man since Adam. Because of the presence of sin, no human can please God. Jesus came to do for us what we are unable to do for ourselves.

12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

Notice that spirit is capitalized here indicating the Holy Spirit. The exact location, in the wilderness, of Jesus' encounter with Satan is unknown. It most likely would have been the same wilderness where John lived and ministered. That would be the desolate region farther South, or the arid Arabian desert across the Jordan. "The Spirit driveth him into the wilderness" is a shortened statement. Compare this to the statement in Luke 4:1 which says; **"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,"**

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.

Mark mentions wild beasts present in this wilderness. So Jesus is sent into a dangerous place to overcome both physical and spiritual temptations. The temptations must have been severe since angels were there to minister to Him.

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

Jesus begins His public ministry as John is ending his. Notice that Jesus is preaching the gospel of the Kingdom which is different from the gospel we live by. This gospel was; accept Me as your Messiah and the Kingdom will

be set up here and now.

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

Jesus continues John's message that people should repent because the Kingdom of God is near. The kingdom of God is actually everything that exists. The whole universe is His kingdom. Think of this as Jesus was preaching the good news that God is King of everything. The gospel of the Church age is different but is still based on believing God and what He said. Romans 10:9 is the gospel we are saved by today. That says; **"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved"**. Be sure to notice the difference in these gospels since God has said, in Galatians, chapter one, verse eight and nine that anyone preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, in this age, is accursed by God.

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.

Since Andrew had been a follower of John the Baptist, it is possible that Peter had been as well. They had evidently returned to their fishing business after John's arrest. They had already met and spent a little time with Jesus, but were here called to follow Him permanently.

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

Evangelism was the primary purpose for which Jesus called the apostles, and it remains the primary purpose of His people today. This was not an offer but a command. Jesus' call is not a temporary appeal but a summons to whole-life commitment. Jesus gains at least four dedicated disciples, who follow him to Capernaum.

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

This is simply a short statement of what was more of a process. We find the complete story in Luke 5:1-11, and that story explains why they were willing to follow Jesus. They witnessed a miracle. Always compare scripture with scripture to get the whole story. Here is the whole story. **And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, {5:2} And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them,**

and were washing [their] nets. {5:3} And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. {5:4} Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. {5:5} And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. {5:6} And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. {5:7} And they beckoned unto [their] partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. {5:8} When Simon Peter saw [it,] he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. {5:9} For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: {5:10} And so [was] also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. {5:11} And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

There are several things to take from that passage of scripture. These four men were partners, along with Zebedee. They had a successful fishing business with at least two boats, possibly more. They did well enough to have other workers on the boats. This may well be why Peter and the other three were able to leave off work and follow Jesus. Jesus would not have called them and left their families unprovided for.

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

We are not told how many boats nor how many hired servants there were but obviously these men were not poverty stricken fishermen operating out of one mullet boat.

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

In addition to Peter and Andrew, the Lord had found James and John. These were fishermen whom the Lord would make fishers of men. The name Zebedee apparently means thunder so James and John were called the sons of thunder.

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

Capernaum was a prosperous fishing village on the Northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. This city had a Roman garrison and was located on a major road so Jesus made the city His headquarters after His rejection at Nazareth when they refused to hear His message. All they could think of in Nazareth was that He was the carpenter's son.

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

Jesus' direct, personal, teaching was so outside their experience that those who heard Him were amazed. Jesus astounds His listeners, for He teaches "as one that had authority." Jesus is the Word. His message is a message of first hand knowledge since He wrote the book. The scribes, on the other hand, were uncertain and their message was a message of interpretation. John 1:1 **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."**

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

Unclean spirit is a general term used when speaking of devil possession. A large part of Jesus healing ministry consisted of cleansing people of these devils. There were plenty around in those days and they, since they do not die, are still here today.

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.

Notice that this devil speaks of himself in the plural indicating that there are usually more than one present. Devils know Jesus and recognize His authority. Jesus demonstrates His power over them by casting these out. Amazingly, the demon affirmed Jesus' sinlessness and deity, truths which many in Israel denied, and still deny. He called Him the Holy One of God.

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

The question always comes up, "where did the devils come from"? Since God does not create devils as such, then they must be left over spirits from a prior creation.

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

This devil did not come out easily. He took one last shot at the man as he was leaving.

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.

we have just seen that these evil spirits had no fear of the scribes and Pharisees. They just came right into the synagogue with the man. The amazing thing to them was the power and authority of Jesus' message.

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

Word about Jesus went out quickly in all directions. You can imagine how this would spread. These people coming to the synagogue had never seen anything like this before.

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

We know from this verse that Peter and Andrew lived in the same house. Simon and Andrew were originally from Bethsaida but the two brothers had moved to Capernaum when Jesus established his headquarters there. Only Mark mentions the presence of James and John at the healing of Peter's mother-in-law.

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

We see in this Scripture that Simon, better known as Peter, was married. We also can see from this that his wife's mother was in the house with them. Paul also affirmed that Peter was married in 1 Cor. 9:5. That his mother-in-law was living with Peter and his wife may indicate that her husband was dead. She was too ill to get out of bed. That coupled with Luke's description of her fever as "high fever", suggests her illness was serious, even life-threatening.

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.

She is healed immediately. This is the case with all of Jesus healing except for a couple of cases, where the recipient of the healing, was told to do something. Peter's mother in law was healed completely so that she was able to leave her bed and minister to their needs. This is very similar to the woman who just touched the hem of Jesus' garment and was healed. This type of healing would be so dramatic that no one could deny it. The word would spread fast.

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

Sun set marked the close of the Sabbath and the easing of the restrictions associated with it. Jewish law prohibited carrying any burdens, even stretchers, on the Sabbath. We see that the fame of Jesus had spread rapidly. By that evening a large group of sick and those possessed with devils had gathered to be healed. These that were brought were very likely the ones whom the physicians had given up on.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

That is a big crowd. This would have included not only the sick and devil possesses but lots of common curiosity seekers, the kind we would call rubberneckers. Everyone wants to see what is going on.

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.

The demon's are fundamental Baptists. Their theology is absolutely correct. They know the Lord Jesus personally. Their problem is that they no longer have the opportunity to be saved. In this case He doesn't allow them to speak because He doesn't want to be called "that Holy One of God" at this time. That just brings more problems from the local religious establishment.

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

Jesus first year of public preaching has borne little visible fruit. But His miracles of healing are drawing huge crowds and bringing Him recognition. It is unlikely that many of the people in these crowds were being saved. They accepted the healing gladly, and believed Jesus to be a great prophet but few were accepting Him as the Messiah. This verse should be a

message to us. In the quiet of the very early morning, Jesus went to pray; not with others, but alone. The most precious times with God is in private with just you and God.

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

This is the first instance in the gospels of Peter's assuming of leadership. Those with Peter are not revealed, though Andrew, James and John were likely among them. Jesus is not going to get much alone time with God.

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

After finding Jesus, Peter and the others excitedly implored Him to return to Capernaum and capitalize on the excitement generated by the healing of the previous night. We see by this that Jesus already had an huge following. This following was not because of His message, but so that they might receive something of Him.

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

We know that Jesus did heal and deliver people, but this was not His purpose in coming to the earth. Jesus' purpose in coming was to save souls. Many times there are physical blessings from Jesus, but His most important role is to save our souls from death.

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

Here we have more devils cast out. These devils are still here today and there is exactly the same number around today as there were in Jesus day. I do believe that their methods have changed and they have become more subtle. Keep in mind that every where He went He cast out devils.

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.

As recently as during my lifetime there were leper colonies here in the US. One of the largest was in south Louisiana. It was highly contagious and nothing seemed to cure it. Now there are medicines and no one is locked away.

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

Lepers were outcasts from society. The true name is Hansen's Disease. "Leprosy" was a dreaded disease. These people were not even allowed to be near the rest of the community. This man was taking his life in his own hands to get to Jesus. This man did not doubt that Jesus could heal him. He said to Jesus, "If you will, you can heal me". Sometimes sin is spoken of as spiritual leprosy. Jesus is the healer of both physical and spiritual leprosy.

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

Keep in mind that no doctor on earth, at that time, could cure leprosy. Only the Lord Jesus could do that. This was not a gradual healing, but as usual, sudden complete healing.

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

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.

Jesus tells the man to say nothing to anyone except the priest. The publicity would hinder Jesus' ability to minister, and divert attention away from His message. Jesus commanded the healed leper to observe the Old Testament regulations concerning cleansed lepers. Until the required offerings had been made, the man remained ceremonially unclean. The priest had to examine him and declare him clean before he could move freely among his people. The man was to give an offering suitable in the temple as the Law of Moses had specified.

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.

The result of the leper's disobedience was that Jesus could no longer enter the city without being mobbed by those seeking to be cured of diseases. Jesus' ministry of teaching in that area thus came to a halt. The healing of man's sin-infected soul is therefore far more important than the healing of

his body. The people's enthusiasm over miracles hinders Jesus' freedom to preach, causing Him to remain in the "desert places".

MARK CHAPTER TWO

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

Jesus returns to Capernaum and again huge crowds assemble to see the miracles He performs. Most houses, of the common people, were from one to four rooms and this one was filled to capacity with a large overflow outside. This is likely Peter's house to which they have returned.

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.

While Jesus is speaking five men arrive with four carrying one of them on a stretcher. Many houses, in that day, had stairs leading up to a flat roof. The roof might be tiles or even sod laid over planks. It would not be hard to tear through one of these roofs.

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

Since he was lying on a bed, the man's paralysis was severe. Palsy is a progressive disease and it seems this man's palsy had gotten to an extreme case. He was unable to walk. Most people with palsy are able to walk, so this had to be someone who had an advanced disease.

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.

This unusual entrance doesn't seem to surprise Jesus in the least. These men had great love for their friend to go to this much trouble to get him to Jesus. Most of all, they had to believe strongly that if they could get him in Jesus' presence, he would be healed.

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

Jesus first words to the man are unusual in that He surely knows that this

man has come for physical healing and the first thing Jesus does is forgive his sins. By implication Jesus is making a claim to divinity, which to the Scribes ranks as blasphemy.

6 But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

One other thing this does is trigger a negative reaction in the scribes. They are always looking for ways to trip Jesus up. Do not miss the fact that Jesus read their minds, something the scribes seem to have missed altogether.

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

The Jews believed that only God was able to forgive sin. Claims by anyone else were blasphemy and was punishable by stoning to death. Many in our churches today cannot see Jesus as anything but man. They are like these scribes, doubting, because they put limits on Jesus. Were Jesus just a man, the scribes would have been correct. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. God forgives sins anytime or anyplace, for anyone He wants to.

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?

It seems that these scribes did not speak out openly against Jesus, but were just having evil thoughts. They were probably, afraid of the people too much to speak out openly. Just the fact that Jesus knew what they were thinking in their hearts should have told them that He was no mere man.

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?

This man sick of the palsy had been around for the scribes to minister to, and they had not been able to help him. Jesus, to me, was saying here, why complain about the manner it is done in, if it works?

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,)

This is Jesus first use, in Mark, of the term "Son of man". This phrase carries suggestions of both deity and humanity. This forces people to choose and to make up their own minds about Him. If He had openly

claimed to be the Messiah then there would have been even more of an uproar from the religious order.

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

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.

The observers have never seen anything like this. Just as the wind obeyed Jesus in Matthew, we see here, that this man obeyed the voice of Jesus and did just exactly what Jesus told him to do. You can imagine how amazed the people were. They had not seen miracles like this done by the scribes. This was something brand new. They realized that this was from God and they glorified Him.

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

The multitude is growing larger. We see here, that when Jesus left the house and went back to the seaside, all these people followed Him; and He taught them. These people were anxious to hear what Jesus had to say, because He had answers to their problems. They had just witnessed a man healed of a long-time illness, and they realized Jesus had something these scribes did not have.

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.

This is Matthew the tax collector. This man would not have been someone the scribes would have chosen for Christian endeavors. As far as making money, this was a good job. Matthew gave up a lot of worldly income to follow Jesus. Matthew came without hesitation when Jesus called.

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.

This is Matthew's house. It was probably one of the nicer ones in the town since a tax collector would have been wealthy at the expense of his own people.

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?

This was a feast that Matthew gave in Jesus' honor. All of the tax collectors were considered both religious and social outcasts. Jesus willingness, to associate with tax collectors and sinners by sharing in the feast with them, deeply offended the scribes and Pharisees. The Hebrews were extremely careful who they associated with. They would not fellowship with people of the world and especially with tax collectors. Jesus had broken the pattern again. He was doing something in meeting with these tax collectors and sinners that the scribes would never do.

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.

Notice the attempt, in the last verse, to stir up His own disciples against Him. The point is that Jesus seeks out those who, being in need, sense and own up to it. "Sinners" refers to common folk who in their religious practices were less scrupulous than the Pharisees, and often more responsive to Jesus than cultivated religious people.

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?

Pharisees were a legalistic sect of Jews known for their strict devotion to the ceremonial law. Even at this early stage of Jesus' ministry, these scribes and Pharisees knew that they were no match for Jesus. They came to the disciples and talked to them. In a sense, they were saying, don't you know that in our law it is forbidden to eat with people like this? They asked the disciples why He was doing this sinful thing. He was telling them, if you are already perfect, you don't need My help. Jesus is using sarcasm again.

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.

A self-righteous Pharisee is bragging that he fasts twice a week. This was to make others look on him as more righteous than he really was. Jesus warned about this type of fasting. Jesus told us when we fast to wash our

faces and not let the world know when we fast, but to fast unto God. Possibly the reason John's followers were fasting was because John was in jail. It appears to me, that these Pharisees were jealous that Jesus' disciples were not fasting.

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

Since they have the bridegroom with them, that certainly was not a time to fast, which was usually associated with mourning or times of great spiritual need. Jesus' point was that the ritual practiced by John's disciples and the Pharisees was out of touch with reality. There was no reason for Jesus' followers to mourn and fast while enjoying the unique reality that He was with them. People fast when they are in desperate need of having a prayer answered. While Jesus was with them, there was no desperate need of an answer to prayer. All who study the Bible know that when Jesus was taken by the authorities, the disciples ran. They suddenly forgot all the times Jesus had told them that this very thing would happen. He told them He would be crucified and then rise from the grave on the third day. Then they would need to fast and pray, because Jesus had been taken away. Instead of fasting and praying, they went back to their old jobs and old ways of life.

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.

If we are patching an old garment, we should cut a patch of something equally worn so that the tear and the patch wear together. It would be a waste of new material also, to put it in something worn out.

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.

A lot of wine was put into wineskins but this parable uses bottles as an illustration. Bottles, in those days, would have been made of pottery and old bottles would have been easily broken by the pressure of fermentation.

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.

All grain, in the bible, is called corn. This is not the Indian maize we call corn

but either barley or wheat. Hundreds of years of rabbinical teaching had added numerous unbearable and arbitrary restrictions to God's original requirement, one of which forbade any travel beyond 3,000 feet of one's home. Travelers who did not take enough food for their journey were permitted by Mosaic Law to pick enough grain to satisfy their hunger. There is a little more detailed account of this same thing in Luke. There is a spiritual message here. The Word (food), is not always prepared for us. Sometimes we have to do a little digging to get the full meaning.

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

Rabbinical tradition had interpreted the rubbing of grain in the hands, as a form of threshing and had forbidden it. Every church has its Pharisees: caught up so in the "don'ts" that it is very difficult to get anything going. These Pharisees pointed to the law and said you can't do this; you are breaking the Mosaic Law. They didn't even realize that Jesus was the law maker.

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?

Jesus' sarcasm pointed out the main fault of the Pharisees, who claimed to be experts and guardians of scripture, yet were ignorant of what it actually taught.

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?

David and his companions were fleeing for their lives from Saul when they arrived at Nob, where the tabernacle was located at that time. Because they were hungry, they went into the temple and took five loaves of shewbread for him and his men. These Pharisees did not realize that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.

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

When God gave the Jews the Sabbath, He never intended for the rabbis to add hundreds of restrictions. It was to be simply a day of rest. While we, as Christians, no longer are commanded to keep the Sabbath, a day of rest each week is still a good idea.

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

God instituted the Sabbath to benefit man by giving him a day to rest from his labors and to be a blessing to him. The Pharisees turned it into a burden and made man a slave to their man-made regulations. When we stay too busy, we have a tendency to forget about God. On this day of rest from daily labor, we can tend to the needs of our souls. It gives us time to think about other things, besides just making a living.

MARK CHAPTER THREE

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

I believe this was a set up by the scribes and Pharisees. They bring in a man for healing knowing full well that Jesus would heal him on the Sabbath. This is just another way to try and accuse Jesus of wrongdoing. Be sure to notice that nothing Jesus did was any attempt to hide the healing. It was done openly, in plain sight of everyone present. Jesus was critical of some aspects of the Jewish religion of His time, but He remained faithful in weekly synagogue attendance. There is a lesson for us there.

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

Sabbath regulations were extraordinarily detailed and legalistic. Sabbath issues become a major battle ground for Jesus and His detractors. No doubt it was their jealousy of His ability to heal that drove them to this. At any rate, they watched His every move so that they could find fault.

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

When He saw the man in need, He boldly told him to come to Him. It made no difference that these scribes were looking on.

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 did not wait for them to say something. He asked them a question that they could not answer. There was no way to criticize what He was doing when He put it this way. If they answered at all, they would have to agree that it was good to do good and to save life. He only gave them two

choices. Since they would not agree with what He was doing, they just didn't answer at all.

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 is angry. We see here, that Jesus had no patience with those who were constantly finding fault with those who were trying to do good. He could look right into their hearts, and He didn't like what He saw. Their hearts were so hardened that they did not have compassion on those who could not help themselves.

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

Do you see the irony here? While Jesus is healing while the Pharisees are plotting murder.

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

These Pharisees absolutely refused to be persuaded by anything Jesus said and did, but instead were determined to kill Him. The Herodians were a secular political party who usually, opposed the Pharisees on nearly every issue, but were willing to join forces with them because both desperately wanted to destroy Jesus. Jesus had returned again to the sea of Galilee where, you remember, Peter had a home.

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 is the only gospel writer, who at this point in Jesus' ministry, noted that the masses came from all parts of country to see and hear Him. This may have been two multitudes which came together to form one. One group from Galilee and Judea and the other group from Tyre, Jerusalem and the other cities listed in verse eight.

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

We see here, that there were so many people that Jesus had a small boat to stand by in readiness in the chance that these people would press on Him so much that He would be overwhelmed. He could preach from the boat if necessary.

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

The word “plagues” here metaphorically describes various painful, agonizing, physical ailments and illnesses. Remember that just touching Jesus' garment could heal as it did the woman with the issue of blood. Virtue went out from Jesus to the person healed each time. You can easily see how this could be tiring, even for the Son of God.

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

Jesus encounters more evil spirits and these also recognize Him as the Son of God. There seem to have been evil spirits everywhere then and they are still here today.

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

Jesus always rebuked devils for their testimonies about Him. He wanted His teaching and actions, not the impure words of devils, to proclaim who He was. Jesus usually seeks to keep His messianic identity somewhat hidden. It seems to have been Jesus' general policy not to influence the multitude by proclaiming His deity. In other words, He wants true converts not those just influenced by the miracles He performed.

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

Jesus has already called Andrew, Simon, James, John and Matthew. He is about to call the remainder of the twelve. These are the apostles. That word means “sent ones”. Jesus has these twelve apostles and a few more mentioned in scripture but these, and Paul, are the only apostles. There are no apostles now. The many others who followed, and believed, were disciples. You and I are disciples.

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

These twelve have three functions: to be with Him, to be sent out to preach, and to share Jesus' mastery over physical and spiritual disorder. This new group, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, constitute the foundation of His New Testament church when they receive the Holy Spirit just before Pentecost.

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

Verse fifteen is the difference between apostles and disciples. We no longer have these powers personally but now operate through prayer. Jesus touched them and prayed over each of them, and His virtue flowed into these disciples. They were really just an extension of Him. They preached in His name, they healed in His name; they cast out devils in His name. The power came from Jesus Christ. Jesus touched the apostles and empowered them to minister. Do notice that these men were just ordinary, everyday people. The only educated apostle was Paul.

16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

From this point on, Mark uses this name for Simon. The name means "a small stone". This certainly describes Peter's character. He was "hard as a rock" on some issues but cowardly on others.

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

This name for the two brothers probably referred to their intense, outspoken personalities.

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

Thaddeus is the only name that is not the same in all the New Testament lists of the 12. Luke and Acts call him "Judas the son of James," and John 14:22 refers to him as "Judas (not Iscariot)."

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

We see here the chosen twelve. The Lord giving James and John this name, "sons of thunder", indicating that Jesus knew they both had the zeal and power to fulfill the great work He had for them to do. John, was very bold in announcing Jesus as the Word and as God. John 1:1, you all know

it."In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."This was also, the same John who was banished to the Isle of Patmos for speaking out so boldly for Christ. So many people wonder why Jesus chose Judas Iscariot. Jesus knew someone had to betray Him. He was obedient to the will of the Father even in choosing Judas as a disciple.

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

We see here, that the magnitude of the ministry was such and the needs of the people were so great that Jesus would not stop to eat or to rest His body.

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

Jesus' relatives evidently heard the report of verse 20 and came to Capernaum to restrain Him from His many activities and bring Him under their care and control, all supposedly for His own good.

"He is beside himself": Jesus' family could only explain His unconventional lifestyle, with its willingness for others always to impose on Him, by saying He was irrational or had lost His mind.

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

These scribes (ministers), of that day realized that Jesus was able to cast out devils, and they were not able to cast them out. They were grasping for some kind of answer why He was able to cast out devils. They even accused Jesus of being of the devil.

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

Notice , even though they were criticizing Jesus, they still came when He told them to. This speaking in parables was so only His followers would understand what He was saying. Not only how can Satan cast out Satan, but why would Satan cast out Satan? This was probably, the most ridiculous statement they had made up until now. Notice that Jesus did not deny that Satan existed. He just said that Satan and Jesus were on opposite sides.

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot

stand.

This was all saying the very same thing. Divide and conquer is just a simple way of saying this. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are opposites. If Satan started throwing his own evil spirits out of his victims, they would no longer be victims.

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

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

“He cannot stand” is an expression used only in Mark and it refers to Satan’s ultimate doom as head of the demonic world system.

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.

Verse 27 is figurative and is speaking of Satan. Satan is bound by the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ. We spoil his house by witnessing and leading people to Christ. Only Jesus has such power over the devil. The two things that Satan is the most afraid of are the name of Jesus and the blood of Jesus. This is what defeated him at the cross.

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

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

30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Let me say this first. Dr. Ruckman teaches that we can not do this in this age because Jesus is no longer with us in person. Now, we do know that, in this age, it is the sin of unbelief that sends one to Hell. But, in the case spoken of here, this is showing the minds of men who should have known better being closed, (or close-but-not-fit), to God’s presence in Jesus. The sin Jesus warns against consists in a deliberate and psychologically irrevocable spurning of God’s redeeming and cleansing power, going as far as to see in Jesus, the incarnation of a devil. Such a perverse heart cuts itself off from saving grace. There can be no reconciliation. God gives the guilty party over to that ruler whom the man has willfully chosen to elevate above the Son of God. It may also be that this sin can only be committed at

death when we reject Jesus Christ as our Savior and die in that state. Then we will have totally rejected the Holy Ghost. Whatever the case in all that, I would be very careful never to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

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

As we have said before, Jesus had at least six half brothers and sisters.

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

There are just some things I wish God had seen fit to include. Whatever happened to Joseph? No doubt he is dead by this point as we never see him included anymore. Always remember that Joseph was also chosen by God to raise His Son.

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

True Christian discipleship involves a spiritual relationship that transcends the physical family and is open to all who are led by the Spirit of God to come to Christ in repentance and faith. This whole scene was set up so that Jesus might teach us about the family of God. We are members of the family because of our faith in Jesus Christ.

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

All believers in Jesus Christ are sisters and brothers in the family of God. Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father, but we also are children of the Father through adoption. We have been grafted in to the tree. Jesus is our elder brother. Romans: 8:14: **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."**

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

This verse is one of the main reasons we call Christian brethren brother or sister. We are all members of the same family. Now, here's a thought for you. In addition to adoption, we are all related to Jesus through Adam. That is why He can be our kinsman redeemer.

MARK CHAPTER 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.

Again Jesus is teaching by the sea of Galilee. He has now gathered a multitude so large that He must teach from a ship so He can be heard above the noise of the crowd.

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

Jesus employed parables to conceal the truth from unbelievers while explaining it to His disciples. "Doctrine", as used here, refers here to the act of teaching, as well as to the content. Doctrine is not just teaching in general but teaching what you are supposed to believe from the book.

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

Jesus is the sower here. "Hearken" means give this your full attention.

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.

Four types of soils are mentioned here causing some to refer to this as the parable of the soils but Jesus himself refers to it as the parable of the Sower. The four soils represent the four types of people who hear the gospel. "By the way side": indicates either a road or a path around the field, both of which are hard surfaces due to constant traffic. Satan is depicted as the fowl of the air. Satan has come to steal and destroy the Word. In scripture demonic beings are often depicted as "birds".

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:

This is rock lying under the surface of good soil. They are a little too shallow to allow a plant to develop a decent root system in the small amount of soil that covers them.

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

This the type of person who gets a “religious attack” and goes down front and makes big commitments to God. A short time later he falls by the wayside. He is on fire for God for a few days then turns back to the world.

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

I see this as the man who hears a good presentation of the gospel but then is pulled away by cults and false doctrine. We see this a lot with new converts.

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.

Here is the man who receives, and believes, the truth. These are fruit bearers who tell others of Jesus. Some of them just get a few saved, but some of them get hundreds saved.

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

Jesus was telling them here, to open the ears of their understanding. These messages in parables are not for the world to understand, but are to be understood by us with the help of the Holy Spirit.

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

Notice that this was more than the twelve who were with Him. There were others who accompanied Him, both men and women. None of the other societies allowed women to participate but Jesus did .

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, all these things are done in parables:

There it is again. These parables are to be understood by those close to Jesus and not by the multitudes. The Lord puts a division between those close to Him and unbelievers.

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 their sins should be forgiven them.

This is a quote from Isaiah 6: 9-10. which concerns the temporary rejection of the nation of Israel. This quote is important enough that it is given five times in the

New Testament. The nation of Israel is now spiritually blinded and will remain that way until the Second Advent.

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

This parable of the Sower is given as a pattern for understanding the other parables. Every detail of a parable has an exact meaning.

14 The sower soweth the word.

Jesus Christ is the Sower and the seed is the Word.

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 Word of God never varies. The difference in the results comes about by those who hear the Word. We see here, in the first instance where the fowls eat it up.

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

This is an emotional , yet superficial response to the gospel. The stony ground indicated a shallow person. He received the Word and may even come forward for salvation, but soon falls back into the world.

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.

Because the person's heart is hard, like the rocky ground , the gospel never takes root in the individual's soul and never transforms his life, there is only a temporary, surface change. To put it in "redneck",this person is never born again.

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

In the this instance, the thorns indicate that this Word sown goes into an area that is close to the world and yes,this can be many of the modern churches. This person, instead of coming out of all this worldliness, gets caught up in it and importance in the community. This may well be many really "good" people who believe they are doing everything right,yet are mislead, and on their way to Hell for eternity. That is the biggest problem today. A lot of really good people are going to wind up in Hell and a lot of horrible Independent Baptist will wind up in Heaven. That may not seem fair but it's not how good,or bad,you are that affects

ones salvation. What matters is what you did about God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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.

That phrase “deceitfulness of riches” is the key.: Not only can money and material possessions not bring the lasting happiness they promise, but they also blind those who pursue them to spiritual things. These things become more important than studying the Word. This person is finally overcome with the desire for worldly things. None of these people above produce any fruit for God.

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.

Believers, in contrast to unbelievers, hear God’s Word because the Holy Spirit draws them. They “accept” it, they understand and obey it because God opens their mind and heart and transforms their lives. The result is that they produce spiritual fruit. This is the person we all need to be.

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?

Christians are the bearers of the Light to the lost world. We must shine forth, not cover the Light the Lord has given us. Jesus was just making an example of how foolish it is to hide the Light of the world. This lamp symbolizes the divine Truth that is caught up in the person of Jesus Christ.

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

The purpose in keeping something hidden is so that one day it can be revealed. Much was hidden before Jesus came. Jesus has opened the way to God the Father for us. The Scriptures are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit of God. The hidden things of God are revealed through Jesus Christ.

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

Again, He was speaking of the understanding of man being opened. This was speaking of listening carefully and understanding.

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.

This has several applications. Be careful what you listen to. Dirty jokes, cursing, movies and tv shows loaded with sex, Your mind is like a super computer. What you allow in stays in. On the spiritual side, be careful not to allow man's church traditions to take the place of Gods' word. In this modern age most denominations (all?) are loaded with man made traditions which have nothing to do with the instructions given us by God. I will use an example in my own denomination. We have a preacher here in the South that is ,by far,the best preacher in the area. He can preach 15 minutes or two hours and everyone is hanging onto his every word. The problem is,he doesn't get to preach much. He wears jeans,flannel shirts and suspenders instead of the “approved” dress of conservative suit and tie. This goes right along with “you must belong to this denomination to be saved”,”you must be baptized to be saved”,”you must pray to Mary”etc. All that is man made stuff and is NOT bible.

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.

This same thing is taught in Matthew 25:14-30,the Parable of the Talents (Jewish) and in Luke 19 the Parable of the Pounds (Gentile). As you use your personal abilities for the Lord then more ability will be given to you. This has now been said in more than three places. The Holy Spirit intends for us to “get” this.

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

This is just saying that the knowledge God has given you must be used. When you have memorized scripture,bring it back to mind occasionally or, pretty soon you couldn't remember it even if you tried. If you use it frequently, then you will add more and more to it all the time.

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

Keep in mind that the “seed” is the word Of God. If you are faithful in spreading the word then there may well be many results of which you are never aware. You influence people both by what you say and the life you live. If you are a Christian others are watching you.

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

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

When the grain is ripe, the sower must harvest the crop. There are two possible interpretations of this parable. It could be referring to the entire scope of the kingdom, from the time Jesus sowed the gospel message until the final harvest in the future. Or, and more likely, this pictures the gospel working in individual lives. After the gospel is presented, the Word of God works in the individual heart, sometimes slowly, until the time when God reaps the harvest in that individual, (saves him).

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

This is a good definition of a parable. It is a comparison. Like and as are the two best words for understanding the bible.

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:

There are two ways to consider this. One, the obvious way is from one man, Jesus Christ, to millions of Christians today. This has been done by one on one witnessing and preaching of the gospel. The next one we will consider with verse 32.

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.

One can hardly miss the comparison to Nebuchadnezzar's tree as well as the reference to "fowls of the air". Birds, in scripture, often refer to demonic beings, aka unclean spirits. If we look at it this way then Christianity has grown from the Lord Jesus Christ, and has proceeded along two paths. Path number one is a smallish, as compared to the other, group of true, dedicated Christians. Path number two is a huge religious monstrosity whose branches are loaded with demons. I am not speaking here of any particular denomination but rather of that huge body of "make believe" "Christians" making up the congregations of most denominations.

33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

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

Jesus is still speaking to the multitudes in parables and giving the explanation to His disciples in private. There were many things that Jesus wanted to say to both

his disciples and to the multitude that they were just not ready to hear yet.

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

Jesus and His disciples were on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. To escape the crowds for a brief time, Jesus wanted to go to the eastern shore, which had no large cities and therefore fewer people.

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.

Be sure to notice the statement, "Let us pass over unto the other side" In verse 35. That is a direct promise that they would make it to the other side. This is why He chides them for their lack of faith in verse 40.

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

This lake is about 690 feet below sea level and surrounded by hills. This was a storm so severe that it took on the properties of a hurricane. The disciples, used to being on the lake in the wind, thought this storm would drown them.

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?

He is "dead tired", so tired that he is sleeping through the storm.

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.

Storms normally subside gradually, but when Jesus gave the order, the natural elements of this storm ceased immediately. Jesus is in total authority over everything in this world. Land, sea, air, and under the earth, as well. When He speaks, the elements must obey.

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

The point he is making is that they had no need to be fearful if they had just believed what he had said.

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?

He is the Creator, that's who he is.

MARK CHAPTER FIVE

1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

This would be the area near the city of Gadera on the south side of the Sea of Galilee.

2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

Like most insane people, this man was not only harmful to others, but to himself as well. As with many insane people of our day, his was a spiritual problem. Unclean spirits had entered into him, and now, they were in total control. Evil spirits can not enter a person uninvited but the invitation can be something of which the person is unaware. Things like playing around with magic, ouija boards and such are one means of entry. I once heard a preacher say that watching demonic movies on TV was like opening a window and inviting them in.

3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

These tombs are carved out of the limestone rock and most were about 20 x 20 feet and, more or less, square.

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

This is superhuman strength supplied by the demons. Imagine the strength required to break chains. Apparently there were friends or family that cared for this man. They had tried to restrain and “tame” him.

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

Self destruction is one of the signs of demonic possession. There is no hope available for these people, aside from Jesus Christ. Many end up as suicides, Many insanity victims are actually possessed by demons.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

Don't miss the word “worshipped”. Demons have no alternative when in the presence of Jesus Christ.

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus,

thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

Be sure to notice that this demon knows with whom he is dealing. All demon spirits recognize Jesus and know that their time is limited. Demons know the Son of God even if most men do not.

8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

Notice that our Lord first speaks as if the men were oppressed by a single demon only. It is when the man answers that we learn that their name was Legion.

9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.

Legion refers to a Roman legion and can be from four thousand to six thousand men. This may have been an arrogant boast by the demon but more likely refers to a very large number of evil spirits inhabiting the man. This is born out by the number of pigs Jesus sent them into.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

The demons wanted to remain in the same area where they had been exercising their evil powers. This is a strange thing about demons. These unclean spirits do not have bodies; they try to find a body that will be willing for them to enter, so that they may use the body for their sensual pleasure.

11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

The owners of these swine must have been Gentiles since Jews have nothing to do with pigs. One of the dietary laws forbid the Jews to eat pork. God had a good reason for this law. Pigs often carry the disease trichinosis. This is not a real concern for us today since cooking at high temperatures kills the disease.

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

They asked for it and they got their wish. In the next verse we are about to see Jesus play a huge joke on the demons.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

So Jesus sent the demons into the pigs and then sent the pigs into the sea to drown. The demons wind up without bodies anyway. I feel that these demons lived since I can find no place ,in scripture ,where a spirit ever dies. If that is the case then all of those evil spirits alive in Jesus earthly ministry are still alive,and working today.

14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

These owners had just lost a great deal of money when those pigs went for a swim. Imagine how fast this story would spread

15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

Fear that came upon these men was because the power of God had come among them, and they did not know what to do. Here, they saw the man who just an hour earlier was insane, and he was totally restored to his sanity and was worshiping Jesus. People fear what they do not understand.

16 And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.

17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

The local citizens asked Jesus to leave their region, out of fear of suffering further financial losses, though His presence might have brought them additional blessings and their sick more healing.

18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

Jesus was referring to Himself as God who controlled both the natural and the super-natural worlds. In other words, "go and witness".

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

There had been a miracle, and these people could not deny it. It was only up to the man to tell them who did it and how He did it. Here we see in effect, a person giving his testimony to those who know just how bad it had been. Now they would

be more receptive of Jesus. There would be no question who He is and that the power of Almighty God brought this miracle about.

21 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.

The people were aware that Jesus would return here and were awaiting Him. It didn't take long for a crowd to gather.

22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

This Jarius has faith that Jesus can heal his daughter. The daughter does not necessarily have the faith to be healed. Keep instances like these in mind when someone says a person must have faith to be healed. The book of James tells us that it is prayer that brings healing. The one praying must have the faith.

23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

24 And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

As soon as Jesus stepped out into the street, the people pressed Him. The word had traveled far and wide that Jesus was healing and doing miracles. Do notice that the people came to Jesus because of the miracles and healing, not because of faith or belief that He was the Messiah.

25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

Luke the physician, suggested the woman was not helped because her condition was incurable. This same account of this woman's illness in Luke said that she had spent all of her money trying to find a cure. This had been going on twelve years and she had given up on help from the physicians.

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up.

;and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

The instant she touched Him, she was healed. The woman's faith in Jesus' healing powers was so great that she believed even indirect contact with Him through His garments, would be enough to heal her. She felt unworthy for Him to touch her since she was a Gentile woman; but she felt if she might just touch His garment, she would be healed. Her faith was great. Perhaps the delay was so Jairus' daughter would be dead, and Jesus would show His power to resurrect the dead.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

This is so interesting, because so many touched Jesus physically; they were pressed all around Him. Only one touched into His healing power. Her touch was a touch of faith, knowing within herself that one touch would make her whole. This touch was an act of faith and that is what it took to activate the healing.

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

The disciples are annoyed at the delay but Jesus wants this woman to publicly proclaim the miracle.

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

Her bleeding rendered her "unclean" according to Jewish law. She ought not to have been mixing in the crowd, let alone reaching out purposely to touch a man. Romans 10:9 says we not only must receive Jesus in our hearts, but confession with the mouth is made unto salvation.

34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

Jesus has intentionally let the time pass in which He might have saved the girl's life. There must be an impossibility before there can be a miracle.

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

Jairus was a high official in the synagogue. Jesus reminded him not to doubt, but believe. This was asking a very difficult thing in the sense that in the flesh she was dead.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

This is the first time Mark gives special status to these 3 disciples. Scripture never explains why these men were sometimes allowed to witness things that the other disciples were not, but these three did constitute an inner circle within the 12. Here again, we see these three chosen out for special things. If Jesus had favorites, these three were them. These three were about to see in action that Jesus had power over death.

38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

Professional mourners would be already singing and raising Cain. The mourning had already begun. Jesus saw all of this crying and commotion in the house.

39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

Imagine mocking the Creator but it happened again at His crucifixion. This reaction, indicates the people were convinced of the irreversible nature of the girl's death and underscores the reality of the miracle Jesus was about to do. "Put them all out" was an emphatic, forceful expulsion which showed Christ's authority and was done because the disbelieving mourners had disqualified themselves from witnessing the girl's resurrection.

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

Mark is the only gospel writer who recorded Jesus' original Aramaic words. "Talitha" is a feminine form of "lamb," or "youth." "Cumi" is an imperative meaning "arise." As in other such instances, Jesus addressed the person of the one being raised, not the dead body

42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

Imagine the astonishment of the group, that had just been mocking Jesus, when this “dead” girl walked out of her room.

43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

On the surface this is an odd command. Christ did not want news of this to spread until after He had left the area. Also, Jesus was no doubt concerned that the girl and her parents not be made the center of undue curiosity and sensationalism.

MARK CHAPTER SIX

1 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

Jesus is now headed back to Nazareth to try, once more, to minister there. He has never been well received in his own country. This will be his last attempt to minister there.

2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

There is a little bit of false teaching that surrounds Jesus and the sabbath. Some teach, incorrectly, that he only taught and/or healed on the sabbath. He both taught and healed when the opportunity presented itself. He did sometimes heal on the sabbath to make a point with the religious leaders.

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

There is the problem in a nutshell. He is just the carpenter's son, one of us. Be sure to notice here that Jesus had four half brothers and at least two half sisters. One large denomination teaches that Mary was a “perpetual” virgin. Obviously she was not. Mary led a normal married life after the birth of Jesus.

4 But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

It is always easier, and more effective, to witness to others than to close friends and family. The friends and family know where the warts are.

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

Jesus has not suddenly lost his ability to do miracles. Here he was restrained due to their unbelief. Without faith, very little healing went on.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

Jesus was amazed at Nazareth's reaction to Him, He was not surprised at their unbelief, but faith should have been the response in that town in Galilee. God does not force Himself upon anyone. Our free will gets involved in anything we receive from God.

7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

They go out in pairs and that is still a good practice today. Notice that Jesus has given them power over evil spirits. There were a great number of evil spirits around at that time and since spirits do not die they are still around today. Think of devils, (plural), as lieutenants of Satan. Satan is restricted to whatever location he happens to be in at the time. That said, he has plenty of help.

8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:

The "staff": is a stick, which provides protection from criminals and wild animals. "Scrip" is a bag like a knapsack.. "Purse" is a money belt. They were not to carry things with them to live on but were to be completely dependent on God..

9 But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

Simple footwear and one tunic. In other words they were to identify with poor people.

10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

The disciples were to carefully choose where they stayed, but once there, they were to stay until their ministry was complete.

11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

I always smile when I read this verse. I have actually seen both Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses do this after a few minutes of "witnessing" to me. In the case

of true Christians it is a sign that they are “finished” with a place, or person, and will not try again.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

Notice that they are still preaching the Kingdom gospel ,(repent and be baptized). This goes on until Paul is called.

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Notice the anointing with oil. This is still practiced by some denominations and while it is not necessarily wrong, it is no longer necessary. Now it is prayer that brings healing to the the sick.

14 And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

Imagine Herod's terror if he really believed this. This shows Jesus' fame to be so widespread that it reaches Herod's court but people still do not recognize Him as God's Son.

The context indicates Herod heard some exciting news centering on Jesus and resulting from the disciples' recent preaching and miracle working in Galilee. Herod was afraid of John the Baptist while he was alive, but he was more afraid now that he felt he was risen again.

15 Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

Some believe He was a Elijah, a prophet, or a teacher. But Peter had the answer when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". Immanuel, means God with us. God in the body of man.

16 But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

Herod's conscience had gotten the best of him, and he just knew this was John who had risen from the grave and was here to take revenge on him for the terrible death he inflicted on John by beheading him.

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

Herod had committed adultery and broken the Mosaic law. Mark's wording

implies that John had repeatedly rebuked Herod Antipas in private confrontation that his marriage to Herodias was contrary to Mosaic law

18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

We can see from this, that Herod feared John. Herod's interaction with John left him in a moral struggle between his lust for Herodias and the prodding of his guilty conscience.

20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Even though John is imprisoned he is able to witness to Herod and apparently Herod takes him seriously. As we go through this passage we see that not only is Herodias seeking revenge but she also fears John's influence on Herod. Most likely she fears she may lose her position.

21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

All of the people of high position are gathered for the party. A big show is put on in order to impress these people.

22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

Josephus gives us the name of this young girl as Salome. This dance is a solo and highly suggestive dance. It would be comparable to a modern striptease. It was unusual that Salome would have performed in this way before Herod's guests

23 And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

Herod had to be intoxicated to make an offer this foolish.

24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

Now Herodias gets her revenge against John. Herod would not have dared kill John except for this foolish promise to Salome.

26 And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

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

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

Can you imagine the scene in the banquet hall when John's head was brought in? Even in their drunken state the guests would have had to have been shocked. Picture in your mind, that head sitting on the platter. No doubt Herodias and Salome put on a good show of being shocked.

29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

It may seem horrible to some that Jesus would have allowed this to happen but think of the outcome. John's troubles were instantly over as the angels already had him in Paradise before his head hit the ground. 2000 years later John is in Heaven and I leave it to your imagination where Herod, Herodias and Salome are.

30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

They need some rest and seek out a private place. It is interesting that Jesus and the twelve were always looking for privacy in order to commune with God. Close communion is always done in private and in silence (no distractions).

33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

This must have been a place he had gone before otherwise the people would not have know where to go. I love that word "outwent". The people actually beat Jesus and the apostles to the place.

34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with

compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

Even though Jesus intended to rest and recuperate with the disciples, His heart was still moved by these people with such great needs. The people are helpless and lacking in spiritual guidance. There was no rest for the weary as He immediately began to teach.

35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

There are several interesting things here. First, this is so important that it is mentioned in all four gospels. Did they only have 200 pennies? In many places in the scriptures a penny was a days wages so this could have been a large sum. At any rate this is all the apostles could have done. It takes Jesus to provide for this multitude.

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

These loaves were probably round and about 5 or 6 inches across. We know nothing about the fish except that they were small and not catfish. At any rate this fed a multitude of probably 20,000 people.

42 And they did all eat, and were filled.

43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

I suppose it's just me but I have always wondered who got the twelve baskets of leftovers. I hope the lad with the loaves and fishes got to take one home. Dake

says these were wicker baskets that held about two gallons. Jews used these to carry food so they would not have to eat Gentile food when traveling.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

This is where I got that 20,000 figure. That would have included women and children.

45 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

Jesus and the apostles were tired before this event so by now they were exhausted. Some believe that since Jesus was God that he would not get tired but He was also human and the human side got just as tired as you and I.

46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

He is still trying to get some alone time with the Father. One thing that is overlooked today is that alone time with God is important. We sometimes need to just sit still and listen for the Holy Spirit. At the frantic pace we live today most people will just not take time to pray alone. If the Lord Jesus needed to pray, think how badly we need to pray.

47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

Jesus would show them and ,by extension,us that our strength is not in ourselves, but in Him. They were rowing as hard as they could trying to make it to the other side. We are struggling with the trials of this life trying to somehow make it to the other side.

48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

Put yourselves in the place of these apostles and sailors. They were scared to death to see a ghost walking across the water.

51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

Notice that it says, "the wind ceased". Jesus has total control over the forces of nature. It is also good to keep in mind that God uses weather as one of his means of judgment.

52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

In other words, it should not have seemed amazing to them that He controlled the sea since they had just witnessed the miracle of feeding the multitude.

53 And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him,

55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

This brings to mind the woman with the issue of blood. Even something as simple as touching Jesus' garment is enough to heal the sick.

MARK CHAPTER SEVEN

1 Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

Here they come again. These people are not coming to learn anything but, rather, to catch Jesus in some error. This was an official delegation of religious leaders coming to evaluate the ministry of Jesus. We sometimes still have these today but now they are called bible changers.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

Understand that these rules were not part of the Mosaic law but had been added, by the religious leaders, over the centuries. These are man made rules. We still have this today in one form or another. Think, "you must keep these seven sacraments in order to be saved". Man made. "You must be baptized to be saved". Man made. My personal favorite, "you must have the evidence of other tongues to be saved". That sounds so scriptural but it's no where in the bible. Man made.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

See that word "tradition"? If you ask about any of those things I mentioned about the last verse you will, no doubt, be told it's church tradition. What that means, in English, is man made.

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

I will use my own denomination to show how these rituals can slowly creep in. Here are a few examples that seem harmless enough. Only King James bibles can be used in this Church/pulpit. At least that is a good tradition and one that seeks to protect God's Word. How about this one? Only people who wear steel rim glasses and white, long sleeved shirts can

preach from this pulpit. That one is too ridiculous for words but I have heard of it. A suit and tie must be worn to preach in this pulpit. Maybe that one starts with good intentions but it's still man made and not biblical.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

We need to keep the things of God foremost in our gatherings. Sometimes we tend to ramble all over the place and leave God out of it. I personally like to hear a salvation message somewhere in the message. You never know who may need that and that is the main thing we are to teach and preach.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*.

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

These last four verses show nothing more than a crooked way to get around what the Lord had commanded. The commentators are divided on this but the bottom line of both sets is the same. One group says this is money promised to the priests (so, to God) and thus can not be used for God's intended purpose which was to take care of the aged parents. See

the irony in that one? Money promised to God but money that can not be used for God's intended purpose. The other group of commentators say that the money was actually given to the priests but was returned to the giver after the death of the parents, less a fee of course. Both turn out the same way.

14 And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and understand:

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

In other words, what we eat has no effect on us. This does not mean harmful things like drugs, tobacco and alcohol. There is another exception and that one is gluttony. Now on the other side of that teaching is the fact that things like evil thoughts, filthy speech etc. come from the heart and these do defile a person.

17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him;

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

Jesus enlarged on his point. We are defiled from the inside out rather than from the outside in. This is particularly true of man made things like traditions. God is much more concerned about what comes out from the heart than what goes into the stomach.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Just look carefully at that list of sins. Is there anyone here this morning that can say you have never done any of these things? You are lying.

Remember, thoughts count.

24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid.

This incident, beginning in verse 25, is one of the few times that Jesus is recorded ministering to Gentiles. By his own testimony he came to the house of Israel. The Gentile ministry started with Paul who, God said, was the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15).

25 For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

Falling at Jesus feet was a sign of both reverence and her grief.

26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs.

28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

Be sure to notice that one of the main ministries of Jesus, in all of the gospels, was the casting out of devils. It is worth keeping in mind that, since devils apparently do not die, they are still around today. A trip to Walmart should convince you of that.

30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

I am convinced that these devils are all around us today. It is a good thing we can't see everything going on around us.

31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Siodon, he came unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

Notice that this person is not devil possessed. Not all cases of this nature are devil caused. Some, perhaps most, are the result of birth defects or ordinary sickness.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

Notice that Christ did seven things here beginning with taking him aside.. The number seven ,in scripture, is always associated with completion or perfection.

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*;

Jesus did not wish to claim his Messiahship this early and bring on the controversy he knew would result.

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

MARK CHAPTER EIGHT

1 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

John never says whether Jesus was teaching or healing. Here he is simply showing the compassion Jesus feels for the multitude. Keep in mind that most of these present were desperately poor people. In our over fed society we tend to lose sight of just how hard it can be for some.

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

You can take this statement one of two ways. Either they have now run out of food and are hungry or they have had nothing to eat for three days. I'm going with the first idea. If they had been without food for three days many, perhaps most, would have left for home and food.

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

The disciples are shortsighted here. How do they not remember the miracles Jesus has already done?

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

Seven is the number of completion or perfection. In this case it is also enough. Notice here that Jesus seems to be asking the disciples how much they have. In other words he is asking them to give up their food this time instead of taking from the crowd.

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.

7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.

Did they hold back the fish until they saw him multiply the bread? Surely that's not it. How would you be able to hold anything back when standing in the very presence of the Lord?

8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.

The Greek word used here indicates a very large basket so the amount of food left was considerable. God never tells us what was done with the leftovers but the lesson is clear. You do not waste food.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

Jesus always sends us away full and satisfied. Some scholars argue that this miracle never happened. Their argument is that the disciples would not have forgotten his previous miracle, feeding the 5000. Beware the scholars. Even today Christians are quick to forget some of the wonderful things God has done for them.

10 And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

Here come the Pharisees again. They never learn.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

That is probably a sigh of disgust. These Pharisees want a sign that can not be mistaken. In other words something apocalyptic like angels appearing or the sun standing still. Jesus does not do this kind of miracle to convince unbelievers but confines his miracles to healing and helping.

13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

This leaven wasn't yeast as we use it today but a little bit of dough left from the last batch of bread. This would be similar to our sourdough. A tiny pinch of this ,over time, would leaven the entire ball of dough. This shows that just a little bit of sin will grow,over time,to become what we would consider gross sin.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

17 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

Jesus is cautioning the disciples against the ways of the Pharisees. These ways are sometimes seen today in "legalism" and in what Jesus referred to as the ways of the Nicolaitians. In redneck terms these are church leaders who see themselves as in positions of power over God's people. Think priests,cardinals and Poops in one large denomination, or the occasional "little dictator" in our own denomination. That,and living by man made rules rather than God's rules.

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

Just a gentle reminder that Jesus can supply anything they need.

22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 And 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 upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

This is a very interesting and unique miracle. It is the only time Jesus healed in “stages” His other healing was

always immediate. Why the spit? No reason is given but it could have been to wash some matter from the blind mans eyes.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

Jesus is still trying to keep a low profile. He already has so many people following that there is no peace for him or the disciples.

27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

The name, Caesarea ‘Philippi, tells us that it was not the same place as Caesarea on the coast. That was in the area ruled by Herod Antipas. Philippi was a city full of temples to Greek gods., The disciples were on the way to Jerusalem with Jesus. Jesus described himself as the Way to God and the term stuck as early Christians referred to their beliefs as “the Way”.

28 And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

The opinion that he was one of the prophets refers to a prophet who had come back to life. At this point no one, including his disciples, seemed to believe He was the son of God.

29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

Peter gets it but the others still doubt.

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

The Jews were expecting a king who would defeat their enemies. This person would lead an army and gain them freedom from Rome. Jesus did not want to encourage that belief, so he did not want them to say that he was the Messiah.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Jesus said that he 'must' suffer. He knew that his pain and death were part of God's plan. We tend to focus on the physical pain, but the most intense pain for Jesus was the mental suffering as the worlds sins were placed on Him.

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

Peter suffered from foot-in-mouth disease. That said, one has to give him credit for intensity and loving the Lord.

33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

Notice that Jesus speaks directly to Satan. This leaves us with a small dilemma. Is Peter indwelt by Satan at this time or is Satan influencing him from the outside. Realize that Peter is not exactly a Christian at this time, that comes with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

This is a general call to anyone in the crowd who might follow him. Jesus did not offer people an easy life. He did not try to persuade people to follow

him like that. A disciple must forget his own wishes if he wants to follow Jesus. These same things are equally true today.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Consider what this is saying. If it were possible to place all of the worlds wealth,gems,gold,silver,property,etc in a pile one soul would be worth more than that. Keep that in mind the next time you are tempted to skip witnessing to someone.

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

If that generation was sinful and adulterous,how much more is that true of today.

MARK CHAPTER NINE

1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

Those within hearing assumed that Jesus would set up the kingdom,that is get them out from under the Roman yoke,within their lifetime.

2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

Peter,James and John were the “inner circle”. They were with him at the raising of Jarius daughter and at Gethsemane. The mountain referred to here is unknown.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

A fuller was one who made cloth thicker or whitened it by the use of lye. This was done on a lot of ground set aside for that purpose as the continuous use of lye rendered the ground unsuitable for growing crops.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

Pay attention here. Elijah had been taken alive into heaven but Moses had died nearly two thousand years earlier and his body had long since decayed. His soul is apparently brought up from Paradise since the OT saints had not yet been given resurrection bodies. The point is, he has a body and he wears clothes so we can take from this that our souls will have bodies. There are other scriptures that support this.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

Notice that it is Peter who is speaking. As usual he gets it wrong. The other two are apparently speechless. What Peter suggests is from a good motive, but if God had allowed it men would still be going there to worship three useless little buildings. Before we move on, realize that Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets. Both of these are now replaced by grace. What Peter said was foolish because he put Jesus on an equal level with Elijah and Moses – one tabernacle for each! But Jesus isn't just another Moses or Elijah. Jesus is the Son of God.

6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

Being in the presence of God's glory isn't necessarily a pleasant experience. In this case it made the three disciples very afraid-terrified might be a good word to describe their state of mind.

7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

This particular cloud is evidence of God's presence. He(God) speaks audibly many times in scripture.

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

Moses and Elijah have gone back to Heaven and the cloud has disappeared. As to why Jesus charges them with telling no one, we can only speculate. First, it probably would not have been believed and second, if it were believed it would only increase the crowds around them. Keep in mind that most were coming for the miracles and not because they believed Jesus was the Messiah.

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

Jesus has now told them several times that He must be killed and come back to life after three days. They just do not understand and though Jesus is telling them directly they do not seem to believe it.

11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

This prophecy concerning Elijah is concerning the second coming.

12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.

Again Jesus is hinting at his death.

13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Here Jesus is speaking of John the Baptist. Jesus has said John has come, “in the spirit and power” of Elijah

14 And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

This is the same multitude that follows Jesus and his disciples ,in order to witness the miracles that he does. We know from other scriptures that Jesus and the apostles had very little quiet,alone time.

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

That is,an evil spirit that does not speak. It was believed by the Phaisees that these could not be cast out because you first had to learn the demons' name before he could be cast out.

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

The boy displayed signs that many would regard as epilepsy, but Jesus realized that they were caused by demonic possession. It may well be that some today who have similar symptoms are actually demon possessed.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

Apparently this was a seizure more violent than the usual. Let me say this,we still have every one of these evil spirits with us today. As far as we know,spirits do not

die so every one of them is still here. Satan has locality so can not be everywhere at once. He does have plenty of help though.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

This is a puzzling verse for me. Why would the evil spirit wish to destroy the body it was using? We know from other scriptures that demon spirits desire a body for their use. Remember the herd of swine? That said, this particular spirit wanted to destroy the body it inhabited.

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

At least a little faith is required

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

There is a huge lesson for us right here. "help thou mine unbelief".

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

The disciples had tried this but were unsuccessful. This demon required extra power to control and the disciples did not have it at this time. I assume that after they received the Holy Spirit, just before Pentecost, they would have had the required power.

26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

I wish Jesus had seen fit to tell us what he did with this evil spirit once it came out. Notice the demon took his sweet time coming out even after Jesus gave the command.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

Apparently some demons are more stubborn than others. The bible hints at different levels of demons so it isn't unreasonable to think that some ranks might be more powerful than others.

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Again, this proves that there are different kinds of devils(demons).

30 And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it.

He bypassed the larger cities. Jesus is still trying to avoid crowds. He and the apostles have very little time for themselves. Time for themselves translates into time to be alone with God.

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

Notice that he plainly tells the disciples that they will be killed. They do not “get it”. This has to be supernatural blindness from God. This is his third announcement of this fact.

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

This is still the most important thing in some religious circles today. Obviously they were embarrassed to admit this to Jesus.

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

By sitting down, Jesus showed that he was going to teach. The Rabbis sat to teach and often, the pupils stood. That would not go over well today. Jesus deliberately took up the position of a Rabbi teaching his pupils before he spoke.

36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

In that day it was understood that children were to be seen and not heard. We are to accept Jesus in childlike faith.

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

Like many scriptures this has a double meaning. First, it means just what it says concerning small children. It also applies to the nation of Israel during the coming tribulation. Those nations that treat Israel well will go in as the “sheep nations”. I will go further and say this probably applies, also, to our treatment of individual Jews.

38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

OK, this isn't going to be popular but I will go ahead and say it. We are not to condemn Christians of other denominations. I'm going to have to name names here. If a person, say, is a Pentecostal or Methodist, or even a Catholic, and a born again Christian then we accept and even help them. That comes with a caution. It does not mean we accept their doctrine or join with them in fellowship.

Furthermore, some of their leaders, especially Catholic and Church of Christ leaders are going to Hell. I base that on Galatians chapter one verses 8-9. Be sure to note that those verses condemn the pastors and teachers and not the hearers.

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

I often think we fail our "little ones". Little ones here refers to new Christians. Unless we immediately take them under our wing and teach them, then someone, under Satan's influence, will draw them away.

42 And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

There were two types of millstones used in those days. One was a small one used by the women and one was a larger one turned by a donkey. It wouldn't matter which one you used the outcome would be the same. Think concrete block.

Anyway, think both small children and new Christians. You certainly do not want to be the reason either of these fall away.

43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Now, notice here that Hell is not "separation from God". It is a place of torment where the fire never stops. Think a strip of bacon sizzling, in a frying pan, forever.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

That phrase, "where their worm dieth not" has now been used twice. The Holy Spirit means for you to dig here. Dr. Ruckman teaches that a lost person's soul becomes a red worm and that worm cooks forever. Even if that's true, we know that this worm can see, feel and speak as well as has memory. You do not want to go there.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell

fire:

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

That worm has now appeared three times. That's the Holy Spirit's red flag.

Whatever it is, it is the real consciousness and life of the individual that goes into eternal torment in an everlasting fire.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Every sacrifice, under the law required salt, so the living sacrifice must be seasoned with suffering and tribulation. Another interpretation could be that the Holy Spirit seasons us as followers of Jesus and adds "flavor" to our lives.

MARK CHAPTER TEN

1 And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

This is the very border of Judea and yet the people still follow him.

2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

There were two opposing factions concerning divorce and remarriage. One followed the Mosaic law and the other side considered it wrong to remarry after divorce.

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

Women had a tough time in those days. The husband could put her away for any reason. The divorced woman was then no longer considered marriage material and either returned to her father's house or remained alone.

6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

This is a good one for the homosexual crowd.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

Notice that it does not say the woman leaves her family. Even today women tend to stay closer to their families after marriage.

8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

Listen up; God now considers you one. It's not too much of a stretch to say that God now holds each accountable for the actions of the other partner.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

So, if the marriage is between two believers then an interloper would be on dangerous ground. I'm speaking of another person trying to come between husband and wife for whatever reason. That would include such things as adultery and the meddling of family members.

10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

Now, be sure to notice that the sin is singular. A Christian should never divorce except for adultery or fornication. Otherwise, live with it. Now, for those who are physically abused, it never says you can't have the offending partner arrested.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

It works both ways. What applies to the man also applies to the woman.

13 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

This has two sides. It applies to children of course but it can also be applied to new Christians. We are to handle them very carefully. I might also mention that we need to guard them. Other denominations will try to pull them away into false doctrine

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Even today children readily accept Jesus. It says something about Jesus that children loved Him and that He loved children.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Children can receive the blessing of Jesus without trying to make themselves worthy of it or pretending they do not need it. We need to receive God's blessing the same way.

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Now we switch to an adult with good intentions.

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

The title “good master” was never applied to other Rabbis in Jesus’ day because it implied sinlessness. There is no instance in the Talmud of a rabbi being addressed as Good Master. Only God was called “good” by ancient rabbis.

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

This story must be understood in the light of the Jewish attitude toward riches. In Old Testament times riches were a sign of Divine favor but this is no longer the case. Remember Abraham David, Solomon and Job. All of these were blessed by God and were extremely wealthy. In New Testament times Jesus ministered mostly to the poor.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

This ruler said of himself that he had kept all these commandments, and that he has done so since his youth. This was impossible according to the true meaning of God for these commandments.

21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

His is putting wealth and possessions ahead of Christ. Notice that there six commands in this verse.

22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

In modern churches we tend to go to one extreme or the other. Either we put too much emphasis on caring for the poor or we place too much emphasis on soul winning and teaching. There should be a balance.

23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

It is because of their reluctance to part with their riches and use them for the glory of God. One other thing to consider is that rich people have no need to turn to God for provision. Their riches take “care” of them.

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

You see more garbage in the comments about this verse than most any other. Some insist that there was a small gate in the wall called the “Needles Eye”. That's nonsense. This is simply a figure of speech indicating that it is hard for the rich to trust God for everything.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

Notice that the disciples are still regarding riches as a sign of God's favor. It was hard for these ordinary working men to believe that God would not favor the rich over them.

27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

These disciples still don't get the fact that salvation comes through belief and faith. Earthly wealth has nothing to do with salvation.

28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

Peter's humanity is showing. There is a special honor for the disciples. They will have a special place in the judgment, probably in the sense of administration in the millennial Kingdom.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

There will be universal honor for all who sacrifice for Jesus' sake.

Whatever is given up for Him will be returned many times over

30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

This is obviously not literal or we would be receiving 100 wives and 100 mother-in-laws. Figuratively speaking, we will receive many times more than we can imagine.

31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

Here is the core of the matter. Spurgeon said” “In the final account, it shall be found that no man has been a loser through giving up anything for the Lord Jesus Christ though he has his own method of deciding who are to be first and who are to be last.”

32 And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he

took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

As they drew near to Jerusalem, the disciples sensed the danger of their mission. Jesus was a wanted man and yet he was going ahead of them. They were all afraid of the fate awaiting them all in Jerusalem. We sometimes don't think enough about the courage of Jesus. It took a tremendous amount of bravery for Him to walk straight towards His fate at Calvary.

33 Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

Delivery to the Gentiles reveals that Jesus will be held in contempt by his own countrymen, for the Gentiles are the last people to whom the Messiah of the people of God should be handed over."

34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Despite the continual declaration of His coming suffering, the disciples still thought that when Jesus got to Jerusalem, He would establish a political kingdom. James and John were asking for high positions in the coming earthly kingdom.

35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

They aren't bashful about asking. These two want the very best positions in the coming kingdom but they have no idea what they are asking.

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

Since both James and John still were under the impression that Jesus would set up an earthly kingdom they wanted to get their wish list in first. As it turns out both did suffer greatly and were martyred.

39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

They both suffered. James was the first apostle to be martyred. According to tradition, John was not martyred, but he survived an attempted murder by immersion in a vat of boiling oil. That last is not scripture but early church

tradition.

40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

It's hard for us to imagine but there was obviously some jealousy among the apostles. We need to remember that they were human, just like us.

42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

Real ministry is done for the benefit of those ministered to, not for the benefit of the minister. Many people are in the ministry for what they can get. Think TV most preachers

43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

We are to follow Jesus example and be servants to others. Think of all the Christians you know and how many of these are true servants? There are always a few, but just a few.

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

Watch this guy. He has true faith and plenty of it.

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

This is really a prayer of desperation. He is not going to be denied. Now, question. How do we know this man is Jewish? He addresses Jesus as "thou Son of David". That's a Jewish expression.

49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

This man knew what he needed from Jesus. He did not come thinking God owed him. All he wanted was mercy and his sight yet he received much more.

50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

This shows his anxiety to get to Jesus. He is casting away everything.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. He did receive his sight and something else with it.

52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

This man was saved and on his way to heaven. Jesus has now said he is made whole. You are not “whole” unless you are saved.

MARK CHAPTER ELEVEN

1 And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

Pay attention to this colt. It is the “type” of a lost man. It also shows another miracle. People do not allow their livestock to be taken away without a fight. Some commentators say that Jesus made prior arrangements but that is nowhere in scripture.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

This “lost man” is by a door where two roads meet. Christ is that “door” by which we come to God. One road is “broad” and that is the way taken by most people. The other road is “narrow” and is taken by few. How narrow is it you ask? It is the width of one man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

This is the miracle of which I spoke. No one allows their livestock to be taken away. God had obviously influenced this.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way.

They are rolling out the “red carpet” for Jesus and proclaiming him king.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

Hosanna means “save us now”. This is actually the second triumphant entry. See Mt 21:1 and 21:9. One has to wonder if these are the same people who cried “crucify him” two days later. And yes, Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, the day before a “high sabbath”. There is no “Good Friday”, just Wicked Wednesday.

10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

Here is the timeline; Sunday; Jesus enters Jerusalem, goes to the Temple, looks around and leaves both the temple and Jerusalem. Monday; Jesus comes back to Jerusalem, curses the fig tree, cleanses the Temple and leaves Jerusalem again. Tuesday; reenters Jerusalem, arrested, tried with all the torture that went with that. Wednesday; preparation for the Passover. This is the day the Passover lamb was killed and the day Christ was crucified. Jesus was taken off the cross before sunset so would have risen sometime Saturday evening. Remember that when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb at daybreak Sunday morning Jesus was GONE.

11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

It is interesting that Jesus is not shown spending a night in Jerusalem. He will enter, to stay, at the beginning of the millennium.

12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

This fig tree is a “type” of the nation of Israel. It shows man's righteousness without the influence of Jesus.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

Israel is now spiritually blinded (cursed) for the next two thousand years until the “times of the Gentiles is fulfilled.

15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

This is the second cleansing of the Temple. The other is found in John 2:13. Understand that these sellers were nothing more than thieves. If a man brought an animal for sacrifice the priests would declare it unfit and the person was forced to buy a high priced animal from them. This animal was probably the animal just condemned from the person just before them.

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

This is a strange one. The only thing I can guess about this is that he allowed no one to even take their merchandise. It was left where it fell. That may be totally off base and I am praying that God will give me some more light on this.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

This is prophecy fulfilled. See Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11. Isa 56:7 says this; “**Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.**”

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

Of course they wanted to destroy him. He was a threat to their power and income. These scribes and priests took their cut of the money made in this indoor flea market. Every Jewish male had to pay a temple tax usually equal to two days wages and his had to be paid in “temple money”. This is where the money changers could take advantage of the common people.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

Notice again that he has gone out of the city before sundown. As far as I can tell he never stayed in Jerusalem overnight. That is reserved for the Second Advent.

20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

This miracle is the result of prayer. He is encouraging his disciples to have this kind of faith. God certainly answers prayer but keep in mind that there are conditions to getting ones prayers answered, Faith is at the top of that list of conditions.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

This promise was made to the disciples and not to the multitude. Do not take this to mean that if we pray hard enough God will grant anything we ask. That could turn into faith in faith and not faith in God.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

You will not find this in the Pauline epistles. While it is not required for our salvation it is still an excellent rule to live by. Our salvation depends on accepting Jesus by faith. Romans 10:9 says it best;”**That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved**”. Notice that there are only two requirements and a conditional promise directly from God.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Again,not a requirement for our salvation but an excellent principle for our Christian walk.

27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

Here they come again. These scribes and Pharisees are slow learners. Jesus is more than able to handle them. This is really about throwing their little cash cow out of the temple.

29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

Jesus is not evading the question here. If they answered that John's message was from heaven then why did they not accept Jesus as their Messiah. See the trap he set for them here?

31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

These men were not sincere seekers of the truth but cared more about scoring points and in pleasing the crowd than in finding the truth.

33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

One can't help but wonder what would have happened if Jesus had told them where his authority came from.

MARK CHAPTER TWELVE

1 And he began to speak unto them by parables. *A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.*

In a day when title was sometimes uncertain, anyone who had had the use of land for three years was presumed to own it in the absence of an alternative claim. There are similar rules in America today but the time involved is seven years. Understand that with this parable we are speaking of the Lord, the prophets and His son Jesus Christ. God made the place so he gets to make the rules.

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

God expects fruit from his people. Fruit is usually thought of as souls saved but there are many kinds of “fruit”. Souls are probably the most important.

3 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled.

5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

This owner (God) was very patient. He sent messenger after messenger And all were abused or killed. This is an example of doubting, and mocking, God.

6 Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

This human believed they would treat his son with respect. In reality it is God giving the Jews one last chance. Both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ knew, in advance, what would happen.

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

8 And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

God the Son was the final messenger. There will be no others for this age. If you refuse the Son there are no second chances in Hell. It is hard for those of us who are saved to understand why any one would take a chance of spending a never ending eternity burning in the fires of Hell.

9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

These husbandmen were foolish enough to believe that if they killed the son the vineyard would be theirs. They had rejected messenger after messenger (the prophets). They are wrong of course. God will return and destroy them.

10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

I love this scripture because it is loaded. This rejected stone is the Lord Jesus and notice that phrase, "the head of the corner". There is only one building in which the cornerstone is also the headstone (capstone). That's a pyramid.

11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words.

These Herodians were followers of the family of Herod. They did not believe in the resurrection or in angels and devils.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?

They expected to be able to trap him with this question. Either way he answered would be wrong. As usual Jesus was several steps ahead of them.

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, **Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.**

These people are obviously slow learners. Whenever they try to trap Jesus he turns the question back on them.

16 And they brought *it*. And he saith unto them, **Whose is this image and superscription?** And they said unto him, **Caesar's.**

17 And Jesus answering said unto them, **Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.** And they marvelled at him.

Three taxes were imposed by the Romans. The land tax was 10% of all grain and 20% of fruit and wine. The second was the income tax which was 1% of a man's income. The third was a poll tax which was one denarius or about a days wage.

18 Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

OK, as said before, these did not believe in a resurrection, nor angels, nor devils. In other words, they were the major cult of that day.

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his wife behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

This is from Dt.25:5-6 and was a commandment from God. This seems strange to us today but then,we aren't stoning witches and queers either.

20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

This question is utterly ridiculous. Everyone knows she is a Mormon and has seven husbands in Heaven. Seriously,Jesus sets them straight with his answer. Now,this might be a good time to mention that some of the brethren believe there will only be males in Heaven. They base this on the scripture that says “**we will all be like Him**”. Think this through and make up your own mind. All I can say is,I hope there are women in Heaven. Nevertheless,His will be done.

24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

Jesus lowers the boom. These guys could quote scripture but did not understand it. Understanding requires the Holy Spirit.

25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

This scripture is sometimes used to push that damnable idea that the fallen angels of Genesis 6 were the “sons of Seth”. This scripture does not say

angels are sexless. In fact we see ,in many places, that they appear as young men.

26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the God spake unto him, saying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

Do not miss the fact that Jesus himself is saying that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, having died centuries ago were now alive and well in “Abraham's Bosom”..

28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

Do not get these commandments backward. Love of God always comes first. Notice also that this scribe only asked for one commandment but he got two.

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 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 thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

31 And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

This scribe's answer is right on the mark. A thousand offerings do not mean anything compared to love for God or a single act of love to another person.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, **Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.** And no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

When a man gets to this place of understanding he will not pay much attention to formality or outward show in worship.

35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, **How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?**

These religious leaders thought they knew everything about the Messiah but they really understood nothing.

36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Jesus is not only the son of David but the Lord of David as well. Jesus is now sitting at the right hand of the Father. One has to wonder, sometimes, why God doesn't pull the plug on this whole mess.

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

The scribes were in charge of keeping and studying God's word. As such the people should have been able to trust them. Here Jesus is warning the people not to trust them. There is a comparable thing today. Do not trust what I say or our pastor says or any other person teaching scripture. Check it for yourself. Humans make mistakes. Other than mistakes, some deliberate misinformation is put out there for the unwary. Think of Binnie, Joyce and Joel.

40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

Now, if you need a verse proving there are degrees of punishment in Hell, here it is.

41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

From this we see that it is not the amount one gives but the sacrifice attached to the gift.

43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, **Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:**

44 For all *they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*

How would you like to be the scribe that devoured this widows house when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ? If you need to know where that scribe might be look back to verse 40.

MARK CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, **Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!***

This begins the famous “Olivet prophecy” Jesus is telling his disciples of what will come in the Tribulation. It also has some application to the destruction of the Temple ,by Titus,in 70 AD.

I'm going to guess that this disciple mentioned was Judas Iscariot who was always obsessed with cost of things.

2 And Jesus answering said unto him, **Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**

This happened in 70 AD and will again during the Tribulation.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, These are the three of the “inner circle” and this time Andrew is included.

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

The disciples ask for a sign which is expected of the Jews. The signs were for the Jews and not for our age. Now we operate by faith. The last Christian who had signs as part of his salvation experience was Saul on the Damascus road. From that point it

has been faith (belief) only.

5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:

Believing in false christs will get you killed. I'm thinking of the examples like David Koresh (Waco), Jim Jones (Kool Aid) etc. Those are just two examples but there have been hundreds since the time Jesus walked those dusty roads of Galilee.

6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.

There have always been wars but they have increased tremendously in the past few decades. There are at least two new wars somewhere in the world each year. The US alone at this time, is fighting in at least 5 armed conflicts.

8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.

Earthquakes are increasing every year and are starting to happen in places we do not expect them to happen. We are having more, and stronger hurricanes and more and larger fires on the west coast. We currently have pestilence (Covid-2). About the only thing left is famine and some parts of the world even have that. I think that the famine referred to here will be worldwide.

9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.
It has now been published in all nations.

11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that

11 **And when ye shall see these things, flee to the mountains, that ye be not seen of them.**

This is obviously a tribulation verse but I wonder if it can be applied here when we begin to face these things as we soon will, given our new political climate.

12 **Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.**

Many Jews and new Christians will be martyred after the Rapture. I say “new” Christians because the old ones went out at the Rapture and so, no born again Christian goes in to the Tribulation period.

13 **And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.**

Again, an obvious Tribulation verse. In this age we do not have to “endure to the end”.

14 **But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains:**

This happens twice. Once in 70 AD when Titus offers a sow on the alter in the Temple and will happen again at the mid point of the Tribulation period. That time the Antichrist will offer something blasphemous. Some commentators say another pig and some say a human sacrifice.

15 **And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house:**

16 **And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.**

These verses indicate the speed with which the people have to run from Jerusalem to avoid death. NOTE to self. There is a lot that can be added here if time permits.

17 **But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!**

18 **And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.**

The Jews flee to Edom (Petra) where they are protected by God for the duration of the great Tribulation.

19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

This is the point when the “Great Tribulation” begins.

20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

OK, I'm not happy with this one. The commentators are all over the place. Dr. Ruckman ignores the shortening and concentrates all his effort on the word “elect” in the passage. I'm going to go with Dake on this. He says that the persecution will be shortened not the 1260 days. This also has problems since the verse says, “shortened those days”. Read it and leave it up to the Holy Spirit.

21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not:

22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

Jesus again warns of false christs. This is true today and will be true in the Tribulation. Many of these false ones preach a time for the tribulation to begin or say that we are already in it. We can all see the time is close; any extended time is pure grace to allow more people to come in before the horrific events Jesus described in the Great Tribulation.

23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

Don't miss the phrase “take ye heed”. It occurs four times in this chapter so the Holy Spirit means for us to get it.

24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

As the Tribulation draws to a close something is wrong with the

heavens. I see this as having two purposes. First, it is one more warning to the Jews who have survived this long. Second, it is probably God, who has a great sense of humor, taking a shot at Satan and his servants who occupy the heavens.

26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

When Jesus returns He will bring the saints, (His bride), with him. Then He will gather the surviving Tribulation saints from the four corners of the Earth. That last phrase is fascinating. Perhaps it's Old Testament saints still in Heaven or maybe dead astronauts out there somewhere.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.

The fig tree is used because it is predictable. The leaves appear and then summer follows. In the same way, when you see these signs, the abomination of desolation, you can date the end.

30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

Now immediately you have the problem of how long is a generation. The scripture gives five different lengths of a generation. These are 33, 42, 70, 80 and 100 years. Three of those "generation lengths", have already passed so that leaves only the last two.

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Did you get that? His words, plural, shall never pass away. This is why each individual word in scripture is important. You do not change one and you do not leave one out.

32 But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the

angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Notice that even Jesus, at the time he says this, does not know the time of the Second Advent. I suspect that he knows it by now.

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Since the disciples can not know the time of Christ's return they are given some commands. They are told to "take heed", "watch and pray", "watch for the master of the house" and again to "pray".

35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Though these comments were given to the disciples, they apply to us today as well. Consider them principles to live by.

MARK CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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.

two days after what is about to be mentioned the Passover would arrive; in other words, what follows occurred two days before the feast. On the day following the Passover commenced "the feast of unleavened bread," so called because for seven days only unleavened bread was to be eaten

2 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

There were within the walls of Jerusalem at this festival some two million people. There was the danger of uproar and bloodshed among the people, who for the most part took Jesus for a prophet,

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.

Let's deal with Simon first. Simon was a leper who had apparently been healed by Jesus. If he was not healed then no one would have been eating in his house. Now, who is the woman with the box of ointment? Most commentators say it was Mary the sister of Lazarus. Some say it was an unknown woman. Take your choice. The alabaster box is a type of limestone. Spikenard is an ointment made from an Indian grass, very aromatic and very costly. "She brake the box" simply means she broke the seal or cement that held it closed. The box itself was not broken or she would not have been able to pour the liquid ointment.

4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

There is little doubt that this was instigated by Judas. He was the disciple who "carried the bag" and he was overly concerned with money.

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.

The value of this box and ointment was equal to almost a year's wages so it was indeed valuable.

6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

This was a good work and so was acceptable to Christ. It was "what she could," and so most acceptable of all.

7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

He is again making a statement that he would be killed but the disciples never seem to pick up on this. She has no idea that Jesus is about to be killed and will have no part in anointing him for his burial but He lovingly regards it as done now.

9 Verily I say unto you that 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 has certainly come to pass. Everyone who reads the New Testament, or hears it preached, has heard of this woman and what she did.

10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11 And when they heard, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

Now we get to Judas. Remember that money obsession? He is selling out our Savior for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave.

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?

This refers to Tuesday evening which is when the Jewish Wednesday would begin. Remember that the Jews days went from sundown one day to sundown the next.

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.

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?

15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

Be sure to notice that Jesus technically eats the Passover on The day of Passover (day starts at sunset). This is important in keeping the timeline correct. There is no Good Friday. Jesus was crucified on Passover duh. Good Friday is Catholic garbage. You can not possibly get three days and nights between Friday sundown and daylight Sunday.

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.

The commentators amaze me sometimes. Some of them make up all sorts of scenarios where Jesus made prior arrangements with the householder. He probably did that at the same time he made the arrangements with the donkey's owner(sarcasm). The Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit have no need for prior arrangements.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

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.**

He disciples had heard many strange things from Jesus but this had to be right up there with the best of them. None of them suspected Judas and the idea that one of them would seek to have Jesus killed seemed absurd.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?

At first it seems strange that the disciples might have thought themselves capable of this thing. On further reflection, put yourselves in their position. If we are honest with ourselves we might well do the same with the right motivation.

20 And He answered and said unto t **It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.**

Jesus did not single out Judas, though Judas, sitting in the place of honor, would have been given the "sop". Since all the disciples dipped in the same dish this identified the betrayer as a friend. Now, in case any of you young ones don't know what a sop is, it's usually a piece of bread dipped in a bowl of something like gravy or soup. Here in the south we use biscuits to "sop" syrup.

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.**

The Bible isn't clear about the origin of Judas. Was he a normal human, later inhabited by Satan? Was he an actual offspring of Satan or, was he possibly a normal greedy, unbelieving human. We

do not know but we do know his destiny. We also know that he has "his own place" where he now resides.

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.

This is the prophecy mentioned in Mk14:22-25 being fulfilled except for that in verse 25 which will be fulfilled in the millennium.

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

Now, notice that ,for the New Testament Christian, the significance of the Passover has changed. Before, it was in remembrance of the flight from Egypt. Now it is in remembrance of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

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.

He will drink grape juice again in the Millennial Kingdom. To that, all I can add is ,even so, come Lord Jesus.

26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

We belonged to a church once that, after the Lord's supper, sang a hymn and went out without saying a word to anyone. They were then free to come back in and fellowship, or not. Some did not come back in and I assume they are still on their way to the mount of Olives.

27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I shall smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

Jesus has not yet celebrated a Passover in Heaven but is waiting for the saints to be gathered to him.

28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

This is another short term prophecy. He did indeed, go before them into Galilee.

29 But Peter said unto Him, **Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.**

I love Peter as he was the original "redneck". As weak humans we have good intentions but are not always able to carry them out. Peter was always getting both feet in his mouth but was still in the inner circle of the Lord Jesus.

30 And Jesus saith unto him, **even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.**

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.**

If someone harms the shepherd, the sheep do not defend him but run away. Have you ever stopped to think how unflattering it is that the Lord compares us to sheep? Yet, He is exactly right to do so.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, **Sit ye here, while I shall pray.**

33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

34 And saith unto them, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.**

Notice here that it is the Lord that began to be very "heavy". It's easy to think this applied to the three as we know they fell asleep.

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.

36 And he said, **Abba, Father, all things aree possible unto thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what thou will.**

Jesus had to pray alone. He knew that his death would happen soon. It is human nature to believe that Jesus was afraid of the physical pain he would have to endure. I believe it was the fact that he knew the sins of the world would be placed on him. Probably a combination of the two. He even asked God the Father to save him from his troubles, if possible. But Jesus did not choose to do the things that he himself wanted but obeyed God his Father completely.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready but the flesh is weak.

39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

Three times, Jesus came back to the disciples. When he returned the last time, he did not again ask them to pray. There was no time for them to pray. Judas was coming. Bad men would take Jesus away.

40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.

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.

42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

Judas had led many men into the garden. These men came from the important priests. This was the Temple Guard and they would have been well armed. We know from other gospels that the disciples asked Jesus if they should fight, indicating they were also armed. See also verse 47-that would be Peter.

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.

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.

Judas kissed him so that the men would recognize Jesus. Men often kissed their friends on the side of the face. So it did not seem strange that Judas did this to Jesus.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.

46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

We know from the other gospels that this was Peter. This is a good verse to use on those snowflakes who question why a Christian would go about armed. There is another good verse in Luke where Jesus ordered the disciples to arm themselves before going on their missionary journey

48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me?

49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

Jesus said that the men did not need to take him away by night. He taught all the people. He was not doing anything secretly. One of the other gospels tells us that all of the guards fell backward to the ground. That should have been more than enough to tell them to go home and leave him alone.

50 **And they all forsook him, and fled.**

There go the disciples and it does say all. Apparently some of them followed after, at a safe distance, as they led Jesus away.

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:**

52 **And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.**

Here is the infamous naked man in the garden. Many believe this was the young John Mark but no one really knows.

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.**

If we had we only the first three Gospels, we would believe that our Lord was led immediately to Caiaphas, and taken before the Council. But, in John's Gospel all this is cleared up, and a very important addition to our information is made. That's John 18:13

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.**

Peter is still afraid and following "afar off" but he does go into the courtyard.

55 And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.

This trial was completely illegal according to Jewish law. Actually they were accusing Jesus of being a terrorist who planned to destroy the Temple. Of course, Jesus had never said that.

56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

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.

They already knew that they wanted his death. But they had no proper reason to decide that. He had not done anything that was against the law. He had not taught anything that the Bible does not teach.

59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

Even the two sets of witnesses could not agree on the charges.

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?

Caiaphas and the other leaders wanted to say that Jesus had done this wrong thing. Then they would say that Jesus should die, but they had a problem. Nobody had ever heard Jesus say anything against God. There were some people who spoke against Jesus. Those people were saying things that were not true but they did not even agree with each other.

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?

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.

Here is another good verse to show those who claim that Jesus never said that he was the Son of God. None of these things

mattered. These people were determined to kill Jesus and did not care what they had to do, or say, to get that done.

63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

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.

One has to wonder what these people think today who tortured Jesus. How about Annas and Caiaphas the two priests who ran this show.

66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

Peter is soon to realize that he is very much human. But it was a dangerous place for Peter to be. People knew Peter. The girl soon recognized him. When he spoke, people heard him. He spoke as someone from Galilee speaks.

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.

69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

Peter's first problem was that he followed at a distance. If we distance ourselves from Jesus it is hard to take a proper stand for him. Next, Peter sat with the servants and warmed himself at their fire. Peter is now fellowshiping with the world instead of following the other fleeing disciples.

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 Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.

71 But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

72And 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.**

This noise caused Peter to remember Jesus' words spoken those words earlier that same night. Since then, Peter had already said three times that he did not know Jesus. At the last he realizes his sin and weeps because of it.

MARK

CHAPTER

FIFTEEN

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.

This is Wednesday morning, a high sabbath, the morning of the crucifixion and it is also the Passover.

2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it.

The Jews did not have power over their own country, so their leaders did not try to kill Jesus. Instead, they sent Jesus to Pilate. Pilate who ruled Judea on behalf of Caesar. They asked Pilate to decide what would happen to Jesus. In other words let Pilate be responsible for killing Jesus.

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

There is no begging, no pleading for mercy, or any of those things most humans would have been doing in this situation. Be sure to notice how uneasy Pilate is with this "trial". He wants to turn Jesus loose.

6 Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

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.

Pilate always wanted to feel powerful and important. That was why he liked to make someone free at Passover. He decided that he would make Jesus free. But the crowd asked for Barabbas. Barabbas had fought against Pilate's government.

8And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

9But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

10For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

There were times when the Jews disregarded this Roman prohibition against killing. One example is the stoning of Stephen. In the case of Jesus the leaders were afraid of the people and what they might do. They passed the buck to Pilate.

11But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12And 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?

Do not miss the irony here. Pilate is baiting the Jews by calling Christ "the King of the Jews". Little does he know that he is being truthful.

13And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

These people shouting for Jesus death are probably some of the same ones who wanted to make him King the previous Sunday.

15And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

16And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band.

Ironically, Jesus stood accused of the very thing he refused to do and that was taking a political stand against Rome.

17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,

They made a crown for Jesus. A normal crown is a beautiful thing but this crown was anything but beautiful. Most of us have seen replicas of the crown of thorns that was made for Jesus. The thorns on those things are several inches long.

18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

Don't you wonder how this bunch is going to feel at the Great White Throne Judgment? Every one of them that struck him, spit on him and mocked him will have to face him again someday and that day the bowing of the knee will not be sarcasm.

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.

It is impossible for us to really appreciate what torture Jesus went through on his way to the cross. The soldiers even pulled out his beard. The scripture says that he was unrecognizable. This is one reason Mary Magdalene and the two on the road to Emaus did not recognize the risen Savior.

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.

Simon was a man from Africa so probably a black man, not that that matters. At any rate, he had no choice in the matter. The Roman soldiers had to be obeyed. We have no idea who Rufus and Alexander unless they are the ones mentioned in Acts ch 19:33 and Romans 16:13.

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

He was nailed to the cross at 9AM and died six hours later at 3 PM.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

Keep in mind that Jesus was offered two drinks while on the

cross, once wine and once vinegar. Some commentators say this was offered as a pain killer. That makes no sense as the whole object of crucifixion was to inflict as much pain as possible.

24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

Some point to this as as gambling but it was not gambling. To gamble you must risk something in order to gain something. Now, don't think I am excusing gambling. Gambling is the sin of covetousness.

25 **And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.**

That's 9 AM

26 **And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

We know from the other accounts that this inscription was in three languages, Hebrew, Latin and Greek. No doubt this was Pilate's way of taking a potshot at the Pharisees.

27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

Have you ever considered how lucky that thief was that accepted Jesus Christ on that cross. Had he been any where else on earth he probably would have died and gone to Hell. So, he suffered some horrible torture that day but now is in Heaven for eternity.

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,**

30 **Save thyself, and come down from the cross.**

Death by crucifixion was death by torture. We need to know and appreciate just what Jesus went through physically while on that Roman cross. The victim's back was torn open from the scourging. Then that wound was torn open again as the clothes were stripped from him. They were torn open yet again as he was thrown down and nailed to the cross beam. When the nail was driven through the wrists it severed the large median nerve resulting in excruciating pain. In order to breathe he had to pull himself up on those nails and breathe in. The lack of oxygen

resulted in severe muscle cramps. Lifting the body for a breath also resulted in scraping the wounds on his back. Each effort to get a breath resulted in even more pain. When the victim became too weak to raise himself he died from suffocation. Now, in addition to all that he had the sins of the world placed on him causing even God the Father to turn away. That's what he did for you and me.

31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

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.

I can't help but wonder what these people thought one second after they died.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

This is darkness at noon. Not an overcast day and not a total eclipse but a thick darkness with a total absence of light. In other words, supernatural darkness.

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?

The ninth hour is 3 PM the time when the Passover lamb and other sacrifices were killed. Now, there is a lot of controversy over what language that was that Jesus spoke there. There were people near the cross who, no doubt, understood all three regular languages in use at that time. Regardless, The Holy Spirit tells us what he said.

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

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.

37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

Be sure to notice that Jesus was not killed by man but "gave up

the ghost”.

38And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

The fact that it was torn from top to bottom is significant. This was done to show that it was not done by man. It also shows that men can now approach God directly and not through a priest.

39And 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.

Could it be that this centurion was the first believer after the death of Christ? Just saying.

40There 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.

John 19:25 said these women stood by the cross. There is no contradiction here as the women could have come and gone many times during that long six hours he hung on the cross.

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.

There were many women who followed the disciples as they traveled around. This may well have included some of the wives of the disciples as well as others. Jesus was the first to include women in the fellowship. They have been major participants since that time.

42And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

43Joseph 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.

First, Joseph had to ask Pilate for the body. That was a dangerous thing to do, because Pilate might be angry but Joseph was a brave man. And he believed that God wanted him to bury Jesus. Joseph buried Jesus as people buried a rich man as had been prophesied in Isaiah.

44And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

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.

In the normal course of events Jesus would have been buried with criminals.

47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother of Joses beheld where he was* laid.

You get the idea that these women loved Jesus more than most. They are always present and Mary Magdalene was the first at the tomb that Sunday morning after the resurrection.

MARK CHAPTER SIXTEEN

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.

These women have proved themselves the most devoted followers of Jesus. Saturday night must have been a lonely, desolate time for them.

2 And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Daylight Sunday morning was the earliest they could visit the tomb.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

The other gospels mention other women with them. What size must that stone have been when six women believed they could not move it.

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

Understand that Jesus was “long gone”. He rose sometime Saturday evening. It should also be understood that Jesus did not need to have the stone moved. He was able to pass through the earth to Hell and back so certainly could have passed right through the stone. The stone was moved for the peoples benefit.

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.

Notice that this angel appeared as a young man. They always appear this way, and not as a woman with wings. The only place a woman with wings shows up is in Zech. 5:9 which says “ **Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold,**

there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.”

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.

Paraphrasing Dr. Ruckman here. “The best news mankind ever had came from a graveyard” That's absolutely true;”He is risen;he is not here”

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.

This is a strangely worded verse and it must have been done for a reason. Peter is separated from the disciples here. It is possible that Peter had lost his discipleship by denying Jesus and would not get it again until he “got right”. Notice that I said possible. Also it would have been discipleship and not salvation that he lost if that is true.

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.

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.

You will often hear it said that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. Nowhere does the bible say that. All we know is that she was possessed of seven devils.

Whatever she may have been it is apparent that now she is very blessed and a favorite of Jesus.

10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

Of course no one believed her. Would you? Now, Peter and John at least believed it enough to go and check for themselves.

12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

The disciples did not believe the testimony of the women and also did not believe the testimony of these two men. This verse also mentions that he appeared in another form here. It has been suggested that the men did not recognize Jesus because of the severe torture that he had gone through. I read it differently. The torture theory did not take into account that phrase “he appeared in another form”.

That says to me that they did not recognize him as he was in his resurrection body. It may well have been a combination of both.

13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

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.

The disciples had been told several times that he would die and be resurrected.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

This is not a suggestion but a command. Mission work is necessary in any Christian work. You either go yourself or you support those who do. I will recount a personal story here that bears on that. I belonged to a church once that fell on some hard times financially. The pastor suggested ,in the men's meeting,that we stop sending support. One old saint put it best;he said;”we will not stop missionary support. We will all dig a little deeper in our pockets and YOU WILL GET A JOB. We are here while our missionaries are on foreign fields and do not have the job option.” Now I firmly believe in pastoral support but ,in this case, the old guy was right.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Jesus did not say that the one who was not baptized was damned but the one who did not believe. If you look at John 3:18 you will realize that the one who does not believe is already condemned to Hell.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

I recommend that you not try casting out any devils. You may well get more than you bargained for. Instead,pray and let God handle it. Tongues have gone out with the other “sign” gifts. They are no longer needed as we now have the complete Word of God.

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.

Do not pick up the next rattlesnake you see crossing the road. The only example we have ,in scripture,is the apostle Paul picking one up by mistake. True,it did not hurt Paul but it will kill you.

19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Now,this is interesting. We know that Jesus is usually seated at the right hand of God . He did stand at the stoning of Stephen. Some say he stood to receive his martyr Stephen and some say he stood to return if they had accepted Stephen's

message. Take your choice. I believe it was for Stephen as God ,in his foreknowledge already knew they would not accept the message.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

It took a long time to get them moving. In fact,they hung out in Jerusalem until the persecution forced them out. The Jews,in their bigotry toward Gentiles,resisted until the Lord called Paul and gave him the ministry to the Gentiles. Notice that the “signs” went with them and continued until midway in Paul's ministry. The signs ended with the passing of the apostles.