

in heaven and on earth.

19 "Going, therefore, disciple all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age."

something that happens. When one is baptized, what happens is that he comes into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In teaching one to be a disciple, the prospect should be taught this before coming to the point of immersion. He must be taught that this is what will happen in the heavenly realm when he is immersed in the name of Jesus. **20 Teaching them to observe all things:** The love of the disciples must move them to respond to obedience of the commandments of Jesus (Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 4:19). Therefore, the teachings of Jesus have been perpetuated throughout history by disciples teaching disciples the commandments of Jesus (See comments 2 Tm 2:2). One of the principal teachings that the disciples were to teach is exactly what Jesus is teaching them on this occasion, that they go into all the world and make disciples of every ethnic group. **I am with you:** Jesus knew that they would go through tremendous persecution, even to the loss of life (At 12:1,2; see Mt 18:20; At 18:10). They must be confident, therefore, that they serve a God in whom they live, move and have their being (At 17:28). They will never be outside His presence. **To the end of the age:** The Greek word *aionios* which is used here and is translated "age" has reference to a predetermined period of time. It does not refer to that which is of substance, as "world." The disciples were coming to the consummation of the Jewish age (*aionios*), at the end

of which, God would terminate national Israel (See comments 13:39,40; 24:3). Their specific mission, therefore, was to preach the gospel to every creature in view of the fact that the end of national Israel was coming. This end would come in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed, thus marking the end of national Israel (See comments ch 24). In reference to the broader context of the disciples' teaching all things that Jesus taught them on this occasion, the end of the age would have a secondary reference to the end of our dispensation of time in which we now live. There is coming a time when the preaching of the gospel will not take place because there will be no need for such in the new heavens and earth that are to come after the final coming of Jesus (2 Pt 3:13). Therefore, until Jesus comes again, His commission is, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mk 16:16). The apostles were not personally and physically able to accomplish this commission in their lifetime. Therefore, it was through those they taught who went into all the world in their generation. It is our responsibility today to carry on with the great commission of Jesus. The world can be evangelized in every generation of the existence of the church if disciples will arise to the occasion to assume individual responsibility to preach the gospel. God did not give the church in any generation and impossible task.

The Gospel According To Mark

Author

John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, was the inspired writer of this New Testament document. John was his Jewish name and Mark was his Roman or Gentile name. He was possibly the son of Mary who was the sister of Barnabas (At 12:12; Cl 4:10). Barnabas, therefore, would have been his uncle. This may have been the young man who fled naked at the time of Jesus' trials (14:51,52).

John Mark journeyed with Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first missionary journey (At 12:25 - 13:1-13). However, for some unknown reason he did not continue with the work of the mission trip, and thus, turned back (At 13:13; 15:37,38). Nevertheless, eleven years later when Paul was in a Roman prison, he called for Mark who was then profitable to him for the ministry (2 Tm 4:11). He was with Paul at some time during Paul's imprisonment (Cl 4:10; Pl 24). He may have also been with Peter in Babylon (1 Pt 5:13).

Date

As the books of Matthew and Luke, Mark was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It was possibly written somewhere between A.D. 65 and 70.

Theme

Mark concentrates on the person and work of Jesus as God's Son who came into the world for the redemption of man (1:1). In order to focus on this theme, Mark concentrates on writing a brief narrative of some of the principal works of Jesus.

Purpose

In writing primarily to Gentiles, Mark focuses on the principal activities and teachings of Jesus. In

doing such, he leads his readers into concluding that Jesus is the anointed Son of God. Jesus was the Son of God who was sent by God to redeem man. In 1:1 he writes, "*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*" By focusing on the authority of Jesus to manifest the supernatural power of the environment in which God dwells, the reaction of the disciples to the calming of the sea explains Mark's purpose for writing. "*So they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, 'What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'*" (4:41). The answer to the disciples' wonder is the purpose for which Mark wrote. He affirms that only God has the direct power to control the physical laws of nature. If Jesus could control such – and He could – then this Jesus is the one who created all things (Jn 1:1,2; Cf 1:16).

Style

As Matthew, Mark is not strictly chronological in recording the works and teachings of Jesus with reference to His ministry. He generally gives more detail in descriptions of various key activities in the life of Jesus than either Matthew, Luke or John. Mark goes into detail with specific events in order to leave a clear and vivid impression on the reader's mind concerning the nature and circumstances of the mighty works of Jesus (See 2:7; 4:39-41; 5:31-34; 6:51; 7:37; 9:2-7; 10:32; 11:18; 16:8). On the other hand, Mark leaves out many events in the life of Jesus that both Matthew and Luke include. This is especially true with material in the last part of the book that begins with chapter 12. Mark does this in order to maintain a fast moving narrative of the life of Jesus. The words "straightway" and "immediately" are key words that explain the swift nature of the narrative.

Chapter 1

- 1 ¶ The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "*Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.*"
- 3 "*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord. Make His paths straight.'*"
- 4 ¶ John came in the wilderness immersing

and preaching the immersion of repentance for the remission of sins.

5 And there went out to him all the land of Judea and those from Jerusalem. And they were all immersed by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist. And he ate locusts and wild honey.

7 And he preached, saying, "There comes

Chapter 1

JESUS' MINISTRY BEGINS

(Mt 3:1-12; Lk 3:1-20; Jn 1:6,19-28)

1 **Beginning:** Keep in mind that Mark will give a dramatic and fast moving narrative of the life of Jesus. This introductory statement is a summary of his purpose for writing. This is followed by the events of the entire first year of Jesus' ministry being recorded in this first chapter of the document. Therefore, no attention is given by Mark to the birth of Jesus in order to move the reader immediately into the important events of the ministry. **Gospel:** This is the good news of Jesus' coming in order to die on the cross for the sins of all men (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4). It is also His resurrection in order to give us hope of a bodily resurrection when He comes again (Jn 5:28,29; 1 Co 15:20-22). See comments Rm 6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4. **Son of God:** See Mt 14:33; Jn 5:18; 20:30,31. **2,3 I send My messenger:** Malachi and Isaiah were the prophets who prophesied the coming of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Jesus (See Mt 3:1; Is 40:3; Mt 3:1-3). John came to prepare the hearts and minds of people in order that they accept the kingdom reign of King Jesus. **4 Immersion of repentance for the remission of sins:** It was the baptism (*baptizo*) of repentance in that it was to prepare the people of Israel to accept the One coming after John

(Mt 3:11,12; 21:32). John called those who were sons of Abraham by faith out of national Israel. He did so in order that they be of a receptive mind to accept Jesus as the Messiah. John's baptism was for (*eis*) remission of sins (Lk 3:3) as was the baptism in the name of Jesus (At 2:38). However, John's baptism was only valid until the death and resurrection of Jesus to the right hand of God. After Acts 2, therefore, all baptism was in the name of Jesus and for remission of sins (See At 19:1-6). **5 All ... went to him:** John worked no miracles. Nevertheless, the power of his preaching that was backed with the commitment of his life, drew people to hear what he had to say (Mt 3:5). The godly and sacrificial lives of powerful preachers will move men to turn to God. John's message was to a people who had been misled by a legalistic religion referred to as the "Jew's religion" (or, Judaism) (See comments 7:1-9; Gl 1:13,14). It was a religion that was consumed with institutional ceremonialism and pompous leadership, and thus, to a great extent void of spirituality. Therefore, the people went out to John because he offered them a disciplined faith that was based on the word of God and not the religious traditions of men. He offered them spiritual simplicity in a world of rules and regulations that had been bound on the backs of conscientious people who wanted to serve God (See comments Cf 2:20-23). **6** See comments Mt 3:4; Jn 1:27. John did not come in the presentable

One after me who is mightier than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.

8 “I indeed have immersed you with water, but He will immerse you with the Holy Spirit.”

9 ¶ Now it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was immersed by John in the Jordan.

10 And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him.

11 Then there came a voice from heaven, saying, “You are My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

12 ¶ And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

13 Now He was there in the wilderness forty

days, tempted by Satan. And He was with the wild beasts and the angels ministered to Him.

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

15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.”

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 fishermen.

17 Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me and I will make you become fishers of men.”

18 And immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

19 Now when He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebe-

clothes of the religious leaders of Jerusalem. His clothes manifested the dedication of his life and focus on his inward man. **7,8** See comments Mt 3:11. John confessed weakness of humanity in reference to the incarnate Deity about whom He prophesied. He expressed the unworthiness of any man to earn even the most humble action toward the Son of God. **9-11** See comments Mt 3:13-17; Lk 3:21,22; Jn 1:29-34 (See Ps 2:7; Is 42:1). Mark's record of the early life of Jesus is brief. It is not his purpose to focus on either the birth or early ministry of Jesus. He wants to direct our minds specifically to the purpose for which Jesus came, that He is the redeemer of mankind. **You are My beloved Son:** Though Matthew records this as a general address to all who were present at the baptism, Mark is more specific. The voice from the Father was directed specifically to the Son. Matthew reports the words as heard from the standpoint of John, whereas Mark records the words as they were heard by Jesus.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

(Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13)

12,13 Into the wilderness: See comments Mt 4:1-11. Immediately after His baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness in order to spiritually prepare for the three years of ministry with the disciples. He was there alone in fasting and prayer. **Spirit drove Him:** He was under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. **Angels ministered:** After the forty days of fasting and prayer, angels ministered to the physical needs of Jesus in order to physically revive Him. It is probable that Jesus fasted for this period in the quiet solitude of a cave in the wilderness.

THE THEME OF JESUS' MESSAGE

(Mt 4:12-17; Lk 4:14,15; Jn 4:1-3).

14,15 See comments Mt 4:17. **The time is fulfilled:** “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, in order to redeem those who were under law, so that we might receive the adoption as sons.” (Gl 4:4,5). This

was the time of the fulfillment of all prophecies concerning God's work to bring the Redeemer into the world (Lk 24:44; Dn 9:24-27). This was the time for the establishment of the new covenant (Jr 31:31-34). It was the end of national Israel, for Israel had accomplished her purpose. The purpose for the existence of national Israel was to preserve the seedline of woman in order to bring the Seed of woman, the Christ, into the world for the redemption of all men (Gn 3:15; Gl 3:16). **Kingdom of God:** This is one of Mark's key phrases in reference to the kingdom reign. It emphasizes the sovereignty of God that originates out of heaven. Matthew uses the phrase “kingdom of heaven,” whereas Mark emphasizes the original source of the kingdom reign. He thus uses the phrase “kingdom of God.” Throughout His ministry, Jesus used both phrases interchangeably in reference to the sovereignty of God that originates out of heaven.

Repent, and believe in the gospel: Israel was to turn to the message that Jesus preached. All men were to prepare their hearts for His ascension to the throne of God (See Mt 3:2). Jesus' call was that people turn to Him in order to believe that He is the Christ and Son of God. Unless one so repents he will not respond to the death of Jesus on the cross nor will he believe the good news of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4; see At 20:21; Hb 6:1).

CALL OF PETER, ANDREW, JAMES AND JOHN

(Mt 4:18-22; Lk 5:1-11)

16-20 Jesus' call of these disciples to apostleship came after He had already started His ministry. They had heard Him in the synagogues. They followed Him immediately on this occasion because they knew what He was preaching. These men were sons of Abraham by faith, and thus, responded to the message of Jesus. They represented thousands of Israelites who were waiting for the Messiah. When Jesus came as the Messiah, they readily accepted Him as such when He came preaching after the announcement of John the Baptist (See comments Mt 4:18-22). Their ready acceptance of Him manifested their expectation of the Messiah.

dee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets.

20 Then immediately He called them. And they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and went after Him.

21 ¶ And they went into Capernaum. Immediately on the Sabbath, He entered into the synagogue and taught.

22 And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

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

24 saying, "Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are, the Holy One of God!"

25 Then Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Hold

your peace and come out of him."

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

27 And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new teaching is this? With authority He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey Him."

28 And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

29 ¶ Now as soon as they came out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and at once they told Him about her.

31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left

HEALING OF A DEMONIAIC

(Lk 4:31-37)

21,22 *He entered the synagogue and taught:*

See comments Mt 4:23,24. The synagogue assembly was for the Jews the time and place for teaching of the Old Testament law on the Sabbath. Jesus went to the synagogue because this was where religious people assembled for reading and teaching of the Old Testament.

He taught them as one having authority: Jesus spoke in the sense that gave the impression that what He said originated from Him (Mt 7:28,29). As the Son of God on earth, He came to authoritatively deliver God's word to man (Jn 12:48). He did not speak by depending on the traditional interpretations of the Jewish fathers (See comments 7:1-9). **23 Unclean spirit:** See comments Mt 4:24. The work of this spirit in the life of this man separated Him from God (See Mt 12:43). That which was separated from God was considered unclean, for under Old Testament law, when God classified something as unclean, it was to be separated. When one was considered unclean he was separated from everyone else in the community. **24 He cried out:** Demons did not make those whom they possessed incoherent. This demon could speak through the individual in whom he dwelt. In his speaking he recognized and confessed the deity of the One who was in his presence. Demon possession was not manifested in one who had some type of hysterical fit. **The Holy One of God:** Unlike most people, this demon confessed who Jesus was. He, as well as all demons, knew who Jesus was (See Ps 16:10; At 2:27; Js 2:19). He also knew his destiny. That destiny was destruction (3:27; Mt 8:29; 25:41).

25,26 Jesus had complete control over the being and activity of demons. Such was also the case with the disciples after Acts 2 (See At 16:16-18). **Convulsed him:** The unclean spirit exercised one last torment of the body of the one in whom he indwelt before yielding to the authority and command of Jesus (See Lk 1:12).

27 What new teaching: Jesus' work of casting out demons moved the people to consider His teaching. It was the purpose of exorcism, or the casting out of demons, therefore, to move people to consider the teach-

ing of the one who had the authority to cast out demons. If one could exercise such authority over the world of spirits, then certainly he was to be heard. This was the reason why God allowed demons to possess people in the first century. They became the occasion by which Jesus and His disciples were proved to have authority over the power of Satan. And thus, they were to be heard as His messengers to all men. For this reason, God did not allow others to cast out demons who were not preaching the message of Jesus and the disciples. The purpose for which God allowed demons to possess people contradicts the belief that people other than Jesus and His disciples were able to cast them out. **28 His fame spread:** See Mt 4:24; 9:31. No one before had cast out demons in Israel. Specifically, no one had attempted to cast them out with the authority by which Jesus cast them out (See comments At 8:4-13; 19:11-20). The manifestation that demons were completely subject to the command of Jesus caused great amazement in the minds of the people. At this time in the ministry of Jesus, therefore, people throughout all the region of Galilee were talking about Him.

HEALING PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW

(Mt 8:14,15; Lk 4:38,39)

29-31 *House of Simon:* See comments Mt 8:14,15. Peter, Andrew, James and John knew one another well before being called by Jesus to be apostles. They were all fishermen, and possibly grew up together as children. **Simon's wife's mother:** Peter was married, and in his call to be an apostle, Jesus did not call him to leave his wife. All of the other apostles were either married or became married (1 Co 9:5). This incident possibly happened about one year after Jesus started His ministry and His call of Peter to apostleship. In this case, Peter is still maintaining his relationship with his family. He, as all leaders among God's people, are not called into celibacy in order to lead the people of God. **She served them:** The response to God's grace of healing is service to others (See comments 1 Jn 4:19). Being a disciple of Jesus is defined as one's response to the grace of God.

her. And she ministered to them.

32 ¶ Now at evening when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were diseased and those who were possessed with demons.

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

34 And He healed many who were sick of various diseases, and cast out many demons. And He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

35 ¶ In the early morning, while it was still dark, He got up, went out, and departed into a solitary place. And there He prayed.

36 And Simon and those who were with Him followed after Him.

37 Now when they had found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is seeking You."

38 Then He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns so that I may preach there also, for that is why I have come forth."

39 So He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

40 ¶ Then there came a leper to Him, begging Him and kneeling down to Him, and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

41 So Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *His* hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing. Be cleansed."

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

43 Then He sternly warned him, and immediately sent him away.

44 And He said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone. But go your way, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing those things that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

45 ¶ But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread abroad the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter into the city. But He was outside in desert places. And they came to Him from every direction.

Chapter 2

1 ¶ And again He entered into Capernaum after *some* days. It was heard that He was at home.

2 Now many were gathered together, so that there was no room to receive *them*, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.

3 Then they came to Him, bringing to Him a paralytic who was carried by four men.

4 Now when they could not come near to Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. And when they had broken through, they let down the bed on

JESUS CONFIRMS HIS DIVINE COMMISSION

(Mt 8:16,17; Lk 4:40,41)

32-34 See comments Mt 8:16,17. **Various diseases:** Jesus healed all manner of sickness. His healing did not depend on the severity of the disease. There was nothing beyond the ability of His power. **Did not allow the demons to speak:** The demons would confess Jesus to be the Holy One of God when they were confronted by Jesus (vs 24; Ps 16:10). This proclamation, regardless from whom it came, infuriated the scribes and Pharisees because they considered it blasphemy. Therefore, at this time in His ministry it is too early for Jesus to begin His confrontation with the religious leaders in order to take Himself to the cross (Jn 10:17,18). Jesus thus had the power to keep even the demons from speaking through those in whom they dwelt.

RETREAT INTO THE DESERT

(Lk 4:42-44)

35 A solitary place: The Greek word used here (*eramón*) refers to a desert place. Jesus went to a place where there were no people. Throughout His ministry He often went to places where He could be alone in order to concentrate on prayer to the Father (6:46; 14:32ff; Jn 17; Lk 5:16). **36,37 Searched for Him:**

And so should all men. Early in the morning before the disciples had awakened, Jesus left them and went into the desert place. At this time in the ministry of Jesus, multitudes were seeking Him, though not purely for the reason of receiving teaching. They wanted to hear what He had to say, but they also sought Him for healing.

38,39 Let us go into the next towns: It was not the ministry of Jesus to remain with one group of people. His ministry gave an example for the work of an evangelist, that is, to go about proclaiming the good news to all (See comments Lk 4:42-44). **Throughout all Galilee:** It was the work of Jesus to preach everywhere (2:17; Mt 4:23-25), not to stay in one location and have people come to Him as did John the Baptist. Evangelists who would start the church in regions should do the same. Evangelists must preach and teach throughout regions to the lost in order to give as many as possible an opportunity to hear.

HEALING OF A LEPER

(Mt 8:2-4; Lk 5:12-16)

40-45 See comments Mt 8:2-4. This leper expressed complete faith in Jesus that He was able to heal him. The sight and condition of the leper moved Jesus to have compassion on him, and thus, heal him

which the paralytic was lying.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

6 But there were some of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,

7 "Why does this *Man* speak blasphemies this way? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?"

9 "Which is easier to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your bed, and walk'?"

10 "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – He said to the paralytic,

11 "I say to you, arise, and take up your bed and go to your house."

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went in the sight of them all, so that

they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen *anything* like this."

13 ¶ So He went out again by the seashore. And all the multitude came to Him and He taught them.

14 Now as He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him."

15 ¶ Now it came to pass that as He was dining in his house, many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples, for there were many and they followed Him.

16 But when the scribes of the Pharisees saw Him eat with tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "Why is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?"

17 When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, "Those who are whole have no need of the physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

(Lk 7:13). His healing was immediate, not delayed over a period of time (Mt 15:28). Such is the nature of a real miracle of God. Miracles are instant because the power of the supernatural is unleashed on the physical world.

Strictly warned him: In this region Jesus needed to do much teaching before the people started to come to Him for healing. For this reason He warned the healed man not to talk to others about his healing. Man's desire to concentrate on the flesh almost always supersedes his desire to have his soul healed. In this case, as well as others, Jesus wanted the people to first understand what He was teaching before they came to Him for healing. In this way, He would be known first for what He believed and taught, and then, He would be known for having the power to heal. Therefore, Jesus sought to draw people first by His teaching before they were drawn by physical needs.

Chapter 2

JESUS HEALS A PARALYTIC

(Mt 9:1-8; Lk 5:16-26)

1-12 See comments Mt 9:1-8. **He preached the word to them:** Jesus has now returned to Galilee from the east side of the Sea of Galilee. He came to Capernaum. Great multitudes came to Him. The occasion here is thus one for preaching the word of God. Wherever there are people assembled who want to listen, it is a time for preaching. **A paralytic:** The four friends of this man were determined to have their friend healed. Jesus thus saw their faith in His ability to heal the man. The man was healed because of their faith, not the faith of the man who was healed. The faith of the man's friends moved them to take him to the One who could heal him. Faith in cases of healing is defined here as the motivation to trust in the One who could heal. It was not a condition for the actual healing to

take place. **Who can forgive sins but God alone:** They were right. Only God can forgive sins, for sin is against God. They thus had to make the deduction that the One in their presence who healed the paralytic was God. In this situation, however, they assumed that Jesus was only a man. As a man, therefore, they complained that He was being presumptuous to suppose that He could forgive sins. **We never saw anything like this:** God had not allowed miraculous works to happen in the generation of Israel to which Jesus came. Only when Jesus came did God unleash the realm of the supernatural into the physical world in order to confirm that Jesus was sent from God (See comments Jn 3:2; Hb 2:3,4). The fact that Jesus worked miracles among them was evidence that no one else did. Therefore, when we read in the New Testament the claims by false teachers that they worked miracles, we can be assured that no miracle was being worked (See comments At 8:8-13; 19:18,19; 2 Th 2:9).

THE CALL OF MATTHEW

(Mt 9:9-13; Lk 5:27-32)

13-17 See comments Mt 9:9-13. Matthew's call to apostleship came after Matthew had heard the teachings of Jesus. Immediately after his decision to follow Jesus he took up the work of Jesus, that is, he invited those of his social acquaintance to come and hear Jesus. Those the scribes and Pharisees considered to be sinners, and those with whom one was not to associate (tax collectors), were invited by Matthew into his house for a small group environment of teaching. **Those who are sick:** Jesus used the occasion of the accusation to reaffirm His ministry to those who were of a receptive heart. Unfortunately, the "sick" on this occasion were not the tax collectors and sinners in Jesus' presence. They were the ones who made the accusation, that is, the scribes and Pharisees.

18 ¶ Now the disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. And they came and said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

19 So Jesus said to them, "Can the children of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

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

21 "No one sews a piece of new cloth on an old garment, otherwise the new piece pulls away from the old and the tear is made worse.

22 "And no man puts new wine into old wineskins, otherwise the new wine bursts the wineskins and the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."

23 ¶ Now it came to pass that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And as they went, His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain.

24 So the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sab-

bath?"

25 Then He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those who were with him?"

26 "How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat, except for the priests. And he also gave to those who were with him?"

27 So He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

28 Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

Chapter 3

1 ¶ Then He entered again into the synagogue. And there was a man there who had a withered hand.

2 Now they carefully watched Him, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

3 And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Stand forward."

4 Then He said to them, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they held their peace.

TEACHING ON FASTING

(Mt 9:14-17; Lk 5:33-39)

18-22 See comments Mt 6:16-18; 9:14-17. As the bridegroom, Jesus was still with the disciples. Therefore, it was not the time for fasting. However, when Jesus left the presence of the disciples, it would then be the time that they would fast. At the time of the ascension of Jesus, He left the disciples (At 1:9). It was at that time, therefore, that the disciples began their fasting. The disciples of Jesus continue fasting even to this day as they wait for His second coming. Much of Jesus' ministry was teaching from house to house. **New wineskins:** Jesus would not allow the Pharisees to intimidate His disciples into submission to their traditions concerning fasting. Their old wineskins of ceremonial religion were in the process of passing away. Things were in the process of change. The new wineskins of Jesus' teachings were at hand. The new teachings of Jesus would not fit into the wineskins of the Pharisees. Therefore, it was a time for new wineskins. They must change from the old to the new.

CONTROVERSY OVER THE SABBATH

(Mt 12:1-8; Lk 6:1-5)

23-28 See comments Mt 12:1-8. **Why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath:** Their accusation was based on the disciples' simple efforts to harvest some grain for eating. Such was unlawful according to the religious leaders' additions of tradition to the original Sabbath law of the Old Testament (See Ex 20:10; 31:15). However, what the disciples did was not unlawful ac-

ording to the intent of the original law of the Sabbath in the Old Testament. The religious leaders had bound their additional laws to the Sabbath law to the point of considering their additions the law of God. It was these additions to the Sabbath law that Jesus and the disciples broke, not the original Sabbath law. **Have you never read what David did:** David ate the showbread, which according to the law, was designated only for the priests (Lv 24:5-9; see 1 Sm 21). The Pharisees did not believe that David sinned, though he did that which was contrary to the Old Testament law. But here they are inconsistent. They excused David while they condemned Jesus and the disciples. Such is the thinking of religious people who cannot see the difference between their additions to the law of God and the actual law of God (See comments 7:1-9; Mt 15:1-9; 23:23,24 and comments in introduction to Gl).

Chapter 3

CONTINUED CONTROVERSY OVER THE SABBATH

(Mt 12:9-14; Lk 6:6-11)

1-6 See comments Mt 12:9-14. **They watched Him closely:** See Lk 14:1; 20:20. Those who are of a legal mentality set themselves up as watchdogs over the system of religion they have constructed from their own opinions and traditions. They do so in order to discover those who do not conform to their system of religion. The Pharisees here seek an occasion to bring accusation against Jesus for violating the laws of Juda-

5 So when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch forth your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored.

6 Then the Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

7 ¶ But Jesus withdrew Himself with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude followed Him from Judea and from Galilee

8 and from Jerusalem and from Idumea and beyond Jordan. And those around Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came to Him.

9 Then He told His disciples that a small boat should wait for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crowd Him.

10 For He had healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed upon Him in order to touch Him.

11 And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, "You are the Son of God."

12 And He sternly warned them that they

should not make Him known.

13 ¶ Then He went up into a mountain and called *to Him* those whom He Himself wanted. And they came to Him.

14 Then He appointed twelve, whom He also named apostles, so that they should be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach,

15 and to have power to cast out demons.

16 And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter),

17 and James, the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "The Sons of Thunder");

18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot,

19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

20 ¶ Then they went into a house. And the multitude came together again, so that they could not even eat bread.

21 Now when His own people heard *of this*, they went out to lay hold on Him, for they

ism. ***With anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts:*** The hardness with which the Pharisees judged others caused anger in Jesus (Zc 7:12). Their rejection of Him and His message was caused by their religious prejudice. Therefore, it grieved Jesus to see such in the minds and hearts of men. Those who have created a religion after their own desires become hardened against truth. Once one has deceived himself into believing that his self-made religion is truth, he will not accept anything that would contradict his "truth" (See 2 Th 2:10-12).

JESUS HEALS THE MULTITUDES

(Mt 12:15-21)

7-12 See comments Mt 12:15-21. After His confrontations with the Pharisees, Jesus withdrew from the multitudes who were yearning for the power of healing. They realized that Jesus had the power to heal (Mt 9:21; 14:36). Demons caused those in whom they dwelt to fall down before Jesus and confess that He was the Son of God (Mt 8:29; 14:33). However, Jesus would not allow the demons to make Him known at this time because it was not yet time for a direct confrontation with the religious leaders concerning His sonship. Consider also that Jesus did not want one who was considered possessed in the community giving testimony to His deity. The demons' proclamation at this time would surely have added power to the Pharisees' accusations that Jesus was from Beelzebub.

APPOINTING THE TWELVE AS APOSTLES

(Mt 10:2-4; Lk 6:12-16)

13-15 ***He went up on the mountain:*** We are not sure as to what mountain this was. The mountain was a location where Jesus could have a private meeting with the twelve concerning the special work to which they were going to be called (Lk 9:1). This was Jesus' retreat with those He was training to be leaders. ***They might be with Him:*** The twelve were to be with Jesus during His ministry in order that they might learn from Him. ***He might send them out to preach:*** They were sent out during the ministry of Jesus (Lk 10). They were also sent out after they were baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 (See Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). They were given authority by Jesus to unleash the power of the supernatural in order to heal and cast out demons (See comments Mt 4:24).

16-19 See Mt 10:2-4; Lk 6:14-16; At 1:13. The twelve Christ-apostles were Peter (Cephas or Simon), James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Thaddaeus (Simon, the Zealot), Simon, and Judas Iscariot.

ACCUSATIONS CONCERNING BEELEZBUB

(Mt 12:22-37)

20-30 The last half of verse 19 should begin this section because they went into a house where the multitudes came to them. See comments Mt 12:22-37. ***He who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit:*** Blasphemy is assigning to be from Satan the work of God through His chosen men. God is thus mocked by those who believe that the work is of Satan and not of God. This is what the scribes did in relation to the works of Jesus. They said that Jesus was of Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons (vs 22). But it was the Holy Spirit who was

said, "He is beside Himself."

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."

23 Then He called them *to Himself* and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"

24 "And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

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

26 "And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end.

27 "No man can enter into a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

28 ¶ "Truly I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they will utter.

29 "But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is in danger of an eternal sin" –

30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

31 ¶ Then there came His brothers and His mother. And standing outside, they sent to Him, calling Him.

32 Now the multitude was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Behold, your mother and your brothers and your sisters are outside looking for You."

33 Then He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?"

34 So He looked around about at those who

sat around Him, and said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!"

35 "For whoever will do the will of God, he is My brother and My sister and mother."

Chapter 4

1 ¶ And He began again to teach by the sea. And there a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He entered into a boat on the sea and sat down. And the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2 Then He taught them many things by parables. And he said to them in His teaching,

3 "Listen! Behold, there went out a sower to sow.

4 "Now it came to pass as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside and the birds came and devoured it.

5 "And some *seed* fell on stony ground where it did not have much earth. And immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth.

6 "But when the sun was up, it was scorched. And because it did not have root, it withered away.

7 "Then some *seed* fell among thorns. And the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

8 "And other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up and increased and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundredfold."

9 Then He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

10 ¶ Now when He was alone, those who were around Him, with the twelve, asked Him

working through Jesus in order to empower Him to reveal the power of the supernatural in the physical world. Therefore, if one accused that Jesus' miraculous power were the work of the Devil, then such was blasphemy. It was not blasphemy just against Jesus, but against the Holy Spirit who was actually doing the miraculous work through Jesus.

JESUS' MOTHER AND BROTHERS

(Mt 12:46-50; Lk 8:19-21)

31-35 See comments Mt 12:46-50. Obedience to the will of God constitutes sonship to God and brotherhood with Jesus (See Gl 3:26,27). Spiritual relationships, therefore, are more important than physical relationships because spiritual relationships will carry on after the conclusion of this world. Therefore, Jesus said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy

of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Mt 10:37).

Chapter 4

BESIDE THE SEA OF GALILEE

(Mt 13:1-3; Lk 8:1-3)

1,2 See comments Mt 13:1-3. The presence of the multitudes here again offers the opportunity for Jesus to do what He continually did throughout His ministry. He taught the people. He continually taught in several environments in order to lay the foundation upon which evangelists after the establishment of the church would later find receptivity. The more people He encountered during His personal ministry, the more people there would be who would remember their personal contact with Him on earth. It would be these Jews who would eventually

about the parable.

11 So He said to them, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. But to those who are outside, all things are said in parables,

12 "so that '*seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest they should return and their sins be forgiven them.*'"

13 ¶ And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

14 "The sower sows the word.

15 "And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. But when they have heard, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

16 "Now these are the ones who are sown on stony ground, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness.

17 "But they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a while. Afterward, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, they immediately fall away.

18 "And others are the ones who are sown

among thorns. *These* are the ones who have heard the word,

19 "but the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

20 "Now these are the ones who are sown on good ground. And they hear the word and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold."

21 ¶ Then He said to them, "Is a candle brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not *brought* to be set on a lamp?"

22 "For there is nothing hidden that will not be manifested, nor has anything been kept secret that is meant to come to light.

23 "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

24 Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With what standard you measure, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.

25 "For he who has, to him will be given. And he who does not have, from him will be taken even that which he has."

26 ¶ So He said, "The kingdom of God is

go into all the world and preach the gospel. On this particular occasion, Jesus teaches in parables in order to reveal truth to those who are truth seekers. He taught in parables also for the purpose of concealing truth from those who were blinded by their traditional religions that were based on traditions (Compare 2 Th 2:10-12).

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

(Mt 13:3-23; Lk 8:4-15)

3-20 See comments Mt 13:3-23. In this parable Jesus emphasized the receptivity of the hearts of men. One's priorities in reference to that which is in his environment often affects the manner by which he receives the word of God. Those who are truth seekers, produce because they are motivated by the word of God's grace. Jesus was at this time sowing the seed of the kingdom. Men were judging themselves by how they responded to the seed (See Jn 3:17).

THE LAMP

(Lk 8:16-18)

21 Inherent in the purpose of a lamp is that it produces light. It is therefore placed in a position to accomplish its purpose. Lamps exist for the very purpose of bringing light to men (See Mt 5:15,16). **22,23** *There is nothing hidden which will not be revealed:* In reference to the preceding parable of the sower, the preaching of the gospel will bring to light the true nature of the hearts of men. It is the light that both enlightens and brings to light (See comments Jn 3:17,18; 5:34; 6:40; 12:48). Those who hear will be revealed to have open hearts. Those who reject the word of God will be re-

vealed to have hardened hearts. **24,25** *Take heed what you hear:* They must understand and respond to what they hear. They must be as the good soil (vs 8) that brought forth abundantly. *It shall be measured to you:* Those who are of a humble nature are receptive to the teachings of Jesus. They hear with the intention of producing. As a result of their willingness to hear, they will grow. To the ones who grow, therefore, more will be given in the sense that the righteous will receive far more in eternal glory than they expect (Rm 8:18). *Whoever does not have:* On the other hand, those who are not of the nature of the good soil will not produce. They will thus not receive the bounty of more. That which unrighteous hearts possess will be lost in the final reckoning of all things. Their good works will be in vain because they are not in Christ (See comments 1 Co 15:58). The unrighteous will lose whatever they had. Truth seeking students of God's word will thus receive more out of Bible study than those who only casually read it. They will receive more out of life because of the righteous nature of their hearts (Jn 10:10). Christianity is more than having a knowledge of the Bible. The abundant life of Christianity comes from a thankful heart that responds to the love and grace of God (1 Jn 4:19). Through such appreciation one enacts the fruit of the Spirit in his life (Gl 5:22,23).

PARABLE OF THE SCATTERED SEED

26-29 In this parable Jesus explained that He was harvesting the fruit of the field of Israel that had been planted centuries before through the establishment of the nation of Israel. Through the medium of His mes-

like a man who casts seed on the ground,

27 “and should sleep at night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow – he does not know how.

28 “For the earth produces grain by itself; first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the ear.

29 “But when the grain is ripe, immediately he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come.”

30 ¶ Then He said, “To what will we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable will we compare it?”

31 “*It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that are on the earth.

32 “But when it is sown, it grows up and

becomes greater than all herbs. And it shoots out great branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.”

33 ¶ And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*.

34 But without a parable, He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

35 ¶ On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side.”

36 So when they had sent the multitude away, they took Him along in the boat just as He was. And there were also other boats with Him.

37 Then there arose a great storm of wind. And the waves were breaking into the boat,

sengers, God had planted the seed of His eternal plan with Abraham, through whom all nations would be blessed (Gn 12:1-3). By preserving Abraham's seed in the nation of Israel, God brought forth the scheme of redemption through the Seed, Jesus Christ (Gl 3:16). As a nation, Israel grew and brought forth fruit. Regardless of the sleeping and rising of the messengers of the kingdom, the fruits of the word of God continued to produce as sons of Abraham by faith accepted the seed of the kingdom. Jesus' point is that men have no control over the germination and growth that is produced by the seed of the kingdom (See 1 Co 3:6,7,12-15). **Yields crops by itself:** Growth and production of fruit is inherent within the nature of the seed of the kingdom. Therefore, the kingdom reign of God continued to permeate the hearts of those who were children of Abraham by faith, and thus, produce growth and fruit. **Harvest has come:** Jesus had now come for the harvest (See comments Mt 21:33-44; compare Rv 14:15). It was now time for the fruit to be given to Jesus in order that the kingdom reign of God continue under His control as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15).

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

(Mt 13:31,32)

30-32 See comments Mt 13:31,32. **To what shall we liken the kingdom of God:** There is no metaphorical parable that will completely explain the nature of that which is beyond the physical experiences of man. The definitions of our words confine us to our experiential world. In other words, we form the definitions of our words by our relationships with people, events and things of this world. Therefore, we have no words that will fully explain to our satisfaction that which is beyond this world. That which is beyond this world cannot be defined with words of this world. Since the kingdom of God is not a kingdom of this world (Jn 18:36-38), then we will not be able to understand every aspect of the kingdom. In this context, therefore, Jesus seeks to explain the nature of the kingdom reign of God. At the same time, we must understand that we are limited in our thinking to this world. Jesus can only use metaphorical stories which are called parables in order to take our minds beyond

that which is of this world. For this reason, therefore, every biblical interpreter must be careful not to literalize the message of the parables in the sense that would lead one to believe that the parables explain every aspect of the kingdom of God. The parables are given to take our minds beyond the simple events of the parables. The parables were given in order to lift our minds to wonder about that which must be beyond the limitations of our minds and beyond the limitations of our dictionary to define. **Like a mustard seed:** In the realm of spiritual growth, the kingdom reign of God permeates the hearts of men (See comments Lk 17:20,21). When the will of the Father is done on earth as it is done in heaven (Mt 6:9,10), spiritual growth occurs within the hearts of men. The message that initiates the growth may appear small, but the results are tremendous. Through us, God “*is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us*” (Ep 3:20; see Rm 16:25; 1 Co 2:9; Cl 1:29). When men allow the seed of the kingdom (the word of God) to direct their lives, the church grows throughout the world as one life affects another.

33,34 See comments Mt 13:34,35. **Able to hear it:** Those who have searching hearts will hear the message of the parables. Because of their desire for and love of truth, they will not reject the message that is being communicated through the parables (See At 17:11; compare comments 2 Th 2:10-12). The truth that is given through the means of metaphorical language is understood only by those who have open minds and hearts. Those who have closed minds and hearts with hidden agendas will twist the message of God that has been given in metaphorical language (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12; 2 Pt 3:15,16).

THE TEMPEST AT SEA

(Mt 8:18,23-27; Lk 8:22-25)

35-41 See comments Mt 8:18,23-27. **Let us cross over to the other side:** We would correctly assume here that Jesus knows what is about to happen. Therefore, He is setting the stage for a miracle that will manifest His control of the physical world (See comments Hb 1:1-3). **And there was a great calm:** In the pres-

so that it was already filling up.

38 Now He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him, and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

39 ¶ Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still." And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

40 Then He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? Have you still no faith?"

41 So they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Chapter 5

1 ¶ Then they came over to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

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

3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with chains,

4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces. No one could tame him.

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

6 ¶ But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and bowed down before Him.

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

8 For He said to him, "Come out of the man, *you* unclean spirit."

9 Then He asked him, "What *is* your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name *is* Legion, for we are many."

10 And he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain.

12 Then all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter into them."

13 So He gave them permission. And the unclean spirits went out and entered into the swine. And the herd, about two thousand in number, ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were drowned in the sea.

14 ¶ Now those who fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what had happened.

15 And they came to Jesus and saw the man who had been possessed with the demon and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

16 Then those who saw *it* told them how it had happened to him who was possessed with the demon, and *all* about the swine.

17 Then they began to implore Him to depart out of their region.

18 ¶ Now as He was getting into the boat, he who had been possessed with the demon, begged Him that he might be with Him.

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

20 So he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him. And all marveled.

ence of Jesus there should also be a great emotional calm in our lives (See Ps 65:7; 89:9; Lk 4:39). **Why are you so fearful:** Matthew also recorded that Jesus made this statement before the work of the miracle. This is the point that Jesus wanted the disciples to understand. At this time, all things are under the care and control of Jesus because He is head over all things (Jn 13:3; 17:2). After the ascension, God "put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church" (Ep 1:22). Jesus is now head (in control) over all things for the sake of the church. We must understand that the phrase "all things" includes all that is of the physical world and all things that are of the world of rational beings. Both the celestial and terrestrial worlds are now under the control of Jesus (Hb 1:1-3; 1 Pt 3:22). The

calming of the tempest at sea was a miracle that was worked in order to prove to the disciples that Jesus has everything under control. **Who can this be:** Once one recognizes that Jesus is God and the Creator of all that exists (Cl 1:16), then he will realize that nothing is outside the power of Jesus to control. For this reason, it is faith in Jesus that brings peace of mind (Ph 4:7).

Chapter 5

JESUS HEALS A GARARENE DEMONIAIC

(Mt 8:28-34; Lk 8:26-39)

1-20 See comments Mt 8:28-34; Lk 8:26-39. More details concerning what happened in this incident are given by Luke. Since this miracle of healing manifests

21 ¶ Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, many people gathered to Him. And He was near by the sea.

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

23 Then he begged Him greatly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her so that she may be healed, and she will live."

24 So Jesus went with him, and many people followed Him and pressed against Him.

25 ¶ Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years.

26 And she had suffered many things by many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was not better, but rather grew worse.

27 When she had heard of Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His garment.

28 For she said, "If I only touch His clothes, I will be well."

29 Then immediately the flow of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

30 Now Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd, and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

31 Then His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude pressing against You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

32 So He looked around to see her who had done this thing.

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

34 Then He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you whole. Go in peace, and be whole of your affliction."

35 ¶ While He was still speaking, they came from the house of the ruler of the synagogue, saying, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble

Jesus' power over the world of demons. Luke goes into more detail for the purpose of accomplishing his theme of recording a defense for Christianity. Gadara was the main city of the area after which the region was named. The fact that this event that took place in Gadara is very significant in the sense that the demoniac was well known for being a terror to the community. However, when he was healed, he was one of the greatest witnesses to the power of Jesus over all forces of Satan (See Lk 8:39). Jesus asked him to go tell others what God had done for him. When our lives are changed by allowing God to work in our hearts, we become a testimony to others of what Christianity is to humanity. We become a witness to how Jesus can change our lives.

PLEA OF JARIUS FOR HIS DAUGHTER

(Mt 9:18,19; Lk 8:40-42)

21-24 See comments Mt 9:18,19. **At the point of death:** Matthew records that the daughter was dead (Mt 9:18). On the other hand, Luke states that Jairus said she was dying (Lk 8:42). The fact is that the daughter was dying at the time the father left to find Jesus. She died while he was gone (vs 35). Jesus' authority to unleash the power of the supernatural from which He came manifests here His power over the living and dead. Death cannot exist in the presence of the supernatural. This miracle, therefore, manifests the realm from which Jesus came and the realm to which all Christians will go.

HEALING A WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD

(Mt 9:20-22; Lk 8:43-48)

25-34 See comments Mt 9:20-22. **Suffered many things from many physicians:** The doctors had prescribed many supposed cures for this woman. None worked. She had thus spent all that she had in the twelve

years of the sickness in order to be cured. However, when she heard of Jesus, she reasoned that if she could only touch His clothes she would be healed. And so it was. Her faith drove her to reach for Jesus. Her faith was not the condition for her healing. It was the motivation that drove her to Jesus. This miracle, as well as all miracles where faith was involved, was not a psychosomatic recovery. Jesus did not demand faith as a condition for healing. Psychosomatic recovery is the power of one's mental attitude to induce a limited recovery from physical infirmity. But we must not confuse such psychosomatic response with the miracles as that which took place in this context. If we do, then we will digress the miracles of the Bible to the power of the mind of man over his physical condition. True miracles have nothing to do with the mind of men in the sense that one must be in a right mind for the miracle to happen. When the power of the supernatural is unleashed into the world of nature, miracle occurs regardless of the thinking of men. God's power is greater than the mental abilities of men.

RESURRECTION OF JARIUS' DAUGHTER

(Mt 9:23-26; Lk 8:49-56)

35-43 See comments Mt 9:23-26. **Only believe:** This statement was made to the father, not to the one on whom the miracle was to be worked. Belief was not the condition for the work of the miracle. Jesus simply asked the father to trust in Him that He was able to do that which would bring comfort. **Talitha, cumi:** Mark is the only writer who records these Aramaic words that Jesus spoke to the girl at the resurrection. **Immediately:** A true miracle is immediate and complete. **Great amazement:** See 1:27; 7:37. A true miracle will produce amazement in the minds of people because it is openly perceived by the senses of men. The amaze-

the Teacher any further?"

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

37 Now He allowed no one to follow Him, except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.

38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue and saw the commotion and *people* loudly weeping and wailing.

39 Now when He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but is asleep."

40 ¶ Then they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all out, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those with Him, and entered in where the child was lying.

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

42 And immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years old. And they were overcome with great astonishment.

43 Then He strictly charged them that no one should know it. And He commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Chapter 6

1 ¶ Now He went out from there and came to His own country. And His disciples followed Him.

2 Then when the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, "Where did this man receive these things? And what wisdom *is* this that is given to Him, that such mighty deeds are worked by His hands?"

3 "Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.

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

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

6 And He marveled because of their unbelief. And He went around the villages, teaching.

7 Then He called the twelve and began to send them out two *by* two. And He gave them

ment is the result of people experiencing something that has occurred out of the ordinary occurrence of natural law. Therefore, in order for a miracle to be considered a real miracle, it must produce amazement in the minds of the beholders.

Chapter 6

THE LAST VISIT TO NAZARETH

(Mt 13:54-58)

1-6a See comments Mt 13:54-58. **A prophet is not without honor except in his own country:** The teaching and mighty works that Jesus did were too much for those who knew Him from childhood. They were not prepared to accept Him for who He actually was. To them He was only a local carpenter's son (Greek, "builder") who grew up in Nazareth. He was the "local boy" the village or town fathers could not accept to be the Messiah at this time in His ministry (Jn 4:44). **He could do no mighty work there:** He could not because the people were not driven by faith to go to Him. Since they considered Him only a local personality they did not accept Him as one who had authority over the supernatural (See Gn 19:22; 32:25). This event explains the faith that one had to have in order to be healed. The faith was in the one through God worked to heal. It was not faith in God to do the healing. Because those of Jesus' home country would not accept Him, He did not have the opportunity to heal many people, for few believed in Him. A common dilemma of leaders is being accepted by those of their home country.

MINISTRY OF JESUS

6b See comments Mt 9:35-38. **He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching:** This one statement explains the ministry of Jesus. In the early part of His ministry, He wanted to do much teaching. He wanted emphasis placed on teaching in order to prepare people for His kingdom reign that was to come. For this reason, He asked those who were touched by healing not to speak concerning their healing, lest people be drawn to Him simply for the purpose of being healed (5:43). His going about in a circuit to teach is certainly a good example for evangelists today who want to teach a great number of people in a specific region (See comments Lk 4:42-44). Great movements of Christianity are started by a great amount of teaching. When much teaching is done, the teaching by word of mouth reaches many in the society who are receptive to the word of God.

SENDING THE TWELVE

(Mt 10:1-15; Lk 9:1-6)

7-11 See comments Mt 10:1-15. This was one of many preaching trips that Jesus commissioned the twelve to do. They were given power to heal as well as to cast out unclean spirits. The purpose of the trips was to accomplish the mission of teaching as many people as possible before the event of the cross and resurrection in Jerusalem. The teaching prepared the minds of the people to accept Jesus' kingship that would later be proclaimed by the disciples on and after the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The preaching trips also prepared the disciples to face rejection by those to whom they went.

power over unclean spirits.

8 And He commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey except a staff; no bag, no bread, no money in *their* belt;

9 but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.

10 Then He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, remain there until you depart from that place.

11 "And whatever place will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them."

12 Then they went out and preached that men should repent.

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

14 ¶ Now King Herod heard of *Him*, for His name became well known. And he said, "John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and therefore powers are at work in him."

15 Others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet like one of the prophets."

16 ¶ But when Herod heard of *it*, he said, "It is John, whom I beheaded. He is risen from the dead!"

17 For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John and bound him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, for he had married her.

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

19 ¶ Therefore, Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could

not,

20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man. And he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very puzzled, but he gladly heard him.

21 ¶ Finally, an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday made a supper for his lords, high captains and chief *men* of Galilee.

22 And when the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and those who sat with him. And the king said to the damsel, "Ask of me whatever you want and I will give *it* to you."

23 Then he swore to her, "Whatever you will ask of me, I will give *it* to you, *even* to half of my kingdom."

24 Then she went out and said to her mother, "What will I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist."

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

26 ¶ Now the king was exceedingly sorry. *But* because of his oaths and because of those who sat with him, he was unwilling to refuse her.

27 So immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. Then he went and beheaded him in the prison.

28 And he brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.

29 Now when his disciples heard of *it*, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Jesus had commissioned them to preach what would be "new wine." They were going to people of "old wineskins." The preaching trips gave them an opportunity to face the rejection of a misguided religious world into which they would go after Acts 2. While Jesus was still with them, they could return for His counsel concerning problems they encountered on their preaching tours. **12,13** See comments Mt 11:1.

HEROD AND JOHN

(Mt 14:1-12; Lk 9:7-9)

14-29 See comments Mt 14:1-12. At this time in Jesus' ministry, people were trying to determine who He was. Because of the miracles, they knew that He was more than a good teacher of Israel (Jn 3:2). They had at this time speculated that He might be the resurrected Elijah, or the Prophet who was to come in Israel as the

Deliverer. They possibly believed that He would be like one of the other Old Testament prophets. Herod's conscience may have been bothering him because he had killed John. He thought Jesus might be John the Baptist raised from the dead (Lk 3:19). **These powers are at work in Him:** Herod at least concluded one thing that was right. If John had been raised from the dead, then the power of the supernatural was at work in the resurrected John. The supernatural was at work, but it was not at work through a resurrected John. It was at work through the One about whom John prophesied and the One in whom all the world must believe. **Herod feared John:** Herod feared that if he acted against John, then something dreadful would happen to him. To some extent, therefore, Herod accepted John as a just and holy man of God. It seems that his acceptance of John was greater than the self-righteous religious leaders of

30 ¶ Then the apostles gathered themselves together to Jesus and told Him all that they had done and taught.

31 Then He said to them, "Come away by yourselves into a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

32 So they departed to a deserted place by boat by themselves.

33 ¶ Now the *people* saw them departing, and many recognized Him, and ran on foot out of all cities. They arrived there together before them.

34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw many people and was moved with compassion for them because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things.

35 Now when the day was almost over, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and now it is already late.

36 "Send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and into the villages and buy something to eat."

37 He answered and said to them, "You give them *something* to eat." And they said to Him,

"Will we go and buy two hundred denarii of bread and give them *something* to eat?"

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

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

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

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

42 So they all ate and were filled.

43 Now they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.

44 And those who ate of the loaves were five thousand men.

45 ¶ Then immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He sent the people away.

46 Now when He had sent them away, He departed to a mountain to pray.

47 Then when evening came, the boat was

Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Herod's pride to maintain face among his peers moved him to overcome his fear and carry out a rash promise he had made in response to the lustful dance of Herodias' daughter. John's physical death thus manifested Herod's spiritual death because he loved his position of this world more than the power of God.

THE REPORT OF THE TWELVE

30-32 We do not know the time that transpired between the sending of the twelve in verse 12 and their reporting back to Jesus. They here reported to Him what they had taught the people and also the miraculous deeds that were done by their hands. It is important to notice here that the twelve had been given authority to command the miraculous power of God before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on them in Acts 2. The Spirit is here working through them in the same way He would work through them after Acts 2. This preaching trip of the twelve, therefore, was a training exercise for the apostles. When the time came to preach in the near future, they would know what to do. **Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while:** Mark lists at least eleven instances when Jesus went to a place of rest. This is a good example for any evangelist who has given himself to periods of intensive evangelistic efforts. Because these worthy evangelists worked hard, they needed the rest. They needed time to talk among themselves and with God about the great things God had done through them. This was a retreat for prayer, thanksgiving and discussion.

FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

(Mt 14:13-21; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-15)

33-44 See comments Mt 14:13-21. **Like sheep not having a shepherd:** The people saw that Jesus entered a boat to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus arrived at the other side, the multitudes had already arrived there on foot. Therefore, when He saw their zeal to follow Him, He was moved with compassion. They were a nation of people who had not been spiritually led for years, and thus, sought for someone to give them guidance. They flocked to the godliness of John. Now they were coming to Him. They were looking for spiritual leadership. This was the leadership that the religious leaders of the day were not giving. It was in the context of their searching for someone to lead them that Jesus worked this miracle of creation. The five loaves of bread and two fish fed about five thousand men plus the women. Twelve baskets full of fragments were left over. This multitude of seekers came looking for one who would lead them. They found the Chief Shepherd and the Son of God who would lead them to victory through the cross. The proof of the miracle was magnified in the baskets of leftovers they took up. The power of the One who was in their midst was measured by the leftovers. He was truly the Son of God who had the power of creation (Jn 1:1,2; Cl 1:16).

45,46 See comments Mt 14:22,23. Jesus here set the stage for the miracle to prove His power over the physical laws of nature. He sent the disciples on by themselves by boat on a sea He knew would develop a storm that would engulf them.

in the middle of the sea, and He *was* alone on the land.

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

49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a spirit. And they cried out,

50 for they all saw Him and were terrified. And immediately He spoke with them, and said to them, "Be of good cheer. It is I. Do not be afraid."

51 Then He went up to them into the boat, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly astonished,

52 for they had not understood *the miracle* of the loaves because their heart was hard-

ened.

53 ¶ Now when they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored to the shore.

54 Now when they came out of the boat, immediately *the people* recognized Him.

55 So they ran throughout that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick, to the place they heard He was.

56 Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or the countryside, they laid the sick in the streets and begged Him that they might just touch the border of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made whole.

Chapter 7

1 ¶ And having come from Jerusalem, the Pharisees and some of the scribes came to-

THE STORM AT SEA

(Mt 14:24-33; Jn 6:16-21)

47-52 See comments Mt 14:24-33. The disciples were rowing against the wind in the late evening. Their life was not in danger. They were simply struggling against the wind. In the early morning from 3:00am to 6:00am (the fourth watch), Jesus was walking by them on the Sea of Galilee. **Would have passed them by:** Jesus was passing by them not in the sense of leaving them in their predicament, but in order to present the situation that would truly manifest His deity. On the other hand, Jesus may have been exercising a sense of humor. They were struggling against the wind and He with ease was simply walking by on the water. There would come a time, however, when they would have the faith to move mountains. **It is I:** This could be translated, "I am" (See Ex 3:14; Jn 8:24,28,58). Their superstitious nature led them to think that they were seeing a ghost. But Jesus reassured them that it was He. **They had not understood about the loaves:** Mark adds this statement here to associate these two miraculous wonders of Jesus. The miracles of the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on water proved that Jesus was Deity (See Jn 1:1-3). He had the power to create (Cl 1:16). He also had the power to control that which He had created (Hb 1:3). It is at this time that the disciples are beginning to realize who He is. **Their heart was hardened:** At the time of the feeding of the five thousand, they were slow to understand who He was (3:5; 16:14). They had not understood from the miracle that He was God. Therefore, the statement that their hearts were hardened must be understood in the context of what Jesus wants them to understand concerning who He really is. They had accepted Him as a good teacher who could work miracles as Elijah or one of the prophets. But Jesus was more than a prophet. He was the Son of God who had the power of creation (See comments Mt 16:18-19). Jesus wanted them to realize that He was the Son of God.

HEALING IN GENESARET

(Mt 14:34-36)

53-56 See comments Mt 14:34-36. At this time in Jesus' ministry the people are coming primarily for healing. Though the works of healing provided opportunity for teaching, it seems that the masses were more concerned over their physical problems than their spiritual problems. And so it is in a world where men have allowed the physical and temporary to distract them from the spiritual that will extend far beyond the destruction of this physical environment. **As many as touched Him were made well:** In verse 56 it is stated that they first begged Jesus that He might heal them. However, it seems that the number of those who were seeking healing was so great that Jesus simply allowed them to touch Him in order to be healed. It would certainly have been an amazing experience just to have been there. It would have been exciting to see the reaction of the multitudes to the presence of the Son of God among so many who sought healing. On this occasion Jesus at least manifested a small glimpse of what heaven will be. The redeemed will be in the presence of God, and thus, there can be no sickness there. They will be in an environment of continual well-being (Rv 21:4). They will be in an environment where the power of the supernatural will not allow sickness and pain to exist. It is difficult for us to understand such an environment in this world of pain and suffering. However, since God is above this physical world, then we must conclude that He will provide an environment of perfect well-being that is above and beyond this present world. This is the hope of the Christian. It is for this environment he continually longs.

Chapter 7

CONDEMNATION OF TRADITIONAL RELIGION

(Mt 15:1-20)

This section of teaching that was prompted by the scribes and Pharisees, is one of the most helpful sec-

gether to Him.

2 And they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands.

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

4 And *when they come* from the market place, they do not eat unless they wash themselves. And there are many other things that they have received in order to observe, *such as* the immersions of cups and pitchers and copper pots.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according

to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, '*This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*'

7 *In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'*

8 "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men – [the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.]"

9 ¶ Then He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your own tradition.

tions of Scripture in aiding our understanding of the nature of the teaching of Jesus in comparison to the religion of Judaism into which He came. This also helps us identify the nature of institutional religions throughout the world that have been constructed after the traditions of men. It is in this context that Jesus defines the contrast between the behavior and beliefs of true sons of God and those who have created a religion from their own traditions. By using this occasion to teach concerning the nature of the Jews' religion (G1 1:13,14), Jesus explains the nature and development of legalistic traditional religion. He explains that human religious traditions will move the word of God to the side in one's thinking to the point that people will be more interested in their traditional religion than the commandments of God. Students of God's word would do well to understand Jesus' statements here concerning the institutional religion of the Jews that led them away from the word of God. This is a common problem with institutional religions throughout the world today. Men often maintain their traditions to the exclusion of the commandments of God. They are intimidated by their fellow man to conform to the traditions of the institutions rather than the commandments of God.

1-5 The scribes and Pharisees came from Jerusalem. They did not come to learn from Jesus, but to find fault with Jesus' teaching in reference to their established religious traditions. **They saw some of His disciples:** They seek here to find fault with the teacher by pointing out the disciples' violations of their traditional religion. **Unwashed hands:** The religious leaders ceremonially washed their hands in preparation for eating. The washing of hands before eating was a good practice. However, these religious leaders had taken that which was a good practice of cleanliness and made it a religious tradition and law. By doing such, they bound it on the consciences of men. They were thus binding where God had not bound. When men feel obligated to keep a religious tradition, then the religious tradition has become bound on their consciences. It has thus become a religious law. **Tradition of the elders:** All men do things traditionally. All religious men also have traditions in their religious behavior. However, to say that the traditional way of doing something is the only way it can be done is to add to the commandments of God.

The tradition then becomes binding, and thus wrong. **Many other things which they have received and hold:** Mark wants us to understand that the teaching of Jesus in this context is not specifically about the particular violation of the disciples in failing to wash hands. He wants us to understand that Jesus is attacking a system of religious thought and behavior. He is attacking the legalistic religious institution of Judaism where the religious leaders bound burdens on the consciences of the people that neither the religious leaders nor the people could bear (See At 15:10; see comments in the introduction to G1 and G1 2:4; 5:1; C1 2:20-23).

6-9 One must not miss the importance of the principle that Jesus here explains. He identifies the nature of a religion when it is burdened with performances of traditions that focus on the outward appearance instead of the heart of man. **You hypocrites:** The system of religion that was established by the religious leaders of Israel lends itself to hypocrisy. It is a system of outward demonstration, but inward death. One can do the actions of the religion but fail to concentrate on the spiritual development of his own heart. God knew that Israel would digress into this form of religiosity. He had prophesied through Isaiah what they would eventually do (See Is 29:13). We must also not miss the application to institutional religions today that have been developed in the same manner as the Judaism of Jesus' day. **This people honors Me with their lips:** Their religion was both traditional and outward. They were doing traditional religious practices according to the traditions of the fathers. Their outward performance with their lips manifested great religiosity, but their heart was not devoted to God. They went through the ceremonies of the religion without a dedicated and loving heart in reference to their relationship with God and man. **Their heart is far from me:** They gave the appearance of devotion to God through their religious ceremonies, but inwardly they were dead men's bones (See comments Mt 23). **In vain they worship Me:** Their ceremonial worship of God was useless because of its hypocritical nature. They gave the outward pretense of worship, but inwardly their hearts were corrupt. They had created a religion after the traditions and doctrines of men that would allow them to feel conscientiously right before God while their hearts went unchecked. They then created in their minds a

10 “For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’

11 “But you say, ‘If a man will say to his father or mother, “Whatever I have that would help you is Corban”’ (that is to say, given to God),

12 “then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother,

13 “making the word of God of no effect through your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

14 ¶ Now when He had called all the people to Himself, He said to them, “Listen to Me everyone, and understand.

15 “There is nothing outside a man that enters into him that can defile him. But the things that come out of him, those are the things that defile the man.

16 [“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”]

17 ¶ Now when He had entered into the house away from the people, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable.

18 Then He said to them, “Are you so without understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever thing from outside that enters into the man, it cannot defile him,

19 “because it does not enter into his heart, but into the stomach, and is eliminated?” (Jesus thus declared all foods clean.)

view of God wherein He supposedly behaved according to the beliefs of their religion. They had convinced themselves that God was pleased with their system of religion. Their first mistake was to begin teaching the religious traditions of men. In teaching the religious traditions of the fathers, they unconsciously began to make people feel that their religious traditions were important. But this respect for the traditions of the fathers led to something more than the simple teaching of the fathers.

Laying aside the commandment of God: Their second mistake was to elevate the doctrines and traditions of men above the word of God. In this second stage of development into apostasy, one begins to ignore God's word in order to honor the traditions of the institution. One feels compelled to honor the traditions in order to keep peace with fellow adherents within the institution. Change from the traditions is threatened with excommunication from the institution. People are thus brought into conformity to the traditions in order to maintain a regimented system of religion that produces a superficial unity that is based on conformity. **You reject the commandment of God:** The third stage of apostasy in institutional religion is that one will openly reject God's word in order that the institution be preserved (Pv 1:25). It is at this stage that the apostate religion becomes resistant to the teachings of the Bible. Judaism was at this stage of apostasy when Jesus came. It was into this atmosphere of traditional religion that Jesus came with a message of grace, truth and freedom (Jn 1:17; Gl 4:4; 5:1,2). God allowed Israel to digress to this stage of traditional religiosity in order to send forth His Son. It was the religious leaders of this system of religion that nailed Jesus to the cross. The same institutional religions today continue to nail Him to the cross because they reject His commandments as the Jews rejected them in the first century. Such systems of legalistic religion exist today throughout the world. It is into these systems of religion that the truth must go in order to bring freedom to those who are held captive by the religious institutions of men (See comments Gl 5:1).

10-13 Jesus used the law of God that taught children to take care of their parents as an illustration of the extent to which the scribes and Pharisees had gone in their apostasy from the word of God (See comments Mt 15:1-9). The scribes and Pharisees demanded that the support that should go to the parents should be given to

the temple. The religious leaders would thus be the recipients of the contributions (See comments Lk 16:14). They had thus rejected the law of God in this matter and established their own tradition in reference to contributions. **Making the word of God of no effect:** The word of God, therefore, could not be applied to the lives of the people because the religious leaders led the people captive by their binding of religious traditions. The law that children take care of their parents was being violated by the religious leaders. They demanded that the parental support should be contributed to the temple.

14-16 From this general assembly in the presence of the scribes and Pharisees, the stage for the public confrontation between the religious leaders and Jesus was set. It was set for the people in order that Jesus manifest to all the error of the traditional religion of the Jews. **Called all the multitude:** Before all, Jesus now explains the nature of the religion that was promoted by the religious leaders. He began by stating that what comes out of a man is that which shows what is in his heart. This brings us to an understanding of the problem with traditional religion. The focus of this system of religion is on the performance of the traditions or rituals and not on the developing of that which is within the heart of man. The performance becomes more important than the heart, and thus, the performance is vain because it is not motivated by a heart that honors the will of God (See comments Mt 7:21-23). It also reveals the fallacy of religious people hiding unholy hearts behind the veil of religious ceremonies. The performance of religious ceremonies and rites cannot be a substitute for holiness in heart (See comments Mt 23).

17-23 His disciples asked Him: The audience to whom Jesus continued the theme of this chapter is now confined to the disciples. They found Jesus' public statements confusing, and thus, they asked Him in private concerning what He meant. **What comes out of a man, that defiles a man:** Jesus is not talking about food. He is discussing the heart of men that leads to the behavior of their lives. If one's heart is unclean, then he will behave in a wicked manner (See comments Gl 5:19-21). A man is defiled when the evil of his heart is carried out in the behavior of his life. One may perform religious ceremonies, but the performance of such ceremonies does not guarantee a righteous heart. In fact, the precision by which one seeks to perform his own self-ac-

20 Then He said, "That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man.

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

22 "thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

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

24 ¶ And from there He arose and went to the region of Tyre. And He entered into a house, and wanted no one to know *it*. But He could not be hidden.

25 A woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet.

26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

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

28 Then she answered and said to Him, "Yes,

Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

29 So He said to her, "For this saying go your way. The demon has gone out of your daughter."

30 Now when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

31 ¶ And again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came to the sea of Galilee through the middle of the region of Decapolis.

32 And they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. And they begged Him to put His hand on him.

33 Then He took him aside from the multitude and put His fingers into his ears. And He spit and touched his tongue.

34 Then looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened."

35 And immediately his ears were opened and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he spoke plainly.

claimed religious ceremonies may indicate the void of spirituality of his heart. He rigorously performs in order to change his heart. Too many people seek to generate a heartfelt religion by the performance of religious ceremonies. But if religiosity is maintained by outward man-made ceremonies, then something is wrong. Outward performances can take one only so far in spiritual growth. We must start in our growth where God starts. God starts with the heart. It is from the heart that spiritual behavior is directed toward unlimited heights (See comments 1 Jn 4:19).

HEALING A MOTHER'S DAUGHTER

(Mt 15:21-28)

24-30 See comments Mt 15:21-28. Tyre and Sidon was a region of the Gentiles. One often wonders what was going through the disciples' minds as they journeyed to these areas where their traditional Jewish laws of association with Gentiles were put to the test. The purpose of the trip into these areas was certainly to prepare the disciples for a commission that would take them to every ethnic group of all the world (See comments Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15; Jn 4:1-42). The gospel would go to the Jews first, but not only to the Jews. It would be for all the world. **The woman was Greek:** From their childhood the disciples had been taught that Jews were not even to go into the house of a Gentile. Their cultural pride had dictated their relationship with the Gentiles until Jesus came into their lives. It was now time to change. They were to bypass cultural barriers in order to carry out the proclamation of the gospel to all men. **She kept asking Him:** And He kept ignoring her. On this occasion, Jesus portrayed the disciples' cultural prejudice and separation from the Gentiles in order to

manifest what was in their prejudicial hearts. The more He ignored her the more they saw themselves in the actions of Jesus. He wanted His ignoring of the woman to motivate within them a response to do something. They must in the future be motivated by the spiritual needs of humanity to the point that they respond. They must overlook their racial prejudices by coming out of their cultural cocoon in order to take the gospel to every ethnic group of the world (See comments Mt 28:19,20).

HEALING A DEAF AND DUMB MAN

(Mt 15:29-31)

31 In avoiding the region governed by Herod Antipas, Jesus returned to the area of Galilee (Mt 15:29). **32-35 Impediment in his speech:** This man could not speak clearly because he was deaf. In private, Jesus signaled to the man by touching his ears and tongue because the man could not hear. **Looking up to heaven:** See 6:41; Ps 121:1,2; Jn 11:41. **Ephphatha:** This was an Aramaic expression that means "to be opened." Aramaic was possibly the language Jesus and the disciples spoke as their common language. **Immediately:** There was no prolonged healing indicated here. A true miracle is defined by the instantaneous result of its effect. A miracle was defined by being openly perceived by others who could not deny it. This was the case with this miracle (At 4:14-16). **36,37 That they should tell no one:** Jesus' purpose for making this command is to discourage people from coming to Him only for healing (See 5:43). Miracles were for the primary purpose of the confirmation of God's messengers and message (16:17-20; Jn 3:2; 20:30,31; Hb 2:3,4). They were not simply humanitarian acts for the benefit of society. **They were astonished beyond measure:**

36 ¶ Then He commanded them that they should tell no one. But the more He commanded them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it.

37 So they were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Chapter 8

1 ¶ In those days the multitude was again very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and said to them,

2 "I have compassion on the multitude because they have now been with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

3 "And if I send them away to their own houses fasting, they will faint on the way, for some of them came from a great distance."

4 Then His disciples answered Him, "How can anyone satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"

5 And He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."

6 So He commanded the people to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks. And He broke *them* and gave to His disciples to set before *them*. And they set *them* before the people.

7 Now they *also* had a few small fish. And He blessed them and commanded to set them also before *them*.

8 So they ate and were filled. And they took up seven baskets full of leftover fragments.

9 Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away.

10 ¶ Then immediately He entered into a boat with His disciples and came into the district of Dalmanutha.

11 Now the Pharisees came out and began to question Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him.

12 So He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek after a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."

13 ¶ And He left them. Then entering into the boat again, He departed to the other side.

14 Now *they* had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf in the boat.

15 And He charged them, saying, "Take heed. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

16 Now they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we have no bread."

17 And when Jesus knew *it*, He said to them,

See comments Mt 15:29-31 (See Is 35:5,6). The extent of their astonishment measures the undeniable evidence of the miracle (At 4:14-16). A true miracle is so definite and obvious that it affects one intellectually and emotionally. It is an occurrence that changes the lives of sincere people. True miracles cannot be questioned or denied. They are not as those counterfeit practices of modern-day prophets who perform trickery in order to impress people (See comments At 8:4-13; 19:11-20).

Chapter 8

FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND

(Mt 15:32-38)

1-10 See comments Mt 15:32-38. There were multitudes in the region of Galilee who were at this time following Jesus. They were committed to the point of forgetting food while following Him for three days. They would possibly have continued in their fast if Jesus had not called the disciples together in order to use the situation again to prove to them that He had the power of creation, and thus, was Deity in their presence. **Left-over fragments:** As in the feeding of the five thousand, the leftovers manifested the purpose of the miracle (See 6:30-44). It was a miracle of creation. They ended up with more than they had in the beginning. **Dalmanutha:** After the feeding of the four thousand, Matthew records that Jesus went to Magadan (Magdala) (Mt 15:39).

Dalmanutha was either a village or small town within the region of Magdala.

ATTACK OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

(Mt 16:1-4)

11,12 See comments Mt 16:1-4 (Compare Mt 12:28ff; Lk 11:16,29; 12:54:56). These sects (the Pharisees and Sadducees) were not actually looking for a miraculous sign. They were looking for an occasion to accuse Jesus. Hundreds of miraculous signs had already been worked by the hand of Jesus. Those who were truly sons of Abraham by faith believed in the signs. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, believed that the signs Jesus had worked indicated that He was from God (Jn 3:2). Therefore, we must not be led to believe that all the religious leaders of Israel were of an evil nature (See At 6:7).

WARNING OF THE PHARISEES' LEAVEN

(Mt 16:5-12)

13-21 See comments Mt 16:5-12. The leaven of the Pharisees was their teaching of religious regulations that they laid on the backs of sincere believers to perform. The leaven of Herod was the evil of political intimidation to submit to what was contrary to God's will. The influence of either the Pharisees or Herod would destroy the freedom of belief that Jesus was bringing to set the captives free from sin and misguided religiosity.

"Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet see nor understand? Are your hearts hardened?"

18 "Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?"

19 "When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve."

20 "And when I broke the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" And they said, "Seven."

21 Then He said to them, "How is it that you do not understand?"

22 ¶ Then He came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Him and begged Him to touch him.

23 So He took the blind man by the hand and led Him out of the village. And when He had spit on his eyes, and put his hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

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

25 After that He put *His* hands again on his

eyes and made him look up. And he was restored and saw every man clearly.

26 Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Do not enter the village."

27 ¶ Then Jesus went out *with* His disciples into the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"

28 And they answered, "John the Baptist. But some say, Elijah, and others, one of the prophets."

29 Then He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."

30 Then He commanded them that they should tell no man about Him.

31 ¶ So He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And He spoke this matter openly. And Peter took Him *aside* and began to rebuke Him.

33 But when He had turned around and

(See comments Jn 8:36; Gl 5:1). One should be cautious, therefore, not to allow his environment to determine or affect his beliefs concerning truth revealed from God. God's truth is not determined by either cultural or political events and situations. We must believe and obey God's will regardless of the environment in which we live (See comments At 4:19,20; 5:29).

22 Jesus now comes into the region of Bethsaida. This is probably Bethsaida Julius that is north of the Sea of Galilee. It is here that He encounters a blind man (Jn 9:1). He took this man outside the town to an area where there was no audience. Jesus did this in order not to cause excitement in the city that a healing of this nature would cause. He did not want people coming to Him simply for healing. Jesus seeks to accomplish the healing and at the same time be able to teach the multitudes in the town (See 5:43; 7:36). The healed blind man would later be a witness for Jesus in the region (See comments Lk 8:39). **23-26** There is no other incident in Jesus' miraculous works like the action of Jesus in this case. We are not certain as to why Jesus healed this man in two steps. Jesus may have wanted to prepare the way for the following teaching that He must be accepted not only as a prophet, but also as the Christ.

THE TEST OF FAITH

(Mt 16:13-20; Lk 9:18-21)

27-30 See comments Mt 16:13-20. Mark omits in the confession of Peter that Jesus is the Son of God. The omission indicates that it is Mark's purpose in writing to concentrate on the messiahship of Jesus. The

Holy Spirit knows that He will inspire John to write the book of John, wherein John will prove the sonship (Jn 20:30,31). When one comes to Jesus he must accept Him as more than a good teacher. Jesus must be accepted as more than a prophet or the Prophet about whom Moses prophesied (Dt 18:15-18). He must be accepted as the Son of God who now has authority over all things (Mt 28:18). If one does not accept Jesus as the Son of God, then there will be no motivation to submit to His will (See comments Jn 12:48).

PROPHECY OF JESUS' DEATH

(Mt 16:21-26; Lk 9:22-25)

31-33 See comments Mt 16:21-26. At this time in His ministry, Jesus turns His face toward the cross. He thus prepares the disciples for the cross and resurrection. He wants them to know His intentions of directing the hostility of the religious leaders who will eventually nail Him to the cross. He is also preparing them to understand that He did not come to be a king on earth, which was the common belief among the Jews concerning the Messiah (See At 1:6). He was the Messiah (the Christ) and King of Israel. However, He would be the suffering Messiah in fulfillment of prophecy (See Is 53; Ps 22). He would be the King of kings and Lord of lords who would reign at the right hand of God in heaven (1 Tm 6:15). And most important of all, He would be the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29).

34-38 *Deny himself and take up his cross:* Jesus had committed Himself to the cross. It was His destiny as the incarnate Son of God. In preparation for the cross,

looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind me, Satan! For you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things that are of men."

34 ¶ Now when He had called the people to *Himself* with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever wishes to lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same will save it.

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

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

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

Chapter 9

1 ¶ Then He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste of death until they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

2 ¶ Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John, and led them up onto a high mountain apart by themselves. And He was transfigured before them.

3 And His garments became shining, exceedingly white as snow, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses. And they were talking with Jesus.

5 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

6 (He did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.)

7 Then there came a cloud that overshadowed them.

He asked the disciples to make the same commitment. And indeed, they would have to in order to accomplish the mission of preaching the gospel to the world. They also must be willing to risk death to carry out His great commission (At 15:25,26). At this time also Jesus is separating the truly committed from those who are simply following Him without being totally committed to Him and the work (See comments Lk 14:25-35). For this reason, He called the people to Himself with the twelve disciples. It is at this time in His ministry, therefore, that everyone must make a commitment to stay with Him. **Whoever is ashamed of Me:** The confession that Jesus demands is not a simple statement with our mouths that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God. It is a confession that we make with our whole life that is totally committed to Him (See comments Gl 2:20). Everyone who would seek to be a disciple of Jesus must commit himself to follow Jesus above all things of this world (See Mt 6:24; 10:32,33; Rm 1:16).

Chapter 9

1 This verse should be understood in the context of what Jesus said to the people and His disciples in the preceding verses 34-38. Some of Jesus' immediate disciples would be alive when the kingdom reign of Jesus would be manifested from heaven. After His resurrection, Jesus would ascend to the throne of David in heaven (Lk 1:31-33). He would sit down at the right hand of the Father and rule over all things (Ep 1:20-22; Ph 2:8-11; 1 Pt 3:22). His kingdom reign, therefore, would be from heaven, not from or on this earth. It would be established in the days of some of the disciples who were in His presence at the time this statement was made. In fact, it would be established in less than two years from the time Jesus made this prophecy (See

comments At 2). It was a spiritual kingdom in the sense that men responded on earth in their hearts to the fact that He was Lord and Christ (See Mt 16:18,19; Lk 17:20,21; Jn 18:36-38; At 2:36,37). **Present with power:** The manifestation of Jesus' reign in heaven was made known by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (See Lk 24:49; At 1:8; 2:1-4). The presence of the kingdom reign in heaven would be manifested on earth by the obedience of men and women who submitted to His reign.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

(Mt 17:1-13; Lk 9:28-36)

2-13 See comments Mt 17:1-13. The miracle of the transfiguration was meant to illustrate that change was coming. There would be a change from the law and the prophets to the One to whom the law and prophets pointed. Jesus would be the One to whom all must go for salvation (At 4:12; Hb 1:1-3). The transfiguration of Jesus was also given to manifest that there would be a resurrection. The disciples understood this because after this event they questioned among themselves concerning the resurrection. This mountain-top event stimulated their thinking concerning Jesus' own discussions of His resurrection (8:31), but also the general resurrection in the end (Jn 5:28,29). By the appearance of Elijah on the mountain, their thinking was focused on the prophecies of the coming of Elijah (Ml 4:5). But Elijah had already come in the sense that John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Lk 1:17). The resurrection to come would not be the resurrection of the spirit and power of someone. It would be bodily in that the body of a person would be resurrected. A central teaching of Christianity is the fact that there will be a bodily resurrection of all saints at the end of time when Jesus comes again (See comments 1 Co 15; 2 Co 5:1-8; 1 Th 4:13-17).

owed them. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son! Hear Him."

8 Then suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no man anymore, but Jesus alone with themselves.

9 ¶ Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no man what things they had seen until the Son of Man was risen from the dead.

10 So they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one another what the rising from the dead meant.

11 And they asked Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?"

12 Then He answered and told them, "Elijah truly comes first and restores all things. And yet why is it written of the Son of Man that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"

13 "But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they have done to him whatever they desired, as it was written of him."

14 ¶ Now when He came to *His* disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.

15 Then immediately all the people, when they saw Him, were greatly amazed, and *began* running to Him to greet Him.

16 Then He asked the scribes, "What are you disputing with them?"

17 ¶ Now one of the multitude answered and said, "Teacher, I brought to You my son who has a mute spirit.

18 "And whenever it seizes him, it tears him. And he foams and gnashes with his teeth, and

stiffens. And I spoke to Your disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not."

19 He answered him, and said, "O faithless generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I bear with you? Bring him to Me."

20 So they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him. And he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming *at the mouth*.

21 Then He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.

22 "And often it has cast him into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

23 Jesus said to him, "If you can? All things *are* possible to him who believes."

24 Then immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe! Help my unbelief!"

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, "*You* deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter no more into him."

26 Then *the spirit* cried, and greatly convulsed him and came out of him. And he was as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead."

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

28 ¶ Now when He came into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

29 Then He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer."

HEALING OF A DEMONIAIC BOY

(Mt 17:14-20; L 9:37-43)

14-16 See comments Mt 17:14-20. We do not know where Jesus was at the time the scribes disputed with the disciples. This passage simply states that on this occasion Jesus came to the disciples and found them disputing with some scribes. When Jesus did arrive, the multitude and scribes left the presence of the disciples and went running to Jesus.

17-29 *But they could not:* Though the disciples had by this time cast out many demons (6:7), they could not cast out this evil spirit. *If You can do anything, have compassion on us:* Here is the plea of a concerned father for a child that is convulsed by a spirit. His statement here manifests a weak faith in the possibility that Jesus might be able to do something to help the son. *All things are possible to him who believes:*

The belief is not the condition for the healing. It is that which drives one to trust in Jesus (Jn 11:40). Jesus here affirms that our total trust must be placed in God. *Lord, I believe; help my unbelief:* And so it is with thousands who have faith, but their faith will not move them to obedience (Lk 17:5). Unless faith becomes active, it is of no profit (See comments Js 2:14-26). Faith does not dispel all doubt. It is natural to have doubts, but our doubts must not hinder us from acting on our faith. We must walk by faith (2 Co 5:7). However, when we allow doubt to hinder our walk, then doubt is destructive. In this case, the father had enough faith to bring his son to Jesus. He realized, however, that his faith must grow beyond doubts that hindered him. Our doubts are reminders that our faith must continue to grow. *By nothing but prayer and fasting:* Since the problem in the context is the weak faith of the disciples

30 ¶ Now they departed from there and passed through Galilee. And He did not want anyone to know *about it*.

31 For He taught His disciples, and said to them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."

32 But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

33 ¶ Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house, He asked them, "What was it that you disputed among yourselves on the way?"

34 But they held their peace, for on the way they had disputed among themselves who *was* the greatest.

35 So He sat down and called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he will be last of all, and servant of all."

36 Then He took a child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,

37 "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name, receives Me. And whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

38 ¶ Then John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in Your name, and he did not follow us. And we forbade him because he did not follow us."

39 But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for there is no one who will do a miracle in My name who can afterward speak evil of Me.

40 "For he who is not against us is on our side.

41 "For whoever will give you a cup of water to drink in My name because you belong to Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose

that hindered them from casting out the demon, then prayer and fasting should increase their faith. The disciples had to grow in faith in order to do the work to which Jesus was calling them. They realized this when they asked Jesus on one occasion to increase their faith (Lk 17:5). Therefore, if prayer and fasting were to increase the faith of the disciples, then it should increase the faith of those today who pray and fast. Christians who want to grow in faith must give themselves to prayer and fasting.

JESUS PROPHESES HIS DEATH

(Mt 17:22,23; Lk 9:43-45)

30-32 See comments Mt 17:22,23 (Lk 9:43-45).

Did not want anyone to know it. It was time for Jesus to spend time with His closest disciples, those He had called to be apostles. The reason for the private discussion was to prepare them for His death and resurrection (Lk 9:44). However, they did not understand what He was saying when He spoke of His death and resurrection. **Were afraid to ask Him:** They had been scolded for their faithlessness, and certainly did not want another rebuke. Nevertheless, they knew that Jesus expected them to understand what He was saying (Lk 2:50; 18:34). And they would understand, but after the event of His death and resurrection. Many things were spoken to the disciples during the ministry of Jesus that they did not understand. However, Jesus knew that the Holy Spirit would later reveal all things to them and cause them to remember what He had taught them. Jesus promised them, "*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance that I have said to you*" (Jn 14:26; see Jn 16:13).

THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM

(Mt 18:1-6; Lk 9:46-48)

33-37 This seems to be the first recorded dispute the disciples had concerning their prideful ambitions. At one time they evidently had ulterior motives when

they asked Him who was the greatest in the kingdom (See comments Mt 18:1). On this occasion and the occasion when James and John in 10:35-45 asked for positions of rule, the apostles at this stage of their spiritual growth manifested their ambitions for greatness and recognition. This ambition stayed with them to the time when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in Luke 22:24-30 (See comments). They thus had some growing to do before they were given the responsibility of being witnesses for Jesus. One can be effective for Jesus only when he learns the spirit of being a servant. It is interesting to note that on each occasion when they had a dispute concerning this matter, Jesus had just talked about His death and departure. It seems that such talk generated carnal ambitions within the hearts of the disciples as to who would take the place of Jesus in their supposed earthly kingdom (See comments 10:35-45).

THE DISCIPLES' ATTITUDE OF EXCLUSIVENESS

(Mt 18:6-14; Lk 9:49,40)

38-41 **We forbade him because he does not follow us:** There seems to be some arrogance on the part of the disciples here against one they considered unauthorized to work miracles in the name of Jesus. This one may have been someone of the seventy who was previously sent out by Jesus to cast out demons (See Lk 10:1-17). He was simply continuing this work. Whatever the case, the disciples were not happy with his work. Because he was not in what the disciples considered to be the inner circle of disciples, they thought that he should be discouraged from his work. They manifest their sectarian attitude, thinking that this disciple should be a member of their party before he could truly represent Jesus. **For he who is not against us is on our side:** Jesus did not condemn the work of the disciple who was casting out demons in His name. It is the enemy of righteousness about whom the disciples must be concerned, not someone who is giving glory to Jesus by his works. Jesus wants the disciples not to discourage the good works of others. It is interesting in this

his reward.

42 “And whoever will offend one of *these* little ones who believe in Me, it would be better for him that a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea.

43 “And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire –

44 [“where *‘their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’*”]

45 “And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter lame into life, than having two feet, to be cast into hell –

46 [“where *‘their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’*”]

47 “And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell,

48 “where *‘their worm does not die and the*

fire is not quenched.’”

49 “For everyone will be salted with fire.

50 “Salt *is* good. But if the salt has lost its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.”

Chapter 10

1 ¶ Then He arose from there and came into the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And the people gathered to Him again. And according to His custom, He once more taught them.

2 ¶ Then the Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife?”

3 So He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

4 And they said, “Moses permitted *a man* to write a bill of divorcement and send *her* away.”

5 Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Be-

context to note that this exorcist was doing what the disciples could not do for lack of faith (See 9:18,19,29). Therefore, the effective work of the unknown disciple may have intimidated the disciples concerning their weak faith. **Whoever gives ... in My name:** Christians must be eager to do good to all men (Gl 6:10). Even the smallest deed in the name of Jesus is recognized by God. Any good that one might do, therefore, must be encouraged. However, it is not on the basis of good works that one will be saved. In order for good works to be profitable, one must be in a covenant relationship with God (See comments 1 Co 15:58).

42-50 See comments Mt 18:6-14. In the context of verses 42-50, some believe that Mark brings together several statements that were made by Jesus on different occasions. However, we must not assume that because Jesus made a statement on one occasion during His ministry that He did not state the same truth in a similar manner on another occasion. We must keep in mind that He is teaching His disciples and preparing them for the work of world evangelism and church edification. In doing this work of teaching on different occasions He certainly would reemphasize truths that needed to be impressed on their minds. **Enter into life maimed:** Jesus stresses how serious we must be about possibly causing “these little ones” to stumble. **The fire that shall never be quenched:** Emphasis is not on the duration of the fire, but on the certainty that it will be there to punish those who offend. Jesus wants us to understand that that which will be the punishment for sin will not go away. There will be a definite punishment for the wicked. **Their fire is not quenched:** Jesus quoted Isaiah 66:24 where Isaiah said that “their” fire is not quenched. It was the worm and the fire that consumed the dead bodies in the unending fire of the valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem. The Greek word *gehenna*

finds its meaning in this continuous fire that consumed the rubbish that was dumped in the garbage heap of the valley of Hinnom. Jesus used the word “gehenna” to emphasize the fact that offenders will face the punishment of the consuming worm and fire. His emphasis is on the fact that we cannot ignore the consuming fire. It will not go away. However, that which is cast into the consuming fire will eventually be destroyed (Mt 10:28; 2 Th 1:7-9). Therefore, it is best to cut off that part of one’s character that offends another. It is best to cut off lest one cause another to stumble. **Seasoned with fire:** Jesus possibly reverts back to correcting in their lives that which needs to be brought under control. It is the fire of persecution and trials that purifies our character (1 Pt 1:6,7). One’s work is also tried by the fires of life (1 Co 3:13). The fire, therefore, purifies the character of individuals in order to preserve them through life and prepare them for heavenly dwelling. **Have salt in yourselves:** The purified character of the disciples would increase their effectiveness and impact on society (Mt 5:13-16). As salt acts as a preservative, so their Christian influence on society would preserve society. If one’s life does not act as a spiritual preservative for society, then he has lost his Christian influence. He is of no value for kingdom business, and thus, not a fit subject for eternal heaven.

Chapter 10

TEACHING ON DIVORCE

At this time Jesus went south to the region of Judea. In Mark’s swift narrative of the ministry of Jesus, this is the only journey to Judea of the three possible journeys that Jesus made during His ministry to this area that is recorded by Mark. Mark here records the final journey. From this chapter onward, Jesus focused on the cross.

cause of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this commandment.

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

7 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife.

8 “And the two will be one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.

9 “Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

10 ¶ Now in the house His disciples asked Him again about the same *matter*.

11 Then He said to them, “Whoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her.

12 “And if a woman puts away her husband and is married to another, she commits adultery.”

13 ¶ Then they brought young children to

Him so that He might touch them. And His disciples rebuked those who brought *them*.

14 But when Jesus saw *it*, He was greatly displeased, and said to them, “Permit the little children to come to Me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 “Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child, will not enter it.”

16 Then He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.

17 ¶ Now when He was going out to the road, there came one running, and kneeling before Him. And he asked Him, “Good Teacher, what must I do so that I may inherit eternal life?”

18 Then Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? *There is none good but one, that is, God.*

He thus prepared His disciples for His final confrontation with the religious leaders and His subsequent victory of the cross.

1-12 See comments Mt 19:1-12. **Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her:** The passage says that the divorcing is the basis of committing the adultery against the wife. It is not the adultery that gives rise to the divorce but the divorce that causes the adultery against the man's wife. The word “adultery” is thus used in reference to one of its common meanings of breaking a covenant or contract. In this case, it is the breaking of the covenant of marriage. Therefore, the one who divorces his wife and marries another has broken the contract of marriage with his first wife. The wife is thus sinned against by the action of her husband. She becomes an adulterated one, that is, one with whom a marriage contract has been broken by the unfaithfulness of the husband (See Mt 5:32; 19:9; Js 4:4).

JESUS AND CHILDREN

(Mt 19:13-15; Lk 18:15-17)

13-16 See comments Mt 19:13-15. It must be stated that this text makes no inference to the baptism of little children. There is no statement in Scripture that gives any indication that babies were baptized. Infant baptism is the tradition of men and an addition to the will of God. These children were simply brought to Jesus for blessing and prayer, a practice which was common in Israel. When the disciples hindered the little children from coming to Jesus, Mark records that Jesus was greatly displeased. He was greatly displeased because the children represented the nature of those who would accept His kingdom reign in their hearts. This incident is followed by the case of the rich young ruler and the request of James and John for positions of authority. Mark seems to be taking this opportunity to emphasize those incidents in the ministry of Jesus that deal with one's possessions and positions in reference to accepting Jesus as the One who must reign in our hearts.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

(Mt 19:16-30; Lk 18:18-30)

See comments Mt 19:16-30. Of the three records of this incident, Mark gives the most detail. He does so possibly because it illustrates the religious behavior of the Jews during the time of the ministry of Jesus. However, in the context of what has just happened in reference to the little children and the incident concerning the ambitions of James and John, Mark's placing of the incident of the rich young ruler in this context is not incidental. The young man who addressed Jesus here was rich. However, we must also remember that he was a ruler with some position in society. The positions for which James and John sought in the following case of verses 35-45 is what this young ruler had but could not give up. Mark places this incident here, therefore, for the benefit of those who will not give up those positions and possessions in life that hinder them from becoming disciples of Jesus.

17 Going out on the road: Jesus and the disciples were leaving town and going to the road that went to Jerusalem (vss 1,32). **What shall I do:** This rich young man came running to Jesus and knelt down before Him. With great sincerity it seems that he approached Jesus for answers concerning a problem with the system of religion that he maintained. It was a system of legalistic religiosity that was taught by the scribes and Pharisees (See comments Mt 23 and introduction to Gl). His performance was good, but his question indicates that he knew that something was not right within his heart. **18 No one is good but One:** With “good” having reference to complete righteousness, then there is only One who is such, that is, God. The problem facing man, therefore, is how can sinful man approach an all-good God. Jesus answers, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (Jn 14:6; see comments Rm 7:24,25). **19** The problem with the question and response of the young ruler was his emphasis on performance. He first asked what he could do. He responded with what he had done.

19 "You know the commandments: *'Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not defraud. Honor your father and mother.'*"

20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth."

21 Then looking at him, Jesus loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack. Go your way *and* sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

22 But he was sad at this saying and went away grieving, for he had great possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"

24 Now the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to

them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter 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."

26 Then they were more astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

27 Then looking at them, Jesus said, "With men *it is* impossible, but not with God. For with God all things are possible."

28 Then Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left all and have followed You."

29 And Jesus answered and said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for My sake and the gospel's,

30 "who will not receive a hundredfold now

However, he knew that his performance of law could not justify him before God because all men sin. His knowledge of this truth was manifested in the very fact that he was asking Jesus for an answer to his spiritual dilemma of not being able to keep law perfectly in order to save himself. **20 I have observed:** The young ruler checked off all the right points of obedience. At least in reference to the commands Jesus stated, he said that he had observed the law. However, he surely knew of David's proclamation in Psalm 14:1-3 and Psalm 53:1-3 that were quoted by Paul, "*There is none righteousness, no not one*" (Rm 3:10). There is none righteous because all have sinned (Rm 3:9,10,23). **21 One thing you lack:** When one believes he has met all the requirements for justification before the Good God by keeping law, there is always something lacking. And it is that lack that will bring condemnation (See comments Js 2:10). In this particular case, it was the materialism and position of the rich young ruler that stood between him and God. **Sell whatever you have:** The problem with the young ruler, therefore, was not with his outward manifestation of religiosity, but with his heart. In order to come into a right relationship with God, this particular rich person had to relieve himself of that which emotionally kept him from dependence on God. He was self-sufficient in his riches and self-confident in his performance of law from youth. He therefore felt that he did not need to trust in the grace of God. **Follow Me:** The second thing Jesus asked him to do was to follow Him. In order to do this he would have to give up whatever position he had as a ruler. For those who are in power, this is a difficult thing to do. In this case, it was too difficult for the young ruler. **22 He was sad at this word:** The rich young ruler realized that his problem was within his heart. He was not angry with Jesus for making the statement. He was made to realize that his performance of the law from youth was not sufficient for establishing a correct relationship with God. He had to deal with the problem of possessions and position that was a problem in his heart. He went away grieved in his

spirit because at this time in his life he could not deal with this problem in his heart.

23-26 The disciples were astonished at the teaching of Jesus concerning the rich young ruler. Their beliefs were based on the erroneous concept that riches were in some way evidence of God's favor, especially if such was combined with obedience to the law, as was the case with the young ruler. Whatever position he had as a ruler, the disciples evidently thought that such gave him an advantage in reference to salvation. If this young ruler could not be saved, then they reasoned that no one could. The disciples were wrong in their assumptions because their thinking was based on wrong premises. **27-31** Herein is the key concept of what the encounter with the rich young ruler brought to light. **With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible:** It is impossible for one to perform either law or good deeds in order to justify himself before God. Paul said that there is none righteous (Rm 3:10). There is no one who can keep law perfectly that will make it possible for him to save himself. It is thus necessary that man's impossibility to be holy be made possible by the grace of God. Though still misunderstanding what Jesus meant, Peter affirmed that the disciples had left everything in order to follow Jesus. This was correct, but this would not bring them the eternal life for which they sought. Eternal life would be on the basis of God's grace, not on the performance of men, even though they had left all to follow Jesus.

PREPARATION FOR THE CROSS

(Mt 20:17-19; Lk 18:31-34)

32-34 See comments Mt 20:17-19. On the road to Jerusalem Jesus prepared the disciples for what was about to happen in all their lives. He talks here about His death and resurrection. The occasion sparked an opportunity for James and John to reveal what was in their hearts. Since Jesus spoke of His departure from this world, James and John realized that leadership must be assumed.

in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

31 “But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.”

32 ¶ Then they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them. And they were amazed. And as they followed, they were afraid. And He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what things would happen to Him.

33 “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem,

and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and to the scribes. And they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles.

34 “Then they will mock Him and will scourge Him and will spit on Him and will kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

35 ¶ Now James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.”

36 Then He said to them, “What do you want

AMBITIONS OF JAMES AND JOHN

(Mt 20:20-28)

When we come to the situation of this context, we do not know exactly how long it was since the disciples disputed among themselves on the road to Capernaum concerning who was the greatest (Mk 9:33). On that occasion, when Jesus confronted them about their struggles among themselves for greatness, they kept silent. They knew that struggling for greatness or positions of power was wrong. Nevertheless, Jesus instructed, “*If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all*” (9:35). In this context, Jesus had just talked with the disciples about His death and departure. Though the disciples did not understand what He was saying, they did sense that something was up. When a leader is going to depart, the disciples suppose that someone must take his role of leadership in the group. And in this context, James and John are not assuming that Jesus will depart, but that He will assume kingship of an earthly kingdom that is soon to be established. They seek to get ahead in securing positions in the kingdom to come. We must keep in mind that the disciples’ understanding of the kingdom was that it would be of this world. They came to Jesus with this understanding and maintain such beliefs unto the ascension of Jesus (See comments At 1:6). They certainly accepted Jesus as the Messiah. However, their concept of what the Messiah was to do was misguided. They had been influenced by the Jewish school of thought that taught that the Messiah would restore Israel to her former glory. It would be like it was in the days of Solomon and David. They would be an independent state, separate from any occupying forces. So in the context of James’ and John’s request for positions, they are thinking earthly, not heavenly. They are thinking positions, not submission.

35 Matthew informs us in his account of this event that it was the mother of James and John who came to ask for the sons (Mt 20:20). However, before we blame the mother for the request, keep in mind that it is James and John who are behind the skirt of their mother. Mark identifies the real source of the request. He does not even mention the mother in the discussions here between Jesus and the two ambitious disciples. For this reason, Mark simply leaves the mother out of the situation when he writes his account of what happened. The fact that Mark does not mention the mother indicates that the source for the request was James and John. They had evidently asked their mother to

approach Jesus concerning their desire for leadership positions in the supposed national restoration of Israel. It is in their heart to secure a position of commanding leadership. Therefore, we must ask why would these two disciples ask for this special favor of Jesus? The answer may be that both James and John grew up in the influential household of Zebedee. Zebedee was evidently known in the circles of the Jewish religious hierarchy in Jerusalem, for during the trials of Jesus, John recorded, “*Now that disciple [John himself] was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest*” (Jn 18:15). We assume in this passage that the author of the letter of John identifies himself to all who personally knew the situation. “That disciple” was John. Since the young John was known by the high priest at the time, he evidently had grown up in a family that was acquainted with the Jewish leadership. Therefore, we could assume that both James and John grew up in an influential family, possibly enjoying the privileges that went along with famous families. It could easily be assumed that they had been spoiled a little by growing up in such an environment. However, regardless of our assumptions, we do know that Jesus saw in these two something that is not perceived on the surface in the context. Jesus was able to look beyond the worldly ambitions of the moment and see the greatness of the men inside both James and John. He saw leadership ability. He saw sincerity. It seems that Jesus’ approach to this misguided request for authority by James and John was handled in a way we should imitate. Though the desires and concepts of James and John are wrong, Jesus does not come down on them with force and retribution. He is patient. He is instructive. In looking for leaders, it is best to look beyond the first impressions one receives from youthful ambition. **Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask:** Here is the voice of a spoiled child asking a father to do for him whatever he wants. The disciples here behave as we sometimes do, seeking to fulfill any desire we have. However, the nature of the request does indicate that James and John possibly know that what they are asking is not right. At least, they had come to Jesus privately, fearing the retribution of the other disciples who eventually found out anyway (vs 41). **36 What do you want:** The natural response to someone who would ask of us anything they desired would be, “What do you want?” What James and John wanted manifested their misunderstanding of what was to be. What was to be

Me to do for you?"

37 They said to Him, "Grant to us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left hand in Your glory."

38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink and be immersed with the immersion with which I am immersed?"

39 Then they said to Him, "We can." And Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink of the cup that I drink and you will be immersed with the immersion with which I am immersed."

40 "But to sit on My right hand and on My left hand is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it has been prepared."

was a spiritual kingdom that would be manifested on earth as a church of slaves (See comments Jn 13:1-20; 18:36-38). They did not know this at this time, however, they would eventually learn. **37 Grant us that we may sit:** James and John are typical of too many leaders today. The type of leadership they are seeking consists of sitting. They wanted to sit on judgment seats and command others to do the work. They wanted to sit in the business meetings and make decisions for others to obey. They viewed leadership as a sitting position, not a serving position. What Jesus is about to convey to them will certainly startle their thinking. James and John are here seeking positions. In their minds these were positions, or "offices" of authority in command. In the supposed physical kingdom to come, they are asking to be leaders who had the authority of command. They want to sit on the right and left side of the king. **38 You do not know what you ask:** Jesus responded to the carnal requests of James and John in verses 38-40. Keep in mind that Jesus responded to James and John with the spiritual kingdom in mind, while James and John are making requests with a physical kingdom in mind. Keep in mind also that James and John know what is involved in leadership in a physical kingdom. In order to free Israel of her oppressor – Rome – they knew that great struggle would be involved. Many men would have to die. So before we are too hard on James and John, keep in mind that they knew what they were asking from the viewpoint of a physical struggle to liberate Israel. This helps us understand the nature of these two. They were not men of weak spirits. These were men of tremendous leadership character and bravery. In fact, when they were identified as Jesus' apostles, Jesus called them Boanerges, which means "sons of Thunder" (3:17). Jesus knew that they would have to be such in order to do what they must do in the struggles of the spiritual kingdom to come. Jesus knew that the same courageous and strong character that is necessary in the hearts of generals who lead men into carnal warfare is also necessary to lead His saints into battle against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ep 6:10-20). Therefore, notice what Jesus first asks them. **Are you able to drink the cup that I drink:** The word "cup" is a metaphor, signifying the portion that is dealt to one at a feast. As a guest at a feast, one was expected to drink what was given to him in his cup. That was his portion. What Jesus is asking James and John is if they can handle the portion or responsibility of leadership that will be handed to them. **Are you able to ... be immersed with the immersion that I am immersed with:** Jesus also asks if they can be "immersed" with the immersion He is about to endure. Here is one of those times when the word *baptizo*

carries with it the meaning "to overwhelm." Jesus was overwhelmed with or immersed in the responsibility of leading men out of sin into life. The cross was a tremendous responsibility. It included pain and sacrifice. There was suffering. There was death. Jesus asked James and John if they were willing to be overwhelmed with the tremendous responsibility that comes with the suffering of leadership. **39 We are able:** This response reveals the inner courage and strength of the two disciples. They knew what it would take to be prominent leaders in a physical kingdom. They knew the burden of leading men. We must not think that these two disciples were ignorant of what it would take to expel the Romans from Palestine. Here we see the desire to lead, though their understanding of how and what they would lead is incorrect. Nevertheless, we must admire the inner strength of these two zealous disciples. Jesus had made a good choice in these two fishermen of Galilee who were sons of Thunder. **You will:** Jesus does not seek to correct their misconceptions concerning the kingdom for He knew that they would need the same strength to lead in the spiritual battle that it would take to lead a physical kingdom. Jesus responded to their original request by saying, "Can you?" Without hesitation the two ambitious disciples answered, "We can." Now Jesus says, "You will." They will drink the cup and be overwhelmed with the tremendous responsibilities of leadership in the kingdom to come. They will suffer and struggle to lead a spiritual war against the wiles of the Devil. The burden of leadership that faces generals and kings in the physical world would soon be cast upon the shoulders of these two and the other apostles. Though understanding that the kingdom would be physical, both James and John were willing to accept the tremendous burden of leadership that went with the position of leadership. We must admire them for accepting such a responsibility. Their willingness to accept the responsibility of leaders manifested their characters of steel in order to lead the people of God. Such revealed their desire to get on with the mission of Jesus. **40 It is not Mine to give:** Jesus now explains something that is hard for them to understand. The positions for which they had asked were not given by the Son while on earth. They were given by the Father, for the Father was still king of the kingdom and head over all things during the ministry of Jesus on earth. There is an order to authority in the Godhead revealed here that we do not suppose to understand (See 1 Co 11:3). This order places God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the original giver of all authority (See Mt 28:18). Any one manifestation of the Godhead comes from the whole. No manifestation of God works independently of the whole. Therefore, though Jesus had the authority to bestow upon them a kingdom (Lk 22:29), the original

41 Now when the ten heard *it*, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them *to Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them. And their great ones exercise authority over them.

43 "But it will not be so among you. But whoever desires to be great among you, will be your servant.

44 "And whoever of you desires to be the first will be the bondservant of all.

45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life

authority came from God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For this reason, Jesus said it was not His alone to give. ***It is for those for whom it is prepared:*** Luke recorded in a similar context that the apostles would "*sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Lk 22:30). "Thrones" is a metaphor for authority. Therefore, these apostles would be given authority. Though Jesus' response to James and John may seem confusing, it is not when considering the time the Father had set forth for the establishment of the kingdom reign of Jesus. The positions of authority were reserved for the apostles. The positions were prepared for them. However, the time would be determined by the Father. The giving of the positions was by the Father. Jesus is simply saying to James and John that they are asking the wrong person at the wrong time. In conjunction with this, they are asking for the wrong thing. There will be no generals in the spiritual kingdom of Jesus. Jesus said that such positions were prepared for the "whom." The "whom" were the apostles. When they sat on the thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel after Acts 2 (Lk 22:30), they would be different men than at this time where they disputed among themselves. For this reason, Jesus used the pronoun "whom" as if it had reference to different men. In reference to their character, they would be different. They would be different men than the ones who were at this time standing before Jesus when they were still struggling in rivalry among themselves. ***41 Greatly displeased with James and John:*** We do not know how much time passed between the actual approach of James and John to Jesus and the time when the rest of the disciples discovered that they had sought such positions. The other apostles were possibly displeased because they also coveted such positions themselves. They certainly were not displeased simply because James and John asked for the positions. They may have been displeased because James and John got a head start on them in securing such positions. Whatever the case, the other disciples were not simply displeased, they were greatly displeased. And this great displeasure resulted in another dispute among the disciples concerning greatness and position. ***42 Jesus called them to Himself:*** Jesus knew that they were having struggles among themselves concerning leadership. He knew that the solution was for them to come close to Him in order that they be instructed again on this matter. ***43 Yet it shall not be so among you:*** In this context, Jesus identifies the nature of leadership in the world. Authority is invested in the leaders of the world by either their own self-appointed power to rule – this would be a dictatorship – or the constitutional authority of the people – this would be a democracy. Regardless of the source of authority, the rulers of the world hand

down dictates to the subjects of the kingdom. It is the responsibility of the people to submit to this authority in fear of retribution. Submissive citizenship, therefore, is often maintained by fear, not service. The key thought that Jesus wants us to remember about the world's system of leadership is, "*Yet it shall not be so among you.*" In this one statement Jesus contrasts the leadership style of the world with that which would be among His disciples. The lordship leadership of the world would not be among His disciples. Jesus says that the great ones "*shall be your servant.*" There will be only one Lord in the kingdom to come (Ep 4:4-6). Everyone else will be servants. In the context here the word "servant" is from the Greek word *diakonos*. The early Palestinian homes of Jesus' day had servants in the house to care for the needs of the family. The needs of the family were the responsibility of the *diakonos*. So it would be in the kingdom. The needs of the people of the kingdom would be upon the shoulders of the servant leaders. As servants, therefore, the leaders would respond to the needs of the people with service. By their service the leaders would then lead those they serve. The served always follow those who serve their needs. This "position" of leadership is certainly different from what the disciples had conceived in their minds. Instead of being over the people, they were to bear the burden of the needs of the people. Leaders in the church would not be rulers over the people. ***44 Shall be slave of all:*** Jesus took the illustration of servanthood out of the house and into the fields of the culture in which He and the disciples lived. The Greek word here for "slave" is *doulos*. These are those who are born into slavery. Slaves have no rights of command. They have no rights of choice to determine how, when or what to do. Slaves do not have the privilege of choice. They simply give themselves to the service of others. Likewise, leaders, as slaves in the kingdom, do not have the privilege of choice in their service to the needs of the people. ***45 For even the Son of man:*** Notice in the text the words "for even." Jesus had every right to demand service, or to forcefully lord over the flock. However, He commanded our submission by what He did for us in serving our sin problem. We thus follow Him in thanksgiving for what He did on the cross and continues to do as our Advocate (1 Jn 2:1). ***Give His life a ransom for many:*** Jesus came to serve, and by serving drew out of each of us submission and service to one another. Herein is the secret to leadership in the community of God. It is not by force or empowerment to a position, but by the example of servanthood. It is by loving service on the part of those who would lead. Greatness in the kingdom comes through humbly serving the needs of others. It is the nature of God to meet the needs of man. Jesus came to give us an example that we should follow in His steps (1 Pt 2:21).

a ransom for many.”

46 ¶ Then 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 road.

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

48 Then many commanded him that He should hold his peace. But he cried all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me.”

49 Then Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise. He calls you.”

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

51 So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said to Him, “Lord, that I might receive my sight.”

52 Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way. Your faith has made you whole.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus in the way.

Chapter 11

1 ¶ Now when they came near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples,

2 and said to them, “Go into the village opposite you. And as soon as you have entered it, you will find a colt tied *there*, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring *it here*.”

Any who would lead His church must see themselves as Jesus in leading the disciples here on earth. As a leader, He gave His life as a ransom for His sheep. Matthew's account of this context brings out the application of the word “ransom” in reference to all who would seek to be leaders. Jesus said, “... *just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*” (Mt 20:28). To lead men to redemption, Jesus had to give Himself. He had to ransom Himself for the sake of buying us out of the slavery of sin. Jesus gave of Himself in order to satisfy our need to be delivered from that which we could not deliver ourselves. He thus did not come to serve Himself. He came to serve our sin problem. “Just as” He ransomed Himself for us, leaders must ransom themselves to service the needs of others. In a sense, therefore, we are not our own when we choose to be leaders. We belong to those we intend to lead to victory. We are the “slaves of all.” In the context of Jesus' instructions here, the metaphorical sense of the word “ransom” is being emphasized. It is used in reference to leaders who must ransom their time, energies and being for the church. There is giving of one's self in Christian leadership. Christian leaders first give themselves to the Lord. Secondly, they give themselves to serve the Lord's body. In a similar context, when the disciples competed among themselves (Lk 22:24), Jesus made a most interesting statement. “*For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves*” (Lk 22:27). Those who sit at the table are the guests. They are the ones to whom special attention is being given. They are the important ones at the table. This is where we would expect Jesus to sit. However, He has taken the position of the servant of those who are at the table. He has taken this position in reference to our sin. He has and continues to serve in reference to our sin (1 Jn 2:2). It is also this position that all who would lead the people of God must take. Every Christian should take the position of a servant in order to present himself to his brother as a servant. This is the spirit of Christianity and the nature of the community of God.

TWO BLIND MEN ARE HEALED

(Mt 20:29-34; Lk 18:35-43)

46-52 See comments Mt 20:29-34. Matthew mentions that there were two blind men. In Mark's account of this healing, he mentions only the outspoken blind man of the two who approached Jesus. **Jesus, Son of David:** This was a common Jewish term that was used in reference to the Messiah. On His way to the cross, Jesus received this proclamation of who He is. He is the Prophet, the Seed of woman who was the fulfillment of all messianic prophecies (Gn 3:15). It is interesting to note that these blind men recognized who Jesus was, but the theologians of Jerusalem who claimed to know the Scriptures could not understand what they clearly saw. Though many warned this blind man to be quiet, he cried out even louder his belief that Jesus was the Son of David, and thus, his belief that Jesus was the Messiah. His outcry would be the work of all disciples after the events of Acts 2. The Christian community would go forth preaching that Jesus was the fulfillment of all prophecy (See Lk 24:44; At 8:4). Since He has fulfilled all prophecy concerning the Messiah, then He is the Messiah. Their plea would be that Israel accept Him as the Messiah.

Chapter 11

Mark now takes us into the last few days of Jesus' ministry with the disciples. In doing so, it is not his purpose to be chronological. Therefore, the correct chronology of the events that he records must be determined by the chronology of Matthew, Luke and John. It is Mark's purpose to draw a climax to the final hours of Jesus' ministry.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

(Mt 21:1-17; Lk 19:29-44; Jn 12:12-19)

1-11 See comments Mt 21:1-17. The final entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is like that of a king riding triumphantly in his return home after a victorious battle. Those who have known the works and teachings of Jesus accompany Him on this triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We must not assume that all these are those who only

3 “Now if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ you say, ‘The Lord has need of it.’ And immediately he will send it back here.”

4 ¶ So they went their way and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street. And they untied it.

5 Now some of them who stood there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?”

6 Then they said to them as Jesus had commanded. And they let them go.

7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and cast their garments on it. And He sat on it.

8 Then many spread their garments on the road. And others cut down branches off the trees and spread *them* on the road.

9 Now those who went before and those who followed, cried, saying, “Hosanna! Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the Lord.

10 “Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest!”

11 Then Jesus entered into Jerusalem and into the temple. And when He had looked around at everything, and since it was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

12 ¶ Now on the next day, when they had come from Bethany, He was hungry.

13 Then seeing a fig tree from a distance having leaves, He went *to see* if perhaps He might find something on it. And when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

14 Then Jesus answered and said to it, “Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.” And His disciples heard *it*.

15 ¶ Then they came to Jerusalem. And Jesus went into the temple and began to cast out those who sold and bought in the temple. And He overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

16 And He would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.

17 Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘*My house will be called the house of prayer for all the nations*’? But you have made it a den of thieves.”

18 Now the scribes and chief priests heard *it* and sought how they might destroy Him, for they feared Him because all the people were astonished at His teaching.

19 Now when evening had come, He went out of the city.

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

a few hours later would cry out to crucify Him. In this multitude are His disciples and many others who had accepted Him as the Messiah. A few hours from this event, however, the religious leaders would stir many in the multitudes to have Jesus crucified. **Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple:** It is here that He for a second time drove out the money changers (vss 15-19; Mt 21:12). After this event, He went to Bethany to the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus (Jn 11:1,18; 21:1).

THE BARREN FIG TREE

(Mt 21:18,19)

12-14 See comments Mt 21:18,19. The incident of the fig tree was to offer a visual illustration for the disciples to have faith in God (See comments vss 20-24). Their faith would move them to trust in God who would work in their lives in order to confirm them to be His messengers (16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). Their faith must produce fruit in the years to come (Js 2:14-26). It would as the disciples went forth into all the world to preach the gospel.

CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

(Mt 21:12,13; Lk 19:45-48)

15-18 This is the second time Jesus cleansed the temple. John mentions that He had done the same about three years earlier at the beginning of His ministry (Jn 2:13-22). It seems that the money changers had picked

up their tables from that cleansing and continued again with their greedy practices. The money changers and the merchants had created a religion based on their own materialistic desires (See comments Lk 16:14). With a clear conscience these money changers worked in the temple area giving unfair exchange rates to the foreign travelers who had come to honor the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. The merchants were selling at inflated prices the needed animals that were to be sacrificed. What they were doing as a religious act was actually, in the words of Jesus, the work of thieves. When one creates a religion with impure motives, the religion that is created will justify the adherents to do practices that are contrary to the word of God.

HAVE FAITH IN GOD

19-24 See comments Mt 21:18,19. The fig tree that Jesus cursed the day before had now withered (vss 13,14). The purpose of the cursing must be what Jesus stated in verse 24. **Believe that you receive them, and you will have them:** The disciples must put their total trust in God. If they do, then God can work exceedingly abundantly through them (Ep 3:20). They must therefore pray in faith “*with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind*” (Js 1:6; see Mt 7:7). As Jesus enters into these final hours, the disciples’ faith would be tried. After all these things had come to pass, they would need to remember these statements in order to work by faith

21 Then Peter, being reminded, said to Him, "Teacher, behold, the fig tree that You cursed has withered away."

22 Then Jesus answering said to them, "Have faith in God.

23 "For truly I say to you, that whoever will say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and will not doubt in his heart, but will believe that those things that he said will come to pass, he will have whatever he says.

24 "Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.

25 "And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 ["But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."]

27 ¶ Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, there came to Him the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

28 And they said to Him, "By what authority do You do these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

29 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask of you one question, and answer Me, and *then* I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 "The immersion of John, was *it* from heaven or from men? Answer Me."

31 Then they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'"

32 "But if we will say, 'From men . . .'" (They feared the people, for everyone considered John to have been a prophet indeed.)

33 Then they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus answering said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Chapter 12

1 ¶ Then He began to speak to them in parables. "A *certain* man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around *it*, and dug a *place* for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it out to vinedressers and went into a far country.

2 "And at the *harvest* time, he sent to the vinedressers a bondservant so that he might receive from the vinedressers the fruit from the vineyard.

3 "But they caught and beat him and sent *him* away empty.

4 "Then again he sent to them another bondservant. And they wounded *him* in the head and sent *him* away shamefully treated.

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

6 "Therefore, having still one son, his beloved, he sent him also to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

7 "But those vinedressers said among them-

in God. ¶25,26 **Forgive him that your Father ... may also forgive you:** This is a condition for answered prayer. God does not answer the prayer that comes from an unforgiving heart. God will judge without mercy the one who has shown no mercy (See comments Mt 18:21-35; Js 2:13).

CHALLENGE OF JESUS' AUTHORITY

(Mt 21:23-32; Lk 20:1-18)

27-33 See comments Mt 21:23-32. **The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him:** It is now the aggression of the religious leaders that develops the confrontation between them and Jesus. Jesus had violated their system of religious regulations. He did not fit in with their idea of who the Messiah should be. Add to this the fact that He had captured the following of the people. All these things conflicted with the religious establishment and the pompous positions of the religious leaders. At this time, therefore, their antagonism towards Jesus mounts, but is controlled by

Jesus who is allowing Himself to be taken to the cross by means of their evil motives (See Jn 10:17,18).

Chapter 12

PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

(Mt 21:33-46; Lk 20:9-19)

1-12 See comments Mt 21:33-46. God planted the Israelite nation. He sent His servants the prophets to care for her. However, as the religious leaders became more entrenched in the traditions of the fathers (7:6-9), they seized upon the vineyard. They took over the people of God by submitting Israel to their lordship. They did this by binding on the people burdens that could not be borne (At 15:10). In other words, they stole the sheep of God. The intensity of their theft was revealed by their act of killing the Son of God. **They sought to lay hold on Him:** The religious leaders clearly understood the meaning of the parable. The meaning was against them. They were in the very act of killing the

selves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours.'

8 "So they took him and killed *him* and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

9 "Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.

10 "Have you not read this Scripture, '*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*'

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

12 Then 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** Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians to catch Him in *His* words.

14 Now when they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and not swayed by anyone, for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?"

15 "Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius so that I may see *it.*"

16 So they brought *it*. And He said to them, "Whose *is* this image and inscription?" And they said to Him, "Caesar's."

17 Then Jesus answering said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they

marveled at Him.

¶ **18** Then *some* Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him. And they asked Him, saying,

19 "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies and leaves *his* wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up children to his brother.

20 "Now there were seven brethren. And the first took a wife, and died leaving no children.

21 "Then the second took her, and died, and he did not leave any children; and the third likewise.

22 "So the seven had her, and left no children. Last of all the woman died also.

23 "Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For the seven *men* had her *as* a wife."

24 Then Jesus answering said to them, "Do you not err because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"

25 "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage. But they are as the angels who are in heaven.

26 "Now concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spoke to 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. Therefore, you are greatly mistaken."

¶ **28** Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together and see-

Son of the One who owned the vineyard. Jesus knew that they would understand this parable because it was His desire to make them see who they really were in the eyes of God. Jesus is thus stirring the evil motives of their hearts in order that they carry out what has been in their minds for some time, that is, the desire to do away with Him. We must keep in mind that these are religious leaders. Any religious leaders today who would so scheme against God's servants are the children of these evil leaders who were the sons of those who killed the prophets (Mt 23:31; Jn 8:44; see comments Mt 23).

JESUS TEMPTED CONCERNING TAXES

(Mt 22:15-22; Lk 20:20-26)

13-17 See comments Mt 22:15-22. In Mark's record of this incident, it is stated that the Pharisees and Herodians were responsible for the confrontation with Jesus concerning taxes. It was lawful according to

the Old Testament to pay taxes to the Israelite kings. Jesus' teaching here, therefore, is that it is not wrong to pay taxes to Caesar.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION

(Mt 22:23-33; Lk 20:27-40)

18-27 See comments Mt 22:23-33. **There is no resurrection:** The Sadducees believed that one's punishment for sin was handed out by God in life, not after death. They believed this because they did not believe in the resurrection of the body (See At 23:8). **In the resurrection ... whose wife will she be:** Their question was meant to show a supposed contradiction in the teaching of Jesus. But they did not know the Old Testament Scriptures or the power of God. After the resurrection, the righteous will be like angels (See 1 Co 15:42,49,52; 2 Co 5:1-8). There will be no marriage or procreation in heaven.

ing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What is the first commandment of all?"

29 And Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.

30 'And you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.

31 "And the second is like it, namely this, 'You will love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

32 Then the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher, you have said the truth. For there is one God and there is no other besides Him.

33 "And to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love *one's* neighbor as himself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no man after that dared ask Him *any question*.

35 ¶ Then Jesus answered and said while He taught in the temple, "How *is it that the*

scribes say that Christ is the Son of David?"

36 "David himself said by the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to My Lord, "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool."'"

37 "Therefore, David himself called Him 'Lord.' So in what sense is He *then* his Son?" And the common people heard Him gladly.

38 ¶ Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and *like* greetings in the marketplaces,

39 "and the chief seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts.

40 "They devour widows' houses, and for show make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

41 ¶ Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and observed how the people cast money into the treasury. And many who were rich cast in much.

42 Then there came a certain poor widow and she put in two lepta that make a quadrans.

43 Now He called *to Himself* His disciples, and said to them, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have cast into the treasury,

THE DECEPTIVE QUESTION OF A SCRIBE

(Mt 22:34-40)

28-34 See comments Mt 22:34-40. Matthew 22:34 indicates that a scribe (a scholar in the law of Moses) and a Pharisee started this discussion. Since in the context of the event the Pharisees had just been answered by Jesus, a Pharisee may have urged a scribe to approach Jesus in order to continue the Pharisees' efforts to entrap Him.

JESUS AND DAVID

(Mt 22:41-46; Lk 20:41-44)

35-37 See comments Mt 22:41-46. An important point in Mark in the context of these events is that the common people received Jesus (vs 37). They were not part of the religious hierarchy of the religious establishment. They were not puffed up by their religious training or positions they held. They were not part of the religious politics that constantly intimidated the religious leaders into conformity with the accepted traditions and practices of Judaism. They did not stumble over their pride but accepted Jesus for who He was. They were the true Israel by faith who accepted Jesus as the Messiah (See comments in introduction to Gl).

REBUKE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

(Mt 23:1-39; Lk 20:45-47)

38-40 See comments Mt 23. Matthew presents a

full record of this thorough condemnation that Jesus spoke against the religious leaders of Israel. Mark here presents a condensed version. Though brief, his version is effective in showing Jesus' work to generate rage in the hearts of these who would take Him to the cross. Jesus used religious leaders to take Himself to the cross. Though the Jews could not actually carry out the death sentence, they were the ones who called on the Romans to crucify Jesus. Peter later identified them as the ones who had to carry the blame for crucifying the Son of God. "*Him [Jesus] being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death*" (At 2:23). Leaders would do well to continually check their motives by the word of God.

THE WIDOW'S SACRIFICE

(Lk 21:1-4)

41-44 See comments Lk 21:1-4. *Out of her poverty put in all that she had*: The materialist will never understand why this widow gave so much. Her thanksgiving for what God had done for her motivated her to give all that she had. She had to make the sacrifice in order to pour forth her thanksgiving to God (See comments 1 Co 15:10). Christianity is of little value to those who are not willing to sacrifice for their faith. Through sacrifice comes growth, but those who are not willing to make the necessary sacrifices for their faith will experience little spiritual growth.

44 “for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, *even* all her living.”

Chapter 13

1 ¶ Now as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what kind of stones and what buildings *are here!*”

2 Then Jesus answering said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another that will not be thrown down.”

3 ¶ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked Him privately,

4 “Tell us when these things will be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”

5 Then Jesus answering them began to say, “Take heed lest anyone deceives you.

6 “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and will deceive many.

7 “And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled, for *such things* must take place. But *that is* not the end.

8 “For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

9 “But take heed to yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils. And in the synagogues you will be beaten. And you will stand before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.

10 “But the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

11 “But when they arrest *you* and deliver you

up, do not worry beforehand what you will say. But just speak whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

12 “Now brother will betray brother to death, and the father the son. And children will rise up against *their* parents and will cause them to be put to death.

13 “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who will endure to the end, the same will be saved.

14 ¶ “But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not – let him who reads understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

15 “And let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor go inside to take anything out of his house.

16 “And let him who is in the field not turn back to get his garment.

17 “But woe to those who are with child, and to those who are nursing *babies* in those days!

18 “And pray that your flight not be in the winter.

19 “For *in* those days there will be tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation that God created until this time, and never will be.

20 “And except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would have been saved. But for the elect’s sake, whom He has chosen, He has shortened the days.

21 “Now then, if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here *is* the Christ’; or, ‘Behold, *He is* there’; do not believe *him*.

22 “For false christs and false prophets will rise and will show signs and wonders to de-

Chapter 13

Mark here records a brief account of the destruction of Jerusalem in comparison to Matthew’s account of the event (See comments Mt 24; Lk 21). Jesus startled the disciples when He talked about the destruction of Jerusalem. He then went out to the Mount of Olives where Peter, James, John and Andrew came to Him for a private meeting. It was during this meeting that Jesus explained the end of the Jewish State as they knew it. It was now time in His ministry to prepare them for the spiritual kingdom reign He was about to receive at the right hand of God (See Ep 1:20-22). Their nationalistic pride and dreams must be challenged (See At 1:6). Therefore, on this occasion Jesus explains in detail the

events surrounding the end of the Jewish age with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Between the cross and the Jewish calamity of the destruction of Jerusalem there would be forty years. It was during this time that the apostles and early evangelists went throughout the Roman Empire from synagogue to synagogue. They went to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus’ commission to take the gospel to all nations (16:15; Mt 28:19,20; Rm 1:16). After the destruction of Jerusalem little is known of their specific evangelistic efforts. However, we do know that within a decade before the destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel had gone into all the Roman Empire. This was accomplished by the time of Paul’s first imprisonment in A.D. 61,62 (See comments Cl 1:23).

ceive, if possible, even the elect.

23 “But take heed. Behold, I have told you all things in advance.

24 ¶ “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light,

25 “And the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers that are in heaven will be shaken.

26 “And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27 “And then He will send His messengers, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of heaven.

28 ¶ “Now learn a parable from the fig tree. When its branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

29 “So you in like manner, when you will see these things come to pass, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

30 “Truly I say to you, that this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

31 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

32 ¶ “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels who are in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *only*.

33 “Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

34 “*It is* like a man going on a journey, who left his house and gave authority to his bondservants and to each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

35 “Therefore, you watch, for you do not know when the master of the house comes, in the evening, or at midnight, or at the cock crow, or in the morning –

36 “lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37 “And what I say to you I say to all, Watch!”

Chapter 14

1 ¶ After two days was the Passover and *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death.

2 But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.”

3 ¶ While in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, there came a woman having an alabaster vial of very costly oil of spikenard. And she broke the vial and poured *it* on His head.

4 Now there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, “Why was this fragrant oil wasted?”

5 “For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and *the money* given to the poor.” And they harshly rebuked her.

6 But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good deed to Me.

7 “For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish, you may do good to them. But you do not always have Me.

8 “She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for the burial.

9 “Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her.”

10 ¶ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them.

11 Now when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

12 ¶ On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover *lamb*, His disciples said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Pass-

Chapter 14

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

(Mt 26:1-5; Lk 22:1,2)

1,2 See comments Mt 26:1-5. **Take Him by trickery and put Him to death:** The original plan of the religious leaders was not to have Jesus publicly executed. They devised a plot to have Him secretly murdered. This religious behavior must not be confused

with what God originally revealed to the nation of Israel on Mount Sinai. The religion of the Jews at this time in their history was a religion wherein they had already rejected the will of God. The religious leaders were more interested in the traditions of their fathers than the commandments of God (See comments 7:1-9; Gl 1:13,14). When Jesus came, He came into conflict with this man-made religion. In this system of religion one could behave in an evil manner outside the religious traditions.

over?"

13 Then He sent out two of His disciples, and said to them, "Go into the city, and there a man will meet you bearing a pitcher of water. Follow him.

14 "And wherever he goes in, you say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher said, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"'"

15 "And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared; there make ready for us."

16 ¶ So His disciples went out and came into the city and found as He had said to them. And they made ready the Passover.

17 Now in the evening, He came with the twelve.

18 And as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me."

19 Then they began to be sorrowful and to

say to Him one by one, "Is it I?"

20 Then He answered and said to them, "*It is one of the twelve who dips with Me in the dish.*

21 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him. But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! *It would have been better for that man if he had never been born.*"

22 ¶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke *it*, and gave to them and said, "Take. This is My body."

23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave *it* to them. And they all drank of it.

24 Then He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant that is shed for many.

25 "Truly I say to you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 ¶ Now after singing a hymn, they went

In other words, as long as one kept the traditions, he could behave as the religious leaders were behaving in this context. The same systems of religion continue today as the church confronts those who have created churches after their own traditions and emotions.

FEAST IN SIMON'S HOUSE

(Mt 26:6-13)

3-11 See comments Mt 26:6-13. It was a time for the preparation for the death of Jesus. At least this one woman realized the gravity of the moment, for according to Jesus she was anointing His body for burial (vs 8). It was this occasion that stimulated Judas to carry out his betrayal plan that he had already conceived in his heart. We must not confuse this anointing by an unidentified woman who anointed Jesus' head in the house of Simon with the anointing of Jesus' feet by Mary in the house of Lazarus as recorded by John (Jn 12:1-8). The anointing of John 12 evidently took place a few days before the anointing recorded by Matthew and Mark (See 14:1; Jn 12:1). In both cases there was complaining concerning the anointing of Jesus. In Simon's house some of the disciples complained about the supposed waste of the spikenard oil. However, in the house of Lazarus it was Judas Iscariot who complained. Regardless of the complaints, Jesus allowed Himself to be anointed for His hour had come to be glorified.

JESUS AND THE PASSOVER MEAL

(Mt 26:17-19; Lk 22:7-13)

12-16 The eating of this particular meal was not according to the Passover meal that was commanded in the Old Testament. The disciples, however, assumed that Jesus would eat on this occasion the Passover meal. Therefore, it is difficult to say that the meal they ate was actually the Passover meal (See Jn 18:28). For this reason many Bible students believe that Jesus actually ate a pre-Passover meal with the disciples. He did such

because He knew that He would be on the cross as the sacrificial Lamb of God when the actual Passover meal was eaten by the Jews.

JUDAS AND PETER

(Mt 26:21-25; Lk 22:21-38; Jn 13:21-38)

17-21 See comments Mt 26:21-25; Jn 13:21-38.

Will betray Me: See Jn 6:70,71; 13:18. The disciples are not sure what Jesus meant by a betrayal. Nevertheless, each one asked, "Is it I?" Judas had already planned the betrayal plot (vss 10,11). It was now time that the plot be put into action. Jesus lets Judas know that He is aware of what has been planned. For the sake of the other disciples, Jesus made this prophecy for their remembrance. They would later recall what He said on this occasion. Their faith would thus be increased because they would realize that Jesus knew what was going to happen at the time these events took place.

INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(Mt 26:26-29; Lk 22:17-20)

22-25 See comments Mt 26:26-29; 1 Co 11:23-34.

Until that day: Jesus turned the minds of the disciples toward the future. Their thinking was surely in the present circumstances, but He was focused on the cross and the results of it that would be announced on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He would drink the cup of the fruit of the vine with the disciples during the kingdom reign that would be manifested from heaven.

26-31 See comments Mt 26:31-35; Jn 14-17. It was at this time that the events and statements of Jesus in John 13-17 took place. Jesus had a private meeting with the apostles as recorded in John 13-17. In the John 13-17 meeting Jesus made specific promises to the apostles that were applicable only to them. In John 17 He made a specific prayer for the apostles and for those who would believe on Him through their preaching.

out onto the Mount of Olives.

27 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be offended, for it is written, '*I will smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.*'"

28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you into Galilee."

29 But Peter said to Him, "Although all will be offended, yet I will not."

30 Then Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times."

31 But he spoke more emphatically, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You." And they all said likewise.

32 ¶ And they came to a place that was named Gethsemane. And He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

33 Then He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

34 So He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch."

35 ¶ Then He went a little farther and fell on the ground. And He prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.

36 Then He said, "Abba, Father, all things *are* possible to You. Take away this cup from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

37 ¶ So He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?"

38 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak."

39 ¶ Then again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words.

40 Now when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy, and they did not know what to answer Him.

41 ¶ And He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 "Rise up, let us go. Behold, he who betrays Me is at hand."

43 ¶ Then immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

44 Now he who betrayed Him had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I will kiss, that is the one. Take Him and lead *Him* away safely."

45 ¶ Then as soon as he had come, he went immediately to Him, and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

46 Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him.

47 Now one of those who stood by drew a sword and struck a bondservant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

48 But Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out as against a thief, with swords and *with* clubs to take Me?"

49 "I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not take Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

50 Then they all forsook Him and fled.

51 ¶ Now there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body*. And the young men laid hold on him.

52 But he left the linen cloth and fled from

THE PRAYER IN GETHSEMANE

(Mt 26:36-46; Lk 22:39-46; Jn 18:2-12)

32-42 See comments Mt 26:36-46. **Peter, James and John:** See 5:37; 9:2; 13:3. **What You will:** See Is 50:5. **The hour has come:** The time had come to fulfill the eternal scheme of redemption that God had planned before the foundation of the world (See Ep 3:8-11; Rv 13:8). The fulfillment of the seed promise of Genesis 3:15 was now at hand. Satan would be crushed by the sacrifice of the Son of God. However, the heel of the Son would be bruised by the necessity of His death on the cross. Jesus had to pay a sacrifice price for our deliverance from sin.

THE BETRAYAL ACTION AND ARREST

(Mt 26:47-56; Lk 22:47-53; Jn 18:2-12)

43-50 See comments Mt 26:47-56. From this time on, things begin to happen quickly in reference to the trials, crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Throughout the next three days the disciples would experience the greatest trauma of their lives. Expectations would be crushed. Their hopes in Jesus would be dashed. They would be in a state of disillusionment until Jesus redirected them through several appearances that would take place after the resurrection. After the trauma of all these events, they would be prepared to go forth for Jesus.

them naked.

53 ¶ Then they led Jesus away to the high priest. And with Him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

54 Now 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.

55 ¶ Then the chief priests and all the council sought for testimony against Jesus to put Him to death. And they found none.

56 For many gave false testimony against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

57 Then some rose up and gave false testimony 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.'"

59 But even then their testimony did not agree.

60 Then the high priest stood up in the midst of them and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these testify against You?"

61 But He held His peace and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

62 Then Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of

power and coming with the clouds of heaven."

63 ¶ Then the high priest tore his clothes, and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?"

64 "You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

65 Then some began to spit on Him and to cover His face, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the guards took Him and beat Him.

66 ¶ As Peter was below in the palace, there came one of the servant girls of the high priest.

67 Now when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."

68 But he denied it, saying, "I do not know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out onto the porch, and the cock crowed.

69 ¶ Now a servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is one of them!"

70 But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said again to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."

71 But he began to curse and to swear, saying, "I do not know this man of whom you speak."

51,52 A certain young man followed Him: There is no mention of this incident in the other records of these events. If the house where the Last Supper was eaten was that of Mary – the location where the disciples later met (At 1:13; 12:12) – then this young man may have followed Jesus and the disciples to Gethsemane. This young man could have possibly been John Mark. Mark makes this brief statement here in order to identify himself as the writer of the document. After the resurrection and during the time of great joy after the church was established in Acts 2, the early disciples would have recalled with humor what had happened to him. Their memory of the incident would later help them identify the author of this document.

THE TRIALS

(Mt 26:57-68; Lk 22:54-65; Jn 18:24)

53-65 See comments Mt 26:57-68. Of all the activities that transpired during these last few hours of Jesus' earthly ministry, Mark records the least of all the inspired writers. He records the trial before the high priest and council (vss 64-65). He records the confirmation of the elders, scribes and the Sanhedrin early in

the morning after the arrest (15:1). And finally, he records the time when Jesus is handed over to Pilate for sanction by this Roman official to have Him crucified (15:1ff; see At 2:23). It is not Mark's purpose to carry out a lengthy description of all the events that transpired. If Mark's record, and that of the other New Testament recorders of these events, had been written by uninspired men, then certainly they would have recorded lengthy accounts of what happened. One proof of their inspiration by the Holy Spirit is in the fact that their accounts of what happened to the Founder of Christianity is recorded in a brief manner (See Jn 21:25).

PETER'S DENIALS

(Mt 26:58,69-75; Lk 22:54-62; Jn 18:15-18,25-27)

66-72 See comments Mt 26:69-75; Jn 18:15-18,25-27. Though it is difficult to place the three denials of Peter in chronological order during the trials, all accounts together mention that there were three occasions on which he denied Jesus. **He wept:** Peter did deny Jesus, but he repented. Judas was remorseful and returned the pieces of silver, but later hung himself. There was a difference between the reaction of the two men to their

72 ¶ Then the second time the cock crowed. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about this, he wept.

Chapter 15

1 ¶ Then immediately in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and carried *Him* away and delivered *Him* to Pilate.

2 Now Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him, "It is as you say."

3 ¶ Then the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing.

4 So Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You."

5 But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.

6 ¶ Now at the feast he released to them one prisoner, whomever they requested.

7 Now there was *one* named Barabbas, *who* was imprisoned with those who had made insurrection with him. He had committed mur-

der in the insurrection.

8 Then the multitude came up and began to ask *him to do* as he had always done for them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him because of envy.

11 ¶ But the chief priests stirred the people so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

12 But Pilate answered and said again to them, "What then do you want me to do *to Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?"

13 And they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" And they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

15 Then Pilate, willing to satisfy the people, released Barabbas to them, and delivered Jesus, when He had scourged *Him*, to be crucified.

16 ¶ So the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium. And they called together the whole *Roman* cohort.

17 Then they clothed Him with purple and twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His

discovery of what Jesus said each would do. Peter's reaction led him to return to faithfulness with a stronger conviction. Judas' reaction led him to further guilt, and subsequently, to his own suicide.

Chapter 15

FORMAL CONDEMNATION OF JESUS

(Mt 27:1,2,11-26; Lk 22:66-71; 23:1-25)

1 See comments Mt 27:1. At this point in the records of the final events of Jesus' ministry, one should carefully consider all four records of the gospel, especially the details that Luke gives (See the chronology of Jesus' life in the introduction). It is not known exactly when Judas committed suicide during these final events. Some believe that this took place during the time Jesus was taken before the Jewish council and Pilate (See Mt 27:3-10; At 1:18,19). 2-5 See comments Mt 27:2,11-14; Jn 18:28-38. John gives a more detailed account of the questioning of Jesus by Pilate. 6-15 See comments Mt 27:15-26; Jn 18:39 - 19:16. **Fellow insurrectionists:** From this account by Mark we learn that Barabbas was an insurrectionist (terrorist) against the Roman government. He was possibly a member of the Zealot group of Jews whose ambition it was to free Palestine from Roman occupation. **What evil has He done:** On this occasion and others it seems that Pilate is trying to find some reason to release Jesus. It is a time of the year – Passover to Pentecost – when the most radical Jews of

the Roman Empire are in Jerusalem. The nationalistic emotions of the multitudes, therefore, were running high. As governor of the region, Pilate had to make compromises with the intense Jewish multitudes in order to prevent riots in the city. His compromises sent Jesus to the cross.

THE CRUCIFIXION

(Mt 27:27-44; Lk 23:26-43; Jn 19:16-27)

16-20 See comments Mt 27:27-44; Jn 19:16-27. When we consider that the One who was struck and mocked in these few passages was the One who created all things, including those who were mocking and striking Him (Cl 1:16), we realize that God is far greater than the imagination of our minds. No false god that one could possibly conceive would behave as we see Jesus as God behaving here. He had the power to call on the angels of heaven for His own deliverance, but He did not issue the command. He allowed Himself to be so treated in order to provide redemption for those who mocked and struck Him. The God of the Bible is certainly beyond what mortal minds can create, for no man-made religion of the world has imagined this God of grace.

21-32 It is in this context that numerous prophecies are being fulfilled. **Divided His garments:** See Ps 22:18. **With Him they also crucified two robbers:** See Is 53:9,12. **He was numbered with the transgressors:** See Is 53:12. **Blasphemed Him, wagging**

head.

18 And they began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

19 Now they kept beating Him on the head with a reed, and spitting on Him. And bowing *their* knees, they paid homage to Him.

20 Then when they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him and put His own clothes on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him.

21 ¶ Then they compelled one passing by *who* was coming from the country, Simon a Cyrenian (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross.

22 Then they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is, being translated, Place of a skull.

23 Then they gave Him to drink wine mixed with myrrh. But He did not take it.

24 Now when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them *to decide* what every man should take.

25 Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.

26 And the inscription of His accusation was written above *Him*: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 Now with Him they crucified two thieves, the one on His right hand and the other on His left.

28 [So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors."]

29 ¶ Now those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! You who destroy the temple and build *it* in

three days,

30 "save Yourself, and come down from the cross."

31 Likewise the chief priests also mocking said among themselves with the scribes, "He saved others. Himself He cannot save.

32 "Let the Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, so that we may see and believe." And those who were crucified with Him insulted Him.

33 ¶ Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 Then at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

35 Now some of those who stood by, when they heard *it*, said, "Behold, He calls Elijah."

36 Then one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar and put *it* on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let Him alone. Let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down."

37 ¶ Then Jesus cried with a loud voice and breathed His last.

38 And the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.

39 Now when the centurion who stood opposite Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

40 There were also women looking on from afar, among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Younger and of Joses, and Salome.

41 When He was in Galilee, they followed Him and ministered to Him, and many other

their heads: See Ps 22:6,7; 69:7. **Chief priests ... scribes, mocked:** See Ps 69:19. These and many other prophecies could not have been fulfilled by accident. Their fulfillment can be explained only in the fact that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah (See Lk 24:44).

33-41 See comments Mt 27:45-46. From the viewpoint of Satan, this was his greatest hour. He had finally brought to an end the threat against his kingdom of darkness by the revelation of the Seed. He had waged war against the Seed of woman from the time God promised that the Seed would crush his head in Genesis 3:15 up to this time when he certainly believed that he had been victorious over the work of God. But what he did not understand is that God had used his evil work all along in order to put on the cross the sacrificial Lamb who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). In their own ignorance, therefore, Satan and all his demons

would be rejoicing at this moment in history. However, their rejoicing would soon be turned to mourning because in three days Jesus would rise from the dead (16:9). What seemingly would have been Satan's greatest hour actually turned out to be his worst. The scheme of God's redemption that had been planned before the creation of the world was accomplished (Ep 3:8-12). The Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world had now in reality been slain (Rv 13:8).

THE BURIAL

(Mt 27:57-66; Lk 23:50-56; Jn 19:31-42)

42-47 See comments Mt 27:57-66; Jn 19:31-42. Unlike those religious leaders of Jerusalem that had moved the multitudes to cry out to crucify Jesus, Joseph, who was one of the Sanhedrin council, saw in Jesus the possible Messiah (See Jn 3:1ff). Because he

women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

42 ¶ And now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

43 Joseph of Arimathaea, a prominent council member who also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

44 And Pilate marveled that He was already dead. And calling to *him* the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead.

45 Now when he found out from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 Then he bought fine linen. And he took Him down and wrapped Him in the linen and laid Him in a tomb that was cut out of a rock. And he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

47 Then Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where He was laid.

Chapter 16

1 ¶ Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices so that they might come and anoint Him.

2 And very early in the morning on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?"

4 But when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great.

5 When entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment. And they were astonished.

6 Then he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He is risen. He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him.

was a member of the council he could make this request, whereas the disciples had scattered because of fear and disillusionment. Jesus was subsequently laid in Joseph's own tomb that had been cut out of solid rock. **Mary ... and Mary ... observed where He was laid:** It is significant that Mark includes this statement. These two women knew where the tomb was located. Some have speculated that when they came to the tomb early on the first day of the week three days later, that they actually went to the wrong tomb. The wrong tomb that they went to at that time was empty. In their excitement and expectation of Jesus' resurrection, they ran to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus. The disciples thus stood up on the day of Pentecost and proclaimed that He had been raised from the dead. But such theories are only the speculations that have been proposed by those who can find no logical reason to disprove the resurrection of Jesus. The women knew the exact location of the tomb. We can consider them valid witnesses that the tomb was empty.

Chapter 16

THE RESURRECTION

(Mt 28:1-8; Lk 24:1-8; Jn 20:1)

1 See comments Mt 28:1-8. In Mark's account of what these women did he emphasizes the fact that the women brought the spices after the Sabbath in order to go and prepare the body of Jesus for its final rest. Matthew and Luke emphasize the fact that the women brought the spices to the tomb. The customary burial preparation for Jesus' body was done on Friday at the time of the burial. However, the complete preparations were not finished. Therefore, the women here seek to finalize all preparations. They possibly want to pay their final respects to the One they thought would be the Messiah of Israel. The fact that they had earlier bought spices

to prepare the body for final rest is evidence that they did not expect that Jesus would rise from the dead. **2-8 Who will roll away the stone:** These women were not expecting a resurrection. They expected that everything would be as it was when they left the tomb the Friday evening before. **When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away:** Too often in life we worry about large stones in our lives. We should look up to God. We will find that He has rolled away the stones. And so it was here. The great obstacle that would hinder their proposed work had been taken away by God. God had sent an angel to do that which they could not do. **They said nothing to anyone:** That is, they said nothing to anyone on their way to tell Peter and the others apostles (Mt 28:8).

THE APPEARANCES

Some Bible students have questioned whether the last twelve verses of Mark should be a part of the book. They believe that some biblical copyist added these verses to the book after it was written by Mark. The reason for this is that these verses are absent from the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts and several other older manuscripts. It is believed that a copyist wrote these verses in order to summarize the appearances. The verses were subsequently added later because another copyist thought they were a part of the original manuscript. However, there are several reasons why many Bible students believe that they were a part of the original autograph of Mark. (1) The Vaticanus retained space for the twelve verses at the end of Mark. This indicates that the copyist of the Vaticanus was aware of the existence of the verses at the time the Vaticanus was produced. It could also be that the Vaticanus copyist was planning to add the verses at a later date when more manuscript evidence was made available. (2) The similarities between the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manu-

7 “But go your way. Tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him as He said to you.”

8 Then they went out and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

9 ¶ Now when *Jesus* was risen early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.

10 She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe.

12 ¶ After that He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country.

13 Then they went and told *it* to the rest. They did not believe them either.

14 ¶ Afterward He appeared to the eleven as

scripts would possibly classify them to be from the same family of manuscripts. If this is true, then their evidence for the development of Greek texts should be measured against other families of Greek manuscripts. They would be only one source of evidence for text production that should be compared with many other families. (3) Consider the above in reference to other sources of manuscript evidence. All of the major manuscripts, except the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, include these verses. These manuscripts would include the Alexandrinus, Ephraimi and Bezae. (4) Consider also that the *cursives* are also in favor of the verses as a part of the original autograph. (5) Consider also the writings of early church scholars. These verses are recognized by the Shepherd of Hermas (A.D. 150), Justin Martyr (A.D. 160) and Irenaeus (A.D. 177). Because of the above points it is the conviction here that these verses are a part of Mark's original account of the days immediately after the resurrection of Jesus and should be considered a part of the original autograph. There is nothing that is doctrinally different in the verses from what is taught in the rest of the New Testament on this subject. Every doctrinal point that is stated in these verses by Mark is also taught throughout the New Testament.

9-13 See comments Mt 28:9,10. **When He rose early on the first day of the week:** This statement makes it clear that Jesus rose on the first day of the week, or Sunday. Since the resurrection was on Sunday, this day has been special to Christians throughout the centuries. It was on this day that Christians in the first century assembled (At 20:7; 1 Co 16:1,2). This day also became known as the Lord's Day (Rv 1:10). **They did not believe:** The fact that they did not believe the first reports of the women indicates that they were not expecting the resurrection. They were in such a state of shock and disappointment immediately after the resurrection that they could not believe the report of the women. **Two of them as they walked:** See Lk 24:13-35.

14 Afterward He appeared to the eleven: This verse indicates that the first appearance to the apostles after the resurrection is under consideration. **He rebuked their unbelief:** Jesus rebuked the eleven apostles for not believing the report of those who first saw Him after the resurrection. **Hardness of heart:** The apostles were evidently still suffering from despondency as a result of the death of the One they thought would be the Messiah of Israel. Their discouragement would not allow them to believe again after such great disappointment. Therefore, they were still in a state of

shock at the time the women reported the resurrection (Lk 24:33-43; Jn 20:19).

JESUS' FINAL COMMISSION

In Mark 16:14-20 Jesus made a very significant promise to the apostles and early church. Unfortunately, these verses that include this promise are often misunderstood. In Mark 16:14-20 Jesus does not define how the miraculous signs about which He talked would be carried out by those who believed. He simply says that “those who believe” would do wonderful things. It is probable that the event of the statements of verses 15-18 took place at a different time and occasion than the events and statements of Matthew 28:16-20 and Luke 24:44-49. There is no reason to assume that these are all parallel accounts of the same appearance of Jesus before His ascension. After all, Jesus appeared to the disciples over a period of forty days after His resurrection and before the ascension (At 1:3).

It is necessary to understand Mark 16:14-20 by first understanding that four different meetings or events are mentioned in the context of these verses. These events or meetings took place at different times after Jesus' resurrection and when the disciples went forth to preach. It is important to understand the chronology of these verses in order to understand the application of the statements of Jesus.

Verse 14 is an appearance to the eleven apostles immediately after the resurrection. Mark here uses indirect discourse. Indirect discourse is identified by the use of third person pronouns. Emphasis is on the one or ones who are being discussed. These are the words of Mark who records this historical narrative of what Jesus said and did in relation to the apostles. The antecedent of the pronouns of the indirect discourse of Mark's narrative of these last verses is established here. The pronouns of the indirect discourses, therefore, must refer back to the eleven apostles of verse 14. The events in this verse took place sometime before the speech of verses 15-18. There is no reason to connect the rebuking by Jesus in this verse with the speech that Mark records in verses 15-18.

15,16 Beginning with the word “go” in verse 15 and extending through the end of verse 18, Mark records the direct discourse of Jesus. Mark is recording what Jesus actually said on possibly another occasion than the occasion of verse 14. These concluding statements in the earthly presence of Jesus that are included here are Mark's concluding narrative of the ministry of Jesus. **Go into all the world:** Jesus now makes it clear to the

they sat at the table. And He rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He was risen.

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 "He who believes and is immersed will be saved. But he who does not believe will be condemned.

17 "And these signs will follow those who believe. In My name they will cast out de-

mons. They will speak with new languages.

18 They will take up serpents with their hands. And if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover."

19 ¶ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat at the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word by the signs that followed.

disciples that the gospel is for all the world, not just the Jews (Jn 10:16). They must go to every village, town and city of the world (Mt 28:19,20). No community must be left untouched by the proclamation of the gospel.

Preach the gospel to every creature: This one statement designates what is to be done (preach), what is to be preached (the gospel), and to whom the preaching must go (every creature). The gospel is the good news of Jesus' death for our sins and resurrection for our hope (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4). This is what must be preached to all the world. The gospel must be preached to every man because every man is a sinner (Rm 3:9,10).

He who believes: Those who believe will respond to God's grace through the cross by immersion in water for the remission of their sins (See comments At 2:38; Rm 6:3-6). Those who do not believe will not respond by obedience to the gospel. One's belief, therefore, must move him to obedience (See Hb 11:6; Js 2:14-26). **Shall be saved:** Jesus makes it very clear that salvation comes as a result of faith in Jesus and one's response to God's grace that was revealed on the cross (Ti 2:11). If one does not respond to the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, there is no hope of salvation (See Jn 3:3-5; At 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pt 3:21).

17,18 Those who believe: The group of "those who believe" of the worldwide call through the preaching of the gospel in verse 17 finds its antecedent in "he who believes" of verse 16. All those who believe and are baptized form the group of "those who believe." Reference in these verses is to the group of Christians in general, not the apostles of verse 14. These Christians would work miracles. From this we would not affirm that everyone of this Christian group would work signs. The passage simply says that the signs would follow the group of "those who believe." The fulfillment of this promise in the book of Acts interprets what is here meant. Not everyone in the church – the group of those who believed – worked miracles. Only those on whom the apostles had laid their hands (See comments At 8:18; Rm 1:11). Therefore, the interpretation here is that the group worked miracles by the representation of those who could, by the laying on of the apostles' hands, command miracles to occur. **Signs:** The miraculous signs would be for the confirmation of the message and messengers (See Jn 3:2; At 15:12; Rm 15:19; 2 Co 12:12; Hb 2:3,4). **Speak with new tongues:** They would speak languages of men that they had never before studied. This promise is in the context of the great commission to evangelize the world. Therefore, the gift of languages

was for the purpose of evangelization. They would not have to spend many months in learning a new language in order to preach the gospel to a particular cultural group (See At 2:2-11; 10:46; 19:6; 1 Co 12:10). **Take up serpents:** See At 28:5. **If they drink any deadly thing:** The texts says "if." In other words, if the disciples' enemies seek to kill them, they will not die from such murder plots. **Lay hands on the sick:** See At 3:6-8; 5:12-16; 9:40; 20:10-12.

19 After the Lord had spoken to them: Mark again turns to indirect discourse. He mentions events that are parallel to the events of Acts 1:6-9. He refers to the ascension of Jesus to heaven. Therefore, keep in mind that this event took place about forty days after the event of verse 14. The pronoun "them" here finds its antecedent in the indirect discourse of verse 14. Reference is thus to the apostles.

20 And they went out: The event of this verse took place at least seven days after the event of verse 19. The apostles went forth only after they had received the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. The antecedent of the pronoun "they" of this verse is discovered in the indirect discourse of verse 14. The pronoun "them" in verses 14,19,20 refers to the apostles. However, in Mark's record of Jesus' statements in verses 15-18, the pronoun "them" would refer to people other than the apostles. Reference is to those who believe and obey the gospel. Therefore, not only would the apostles do miraculous works, "those who believe" would do the same.

"Those who believe" in verse 17 will work miracles. This is certainly a reference to the promise of Joel 2:28 (See comments Acts 2:16,17). This statement of Jesus also has in view Acts 2:38,39. It is also a promise that the working of miraculous signs would go beyond the apostles themselves. This is what Joel prophesied. Jesus does not explain how the believers would receive the authority to work signs. He does not explain in these verses when they would receive this authority. He simply states that signs would follow them as a group, the church, as a result of their belief and obedience of the gospel by immersion. We must look throughout the rest of the New Testament in order to discover who and when the miraculous gifts would go to the group of those who believe. Therefore, since Jesus does not in this context explain the how and when, we must allow the New Testament to be the final commentary on how the miracles would go to the group of those who believe and when this would take place.

It is also significant to notice that Jesus is here

promising that those who believe would ordinarily receive the authority to work signs. Their reception of such authority is assumed in the text. He does not specify that only the special group of Christ-sent apostles would be given the authority to work signs. In fact, the nature of the promise of Joel 2:28 that "all flesh" would receive the "good things" of the Spirit is in contrast to a select group receiving the Spirit as in the Old Testament period. He does not say that there would be restrictions or qualifications for them to receive the Spirit other than "believing" and "obeying" the gospel. He simply states that all those who believe and are baptized would receive the authority to work signs.

Another important point to remember is that the receiving of the authority to work miraculous signs was not given to those who had not believed and obeyed. It was for those who had already believed and obeyed by baptism. In other words, the working of signs was not a condition for salvation, neither was it a signal of salvation. It was a blessing for the purpose of confirming the preached word of God. Those who went forth had already believed and obeyed the gospel by baptism. Those who have not believed and obeyed the gospel, therefore, have no promise of a reception of the Holy Spirit in any manner or through any means. There is no teaching in the entire New Testament that affirms that the giving of the Holy Spirit in any manner was for the purpose of saving individuals (See comments At 10,11).

Consider also that Jesus does not state that the signs would necessarily follow every believer. He indicates that the signs would follow the believers as a group. "Those who believe" indicates that the corporate body of believers (the church) would be followed by the signs wherever they were or wherever they went. Not everyone of the group of believers would be able to work the signs. However, there would be those in every group of believers who could. The signs would follow the believers as long as they were a part of the church group. Again, the book of Acts historically interprets what Jesus meant in this context. Only those on whom the apostles laid their hands could work signs as the apostles (See comments At 8:18). The historical event of what actually happened in the book of Acts explains what Jesus is here mentioning in a brief promise.

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Christ-sent apostles in Acts 2, the apostles then went forth to preach. In verses 19,20 of this context the pronoun "them" finds its antecedent in verse 14. The "them" was the group of the Christ-apostles – Matthias was later

added to their number (At 1:26). The going forth of the apostles took place many days after the commission of verses 15-18 because they waited in Jerusalem until the coming of the Spirit (Lk 24:49). There are fifty days between Passover – when Jesus was crucified – and Pentecost. After being in the tomb for three days, Jesus appeared to them during forty of the fifty days before Pentecost (At 1:3). Therefore, they waited in Jerusalem for about seven days before the Spirit came. **And preached everywhere:** When the apostles went forth from Jerusalem they preached everywhere. It was several years after the events of Acts 2 before the apostles personally went forth from Jerusalem to preach in other areas. The apostles stayed in Jerusalem from ten to fifteen years after Pentecost in order to evangelize those Jews who came to Jerusalem every from all over the world for the annual Passover/Pentecost feasts. Those who were converted during these feasts went to all the world. In this manner the apostles first accomplished their work of this commission to go into all the world.

The Lord working: The Lord is given credit for working the miraculous signs through the medium of those who went forth. This indicates that their work and word originated from God, not man (See Jn 3:2; Hb 2:3,4). As the apostles went forth, they laid hands on "those who believed" in order that they receive the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (See comments At 8:18; 19:1-6; Rm 1:11). Therefore, "those who believe" were able to work miracles only if they had had hands laid on them by the apostles. This is the historical commentary of what actually happened. Therefore, when the apostles died, there was no one to lay hands on those who believed in order that they carry on with the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. When the last Christ-sent apostle died, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit among those who believed ceased to be passed on to other disciples (See comments 1 Co 13:8-10). When the last person died on whom the last apostle had laid hands, the age for the open manifestation of the work of God through miracles ceased, though God continued to work behind the scenes of natural law in the lives of the disciples, which work continues even to this day. The word of God had been firmly confirmed by miracles. There was no more the need to confirm the word of God in such a manner for those who already believe. God does not have to reconfirm His word today. It is sufficient within itself to produce that faith which is acceptable to Him (Rm 10:17; Hb 11:6). It is for this reason that the word of God is able to supply one unto every good work (2 Tm 3:16,17).

Luke's Historical Defense Of The Christ Luke

Author

The inspired writer of this New Testament document is Luke, the beloved physician (Cl 4:14). He is a Gentile, but was not an eyewitness to the life and death of Jesus. Luke's authorship is established because of the close relationship in writing style and vocabulary between the documents of Luke and Acts. Both books were written to Theophilus. Lk 1:1-4 and At 1:1 are similar in expressing the purpose of writing, and thus, indicate that there was a common writer for both documents. This relationship between the two documents is especially indicated in At 1:1 when the writer of Acts refers to the "former treatise." The former treatise is undoubtedly a reference to the document of Luke.

Another important evidence that establishes the relationship between Luke and Acts is the fact that both books have a common literary structure in the Greek language. The vocabulary and writing