



# MARK

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## INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

**Instructor:** C. M. (Chuck) Horner

**Biography:**

Chuck was born in 1933. He and his wife Loretta have been married 62 years. They have 3 children, 5 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. He is an alumnus of Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, where he majored in actuary science and minored in accounting. He graduated from the Bear Valley School of Preaching, Denver, Colorado in 1974. He has served on the administrations of York College and the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver. He served both as an instructor and as director in the Southwest School of Biblical Studies in Austin, Texas. In the fall of 1986 he helped start World Video Bible School where he serves as an instructor and trustee.

## **MARK BACKGROUND**

### **I. AUTHORSHIP: JOHN MARK.**

- A. The author of the book does not identify himself.
- B. The early church ascribed the authorship to John Mark.
- C. Tradition says Mark was with Peter in Rome (?).
  - 1. He was a trusted companion of Peter (1 Pet 5:13).
  - 2. Justin Martyr quotes this gospel and calls it the “Memoirs of Peter.”
  - 3. Others, close to the first century, say Mark got most of his material directly from Peter.

### **II. THEME: JESUS IS THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF GOD (cf: 8:31; 10:33).**

- A. Mark gives us one of the three reasons for Jesus’ death:
  - 1. A ransom for many (10:45).
  - 2. For the remission of sins (Mt 26:28).
  - 3. For the sheep (Jn 10:11).
- B. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is very relevant background for this gospel.

### **III. TIME OF WRITING: 55-70 A.D.**

- A. The date is very hard to determine.
- B. Papius, stating tradition, says the church at Rome had Mark write this gospel as a memoir of Peter’s preaching.

### **IV. PURPOSE: A GOSPEL FOR THE GENTILES, ESPECIALLY THE ROMANS.**

- A. It disregards many instances of special Jewish interest and explains Jewish customs and language for non-Jewish readers (5:41; 7:34; 15:34).

- B. It does not give emphasis to Old Testament prophecies as Matthew and John do.
- C. The picture of Jesus Mark presents would appeal to the Roman mind.
  - 1. The Son of Man is shown as a man of vigorous action.
    - a. Jesus is shown as a strenuous worker quickly moving from one task to another.
    - b. The Greek word εὐθέως which is translated as “straightway, forthwith or immediately” is used 42 times. Of these 14 are used of Jesus’ personal activities.
  - 2. His heroic service to others and His willingness to die for others would attract Roman attention.
  - 3. ACTION is the key to this gospel. With this in mind many feel this gospel was written primarily to the Romans who were very industrious and proud of their achievements.

**V. CLASSIFICATION: GOSPEL.**

**VI. SPECIAL EMPHASIS AND CHARACTERISTICS.**

- A. Several things were omitted by Mark as they were not necessary to his special message:
  - 1. No genealogy,
  - 2. No account of the virgin birth and
  - 3. No history of His childhood years.
- B. Mark stresses facts rather than themes or topics.
- C. Old Testament quotes:
  - 1. Only once does Mark directly quote the Old Testament (1:2-3).
  - 2. And he only quotes Jesus quoting it two times.
- D. He gives only 8 of the 70 possible parables.
- E. He does give 23 different personal reactions to Jesus.

- F. Mark's closeness to Peter:
1. The outline and content of Peter's sermon in Acts 10:34-43 is very similar to this gospel.
  2. This gospel, with the exception of John the Baptist, begins with the call of Peter.
  3. Peter's name appears in 1:36; 11:21; 13:3, but not in the other gospel's accounts of these same things.
  4. When Peter gets out of jail he comes to John Mark's mother's house.
  5. If these things point to a close association with Peter, it is only natural as Mark did spend much time with him.
  6. It would seem, in fact, that John Mark did get much of his material from Peter.
  7. BUT, do not forget - it is still *the Holy Spirit* who directed the writing of this gospel!
- G. Mark uses 151 historic present tenses which emphasize action.
- H. Even though this is the shortest gospel, it does go into more detail in certain places than the other gospels (1:14-29; 6:14-19; 7:1-23; 12:28-34).
- I. As far as we know this gospel is totally chronological.
- J. An unnamed boy flees from the garden in 14:51-52. This fact is given as an incidental detail, but many feel Mark is describing his own action on that occasion.

## VII. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

- A. Mark attaches great significance to John the Baptist's work and even dates the "beginning of the gospel of Christ" from him (1:1).
1. Both Peter and Paul specify the ministry of John the Baptist as the beginning of the gospel (Acts 10:36-37; 13:23-24).
  2. Jesus also noted John the Baptist's importance (Lk 16:16).

- B. The Old Testament closed with the prophecy of John's coming (Mal 3:1; 4:5-6).
- C. John's mission was the preparation of a people for the Messiah (1:1-2).
- D. John the Baptist's message was for the people to repent and to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (1:4 cf: Mt 3:2).

#### **VIII. THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES.**

- A. The names of the apostles are listed four times in the New Testament:
  - 1. Matthew 10:2-4.
  - 2. Mark 3:16-19.
  - 3. Luke 6:14-16.
  - 4. Acts 1:13.
- B. They did a very important work for the Lord (cf: Mt 18:18; Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14).
- C. The term "apostle" is used two ways in the New Testament:
  - 1. In its non-technical sense it refers to anyone who acts under another's authority (Acts 14:4,14; 1 Thess 1:1 cf: 2:6).
  - 2. When it means any of the twelve or Paul, it means he is one duly authorized to act as an ambassador on behalf of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:20).
- D. Jesus' purpose in choosing the apostles is summed up in 3:14-15.
  - 1. They were to be with Him, learn from Him and witness the events of His ministry, death and resurrection (Acts 1:21-22).
  - 2. They were to be heralds of the kingdom of God.
  - 3. They were to be empowered from the Holy Spirit to perform miracles as the credentials of their office.
- E. Their office was not to be perpetuated in the church.

1. Matthias was selected to fill an office which had been vacated by an apostasy which occurred prior to Jesus' death.
2. The other apostolic offices were not filled upon the death of the original holders.

#### **IX. THE TEXTUAL PROBLEM OF 16:9-20.**

- A. These verses are missing from some of the oldest Greek manuscripts available to us today.
- B. This is why some translations omit it, print it in the margin or otherwise indicate there is a textual problem.
- C. Whether or not these verses belong here does not affect us or our faith in any way. There is nothing in the faith or practice of Christianity which stands or falls on these 12 verses. Everything found in them is found in other verses of the New Testament!

#### **X. INTER-TESTAMENTAL HISTORY.**

##### **A. Galatians 4:4 - A Prepared World for Christ to Come Into.**

1. In Malachi's time Judah was a Persian province.
  - a. Shortly after this Greece comes into its own power.
  - b. Homer and David lived in 1,000 B.C.
  - c. Real Greek history begins at 776 B.C.
  - d. Hellenic states 776-500 B.C.
  - e. Plato, Socrates and Aristotle lived during the Jewish restoration period.
  - f. 331-330 B.C. Alexander the Great came into power.
  - g. Alexander invades and rules Palestine.
  - h. Alexander dies in 323 B.C. at the age of 33.
  - i. The Seleucids rule in the east and the Ptolemies rule in the west.

- j. Ptolemies gave peace to Palestine.
- k. In 198 B.C. a Seleucid named Antiochus III reconquered Palestine.
- l. Antiochus Epiphanies IV rules 175-164 B.C.
- m. In 168 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanies IV:
  - 1) Offered a sow on the altar in the temple.
  - 2) Smearred the walls of the temple with the blood.
  - 3) Made an image of Jupiter and put it in the temple.
  - 4) Prohibited temple worship.
  - 5) Forbade circumcision.
  - 6) Destroyed every copy of the Hebrew scripture he could find.
  - 7) Sold thousands of Jewish families into slavery.
- n. The Maccabean (Hasmonean) Period resulted - 165-63 B.C.
  - 1) A priest, Mattathias, and his 5 sons were irate and regained rulership of Palestine.
    - a) Judas ruled 166-161 B.C.
    - b) Jonathan ruled 161-144 B.C.
    - c) Simon ruled 144-135 B.C.
    - d) John.
    - e) Eleazar.
  - 2) In 165 B.C. Judas and his family reconquered Jerusalem and repurified the temple. This started the Feast of Dedication (Jn 10:22).
  - 3) John Hyrcanus (Jonathan's son) ruled 135-106 B.C. (includes the rule of his sons).

- 4) Aristobulus I took the title of king. His rule, including his sons', was 106-63 B.C.
- 5) The name Maccabee means "hammer."
- 6) The Jews were independent in the years 165-63 B.C.
- o. In 63 B.C. Pompeii conquered Palestine.
  - 1) Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, was appointed ruler in Palestine and ruled until 43 B.C.
  - 2) They were Idumean.
- p. Herod the Great became ruler of Palestine 37-4 B.C. He began to rebuild the temple in order to gain the favor of the Jews.

**B. Language Changes.**

- 1. By the first century the language of Palestine was Aramaic (Mk 5:41; 7:34).
- 2. There were many people who could not read Hebrew.
- 3. The Targums were the Aramaic translations of the Hebrew scriptures (possibly 200 B.C.).
- 4. The Targums were written down in the second century A.D. with comments added.
- 5. The Talmud (oral traditions) were started and written down about the same time.

**C. The Synagogue Begins During This Period.**

- 1. "The great synagogue" was the name given to 120 men.
  - a. Nehemiah instituted this synagogue with Ezra as president in 410 B.C.
  - b. Its object was to guide the returning exiles into true Judaism.
  - c. It lasted until 275 B.C.

2. The synagogue also arose out of the need of the dispersed Jews to be guided into true Judaism.
  - a. They were presided over by a board of elders.
    - 1) There was a chief elder.
    - 2) Almost every town of any size had a synagogue.
  - b. Five families or ten men were needed to establish a synagogue.
  - c. A place of prayer was used when there were not enough families or men to establish a synagogue.
3. The Sanhedrin (a ruling body over the Jews).
  - a. It is thought to have begun in the third century B.C. 2 Chronicles 19:5-11 indicates that it may have been earlier.
  - b. Under the Romans the power of the death penalty was taken away from them.

**D. Three Tendencies of Jewish Religion in the First Century.**

1. Legalistic,
2. Traditional (traditions equal to God's word) and
3. Nationalistic.

**E. Customs of the Times.**

1. Home.
  - a. The center of everything.
  - b. Deep reverence for old age.
  - c. They always offered thanks for their meals.
  - d. The eating of a meal together was a family custom.

- e. Birth was a great blessing to the family, especially if it was a male.
  - 1) He would carry on the family name.
  - 2) Another breadwinner.
  - 3) Family protection.
  - 4) Strength for the nation.
  - 5) If the family was from the tribe of Judah, there was hope that he could be the Messiah.

## 2. Marriage.

- a. The arranging for marriage was done by the family or friends.
- b. The betrothal was binding.
- c. The marriage ceremony was nothing but bringing the bride from her father's house to the groom's house (Jer 7:34; 16:9; Mt 22:11; Joel 2:16; Gen 29:23).
- d. Redeeming of the new born male was done in 40 days and the female in 80 days.
- e. As a child grew he went through certain stages.
  - 1) At about 5 years of age he started to learn to read the Hebrew Bible (Shema - Deut 6:4).
  - 2) Then he began to learn the Pentateuch.
  - 3) At age 10 he was advanced to the Mishna.
  - 4) At age 13 he went through his Bar Mitzvah ("Son of the Commandment").
  - 5) At age 15 he began to study the Talmud.
  - 6) At age 18 he was usually married.
  - 7) At age 20 he was working at his lifetime vocation.

- f. The girls studied the domestic arts.

**F. The Social Distinctions.**

From highest to lowest:

1. Sadducees (always controlled the Sanhedrin).
2. Pharisees.
3. Publicans.
4. Sinners.
5. The lowest Jew was a slave.
6. Roman soldiers and officials.
7. The Gentile traders.
8. Samaritans.

**G. Death.**

1. Professional mourners were hired by the rich.
2. The body was washed and anointed with oils, etc., then wrapped in burial clothes.

**H. Sects.**

1. Pharisees - elite clergy.
  - a. They were the most prominent in Jesus' time - about 6,000.
  - b. They were very closely knit socially, etc.
  - c. They had very little interest in politics.
  - d. They emphasized the minute and the external.
2. Sadducees - politically minded.
  - a. They believed God did not have many dealings with mankind.

- b. There were about 4,000 of them at this time.
  - c. They did not look forward to a Messianic reign.
  - d. They were cruel and took every advantage they could in any circumstance.
3. Herodians - almost totally a political party.
- a. Mark 3:6 shows a rare instance of cooperation between them and the Pharisees.
  - b. This cooperation was for the purpose of killing Jesus.
  - c. This was the only point they could agree on.
4. Zealots - just the opposite of the Herodians in their views.
- a. They wanted political independence.
  - b. Used guerrilla type warfare.
  - c. They were basically the ones who precipitated the destruction of the temple.
  - d. Simon the apostle was one of these (Mt 10:4).
5. Essenes - not mentioned in the New Testament. They:
- a. Did not sacrifice animals.
  - b. Did not store up any kind of wealth.
  - c. Made no fighting instruments.
  - d. Owned no slaves.
  - e. Avoided taking oaths.
  - f. Dwelt in communes.
  - g. Respected their seniors as parents.
  - h. Wore white (men).

- i. Bathed in cold water.
- j. Sang praises to God before and after their meals.
- k. Believed in the immortality of the soul.
- l. Emphasized:
  - 1) Love of God,
  - 2) Personal virtue and
  - 3) Brotherly kindness.
- m. Did not believe in marriage, therefore
- n. Became extinct.

**I. The Rulers.**

- 1. Roman.
  - a. Octavius Augustus ..... 30 B.C. - 14 A.D.
  - b. Tiberius Nero Caesar ..... 14-37
  - c. Gaius Caligula ..... 37-41 (he was slain)
  - d. Claudius Caesar ..... 41-54 (chased the Jews from Rome)
  - e. Nero Caesar ..... 54-68
  - f. Galba ..... 68 (7 months)
  - g. Otho ..... 69 (3 months)
  - h. Vitellius ..... 69 (8 months)
  - i. Vespasian ..... 69-79
  - j. Titus ..... 79-81
  - k. Domitian ..... 81-96

2. Local.
  - a. Herod the Great..... 37-4 B.C.
  - b. Herod Archelaus.....4 B.C. - 6 A.D. (Judea-Samaria)
  - c. Herod Antipas..... 4-39 A.D. (Galilee-Perea)
  - d. Herod Phillip Decapolis .....4 B.C. - 34 A.D. (Basham)
  - e. Lysanais (not Herod) ..... (Abilene)
  - f. Herod Agrippa I ..... 41-44 (all)
  - g. Herod Agrippa II ..... 44-46 (all)
3. Roman governors over Palestine.
  - a. Pilate ..... 14-37
  - b. Felix..... 53-60
  - c. Festus..... 60-62
4. High priests.
  - a. Annas ..... 6-15
  - b. Caiaphas ..... 18-36

**J. RECOMMENDED BOOKS.**

1. *From Sinai to Calvary* - Eckstein.
2. *Between the Testaments* - C. Pfeiffer.
3. *Living Word Commentary, Vol. 1* - Malherbe.

**XI. OUTLINE.**

- I. The preparation of the Servant ..... 1:1-13
- II. The Servant's ministry in Galilee ..... 1:14-9:50

- III. The Servant's ministry in Jerusalem ..... 10:1-13:37
- IV. The death, burial and resurrection of the Servant..... 14:1-16:20

**XII. EXPANDED OUTLINE.**

- I. The preparation of the Servant ..... 1:1-13
  - A. The ministry of John the Baptist..... 1:1-8
  - B. The baptism of Jesus ..... 1:9-11
  - C. The temptation of Jesus..... 1:12-13
- II. The Servant's ministry in Galilee ..... 1:14-9:50
  - A. Its beginning..... 1:14-15
  - B. The calling of the four fishermen ..... 1:16-20
  - C. The healing of a man with an unclean spirit ..... 1:21-28
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# THE GOSPEL OF MARK

## THE SUFFERING SERVANT

- I. THE PREPARATION OF THE SERVANT ..... 1:1-13
- A. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST ..... 1:1-8

Compare Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 3:4-18; John 1:6-8,15-28.

Mark pictures Christ as an active, energetic, swiftly moving, warring, conquering King.

When kings were about to arrive they were generally preceded by a herald:

He was to prepare the way.

He was to proclaim his coming.

Mark shows John as this herald.

- 1) Note the exalted title used here:

Jesus - "He will certainly save," the personal name.

Christ - Anointed of God to be Prophet, Priest and King.

The Son of God - Deity!

Mark does not name himself as the author.

- 2) *As it is written in the Prophets* [Isaiah the prophet].

Mark first quotes Malachi 3:1 here to explain fuller the quote from Isaiah.

- 3) *The voice*. This quotes Isaiah 40:3. The quoting of more than one source, but naming only one, was common.

John himself claims to be "the voice" (Jn 1:23).

- 4) *John came baptizing*. Baptism was not new. It was required of all converts to Judaism. What was new was that the Jews, the "chosen people of God," were to be baptized.

*For the remission of sins*. εἰς, identical to Acts 2:38 and Matthew 26:28.

- 5) *Confessing their sins.* Notice baptism (vv. 4-5), repentance (v. 4) and confession (v. 5). These could come *only after* hearing and believing (cf. Rom 10:14,17).

John is truly preparing the way for Christ and the church, the body of Christ.

- 6) *John was clothed...he ate.* He was a living protest against all selfishness and self-indulgence.

Hence, he was also against that frivolity, carelessness and false security with which many were rushing toward their doom.

- 7-8) John gives two comparisons between himself and Jesus:

Jesus has superior majesty (v. 7).

Jesus has superior activity (v. 8).

John shows his humility:

The disciple is willing to render almost every service.

The slave (or humblest servant) is willing to render every service.

John considers himself unworthy to render the service.

## **B. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS ..... 1:9-11**

Compare with Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34.

- 9) *And was baptized* in order to fulfill all righteousness (God's will) - Matthew 3:13-17.

- 10-11) All three of the godhead are present at this great event! God is always pleased with freely given obedience to Him.

*My beloved Son.* ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, "the Son of Mine, the beloved!"

## **C. THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS ..... 1:12-13**

Compare: Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13.

- 12) *And immediately.* The valleys of temptation, sin and despair are always so close to the peaks.

*Drove.* ἐκβάλλει, a very forceful phrase, “he cast Him out,” - “he threw Him forth.”

- 13) *Forty days* - not to be understood as the same forty days of fasting which preceded this (Mt 4:2).

*Tempted by Satan.* Jesus “was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15 also cf. 1 Jn 2:16).

Lust of the flesh – turn stones to bread (Mt 4:3).

Lust of the eyes – shown...all the kingdoms (Mt 4:8).

Pride of life – cast yourself down...angels (Mt 4:6).

By His voluntary submission to baptism and voluntary obedience when tempted by Satan, Jesus, as the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45), overcame the test the first Adam failed.

Jesus is now ready to begin His ministry of:

Teaching,

Preaching,

Healing,

Casting out demons,

Suffering and

Dying for the lost sheep.

## **II. THE SERVANT’S MINISTRY IN GALILEE..... 1:14-9:50**

### **A. ITS BEGINNING ..... 1:14-15**

Compare: Matthew 3:2; 4:12; 11:2; 14:3-5; Mark 6:17-20; Luke 3:19-20; 4:14-15; John 3:24; 4:1-3,43-44.

14-15) *The time is fulfilled.* The fullness of time (cf. Gal 4:4; Eph 1:10).

*Kingdom of God* = kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 4:12).

This can be understood four ways in Scripture:

God's kingship - Matthew 6:10.

Salvation - Mark 10:25-26.

The church - Matthew 16:18-19.

Heaven - Matthew 25:34.

*Repent and believe in the gospel.* A change in the frame of mind and "believe" shows direction — toward the gospel.

**B. THE CALLING OF THE FOUR FISHERMEN ..... 1:16-20**

Compare Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:10.

16-20) If there is to be a great movement there must be those who are "in on the ground floor," who receive the first call and positions of leadership. All great men and all great leaders have their close followers.

**C. THE HEALING OF A MAN WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT ..... 1:21-28**

Compare: Luke 4:31-37.

- 22) *He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* No rabbi or teacher taught on his own authority. They always quoted others and their traditions. But Jesus speaks with the authority of the godhead, the fountain of living waters (Jer 2:13).
- 23) *A man...with an unclean spirit.* Demon possession today? NO! This occurrence was temporary and was ended when the power to cast them out was no longer necessary (Jn 20:30-31; 1 Cor 13:8-13).
- 24) *Let us alone! What have we to do with You?* One demon speaking for all the demons, realized that what was going to happen to him was the lot of all demons (cf: Jas 2:19).
- 25) *Be quiet.* Jesus has no need for evil ones to testify for Him. If He allowed this to continue it would cause many to doubt Jesus' claims and message.
- 26) *Had convulsed him.* The old KJV has "torn him." The NKJV is correct. There was no physical harm done to him. This word is translated "epileptic" in Matthew 17:15.
- 28) *His fame spread.* Great acts bring great fame.

**D. THE HEALING OF SIMON'S MOTHER-IN-LAW AND MANY OTHERS ..... 1:29-34**

Compare: Matthew 8:14-17; Luke 4:38-41.

- 31) Luke adds “and rebuked the fever.” Jesus exercised complete control over fever, wind, waves, all nature. The same word is used in Luke 8:24.

Matthew tells us this is the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4, “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.”

**E. “EVERYONE IS LOOKING FOR YOU” ..... 1:35-39**

Compare Luke 4:42-44, also Matthew 4:23-25 with Mark 1:39.

- 35) Jesus felt the importance and need of prayer. He prayed often, such as:

At His baptism	Luke 3:21
Choosing the twelve	Luke 6:12
Feeding the five thousand	Mark 6:41-46
Mount of transfiguration	Luke 9:28
The model prayer	Luke 11:1
At raising Lazarus	John 11:41-42
For Peter, before the denial	Luke 22:32
In Gethsemane	Mark 14:32-39
On the cross	Mark 15:34
After His resurrection	Luke 24:30
Etc., etc.	

Prayer will never do our work for us; what it will do is strengthen us for the work which must be done.

- 38) *That I may preach there also.* Jesus says nothing about performing miracles in these places, but His emphasis is on preaching “the kingdom of God” (Lk 4:43).

**F. A LEPER CLEANSED ..... 1:40-45**

Compare: Matthew 8:2-4; Luke 5:12-16.

- 41) The power and love of God, in Jesus, responded immediately to the leper's need and faith.

Jesus did not send away a man who had broken the Law by coming to Him (as a leper).

Jesus touched the man who was unclean.

After he was healed, Jesus sent him to the priests to fulfill the Law.

- 43-44) *Say nothing to anyone.* Jesus needed to be known as the bringer of God's good news not as a miracle worker.

This would bring about a premature crisis and Jesus' hour had not yet come.

*Show yourself to the priest.* Two things the priests will know as a result of this:

Irrefutable testimony to the power and love of Jesus.

Jesus condemns traditions that make void the Law, because He is obeying the Law and tells the leper to obey it also.

**G. THE HEALING OF A PARALYTIC ..... 2:1-12**

Compare: Matthew 9:2-8; Luke 5:17-26.

Chapter 1 was one of glory for Jesus, but chapter 2 begins the conflict. The conflict could not be avoided.

Jesus stressed:

Love

God's holy law

Freedom

Inner attributes

The Jews stressed:

Legalism

Law-defeating legalism

Bondage

Outward acts

They would hate to surrender their prestige and their hold on the public.

- 5) *Son, your sins are forgiven you.* The Jews of Jesus' time felt illness was a result of sin. Jesus does not accommodate their theory, but shows them by their own reasoning He has the power to forgive sin.

The Jews believed the man could not be cured unless his sins were forgiven.

The man was cured. Therefore, he was forgiven.

Therefore, Jesus' claim to be able to forgive sins must be true.

Jesus has entered the battle and has, for all practical purposes, "signed His own death warrant."

#### **H. THE CALL OF LEVI .....2:13-17**

Compare: Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32.

- 14) *At the tax office* - the tax-collector's booth, the place where the taxes were collected on any merchandise that passed along the international highway between Syria and Egypt.
- 16) *How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?* To the Pharisees a sinner was one who refused to subject himself to their interpretation of the Law.

In this sense, Jesus was a "sinner" in their eyes.

But, one of these "sinners" might actually be justified in God's eyes.

Jesus is showing us that at certain times "fellowship" is needed in order to win them for God.

- 17) *I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.* These people felt they were righteous, but Jesus shows them a great truth.

To have no sense of need is to erect a barrier between us and Jesus.

To have a sense of need is to possess the "passport" to His presence.

#### **I. THE QUESTION ABOUT FASTING .....2:18-22**

Compare: Matthew 9:14-17; Luke 5:33-39.

19-20) *As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. ...and then they will fast.* In Matthew 9:15 it says, "...the bridegroom will be taken away from them," which refers to Isaiah 53:8.

Mark has several references to Isaiah:

<u>Mark:</u>	<u>Isaiah:</u>
2:20	53:8
4:12	6:9-10
7:6-7	29:13
9:12	53: 3
11:17	56:7
12:1	5:1-2
13:8	19:2
13:24-25	13:10; 34:4
15:4-5	53:7

There was a rabbinic ruling: "All in attendance of the bridegroom are relieved of all religious observances which would lessen their joy." The wedding guests were actually exempt from all fasting.

21-22) What Jesus is saying is that the old, formal, rigid, Pharisaic religious mind cannot contain the new truths that are coming. The new religion of Christ will come to men only when their minds and hearts are open to the gospel.

**J. LORD OF THE SABBATH ..... 2:23-28**

Compare: Matthew 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5.

Jesus is emphasizing that those then living in His presence should be feasting, not fasting; rejoicing, not mourning.

What they were doing did not break the law of Moses. As long as the traveler did not thrust his sickle into a man's grain, he was permitted to pick some and eat it (cf: Deut 23:25).

Man was created prior to the Sabbath law. Man was not created to be the victim and slave of Sabbath rules and regulations created by religious leaders.

Man was not to be enslaved by the Sabbath; the Sabbath existed in order to make his life better.

Jesus is greater than:

The temple - Matthew 12:6

Jonah	-	Matthew 12:41
Solomon	-	Matthew 12:42
The Sabbath	-	Mark 2:28

Jesus, as Lord of the Sabbath, has authority to lay down the principles governing that day and no man has the right to find fault with Him or what He allows!

4 names for Jesus in this chapter:

Son of Man	-	10,28
The physician	-	17
The bridegroom	-	19-20
Lord of the Sabbath	-	28

**K. THE SHRIVELED HAND.....3:1-6**

Compare: Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11.

- 2) *Heal him on the Sabbath.* By Jewish traditional law all work was forbidden, and to heal someone was to work.

Jewish law (not God's) was definite and detailed about this. Medical attention could be given only if a person's life was in danger, and then only to bring them out of danger with all the other help being left until the next day.

- 4) A dilemma for the Jews! The answers were obvious to all. Silence was their only action.

A clash of religious ideas:

The Pharisees' religion was one of ritual - obeying certain added rules and regulations.

To Jesus, religion is service; first to God, then to men.

- 5) *Being grieved.* συλλυπούμενος, present, middle, participle - "the one being utterly distressed."

- 6) *How they might destroy Him.* Their problem has become acute because they AND their traditionalism had just suffered a humiliating defeat.

**L. TEACHING AND HEALING THE MULTITUDES ..... 3:7-12**

Compare: Matthew 12:15-21.

- 9) *Small boat.* Why? To spare Himself, for His work was not yet finished.  
*Crush.* θλίβωσιν, “to pressure, squeeze,” as grapes in a wine press.
- 11) *Whenever they saw Him.* ὅταν αὐτὸν ἐθεώπουν, “every time they saw Him.”  
*Cried out.* ἔκραζον, imperfect, “kept on crying out,” or “kept on screaming.”
- 12) *They should not make Him known.* He does not need the testimony of demons - that would discredit Him.

“Son of God” implied “Messiah” and their nationalistic view was wrong.

The scribes were telling the people that Jesus and the demons were allies and this could be twisted to confirm their lies.

**M. CHOOSING THE TWELVE ..... 3:13-19**

Compare: Matthew 10:1-4; Luke 6:12-16.

- 14) *Then He appointed twelve.* This would solve two basic problems:

How to make His message permanent.

How to disseminate the message when He was gone.

Christianity began in a group.

Christianity is lived out in a fellowship.

Christianity binds us to our brothers and sisters, and presents us with the task of living in harmony with each other.

Christianity began with a mixed group.

Matthew was a tax collector and, therefore, an outcast.

Simon the Zealot was fiery, violent and nationalistic.

Christianity began by insisting that the most diverse people must live together in harmony.

**N. BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT..... 3:20-30**

Compare: Matthew 12:22-32; Luke 11:14-23; 12:10.

- 21) By His actions Jesus made it clear that the three laws most men live by meant nothing to Him:

He had thrown away security – an occupation.

He had thrown away safety – we always tend to “play it safe.”

He did not let public opinion sway Him – “What will others say?”

What was worrying Jesus’ friends was that He was taking risks which they thought no sensible man should take.

- 27) *Plunder (spoil)*. διαρπάσαι, “to thoroughly ransack.”

Jesus’ defeat of demons showed that Satan’s defenses had been breached and that His conquest was begun.

- 28-29) *Blasphemes*. βλασφημία, “to speak against, defame.” Blasphemy is a spoken sin!

These Pharisees substituted:

Hardening for penitence,

Plotting for confession,

Evil for good and

Slander for praise.

They were dooming themselves. Their sin was unpardonable because they were unwilling to repent and seek God’s favor and forgiveness.

Compare 1 John 5:16; Hebrews 6:4-8.

**O. THE MOTHER AND BROTHERS OF JESUS..... 3:31-35**

Compare: Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21.

34) *Here are My mother and My brothers!* True kinship lies in:

A common experience – Christians have the common experience of being forgiven.

A common interest – Christians have the common interest in God’s word and God’s Son.

A common obedience – Christians have the common obedience in baptism and obedience to the same Master.

A common goal – heaven.

**P. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.....4:1-9**

Compare: Matthew 13:1-9; Luke 8:4-8.

- 1) Jesus spoke from a boat (cf: 3:9).
- 2) *Parables.* παραβολαίς, “to cast beside.”

What we must not look for in a parable is where every detail stands for something BUT, where one idea leaps out and shines like a flash of light!

- 9) If one “hears” he is not refusing to hear and he is not hardening his heart (which leads to the unpardonable sin).
- 3-9) The parable told. It is explained in verses 14-20.

**Q. THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES .....4:10-12**

Compare: Matthew 13:10-17,36; Luke 8:9-10.

- 10) *Those around Him with the twelve asked.* There are always those who want to hear and listen! We must find them!
- 11) *Mystery.* μυστήριον. In Greek it has a technical meaning. It does not mean something which cannot be understood. It is something which is unintelligible to someone who has not had the meaning explained to them. But it is perfectly clear after it has been explained.

Meaning: A person or a truth that would have remained unknown if God had not revealed him or it; a revealed or open secret; a Divinely revealed secret.

12) See Matthew 13:13-16 for the explanation of this and Isaiah 6:9-10.

**R. EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER ..... 4:13-20**

Compare: Matthew 13:18-23; Luke 8:11-15.

14) The sower is Christ and, by extension, all Christians (Mt 28:18-20).

A parable of hearts:

The unresponsive heart (v. 15).

The impulsive heart (vv. 16-17).

The preoccupied heart (vv. 18-19).

The responsive heart (v. 20).

15) Their lands were in long narrow strips and divided by paths. Through long usage these paths had become as hard as stone.

Compare Ezekiel 33:30-33.

16-17) This was not ground full of stones. Much of Galilee was a shelf of limestone with a narrow strip of earth over it.

*Stumble (offended).* σκανδαλίζονται - English: "scandal." Lit: "trigger of a trap."

Their failure was to think this obligation through - they forgot to "count the cost."

18-19) *Thorns.* Many times farmers cut only the tops off or even burn off the field, but by never removing the roots, the weeds come back stronger than ever.

Compare Amos 8:4-7.

20) Every good heart obeys the gospel and then obeys the great commission!

Although most of the seed here never grew, the fact remains that in the end there will be a great harvest.

This is a parable to end all despair!

What does this parable say? Patience! Do your work! Sow the seed! Leave the rest to God! The harvest is sure!

**S. VARIOUS SAYINGS OF JESUS.....4:21-25**

Compare:

- Verse 21 - Matthew 5:15; Luke 8:16; 11:33.
- 22 - Matthew 10:26; Luke 8:17; 12:2.
- 23 - Matthew 11:15; 13:9; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8,18a; 14:35b.
- 24a - Same as v. 23.
- 24b - Matthew 7:2; Luke 6:38.
- 25 - Matthew 13:12; 25:29; Luke 8:18b; 19:26.

21-22) Yes, we are to be lights. But Jesus is The Light and He should be shining forth. He reveals all we need to know (2 Pet 1:3).

23) First class conditional sentence - SINCE!

24-25) Be careful what you hear: in learning - in gossip - etc.

*With the same measure you use.* Your judgments of others will depend on what you have heard.

*More will be given.* A man's getting will be determined by his giving!

This is true of *Study* – the more you learn, the more you are capable of learning – stop learning and what you have learned will be forgotten.

This is true of *Worship* – do we come to GIVE worship or to “get our ticket punched?” Do we give ourselves to worship or do we take away by being critics?

This is true of *Fellowship* – if you want friends, be one.

This is true of *Physical Strength* – exercise and grow stronger or die of weakness.

This is true of *Skills* – work, art, music, etc.

This is true of *Responsibility* – if you never exercise decision making, it becomes harder.

This is true of *Judgment* – if you lack mercy God will withhold mercy from you (cf: Jas 2:13).

**T. THE PARABLE OF THE SEED GROWING IN SECRET..... 4:26-29**

This is the only parable which Mark alone tells us.

Victory is assured! God's plan must be - and is going to be - carried out!

To man, growth is a mystery (vv. 26-27).

The seed reveals its potency (v. 28).

The harvest time spells victory (v. 29).

26-27) "All the farmer can do is trust. To be sure, he can cover the seed, root up weeds, loosen the soil, add fertilizer, and perhaps even channel water to his plot. All of these things are important. But he cannot cause the seed to sprout and grow. As to that, all he can do is sleep night upon night, and rise day after day. The rest he must leave entirely to the seed, ultimately to the One who created the seed, who knows it thoroughly, and activates it. The farmer must trust and pray. He must wait patiently" (Hendricksen).

Compare 1 Corinthians 3:6-8.

28) *By itself.* αὐτομάτη. Lit: "of its own accord." This is used only here and in Acts 12:10.

29) Victory is sure! The harvest (judgment) is coming and will arrive just when God has planned it!

Read: James 5:7-8.

Joel 3:13.

Revelation 14:14-16.

This parable calls for:

Patience,

Hope and

Preparedness.

**U. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED.....4:30-32**

Compare: Matthew 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-19.

Central idea: The kingdom of God, no matter how small and insignificant it may appear at first, or in any one place, will continue to expand over the earth and continue to bless all of those who enter into it.

This parable tells us:

- Have patience,
- Exercise faith,
- Keep on praying,
- Keep on working and
- God's plan cannot fail!

**V. CHRIST'S USE OF PARABLES .....4:33-34**

Compare: Matthew 13:34-35.

Here we see the Master Teacher at work. He fitted His instruction to His listeners.

A good teacher will:

- Avoid all self display.
- Avoid a sense of self-superiority.
- Possess understanding.
  - a. Of his subject, and
  - b. Of his students.
- Possess patience.
- Possess kindness.

**W. A TEMPEST STILLED .....4:35-41**

Compare: Matthew 8:18, 23-27; Luke 8:22-25.

- 37) Great storms would come down between the mountains, striking the lake suddenly, violently and totally unexpected.
- 39) *Peace be still.* Lit: “silence, be muzzled and cut off the wind.” (This is the same phrase as in 1:25, “Be quiet . . .”)

Christ gives peace:

In the storm of sorrow.

When life’s problems, tensions and uncertainties cause us to doubt,  
“Lord, what will You have me do?” (cf: 9:24).

In the storms of anxiety (worry, worry, worry).

**X. HELPFULNESS VERSUS HEARTLESSNESS .....5:1-20**

Compare: Matthew 8:28-9:1; Luke 8:26-39.

Turning from the description of the wild sea, Mark now tells us of a wild man. Humanly speaking both were untamable, but Jesus subdued them both!

- 4) *Had often been bound.* πολλάκις ... δεδέσθαι. Perfect, infinitive, passive. There were pieces of fetters still hanging from him.
- 7) *What have I to do with You?* The demons use the vocal cords of this man, so Mark is accurate.

Even though men do their utmost to deny the deity of Jesus, the demons do not!

Compare: Deuteronomy 6:4 with James 2:19.

And what title do they use? *Son of the Most High God!*

*My name is Legion; for we are many.* One demon speaks for the many. He is their leader, their spokesman.

Jesus wants all to know this demon(s) has a name and is not to be confused with the man himself. Both for the man’s sake himself and those present with him. These are spirits, other than the man himself, who are inhabiting him.

*Legion.* A Roman legion was composed of 6,000 men. The meaning must be understood as “a very large number.” (Compare with the 2,000 who survive - v. 13.)

The word “legion” conjured up the vision of an army of occupation, cruelty and destruction.

Here we come face to face with Satan’s army of terror and death!

More than one demon could occupy and enslave a person - compare Mt 12:45 (Lk 11:26); Mk 16:9 (Lk 8:2).

- 12) *And all the demons begged Him.* The demons know they cannot resist Jesus’ commands. They must leave this man AND they will do exactly that – come out of him!
- 13) Here Mark suddenly changes the tense of the verb. He briefly states four facts – like snapshots:

Gave,  
Went out,  
Entered and  
Ran violently.

These are aorists, then there is one final imperfect:

Drowned.

This is a perfect picture of sin - fast and furious actions pleasing the individual and in the end a slow drowning in those sins - a final death in sin.

- 15) *Clothed in his right mind.* ἱματισμένον καὶ σωφρονοῦντα, a perfect passive participle - he had become, and was still, clothed; followed by a perfect participle - in his right mind and remaining in his right mind.
- 17) *Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.* People want to be left alone; their battle cry is, “Please, do not disturb me!” Do not:

Disturb my comfort!

Disturb my possessions!

Disturb my religion!

Allow unpleasant subjects to disturb my peaceful religion!

Allow personal relationships to disturb my religion!

Disturb my beliefs! “What was good enough for my mother is good enough for me!”

Many Christians are eager to hear the story of Jesus and of His love just as long as the gospel’s demands for their lives and conduct are not emphasized - that would be disturbing and upsetting!

“Don’t rock the boat!”

18-20) From demonic to missionary!

**Y. TWO MIRACLES: JESUS RAISES JAIRUS’ DAUGHTER AND THE WOMAN WHO TOUCHED JESUS’ GARMENT ..... 5:21-43**

Compare: Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56.

The transition from the previous section to this one is very striking. From the fearful plea, “Please go away,” to this earnest and moving plea to, “Please come!”

Two Sermon Seeds:

The first miracle introduced.....	vv. 21-24
The first miracle interpreted by the second miracle .....	25-34
Faith Concealed .....	25-28
Faith Rewarded.....	29
Faith Revealed.....	30-34
The first miracle performed .....	35-43
A Word of Encouragement.....	35-36
A Word of Revelation .....	37-40a
A Word of Love and Power .....	40b-42
A Word of Tender Concern .....	43

22) *One of rulers of the synagogue*, a man of influence and, most likely, a wealthy man.

23) *My little daughter*. τὸ θυγάτριόν μου, a diminutive and endearing term. She is his only daughter (cf: Lk 8:42).

24-28) Much anguish and much faith. This was a private faith, “For she said to herself” (Mt 9:21).

29) *Affliction*. μάστιγος from μάστιξ, “scourge, whip.”

30) An interruptions! Jesus used it for good. How do we use the interruptions which come to us daily? Are we glad? Are we annoyed?

*Power (virtue)* = power under control! Whose? The Holy Spirit's!

31-32) Who? . . . Who?

33) Another fulfillment of Psalm 50:15, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” She gives the glory to Christ!

35-36) What is death to the Son of God?

37-40) The crowds, mourners and even some of the disciples are not allowed in.

41-42) The source of life gives life again.

43) Now the needs of life are secured again.

Another name of Jesus: The Lord - vv. 19-20.

## **Z. THE REJECTION OF JESUS IN NAZARETH ..... 6:1-6**

Compare: Matthew 13:53-58; Luke 4:16-30.

3) James and Judas (Jude) later believe and become strong leaders.

James and Simon are not heard of later in the New Testament.

4) *Prophet*. Jesus definitely implies here that He *is* actually a prophet and has *the right* to be honored in His own country.

Compare: Deuteronomy 18:15,18,20-22; 13:1-5; Matthew 21:11; Luke 24:19; John 9:17; Acts 3:22; 7:37.

- 5) *He could do no mighty work there* because of their unbelief (cf: Mt 13:58).  
Because of their unbelief and opposition He did not desire to do them.

**AA. THE CHARGE TO THE TWELVE ..... 6:7-13**

Compare: Matthew 10:1, 5-14; Luke 9:1-6.

- 7) *Power*. ἐξουσίαν, “authority.”
- 8-9) Only that which is absolutely necessary must be taken on this trip. Why? They are to learn that God will provide. They must put their entire trust in God not men.
- 11) *Shake off the dust under your feet*. This is a symbolic action and declaration of the Divine displeasure that rests on any people who reject God’s word.
- The testimony “given” to them will now be turned into testimony against them.
- 12) *Preached*. When the apostles went out and preached to men:
- They did not create a message - they brought an existing message.
- They did not tell people what their personal opinions were - they told them what Jesus told them to say.
- They did not take a theology - they brought God’s truth.
- That people should repent*. Repentance is a revolutionary thing. That is why so few do it!

**BB. HEROD’S PARTY AND JOHN’S DEATH ..... 6:14-29**

Compare: Matthew 14:1-12; Luke 9:7-9.

- 14-16) *John . . . has been raised from the dead*. Herod has a very guilty conscience!
- 17-19) Herodias does not like the fact she is exposed as an adulteress, especially so publicly as John had been doing.
- 20) Herod feared John’s righteousness.
- 22) *Danced* - a very seductive type of dance on this type of occasion. These dances were usually performed only by prostitutes.
- 25) *Give me at once*. Lit: “Here and now - and on a platter!”

26-28) A coward's compliance.

29) However, a decent burial is still allowed.

**CC. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND ..... 6:30-44**

Compare: Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14.

30) The apostles gather with Jesus again.

31) *Deserted place (desert)*. Deserted, not arid! (cf: Acts 8:26).

*Rest*. Working without resting, never taking a vacation or a day off, is not acceptable. Not even for Jesus.

Retreat for relaxation, calm discussions, prayer and meditation are always needed.

34) *They were like sheep not having a shepherd*. A sheep without a shepherd:

Cannot find its way.

Cannot find pasture and food.

Has no defense against dangers about it.

37) *You give them something to eat*. This the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four gospels.

38) *Loaves* (cf: Jn 6:9). Barley loaves were common fare of the very poor.

From a boy - also compare John 6:9 on this.

41) *Blessed* (cf: Jn 6:11) "given thanks." Therefore "blessed" = "given thanks."

Ask God to bless it? NO! He already has, we must now give thanks for it!

44) *About five thousand men*. How many were there? There were many more counting women and children as well (cf: Mt 14:21).

**DD. WALKING ON THE WATER ..... 6:45-52**

Compare: Matthew 14:22-33; John 6:15-21.

- 45) *He sent the multitudes away.* Why? The people attempted to take Him by force to make Him king (cf: Jn 6:15).
- 49) Superstition still lived in these men - they were still learning and growing.
- 52) *Because their heart was hardened,* but not like the hearts of the Sadducees and the Pharisees (cf: 9:24).

**EE. HEALINGS IN GENNESARET ..... 6:53-56**

Compare: Matthew 14:34-36.

- 54) *Immediately the people recognized Him.* Good news travels fast and they would have been looking to see Him at any time.
- 55) *Those who were sick.* κακῶς, “those who had it bad.”

Another name for Jesus in chapter 6 - a prophet (v. 4).

**FF. CEREMONIAL VERSUS REAL DEFILEMENT ..... 7:1-23**

Compare: Matthew 15:1-20.

- 5-7) Legalism pictured:

Legalism takes into account man’s outward actions, but not his inward actions, thoughts, etc.

Legalism is hypocrisy - one may serve God correctly outwardly but be totally opposed to God inwardly.

If a man’s heart is full of sin, all of the outward acts of correct religion will do him no good!

- 11) *Corban* - “devoted” to God!

This was to be treated as if the gift had already been placed on the altar. It was completely set apart from all ordinary purposes.

- 13) To Jesus any rule which prevented one from giving help where it is needed is nothing less than a contradiction of God’s law.
- 14) *Called all the multitude to Him.* Jesus feels deeply about the people being misled by their leaders and wants them to know the truth.

- 15) When this was first spoken it was a revolutionary comment!  
The defilement, as the Jews saw it, worked its way from the outside in.  
But Jesus shows that in reality it works from the inside out!
- 18) Illustration: Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian king, in his torture and killing of the widow's seven sons for not eating pork (4 Maccabees 7).
- 19) *Purifying*. καθαρίζων. English - "bromo" seltzer, absolutely pure.
- 21) *Evil thoughts*. οἱ διαλογισμοὶ οἱ κακοὶ. Every outward act of sin is preceded by an inward act of choice, so Jesus begins here with His list of sins.
- Thefts*. κλομί. English - "kleptomaniac."
- 22) *An evil eye*, ὄφθαλμὸς πονηρός, the eye which looks on the success and happiness of others and would cast an "evil spell" on it, if possible.

Our English word "envy" stands for this word and comes from the Latin "in video" - "to look against."

*Foolishness*. ἀφροσύνη, "folly." This does not mean the foolishness that is due to weakness of intellect; it is moral folly.

**GG. THE FAITH OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN  
REWARDED..... 7:24-30**

Compare: Matthew 15:21-28.

- 27) *Dogs*. κυναρίοις, diminutive, a pet, not a vicious street dog.  
If her wish is to be granted it will be an exception and, therefore, a very great privilege.
- 28) *Eat from the children's crumbs*. They ate with their hands, wiped them on chunks of bread, then tossed away the bread which the dogs ate.

**HH. A DEAF AND DUMB MAN HEALED ..... 7:31-37**

Compare: Matthew 15:29-31.

- 33) *Spat* - a sign of healing in those times.

- 36) *They should tell no one.* This is not yet the right time for the full revelation of the Messiah.

**II. THE FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND ..... 8:1-10**

Compare: Matthew 15:32-39.

- 8) *Baskets.* σπιρίδας. Lit: “hamper.” A large basket like Paul used - Acts 9:25.  
9) They are in Decapolis (cf: 7:31).

Is it possible that part of this large crowd was due to the missionary efforts of a cured demoniac (5:1-20)?

Could we see here the extent of what one man’s work can do for the Lord?

**JJ. THE CRAVING FOR SIGNS REBUKED..... 8:11-13**

Compare: Matthew 16:1-4 (Also Mt 12:38-42; Lk 11:29-32; 12:54-56).

- 11) *Seeking from Him a sign from heaven.* The tendency of this age was to look for God in the abnormal.

It was believed the Messiah would cause startling things to happen when He came.

- 12) *No sign shall be given to this generation.* “No sign such as you are demanding shall at all be given!”

**KK. THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND OF HEROD ..... 8:14-21**

Compare: Matthew 16:5-12.

- 15) *Take heed, beware.* Present tense, “Keep on taking heed and keep on being aware.”

The lesson they must learn is that Jesus can and will provide for them.

**LL. THE HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN ..... 8:22-26**

This is found only here in Mark.

This is Jesus’ only gradual miracle.

- 23) A miracle done in private. Would seeing a great multitude be too overwhelming for his first view of the world?

**MM. PETER'S CONFESSION AND CHRIST'S STRICT ORDER..... 8:27-30**

Compare: Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-21.

- 29) *But who do you say that I am?* A true believer is one who is willing to fly into the face of popular opinion and openly express his conviction in Jesus as the Christ!
- 30) *They should tell no one about Him.* Why? Jesus had to teach them what the Messiahship really meant.

Ideas of the Messiahship at that time:

They were violent, nationalistic, destructive and vengeful.

Everything was to end in the perfect reign of God BUT they were to come to it through a blood-bath and a career of conquest.

Therefore, Jesus had to reeducate them.

It is easy to see why the Jews crucified Jesus.

They had no desire for a loving Messiah, a cross or His suffering.

**NN. THE FIRST PREDICTION OF JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION ..... 8:31-9:1**

Compare: Matthew 16:21-28; Luke 9:22-27.

- 31-32a) Characteristics of this prediction:

It was necessary - They had to learn what it meant to be the Christ.

It was startling - The Son of Man (Jesus the Messiah) was to suffer and die.

It was revealing - Those who were supposed to be the watchmen for Israel were to be the ones to kill their own Messiah.

It was kind and wise - To prepare these men but, at the same time, spare them the terrible details of what was coming.

It was clear - No longer hidden, but open to them.

- 33) *He rebuked Peter.* Why? Because he was putting into words the very temptations of Satan to Jesus. Satan still wants Jesus to worship him.
- 34) *He had called the people to Him.* All, not just the twelve, must hear this!
- 35) *Loses his life...will save it.* Nobody can say that Jesus ever induced anyone to follow Him based on false pretenses.

Jesus never asked anyone to do what He Himself would not, and did not, do.

Let each person say, "No." to himself.

Jesus regards Himself as Lord in order to make these kinds of demands.

36-37) The real question Jesus is asking is, "Where do you put your values in life?"

9:1) What confidence! Jesus has just predicted the cross and His death BUT, in the end, He will be victorious!

**OO. THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS ..... 9:2-13**

Compare: Matthew 17:1-12; Luke 9:28-36.

2-3) What is about to happen is for Jesus' "inner circle."

*Transfigured.* μετεμορφώθη, "to transform, to change."

*Shining.* στίλβοντα, "to gleam or glitter," used of polished brass, shining of the sun or sparkling of the stars.

*Launderer (fuller).* γραφεύς, "bleacher, one who cleans woolen cloth."

4) Moses represents all of the Law and Elijah represents all of the prophets.

They were talking with Jesus about His death "which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Lk 9:31).

5-6) Peter is half-asleep and amazed. As usual he is not lost for words.

7) It is not enough for Moses and Elijah to confirm Jesus. God the Father gives the ultimate approval.

*Hear Him!* The authority of Moses and the prophets is being removed.

8) The transfiguration ends as quickly as it began.

9-10) Jesus instructs them to tell no one until He is resurrected. They are puzzled.

They still have much to unlearn and relearn about the Messiah from God's point of view.

11-13) *Elijah must come* = John the Baptist, which they understood now (Mt 17:13).

**PP. THE HEALING OF AN EPILEPTIC BOY ..... 9:14-29**

Compare: Matthew 17:14-21; Luke 9:37-43a.

NOTE: Beware of "mountain-top religion." They have just returned from a great experience on the mountain. Now, they are to immediately face great problems.

If we desire only the mountain-top experiences, Satan will see to it that the valleys will be all the more deeper!

14-16) *Disciples...scribes disputing with them.* What an opportunity for the scribes!

If they could discredit the disciples would this not also discredit their Master?

But Jesus stops the questioning and the scribes do not answer.

17-18) The father of the boy answers.

His son has all the symptoms of epilepsy, in addition to being demon possessed (causing him to be deaf and dumb - v. 25).

The disciples had been unable to cast this demon out.

20-21) The demon recognizes Jesus.

A life-long affliction - these people will know for certain this is a full and valid miracle.

22) *If You can do anything...help us.* The father's faith had also become weak.

23) *Believe, all things are possible.* Faith is the key here, but it is not the only key as we shall see later (v. 29).

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 Jn 5:14).

24) *Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!* This must be the heart-felt cry of every soul seeking to come closer to God and to do His will more perfectly.

25-27) The Lord always rewards faith but in His own way each time.

The boy is healed completely (song: "He Lifted Me").

28) *Why could we not cast him out?* We did it before! (3:14-15).

29) *This kind.* There is more than one kind of demon. Some are more powerful than others.

*By nothing but prayer* (this is the second key, cf: v. 23) - faith coupled with prayer and fasting.

We need more faith to pray, and then pray for more faith!

This is the only way to grow closer to God (coupled with works of obedience (Jas 2)).

**QQ. THE SECOND PREDICTION OF JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION ..... 9:30-32**

Compare: Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:43b-45.

30) Private instruction is needed for preparing the twelve.

31) New information, *He will rise the third day.*

32) *Afraid to ask.* Was the knowledge they had so confusing and frightening that they were afraid to ask? (Like a doctor's prognosis?)

**RR. WHO IS THE GREATEST? ..... 9:33-37**

Compare: Matthew 18:1-5; Luke 9:46-48.

33-34) Nothing shows us any better how far the disciples were from realizing the real meaning of the Messiahship as this does. They were still immersed in the physical concepts.

35) *He sat down* - the normal position for the teacher. He is assuming the role and authority of a teacher (rabbi).

*First...shall be last of all.* Paedaretos - when 300 men were chosen to rule Sparta - was not included in the number. Although he was a great man and well qual-

ified, he said, "I am glad that in Sparta there are three hundred men better than I am."

True greatness, even in the world, comes through selfless giving of one's self.

36-37) The object lesson: A child must have things done for him. He cannot exert influence over you or give you prestige, he can only receive from you.

Jesus is saying, "If you welcome the poor, ordinary people, those who have no influence, no wealth, no power, those who need things done for them, you are welcoming Me. More than that you are welcoming God the Father."

**SS. HE WHO IS NOT AGAINST US IS FOR US ..... 9:38-41**

Compare: Luke 9:49-50.

38-40) Denominational commentaries find "tolerance" for others of the "Christian" faith who believe differently than they.

The idea is that if God gave a person the power to perform miracles, those miracles were proof that that man was not an enemy and would not align himself against them.

*In My name* = everything Jesus is and stands for - Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah!

41) This shows that any kindness given, any help given to a fellow follower of Christ, will not lose its reward.

**TT. DO NOT YIELD TO TEMPTATION ..... 9:42-50**

42) The converse of verse 37. These are Christians for they "believe on Me."

Degrees of punishment. It is better to die now than to live long enough to sin against one of Christ's little ones.

43-48) *Hand...foot...eye*. The most valuable of the visible members of the body.

Modify, change whatever you must, in order to attain your goal which is heaven!

It is heaven He is talking about because it is contrasted with hell (gehenna).

49) *For*. This shows that this is the conclusion for verses 43-48.

*Everyone* = all who do not change so as to enter heaven.

*Seasoned with fire* = preserved with fire. Our souls will not be annihilated!

- 50) *Salt* preserves, but if the Christian does not persevere he is worthless!

*Have salt in yourselves* - allow God's word to abide in your heart and the result is peace among us.

### III. THE SERVANT'S MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM ..... 10:1-13:37

#### A. TEACHING ON DIVORCE ..... 10:1-12

Compare: Matthew 5:32; 19:1-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16.

- 2) The Pharisees were always looking to entrap Jesus. Divorce was a very "hot" issue in their time.

School of Shammai - Utter strictness.

School of Hillel - Total freedom (for the husband!).

- 3-5) Jesus refers them to the law of Moses. They answer with Deuteronomy 24:1-3 (which was a temporary law).

- 6) Jesus refers them to Genesis 2:19-25 (which is the permanent law).

- 7) *For this reason* = Eve taken out of Adam (cf: Gen 2:21-24).

- 8) *One flesh* = a "oneness" in all interests and relations.

- 9) *Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate*. "Man" is used here in the broad sense - including all men, singular or in groups.

No human authority (civil or otherwise) has the authority to annul any law of God.

God-made ties, such as marriage, cannot be broken by human laws.

- 11) Matthew informs us of the only exception - fornication (Mt 19:9).

"For one party to be free to marry again after a separation, the adultery must have been committed 'before' the separation and be the 'grounds' of the separation. In such case, the innocent party is, in my judgment, at liberty to marry again" (Woods).

- 12) Any remarriage by an undivorced person (according to God's law) is an adulterous, man made marriage!

**B. JESUS AND CHILDREN..... 10:13-16**

Compare: Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17.

- 13) The disciples were keeping the children away from Jesus.
- 14) *Of such is the kingdom of God.* The kingdom of God requires (of its possessors):  
Innocence,  
Purity and  
Submission.
- 15) *Receive...as a little child,* with:  
Trusting faith,  
Quick repentance,  
Ready obedience and  
Readiness to be led.
- 16) *Blessed them.* He prayed for and gave thanks for them. He did not baptize them or sprinkle them. They were not even brought to Him with that thought in mind.

**C. PERILS OF RICHES AND REWARDS OF SACRIFICE ..... 10:17-31**

Compare: Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30.

**1. PERILS OF RICHES (RICH YOUNG RULER) ..... 10:17-22**

- 17) This young man is honest, open and desires to go to heaven.
- 18) *Why do you call Me good?* Jesus had the nature of man! He felt all of the same impulses of sin that man does.  
  
So long as He felt the emotions, and desire to sin, He did not call Himself good.  
  
Neither did the Holy Spirit call Him perfect at that time (cf: Heb 5:8-9).

- 19) *You know the commandments.* Jesus refers him to the law of Moses which prepared one for eternal life (at that time).

There are two classes of these commandments:

First – Defining man’s duty to God.

Second – Defining man’s duty to his fellow man.

Jesus quotes the second.

- 20-21) The young man is no hypocrite or Jesus would have rebuked him.

The leading trait of Jesus (and should be of all Christians) is self-denial and self-sacrifice for others.

- 22) *But he was sad.* Most people are unacquainted with themselves until Christ, in His providence, lays bare the poverty of their souls and the insincerity of their lives.

## **2. REWARDS OF SACRIFICE ..... 10:23-31**

- 23-24) *How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!* Riches gain such a control over one’s affections and make such demands upon his time, he has neither the disposition nor the time to obey God.

*The disciples were astonished.* The Jews (like all materialists today) believed riches were a direct blessing from God and, if they kept the commandments, God approved of their lives.

- 25-27) *With God all things are possible.* Either feat is possible with God:

A literal camel through the literal eye of a needle, or

A rich man to enter heaven.

The first is miraculous, the second is not.

- 28-31) To give up the worldly is to gain all - the heavenly!

*With persecutions.* μετὰ διωγμῶν.

**D. THE THIRD PREDICTION OF JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION ..... 10:32-34**

Compare: Matthew 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34.

32) *Amazed...afraid*. Compare John 11:8,16.

33-34) Jesus does not want them to be caught unawares and then be overwhelmed in a sudden storm of temptations.

**E. THE REQUEST OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE ..... 10:35-45**

Compare: Matthew 20:20-28.

35) James and John are influenced and represented by their mother (cf: Mt 20:20).

36-37) Their concept of the kingdom is still faulty.

38) *Cup...baptism*. These refer to suffering and death.

39) They say they are able. Jesus does not deny it but, instead, confirms that it will be so.

40) The Father still has ultimate authority.

*It is for those for whom it is prepared*. Heaven itself and all "positions" in it are:

Prepared places for...

Prepared people.

41) Glory-seeking always produces problems.

42-44) The lesson is for all of them to understand.

45) *A ransom for many*. This is one of the three reasons Jesus gave for His death. The others are:

Remission (forgiveness) of sins (Mt 26:28).

For the sheep (Jn 10:15).

**F. THE HEALING OF BARTIMAEUS..... 10:46-52**

Compare: Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43.

46) Matthew tells us there are two blind men. This is no contradiction. Mark names only the one, who is more known, but does not say he is the only one.

47-48) A cry for help. It will not be denied! They cry out all the louder.

49-50) Jesus answers the call as He always did and does.

51-52) Being blind, they could not have seen any of Jesus' miracles.

Therefore, they are acting on faith in what they have heard about the "Son of David."

**G. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM..... 11:1-11**

Compare: Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19.

1-6) Jesus instructs them to find a colt of an ass and bring it to Him. They obey and all things are as He said they would be.

7-11) The entry as a prince or triumphant warrior.

This fulfills prophecy (Isa 62:11; Zech 9:9).

Hosanna = Save we pray! (cf: Psa 118:25-26).

**H. THE CURSING OF THE FIG TREE ..... 11:12-14**

Compare: Matthew 21:18-19.

*Perhaps (haply) [hap].* The fig tree develops its fruit before it does its leaves. The foliage signaled to the world that there was fruit to be harvested - leaves without fruit is hypocritical.

**I. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE ..... 11:15-19**

Compare: Matthew 21:12-17; Luke 19:45-48. For earlier cleansing see Jn 2:13-22.

15) Nothing was lost by these men except this fine place in which to do business.

17) *Is it not written?:*

Isaiah 56:7.

Jeremiah 7:11.

18) Another reason to get rid of Jesus.

Want trouble? Hit the pocket-book!

**J. THE LESSON FROM THE WITHERED FIG TREE..... 11:20-26**

Compare: Matthew 21:20-22.

20-21) Peter called the tree “cursed.” This carries the idea of “devoted”; it is no longer for man’s use.

All devoted inanimate things were given to the priests, but humans or animals were different.

Animals - killed.

Humans - lived in God’s service; redeemed; put to death.

22-24) All prayer is answered. Always, “Yes!”

As requested.

As requested but later in God’s scheme of things, not ours.

As requested denied, but supplied by God in a different form as His wisdom sees fit.

25-26) There are three requirements of prayer that should be noted here.

In harmony with God’s will (1 Jn 5:14). Only non-miraculous today (1 Cor 13:8-10).

In the name of Christ (Jn 14:13).

We are forgiven as we have forgiven others (here).

**K. CHRIST’S AUTHORITY ..... 11:27-33**

Compare: Matthew 21:23-27; Luke 20:1-8.

27-28) *By what authority are You doing these things? ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς?*

Cleansing the Temple?

Working miracles?

Teaching?

Taking charge in “their matters?”

*And who gave You this authority to do these things? ἢ τίς σοι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἵνα ταῦτα ποιῆς?*

Jesus - neither priest nor a civil ruler.

Sanhedrin?

Caesar?

29-32) Jesus counters with a true “dilemma.”

33) They dare not answer, so Jesus does not answer either.

They should have known, but their own sins blinded them to the truth.

**L. THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS ..... 12:1-12**

Compare: Matthew 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19.

1) *Parables* - stories cast beside (set beside) truth to help us understand.

*A hedge around it protected it* - as Jehovah did Israel.

*Wine vat* - a place for the juice of the grape.

*Tower* - over the wine vat, and used as a home for the vinedresser.

2) Servant(s) - prophet(s).

3) They did three things:

Took them,

Beat them and

Sent them away.

5) Then:

Killed some.

6-8) Killed the son - the heir!

9-11) Therefore, their supposed inheritance is taken away!

12) They understand clearly!

**M. TRIBUTE TO CAESAR ..... 12:13-17**

Compare: Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26.

13) *The Pharisees and the Herodians.* Enemies unite in a common cause.

Compare the U.S. and Russia in World War 2.

15) They felt they had asked Jesus a true “dilemma.”

*Test.* πειράζετε, “to try, to tempt.”

17) How undefeatable truth is!

Give Caesar what is due him (Rom 13:5-7).

Give Jehovah what is due Him (Acts 5:29).

**N. QUESTION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION..... 12:18-27**

Compare: Matthew 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-40.

18) Sadducees - “‘Sad, you see,’ for there is no resurrection!”

19-23) The wife of seven brothers.

24) The Sadducees’ problem: “You do not know the Scriptures.”

Why are there problems in the church today? The same answer!

Spiritual ties count in heaven - NOT earthly ties!

26) Positive proof of the resurrection! (Ex 3:6-15).

Dead - when Moses wrote:

Abraham - 329 years,

Isaac - 224 years,

Jacob - 198 years.

27) But Jehovah is still their God.

Therefore, Jehovah is the God of the living.

**O. THE GREAT COMMANDMENT ..... 12:28-34**

Compare: Matthew 22:34-40.

28) *Which is the first commandment of all?*

29-30) The "Shema" (Deut 6:4).

31) The expression of Shema (Deut 6:5).

Compare 1 John 3:16-17; our response to John 3:16.

32-33) "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Sam 15:22).

34) Accurate understanding leads to salvation!

**P. THE LORDSHIP OF THE CHRIST ..... 12:35-37**

Compare: Matthew 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44.

36) *For David himself said by the Holy Spirit. David's writings are inspired. Also compare 2 Samuel 23:2.*

37) This question can be answered only by acknowledging Jesus as both human and divine.

Answered in Romans 1:3-4.

Son - physically,

Lord - deity.

**Q. DENUNCIATION OF THE SCRIBES ..... 12:38-40**

Compare: Matthew 23; Luke 20:45-47.

- 38) *Beware.* βλέπετε, present, imperative, active, “you see, you be aware of.” To be a false teacher carries greater punishment.

Compare James 3:1.

**R. THE WIDOW’S MITES ..... 12:41-44**

Compare: Luke 21:1-4.

- 41) *Many.* Not all! Some were giving properly.
- 42) *Two mites.* Less than 1/3 cent (U.S. currency).
- 43) *Has put in more* - in proportion to her income.
- 44) *Her poverty.* She must fast for at least one day now; they were paid daily in those days.

**S. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE FORETOLD..... 13:1-37**

**1. OCCASION OF THE PREDICTION..... 13:1-4**

Compare: Matthew 24:1-3; Luke 21:5-7.

- 1-2) The destruction of the temple is declared.
- 3-4) The four ask questions privately.

There are, in fact, three questions (Mt 24:3):

Question 1: *When will these things be?*,

Question 2: *What will be the sign of Your coming?* and

Question 3: *(What will be the sign of...) the end of the age?*

The word “all” (Mk 13: 4) broadens Mark’s record to include the second and third questions in Matthew 24:3.

**2. FALSE CHRISTS, WARS, EARTHQUAKES AND FAMINES ..... 13:5-8**

- 5) *Take heed.* βλέπετε, present, indicative, active, “You keep on looking, seeing, watching!”
- 6) *Will come.* ἐλεύσονται, future, middle, active, “Shall come for their own sakes, of their own wills.”
- 7) *Do not be troubled.* μὴ θροεῖσθε, present, imperative, middle, “Do not be alarmed immediately.”

*But the end is not yet* - the destruction of Jerusalem.

- 8) Additional signs that shall come before the destruction of Jerusalem.

**3. PERSECUTION OF THE DISCIPLES ..... 13:9-13**

9-10) You will literally be put on trial.

- 11) *Do not worry beforehand [be not anxious].* μὴ προμεριμνᾶτε, “Do not be concerned or anxious ahead of time.”

*Or premeditate.* μηδὲ μελετᾶτε “Do not study out or predetermine any answers you might make.” This is in the Textus Receptus text but not in the Eclectic Text.

*For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.* Promise of inspiration!

- 12) Compare 10:29-30; Matthew 10:34.

- 13) This verse refers to the end of Jerusalem.

*Endures.* ὑπομείνας, “a standing under, active endurance.”

NOTE: See Matthew 10:22 for the reverse of Calvinism! Do not use this verse (13:13) to refute Calvinism!

**4. THE LAST SIGN AND THE TIME FOR FLIGHT ..... 13:14-20**

- 14) *Abomination of desolation* - the Roman army (cf: Lk 21:20-21):

Abomination because they are Gentiles.

Desolation because of what they will do.

*Spoken of by Daniel* (cf: Dan 9:26-27).

*Flee.* φευγέτωσαν, present, imperative, active; a command to the Christians to flee.

15-19) When the signs are read correctly do not stop for anything! Bear any hardship, but flee Jerusalem!

20) The lifting of Titus' siege is in the providence of God.

This is a Jewish form of intensification by repetition.

#### **5. OTHER WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE CHRISTS ..... 13:21-23**

21-22) *False christs.* The Jews expected the Messiah about this time, but they expected Him to deliver them from *physical* oppression.

Naturally there would be many at this time who would claim this title.

*And show signs.* Some commentators claim these are also false signs. But compare Exodus 7:10-13 then Deuteronomy 18:20-22; 13:1-5 (esp. vv. 1-2). Then compare 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.

23) Forewarned is forearmed!

#### **6. COMING OF THE SON OF MAN ..... 13:24-27**

24) *But in those days, after that tribulation.* In a period after the destruction of Jerusalem. This is an indefinite period.

25-27) Compare Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 1:7.

#### **7. PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE ..... 13:28-31**

28) You understand the signs of nature!

29) Therefore, knowing these signs, expect Jerusalem's destruction.

30) Some of those living will see this happen.

31) But the words of the Messiah (who Himself is God) shall endure forever!

#### **8. UNCERTAINTY OF THE DAY ..... 13:32-37**

32-33) If neither Jesus nor angels know the end time, how foolish to speculate on that day and time! All speculators are, in the last analysis, calling God a liar!

34) Every person in the kingdom has his work to do, and must do it expecting Jesus to return at any time.

35-37) Watch! He IS Coming! Be Ready!

**IV. THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF THE SERVANT ..... Ch 14:1-16:20**

**A. COUNCIL OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES..... 14:1-2**

Compare: Matthew 26:1-5; Luke 22:1-2.

*Sought how they might take Him by trickery.* δόλω, “guile, to lure or bait.”

*Uproar of the people.* Approximately two million people were in Jerusalem at this time.

National pride would be at a peak.

They were expecting a Messiah.

Many Galileans would be there, and they were noted for their excitability.

In Jerusalem, at that present time, conditions were just right for a riot and/or insurrection.

**B. THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY ..... 14:3-9**

Compare: Matthew 26:6-13; John 12:1-8.

This seems an unlikely group of people coming together for a supper:

A healed leper - Simon.

One risen from the dead - Lazarus.

A woman full of grateful love - Mary (Jn 12:3).

A plotting traitor - Judas.

A great healer and teacher destined to be crucified - Jesus.

At least two more who will die martyrs' deaths.

Some who were indignant - Judas and others (Jn 12:4-5).

Three hundred denarii (pence) - approximately \$50 (today's U.S. currency).

Jesus honors her in return; she will be remembered wherever the gospel is preached.

**C. THE AGREEMENT WITH JUDAS ..... 14:10-11**

Compare: Matthew 26:14-16; Luke 22:3-6.

*To betray Him.* παραδοῖ, "to deliver Him."

*They were glad.* οἱ ἐχάρησαν, "rejoiced." An unexpected turn of events - how convenient! And, one of Jesus' own followers!

**D. PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER ..... 14:12-16**

Compare: Matthew 26:17-19; Luke 22:7-13.

The disciples want to know where Jesus is to eat the Passover.

Jesus gives them detailed instructions which could be known only by deity.

**E. THE BETRAYAL PREDICTED ..... 14:17-21**

Compare: Matthew 26:20-25; Luke 22:21-23; John 13:21-30.

*Assuredly (verily).* ἀμῆν, "truly!"

*Is it I?* Ask yourself this question!

*Who dips.* ὁ ἐμβαπτόμενος, "the one immersing."

God has always willed that men do good works. But if men refuse to do good works, then God has decreed that they shall do the unclean works. Judas was selected for "good works" and he was numbered with the apostles. But he let Satan enter his heart. Therefore, God used him to betray His Son!

*Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!* A vile heart for a vile deed - punishment will be sore!

Greater responsibilities incur greater condemnation if not fulfilled (Jas 3:1).

**F. THE LORD'S SUPPER INSTITUTED ..... 14:22-26**

Compare: Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

*Blessed it* = gave thanks (cf. Lk 22:19).

In other words we bless the elements in the Lord's Supper, or the food we eat, by giving thanks to God for it.

*Blood...shed for many.* Compare 10:45; Matthew 26:28; John 10:15 - the three reasons for Jesus' death.

*No longer drink...until that day...* Compare Acts 2:1ff. (Pentecost).

**G. DESERTION AND DENIAL FORETOLD ..... 14:27-31**

Compare: Matthew 26:31-35; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38.

*All of you will be made to stumble (be offended).* πάντες σκανδαλισθήσεσθε, "caused to stumble, given cause to sin." BUT, NOT FORCED TO SIN!

*I will go before you to Galilee.* This is encouragement for them. It also tells them where to look for Him after His resurrection.

Peter is the boldest in this affirmation of loyalty but notice that *they all made* this same claim (v. 31).

**H. THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE..... 14:32-42**

Compare: Matthew 26:36-46; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1.

*Gethsemane* = "a place of oil presses."

*Deeply distressed (very heavy) [sore troubled].* ἀδημονεῖν, "deeply depressed."

*And watch.* γρηγορεῖτε, "and be watching, be vigilant."

*The hour might pass from Him.* Compare John 12:27:

"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour?' But for this purpose I came to this hour."

*Take this cup away from Me.* What is this cup?

Deliverance from giving in to death spiritually?

Not to die of sorrow before the cross is endured?

Satan's forces?

Praying to be brought out of death into life safely (the resurrection)?

A shortening of the agony and sorrow in the garden?

The extreme desire of deity not to be separated from deity (never before in eternity)?

The very idea of deity being made sin (having never had sin)!

The three fall asleep more than once.

*Sleeping...rise up.* Even as He speaks Judas is coming so there is an abrupt change in His words.

**I. THE ARREST OF JESUS ..... 14:43-52**

Compare: Matthew 26:47-56; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-14.

Judas' "Kiss of Death."

Peter cuts off Malchus' ear (Jn 18:10).

Why did only John record names? John writes approximately 90-95 A.D. when no recrimination could come.

*I was daily with you* – a taunt to show their hypocrisy.

*A certain young man...having a linen cloth.* We are not told who this was.

*Laid hold of him* = arrested Him.

**J. TRIAL BY THE SANHEDRIN ..... 14:53-65**

Compare: Matthew 26:57-68; Luke 22:66-71; John 18:19-24.

Peter and another disciple (probably John) follow (Jn 18:15).

*Sought testimony against Jesus.* Why the need to look for witnesses now? Judas' surprise help caught them off guard; they were not prepared.

But, no two witnesses agree!

*High priest...Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*

*I am.* How much clearer could His claim be?

AND, *He* shall also be *their Judge* (v. 62)!

*Prophecy!* = "Identify who is hitting You." He was blindfolded, and only a prophet could do that.

**K. PETER'S DENIAL ..... 14:66-72**

Compare: Matthew 26:69-75; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27.

Jesus prompted Peter's memory. Compare Luke 22:61.

Peter denies his Lord but compare 2 Peter 2:1.

**L. JESUS ACCUSED BEFORE PILATE..... 15:1-5**

Compare: Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38.

Pilate asks Jesus if He is the king of the Jews. He answers, "It is as you say." This is an affirmative answer! YES!

But Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (Jn 18:36). This statement is probably what kept Herod and Pilate from finding fault with Him.

**M. BARABBAS PREFERRED AND JESUS REJECTED..... 15:6-15**

Compare: Matthew 27:15-26; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-40.

Pilate asks the people, not the priests, whom to release. He knew the priests' position, but hoped that the people were still kindly disposed toward Jesus.

Woe to those who do evil, BUT how much more to those who *encourage others* to do evil!

Pilate's unanswerable question, "Why, what evil has He done?"

Their answer (Jn 19:12): “If you let this man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.”

The crowd carries out the priests’ wishes to, “Crucify Him!”

**N. JESUS MOCKED AND LED AWAY BY THE SOLDIERS ..... 15:16-21**

Compare: Matthew 27:27-32; Luke 23:26-32; John 19:1-3,16-17.

*Soldiers* - the auxiliary troops recruited from among the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine who were assigned to the military governor.

*Praetorium* - the hall of the Roman governor (*praetor*) where he sat to administer justice.

*Struck Him on the head* - using such force necessary to drive the thorns into His flesh.

*Spat on him* - imperfect tense, they continued to spit on Him.

*Compelled* - conscripted, forced Him legally to carry the cross.

**O. THE CRUCIFIXION ..... 15:22-28**

Compare: Matthew 27:35-43; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:18-24.

*Crucified*. These Jews truly hated Jesus and showed their hate by wanting Him to be crucified. There were other forms of execution used at that time:

Stoning - Stephen (Acts 7:59).

Using a sword - James (Acts 12:2).

Beheading - John (Lk 9:9).

Strangling - done by the Romans.

Crucifixion had never been adopted by the Jews. Even to hang anyone on a tree was a great indignity (Deut 21:22-23).

This made it an ideal punishment for the Romans to inflict on the Jews because the Jews regarded it with great horror.

*Wine mingled with myrrh*. This was a drink given to deaden the pain. It was made of vinegar or sour wine with bitter drugs mixed in. This drink would dull the

nerves, cloud the intellect and would act as an anesthetic against the lingering pain and agony.

Myrrh was made from the bark of a tree.

The Jewish Talmud records that there was a group of women in Jerusalem who went out regularly to those being crucified and offered them this drink.

Psalm 22:14-18 (esp. v. 18) - the crucifixion and casting of lots.

In June 1968 a team of Jewish scholars discovered a Giv'at ha-Mivtar in north-eastern Jerusalem, a Jewish tomb which produced the first authenticated evidence of a first century crucifixion. Their report stated:

“The feet were joined almost parallel, both transfixed by the same nail at the heels, with the legs adjacent; the knees were doubled, the right one overlapping the left; the trunk was contorted; the upper limbs were stretched out, each stabbed by a nail in the forearm.”

*Robbers.* This word can also mean “revolutionaries.”

*One on His right and the other on His left.* The apostle John was there. One wonders if he thought back to the time when he and James requested to be placed on Jesus' left and right sides, and then if he would have remembered Jesus' answer.

*“Numbered with the transgressors”* (Isa 53:12). This does not mean that Jesus was a transgressor (sinner) but that, in His death, His place was *with* transgressors. God never regarded His Son as a sinner. But, in His mode of death, He was regarded as a transgressor and was treated in the same manner as others who were put to death for their transgressions.

**P. REVILING BY THE PEOPLE ..... 15:29-32**

*Aha,...* refers to John 2:19 and fulfills Psalm 22:7-8.

They implied that Jesus is weak and cannot come down from the cross when in reality it is His strength which keeps Him there. If He had not stayed there and fulfilled His task He would not be our Savior!

It is also because Jesus did not come down from the cross that we believe in Him. If He had refused to remain on the cross it would have meant there was a limit to Christ's (God's) love. It would have meant He was not prepared to suffer and die for mankind. There would have been a line beyond which He was not willing to go.

If Jesus the Christ had saved Himself it would have meant that He could not save others! He must die or others could not live.

The only authority for these people, like many today, was what they could grasp with their hands, or see with their eyes; in other words, their five senses.

Read 1 Peter 2:23-24.

**Q. THE DARKNESS AND THE END ..... 15:33-41**

Compare: Matthew 27:45-56; Luke 23:44-49; John 19:28-30

Darkness represents judgment many times in the scriptures (cf: Isa 5:30; 60:2; Joel 2:30-31; Amos 5:18,20; Zeph 1:14-18; Mt 24:29-30; Acts 2:20; 2 Pet 2:17; Rev 6:12-17).

Also consider the plague of darkness in Egypt. That darkness over the land was a sign that God's curse rested upon it (Ex 10: 21ff).

Read Amos 8:9!

*Jesus cried out* fulfills Psalm 22:1.

*Forsaken* - Lit: "to leave down in," the idea of someone being deserted in a set of circumstances which are against him.

Jesus is the God-man. We do not understand what all this means, but we do know Jesus reacted to some situations as a man, and other times as God. There are two possibilities involved here and both may be correct:

Jesus, as a man, was being rejected by almost all who knew Him on this earth. He felt, too, that His God had also rejected Him. But remember, He did not reject the Father for He uses the phrase, "My God."

"Up to this moment Jesus had gone through every experience of life except one - *he had never known the consequence of sin*. Now if there is one thing sin does, it separates us from God. It puts between us and God a barrier like an unscalable wall. That was the one human experience through which Jesus had never passed, because he was without sin. It may be that at this moment that experience came upon him - not because he had sinned, but because in order to be identified completely with our humanity he had to go through it. In this terrible, grim, bleak moment Jesus really and truly identified himself with the sin of man. Here we have the divine paradox - Jesus knew what it was to be a sinner. And this ex-

perience must have been doubly agonizing for Jesus, because he had never known what it was to be separated by this barrier from God” (W. Barclay).

Jesus is the God-man – one thing this does mean however, is that He is 100% Deity and 100% man.

An act of kindness in the midst of taunts.

*Breathed His last* - expired, died.

Jesus died about the time the Pascal lamb was offered.

Both Matthew and Luke tell us that Jesus “cried out with a loud voice” (Mt 27:50; Lk 23:46), but it is John who tells us He shouted, “It is finished!” (Jn 19:30).

Jesus died with a cry of triumph on His lips. His work was completed, His task was accomplished, He had won the victory! After that terrible darkness the light came again - Jesus went home to the Father as a triumphant victor! (Isa 53:12).

*The centurion.* Jesus on the cross had a greater affect on the centurion than on the Pharisees. He had only been ignorant and indifferent to Jesus, but now his wonder and belief is stronger than theirs.

*Women.* With the exception of John, none of the other apostles or disciples were present at Calvary, but these women were present! They displayed a very rare courage.

*Mary Magdalene* - should be “Mary of Magdala” or “Mary from Magdala.” Some have tried to show she is the harlot in Luke 7:37ff., but there is no proof of this!

## **R. THE BURIAL OF JESUS ..... 15:42-47**

Compare: Matthew 27:57-66; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42

The Jews had already taken steps to provide for removal of the bodies before the Sabbath. If the Jews’ plans had been carried out, the Lord’s body would have been committed to the common grave provided for criminals who had been hanged.

Despite the fact that Jesus had been crucified for high treason and that Joseph was unrelated to Him, he boldly petitioned Pilate for the right of burial.

Joseph was braving all possible consequences!

In a manner of speaking, men today must take their stand either with Caiaphas or with Christ - there is no middle ground!

Compare Deuteronomy 21:23.

Death by crucifixion usually came two or three days after they were hanged on the cross. In some cases the victims actually died of starvation rather than from their wounds.

Pilate freely gave Jesus' body to Joseph, not out of any feeling of generosity but because he would be rid of this most inconvenient and troublesome affair.

The burial preparations of Jesus' body in this way, and its being buried as it was, were inconsistent with any idea that there would be a resurrection.

Compare Isaiah 53:9.

*Observed.* This implies steady and careful contemplation.

## **S. THE VISIT OF THE WOMEN TO THE SEPULCHER ..... 16:1-8**

Compare: Matthew 28:1-8; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1-10

This is a work of love by these ladies, but it also a work of unbelief. After all, had not Jesus promised to rise on the third day?

The mere fact that they did not expect Him to rise actually gives more credence to their testimony.

These ladies did not seem to know of the Jews' plans with Pilate. (The Jews had gone to Pilate, had secured the sealing of the stone, and had the setting of a guard over the tomb.) Their only concern here is how to get the stone rolled away.

The stone had not been rolled away to let Jesus out. He did not need to be let out. The stone was no hindrance to Jesus, but would have been to the ladies and the apostles.

*Alarmed.* This was wonderment, not a fright.

The angel is not a vision. He speaks to the women, answering their unasked question.

*Crucified.* This description of His shame has now become His crown of glory!

*Go...tell.* “The fact that women were the first to receive the announcement of the resurrection is significant in view of contemporary attitudes. Jewish law pronounced women ineligible as witnesses. Early Christian tradition confirms that the reports of the women concerning the empty tomb and Jesus’ resurrection were regarded or considered embarrassing (cf. Lk. 24:11, 22-24; Mk. 16:11). That the news had first been delivered by women was inconvenient and troublesome to the Church, for their testimony lacked value as evidence. The primitive community would not have invented this detail, which can be explained only on the ground that it was factual” (W. L. Lane).

*Tell...Peter.* Peter had denied his Lord. This would have given him special courage and knowledge that he is still of value to the Lord and His work.

*Galilee.* This would remind the apostles that the Lord had told them where to find Him. The going to Galilee would also put aside any idea of setting up a kingdom in Jerusalem.

They feared to remain in the presence of the angel after he had given them instructions to leave and deliver the message to the apostles and Peter.

When people are confronted with God’s direct intervention in the affairs of this world, they do not know how to react. God’s revelation and intervention are beyond human experiences and we have no experiences in our lives which would enable us to understand and respond appropriately. The first human response is overwhelming fear.

**T. JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE ..... 16:9-11**

Compare: Matthew 28:9-10; John 20:11-18

*They did not believe.* The idea here is not that they *did not* believe but that they *had refused* to believe. This also shows how completely they had given themselves over to despair. Even though they had been told He would be resurrected they still did not yet believe it would be.

**U. JESUS APPEARS TO TWO IN THE COUNTRY ..... 16:12-13**

Compare: Luke 24:13-35

*In another form.* This phrase is literally, “In a different outward expression of appearance.”

**V. THE GREAT COMMISSION..... 16:14-18**

Compare: Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23.

After Jesus' crucifixion His disciples were scattered, their hopes shattered by what had happened. The entire Messianic movement would have come to a stop if there had been no resurrection!

This is called a "commission" because it gave the apostles a commission they had not had before - the authority to preach the gospel and tell the world of His terms of salvation.

*Saved.* This word also means "rescued." It means to be made safe, implying that we are in danger or actual distress, and that danger or distress is removed.

*Baptized.* If any person argues against baptism being connected to salvation let him remember that it is Jesus Himself who connects the two. When we revolt against this idea, the fault is entirely our own!

If the governor of a state would offer pardon to prisoners if they would sign a form that they would be good citizens and would be immersed to seal the pact, there is no prisoner alive who would believe that all he had to do was sign the paper, but not be immersed.

"Condemnation already rests on those who believe not (John 3:18), but the apostles are here told that it shall especially rest on those who *hear* the gospel and believe it not. It rests on them now, and it must, of course, rest on them forever unless, at some subsequent period of life, they shall become believers. In this way the state of condemnation which now exists will reach forward into eternity, unless its cause be removed, in like manner as the state of salvation enjoyed by the baptized believer will reach into eternity, unless it is forfeited by subsequent apostasy" (C. E. W. Dorris).

Also compare John 3:36.

It may be asked, "How can it be *just* in God to condemn men for not believing the gospel?" I answer -

- 1st. God has a right to appoint His own terms of mercy.
- 2nd. Man has no claim on Him for heaven.
- 3rd. The sinner rejects the terms of salvation, knowingly, deliberately and perseveringly.
- 4th. He has a special disregard and contempt for the gospel.

- 5th. His unbelief is produced by the love of sin.
- 6th. He shows by this that he has no love for God and His law, nor for eternity.
- 7th. He slights the objects dearest to God and most like Him; and
- 8th. He *must* be miserable. A creature who has *no confidence* in God; who does not believe that he is *true* or worthy of his regard, and who never seeks his favor *must* be wretched. He rejects God and he must go into eternity without a Father and without a God. He has no source of comfort in himself and *must* die for ever. There is no being in eternity *but* God that can make a man happy, and without his favour the sinner *must* be wretched” (A. Barnes).

The unbeliever is condemned whether he is baptized or not baptized!

When the term “saved” is used to refer to the saved state during this life (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor 1:18; 15:2; Eph 2:5; Titus 3:5) it means that we are safe from our past sins. This is effected by God’s pardon and cannot be received in any other way.

*These signs.* This promise does not state any specific time that the signs would last, nor does it state that it will be with every individual believer. It only means that they shall follow the believers as a whole.

The signs did follow the believers during the apostolic age. They were not with every individual believer but were with nearly every individual body of believers wherever they were located. This was a complete fulfillment of His promise, and anybody who claims that the promise includes any more than this presses the promise beyond what was intended and necessary to the fulfillment of its meaning.

The signs’ purpose was to confirm this commission given to the church and was not intended to be a confirmation of any individual’s faith.

*In My name* - by His authority and using the power that He would use if He were bodily present at the time.

Compare Acts 28:3-6.

## **W. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS..... 16:19**

Compare: Luke 24:50-53

*Right hand of God.* This means that Jesus is exalted with honor and power, and resides with the Father in heaven.

This is the highest honor of any kind, or anywhere, that can be bestowed on our Savior.

**X. THE APOSTLES WENT FORTH ..... 16:20**

*Working with* - to work along with, to cooperate with.

*The Lord working with them* - by miracles (signs), by removing obstacles, by supporting them and by giving the gospel success and making it effectual in saving men.

**FINIS**

### **The Anvil - God's Word**

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;  
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor  
Old hammers, worn with the beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,  
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"  
"Just one," said he, and then, with twinkling eye,  
"The anvil wears the hammer out, you know."

And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,  
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;  
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,  
The anvil is unharmed – the hammers gone!"  
unknown

## **THE CASE FOR MARK 16:9-20**

Jerry Moffitt

Whenever the subject of baptism is carefully studied, Mark 16:9-20 certainly will come up. Mark 16:16 contains a very strong passage in favor of water baptism being essential to salvation, so those who say that baptism is not essential will usually cast a doubt on the genuineness of the verses. To reply to those doubts is the object of this study.

### **THE PROBLEM**

As you know, our English translation of the Bible is made from Greek manuscripts. There are hundreds of these manuscripts available today. They are graded by textual critics on their age, their completeness, their consistency, etc. Usually those which are the oldest and more complete are the best. That is the problem concerning Mark 16:9-20. The two oldest and best Greek manuscripts do not have the verses. Some textual critics think that the words were written later, that a part of Mark's original was lost, and that later copyists tried to supply an ending. Actually, when all the manuscripts are viewed, it is found that four different endings of Mark are current among the manuscripts. The King James uses the "long" ending. The TEV version uses the long ending and a short ending.

### **SOME DEFINITIONS**

Since we may use some of the technical terms which are commonly employed, we want you to have access to this glossary.

1. Roll - a manuscript, usually about 30 feet long, 9 or 10 inches high. The inner edge of the roll was attached to a wooden roller. The scroll was read by unrolling it. Usually they were made of papyrus.
2. Papyrus - a reed which grew in abundance along the river Nile. It was cut in strips and pressed together to make a type of heavy paper.
3. Vellum or parchment - all kinds of animal skins dressed for writing purposes.
4. Codex - a manuscript prepared like our modern day book.
5. Genuine - Notice very carefully! A manuscript is genuine if it is written by the author of the manuscript. If Peter would have written the fourth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans, the fourth chapter would not be called genuine. Thus the fourth chapter would be inspired but not genuine.

6. Canonical - accepted as part of the Bible. It is part of the canon of scriptures.
7. Manuscript - Notice! Greek documents only! Other ancient writings which are written in a different language are called versions. So it is often misleading to say that the oldest manuscripts do not contain Mark 16:9-20. Many, even older, versions may have it. "Manuscript" is a technical term which applies only to Greek documents.
8. Versions - translations in other languages than Greek. Many of them are quite old, older than many manuscripts.
9. Church Fathers - quotations from early Christians who wrote down scripture in their writings. Many of these writings are older than our oldest manuscripts. There are over 86,000 quotations from which we can construct the New Testament.
10. Inspiration - the term applies to writings which are produced by the direct agency of God through His Holy Spirit. Paul writes, but God inspires what Paul writes.
11. Lectionaries - manuscripts containing selected passages of scriptures designed to be read in public worship services. Many of these are quite old.

### **TEXTUAL CRITICISM**

Brother Neil R. Lightfoot says this of Textual Criticism:

The function of the textual critic is plain: he seeks by comparison and study of all the available evidence to recover the exact words of the author's original composition. The New Testament text critic seeks, in short, to weed out the chaff of bad reading from the genuine Greek text. . . He knows that the only way to have a reliable English translation is to make sure that the original fountain-head is free from all impurities (*How We Got The Bible*, pp. 21,29).

### **THE CASE AGAINST MARK 16:9-20**

Skipping over a study of the causes of error in the transmission of the text of the New Testament, and skipping over the textual critic's criteria for the evaluation of variant reading, let us come immediately to the case against the verses being genuine and inspired.

A. T. Robertson details the evidence against the genuineness of the verses as follows:

1. At verse 8 “Aleph and B, the two oldest and best Greek manuscripts of the New Testament stop. . . “ (*Word Pictures In The New Testament, Vol. 1, p. 402.*)
2. Three Armenian manuscripts also end at verse 8.
3. Some documents have a shorter ending than the usual long one.
4. One Armenian manuscript attributes it to one named Ariston.

Robertson says these facts argue against the genuineness of verses 9 to 20. He supposes that a leaf or column may have been torn out or off the end of the papyrus roll and that scribes treated the loss in several ways:

1. Some left it alone and ended with verse 8.
2. Some added one ending, some another.
3. Some added both endings.

### **METZGER**

Metzger in *The Text Of The New Testament* points out that are four different endings current among the manuscripts. Besides what Robertson has said, Metzger adds the following evidence against Mark 16:9-20:

1. This ending is lacking in the Old Latin manuscript K.
2. It is lacking in the Sinaitic Syriac and many manuscripts of the Old Armenian version.
3. It is lacking in the Adysh and Opiza manuscripts of the Old Georgian version and a number of manuscripts of the Ethiopic version.
4. Clement of Alexander (an ancient Christian writer), Origin and Ammonius show no knowledge of it.
5. Not a few manuscripts which contain the passage have notes stating that older Greek copies lack it.
6. There are 17 words never used by Mark in his gospel which are found in the long ending.

### **“THE SEMINARY REVIEW”**

Another recent work I have studied is “The Last Twelve Verses: Mark 16:9-20”, written by Harold W. Ford in “The Seminary Review.” He mentions the following:

1. Important conservative scholars such as Tregelles, Warfield, Zahn and A. T. Robertson reject the passage.
2. Others who think it is old, but spurious, are A. H. McNeile, James L. Price and Edgar J. Goodspeed, with Merrill C. Tenney and Henry Thiesen seeming to go along.
3. Eusebius, Jerome, Gregory of Nyssa, Victor of Antioch, Hesychius of Jerusalem, Severus of Antioch and Euthymius all cast doubt on the passage. These are most ancient writers.
4. Ford mentions that some scholars think the style of the questioned section is very different from the style of the bulk of the gospel of Mark. The issue of “The Seminary Review” quoted from is Vol. 19, Num. 2; Winter 1973.

### **“BIBLE LEAGUE QUARTERLY”**

Bishop D. A. Thompson tells us how Mark 16:9-20 has fared in Modern English Versions. Remember, the King James version was translated from the Textus Receptus which was compiled from only a few Greek manuscripts. The last twelve verses were, of course, found in those few manuscripts from which the King James version was made. But:

1. The American Standard Version includes it with a footnote stating “The two Oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities omit verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the gospel.”
2. The Revised Standard Version concludes the chapter at verse 8 but adds verses 9-20 in a footnote.
3. The same procedure is followed in the New English Bible, The TCNT, Moffatt’s version, Goodspeed’s, Phillip’s and many more. They all show doubt indicated by bracketing, footnotes or a special heading (“Bible League Quarterly”, April-June, 1973).

We think that is a fair treatment of the evidence against the verses. Now we shall do two things. We shall answer each of the objections; then we shall list the evidence for inclusion of the twelve verses.

## OBJECTION #1

(Vaticanus and Sinaiticus do not have it.)

It is true that Vaticanus and Sinaiticus do not have Mark 16:9-20, and it is also true that they are our two oldest and possible best manuscripts. But the following facts are also true:

1. Codex Vaticanus acknowledges that something is missing because, after verse 8, a whole column is left blank. In fact, that is the only blank spot in the whole manuscript. Also, Dean Burgon (author of *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*) showed that the twelve verses fit the space.
2. Then consider that Scrivener (author of *The Text Of The New Testament*), admits that there are circumstances that corroborate Tischendorf's opinion that Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were written by the same scribe. If so, then the two manuscripts would really be only one witness. Now since Dean Burgon claims that the blank spot in Vaticanus makes it a witness in favor of the last verses, and since the two manuscripts possibly were written by the same scribe, then both manuscripts are witnesses for the last twelve verses.
3. Also, there are many other gaps in the two manuscripts. Just because there is a gap does not mean something does not belong there, or that we should take it out in our English translations which are based on manuscripts which contain the missing parts. There are many other places in the two manuscripts where parts of the Bible have been left out: John 21:25; Heb. 9:15; Mark 1:1; John 9:38; Luke 6:1; Luke 22:43; Luke 23:34; John 19:33-34; Eph. 1:1; 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; and the whole book of Revelation. Why should Mark 16:9-20 be left out and all these others and many more be left in?
4. Again, the word "manuscript" might be misleading. When we say that the oldest *manuscripts* do not have the verses we are not saying the oldest *documents* do not have them. Most of the ancient versions, many of which are older than Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, have the verses; namely, Peshito Syriac, the Old Italic, the Sahidic and the Coptic. The testimony of the ancient versions is overwhelmingly in support of the last twelve verses.

Another source of ancient documents is the Lectionary system. After the custom of the synagogue, where portions of the law were read at stated intervals, the early Christians adopted the practice of reading passages of the New Testament books at services of worship on certain days. These passages were copied and scholars have only recently begun to appreciate their value for constructing the original text. Now it is a fact that in these Lections, Mark 16:9-20 has a regular, conspicuous and honourable place. Burgon says, "All the twelve verses in dispute are found in every known copy of the venerable Lectionary of the East."

- 5 Consider also, that of the five oldest Greek manuscripts which are available, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Ephraemi Rescriptus and the Freer Gospels, the latter three include the verses. True, the Vaticanus and Sinaitus date from the fourth century while Alexandrinus and Ephraemi date from the fifth century, but the time difference does not appear to be that important. Besides, the Freer Gospels date probably from the fourth century. Nevertheless, of the five oldest manuscripts, it is 3 to 2 in favor of the verses.

### **OBJECTION #2**

(Some ancient writers do not have it.)

True, Eusebius (330 A. D.), Jerome (420 A. D.) and Euthymius (1118 A. D.) all testify to a doubt concerning the verses. But Irenaeus (177 A. D.), Hippolytus (235 A. D.), Chrysostom (345 A. D.), Ambrose (250 A. D.) and Victor of Antioch (550 A. D.) all testify to its authenticity. Again, the weight of evidence sides with the authenticity of the verses. We will need to say more about Irenaeus in a while.

### **OBJECTION #3**

(Eusebius cast doubt on it.)

No, in truth, Eusebius himself does not doubt the twelve verses. All he really says is that some might reject them. A certain Marinus asked Eusebius to reconcile the resurrection account given in Matthew 28:1 with that in Mark 16:9. Eusebius says there is a twofold solution. "He who is for getting rid of the entire passage will say that it is not met with in all the copies of Mark's gospel: the accurate copies, at all events." Eusebius was born about A. D. 260, a native of Caesarea. He left us with an early history of the church. Why Mark 16:9-20 was left out of so many copies of his day is a question we hope to answer satisfactorily in a later notation.

### **OBJECTION #4**

It is argued that the style of the questioned section is so different from the style of the bulk of the Gospel of Mark that any thought of "Markan" authorship is expelled. Critics say that these internal facts prove conclusively that the verses could not have been written by Mark. Ezra P. Gould in *International Critical Commentary: The Gospel According To Mark* sums up the evidence thusly: "To sum up, there are in all 163 words in this passage, and of these, 19 words and 2 phrases are peculiar, not occurring elsewhere in this gospel. There are 109 different words, and of these 11 words and 2 phrases do not occur elsewhere in this Gospel."

However, are things so clear and certain as Gould makes them? Will this "internal" argument break down under careful examination?

## McGARVEY

Our own J. W. McGarvey reported that he examined the last twelve verses of Luke's Gospel and found nine words which are not elsewhere used in his narrative, and among them are four which are not elsewhere found in the New Testament. He writes:

. . . none of our critics have thought it worthwhile to mention this fact, if they have noticed it, much less have they raised a doubt in regard to the genuineness of this passage. Doubtless many other examples of the same kind could be found in the New Testament; but these are amply sufficient to show that the argument, which we are considering is but a shallow sophism. (*New Testament Commentary: Matthew and Mark*, p. 380.)

McGarvey also pointed out that the change of subject matter at the end justified the use of different words. Further, he pointed out that though some of the words were not, in the Gospel, used in their simple form, they were constantly used in composition with a preposition. The objection is saying that if a writer uses "go in" or "go out" in the main part of a letter, then uses simply "go" only near the end, that the end conclusively had to be written by a different author. This so called "internal" argument is about that weak.

### OBJECTION #5

Textual critics proceed on the basis of several criteria to determine whether a text should be included or not: (1) the preferred reading is the one that explained the others, (2) that the more difficult reading was most likely to be genuine since it probably bothered a scribe and led him to change it, (3) the shorter ending is most likely genuine since scribes tended to add more than they omitted.

Number (3), above, bears on our subject concerning Mark 16:9-20. The shortest ending is simply to stop at verse 8 as do some manuscripts. But this rule of preferring the shorter ending is good as it is applied in some circumstances. But we question its validity when applied to so long a passage as Mark 16:9-20. Yes, apply it to words, short phrases, even a whole sentence. But when twelve verses are under consideration, something more than a scribe's minor addition is at work. A complete part of the narrative is lost or in danger of being left out. Rule (3) does not apply in such a case for obvious reasons.

### OBJECTION #6

I guess we would call what follows an objection to Mark 16:9-20. For myself it is merely interesting. The objection is that a late Armenian manuscript contains a note between Mark 16:8 and the ending stating "of the presbyter Aeration." However, Eusebius in Book III, part 39, of his church history quotes Papias (123-150 A. D.) as saying he got his words from what Andrew or Peter had said. . ."and what Ariston and

the presbyter John, disciples of the Lord were still saying.” Now there is a slight difference in the spelling of the names, but that would be expected and the probability is that it is one and the same person. But notice, even if Aristion wrote that section of Mark, he was regarded as an early disciple of Jesus on the same level with John the apostle. Possibly he would have even a better claim to inspiration than Mark.

Now what we have done is this: we have drawn all the important objections to Mark’s last twelve verses together in those six objections. All other objections will be answered in what follows now.

## EVIDENCE FOR THE LAST TWELVE VERSES

### 1. Manuscript Evidence.

Though the verses are not found in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, three of the five oldest manuscripts have the verses. Not only that, all other of the hundreds of Greek manuscripts, except the handful mentioned, have the verses.

### 2. Apostolic Fathers.

One of the most significant facts in favor of the twelve verses is that Irenaeus (140-200) quotes from the verses in question and states that they were written by Mark. Now in construction the text of the New Testament the following are used: Greek manuscripts, quotations from ancient church writers, lectionaries and versions. Irenaeus is a witness for the verses 200 (! ! ) years before Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were even written. Notice, Irenaeus was a pupil of Polycarp who was a companion to the apostles and a pupil of John. This pupil of a pupil of John says in his day that Mark wrote the verses. Irenaeus is the oldest witness on the matter! He is a much older witness than Vaticanus or Sinaiticus and this must be kept in mind.

### 3. Versions.

It is not significant to note that some of the versions which include the twelve verses antedate Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, i.e., Peshito Syriac, the Old Italic, the Sahidic and the Coptic. Besides that fact, the greater majority of all the versions contain the verses, and the four we have mentioned above contain the verses. The evidence of the versions is overwhelmingly in favor of the twelve verses.

### 4. Lectionaries.

You recall that lectionaries were ancient arrangements of scripture for public reading. These existed from the earliest of times. Dean Burgon (*The Last Twelve Verses of Mark's Gospel Vindicated*) says that the twelve verses are found occupying "the same singular conspicuous, as well as most honourable place."

## HOW WERE THE TWELVE VERSES LEFT OUT?

Here let me give a reason why the last twelve verses may have been left out of any manuscripts. Burgon observed that at a remote age it was customary to write *telos* (end, completion) against Mark 16:8. It was written as a "liturgical memorandum in the margin of a Lectionary. At a very early period it was possible that the note, *telos*, was incorporated into the text of Mark's gospel. It was easily liable to misconception, the scribes thinking that it was the "end" of the gospel rather than the "end" of a lection. So there could have entered into the world a whole series of Greek manuscripts which stopped at verse 8, or which left a blank spot. Later scribes, sensing the awkwardness

of the ending at verse 8 may have written a short ending in the margin which even later was incorporated into the text by a later scribe.

All the above is convincing to this writer that Mark 16:9-20 should continue to occupy its place in the gospel of Mark. Along with it stands the statement of Jesus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

## FOUR GOSPEL GLIMPSES OF CHRIST

Jesus Portrayed As:	<u>Matthew</u> Preacher	<u>Mark</u> Man of Power	<u>Luke</u> Master Teacher	<u>John</u> Person
Written To:	Jews	Romans	Greeks	All Men
Key Word:	Fulfilled	Straightway	Son of Man	Believed
Key Verse:	16:24-26	2:8-12	6:38	14:6
Outstanding Feature:	Sermons	Miracles	Parables	Personal Associations
Arrangement Of Material:	Topical	Chronological	Chronological	Topical
Percent Spoken By Christ:	60%	42%	50%	50%
Quotations From O.T.:	53	36	25	20
Allusions To Old Testament:	76	27	42	105
Unique Material:	42%	7%	59%	92%
Broad Division:	Synoptic Gospels: Humanity of Christ			Supplemental Gospel: Deity of Christ

## HE IS MY SAVIOR

“He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on divinity. He became the son of man that we might become the sons of God. He came from heaven where flowers never fade, rivers never freeze, frosts never chill the air. There are no undertakers and no graveyards, for no one ever dies, nor is anyone ever buried.

“He was born contrary to the laws of nature, reared in obscurity, and lived in poverty. Only once did He cross the boundary of His homeland, in childhood. He had no wealth or influence, had neither training nor formal education. His relatives were inconspicuous and uninfluential.

“In infancy He startled a king; in boyhood He puzzled the doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature. He walked upon the billows, hushed the sea to sleep and healed the multitudes without medicine.

“He never wrote a book, yet not all the libraries of the country could hold the books that have been written about Him. He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all song writers combined. He never marshaled an army, drafted a soldier, or fired a gun, yet no leader ever made more volunteers. He is the star of astronomy, the rock of geology and the lion and lamb of zoology. Great men have come and gone, yet He lives on. Herod could not kill Him, Satan could not seduce Him, death could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him.

“He laid aside His purple robe for a peasant’s garb. He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor. He slept in another’s manger, He cruised the lake in another’s boat. He rode on another’s beast, and He was buried in another’s tomb. All men have failed; He never. He is the EVER PERFECT ONE – He is the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. He is my Savior.”

Author Unknown

**INTER-BIBLICAL PERIOD**  
**(400 B.C. to the birth of Christ)**

**I. PERSIAN (538 or 400 - 332 B.C.)**

- A. Conquered Babylon in 538, automatically took control of the Jews.
- B. Cyrus allows them to return - Zerubbabel.
- C. Book of Esther applies here.

**II. GREEK (332 - 167 B.C.)**

- A. Alexander “the Great” conquered most of the then known world.
- B. With Alexander’s death, his kingdom was divided among four of his generals.
  - 1. Ptolemy - Jews under him from 323-198 B.C. Ptolemy built Alexandrian Library and translated the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek Septuagint (3rd century B.C.)
  - 2. Seleucus - Took over 198-167 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes was one of their rulers.
  - 3. Lysimachus and Cassander received other sections of the Greek kingdom.
- C. Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Jewish temple starting a chain of events that lead to the Maccabean Revolt, or Period of Independence.

**III. HEBREW INDEPENDENCE (167-63 B.C.)**

- A. Antiochus attempts to force Hellenism on the Jews.
- B. When he desecrates the Jewish temple he sends soldiers to do the same in outlying areas.
- C. Judas Maccabeas leads in defeating their enemies.

IRONY: Judas, greatest leader in that period of Jewish history.  
Judas, greatest traitor in Jewish history.

- D. Pharisees - followers of Judas Maccabeas; traditional in religion, common people.
- E. Sadducees - accepted Hellenism, aristocratic, priestly, considered to be strict in religion.

**IV. ROMAN (63 B.C. - 70 A.D.)**

- A. Dissension among the Jews (Pharisees and Sadducees) enabled Pompey to take over the Jew's territory and end the period of Hebrew independence.
- B. "In the fullness of time . . ." Galatians 4:4.
  - Great system of transportation.
  - Protection of the Roman Empire.
  - Greek language known world-wide.
  - Relative world peace.
  - Jews had been told a deliverer would come.
  - Fulfillment of Daniel 2:44
- C. In other words the world was ready for the gospel –
  - Politically,
  - Economically,
  - Socially and
  - Religiously.

## **IT LIVES!**

Christians believe the Bible is God's Word because it cannot be destroyed. Evil men have hated it from the beginning. Every doctrine in it has been hated and every verse has been attacked. Any human product would have perished long ago under such a withering attack, but the Bible lives and has a greater hold on humanity than ever before.

Every few years somebody "demolishes" the Bible, proves it "false" and completely "explodes it." Yet, the pieces come together and are stronger than ever. The Bible is like the Irishman's fence. He had put up the fence many times only to see it torn down. Finally he built a fence of cement and stone, three feet high and four feet wide. When asked the reason for this strange fence, he said, "I built it three feet high, and four feet wide so it will be higher when it is turned over." Let the skeptics attack the blessed old Book. It will be higher when they finish! Aye, let them criticize. Christians are indebted to the attacks of the skeptics for these attacks have called forth an ever-increasing number of arguments in favor of the Bible. Yes indeed, "the more the truth is rubbed, the brighter it will shine."

# **JESUS' TRIAL, CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION**

## **THE TRIAL**

In our modern, justice-oriented society, most of us expect a trial to be a sincere attempt at determining the innocence or guilt of the accused. Some, however, have been a little more than a “kangaroo court,” in which the verdict was known before the first juror was certified. Any trial so conducted is a mockery of true justice.

Such a trial took place almost two thousand years ago. The man in question had lived a perfect life, without sin or violation of the law. But, since the leaders of the people wanted Him eliminated, the desired verdict of guilty was given and the man was put to death. The man was Jesus of Nazareth.

The so-called “trial” took place in the early morning hours of the Friday of Passover week. After Jesus had observed the sacred feast, and given instructions for the Lord’s Supper, He went out to pray for strength to endure the coming trials. His disciples, fearful at Jesus’ arrest in the darkness, all fled from Him, with the exception of Peter, and probably John, John 18:15, who “followed Him afar off.”

Thus, with all His friends forsaking Him, Jesus’ trial began. Divided into two major sections, it covered no more than twelve hours. The following chart should help visualize the events of the day:

## **JEWISH TRIAL**

A. At the house of Annas.

Father-in-law of Caiaphas (Jn 18:13).

Probably passing time until a quorum of the Sanhedrin could be gathered.

B. At the house of Caiaphas.

Only technically the High Priest until Annas’ death.

He received the revenues from the money-changers, etc. in the Temple

Bribed, false witnesses fail to agree.

Jesus answered question, “Art thou the Christ?” with, “Thou sayest” (Lk 23:2).

He is charged with blasphemy.

Peter denies Jesus thrice (Mk 14:72).

- C. The Hall of Hewn Stone, the official meeting place of the Sanhedrin.

### **ROMAN TRIAL**

- A. Before Pontius Pilate (Gabbatha).

His approval was required before the death sentence could be carried out.

He refused charge of “blasphemy” and doubts the other charges.

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn 18:36).

- B. Before Herod Antipas.

Jesus refused to testify before him, even though He was reared in Galilee.

Feud between Pilate and Herod healed.

- C. Before Pilate Again.

Fearing riot Pilate released Barabbas though he preferred to release Jesus.

His wife warns against any dealings with Jesus, because of her dream.

Only a technicality, so the trial can be referred to as a “public” trial.

Charges changed from blasphemy to: sedition, claiming to be a king, and refusing to pay taxes to Caesar.

“I have found no cause of death in Him,” but fearing the crowd, heeded their cries of “crucify Him.”

Pilate “washed his hands” of the matter (Mt 27:24).

The shocking thing about both of these trials is the obvious lack of concern for the truth. The Jews, at the prodding of the chief priests, ignored the innocence of Jesus and demanded His crucifixion. The Sanhedrin ignored their own carefully established rules for trials and flaunted their contempt for those rules by their behavior. Consider these illegalities in Jesus’ trial before the Sanhedrin:

1. All criminal cases were to be tried during daylight hours only. It was forbidden for them to even gather at night, but this trial was completed between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 5 a.m.

2. No trial could be held during the Passover season; on the day before any feast, or on the Sabbath eve. All of these were violated.
3. No verdict would be valid unless the trial was publicly held in the established place of meeting, The Hall of Hewn Stone. A private residence was improper.
4. All evidence was to be verified by two or more witnesses, separately examined. The witnesses, knowing that false witness was punishable by death, were required to participate in punishing the convicted defendant.
5. A defendant could not even be asked a question by which, in answering, he might condemn himself. Their only real “evidence” was obtained in this way.
6. Only a verdict of innocence could be pronounced on the same day of a trial’s beginning. This trial was begun, held privately, and concluded in less than eight hours, a definite violation. (For documentation of this material, see Life and Times of Jesus, The Messiah, Edersheim, Vol. II, pages 546-581; The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. I, pages 2688-2690; and Heart of the New Testament, H. I. Hester, pages 205-213.)

For these and other reasons it is obvious that justice was not the objective of either the Jewish or Roman trial. It is no wonder that the cry of the Jews before Pilate, “Let His blood be on us and on our children,” has caused much anguish even to those same people who reject Him today. What a miscarriage of justice – then as well as now.

## **THE CRUCIFIXION**

When Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, finally realized that the Jews would not rest until permission was given to kill Jesus, his fear of an uprising, and its subsequent troubles with Caesar, forced him to give the order.

Part of the procedure leading up to crucifixion included scourging, one of the most painful and deadly punishments administered short of crucifixion. The Lictor, a Roman skilled with the scourge, was free to “lay on” as many stripes as he chose. The instrument was a round stick, like a short broom handle, to which had been attached seven thongs of leather, each about seven feet long. The end of each piece of leather bore a small piece of bone or metal, which was intended to tear the skin from the victim’s back. At least half of all who were scourged were unable to endure, and died before further punishment could be given. In that case, the Lictor would be admonished for robbing the citizenry of the opportunity of viewing a crucifixion. Jesus, the innocent Lamb of God, endured the scourging, “by whose stripes we are healed,” 1 Pet 2:24.

Crucifixion, an invention of the ancient Phoenicians, had been carefully perfected as a means of public punishment by the Romans. They had tried other punishments, such as boiling in oil and dismemberment, but death came too quickly. Almost scientifically, they had developed ways by which a man could be kept alive on the cross for as long as five or six days. This was an effective method of warning would-be violators of Roman law of their ultimate destiny, the painful cries often being heard in the city of Jerusalem far into the night. Death by crucifixion was so humiliating, the Romans never executed another Roman in that fashion. Only the most vile criminal was crucified.

Jesus, weakened by the sleepless hours, the scourging, and the hatred of His own people, carried the cross as far as possible. When He fell under the load, probably 30 pounds of rough timber, a man from Cyrene named Simon (Mk 15:21 and Rom 16:31) was required to carry the cross the rest of the way.

On the hill called Golgotha, meaning “place of the skull,” Jesus was crucified. Jim Bishop’s book, *The Day Christ Died*, reads,

“The executioner wore an apron with pockets. He placed two five-inch nails between his teeth and, hammer in hand, knelt beside the right arm. The soldier whose knee rested on the inside of the elbow held the forearm flat to the board. With his right hand, the executioner probed the wrist of Jesus to find the little hollow spot. When he found it, he took one of the square-cut nails from his teeth and held it against the spot, directly behind where the so-called life line ends. Then he raised the hammer over the nail head and brought it down with force” pages 323-324.

Jesus’ mother, Mary, was standing near witnessing the execution. What must her thoughts have been? Those small hands she had held as a baby, now were being mutilated by a Roman soldier. Others, having seen those same hands heal the sick, the halt and the blind, must have wondered how God could allow this to happen.

It was here that Jesus, who was free of any sin of His own, became “sin for us,” 2 Corinthians 5:21, and paid the price of our redemption with His own precious blood. If you are looking for a motive to serve God every moment of your life, here you will find it – Christ, the sinless one, dying for you and for me, the chief of sinners. How can we refuse His request for our loving, obedient response?

The death brought on by crucifixion was usually suffocation. With the weight of the body hanging by the spikes in the wrists, the pectoral muscles begin to paralyze, preventing the lungs from exhaling the air. In an attempt to breath, the victim would push himself upward, placing all of his weight on the single spike through his ankles. As painful as this was it did allow freedom of breathing for the length time of his endurance. This is how a man could last for days on the cross, and also the reason for the breaking of the legs. (Read carefully Jn 19:31-36.) With legs broken, suffocation would come in minutes.

While on the cross, Jesus continued to teach. Some say the greatest sermon He ever preached was contained in His Seven Sayings of the Cross:

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).

“Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Lk 23:43).

“He said unto his mother, ‘Woman, behold thy son!’” (Jn 19:26).

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46).

“I thirst” (Jn 19:28).

“‘It is finished,’ and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (Jn 19:30).

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Lk 23:46).

With Jesus’ death, the veil of the great Temple was rent, symbolizing Jesus’ entry into the Holy Place once for all time, Matthew 27:51, and Hebrews 9:1-12, 24-28. Here, the Law of Moses was “nailed to the cross,” Colossians 2:14-17, and the New Covenant was presented. With the shedding of Jesus’ blood, Matthew 26:28; John 19:34, the New Testament had its beginning, Hebrews 9:16-17.

This is the reason we remember His death, burial and resurrection on the first day of the week, participating in the Lord’s Supper. This is why we submit to baptism, because it is here we contact the blood of Christ (Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3-6). And, in reality, this is the essence of the Gospel (1 Cor 15:1-4).

## **THE RESURRECTION**

During His three years of preaching, Jesus had promised the Jews a sign of deity that would be unmistakable - a resurrection from the dead (Jn 2:18-22). What could be more convincing than such a sign? How could anyone doubt the divine nature of a person coming forth from the grave just as he had promised?

This subject, the resurrection, has been the focal point of controversy for centuries. There is nothing unusual about a man being tried and convicted by the Jewish Sanhedrin court. Similarly, there was nothing unique about one being crucified on Golgotha - thousands of men were. But how many had come back from such a death to live among the people again? No One!

When Jesus “yielded up the ghost” (Mt 27:50), two men of wealth and prestige, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, requested the body for burial. The “new tomb” of Joseph was prepared, and the body was placed there after being wrapped in the proper

grave clothes. A huge stone was placed over the opening and a guard of soldiers was sent by Pilate to prevent anyone from stealing the body and claiming a resurrection. Read John 19:38-42 and Matthew 27:57-66 carefully.

Up to this point there is little to distinguish this death from thousands of others during the first century. But then, the impossible happened. A man, declared to be dead by impartial, experienced Roman soldiers, after three days in a grave guarded by other Roman soldiers, suddenly was alive again! The angel declared, "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Mt 28:6). On this morning of the first day of the week Jesus began a period of 40 days in which He appeared to over 500 different people, and proved to all that He was the Son of God. "These things were not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26), but before reliable witnesses.

But someone asks, "How do we know this was not merely a legend encouraged by His followers? How can we be sure this was not just a grand hoax, a 'passover plot,' intended to fool gullible and superstitious people?" Here are several valid reasons for believing in Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead:

1. **THE BIBLE RECORDS IT!** The skeptic may scoff at using the Bible as evidence, but what other book has been proved as accurate through the years? What other book has proved as reliable? By faith and at the testimony of the Scriptures we can confidently accept the truths concerning the resurrection of Jesus.
2. **HISTORY DOCUMENTS IT!** Someone said, "There is more authentication of Jesus' existence as a person than of the life of George Washington." Truly, the world does use the life of Jesus as a code of ethics, a standard of government and the beginning point of our measurement of time. The man of faith need not apologize for accepting the facts of Jesus' resurrection, for history attests to its truth. That kind of faith is not blind, but based on solid evidence.
3. **THE EYE-WITNESSES DECLARE IT!** When Paul recorded the events that followed the resurrection, in 1 Corinthians 15, men who had seen and heard Jesus perform those deeds were still alive. Had they been false, the Romans as well as the Jews would have publicly exposed the claims as a fraud. Such an exposition does not exist because those who were eye-witnesses were able to corroborate the truth as Paul described it. They knew it was true!
4. **THE EMPTY TOMB DEMANDS IT!** Every attempt to explain the empty tomb, other than accepting Jesus' resurrection, fails because it is illogical and untrue. The lie told by the guards ("the apostles stole the body," Mt 28:11-15) is nonsense, because had they been asleep they could not have known what happened. The "wrong tomb" theory is absurd because this was a tomb on Joseph's personal property - not a public cemetery with many graves to confuse the disci-

ples. The angels would have been at the wrong tomb also (Jn 20:11-12). The empty tomb remains as firm testimony of Jesus' resurrection.

5. **THE EFFECT ON THE APOSTLES PROVES IT!** Perhaps the most impelling reason for accepting the resurrection evidence is the transformation that came over Jesus' apostles. From a group of frightened, cowering mutes in an upper room emerged a band of men whose determination could not be diverted even by threats of imprisonment and death. Peter, who denied Jesus before a small group of common people, became a man willing to stand before the whole Jewish nation and charge them with Jesus' death, Acts 2:36. Later, when told to cease preaching Jesus, they responded, "we must obey God rather than men," Acts 5:29. Does this sound like the behavior of men who had deceived and lied to the people? Hardly!

If the story is a fraud, a hoax, then it is the most successful in history. Speak the name of "Jesus" on any continent and the hearer knows the name. Mention the term "resurrection," and thoughts immediately go to Jesus, the Son of God. If it is a lie, then the whole world is deceived. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins," 1 Corinthians 15: 17. If Christ is not raised from the dead, then He also is not the "Lamb of God" or the "good Shepherd," but the greatest liar and imposter of all time. Few have made such an accusation, but that is the only alternative to the Bible record. Either He was miraculously raised from the dead, or He lied, and cannot be our Savior.

Two things help Christians to remember Jesus' resurrection: The Lord's Supper, a memorial to this Gospel story; and the fact that we are raised from the waters of baptism to walk in "newness of life" (Rom 6:4). May our lives always reflect the "conversion" that has taken place in our hearts.

Carl B. Garner

## MATERIAL UNIQUE TO MATTHEW

Genealogy to Abraham .....	1:1-17
Annunciation to Joseph .....	1:18-25
Coming of the wise men .....	2:1-12
Flight to Egypt .....	2:13-15
Sermon on the Mount .....	Ch 5-7
Details of the sending of the twelve .....	Ch 10
Great invitation, "Come to Me, all you who labor" .....	11:28-30
Parable of the tares .....	13:24-30
Parable of the hidden treasure .....	13:44
Parable of the pearl of great price .....	13:45-46
Parable of the dragnet .....	13:47-50
Peter walking on water .....	14:25-31
"On this rock I will build My church" .....	16:16-19
The money in the fish's mouth .....	17:24-27
Parable of the unforgiving servant .....	18:23-35
Parable of the workers in the vineyard .....	20:1-16
Parable of the two sons .....	21:28-32
Parable of the wedding feast .....	22:1-14
Woes upon the Pharisees .....	Ch 23
The love of many will grow cold .....	24:12
Parable of the ten virgins .....	25:1-13
Parable of the talents .....	25:14-30
Parable of the sheep and goats .....	25:31-46
"Put your sword in its place" .....	26:52-54
Judas' death (also found in Acts 1) .....	27:3-10
Pilate's wife's dream .....	27:19
Pilate washes his hands .....	27:24
Tearing of the veil of the temple .....	27:51
Resurrection of the saints .....	27:52-53
The guard at the tomb .....	27:64-66
The angel rolls back the stone .....	28:2
Bribing of the guards .....	28:11-15
The meeting in Galilee .....	28:16-17
The great commission .....	28:18-20

## MATERIAL UNIQUE TO MARK

“The Sabbath was made for man” .....	2:27
“He is out of His mind” .....	3:20-21
Parable of the seed growing secretly .....	4:26-29
Pharisees washing cups, etc.....	7:4
Healing of the deaf man with impeded speech.....	7:31-37
Healing of the blind man at Bethsaida.....	8:22
“I see men like trees, walking” .....	8:24
“This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting” .....	9:29
“Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched” .....	9:48
The young man who fled at the arrest of Jesus.....	14:51-52

## MATERIAL UNIQUE TO LUKE

Dedication to Theophilus.....	1:1-4
Gabriel and Zechariah.....	1:5-25
Gabriel and Mary.....	1:26-38
Mary and Elizabeth.....	1:39-45
The song of Mary.....	1:46-56
Birth of John the Baptist.....	1:57-66
Zechariah's prophecy.....	1:67-80
Census, journey to Bethlehem, full inn.....	2:1-7
Angels and shepherds.....	2:8-20
Circumcision and temple offering.....	2:21-40
Boy Jesus in the temple.....	2:41-52
Dating of John the Baptist.....	3:1-2
Specific teachings of John.....	3:10-14
The Lucan genealogy.....	3:23-38
Large catch of fish; calling of Simon.....	5:5-11
Widow's son at Nain.....	7:11-17
Sinful woman forgiven.....	7:36-50
Women who supported Jesus.....	8:1-3
Rejection by Samaritan village.....	9:51-56
The seventy-two sent out.....	10:1-12
The seventy-two return.....	10:17-20
The good Samaritan.....	10:29-37
Mary and Martha.....	10:38-42
The importunate friend.....	11:9-13a
True blessedness.....	11:27-28
Parable of the rich fool.....	12:13-21
Much given, much demanded.....	12:41-50
Repent or perish.....	13:1-5
Parable of the barren fig tree.....	13:6-9
Woman healed on Sabbath.....	13:10-17
Man healed of dropsy.....	14:1-6
Lesson to guests and host.....	14:7-14
Count the cost.....	14:28-33
Parable of the lost coin.....	15:8-10
Parable of the lost son.....	15:11-32
Parable of the dishonest steward.....	16:1-13
Rich man and Lazarus.....	16:19-31
Ten lepers cleansed.....	17:11-19
Parable of the widow and the judge.....	18:1-8
Parable of the Pharisee and tax collector.....	18:9-14

## Material Unique to Luke Continued

Zacchaeus.....	19:1-10
The two swords .....	22:35-38
Jesus before Herod.....	23:6-12
Emmaus Road .....	24:13-35
Jesus' last words (according to Luke) .....	24:44-49
Ascension (Mark 16:19-20?) .....	24:50-53

## WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

The word “miracle” is being used quite a lot these days. It is obvious that many are not clear as to its meaning. It has been said that “a proposition correctly defined is half argued already.” Certainly we need to understand the terms we use in religious discussions. A paper recently crossed our desk in which the editor made the following comment: “We hear so much today about some brother who is branded a heretic, false teacher, etc., since he believes in miracles, divine or ‘faith’ healing, working of the Holy Spirit. My question is, is there really one Christian on earth who doesn’t? It would seem to me something sillier than a game of five-year-old children for us to eat of the bread and drink of the cup without a miracle taking place. Is the forgiveness of sin through baptism some sort of a human or natural situation? And if we are dead-set against divine healing why on earth do we pray (you hear it our pulpits every Sunday) for the sick? If we do not expect some kind of a supernatural or act of God to take place why bother doing it at all?”

We wonder if the aforementioned editor would go to a cemetery and try to raise the dead? Would he say others could do it? The editor’s statements are but a sample of the loose and imprecise expressions uttered today. The editor is in error on the meaning of a miracle. In trying to smooth over the errors of others he has failed to understand the word miracle himself.

The word “miracle” is defined by Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, as “An event or effect in the physical world deviating from the known laws of nature, or transcending our knowledge of these laws; an extraordinary, anomalous, or abnormal event brought about by superhuman agency.” A miracle then is an extra-ordinary event in the natural world which is brought about by “superhuman agency.”

We should study the terminology for miracles in the New Testament. “Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know” (Acts 2:22). Notice the terms used are (1) mighty works, (2) wonders and (3) signs. “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works” (2 Cor 12:12). Here we have (1) signs, (2) wonders and (3) mighty works (powers). “And beholding signs of great miracles wrought, he was amazed” (Acts 8:13). This text speaks of (1) signs, and (2) miracles. A standard work, *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord*, by Richard C. Trench, deals with the basic terms involved. (1) The word wonder portrays miracles from the standpoint of the astonishment which the work produces upon the beholders and so is transferred to the work itself. “Wonders” is used in connection with some other term so we can understand it refers to miracles. (Cf. Acts 14:3; Rom 15:19; Heb 2:4.) (2) The word sign is a token and indication of the near presence and working of God. In this

word the ethical purpose of the miracles come out more predominately. So we read of the Lord confirming the word by signs following (cf. Mk 16:20; Acts 14:3; Heb 2:4.) (3) Powers or mighty works or miracles denotes power of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural means (cf. Mk 6:3; Acts 8:13; 19:11; 4:16).

But what about the Lord's supper and regeneration? Catholic theologians teach that a miracle does take place in the Lord's supper, so that the bread and the fruit of the vine are miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Jesus. This doctrine is called transubstantiation. However, upon a close examination of the text in Matthew 26:26-29, one will find that Jesus is using the figure of speech known as metaphor. (See D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics*, p. 253.) That means that Jesus was saying the bread and fruit of the vine represent or calls clearly to mind the body and blood of Jesus. There is no miracle here, there is a memorial supper. Now about regeneration or conversion. Waymon D. Miller in a fine work *Modern Divine Healing*, raises and answers this question. "When one affirms that he believes the age of miracles past, the usual response from believers in faith healing is: 'Then you don't believe in regeneration today, for that is a great miracle. Don't you think it nothing short of miraculous that one is born into the family of God, and receives pardon of sins?' My answer to this question is: 'No, I do not consider this a miracle. I most emphatically deny that it is.'" He continues, "Regeneration involves no miracle at all, but it is the result of conformity to a fixed spiritual law. The new birth, established by the Lord, is as much a positive spiritual law as physical birth is a positive physical law (Jn 3:5)." He points out that in the parable of the seed sown in ground, that the seed is employed in the regenerating operation so that it follows a pre-ordained law of the Lord (Mt 13:3-9; 18-23.)

In discussing the question of miracles today let us bring into focus the issue. First, it is not a question of miracles yesterday in Bible times, but today. We believe miracles were performed in the first century. "For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought" (Acts 4:22). But there is no passage that teaches we are to have miracles today. Second, it not a question of power, but of will. Certainly God is powerful enough to heal a man by miracle today, but what is God's decision about that today? It is not what God can do but what God does do. Third, it is not even a question of prayer for the sick. We believe that it is right to pray for the sick. We must even pray for our daily bread. That, however, does not mean that Jehovah will hand us a loaf of bread directly from heaven. Yet we must pray for it (Mt 6:11). Bread today must be gotten according to God's natural law. God has certain natural laws in regard to the sick. To ignore them is to fail in God's plan for the sick today. God works, yes, but through his law, his natural law. When we pray for the sick today we do not expect them to take up their bed and walk being miraculously healed. We pray if it be "according to his will" (1 Jn 5:14), through the means being administered that the person may regain his health. Fourth, it is not a question of healing. Certainly God heals today. But how? And such healing is divine but not miraculous. There is a vast difference between being healed miraculously and being healed by using God's natural laws. All healing is divine but not all healing is miraculous. All bread is divine. It

is provided by natural law. Fifth, it is not a question of so-called testimonials of alleged healings. The issue is what does the Bible teach. Many religious groups with conflicting doctrines claim miracles and depend upon testimonials to make converts. But the Holy Spirit is not responsible for these conflicting testimonials to support conflicting doctrines.

Jesus raised the dead. Who can raise a dead person today? Paul struck a man blind. Who is striking people blind today? Jesus could take a few loaves and multiply them to feed thousands. Who can make bread like that today? Jesus could turn water into wine. Who does that today like he did? Where is the miracle bread-making church? Where is the miracle wine-making church? Where is the dead-raising church?

The signs or miracles of Jesus and the apostles of the first century were to confirm the word (Mk 16:20; Heb 2:1-4). The signs for us today are written in the New Testament (Jn 20:30-31). If someone wants a sign today, read him one from the New Testament. To ask for other signs or miracles than "these" signs that are written in the New Testament is to reject the word of God.

by J. Noel Merideth

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## THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

Carl B. Garner

The characteristic of Jesus that so strongly attracted the multitudes was His ability to perform “mighty works and wonders and signs” (Acts 2:22). The astonishment of the people when witnessing these events, proves that the source of the miracle was not man, but the divine Maker of all things, Jehovah God. The effect on those who saw the miracles proves their judgment of them:

“For he was astonished, and all that were with him...” (Lk 5:9).

“So much the more went there a fame abroad of Him...” (Lk 5:15).

“They were all amazed...saying, We never saw it on this fashion” (Mk 2:12).

“Of a truth, thou art the Son of God” (Mt 14:33).

Of course, there were imposters and fakes who claimed to have great powers, and for this reason we are told to “prove all things: hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil,” 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22. Jesus’ mighty works always stood the test, and if people claim to have similar power, surely they will welcome such testing. God showed His approval of Jesus and His disciples by the miracles He enabled them to perform, and their word was to be “confirmed” by these mighty works (Mk 16:20).

The turmoil of the religious world today is heightened by many who claim to “perform miracles just like Jesus and His disciples did.” One claims to heal, while another claims a special revelation. Numerous claims are made on the subject of tongues, nearly all claiming to have the “same gift” Jesus gave to His apostles. It is this writer’s contention (based on 1 Cor 13:8-10; Jude 3; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4 and many other Bible passages) that these miraculous gifts have ceased. It is also apparent that when compared to the miracles and healings of the first century, the so-called miracles of today fall far short in reliability, quality and durability. These characteristics were inherent in Jesus’ miracles:

1. JESUS PERFORMED MIRACLES IN THE PRESENCE OF UNBELIEVERS (Mk 2:3-12). Today, however, if an “unbeliever” (in modern-day miracles) questions a healer, often he will be told that healing can’t be done in the midst of unbelievers.
2. JESUS’ MIRACLES OF HEALING WERE IMMEDIATE (Lk 18:43; Jn 9:7; Lk 7:15). On a recent television show, one of the “miracles” of healing described a man whose broken ankle was “healed within three weeks of the healing service, even though the doctor had stated at least 10 weeks would be required.” An unusual occurrence, perhaps, but hardly a “miracle like Jesus performed.”

3. JESUS' MIRACLES WERE PERMANENT (Mk 5:1-34). The crippling diseases did not return after the healing took place. Today's "laying on of hands" may have a psychological effect on the recipient, but if the pain returns, that certainly indicates the healer does not possess Jesus' healing power.
4. JESUS NEVER FAILED IN AN ATTEMPT TO PERFORM A MIRACLE. When modern "miracle-workers" fail to heal (and there are many) the failure is usually attributed to the recipient's lack of faith. Compare this with Matthew 17:19-20.

One problem that arises is in the definition of a miracle. One person used the term when viewing the birth of a child. Another calls the answer to prayer a miracle. In the language of some, the wonder of nature is a miracle in itself. However, when we see a Bible-based definition of a miracle, we see that events conforming to established laws of God are not miraculous at all. While God may have established laws in a miraculous manner, in the truest sense a miracle is an exception to established law, brought about by supernatural agency.

But what about prayer, and the "new birth"? Waymon Miller, in *Modern Divine Healing*, pp. 16-17, replies, "When one affirms that he believes the age of miracles past, the usual response from believers if faith healing is: 'Then you don't believe in regeneration today, for that is a great miracle. Don't you think it nothing short of miraculous that one is born into the family of God, and receives pardon of his sins?' My answer to this question is: 'No I do not consider this a miracle. I most emphatically deny that it is.' Regeneration involves no miracle at all, but it is the result of conformity to a fixed spiritual law. The new birth, established by the Lord, is a much a positive spiritual law as physical birth is a positive physical law. (Jn 3:5)."

Webster calls a miracle "an event in the physical world deviating from the known laws of nature." Speaking a language learned by careful study would hardly be a miracle, whereas, immediate fluency in a language never encountered would be miraculous (Acts 2:6-7). It has always been a wonder to me that those who constantly tell us to "expect a miracle" will always include foreign languages in their program for their foreign missionaries. Why not "expect a miracle" there also?

I believe the day of miracles is past. I do not deny God still has the power; only that He has changed His plan (Heb 7:12). Jesus' apostles were told not to study or prepare for their presentations of the gospel story or their defense before the courts of men (Mt 10:17-20; Mk 13:9-11). But years later, as the deaths of the apostles increased, Timothy was told to study (2 Tim 2:15). Peter told Christians to grow by "the sincere milk of the word" (1 Pet 2:2). The day of miracles was rapidly diminishing even then. Today we are saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:1-2), and we should be wise to look there for our salvation rather than seeking some miraculous experience or encounter. The miracle of Jesus' resurrection should be evidence enough for us.

## MIRACLES OF JESUS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

1. Water made wine at Cana ..... Jn 2:1-11
2. Healing the nobleman's son ..... Jn 4:46-54
3. The first catch of fishes ..... Lk 5:1-11
4. The man with an unclean spirit..... Mk 1:23-26; Lk 4:33-35
5. Healing Simon's mother-in-law..... Mt 8:14-15; Mk 1:30-31; Lk 4:38-39
6. Healing a leper ..... Mt 8:2-4; Mk 1:40-45; Lk 5:12-14
7. Healing the paralytic..... Mt 9:2-8; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26
8. The man with an infirmity ..... Jn 5:1-16
9. The withered hand ..... Mt 12:9-14; Mk 3:1-6; Lk 6:6-11
10. The centurion's servant..... Mt 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10
11. The widow's son at Nain ..... Lk 7:11-17
12. The man dumb and blind..... Mt 12:22
13. Stilling the storm..... Mt 8:23-27; Mk 4:35-41; Lk 8:22-25
14. The Gadarene demoniac..... Mt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-20; Lk 8:26-39
15. The daughter of Jairus ..... Mt 9:18-26; Mk 5:21-43; Lk 8:40-56
16. The afflicted woman ..... Mt 9:20-22; Mk 5:25-34; Lk 8:43-48
17. The blind men, dumb demoniac ..... Mt 9:27-34
18. Feeding the five thousand ..... Mt 14:13-23; Mk 6:30-46; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-15
19. Jesus walking on the water ..... Mt 14:24-36; Mk 6:47-56; Jn 6:16-21
20. Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter..... Mt 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30
21. Deaf and dumb man..... Mk 7:31-37
22. Feeding four thousand ..... Mt 15:32-38; Mk 8:1-9
23. The blind man near Bethsaida ..... Mk 8:22-26
24. The demoniac boy..... Mt 17:14-21; Mk 9:17-29; Lk 9:37-42
25. The temple tax - tribute money..... Mt 17:24-27
26. The man born blind ..... Jn 9:1-41
27. The dumb demoniac ..... Lk 11:14
28. The crippled woman ..... Lk 13:10-17
29. The man having dropsy..... Lk 14:1-6
30. The raising of Lazarus..... Jn 11:1-46
31. The ten lepers ..... Lk 17:11-19
32. The blind men near Jericho..... Mt 20:30-34; Mk 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43

### THE LAST WEEK

33. (Tuesday) The withered fig tree ..... Mt 21:18-22; Mk 11:20-25
34. (Friday) Healing the ear of Malchus ..... Mt 26:51; Mk 14:47; Lk 22:49-51

### AFTER THE RESURRECTION

35. The second catch of fishes..... Jn 21:6-11

## **MODERN-DAY MIRACLES**

### **A DEFINITION:**

LOCKYER - "A work wrought by divine power by a means beyond the ability of man."

W. SMITH - "An event which requires for its cause the intervention of a supernatural being . . . is not duplicated by natural laws."

### **BIBLE WORDS FOR MIRACLES:**

1. "Signs" - Acts 2:22; Mark 16:20.
2. "Wonders" - Hebrews 2:3,4; Acts 14:3.
3. "Mighty works," "miracles" - Mark 6:2; Acts 4:16; 8:13.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS' MIRACLES:**

1. Performed in presence of unbelievers - Mark 2:3-12.
2. Results were seen immediately - John 9:7.
3. Results were permanent - Mark 5:1-34
4. No special atmosphere required.
5. Organic illnesses, John 9:1ff; blind healed, Mark 8: 22ff; feeding hungry, Luke 9:12ff; raising dead, John 11; control over nature, Mark 4:41.

### **REASONS FOR REJECTING MODERN-DAY MIRACLES:**

1. They were for a specific purpose - to "confirm the word" - and that purpose has been fulfilled.
2. Characteristics of biblical miracles no longer present and apparent.
3. New Testament miracles were not intended to be a permanent tool.

4. The means of obtaining miraculous power no longer available.
5. Question was not a matter of debate, but of demonstration.

## ONE SOLITARY LIFE

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was 30, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things which usually accompanies greatness. He had no credentials but Himself.

While He was a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth, and that was His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a private grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth, as that One Solitary Life.

Author Unknown

## THREE VITAL QUESTIONS

### I. WHY WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN DOWN IF THE CHURCH COULD GET ALONG WITHOUT THEM FOR SEVERAL DECADES?

- A. God wanted it so (Jn 20:30-31).
- B. So the gospels could be preserved accurately for later generations.
- C. For instruction where no spiritual gifts were available.
- D. It made it easier to instruct other people.
- E. Christianity began spreading so far and so fast, a quick and accurate communication was necessary.

### II. WHY WERE THERE NO WRITTEN GOSPELS AT FIRST?

- A. Because there were spiritual gifts, and the church was not as widely dispersed.
- B. Most people could not read them.
- C. It was easier to tell the gospel orally.

### III. WHY CAN WE PLACE CONFIDENCE IN THESE WRITTEN ACCOUNTS?

- A. Luke, under inspiration, claims accuracy (Lk 1:1-4).
- B. Many eyewitnesses were still alive who could have, and would have, corrected erroneous statements in the gospels as they were spread.
- C. Leaders of the Jewish communities (especially Palestine) would have refuted many errors.
- D. The early Christians were taught NOT to believe everything they heard about Christianity (1 Jn 4:1).

## A Two-Fold Miracle

Among the miracles of healing the account of the blind man receiving his sight in Mark 8:22-26 stands out. It is unique in that other miracles of healing were immediate and complete whereas this one occurred in two phases.

Jesus and His disciples were in Bethsaida and a blind man was brought to Jesus for healing. He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. He spit on the blind man's eyes, layed His hands on him and asked, "Do you see anything?" The man looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around" (NASB). (NKJV, "I see men like trees, walking.") Jesus layed His hands on the man's eyes again and "the man looked intently, and was restored, and began to see everything clearly."

### Typical Explanation

Most commentators recognize the uniqueness of this two-phase miracle. What R. C. Sproul has to say is typical. He suggests that the first phase left the man with "dim-blurred" vision. Then Sproul comments: "Jesus was not finished. He applies a second touch. With the second touch the things that were blurred come into sharp focus. Now the man could distinguish between trees and men."<sup>1</sup>

R. C. Foster writes, "The man could see, but not distinctly. Then with the second touch and a fixed look by the man, the sight was completely restored."<sup>2</sup>

Why the miracle was performed in two steps, commentators, in general, do not know.

### New Insights on Sight

The movie *At First Sight* is based on a story told by Dr. Oliver Sacks in his book *An Anthropologist on Mars*. One of the stories Dr. Sacks tells is of a man who lost his sight early in life who underwent a surgical procedure that restored his sight at age 50.

What do you suppose this newly-sighted man experienced? Joy? A new lease on life? A New Birth? Five weeks after surgery this man said, "he often felt more disabled than he had felt when he was blind." Dr. Sacks explains, "Steps ... posed a special hazard, because all he could see was confusion, a flat surface of parallel and crisscrossing lines, he could not see them (although he knew them) as solid objects going

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<sup>1</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Playing God*, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1988, pp. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1982, p. 691.

up and coming down in three dimensional space.”<sup>3</sup> This man’s sight had been restored, but that did not mean he knew what it was he saw.

Dr. Sacks compares learning how to depend on sight after being born blind all your life to learning a language for the first time. Not learning a second language, but learning to speak for the first time.

(Stay with me here.)

In the movie version of this story, once the gauze is removed from the patient’s eyes, the doctor holds up a can of Coke and asks, “What do you see?” (Jesus asked the same question.) The patient didn’t know what to say because he didn’t know what it was he saw. Once the can of Coke was placed in his hand, he knew immediately what it was – but not by sight; by touch.

When someone is born blind or loses their sight early in life and has their sight restored in later life, there is something surgery cannot remedy. It cannot give the newly-sighted the ability to conceive of what they perceive.

Mortimer J. Adler, in his book, *Intellect: Mind over Matter*, makes reference to a phenomenon known to neurologists as *agnosia*. Dr. Adler defines agnosia saying that it occurs in individuals whose sensory powers are in no way impaired but who have suddenly become conceptually, not perceptually, blind.”<sup>4</sup> The difference between what Dr. Adler describes and the one who receives sight is that the once blind person has never conceived of things by means of sight. They have never interacted with the world by sight. Simply because someone has received their sight does not mean they recognize what they see.

Dr. Sacks, quoting ophthalmologist Albert Valvo, writes: “In fact, the number of cases of this kind over the last ten centuries known to us is not more than twenty.”<sup>5</sup> This being the case, our knowledge of what takes place when a blind man receives his sight by natural means would be obscure. No wonder we have misunderstood the dynamics of the miracles described in Mark 8.

### The Connection

What has this got to do with the miracle in Mark 8? Plenty. Keith Mano wrote the following in an article for *The National Review*, “The Bethsaida Miracle.”

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<sup>3</sup> Oliver Sacks, *Anthropologist on Mars*, New York: Vintage Books, 1985, pp. 120-121.

<sup>4</sup> Mortimer J. Adler, *Intellect: Mind over Matter*, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1990, pp. 36-37.

<sup>5</sup> Oliver Sacks, p. 109.

The man in Bethsaida can now see, but he cannot yet make sense of what he is seeing. Tree and man run together... All this, moreover, is not surprising to Jesus. He knows, it would seem, that a newly healed blind man has neither depth perception nor the ability to synthesize shape and form. The blind man's brain must first be recalibrated: must be taught (in one miraculous instant) what you and I have known since childhood – how to see.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Sacks adds:

An infant merely learns. This is a huge, never-ending task, but it is not one charged with irresolvable conflicts. A newly sighted adult, by contrast, has to make a radical switch from a sequential to a visual-spatial mode, and such a switch flies in the face of the experience of an entire lifetime. ...conflict and crisis are inevitable if “the perceptual habits and strategies of a lifetime” are to be changed. Such conflicts are built into the nature of the nervous system itself, for the early blinded adult who has spent a lifetime adapting and specializing his brain must now ask his brain to reverse all this. (Moreover, the brain of an adult no longer has the plasticity of a child's brain – that is why learning new languages or new skills becomes more difficult with age. But in the case of a man previously blind, learning to see is not like learning another language; it is ... like learning language for the first time.)”<sup>7</sup>

This helps to explain the two-phase nature of the healing of the blind man in Bethsaida. In the first phase, he receives his physical sense of sight. In the second phase of the miracle Jesus gives the man his conceptual sense of sight. The man Jesus healed saw (perceptually) clearly, but he was not quite sure what to make of what he saw (conceptually). I think this explains how Jesus could heal the man's physical sense and at the same time the man say something so puzzling – at least to those of us who have lived with sight all our life.

When Jesus asked the man what he saw, the man said, “I see men like trees, walking.” It is likely that the man was able to deduce what he was looking at was men by the use of other faculties. But as far as he was concerned they were “like trees” in that they were upright. Conceptually, they were similar in structure.

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<sup>6</sup> Keith Mano, *National Review*, “The Bethsaida Miracle.” New York: April 21, 1997, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Oliver Sacks, *ibid.*, p. 141.

If this approach to the story corresponds closer to what actually took place than the former consensus, it is difficult to fault former thinkers due to the number of cases or lack thereof that we have had to go on.

### Concluding Remarks

Keith Mano writes:

As far as I can judge, this is irrefutable evidence that a miracle did occur at Bethsaida. Back in 30 A.D., the blind did not often receive sight: there were few, if any eye surgeons and seldom a decent miracle-worker. No shill in the crowd could have faked it all by pretending to be blind – because only someone recently given his sight would see “men as trees, walking,” ...A Faker, not knowing about post-blind syndrome would have reported that Jesus had given him perfect vision.”<sup>8</sup>

Of course, others Jesus healed received their sight in full (John 9) as opposed to receiving it in two phases. The account recorded in Mark is not one of Jesus failing to heal the first time and then finishing the job with a second try. What took place in the first part of the healing process is the healing of a man’s perceptual sight. He was blind but now could see. Then there was the healing of the man’s conceptual sight. He now knows what it is he sees.

If someone wanted to argue that Jesus somehow, by natural means, restored this man’s sight by trickery, this in no wise explains the second aspect of the cure. Mano writes, “Only by a miracle could Jesus provide that necessary crash course in visual recognition.”<sup>9</sup> You may be able to unlock a man’s sight, but you can in no wise “infuse a human brain with that lifetime of visual experience necessary for normal sight.”<sup>10</sup>

This is irrefutable evidence that a miracle took place at Bethsaida. It lends great credibility to the reliability of the Bible. It demonstrates Jesus to be the Son of God (Jn 3:2).

Steve Lloyd

As submitted to *The Gospel Journal* for publication

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<sup>8</sup> Keith Mano, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

**WHY I BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD**  
**Carl B. Garner**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Living in a world of doubt, science has aroused man's interest in proof.

The world needs to know it is possible to believe in God, yet be intelligent in this belief.

1 Peter 3:15 - Be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

Of the Bible's 3/4 million (750,000) words and 31,000 verses only 1/10 of one percent has ever been questioned by anyone.

**I. SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN.**

- A. In the beginning (time) God (force) created (action) the heavens (space) and the earth (matter). Genesis 1:1. Five ingredients necessary for origin. (Herbert Spencer, 1820-1903)
- B. He hangs the earth on nothing (Job 26:7). (Sir Isaac Newton)
- C. It is He who sits above the circle of the earth. Isaiah 40:22 - 1400 A.D. before people thought about the earth as a sphere. (Written 700 B.C.)
- D. Ecclesiastes 1:7 All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the rivers come, there they return again. Schoolboys know of the process of evaporation - condensation - evaporation.

**II. THE VAST INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE.**

- A. Always a best seller - 25,000 copies sold every day.
- B. Present at all important occasions of state (in the United States) - inaugurations, award ceremonies, sessions of Congress, sessions of court.
- C. The United States was founded upon principles of the Bible (spirit of law).
- D. Good men love the law of God . . . Psalm 1:2 (see quotations).

### **III. INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF THE BIBLE.**

- A. Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. Also see 1 Peter 1:25.
- B. “The Bible has withstood three great enemies:
  - 1. False systems built upon it.
  - 2. Open hatred by its enemies.
  - 3. The indifference of its friends.”
- C. Irony: Voltaire, the famous French infidel, stated that the Bible would be a “dead book” by the end of his life. Today his old home is used as a warehouse for the Geneva Bible Society.

### **IV. IMPARTIALITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.**

- A. Books written by men tend to glorify the hero and condemn the “villain.”
  - 1. David - a man after God’s heart, Acts 13:22, also a murderer and adulterer.
  - 2. Simon Peter - strong follower of Christ; yet denied Him three times, Luke 22:54-62.
  - 3. Naaman - Syrian general, an enemy of the Jews - tells of his good qualities also - healed by Elisha, 2 Kings 5.

### **V. THE HIGHER CODE OF ETHICS TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE.**

- A. Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5,6,7) teaches how to live as a Christian . . . Golden rule (Mt 7:12) . . . Thoughts and actions equally important.
- B. Love your enemies . . . Matthew 5:44.
- C. Love your neighbor as yourself . . . Matthew 19:19.
- D. If your enemy hungers, feed him . . . Romans 12:20.

### **VI. ACCURACY OF BIBLE PROPHECY (Deut 18:20-22; 13:1-5, judging a prophet).**

- A. Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 13:19-22 that Babylon would be destroyed (like Sodom and Gomorrah) - not inhabited anymore.
  - 1. Isaiah died in approximately 690 B.C., 100 years before Babylon even came to power in 586 B.C.
  - 2. His prophecy came true in 536 B.C., almost 150 years after his death.
- B. Isaiah 44:28 predicts that Cyrus would help rebuild Jerusalem (100 years before Cyrus was born). Read 2 Chronicles 36 for fulfillment.
- C. Daniel 2 prophesies of the coming of Christ's Kingdom during the fourth Empire or dynasty from his day.
  - 1. Four empires were Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman.
  - 2. New kingdom would "never be destroyed" (Dan 2:44).
- D. Psalm 34:20 prophesies that not one bone of Christ would be broken. See John 19:36 for fulfillment of this prophecy.
- E. Notice picture of Jesus' crucifixion in Psalm 22.

## **VII. ANTICIPATION OF ERROR IN THE BIBLE.**

- A. Every false doctrine was anticipated and answered in the Scriptures.
- B. "Faith Only" - 2 Thessalonians 1:8; James 2:24; Latter Day Revelations, Galatians 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:3.

## **VIII. PERFECT UNITY OF THE BIBLE.**

- A. Written over a period of 1,600 years (Genesis in approximately 1481 B.C. and Revelation in approximately 97 A.D.).
- B. Over 40 different writers - with varying backgrounds, languages, customs, living in different countries - most of the writers never knew each other. Yet the finished product is a tapestry perfectly woven together by God's overseeing hand.

## **IX. HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE.**

- A. The Bible is specific about places, names, people, time, etc.

- B. Fall of Jericho (Josh 6), walls fell down flat, spoils not taken.
- C. Hittites mentioned 48 times in Scriptures; unknown to historians until late 19th century; Bible proven to be true again.
- D. Luke's accuracy as a historian questioned:
  - 1. Cyrenius governor at time of Jesus' birth? Served two separate terms.
  - 2. Sergius Paulus, proconsul on Cyprus? Sir Wm. Ramsay, 1912, found proof.
- E. Archaeology, geology, paleontology - findings prove accuracy of the Bible.

**X. LOGIC DEMANDS WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD.**

- A. If God didn't give us the Bible - who did? Four Possibilities:
  - 1. The Devil? . . . not logical. Bible exposes devil as he really is.
  - 2. Evil, brilliant men? . . . they would not write a book that condemns their evil deeds (Psa 119:155).
  - 3. Good, brilliant, uninspired men? . . . good men wouldn't lie . . . over 2000 times the Bible claims to be God's word.
  - 4. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – "All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . ." (2 Pet 1:21).

**XI. BREVITY AND RESTRAINT OF THE BIBLE.**

- A. Only 34 verses to describe the creation of the earth and its inhabitants.
- B. Only about 50 days of Jesus' life are chronicled by Gospel writers.
- C. Avoided words such as "stupendous," "fantastic," "tremendous."
- D. No physical description of Jesus - man's curiosity not catered to.

**CONCLUSION:**

- A. The Bible is the thoughts and words of God (1 Thess 2:13; Rom 1:16).

- B. The Bible can be understood (2 Cor 1:13; Eph 5:17) and must be obeyed (1 Pet 4:17; 2 Thess 1:8). Religious division is not the fault of the Bible.
- C. The Bible will be the “Standard” by which we are judged (Heb 9:27; Jn 12:48; Rom 2:6,16; 2 Cor 5:10).
- D. “There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history” (Sir Isaac Newton).
- E. “I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book” (Abraham Lincoln).

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