

The Gospel of Mark

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(1993–1994 Study)

The following notes were compiled from a Bible study on the Gospel of Mark led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1993–1994. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
2. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord's help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
3. Finally, Bro. Frank has not reviewed the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1993–1994)

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

Jesus is called the “*Son of God*,” not God the Son. Mark began with the *gospel* of Jesus, with his baptism—and not with his genealogy, infancy, or childhood. In other words, 30 years of Jesus’ life were omitted.

Since this Mark was John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, we know he was fully reinstated to favor after the disputation and separation from Paul. As a Roman name, Mark would be Marcus.

Mark was a Jew, but he spoke as a Roman to a Roman. As the amanuensis for the Apostle Peter, he directed his Gospel to the *Romans*, the soldiers, who did not appreciate long, flowery speeches. They wanted things stated right to the point with a minimum of words. The Roman soldiery would not have been as interested in Jesus’ infancy as in his being Messiah. Mark relied a lot on Matthew and repeats things Matthew stated. (Incidentally, Matthew’s Gospel was directed to the native Israelites.)

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

“As it is written in the prophets [*plural*].” Quoting from two prophets, Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3, Mark combined the two prophecies into one and used only part of each prophecy. He came right to the heart of the matter.

“Behold, I [God] send my messenger [John the Baptist] before thy [Jesus’] face, which shall prepare thy [Jesus’] way before thee [Jesus].” The way was prepared before Christ, who, as Messiah, was the *representative* of God.

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

John the Baptist was the “voice ... crying in the wilderness.” “Prepare ye the way of the Lord [Jesus].”

Q: How do we explain to Trinitarians that “LORD” in Isaiah 40:3 is Jehovah, but “Lord” in Mark 1:3 is Jesus, yet they are two separate beings?

A: We could not convince them with these texts alone. Go back to Exodus 3:2–6. At the time of the burning bush, an “angel” appeared to Moses. Several verses later, the angel said he was Jehovah, yet the angel was *not* Jehovah, for “no man hath seen God at any time” (John 1:18). Even Moses did not see God but a *representation* of Him in symbolic imagery. Moses did hear a voice, but he did not see God.

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

John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance, but Mark’s purpose was not to discuss John’s baptism at length. Mark was addressing an unseen audience, the Romans.

Hence he quoted these two prophecies with a minimum of words so that they would have a *punch* effect.

“John [the messenger] *did* baptize in the wilderness.” (Mark came right to the point—no subtle or flowery pictures.) John had preached a baptism of repentance, and repentance was a form of *preparation*. It had prepared the hearts and minds of Jewry to receive Messiah. Now John’s purpose was to bring as many as possible of the Jews who had a proper heart condition into a situation where they would be amenable to the instruction of the gospel.

Moses “baptized” the nation in the sea (*water*) and the cloud, water being a symbol of baptism (1 Cor. 10:2). The Tabernacle had the Laver (*water*) for washing. The *water* of Noah’s Flood was a symbol of baptism for the remission of sins (1 Pet. 3:21). Mark could have written much about the Red Sea and the Laver, but the Romans, not being Jews and not being immersed in the Old Testament, would not have appreciated these subjects. Therefore, Mark avoided the extra information and came right to the point. In other words, Mark identified John the Baptist as the individual God sent to prepare the way for Messiah.

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

Not all were literally baptized, but the report reached all. This verse reveals two facts: (1) When John the Baptist appeared at Jordan, there was quite a commotion and much publicity. (2) At this time John was baptizing at the lower or southern end of the Jordan. “All” *Jerusalem and Judea* went out to see him, not all of Galilee. Hence John’s popularity was centered in the lower part of Israel, around Jerusalem and Jericho.

As stated, while all went out to see John, not all were baptized. Many went because they were curious—they just wanted to see who John was. And what did they find?—a man dressed in a rough, strange garment of animal skins. The type of desert life John led was written on him. His appearance caused many to think he was a fulfillment of Malachi 3:1, the prophet to come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. This thought frightened them. God purposely designed the circumstances to give this impression regarding Malachi 3:1.

Again we see that Mark was trying to appeal to the Roman mind, and he was doing it staccato fashion—quick and very much to the point.

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

Locusts were considered clean under the Law because their legs enabled them to jump or leap off the earth (Lev. 11:21,22). These insects were a common food to the Bedouin in the desert. Dipped in honey, locusts were pretty good to eat.

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

A “latchet” was a sandal strap. This was a humble statement on John’s part. He got his

humility from his mother, Elizabeth. Her humility was manifested when Mary visited her and Elizabeth proclaimed that Mary's pregnancy was mightier than, and superior to, her own.

Mark's dramatic presentation would have stirred up the attention of the hearers, the Roman soldiers. They liked someone who was authoritative and gave orders. Mark abruptly identified Jesus as Messiah and gave two Scriptures to show he fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. This narrative enhanced the importance of the individual Mark was pointing out: Messiah. And Mark showed that Messiah was superior to John.

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

Mark continued to get the attention of the hearer by saying that John baptized with water but that the superior one would baptize with the Holy Spirit. The Romans would then ask, "What is the Holy Spirit?" Mark was keeping them in suspense with his dramatic writing. "Christ in you, the hope of glory" is a mystery. So is the doctrine of the Church's share in the sin offering.

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

Under the Law a priest began his public ministry at age 30. Thus Jesus left the Galilee region at that age and went south to the Judah and Jerusalem area to be baptized. Jesus began his ministry in the fall, probably in October.

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

Jesus "saw the heavens opened [cloven, rent]." (John saw this too but in a *limited* sense.) The heavens "opened" to Jesus in that the knowledge of his *preexistence* with the Father dawned upon him. Philippians 2:8 proves Jesus did not have this knowledge previously: he was "*found* in fashion as a *man*." Of course the angels knew who he was, for they had announced his birth. The point is that Jesus "*found*" *himself*; his mind was enlightened to remember being with the Father. Up to his baptism, Jesus grew and developed as a natural being, but after his baptism, he developed as a new creature. It was the old man versus the new man. We are a new creature in an *imperfect* earthly vessel. Jesus was a new creature in a *perfect* earthly vessel. There is a duality of nature.

As soon as Jesus was raised out of the water and stood up, the heavens opened to him and the dove appeared. Jesus probably literally saw a miraculous opening, and then the knowledge flooded his mind. Perhaps John the Baptist saw the heavens open too and he definitely heard the voice, but he did not receive the knowledge. John had been told that upon whomever he saw a dove light when baptism was performed, that person would be the Messiah. John baptized multitudes, and only on Jesus did the dove appear.

The dove is a symbol of peace and the Holy Spirit. There is a relationship between Noah's Ark and the dove. Also, the normal, general disposition of the Christian

should be *peaceful* and *dovelike*; the Holy Spirit gives this quality. As the “*Comforter*, it gives an *unction* from above. (An unguent is a soothing salve.) “*Abide, sweet Spirit, heavenly Dove*” are the beginning words of a hymn.

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

The voice was very fitting following the revelation. Jesus had just received the memory of his being the Logos, and of course he remembered his life as a human being up to the moment of baptism. The voice assured him that he had performed well in his human existence: “Even though you have had a blank mind regarding the past, I am well pleased with your behavior up to age 30.” The voice assured Jesus that he had been faithful in his life up to that point.

Thus there were two witnesses, one visual and one audible, that Jesus was the Son of God. Both John and Jesus got the double witness.

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

Remember, Mark wrote to the Romans, most of whom were soldiers. The Romans liked things right to the point. Hence Mark started his Gospel with Jesus’ manhood, not his birth. Mark’s Gospel is intentionally shorter, abbreviated. His writings are very similar to Matthew’s, just shorter. Mark wrote later than Matthew with his own purpose in mind.

When Jesus was baptized, things began to happen immediately. Jesus’ new mind compelled him to withdraw from others and go into the wilderness. Having had the heavens just open to him, he wanted to get off by himself for prayer and meditation.

Put ourselves in Jesus’ place. He had just gotten a knowledge of his Father—an intimate knowledge about creation, the angels, the planets, his Father, etc. Now he just wanted to get away and think. He also wanted to pray and meditate on how to conduct his ministry—how he could best perform in 3 1/2 years what the Father had sent him to do. His preexistence was a *tremendous* infusion into his brain—the knowledge came like a *flood*.

Comment: Paul also withdrew after his eyes were opened. He too had a lot to think about. Jesus was away 40 days and Paul for several years. Paul, being imperfect, needed more time.

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

Mark omitted the three temptations. The Romans would not have been interested in the Jewish Temple. Mark wanted to impress the Romans with the man Christ Jesus—how wise, powerful, etc., he was.

Comment: This is the only Gospel to mention the *beasts* in the wilderness. The Roman soldiers would be impressed with his survival amidst “wild beasts.”

Reply: That area of the Jordan wilderness did have lions and wild beasts. The soldiery

would be interested to know that some providence protected Jesus, for he was unarmed.

The “40 days” represent a period of testing. Jesus and Moses were both in the wilderness for 40 days without food or water. Jesus was tempted or tested along the lines of *vanity* (“Cast yourself off the temple and the angels will catch you”). He was tested regarding his *loyalty to the Father*. Satan wanted to wean Jesus’ attention to himself. We are reminded of the serpent with Eve. Satan appeared as her benefactor, implying that God had a selfish motive: “If you eat of the tree, you will be wise.” The serpent ate with immunity and spoke as a friend.

When permitted by God to do so, Satan could penetrate Jesus’ mind. This is a very important point. Hence evil thoughts can penetrate the minds of Christians—thoughts they do not want. The Adversary uses this means of temptation, among others. We possess seeds of decay along the lines of pride, greed, lust, etc., in our brains, and Satan appeals to these—when permitted to do so. (If Satan flooded our minds continually, we would not be able to do God’s will.) Jesus’ temptations were *sudden* and very *powerful* intrusions.

Martin Luther fasted and tortured himself as a monk, but the Adversary assailed him. One time when writing, he threw an inkwell against the wall. At that time he must have had an appearance from the Evil One. He was being tried, and the experience developed a positive nature in him. “Resist the devil [rebuke him mentally, for example], and he will flee from you.” *Rebuke with positiveness* in Jesus’ name.

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

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

Jesus preached somewhat like John. Moreover, Jesus’ disciples baptized and so did John.

“The kingdom of God is at hand” has a different significance now than it did at the beginning of the age. Now we mean the Messianic reign is at hand and Jesus is about to establish his Kingdom. But what was meant at the beginning of the age? The significance was that 69 weeks of the 70-week prophecy of Daniel had been fulfilled and it was time for Messiah to come to the nation of Israel. Jesus realized he was Messiah the Prince, and it was incumbent upon Israel to recognize him in that role. Jesus had to begin to teach and preach so that others would have the opportunity to be convinced he was Messiah.

Repentance was a necessary step for any to be blessed by Jesus’ ministry. Even the “good” and the “upright” needed to repent and accept Jesus as Messiah to be covered by the robe of Christ’s righteousness. A radical change from one’s former life was required, and baptism was incumbent upon all. Acts 2:5 says the 3,000 and 5,000 who accepted Jesus were “devout,” yet they were baptized. Not just the publicans and those living an obviously sinful life were sinners, but *all* were sinners and needed to repent.

The *Diaglott* says, “God’s royal majesty has approached” for “the kingdom of God is at

hand.” “The time [of Daniel’s prophecy of 69 weeks] is fulfilled, and God’s royal majesty has approached: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” In other words, Jesus was looking for the future kings and priests to reign with him in the Kingdom. The finding of the Kingdom of *heaven* class, not the earthly class, has been going on down through the Gospel Age. Jesus is looking for royal heirs now, and has been for almost 2,000 years.

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

Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee when he saw Simon (Peter) and Andrew. They were out in the sea, offshore a little way, casting in their nets.

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

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

Jesus called out, “Come and follow me.” Other Gospels show more transpired than just these two verses. Otherwise, verses 17 and 18 would encourage impulsive action. We should *weigh* matters first and *then act*. Delaying to act, procrastination after seeing the Lord’s will, vitiates decisiveness of purpose.

If we put ourselves in the place of Simon and Andrew, and a *stranger* walking along the shore called to us while we were fishing, it would be *unreasonable* for us to *immediately* leave the boat and our nets to follow him. First, we would have to know about Jesus.

Things had happened previously for Simon and Andrew to know Jesus was no ordinary man. And things also occurred at that time to apprise them. John 1:35–42 provides information about what had happened earlier. When baptizing was taking place at the Jordan, two disciples (Andrew and an unnamed disciple—probably John) heard John the Baptist say of Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God!” Andrew asked where Jesus would lodge for the night and then went to get Simon, his brother. So they previously had a background knowledge of Jesus before he called them to follow him and to leave the fishing business.

When Simon accompanied Andrew back to see Jesus, Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon”; that is, “I know who you are.” He continued, “Your name will become Cephas [or Peter],” meaning “a stone.” Peter would have been startled that Jesus already knew him and could predict his name change. Jesus’ words were a clue he was Messiah.

Jesus said, “I will make you to become fishers of *men* [and hence no more fishers of fish].” They would be leaving behind the fishing business. But, notice, they did not irresponsibly leave. Verse 20 says they left the father of John and James in the ship with hired servants. Mark is being as brief as possible to get to the main point.

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

Mark 1:20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in

the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

James and John Zebedee were next called to follow Jesus. Since the unnamed disciple of John 1:35–42 was John, again there was advance information. (John habitually did not use his own name.)

Comment: By giving such an abbreviated account, Mark was showing the Romans that Jesus had *authority*. He purposely let them think Jesus could just give a command and it would be obeyed.

Reply: Yes. He did not give the details to show a basis for compliance. Mark was trying to show Jesus was Messiah and the propriety of following him. (Mark wrote *years* later.)

John informed James, his brother, just as Andrew had told Peter, his brother. The two sets of brothers “straightway” followed Jesus. Andrew and Peter had been in the boat *casting* their nets. James and John had been in the boat *mending* their nets.

Luke 5:1–11 shows another incident intervened. After catching no fish, Peter followed Jesus’ instruction and cast in the net. A huge catch of fish resulted. Thus they had a *double* confirmation that he was Messiah: (1) proof he knew them before they came to him and (2) the great catch of fish.

Women prophetesses were Anna, Deborah, Huldah, and the four virgin daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8,9).

Comment: Mark used the words “straightway” and “immediately” repeatedly, even in Chapter 1: verses 10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 28, 31, 42, and 43. This is the *shortest* Gospel, yet Mark used these words throughout his Gospel *many* more times than the other Gospel writers. This is another evidence that he was directing his epistle to the Romans. He tried to report about Jesus’ ministry quickly without details.

Reply: Yes. One Roman centurion said, “I have all these men under me. When I give an order, it is carried out immediately.” Hence he felt Jesus could just give the word and the healing of his servant would occur right away.

Character, temperament, nobility of mind, dress, comportment, and carriage are all important for a leader.

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

Mark emphasized that Jesus did not procrastinate but immediately started his ministry. Jesus chose Capernaum because of the Isaiah 9:1,2 prophecy about Naphtali and Zebulun and the people seeing a great light. (Matthew 4:13 says that Capernaum was in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali.) Thus Jesus went to Capernaum to fulfill prophecy. We can see why he later castigated Capernaum for sinning against such a great amount of light. In contrast, Nineveh had less light but responded faster. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Kingdom than for Capernaum.

Mark 1:22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one

that had authority, and not as the scribes.

Jesus entered the synagogue and taught as one who had *authority*. The Romans would very much appreciate that authority. Jesus spoke directly and not in a sing-song voice.

Comment: In contrast, it took Matthew *seven* chapters to make the statement in the *first* chapter of Mark (1:22). Mark got right to the point regarding Jesus' *authority*.

Matthew is not necessarily sequential, whereas Mark, Luke, and John are sequential. Part of the end of Mark is spurious, so Mark is only about half the length of the other Gospels. But Matthew gives a fullness of detail.

The people were "astonished" at Jesus' doctrine. Their reaction shows he added comments to what he read and also emphasized with inflection as he read.

Comment: Jesus was only 30 years old, whereas the scribes and Pharisees were older, and some much older. His "youth," plus his authoritative teaching, astonished the people.

Reply: As a youth of 12, Jesus had asked *profound* questions at the Temple. There is a way of asking a question that provides the answer.

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

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

Imagine being dumbfounded at Jesus' teaching when all of a sudden an uproar occurred! A man in the congregation was out of control yelling out, being an instrument of the fallen angels. The words were a witness—they helped to impress that Jesus was important (and so did Jesus' subsequent actions). Note: The fallen angels knew Jesus was "the Holy One of God," not God Himself.

"Nazareth" was mentioned derogatorily. The mention also indicates that the angel knew Jesus' background.

Comment: The fallen angels did not really believe Jesus could destroy them, for they felt they were immortal. Thus their words were sarcastic: "Are you come *to try* to destroy us?"

Reply: They expected a confrontation. "Art thou come before the time?" they asked on another occasion. James 2:19 says, "The devils also believe and tremble."

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

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

Mark 1:27 **And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with**

authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

What an extraordinary experience from beginning to end! The people were startled. And on hearing Mark's account later, the Roman soldiers were impressed with this authority of Jesus—his power over unseen spirits.

With *authority*, Jesus said to the unclean spirit, "Hold your peace!" "Come out of him!" The unclean spirit resisted—convulsing the man and showing *spitefulness*. The unclean spirit had a bad attitude (like a temper tantrum) when his will was crossed, and he tried to take it out on the party he possessed.

When the unclean spirit left his abode with a *loud* cry, the spectators were amazed. Jesus had been teaching with authority when one in the congregation interrupted him abruptly. Jesus' manner of teaching was new, and in the middle came an explosion. "What is your purpose? Are you come to destroy us? We know who you are," the unclean spirit said.

Jesus' ministry started with a bang. If he had just spoken mildly and been passive, he wouldn't have had opposition. Thus the Christlike spirit includes exposing error. To those who are forward, an elder should be forward. Elders have added responsibility.

The people questioned among themselves regarding the things they had just seen and heard. "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this?"

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

If the unclean spirit had not caused a scene, those in charge of the synagogue would have merely questioned and rebuked Jesus for his teaching and manner of teaching. But now they were intimidated by his power and hesitant to criticize. Providence was operating. God overruled the situation to provide free publicity. All were stunned.

Comment: The feet members may get similar publicity through opposition.

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

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

"Anon" means "straightway."

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

Peter's mother-in-law was instantly healed of the fever and immediately got up and ministered unto them. There was *POWER* in Jesus' hand as he lifted her up by the hand.

Peter is supposed to be the first pope and he was *married*.

Mark 1:32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were

diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

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

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

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

After sunset, in the darkness, *many* came right up to the door to be healed of various ailments and possession. Jesus stood in the doorway as each of the gathered people took turns bringing himself, a family member, or a friend before him. Jesus healed them all. His fame had spread.

Jesus would not let the fallen angels speak.

In the morning, Jesus rose up “a great while before day.” He healed late into the night, got very little rest, and then went out long before sunrise to be alone and pray. Much strength and vitality had left him as a result of the healings. Thus he felt the need to communicate with his Father in spite of his fatigue. His strength was replenished following prayer, but he had to travel out to the deserted location while feeling weakened.

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

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

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

The disciples found Jesus and said, “Everyone is looking for you.” The people wanted more healing and were not really interested in hearing his teaching. They wanted the loaves and the fishes—temporal things.

Jesus went on to the next town because his message was more important than the healings. To stay where he was would have preoccupied him with healing. Luke 4:43 says, “I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also.” He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and he was budgeting his time for the 3 1/2 years.

Many in insane asylums are possessed. Diseases and illnesses can sometimes be used by the fallen angels to possess a weakened vessel and occupy his or her mind. Pills and drugs can sometimes restore the mind to a certain extent. If the weakness can be counteracted with pills, the person is more resistant and can be healed without exorcism, but when one has given himself over to demonism, pills are not effective. Electric shock treatments sometimes help.

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

Jesus preached in the Galilee *region*, not just on the shore.

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

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

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

The leper beseeched, was humble, exercised faith, and realized his need to be cleansed. He said also, “If it is your will to heal me, I *know* you can do so.” The leper knelt down in humility.

A leper had to keep his distance from others, cover his mouth with a cloth (as if to say, “Sin is spiritually infectious”), and cry “Unclean!” Some kinds of leprosy are contagious, and some kinds can be cured—but the symbolism in regard to sin is important.

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

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

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

Jesus told the leper to say nothing to others but to go to the priest and offer the ritualistic cleansing prescribed under the Law. (Miracles helped publicize Jesus’ ministry, but his mission was to preach the gospel.) The leper forgot Jesus’ instruction and “blazed abroad” the miracle. His words were providentially overruled, however, for all in Jewry were to hear about Jesus. Publicity was necessary. God wanted it done this way, and we can certainly understand how one long sick with leprosy and with fingers, nose, etc., deteriorated would be exuberant and rush to tell others when he was immediately healed.

No more could Jesus *openly* enter the city (but he could enter quietly at dusk). He slept in the desert depending on circumstances.

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

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

Chapter 2 continues to use “straightway” and “immediately” (verses 2, 8, & 12). These words indicate action that would have appealed to the Romans.

Verses 1–12 will be a nice incident to see replayed. The room was so full of people that they even lined up and packed in around the door.

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

Four men bore a paralytic on a stretcher, believing Jesus would cure him. But they could not enter the house because it was too full. According to the *Berean Manual* the middle-class house at that time consisted of one room 20 feet by 40 feet.

Mark 2:4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

“Palsy” is an abbreviation for a form of paralysis.

To get the paralytic in the room, the four opened up a hole in the roof and lowered the bed. They had to first calculate where Jesus was in the room so they could lower him at that end. To take these steps, the four had to have great faith—and also great love for the paralytic. Their determination can be seen, for they knew Jesus could heal the paralytic. They did not have time to consult the owner before making a hole in his roof. Probably they intended to pay for the damages later.

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

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

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

Mark 2:8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves,

Mark 2:9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

Notice the deference given to the scribes—they were *sitting* on seats (verse 6).

Jesus could perceive thoughts by looking at the individual. When we think, electrical impulses are given off that can be measured or tracked on a graph. The impulses can even set electronic equipment in motion. Hence thinking does extend. Nevertheless, Jesus had special abilities. (This does not mean that a perfect man in the Kingdom will be able to read all thoughts, however. Facial expressions and/or body motions make apparent a *general attitude* but not specific thoughts.) Jesus was able to answer the scribes' *thinking*. He could actually read their thoughts.

Only under certain conditions will a perfect man in the Kingdom be able to read thoughts. The mind is arranged so that people will be able to have private thoughts. However, the powers of the spirit world—God, Jesus, and the Church—will be able to discern thoughts and motives. Jesus was more than holy, harmless, and without sin—he had miraculous powers.

When Jesus saw “*their faith*”—the four men were determined to get the paralytic to Jesus, for they *knew* he could effect the cure—he said, “Son, thy sins are forgiven.” In other words, physical healing was secondary. Jesus’ main purpose was healing the *sin* sick. All diseases are a result of Adam’s disobedience and the death penalty. Even a person who is born with palsy or an affliction has sin as the cause—*Adam’s sin*. “Disease” means lack of ease.

It is possible the paralytic had committed grievous sins prior to his paralysis. He might, therefore, think God was punishing him with the paralysis. Suppose he had been very healthy and robust, then committed serious sin, and next became paralyzed. He would think the affliction was a judgment. “Thy sins [plural] be forgiven thee” implies multiple sins.

Forgiveness of sin, which is more important than physical healing, is harder to do. However, from the *onlooker’s* standpoint, physical healing appears to be more difficult to accomplish. Talk is cheap. For example, a Catholic priest can say, “Your sins are forgiven,” but Jesus *really meant it*. If the paralytic had great sorrow and repentance in his heart, then Jesus’ statement about forgiving sin would have encouraged him. And it was putting first things first.

Using “son” as the term of address does not necessarily mean the man was young. After all, Jesus was *OLD* when you consider he was the Logos, so he could call any male “son.” The Israelites were called “children” no matter what age.

Regarding verses 6 and 7, we would think that all who witnessed this healing would appreciate it and that their hearts would melt. The fact that certain scribes were not thus affected shows that if one is *deeply prejudiced*, even the elements of compassion are stultified. “Who can forgive sins but God?” the scribes asked. They knew Jesus was not God and hence thought he could not forgive sin. If they had known the Old Testament prophecies, they would have realized God would send a Savior with miraculous powers.

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

The parenthetical statement in black letters “(he saith to the sick of the palsy,)” was inserted into Jesus’ words to indicate he *turned* and *spoke directly* to the paralytic. Before that, he was addressing the scribes and had turned toward them.

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

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

The house was *packed* with people, but when the miracle was performed, *immediately* an aisle opened up to let the cured man out with his bed. How shocked the people must have been, for earlier, when the four tried to enter the house with the paralytic, no one made room! Now the cured one was exhilarated!

Jesus told the healed man to take his bed with him. Beds were generally rolled up and carried on the back. Of course in this case, poles may have been used for a stretcher effect. According to a *Diaglott* note, Eastern beds are light and movable, consisting of a mattress and two quilts. Or a sheet was sewn to a quilt or “rug.” A divan cushion often served as a pillow.

The four would have stayed up on the roof. When they let the paralytic down into the room, they probably lowered him about 2 feet and then others down in the room would have taken the bed.

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

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

Levi is another name for Matthew the publican (tax collector). When Jesus said “Follow me” to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, other Gospels show there was previous contact, but with Levi the Gospels do not relate any prior contact or incident. Apparently, Matthew was ready to forsake the tax table and follow Jesus. But we can still assume something had happened earlier.

Alphaeus, the father of the apostle James, is probably this same Alphaeus. Many of the apostles were related, but we do not usually think of Matthew and James in this regard. We can certainly see the importance of family reverence and holy upbringing.

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

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

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

There are none righteous, but some *think* they are righteous (Rom. 3:10). Jesus does not call the *self*-righteous but individuals who recognize they are sinners and in need of repentance. He came to find those who would respond to his message, those who were willing to change. He called sinners who were on the verge of repentance.

When Jesus ate in Matthew’s home, the scribes and Pharisees objected to his eating with tax collectors and “sinners.” A *Diaglott* footnote says the Greek word used here for “sinners” means “Gentiles.” According to custom, they *reclined* at the dinner table (*Diaglott*).

Q: Wouldn’t some use this Scripture to justify going into a bar, to homosexual assemblies, etc., to witness? Here Jesus did not enter into a sinful environment—the people were not engaging in sinful activity.

A: That is true. Jesus was not looking for people in the gutter or among hardened sinners who had no interest in God. Jesus did not fraternize and live among them. He ate his meal and left. Jesus was invited to this home, and Matthew also asked his friends.

At the First Advent, Jesus' healings were sample demonstrations of what he will do worldwide at the Second Advent. In other words, people will come forth from the grave, to a certain extent, with the diseases they had when they died. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccl. 11:3). Of course they will be a little better, if necessary, so that they can be reasoned and dealt with. Every step of faith and obedience will result in healing. Just as Jesus took Peter's mother-in-law by the hand, so assistance will be given to those coming forth from the grave to enable them to absorb the lessons *if* they want to.

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

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

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

Jesus gave appropriate, common-sense advice. There is nothing wrong with fasting, but it should not be done to be seen of men. When Jesus, the Bridegroom, was present with his followers, he would not deny them their temporary joy by having them fast. They would need all the joy and instruction they could absorb in preparation for future trials, persecutions, and depression.

There is a time for joy and a time for sorrow. When one is depressed, it would be improper to speak happily and joyfully in his presence. To the weak, we should be weak. To the sick, we are sick. In other words, we should come down to their level, sympathetically speaking. Because we are stronger at the time, we can, hopefully, be of some assistance. Gaiety in front of one who is sorrowing is wrong. The sad one has serious matters on his heart. Conversely, on an occasion of joy, we should go out of the situation if we would just be a wet blanket. Marriage is an example of a joyous occasion.

The term "children" in verse 19 applied to both young and old.

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

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

These words are also common sense. The NIV has "unshrunk cloth" for "new cloth." The people back there were familiar with these things. Jesus was saying, "Just as in the

natural realm these things happen, so with the new doctrine that I speak. My message is a new message, a new calling. Therefore, an adjustment must be made in the recipients; a change of attitude is essential to properly receive the message." The ones with a hearing ear were taught little by little that these changes were shown in the Old Testament.

Q: How is Jesus' response about fasting tied into the comment about the new cloth and the new wine? What is the relationship?

A: There was an Old Covenant and there is to be a New Covenant. The New Covenant is a different situation.

Q: Luke 5:36 inserts before Jesus' comment about the new wine: "And he spake also a *parable* unto them." Wouldn't this indicate a change in thought?

A: But there is a relationship. The Pharisees fasted mostly to be seen of men, whereas John's disciples fasted to be prepared and in the proper heart condition to receive Messiah. Therefore, regarding John the Baptist, fasting was proper because of his mission. He and his disciples' fasting are tied together as the old cloth and old wine. The "old cloth" pictures the instructions of Scripture on repentance and reformation. But now there was a new message. Jesus preached differently. He said to do what the Pharisees taught from the Word, but he added to the Word. Thus he did not destroy the old but carried it forward to a new situation. He magnified the Law.

Comment: Luke 5:39 adds, "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better."

Reply: The old was proper in its place, but now the new message was here. Jesus' instruction was perfect—but they had to be teachable.

A cloth is woven material—organized. Wine is for another purpose: exhilaration, good fellowship, relaxing.

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

The Law permitted a person on the Sabbath to take and *eat* food on the spot but *not to store* or harvest food. One could take just enough for current needs but none for tomorrow. (The poor could glean in the corners of the field; i.e., the corners were not to be harvested by the owner.)

The "ears of corn" were the heads of grain (wheat, barley, oats, etc.)

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

The Pharisees were spying on Jesus and his disciples. A knowledgeable Pharisee should have known that they were not disobeying. But anything Jesus did on the sabbath irked them, even though he fulfilled and *perfectly obeyed* the Law.

Animals were allowed to wander loose and eat on the sabbath, for they were not

consuming stored-up food. They were given the liberty of resting and roaming in the field.

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

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

“Need” and “hungered” are the key words. David’s eating the shewbread was a *necessity*. He and his men were hungry as they were trying to escape from Saul, and because David was a fugitive, people were afraid to feed him.

Jesus was superior to the Law. He said to Martha, “[Do you not know that] I am the resurrection?” One can be familiar with the *letter* of the Law and yet not realize that, under certain circumstances, it is permissible to do something that may appear to be a violation of the Law. Ritual must give way to dire necessity under such circumstances. Thus, under emergency conditions, there is some flexibility in interpreting the Law, but one must be very careful not to *falsely* interpret a situation as an emergency in order to have an excuse to violate the Law.

David was desperate for food in this life-and-death situation. Had he fainted, he would have been apprehended—and he had been anointed by God to be the future king. When the shewbread was changed on the seventh day, it could be eaten. David may have reasoned this way in his desperation. We do not have the details.

Antitype: On the seventh day (at the end of the age), the antitypical bread will be changed—the Church will be complete.

Comment: Abiathar should be Ahimelech. This is a case where the Bible corrects itself (1 Chron. 24:6; 2 Sam. 8:17; 1 Sam. 21:1). Abiathar was the father of Ahimelech.

The side flaps of the Tabernacle were used for changing clothes and storing supplies (such as incense and oil), clothing, and mementos. The side chambers of Solomon’s Temple were likewise used as storerooms.

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

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

The Matthew 12:1-8 account of this incident in Mark adds a thought about the priests. Jesus asked, “Don’t the Levites *work* on the *sabbath* (the seventh) day? The animals have to be killed, skinned, etc.”

“The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.” “The sabbath was made for man.” Jesus was making two points: (1) he was superior to the Law, and (2) the Law was given to *benefit* man, not to crush him. The sabbath was set aside for special devotion to God and for man’s rest and refreshment. Man was not meant to be a drone. Rest is needed on the seventh day. Moreover, the Law showed mercy and consideration to the animals and the land, as well as to man. For example, crops were to be rotated, and

the land lay fallow the seventh year so that it could be restored.

Comment: In John 7:23,24, Jesus said, "If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but *judge righteous judgment.*"

Reply: The Pharisees were inflamed that Jesus was a *teacher* of the Law when he did not have his "doctorate" according to their synagogue. They were jealous of his superiority, and they demeaned him publicly.

The sabbath (seventh) day of rest foreshadowed the Millennial (seventh) day of rest for mankind.

The expression "Son of man" can be taken either of two ways depending on context. "Son of man" can refer to Jesus, or it can pertain to mankind, as in Psalm 8:4. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

Lesson: Under certain circumstances, the Law allowed that which might appear to be a violation, but actually it was in harmony with the *spirit* of the Law.

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

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

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

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

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

The withered hand was restored completely so that it matched the other hand. Despite this *great* miracle, the Pharisees were not converted because of a wrong heart condition. Seeing their heart condition by reading their thoughts, Jesus took the offensive and asked them questions. Embarrassed, they couldn't answer.

The same principle operates today. Back there, the Pharisees were so hardened that the miracle, instead of converting them, angered them. Today even the *soudest* logic does not penetrate hearts not prepared for it. And this is especially true where one has an adversarial attitude.

Jesus' reaction in verse 5 shows there is a proper time for anger (for righteous indignation).

Comment: The *Berean Manual* says that failure to be angry under the right circumstance indicates a defect in character.

Reply: The *false* prophets characteristically gave a *soft* message. The *true* prophets spoke *strong* words.

Jesus “looked round about on them with anger.” Imagine what power that look had! In Gethsemane his apprehenders went backward and fell when he looked at them and said, “It is I” (John 18:5,6). Then he subdued the power to show he was voluntarily submitting to being bound. The point here in Mark is that neither the look nor the miracle brought conversion to the Pharisees.

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

The Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians; i.e., two different cliques joined forces over a common enemy: Jesus. A common enemy unites people of diverse attitudes. Some of the Pharisees may be incorrigible, for what greater thing could happen in the Kingdom Age to cause a change in attitude?

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

Mark 3:8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

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

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

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

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

Jesus withdrew himself because his time had not yet come. He selected a *small* boat to keep the people from crowding him. (If the boat were larger, *many* would have climbed aboard.) The angels probably arranged in advance that a boat just big enough for Jesus and his disciples would be on hand.

Jesus healed many, and the crowd pressed upon him, wanting to *touch* him, believing they would get an energizing power. When Jesus healed, a certain amount of vitality went out of him.

Comment: Verse 8 shows how far Jesus’ fame had spread. People (both Jews and Gentiles) were coming from Idumea, across Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon.

Reply: Word of Jesus’ healing power had spread far and wide to friends and relatives.

Those possessed of unclean spirits fell down before Jesus, bowing the knee, and cried out. (The unclean spirit that was housed in an individual used the mechanism of that body to supplicate before Jesus.) The fallen angels knew of Jesus’ preexistence, and

they knew he was the *Son of God*, not God the Son. *Possibly* this incident indicates a repentant condition among some of the fallen angels. *If* they had been favorably affected by seeing the miracles, they *possibly* were giving a witness. Nevertheless, Jesus had to suppress a testimony coming forth in such a manner.

Prejudiced minds were not influenced by Jesus' teachings. Only about 500 brethren in all of Israel were converted. But *after* his death and resurrection, his ministry had a greater effect.

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

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

Mark 3:15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

Mark 3:16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

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

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

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

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

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

Jesus went up into a mountain, called 12 disciples unto him, and ordained them. He also gave them the capability to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons. He was preparing them for future activity.

Verse 21 says that Jesus' friends "went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself." They were genuinely concerned for his health—that he was being drained mentally and physically—and were not speaking disparagingly of him. If he healed 100 people and virtue went out of him, the effects on him would be discernible. But, of course, he had the ability to be restored—and in a very short time.

Verse 19 should end with "betrayed him" (see the NIV). Verse 20 starts with "And they went into a house." In other words, the house was not up on the mountain.

Some of the apostles had more than one name, as follows: Bartholomew (Nathaniel); Matthew (Levi); Thaddaeus (Lebbaeus Thaddaeus, Jude/Judas, half brother of Jesus); and Simon the Canaanite (Simon the zealot, Simon Zelotes).

The great multitudes sought Jesus primarily for the loaves and the fishes, for the healing—and not for his message and doctrine. They wanted *temporal* benefits.

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

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

Notice that Jesus called the scribes unto him. His question “How can Satan cast out Satan?” signifies that Satan *would not do this* because it would be *contrary to all reason*. There is no implication that the time would come when Satan would cast out some of his own membership. In fact, the very question *negates* the thought that he would do this at a future date. Only Mark states this so forcefully.

Comment: If this question is considered in context, that *Jesus* was being accused of casting out demons by collusion with the Adversary (i.e., that *Jesus* was being accused of participating in Satan’s casting out Satan), then the absurdity of the majority reasoning is shown. Satan is *not* casting out Satan today—that is not a proof his kingdom is tottering.

Comment: Some feel the healings are a sign Satan is casting out Satan, but there were healings by others in Jesus’ day and he said not to forbid such.

Comment: There is a difference between Satan’s casting himself out and his appearing as an angel of light.

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

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

If Satan’s house and kingdom were divided against themselves, they could not stand but would end. Jesus was trying to show the foolishness of their reasoning in criticizing his advice.

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

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

The prevalent explanation is that this verse is hinting about the way Satan’s end will come, but verse 27 *contradicts* such a thought because Satan must be bound *before* his house is destroyed—he must be bound *first*. *Order:* Binding, house destroyed, goods taken as a booty. Satan will not destroy his own house—Jesus will destroy it.

The “strong man” is Satan; his “goods” are the people. Jesus first binds Satan and then spoils his goods. Therefore, the *parousia* is not the entering of Jesus into Satan’s house. Why not? If the *parousia* (1874) marked the entering of Jesus into Satan’s house and the spoiling of his goods, then Satan had to be bound *before* 1874. No, the permission of evil continues, and the Laodicean Church has to contend with the *fullness* of Satan’s power.

There are two aspects of the “spoil”: (1) In regard to the *evil* aspect, Jesus will *destroy*.

(2) In regard to the *good* aspect, Jesus will *take a booty*.

Satan's house, or rulership, is filled with demons. He is at the head of his kingdom, with the fallen angels having various powers and principalities below him. When they are removed from office, that method—the exercise of authority and control—will be replaced by Jesus' *pure* authority and control. Righteousness will control and govern, not unrighteousness. Satan *is now* the *invisible* god of this world. When Jesus reigns, he *will then be* the *invisible* power of this world. Now the *whole world* lieth in the *Wicked One*. In the Kingdom, *all* will have to bow and confess to *Jesus*.

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

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

The "all sins" that "shall be forgiven" must be modified, for only sins that are *not willful*—that is, sins due to ignorance or Adamic weakness—are forgiven. Sins against the Holy Spirit—*willful* sins against light—cannot receive blanket or *carte blanche* forgiveness. They can be expiated by stripes, however, *if the party is repentant*. The expression "in danger of eternal damnation" shows that a sin against the Holy Spirit is not necessarily a sin unto Second Death. Nevertheless, one is in grave danger of Second Death. Repentance and change are essential.

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

The *Holy Spirit* (verse 29) is contrasted with an *unclean spirit*. The scribes and Pharisees who said Jesus had an unclean spirit are in danger of Second Death. *Full* willful sin brings Second Death. Depending on the *degree* of willfulness and the *degree* of the sin, one can go into Second Death. Judas knew what he was doing. He committed *premeditated* murder.

There are different degrees of both punishment and expiation depending on the degree of willfulness and the nature of the sin. *All* willful sin is dangerous, but some is more so.

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

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

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

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

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

While Jesus was teaching, multitudes were around him, creating sort of a barrier. When members of his family arrived and wanted to speak to him, they realized it

would be difficult to get through the crowd. Also, it would be rude and inappropriate to interrupt him since he was *teaching*. The message Jesus' family sent to him indicated, "Come out and speak with us as soon as you can."

Jesus' reply to his family, including *Mary*, offsets the doctrine of Mariolatry. If she were so important, Jesus would have stopped teaching and gone out to see her. Verse 35 is wonderful protection against Mariolatry: "Whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my ... *mother*."

This providential occurrence gave Jesus opportunity to show the importance of partiality—under certain circumstances. (However, *judgment* should be *impartial*. God is no respecter of persons in matters of judgment—when sin or wrong is committed.) The Apostle James speaks of partiality from another standpoint: Partiality should not be shown for a rich, important person over a poor person.

We are practicing now, in the present life, hoping to get a diploma eventually. When we make a mistake, the Lord watches to see if we are sorry.

Comment: We often hear, "If I err, I would rather err on the side of being merciful."

Reply: We should want to be on the *right* side.

Comment: To whatever degree we are more merciful or more just than what the Lord would approve, we are out of alignment. Both are equally wrong.

Comment: To see grievous sin occur in our midst requires action—no guesswork is involved. The *general* attitude of wanting to be on the side of mercy is wrong.

Reply: Some brethren do not want to know about a gross sin so they can curry the favor of both sides.

Comment: A *Manna* text says we may not necessarily suffer for our own sake but because we are taking the side of a brother or sister who is being unfairly accused. In other words, supporting the *right* stand of *another* may cost us something.

Prayer is important in making decisions. Then, even if we make the wrong decision and act accordingly, God sees that we tried.

There is another point in regard to *Mary*. One of the commandments tells us to "honor thy father and thy mother"—the "hoary head" (Exod. 20:12; Lev. 19:32). *Jesus* was *older by far* than *Mary*, so he was the Master and certain criteria would not be binding on him.

If an elder is criticized, especially an *older* one, the words used should be respectful. Even if the younger one is right, the criticism must be properly given. On the other hand, if gross sin is occurring openly (such as when Phineas committed fornication), age is immaterial—the sin should be condemned. The office is to be respected, but if someone is despicable in the office, that must be taken into consideration.

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

whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

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

Jesus' popularity was such that a "great multitude" was assembled on the seashore. Hence he got into a boat to teach a little offshore where he would not be jostled. He enumerated several parables, of which the Parable of the Sower is the first.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The parable illustrates the importance of the *ground* or *soil* upon which the seed (of truth) falls. Seed that fell by the wayside (on the hard beaten path) could not prosper. If we consider the natural picture, it is important for seed to be cast into furrowed, plowed soil.

The parable discusses four kinds of soil, as follows:

1. Seed fell by the wayside—on hard, trampled ground. The seed lay on top of the ground where it got snatched away by birds.
2. Seed fell on stony ground—on thin topsoil that contained many rocks and stones. Hence it was not suitable for planting seed. Lack of *depth* of soil caused the seed not to prosper. As the sprout came forth, the heat of the sun killed it. There was no moisture, nutriment, or depth of root.
3. Seed that fell among thorns bore no fruit. Although it was good, plowed soil, it was not weeded and properly cared for. Hence thorns grew up and choked the seed.
4. Seed fell on good, cultivated, weeded soil that brought forth fruit. The abundance of the crop varied, but *fruit* was produced. Soil can be good, better, or best—producing, proportionately, different amounts of fruit.

Continue to consider the natural picture—we are on shore listening to Jesus in the boat speaking the parable. This *great* teacher is just saying things that are *common sense*. The people agree. They get the point of the importance of the soil. The *same seed* was sown in all four cases—the *soil* it fell into was the difference. But how did Jesus

conclude? “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” His words were a hint that the lesson was deeper. He was speaking loud for all to hear, but raised his voice *more* and *cried out* this last statement (verse 9).

The explanation was purposely delayed, waiting for the interested ones to ask questions.

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

The *motive* in asking a question is important. The twelve apostles plus “they that were about him” asked the meaning. Their sustained interest was remarkable, for it took *time* for the multitude of thousands to disperse, and the passage of time was a test on those who remained. When Jesus was finally alone, they asked him for more understanding. Knowing Jesus was no ordinary man, they realized the parable had a *deep* significance. The twelve and the others were rewarded with information.

Lesson: We should not tell everything we know. A *fool* tells all—talking all the time. We are to look for those who truly hunger and have some reserve under certain circumstances.

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

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

Jesus did not preach the gospel fully to the multitude but deliberately withheld information. Here is the reason: “lest ... they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.” The multitude had not received counsel regarding the responsibility of being a disciple: loving Jesus more than father, mother, etc.; not turning back; counting the cost; and so forth. Therefore, he did not want to needlessly jeopardize their future. Being perfect, the Master knew just what degree to do this, whereas we would have great difficulty. But there is a rule: “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.” In other words, we should not try to plant that ear. One must hunger and thirst. *Interest* should be fostered. It is better that questions come from the other party than from us.

If some were converted and then changed their minds and looked back, they would jeopardize their salvation. *If* they made a full consecration based on an *insufficiency of information*, they might turn back later. Hence Jesus purposely did not try to win over the multitudes. He was especially instructing the apostles.

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

Jesus, *knowing* they did not understand the parable, was impressing upon them their *lack of understanding*. His two questions imply the Parable of the Sower is easier to understand than other parables. Why? because it is about *principles* and it pertains to the *Ephesus* period when the gospel seed was initially sown.

Mark 4:14 The sower soweth the word.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The seed falls on four types of ground or soil: (1) the wayside or beaten path, (2) stony ground, (3) soil mixed with thorns, and (4) good soil. We will consider each type of soil separately.

(1) *Wayside*. Satan comes immediately and takes away the word, the seed of truth. Also, birds or fowls of the air devour the seed (verse 4). Hence not only Satan but the other demons as well are instrumental in plucking away the seed of truth.

(2) *Stony ground*. Shallow soil contains rocks. In other words, rocky soil is not conducive to growth. All the seed is sown in the ear, the heart, the mind—and hence has to do with how the individual hears the truth. Whether or not he is receptive depends on the soil of his heart condition.

(3) *Soil with thorns*. “Thorns”—representing the deceitfulness of riches, lusts or pleasures, and the cares of this world—choke the word so that it becomes unfruitful. In this case, the soil is good, but other things come in on top of the seed to hinder its growth. As a result, the word “becometh unfruitful”; i.e., some fruit is produced but not the desired kind. This class can represent either the Great Company or Second Death. Luke 8:14 says that this class “bring [forth] no fruit to perfection [to maturity].” They bear some fruit but not a sufficiency to be satisfactory.

Comment: Thorns grow much faster and thicker than other plants and thus prevent growth and maturity.

Reply: Yes, the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and lusts and pleasures can all grow rapidly and be overwhelming. Their growth can be subtle so that one does not realize the prosperity of the seed is being choked.

In *every* instance the *seed is good*. The *soil* is the problem (how the seed is received). The Great Company bring forth some fruit—and sometimes very quickly—but it gets choked.

(4) *Good ground*. The fruit coming forth 30-, 60-, and 100-fold indicates capability. Those who bring forth 30-fold produce all that could be expected, and the same is true of the 60- and 100-fold individuals. All three are Little Flock. Lesson: ability *must be used*.

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

Mark's use of the question form is more forceful than Matthew and Luke. What is the purpose of a candlestick? It is for illumination. Lesson: Do not hide the light!

The Romans would have appreciated Mark's approach, whereas Matthew's Gospel was more comprehensive for the Hebrews, Luke was written for learned Greeks, and John is international, appealing to all kinds of minds. The Apostle John was very brief on the parables; he philosophized and reasoned on principles.

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

This statement is powerful and searching—to the Little Flock, the Great Company, and the world of mankind. All things are open and manifest to *God*.

Jesus was speaking in broad terms, for it would not be profitable for some things to be made public. The Father does not like to look on sin. Sins will be revealed just enough to show the worthiness or unworthiness of an individual for his calling or for incurring retribution. In the Kingdom mankind will receive stripes for willful deeds done either in the present life or in that age. What a man sows, he *shall reap!*

Some things are censored for the benefit of the individual. For example, certain faults of Abraham or Moses do not need to be revealed because of their nobility of character. What would be the point of revealing such things?

On the other hand, faults will be revealed to individuals who do not know they are doing wrong. Some are so hardened in wrongdoing that they are insensitive to injustice and need to be apprised of their sins. Jimmy Swaggart is an example of when foul deeds should be revealed. He professed to be a righteous preacher and a Christian yet committed grievous sins on the side. It is necessary to reveal such hypocrisy.

The fact that a person goes into Second Death may not be revealed in the present life, but it will be revealed in the next age. When gross sins of a Christian are revealed in the present life, it means there is a vague chance of repentance. Proper repentance could result in one being of the Great Company.

Generally speaking, those faithful in the truth know more than those who are not faithful in the truth and who are not inquiring. However, we should *analyze* what we hear and be sure it is truth, for "there is a way that seemeth right, but it leadeth unto death" (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).

A wrong attitude would be to say, “Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou” (Isa. 65:5).

Mark does not follow the pattern of Matthew—he omits the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares and other parables. Why? It was providentially overruled, for the seven parables of Matthew 13, all given in one day, are dispensational. They outline the seven stages of the Gospel Age. Another difference in the Gospels is that Matthew is not accurate on sequence until near the end of Jesus’ life. Mark, Luke, and John are sequential, even though they don’t individually fill in all the gaps.

Verse 22 is a maxim, a general statement. Another example is “He that uses the sword shall die by the sword.”

Adam Rutherford brought forth the truth that some pyramids were built before the Great Pyramid as *practice* pyramids.

When God commanded the Israelites to kill every man, woman, and child, there would be no need to reveal a detailed record because the killing was *authorized*.

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

Again, Jesus would pause and then raise his voice with these words: “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.”

In verse 11, Jesus said he spoke in parables to the multitude lest they understand and be converted, yet verse 21 says our candlelight is to shine unto others. How do we harmonize the two statements? Some are enlightened in this age and some in the next age. The parables were designed to be understood by those in the right heart condition. Such will inquire further for understanding. Hence the parable is really for a *small minority* at the present time.

Comment: Much of Mark 4 has to do with “*hearing*.” Wouldn’t the harmony of verses 11 and 21 be that although the minds of the vast majority are blinded by Satan lest they believe, we are responsible to witness and let our light shine anyway? (Persecution and misunderstanding are helpful for Christian development.) Verse 23 would then take on an added meaning to show that God is aware of (1) how we hear and (2) how we let our light shine to others.

Comment: Verse 1 says Jesus was speaking to the *multitude*. After giving the parable, he said to them, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” A little time elapsed, and then, when Jesus was alone (verse 10), the twelve and the others with them asked for an explanation. After explaining to the *select group*, Jesus again said, “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.” This would be a further caution even to disciples and interested ones that “although you have done well to inquire, you must *keep on* inquiring. Inquire further. Do not feel smug and secure—keep your hearing ears open.”

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

How we measure the doctrine we hear is important. We should not let prejudice

blind us to the importance of a doctrine or to its Scripturalness. “With what measure ye mete [judge]” applies to morals as well as doctrine. Mark points up the *doctrinal* aspect, whereas Matthew 7:2 pertains to judging the standing or destiny of an individual. To judge one as a “false prophet” means to judge him unworthy of life, to judge him into Second Death. We can judge that one has spoken or acted incorrectly, but it is *damaging* to call one a “false prophet”—we must be careful. If true, it is our responsibility to show him he is leading brethren astray. However, if we do so incorrectly, we incur a penalty. We should not make hasty judgments. We should go to the individual if we think there is a possibility of misunderstanding. But when a speaker uses three or four illustrations to support his thinking, there can be no misunderstanding. In that case, it is not necessary to go to the speaker for clarification.

Verse 24 also refutes the attitude “It is not necessary to know that now. The information will be revealed in the Kingdom.” We are responsible if we judge something unimportant that is important.

Comment: Although Mark would not have had the word “Ephesus” in mind, the Parable of the Sower is geared particularly to the first period of the Church. It was very important how seed was sown to start the Church.

Reply: Yes, neither Mark nor Matthew probably knew that Ephesus or the other six churches were represented. It was God who overruled the accounts, and Mark is geared to the early Church.

Comment: The word “hear” is used *repeatedly* in this chapter—over and over again: verses 9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, and 24.

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

“He that hath [used faithfully], to him shall [more] be given.” From him “that hath not [used], ... shall be taken even that which he hath.” Lesson: Let your light shine. Those of the Great Company have the hope of the high calling. If they lose out, that which they might have retained goes to the Little Flock, to another. This principle corresponds to the responsibility of using one’s talents.

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

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

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

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

This unusual parable carries forth the Parable of the Sower. In principle, when considered dispensationally, it incorporates the other six parables of Matthew 13. The seed was sown in Ephesus. In the second dispensation, the devil came and sowed tares among the wheat. Rising “night and day” shows the passage of time, as does the

progression from blade to small ear to mature large ear to the harvest.

After the man sowed the seed, he slept. The apostles and Christians down through the age wondered about certain things—and particularly as time went on. At the First Advent Jesus said, “It is not for you to know at this time. The Holy Spirit will subsequently reveal understanding.”

The startling thing is that the blade growing up can be considered from another standpoint. In the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, *wheat* was seen growing up, but *tares* also. Growth of a seed is miraculous. It can multiply up to a thousand times. The first seed was Jesus, who will multiply into 144,000. The growth of tare seed is miraculous too—but it is of the Adversary. The wheat field became a tare field, prospered by Satan. The tares outnumbered the wheat.

Q: Who is the “man” who sleeps, rises, and does not know how the seed grows?

A: The point is that whether good seed or bad seed is sown, the miracle of growth cannot be fully explained. Rising night and day suggests a period of time. Thus Mark covers the Gospel Age, but without detail except for the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30–32).

When the fruit is ripe, the harvest has come. When the 144,000 are found, the Church will be complete.

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

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

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

The mustard seed in the parable is likened to the Kingdom of God. Generally speaking, it is the least of all seeds, yet it can grow up into a tree. In the shadow of the tree, the fowl of the air lodge. Jesus did not explain the parable. Think about this miracle of nature that such a *mighty* tree can grow from such a *tiny* seed. In Matthew 13, the Parable of the Mustard Seed has a bad connotation in regard to the nominal Church (the proof is that it is followed by the Parable of the Woman Who Leavens the Meal). As time went on, the professedly Christian Church grew and overcame the Roman Empire to become a great power. “Fowls of the air” picture the unclean, the unconsecrated, who came into the professed Church. The world accepts the nominal Church as the true Church.

Q: Is the mustard seed like the stone in Daniel 2 that grows and fills the whole earth?

A: That would be in the good sense.

Comment: The “fowls” are usually a bad connotation.

Reply: Certainly they are in Matthew 13 and in Revelation 18. Scofield speaks of the

tree vision of Daniel 4:21, "... on whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation." In this reference to the Babylonian Empire, the fowls are *unfavorable*. Similarly the mustard seed grew to be a world empire. The Parable of the Mustard Seed in Mark 4 can be taken both ways in a sense, but in Matthew 13, it is unfavorable, as in the Parable of the Woman Who Leavens the Meal. The mustard tree pictures the nominal Church at its height. Therefore, the Mustard Seed Parable in Mark 4 also seems to be unfavorable.

Comment: Leaven increases the size rapidly, the mustard seed grows quickly, and error prospers faster than truth.

Reply: Yes, the olive tree is slow-growing—it takes centuries.

Mark 4:33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

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

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

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

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

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

This incident is a reminder of Jonah, who slept below deck in a fierce storm. Here the waves kept breaking over the boat so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus slept on until the disciples awoke him. Other boats had left shore at the same time, but the incident primarily affected the boat Jesus was in. The King James Version calls the other boats "little ships," suggesting that Jesus was in a larger boat.

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

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

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

When Jesus rebuked both the wind and the sea, there was a great calm. When Jonah was cast into the deep, there was a great calm.

Satan was behind the wind—hence it was an ill wind that needed rebuking. Satan hoped the Master, or at least some of his disciples, would perish.

This is a prophetic picture of the great Time of Trouble at the end of the age, in which

no flesh would be saved without divine intervention. The command “Peace, be still” shows Jesus’ authority. We are reminded of the Elijah picture with the wind, earthquake, fire, and still small voice.

The Sea of Galilee is very tempestuous when the wind blows down between the two mountain ranges, but the sudden great calm in this incident was unusual. It is one thing for a storm to cease, but the waves would continue to be choppy for a while. The dead calm that ensued immediately shows Jesus’ *complete authority* in giving the rebuke.

Sequence

Matt. 8:23–27 — (1) Rebuke of disciples, (2) rebuke of wind and wave.

Mark 4:35–41 — (1) Rebuke of wind and wave, (2) rebuke of disciples.

Luke 8:22–25 — (1) Rebuke of wind and wave, (2) rebuke of disciples.

Mark and Luke are correct; Matthew is not always sequential. It would make sense to rebuke the disciples *afterwards* for little faith. Otherwise, in the heat of the storm, the rebuke would be lost. Jesus spoke in the calm.

Mark 5:1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

Mark 5:2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

Mark 5:3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

Mark 5:4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

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

The Gadarenes were the Gergesenes. The “country of the Gadarenes” was east of the Sea of Galilee, and Gadara was its capital. Jews were living there.

Matthew 8:28 mentions two possessed men in this area. “And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.”

Comment: It is remarkable that these two events followed one right after the other. Either event by *itself* was startling. Although Satan was defeated in the storm attempt, he was so vicious and hardened that he did not even stop to reflect but had the two demon-possessed individuals go out to meet Jesus afterwards.

Two thousand unclean spirits inhabited this *one* man. His name being “Legion” indicates one demon was the spokesman, the leader. The possession of a human being by a demon can be almost molecular in size, especially if the contact point is in the brain. Through the contact point an influence is exercised that affects the whole body. The brain controls both voluntary and involuntary action—it is like two

systems operating to tell the body what to do. Because the contact in the brain is pinpoint size, 2,000 beings could inhabit one person. What confusion for the victim!

The possessed man came from one of the ten cities of the Decapolis. The townspeople had tried to subdue him but could not. He had also torn off clothes and gone around naked. Because they could not subdue him, they took him in a calm moment to the barren area of the tombs and left him there, where he lodged in caves and roamed as an animal. The breaking of chains was more than just a surge of adrenaline and the pituitary gland, for the chains were broken “often” with the superhuman strength that comes from demon possession. In another manifestation of the same spirit, the man savagely cut himself with stones.

Mark 5:6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

Mark 5:7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

Mark 5:8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

Mark 5:9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.

“I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.” Why did Legion ask through *God*? Under unusual circumstances even unbelieving humans may say strange things. Satan knew God was more powerful than Jesus, so even though Satan is a fallen angel, he called on the highest power. This suggests that Satan thought what Jesus was about to do might be illegitimate, that is, judging him “before the [due] time” (Matt. 8:29). Even the devils believe and tremble (fear) before God. “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19). Of the 2,000 demons in the man, one (Legion) was like the prince of demons, the spokesman.

Verse 7 shows the fallen angels knew Jesus—that he was not an ordinary man. They knew of his preexistence as the Logos and of his close relationship with God. They worshipped him (verse 6) out of fear of what he might do to punish or judge them.

Verse 7 shows the demons have “out of body” experiences. While possessing a person, they know what is happening around them. Therefore, knowing Jesus had been casting out demons in his ministry, these 2,000 did not want to be cast out of their human contact, which they evidently prized.

Why do fallen angels possess human beings? They do so for the satisfaction of the vicarious feeling. While they themselves are curbed in certain areas, they get pleasure in observing others do monstrous things. They get satisfaction in witnessing perversion. The same was true with the worship of Molech, in which infants were roasted alive. That is sadism—getting pleasure out of the pain inflicted on others. People can be sadists too.

Mark 5:10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

NIV: “And he begged Jesus again and again not to send *them* out of the area.” The

spokesman did not want Jesus to exorcise the 2,000 demons out into space and thus evict them from their human vehicle.

The inference is that God has implanted in man a certain innate fear of the supernatural. The fear is good, for it helps many avoid being possessed. Hence the fallen angels do not find too many humans through whom they can operate direct. They usually have to make a person do something by *indirect* methods. Through stratagems Satan can influence people and nations, but he usually has to use bait. That is a different method than *direct* control of human “robots.”

This incident illustrates the principle that *only Jesus* can bind Satan, for “no one was able to subdue” Legion (NIV). Satan was originally an archangel, a morning star. Even Gabriel, third in power, could not control the “prince of Persia” (Satan). Therefore, other angels, let alone man, cannot overpower Satan. Other fallen angels respect the *exceeding power* of Satan as the *prince* of demons. Only Jesus can bind Satan.

Mark 5:11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

Mark 5:12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

Mark 5:13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

Mark 5:14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

The 2,000 demons spoke as a multitude. Imagine the disciples hearing all this! What a faith-strengthening experience!

Q: The death of 2,000 pigs was quite a loss for the owner(s). Was this permitted because the pigs were unclean and Jews should not have been raising them even for others?

A: The demons wanted revenge on Jesus. If they could cause the death of the pigs, then they knew Jesus’ ministry in that region would be negated. Jesus permitted the death because Jews should not have been raising swine even for others to eat. And the result was that the Gergesenes opposed Jesus’ ministry. Satan is jealous of Jesus just as the scribes and Pharisees were.

Mark 5:15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

Mark 5:16 And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.

Mark 5:17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

Mark 5:18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

Mark 5:19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

Mark 5:20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

The exorcised man was very grateful. Mark told of only *one* possessed man because, writing for the Romans, he got right to the point.

Comment: Although Jesus did not permit the man to go along with him, the *Reprints* indicate that does not mean the man did not consecrate. Based on Matthew 12:43–45, if an unclean spirit goes out of a man and the person does not consecrate, the demon returns with seven other demons and the man’s fate is worse than at the beginning. Therefore, the fact the man wanted to follow Jesus would show he consecrated.

Reply: Yes. The fact he was seen well dressed, with his hair combed, and polite—the opposite of his behavior previously—shows he consecrated. He did obey Jesus and return to his home to tell of the Lord’s compassion on him. What a testimony for the people who had known him earlier!

A righteous man’s steps are ordered of the Lord. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way” (Psa. 37:23). (1) God providentially leads and directs us. (2) We try to walk in straight paths and to avoid unnecessary dangers.

The people of the region knew that if Jesus stayed there, it would cost them something, so they wanted him to leave. The swine were just one facet. They knew they would have to change their occupation. Seeing there were no hearing ears, Jesus did leave. Otherwise, he would not have heeded their desire.

Mark 5:21 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.

Mark 5:22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

Mark 5:23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

Mark 5:24 And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

Jesus returned to the west side of Galilee. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, fell at Jesus’ feet and said, “My little daughter is dying.” Not only did the ruler show faith, but he humbled himself before Jesus, who was not of the orthodox priesthood. Trauma and tragedy can humble a person. In fact, that is how some of us came to the Lord initially. Jairus knew Jesus *could* heal his daughter—if he so chose.

Jesus raised people in various conditions of the death state, showing he *is the resurrection* (John 11:25). (1) Lazarus was dead for four days. (2) Jairus’ daughter had just died. (3) The son of the widow of Nain was on a funeral bier. The length of death and

the degree of deterioration are no deterrent to Jesus.

Mark 5:25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

Mark 5:26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

Mark 5:27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

Mark 5:28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

Mark 5:29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

Jairus' daughter was 12 years old. The woman had had an issue of blood for 12 years. Her *faith* made her whole (verse 34). She believed she would be healed if she could just touch Jesus' garment. *Immediately* she was healed—she felt the healing.

Mark 5:30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

Jesus knew someone had touched him and been healed because he felt virtue leave him. Since the woman had been ill for 12 years, it probably took quite a lot of “virtue” to heal her. The woman had touched Jesus secretly, but he knew someone had been healed.

Mark 5:31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

Mark 5:32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

Mark 5:33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

Mark 5:34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

It is touching that the woman, so grateful to be whole, trembled when Jesus asked, “Who touched me?”

Mark 5:35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

Mark 5:36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

Mark 5:37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

Mark 5:38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

Mark 5:39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

While en route, Jesus got the news that Jairus' daughter was dead. Jesus told Jairus not to fear but to keep believing, in faith. He *selectively* took Peter, James, and John into the house to witness the healing. Peter, the leader, was named first. James was listed next because he was the oldest.

"The damsel is not [permanently] dead, but sleepeth [until the resurrection]."

Mark 5:40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

Mark 5:41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

Mark 5:42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

Mark 5:43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Jesus healed (he did what others *could not do*) and then commanded that she be fed (he did not do what others *could do*).

When Jesus said, "*Talitha cumi*," the damsel arose *immediately*. The miracle showed his authority to awaken from death. However, he charged the others not to tell of the miracle because he did not want to become too popular too soon. The real object of this cure was to teach the apostles and to indelibly engrave the miracle on their minds.

When Jesus said Jairus' daughter slept and was not dead, the mourners "laughed him to scorn." His words would startle them because they *knew* she was dead. Thus their laughing was understandable under the circumstances. However, the miracle would be *more* beneficial to the *right*-hearted among the scorners who subsequently accepted him. The opposition would enhance the depth to which the miracle penetrated them.

In other words, the laughing of verse 40 was *spontaneous* and not a *harbored* feeling. In contrast, the people of Nazareth did harbor wrong feelings so that Jesus did not perform many miracles there (Mark 6:5).

Mark 6:1 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

Mark 6:2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Judah, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

Q: What does “offended” mean?

A: “Stumbled.” Jesus’ background was an obstacle to their proper evaluation of him. Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses is a thing established, and *hundreds* witnessed Jesus’ miracles. Instead of looking inward to see what was wrong with themselves, they viewed Jesus with prejudice and found fault with him.

Unfortunately, most people do not weigh facts and rationalize things properly. We have to fight this tendency too. Jesus said, “If you can’t believe me, believe my works.” To be proper judges, we must weigh things unemotionally. Exception: If the sin is blatant, then sudden and vehement action is required. But *reports* about others (doctrine and conduct) should not be emotionally evaluated. This may affect one’s destiny—the destiny of the one being judged as well as of the one doing the judging.

Jesus had half brothers and stepsisters. James and Juda(h) were apostles. “Is not this the carpenter, the son of *Mary*”? The wording indicates Joseph was dead.

Mark 6:4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

Mark 6:5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

Many in Nazareth harbored wrong sentiments. “Familiarity breeds contempt” is the saying. They were somewhat piqued that Jesus had done so many miracles in other towns but not there. His ministry was mostly in the Galilee area because that is where his apostles came from: Philip was of Bethsaida and Peter of Capernaum, James and John lived in the area, James and Juda were half brothers at Nazareth, and Matthew (Levi) was a tax collector probably at Tiberias. In addition, Mary came from Magdala.

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

Jesus marveled at the unbelief of those in Nazareth. In spite of his being perfect, he was not accepted. They resented the years he had been there without doing miracles, and their prejudice blinded them. They overlooked the important fact that Jesus’ ministry could not begin until he was 30.

Comment: Just as some today resent a “goody-goody,” wouldn’t some back there have resented his always being perfect? His perfection would have shown them up.

Reply: Seeing things through a jaundiced eye affects one’s character.

Mark 6:7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

Mark 6:8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:

Mark 6:9 But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

Mark 6:10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

Mark 6:11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for Jews who rejected and were critical of Jesus back there. This verse proves Sodom and Gomorrah will have a resurrection. Familiarity with truth brings more responsibility. Recovery from sin will be more difficult where Jesus' words and miracles were witnessed and rejected.

Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

Mark 6:13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Jesus sent out the twelve two by two with just the barest of necessities. Why two by two? It is wise for two to go together so that one can supplement the other with comments and Scriptures. He gave the twelve a dispensation of the Holy Spirit so that they could heal and even cast out demons.

He further instructed them to shake off the dust of their feet against individuals, homes, or towns that would not receive them. The visual demonstration showed that the apostles did not accept responsibility for improper conduct toward the truth. This principle can even apply among the brotherhood.

Comment: Going out with the barest necessities would have developed faith, but later Jesus sent them out with more provisions. It is good the second situation occurred or Christians would expect to be supported by others, and they would sponge.

Reply: More allowances are made for newcomers in the truth.

Why was oil used in effecting the cure? (1) Oil was a symbol of the coming Holy Spirit. (2) The use of oil implied that sin was involved and that repentance was in order. There was (and is) sin-sickness as well as physical sickness.

Mark 6:14 And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

Mark 6:15 Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

Mark 6:16 But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

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

Herod's conscience was troubling him in regard to John the Baptist. Both John and

Jesus stressed repentance.

Mark 6:18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

Mark 6:19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

Mark 6:20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Mark 6:21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

Mark 6:22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

Mark 6:23 And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

Herod liked to listen to John the Baptist, so John would have said *much more* than is recorded. In spite of this, and in spite of the fact Herod knew John was just and holy, he had imprisoned John. This shows Herod was *weak* and under the influence of *Herodias*—just like Ahab and Jezebel.

Herodias cleverly sent her daughter in, fully cognizant of Herod's weakness and that he would get tipsy with wine. Not knowing what Salomé would ask, Herod uttered a rash, emotional statement: "Ask whatever you wish and I will give it to you up to *half* of my kingdom."

Herod "feared" (respected) John. It was like Pilate, who, despite the criticism against Jesus, noticed his bearing under the circumstance: "Behold the man." He had some respect for Jesus but weighed this against his office. Likewise, Herod had some respect for John but allowed himself to be manipulated by shrewd Herodias.

Mark 6:24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

Mark 6:25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

Mark 6:26 And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

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

Mark 6:28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

Mark 6:29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

What *shame* will be felt in the Kingdom not only when the literal account is replayed but also in regard to the antitype!

Salomé had no qualms about doing what her mother said. She had performed a shameful dance too. Herodias was powerful—she controlled both her husband, the king, and her daughter. Salomé could have had half the kingdom, which means Herodias would be displaced, but Herodias had a powerful influence.

In antitype the beheading is yet to come. John the Baptist pictures the feet members. Jesus at the First Advent was a type of the present glorified Lord at his Second Advent. John's announcing Jesus' (literal) presence in the flesh pictures the feet members' announcing Jesus' Second (invisible) Presence. John's saying "He must increase and I must decrease" represents the Little Flock's increasing beyond the veil and decreasing here in the flesh at the end of the age.

John's head was brought in in the midst of the festivity—"immediately." How gory to see his head on a platter! Subsequently his disciples took the headless corpse (although they may have gotten his head separately). The scene of the beheading was at Machaerus on the far side of the Dead Sea in Herod's summer palace.

Mark 6:30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

Mark 6:31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

The twelve apostles returned after being sent out two by two without scrip, etc., and now they were reporting their experiences. A paragraph break should be inserted before verse 30. Matthew 14:12 says that John's disciples took John's body and buried it, and then went and told Jesus. A paragraph break properly follows. Probably at about the same time that John's disciples reported to Jesus, the twelve apostles came back. Jesus said that his apostles should go to a desert place and rest.

Mark 6:32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

And they went by ship across the northern portion of the Sea of Galilee to a flat plain on the northern third of the east shore.

Mark 6:33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

When the people saw them leaving, they *ran* or *trotted* around the shore to meet Jesus when he landed. What a surprise! Jesus was looking for rest, but there the people were!

Mark 6:34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

Moved with compassion, Jesus began to teach and heal (Matt. 14:14), although the

emphasis was on hearing Jesus' *message*.

Mark 6:35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:

The day was "far spent" when his disciples suggested dismissing the people so they could get food. (In those days it would not be convenient to travel after dark—there were no lights.)

Mark 6:36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

"Send them away, that they may go into the country round about," said the disciples. In other words, the suggestion was to send the people back the way they had come, around the northern route. (They were in an unpopulated area.)

Mark 6:37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

Mark 6:38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

With five loaves of bread and two fish, they were to feed 5,000 men (plus women and children). "Two hundred pennyworth" was *200 days' salary* (the money needed to buy food to feed that crowd).

Mark 6:39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

Mark 6:40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

Jesus commanded the apostles to make the people "all sit down by companies." We are reminded of how the Israelites went through the Red Sea in the Exodus by companies in a very orderly way. The multitude was fed by fifties and hundreds (instead of all hundreds) because of the terrain.

Numerics of the two feedings (add people and food, and multiply one by the other):

5,000	5 loaves, 2 fish	9,000
+4,000	<u>7 loaves, 2 fish</u>	<u>x16</u>
9,000 fed	12 + 4 = 16	54000
		<u>9000</u>
		144,000 in the Church

Each piece of bread or fish was miraculously replaced as the apostles removed it. Similarly, the oil in the widow's cruse kept multiplying (1 Kings 17:8–16). The Lord has miraculously fed his people, especially the Little Flock, with spiritual food. The feeding has been mainly through the apostles, and they are the ones who went around with baskets of food here in the literal picture. Before they ate, they fed the others. The fragments were for the apostles.

Mark 6:41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

It was characteristic of Jesus to look to heaven before he blessed and broke the bread.

Mark 6:42 And they did all eat, and were filled.

The people ate not sparingly but until *they were full*. Plenty of food was provided.

Mark 6:43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

Mark 6:44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

Mark 6:45 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

Near the end of the day, Jesus told his disciples to get into the ship and go to Bethsaida at the northern end of Galilee.

Mark 6:46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

Jesus directed the people to go home and then went alone to a mountain to pray.

Mark 6:47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

The ship got to the middle of the Sea of Galilee, that is, to the midpoint of the way to Bethsaida.

Mark 6:48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

Probably the moon was shining so that Jesus could see the apostles from the mountain. The moonlit path would have looked like a sidewalk. It took Jesus a little while to leave the mountain and get out to the apostles, who were getting nowhere. They were at the point of no return—if they had turned around, the contrary wind would have blown from the other direction.

Jesus came to them “about the fourth watch” (3 a.m.) of the night.

(1st watch) 6–9 p.m.

(3rd watch) 12–3 a.m.

(2nd watch) 9 p.m.–12 midnight

(4th watch) 3–6 a.m.

The *fourth watch* is when Jesus comes for the rapture. Clue: John 6:21 says the ship was *immediately* at land when Jesus entered it.

The apostles had toiled for *many* hours before Jesus walked out to them. He would have passed right on by if they had not called to him. Two other incidents come to mind: (1) With the two walking to Emmaus, Jesus would have kept going if they had not asked him to stay. (2) Paul tarried only because Lydia of Thyatira “constrained” (asked) him; he did not presume to stay. The principle here reminds us of “To him

who has an ear to hear, let him hear.” In other words, it is a waste of time to try to put an ear on someone.

Q: How did Jesus, as a *human*, walk on the water?

A: The same way the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. The water congealed to make a straight *frozen* path. Lesson: Water is belief; ice is faith. Belief is not the real essence of faith. Faith is supported by reason, whereas belief tends to credulity, which is unreliable and unstable. *Faith is the congealing of belief*; it is belief congealed.

Three similarities are apparent between Moses and Jesus: (1) Moses showed his control over the Red Sea, and Jesus showed his control over the Sea of Galilee. (2) Moses fed the Israelites with manna from heaven, and Jesus fed the 5,000 (and later the 4,000) with miraculous bread and fish. (3) Moses lifted up his rod over the Red Sea to control wind and waves, and when Jesus lifted up his voice, the Sea of Galilee responded.

The succession of events and experiences slowly educated the apostles and developed their faith preparatory to Jesus’ going away. He was with them while awake, he was with them while asleep, and he was away from them yet performed miracles and came to their aid. Lesson: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Though absent, he was present with them. This Scripture will be on the minds of the feet members to sustain them.

Mark 6:49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

They thought they were seeing a ghost, an apparition, a phantom, but not Jesus. In their desperation, they cried out.

Mark 6:50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

Wonderful words: “Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.”

Mark 6:51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

Jesus went “*up*” into the ship. The waves were boisterous, so the ship went up and down. Jesus entered the ship when it was on the crest of a wave.

John 6:21 says that when Jesus entered the boat, *immediately* they were at shore. This is a picture of the rapture at the end of the age. Jesus will return at the beginning of the *fourth* or *last* watch to get the feet members, who will be raptured as a *company*. The moment of death will be almost synonymous with their resurrection.

Mark 6:52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

“Their heart was hardened.” The apostles were dull of hearing and comprehending. They had already forgotten the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. This is why we are counseled to periodically review the Lord’s providences in our lives. Then when we

enter into a new trial, we draw strength from remembering past deliverances. This account about forgetting can be a rebuke to us too.

A miracle can be seen but forgotten. That was the problem with the children of Israel. They heard the Word and left Egypt, but they *forgot*. They saw the plagues, the opening of the Red Sea, etc., and they sang a song of deliverance, but they soon forgot these miracles. The reaction of the Israelites shows that even in the Kingdom, when *every assistance* will be given, one will not get life unless the heart is right.

Mark 6:53 And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

Mark 6:54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him,

Mark 6:55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

Mark 6:56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

Hymn: "I touched but the hem of his garment, and glory came flooding my soul." It was unusual for so many to feel they would be healed by just touching the hem of Jesus' garment. This is a picture of the Kingdom Age when the people will be healed but not in a direct sense.

Paralytics who lay on the ground could reach up and touch the hem of Jesus' garment. Very dramatic! The ill ones *themselves* had to touch his garment, not those who transported them. They cried out to Jesus, and when he walked over to them, they reached up and touched his garment.

Mark 7:1 Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

Verse 1 suggests the scribes and Pharisees *planned* to approach Jesus to *find fault*. The situation was *contrived*.

Mark 7:2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

The scribes and Pharisees criticized the disciples for eating bread with unwashed hands. The disciples had probably worked very hard and were ravenously hungry. It is not always convenient to wash hands when outdoors.

The very orthodox Jews follow this hand-washing practice today, at least when they have company. Ritual and ceremonial hand washing is the *tradition of men*, but hand washing for just sanitary reasons is good common sense.

Mark 7:3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

The hand-washing custom was prevalent among the Pharisees and on down to the common people. They had to wash their hands *often* whether or not they were

religiously inclined.

Mark 7:4 And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

The traditions of men made void the commandment of God (Matt. 15:6). A *form* of godliness was practiced that denied the power thereof *if* the hand washing was done *hypocritically*. Needful and convenient hand washing was another matter, however.

Many other things, though clean, were also ritualistically washed, such as cups, pots, and vessels. This does not mean the Lord condemned eating from a clean table or the washing of hands—it was the *ceremonial* aspect that was wrong.

Mark 7:5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

The Pharisees even called this the “tradition of the elders” and not the real Law of Moses. This tradition was taught *outside* the Law.

Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Strong talk: “Hypocrites”! The accusation was true and appropriate, for Jesus could read the heart. He knew who was and who was not sincerely reverential. Perfunctory ritualism is wrong. “This people honoureth me with their *lips*” suggests a little ditty accompanied the ceremony.

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

Mark 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

Parts of verse 8 are spurious. It should read: “Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men.”

Mark 7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Mark 7:10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

Mark 7:11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

The scribes and Pharisees wrongly taught that if one said to his father or mother, “It is Corban [a gift],” he was free from parental responsibility. The traditions of the Pharisees were like a catechism.

Mark 7:12 And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother;

Mark 7:13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Instead of the people providing for their needy parents, the priests made the people think that if they gave the money to the priesthood as “Corban” (a gift ostensibly to the Lord), that would be more honorable in God’s sight. “Corban” implied the gift was consecrated to the Lord. But family responsibilities should come first.

The people knew the Law that if a child cursed his father or mother, the child was to be put to death, but they did not get the lesson of respect for parents (especially honorable parents). They were oblivious to their parents’ needs and used the excuse that the gift was dedicated to God. Verse 10 shows they should have realized the need of the parents and their own responsibility in providing it. Leviticus 19:32 says to honor the hoary head. We are to talk to an older person as if we were talking to our father or mother—have respect when admonishing a wrongdoing.

In summary, the Word of God can be made of no effect through the traditions of men. The lesson or danger for us is that we must not add to the Word of God. The higher the ceremony in a church (Roman Catholic, Episcopal), the more traditions are followed. Examples are feast days, Lent, confession, and holy water. The Bereans were more *noble* because they tested what they heard, even from Paul, against the Word.

Tradition is permissible *only* when it does not conflict with Scripture. “This is not according to Bible Student *tradition*” has been said when something is different from the usual thinking. Notice the emphasis in verses 3 and 5 on “the tradition of the *elders*.” *We* have elders and *we* can be guilty of this too. Tradition is wrong *if* it contradicts Scripture. The scribes and Pharisees added traditions of men, implying they were of the Law of Moses.

Mark 7:14 And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand:

Mark 7:15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

Mark 7:16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

Mark 7:17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

Notice that verse 15 is called a parable in verse 17: “Nothing outside a man *entering* into him can defile him, but the things that come out of him can defile him.” Verse 16 says, “PAY ATTENTION TO THIS AXIOM! If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.” Even the disciples did not get the point—why not? Because the parable starts with a *natural* thought of food going into a man and ends with a *spiritual* thought, not with literal body waste. The scribes and Pharisees taught that what a man ate defiled him (e.g., eating bread with unwashed hands). Jesus started with the natural and ended with a parabolic or spiritual/figurative thought. Doctrines—what a man speaks—can defile not only him as the speaker but also the hearer(s).

Comment: Another block to their understanding was their schooling against eating unclean food, which they believed could defile a man. Jesus said, “*Nothing ... entering*

into him can defile him.”

A sore or cut in the mouth makes eating certain foods dangerous because germs can enter the bloodstream. Saliva, enzymes, and digestive juices protect us from many diseases. We have a built-in immune system.

Mark 7:18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;

Mark 7:19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

Mark 7:20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

Mark 7:22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

An “evil eye” would be envy.

Mark 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Jesus treated only the aspect of the person himself being defiled. He did not talk about the hearers. The imbibing of *wrong* doctrines and practices defiles the heart.

Mark 7:24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.

Mark 7:25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

Jesus went to Phoenicia, Tyre, and Sidon (out of Israel) to rest, but his reputation was known. Providentially a Syrophoenician woman, falling at his feet, besought him to cast a demon out of her young daughter.

Mark 7:26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

She was a Greek by nationality whose citizenship was in Phoenicia. She *repeatedly* importuned Jesus (Matt. 15:21–28).

Mark 7:27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

Mark 7:28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children’s crumbs.

Mark 7:29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

Mark 7:30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

What wisdom from this woman regarding the dogs getting the crumbs! She was not offended by Jesus' reference to dogs. Jesus knew her statement would melt the Father's heart too. She was unusual. To say this showed humility, honesty, and hunger.

Mark 7:31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

Mark 7:32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

Mark 7:33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

Mark 7:34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

Jesus looked up to heaven and sighed. (Such details make us feel we were there.) This helped the *deaf* man realize the source of his healing. Putting fingers in the man's ears, spitting, and touching his tongue were like "*sign language*" for the deaf man.

Mark 7:35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

Mark 7:36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;

Mark 7:37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

This healing took place back in Decapolis. Taking the deaf and dumb man aside from the multitude, who respectfully kept their distance as they watched, Jesus used spittle from his own mouth. He put his fingers in both *ears* of the man and next spit on his finger and touched the man's *tongue*. The man could then *hear* and *speak*. When his tongue was loosed, he spoke "*plainly*." Therefore, he was no dummy. Despite Jesus' instruction the people, as well as the man, could not keep quiet—they broadcast the miracle.

There was a time when we were spiritually deaf and dumb—the gospel loosed our tongues.

Mark 8:1 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

Mark 8:2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

Mark 8:3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

The “*very great*” *multitude* had been with Jesus for three days with nothing to eat; hence he had compassion on them. Some had come from quite a distance, and he did not want these to faint or perish on the way home. To have a three-day attention span without food means not only that they slept on the ground but that Jesus’ personality was charismatic and their interest was more than the usual.

Some of the later 500 disciples from this region may well have been among this gathering. Why? because to stay three days without food cost them something. They were not mere curiosity seekers.

Comment: There were women and children as well as the 4,000 men (verse 9). It is remarkable that the children did not murmur and/or make a disturbance.

Mark 8:4 **And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?**

Already the apostles had forgotten the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. The *retention* of knowledge and interest is important, not just knowledge. In the Wilderness, the Israelites *forgot* the miracles—*forgot* what God had done for them. Such examples prove that knowledge alone in the Kingdom will not save anyone.

Mark 8:5 **And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.**

Mark 8:6 **And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.**

Mark 8:7 **And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.**

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

As Jesus broke the bread, it just kept multiplying. Leftover fragments filled seven baskets. With the 5,000 there remained 12 baskets, and one day was involved. Here with the 4,000, three days were involved. The 12 apostles (12 baskets) were on the scene *one* day. The *seven* messengers (*seven* baskets) were on the scene *three* days. The 12 baskets (apostles) preceded the 7 baskets (messengers to the Church). Food is served to Christians through both the apostles and the seven messengers.

In review, the Church (Little Flock) is shown by the multiplication:

$$7 + 2 + 5 + 2 = 16 \qquad 5,000 + 4,000 = 9,000 \qquad 9,000 \times 16 = 144,000$$

Incidentally, the multitudes would not have washed their hands before they ate. So much for the scribes and Pharisees!

Comment: The people were so hungry that it seems the magnitude of the miracle did not penetrate. No comments are recorded.

Reply: Even the apostles were oblivious of the portent of the miracle. Probably the apostles had not eaten either.

Mark 8:9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

Mark 8:10 And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

Dalmanutha is an alternate name for Magdala or a village near Magdala.

Mark 8:11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

It was poor manners for the Pharisees to ask Jesus for a sign from heaven, but they were trying to find something he could not do and thus lower the esteem the people had for him. Their actions show the smallness of their hearts and minds.

Mark 8:12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

Jesus said no sign would be given. On another occasion, he said there would be no sign except “the sign of the prophet Jonas” being in the whale’s belly for parts of three days and three nights (Matt. 12:39,40).

The Pharisees did not view Jesus as God but as one who blasphemed God because of claiming to be His Son. Jesus is the Son promised in Genesis, the Son of the man (Adam). The seed of woman will bruise the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15).

Jesus sighed deeply in disappointment over the shallowness of the character of mankind, generally speaking. His emotions went in deep on him. It would seem that surely they would recognize him as Messiah because he spoke and acted as no other man—and considering the volume of miracles! But he went unrecognized by the nation.

In John 6:30–35, the people asked for a sign saying that their fathers had received manna in the desert, “bread from heaven.” Jesus replied that he was the “*true* bread from heaven.” In other words, Jesus *himself* was the sign they kept rejecting.

Mark 8:13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

Jesus left the Pharisees and went back across the Sea of Galilee diagonally (northeast) to Bethsaida.

Mark 8:14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

Mark 8:15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

Mark 8:16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

Mark 8:17 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye

have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

Mark 8:18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

Mark 8:19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

Mark 8:20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

Mark 8:21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

Jesus was trying to raise their thinking to a higher level. The supplied food represented his message, his words, but even the apostles did not have a depth of understanding until Pentecost when they got the Holy Spirit, the spirit of *remembrance*. Then the meaning of Jesus' words dawned on them.

The apostles were so foggy at this time that Jesus treated them almost like little children. "Don't you understand what has been happening? Have you been in a daze?" These verses confirm that the leftover 12 + 7 baskets represented the spiritual food served by the 12 apostles and the 7 messengers, respectively.

Here is an example where Jesus criticized even his own disciples—but *constructively*. Another time (Luke 9:44) Jesus said, "Let what you just heard *sink down deep* into your ears. Do not hear superficially or you will forget." His words should sink into our hearts, the seat of our emotions.

Comment: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees" means "Beware of the false doctrine of the religious and civil establishment!"

Mark 8:22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

Mark 8:23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.

Why did Jesus lead the blind man *out of town* to heal him? Bethsaida had already been the scene of many healings and blessings, but the people were not worthy of further favor. Jesus said, "Woe to Chorazin, *Bethsaida*, Tyre, Capernaum, and Sidon" (Matt. 11:21–24). He was reluctant now to perform a miracle in the presence of those who were not favorably disposed to him. Not only did insincere curiosity seekers not have ears to hear, but they caused an atmosphere that was not conducive to healing. In other words, a negative influence impedes the blessing of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Jesus' leaving town was a tacit rebuke to those of Bethsaida.

Jesus took the blind man by the hand—how touching! *Others* led the blind man to Jesus, and now he was *personally* leading the blind man. Jesus spit ceremonially on the blind man's eyes. At first the sight was only partially restored.

Others besought on the blind man's behalf that he be healed, and then he was healed in two stages. Thus *others* had the faith here, and not necessarily the blind man himself (although the account does not say). Sometimes faith on behalf of others is rewarded for the one weak in faith.

Comment: This is a picture of the Kingdom where people (the sheep class in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats) will be expected to pray for and help others.

Mark 8:24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

After Jesus spit on the blind man's eyes, put his hands on him, and asked what he saw, the man said, "Men as trees, walking."

Mark 8:25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

The restoration process was repeated; here it was a *two*-step process. It was a seven-step process with Naaman the leper, who washed seven times in the Jordan River, and with the Shunamite's son whom Elisha raised to life (he sneezed seven times).

What do the two steps represent? This is probably a Kingdom picture. The "spittle" pictures the Lord's Word. "Trees," representing human beings, are a symbol of maturity and growth when contrasted with grass. The two steps picture the enlightenment of the people during the Kingdom. Blind humanity will be brought up to a level of maturity, but another step will be needed after they are "trees, walking." Those who pass the final test of the Little Season will look back and see clearly what has happened. (While going through the process, mankind will not as clearly understand.) Incidentally, there is a learning process in the Gospel Age too.

God's Wisdom is the *last* attribute to be seen. It will be seen when God's plan is complete—after the Little Season when the incorrigible have been removed. All who get life will know God. In Gethsemane, Jesus said, "This is life eternal ... [to] *know* ... the only true God, and Jesus Christ" (John 17:3), that is, life eternal is equated with *knowing* God and Jesus.

All who get life will know God in a true and understanding sense, not just in an intellectual sense or in having a general familiarity with the plan. Our blessing will be proportional as we develop our hearts accordingly. Hence there is a danger in just speaking about the plan—or in praising certain individuals. *Jesus* is to be praised, and the *Father* above all. Those who properly obey God will know Him in that sense. Jesus praised God all the time at his First Advent because he *knew* God from his preexistence. He had a *heart* affinity for God and His ways. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many" (Isa. 53:11). Jesus' preexistent knowledge carried him through the agony of the Cross.

It is a life work for us to *know* God and His Son. "More love to thee, O Christ" and to the Father!

Mark 8:26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

We should not tell everything, for only a fool tells all he knows (Prov. 10:19; 29:11). A

fool's mouth rattles as a chatterbox. Reserve is sometimes proper. Jesus told the blind man not to go into town or tell anyone. Sometimes it is propitious not to tell a matter. Jesus took the man out of town to cure him because of the antipathy in Bethsaida. (Also, the man may have lived in a suburb, so he was to return to his own home and could tell his family.)

Mark 8:27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

Caesarea Philippi is a region about 25 to 30 miles north of Bethsaida, in the area of Mount Hermon.

Mark 8:28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

Mark 8:29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

Jesus asked: (1) "Who do *men* say that I am?" (2) "Who do *you* say that I am?" In other words, "never mind what the others think? Aren't *you* able to discern the matter?" It was encouraging that Peter burst out with the affirmation "Thou art the Christ!"

Mark 8:30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

Q: In addition to the previous reasoning as to why the cured blind man wasn't to tell about the miracle in the town, wouldn't a subsidiary reason be that it prepared the disciples for not telling what Peter now confessed, because again Jesus said not to tell?

A: Yes, and there were other reasons. Jesus did not want his popularity to grow too soon, for his death had to occur at a precise time.

Mark 8:31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mark 8:32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

Mark 8:33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

Peter began to *rebuke the Lord*. He forgot himself. But Jesus disclosed the real source of that suggestion in his rebuke to Peter, namely, the Adversary.

Comment: Peter's rebuke of Jesus was even more remarkable because the *same* apostle had just said, "Thou art the Christ!"

Reply: When channeled by the Holy Spirit, an impulsive nature makes a more disciplined soldier of the Cross than the gentle ones. Love and justice should be blended.

The information about Jesus' death was sober news that none of the disciples wanted to hear.

Peter's words were a stratagem of Satan to make Jesus falter in his purpose, and Jesus realized this. Satan was more interested in Jesus than in Peter, but Satan used Peter to try to influence Jesus and divert the focus of his attention.

Mark 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, **Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.**

The "people" were potential disciples. They and those who were already disciples needed this advice. Cross bearing, a higher step than self-denial, is needed to be of the Little Flock. Self-denial is more the characteristic of the Great Company, who fail to take up the Cross sufficiently. We are reminded of the Lord's goat versus the scapegoat. The Lord's goat died sacrificially on the altar, whereas the scapegoat had to be forced to sacrifice.

Luke adds "daily"—"Take up your cross *daily*." *Live* your consecration *daily*!

Mark 8:35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

This serious admonition applies even to the Great Company. Some have renounced their faith under great pressure and then had second thoughts and died courageously. DO NOT DENY THE LORD! The human flesh cringes from suffering and death, but the test for life is severe.

Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Mark 8:37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

The implication is that some Christians have turned back to the world and gotten *great* rewards from the *world's* standpoint. One aspect of the verse should be sober news to successful evangelists. As they prosper and multiply, they should remember that their "security" does not depend on the number of conversions. If it is true that at one time the present pope was familiar with the Harvest message and then allowed himself to become pope, being worshipped, a serious fate awaits him. Popularity is scary—it is a great temptation!

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

The "Son of man" is Jesus, who will come "in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

"Whosoever is ashamed of Jesus and his words, of him shall Jesus be ashamed." We are ashamed of Jesus if we are ashamed of our brethren. (The exception would be when a brother has grievously sinned. For example, we should not go to prison to visit a brother guilty of child molestation to show our love for him. Common sense

must be used.) If a brother is not learned and we are ashamed of him for this reason, we are guilty. The illiterate can love the Lord! Their love for the Lord should make us stand up for them even though they lack education, money, manners, etc. (On the other hand, we should not wish a person Godspeed too hastily either.) We would be guilty if we were ashamed of one the Lord loved dearly. We are cautioned not to speak evil of “dignities”—“dignities” in the *Lord’s* sight may not even be elders (2 Pet. 2:10; Jude 8).

Comment: We should pray for elders, for when Satan gets to an elder, he can get to a whole class.

Reply: Satan especially wants to influence those who have influence. Conduct and doctrine are areas of attack.

We reap treasures in heaven if we support those whom the Lord especially loves, sometimes even bringing suffering on ourselves.

Mark 9:1 **And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.**

Jesus’ statement was misunderstood—it was thought that the Kingdom would come before the death of all the apostles. However, Jesus was speaking to his disciples and referring to his coming transfiguration. Matthew 17:9 says the transfiguration scene was a *vision*.

Mark 9:2 **And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.**

This “high mountain” is commonly thought of as Mt. Hermon, but it was Mt. Tabor. Six days gave Jesus time to return south from beneath the slopes of Hermon in the Caesarea Philippi region.

Luke 9:28 has “eight days.” The *Berean Manual* says that six days plus the day Jesus spoke the words of verse 1 and the day he was transfigured equals eight days. Also, the fraction of a day according to Hebrew reckoning can make a difference.

Mark 9:3 **And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.**

The sudden change was awesome! The “shining, exceeding white garments” indicated purity.

Mark 9:4 **And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.**

Elijah (representing the Little Flock) and Moses (representing the Ancient Worthies) appeared on either side of Jesus. Since the apostles did not know what the two looked like, they would have been recognized by the use of their names. The subject matter was Jesus’ death (Luke 9:31). During the last half year of Jesus’ 3 1/2-year ministry, he began to break the news of his impending death.

Elijah represents the Church starting with 1799, the end of the 1,260 years. Hence he pictures the Gospel Age, and Moses pictures Old Testament times. Stated another way, Elijah represents a class who look *back* to Christ, and Moses pictures a class who look *forward* to Christ. The Moses class had faith in a Messiah before he came (Hebrews 11).

The bodies of all three were not found—showing a *spiritual* resurrection eventually for all three. Elijah did not die but was whisked up into heaven, picturing the rapture of the feet members.

The vision pertained primarily to the Kingdom of God in power, and Jesus was seen not as a sin-bearer but as the glorified Christ. Also suggested is a relationship in the Kingdom between the Little Flock and the Ancient Worthies. But there was a secondary picture as well. The two pictures are as follows:

1. Jesus would receive a glorious change of nature after his death on Calvary, that is, upon his ascension.
2. “The kingdom of God ... *with power*” would be the Kingdom Age. The Kingdom of God *not in power* is mainly the Gospel Age, when it is likened to ten virgins, etc. The Kingdom Age *class* is developed in the Gospel Age.

Mark 9:5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

Mark 9:6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

Peter blurted out, “It is good for us to be here! Let us make three tabernacles!” He should have been quiet. They were all afraid. The others were silent in their fear, but not Peter. In time of emergency, some likewise babble on.

Mark 9:7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

A dark cloud overshadowed them, and *God’s* voice was heard: “This is my beloved Son: hear him.” This verse disproves the Trinity. Since *God’s* voice was *separate* from Jesus, the Son cannot be God. Note that the translators did not put the words in red, for they were not Jesus’ words. The Father was pointing out *His Son* as the One to heed—above the Law and Moses, and above the prophetic aspect.

Mark 9:8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

Suddenly, as the cloud dissipated, only Jesus remained with Peter, James, and John, and now he had normal clothing and was in *their* midst.

Comment: Luke 9 says the three were heavy with *sleep*, and they woke up suddenly to see this vision. Perhaps this is a little excuse for Peter—he was startled out of sleep and blurted out irrelevant words.

Mark 9:9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they

should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

Mark 9:10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

The vision raised more questions than answers. They were puzzled about Jesus' death and did not perceive the necessity for it. They had heard him say he would die, and yet they conveniently forgot. Now the vision brought up his death again.

"Tell no man" means they could tell the other apostles but not any outside their little circle.

Mark 9:11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

And they were puzzled about Elijah too. The last two verses of Malachi had said Elijah must come *before* the great and dreadful day of the Lord. The apostles knew about this prophecy.

The apostles would not have understood the depth of meaning regarding John the Baptist coming in the power of Elijah. After Malachi's statement (4:5,6) about Elijah coming before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, John the Baptist came on the scene in the role of Elijah with a camel's hair coat and a leather girdle, and he came from the desert as Elijah had come from the wilderness. But John's coming was only a tiny seed beginning to open. In time the seed grew and developed into a complex subject. At the First Advent, it was impossible for the apostles to understand much. "Elijah was supposed to be dead, yet he was there???"—how could that be?" they wondered.

The fact the three apostles saw a *vision* indicated the meaning was complex and not to be considered literally. It was a *picture*. Being told it was a vision should have somewhat comforted them in their confusion.

Mark 9:12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and [later] restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.

In other words, the teaching of the scribes was correct regarding Elijah coming first, but the restoring of all things is future, in the Kingdom Age. Elijah comes and *partially* restores some things to the Gospel Age class with the hearing ear, but when Elijah (The Christ) comes *in power*, then *all things* will be restored. First Jesus, as the head of the Elijah class, had to suffer and be rejected unto death.

We get only a *brief* insight into Jesus' discussion with the apostles, a synopsis of the drift of the conversation. In the vision, Jesus discussed his death with Moses and Elijah. Hence the topic of Jesus' death would have been discussed further as they descended the mountain.

Mark 9:13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Verse 13 is a *double* picture of (1) John the Baptist, who was imprisoned and beheaded; and (2) Jesus as the head of the Elijah class. Jesus was implying that he would be put to *death* as John was; both had to *suffer*. The body members, too, must suffer. When considered with their head, Jesus, the Church is pictured as a man (Elijah). Apart from their head, the Church is seen as a woman.

Elijah is the forerunner of *The Christ* in the flesh *during* the Gospel Age. John the Baptist pictures the *feet members* of the Elijah class at the *end* of the Gospel Age, who announce the presence of the Lord just before the Kingdom is established.

Information about the need for the Church to suffer in order to reign came *after* Jesus' death and resurrection, especially in the seven messages to the Church in the Book of Revelation and also in Paul's epistles, which treat the philosophy of suffering.

Comment: If the disciples were familiar with the Old Testament, they knew every faithful one approved of the Lord had suffered in past ages, so suffering for Jesus and his followers should not have been so surprising.

Reply: Not many people put things together, even though it is common sense.

Mark 9:14 **And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.**

When Jesus came down from Mount Tabor, he saw a great multitude about the other apostles, and the scribes were questioning them.

Mark 9:15 **And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.**

When Jesus was spotted, he became the center of attention. Amazed, the people ran to him and saluted him. They figured they would now get a real answer (as to the disciples' inability to cast out the demon).

Mark 9:16 **And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?**

Jesus asked the scribes, "What is the question?"

Mark 9:17 **And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;**

Mark 9:18 **And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.**

One of the multitude said, "We were discussing my only son, who is possessed with an evil spirit that makes him dumb and causes convulsions. Your disciples could not cast out the evil spirit." This lesson was for the disciples, the public, the father, and the son (the victim).

The disciples had returned delirious with joy after being sent out two by two and being empowered to cast out demons. So when the man brought his son, they probably thought they could do the exorcism in the Master's absence. (When Jesus

was there, he did the exorcisms.) Now the disciples were puzzled, and their inability weakened them in the eyes of the scribes.

The victim son was sometimes *driven* by the demon to go to different places. The demon-caused seizures pulled him along and completely possessed and controlled the mechanism of his body, casting him on the ground, into a fire, into water; making him foam at the mouth; etc. (verse 22). This was a very *destructive* demon. Radical seizures yanked the son.

The father had approached the disciples with hope: "I spoke to your disciples, but they could not cast out the demon." Now he was depressed.

Mark 9:19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

Who was Jesus addressing when he said, "O faithless *generation*"?

Comment: Jesus was speaking to the apostles, the multitude, and the father of the victim, who said, "If you can do anything." Jesus responded, "If you can believe" (verses 22 and 23). In other words, there was a lack of faith all around. Matthew 17:20 reads, "Jesus said unto them, Because of your *unbelief*: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Mark 9:20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

When the son was brought to Jesus, immediately the evil spirit caused him to fall on the ground and wallow and foam. Notice Jesus' *calmness*—not getting emotionally involved.

Mark 9:21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

Jesus *calmly* asked, "How long has your son had the evil spirit?" "Since his early childhood," was the reply. It is helpful for us to know that a small child can be possessed.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus was *calm* when he should be and *explosive* in anger when it was proper. Now he had to not only heal the victim but *instruct others*.

Mark 9:22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

The father said, "If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

Comment: He did not say "If thou *wilt*" but "If thou *canst*." This big difference again points up the lack of faith.

The father may have known Jesus could cast out demons, but seeing his son get victimized right in front of Jesus shook his confidence. He would think, "If the disciples failed, maybe Jesus will fail too."

The father's plea "have compassion [mercy] on us, and help us" melted Jesus' heart.

Mark 9:23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Jesus gave the *same* words back to the father. The father had said, "If you can do anything" (verse 22). Jesus replied, "If you can believe." Faith was essential. The son could not have faith (he was helpless), but the father had to have faith. Thus sometimes it is the faith of those nearest and dearest to the victim that needs to be exercised.

What a beautiful promise to remember! "All things are possible to the one who believes."

Mark 9:24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

The father's response was touching: "Lord, I believe! Help my unbelief!" Faith and the right heart attitude were essential for a complete cure.

Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

Jesus was calm. When he first arrived, a multitude was there. Now *more* were coming—and *running*. If he waited for the others to arrive before he healed, some of the lesson would be lost. There would have been confusion.

Jesus rebuked and charged the demon to (1) come out and (2) not enter the child anymore.

Mark 9:26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

When the spirit came violently out, it left the victim as dead.

Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

Then Jesus took him by the hand—like Jairus' daughter. The son arose.

Mark 9:28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

The disciples desired to know why they could not perform the cure.

Mark 9:29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Comment: Jesus' reply shows that for an exorcism the disciples had to be in the proper attitude of heart and mind. It was not something to rush headlong into. That applies to us today, too, if we should ever be in such a circumstance. An exorcism has to be solemnly approached with prayer in advance, and all who would participate should be of the same solemn frame of mind and heart sympathy.

Reply: Yes, that is the answer as to why the disciples could not do the exorcism, even though they previously were successful momentarily and temporarily with Jesus' blessing. This particular kind of possession had such *deep* inroads into the individual that it was *abnormal* possession. In proportion to the gravity and importance of the situation, it was/is necessary to get into the proper attitude to effect, if it be the Father's will, a remedy.

Fasting is proper depending on the circumstance. For example, Daniel prayed and fasted for three weeks before getting a reply.

Mark 9:30 And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it.

Jesus did not want anyone to know their whereabouts because he wanted to have time with his disciples to teach them about a sobering subject: his death (verse 31).

Mark 9:31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, just a short time before, one Gospel said the subject matter was Jesus' death. In Caesarea Philippi, too, he had mentioned his coming death. Now the subject came up again.

If Jesus were *God*, how could he be delivered into the hands of *men* and *men* kill him? God is eternal, ever living, from everlasting to everlasting. He *cannot die*. The Trinity does not make sense.

Mark 9:32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

The apostles were afraid to discuss this subject in any depth. They understood Jesus' words but not the *reason* for his death, not the philosophy behind the need for it. Moreover, the disciples did not want to hear about Jesus' death, for they were anticipating the *imminent* establishment of his Kingdom. They were probably thinking of their own positions of honor (see verses 33 and 34).

Mark 9:33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

Jesus very likely went into Peter's house. Although he knew what they were disputing, he asked anyway.

Mark 9:34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

Mark 9:35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

In embarrassment, the twelve did not answer. They had been disputing which of them should be the greatest. They were thinking of *glory*, and Jesus was thinking of *death*, which had to precede glory.

Comment: This dispute occurred not long after the three were taken up into the Mount of Transfiguration, so it was on their minds that three of them were being especially favored.

Reply: The apostles were keenly aware of the distinction because Jesus had been absent with the three. The other nine were not so privileged. The three were in the conversation too, so they may have been discussing, even more than the others, the subject of who was greatest. But how did Jesus respond? He said the humblest servant would be greatest. Therefore, the one who desired to be first should be the humblest.

Comment: It would be interesting to know what part Judas played because he was more capable than the rest. If faithful, he would have had the chief position. His personality was the type that could have resented not being taken up in the mount for the transfiguration.

Comment: Later the mother of John and James wanted her sons to sit on Jesus' right and left, the most prominent positions.

Comment: When this incident was discussed at the Michigan Future Events conference, the question was raised from the floor "But what is wrong with wanting to be greatest?" From one standpoint, we are to run as if only one gets the prize and we should want to be as near as possible to the Master. However, there is a fine line here on motive. We should not be striving and competing with our brethren.

Reply: It is something like eldership. Eldership is a good office to desire, but brothers should be careful, for there is greater condemnation for disobedience—greater responsibilities are attached to the office.

Although the mother later raised the question, John and James desired very much to sit on Jesus' right and left. On one occasion, Jesus gave a parable about one who presumptuously took the chief seat. The party was subsequently asked by the host to vacate the seat because it was intended for another. Taking the chief seat was a form of greed. Likewise, a problem of the scribes and Pharisees was their desire for the chief seats at festivals.

Mark 9:36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

Mark 9:37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

In this character lesson, Jesus took a child and set him in their midst. The disciples would have sensed an object lesson was coming. Then Jesus took the child in his arms. The pause focused the disciples' attention on the coming lesson.

The child illustrated one who was *consecrated*. The person who receives one of the consecrated really receives not only Jesus but also the Father. It goes up the chain of command. Conversely, to act improperly against one of the consecrated is to act against the Father too. In the *family* relationship of the consecrated, proper esteem should be given to those who are older—but not to the neglect of receiving one in

Jesus' name.

Partiality is taught in the Scriptures along certain lines. Those who have been very beneficial to the brotherhood should be respected for their service. They should not be viewed in the same light as a newcomer—but nevertheless, the family relationship is important. We should not offend a *little* one. And the family relationship goes right up to the Father because He first draws the individual to Christ.

Q: Isn't verse 37 a case where the word "only" fits? "Whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me *only*, but him that sent me."

A: Yes, and this theme comes out in John's Gospel.

A "child" in the faith can be (1) a new Christian, (2) one who has not matured, or (3) one who is mentally limited and cannot develop. A "*childlike disposition*" is important for all to have, however. We should always be teachable and humble.

Mark 9:38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us.

John, one of the three who had been on the Mount of Transfiguration, took the leading role here. And John was one of the two who desired to sit on Jesus' right or left hand.

Because one who was casting out demons in *Jesus'* name was not one of *his* disciples ("he followeth not us"), they forbid him, that is, told him to stop. This is a searching matter, for John's motive intended to be good. He was zealous for the Master, and he did not want Jesus' name to be used by one who was not a disciple. We too have experiences along this line. We may think our motives are good—and they may be—but to take this role in judging others is not proper. The others were held accountable for their own conduct since they performed the acts in Jesus' name. And so many today think they are followers of Christ. Maybe the ones back there did miracles such as casting out demons. Another text says, "By whom do your children cast them [the demons] out?" showing these works were done by others as well (Matt. 12:27).

Some spend their whole ministry finding fault with others and trying to damage their service. Referred to as brambles and thorns, they themselves have nothing productive to offer (Matt. 7:16). Christians are not to be spiritual policemen—that could be a full-time job. Nevertheless, there are circumstances where moral or doctrinal problems have to be exposed, but those are the exception. If one's ministry is damaging the brotherhood, it should be stopped. And there is more responsibility in the local area where one lives.

Mark 9:39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

This is a *general* rule. In exorcism, the crucifix can be effectively used as a charm. Jesus' name can be used that way too. Those who saw Jesus casting out demons, even though they did not become disciples, might try to do the same, using Jesus' name because of what they had witnessed. But what irked the disciples was that the person

was using Jesus' name *as if he were a disciple*. He was not interested in being a follower—he just wanted to use Jesus' name to cast out demons.

Lesson: Do not delve into the motives of others who profess Christianity. Even here the disciples did not know the motive of the man. He may not have been culpable. Maybe he was desperate regarding a relative, for example. At any rate, the individual himself will have to answer to God.

Comment: The same is true today with those in the nominal system who profess to love the Lord. There are all kinds of gradations, and we cannot always dig into the matter and pin down individuals as to how or whether they have made a consecration. The responsibility is between the Lord and the individual who professes to be a Christian and is doing work in His name.

Reply: Yes, and some lower the standard to think that any good work is being a Christian. Many look at the conduct of a person, and if he is gentle and kind, they think he is Christlike. But Christlikeness is not superficial. Even shrewd businessmen can appear kind and interested just to get a sale. Kindness should be genuine.

By using Jesus' name, the man showed respect for the power of that name. But his reason or motive could be another matter. We are not to analyze motives.

Mark 9:40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

Turn this verse around: "He that is on our part [he that is for us] is not against us." Contrast this with "He who is not with me is against me"; turned around, this reads, "He who is against me is not with me" (Matt. 12:30).

Verse 40 pertains to one *outside* the movement. But this can be searching *within* the movement too. Some within the brotherhood can be against the Lord by being stumbling blocks. Nominally associating with the Bible Students, they may be rejects along doctrinal or moral lines. Being within the movement is not a guarantee *if* the principles of God and Jesus are not recognized and obeyed. Therefore, Matthew 12:30 can be viewed as applying to one *within* the movement.

Comment: "In my name" or "in thy name," referring to Jesus, is a common phrase in this chapter (verses 37, 38, 39 and 41).

Mark 9:41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

All other things being equal, "whoever shall give a cup of cold water" in *Jesus'* name—that is, because the individual it is given to is *consecrated*—"shall not lose his reward." This "water" would be given by one who is *not* consecrated. Another Gospel covers one who *is* consecrated. Hence a "reward" applies to those both outside and inside the movement.

Mark 9:42 And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

This is a serious doctrine with great implications, for it would be better to die with a

millstone around the neck than to die Second Death. In other words, offending one of the Lord's "little ones" can affect one's destiny.

Notice, further, what this verse says. Whoever stumbles one of the "little ones" in the truth (not a great one) is in danger of Second Death. In other words, we are to tread lightly with new interests, those who are mentally limited, etc., for we could turn a person off and cause him to go out of the way. If God judges the consecrated one to be responsible for causing a little one to depart, that is serious. However, some who are very sensitive may claim they have left the truth because of the remark of a brother or sister, whereas the remark was actually justified and proper. Sometimes remarks are necessary to alert an individual to a problem. The point is to be careful and not to be too hasty in our attitude and conduct toward others. But there are times when a rebuke is necessary—or a challenge or a warning.

We must be especially careful with the weak and with a little child. On the other hand, some who are weak and immature make harmful comments that influence many others. Such individuals must be put in their place because of the damage being done.

Verse 42 is not talking about those who are very forward and who control and/or disrupt a meeting with their conduct. Rather, it is the humble, sensitive, introspective ones who must be treated carefully.

Comment: Yet if some are overly touchy and sensitive, the Lord will permit certain circumstances to help them overcome this abnormality.

Reply: Yes, habitual sensitivity is a problem to be overcome. Nevertheless, being careful with the Lord's little ones is a general principle.

Comment: An example of conduct incurring responsibility is a brother who criticized a woman at a convention for not wearing a head covering. The woman, who not only was not consecrated but was a new attendee, had just been moved to tears by a talk. The brother's rebuke was out of order and may have been a factor in her not returning subsequently. This example illustrates the principle, even though the woman was not actually a "little one."

Q: Could *one* remark offend a brother or sister into leaving the truth? Wouldn't the remarks have to be habitual?

A: There are degrees of injuring spiritually as well as degrees of culpability. A remark might not actually put one out of the truth, but it could affect his walk for some time. For instance, one might not come to meetings because of a remark. Then, not attending meetings, the individual gradually gets cool. Lacking instruction and fellowship, he perishes by the way. However, it is not likely that *one* remark would stumble—more likely, it is an attitude that is being pursued. However, *one* remark can do a lot of harm.

Paul speaks about some who are sinning against Christ. When one comes into a meeting, the subject should not be changed just to give an object lesson and/or rebuke to that individual. Some like to rebuke, and in every study and talk they try to slant the lesson against a brother or sister. If done as a *practice*, that is sinning against Christ.

However, if the subject is being discussed, it should be discussed openly and fearlessly. Usually the one *doing the correcting* has plenty of his own problems.

Mark 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Mark 9:44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Mark 9:45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Mark 9:46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Mark 9:47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

Mark 9:48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

If our hand, foot, or eye causes us to sin, we are to get rid of it, figuratively speaking. If one of these is cut off, there is a lack, but if two (both) are cut off, the implication is Second Death. Why? because the person has not attempted to curb the problem. *An ingrained character fault or defect must be uprooted.*

Comment: To be bound hand and foot is another way of stating the full penalty—complete immobility. If we do not deal with the sin, it will stop us completely—in Second Death.

In what way can the hand, foot, and eye “offend”? The hand pertains to service, the foot to our walk, and the eye to our intellect or wisdom.

If one has a weakness for adultery, for example, and then allows his eyes to roam at will, he is in danger of committing grievous sin. Instead, that one should avoid temptation by curtailing his liberty. Another example is a bad temper, which needs curbing if it is habitual. One who is short tempered must deal with the fault. There is a responsibility not to offend *others* and a responsibility not to offend *self*. In other words, we are not to cause *others* to sin, nor should we allow *ourselves* to sin.

Comment: The NIV uses “sin” instead of “offend.” “If your foot causes you to *sin*,” etc.

Parts of verses 44–47 are spurious as follows: Omit verses 44 and 46, the end of verse 45 (“into the fire that never shall be quenched”), and “fire” at the end of verse 47.

Verse 48 is based on Isaiah 66:24 (the last verse of the Book of Isaiah), which refers to the destruction of Gog and Magog at the end of the Gospel Age. A cemetery in Israel will be called Hamon-gog. In regard to the worm not dying and the fire never being extinguished—this is to be an *everlasting perpetual* lesson. As the people go by, they will see the cemetery, and an audiovisual record will tell why and how God destroyed Gog and Magog. While a worm literally dies and a fire can be extinguished, the lesson will continue. All future sentient beings on other planets will also see the movie record.

Hence the worm and fire are figurative.

Here in Mark the worm and the fire are associated with *gehenna*, the Valley of Hinnom, i.e., *Second Death*, which will never be destroyed. Adamic death will be destroyed but not Second Death. God will always have the prerogative, if He so desires, to expunge a life. In the illimitable future, one on another planet might sin and would thus have to be put to death right away so that God's will would still be done there. Evil will not be allowed to arise and prosper on other planets.

Comment: In refuting the doctrine of hellfire, the *Berean Manual* makes a humorous comment about verse 48: "Who would ever think that a worm could be immortal?" ("Their worm dieth not"). A further comment is made that when dead bodies were thrown in the Valley of Hinnom, most were destroyed with fire, but if a body landed on a ledge, worms destroyed the body. Thus the Valley of Hinnom is a good picture of Second Death.

Reply: Notice that *corpses* were thrown in *gehenna*, not live bodies. Therefore, the idea of eternal torment is not taught by the Valley of Hinnom. The *remains* were destroyed.

Mark 9:49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

This verse begins with "for," and hence is a conclusion or is related to the hand, foot, and eye needing drastic action if they offend, stumble, or spiritually injure us. "For every one shall be salted with fire."

Comment: The thought is that we will all receive strong temptations and trials.

Reply: Our consecration vows entail, among other things, some *serious sacrifices* to show the depth of our consecration.

The end of the verse "and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" is spurious, but in the Old Testament all sacrifices were salted with salt. A handful of salt was thrown on the sacrifice (Lev. 2:13). Ezekiel 43:24 shows that in the Third Temple, salt will have to be offered with sacrifices just as under the Mosaic Law. Spiritual lesson: service should be rendered willingly, wholeheartedly, enthusiastically—with *zeal*. It is a favor, a blessing, to serve God.

With the hand, foot, and eye admonition, the advice is to *stay clear of temptations*. Do not get into danger unnecessarily. Where we have weaknesses, we must deny ourself privileges that others have. Almost everyone has something wrong with the eye, the hand, or the foot. A wandering of the eye or a defect in activity or conduct *must be dealt with*. The best safeguard is to be *fully immersed in the Lord*.

Mark 9:50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Another aspect of salt is its preservative quality. If one loses his desire to serve the Lord and his love for the truth, retrieval is nearly impossible. Once one cools off and truth no longer has an energizing influence, the situation can be hopeless. But if one has *zeal* with the weakness and deals sternly to overcome the weakness, he can be

reinstated.

If one leaves the fellowship but continues to study, his retrieval is more likely. Those who leave and do not study usually cannot be retrieved, for the salt loses its saltiness. Lamentations 4:1 reads, “How is the gold become dim? How is the most fine gold changed? The stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street.” The gold itself does not dim or tarnish. Rather, the *one beholding the gold*—his appreciation of divine things—grows dim. When spiritual eyesight dims, restoration is virtually impossible. And salt without “saltiness” is good only to be trodden underfoot (Second Death). One reason why Second Death will never be destroyed is that it cleanses God’s universe. Should one disobey in the illimitable future, God will always have that ability or prerogative with all of His creations. It is good when a contaminating influence is trodden underfoot. Even literal salt serves a purpose when it is trodden underfoot (Luke 14:34). Salt that loses its savor is useless for flavoring food, but it will melt ice on a sidewalk. That is a purpose, as is Second Death.

Comment: Salt without saltiness has lost its preservative quality. The context had just spoken about being cast into hell (*destruction*, Second Death), and salt without saltiness will not preserve life.

“Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.” Salt is a *preservative*, so one lesson is not to destroy one another. Comments should be *constructive* and *edifying*, not destructive. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth but that which is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29). “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:6). As we mature, we should have more and more of this characteristic.

Mark 10:1 And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

Jesus left Capernaum and traveled south into Judea, teaching as he went.

Mark 10:2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

The Pharisees asked, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?” There would be nothing wrong with this question if their attitude were sincere, but the Pharisees were *tempting* Jesus.

Mark 10:3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

As was customary, he answered their question *with a question*: “What did Moses command you?” This is a good tactic for the insincere. The Pharisees did not want information—they were trying to trip him up. They were supposed to be teachers of the Law, so Jesus redirected the question. This method gave him the last say and also gave him time to collect his thoughts.

Mark 10:4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is the law of divorcement: "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

Mark 10:5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

Jesus said the precept was written because of the hardness of the people's hearts. Moses adjudicated questions, but so many Israelites went to him that Jethro suggested he share the burden with the 70 elders. (Otherwise, Moses would be answering questions from sunrise to sunset.) Moses followed Jethro's good advice.

Q: Deuteronomy 24:1-4 did not apply to adultery because that was covered under other laws. Would "uncleanness" be grounds for divorce with a Christian? That was an expediency under the Law, but would it have any application now?

A: Uncleanness can occur in a marriage situation; e.g., a bestial type of sexuality. Being considered fornication, this would release the partner from the marriage. (Adultery is fornication but only one form of it.) Two men together would also be fornication. There are many forms of fornication, but it would not apply to insanity or sickness because the marriage vow makes allowance for sickness ("in sickness or in health"). If the woman were a harlot or did abnormal things, the man could divorce her under the Law. This is not advice for the Christian, normally speaking, but certain situations would apply in regard to fornication.

Q: The man could divorce the woman, but what about vice versa? Since a man's uncleanness was not mentioned under the Law, could a woman ask for a divorce under this circumstance?"

A: Based on Jesus' comments, the word "man" would apply either way.

With their original entrapment question, the Pharisees expected Jesus to say that a man should not get a divorce, for they knew Jesus was strict and the Christian call was higher than the Law. The Gospel affects the *mind*, and the Law deals with the *deed*. "If thine *eye* offend thee," Jesus said.

After the Pharisees answered, Jesus admitted the Law stated there were occasions in which a man could put away his wife. But Jesus added that the precept was written because of the hardness of their hearts. Fallen humanity has problems along this line, and part of them could be alleviated by the bill of divorcement. If the husband thought the wife was unfaithful, the wife had to drink water with dust of the Tabernacle in it. If guilty, her stomach swelled, and she was put to death. If nothing happened, she was innocent and the husband was embarrassed.

The Law was stated from the man's standpoint because it was a type of Christ (the man) and the Church (the woman). Since Jesus cannot be unfaithful, the man was considered not guilty—there was no test on him. Only the Little Flock marries Jesus, so an ex-wife could not remarry her original husband.

Unequal animals could not be yoked together under the Law. This pictured that the consecrated should not marry the unconsecrated. To do so would result in an unequal yoking.

Q: With Paul's and Jesus' advice, *divorce* is permitted for the Christian only on the grounds of fornication and adultery. For something lesser, separation could occur if the situation were untenable. Isn't that a higher plane than the Law, which allowed divorce for "unclean" reasons?

A: Right, for the Christian, a higher level of obedience is required.

Mark 10:6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

Mark 10:7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

Mark 10:8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

Mark 10:9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Jesus was saying there are too many divorces. Husband and wife are not to be put asunder by either an outsider or the husband—that is the *ideal*. But in cases of adultery and fornication, divorce is permitted. Adam and Eve were the ideal of two becoming one flesh.

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

The public conversation having ended, the disciples now, in private, asked Jesus for more information.

Mark 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

Mark 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

"It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:31,32). To "put away" means to divorce. If the man divorces his wife not for scriptural reasons and marries another woman, he commits adultery against his ex-wife, and it is vice versa with the woman. That was true of the Law too—for man or woman. The "he" is generic, impersonal. Where a divorce is scriptural, a Christian can remarry, but not to the same or first husband.

Based on the type in Deuteronomy 24:1–4, those who leave the truth forsake their consecration. They cannot “remarry” the first husband (Christ) and hence cannot be of the Little Flock. Some who have strayed have been retrieved, but most are not.

When brethren are divorced, the reason should be made known. Then if one or both should later remarry, the brethren would know whether the marriage was scripturally permitted. If there is no proof of adultery or fornication, then the second marriage must be considered wrong. Stated another way, if one marries a divorced person, he or she commits adultery *if the person was not scripturally divorced*.

If a couple divorces without scriptural grounds, neither one can remarry. Why? Because they broke a contract. However, if one disobeys and marries again, then the other divorced party is free to remarry.

If the reason for the divorce is not made known, there is confusion—the brethren do not know who is guilty and who is innocent. If the grounds are simply incompatibility, that should be made known. A person’s word should be accepted, for we cannot pry into all matters in detail. The only reason a person’s word might not be taken is if he or she is very unstable.

Being married and divorced *before* consecration is another matter. It would then be up to each individual as to how the Lord’s Word is understood. For conscience’ sake, we should not ask too many questions in such a case.

Mark 10:13 **And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.**

When others brought young children to Jesus “that he should touch them,” the disciples issued a rebuke. “Touch” means embrace; i.e., it is a form of endearment. Of course in blessing the children, Jesus could have put his hand on the children’s heads and thus have touched them in that sense.

Mark 10:14 **But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.**

Q: Was part of the disciples’ reasoning based on Mark 8:30 where just a short time ago Jesus wanted to teach his disciples privately and did not even want other adults to know his whereabouts? The disciples may have thought they were doing Jesus a service.

A: They certainly had a reason of some kind.

Comment: They probably thought Jesus had more serious things to think about.

Reply: Yes, but Jesus would have foreseen that he could make an object lesson of the children. At any rate, he was “*much* displeased.”

Jesus’ words about the little children (“infants” in Luke 18) that “of such is the kingdom of God” lead some to conclude that children go to heaven. Proof against this thought is that they cannot take up their cross and follow Jesus—they do not have the

mind development to do this. How could a child love God more than himself when he does not know anything about God? Knowledge is a prerequisite for loving God.

Mark 10:15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

One must be like a “little child” to “enter” the kingdom of God, that is, to receive the truth or respond to Jesus’ message. The lesson is to be teachable (meek) and humble. Peter was *meek*, humble, and teachable despite his impetuosity. For example, he meekly accepted Paul’s public rebuke regarding eating with the Gentiles.

Here the “entrance” into the Kingdom of God refers to our initial consecration, not to the end of our course. (However, in order to be of the Little Flock, that attitude must be maintained.) One who does not initially accept the truth as a child will not respond with consecration. Fallen human nature resists truth.

Comment: Many have humbling experiences that bring them to the Lord and make them extremely receptive initially, but we must stay in this attitude, no matter what circle or group we come to the Lord through, if we would *grow* in knowledge *throughout* our Christian walk. This principle applies to Bible Students too. Will we continue to grow, or will we stop and say, “I heard the truth when I first came in, and that is it”?

Reply: Some use the slogan “Jesus has satisfied” to say they are satisfied with the knowledge they have, but the Bible is a *thick* book.

Mark 10:16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Jesus set the children on his lap or knee, put his hand on their heads, and pronounced a blessing.

Some feel they know the “plan” and have no need of further instruction—they feel they cannot learn anything from anyone else. That attitude is dangerous, for even Jesus learned. For example, he marveled at the faith and understanding of the *Syrophoenician* woman who said, “Even the dogs get crumbs from the master’s table.” The *Roman* centurion said Jesus did not have to go to the sick one to effect a healing but could just speak the word. On another occasion Jesus said, “I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast revealed these things unto babes” and not to the worldly wise and rich and powerful. God calls the *poor in spirit* (such can be wealthy or poor in temporal means). Jesus marveled at God’s wisdom in the nature of the call and those who respond. He realized that those who were aware they were “sick” and in need of a “physician” were of the proper heart condition, whereas those who thought they were “whole” were not.

The more one advances in knowledge, the more difficult it is to remain humble. Hunger, humility, honesty, and being wholly for God are essential.

Mark 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Mark 10:19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

Mark 10:20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

The ruler was a young man who had obeyed from his youth. He had probably gotten good instruction from his parents.

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

“Take up the cross” is spurious.

Mark 10:22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

Verses 17–22 are about the Rich Young Ruler. Though rich, he had humility, as shown by his *running* to the Master and *kneeling* before him. And he *asked* for further enlightenment. In spite of his trying to obey, he felt a lack but did not know what it was until Jesus pointed it out. The problem was that he had too many goods—these were his idol. Jesus told him to sell all that he had and give the proceeds to the poor. Why? in order to emphasize the Rich Young Ruler’s fault or weakness. The ruler went away depressed when Jesus touched this sensitive point (verse 22).

Comment: When Jesus answered the question “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” with an enumeration of certain commandments, he noticeably and purposely omitted “Thou shalt have no other gods before thee.” He subsequently pointed out the problem, which was not having sufficient love for *God*, by telling the ruler to sell all his goods.

Reply: Yes, if Jesus had incorporated the first commandment, the ruler would still have said, “All these things have I observed from my youth,” for he was unaware of his lack. Hence Jesus omitted the most important commandment.

Many are likewise unaware that money is their idol. The *love* of money is the root of much evil. One can be *poor* and still *love* money.

The ruler was *sincere* (verse 21), whereas the scribes and Pharisees asked questions to try to trap Jesus. The ruler sincerely wanted to know what he lacked. Jesus, beholding the ruler and his words and sincerity, *loved* him—tender! But he said, “One thing you lack—sufficient love for God.”

Jesus could have just said, “Go thy way. Sell your possessions, give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven.” But to gain eternal life in this or the next age, one must recognize *Jesus*. “Come [be my disciple], and follow me.” To be Jesus’ disciple, the ruler would have to suffer ignominy and shame.

The ruler started with “*Good Master,*” and Jesus replied, “Why do you call *me* good? There is none good but *God.*” Jesus’ answer is an excellent proof against the Trinity.

Mark 10:23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

Mark 10:24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

Mark 10:25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Mark 10:26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

Mark 10:27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

It is interesting that Jesus addressed the disciples as “children” (verse 24) because he had said they had to be as little *children* to enter the Kingdom. Jesus called them “children” because they were like children. They did follow him and they did sacrifice.

Comment: Under the Law, material or temporal blessings were the reward for faithfulness. Therefore, the disciples were astonished when Jesus said, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” They considered riches a favorable sign.

Reply: Yes, under the Law the rewards were fleshly: health, property, prestige, battle victories, etc. The Israelites expected evidence of their obedience and acceptance.

Verse 25 reads, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Those who trust in riches feel a sense of security in them. The Rich Young Ruler had many possessions. His heart was with the treasure and not the Lord. The *love* of money is the root of much evil.

Verse 25 does not apply to the camels’ entrance gate into Jerusalem but to the literal eye of a needle. Jesus knew the disciples would say it was impossible for a camel to go through a needle’s eye. Many times Jesus made a statement that shocked his disciples. Afterward they would go to him privately and ask the meaning. Here Jesus did not wait for them to come but sermonized immediately.

A consecrated *rich* person will have a tenfold difficulty in making his calling and election sure, for the riches bring more responsibility and are an obstacle. With most, it is better not to have too much of this world’s goods. However, even the poor can have the love of money.

Jesus’ words were a hard statement that was soul searching and caused the disciples to question themselves. They wondered, “Can nobody who is rich enter the Kingdom of God?” Jesus corrected that conclusion by saying it is *easier* for a camel to go through

the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom.

In verse 27, Jesus said, “With *men* it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, but with *God* all things are possible.” Genetics are involved. A camel’s life starts as a *seed*, and the seed is smaller than a mustard seed. With great ease the potential camel, at the seed stage, could go through the eye of a literal needle. Moreover, God can *reverse* growth so that an adult can be reduced to the seed stage. God can reverse the genetic process so that a literal adult camel can go through the eye of a needle as a seed.

Q: Who would know this better than the Logos, who experienced a reversal at the hands of the Father?

A: Yes, because the Logos was a *transferred* life. He did not die when he came down here. The transferred life was sperm put into the womb of Mary. The great Logos was thus reduced and implanted to come forth as a human being.

For Legion to be possessed by so many demons, they had to *reduce* their size. Therefore, an angel can permeate a solid. A spirit being can go through a door by reducing himself and going between the atoms and the molecules.

In verse 26, the question was asked: “Who then can be saved?” None of us could make our calling and election sure without *God’s* help. It is superhuman to receive the divine nature. Without *God’s* Spirit operating in our lives, it would be impossible for us to attain the Little Flock. Therefore, in verse 27, Jesus was answering the disciples (and all Christians) by saying that a camel *can go through* a needle’s eye, but none of these things are possible without God’s help. All of Jesus’ parables contain *very deep truths*. The depth is all the more remarkable because Jesus was limited by the Holy Spirit not having been given yet to the disciples. Thus he had to speak to humans on *their* level. Even so, his reasoning was *most profound*—more profound than that of Paul, who had great liberty and the Holy Spirit.

We are given sympathy here for those who have a lot of this world’s goods because they have a problem making their calling and election sure. In the Kingdom, if they should have a higher reward than those without riches, there should be no jealousy whatsoever, for riches are an obstacle. We should sympathize with their greater responsibility.

Mark 10:28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

Mark 10:29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s,

Mark 10:30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Mark 10:31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

How are the consecrated blessed *now* with houses, brethren, mothers, children, and

lands when they *leave* such things for the gospel's sake and for Jesus' sake? There is a mutuality of love and consideration. For example, if a consecrated one goes abroad and finds a consecrated group, he or she is welcomed there. It is like window shopping. We see jewels and wonderful things, but we do not buy or covet them, for we know the meek shall inherit the earth. If faithful, we will get much more later. We can enjoy and appreciate things *without* possessing them. Incidentally, "an hundredfold now" is a colloquial expression and not literal.

The phrase "*with persecutions*" is significant in verse 30. Those who please the Lord are greatly blessed, but we must also have persecution in some form.

"Many that are first shall be last; and the last first." Many who are first in this world's goods and in seeming blessings now shall end up last, and the ones who seem to have the least will end up with the higher reward. *Generally speaking*, the Great Company class *teaching element* think they have more knowledge than the Little Flock. And the Little Flock are not necessarily teachers. The teachers who end up as Great Company are the Elihu class in Job. Not until the Kingdom Age will the Great Company realize they did not make the Little Flock. Then they will know the chosen ones excelled. Many think Elihu's reasoning was superior wisdom, but a thorough study of his remarks shows this is not the case, for he said things neither Jesus nor the holy angels would have uttered. However, his conscience was pricked when he saw Job being vindicated and restored to a better condition than prior to his affliction. Elihu was probably the author of the Book of Job.

Mark 10:32 And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

Mark 10:33 Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

Mark 10:34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

In verse 32, why were the disciples afraid and amazed *before* Jesus again foretold his death? Because they knew the rumor that Jesus' enemies were waiting to put him to death. Jesus went ahead of them—i.e., he did not shirk his responsibility. The disciples were afraid both for him and for themselves.

This time Jesus' words regarding his death seemed to sink in a little better with the disciples. He gave them remarkable detail in advance—even the spitting. Jesus had all this understanding *before* his crucifixion. He knew a great deal, but one thing he did not know was that he would feel forsaken on the Cross. Moreover, he did not know the day or the hour of the rapture or who would sit on his right and left hand.

Why did Jesus choose this moment to give so many details of his death? Why did he take the disciples aside *after* they were afraid? He told them in advance so that when the events happened, they would have faith and know Jesus was not taken by surprise. In Gethsemane, he made it obvious he allowed himself to be taken, both by the sword and by causing the mob to fall backwards before he submitted.

The “Gentiles” (verse 33) were the Romans (soldiers, centurions, and Pilate). Jesus’ experiences were prophetically foretold in Psalm 22.

Mark 10:35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

Mark 10:36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

Mark 10:37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

Based on the Matthew 20 account, the mother of James and John was probably the spokesperson. The Holy Spirit motivated this request even though it was illegitimate. It was a good desire, however. Jesus had given the apostles the hope of sitting on 12 thrones in the Kingdom.

Even though the mother evidently initiated the request, James and John gave assent to the request by their silence and by their going to Jesus privately. The sons did not nip the request in the bud. The final responsibility rested on all three, but of the three, James and John were the most important.

Bathsheba is another mother who interceded for her son. Adonijah’s attempt for power prompted her to go to David regarding the promise made years earlier about Solomon. And Rebecca interceded for Jacob according to the promise at his birth.

Jesus was not sure at that time who the Father wanted to sit on his right and left hand. This distinction between the two refutes the Trinity. Jesus’ throne is on the right hand of the Father. Then Jesus, in turn, has others on his right and left hand.

From our standpoint, the request of James and John seems a little presumptive, but if we had been apostles back there, specially chosen and named by the Master, the request would seem natural. However, the others were indignant that James and John should do this.

Comment: If their heart motivation was purely love for Jesus and the desire to be as close to him as possible (and not strife, vainglory, and puffing up self), the request was made with the best of intentions.

Reply: Yes—but it is interesting to see how Jesus responded. The positions of honor were up to the Father and not him.

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

Mark 10:39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

Mark 10:40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

In other words, “How far will you go for this request?” James and John said, “We

can,” but they did not fully know what it meant to drink the cup and be baptized as Jesus was. They meant well and were sincere—they loved the Lord—but the depth of the cost was unknown to them at that time. After Jesus’ crucifixion they would begin to soberly ask, “Am I worthy to be of the Little Flock?” Paul even reasoned that he could be a castaway if he did not concentrate his energy on attaining the prize. He could lose the crown or even life itself.

In testimony meetings some state how much they love the Lord, but we do not know the depth of our love until it is really tested. If one does not have a sense of the responsibility involved, he is speaking above his head. The Lord graciously overlooks some of these things in immaturity, but as one matures and sees the *great highness* of the calling, he knows he has to run the race as if there is only one crown. One can be way out in front for three quarters of the race and then falter in the homestretch. *Endurance* is important. Talk can be braggadocio without realizing it. Some years ago, a sister, quite young, was always the first to testify how much she loved the Lord, and now she is out of the truth.

Verse 39 indicates Jesus knew James and John would be faithful. He knew they were *thoroughly devoted*, but the position of honor was up to the Father and depended on other characteristics, such as character development and Scriptural wisdom.

Mark 10:41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

Mark 10:42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

Mark 10:43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

Mark 10:44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The ten were angry. They probably thought they should have been consulted and gone to Jesus as a group.

In the world, the aggressive talkers get ahead. The meek, humble, and honest individuals make good servants. Jesus fulfilled this role—he was the greatest servant of all (verse 44). During his ministry, he was the servant of his disciples (and especially of the twelve).

The twelve apostles (Paul replacing Judas) will have the highest positions in the Kingdom. (What happens *after* the Kingdom can be different.) Yet John the Baptist, who was the *greatest* of those born of woman at that time, was not called to be an apostle because he was the *best* one on the scene to announce the presence of Jesus at the First Advent.

About nine of the twelve apostles were related: cousins, brothers, in-laws. Even John the Baptist and Jesus were of the *same* family, for their mothers, Mary and Elizabeth,

were cousins. The twelve were the *best* ones (after John the Baptist) of that generation. During the Gospel Age, others may have proved equally or more than equally great. If so, their positions in the future, *after* the Kingdom, can be superior to those of the apostles.

Verse 45 states that in addition to being a servant ministering to the disciples' needs, Jesus ministered to the whole world by giving his life a ransom for all. He came for two reasons: (1) to teach and (2) to die.

Mark 10:46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

Mark 10:47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Mark 10:48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Mark 10:49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

Near Jericho toward the end of Jesus' ministry, two blind men, in addition to Bartimaeus, asked Jesus to heal them (Matt. 20:29–34). "Bartimaeus" means "son of Timaeus [Timothy, Timotheus]." "Timothy" means "honored of God." Lesson: The Lord is gracious to those who persist in crying out to him. Incidentally, Jericho has an unusual road system. The main road going *through* Jericho circles it almost 200 degrees so that the entrance is close to the exit.

Mark 10:50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

Mark 10:51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

Mark 10:52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

Bartimaeus was full of faith. He cast away his garment and arose, believing he would receive his sight. He knew Jesus could heal him.

Jesus told Bartimaeus to "Go thy way"; that is, Jesus opened the door for Bartimaeus to sit down and count the cost, as it were, but Bartimaeus chose to follow him. Jesus treated various individuals differently, e.g., the Rich Young Ruler. The different treatment was based on how best to reach each individual. Bartimaeus could have assumed "Go thy way" meant "You can go back home." But Bartimaeus appreciated his sight so much that the only "way" for him was to be a disciple.

Comment: This incident, which occurred close to the time of Jesus' crucifixion, was discussed at a Future Events meeting. Bartimaeus and the two blind men were healed. The fact that all three followed Jesus was unusual. In antitype it shows that some will get their eyes opened spiritually at the very end of the age.

Mark 11:1 And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany,

at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

Jesus' route: Jericho ⇒ Bethphage ⇒ Bethany ⇒ Jerusalem. Bethphage (pronounced Beth-pha'-jee) means "house of *figs*"; Bethany means "house of *dates*."

The road to Lazarus' tomb marks the division between Bethphage and Bethany; this old road is a spur off the main road from Jericho. When Jesus got to Bethany, he gave instructions about the colt (the foal) and the ass (the mother)—see Matthew 21:1–7.

Mark 11:2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

"Go your way into the village over against you." The present road to Lazarus' tomb curves considerably twice. After one curve, Siloam can be seen, and a little farther on in the curve, Jerusalem. Thus Jesus would be pointing to these places.

"As soon as ye be entered into it" suggests that the colt and its mother were at the entry of the village where a road divides and there is a house with a little garden. This house is the traditional home of John Mark, the Gospel writer. He lived in Siloam, and he is the one who fled naked at Jesus' apprehension in Gethsemane. Jesus went by this house and route when he was taken to the two high priests' homes.

Mark mentions only one animal because he was addressing the Romans and Jesus' riding an unbroken colt with perfect control would show his *authority*. The colt was neither tiny nor real young. This incident fulfilled Zechariah 9:9.

Jesus' authority over the unbroken colt showed his correspondency with Adam's being a perfect man and having perfect control over the animals. Jesus is the *Second Adam* not only in regard to his death and resurrection as the ransom price but in all correspondencies between the two.

Mark 11:3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

Probably the owner of the colt had prayed for a way to do something for the Lord, and the need for the colt was the answer to prayer.

The NIV and some other translations indicate the end of the verse means Jesus promised to return the colt immediately, but that is not the thought because Jesus did not return the animals right away. When asked why they were taking the colt, the disciples were to say, "The Lord needs the colt." Then followed Jesus' comment: "The owner will immediately let the colt go." The owner would consider the animals a sacrifice in answer to prayer and not expect them back, even though, no doubt, they were returned after two days.

Mark 11:4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

"Where two ways met" is not in the new translations, but it seems to be authentic. The two ways met in a "Y."

Mark 11:5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

Mark 11:6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

Mark 11:7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

Garments were cast on two animals, for they did not know which one Jesus wanted to ride. Jesus rode the colt.

Mark 11:8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way.

Strawing Jesus' way with garments and tree branches was a gesture of respect.

Mark 11:9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

Mark 11:10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

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

Verses 11, 12, and 15 tell the following: Jesus entered the city and the temple and just looked around the *first day*. (This was near evening.) He reentered the city and the temple the *next day* and chased out the money changers. Jesus probably went to Lazarus' home when he returned to Bethany every night.

Mark 11:12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

Mark 11:13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

He saw a fig tree with leaves. See Footnote 32 in *The Keys of Revelation*, Chapter 6. The fig tree begins to put forth tender leaf buds about the end of March. (1) At the same time, tiny figs begin to develop (with the leaves) to the size of a small cherry. Most fall off. Being immature and inferior, they are eaten only by the poor or a traveler. (These are what Jesus was looking for.) (2) A few of these small figs continue to ripen on the tree and reach maturity in June as excellent figs. (3) In June, buds of the next crop appear higher up in the branches. These ripen and are the great crop of figs in August. Hence there are three stages of development. The *second* crop was the "time of early figs"—it was the *first* nutritional harvest. The *third* crop was really the *second or general* harvest of figs. Thus Jesus cursed a fig tree that did not even have the first *tiny* figs, and this was *prior to* the two harvests.

Jesus was *truly hungry* (verse 12). In other words, he did not premeditate the fig tree scene. When he saw leaves at Passover time, he assumed the tiny immature figs

would be there too. When he saw no fruit, he realized there was a reason, a providence, for this. He knew the fig tree pictured the Jewish nation.

Mark 11:14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

Unseemly hunger, coupled with the fruitless fig tree, made Jesus realize there was an object lesson regarding the nation of Israel. As a nation, the people did not receive Jesus, so they were cursed for an age. Only five days later Jesus was nailed to the Cross, bringing an additional condemnation in reality. “His blood be upon us,” the people cried.

Jesus had a right to eat figs from this tree *as he walked along* (Deut. 23:24,25). He could not enter the property, but he could pick from the road what he was able to eat.

Comment: The fact that Jesus saw the fig tree “afar off” shows the Father directed his mind to it in connection with the hunger (verse 13). He did not just notice the tree at his side but saw it afar off.

Since the fig tree still had leaves, Jesus expected it to also have fruit. His curse was “No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever [Greek *aionian*—for an age].” The cursing of the fig tree indicated, “Your house is left unto you desolate.” That was the legal rejection of the nation, but the practical reality did not occur until AD 69.

Mark 11:15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

What a startling scene—to see Jesus overturn the tables of the money changers! It would take great courage for an ordinary person to do this. Bartering stalls were right in the Temple precincts, and animals and Temple shekels were sold for high profits. Jesus was now at the peak of his popularity.

Mark 11:16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

Water vessels were carried through the Temple as a shortcut from the Pool of Siloam and the Virgins’ Font. Merchandise was also carried through the Temple area. Lesson: Be careful with sacred things. Do not make jokes in a serious study. Exception: When in harmony with the lesson, *select* humor can have its place, and sarcasm too, but we should be careful not to interrupt the flow.

Mark 11:17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

This quote from Isaiah 56:7 is a prophecy yet future in fulfillment: “My house *shall be called* of all nations the house of prayer.” The whole Temple area was to be holy. The expression “den of thieves” has the thought of merchandise.

Comment: Mark is the only Gospel to include the phrase “of all nations,” which is appropriate since he was addressing the Romans, who were Gentiles.

Mark 11:18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

Mark 11:19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

The scribes and Pharisees viewed the action in the opposite (wrong) light. They considered Jesus' actions to be inappropriate and a desecration of the Temple, but the true desecration was their daily practices of commercialism.

Mark 11:20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

The *next day* as Jesus and the apostles were returning to the Temple, they saw the cursed fig tree "dried up from the *roots*." Mark gives the timing: fig tree cursed, *next morning* fig tree *dead*. The fig tree being dried up from the roots would correspond to the dry bones in the valley (Ezekiel 37).

Mark 11:21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

Some misunderstand the cursing of the fig tree and think Jesus was being petulant, but the "curse" was simply a harsh command. Lesson: The fig tree represents the nation of Israel. Jesus was truly hungry when he went to the fig tree. Seeing the lack of fruit (it had leaves but no fruit), he realized this was a providence and drew the right lesson. In other words, God purposely withheld fruit that would have satisfied the hunger of His Son in order for a lesson to be given. (The first small, immature figs—poor quality but edible, especially by the poor—were due at that time.)

Jeremiah 24:1–9, especially verse 5, proves that the figs represented Israel: "The LORD showed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the LORD.... One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up.... And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil;... So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them."

The "good figs" were spared, even though they were taken into Babylonian captivity. The "evil figs" were destroyed in Jerusalem, Judea, and Egypt. In the days of Jeconiah, Daniel and the three Hebrews were taken to Babylon.

Mark 11:22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

Jesus said, "Have faith in God." Realizing the fruitless fig tree was a providence, he exercised *faith in God* and showed what he could do based on *faith*. He knew the nation would be rejected and cursed a few days later ("Behold, your house is left unto you desolate"—Matt. 23:38).

Mark 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Now Jesus tells what his disciples can do *by faith* in this age. Faith is not just a passive trust in God, as Job showed: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). Faith is strong and it *endures*. It is the exercise of trust in God and relying on Him *with knowledge*. Faith is *not* credulity but is asking with knowledge. When God says something in His Word and we *know* what it means, no one can twist our thinking.

Verse 23 is an example of faith: Whoever will say to this mountain "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt but believes what God says will happen, "shall have whatsoever he saith." We *know* that a "Thus saith the Lord" condition will occur. Caution: The Devil causes providences too. Satan can help an *improper* faith, prayer, or belief. Therefore, we must *weigh* a matter. If we become *mature* in Scripture, we will be able to discern between good and evil, between right and wrong. The point is that if one is correct in understanding a Scripture and exercises faith predicated on that Scripture, the "mountain" will be removed. "He shall have whatsoever he saith" *if it is according to a "Thus saith the Lord."*

The "mountain" was Israel, the literal Mount Moriah in the type (or Christendom in antitype). Jesus may have actually pointed to Mount Moriah while he said, "The figurative mountain, which represents Israel (for the house of the Lord will be built on the top of the mountains), will be destroyed." Both the mountain and the fig tree represented Israel.

Comment: It is marvelous how the Lord uses symbolism harmoniously. In the Second Trumpet message, Revelation 8:8 says, "A great *mountain* burning with fire was *cast into the sea.*" Both here and in Mark 11:23, the "mountain" is Israel and it is "cast into the sea."

Reply: Yes, the interlocking symbolism helps us to understand and confirms that the second angel was John, who outlived the other apostles, surviving until about AD 100. Therefore, in AD 70 John was alive and saw the destruction of Israel, the "mountain."

Comment: The key is that verse 23 pertains to a "Thus saith the Lord." We do not have to say "Thy will be done" in regard to Christendom's destruction, for we know it *will be done*. We can have *faith* to that end.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

This verse is another example like "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." We should not take such statements at face value unless there are two or three witnesses.

Obviously, we cannot literally have *whatever we desire* if it is contrary to God's will.

The disciples would have been puzzled at these hard sayings, but as time went on, their faith grew because they saw the truth of what Jesus had said. The Holy Spirit, as a spirit of remembrance, later helped them to recall these things, and then they realized Jesus had prophesied correctly.

We should be tactful, but not so tactful that people do not get the point.

Mark 11:25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

According to Young's *Analytical Concordance*, "stand" means to stand fast, to stand firm.

Mark 11:26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

By this time the apostles were familiar, more or less, with Jesus' teaching, so when he made certain remarks, they understood, limitedly, the implications—and so should we. If not, and if we take some of these statements out of context, wrong conclusions are drawn. Verses 20–26 must be modified by other Scriptures.

We are to be in a forgiving *attitude*, but depending on the act, repentance must precede forgiveness. Luke 17:3 says, "If thy brother trespass against thee, *rebuke* him, and *if* he repent, forgive him." If "Love" is looked up in the *Reprints*, not many qualifying statements will be found. However, if "Forgiveness" is looked up, there are many qualifying articles. One qualifying or modifying factor here is that the sin is against *you*, not against God.

In the Lord's Prayer, we *ask* God to forgive us our trespasses. By asking forgiveness, we manifest repentance. We ask forgiveness for sins we are aware of and for those we are not aware of. But notice the rest of the petition: "Forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive those who trespass against us.*" As God forgives us *when we ask*, so we are to forgive others *when they ask*. It is an insult to God if we are more loving than He or if we are less forgiving than He.

If one is praying about a matter and has not forgiven a brother who has asked, an answer to the prayer should not be expected.

Mark 11:27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

Mark 11:28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

Mark 11:29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Mark 11:30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

Mark 11:31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From

heaven; he will say, **Why then did ye not believe him?**

Mark 11:32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

Mark 11:33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

What wisdom Jesus had! He would have spoken strongly and sternly to get his point across. John the Baptist likewise spoke strongly and criticized the scribes and Pharisees who came to him to be baptized because they were not in a proper heart condition. In a similar situation, we could say to an opposer, “My authority is the Word of God. What is your authority?” Incidentally, the people were listening to this interchange (Luke 20:1).

Q: Would this be a parallel example? If we had a witness effort and someone responded by mail very indignantly, wouldn't it be better to just drop the matter than to send back more literature and thus give the individual even more ammunition as the enemy? If we send more literature, aren't we casting our pearls before swine? And the literature could get into further wrong hands.

A: Yes. The swine are evidenced by the manner in which the questioning is done. Here Jesus knew their heart condition. Along this line, it is a waste of time to witness to one who is intoxicated.

Regarding the Prodigal Son, the father could see his son approaching in a humble posture—back bent, etc.—so he knew the son was repentant and hence he ran to meet him and forgave him. The Prodigal Son's attitude would have been manifest.

Mark 12:1 And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winevat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

Verses 1–9 treat one of several parables on the vineyard. In verse 1, Jesus “began to speak ... by parables [plural]”; that is, he spoke other parables on this occasion.

A “certain man” (Jehovah) planted a vineyard (the nation of Israel). God dealt more directly with Israel in Old Testament times. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2). He sent them judges, kings, and prophets, especially during the period of the kings. Priests dealt with religious matters and kings with civil matters. Isaiah 5:1–7 tells how God planted Israel as a vineyard, hedged (fenced) it, gathered out the stones, planted it with the *choicest* vine, built a tower in its midst, and made a winepress.

In time, however, God “went into a far country” in the sense that He distanced Himself from them after repeated disobedience. He was alienated from them for a while—until they got the lesson. Then in 536 BC some of the Jews returned to Israel under Ezra, and more returned later under Nehemiah. All of this happened before God sent His Son. When the nation rejected Jesus, the Jews were rejected as a people.

The “husbandmen” were the religious leaders. The “tower” would be a watchtower,

representing the office of the prophets. A prophet could see into the distance, the future, what would happen if corrective measures were not taken. All vineyards in ancient times were guarded to prevent the grapes from being stolen. From the high position of a watchtower, one could watch for an approaching enemy. Moses is one of the most notable prophets of the Old Testament. The Logos was the spiritual overseer; he is also called the "tower of the flock" (Micah 4:8). In Joshua 5:15, he was the angel, i.e., the "captain of the LORD's host." Under the Tabernacle arrangement the angel of the pillar cloud was the Logos. He was also the "sent of God." During the Christian Age, Jesus fills a similar role, but now the calling is to another condition.

Comment: God furnished Israel with everything possible to bring forth good fruit. He upheld His part of the bargain.

Mark 12:2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

Mark 12:3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

Verses 1–5 took place before Christ. Verse 2 would be early in Israel's history. The vineyard was the Promised Land, and the Israelites entered under Joshua. The "servant" was caught and beaten and sent away empty (without fruit).

Mark 12:4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

The second servant was stoned, wounded in the head, and sent away "shamefully handled." As the Logos, Jesus knew about things of which we are unaware. In the future, true history will be revealed, including sufferings during Christian and prior ages.

Mark 12:5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

The third servant was killed, and many others were beaten or killed. This shows a *progression* of more and more evil. John the Baptist was the last prophet and he was killed.

The "husbandmen" in Jesus' day at the First Advent were scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. Herod was their figurehead under the Roman yoke.

Mark 12:6 Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

The "wellbeloved" Son would be Jesus. God foreknew Jesus would be crucified. A parable is not an exact type but a story with lessons in it. A reality picture can be drawn from the parable but not necessarily from every detail.

Mark 12:7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

The scribes and Pharisees consulted together during the Passover season on how to apprehend and kill Jesus. The Pharisees felt that if they humiliated and killed Jesus,

the people would regard them in a higher light than before. “Cursed is he who hangs on a tree” was what they wanted. They thought that his death would kill his influence, his followers, and the religion and that it would cast fear into any who thought differently.

Jesus resuscitated Lazarus, Jairus’s daughter, and the young man on a bier being carried to a grave. And he healed *thousands*. Just in the things he did, he was head and shoulders over others. “If you cannot believe me, believe *my works*,” he said. His extraordinary words and actions should have convinced the people. Imagine restoring the limbs of lepers! This failure of the nation to recognize Jesus shows that when one is blind, nobody can remove that blindness except God. The individual is first brought to Jesus, and then the blindness can be further removed. Incidentally, according to tradition Lazarus became a disciple and went to another nation.

Jealousy was the root of the scribes’ and Pharisees’ problem. Like anger, jealousy has a blinding effect. The jealous person is so emotionally disturbed that he does not listen or see.

Comment: King Saul had an evil eye because he was *jealous* of David.

The husbandmen said, “This is the heir.” Jesus called himself “the Son of man,” and he was likened to the “second Adam,” that is, the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45). Just as Adam was created perfect and was the father of the human race, so Jesus came as a perfect man, the second Adam (1 Cor. 15:47). He should have been recognized. His miracles, spirit of reform, *constructive* criticism, words seasoned with salt, etc., should have convinced them. Moreover, the people expected a personal Messiah—and at that time. In contrast today, many Jews make Israel the Messiah, not an individual. A few Jews realize that Isaiah 53 is talking about a *personal* Messiah.

From a *human* standpoint, the reasoning of the husbandmen was uncannily wise. They thought killing Jesus would bring them more respect—especially killing him as an outcast. And they thought killing him would stop all future “pretenders” out of fear. They wanted to stop all talk of a resurrection. We can see why, when Jesus was raised, the brethren ran like wild men to tell the news.

Mark 12:8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

How did the husbandmen “kill him, and cast him out of the vineyard”? They *crucified* him *outside* the city walls, thus signifying his uncleanness in their sight: “Cursed be every man who hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). They would not allow Jesus to be put to death in the Holy City but killed him without the gate (like the bullock for sin). “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered *without the gate*” (Heb. 13:12).

Mark 12:9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

Those listening heard Jesus leading up to a climax. First, the prophets were sent and just beaten; later the treatment got worse, so the Lord of the vineyard sent His only Son. Those listening followed the story and entered into it. When the question was asked “What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?” the listeners replied: “He

will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others." Some may have said, "Amen!"

Note: The husbandmen will be *destroyed*. This is one evidence that those who paid hush money to silence the Roman guards about Jesus' resurrection may not be raised from the tomb. They sinned willfully against *light*.

The vineyard was given to "others," that is, to faithful Christians. Also, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will supplant the religious leadership. In principle, the same thing happens to the one-pound person; failing to use the one pound, he loses it and it is given to another.

Mark 12:10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

Mark 12:11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

These verses follow the very principled parable. Here Jesus used the Pyramid to condense the parable lessons about his rejection. Verses 10 and 11 are a quote from Psalm 118:22,23. In that Psalm "LORD" (*Jehovah*) is indicated with all caps. In the parable, Jesus was talking to the nation, to the professed people of God (not just to the scribes and Pharisees). Jesus holds the *people* responsible: "Have ye not read this scripture?" ("Israel" means "prince with God.")

The top stone was rejected because it was too large. And the scribes and Pharisees, in their jealousy, thought Jesus was too big for his britches. He was young—how could he know more than they? "He takes too much to himself" was their opinion. Hence they rejected the true top stone, and he became a stumbling stone. "This was the Lord's [God's] doing."

Mark 12:12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

The amazing thing is that the scribes and Pharisees *got the point*—they knew Jesus was talking about them, yet they persisted in their evil attitude. This proves that *not all* those who crucified Jesus did so in ignorance. Jesus was addressing the people, but the scribes and Pharisees who were listening understood that the parable referred to them. They could also see that the common people were getting the drift.

Mark 12:13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.

The scribes and Pharisees who had *just heard the parable* and were incensed looked for some of their members who would be better equipped to trap Jesus in his words. They wanted to openly rebuke him but feared the people, so they looked for other Pharisees to reason with Jesus and turn the populace against him.

Herodians were "religious" liberals in favor with King Herod. They were worldly-wise "politicians."

Mark 12:14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that

thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?

How wily! They complimented Jesus to throw him offguard. "We know you are preaching the truth. We are in agreement." With most people, flattery would work. "Master, we know you are fearless"—this is also complimentary, but what hypocrisy! They were preparing Jesus to answer right to the point, but arsenic was injected. Then came the thunderbolt: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?"

Mark 12:15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

They continued: "Shall we give [tribute], or shall we not give?" Jesus saw through their ulterior motive.

The common people felt the taxation at the hands of a foreign, heathen king was breaking their backs (Herod was not a true Jew), and they were waiting for Messiah to deliver them from the situation. Hence the question, preceded by flattery, was CAGEY! But Jesus turned the sympathy of the common people to himself and away from the scribes and Pharisees.

A "penny" was a denarius. This coin, which had Caesar's superscription on it, was used to pay tribute. Jesus' instruction to "bring me a penny" caused a pause, a break in thought.

Mark 12:16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.

Looking at the penny, Jesus asked, "Whose image is this?" A chorus answered: "Caesar's."

Mark 12:17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

What an outstanding reply! Part of our taxes go for war. We are conscientious objectors, but what the *government* does with the money is another matter. The government is responsible.

Mark 12:18 Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

Mark 12:19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Mark 12:20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

Mark 12:21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

Mark 12:22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

Mark 12:23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

The Sadducees presented this complicated proposition to Jesus to stumble him. A noticeable point is that the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection, yet their whole proposition was based on a resurrection. How hypocritical!

The Sadducees addressed Jesus as “Master” to flatter him and put him offguard. In verse 14, the Pharisees and the Herodians likewise began their remarks with “Master.”

Mark 12:24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

Mark 12:25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

Mark 12:26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

Compare Jesus’ reply in Luke 20:34–36. Luke adds the detail “when they attain unto *that age [beyond the Millennium].*” With Mark alone, it might seem as if the Millennium is the age being referred to. Then Mark adds a detail not contained in Luke, that is, Jesus’ criticism: “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?” and “Ye therefore do greatly err.” First a question, then a statement.

The Sadducees were supposed to be learned, but they were more politically minded and not too religious. Jesus’ answer exposed their ignorance of Scripture. And he answered their question with a question about Abraham. They asked a complicated question and he asked a simple question. He answered their question, but they did not answer his. Both the Sadducees and Jesus referred to what Moses had said.

In the Old Testament, God called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod. 3:15). For Moses, who lived later, to say this proved there would be a resurrection. And God Himself implied a resurrection by using this title *after* their deaths. If there is no resurrection, the statement would be a reflection on God.

The Sadducees did not believe in either a resurrection or angels (Acts 23:8). Jesus brought *both* into his answer. And both are mentioned and/or implied in the Pentateuch, which more Jews back there were familiar with.

Doctrine affects one’s mode of life. One who does not believe in a resurrection has no incentive to pursue righteousness. Why not eat, drink, and be merry if one perishes forever in the grave? Why suffer for righteousness? Believers, on the other hand, live for the next life. We get strength to obey God’s ordinances when we believe in the resurrection. Not believing in the resurrection greatly diminishes one’s respect for God’s power. There is a pun: The Sadducees do not believe in a resurrection; that is

why they are “Sad-you-see”!

Note: Jesus could have simply said that death ends the marriage contract, but instead he gave a much more comprehensive answer. Births, marriages, and deaths will occur in the Millennium but not beyond.

One should be forward to the forward, and weak to the weak. Jesus was forward to the Sadducees.

Mark 12:28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

Mark 12:29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

Mark 12:31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Compare Matthew 22:34–40. Although Matthew says that the questioner started with “Master” and that he “tempted” Jesus, Jesus commends him in Luke 12:34: “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.”

Mark 12:32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

Mark 12:33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Mark 12:34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

“Discreetly” is translated “wisely” in the NIV. Jesus meant that the scribe did not overextend himself—he just asked a simple question. A soft answer here turned way rebuke. The scribe appreciated Jesus’ answer.

The scribes were well-educated religious stenographers who were very familiar with the Law and had a *legal* viewpoint. In contrast, the Pharisees were religious instructors. The scribes were more technical.

How remarkable that Jesus *summed up the Ten Commandments in two commandments!* Some commandments are based on personal love for God (do not take His name in vain, hallow the sabbath, etc.), and some are based on love for neighbor. For example, “Thou shalt not steal” is love for neighbor because the stealing would be from a “neighbor.” The scribe who asked the question could not help being impressed at Jesus’ profound reply. And notice that Jesus linked the *two* together as *one* commandment. The question was, “Which is the first [greatest] commandment of

all?" Jesus put *two* commandments *together*: love for God and love for fellowman. Stated another way, the greatest commandment would be love for *God* and love for *God's instruction* on behavior toward a neighbor.

Comment: Jesus was really saying that *all* the commandments are important.

Reply: Yes, the condensation embraced *all*.

Comment: Matthew 22:40 elaborates further: "On these two commandments hang *all* the law and the prophets."

Reply: Yes, "the law and the prophets" are the inspired word of the Old Testament, and 75 percent of the comments of the prophets were on *misbehavior* and *lack* of love toward God. Some have difficulty accepting the prophets because they criticized the populace, who were supposed to be the people of God. But the criticism and warning were *real love*—concern for the future destiny of the people. *A true friend warns.*

We are to discern evil. We pass from babyhood to maturity when we can discern between good and evil. But we cannot see the difference between the two unless we meditate between right and wrong. On the surface, one party may appear right, but there can be extenuating circumstances to swing judgment in another direction.

Comment: In Matthew 22:35–40, the one asking Jesus which commandment is the greatest is called a lawyer and he "tempted" Jesus with the question.

Reply: A lawyer could be a scribe—hence that can be the same account as in Mark 12.

Comment: Because of Jesus' reply in Mark 12:33, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God," it would seem that this lawyer-scribe had better motives than the one trying to *trap* him. He was merely trying to test Jesus' wisdom and then was so *impressed* with the answer that he exulted: "Master, thou hast said the truth. To love God with all the heart, understanding, soul, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself, is better than *whole* burnt offerings and sacrifices."

The scribe used Samuel's reasoning: "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22). Saul was given specific instructions to destroy the enemy and his goods, but he disobeyed by saving the best of the cattle. He ostensibly saved the cream of the crop to devote to God, but the sacrifice was not acceptable because of disobedience. Also, Saul was not to accept the role of a priest and do the sacrificing. We should be careful lest we be subtly influenced in this direction. We might desire to appear to others as magnanimous and loving and yet be a stench to God by being more loving than He, more forgiving. It is a lifetime work to be a Christian.

Mark 12:35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?

Mark 12:36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Mark 12:37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

Jesus was quoting Psalm 110:1, “The LORD [God] said to my Lord [Jesus], Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Why did Jesus ask the question “How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?” *Volume 5* treats Psalm 110:1 extensively. In the *flesh* at his First Advent, Jesus was the “*Son of David*,” but the *glorified* Christ is *David’s Lord*. Jesus was the *Son of God* (1) in his prehuman existence, (2) at his First Advent, and (3) now as the risen Christ in glory.

Jesus claimed to be the *SON* of God at his First Advent, not God. The concept of Jesus being God developed in later centuries as a false doctrine of Christianity. God came *representatively* by sending Jesus. Jesus is the *One sent of God*.

The Jews recognized that Jesus was the Son of David, but they considered his claim to be the Son of God as blasphemy. Yet he performed many miracles, spoke as no other man, was of the lineage of David, and did the things expected of Messiah. With their lips they said the Messiah was the Son of David, but when one came with all the evidences of being Messiah, that was blasphemy in their sight.

In Mark 12:36 there are two “Lords”—Jehovah and Jesus. The King James Version correctly has the first “LORD” in all caps as in the Old Testament. If there are not two Lords, one being superior to the other, then the “Lord” talked to himself.

David called Jesus “Lord”—how then can the Lord Jesus be his Son? Messiah was to be the Son of David and yet be the superior “Lord” of David under Jehovah. Thus Jesus was helping the common people to discern.

Comment: In Acts 2:34,35 Peter used this same Scripture to convert many.

Reply: Yes, he called to mind what previously had affected and penetrated his thinking. They had killed the Messiah, who was the Son of David. It is significant that the scribes and Pharisees did not try to show Jesus’ lineage was fraudulent. They knew he was of that lineage; otherwise, they would have properly refuted him on that basis.

Mark 12:38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,

Mark 12:39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

Mark 12:40 Which devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

“In his doctrine” (verse 38) indicates that these verses are a *condensation* of the sermon Jesus gave. If behavior belies one’s profession of teacher, his words should be discredited. Jesus condemned the practice of the scribes entering an emotional situation at the time of death and urging widows to give money or property “to the Lord.” What was given to the Temple added to the revenue of the priesthood.

Q: Wouldn’t you think the reference to “long clothing” would be obvious for both Protestants and Catholics?

A: Yes. The clergy wear crosses around their necks and backward collars.

Comment: The long clothing is such an obvious *outward* sign, whereas love of salutations can be a more inward pride.

Mark 12:41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

Mark 12:42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

Mark 12:43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

Mark 12:44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

Jesus sat and witnessed, or observed, the people putting money in the treasury. Many who were rich made a show (to be seen of men), casting in much money. Then along came a widow who cast in a tiny two mites. (A farthing was part of the price of a bird, the cheapest offering.) In the Lord's eyes, she threw in more than *all* the others *combined*. What a powerful philosophical lesson! The rich gave of their surplus—she gave all she had, all her living.

Q: This incident has been misunderstood by some who think they should give on a regular basis to the point where, for even the necessities of life, they are dependent on others. Shouldn't this type of giving be a special occasion and not a regular practice? For example, she could have had something on her heart she was particularly thankful for and thus gave till it hurt on that occasion.

A: Yes. If we gave that way all the time, we would not be able to live. Some are brought to such a low estate that they might have only a few dollars to their name and nothing in the bank. Then they give away all of that day's living, knowing they will work the next day and get a little income.

When the widow cast in *all* her living, she had nothing left for food, etc., for that day. We should not give like that as a general practice because we are to "owe no man anything" and provide things for our family that are decent in the sight of all men (Rom. 12:17; 13:8).

Mark 13:1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!

Mark 13:2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

In answer to a disciple's question, Jesus said not one Temple stone would be left. He gave this reply as he went out of the Temple. Then there was a time lapse before he got to the Mount of Olives and the four came to him privately.

Q: What would have prompted a disciple to make this statement?

A: The vantage point for viewing the Temple was a factor. Perhaps the day was clear, causing a sheen on the structure. The Temple was adorned with precious stones and gifts (Luke 21:5).

Jesus would have been on the *east* side of the Temple near the Golden Gate. When the destruction occurred, everything was leveled with the exception of the stones in the *Western Wall*.

Comment: A *Diaglott* footnote says, “Every stone was white and firm and about 25 cubits in length, 8 in height, and 12 in breadth”—these were *huge* stones.

Reply: Yes, a remaining stone in the Western Wall is about 35 feet long, but the higher stones were not that large, just the foundation stones.

Mark 13:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

Mark 13:4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

The four asked Jesus, “When shall these things be?” The “things” were (1) the destruction of the Temple, (2) Jesus’ Second Presence, and (3) the end of the age (Matt. 24:3). All of these “things” were to be fulfilled at different times.

Comment: Since the apostles asked about Jesus’ return or presence, it would seem they understood he would leave them.

Reply: We get only minimal information—what the Holy Spirit called to remembrance for the written record. In other words, the Holy Spirit was *selective* in calling to mind experiences and words. One purpose: Those who reason superficially will get only a superficial understanding.

While Jesus personally favored Peter, Andrew, James, and John, other disciples were no doubt within earshot of his reply. For example, Matthew recalls in much detail the Master’s words, so he must have overheard the reply. Of the four, none wrote down Jesus’ words, although Mark wrote later at Peter’s instruction. John did not mention the discourse in his Gospel. Luke got his Gospel from Paul, who obtained the information from James and Peter. Sometimes a calm, interested listener gets more than the one directly involved in the conversation.

“What shall be the [main] sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?” This sign would apply to the very end of the age. The disciples seem to have understood the *parousia* part, and Jesus addressed this—but also the very end of the age. Without the Holy Spirit the disciples would not have grasped the details, however. Jesus was a man at the First Advent—taller and more noble but a man. If he came again, they wanted to know how to recognize him. They asked from the standpoint of being *natural* men, and they wanted to know the time and circumstances.

What was “the sign” (*singular*)? Matthew Chapters 24 and 25 follow the question(s). Remember, Jesus was speaking to *natural* men. “The sign” will be the one everyone will recognize: “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with

great power and glory” (verse 26). Even that is figurative, but *natural* men will perceive the judgment—for example, God’s deliverance of the Holy Remnant and the defeat of Gog will clearly be an evidence of divine power. Matthew 24:30 reads, “And then shall appear *the sign* of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

The most significant portion of Jesus’ words, however, pertained to the *spiritual*, which, when the apostles got the Holy Spirit, would come to remembrance and be understood. Jesus was telling them five or six different principles. One was TIME. He mentioned *many* events, suggesting a passage of time. Although the Matthew 24 sermon is long, it is abbreviated—Jesus said much more. The discussions probably took about three hours, and Jesus would have paused between statements to let them sink in.

Mark 13:5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:

Jesus started out: “Take heed lest any man deceive you.” Not only would many troubles lead to the final trouble, but *there would be deceptions* in connection with Jesus’ Second Advent. Jesus was preparing the disciples.

Q: Wouldn’t the disciples have had some idea of Jesus’ going away and then returning?

A: Yes. He started to instruct them at the Mount of Transfiguration and then added more details little by little. They understood he would die but did not understand *why*. They were puzzled about his statements.

Mark 13:6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Here the word “Christ” is italic but not in Matthew 24:5. If it were italic (supplied) in all instances, we would have trouble explaining that Jesus said he was “I am.”

This verse has two applications:

1. False Christs (individuals) would come claiming to be Christ and deceive many.
2. Some would come saying “Jesus is Christ” but have *false gospels*, e.g., Papacy. The *systems* deceive people by the millions, whereas Bar Kochba and other *individuals* deceive thousands. Papacy claims that the pope is the vicegerent of Christ and that they are setting up the Kingdom. They had a (false) millennium from 799 to 1799 and expect to get control gain. The gorgeous robes, the clergy’s prostrating themselves before the pope’s feet and kissing his ring, etc., all hoodwinked the people into thinking the pope is Christ’s representative.

Mark 13:7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.

“Rumours of wars” would be fear of war, rumors that an attack is coming. The Cold War was “rumours of wars”—the buildup of arms on both sides caused fear. “But the

[final] end [of the present evil world or the Gospel Age] shall not be yet."

Jesus was giving a *general, overall* thumbnail description of the Gospel Age. False Christs, wars, rumors of wars, etc., all suggest *time*. Yet, surprisingly, when Jesus was resurrected, the disciples asked, "Are you going to establish the Kingdom *now*?"

Mark 13:8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.

Nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be many earthquakes and famines and troubles—in addition to the wars, rumors of wars, and deceptions. All these are the "beginnings of sorrows," travail, birth pangs (*plural*). "Troubles" include Christians being put to death for their faith (verses 9 and 11).

Mark 13:9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

"Take heed to yourselves." In verse 5 Jesus said, "Take heed lest any man deceive you." Now he says, "Watch yourselves."

Christians in the early Church were beaten in synagogues. Later Christians were delivered up to church councils. In the Middle Ages, they were brought before kings, rulers, and dignitaries. Christians are to make sure they grow and prosper spiritually so that they can withstand this type of persecution.

The purpose of being "brought before ... kings" is to be "a testimony against them." How? The execution and persecution of innocent Christians reveals the leaders' evil heart conditions and the necessity for the governments of this world to fall. For example, when evil rulers come forth from the grave, the enormity of their crimes will be manifest. To be a "testimony," their deeds will be *seen*, probably on film. On film will be the victim, the vicious crime, the murderer, how it affected the family, etc. Then it will be seen how and why God deals with such evildoers. A testimony that is visual, written, verbal, and/or in memory will be against the persecutors, and retribution will be given.

Mark 13:10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

"The gospel [of the Kingdom—Matt. 24:14] must first be published [preached] among all nations." The "gospel of the kingdom" is the high calling of the *heavenly* Kingdom. The Kingdom is a government of kings. "My *kingdom* is not of this world," said Jesus. "Take up your cross and follow *me*," said Jesus—that would be the "gospel" aspect.

The gospel has been preached whether or not it is understood. The Bible has been printed in almost all tongues in all nations. Bible societies started a little after 1799 and were preparation for the Harvest in flooding the world with Bibles.

We should give credit to missionaries. True, we have been blessed with much truth, but many made their calling and election sure without knowing of the sin offering, the Lord's presence, and other present-truth doctrines. The great bulk of Christians were faithful *without* present truth. With so much information available to us in this

country, we are *more responsible* for the truth that is due.

The parallel verse, Matthew 24:14, reads: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” The “end” is the Harvest.

Mark 13:11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

This has been true all down through the age. “Take no [anxious] thought beforehand.” Take thought, but do not be overly concerned. We must study *in advance* so that the Holy Spirit will bring thoughts to remembrance and give us the words. *Prepare now*, and then, at that time, the Holy Spirit will direct our words. It may not be the most fluent sermon, for we will not convince the opposition, but we want to speak from the heart and not be hypocritical. God will give strength to His people. *Lay hold* on these promises in *faith*.

Stephen was not spared despite his eloquent sermon. He was much like the Apostle Paul—they reasoned similarly. Ironically, Paul watched the stoning of Stephen.

Q: At the end of the age, won't this verse be especially true so that those not normally eloquent will be made eloquent by the Holy Spirit?

A: Yes, a final witness will prosper for a short time. But, remember, Jesus had little to say when it was time for him to die.

Mark 13:12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

Natural family members would betray one another. The father betraying the son seems especially dreadful, because if the reverse were true and a young child betrayed the parent, there would be more chance of *some* excuse.

Mark 13:13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

The victory is to *endure* and not to recant. Be *steadfast*.

Mark 13:14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:

The “abomination of desolation” is the doctrine of the Mass, transubstantiation (Dan. 11:31). This doctrine teaches that the bread/wafer and the wine are literally changed into the body and blood of Christ by the priest's pronouncement of some words. The “desolation” aspect is that the Mass sacrifices Christ afresh, and thus it makes null and void his sacrifice, which was *once* for *all*. Jesus' sacrifice is *ever* efficacious, *continual*—it is called the “daily sacrifice” in Daniel 11:31, meaning “continual.” “And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away

the daily [*continual*] sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. 11:31).

The doctrine of the Mass reincarnates Jesus and has him die again symbolically over and over and over. One seeming justification is the use of the word "daily" in "daily sacrifice." Some would claim, then, that it had to be performed daily, but the thought is of the *one continually efficacious* sacrifice of Jesus.

King Ahaz had an altar from Damascus copied and put in the Temple in Jerusalem (2 Kings 16:10–18). Then he took the Lord's altar for his own personal altar. Since the altar pictures the sacrifice of Christ, this disobedient act suggests the Mass in antitype. The foreign altar was instituted *instead of* the true altar. The altar was the first article to be seen in the Tabernacle and the Temple. Purpose: to point out the sacrifice of Christ *first*. In Ezekiel's Temple, the altar will be the mathematical center of the whole complex.

The *usual* application of verse 14 and Daniel 11:31 is a reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, but that occurred about two centuries BC and Jesus speaks of the "abomination of desolation" as being *future* to the First Advent. Between 171 and 168 BC, Antiochus, a Syrian king, entered Jerusalem forcibly and stopped the Jewish sacrifices to God in the Temple. In their place, he put an idol of the god Jupiter. Some apply the fulfillment of verse 14 and Daniel 11:31 to the Romans, who placed an obscene idol in Jerusalem, but this application is also incorrect. The defilement took place between 314 (the birth of the man child) and 539 (the man of sin). The exact year cannot be defined.

"Let him that readeth understand"; that is, "let the one with a hearing ear understand." "Then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains." Luke gives a double application with a *natural* (primary) fulfillment occurring just prior to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in AD 69–70. Matthew and Mark concentrate on *spiritual* Judea. The clue to Luke's primary fulfillment being *past* is: "When ye see the armies encompass Jerusalem round about, Then let them that be in Judaea flee [paraphrase]." In AD 69, the Roman army was suddenly making a cordon around Jerusalem to capture and destroy it, but then the Roman emperor died. Vespasian, who had initiated or ordered the siege, rushed back to Rome because he was a leading contender to be the new emperor. Hence the siege was momentarily relaxed under Titus, his son. Christians who obeyed Jesus' counsel fled immediately, before the cordon was tightened. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto" (Luke 21:20,21).

Fleeing from Judea to the mountains corresponds to fleeing or coming out of mystic Babylon at this end of the age. As those in Babylon are enlightened as to the real role of Papacy (and her daughters), particularly in the near future, they should instantly, *as fast as possible*, get out of the system. *The time is short*.

The call to come out of Babylon began in 1878. As we get nearer and nearer to the time of judgment for Papacy, those who become aware of the signs of the time must flee or be involved in its violent destruction. Once one sees the enormity of the doctrine of the abomination of desolation and the false claim of Papacy, he is responsible to

disassociate himself.

The *beginning* of the understanding of the identity of the man of sin was roughly the time of Martin Luther, the time of the Reformation. In 1611 the King James foreword spoke of Papacy as the man of sin.

Two Sets of Plagues

7 last plagues (Rev. 16)	3 plagues in one day (Rev. 18:8)—death, mourning, famine
Plagues of <i>discomfiture</i>	Plagues of <i>death</i> (actual death of system)

Example of discomfiture: The doctrines of hellfire and the Trinity, when revealed as false to a person, cause an uncomfortable feeling (a “plague”), a feeling of not really pleasing God, when that individual does not leave Babylon.

Q: Please explain “mountains” (plural).

A: Usually those who come out of Babylon do not come out to clear light. They leave one church for another and another in their search for more truth and a more spiritual atmosphere. Thus there are *degrees* of separation.

Mark 13:15 **And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house:**

The “house” would be the nominal Church, the house of worship. Christians “on the housetop” are those who are more alert—the cream of the crop.

Regarding the literal fleeing at the time of Titus, obedient Christians had to flee *immediately*, for the siege was relaxed only *very briefly*. Those who saw the siege relaxed and wrongly concluded that conditions were changing—and thus delayed and did not flee—were caught in the siege when it was tightened and Jerusalem was destroyed. In other words, if they did not flee immediately, they could not flee. What was the literal advice? Do not try to take all your belongings with you. *Flee in haste!* And spiritually, if one does not act quickly, he begins to succumb, to compromise, to temporize. After a while, he does not come out of Babylon, generally speaking.

Christians on the rooftop are the cream of the crop in the nominal system. Those outside the houses, the denominations, should not join a denomination once their eyes are opened. They should not go into Babylon once they see its true colors. Those who hesitate, reason on, or debate the issue jeopardize their safety. There is only one wise course: Get out! The closer we get to the end of the age, the more acute will be the urgency to get out.

Mark 13:16 **And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.**

The “field” is the Christian world, for example, the missionary field. Again the advice is not to procrastinate or debate the issue.

Mark 13:17 **But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!**

“Woe to them that are with child [pregnant] ... in those days.” In other words, “Woe

to those who are nurturing others toward consecration. Those who are not yet consecrated but are being nurtured toward consecration are spiritual “fetuses.” A pregnant woman feels a responsibility toward the fetus she is carrying.

“Woe ... to them that give suck in those days” would mean “Woe to those who are nurturing spiritual babes.” Those who are already consecrated but are still on milk (hence receiving suck) are spiritual “babes.” Just as the natural mother is concerned for those she is nurturing, so many Christians feel they do more good by staying behind to nurture the children, and they fail to realize God is calling them to action. They are too attached to the receptive babes.

Comment: The hellfire doctrine is very damaging because its adherents feel that if they do not stay and do the nurturing, the unconsecrated (the yet unborn) will go into eternal torment.

Mark 13:18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

What is “winter”?

Comment: Matthew 24:20 adds the phrase “neither on the sabbath day.” The warning is, Do not delay until the “winter” time of trouble during the antitypical “sabbath day,” which began with the Jubilee in 1874.

Fleeing has always been difficult. Even in the Pastor’s day, those who fled the nominal systems were viewed as cults, for he was not an ordained minister and did not believe in hellfire and the Trinity.

When the “winter” and the “sabbath day” are *contemporary*, then those who flee at that time, “in those days” (verse 17), will be Great Company at best. “The harvest [of the Little Flock] is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” will be their situation (Jer. 8:20). The “sabbath” has started, but the “winter” is *yet future*. The warning is about *both—the two—occurring together*.

Mark 13:19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

The trouble must exceed the trouble caused by the fallen angels in Noah’s day. The trouble does not refer to the Flood, for the Flood killed the people and was quick—no protracted agony. The trouble was the *120 years* in which the fallen angels materialized and took wives of all they chose, even of those who already had earthly husbands. The fallen angels were superior to humans both in stature and in knowledge. They had the benefit of knowledge accumulated over thousands of years. The good angels came to earth, materialized, performed an errand, and then dematerialized and went back to heaven right away. To the contrary, the fallen angels became enamored with women when they materialized; they lingered here and did not return to heaven, their first estate. Human men were powerless to defend against the fallen angels, for they could not fight or use weapons against beings who could dematerialize at will and had superior power. The 120 years of violence and lust *grew worse daily*. During this time, the fallen angels brutalized mankind. Meanwhile Noah preached righteousness, but the people, except for his family, turned a deaf ear.

The expression “the beginning of the creation which God created” refers to *human* creation, not to the Logos, and hence is a modified statement.

What could be worse in the future? Conditions will be similar because Noah’s day is given as an illustration, “As it was in the days of Noah, *so shall it be* in the days of the Son of man.” Satan and evil prosper more and more as the Harvest period continues. Conditions will continue to worsen until the winter Time of Trouble comes. Then will occur *God’s* judgment, the antitypical Flood. Incidentally, if Satan is being bound *now*, and if Jesus is *presently* exercising his power to bind Satan, why are evil, lust, and violence *increasing*?

Q: Are the 120 years that Noah preached while he was building the Ark considered the great Time of Trouble?

A: No. The 120 years preceded the trouble. The Flood was the trouble *God* brought. There is a difference between (1) the trouble of the fallen angels and mankind and (2) *God’s* trouble. The trouble between the fallen angels and mankind is what we are having today. *God’s* wrath, *future*, will stop the trouble. In Noah’s day, trouble came from the fallen angels and from mankind, who were infected with the virus of sin. The human race became more and more depraved until they were almost like the fallen angels themselves.

The “Ark” got more and more finished as the 120 years continued, and so it is with the antitypical “Ark” in the 120-year Harvest period. Noah started with a rough frame, added planks and other materials, and finally the bitumen, but it had *never rained*. If we had lived back there, would we have heeded Noah? Only if we had *faith*. Faith is a scarce commodity.

None of the Old Testament prophets were well liked. They were all critics. Jesus said, “So persecuted they the [true] prophets.” If a speaker criticized certain things from the platform today, how popular would he be? He would probably not be invited again, for people, even brethren, like smooth things. “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matt. 5:11,12).

Mark 13:20 **And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.**

“The elect” are the Very Elect, the Little Flock, the 144,000. (In the present life, the “elect” are all the consecrated. In the final analysis, there will be only 144,000.)

The word “sake” and the apostrophe “s” on “elect’s” should be omitted, for they change the meaning. Therefore, the verse should read “but by [or through] the elect, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.” The Little Flock will *do* the action—they are not recipients of the action. The elect will be *with Jesus* during “winter.” Jesus was not here in AD 69–70, but he did suffer the Cross.

Comment: The parallel text in Matthew 24 uses *future* tense. As written here in *past* tense, the verse has to be considered as God would see a *completed* action. He sees the end from the beginning.

Reply: Our perspective is to look forward. But God can see that which is yet future as though it is past. He sees prophecy fulfilled before it occurs. His omniscience is so great He sees the future as a past event.

All would perish if The Christ did not intervene. God promised Noah after the Flood that never again would such a proportion of all mankind perish, and He gave the bow in the cloud as a sign. Without divine intervention no flesh would be saved.

“Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’s anger” (Zeph. 2:3). Those who do not join in the violence but are humble and meek are more apt to survive because the trouble will be primarily on the heads of the wicked (Jer. 23:19). The violent will be fighting one another. Advice: “Get out of the way of the Lord’s steamroller.”

God promises us escape from *spiritual* disease only, from *spiritual* death, *if we are faithful*.

Mark 13:21 **And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not:**

“If any man shall say to you, Lo, *here* is Christ; or, lo, he is *there*; believe him not.” This verse suggests that there will be a purported appearance of Christ at the end of the age—and in a *specific geographic location*. *Do not believe* such a report or declaration.

Comment: The words “here” and “there” imply some will claim he is right in their midst, *visibly with them* in a physical location. Others will just hear the report.

Satan himself may purport to be the Messiah. Paul said, “Though an *angel* from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). In other words, even though an angel from heaven should make such a declaration and appear miraculously in the form of flesh, *believe it not!* This Scripture in Galatians suggests the possibility of Satan appearing as Christ.

It is almost certain that Satan will appear in the flesh at the end of the Kingdom (Isa. 14:10–19). He would appear in the Little Season when he leads the disobedient to Jerusalem (Rev. 20:3,7–9).

“Believe *it* not” (Matt. 24:26) and “believe *him* not” are both correct. “It” refers to the message; “him,” to the personage.

Mark 13:22 **For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.**

A purported visible Christ at the end of the age will be one of the “*false Christs*” trying to seduce all, even the very elect. The *plural* form suggests there will be more than one such declaration or deception. The *plural* form also raises the possibility of the “here” and “there” appearances. Many think Jesus will come from the desert.

Any purported sighting of an Ancient Worthy before the due time would also be a deception, for none can appear until after the consecrated are off the scene and the

blood is released. False “prophets” would be lesser personages than a purported Christ—perhaps a New Testament prophet, an entirely new prophet, or an Old Testament prophet.

The point is that *Jesus will not be seen* as a flesh being at his Second Advent. Any such sighting is false.

“Signs” are *visual* deceptions. Jannes and Jambres, Old Testament magicians, duplicated some of Moses’ “signs” (2 Tim. 3:8; Exod. 7:11). “Wonders” are *audible* untruths, called “lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9). Under hypnosis, people sometimes narrate events of the past with dates, names, and places that can be verified. But that does not mean they lived previously. These are *miraculous verbal lying wonders*.

Verse 22 is saying that the majority opinion on subjects concerning present and future conditions will not be the true interpretation. Therefore, we are to look for something that has the *ring of truth* and is *not the majority opinion*. The right opinion will be a minority opinion. In other words, the Great Company class will be at least momentarily deceived. Warning: Do not be deceived by a majority opinion—and especially if it is a *worldly* opinion, an opinion held by the world.

Mark 13:23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

Jesus has foretold *all things necessary* to keep us from being deceived, so “take heed.” The opposite of not taking heed is to be careless, to not watch. Such individuals are not even interested in watching. This warning is *REAL*, not vain. “Behold” indicates that if one does not watch but is indifferent to prophecy, he is in danger and is failing. Jesus’ warning counteracts the Laodicean message or attitude. Those who feel rich and full will not watch.

False Christs and false prophets will arise in connection with the nominal Church—purporting to be true prophets. Those not taking heed may assume that such a one is a resurrected faithful one of the past.

An incident in 1 Kings 13 is pertinent. When the prophet was told to perform his errand and return home directly—that is, not to tarry—and another prophet intercepted him and invited him to come and dine, saying the Lord had ordered it, the second prophet could have been telling the truth. It is possible God had an angel appear to the first prophet, but He had previously given explicit instructions to the first prophet to the effect: “Watch, lest you be deceived. Do not let anything deter you.” God allows such *tests* with us too. Adam was tested with the tree and its fruit. As with Adam and Eve, so with us—Satan can appear as an angel of light.

Comment: We are similarly tested. If we take a strong view on the Bible teaching on love, other brethren will say we are too harsh. They say they would rather err on the side of mercy than be too strict. They truly believe they are right and we are wrong. But our test is to be faithful to what we know the Scriptures teach. Do not deviate.

Reply: The only safe way is to try to understand God’s Word and thinking. Satan tempted Jesus with *Scripture*, but Jesus knew the application was otherwise and was faithful. Scripture is a *lifetime* study. RUN to WIN the race. Runners and athletes endure great privations, and so should we. The high calling is the most serious

exercise. He who controls his spirit is greater than a general who captures ten cities.

The point of prophecy is to show or reveal things to come *before* they actually occur. To be “satisfied with the Harvest message” and not have an interest in the Book of Revelation is a dangerous condition.

Comment: In the prophetic meeting on Jesus’ Last Week held in the Detroit area a few years ago, it was pointed out that Matthew 24 is often called “Our Lord’s Great Prophecy.” If that is the Lord’s *great* prophecy, then the Book of Revelation, with 22 chapters, is the “Lord’s *Greatest* Prophecy.” Revelation is the same theme as Matthew 24 but *much expanded*.

Reply: Yes, and Revelation is from Jesus too—but in this case from the glorified Lord directly. Revelation and Matthew 24 both speak about the whole Gospel Age, but Revelation has more detail.

Mark 13:24 **But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,**

What “tribulation”? Pastor Russell applied the tribulation to 1799, the French Revolution, and said the literal signs in the heavens were in 1780 and 1833, but 1780 was *before* the French Revolution and hence that phenomenon cannot fulfill Mark 13:24. The Pastor said that after the 1,260 days, these two natural signs happened, but one sign occurred *before* the tribulation.

What about verse 18 and the “winter” time of trouble? Verse 18 pertains to the forced flight from Babylon—*Babylon’s* winter time of trouble, which will lead to the fall of governments and up to, but not including, Jacob’s Trouble. In other words, “winter” extends from Babylon’s fall to Jacob’s Trouble. Those who are of the Very Elect will not enter that tribulation at all.

“The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.” These phenomena will occur after the “tribulation” starts, after the Time of Trouble has commenced.

Mark 13:25 **And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.**

Sun will be darkened.	}	These are more or
Moon will not give light.	}	less the same thing
Stars of heaven will fall.	}	but viewed from
Powers in heaven will be shaken.	}	different perspectives.

In other words, the nominal ecclesiastical heavens will fall into disgrace. Both ecclesiastical and government leaders will cease to function, but the *main thrust* of the darkening will be on the *nominal* Church.

The madness, violence, and trouble will be so great that the people will not look to the true gospel until after Jacob’s Trouble. Instead, they will curse *their* god and *their* king (Isa. 8:21). Only after Jacob’s Trouble will the world be enlightened and things stabilize.

Mark 13:26 **And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with**

great power and glory.

“And then shall they [the world] see the Son of man coming in the clouds [of trouble] with great power and glory.” In other words, the trouble will reveal the Son of man when it climaxes in Jacob’s Trouble. Then shall the world know, from that day onward, that a supernatural power, Messiah’s Kingdom, has commenced. “They shall know that I am the LORD. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel” (Ezek. 39:6b,7).

Comment: Matthew 24 helps in saying they (the world) shall see “the *sign* [the *proof*] of the Son of man.” Also, in Matthew 24:30 “great” is before “glory,” so if Matthew 24:30 and Mark 13:26 are combined, the Son of man will come in the clouds of heaven with GREAT *power* and GREAT *glory*. There is a double emphasis.

Reply: Yes, and the great power and great glory are future, not in 1874, as indicated in the *Volumes* (and later corrected). The “sign” will be seen at the climax of Jacob’s Trouble, with the stopping of the trouble and all the miracles to be performed. One miracle will be a visual hologram of the Crucifixion over the Mount of Olives at the time God saves the Holy Remnant.

Mark 13:27 **And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.**

“And then” does not necessarily mean consecutive events when used (verses 21, 26, 27). Verse 27 does not follow verse 26 in fulfillment. Verse 26 pertains to the world, verse 27 to the Very Elect, who are gathered *before* the tribulation: “Pray that ye may be found worthy to escape” the trouble (Luke 21:36).

Notice that the elect will be gathered “from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.” Matthew 24:31 says “from one end of heaven to the other.” The Gospels give different perspectives.

“From the uttermost part of the *earth*” would be from the four corners of the earth, from the *entire* earth. This suggests a focus point, a pivotal or compass point. The elect will be gathered from all over the earth to a *specific place*; i.e., they will be gathered to *earth’s atmosphere* where Jesus and the raised saints already are. The saints who are in the “uttermost part of the earth” are still here in the flesh. All will first be gathered together in earth’s atmosphere before going to the wedding *as a group*.

The raised saints are being tutored, but at some point the instruction will end. Probably when that time comes, there will be a little interval of time during which they will go into that part of earth’s atmosphere where they can view not only world events down here but their former homelands.

Then, when the time comes for the wedding, all the saints—those raised and those down here—will be gathered together in earth’s atmosphere preparatory to going as a company to the heaven of heavens where the Father is. The ones down here will be invisibly raptured—caught up in the air to meet the Lord. Jesus is the centerpiece. Wherever he is, all will be gathered to him to go to meet the Father.

Comment: In other words, this verse has to do with a *point in time*, not a period of time, and it pertains to the *rapture* of the feet members.

Reply: Yes, they will be gathered from various locations to where the risen Lord is, and the risen saints, knowing it is time for the wedding, will also be gathered to Jesus.

Q: Are the “angels” literal angels who will be sent as messengers at that time?

A: Yes. In Matthew 24:31, the Pastor said the “angels” were down here and the elect were being gathered to the truth; they feed on the dead humanity of Christ (the carcass). But when all three Gospels are considered, sometimes the carcass seems to be above, in the heavenly realm. One Gospel suggests the heavenly garner or barn is down here; another has it beyond the veil.

The 13th chapter of Mark contains both *points of time* and the *Harvest period of time*. The chapter starts with a point in time, 1878, when the fig tree put forth its leaves. Then comes a progression during the Harvest period. We “know that summer [the Kingdom] is nigh [near]” because we see the end-time signs being fulfilled during the Harvest period, but the consecrated will not be here when this summer occurs.

Comment: Verses 26, 27, and 28 are all separate events and in reverse time sequence. Verse 26 pertains to the miraculous revealment in Jacob’s Trouble in connection with the deliverance of the Holy Remnant. Verse 27 goes back in time to the rapture and gathering to go to the wedding. Verse 28 goes back even more to 1878.

The ideal study would be with all those present having perfect understanding and each one contributing comments, so that the subject is covered from all perspectives.

Q: Do you think that, according to truth then due, meetings were more like that in the early Church because of their mechanical gifts (the gift of remembrance, prophecy, etc.)? Comments must have come in from all angles for a very edifying study.

A: Yes, the studies back there were sensational and rewarding. Look at conditions: It was an agrarian society with no buses, trains, or automobiles, etc. With the brethren having to travel 25, 30, or more miles on foot or horse to get to meetings, they were rewarded for their efforts and because most could meet only once a week. Moreover, God would have given them strength to travel in inclement weather, especially the older brethren. Probably they slept soundly to regroup their strength.

Mark 13:28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

The “fig tree” is the nation of Israel. Proofs are as follows:

1. Jeremiah 24—The people of Israel were likened unto good and bad figs.
2. Jesus cursed the fig tree for not bringing forth fruit.
3. Song 2:13—“The fig tree putteth forth her green figs.”
4. Habakkuk 3:17—“The fig tree shall not blossom” until after the Great Company is developed.

The fig tree can also represent the Church, for a fig is *filled* with seeds. This shows a

relationship with the New Covenant to be made with Israel. And “fig leaves” are a symbol of justification. Adam and Eve used fig leaves to cover their nakedness. God made the Law Covenant with Israel as a way of dealing with their sins and typically cleansing them each year through animal sacrifices and other means.

Chronological Development of Justification

1. Adam and Eve were partially justified by fig leaves.
2. God justified the Ancient Worthies (i.e., *individuals*) by faith.
3. The Law Covenant gave typical justification to the *nation* of Israel. The (Old) Law Covenant is a type of the New (Law) Covenant.
4. God will justify the world of mankind through the New Covenant to be made with Israel in the Kingdom.

Comment: That fits beautifully with Jesus’ finding Nathanael under the *fig* tree. Nathanael was an Israelite indeed, and the fig tree represents both Israel and justification for the sincere Israelite.

Depending on climate and place, at a certain time of the year, the fig tree “branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves.” Spiritually, Israel put forth leaves in 1878 when Jews were allowed to purchase land (Petatikva, “Door of Hope”) after 1,845 years. Disraeli, the first *Jewish* prime minister of England, negotiated an agreement with Russia and the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire whereby Jews could purchase land. In 1917 the Balfour Declaration furthered this arrangement.

Comment: The fig leaves *preceded* the animal skin coverings of Adam and Eve, so that would fit God’s plan too. The nation of Israel was provided with typical justification *prior to* Jesus’ shed blood providing true justification.

Reply: Yes, the sequence in the antitype corresponds with the sequence in the type. The plan of God is so pervasive that we will always find new nuggets.

Comment: Adam and Eve provided their *own* fig leaves, but *God* supplied the animal skins. This also fits the antitype. Works under the Law helped to justify, but by God’s grace we are justified through Jesus’ shed blood. The Law made possible partial, *tentative* justification; Jesus provided *real* justification.

“Ye know that summer is near.” “Summer” is the Kingdom, a time of favor, as opposed to the winter Time of Trouble. Order: *summer* of Harvest ⇒ *winter* Time of Trouble ⇒ *summer* of Kingdom. Jeremiah 8:20 (“The harvest is past, the summer is ended”) is referring to the summer that precedes the winter of trouble.

Mark 13:29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.

Jesus stood at the door and knocked at the beginning of and during the Laodicean period, but this verse refers to the doors at the *end* of the Laodicean period. Verse 29 takes us to just before the rapture.

Comment: From Luke 21:31 we know that “it” is the “kingdom of God”: “When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.”

All of the Lord's people are expected to have *zeal*, to run the race as if only *one* will win—but we must make sure that the zeal in serving Him is *according to His Word*. Some are very zealous for works, but theirs is not necessarily a proper zeal. “*To obey is better than sacrifice*” (1 Sam. 15:22). Of course it is nice to have both zealous works and obedience—if the Lord gives us the opportunity for service.

Mark 13:30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

“This generation” would be the generation starting from 1874 or 1878—which of the two dates is the question. In Matthew 24, two separate events are referred to: Noah (1874) and the fig tree (1878). The “generation” is 120 years—hence 1994 or 1998. The shortest “generation” was 40 years (the time Israel was in the wilderness). Threescore and ten (70 years) was a generation in David's day. “Fourscore years” would be 80 years (Psa. 90:10). A generation can also be 100 years (the account of Abraham in Genesis 15 says four generations are 400 years). The longest generation is 120 years. Considering the earlier date, 1994, is safer, but what date it will be, only time will tell.

The Great Company have to prove faithful too, so there are different dates. The dates will be discussed sometime in a Pyramid study.

Mark 13:31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

This verse is a form of *emphasis* that the generation will not pass away until all things are accomplished. A *definite time period* has been set aside.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

This verse is different from the parallel verse in Matthew 24 in that it distinguishes between the Father and the Son. The Son did not know the day and the hour at this time, but he had to know the year to give so much information in his great prophecy.

We too may know the year as it approaches, for the signs will get clearer. Look how fast things are happening. The pope is to visit Israel, and Israel has an ambassadorial relationship with the Vatican. One common currency in the EC is also significant. The stage is being set for a speedy fulfillment when the time comes.

The angels in heaven greatly desired to know prophetic matters, so their interest puts to shame any brethren who do not have such a desire. “*Prophecy*” includes *prophecy*. “*Despise not prophesyings*” (1 Thess 5:20). How many seriously study the Book of Revelation?

Mark 13:33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

In Matthew 24, the admonition has a little different slant.

Comment: More text intervenes before the parallel verse. In Luke 21:34–36, Jesus warned us not to let our hearts become overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness, and the cares of this life—or we will be taken unawares.

Reply: Prophecy should get a lot of our time and attention. Only *through prophecy* and its fulfillment do we know what to watch for.

In the early Church and all down the age, the disciples did not know when the end of the age would occur. When various anticipated time periods failed, discouragement followed. But the anticipation providentially served as an incentive to be active.

Mark 13:34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

The parables of the Talents and the Pounds also refer to the Son of man going on a far journey and returning to deal with his servants (Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:13–27).

Comment: The “servants” given authority are the seven messengers to the Church.

Reply: Yes. The servants were watchmen. A “porter” is a servant who watches at the door or from a tower. He warns those of the household.

Q: Why are the “servants” plural and the “porter” singular?

A: The porter would be an individual on the scene at the very end of the age.

Mark 13:35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

When will the “master of the house” come? During which of the four watches?

At even (6–9 p.m.)	}	
At midnight (9 p.m.–12 midnight)	}	3-hour watches
At cockcrowing (12–3 a.m.)	}	
In the morning (3–6 a.m.)	}	

Comment: Earlier in Mark, Jesus walked on the sea in the tempestuous storm. John says that when Jesus entered the boat, it was immediately at shore. “Gennesaret” means “rapture.” And the time was stated as the fourth watch.

Reply: But the fourth watch has a beginning and an ending: 3–6 a.m. (three hours). At 3 o’clock the third watch ends and the fourth begins. Dawn is at 6 o’clock, and certain events have to occur between the rapture and the dawn. Therefore, Jesus will come for the feet members *sometime during the fourth watch*, sometime between 3 and 6 a.m.

Q: With Elijah and Elisha, there were *four* stopping places, which we consider to be dates. Can these be equated to the *four* watches of Mark? It is in the *fourth watch* and in the *fourth stopping place* (Jordan) that the rapture occurs. It was expected that Jesus would come at these different times.

A: In the Elijah picture, Elijah and Elisha went on a little after the smiting. Then suddenly Elijah was raptured. Since these verses in Mark are related to the Church’s rapture, other details would correspond or be related. The pictures dovetail. Truth advances and will keep clarifying to the feet members, the wise virgins. They have extra oil in their lamps. Lesson: *Be prepared* for the Master’s coming.

The eleventh-hour workers will become *discernibly involved* in a Harvest work. They are on the scene *earlier* but come in *late* to do *bigger* works. In other words, the opportunity for service will open up *late* for the eleventh-hour workers and on a *larger scale* for general harvesting work. The other workers, realizing that the eleventh-hour workers were in the vineyard for only *one hour*, will expect to receive more. When the eleventh-hour workers are given the penny too—the same amount—the others will murmur, showing a wrong frame of mind.

Points to note in the Wise and Foolish Virgin Parable: (1) A *delay*. (2) *All* fell asleep regarding prophecy. (3) At *midnight* came the cry “Behold the Bridegroom!” (4) When all awoke, the wise had *extra oil* in their lamps; the foolish did not. (5) But the wise virgins did not walk in the door immediately. A slight time period intervened, for *while* the foolish went to the marketplace to buy oil, the *wise went in to the marriage*. The cry went forth at midnight, but there was a tiny delay before “*those that were ready*” went in to the marriage.

At midnight Jesus was betrayed, but he was not executed right away. At “midnight,” as it were, the penny was given, but time was needed to use it. At midnight the Bridegroom announcement was made, but the rapture did not occur immediately.

All vineyard workers—including the foolish virgins—will get the penny, the privilege of service. The foolish virgins, as well as the wise, will hear the announcement “Behold the Bridegroom,” but only the wise will be prepared.

Mark 13:36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

In Laodicea, the “*sleeping*” period, the prevailing attitude is “I have need of nothing.”

Mark 13:37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

All believers are to **WATCH!**

Mark 14:1 After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.

The Feast of Passover is a seven-day feast beginning on the 15th of Nisan at 6 p.m. *But that year* Jesus ate the Passover meal on the 14th of Nisan—after 6 p.m. This was *a day early*.

At the time setting of verse 1, Judas had not yet gone to the chief priests to betray Jesus, so they did not yet know how to “take” Jesus. This was two days before the feast began, i.e., it was the 13th of Nisan. Therefore, Jesus would be betrayed in Gethsemane the following night, on the 14th, at midnight. Jesus died at 3 p.m. on the 14th—three hours before the day ended.

Mark 14:2 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

The chief priests wanted to avoid the 15th of Nisan lest there be an uproar.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Chief priests | 1. Beast and False Prophet |
| 2. Judas | 2. Judas class |
| 3. Pilate | 3. Dragon |
| 4. People | 4. People |

Chief priests' motive = jealousy

Judas's motive = greed

Pilate's motive = fear and pressure exerted on him

The Second Psalm shows the feet members will have a similar experience.

Mark 14:3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

Mark 14:4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

Mark 14:5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

The 300 pence were a year's salary (sabbaths on Saturday and at other times would be deducted from the total 365 days in a year). In other words, a day's wage was a penny, one pence (see Parable of the Penny). Thus the spikenard was a real sacrifice.

Simon the leper was the father of Judas. The type of leprosy he had was a white scurf all over the body that could be seen but was not contagious.

Of the three anointings of Jesus, this was the third. At the second anointing, only Judas protested the cost. Now others also objected. Normally speaking, from a *human* standpoint, the complaint of waste would seem to be justified. Anointings: (1) early in Jesus' ministry on his feet, (2) six days before Passover on his feet (John 12:1-8), and (3) two days before Passover on his head. It is unusual that two anointings occurred just four days apart. This would be a double sign that Jesus was the Messiah.

Comment: These verses show the influence Judas had. Just four days earlier he had protested the expense. In the meantime, others had obviously thought on his words and now joined the protest.

Reply: If the 300 pence had gone into the treasury, Judas could have stolen some of it.

Mark 14:6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

Mark 14:7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

Mark 14:8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

Mark 14:9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a

memorial of her.

“Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good” is a proper rationale. This verse refutes a social gospel. We should do good unto others as we have opportunity, but that is not the mission of the Church.

“She hath done what she could.” What a commendation! A man is judged according to what he hath used—same principle. What a person is capable of, and then does accordingly, is very much appreciated. The woman’s *depth of devotion* was remarkable, and especially at a time when Jesus needed sympathy.

Mark 14:10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

Mark 14:11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

As the chief priests were trying to decide how to kill Jesus, along came Judas. Thus Judas went twice to the priests to arrange the betrayal: now (before the Passover) and after the lamb was eaten. At this point, Judas still had an out—he could have repented. Judas and the Judas class betray because of some *temporal benefit*: honor, recognition, money, etc.

Earlier, as Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he had said, “Tell that fox [Herod] ...” (Luke 13:32). Some of the Pharisees were warning Jesus that Herod would kill him, but Jesus did not heed the warning. When Agabus warned Paul about bonds awaiting him, the disciples tried to dissuade Paul from going to Jerusalem. But he went anyway in obedience to the Lord. Paul was ready to die if necessary (Acts 21:13); he was steadfast in his convictions. Lesson: At the end of the age, we *must not hide* from persecution.

Elisha continued on with Elijah *after* the Jordan was smitten. We are (1) to lose our life for Christ’s sake and (2) not to be ashamed of the gospel. Even the Lot class must ultimately do this. Lesson: We should not be overconfident in regard to our courage.

Mark 14:12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

Mark 14:13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

The “first day of unleavened bread,” when the lamb was killed, was the 14th day of Nisan. There are seven or eight days in the feast depending on the viewpoint.

The two disciples were probably Peter and John. It was *unusual for a man to carry water*.

Mark 14:14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Mark 14:15 And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

The “goodman of the house” would have been somewhat well off to have a house with such a large guest chamber.

Mark 14:16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

“Passover” was the day Jesus not only ate the Passover and partook of the symbols but also the day in which he died. (Day began at 6 p.m.)

Mark 14:17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

Mark 14:18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

Mark 14:19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?

Mark 14:20 And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.

Mark 14:21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

Jesus’ words indicate both his foreknowledge and his willingness to die.

Comment: Just think how many millions of times in the future the replay of the Crucifixion will show Judas as the betrayer. That is why it would be better if he had never been born.

All asked, one after the other, with Judas being last, “Is it I?” (Matt. 26:22). The question by the others shows they were unaware of the depth of degradation in Judas’s character. And evidently the eleven were so sorrowful that they did not notice when Jesus asked Judas.

Comment: Deep grief is like that—very inward.

John asked first, “Is it I?” Even Peter asked, who was next to Judas and next to last. Although normally confident, Peter was psychologically overcome by the situation.

The fact Judas did not change his mind shows it is very difficult to reverse steps in a downward trend. One factor was the reward money—the money was so appealing that it overrode his judgment. Probably, based on everything written about Judas, his motive was to get the money and he knew Jesus *could* escape. (On other occasions Jesus did escape, and Judas thought he would this time too.) Certainly Judas knew the priests wanted to kill Jesus, but he never dreamed Jesus would allow himself to be apprehended. However, when Judas saw Jesus submitting and being led irretrievably to the Crucifixion—and knowing Jesus would die as a just man, as a completely innocent man—he was convicted and went and hung himself. Judas sorrowed but too late, and it was not a godly sorrow but a selfish and political sorrow. Some politicians regret they made a mistake, but it is not a moral sorrow.

Q: Was Satan's "entering into" Judas like possession? Then when Satan left, Judas was overcome with selfish sorrow.

A: That is true. With Cain the warning was, "Satan lieth at the door." This expression implied a very important crisis that **MUST BE RESISTED**. Of course Judas had been a thief all along, but his actions now were putting him in Second Death.

Comment: Judas was a hypocrite and a liar to ask, "Is it I?"

Reply: In Matthew 26:25, Jesus replied directly to Judas that he was the betrayer ("thou hast said"), but the others were so grief-stricken that they did not hear. Even when Judas left early, the others thought he was going out to get supplies as treasurer.

Comment: Judas knew what Jesus was saying to him when he received the sop. But that did not stop Judas either.

Mark 14:22 **And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.**

New American Standard: "After a blessing, he broke it [the bread] and gave it to them." This was a continuation of the supper.

Mark 14:23 **And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.**

They *all* drank *all* of the contents of the cup (compare Matthew 26:27).

Mark 14:24 **And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.**

Comment: Luke 22:20 says, "which was shed for *you*" in contrast to "which was shed for *many*." The two thoughts, taken together, are a reminder of the Scripture that Jesus is the propitiation not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Reply: Sometimes "for many" signifies "for all" and sometimes just "for many." Actually Jesus' blood will be for all, but not all will avail themselves of it.

Mark 14:25 **Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.**

Now it is a cup of suffering, ignominy, sorrow, and death. In the Kingdom it will be a cup of joy and celebration but limited to those who made their calling and election sure (the Little Flock). Then it will be symbolic of victory and overcoming. At that time Jesus will drink "literal spiritual" wine. Those with the divine nature do not have to eat and drink to sustain life, but they will do so for special reasons on special occasions of fellowship.

Q: Will this take place at the marriage prior to the marriage supper?

A: That will probably be the case. First, upon being resurrected, each of the Little Flock will have Jesus' personal greeting: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Then it will be time to meet the other raised saints.

In all, 144,000 names will be individually confessed before the Father, and each will shake the Father's hand—all being on the divine plane. Perhaps the ceremony will conclude with God singing! "He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

The implication in the wording is that Jesus actually drank of the cup at the Memorial before passing it to the others. Symbolically speaking, that would be proper, for Jesus said, "The cup that I shall drink, shall ye not drink thereof?" This is the same cup of which Jesus asked James and John, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of?" They readily responded "yes," not knowing how deep that question was.

Q: In Luke 22:16 Jesus said, "I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof [of the Passover lamb], until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Does this show he will partake of a "literal spiritual" lamb as well?

A: Yes, but for pleasure, not as a necessity. It is a pleasure to eat perfectly prepared food. There are trees, flowers, brooks, a spiritual mansion specially prepared for the Church, etc., in heaven. While the Bible says we do not know what we shall be like, nevertheless, we know that spirit beings have one head, two eyes, two arms, and so forth. Man was made in the "image of God," and that includes not only the mental and moral image but a "physical" image too. Jesus was made in the very likeness of God (Heb. 1:3), and man was made in the image of God.

"Until ... I drink it new in the kingdom of God." "New" means with a new significance; it will be similar but on a higher plane. By Jesus' referring to new circumstances, the apostles realized that he was leaving them.

Mark 14:26 **And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.**

Mark 14:27 **And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.**

Jesus predicted that all the apostles would fall away. And they did all flee lest they be apprehended. At least John and Peter showed more courage by following him to the palace where he was given a kangaroo hearing before Caiaphas, but Peter then denied him and John did not speak out for the Lord.

Wrong talks have been given that apply "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" to the Pastor. That is true from a *principle* standpoint, for when he died, the brethren lacked leadership. But to apply the Scripture to him is completely improper.

Comment: If the speakers had said "in *principle* on a *lower* plane," they could have gotten by with the statement because we take other things from Jesus' life and say the feet members will suffer the same things in principle, but they in no way will equal what the Master suffered.

Reply: Similarly, Jesus said, "A prophet is without honour in his own house," applying the statement to himself. But in *principle* that statement has applied to many others, even in the world, for familiarity breeds contempt.

Mark 14:28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

Jesus did other things first, however. On different occasions he appeared to some of the disciples, both men and women. In Galilee he appeared on the shore and also to 500 brethren (1 Cor. 15:6).

Mark 14:29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

Mark 14:30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Mark 13:35 lists the four watches: evening (6–9 p.m.), midnight (9 p.m.–12 midnight), cock crowing (12 midnight–3 a.m.), and morning (3–6 a.m.). The total night watch, therefore, covered 12 hours, that is, night.

Mark 14:31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

Peter was boastful. At that time he did not realize the full significance of the ominousness of that hour. Year after year the Jews had celebrated the Passover, rejoicing in their predecessors' deliverance from Egypt, so it was impossible for them to fully enter into Jesus' experiences.

"Likewise also said they all." It is interesting that all of the apostles followed Peter's lead in saying they would not deny Jesus—just as earlier when one asked, "Is it I?" they all subsequently asked the same question.

Peter, followed by the others, said they would not deny Jesus even if it meant dying with him. It is hard to see that kind of overconfidence in the feet members at this end of the age. The statement might be uttered *in advance* of the pressure of that hour, but not *during* the hour.

Comment: Those who do not believe in the revival of Church and State and the hour of power could, at least prior to that happening, have a false sense of confidence. They would be unaware of the experiences that lie ahead.

Reply: That would be true especially in the antitype of the Triumphal Entry when the truth is popular. Psychologically, the popularity will be very encouraging, but the lesson is to keep humble, to watch and pray, and to trust in God and His Spirit to strengthen and uphold us as it did marvelously for Christians in the Dark Ages. Some who were timid by nature grew strong. The Lord gives His people sufficient time to develop character.

Comment: Many might not have this wonderful courage at all until the very end. They will be amazed to hear the things they are saying with the Lord's help.

Reply: The Holy Spirit can bring great boldness at the crucial time.

Mark 14:32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

Mark's account is very abbreviated, whereas John has several chapters leading up to Gethsemane.

Mark 14:33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

Mark 14:34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

"Gethsemane" means "olive press." Peter, James, and John were favored by being separated from the other eight apostles. These three were instructed to sit nearby—a stone's throw away—from where Jesus' praying could be heard (Luke 22:41). He probably prayed in a reasonably loud voice.

Comment: Depression is described as being "very heavy" and "exceeding sorrowful unto death." That is a good description of depression—one feels so weighed down.

The apostles had difficulty keeping awake because of their sorrow. Jesus' soul was deeply troubled—and probably also when he was discoursing on the way to Gethsemane, as described by John. The more-than-usual soberness in his voice caused the disciples to be very heavy-hearted as well.

Peter and John are mentioned subsequently but not James. Also, Peter and John followed after Jesus when he was apprehended. These two facts suggest that Peter and John were on a little higher level than James. The order on the high priest's breastplate was Paul, Peter, John, and James. Of the three, James died first, however, so he probably entered as fully and courageously after Pentecost as the others. In fact, before James died, his ministry became a real ball of fire. Incidentally, this was James Zebedee, not James Alphaeus. The epistle of James was written by James Zebedee.

Mark 14:35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

This emotional trauma tells us that the Father was testing Jesus to the core—that His hand was very, very heavy on Jesus, almost to the breaking point, because he will have the highest office under God in the universe. This was the most crucial hour for Jesus, for the experience was of some duration. (In contrast, his feeling of being forsaken while hanging on the Cross was of short duration.)

Lesson: Do NOT judge a peaceful death of a brother or sister as a sign of faithfulness, for one who questions and agonizes at the end could prove more faithful ultimately because of *enduring* more. Some are extroverts and overconfident by nature and are sure they will get the crown, but that is emotionalism. Jesus was the "man of sorrows" at the time of his death, but not during his regular ministry when he was serene and bold to answer his detractors. "By his stripes we are healed" applies to the end of his ministry. Jesus was so severely tested he asked that, if possible (that is, if it were permissible), the "cup" and the "hour" would be removed from him, and yet he will receive the highest reward under the Father Himself. Lesson: Do not judge a matter improperly in regard to the trials of the consecrated. Asking for help is NOT a proof of weakness of faith. Do NOT judge emotionally. If one makes his calling and election sure, we can be certain that, from God's sight, the individual was proven and

merits the crown. The one who has fear but presses on can have greater courage than one who acts on impulse. Only God, who looks on the heart, knows what an individual is capable of. He may try that one to the limit, and that one may prove faithful even though appearing weak from the human standpoint.

Comment: John the Baptist in prison and Jesus on the Cross both experienced depression. We use these as types for depressing experiences the feet members will have after being arrested or apprehended. But Jesus' discouraging moments in the Garden of Gethsemane *preceded* his arrest. The feet members may likewise feel depressed and unworthy *prior* to being apprehended. Therefore, if we should have these feelings, we must not lose faith, for *succor will come*. It helps to remember the example of the Master prior to his arrest.

Q: Why did Jesus pray that, if possible, both the "cup" and the "hour" would pass from him?

A: He knew things from the prophecies that the others were unaware of—especially Psalm 22. The Pastor said that if one would be faithful based upon heart condition and obedience, it might not be necessary for him to suffer persecution unto death. The Pastor himself did not so suffer (although he was tested to the core in other ways). The instruction is to be faithful unto DEATH and NOT TO DENY the Master.

Jesus loved and revered the Father so much and manifested this in his life and deeds to such a degree that the things he experienced—being naked on the Cross, being crucified between two thieves, being considered a blasphemer and getting cursed when he was holy and perfect—went in on him deeply. For this reason he asked that, if possible, the cup be removed. Jesus feared he might not have done everything perfectly, but "he was heard in that he feared." (The three times Jesus asked that the cup be removed are a reminder of Paul's asking three times for the restoration of his eyesight.)

Mark 14:36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

Mark 14:37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?

Jesus spoke especially to Simon—why? Because Peter was a leader and because he had boasted that "although all shall be offended, yet will not I" (Mark 14:29). Also because he would soon enter into temptation in denying Jesus three times.

Sorrow over Jesus' words at and after the Memorial supper to the effect that he was leaving them induced the disciples' sleepiness. Even though they did not fully comprehend his words, the very fact he would leave caused the sorrow—and particularly with Peter, James, and John, the three who loved him the most and would miss him the most. Sorrow, disappointment, and worry all play havoc with the nervous system.

Three times Jesus prayed and returned to the disciples. Of the three apostles, John was the most awake to be able to record so many of Jesus' words en route to Gethsemane. (Probably the reason he did not record this incident in the garden prior to Jesus'

apprehension is that the other Gospels covered it adequately.) And even if the others dozed off, they still heard something—the words went into the brain and the Holy Spirit could recall them. Certainly the apostles were aware of the seriousness of the moment, and Jesus told them his soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. To hear the Master, the *Strong One*, in their midst say this would go in on them deeply. Worry and confusion mixed with their sadness and caused a sleepy stupor.

The fact this account is recorded about Jesus' three-time prayer and the drowsiness suggests it is meant to be typical as well. Mark wrote on behalf of Peter, and this fault would be a reflection on Peter. It also indicates Peter was sorry he was not more alert, but he probably could not help the sleepiness because of the intensity of his grief.

Mark 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

“Watch and pray” indicates the attitude the Lord’s people should have at the end of the age when they see events coming to a head—the time when the true disciples of Jesus will have a crucial trial. This is called the “hour of temptation,” the hour of the beast (Rev. 3:10; 17:12); it is the (first) half hour of Revelation 8:1. TAKE HEED! If Jesus had such an extreme experience, the feet members will have anguish too. “The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.”

Comment: On a different occasion, Jesus said, “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

Reply: The feet members will escape the events of the real Time of Trouble, the anarchy, that will come upon the world, but they will not escape the hour of temptation, Satan’s hour. The special hour of trial that will come on the Laodicean Church has not yet happened. Even the Great Company class will have an experience that is Satan-directed when the scapegoat is taken into the wilderness.

“Couldst not thou watch one hour?” (verse 37). Immediately after Jesus’ experience in the garden, his trial began—he was taken to the house of Annas, the house of Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, etc. At midnight the crucial time of betrayal came.

Comment: Luke 22:45 is direct; it actually says the disciples slept out of “sorrow.” We do not have to surmise the reason.

Mark 14:39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

Mark 14:40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.

Mark 14:41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

“Sleep on now, and take your rest.” In other words, there was a little time lapse before Judas and the apprehenders arrived. In principle, it was like Jesus’ telling the apprehenders to let the disciples go, for “it is me you want.” Despite the difficulty of the trial, Jesus did not lose his consideration for others.

“Sleep on now” also indicates that Jesus received strength and inner peace as a result of his agonizing, sincere prayers. “He was heard in that he feared.” He received succor and was resigned. His extremes in feeling will be experienced by the feet members too: feelings of isolation, loneliness, and being forsaken as well as feelings of peace, calm, and strength.

Mark 14:42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

Mark 14:43 And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

Comment: Jesus considerably let the disciples sleep until the very last minute. *Right while he was saying*, “Rise up,” Judas and the others arrived. Jesus let the disciples get the maximum rest under the circumstances.

Reply: If they had fully understood what was about to happen, they would have been praying for Jesus to be given a sufficiency of strength, for Paul says Jesus “feared” the ignominious and shameful aspects of the Crucifixion. But no feature of the cup could pass from him for two reasons: (1) His experiences disciplined him for the highest honor in the universe under the Father. (2) He had to fulfill the corresponding aspects of paying the ransom price—his sufferings offset the penalty on Adam.

Q: Are there two “hours”? The disciples failed to watch for “one hour” prior to the “hour” that came on Jesus when he was apprehended (verse 41)?

A: There are two senses of trial: (1) the need for strength while *anticipating* the apprehension and death that are coming, and (2) the *actual* apprehension and experiences ending in death.

Crystallization of character is very important—not only reaching the mark of perfect love but *patiently standing* at the mark, often not understanding the trials that occur.

Mark 14:44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.

The “token” or sign was the kiss. The kiss was probably an offset for Adam’s experience. It is likely that Eve tempted Adam with a kiss when she offered him the fruit of the tree. Both Adam and Jesus were in a garden. A tree was involved with both: Adam and Eve hid behind a tree, and Jesus was crucified in front of a “tree.”

Jesus was betrayed by a “familiar friend” (Psa. 41:9). No doubt Judas had some admirable characteristics that are minimized in the Scriptures because of the enormity of his sin in betraying the Master, but *in no sense* was Judas a hero; the world improperly ascribes higher ulterior motives to Judas. The very fact (1) Judas was next to Jesus at the Memorial supper, (2) he was treasurer, and (3) his name was “Judah” indicates he had superior and admirable qualities that became perverted and debased. Hence we are told to keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life. If we ever get conscious of our own abilities along any line, be careful!

Q: Why would Judas give the instruction to lead Jesus away “safely”?

A: Judas betrayed Jesus for money, but he thought Jesus would escape based on the miracles he had performed and because he had avoided being put to death on two previous occasions. Judas thought he would get the money and Jesus would not allow himself to be captured. Judas wanted Jesus to be led away safely so that he could escape or so that the multitude could rescue him in the morning.

Comment: There is a danger with the nominal Church belief that in the rapture Christians will be whisked away from all trouble. If that kind of thinking entered our midst, it could influence the Judas class at the end of the age. They would think turning fellow Christians over to the authorities would not lead to their death but would result in their being physically raptured without suffering.

Reply: Yes, that would be a problem and from another standpoint too. Those who think Christians will be whisked away and thus miraculously saved could conclude that anyone claiming to be a Christian who is not miraculously saved must be a criminal. Jesus was taunted, “If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross. Show us.” Some of the feet members will have that experience.

Q: When “Satan entered into Judas,” wasn’t Judas incapable of resisting at that point?

A: No. When Peter tried to dissuade Jesus from going up to Jerusalem, Jesus knew that the suggestion was coming from the Adversary (that Satan had momentarily entered into Peter) and said, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” When Satan intruded thoughts upon Jesus’ mind in tempting him at the end of the 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus countered with Scripture. In both cases, Jesus rejected Satan—and Judas could have too. The intrusion of adverse thoughts does not mean the Lord is displeased with the recipient; God *allowed* Satan to enter Jesus’ mind and make suggestions to him. We should consider these things because who knows what trials any one of us might have before we die? Whether we will experience sickness, accident, real persecution, or some other trial, thinking on these things now will help to remove some of the element of surprise.

Mark 14:45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.

Mark 14:46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

Mark 14:47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Mark 14:48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me?

Mark 14:49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled [regarding my death].

Isaiah 53:7 and Psalm 22:6 are examples of Scriptures that were fulfilled before Jesus’ death. Jesus was a “worm” as his naked body hung twisted on the Cross. Nails through his hands and feet frayed his nerves and caused spasms. To onlookers Jesus’ hanging on the Cross like a common criminal belied his claim to be the Messiah.

Comment: Imagine the pain caused by the spasms. It was bad enough just hanging there without sudden movements causing additional searing pain.

If Jesus had done something wrong, the time to seize him was when he was talking to the people and in their midst, not at night when he was not publicly preaching.

Comment: As already pointed out, Mark wrote his Gospel for Peter. Peter was the one who drew the sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, but he did not name himself here out of humility. Peter brought in his own name when doing so showed a fault or shortcoming. Since cutting off the ear was not a shortcoming but an act of courage, the humble apostle did not name himself.

When Jesus had earlier asked for swords and was told there were two, he said, "That is sufficient." It would be interesting to know which other disciple had a sword.

Comment: In Luke 22:49 some of the disciples asked, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" But Peter apparently did not wait for an answer—he just acted impulsively.

Mark 14:50 And they all forsook him, and fled.

By nature Peter and John were a little more courageous than the others who fled. And John went right to the Cross. Also, on the Day of Pentecost Peter and John were the boldest. In the high priest's breastplate, Peter and John are shown to be superior to the others (except for Paul, who came on the scene later).

Mark 14:51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him:

The "certain young man" was John Mark. Even the location of the house in which he lived, being "at the head of the way," suggests this verse refers to him. When we go down to the Wailing Wall and pass the entrance, the road doubles back on itself. We retrace the steps taken going down the hill, but now for a little distance we are proceeding in the opposite direction—very close to the other road but below it. Then we start climbing steps to the place where purportedly the Last Supper took place. (Traditionally there are two places, but both are on the same path. The first of the two is probably the actual location.)

The linen cloth being cast about his naked body suggests that John Mark was in bed at night when he heard a commotion from the crowd. Upon looking out, he perhaps even saw it was Jesus. In haste he covered himself with the sheet and went out to find out what was happening. When he was apprehended, the sheet pulled off his body and he fled naked as it unwound. John Mark was not an apostle.

Comment: The adjective "young" is another clue this was not the Apostle John.

Mark 14:52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

Other lessons are here too, one possibly being that this incident was typical. Although the event was not derogatory to John Mark, it pictures those who will take off the robe of Christ's righteousness in the trouble to come. Similarly Peter is a type of some

things not to do, yet he was perhaps the most outstanding of the apostles at that time.

Since this is the Gospel of Mark, it is natural that he would talk about his own experience. Of those who go into Second Death, some will actively betray Jesus and some will more quietly forsake the robe of Christ's righteousness. Nadab and Abihu picture these two classes. It is not always the aggressive ones who are not worthy to get life. There are grievous sins of both commission and omission.

Comment: This type harmonizes with the Parable of the Wedding Garment, the linen cloth picturing the robe of Christ's righteousness.

John Mark was probably following after the crowd of priests, scribes, etc., when he was spotted. They laid hold on him because they did not want an eyewitness. They did not want the news of Jesus' arrest to be broadcast until he was already condemned and on the way to his death.

Mark 14:53 **And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.**

Jesus was led from the Garden of Gethsemane to the household of the high priest. Perhaps the "all" should be understood in an accommodated sense because Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea may not have been present. Incidentally, Annas was the older high priest, and Caiaphas was the son-in-law.

Mark 14:54 **And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.**

Peter followed afar off. Meanwhile John must have gone ahead and entered the household of the chief priest because he let Peter in later. Peter and John were the more zealous of the apostles in that they did not flee and forsake the Lord utterly but followed at a discreet distance. Of course, John's being an in-law of the high priest meant he could enter that household with less fear and trepidation. Nevertheless, we know John was not fearful because he went right to the Cross where Jesus committed to him the care of his mother, Mary.

Q: John 18:18 mentions that a fire was made for warming purposes because "it was cold." Yet a short time before, the apostles had been sleeping on the ground in Gethsemane. Wouldn't they have been cold there?

Q: In regard to Jesus' crucifixion, nature played a part; e.g., the sun was darkened and earthquakes occurred at the time of his death and when he was resurrected and the stone was rolled away. Therefore, isn't it possible that when Jesus was apprehended, the night air became cold, or colder than usual, to manifest the Father's disapproval? There could have been a sudden downward plunge in temperature.

A: That is possible. The event took place about April 2, so the evenings would be cool—and perhaps colder than normal on that occasion.

Mark 14:55 **And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.**

“The council sought for witness against Jesus” because they needed two or three witnesses with the same story. However, no agreeing witnesses were found. (With Daniel, too, no fault was found; his conduct was blameless.)

Mark 14:56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

Because of lies, no two witnesses agreed. That is a problem in a court of law. The credibility of the witnesses is challenged when there is a contradiction.

Comment: The ninth commandment is “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

Reply: If the penalty for a crime was death, then a false witness got the same penalty. To risk death here shows how strong the party spirit was and the extreme hatred and jealousy that some had for Jesus.

Mark 14:57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

Mark 14:58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

Compare Matthew 26:60,61, which says that two individuals came forward who had agreed beforehand to bare the same false witness. Note that they quoted what Jesus had actually said—his own words. Their testimony was based on an excerpt from one of Jesus’ sermons, whereas the earlier false witnesses had apparently concocted false stories that did not jibe. (But, of course, Jesus was referring to the three days in another sense. The three days literally pertained to him as the Head of the body. The rest of the body would be complete within three 1,000-year “days.” Jesus’s crucifixion took place in the fifth “day”—more than 4,000 years after the creation of Adam.)

Mark 14:59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

Q: Is verse 59 saying that although both false witnesses testified Jesus had said the words in verse 58, as soon as they added to their stories, there was discordance?

A: Yes. And there was no evidence to prove Jesus wanted to destroy the Temple.

Mark 14:60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

The high priest questioned Jesus about his silence. The time had now come for Jesus to be the meek Lamb going to the slaughter. He did not want to defend his position because he knew it was necessary for him to be condemned and crucified and to die. To dispute the accusations might delay his death. This suggests that at the end of the age, when it is observed that the age is closing and the time has come for the consecrated to go beyond, those who are more faith-filled and strengthened of the Lord (the feet members) will also see the expediency of not defending themselves. Based on types, the indication is that the great majority, at least temporarily, will try to steer a prudent course to avoid the danger. Of those who fail to use the penny, the Great Company will *later*, looking back, be energized in seeing the end time has come and will see the need for their departure too. The Great Company will not die

sacrificially; rather, death will be enjoined upon them by circumstances. At least they will get some encouragement in realizing “Blessed are those who attend the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9 paraphrase).

In the closing days of his ministry, Jesus was meek as a Lamb, but throughout his ministry—up until this time—he was bold as a Lion.

Mark 14:61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

The high priest, in effect, tried to prod Jesus into making a statement. But Jesus did not take the bait—“he held his peace.” A principle is shown here: “There is a time to be silent and a time to speak.” In other words, there is a time to be bold as a lion and a time to be meek as a lamb. For the next question Jesus could not remain silent: “Art thou the Christ?”

Mark 14:62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Jesus said he was the Christ, the promised “Son of the Blessed,” the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament. His words were based on the prophecy in Daniel 7:13, “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days.” To the worldly, Jesus’ words were blasphemy. This may be a lesson for some of the feet members: there may be a time for them to remain silent and a time when they are forced to make certain statements.

Q: What did “coming in the clouds of heaven” mean to the high priest?

A: It was like answering “I am” when the high priest asked, “Are you the Christ?” Now Jesus compounded his “guilt” by quoting from Daniel. The religious representatives were familiar with many of the Scriptures regarding the coming of Messiah, but they mixed those that pertained to the end of the Gospel Age with those that referred to the end of the Jewish Age. Thus they expected Messiah to come with POWER, not in a sacrificial role, and Jesus was not a man of their own choosing.

Q: How will Jesus be “seen”?

A: He will be perceived in the clouds of trouble. Scriptures about Jesus’ coming have him riding on a horse, standing, sitting, knocking at a door, holding a chain in his hand, etc. They cannot all happen at the same time and they cannot be literal.

Comment: Verse 62 ties in with Jesus’ great prophecy in Matthew 24:30, “And then shall appear *the sign* [trouble] of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Reply: In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 Paul says Jesus “shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” Many have trouble discerning between that which is literal and that which is symbolic.

Q: 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is usually interpreted as taking place at the *beginning* of the

harvest, but wouldn't the "shout" in the strongest sense be when Jesus comes with the "sign" of the Son of man in power and great glory—*yet future*?

A: Yes. The Greek for "shout" is *keleusma*, which is peculiar to the coxswain, who shouts to create a rhythm for the rowers in a racing boat. The shout is increased with intensity when it is propitious to do so. The "shout" seems to have a future application because it will be directed to the public. However, the shout has been applied, since the beginning of the Harvest, to the Lord's people who see the signs of the Lord's presence. They can draw comfort, power, and realization from certain Scriptures *now* in the *anticipatory* sense. They can experience *now* what, in reality, will occur a little *later*. Many "comings" are associated with the Second Presence.

When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, it will be understood, sooner or later, that the Lord's power is being exercised. The way the professed Christian Church interprets the prophecies of Jesus' coming makes its adherents very happy, for they believe they will be taken and everyone else will have trouble. The nominal Church teaches that one must be of the raptured class to be saved. When they find they are neither "saved" nor "raptured," the *keleusma*, instead of being a shout of encouragement, will be a shout of condemnation and destruction. The Kingdom will be for the blessing of the people—for salvation and relief from oppression, poverty, disease, etc. That is when the *keleusma* of encouragement will be given. To the Church, the presence of Christ is an encouragement, but the "shout" will be more public—it will be broadcast.

A distinction should be made between the first and the seventh days of the Feast of Trumpets. The seventh trumpet sounds on the first day, but on the tenth day the trumpet of restitution sounds *publicly*. There is a hymn about Gabriel sounding his horn so loudly that it awakens the dead. The shout of restitution is associated more with the sounding of the trumpet on the Day of Jubilee (the word "Jubilee" is associated with joy). In the type, restitution was associated with the trumpet blown on the tenth day of the seventh month every 50th year. The *annual* observance of the Day of Atonement, a very *solemn* feast, was for repenting of sin and cleansing, but the 50th year was one of jubilation and joy. Thus the Lord's coming and knocking on the door for his people (and thus announcing his presence) are distinct from his future public coming with dramatic signs that cause consternation followed by the "still small voice" of comfort and consolation (1 Kings 19:12). In Egypt Joseph's ten brothers had great fear when they recognized him, knowing they had sold their brother into slavery. When the Holy Remnant look upon Jesus, whom they "pierced," they will MOURN greatly. Joseph comforted his brethren, assuring them he held no ill will. Jesus will do the same.

Mark 14:63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

In other words, "That is enough—his own words condemn him!" And since the chief priests all heard Jesus' words, there was more than one witness. They all considered his words blasphemy. Jesus spoke exactly as he should have done—he made a clear statement that he knew would be misunderstood.

Q: Did the high priest tear his clothes for effect?

A: In Old Testament times this was commonly done when one was very distraught, especially with sorrow. Some rent their clothes out of deep sorrow or remorse, and others did it as a theatrical display. Here pure hatred was displayed by those who were plotting to kill Jesus.

Mark 14:64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

Hatred and prejudice blinded them to reason.

Mark 14:65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

The feet members will have similar experiences. They will be ridiculed as being of a cult with foolish beliefs. It would not be pleasant to have someone spit in our face or to cover our eyes and then say, "Prophecy who is hitting you."

Q: Would those who so mistreated Jesus be incorrigible?

A: These actions were a different type of guilt from that of the chief priests and elders who paid large sums of hush money to the guards at the tomb. It is questionable whether this latter religious element will get life, for they have no excuse for their guilt. The chief priests and elders knew that the praetorian guards assigned by the Roman government were telling them the truth about what had happened.

Mark 14:66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

Peter was in the courtyard warming himself at the fire. We know he was ultimately forgiven the three denials because he repented and wept and made the three confessions, but there is a lesson for us; namely, the pressure will be so great at the end of the age that we must be careful not to follow Peter's example. Here we are being shown what *not to do*. Of course the greatest pressure will be put on the prominent ones. The authorities will not be as concerned with the general movement and members. Warning: Do not be surprised into denying Jesus!

Mark 14:67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

Mark 14:68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

The words "and the cock crew" are spurious (see the *Diaglott*).

Mark 14:69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.

Mark 14:70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.

Peter's manner of speech called attention to his being a follower of Jesus.

Mark 14:71 But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

Mark 14:72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

Comment: The King James margin tells that Peter “wept abundantly” because he had made the denials with such positiveness, denying even knowing Jesus.

Reply: In one sense this experience broke Peter, but then a new man emerged.

Comment: Luke 22:60-62 reads, “Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”

Reply: Peter was more courageous than the others in the Garden of Gethsemane, but Jesus' arrest shattered their expectations—even though he had predicted his death and the spitting, mocking, etc. Sometimes spoken words do not penetrate.

Comment: Jesus had warned Peter that Satan desired to sift him. Therefore, Satan must have put considerable pressure on Peter.

Reply: Peter was loyal at heart, but the surprise element, the pressures, and Satan all pressed down upon him. Satan does not personally try all of the consecrated. The consecrated are tried through the fallen angels and others, but those who are of strong character and in positions of leadership are especially opposed. The principle is that Christendom does not stir up a hornet's nest, but when a voice of dissent is publicly recognized, then the pressures are brought to bear.

Satan no doubt felt that if he could get Peter to forsake the Lord, it would be a death blow to the other disciples. Peter was sincere earlier when he said that even though all others forsook Jesus, he would not. But Satan is a very powerful being. Only by God's grace can one withstand him when he singles out an individual for attack. Satan thought he was winning the battle when he got the apostles to flee, Peter to deny the Master, and Jesus to be crucified. He used human instruments to abet his cause when three times Peter was asked about being a follower of Jesus. After Jesus was strongly fortified through prayer in Gethsemane, Satan began to operate on others: Peter, the high priest, the mob, etc. To say Satan is being bound now is WRONG—it is just the opposite. His hour is *yet future*. Only once will he be bound—at the beginning of the Kingdom.

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). When we successfully resist the devil in a certain trial, the fleeing is not permanent, for the consecrated are tested again and again and again.

As Jesus came out, two things happened simultaneously: (1) the cock crowed and (2)

Jesus looked at Peter. Then Peter wept. In other words, the sound of cock crowing and especially the look of Jesus induced Peter to go out and weep bitterly. A denial made with force is an automatic hardening, but the look of Jesus, the sound of cock crowing, and the remembrance of Jesus' prediction of the denial and the apostle's own boast about never denying the Master all combined to break Peter. He was so overwhelmed that he just had to get out. Then the tears really flowed.

The Lord saw in Peter a certain strength and leadership qualities that could be used. Incidentally, Peter subsequently had a communication with the risen Lord, about which we have no details.

Mark 15:1 And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

The "council" was the Sanhedrin. The consultation of the chief priests, elders, scribes, and the Sanhedrin was held very early in the morning to avoid a tumult and the possibility of the people rescuing Jesus. The religious leaders must have awakened Pilate out of bed in order to get Jesus to him at about 6 a.m. Jesus had no sleep for over 30 hours.

Mark 15:2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it.

"Thou sayest it." Jesus was saying, "I am the King of the Jews," "What you say is so."

Comment: Jesus was first asked by the *religious* element, "Art thou the Christ?" and he replied, "I am" (Mark 14:61). Now he was being asked by the *civil* element, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and again he said that was true. Thus it was necessary for Jesus to make both confessions.

Mark 15:3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

Mark 15:4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

Mark 15:5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

Jesus was meek as a lamb before its shearers. His words were remarkably few.

Mark 15:6 Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

Mark 15:7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

Mark 15:8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

Mark 15:9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

Mark 15:10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

Mark 15:11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

Each year the custom at Passover was to grant a reprieve to a prisoner. Pilate could see through the ulterior motivation of the priests, so he was hoping the reprieve would go to Jesus. But the crowd, incited by the chief priests and elders, desired Barabbas, an insurrectionist who had committed murder (Matt. 27:20). Of those gathered, most were sympathetic to the priesthood, and many were even of the Sanhedrin.

Q. “Barabbas” means “son of the father.” In antitype could the “father” be Papacy, the pope? If so, the one released would have a background of terrorism for supposed religious causes, e.g., a member of the IRA.

A. There exists that possibility at the very end of the age.

“And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.” The chief priests began to control what the crowd cried, directing Pilate to release Barabbas. They wanted Barabbas released and Jesus crucified *as soon as possible*. Pilate subsequently tried to procrastinate by having Jesus scourged.

Mark 15:12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?

Mark 15:13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

Mark 15:14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

Pilate repeatedly tried to circumvent the cries and pandemonium of the multitude, but to no avail. He had to be careful because he was treading on other toes (Rome was sympathetic to Herod, and Pilate did not want to sponsor a new ruler). Pilate was evidently impressed with Jesus’ serene demeanor under such a circumstance.

Satan himself was inciting the people through the priesthood. “Crucify him!” became a rhythmic chant in unison. The priesthood had specially preselected the common people who were present so that they could be manipulated. The lunacy of this tumult will be apparent in the future when scenes of the Crucifixion and preceding events are replayed.

Comment: It is to Pilate’s credit that he tried to have Jesus released. He certainly is not as guilty as the priesthood, but there is some blame, for as shown in verse 15, he was “willing to content the people.”

Reply: Pilate got his retribution shortly after the Crucifixion when he and his wife were banished and died in exile. *Pilate’s Report* gives some thoughts favorable to Pilate. It says Jesus was so resigned to his fate that he did not in any way want to escape the condemnation and Crucifixion. Pilate supposedly said, “You might as well say to the stream coming down from the mountain, ‘Go back from whence you came.’” Jesus would not change his mind. Moreover, the people present were determined that the Crucifixion would take place.

Comment: *Pilate's Report* is also excellent for showing the Satanic spirit that seized the mob.

Reply: The tumult ties in with the Second Psalm: "Why do the heathen rage?" etc.

Mark 15:15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

Pilate gave in to the people's demands. First, Jesus was remanded for scourging. (Pilate thought that scourging might satisfy the multitude's desire to see punishment inflicted on Jesus—and that their hearts might soften.)

Mark 15:16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band.

Mark 15:17 And they clothed him with purple, and plaited a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,

"Plaited" is a forceful word. The wreath of thorns was slapped down hard on Jesus' head in mockery. In other words, the soldiers plaited (plated) it down flat on his head.

Mark 15:18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

Mark 15:19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

Mark 15:20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

Comment: The Roman soldiers were sadistic and cruel. They failed to understand the intentions of their ruler, Pilate, who was trying to release Jesus. In their innate cruelty the soldiers were not sensitive to the feelings of their leader.

Reply: They were probably anti-Semitic. They were far away from home, and when the tiny little nation of Israel rebelled, the soldiers wanted to put this upstart people in their place. They were proud of Rome and its strength, laws, etc. Thus they took out their feelings on the one who was claiming to be the "King of the Jews." A "reed" is a scepter, a symbol of rulership.

Mark 15:21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

The sons, who became disciples, are referred to in Acts 19:33 and Romans 16:13. Coming from Africa, Simon and sons were black. Simon's selection to help bear the Cross was providential. Roman law required the one who was designated to carry the burden to go a mile. Jesus' advice was to go farther with a cheerful attitude: "If they compel you to go a mile, do not protest after 1 1/4 miles, but be willing to go twain."

Mark 15:22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

Mark 15:23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received

it not.

“Wine mingled with myrrh” would have deadened the pain, so Jesus refused the drink. He was so resigned to doing the Father’s will that he did not want to alleviate the rigors of crucifixion in any way. Subsequently, to fulfill the Scripture, he took just a sip of vinegar mixed with gall.

Mark 15:24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

Casting lots for the victim’s garments while he could see them from the Cross was a sadistic ritual. Jesus’ seamless garment was not parted because it had value.

Mark 15:25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

Jesus’ agony in connection with the Cross lasted about six hours. Of course time was required to put him on the Cross. Probably the two thieves were crucified first and then Jesus. About noontime the whole process was finished, and the heavens grew dark. Prior to that Jesus was nailed, naked, to the rough Cross. He had to lie horizontal on the ground for a while before the Cross was raised. When the Cross was in position, Jesus’ feet were about 3 feet off the ground. Proof: To give Jesus vinegar and gall to drink, a sponge had to be put at the end of a long pole and lifted up to him (verse 36). Also, the Cross was on the brow of Skull Hill so that the people looked up at him in two senses.

Therefore, including the process of nailing Jesus to the Cross, the Crucifixion took six hours, even though the Cross was upright for just the three hours from noon until 3 p.m. Providentially, Jesus had to be raised up to the vertical position exactly at noon because of the meridian. With the feet members, the providential hour will be midnight or the twelfth hour of the Parable of the Penny, which is 6 p.m. The three crucial hours are high noon, sunset, and midnight. Jesus’ death occurred at 3 p.m., the midpoint between the two evenings of noon and 6 p.m. Mark used Hebrew reckoning for time designations.

Traditionally two others had been crucified sometime earlier for a total of five crosses. Clues to this effect are found by piecing together the four Gospel accounts. The distinction is that the two crucified with Jesus both railed at him, whereas one of the two earlier individuals spoke in his defense.

With other individuals in custody, it was sadistic to select Barabbas, a *murderer*, for release—he was the worst possible candidate. Sadistic tendencies exist in everyone like a germ. Under certain conditions, if not resisted, this latent germ comes to the fore through depraved tastes.

Comment: Perhaps Pilate intentionally named Barabbas for the alternate release, thinking that because Barabbas was so disgraceful a character, the multitude would select Jesus instead.

Reply: That might be, but in any event the choice pleased the crowd.

Mark 15:26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING

OF THE JEWS.

That was part of the superscription, and it was written in three languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Because of the superscription, the Lorraine cross was used with an additional cross-piece over the head for the writing.

Mark's Gospel emphasizes the mockery that ensued throughout the crucifixion experience.

Mark 15:27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

Mark 15:28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

These two transgressors were truly guilty, whereas Jesus was sinless. He was crucified between them (Isa. 53:12).

Mark 15:29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,

Jesus did say, "Destroy this body, and I will raise it up the third day," but he was referring to the "body" of his Church. This was part of the accusation laid against him. Accusations: (1) He was an *insurrectionist* and a troublemaker, (2) he styled himself a *king* whereas Caesar was king, and (3) he threatened to *destroy the temple*. In addition, the religious authorities considered him to be a *blasphemer*. At this end of the age, the accusations will be very much the same against the feet members. Behind all of the accusations was jealousy because of Jesus' momentary popularity, which seemed to threaten the priesthood. His popularity started with "Hosanna!" at the time of the Triumphal Entry.

Mark 15:30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

Mark 15:31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

Mark 15:32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

Jesus could hear the conversation of the chief priests and the scribes. They taunted him. What wonderful self-control Jesus exhibited in the face of Satanic ingenuity!

Mark 15:33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Mark 15:34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The "sixth hour" was noon; the "ninth hour" was 3 p.m. (In Roman time the "sixth hour" was 6 o'clock, and the twelfth hour was either noon or midnight.) With Hebrew time, the first 12 hours went from sunset to sunrise (6 p.m. to 6 a.m.), and the second 12 hours went from sunrise to sunset (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.).

Astronomy is involved, so noontime is 12 *p.m.* because that is when the declination takes place. The fullness of light at noontime is called “p.m.”—post meridian.

Regarding the darkness, it is possible that an earthquake took place in the distance. From the fissure came forth volcanic ash to obscure the light of the sun for the three hours Jesus was in agony on the Cross. The timing was miraculous. Moreover, the “darkness” covered “the *whole land*,” so that it could not be denied—all the people saw it. When the scribes and Pharisees tried to discredit the Crucifixion, they did not rebut the darkness. If the Crucifixion were fiction, that would be the easiest part to refute.

Jesus felt utterly forsaken for only a moment: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Then, just before he died, he was strengthened and cried out loudly, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). His words must have been a terrific roar as he summoned up all his remaining energy. His heart burst right after that.

Comment: He must have felt worse for that moment than he did in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was in depression in the garden, but this experience of feeling utterly forsaken must have just cut him to the core.

Reply: YES, IT DID.

Q: Did Jesus have this experience because he became sin for us for a moment?

A: As Adam fled in panic and hid behind a tree when he sinned, so Jesus had to have a corresponding experience. When Adam willfully disobeyed, he became conscious of his nakedness; he felt shame in full force. The entire time Jesus was on the Cross he took the place of the sinner, but this sudden feeling of being forsaken was the climax. He did not anticipate this feeling.

Jesus not only had to die to be the Savior, but he had to die in *every detail* of Scripture. Pastor Russell identified a perfect man’s life for a perfect man’s life as the Ransom price, but that is only half the story. Jesus also had to take the place of the sinner. He had to experience the crown of thorns, betrayal in a garden at the hand of a familiar friend, the sweat, the feeling of alienation, fear, etc. The *additional* sufferings made Jesus’ sacrifice a corresponding price. The perfect Jesus died unjustly. From a legal standpoint he had the right to live forever. A perfect man dying for a perfect man is necessary for resurrection. Jesus must be raised because of that factor, but he also had to be the curse.

Mark 15:35 **And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.**

Jesus’ speech was probably slurred because crucifixion had dried his tongue.

Mark 15:36 **And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.**

How very, very sadistic! Vinegar was a terrible thing to offer Jesus at this point, but he tasted it to fulfill Scripture.

Mark 15:37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

“It is finished!” was his cry.

Mark 15:38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

The veil, or curtain, was about 4 inches thick. Earthquake tremors preceded, causing darkness over the whole land, and then there was this one violent eruption. During the next three days, the tremors continued. Proof: Some came forth from the tomb (Matt. 27:52,53).

The renting of the Temple veil from top to bottom signifies that Jesus opened up “a *new* and living way” (Heb. 10:19,20). In antitype with the feet members, it would signify the *recognized* closing of the high calling (from the Father’s standpoint the high calling will close sooner). The renting indicated another thing: Just as the high priest tore his cloak in twain to show *anger* at Jesus’ supposed blasphemy, so God, when the death of His Son occurred, displayed His *anger* and displeasure with the renting of the thick Temple veil. When Jesus suffered, God suffered too. The Father saw the sadistic way others treated him, e.g., putting a sponge dipped in vinegar to Jesus’ mouth. Even though Jesus’ death was prophesied, that did not excuse Satan, the fallen angels, the scribes, and the Pharisees. And God’s wrath at the end of the age against Gog and Magog will mark the opening of a *new* era. His judgment on Gog and Magog will be negative in regard to their destruction, but from that day forward, it will be known that the Kingdom has started.

In the Tabernacle arrangement, the first veil is the veil of human-mindedness, the veil of consecration; it signifies the death of the human will. The second veil represents the finishing of one’s calling, the actual death of the flesh.

Mark 15:39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

The centurion faced Jesus directly; that is, he was *in front* of Jesus, looking up at him. Jesus had just cried with a loud voice “It is finished”! This cry, plus the phenomena in nature—the *combination* of things—convinced the centurion that Jesus was the Son of God. The centurion could not see the Temple veil being rent, but for that to happen, there had to be a *powerful* earthquake. He knew that Jesus’ last utterance was a triumphant cry, that Jesus was a man of conviction, and that crucifixion was about the most painful death one could experience (three hours of extreme and excruciating agony with every movement being torture). The centurion would have admired Jesus’ endurance of tremendous pain and his triumphant cry. Also, it was dark from noon until 3 p.m. and no doubt began to clear right after Jesus’ death.

Not many centurions were in Jerusalem. The centurion whose servant Jesus healed was Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, but the centurion at the Cross was a different one. It would appear that the centurion at the Cross was not previously sympathetic to Jesus because he did not try to interfere when the garments were parted and the jeering took place. But then the signs culminated: the earthquake and the ominous, foreboding darkness for three hours. And when Jesus said “It is finished” and died at

3 p.m., the sky began to clear. During the period of Jesus' anguish and suffering, the sunlight was obscured, and when he was relieved of the agony by death, the sun broke through. All of these things indicated Jesus was not an ordinary man. With the signs in nature, it was as if the earth were suffering with him.

Comment: Verse 39 in the RSV reads, "When the centurion, who was standing right in front of him, saw the way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God.'" Matthew 27:54 in the RSV is as follows: "Now the centurion and those who were with him, keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, 'Truly this was the Son of God.'"

Reply: The mood was just too coincidental to be happenstance. It was as if nature were in accord with the suffering of Jesus.

Mark 15:40 **There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;**

Three women at the Cross are mentioned by name as individuals: Mary Magdalene, Mary (Jesus' mother), and Salomé. Mary, the mother of Jesus, had sons named James, Joses, Judas (Juda), and Simon (Matt. 13:55). Purportedly Salomé was the mother of James and John Zebedee; i.e., she was Zebedee's wife.

They were standing "afar off" out of courtesy because Jesus was naked on the Cross. Only Jesus' mother came close. John had probably manifested sympathy for Mary before Jesus committed her care to him. Jesus wanted John to watch out for her welfare.

Mark 15:41 **(Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.**

Interesting insight. When Jesus went to Jerusalem, many women followed behind the apostles. Only Matthew's Gospel mentions women quite frequently, and in his genealogy of Christ, he lists Rahab, Ruth, and Tamar. As a tax collector, and thus despised, Matthew was sensitive to others. Some of the "many other women" may not have been disciples but were going to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Mark 15:42 **And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,**

Mark 15:43 **Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.**

Joseph of Arimathea's being "an honourable counsellor" suggests a few things: (1) He was a member of the Sanhedrin. (2) Jesus' body was laid in his tomb, which was near the Cross. (3) He did not vote with the others who wanted to put Jesus to death. However, just because he did not vote does not mean the others on the Sanhedrin knew he thought so highly of Jesus. Nevertheless, they would know he was sensitive to justice, as the Sanhedrin was supposed to be. Without substantial evidence, they probably thought he was merely acting out of principle as a just man.

Now, by *boldly* craving the body of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea was beginning to shoulder responsibility and incur opposition. “Boldly” suggests he was courageous. Pilate, a representative of the Roman Empire, was greatly feared. To demand an audience before Pilate’s august appearance took courage, therefore, and shows Joseph would persist beyond the first negative influence.

Comment: Matthew says Joseph *begged* the body of Jesus in his determination.

Joseph was a just man waiting for the Kingdom of God and for the Messiah. Luke 19:38 says he was a disciple of Jesus, but “secretly for fear of the Jews.” He knew that as soon as he revealed he was a disciple, he would be put off the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus was another secret disciple. According to a very old tradition, Joseph of Arimathea did not stay in Israel after the Crucifixion but went to England. A Christian colony was there, and an early Gospel was written.

In the Garden tomb were two places for bodies, one being smaller than the other. The foot part was elongated on the larger receptacle. Originally this tomb bed was made for Joseph of Arimathea, but in haste the foot area was chiseled out for a taller man. It was roughly cut—rougher than the rest of the receptacle—showing haste. The plan was to put Jesus’ body in that receptacle, but that never happened. Joseph went to Pilate after 3 p.m. to beg for the body. It was quite a walk, which took time. After receiving permission, he had to get tools to extract the spikes. Jesus’ body was removed from the Cross, carried down the hill to this particular tomb, and then left on the slab in the antechamber. Since the sabbath began at 6 p.m., Joseph had only three hours to do all these things and to wrap the body. Therefore, everything was done in haste. The women saw where Jesus was being buried, and they hurried away to buy spices to anoint his body, not knowing Nicodemus was also getting spices and linen to wrap the body. Early Sunday morning the women returned to the tomb, thinking they could finish the anointing and the preparation.

When the tomb is entered, the first thing noticed is the slab in the antechamber. If the resurrection had not occurred, the anointing process would have been finished there, and then the body would have been moved to the elongated tomb bed. (When John just looked in, he could not see the tomb bed. He had to actually enter the tomb in order to see it.) Incidentally, one of the Gospels said Joseph had prepared a “new” tomb, which suggests the Garden Tomb was made not long before Jesus’ crucifixion.

The Feast of the Passover began the next day. Because these individuals had touched Jesus’ dead body, they could not participate in the feast at this time but had to observe it a month later according to the Law.

Mark 15:44 **And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.**

Mark 15:45 **And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.**

The centurion was in charge. A centurion had over 100 people under him, although not that many would have been needed here. When he assured Pilate that Jesus was indeed dead, then Pilate gave permission for the body to be taken. Without this assurance, there would always be the thought that Jesus had survived and not died.

The solid-rock hewn Garden Tomb had only one entrance. Therefore, when the stone was rolled across the door, there was no human way to remove the body. The four Gospels present the Crucifixion from different eyewitness and/or contemporary slants. The fact the details harmonize proves the accounts were not fabricated.

Mark 15:46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

All of the details were premeditated to fit into God's plan. John 19:39,40 mentions where Nicodemus went and what he bought: "And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. Then they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." The "manner of the Jews" for burying was to wrap the head separate from the body, and to wrap each arm and leg individually (proof: Lazarus walked out of his tomb with the linen burial cloths still on him).

Mark 15:47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.

Others also beheld where Jesus was laid, but Mark thought the mention of these two was especially important.

Mark 16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

The two who beheld where the body was laid knew where to take the sweet spices. Other women were with them. Where were the apostles at this time? The faithfulness of these women and their reverence for Jesus are to be appreciated. Earlier the same three viewed Jesus on the Cross from afar (Mark 15:40).

Mark 16:2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Mark 16:3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

Mark 16:4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

Because of all the tourists, the stone is smaller today, but originally it was about 4 to 5 feet high and very thick and heavy. Knowing this, the women were concerned they could not remove the stone. By faith they proceeded to the tomb anyway.

The Garden Tomb is so situated that it can be seen from a distance. The earthquake tremors and the angel were instrumental in rolling away the stone. The *same* earthquake produced the cloud that darkened the atmosphere for three hours, shook when Jesus died, rent the Temple veil, opened the graves of sleeping saints, and then helped to roll away the stone. In other words, *one* earthquake can have *many* tremors.

John saw the grave clothes lying there in the tomb unwrapped—just collapsed—and believed (John 20:8). He realized that only a miracle could extract the body without unwinding the grave clothes. The Father had *instantaneously* dissolved the body into gases and resurrected His Son. When a person dies under normal circumstances, the body eventually dissolves into ashes, but not instantaneously. “Thou sowest not that body which shall be,” said the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 15:37). This is true of the world as well as of the Church, although the world will receive bodies like those they had previously.

Mark 16:5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

We know Mary Magdalene did not go into the sepulcher because when she reported to the apostles, she testified that the stone had been rolled away, saying, “They have taken him away.” If she had seen and heard the angel, she would have mentioned him. Those who heard her testimony and that of the other women thought it was fantasy. Nevertheless, Peter and John ran to the tomb.

Jesus’ body had been on the slab on the left, and now the “young man” was sitting on the right. Therefore, one had to enter the tomb in order to see the angel.

When the stone was rolled away, the guards left quickly to report to the scribes and Pharisees. (Jesus was raised about 5 a.m.) The guards were paid large sums of money to keep quiet (Matt. 28:11–14).

Mark 16:6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

Mark 16:7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Mark 16:8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

The women said nothing while en route, but they told their experience when they got to the disciples.

The sleeping saints who were resuscitated and came out of their tombs in an earlier earthquake tremor now had a chance to follow Christ (Matt. 27:51–53). Their discipleship had been cut short in death without receiving the Holy Spirit and having the opportunity to walk in the narrow way. Also, their coming forth has an antitype.

Mark 16:9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

When Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb the second time, she beheld the risen Jesus as a gardener. He appeared only to her as she mourned.

The Gospels providentially portray Jesus’ mother, Mary, very low key and do not put her first. Otherwise, it would be nearly impossible to refute the thought that she is a

Mediatrix.

Two of Jesus' four brothers believed on him earlier and were apostles. The other two brothers did not believe until the resurrection. The united testimony of all who had seen the risen Christ, including the 500, was so convincing that Jesus' brothers woke up. Therefore, all four of his brothers eventually believed.

Verse 9 and the remainder of this Gospel are spurious.