

THE BOOK OF MARK

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LESSON # 1 - INTRODUCTION

Mark's Gospel of Jesus Christ may be called, The Servant-Savior Gospel – because it presents Jesus Christ as the true Servant of God. It is a Gospel presented from the view-point of two Greek words – euthus and eutheos, translated by the English words, “immediately”, “forthwith”, “straightway”, “straight”, “anon”, and “as soon as”. We wish to see how they relate to the main purpose of Mark, namely to present Jesus Christ as the true Servant of the Lord.

I. THE PENMAN OF THE GOSPEL

This Gospel was penned by “John whose surname was Mark”, the son of Mary, a resident of Jerusalem. He was also a nephew of Barnabas (Acts 12:12; Col. 4:10). He became a believer under the ministry of Peter who calls him “Marcus, my son” (1 Pet. 5:13). He was a comrade of Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary tour, but deserted his post of missionary service when they came to Perga. Paul later refused to permit his attendance on their second tour (Acts 12:25; 13:5; 15:37-39). However, Mark recovered the confidence of Paul and was with him in his first imprisonment at Rome (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24). After this he was with Peter at Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13). Still later it seems he was with Timothy at Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:11). Beyond this point the Scriptures are silent concerning him.

The question is asked: Where did Mark get his information to write this Gospel seeing he was not one of the twelve. Luke also was not one of the Apostolate who followed Christ, but he tells us where he got his information (Luke 1:1-4). There is no such information in the Gospel of Mark. There is, however, a wealth of external evidence which gives conclusive proof that Mark was the amanuenses of Peter. This testimony can be traced through three hundred years, from the beginning of the Second Century to the end of the Fourth. The witnesses are Papias, early part of the Second Century; Justin Martyr, first half of the Second Century; Irenaeus, latter half of the Second Century; Origen, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, early third Century; Eusebius, end of Third Century; Epiphanius and Jerome, towards close of the Fourth Century. With variations of detail, all these affirm that Mark was dependent upon Peter. Papias, the earliest witness was the disciple of a John the Presbyter, who seems to be identical with John the Apostle. So this witness may be connected with the Apostolic Age, and with one of the twelve apostles.

The Presbyter said thus: “Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately whatever he recorded. He did not present, however, in regular order the things that were either spoken or done by Christ; for he had not been a personal auditor or follower of the Lord. But afterwards as I said, he attached himself to Peter, who gave instructions according to the necessities of his hearers, but not in the way of making an orderly arrangement of the Lord's words. So Mark committed no error in thus writing such details of things as he recorded; for he made conscience of one thing, not to omit on the one hand, and not to misrepresent of the other, any of the details which he heard”.

The opinion that Mark drew his material from the oral discourses of Peter is also perpetuated in Christian art. There are representations of Peter on a throne with Mark kneeling

before him and writing from his dictation: or, Mark sitting and writing and Peter standing before him with his hand raised and dictating; or Peter in a pulpit preaching to the Romans, and Mark taking down his words in a book.

The opinion that Peter influenced Mark is further seen in Peter's character imprints upon Mark. Vincent in his Word Studies in the New Testament says: "The restlessness and impetuosity of Mark's disposition, of which we have hints in his forsaking Paul and Barnabas at Perga (Acts 13:13; 15:38), in his subsequent readiness to join them on the Second Missionary journey (Acts 15:39), and if the tradition is accepted, in his rushing into the street on the night of Christ's arrest, clad only in a linen sheet (Mark 14:51-52), would naturally be in sympathy with the well-known character of Peter. Peter was a man of observation and action rather than of reflection; impulsive and impetuous".

Dr. Morrison says: "When we assume that Mark drew directly from the discourses of St. Peter, then we understand how it comes to pass that it is in his pages that we have the most particular account of that lamentable denial of his Lord of which the Apostle was guilty. On no other person's memory would the minute particulars of the prediction, and of its unanticipated fulfillment, be so indelibly engraven. It is also noteworthy that, while the very severe rebuke which our Lord administered to St. Peter in the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi is faithfully and circumstantially recorded in Mark's pages, the splendid eulogium and distinguishing blessing, which had been previously pronounced, are, as it were, modestly passed by. Doubtless, the great Apostle would not be guilty of making frequent or egotistical references to such marks of distinction".

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

The key verse to this Gospel is found in 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". (See also Acts 10:38). This verse presents the Savior as the Servant of the Lord. This thought will be seen in both the words and works to Christ in Mark's Gospel, and is the main theme of his writing.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan says: "Mark gives us practically no material other than that which is recorded by Matthew. The difference between the Gospels is that of method rather and that of matter. The method of Mark is characterized by directness and brevity (almost amounting to bluntness), accompanied by certain circumstantial touches which give us a most vivid sense of the Lord, in many details of look, gesture, and habits of speech".

In dealing with the Purpose of Mark, one might first ask the larger question: Why four Gospels? Why should not one have been sufficient when there is so much material of a similar character in the various records? There are several views in answer to this question. We have the so-called "Harmonies of the Gospels" seeking to set forth in chronological order the life and labor of the Lord. They have a certain value, but do not fully answer the reason for the four Gospels. Another view sets forth the idea that each writer wrote for a different class of people. For example, Matthew wrote for the Jews; Mark for the Romans; Luke for the Greeks; and John for the Church or the world at large. But there is nothing externally nor internally to warrant such a view. Scripture being its own interpreter, we can go to the Scriptures themselves and find the answer.

In Ezekiel 1:5-10 and Revelations 4:7, we have the description of the four beasts or living creatures. The first was like a lion; the second like a calf; the third had the face of a man; and the fourth was like a flying eagle. Here we have a fourfold pictorial prediction of Christ. Christ is

seen in four manifestations, represented by the four living creatures, as we view Him in the four Gospels. The early church fathers saw this, and with one voice they testify to what they understood. Irenaeus, Athanasius, Victorinus, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great all refer to the Cherubim as depicting Christ in the four Gospels. Matthew is thus associated with the Lion, depicting Christ as the Jewish Messiah and King, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah”. Mark is associated with the Ox, as the Servant symbolical of a beast of burden. Luke is associated with the Man, symbolizing Christ as the Son of Man. John is associated with the Eagle, Symbolizing Him as the Son of God.

This view may be further corroborated by the four predictions in the prophets of the “Branch”. It is significant to note that there are only four. In Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15 we read of Messiah as the “Branch of David”. Christ is to be the son of David, Israel’s King. The Gospel of Matthew predicts Him as such with the royal aspect throughout. In Zechariah 3:8 we read: “My Servant the Branch”. Mark’s purpose as we shall see is to present Christ as the true Servant. In Zechariah 6:12 we read: “The man whose name is the branch”. Luke presents Christ as the perfect Man. In Isaiah 4:2 we read: “The branch of Jehovah”. Who better presents Christ as the Son of God than The Gospel of John. This we believe is the purpose of the four Gospels, to present a composite picture of Christ as He is predicted in the O.T.

WHY FOUR GOSPELS:

1. “I will raise up unto David a righteous branch”.
(Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15)
“Behold thy King” (Zech. 9:9)
MATTHEW THE KINGDOM GOSPEL
2. “My servant the branch” (Zech. 3:8)
“Behold my servant” (Isa. 42:1)
MARK THE SERVANT GOSPEL
3. “The man whose name is the branch” (Zech. 6:12)
“Behold the man” (Zech. 6:12)
LUKE THE PERFECT MAN GOSPEL
4. “The branch of Jehovah (Isa. 4:2)
“Behold your God” (Isa. 40:9)
JOHN THE SON OF GOD GOSPEL

THE INTERNAL PURPOSE:

1. Matthew (see Matt. 5:17)
2. Mark (see Mark 10:45)
3. Luke (see Luke 19:10)
4. John (see John 5:43)

It is very clear that Mark wrote with a specific purpose in mind. He may not have known the Divine purpose, but being inspired by the Holy Spirit, he was guided to pen this record. To illuminate the thought of servantship in Mark’s Gospel, we notice that there is no genealogy of Christ, no childhood at Nazareth, no reference to His pre-existence and Divine glory, no Sermon on the Mount because a Servant does not administer Laws of the Kingdom, and the word “Lord”

is markedly omitted. All this reveals the purpose of Mark to present Christ as the true Servant-Savior.

Someone has said that Mark gives us “a species of minute photography”. Bernard in his Bampton Lectures (1864) says: “It is the Gospel of action, rapid, vigorous, vivid. Entering at once on the Lord’s official and public career, it bears us on from one mighty deed to another with a peculiar swiftness of movement, and yet with the life of picturesque detail. Power over the visible and invisible worlds, especially as shown in the casting out of demons, is the prominent characteristic of the picture. St. Peter’s saying to Cornelius has been well noticed as a fit motto for this Gospel, - ‘God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good and healing all those who were oppressed of the devil’”.

Mark is, therefore, pre-eminently the pictorial Gospel, the Gospel of detail. “There is” says Canon Westcott, “perhaps no one narrative which he gives in common with Matthew and Luke, to which he does not contribute some specific feature”. Thus he adds to John the Baptist’s picture of loosing the shoelatchet another touch, in the words “to stoop down” (1:7). He uses a more graphic term to describe the opening of the heavens at Christ’s baptism. According to Matthew and Luke the “heavens were opened” (anecithesan); but Mark depicts them as “rent asunder” (schizomenous) (1:10). Matthew and Luke represent Jesus as led (anecithe) into the wilderness to be tempted, but Mark as driven (ekballei), and adding that He was with the wild beasts. Some detect here a reference to Peter’s comparison of the Devil to a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8). Mark gives a realistic touch to the story of James and John forsaking their employment at the call of Jesus, by adding that they left their father with the hired servants (1:20). After the discourse from the boat to the multitude upon the shore, Mark alone tells us that the disciples sent away the multitude, and gives us the little details that they took him as he was, and there were with them other little boats (4:36). His account of the storm which followed is more vivid than Matthew’s or Luke’s. He pictures the waves beating against the boat, and the boat beginning to fill; notes the steersman’s cushion at the stern on which the sleeping Lord’s head reposed (4:37-38). He throws the awaking by the disciples and the stilling of the tempest into a dramatic form by the distressful question: “Master carest thou not that we perish?”, and the command to the sea, as a raging monster, “Peace! Be still!” (4:38-39).

Mark is a master in giving special incidents, such as: How the Lord went to prayer (1:35); How He withdrew to the sea (3:7); How He sat in a boat on the sea (4:1); How He was asleep in the stern on a pillow (4:38); How He sent forth the disciples two and two (6:7); How He made the people to sit on green grass (6:39); How He made the people sit in ranks (6:40); How He sat (12:41; 13:3); How the Centurion stood over against Him (15:39).

G. Wilson Heath in his Studies in Mark’s Gospel says: “We are told in Mark, in a special way, of the fear, the astonishment, and the sore amazement of the disciples. Also the effect of our Lord’s ministry and works on the multitude is detailed as in no other Gospels. We get in Mark the heights of Divine power, His compassion, His love, His composure, His seeking solitude, His wonder, His grief, His sighing, His anger, His displeasure, and above all the activities and movements in grace of Jehovah’s Servant, the One whom the prophets speak of as made to ‘serve with our sins’. Yes, we see that ‘where sin abounded grace did much more abound’. I cannot read this Gospel without feeling springtime in my soul, it is so rich and throbbing in manifested grace”.

Andrew Jukes in his, Differences of the Four Gospels, says: “Again in this Gospel the look is noticed, and this in scenes where the other Evangelists in the corresponding places give us no such information. Thus when they watched Him upon the Sabbath, whether He would heal or

not, we read here: 'When He had looked round about on them in anger' – was there nothing in such a look? So again, when they said, 'Thy mother and Thy brethren without seek for Thee', here only is it noticed that 'He looked round about on them who sat about Him and said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren'. So again, when He spoke of His cross, and Peter began to rebuke Him, here only we read: 'And Peter began to rebuke Him', here only we read: 'and when He had turned about, and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter'. So again, in the case of him who came kneeling down and asking: 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' here only do we read that 'Jesus looking upon him, loved him'; and then again, 'when he went away grieved', here only it is noticed that 'Jesus looking round said to His disciples: 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!' Surely not in vain is the look recorded. Let servants mark this: there is no small ministry in a single look, be it of love, or grief, or anger. It may speak what words cannot express".

III. THE PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL

Two Greek words, euthus and eutheos play a significant part in the presentation of Mark's Gospel. These words are translated by six different English words and phrases. Of the forty-three occurrences of the words in Mark we find that nineteen (19) times they are translated "straightway"; seventeen (17) times "immediately"; three (3) times "forthwith"; two (2) times "as soon as"; once (1) "straight"; and once (1) "anon". All of these references are not used directly of Christ. Some refer to other things. Most of the words are in the first part of the Gospel. However, they are found in almost every chapter. The first occurrence is in 1:3 and the last in 15:1.

1. The Immediacy of Preparation

1:3 – Here is the first reference, revealing the preparation of the way of the Lord. John was to make it "straight" or "immediate", so that this Servant when He came could go forth to work. John was a forerunner, a herald, a trail-blazer for the Lord's Servant. This is quoted from Isa. 40:3. The word "euthus" has the idea of straight "whether perpendicular or horizontal". This shows how complete was the work of John, and it was a complete work both in bringing men to Christ, and denouncing the hypocrites.

1:10 – Jesus had just been baptized by John for the "fulfillment of all righteousness". He does not linger long after this legal experience, but come "straightway up out of the water". The Servant is immediately ready and willing to work.

1:12 – The immediacy of preparation is also seen in the Spirit's work. The "Last Adam" is to be tempted in a wilderness, and so "The Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness".

2. The Immediacy of Proclamation

1:21 – This is the first immediacy of His preaching. This same immediacy is seen throughout this Gospel. He had a message from His Father to sinful men, and it required haste.

6:50 – His word was never far from those in trouble. He has the word of cheer and the word of healing.

3. The Immediacy of Power

1:31 – No sickness ever remained long in the presence of the Divine Healer. “He sent His word and healed them” (Ps. 107:20). His word is a word of power in the home and life of Peter’s mother-in-law.

1:42 – Leprosy was not only a most loathsome and foul disease, it was also the most incurable. But even this dread malady is immediately removed by this Healer.

5:29 – Blood is the life stream of the human body, the soul that keeps us alive. A woman’s faith brought her to Jesus and His power immediately healed her.

5:42 – Death, that final enemy of man had found its way into the home of a twelve year old girl. But Jesus’ power is just as immediate and effective as in His healing.

7:35 – Christ came with immediate power to open deaf ears and unloose tied tongues. So a deaf and dumb man is fully restored.

4. The Immediacy of Perception

2:8 – Jesus Christ possessed an intuition which gave Him immediate perception. He knew what was in man, and needed not that any man should tell Him.

5:36 – The immediacy of hearing gave Jesus perception to act at once.

11:2 – It is reasonable to believe that Jesus had made no prior arrangement with the owner of the colt. His ability of perception could bring this about.

5. The Immediacy of Peril

3:6 – Jesus was in constant peril from His enemies. Here two evil forces join against Him. They lose no time in their preparation to do away with Him.

4:15 – Here again evil has its immediacy. This time it is Satan who comes and robs the word sown in human hearts.

6:25 – The daughter of Herodias came with haste to the king Herod to ask for the head of John the Baptist. Evil is again alert.

14:43 – The traitor comes to Christ immediately into the Garden of Gethsemane. When evil has ripened it makes quick moves to fulfill its mission. Judas is losing no time to betray Christ. See V.45.

15:1 – This is the last reference in Mark to the Greek word euthus. The leaders of the nation, under evil domination, fulfill their part in haste.

6. The immediacy of production

4:5 – Jesus shows how rapidly the seed springs up in the case of that sown on stony ground.

4:16 – He repeats again that the seed sown on stony ground sprang up quickly.

4:29 – There is no hesitation between the fruitage and the harvest. As in the natural world, so in the spiritual, both evil and good are harvested when they become ripe.

7. The Immediacy of Demon Possession

Christ was never very far away from his greatest enemy – the demon world. He had come to destroy evil principalities and powers.

5:2 – Here we find that a demon-possessed man met Christ immediately as he stepped ashore from the boat.

9:20 – An evil spirit takes no time to become ferocious in the presence of Jesus.

5:13 – Jesus immediately permits evil spirits to enter into a herd of swine. Demons seem to demand a body.

8. The Immediacy of Purpose

1:29 – All through this Gospel we are confronted with the fact that Jesus not only knows His purpose, but that His purpose is first and foremost. From the synagogue He goes right to the house of sickness.

1:30 – No sooner had Jesus come into the house of Peter but what they immediately tell Him of the sickness.

6:45 – Again, no time is lost. The work of the Kingdom of Heaven requires haste, and everywhere in this Servant-Gospel we see it happening. There is always the realm of immediacy.

8:10 – Jesus is going immediately from one place to another performing His mission of preaching, teaching, and healing.

9. The Immediacy of Performance

2:12 – The same Lord that worked so efficiently as a Servant, and performed His tasks immediately required that faith be that instantaneous.

9:24 – The immediacy of faith is seen in the father of a demon-possessed child. He not only believed, but revealed unbelief.

10. The Immediacy of Publicity

1:28 – The fame of Jesus could not be kept in any one little center. It spread abroad immediately. His miracles had healed those in all kinds of distress, such as disease, demon-possession, and even death.

2:2 – His fame brought the crowds together so that standing room was at a premium.

9:15 – Jesus did not hold Himself aloof from the people, but gladly met and ministered to them. To Him they were as sheep without a shepherd.

There are other passages where our words occur, but are not directly relevant to Christ as the Servant. The ones we have noticed throw much light upon Him who came into the world, “not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Mark 10:45).

The Gospel according to Mark may be regarded as the greatest book on the subject of service. The stimulus of that service is Divine LOVE. The strength for that service is Divine POWER. The standard for that service is Divine WILL.

The greater discourses found in Matthew are omitted in Mark. The parables are few, some seven in number, while emphasis is laid upon the miracles which are some eighteen in number. The meaning of this is evident for Mark is a Book of Service.

Mark gives particular attention to the various periods and occasions of Christ’s retirement: He withdraws to a solitary place after healing people (1:35); He goes to the desert place after the cleansing of the leper (1:45); He goes to the lake after healing the man with the withered hand (3:7-13); He goes to a desert place after the death of John the Baptist (6:30-32). The meaning of this is evident. He who serves much must be much in need of retirement and fellowship with His Father. Christ still says to many overburdened disciples, “Come ye apart and rest awhile” (6:31).

OUTLINES:

The Gospel of Mark does not lend itself readily to a good analytical outline as does, for example, Matthew. Yet there is a geographical movement as we shall see from north to south; and a service ministry in word and deed, followed by a sacrificial ministry issuing out in the cross.

The key verse to this Gospel is found in 10:45:

“The Son of Man came

(1) not to be ministered unto, but to minister (1:1 – 10:52).

(2) and to give His life a ransom for many” (11:1 – 16:20).

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie in his A Guide To The Gospels gives the following suggestive outline –

THE DAY OF MINISTRY

Introduction: 1:1-13 – The Day Before.

(a) Acclamation: 1:14-45 – Dawn.

(b) Opposition: 2:1 -3:6 – Morning.

© Separation: 3:7 – 6:6 – Forenoon

(d) Consummation: 6:7 – 8:26 - Midday

© Instruction: 8:27 – 10:52 – Afternoon

(b) Condemnation: 11:1 – 13:37 – Evening

(a) Crucifixion: 14:1 – 15:47 – Night

Conclusion: 16:1-20 – The Day After

“On either side of the Consummation are the Separation and Instruction of the Apostles. Outside of that is the Opposition which led to the Condemnation. Enfolded all is the tragic contradiction of Acclamation which ended in Crucifixion. On the one side of this program is The Day Before, one of Preparation for Earth’s service, and on the other side is The Day After, one of Exaltation to Heaven’s Service”.

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I . . . INTRODUCTION (1:1-13)

1. The Proclamation of John (1-8)
2. The Preparation of Jesus (9-13)

II . . . PRESENTATION OF THE DIVINE SERVANT (1:14 – 15:47)

1. His Ministry in Galilee (1:14 – 9:50)
 - a. Contending (1:14 – 3:6) Agents & Activities of evil.
 - b. Separating (3:7 – 6:6) Believing from Unbelieving.
 - c. Performing (6:6 – 8:26) Messages and Miracles.
 - d. Instructing (8:27 – 9:50) The Cross.
2. His Ministry in Perea (10:1-52)
 - a. Messages (1-45)
 - b. Miracle (46-52)
3. His Ministry at Jerusalem (11:1 – 15:47)
 - a. His entry into the city (11:1-11)
 - b. Cursing of a tree and cleansing of the temple (11:12-19)
 - c. His final controversy and great prediction (11:20 – 13:37)
 - d. Conspiracy and compact to take Jesus (14:1-11)
 - e. Passover, Gethsemane, and Betrayal (14:12-52)
 - f. Condemnation and Crucifixion (14:53 – 15:47)

III . . . CONCLUSION (16:1-20)

- a. Resurrection of Jesus (1-8)
- b. Manifestations of Jesus (9-14)
- c. Proclamation by Jesus (15-18)
- d. Ascension of Jesus (19)
- e. Ministration by the Apostles (20)

(1) Jesus – The personal name of our Lord, the Greek form of Joshua, meaning “Jehovah, his help or Savior”, and given to Him by command of the angel of the Lord. He was to “save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

(2) Christ – His official title, meaning “anointed” and corresponding to the Hebrew Messiah (Ps. 2:2; Dan. 9:24-25; John 1:41; 4:25). He was the anointed, the Messiah, the Prophet, Priest and Potentate.

(3) The Son of God – His Divine name, possessed of Deity. He was not only “the child born”, but also “the Son given” (Isa. 9:6). He was the child of Mary, but also the Son of God.

b. Concerning John – The Forerunner (Vrs. 2-3)

We have now the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. Mark quotes from two O.T. prophets: Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. How necessary to know the O.T. Scriptures, and here it is true as someone has said: “The New is in the Old contained, the Old is in the New explained”.

“Behold” introduces something wonderful and unexpected. This O.T. prediction was given of John, the forerunner to the Messiah. He was to be “the voice of one crying”, a herald exciting attention, but of comparatively short duration. The “wilderness” denotes an unenclosed, untilled, and thinly populated district southwest of Jerusalem. It is also called “The Wilderness of Judea”. John’s ministry was one of preparation. The word “prepare” denotes a leveling and straightening of the roads, as was customary before Oriental monarchs came on their journeys and marches. John, the precursor of Christ, went before, rebuking the proud, exposing the hypocrites, calling men to repentance, and making ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:16-17).

2. The Divine Preparation (Vrs. 4-8)

A stranger who at this time might happen to be in Jerusalem or in the general region of Judea and the Jordan, would have noticed a strange stir among the people. Had he asked: “Where are they going?” he would have been told that all Judea was drawn to hear and see a new prophet, whose name was John, a man resembling Elijah.

By his birth John was the “child of miracle” being born of aged parents, in accordance with the Divine prediction. His home from youth was in the wilderness. Here he lived the life of an ascetic, withdrawn from all social contacts and bearing the marks of a Nazarite (Num. 6:1-8).

a. His Method (Vrs. 4-5)

John’s method was to preach and practice baptism in water “of repentance for the remission of sins”. This sign of baptism in water was nothing new to the Jews it being a well-understood sign of moral purification (Isa. 1:16; Ezek. 36:25; Ps. 51:3,7). His method and place of ministry might be new to the people, but the sign or symbol of water cleansing was not new. John, the last of the O.T. prophets, was calling the people to repentance of their sins, which was necessary for the coming of the King and the Kingdom Gospel. We are here reminded of another day in the future, when these people look on Him Whom they crucified, and make national repentance (Zech. 12:10; 13:1). This water baptism administered by John was a legal baptism belonging to the O.T. types and symbols of cleansing. This baptism has no place in the present dispensation of the grace of God.

b. His Make-up (Vr.6)

John the Baptist, being the son of a priest, was entitled to exercise the priestly office and enjoy all its privileges, which assured him a life of ease and comfort. However, by the Holy Spirit, which filled his life before birth, he gave up all this for the lowly and austere life of a Nazarite. He could not eat anything coming from the vine, the symbol of that which “cheereth God and man” (Judg. 9:13). Like Samson he let his hair grow long, a symbol of dishonor (1 Cor. 11:14). Instead of the linen ephod he wore coarse camel’s hair. Instead of living at the altar and eating the best of the sacrifices, he subsisted on locusts and wild honey. The locust was a clean animal and permitted for food (Lev. 11:22).

c. His Mission (Vrs. 7-8)

John now comes to the heart of his mission – The introduction of Jesus Christ. In announcing the immediate coming of the Messiah he contrasts Him with himself in these verses in a twofold manner, first in person and then in performance.

John was more than a prophet; none greater had yet risen and no man born of woman was greater than He (Matt. 11:9-11); yet he declared his inferiority to the One he came to herald. He was unworthy to perform the humblest service, unloosing the latchet of His shoes, for the One Whom he proclaimed. He not only contrasts his person, but also his performance with Christ. His was a baptism with water; Christ’s a baptism with the Holy Spirit – one a material element, the other a heavenly Being. One but a symbol and shadow, the other the reality; one a created substance, the other the Eternal Spirit. As there is an infinite difference and distance between matter and Spirit, so there is a corresponding difference and distance between the Messiah and His forerunner.

We see that Mark omits the word “fire” in this context as given by Matthew and Luke, and this for a specific reason. A servant never pronounces judgment, and Mark is picturing Christ as The Servant. This proves that “fire” in this connection is not a symbol of the Holy Spirit, but a baptism of judgment fire which Christ will ultimately pour out upon His rejecters. Note that Christ Himself never baptized with water (John 4:2).

3. The Divine Presentation (Vrs. 9-11)

The Messiah now emerges from His parental home at Nazareth of Galilee, a small village in Lower Galilee some seventy miles north of Jerusalem. Here was the residence of Joseph and Mary before the birth of Christ, and after their return from Egypt (Luke 1:26-27; Matt. 2:23; Luke 2:39-51). Nazareth was situated on the side of a hill (Luke 4:29). And was not in good repute (John 1:46). It is mentioned neither in the O.T. nor by Josephus. As far as we have any knowledge Jesus lived here until this time when He comes to the Jordan River to be baptized by John and inaugurate His mission.

a. By Means of Human Demonstration (Vr. 9)

Much conjecture and misconception have centered around the baptism of Jesus. The reason and need for His baptism in water seem to be widely misunderstood. Jesus was about thirty years of age at this time (Luke 3:23), the age at which Levites began their ministry and the rabbis their teaching. Jesus Christ was born under the Law (Gal. 4:4). He was a Priest as well as a prophet. As a Priest He was not after the order of Aaron because He was not born a Levite, but from Judah (Micah 5:2). He was a priest after the order of Melchisedek (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:21), who was a priest-king. Christ was also a Prophet (Matt. 21:11; Luke 24:19). Now it behooved Him, Who was born under the Law, a Prophet and Priest, to fulfill all legal

righteousness (Matt. 3:15). This was one ceremony of the Law taken as representative of the spirit and essence of the whole ceremonial system.

Further, it may be said that in taking the baptism at the hand of John, He gave His approval of John's ministry, and identifying Himself with the people in that He became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). See also Phil. 2:7-8. This cleansing baptism in water became a type of the greater baptism at the cross, called His Passion Baptism (Luke 12:50). The Jordan River represents a passing from the old life into the new (See Joshua chs. 3,4). Thus it prefigured sin receiving its death and burial with Him, and holiness its resurrection and new life with Him (See Rom. 6:3,4,8; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:12-13).

b. By Means of Divine Declaration (Vrs. 10-11)

(1) He was Accepted (10a). "He saw the heavens opened" (or rent). He offered Himself and was immediately accepted of His Father throughout the cloven heavens. Later on Stephen saw "the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). On another occasion the heavens were closed for the Lord (Matt. 27:46).

(2) He was Anointed (10b). "And the Spirit like a dove descended upon Him". The dove is a symbol of peace, of judgment past (Gen. 8:12). The dove was a fit emblem of the pure, gentle, and peaceful character of Jesus and His work (Isa. 61:1-3; Matt. 10:16). Thus Jesus received the heavenly anointing and now the active and official ministry begins (Ps. 45:7; Isa. 11:2; 42:1).

(3) He was Attested (Vr. 11). John's was the voice of preparation, God's was the voice of attestation. Not only was Christ God's Son (Ps. 2:7,12); but "my beloved Son" (Isa. 42:1). In all respects as a Son and Mediator Christ was the "beloved Son" of God. (See Matt. 17:5; 2 Pet. 1:17). Thus the three persons of the Trinity were manifested at Jesus' baptism: The Messiah Himself in humble obedience, the Spirit in Divine anointing, and the Father in blessed attestation.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. The Gospel is both Unique and Universal – It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Vr. 1). Any Gospel not related to Him is spurious (Gal. 1:6-9). The basic Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-4). This Gospel is not only unique as related to Christ, but it is universal (Acts 4:12).

2. Christ is superior to the greatest man – John, the greatest man born of woman, stooped before the august presence of "The Lamb of God". "The Beloved Son" is alone worthy of adoration (Ps. 95:6; Hebr. 1:3-4; 3:2-6; 5:5-6; 8:1-6; 12:2).

3. John was humble and Christ was submissive to their Fathers' ministries – John was a "voice" clear and strong in preparation for Christ. Christ was a victim on a cross in salvation for all men. Both were completely yielded to their Father's will and fulfilled God's mission for them. God has a ministry for us today.

4. John baptized with water; Jesus with the Holy Spirit – The one was but a shadow and symbol of the reality. The continued practice of water baptism in this Dispensation has created separation and sectarianism among God's people. Baptism with the Spirit produces unification and sanctification among members of the Church.

LESSON # 3 MARK 1:12-20

I. INTRODUCTION

“For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:45).

The object of the coming of Christ is also expressed in 1 John 3:8 – “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil”. Christ did not come to show us how to live, nor only to give us a good example – but “to minister” and “destroy the works of the Devil”.

Our Lord is now standing on the Threshold of His public ministry. He has just ascended from the baptismal waters, and after forty days in the Wilderness of Temptation will enter upon that work purposed by His heavenly Father, and predicted by the Seers of old. His work “to minister” and “to give” will now lead him from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

1. Principal Places: - “Wilderness of Judea”. This was a desolate country south-east of Jerusalem, adjacent to the Dead Sea and stretching toward Jericho. It is the most desolate and dreary region of the whole country. “Galilee” is the northern province of Palestine. “Sea of Galilee” is also called the Sea of Tiberius, from a city built by Herod Antipas on the southwest shore, and named in honor of Emperor Tiberius (John 6:1; 21:1); also “Lake Gennesaret (Luke 5:1; and in the O.T. “The Sea of Chinnereth” from a city and small district on the western shore (Num. 34:11; 1 Kgs. 15:20).

2. Principal Persons: - Jesus Christ, Satan, Simon, Andrew, James, and John.

3. Principal Purpose: - This seems to be two-fold: First, to demonstrate the power of Jesus Christ over Satan and his every temptation; and, secondly, to demonstrate the power of the Gospel over men to leave their earthly calling for a heavenly calling.

II. INTERPRETATION

1. Probation in the Wilderness (1:12-13)

Before entering directly upon His public ministry our Lord must be tested in The Wilderness by the tempter that beguiled our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Our Lord is called “the last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45). No one since the days of the first Adam had been able to satisfy God’s righteousness and justice in the matter of sin, for all men are sinners (Rom. 3:23). The first man Adam was tempted in a garden, perfect in every detail; the Last Adam was tempted in a wilderness cursed by sin. The first fell in the midst of perfection; the last One stood the test in the midst of degradation. The Temptation, not being a record of service, is mentioned just briefly by Mark. Matthew and Luke give the details (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).

a. Compulsion by the Spirit (Vr. 12)

The great manifestations of Divine approval are immediately followed by correspondingly great temptations. The Holy Spirit of which Christ was full (Luke 4:1), impelled Him into the wilderness. As the great High Priest of His people Israel, He must of necessity be tempted in all points, so that He might be prepared to sympathize with, intercede for, and help (Hebr. 2:17-18; 4:15-16). In this wilderness there is a mountain called Quarantania, which

tradition has fixed as the scene of the temptation. It is described as an almost perpendicular wall of rock towering fifteen hundred feet above the plain.

b. Temptation by Satan (Vr. 13a)

For forty long days our Lord endured temptations in this desolate wilderness by Satan. The most natural meaning of this passage is that Jesus was tempted during forty days (Luke 4:2). Then the most signal assaults of the Tempter at the close of the forty-day period are those recorded by Matthew and Luke. The number forty is associated with probation, trial, and chastisement. It is recorded of Israel in the Wilderness (Deut. 8:2-5); under the judges, Othniel, Barak and Gideon (Judg. 3:11; 5:31; 8:28); under the kings, Saul, David, and Solomon (Acts 13:21; 2 Sam. 5:4; 1 Kgs. 11:42; Moses on the mount (Ex. 24:18; Deut. 9:18,25); The spies (Num. 13:25; 14:34); Elijah (1 Kgs. 19:8); Jonah and Nineveh (Jonah 3:4); Jesus after His resurrection (Acts 1:3).

The word “Satan” means Adversary. In his character and work, he is the opposer and false accuser of God and man. He is also known by the names Beelzebub, “the prince of demons” (Matt. 12:24); “the Prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2); and “the Old Serpent” (Rev. 12:9). Mark takes for granted and implies the victory of Jesus over Satan. He was victorious, which was a pledge of the full and final triumph of Himself and His people (Rom. 8:37).

c. Association with Wild Beasts (Vr. 13b)

This detail is found only in Mark. It completes the description of the desolateness of the region. The wild beasts are a type of the ferociousness of sin. Our Lord, in being our sin-bearer, must taste the depths of sin.

d. Ministration by the Angels (Vr. 13c)

“Angel” means messenger. They are spirit beings of a higher order than man (Ps. 8:5). They are the agents of God’s providence, and are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). After these days of intense trial, they come with Divine consolation and heavenly sustentation. Mark briefly notices three kinds of beings: Satan, wild beasts, and angels. At another crucial hour our Lord was ministered to by angels (Luke 22:43).

“The portal by which our Lord entered upon His earthly ministry has two pillars – the baptism and the temptation. In His baptism the Savior was visibly and audibly approved by God the Father. In His temptation He was manifestly put to the test by the power of evil. Consecration and probation were thus the two elements in the Redeemer’s inauguration, by which he was dedicated to the earthly ministry of humiliation, obedience, and benevolence” – The Pulpit Commentary.

2. Proclamation in Galilee (Vrs. 14-15)

Our Lord now enters upon His Galilean ministry. It is not, however, the beginning of Christ’s ministerial work. John alone, in his Gospel, fills in the gap between the Temptation and the imprisonment of John the Baptist. The unrecorded events following the temptation of Christ and His public ministry in Galilee are as follows: John introduces Christ with the words: “Behold the Lamb of God”; then follows the Marriage at Cana; then the first visit of Christ to Jerusalem and cleansing of the temple; then His interview with Nicodemus; the ministry of John

the Baptist; and the return of Christ to Galilee by way of Samaria, where he talked with the woman at Jacob's well. Coming to Galilee He heals the nobleman's son (See John 1:15 – 4:54).

The first three Gospels begin their record of Christ's ministry after John's imprisonment. The reason for this seems to be that a full and independent ministry to all Israel could not commence until the forerunner had completed his. Neither Matthew, Mark, and Luke were witnesses of His early Judean ministry.

a. The Gospel – Its Content (Vr. 14)

“The Gospel of the Kingdom of God”. Christ now comes as a Herald of the Good News which He came to bring unto men. This “Gospel of the kingdom of God” is that Gospel predicted and promised in the O.T. Scriptures (See Rom. 1:1-2). It is the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). “Salvation is of the Jews” said Jesus to the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:22). Christ was born as a Jew, of the Seed of David (Rom. 1:3); and was “a son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1). This Gospel has its roots in the O.T. It was God's purpose according to O.T. predictions and N.T. revelations that his Gospel should be preached to the Jew first and then to the Gentile (Rom. 1:16). This was God's order, and was so done in the beginning. But the nation rejected the Gospel, and thus forfeited their God ordained ministry. This Gospel finally ended when God permitted Jerusalem and the temple, destroyed by the Romans, A.D. 70.

Today there is no special priority in the Gospel of the Grace of God and the Secret (Eph. 2:5-9). Today there “is neither Greek nor Jew (Col. 3:11). God is today building the Body of Christ, the Church, not establishing a Kingdom. When this Body has been completed and we have been manifested with Him in glory (Col. 3:4) then God will deal again with His people Israel; and they will proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all mankind (Matt. 24:14).

When this Gospel of the Kingdom is again proclaimed it will be unlimited in its scope; it will be moral and spiritual in its sphere; it will be inclusive in its character (Both Jew and Gentile will enjoy it); thus it will be universal in its aspect; and it will be age-long in its duration.

b. The Gospel – Its Conditions (Vr. 15)

“The time is fulfilled”. Christ came in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4; Dan. 9:24-27). God is now speaking through His Son (Hebr. 1:2). The conditions are “repent ye and believe the Gospel”. Repentance is basically “to change one's mind and purpose”. This change is always for the better. Not only to forsake sin, but to change one's apprehension regarding it. It was what the Prodigal Son did when he “came to himself” and “stood up” (Luke 15). Believe is to put faith in, to trust, and accept as a gift. Believe what the prophets foretold and what is now proclaimed by John and Jesus. Believe both the message and miracles of the Kingdom Gospel.

3. Propagation by the Sea of Galilee (Vrs. 16-20)

Our Lord now walks along the Sea of Galilee, and sees two sets of two brothers each, whom He will now call into service for the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom. Simon and Andrew are the first two and James and John are the second pair. Jesus did not go down to the Sea and at random call these men. They were chosen (John 6:70). Jesus saw in these simple fishermen material for His Kingdom proclamation. Three of these early disciples (Peter, James, and John) became that “Apostolic Trinity” that Jesus put so much confidence in, and took with

Him to the Mount of Transfiguration, and the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 9:27-36; Matt. 26:36-46).

a. Their Occupation

They were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. They were fishermen by profession, using nets as a means of catching fish. God has called men from every occupation of life. He has honored humble, yet honest labor. The Sea of Galilee is famous for its clear blue water and abundant fish.

b. Their Obedience

“Straightway” is twice emphasized in these verses for both pairs of brothers. It is Mark’s characteristic word. The power of the call in these men’s lives is marvelous. They forsake all and follow Him. He called them to be “fishers of men”. They will now cast out the net of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

We note also that Jesus was not inconsistent in His call to these men. Zebedee, the father of James and John, was a man in good financial circumstances. He owned a boat, and had servants (Vr. 20). His wife was one of those pious women who ministered unto Jesus of their substance (Matt. 27:56). This circumstance would not make it difficult for the family to part with their two sons.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. As Christ’s temptation followed His baptism, so trials often follow a great spiritual enjoyment; (2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Jn. 2:14).

2. We need to be led of the Spirit in retirement and solitude, for they are often places of greatest temptations; (Ps. 36:4; Matt. 6:6; Eph. 5:12).

3. Temptations should result in our good, and help fit us for life’s duties; (Jam. 1:2-3; 1 Pet. 1:6-7).

4. We should, like these early disciples, follow the leadings and teachings of the Spirit. Prompt obedience is pleasing in the sight of the Lord; (Luke 9:57-62).

5. “Jesus calls us; by thy mercies,
Savior, may we hear Thy call,
Give our hearts to Thy obedience,
Serve and love Thee best of all”.

LESSON # 4 MARK 1:21-35 (Luke 4:31-42; Matt. 8:14-17)

I. INTRODUCTION

In our last lesson Jesus had been preaching in a general way in Galilee. He had called His first four disciples, and had departed with them on a preaching tour. As this lesson opens, we find them in the city of Capernaum in Galilee.

1. Principal Places: Capernaum in Galilee – a city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 4:18; John 6:17,21,24). It is not mentioned in the O.T., nor in the Apocrypha. Its exact site is unknown, strikingly illustrating the prediction of Jesus (Matt. 11:23). In Capernaum Christ and His disciples visited two places on a Sabbath Day; the Synagogue and the home of Simon and Andrew.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus Christ, Simon, Andrew, James, John, Man with unclean spirit, and Simon's mother-in-law.

3. Principal Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to attest and substantiate the Gospel of the Kingdom by the working of miracles.

Before entering upon the interpretation of the text, let us look at a few suggestions relative to the miracles which Jesus performed. The ministry of Jesus was twofold: first – the message; He taught them; and then the Miracle; He healed them. To prove His deity and manifest His power in the Gospel, He wrought miracles. The healing ministry of Christ was twofold: to bring mental and physical health. In His mental healing He dispossessed those who were possessed with demons, and in His physical healing He restored bodily powers. The miracles of our Lord were never violations of natural law and order, but restorations to natural order. The demon-possession of the man, and the fever of the woman were unnatural. Jesus restored them to natural health and order.

Jesus while here upon earth performed miracles in proof of His Divine mission (See John 9:3-5; 10:25, 37). The Jews expected that their Messiah would work miracles (See Matt. 12:38; Luke 11:16-17; John 7:31) and so also did John the Baptist (Matt. 11:3). The miracles of our Lord were variously designated:

(1) As evidence of His Divine mission they were called "semeia" or signs, a signal: hence signs by which it might be known that He was the Christ of God (Mark 8:11-12; John 2:11).

(2) As manifestations of supernatural power they are called "dunamis" mighty works or mighty powers. From this Greek word we get such English words as dynamite, dynamo, dynamic (Mark 6:2; 9:39).

(3) As extraordinary portending phenomena, exciting astonishment and wonder, they were called "teras" wonders (John 4:48; Acts 2:19).

(4) As evidence of something completed, the natural acts and products of His being, they were called "erga" works (John 7:3,21).

The first three of these are brought together in Acts 2:22 and Hebrews 2:4. The first of these is translated "signs", "miracles", "wonders": the second, "mighty works", "mighty deeds", "wonderful works", "miracles"; the third, "wonders", and the fourth "deeds" and "works".

In order to get a full and correct conception of Christ's miracles, they should be viewed in all these aspects. They were not only manifestations of His supernatural power, but also the product of that power inherent in Him, the natural fruits, the outworking of His own Divine nature. They were not merely adapted to impress the mind with wonder, astonishment or terror; but were signs of the truth of which He was the embodiment.

II. INTERPRETATION

1. MANIFESTATIONS IN THE SYNAGOGUE (Vrs. 21-28)

Our Lord now comes with His four disciples, whom He had called from their fishing on the Sea of Galilee. They came to Capernaum and immediately entered into the synagogue. The word synagogue means "assembly or congregation". It is applied both to a religious gathering, having certain judicial powers (Luke 12:11) and also to the place where the Jews met for their public worship on ordinary occasions (Luke 7:5). The synagogues appeared during the Babylonian Captivity, when the Jews were deprived of their usual rites of worship in the Temple at Jerusalem. In the synagogues they assembled to hear the reading of the Law, and to hold social functions, as well as the judicial activities. It was a place of unification for the scattered people.

a. The Public Message (21-22)

It was the Sabbath Day. Our Lord was law-abiding. Mark does not give us the substance of His message; he merely states that Jesus taught and the people marveled at His doctrine. The Sermon on the Mount may well give the substance of His teaching (Matt. Chs. 5,6,7). Luke 4:16-21 gives the substance of His reading and teaching while at the synagogue at Nazareth. His post-resurrection teaching may also serve as a model of His teaching (Luke 24:25-27). The affect upon the people was wonder and astonishment. He taught as the great Author and Revealer of Truth. As the Author of the Law, He expounded it in a greater spiritual fullness than Moses did. "Verily I say unto you". They noticed a marked difference between His teaching and that of the Scribes. The teaching of the Scribes was adulterated with traditions which nullified the power and effectiveness of the Law. He also taught and worked in the fullness of grace (John 1:17).

b. The Public Miracle (23-28)

The Divine authority of Jesus is now attested by Divine power. Three things are to be noted in this incident –

(1) Demon Degradation (23-24)

Here is a man controlled by a wicked, unclean spirit or demon. Nothing shows the depths of sin and degradation as demon possession. Part of the ministry of the Lord was "to proclaim liberty to the captives" (Isa. 61:1). We note two things about this demon: his power and his personality. He controlled the man to the extent that he used his organs of speech; and he recognized Jesus as "the Holy One of God". Here was a wicked spirit being possessing a human being. But before the august presence of that "Holy One" he feared and trembled (See Acts 16:17; James 2:19). The demons know Him to be The Son of God, and they fear and tremble (Luke 4:41); while many human beings blaspheme the Son of God and trample Him under their feet (Hebr. 10:29).

(2) Divine Declaration (25)

“Hold thy peace, and come out of him”. Literally, Jesus was saying: “Be muzzled, and come out of him”. Here was command with authority. It is usually supposed that evil spirits would be the last to acknowledge the Lord, or make Him known, and that we should welcome any agency that bears witness to the truth. But our Lord would not have the testimony of demons, and bids them be silent and come out of the man.

(3) Divine Demonstration (26-28)

The Possessed is set free and the people are astonished. After tearing the man and convulsing him and yelling in a demoniacal voice, the demon left him. The man becomes natural again by the supernatural power of Christ. The Lord’s authority over unclean demons, even more than His control of disease, was the marvel among the people, and became the means of spreading His fame abroad in Galilee.

2. MINISTRATIONS IN SIMON’S HOUSE (Vrs. 29-34)

Immediately after leaving the synagogue they enter the house of Simon and Andrew. They had formerly resided at Bethsaida (John 1:44) but now had taken up residence at Capernaum.

a. His Private Ministry (29-31)

Upon entering the house, they find that Simon’s mother-in-law was violently ill with a fever. From this incident it is certain that Peter had a wife (See 1 Cor. 9:5). Fevers were very common in Palestine, especially in the vicinity of Capernaum during the summer and autumn. Jesus is immediately told of the sickness, and again His power is manifested and the fever leaves. As an evidence of a full and perfect cure “she ministered unto them”. The fever did not leave her weak and exhausted; she was raised to full strength and perfect health. We note how Mark details each act of Jesus, more-so than Matthew and Luke (Matt. 8:14-15; Luke 4:38-39).

b. His Public Ministry (32-34)

Mark now proceeds from the one outstanding public miracle in the Synagogue to the private miracle in the house and thence to the Outburst of supernatural power in all its fullness and freeness. It was a busy day for our Lord on that Sabbath; in the synagogue in the morning, in Peter’s house in the afternoon, and now at the door in the evening. The Jewish Sabbath closed at the setting of the sun (Lev. 23:32). It being the cool of the day, the people could bring their sick and suffering to Him – diseased and demonized human beings. People come en masse bearing their sick.

The news of this second miracle stirred the people in all parts of the city, “and when the sun was setting, all they that had sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him, and He laid His hand on every one of them and Healed them” (Luke 4:40). The blind returned home seeing, the dumb shouted for joy, the deaf heard the sweet melodious voice of Christ, the lame walked, the leper cleansed, the possessed thanked God for release. “Hallelujah! What a Savior!”

3. MEDITATION IN SOLITUDE (Vr. 35)

We have seen our Lord in His ministration of preaching, His manifestation of power over demons and disease, and now finally, in His meditation in prayer. We have seen our Lord in

His contact with disease, His conflict with demons, and now His communion with Deity. A truly blessed close to a busy Sabbath in Capernaum.

Thronged by the multitudes, pressed by the cries of the sick and suffering, He found little time for rest and communion with His Father in prayer. A new day has not yet dawned. It is a solitary desert place where Christ is alone in prayer to His Father. He was tired, weary and worn from that busy day. But now from His hallowed solitude He will be refreshed, and able to meet another day among the diseased, the demonized, and the dying.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. Christ entered the synagogue on the Sabbath Day (Vr. 22). He set for us a fitting example that we too should come together for the reading and meditation of the Word (Hebr. 10:25).

2. A Mere intellectual knowledge of Christ is useless. The unclean spirit knew Jesus for demons believe and tremble. But they know Him only as conqueror, and not as Savior (Vrs. 23-24; James 2:19).

3. The demon spoke of “Jesus of Nazareth” (Vr. 24). “No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). Beware of those who speak of The Lord Jesus Christ as merely Jesus. It could be demonology in a religious dress. We should no longer speak of Him as “Jesus of Nazareth”; He is the Lord from Heaven.

4. Christ’s victory over demons foreshadows His complete victory over the Kingdom of Darkness (Vrs. 26-27; 1 John 3:8).

5. The display of Christ’s power often produced wonder only without saving faith (Vrs. 26-27; Matt. 9:33; 12:23; Acts 13:41).

6. Christ should always be our first resort in time of trouble (Vr. 30; Phil. 4:6).

7. Communion in prayer with our heavenly Father should be a daily exercise, and will contribute to the well-being of body, soul, and spirit (Vr. 35; Psa. 5:3; Matt. 6:6).

LESSON # 5 – Mark 1:36-45

I. INTRODUCTION

In our last lesson we left Jesus in a solitary place where He had gone to pray. He had gotten up before daylight, after His strenuous day of ministering both to the souls and bodies of many.

It is now a new day and we shall see Him busily engaged as the two Greek words indicate: He went immediately, forthwith, straightway to His work. Ruskin had on his desk the motto: “DO IT NOW”.

In this lesson we shall meet a new type of disease that Jesus heals. He had driven out unclean spirits (23-27); He healed a woman of fever (29-31); He had cured all diseases and demon-possessed (32-34); and now He cleanses a leper (40-45). It all reveals how deeply sin and its results have penetrated into the human race.

II. INTERPRETATION

1. THE SEARCH FOR JESUS (36-37)

a. He is Sought (36) – Simon missed Him, and informed the other disciples. The Greek word translated “followed after” literally means “hunted down”. It is very expressive and occurs only here. It denotes (1) to follow hard upon; (2) to pursue closely, to track out. It is used by Xenophon to describe the pursuit of an enemy in war. It occurs in a good sense in the LXX of Psalm 23:6 – “Thy mercy shall follow me”.

b. He is found (37) – He had evidently not been able to minister to all who needed His help at Capernaum. “All are seeking thee” was the reason for seeking out Jesus at His place of prayer. It could also mean that many who had been healed the day before now seek Him to honor and adore and even crown Him as their King. But it was not yet the day for crowning a king.

2. THE SERVICE IN OTHER PLACES (38-39)

“the next towns” could be translated village towns. Such towns as Dalmanutha, Magdala, Bethsaida, and Chorazin were near by.

“therefore came I forth”. He came that all might hear and be healed. And so He preached in all Galilee and cast out demons. This was no doubt the first general preaching and healing tour throughout Galilee, recorded also in Matt. 4:23-25.

Between verses 38 and 39 we have The Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matt. Chs. 5-7.

3. THE SAVING OF A LEPER (40-45)

The three Evangelists give this miracle in different settings. Matthew 8:2-4 places it first in his three triplets of specimens of the Messiah’s mighty works – just after The Sermon on the Mount. Luke 5:12-14 places it just after the call of the first disciples.

There are twelve cases of leprosy in the N.T. – Simon the leper (Mk. 14:3); the ten lepers (Luke 17:12); and the leper of our text.

Leprosy was common in Bible lands. It attacks not only the skin, but the blood, flesh, and bones. One form is incurable, eating away, little by little, the whole body. The Jews called it “the finger of God”. They never expected to cure it (2 Kings 5:7). With lip covered, bare head and rent garment, the leper bore about him the emblems of mortality (Lev. 13:45). “These four are counted dead” says the Talmud: “the blind, the leper, the poor, and the childless”. We note the several cases of leprosy in the O.T. – Moses (Exod. 4:6); Miriam (Num. 12:10); Naaman (2 Kings 5:1); Gehazi (2 Kings 5:27); Four men at the gate (2 Kings 7:3); and Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:20-21).

a. The Leper’s Request (40)

Luke says that here was “a man full of leprosy”.

He was Expectant – he came to Jesus.

He was Fervent – he beseeched Him.

He was Humble – he knelt down.

He was Submissive – “If Thou wilt”.

He was Confident – “Thou canst”.

His request: “If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean: are only five words in the original.

b. The Lord’s Reply (41)

(1) Seen in His emotion – “Jesus moved with compassion”. Mark alone describes the Savior’s feeling of pity upon seeing and hearing the leper. Compassion was the moving cause of all His mighty works. This compassion touched the whole being of Christ. The Greek means that He yearned deeply; His whole inner being stirred to action. This is the first mention of an emotion in Jesus. His look, His voice, His word and action all express it.

(2) Seen in His action – “put forth His hand, and touched him”. Jesus showed His compassion by stretching forth His hand, and contrary to Jewish law, touched him. Christ was Himself the Lawgiver and the fulfiller of the Law (Matt. 5:17). As it was in harmony with the law of the Sabbath to do good and save life; so it was with the law of leprosy to remove the disease and defilement. Jesus was Himself purity and could contract no uncleanness. Christ healed with a touch, sometimes with a word, and sometimes with both as here.

(3) Seen in His volition – “I will, be thou clean”. “I will”. Wonder of wonders that our faith moves God to act on our behalf. The greatest pollution will not make Christ shrink from one who desires to be cleansed and saved.

3. The Leper’s Result (42-45)

(1) Healing (42)

The cure was both instantaneous and complete. Such is the power and purpose of Christ.

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie says: “Christ’s parables were miracles in words and His miracles were parables in deeds. In the raising of Peter’s mother-in-law we see His power over the feverishness of sin; in His exorcising of demons, His power over the thralldom of sin; in His healing this leper, power over loathsomeness of sin.

(2) Holiness (43-44)

“And He straitly charged him”. The Greek word occurs in four other places: Matt. 9:30 – “Jesus straitly charged them”; Mark 14:5 – “And they murmured against her”; John 11:33,38 – “He groaned in the spirit”. It signifies strong grief or indignation; to command with sternness. This is the opposite of “moved with compassion”.

“...sent him away”. It literally means “to thrust or put him out”. There is urgency in Jesus’ action. He represses the natural impulse of the leper to stay and add to adulation and excitement.

“...show thyself to the priest” (Vr. 44) at Jerusalem. Under the Law the priest must attest to the reality of the cure (Lev. 14:3).

“offer for thy cleansing... which Moses commanded”. He would take two birds, “alive and clean”, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop (Lev. 14:4-7). On the eighth day further offerings were to be made: two lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb without blemish, three tenth deals of fine flour, one log of oil (Lev. 14:10). If the leper were poor, he was permitted to offer one lamb and two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, with one tenth deal of fine flour (Lev. 14:21-22).

“for a testimony unto them”. He had been pronounced unclean by the priest; now he must be pronounced clean by the priest. This would re-admit him into the congregation. It would also show that Jesus had the power to cleanse even a leper.

(3) Heralding (Vr.45)

“...began to publish”. He at once began to herald his cure. He gives vent to his joy, forgetful that the expression of this should be regulated by Jesus. Others in similar circumstances did not keep silence: the blind men (Matt. 9:30-31); the man with an impediment of speech (Mark 7:36).

“could no more openly enter into the city”. There is a dispensational principle here. It was not the time for pomp and parade. Jesus had come as the Suffering Servant, and He wanted to remain more or less incognito. So He entered into “desert places”.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. To spend a night, or a great part of a night, in prayer, was our Lord’s way of preparing for preaching (Vr. 38); for working miracles (9:29); and choosing of the twelve (Luke 6:12).

2. Leprosy is a striking type of sin. The leper felt his disease, despaired of human help, exercised faith in the power and willingness of Jesus to heal, and was healed (Vrs. 40-41).

LESSON # 6 Mark 2:1-12

I. INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter Mark graphically pictures the popularity of Christ's ministry in Galilee, and the enthusiasm of the people excited by His miracles and teaching. It was now approximately three months since He first began His ministry in Galilee, and about fifteen months since His baptism.

In this chapter Mark now traces the growth of the opposition which speedily arose: first, because He claimed power to forgive sin (6-7); secondly, because of His eating and associations with the publicans and sinners (16); then, thirdly, because of His neglect to fast (18); and, finally, because of His supposed violation of the Sabbath (24).

1. Principal Places: Capernaum – See Lesson #4. House – This was most probably the home of Peter where Christ and His disciples made their headquarters at Capernaum.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Paralytic man, The Four Helpers, and the Scribes and Pharisees (See Luke 5:21).

3. Principal Purpose: To reveal that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). This incident is also recorded in Matt. 9:1-8 & Luke 5:18-26.

II. INTERPRETATION

1. THE DIVINE REVELATION (Vrs. 1-2)

“He preached the word unto them”.

a. The Meeting – Returning from His tour through Eastern Galilee, Jesus continued His ministry in Capernaum. This was His return from the first missionary tour. Capernaum seems to be the center of His operations. Very probably He returned to Capernaum quietly, without the people recognizing Him. But it was not long before they discovered that He was in town. Immediately, they began to come, filling the inner rooms and gallery and hallway of the house, and probably thronging the street. Luke tells us: “There were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem” (Luke 5:17). It was therefore no ordinary house meeting that Jesus had that day. The record reveals the popularity of Jesus. His ministry and miracles had drawn the people from far and near.

b. The Message – “He preached the word unto them”. Before this multitude Jesus now exercises the two functions of His ministry, namely, teaching and healing. But always first and foremost He preached the word. He was the great Revelator of God. Jesus said: “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). And, “The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me” (John 14:24). And again, “For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me” (John 17:8).

2. THE DIVINE REDEMPTION (Vrs. 3-5)

“Son, thy sins be forgiven thee”.

In this incident of redemption which we now have before us, there is a remarkable study in Faith. Let us then view it in its various operations, as revealed here.

a. Faith's Mission (Vr. 3) – While Jesus is preaching to the crowd in Simon's house, four men come carrying a paralytic on a poor man's bed or pad. There was no remaining room for approach to Jesus. Every nook and corner of the house was filled, so no one could approach Jesus. But faith has a mission and that is to bring the helpless to the Divine Master. After all, that is faith's mission in life. Faith puts implicit trust in the deity of Jesus Christ. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

b. Faith's Method (Vr. 4) – What should be done? Should they wait until the multitude dispersed? Should they wait for a more auspicious occasion? They decide quickly what to do. Outside the house was a stairway by which they ascended to the roof. Reaching the roof over the place where Jesus was teaching, they lifted off the tiles, removed the light woodwork and other material, and then lowered the paralytic into the presence of the Divine Healer. Such is faith. It overcomes every obstacle in its way. Nothing is ever impossible for faith. "Faith is the victory". Jesus said at another occasion: "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" (Matt. 17:20). "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17:5).

c. Faith's Miracle (Vr. 5) – This man was a paralytic. His disease was a fitting type of the ruin wrought in every man's life by sin. It left him morally and spiritually helpless, unable to be righteous before God. He apparently never could partake of the religious rites of his nation. Palsy is not as painful as cancer, not as loathsome as leprosy, nor as fatal as cholera; but it is a disease which renders the patient eminently helpless.

"When Jesus saw their faith" i.e. of all five, He cleansed the man from moral and spiritual defilement: "Thy sins be forgiven thee". First, holiness and then ultimately health. Christ now proclaims His deity. The Scribes were right, "Who can forgive sins but God only". He redeems because He is the Redeemer.

"He said unto the sick". That is all; it is the word of power, and he that believes receives. This was a word of absolution, a word of God. He who could speak and the universe came into being has also the power to forgive sins. Notice that the forgiveness of sins did not remove the palsy; that was the result of a separate, distinct act of Jesus. The forgiveness of sins acts upon the moral and spiritual consequences of sin directly; on the natural consequences of sin indirectly and ultimately. The redemption of Christ at Calvary merits our cleansing from sin now; the resurrection of Christ from the tomb merits ultimate freedom from every physical ailment. Christ removes first the root, then the fruit of sin.

3. The Divine Recognition (Vrs. 6-9)

"Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves".

Coming as a parenthesis in this incident of the paralytic, Christ must deal with His enemies. And thus before completing the miracle on the palsied man, He answers the Scribes, Pharisees and Doctors. This too is a miracle, not so much of omnipotence as of omniscience. Christ is also able to know everything, as well as do everything.

a. The Scribes – Their Inquisition (Vrs. 6-7)

It was quite true that only God could forgive sins, so their error was in not recognizing Jesus as God. According to the most ancient manuscripts this should read: "Why doth this man speak thus? He blasphemeth". "This" and "Thus" are used contemptuously and

irreverently. It indicated severe questioning. “Blasphemy” in Hellenistic usage denotes evil speaking against God. We have here the great sin of the Jews in not recognizing that Jesus was God – the Divine Son of God.

b. The Savior – His Interrogation (Vrs. 8-9)

“And immediately ... Jesus perceived”.

His knowledge was intuitive and His perception instantaneous. As the God-Man He perceived by His own omniscient and Divine spirit. Our Lord did not derive His knowledge from the ordinary outward method of discovery, but from internal powers which He possessed, independently of everything external. “He needeth not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man” (John 2:25).

“Why reason ye these things in your hearts”? The evil was in them and not in Him. The evil was in attributing blasphemy to Him whose miraculous power showed the justice of His claim. Their sinful hearts apprehended neither His person nor His power.

“Whether is it easier to say”? Jesus did not ask which is easier to perform. To these men it would seem easier to pronounce a man’s sins forgiven than to pronounce a palsied man healed; for they could see the latter, but not the former. Jesus was going to heal the man physically by the same word of His power as He healed him spiritually.

4. THE DIVINE RESTORATION (Vrs. 10-12)

“Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house”.

Jesus now gives them evidence adapted to their physical and earthly conceptions. To perform a physical miracle is as truly the work of God as to forgive sins. Jesus did the former in proof of His power to do the latter. “That ye may know” is the underlying reason for this miracle on the paralytic. It is for their ignorance and unbelief that this miracle of healing takes place.

a. The Master (Vr. 11) – To prove His Divine power, not in Heaven, but upon earth to forgive sins, He speaks the Divine word to the palsied man. To forgive sin and heal disease are superhuman. They might deny His authority to forgive sin, but to deny His power to raise the palsied man they could not deny. And yet to deny the miracle of the forgiveness of sin is sheer folly, for the one is as much a miracle as the other, and the possibility of the miracle of healing substantiates beyond a doubt the miracle of sin’s forgiveness.

b. The Miracle (12)

All eyes are now fixed on the paralytic, eagerly awaiting the result. He not only rises, but shows that he is completely healed by carrying off his bed. Had the palsied man failed to rise, the teachings of this new prophet would have fallen by the test of His own choosing. The result, as one would expect, was a demonstration of astonishment, ecstasy and amazement. There was a general ascription of praise from the multitude (Matt. 9:8), while the Scribes, Pharisees, and the learned Doctors stood confounded by this manifestation of miraculous power.

“We never saw it on this fashion”. A paralytic man had been healed spiritually and physically. Such is the way of our Lord, and would that all men knew His power over both sin and sickness.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. We cannot deliver sinners from the maladies of the body, much less the soul, but we can bring them the Word of Life – Jesus Christ, the Savior (Vrs. 3-4; I Cor. 9:22).

2. Afflictions are often great blessings to the soul (Vrs. 4-5; Psa. 119:71; Rom. 5:3-5).

3. Many see and enjoy the greatest blessings in vain, and shall receive the greater condemnation (Vrs. 6-8; Matt. 11:23; John 9:39-41).

4. Christ is the searcher of hearts, and knoweth all things (Vr. 8; John 2:24-25; Rev. 2:23).

5. Jesus Christ can forgive sins; His miracles are a proof of His deity (Vrs. 5,9-11; John 10:37-38; Acts 5:31; Hebr. 9:26).

6. The commands of Christ are all reasonable and backed with Divine power (Vrs. 11-12; Phil. 4:13).

LESSON # 7 Mark 2:13-22

I. INTRODUCTION

Parallel passages are found in Matt. 9:9-17 and Luke 5:27-39.

Our lesson deals with The Calling of Matthew; The Feast in his house where Jesus eats with publicans and sinners; and The Discourse on fasting. A second ground of Pharisaical opposition to Jesus is here presented in the narrative.

1. Principal Places: Seaside of Galilee. Levi's house.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus; Levi or Matthew; Publicans; Sinners; Scribes; Disciples.

3. Principal Purpose: Christ's chief work is to call sinners to repentance. (Vr. 17).

II. INTERPRETATION

1. FINDING LEVI (Vrs. 13-14)

a. The Setting (13)

Jesus now goes "forth again" from the house at Capernaum (Vr. 1) and resorts to the seaside. Capernaum was near the shore, its suburbs extending down to the sea. Mark alone tells us that "the multitude resorted" unto Jesus and He taught them. Jesus often taught by the seaside (Mk. 4:1; Luke 5:1).

b. The Selection (Vr. 14)

As Jesus now passed along the way to the seaside, He passed the custom house where sat Levi or Matthew (Matt. 9:9). This is no doubt the same person. He had two names like

Simon Peter and Saul who became Paul. Matthew also designates himself “the publican” (Matt. 10:3). None of the other evangelists call him by this name. He is also called “the son of Alpheus”. This is to be distinguished from Alpheus the father of James the Less (Matt. 10:3). In the four apostolic records (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13) brothers are usually mentioned in pairs, but Matthew and James the Less are never placed side by side. Alpheus was a common name among the Jews.

Here Jesus now finds Levi “sitting at the receipt of custom”. Dr. Thomson in his The Land and the Book, says: “The people of this country sit at all kinds of work. The carpenter saws, planes, and hews with his hand-adze, sitting on the ground or upon the plank he is planing. The washerwoman sits by the tub; and, in a word, no one stands where it is possible to sit. Shopkeepers always sit; and Levi sitting at the receipt of custom is the exact way to state the case”. The revenues which Rome derived from conquered countries consisted chiefly of tolls, tithes, harbor duties, tax on public pasturelands, and duties on mines and salt-works.

“Follow me. And he arose”. The obedience to the call of Jesus was immediate. Like Andrew and Peter (1:16-20) he probably before had heard Jesus and recognized Him as the Messiah. Though tax collectors were hated and despised by the Jews, yet Jesus did not hesitate to invite him to be one of His disciples and later an apostle.

2. FEASTING WITH LEVI (Vrs. 15-17)

a. The Company (Vr. 15)

After responding to the call of Jesus, Levi served a dinner in his house. He invited “many publicans and sinners” together with Jesus and His disciples. Publicans together with sinners were considered such scum of humanity as gangsters and prostitutes in our day. Yet we see that Jesus accepted the invitation and dined with them (See Matt. 21:31). The publicans would often ask more taxes than Rome required. This led to extortion and oppression, and publicans were hated by the people. Theocritus, in answer to the question which were the worst kind of wild beasts, said: “On the mountains, bears and lions; in cities, publicans and pettifoggers”. Pettifoggers were those who engaged in legal tricks or chicanery.

Trench says: “They were nothing less than renegades and traitors, who, for filthy lucre’s sake, had sided with the enemy, and now collected for a profane heathen treasury that tribute which was the evident sign of the subjection of God’s people to a Gentile yoke. This scorn and hate found utterance in a thousand ways; no alms might be received from their money chest; it was not even lawful to change money there; their testimony was not received in courts of justice; they were as the heathen, and some sort worse than the heathen”.

b. The Conversation (Vr. 16)

The scribes and Pharisees, who probably just stood around watching, were shocked and express their disapproval to Jesus’ disciples by an interrogation: “How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinner”?

The scribes were learned men, who preserved, copied, and expounded the Law and the traditions (Ezra 7:6,12; Neh. 8:1; Matt. 15:1-6). They are called lawyers (12:28; Matt. 22:35) and doctors of the law (Luke 5:17,21). The Pharisees were a religious sect which originated about one hundred and fifty years before Christ. Their name means separatists; they were those who separated themselves from Levitical and traditional impurity. They observed strictly the

laws of purity, according to the Mosaic ritual, and traditions of the elders, (Mark 7:3). They held strictly to their oral law, and attached more importance to them than the written law (Matt. 15:1-6). They were the formalists of their age and nation, and often characterized for their ostentation, self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

c. The Correction (Vr. 17)

The Lord speaks up in His own defense. He is in the right place, among those who need Him – the sick who need a physician and the sinner who needs a Savior. This would place a self-righteous scribe and Pharisee outside His gracious ministry. His mission being to sinners, no one should find fault if He associated with them.

Jesus did not mean that the scribes and Pharisees were both healthy and righteous. He meant to convey that as they assumed health and righteousness in themselves, they were outside the scope of His healing and saving power.

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie says: “None are so sick as the diseased who think themselves well, and none are such sinners as the sinful who think themselves holy”.

3. FASTING AND THE PHARISEES (Vr. 18)

a. The Interrogation (Vr. 18)

“Why do ... thy disciples fast not”?

The law commanded only one fast a year (Lev. 16:29; 23:27-32). The Pharisees fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12). Others were added later, as, those in the fourth, fifth, tenth, and twelfth months (Jer. 52:6,7,12,13; 41:1,2; 52:4; Esth. 9:31; Zech. 7:5; 8:19). These commemorated the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar; the murder of Gedaliah; the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; and the deliverance of the Jews in Persia.

The contrast between the disciples of John with their Master in prison and Jesus at this feast could not fail to be felt.

Perhaps this feast of Levi took place on one of the fast days of the Pharisees. Notice that the Pharisees now complain to Jesus of His disciples, as they had complained to His disciples of Him. In both cases they show a cowardly and censorious spirit.

b. The Illustrations (Vrs. 19-22)

(1) The Bridegroom and Attendants (Vrs. 19-20)

Fasting is out of place at a wedding. It was the expression of grief, or of repentance of sin, or of humiliation before God in times of national calamity. Since Christ is the Bridegroom, and His presence would usher in a wedding, it would be improper for His groomsmen to fast at a time of rejoicing. The male attendants of the bridegroom, upon the day of marriage (Judg. 14:11) went with him to the house of the bride to bring her home. John the Baptist had presented Christ as the Bridegroom (Jn. 3:29). The prophets had used the same illustration between God and Israel (Ps. 45; Isa. 54:5; 62:5).

“But the days will come”. The time is coming when circumstances will change and then fasting will be becoming and demanded. “The bridegroom shall be taken away” as if by violence. The words are a prediction of a violent termination of His life.

(2) The New Cloth and the Old Garment (21)

No one tries to preserve an old garment by patching it with a new piece of cloth. “New cloth” means unfulled cloth, not yet dressed or fulled. It would shrink upon being wet, and hence the rent would be worse.

Jesus is saying that no one may expect in His kingdom a mere patching up of the old dispensation with its system of legal observances. There would come a complete renovation under The New Covenant of grace.

(3) The New Wine and Old Bottles (22)

Wine was contained in goat skins. These are skins stripped off whole. The holes at the legs and tail are sewed up, while the hole at the neck answering to the neck of the bottle. When new, these skins stretched enough to allow for expansion of the fermentation of the new wine. But old skins, already stretched to capacity, were unfit for unfermented wine. The pressure would burst the skins.

The old wine skin of formalistic Judaism was not able to contain the new wine of the life that Christ came to offer through the Gospel. His new wine must have new skins.

In all three of the Lord’s illustrations He would have us learn that Christianity is not a patched-up Judaism. The patch may illustrate the outer form of this truth, and the skins the inner form. Legalism and grace are incompatible.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. Christ can and will call men and women into His service.
2. Christ’s chief work is to call sinners (Vr. 17).
3. The grace of Christ draws Matthew from the love of gold; on the other hand the love of gold drew Judas away from Christ.
4. Fasting may have its value, but to make a merit of it, is opposed to our Christian freedom.
5. What Christ offers is always something that is joyful (19); it is new (21); and it is expansive (22).

LESSON # 8 – Mark 2:23 – 3:6 (Matt. 12:1-8, 10-14; Luke 6:1-11)

I. INTRODUCTION

In Lesson Six we listed the fourfold opposition to Jesus which arose in chapter two. We have here now the fourth of these oppositions: His supposed violation of the Law of the Sabbath.

1. Principal Places: In the corn field and in the Synagogue. The exact time and place of these happenings is not known. It is thought, however, that Jesus and His disciples were returning from the second Passover of our Lord's public ministry. Thus they would be returning from Jerusalem in Judea to Galilee (See Luke 6:1).

2. Principal Persons: Jesus, the Disciples, the Pharisees, the Man with the Withered Hand.

3. Principal Purpose: To reveal that the Messiah is Lord of the Sabbath, and not the Sabbath lord of the man (2:27-28).

Before entering in upon the lesson study it may be of interest to say a few words relative to the origin and object of the Sabbath. In the record of creation found in Genesis 1:1-2:3 there is at its close an impressive account of the hallowing of the seventh day, because on it God rested from all His work. The word Sabbath, however, does not occur here. In Exodus 20:8-11 we find the Sabbath observation a part of the Decalogue to be kept as a Holy Day because Jehovah rested on the seventh day of Creation. The first mention of the word Sabbath is at Exod. 16:23 in connection with the giving of the manna. The Sabbath was given to Israel by Jehovah as a sign between them forever (Ex. 31:12-18). Israel also had Sabbaths or Holy Convocations connected with their feasts. These were kept like the seventh-day Sabbath (Lev. 23:7,21,24,27,32,35,36,39). They are called "an high day" in John 19:31. The Sabbath of the seventh day as well as all "Holy Convocations" connected with the feasts were given to Israel; and hence were Judaistic and legalistic in origin and object. The Sabbath was typical of the Lord Jesus in Whom alone there is true rest (Matt. 11:28-30); and also of that great day of one thousand years – the Millennium. The term "Christian Sabbath" is unscriptural. As members of the Body of Christ we have nothing to do with the Jewish Sabbath of Israel's rituals (Col. 2:16-17). They were but the shadow of things to come. We have the Reality, Christ the Antitype of all the types, symbols, and shadows of old. We keep the first day of the week, not because of any ritualistic law, but because custom has long ago set it aside as a day of rest and worship.

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie says: "The need for periodical rest is comprehensive, universal, and age-abiding. If machinery is to do its best work it must rest sometimes; if the land is to produce its maximum, it must rest awhile (Lev. 25:4); and if man would be sound, physically, mentally, and spiritually, he must have periodical rest, and for this purpose the Sabbath has been given".

II. INTERPRETATION

1. THE SABBATH AND PHYSICAL REFRESHMENT (2:23-28)

a. The Interlude – Disciples and Grain Field (23)

The Lord and His disciples are now on a journey, and this journey brings them through a grain field; literally, sown fields, fields of grain, of wheat or barley. In many places

there were no roads in Palestine as we know them today; the way led them on paths through fields of grain. Often this grain would grow over the path. The original indicates that they had to make their way through the grain on the path. However, it was not regarded as trespassing to go this way, nor stealing to pluck some handfuls of the spikes, and rub them between the hands to bring out the kernels of grain, and then eat them (Deut. 23:25). Matthew adds “to eat” stating the motive for the plucking. Luke adds “rubbing with their hands”.

b. The Interrogation – Pharisees and the Sabbath (24)

“Behold” is an exclamation of surprise, directing attention to something strange and unexpected. The Pharisees were censuring the disciples, not for plucking the grain and eating it, but for doing this on the Sabbath Day, and also in the act of rubbing out the grain. This was interpreted as unlawful work on the Sabbath (Exod. 31:15).

In reality it was the Pharisees who were breaking the Law, not the disciples. It must have been harvest time during the Passover and Unleavened Bread. The disciples, eating the grain as it came from the stalks, were eating unleavened bread. Spiritually, hypocrisy is leaven (Luke 12:1) and the Pharisees were guilty of hypocrisy, so they were spiritually leavening the Feast.

c. The Illustration – David and the Showbread (25-26)

Jesus now makes reference to David and what he did when hungry; entering the tabernacle and eating of the forbidden showbread – the bread of presentation (I Sam. 21:1-6).

“Did ye never read”? They had appealed to traditional interpretation of Scripture; He appeals to Scripture itself. The emphatic “never” is a pointed rebuke. Thus David and his men find their counterpart in the Son of David and His disciples. The tabernacle in David’s time was at Nob, a short distance north of Jerusalem.

The showbread was made of the finest wheaten flour which passed through eleven sieves. There were twelve loaves in two rows. They were anointed with oil. The renewal of the bread was the first of the priestly functions on the commencement of the Sabbath. David and his men ate the old bread just removed (I Sam. 21:6).

Our text speaks of Abiathar, the High Priest, and First Samuel says it was Ahimelech, who was the son of Abiathar (1 Chron. 24:6). It seems that Ahimelech gave the bread to David but was soon slain for this act, and his son succeeded him.

It is evident that the Law was not meant for those in His presence. The disciples are now in the presence of Him Who is greater than the Temple (Matt. 12:6). The Pharisees are importing the Law into the precincts of the Living Temple of Jehovah. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 10:4).

d. The Interpretation - Jesus and the Sabbath (27-28)

Mark now presents the fact, not recorded by either Matthew or Luke, that the Sabbath was designed for the good of man. “The Sabbath was made for man”. At the Creation it was given for his benefit and happiness (Gen. 2:2-3). The law of the Sabbath is to serve the highest interests of man, and not the highest interests of man to the Sabbath.

Christ, being the Son of Man, made the Sabbath for the good of man. He is therefore “Lord also of the Sabbath”. This is but a natural deduction.

“I gave them my Sabbaths” (Ezek. 20:12). The Sabbath is a boon, not a burden. “The Sabbath is handed over to you; not ye are handed over to the Sabbath” (Edersheim, in his Life and Times).

Jewish tradition carried Sabbath observance to ridiculous ends. They discussed whether it was lawful to put one’s hand out to give to a beggar, and how far. They disagreed as to whether it was allowable to comfort the sick on that day.

2. THE SABBATH AND PHYSICAL RESTORATION (3:1-6)

By precept, example, and miracle Jesus gives a further exposition of the Sabbath, and then opposition takes an organized form. One of the most significant points in many of the miracles accomplished by our Lord is the fact that they were performed on the Sabbath. How better could He indicate the great truth that, when some day Israel would be cured from all her ills, it would introduce the great Sabbath of rest which is left for these people of God (Hebr. 4:9). This should have proved His Messianic claims, and not offended them.

a. The Occasion – In the Synagogue (Vr. 1)

Our Lord now enters the synagogue. Luke says (6:6) “on another Sabbath”. This was probably on the next Sabbath after the plucking of the grain. The object of His attention now is a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees being blind to His person and power as manifested in the grain field, He chooses another and simpler method of enforcing the truth concerning the Sabbath. Here is a man with a withered hand, who cannot completely work either on the Sabbath or any other day. Such was the Sabbath-keeping of the Pharisees – a withered, shrunken, lifeless, soulless, spiritless form. Israel is spiritually the man with the withered hand.

Luke tells us it was his “right hand” (6:6). The original implies that his hand was both withered and dried up. Such cases were incurable. See 1 Kings 13:4 for the case of Jeroboam.

The Pharisees, instead of being so traditional and legal about doing good on the Sabbath day, should have been concerned about the fact that they could do no good work for God on any day.

b. The Observation – The Pharisees (Vr. 2)

They now begin to watch His movements very carefully with malicious intentions (See Luke 14:1; Acts 9:24). Their intention, as we shall see, was not now to censure Him or His disciples, but to accuse Him before the local authorities. It is no longer curiosity that hounds Him at every place, but a deliberate desire to entrap Him.

c. The Interrogation – Christ to Pharisees (Vr. 4)

Our Lord now confronts the Pharisees with the alternatives, “good or evil, save or kill”. This was a question with an answer not only to their thoughts, which He knew (Luke 6:8), but also to their question (Matt. 12:10). The question involved a principle – doing good and saving life in accordance with Sabbath observance, rather than doing evil and killing. He who

neglects to do good and save life is justly held accountable for the loss sustained (See Prov. 24:11-12; Ezek. 33:6). But “they held their peace”. It was evident that it was lawful to do well on the Sabbath.

This question of Christ was a devastating word. “By that searching question He tears the drapery from hypocrisy, and the masque from humbug, and shows it to be what it is” – W. Graham Scroggie.

d. The Restoration – Christ and the Miracle (Vrs. 3,5)

“Stand forth” and “Stretch forth”. Jesus knowing the thoughts of the Pharisees now calls the man forward, thus making his misery conspicuous by putting him in a prominent place.

Mark is conspicuous for his vivid description of our Savior’s looks, feelings, and gestures (See 1:41; 5:30; 10:23). Both His external act and His internal feeling are revealed. His anger was holy indignation against the hardness of their hearts. Holy anger against sin is consistent with holy grief and compassion for the sinner.

“Stand forth” as a confession of need. “Stretch forth” as a confession of faith. Having silenced His opposers, Jesus proceeds to heal the man. He healed him without any bodily effort, just His word; hence His adversaries could not charge Him with laboring on the Sabbath. Jesus shows the power of His word, and the lawfulness of healing on the Sabbath.

This miracle is one of seven which Jesus performed on a Sabbath Day – see Mark 1:21; 1:29-31; John 5:9; Luke 13:14; 14:1; and John 9:14. Our text is the fourth.

e. The Opposition – Pharisees and Jesus (Vr. 6)

The Pharisees now baffled with argument and deprived of all legal ground of objection are the more angered, and go now from the synagogue to consult with the Herodians. This is the first organized movement against Jesus. What they do here with the Herodians they later carried out with Pilate. The Herodians were rather a political party in favor of Herod Antipas. Someone has said: “Between lie and lie there are always points of contact, so that they can act together for a while; it is only between a lie and the truth that there is absolute opposition, and no compromise possible”.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. A call for food is a healthy call and a healthy call is a holy call. Whatever is necessary for health and holiness is sacred.

2. How important is Scriptural knowledge. (Vrs. 25-26; 2 Pet. 1:19).

3. The wicked watch the believer to ensnare (3:2). Let us always do the right and stand for the truth.

4. Christ is Himself the Divine rest, the true Sabbath; hence no true rest and peace without Him (Eph. 2:14).

LESSON # 9 – Mark 3:7-19a (Matt. 12:15-16; 10:1-4; Luke 6:12-19)

I. INTRODUCTION

In our last lesson we saw how the Pharisees and the Herodians joined together to destroy Jesus (3:6). This opposition of the religious leaders might have seemed like a serious blow to Jesus and His cause, but He did not allow Himself to be discouraged or defeated. He knew that this would be a part of His humiliation experience. He used the opposition for a new forward step in the advancement of His first advent. He encountered their organized opposition to Him with the organization for the expansion of the Kingdom by choosing the twelve apostles.

1. Principal Places: “The Sea” – This is the Sea of Galilee. “Galilee” – This was the northern province of Palestine where He resided and in which, according to the prophecy, He chiefly ministered (Matt. 4:13-15). “Judea” – This was the southern province, south of Samaria, bounded by Jordan on the east, the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and the Arabian Desert on the south. “Jerusalem” – The city is distinguished from Judea on account of its importance as a religious center, and the seat of the theocracy. “Idumea” – The Greek modification of the Hebrew “Edom” as applied to the country occupied by the sons of Esau (Gen 25:30; 36:1; Num. 20:20; 1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Sam. 8:14; Ezek. 36:5; Obadiah). It lay southeast of Palestine, and was the hereditary enemy of Israel. It was from this country that the family of Herod derived its origin. “Beyond Jordan” – This was the land east of Palestine, and called by the Greek geographers “Perea” lying north of Edom. “Tyre and Sidon” – The two most famous cities of Phoenicia. Lying on the Mediterranean Sea north of Palestine, they were distinguished in the ancient world for maritime commerce. They were subjects of prophecy and of Divine judgments under Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander (Isa. Ch. 23; Ezek. Chs. 26-28). “A mountain” – It is not named. There were several mountains on the west side of the Sea of Galilee.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus and His disciples.

3. Principal Purpose: To reveal Christ’s popularity among the common people (Mark 12:37). To reveal His prerogative and purpose in choosing the Twelve Apostles.

II. INTERPRETATION

1. THE DIVINE SERVANT AND THE MULTITUDES (3:7-12)

a. His Persecution (Vrs. 6-7a)

“How they might destroy Him. But Jesus withdrew Himself”.

Our Lord was not outwardly or violently persecuted by the Pharisees and Herodians at this time, but inwardly He knew their malicious intents (Matt. 12:14-15). In consequence of this combination and the dangers which would arise from it, He withdrew from the city to the shores of the Lake.

This retreat from His enemies was prompted, not by fear, but by that wise discretion which always accompanied His actions. It was in the Divine plan that His atoning work should be preceded by a ministry in word and work, a design to indoctrinate the people into the Laws of the Kingdom, and to prepare for its erection by the training of the Twelve. It was because of this preparatory process that He withdrew to the Sea; His hour having not yet arrived for the Cross and the Crown.

b. His Popularity (Vrs. 7b-12)

“And a great multitude ... came unto Him”.

Here begins the most vivid description in the Gospels of the multitudes, the masses who attended upon the ministry of our Lord. Not only was the multitude great from Galilee but also from many other places – Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, Tyre and Sidon.

Then to add another graphic stroke to the picture of this vast assemblage, Mark relates the incident of the small ship into which Jesus had to step, in order to escape the pressure of the crowd that thronged Him. The special cause for the great pressure is now given.

(1) Power over Disease (Vr. 10)

“He healed many”. It is just natural that they should push, rush, and press upon Him. Their desire for healing was intense, and their efforts to reach Him corresponded. Their desire to “touch Him” was not superstition, but an expression of their faith. They knew that there was healing even in a touch (Mark 5:27-34; Luke 6:19). Plagues, which were scourges from God, had to depart at His Divine touch.

(2) Power over Demons (Vrs. 11-12)

“And unclean spirits ... cried, saying”.

Demons were subject to His power. These were “unclean demons” because of their moral vileness and wickedness. These evil beings often completely possessed their victims, so that they used the organs of sight, speech, and muscular control. The demon world knew who Jesus was – “Thou art the Son of God”. Jesus was a Person of the Godhead, sustaining the relation of Son with the Father (John 1:1,18). The charge of Jesus in verse twelve is no doubt twofold: First, to the demons, and then to the healed persons. Demons were unworthy witnesses to His Sonship, and therefore must be silenced. The healed must also not testify, because it would arouse enthusiasm on the part of the masses to crown Him King at this time. (See Matt. 12:17-21)

2. THE DIVINE SERVANT ON THE MOUNTAIN (Vrs. 13-19a)

Jesus now retires to the mountain, and after spending all night in prayer (Luke 6:12) proceeds to choose from His disciples the twelve apostles.

a. His Sovereign Determination (Vr. 13)

“Called whom He would”. Here we are confronted with the self-determining sovereignty of Jesus, a choice based upon reason within His personality. He was entirely uninfluenced by outward circumstances and appeals. Christ was infinite in wisdom and understanding. He probably called a larger number, and from them ordained the twelve.

“Those whom He Himself had thus chosen He called unto Himself and by that call first set them free from all responsibility and secondly, imposed upon them serious responsibility. He set them free from all responsibility. If there were any mistake He made it. They were not responsible. If there were defects in them, He must deal with them and remedy them. They were not responsible. And yet that call brought them into a place of very definite and real

responsibility. It called them to confidence in the wisdom of His choice. It called them also to obedience to His commands, and therefore to yield to His power” – G. Campbell Morgan.

b. His Sovereign Designation (Vr. 14a)

“And He ordained twelve”. This is not to be confused with His calling, nor is it an explanation of the former calling. He constituted, or appointed twelve of those who went with Him. Luke 6:13 makes this very clear that He ordained twelve from the many that He called. The statement: “For many are called but few are chosen” (Matt. 20:16; 22:14) has its fulfillment here. As twelve is the number of administration or government, there are just twelve chosen to proclaim the coming Kingdom.

c. His Sovereign Directions (Vrs. 14b-15)

The reasons for their appointment and ordination are now given. He who is sovereign in His call and choice is also sovereign in His charge. There are four things in their commission as apostles: (1) “That they should be with Him” (2) “that He might send them forth to preach” (3) “power to heal sicknesses” (4) “to cast out demons”. They were first of all to be His constant personal attendants as learners and witnesses. They were to be witnesses of His life, death, and resurrection. They would thus be prepared to carry on His work after His departure. (See Acts 1:8, 21-22). Secondly, they were to proclaim the glad tidings of Christ’s kingdom. Thus they went out two by two (Mark 6:7). Thirdly, they were to have power or authority to perform the same miracles that He performed. Their preaching should be attested with the evidences as His own (Mk. 6:12-13; 16:20). And fourthly, they were to have power over the spirits of darkness.

The characteristics of an apostle were a direct call and ordination, a continuous fellowship with Christ, a personal observation, the right of preaching and the gift of miracles.

d. His Sovereign Distinctions (Vrs. 16-19a)

Four listings of the Apostles are given in the N.T. (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19a; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13). Each listing is divided into three classes, the names of which are never interchanged, and each class headed by a leading name. Peter heads the first class, Philip the second, and James the third. Christ surnames three of the Apostles – Peter, James, and John – the Apostolic Trinity that had particular privileges in companionship with Jesus. Jewish names always had a definite meaning attached to them. Judas Iscariot stands last in the list, except in the Acts, where his name is omitted because of his apostasy and death. Matthias was then chosen to take his place, and the list is again full with twelve apostles.

	MATTHEW 10:2-4	MARK 3:16-19a	LUKE3 6:14-16	ACTS 1:13
1.	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
2.	Andrew	James, son of Zebedee	Andrew	James
3.	James, son of Zebedee	John	James	John
4.	John	Andrew	John	Andrew

5.	Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
6.	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
7.	Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
8.	Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
<hr/>				
9.	James, son of Alpheus	James, son of Alpheus	James, son of Alpheus	James, son of Alpheus
10.	Lebbeus Thad- deus	Thaddeus	Simon Zelotes	Simon Zelotes
11.	Simon the Canaanite	Simon the Canaanite	Judas, brother of James	Judas, brother of James
12.	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	
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(1) Simon Peter – The name Peter means “a stone”. It was first given as a surname at his introduction to Jesus (Jn. 1:42). Peter became his common name as an apostle. It was given in allusion to his hardy character, noted for decision and boldness, and to the conspicuous position he should hold as an apostle to the circumcision (Gal. 2:7). He was spokesman for the apostles (Matt. 16:18), and the chief speaker on the Day of Pentecost. He was the first to give the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts ch.10).

(2) James the Son of Thunder – He was the son of Zebedee. His name is the same as Jacob, meaning supplanter. Boanerges, or The Son of Thunder is the surname given him. The exact significance of this word has been much debated. It was given to the two brothers James and John probably as descriptive of their vehement and zealous spirit (Mk. 9:38; 10:37; Luke 9:54; John 18:15,16; 19:26; Acts 4:13). “The thunderbolt is the son of thunder, as it accompanies the crash from the rent clouds” – Hiller. The word Boanerges is Aramaic. He was selected with Peter to witness the restoration of Jairus’ daughter (Mk. 5:42), the Transfiguration (Mk. 9:2), the agony in Gethsemane (Mk. 14:33). James was the first martyr among the apostles (Acts 12:2).

(3) John, the Son of Thunder – He was also the son of Zebedee, whose name means “graciously given by Jehovah”. Next to Peter, he was the most noted of the twelve and characterized with gentleness and firmness, as well as being “a son of thunder”. He shared with his brother and Peter in the afore-mentioned experiences. He belonged to a family of influence (Mark 1:20; John 18:15). He became responsible for the maintenance of Mary, Jesus’ mother (Jn. 19:27). He survived all the apostles and died a natural death at Ephesus about 100 A.D.

(4) Andrew – The brother of Peter and the one that led Peter to Christ. Andrew is derived from a word that means “man”. He appears as the introducer of certain Greeks to Jesus (John 12:22), and with the afore-named three in asking Jesus about the destruction of the temple (Mark 13:3).

(5) Philip – A Greek name meaning “lover of horses”. He was a disciple of John the Baptist. He together with Andrew introduced the Greeks to Jesus. See also John 6:5-7; 14:8-10).

(6) Bartholomew – A Hebrew form meaning “rich fruit”. According to tradition he labored in India.

(7) Matthew – He was also called Levi (2:14). He was a publican by profession (Matt. 10:3). He left all to follow Jesus, and then gave a great feast as recorded in Luke 5:26-29.

(8) Thomas – He was also called Didymus (John 11:16). His name means “twin”. He was impulsive (John 11:16), of an inquiring mind (John 14:5-6) and slow to be convinced (John 20:24-29).

(9) James the Son of Alpheus – He is called also James the less or younger (Mk. 15:40).

(10) Thaddeus – Also called Lebbaeus (Matt. 10:3). He was the “Judas, not Iscariot” (Jn. 14:22). His name means “beloved child”.

(11) Simon the Canaanite – He is also called Simon the Zealot (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). He belonged to a sect known among the Jews as Zealots, who regarded the Romans as treason.

(12) Judas Iscariot – The only one of the Apostles not born a Galilean. He carried the money bag and appropriated part of the same (John 12:6). An apostle and a traitor (Luke 6:16); a mystical combination which led to the crucifixion of Christ. Christ as the Sovereign Savior chose His own betrayer. It was in God’s plan that Christ should be betrayed, as had already been predicted (Matt. 26:24,50; Zech. 13:6).

III. INSTRUCTION

1. It was a great experience to be with Christ (Vr.13). But it is vastly greater to be “in Christ” (Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:27). This is our position today as a believer.

2. Effective service for Christ is always the outcome of patient discipline.

3. Christ calls into His service every variety of talent, and sanctifies that talent by His Spirit to be become useful for Him.

LESSON # 10 Mark 3:19b-35 (Matt. 12:22-37; Luke 11:14-23; and Matt. 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Places: House or Home – probably Capernaum.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Multitude, Friends or relatives, his brothers and mother, Scribes.

3. Principal Purposes: To show that there is a limit to Divine forgiveness. To establish the higher and permanent relationships. To show opposition from both friends and foes to His ministry.

Christ had not yet broken with the Pharisees as a party, nor denounced them in private or public. But now, at the close of His second circuit through Galilee, the collision came. They had called Him a winebibber, a gluttonous man, a friend of publicans and sinners, a Sabbath-breaker,

a blasphemer. But here is now the vilest thing of all, when they say of Him that He is in league with the Devil; and that it is to him that He owes His wisdom and power.

Our Lord recognized their hostility and His words are a sort of Declaration of War. Deserted by the ecclesiasts of the nation and by members of His family, He now turns to "whosoever shall do the will of God" and identifies Himself with such.

II. INTERPRETATION

1. SUDDEN INTRUSION (19b-20)

"They went into a house". The meaning no doubt is that they came home, that is, to Capernaum (Matt. 9:1).

"And the multitude cometh together again". This gathering and greatness of the crowd are most vividly described. In a former entrance into Capernaum (2:1-2) they filled the house so that there was no longer any room, even at the door. They again thronged Him at the seaside (3:9-10). So the crowd with the freedom of Orientals came in and filled the house.

"They could not so much as eat bread". They could find no opportunity to take their meals.

2. SEVERE INDICTMENTS (21-22)

a. Misunderstood by His friends (21)

The Greek words translated "friends" is a rather vague expression. They may mean His relatives, domestics, or any who had a special interest in Him. The words can be translated "those belonging to Him", or "they who were from beside Him". These may be the ones of verse 31. Wycliffe has "kinsman" and Tyndale has "they that belonged to him". These were not His disciples because they were in the house with Him.

"to lay hold on Him ... He is beside Himself". They had come perhaps from Nazareth, to protect Jesus against His madness. He is out of His mind. Paul uses the same word in 2 Cor. 5:13.

b. Misrepresented by His Foes (22)

Here is the first mention of Scribes from Jerusalem indicating increased activity and hostility of the religious leaders. The Pharisaic Scribes from Jerusalem had been from the first the instigators of the opposition (Luke 5:17). Their present attack arose out of the healing of a possessed man who recovered sight and speech. See Matt. 12:22 and Luke 11:14. These emissaries from Jerusalem appear as His deadliest foes.

The criticism against Jesus is twofold: The first is opposition to His Person – "He hath Beelzebub", and the second is opposition to His performance – "and by the prince of the demons He casts out the demons".

"He hath Beelzebub" or better Beelzebul. It was a name applied by the Jews to Satan (Vr. 23). He is called "the Prince of the demons". The name is variously explained. It is supposed to mean, "Lord of Flies", the fly-god of Ekron (2 Kgs. 1:2). This is the name

Beelzebub. The name was changed to Baalzebul or Beelzebul – “Lord of dung”, thus the dung god. Thus it was applied to Satan as the god of idolatry and impurity. Others again suppose Beelzebul means “Lord of the habitation, master of the house”. Applied to Satan as Lord of the kingdom of darkness. Jesus in contrast is represented as the true “Master of the house” (Matt. 10:25). So they blaspheme His person by stating that Jesus was Beelzebul.

“And by the prince of the demons, casteth He out demons”. Here they strike a blow at His performance. During Christ’s life it was never denied by His bitterest foes that He wrought miracles. Not believing He was from God, they must take the other alternative and attribute His works to the Devil. So they blaspheme His performance.

3. SEARCHING ILLUSTRATIONS (Vrs. 23-27)

The Scribes had made their infamous charges against Jesus behind His back, perhaps to His disciples or someone else. Jesus knew their thoughts and words (Matt. 12:25) and so proceeds to answer them.

He speaks to them in “parables”, in figures, similitudes and comparisons, such as “kingdom”, “house”, and “strong man’s house”.

“How can Satan cast out Satan”? The question implies that the thing is morally impossible (Matt. 12:26); or physically impossible (Matt. 12:29); or that no one had the face to do it (Luke 6:42). Jesus is making the point that the whole argument is not only a misrepresentation, it is a contradiction, an utter absurdity. Granting that spirits are cast out by the aid of another spirit, more is needed in the latter than superior strength. There must be some qualitative difference – in nature and interest.

Then in rapid fire, Jesus sends four piercing salvos at His critics (Vrs. 24-27) - -

Kingdom divided against kingdom – cannot stand. (Vr. 24).

House divided against house – cannot stand (Vr. 25).

Satan against Satan – cannot stand (Vr. 26).

First bind the strong man (Vr. 27).

Jesus shows the absurdity of the theory; also the principle on which theory is wrecked; and that the theory involves suicidal action. “But has an end”. This is peculiar to Mark.

“and spoil his goods”. The word “spoil” is diarpassai, and means “to plunder”. It means “to tear in pieces; to carry away, as the wind; to efface, as footsteps”.

The Master is not an agent of Satan, but an enemy who is conquering him by driving out his agents. The picture is taken from Isa. 49:25 – “Even the captives of the strong one shall be taken away”.

4. SOLEMN INSTRUCTIONS (28-30)

a. Concerning Sin against the Savior (Vr. 28)

“Verily” is the Greek word amen. It means sure or certain. It is a solemn word introducing a solemn speech uttered in a tone not to be forgotten.

“all things shall be forgiven”. This is a magnificently broad proclamation of the wideness of God’s mercy against any sin committed to Jesus Christ.

b. Concerning Sin against the Spirit (Vrs. 29-30)

“But he that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit”. Here is the exception. In 1 Tim. 1:13 we learn that Paul was a blasphemer, but that he obtained forgiveness because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. Thus it cannot be ignorant blasphemy against the H.S. This must be a willful, rational, pre-meditated sin which attributes the works of the H.S. unto Satan (Matt. 12:31-32).

When the leaders of the nation stoned Stephen who “being full of the Holy Spirit” they committed the sin of “eonian damnation” (Acts 7:54-60).

On the Cross of Calvary Christ prayed: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). But after Calvary and the resurrection they had to deal with the H.S. It was the H.S. who would bring the truth to the heart in the work of conviction (Jn. 16:8-11).

The judgment would be “an age-abiding judgment”. Matthew says: “neither in this age nor in the age to come”. This would indicate that there would come an age when the sin is forgiven.

5. SEVERED IDENTITY (Vrs. 31-35)

a. From Natural Kinship (Vrs. 31-32)

These verses no doubt go back to verse 21, telling about the efforts of Jesus’ Kinsmen to take Him into custody because they thought He was “beside Himself”, or “out of His mind”. His family could not get to Him because of the crowd, but the word passed along to Him that they were there looking for Him. The names of His brothers given in Matt. 13:55 are “James and Joses and Simon and Judas”.

Many of the early church fathers criticize Mary severely for this act of intrusion into the life and ministry of Jesus. Theophylact speaks “of vain glory and of guilt, in endeavoring to draw Him from teaching the word”. Tertullian pronounced her guilty of incredulity (state of unbelief). Chrysostom of vain glory, infirmity and madness, for this very thing.

b. To Spiritual Kinsmen (Vrs. 33-35)

The most sacred of earthly ties lose their greatness before the grandeur of a new spiritual kinship, whose ties shall last forever.

We must not assume here that Jesus despised human relationships (Jn. 19:26-27) but simply esteemed the spiritual so much greater. This and similar language (Luke 2:48-49; Jn. 2:4) shows how groundless is the doctrine of Immaculate Conception and making Mary an object of adoration, invocation and worship.

“And He looked round about”. Here is another of those graphic details of Mark. It is the minute description of an eye-witness.

“Whosoever shall do the will of God”. Such only are His true kinsmen. The spiritual relationship is the true and permanent kinship.

Jesus thus refused or delayed speaking to His mother and brothers. This action was an indirect reproof to them because of their over-anxiety on His account. They were interfering with His messianic mission.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. These verses show in unmistakable language the contrast and conflict between Satan and Christ, bondage and freedom, defeat and victory, perdition and pardon, hate and love.

2. Beware of criticizing a person’s motive. One may safely criticize one’s method. The leaders of Israel began by criticizing Christ’s method of healing on the Sabbath, but now they charge Him with being in league with the Devil and demons. These Scribes were doing as Morgan says: “invading that inner, secret, lonely, holy sanctuary of the reason why He did what He was doing”

3. There is a limit even to Divine forgiveness.

4. The Holy Spirit is a personality, a member of the Godhead, and blasphemy against Him is a heinous sin.

LESSON # 11 Mark 4:1-20 (Matt. 13:1-23; Luke 8:4-15)

I. INTRODUCTION

Two very important events have taken place in the sequence of events as recorded in the last lesson. These two incidents form an important background to our present lesson. In Mark 3:22-30 we have the record of the unpardonable sin which is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, by attributing the ministry of Christ to Satanic powers. Then in 3:31-35 we have the new spiritual relationships as being greater than any mere natural relationships. These were the climax of a series of hostilities and oppositions to Christ. We have seen the growth of this opposition. It began in the synagogue at Capernaum when He healed a man with an unclean spirit. Then they said: “What thing is this”? “What new doctrine is this”? (1:27) It was further manifested when in a house at Capernaum He healed a man of palsy and forgave his sins. Then they said: “Who can forgive sins but God only”? (2:7) Then in the house of Levi He was criticized for consorting with sinners, and for permitting His disciples to neglect the ceremonial fasts (2:16). Later in the cornfields He was criticized for permitting His disciples to pluck and eat corn (2:24). On another Sabbath in the synagogue He healed a man with a withered hand and then the Pharisees and Herodians took counsel how they might destroy Him (3:6). And finally in a house in Capernaum they declared “He hath Beelzebub” (3:22). The Lord then answered His critics with the most solemn words that ever fell from His lips.

1. Principal Places: The Sea Side which was by The Sea of Galilee, presumably near Capernaum. A Ship in the Sea.

2. Principal Persons: A great Multitude, The Twelve Apostles. Jesus.

3. Principal Purposes: To conceal as well as to reveal the secret aspects of the Kingdom during the rejection of the King.

The Greek word translated parable is “parabole” and means “to throw beside”, to compare. Hence a parable is a placing beside, a comparison. The exact number of Christ’s parables cannot be satisfactorily determined, because it is difficult to decide what is regarded as a parable. They can vary from thirty to forty-six. Luke has the most and Mark has the fewest. There seem to be none at all in John.

The parables are not fables. Fables illustrate human character and conduct; parables of Christ illustrate moral and spiritual truth. Fables are founded upon supposed words and acts; parables of Christ upon common and familiar incidents in nature and human experience. Compare with the Fable of Jotham (Judg. 9:8-15). Parables are not proverbs. Proverbs are brief terse sayings expressing in simple or figurative language the result of human experience or observation. The parables of Christ are more extended, illustrating truth plainly and in detail. Compare the proverbs of Christ: “Physician, heal thyself” (Luke 4:23). “A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country” (Matt. 13:57); with the parable of The Sower and Soils. Parables are not allegories. An allegory is more of a fictional symbolic representation; while a parable takes on more of a resemblance as well as representation. See allegory in Galatians 4:22-26.

II. INTERPRETATION (Vrs. 1-29)

1. THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF THE PARABLE (Vrs. 1-9)

“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside” (Matt. 13:1)

“Out of the house” ... “by the seaside”. These circumstances express more than the natural sequence, they express a dispensational principle. The “house” is a type or symbol of the Jewish nation. At the beginning of the Lord’s ministry it was “My Father’s House” (John 2:16); but after His rejection, it was “Your House” (Matt. 23:38). He leaves the “house” and “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate”(Matt. 23:38). The temple was symbolical of Him, and without Him the building was utter desolation. He goes to the Sea, a type of the multitudes or nations (Rev. 17:15).

For this reason we see a change in His method of teaching. The multitudes gather to Him as He sits in a boat, teaching “many things by parables”. His surroundings were exceedingly suggestive for parabolic teaching. Before Him lay the Sea with its boats and fish and nets; and not distant could be seen the fields where the sower was casting his seed. These scenes were most familiar to the people whom He addressed. “Hearken, behold” says Jesus, calling attention to the sower, saying, “there went out a sower to sow, and as he sowed” - - “Some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up” (Vr. 4). “And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away” (Vrs. 5-6). “And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it and it yielded no fruit” (Vr. 7). “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” (Vr. 8).

Four of the seven parables given in Matthew Ch. 13 were spoken by the seaside, and the other three were given in the house.

Jesus now gives a call to candid and serious attention (Vr. 9). He that hath ears to hear will attend to and understand the solemn truths being set forth in parabolic language. (See Matt. 13:14-17)

2. THE PRIVATE PREDICTIONS OF THE PARABLE (Vrs. 10-20)

After the multitudes had been sent away and Jesus was alone with His disciples including the twelve, they ask Him to interpret this parable (Vr. 10). Jesus then proceeds to interpret this parable as a model or specimen of interpretation for all His parables. This one would be a key to the others.

a. The Secret (Vrs. 11-13)

Jesus will now use parables in order that the secrets of The Kingdom might be veiled to the hardened and unbelieving; but knowledgeable to the believing followers (Vr. 11). “Unto you” is emphatic, and so in contrast to them that are without.

In verse twelve we have a part of Isa. 6:9-10 quoted. The hardness of heart exhibited in Isaiah, was now exhibited in greater measure under Christ. Their unbelief has led to spiritual deafness and blindness. They were going to see and hear the external form of the parables, but not perceive the hidden truth and spiritual meaning. Israel, as a nation, had had their opportunity, and for now there would be no national repentance and conversion. From now and on it would be an individual call to fellowship with Christ (See Matt. 11:28-30).

And so the interpretation of this parable should lead the believing to know the meaning of all the parables (Vr. 13).

b. The Sower (Vr. 14)

The Sower represents the “Son of Man” (Matt. 13:37), and also His servants (Matt. 25:14-30) and His ministers (2 Cor. 5:20).

c. The Seed (Vr. 14)

The seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11; 1 Pet. 1:23). The Sower went forth to sow the seed of the Word; not to criticize or make a mere display. “The words that I speak unto you are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). The Living Word of God is the Bible, and it will germinate and bear fruit in every prepared soil; because it is not corruptible seed, but incorruptible (1 Pet. 1:23).

d. The Soils (15-20)

Four kinds of soil are now presented as receiving the Word of God, namely:

(1) Satanic Prevention (15)

This is the soil of the wayside hearer. These hearts are like the trodden path, hard and calloused. This is the indifferent hearer, who may be a regular hearer, but whose heart is like the public footpath, open to every passerby and beaten hard by the feet of selfish thoughts. “Satan cometh immediately”. Such a heart is always in danger from Satan. And the Seed is always in danger of being lost unless it is hidden away (Ps. 119:11). Fowls have quick eyes.

They detect the precious Word lying on the thoughtless heart and catcheth it away (Matt. 13:4). The loss is never felt because its worth has never been enjoyed.

(2) Shallow Possession (16-17)

This is the stony ground or the emotional hearer of the Word. Such receive the Word with gladness, but there is no depth of earth and hence they are easily moved. The shallow-hearted hearers are very emotional. Tears are quickly shed and as quickly dried up. The inner man of the will is not affected by the Word, only their fears, feelings, and imagination. They are quickly starved because there is no root. It soon sprang up, but its life was all on the outside. Beneath the thin covering of emotional feeling there lies the hard, unyielding rock of a stubborn will, and hence they endure only for a short time. Tribulation and persecution strengthen and develop the true believer (Rom. 5:3; 8:35-39; 2 Cor. 4:17); while they offend, discourage, and completely disaffect the superficial hearers (2 Tim. 4:10). These superficial hearers are not “rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17) and are destitute of that hidden life which “is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). They are not rooted and built up in Christ (Col. 2:7).

(3) Sinful Pre-occupation (Vrs. 18-19)

The thorny-ground hearers are double-minded in character. Where there is plenty of depth for thorns there is depth for seed. They may have conviction of sin, and show signs of sorrow for sin, but the heart is divided. They are taken up with the cares of this life instead of casting all their cares upon Christ (1 Pet. 5:7).

The deceitfulness of riches, either obtained or sought is alluring to the heart, producing self-sufficiency and self-complacency. Hence they take up false hopes and a mere profession.

The lusts or inordinate desires for other things in this life, such as the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and pride of life, are thorns that choke the fruitfulness of the seed. In the sight of God they are destitute of good works. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24).

(4) Sincere Preparation (Vr. 20)

This is the good-ground hearer. They hear the word attentively and obediently. Their heart’s soil is thoroughly prepared for the good seed. According to Matt. 13:23 they “understand” its true spiritual import and consequently “bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). The Word is heard, not thoughtlessly (Vr. 15) but seriously; received not superficially (Vrs. 16-17), but sincerely; accepted, not partially (Vrs. 18-19), but completely with the whole heart. The distinguishing characteristic of this class is that they bring forth fruit. The others did not come to fruitage. “Some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred” are the words of the Divine record. So only one-third of one-fourth ever comes to full fruitage.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. As the Seed is sown on all kinds of soil, so the Word is to be proclaimed to all classes of hearers (Vrs. 4-9).

2. Some persons, though living, are given over to destruction (Vr. 12); simply because they willfully refuse the Gospel, and attribute its power to Satanic influence (Jer. 6:30; Rom. 1:28).

3. Both the Sower and the Seed are all-important. Without either, no growth and fruitage can be expected (Vr. 14; Rom. 10:14; 1 Pet. 1:25).

4. Man may delay to attend to his spiritual welfare, but Satan will not delay in effecting his ruin (Vr. 15; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 Tim. 5:15).

5. It is fruit that God looks for and not merely leaves. Cursed is everyone who merely has a profession without a possession (Matt. 21:18-19).

6. Our lesson has indicated that there are calloused hearers, impulsive hearers, pre-occupied hearers, and receptive hearers. May we always be the latter.

LESSON # 12 Mark 4:21-34 (Matt. 5:15-16: 13:31-32; Luke 8:16; 13:18-19)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Places: By the Sea of Galilee; and also in a house at Capernaum, presumably the house of Simon and Andrew (Matt. 13:1,36).

2. Principal Persons: Jesus and His Twelve Apostles.

3. Principal Purposes: These three parables reveal three lessons: first, that the teachings of Jesus were given that men might know the truth; secondly, that the growth of the Seed is supernatural in its character; and, thirdly, that the Kingdom of Heaven in its mystery form would attain an outward abnormal growth.

In our last lesson our Lord compared the Kingdom of Heaven in its mystery form to a Sower who went forth to sow, and in the process of sowing the seed fell on four kinds of soil. In His interpretation, Jesus reveals the fact that only one-fourth of the seed bore fruit. It is important that we keep His interpretation in mind as we look at His other parables. Jesus said: "Know ye not this parable and how then will ye know all parables"? (Mark 4:13)

II. INTERPRETATION

1. The Burning Candle – Divine Revelation (Vrs. 21-25)

Jesus had just told His disciples that it was given them to know the mysteries of The Kingdom of Heaven, but to those unbelievers He spoke in parables. Lest the disciples should infer from this that parabolic instruction of the Truth is adapted to darken and conceal, rather than enlighten, He further instructs them. It is the nature of all Truth to enlighten; if it darkens, the fault is in the hearer, not in the Truth. The same sun that melts the wax, hardens the clay.

a. The Parable (Vr. 21)

Our Lord now uses a familiar figure of a domestic light, such as a candle or a lamp. He also uses the common grain measure, holding about a peck; and, a couch, the kind that people

reclined upon at meal time. The proper place for a light is not to be hid under a corn measure or a reclining cot; but to be placed on a lamp stand and shine forth in the darkness.

It was considered “bad luck” in the superstitious Orient if a lamp went out during the night. It was the housewife’s lot to see that it was replenished every hour or two. But in order that the room might be darkened for sleep the burning lamp was slipped under the cot, or covered with an inverted peck-measure, so tilted as not to suffocate the flame.

The form of the question demands a strong negative answer. If the lamp is put under a corn measure it could be extinguished, and if put under a cot it could set the couch on fire. The purpose of a lamp is not for extinguishment, nor conflagration; but for illumination.

b. The Principle (Vrs. 22-25)

Dr. James M. Gray says: “The bushel stands for the cares and material things of life, and the bed for ease and comfort”. Our Lord now emphasized the principle involved in a three-fold manner:

(1) By an Illumination (Vr. 22)

He emphatically declares that nothing has been concealed intentionally or kept secret that it should not be revealed. The Truth that He spoke is a light, and that light was never meant to be hid. He came into the world of darkness with a message of light from the Father in order that all may see the light. But the Pharisees and Scribes had willfully shut up their hearts and minds to receive the light; hence darkness would prevail in their lives.

As the seed suggests life, so the lamp suggests light; and the Word of God is likened to both. “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” “The entrance of Thy words giveth light” (Ps. 119:105,130). Life implies that there is the opposite, namely death, and so light suggests that there is darkness. “Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord” (Eph. 5:8). Death needs life, and darkness needs light.

(2) By an Admonition (Vrs. 23-24a)

“If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. Take heed what ye hear”. If anyone has a willing perception: “let him hear”. The disciples are here admonished to be careful that they hear the message and heed it. In 4:9 the lord had said that the disciples should take heed that they hear. In Luke 8:18: “Take heed how ye hear”. And now He says: “Take heed what ye hear”. This constitutes the whole philosophy of hearing. The Word of God is “what” they should hear and heed. The philosophy and traditions of men may only lead astray. “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17).

(3) By a Declaration (Vrs. 24b-25)

“With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: ... he that hath, to him shall be given, and he that hath not, from him shall be taken”.

This is one of the maxims of Jesus applicable to various occasions (Matt. 7:2). The measure of careful attention given to the Word will be the measure of further instruction. Those who have open ears to hear will receive more instruction and knowledge. He who uses the

light he has shall obtain more light (Hos. 6:3; Jn. 8:12). But he who neglects the light he has shall lose it altogether.

Dr. Swete says: “the appropriation of any measure of Divine truth implies a capacity for receiving more, and conversely, incapacity for receiving truth leads to a loss of truth already in some sense possessed”.

There is a law of reward and retribution at work all the time, especially in the matter of God’s Truth. Here it is true that as we sow so shall we reap (Gal. 6:7). The purpose of the ear is to hear the Word, and the purpose of the mind is to heed that Word.

2. THE GRAIN SEED – DIVINE REPRODUCTION (Vrs. 26-29)

Mark now records a parable not given by the other Gospels; but in the light of Mark’s purpose it is clear why he should relate it. Mark’s presentation of Christ as The Servant fits in with this parable of The Servant and The Seed.

a. The Parable (Vrs. 26,28-29)

Our Lord now speaks about the seed again. The grains of Palestine were wheat of an Egyptian brand, barley and millet, an Indian corn. The wheat was used mainly for bread and the barley for the stock. Our Lord has interpreted the seed as the Word (4:14).

He brings now to their minds the stages of growth in the seed that is planted and which germinates in the soil. By the hidden processes of life through the power of God, there comes first the blade or small grass-like shoot; then the ear of the head upon the stalk, the period when the grains are distinguished from the grasses; and, then finally, the full corn or the mature kernels for the harvest. The spontaneous growth of the fruit continues till it is fully ripe and then it is ready for the sickle and the harvest.

The three Husbandry Parables are: The Soils (1-20); The Tares (Matt. 13:24-30); and The Seed (26-29). In each the seed is The Word, the soil is the heart of man, and the harvest is the end of the age.

b. The Principle (Vr. 27)

“He knoweth not how”. Here are applicable the words of the Apostle Paul: “I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6-7).

Our Lord wants to teach by this principle that when His disciples have sown the seed it is God’s business to see that it grows and bears fruit. The unconscious growth was His part. In natural growth as in spiritual grace, “God giveth the increase”.

3. THE MUSTARD TREE – HUMAN REALIZATION (Vrs. 30-34)

After speaking of Divine illumination and Divine production it may seem strange to continue with human manifestation. The current popular interpretation of this parable is that the growth of the Mustard Seed reveals the marvelous manifestation of the Gospel in the whole world until it becomes dominant and then ushers in The Kingdom of Heaven.

Such interpretation rules out entirely the Lord's interpretation of the Seed and the Soils. After the twelve had interrogated Him as to the interpretation of this parable, He says "Know ye not this parable and how then will ye know all parables"? (4:13)

a. The Parable (Vrs. 30-32)

In this parable our Lord likens the kingdom to The Mustard Seed, the smallest of all seed-grain used in Jewish husbandry. It becomes the largest of all herbs and takes tree-like proportions (Luke 13:19). Ordinarily, wild mustard does not assume such proportions, but under the handling of man it can grow to enormous size. It will spread forth its branches until the birds find lodgment in its shade. This quick growth is quite in contrast to the previous parable, and the pungent mustard is not a food, but a condiment.

Such details as its nature and use, its abnormal growth from an herb to a tree, and its resting the birds of the heavens in its branches must be taken into consideration in order to get a right interpretation.

b. The Principle

Our Lord is now consistent with the other parables and giving further evidence of the abnormal growth of the Kingdom of Heaven during the time that the King is away. The flying creatures of heaven have a sinister significance. In the first parable they snatched away the seed and devoured it (Vr. 4). They represent Satan and the demons who oppose the Lord's proclamation. In the last form of apostate Christendom, as revealed in Revelation 18:2, we find that Babylon had become the habitation of demons, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

This can have no reference to the true Church, the Body of Christ; but to the apostate Christendom who have a "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5).

Mark then tells us (Vrs. 33-34) that Jesus spoke to His own in many such parables (see Matt. Ch. 13), as they could bear them, and that His teaching from now on was exclusively done in parabolic form. And "He expounded all things to His disciples". Jesus was in the habit of revealing to His disciples the interpretation, the meaning of the parables He spoke.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. We are to shine "as lights in the world; holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:15-16).

2. There are three things which must be present in spiritual life and growth: the faithful sowing, the living seed, and the receptive soil.

3. He who faithfully sows the Master's Seed shall come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him (Ps. 126:6).

LESSON # 13 MARK 4:35-41 (Luke 8:22-25)

I. INTRODUCTION

“And the same day”. This opening statement of our lesson takes on new meaning when we consider how busy that day had been for Jesus. He had healed a demoniac (Matt. 12:22); He had encountered the opposition of His friends (or relatives) (3:20-21), and of His foes (Matt. 12:24); and probably had also taught many times.

“They took Him even as He was in the ship”. From this ship (4:1) Jesus had been addressing the multitude on the shore. Being weary from this long day’s ministry the disciples take Him in the same boat for the trip across the sea.

The Lord used three methods in His earthly ministry – Teaching, Miracles, and Training. He taught them all about The King (Himself); The Kingdom, its message and miracles, and trained His apostles in the proclamation of the message and performing of miracles.

This account given by Mark is the fullest, most graphic, and most definite. The graphic details of Mark are: “the other boats with Him” (Vr. 36) and “asleep on a pillow” or pad, cushion in the stern (Vr. 38).

As The Sermon on the Mount was attested by miracles (Matt. Chs. 8-9), so were the great parabolic discourses by the seaside given here in Mark. After His long day of teaching, Jesus saw the multitudes about Him, and needing rest from the strain of the day’s ministry, He gave commandment to dismiss the crowd and set out for the other shore.

1. Principal Places: The Sea of Galilee is some 12 1/2 miles in length, and not over 7 miles in width. It lies in a deep valley, called the Galilean Basin with a maximum of 838 feet below sea-level. Macgregor’s Rob Roy on the Jordan, says: “On the Sea of Galilee the wind has a singular force and suddenness; and this is no doubt because that sea is so deep in the earth that the sun rarifies the air in it enormously, and the wind, speeding swiftly above a long and level plateau, gathers much force as it sweeps through the flat deserts, until suddenly it meets this huge gap in the way and tumbles down irresistibly”. This may be the natural explanation for sudden storms on Galilee; but there can also be a supernatural explanation as we shall see.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus and His Twelve Apostles.

3. Principal Purpose: To attest the Deity of Jesus by revealing His power over the raging elements.

A-1. COMING OF THE STORM (37-38)

B-1. CONCERN OF THE DISCIPLES (38a)

A-2. CALMING OF THE STORM (39)

B-2. CENSURE TO THE DISCIPLES (40-41)

There is a difference among Bible expositors as to the reason for Jesus retiring to “the other side” of Galilee. Some think it was because of His weariness after a long day’s ministry, while others feel it was the normal way of Jesus retiring to another place to teach others also. It could be both.

We shall now see the Miracle Master on The Sea of Galilee.

II. INTERPRETATION

1. A GREAT STORM (Vrs. 37-38)

a. Peril on the Sea (Vr. 37)

“And there arose a great storm of wind”. Luke says: “And there came down a storm of wind on the lake”. It was one of those sudden, violent squalls or whirlwinds, attended by rain, to which the Sea of Galilee was often subject. The words used by the narrators indicate a furious storm or hurricane. This could indicate more than just natural powers at work.

“And the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full”. A boat on the water and on the waves is a perfectly natural thing, but water in the ship is an unnatural and dangerous experience. Luke says: “filled with water, and were in jeopardy”.

b. Peace of the Savior (38a)

As a contrast to the great storm we now have a Great Savior. While the elements were in a horrible uproar, and the disciples awake and filled with terror, He was fast asleep in the stern of the boat on the steersman’s cushion. “Asleep”, not merely in appearance, but in reality, Here we have a manifestation of Jesus’ humanity and divinity. He needed rest – His humanity; He sleeps in a raging storm – His deity. Like Jonah, He slept in the midst of a storm, but how different: Jonah fleeing from duty and Jesus peacefully awaiting duty. The prophet the cause of the storm; the Master, the calmer of the storm.

c. Prayer of the Disciples (38b)

“They awake Him ... Master, carest Thou not that we perish”. Luke says: “Master, Master, we perish”.

Here is a mingled prayer and complaint; with mingled fear and faith. This is the cry of intense anxiety, and an exclamation of terror. “Teacher, we are lost! Hast thou no concern for us? Save us from impending ruin! How great this tempest to terrify fishermen used to the perils of this Sea!

Dr. G. Cambell Morgan suggests: “They were protesting against His lack of concern in view of the fact that they were all going to perish, Himself amongst the number”. So that the “we” here includes the Lord as well as the disciples.

2. A GREAT SOVEREIGN (Vr. 39)

The Master now exercises His powerful rebuke and there follows a great repose. Arising from His slumber, He looked over the storm-tossed waves and in anger rebuked them. He was the Creator of the sea, so why should it not obey Him. All others were subject to the elements, but this Man subjected the elements.

Mark uses a double imperative – Siopa, Pephimcso – “Be silent, Be muzzled”. I take it that the first, “Be silent” refers to the wind and the waves, while the second, “be muzzled” refers to the unseen powers of the unseen world of demons and the Devil.

“And there was a great calm”. Over the sea and away to the mountains, and everywhere, with sudden swiftness there was quietness and calm. No doubt Satan and the demons were the cause of the storm, and behind the wind and the waves they are commanded: “Be muzzled”. It was Satan who sent “the wind from the wilderness” in the days of Job. So he may have had something to do with the violence of this storm. He is called “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2).

“Dark was the night; the foaming deep
Raged madly round; He rose from sleep
The Man, the God, the tempest’s Lord.
He spake! Obedient, trembling, awed,
Low sank the proud waves’ crested head,
Far the affrighted storm-fiend fled”.

3. A GREAT SERMON (Vr. 40)

“Why are ye so fearful”? “How is it that ye have no faith”?

The Lord rebukes them because of their alarm, their terror, their fear, and their lack of faith. Jesus rebukes them, not because there was no danger, or because they had no right to be alarmed; but because their danger and alarm, though natural, should have been neutralized by His presence, and their confidence in His ability to save them, even though He was asleep. “Carest thou not that we perish”? Of course He did, but they had not perished as yet. These disciples had not learned what Paul had learned when he said: “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content”. And “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:11,13).

It is one thing to trust Christ for saving faith; and another thing to trust Him for sustaining faith. There is sustaining grace as well as saving grace. To be fearful and faithless is the most wretched condition any one can be in.

4. A GREAT SEQUEL (Vr. 41)

“And they feared exceedingly”. “What manner of man is this”?

Now they forgot all about the storm, the wind and the waves; and a new fear possessed them, an exceeding great fear, a deep sense of awe and reverence.

Dr. Morgan says: “Mark the strange merging. The disciples saw a tired Man asleep. They saw a Man so tremendous in power that the wind that tossed the sea into fury ceased, and the sea, tossed into fury was immediately calm. What wonder that they asked: ‘Who then is this’? ‘What can we see’? We see the mighty One who can hush the storm to rest, confronting the human soul and saying: ‘Why are ye fearful’? In other words, it is suggested by this story that the problem that confronted God was not that of stilling the storm on the sea but that of stilling the storm in a human soul, and that is harder work for God”!

The disciples were fearful from the storm, now they are fearful from the silence. “They feared with great fear” says the Greek.

“The winds and the waves shall obey My will,
Peace “Be Still.
Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea,

Or demons, or men, or whatever it be,
No waters can swallow the ship where lies
The Master of ocean, and earth, and skies;
They all shall sweetly obey My will;
 Peace Be Still. Peace Be Still.
They all shall sweetly obey My will;
 Peace, Peace Be Still”.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. This episode is a little adumbration, a preview of The Kingdom. The sea represents the nations (Rev. 17:15); the storm the time of the Great Tribulation; the wind is the supernatural powers at the time of the end that stir up the nations to persecute and destroy the faithful remnant. When the Lord comes at His Second Advent He will say again: “Peace, Be Still”. And then will come the millennial calm.

2. “With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm”.

Can I smile at the storm with Christ in the vessel? I am not sure that I always can, but I ought to and I want to.

3. A storm with Christ is better than a calm without Him.

4. Trench points out that there are three words used for fear in the N.T.: eulabeia, used in a good sense; deilos, always used in a bad sense; and phobos, used both in a bad and good sense. The second of these is used in verse 40, and the third in a good sense in verse 41.

5. It is a great thing to witness when Jesus hushes the storm (Vr. 39); but it is a greater thing to watch Him through the storm (Vr. 38).

6. Too many believers today distrust Christ in His providence, through a lack of faith, yet He deals tenderly with us in grace.

7. The under and upper worlds of evil spirits still exist. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

LESSON # 14 Mark 5:1-20 (Matt. 8:28-34); Luke 8:26-40)

I. INTRODUCTION

The storm of the Sea is now over, and in quietness and calmness they land at their destination – the country of the Gadarenes. Jesus had just stilled a tempest on the Galilean Sea, and now steps ashore to meet another tempest in a Gadarene man. This tempest did not rave along the shores and shriek over woodland amid the habitations of men; it raged in the body and soul of a human being, a son of Adam’s race, created in the likeness of God’s image.

In this chapter five we shall see the Master of sea and souls in relation to Demons (1-20); Disease (25-34); and Death (21-24,35-43).

In our lesson we shall see that what proves a cure to one becomes a curse to others. One man is now made better, and many are made worse. Jesus is now going to meet head on with the demon powers of darkness.

1. Principal Places: Country of the Gadarenes (Vr. 1). This was on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee in the vicinity of Gadara, a fortified city in this district. Decapolis (Vr. 20). When the Romans conquered Syria (B.C.65), they rebuilt, partially colonized, and endowed with certain privileges “ten cities” called Decapolis. All the cities lay, with the exception of Scythopolis, east of the Jordan. They were Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Pella (to which the believers fled when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus), Philadelphia, Gerasa, Dion, Canatha, Raphana, and Damascus.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus, The twelve Apostles, the demonized maniac and the swine herders.

Principal Purpose: To manifest that the Son of God could destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8).

II. INTERPRETATION

1. THE DEMONIZED MANIAC (Vrs. 2-7)

When Christ came out of the ship there met Him a man that came out of the tombs. The sepulchers of the Jews were generally cut out of the solid rock. It was in one of these caves that this man lived, perhaps with the skulls and bones of many dead persons.

Mark now goes into great detail to give us a description of the most horrible case of demon possession recorded in the Gospels. None others are represented as possessing such muscular strength, such abandonment of all society, and such savage and uncontrollable ferocity.

a. His Person (Vr. 2)

“...a man with an unclean spirit” Luke says, “which had demons a long time” (Luke 8:27).

The exact origin of the demons is not known. The Jews held various notions on this subject: such as, the demons were the spirits of wicked dead which could be exorcised by means of roots, or the name of Solomon, or fumes of roasting heart and liver of fish. Mark and Luke tell us that this was “an unclean spirit”. The designation is applied to the worship of the gods of the heathen (Deut. 32:16-17). The heathen witch doctors would use both human and animal excrements in their concoctions for supposed healing, as well as the inwards of animals for healing purposes. Some demons completely demoralize human beings. “He wore no clothes” says Luke. Indecent exposure accompanies demon possession.

Demons may be either: spirits of pre-historic beings, or spirits of the giants who died in the Flood of Noah’s day. They seem to want a body, which may infer that they once occupied a body.

b. His Power (Vrs. 3-5)

(1) He was Defiant (3-4). Luke says that he was driven of the Devil and Mark adds that no man could either bind him nor tame him. He was helpless and hopeless as a human being. Captivated by this unseen power from the underworld of demons he plucked asunder, broke in pieces, and tore apart every chain and fetter that bound him. Luke also adds to the horrible picture by describing his shamelessness and friendlessness: he wore no clothes and abode in no man's house. No amount of human culture, moral persuasion, temperance pledges, social schemes and environment could tame this man. Here human devices were utterly helpless. It would take the power of God.

(2) He was Desperate (Vr. 5). His demoniacal madness is further attested by his wildly roaming in tombs and in solitary mountain fastnesses uttering and shrieking in all manner of inhuman sounds. And, as if contending with some foe, rending his flesh with the sharp pieces of stone found in tombs and mountains. Under the power of demons he is no longer guided by the power of self-preservation. Torment is the lot of all demon possessed. Isaiah says: "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up dirt and mire. There is no peace saith my God to the wicked" (Isa. 57:20).

The word "crying" indicates fear which attends sin and demon possession. Christ came to deliver from fear of death (Hebr. 2:14-16; Col. 1:12-14). The word "cutting" suggests human effort to atone for sin. This world's demon possessed practice some fanatical sadistic pattern of self-imposed atonement. So did the Baal priests in Elijah's day: "They cried aloud and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them" (1 Kings 18:28),

c. His Prayer (Vrs. 6-7)

Being demonized this maniac tormented and terrorized any human being that came near. But seeing Jesus afar off, he runs to worship Him. The demons recognize the person and power of the Son of God. They know that their doom is sealed. But "torment me not".

We have already seen that another unclean spirit cried out: "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" (Mk. 1:24). The demons recognize their true Master and fear Him.

2. THE DIVINE MASTER (Vrs. 8-20)

We shall see this Divine Master now in - -

a. The Deliverance of the Maniac (Vrs. 8,15)

"Come out of the man, unclean spirit". We have here the declaration and deliverance of the possessed man by Jesus. He demands that the demons leave. Christ is the great Emancipator. Part of His ministry was to set the captives at liberty (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18). The word of Christ has power over disease, death, and demons. He who can still the tempest of the elements is also able to still the tempest in the life of a man possessed by demons. What a complete emancipation came to this demon possessed man!

It was a restful change – "sitting".

It was an outward change – "clothed".

It was an inward change – "right mind".

It was a manifest change – "all men did marvel".

“If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Restoration made this degraded, deluded, defiant, desperate demoniac into a very docile, devoted and dignified person. There was deliverance from self – “no man could tame him”, from Satan – “My name is legion”, from insanity – “fetters broken in pieces”, from death – “the tombs”.

b. The Demand of the Demons (9-13)

“besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country”. “Send us into the swine”.

Jesus interrogates the demons by asking: “What is thy name”? They answer “Legion, many”. He did not ask this for personal knowledge. He knew who they were. But to tell His disciples and others that the demons are real personalities. He no doubt addressed the demon and not the man. The demon completely possessed the man.

How many there were in the “Legion” we have no way of knowing. Some feel that because there were two thousand swine there must have been two thousand demons possessing the man.

There were many Jews living in this part of Palestine and trafficked in the herding of swine, which was forbidden by the Law (see Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8; Isa. 65:4; 66:17). The demons now ask of Jesus to be permitted to enter these two thousand swine. There are three animals which seem to be acceptable to demon possession – the swine of our lesson; and the bulls and dogs of Psalm 22:12,16,20). The result of this encounter of the demons with the swine was that the swine became insane and drowned in the sea, and the demons went into the abyss or the “deep” (Greek – abussos). Here is where they did not want to go (Luke 8:31), but apparently went.

c. The Declaration of the Swine Herders (Vrs. 14,16-17)

The swine herders now rush into the city and to the country to tell what had happened to the maniac, and also to the swine. The result was that “the whole city came out to meet Jesus” (Matt. 8:34). What did they see? A man, who one moment was a desperate maniac, now quietly sitting in his right mind and clothed. They also saw that the swine were completely gone.

When Jesus comes, the Son of God, there ensues both complete deliverance and complete destruction. What a wonderful Savior! There follows now (Vr. 17) the third of the four prayers in this lesson – that of the Gadarenes. There had been the prayers of the Demoniac (Vr. 10); of the Demons (Vr. 12); and finally the prayer of the healed man (Vr. 18). The prayer of the Gadarenes was that Jesus might “depart out of their coasts”. Luke adds (8:37) “for they were taken with great fear”. Their superstitious awe filled them with fear that other swine might be in danger. To worldly minded men the loss of swine more than counterbalanced the cure of the demoniac.

d. The Devotion of the Healed Man (Vrs. 18-20)

The Master of wind and waves, demons, and death is now ready to embark for the journey across the sea. He had finished His urgent and natural request. Both nature and demons must obey Jesus; it remains for man to decide whether or not to obey.

(1) His Aspiration – “...prayed that he might be with Him”. He no doubt felt great gratitude and love to Jesus who had so completely emancipated him from demons.

(2) His Commission – “Go home to thy friends, and tell them”. The demons pray and their prayers are granted to their own discomfiture; the Gadarenes pray, their prayer is also granted by being left to their own destruction; but the man who had been healed prays, and his petition is not granted. Our Lord chooses whom He will and ordains whom He will to follow Him (3:13-14). This region needed a living witness to the goodness and grace of the Messiah.

(3) His Proclamation – “And he departed and began to publish”. So the healed demoniac returns and tells all that Jesus had done, not only in his own town, but in all the ten cities of the district. His message excited wonder for “all men did marvel”.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. The underworld of evil spirits still exist, not only in the abyss, but in the Heavens. (See Eph. 6:12)

2. A believer who has no testimony at home cannot be of much blessing away from home.

3. Satan and his demons make a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde out of sinners. They have a double personality; longing for liberty, but held in bondage. They have two voices and two forces within.

4. An answered prayer is not always a sign of Divine approbation nor an unanswered one a sign of Divine displeasure (Ps. 78:29; 106:14,15).

5. The powers of Satan and demons are subject to the Word of the Lord; they cannot go beyond His permission (Vr. 13; Luke 10:18-19).

LESSON # 15 MARK 5:21-24; 35-43; (Matt. 9:18-19; 23-26; Luke 8:41-42; 49-56)

I. INTRODUCTION

In our last lesson we saw Jesus in performance of a great miracle on the other shore of the Gadarenes. In our lesson today He has just returned from Gadara, where people more distressed at the loss of their swine than grateful for the healing of their neighbor, had besought Him to depart from their coasts.

1. Principal Places: “Unto the other side” is the only description that Mark gives of the place where our lesson now finds its setting. It was most likely on the sea coast near Capernaum where this incident took place. “The House of the Ruler”. This was the home of Jairus where Jesus brought life again to a little maid.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Peter, James, John, Jairus and his wife, the little girl.

3. Principal Purpose: To reveal the power of Jesus over death, thus further corroborating His Deity and Messiahship. We have seen His power over disease and demons; now it is over death.

The Bible record reveals that Jesus performed three miracles in the realm of death. This may have a special design in the progress of Revelation. The first was the little maid as recorded in our lesson by Mark; the second was that of the young man of Nain on his way to burial in the tomb (Luke Ch. 7); and the third was that of Lazarus recorded in John Ch. 11. One from childhood, one from young manhood, and one from old age. Sin has brought spiritual death to all ages (Rom 3:23; Eph. 2:1). Archbishop Trench has called these: “An ascending scale of difficulty”. He raised them from the bed, the bier, and the tomb.

The words of the prophet Jeremiah 15:9 seem applicable to our lesson: “Her sun is gone down while it is yet day”. Sunset at noontide is truly the experience that presents itself in the daughter of Jairus. In each of the resuscitations there was an only daughter, an only son, and an only brother.

II. INTERPRETATION

The event which now occupies our attention is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Matthew gives the briefest account, Mark is as usual graphic, and Luke is tender, natural, and acute in his delineation. Matthew differs from Mark and Luke as to the time of the miracle. Matthew gives it immediately after the feast given by Matthew for Jesus; while Mark and Luke record it after they come from Gadara. Someone has commented that “every arrangement is beset with difficulty”. So it is if we try to harmonize according to time and place. But all is clear if we deep in mind that Mark is setting forth Christ as The Servant, while Matthew and Luke as King and Man respectively. Thus events are not fitted together for time and place. They are given to reveal the Divine purpose of the Gospels as King, Servant, Man, and Lord.

1. THE REQUEST OF JAIRUS (Vrs. 22-23)

“One of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name”. Jairus was one of the elders and presiding officers, who convened the assembly, preserved order, and invited readers and speakers (Acts 13:15). Jairus means “a diffuser of light”. The light that he had, brought him to the Source of all true Light and Life – Jesus Christ.

a. His Posture (Vr. 22)

“When he saw Him, he fell at His feet”. Literally, and seeing Him. The use of the present tense gives vividness to the narrative. It would seem that Jairus did not see Him at once, but, making his way through the crowd (Vr. 21), he at length saw Him and fell at His feet in adoration and worship. It was a posture of reverence and earnest entreaty.

b. His Problem (Vr. 23)

“My little daughter lieth at the point of death”. “My little daughter”! “twelve years of age” (Luke 8:42). “Only daughter”! (Luke 8:42) “At the point of death”! Here is a graphic picture of a father in sore distress and overwhelming grief. Did Jairus have a real problem? Is it any wonder that this ruler lies prostrate before the Lord of Life.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan comments: “Twelve years of sunshine, twelve years of music in the home! She had come to that wonderful age which today we are describing as the period of adolescence, when will is becoming supreme, and choices and elections are being made alone, when all life seems to be breaking from bud into larger blossom with the potentiality of

fruitage. Twelve years of age! Then the sorrow is revealed in one graphic sentence: ‘My little daughter lieth at the point of death’”.

c. His Prayer (Vr. 23)

“Come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live”.

Jairus had no doubt been present in the synagogue when Jesus healed the man with a withered hand (3:1-5) and had also seen when Jesus laid His hands on the sick that thronged Him (Luke 4:40). His prayer of faith implied that only the personal presence and corporeal contact of Jesus would heal his daughter, which belief Jesus did not here rebuke, as in the case of the Nobleman (John 4:46-54).

So we see Jairus prostratingly, passionately and prayerfully coming to Jesus for help.

2. THE RESPONSE OF JESUS (Vrs. 24,35-43)

“And Jesus went with Him”. Jesus immediately complies with the request of Jairus. His compassion and concern went out to him.

a. He Goes to the House of Jairus (Vrs. 35-37)

As he went along with the ruler, a great throng followed them, and in this multitude was a woman with a grievous disease, who reached forth her hand, touched Jesus, and was healed (Vrs. 25-34). This delay must have been very sore for Jairus, whose heart was chafing against this hindering episode. The eagerness of his faith was now being put under the discipline of delay. He was going to learn that Jesus’ power to heal was not limited by time and that as a rich ruler he had no necessary precedence over a weak and poor woman.

However, before they come to the house of Jairus, two things take place:

(1) Jesus and Human Counteraction (Vr. 35). Messengers had come from the ruler’s house and announced: “Thy daughter is dead”. No doubt Jairus was ready to say with Martha: “Master, if thou hadst not tarried, my daughter had not died”. He might have felt that the woman’s healing could have waited, but mine could not. “Why troublest thou the Master any further”. It was now all over. While there was life there was hope. So reason all those who know not this Master of both life and death. The thing that troubles the Master is that we trouble Him so little.

(2) Jairus and Divine Consolation (Vr. 36). “Be not afraid only believe”. “She shall be made whole” (Luke 8:50). In these words of Jesus there is both a command and an exhortation. When the Master heard the discouraging words of the messengers, He feared for the distressed father’s faith, already sorely tried by the delay, and so He makes haste to stretch out His saving hand to prevent him from sinking in the sea of doubt and unbelief. Jesus often spoke the word of cheer and consolation: “Be of good cheer”; “Be of good comfort”; “Be of good courage”; “Be not afraid” (Matt. 9:2; Mk. 6:50; Mk. 10:49; Ps. 31:24; Matt. 14:27). “She shall be made whole”. This was the ground and warrant for his sinking faith to stand on.

Only Peter, James and John are now permitted to go with Him and Jairus. These three disciples formed “The Apostolic Trinity” who were later selected to be with Him at His Transfiguration (9:2) and His agony in The Garden (14:33).

b. He Goes Into the House of Jairus (Vrs. 38-43)

Coming to the house He found it filled with a motley crowd of weeping friends and wailing mourners who were hired to perform the accustomed rites of sorrow over the dead. These friends would mark the precise moment of death; upon which they set up instantly a united outcry, attended with weeping and beating of the breast, and tearing out the hair of the head. Jesus now finds these mourners practicing the death-dirge.

(1) His Revelation (Vr. 39) – “The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth”. Some suppose her death to be only apparent, as in a swoon, or state of unconsciousness, like one dead. But according to Luke 8:55 her spirit returned. Jesus viewed death from the Divine side of resurrection; these others from the human side. To the God of resurrection, death is like a sleep. His voice can as easily raise the dead, as we can awaken those who are slumbering. The word “sleep” became a popular term for death (Matt. 27:52; Jn. 11:11; Acts 13:36; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:20; 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:14; 5:10). The word does not occur in the Prison Epistles.

“And they laughed Him to scorn”. Human desperation now turns to human desolation. Here is mocking unbelief. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:14). They understood neither the language nor the power of the Master Who had now entered the house.

(2) Her Restoration (Vrs. 40-43)

Those who mockingly scorn the things Divine, and in unbelief ridicule the Lord of Glory shall not see His miraculous power. Before performing the miracle of restoration, He turns the mockers out of the room. With His three apostles and the maid’s parents, He then enters the death chamber.

His method is seen in that “He took ... and said” (Vr. 41). Suiting His action to His words, Jesus took the damsel’s hand. This was not necessary to the miracle, but added that touch of deep sympathy for this little lamb. At another occasion Jesus took little children in His arms, laid His hands upon them, and blessed them (Mk. 10:16). “Talitha Cumi” is the Aramaic, and means “Girl, arise”.

The Miracle is recorded “And straightway the damsel arose and walked” (Vr. 42). The resuscitation was instantaneous and complete for she not only arose but walked. So the Lord who has revealed His power over disease and demons, now demonstrates it over death. “They were astonished with great astonishment”. This revealed that she was really raised from the dead.

The Mission is revealed “He charged them” (Vr. 43). Obeying the laws of love and nature, He delivered her into the hands of her parents for care and nurture. He bade them give her food. God does not do for us what we can do ourselves. And again Jesus commands silence about this miracle. It is not yet the time for open acceptance of Him as King of Israel.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; dead in trespasses and sins (Rom. 3:23; Eph. 2:1).
2. Jesus Christ is the only Savior from disease, demons, and death (Acts 4:12).
3. If those who have returned from death ever knew where they had been, or what they had seen, we have no record of it. Death is death and Jesus is the only One who can raise the dead and give new life (John 11:25).
4. In human diseases and death we see the results of sin, and a type of the deeper results in the soul (Gen. 3:17-19; Rom 5:12).
5. In the darkest hour of our human experience let the words “Only believe” dispel our fear (Luke 24:25-26; Acts 27:33-34).

LESSON # 16 MARK 5:25-34 (Matt. 9:20-22; Luke 8:43-48)

I. INTRODUCTION

We have in these verses a whole incident of healing between two halves of another miracle. The one concerns the young twelve year old daughter of Jairus, and this one a woman who had a disease for twelve years. Jairus was well-to-do, the woman was poverty stricken; Jairus came openly, she came secretly, but both received what they wanted.

Jesus is on His way to bless one family and He blesses another person. No doubt Jairus regarded this action of the woman as an interruption of Christ’s ministry to his daughter.

Deep as the sorrow of Jairus might have been, the sorrow and suffering of this woman was far deeper. Because of her illness she was separated from her home, from society, and from the synagogue and temple courts. This disease rendered her completely unclean according to the Law (Lev. 15:19-27). In the case of Jairus there were twelve years of sunshine suddenly snuffed out; in the case of this woman twelve years of suffering issuing out in utter desolation.

1. Principal Places: On the way to Jairus’ home, probably at Capernaum.
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, His Disciples, a Great Crowd, the Suffering Woman.
3. Principal Purpose: To demonstrate the hidden Deity and power of Christ, made manifest by a mere touch.

1. HER CONDITION DESCRIBED (Vrs. 25-26)

We now meet with “a certain woman”. Nothing is said as to her name, her age, or her home; whether she lived in this vicinity or came from another place.

Archbishop Trench says: “such overflowing grace is in Him, the Prince of life, that as He is hastening to the accomplishing of one work of His power, He accomplishes another, as by the way”.

a. She Was Physically Depleted (Vr. 25)

“...an issue of blood twelve years”. Here is a pathetic condition of a woman who had suffered to twelve years from an incurable disease. We see the number twelve in both of these miracles. Jairus’ daughter was “about twelve years of age” (Luke 8:42); and here we read

that this woman had been ill for twelve years. This number twelve has to do with Israel's national and physical well-being. It is a number which denotes Governmental perfection.

b. She Was Financially Depleted (Vr. 26)

She “had spent all ... on many physicians” ... “nothing bettered, but rather grew worse”.

She perhaps had possessed great wealth at one time, but her disease had reduced her to poverty. She suffered, not only from her disease, but also from her prescriptions. How pitiful was her condition.

2. HER CONCERN DISPLAYED (Vrs. 27-28)

A great crowd was now following Jesus to the home of Jairus. In this crowd came a woman who needed help in a desperate way.

a. She Came out of Fear (Vr. 27)

“...came in the press behind”. She comes incognito, concealing her identity for fear that someone might recognize her, and reveal her condition – an outcast in society. It was her fear of recognition that caused her to come quietly from behind. So it was her sense of unworthiness, uncleanness, and to escape observation that she comes in this manner.

b. She came out of Faith (Vr. 28)

“... and touch his garment. ... If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole”. The law of Moses commanded every Israelite to wear at each corner of his tallith or garment a fringe or tassel of blue to remind him that he is God's own (Num. 15:37-40; Deut. 22:12). Two of these fringes usually hung down at the bottom of the robe, while one hung over the shoulder (See Matt. 23:5). Her faith is revealed by the thoughts of her heart: “If I may touch ... I shall be whole”. Like Jairus she thought there must be some contact with Jesus in order to be healed.

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie has so aptly said: “It was not her finger or His fringe that made her whole, but the faith that expressed itself in her touching him. She had but one opportunity, and she seized it, and greatly was she blessed”.

3. HER CURE DECLARED (Vrs. 29-34)

So the miracle takes place.

a. It was Instantaneous (Vr. 29)

“And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; ... she was healed of her plague”. It was immediate and complete. She knew, perceived in her body by the sensations that she was cured. The miracle of Jesus was not only immediate it was complete. She experienced health and restoration.

b. It was Interrogated (Vrs. 30-31)

“Who touched my clothes”? Christ knew that power had gone out from Him. He had an inner consciousness of the fact. Her cure was the result and answer of her touch of faith, which reached beyond the fringe of His garment to His divine nature. (See 6:56; Luke 6:19) The question was asked of Jesus to call forth the confession of the woman for her good and the good of the crowd. So a judge asks a criminal whether he is guilty or not guilty, though he may know the certainty of his guilt. A general denial then followed by the multitude (Luke 8:45), and also His disciples with “Peter and they that were with him” {Luke 8:45}.

“And He looked round about”. Here is another touch of Mark’s graphic picture. The tense in the original indicates that He “kept on looking all around”. Then His eyes fell on the woman who had been healed. The multitude thronged Jesus, but the woman touched Him. Augustine said: “Flesh presses; faith touches”. The crowds jostled Him out of curiosity, but the woman made contact by faith. Many thronged Him at this time, but only one touched Him.

c. It Was Informative (32-34)

The effect of His searching question and look upon the woman brought “fearing and trembling”, an inner fear and outward tremble. In humble adoration she falls down at his feet and “told Him all the truth”.

A. Hovey in his Miracles of Christ says: “Nature may shrink back and wish to spare itself the shame of acknowledging its moral pollution, but this weakness must be conquered, and the tide of love and thankfulness permitted to flow out, full and free, to the glory of divine grace”.

She may have feared His anger for according to the Law, the touch of one afflicted as she was caused ceremonial defilement until the evening. “...told Him all the truth”. He was the Truth, and nothing less would do for Him. Luke 8:47 tells us that she made a public confession so that all heard her story. From the acknowledgement of this healed woman we have finally the declaration of Christ (Vr. 34). “Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole”. Our Lord addressed no other woman by this title. By this designation the Lord speaks words of comfort and confirms the miracle. The lord used the word “son” in 2:5. Both these terms were expressive of the new spiritual relationship (3:5; 2 Cor. 6:18; Heb. 2:10). “Thy faith hath made thee whole”. Matthew 9:22 adds: “Be of good comfort”. Jesus makes her faith prominent as the means of her cure and comforts her, taking away all fear and trembling.

“Go in peace, and be whole”. Literally: “Go into peace”, into a state of serenity and freedom from all thy former bodily and spiritual sufferings. The healing is thus publicly and solemnly ratified. The cure was permanent. Bengel says: “After a long sorrow, a lasting blessing”.

III INSTRUCTION

1. Hemorrhage speaks to us of the waste of sin, which no human physician can arrest. But a new day dawns when the sinner says: “I have tried and tried in vain many ways to ease my pain; now all other hope is past, only this is left at last. Here before Thy cross I lie; Here I live or here I die.

2. A dispensational scene takes place in the two miracles, raising of Jairus’ daughter and healing of the woman. While the nation will linger and die, and cannot be raised until His return, a remnant among them will have faith and know the blessing of personal contact with Christ in salvation. Christ has not yet reached His intended goal – the resurrection and restoration of the nation, Israel.

LESSON # 17 MARK 6:1-13; 30-32

I. INTRODUCTION

This sixth chapter opens with Christ and His disciples in the city of Nazareth, Jesus' home town (Vrs. 1-6). Two significant statements from the lips of our Lord sum up His work and stay here – “And he could there do no mighty work”; “And He marveled because of their unbelief”. In verses 7-13; 30-32, we have the record of the twelve being sent forth into the cities of Israel to preach repentance, heal diseases, and cast out demons, ending by retirement to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee for a report of their work and rest from their labors.

1. Principal Places: “His own country”. Here He came to Nazareth in Galilee. Synagogue at Nazareth. Desert Place.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Disciples, Synagogue attenders.

3. Principal Purpose: To reveal the inherent unbelief of His own people. To reveal the methods and ministry of the Twelve Apostles.

II. INTERPRETATION

1. REVISITATION AND REJECTION AT NAZARETH (Vrs. 1-6) Matt. 13:54-58

Jesus now comes again to His home town of Nazareth. He comes to His fatherland, and to a very sad experience. It appears that this is in His last visit here.

Some Bible expositors feel that this visit is identical with that mentioned in Luke 4:16-30. But others, for good reason, believe it was a later visit. Matthew settles the matter by giving two visits to Nazareth (Matt. 4:13 and 13:54-58). The former is the one mentioned in Luke 4:16-30. In this second visit of our text He heals a few sick (Vr. 5); while at His first visit there is no record of any healing. In His first visit He is alone; in this visit He has the twelve with Him. In the first He is attacked by the enraged mob, and makes a miraculous escape; in this second visit He experiences no such attack, but continued to minister in the villages around Nazareth.

a. A Golden Opportunity (1-2a)

Jesus comes now from near the Sea of Galilee (5:21) from Capernaum (Matt. 9:1). Nazareth was the country of Jesus for His parents and He had resided there (Luke 1:26,27; 2:4; Matt. 2:23; Mk. 1:9). Thus He was called “a Nazarene” (Matt. 2:23; Mk. 1:24). With Him were His disciples, most likely the twelve. Mark alone records this fact.

He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. This was no doubt the one He attended on the former visit (Luke 4:16-30). His teaching caused great astonishment and questioning. The people were amazed that their former humble townsman spoke in such a manner, and performed such miracles. But their wonder had but a hardening affect as we shall see. This was no doubt His last visit, and their golden opportunity, but they missed it.

b. A Graphic Offense (2b-3)

“And they were offended at Him”. By a series of questions they now indicate doubt and implied hostility. They thought they knew Him and his family so well, that they were surprised that one appearing so ordinary could do such extraordinary things.

“From whence hath this man these things”?
“What wisdom is this which is given unto him”?
“Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother
of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon, and are not
His sisters here with us”?

The people could not deny His wisdom and His miracles, but to attribute them to God was their problem. So the only other alternative was to attribute them to the Devil (3:22).

The word “offended” is the word “scandalized in Him”. The scandalon was part of a trap for catching animals; that part on which the animal was expected to strike unawares. So these people were caught, fixed, and hurt. It was the source of Christ’s knowledge; the character of His wisdom; the significance of His power; and the majesty of His person that ensnared them. The Nazarenes could not understand how a carpenter’s son could be a prophet.

The expression “mighty works” or “powerful deeds” is one of several words used in connection with Christ’s miracles. Here they are called dunameis – powers. They are also called signs, tokens of the presence and working of God. They are also “wonders”, bringing awe and astonishment to the people. John frequently uses the term “works” or erga, which means the result or object of employment.

Christ is here called “the carpenter”; in Matt. 13:55 He is called “the carpenter’s son”. A Jewish proverb says: “he who taught not his son a trade, taught him to be a thief”. Paul was a tent maker; the famous Hillel a hewer of wood.

“Is not this ... the son of Mary”? At the earlier visit they said: “Is not this Joseph’s son”? (Luke 4:22) Dr. G. Campbell Morgan says of this change: “How much of suspicion and contempt may have lurked behind that particular description of Him? I do not think there can be any careful reading of these narratives, without recognizing that there were those who fastened upon Jesus an insufferable and intolerable stigma”. At another occasion they said to Jesus: “We be not born of fornication” (John 8:41) which may subtly indicate that He could have been born as an illegitimate child.

c. A Grievous Outcome (4-6)

It is now their refusal to honor Him and His work that turned aside the stream of blessing: “He could there do no mighty work” and “He marveled because of their unbelief”.

(1) The Proverb (4) – This proverb is reflected in the more familiar, “familiarity breeds contempt”. On three occasions the Lord used this proverb (Matt. 13:57; Luke 4:24). Jesus is one of a family: four brothers are here named, and there were sisters. John tells us that none of them believed in Him (7:5). Lonely at home.

(2) The Problem (5-6) – “no mighty work”, “marveled because of their unbelief”. It is an amazing thing that unbelief can paralyze omnipotence. Twice we read that Jesus marveled: once because of faith (Matt. 8:10) and here because of the lack of it. As He could not heal except by faith, so He cannot save except by faith. Therefore He laid His hands only on a

few sick. Jesus now leaves Nazareth forever and continues on His journey, teaching from town to town. On the fact that Jesus healed only a few sick folk, John Calvin says: “What an amazing contest, that while we are endeavoring by every possible method to hinder the grace of God from coming to us, it rises victorious and displays its efficacy in spite of all our exertions”. The unbelief of those who have the means of grace is most amazing.

2. MINISTRATION OF THE TWELVE TO THE NATION (7-13; 30-32; Matt. 10:1-15; Luke 9:1-6)

The equipment and engagement of the twelve for their ministry are most fully set forth by Matthew, while Mark briefly gives that portion which refers to their equipment and their conduct toward the people. Luke presents more briefly that portion given by Mark. Luke gives quite a full discourse to the seventy (Luke 10:2-15). The endowment of the Apostles to minister in the message and to work miracles must be distinguished from their call to follow Christ (1:35-45), and their selection and appointment as Apostles (3:14).

a. Supply For the Journey (7-9)

Matthew and Luke simply note the sending of the Twelve, while Mark says they went “forth by two and two”. This was no doubt for mutual support, encouragement, and to establish the witness. By the mouth of two witnesses every word is established (Matt. 18:16). Their ministry was limited to the Jews in the land; they were not even to go to the Samaritans (Matt. 10:5-6). These messengers were not to be encumbered with excessive baggage –

No scrip, parchments, or suitcase.

No bread, or any food.

No money, gold, silver, or brass.

No change of raiment, only one cost, a pair of sandals.

“The workman is worthy of his meat” (Matt. 10:10).

b. Sphere Of Their Activity (10-11)

“In what place soever ye enter”. They are to enter into a house as invited and welcomed guests. They are to remain until they leave for another place, a village, town, or neighborhood. Oriental hospitality is still a blessed experience. In the days of the Apostles it was necessary where there were no inns or eating places. If for any reason they were rejected in a home they were to “shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them”. Note the conduct of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch (Acts 13:51) and Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:6). This action must be regarded as symbolical of a complete cessation of all fellowship and a renunciation of all further responsibility.

The words followed by “Verily I say” are not found in four of the oldest manuscripts, hence omitted in some versions. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were types of aggravated sins, and of terrible retribution (Gen. 13:13; 18:20; Jude 7; Deut. 29:23; Amos 4:11). How terrible to reject Christ and His message!

c. Service Of Their Ministry (12-13)

The Message: “preached that men should repent”. See 1:4; 1:15. The word metanoeo means “to have another mind”. They were also to announce that “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Matt. 10:7).

The Miracles: They were to “cast out many demons and anoint with oil”, healing the sick. They were to overcome the kingdom of Satan and give absolute complete physical health to the subjects of the Kingdom. Oil was used medicinally (Luke 10:34) for healing wounds, as well as overcoming all diseases (Isa. 1:6; Jam. 5:14)

d. Success of Their Mission (30-32)

The Apostles now return from their first missionary journey through Galilee and Judea. This is the only time Mark calls them “Apostles” (Vr. 30). Matthew uses it only once, and Luke six times.

(1) Their Report (Vr. 30) – They make a detailed report of places visited, all their messages and miracles. However, the record gives no details as to villages visited, discourses given, and the number of miracles performed. The Gospels are not so much a record of what the disciples did and said, as what Christ said and did.

(2) Their Repose (31-32) – “Come ... rest awhile”. Jesus had before sought retirement for Himself (Luke 5:16; Matt. 12:15; Mk. 4:35); now He seeks it for His Apostles. The people were incessantly coming and going, so that at times they could not eat (3:20). So they depart “into a desert place by ship privately”. This is indeed a revelation of Christ’s understanding, tender care for His own, and a revelation of His wisdom.

“We must know how to put occupation aside, which does not mean that we must be idle. In an inaction which is meditative and attentive, the wrinkles of the soul are smoothed out. The soul itself spreads, unfolds, and springs afresh, and like the trodden grass of the roadside or the bruised leaf of a plant, repairs its injuries, becomes new, spontaneous, true and original” – Amiel.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. Many would explain the works of Christ and the Spirit, and His Gospel by natural causes; and when they fail are offended (Vr. 3).
2. Unbelief is the sin of sins. It robs Christ of His glory and man of his means of grace (Eph. 2:8).
3. Ministers of the Gospel should go forth in humble dependence, trusting that He for whom they labor will provide from time to time all that is necessary (Vrs. 8-9; 1 Cor. 9:8-11; 3 John 7).
4. It is expedient that we take a rest from routine Christian duties; but never from Christ and the Word (Vr. 31).

LESSON # 18 MARK 6:14-29 (Matt. 14:1-12; Luke 9:7-9)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Persons: King Herod; John the Baptist; Herodias; Daughter of Herodias (Salome); Lords; Captains; Chiefs; The Executioner; John’s Disciples.
2. Principle Places: Prison (A gloomy castle of Machaerus on the shores of the Dead Sea), Herod’s Banquet Hall.

3. Principal Purpose: To show the diabolical and dehumanizing power of hate.

This is a most lurid and ghastly story. The record is as follows: Herod's shameful and incestuous marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; John the Baptist's fearless rebuke of the monarch's sin; John's imprisonment in the castle of Machaerus; Herod's sensuous birthday party; Salome's degrading and lascivious dance; Herod's drunken vow to Salome who had degraded her sex; demand for John's head and the beheading of the prophet to sate a woman's hate; the burial of John by his disciples.

II. INTERPRETATION

1. ESTIMATION OF JOHN'S DEATH (Vrs. 14-16)

These verses show us Herod's opinion of Jesus. "King Herod". By Matthew and Luke he is called "tetrarch" a Greek word meaning: "a ruler of the fourth part". This became a common title for those who governed any part of a province, subject only to the Roman Emperor. Out of courtesy and popular language he is called "King Herod". This Herod was named Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great by Matthace a Samaritan. His dominion comprised Galilee, Samaria, and Perea. The Herods originally came from Idumea, the territory of Edom. Hence were descendants of Esau. Herod Antipas first married a daughter of Aretas, King of Arabia, city of Petraea; but afterwards took Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Aretas, indignant at the insult offered his daughter, waged war against Herod and defeated him. Herodias was a granddaughter of Herod the Great, and so Herod Antipas' niece. Herodias caused Herod's ruin for she induced him to go to Rome and beg for the title of King. Instead of receiving this honor he was banished with his wife, by emperor Caligula, to Gaul where they died.

Herod can be characterized as a man who was sensual (Vr. 22), weak (Vr. 22), cunning (Luke 13:32), unscrupulous (Vr. 18), and superstitious (Vrs. 16,20; Luke 9:9).

a. Risen in the Person of Jesus (Vrs. 14,16)

"John, whom I beheaded". The pronoun I is emphatic and has the emphasis of a guilty conscience. Herod had heard of the ministry and miracles of Jesus. The murder of John must have startled Herod's conscience and made him uneasy. This man filled with superstition was tortured by a guilty conscience. John in life did no miracles (John 10:41), but now Herod thought he was risen and did miracles. Luke 9:7 says that Herod was "perplexed". So Herod desired to see Jesus.

b. Risen in the Person of Elias (Vr. 15)

Others, beside Herod, said "It is Elias". Elias is the Greek form of Elijah, whose coming had been foretold by Malachi (4:5) and was commonly expected by the Jews. Hackett in Smith's Dictionary says: "During certain prayers the door of the house was set open, that Elijah might enter and announce the Messiah. ... So firm was the conviction of his speedy arrival, that when goods were found and no owner appeared to claim them, the common saying was: 'Put them by till Elijah comes'". John was indeed the Elijah who was to come (Matt. 11:14; Mk. 9:11-13) if the people had repented and accepted the Messiah.

c. Risen in the Person of a Prophet (Vr. 15)

Herod made a great feast “to his lords”, the nobles, princes and officers of state. Also to his “high captains”, literally, “commanders of a thousand” (See Acts 21:31; 25:23). And also to the “chief estates of Galilee”, the chief men of the land generally.

The daughter of Herodias now enters the banquet hall and performs before Herod and the guests a dance. Josephus says her name was Salome. Farrar says: “A luxurious feast of the period was not regarded as complete unless it closed with some gross pantomimic representation; and doubtless Herod had adopted the evil fashion of his day. But he had not anticipated for his guests the rare luxury of seeing a princess – his own niece, a granddaughter of Herod the Great and of Marianne, a descendant, therefore, of Simon the High Priest, and the great line of Maccabean princes – a princess who afterwards became the wife of a tetrarch and the mother of a king – honoring them by degrading herself into a scenic dancer.

“Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom”. The ruler Herod and his guests were so pleased by this dance that Herod offers Salome that which he had no supreme power to give. But such were the ideas of his excited and intoxicated brain. Maybe Herod was striving to imitate the great Ahasuerus in his promise to Esther (Esther 5:3; 7:2).

(2) The Consequences (24-26)

“The head of John the Baptist”. Salome retires to the women’s quarters which were separate from the men’s. John’s righteous and holy life had marred the pleasures of Herodias, and now she saw that her hour had come. No jeweled trinket, no royal palace, no splendid robe, should be the reward of her daughter’s feat. “In a charger the head of John the Baptist” is her wish, which she immediately requests. The Greek word for “charger”, an old English word, meant a platter of any kind.

Herod now becomes greatly sorrowful and also horrified. It was an ill omen among the Romans to take away life on one’s birthday. But his oath had been witnessed by his great men and the code of honor must be obeyed. Herod had placed himself in a dilemma, to make choice of two evils – to break a rash, wicked oath, or to commit murder – see Lev. 5:4-6. But Herod would “not reject her”; he would not treat her contemptuously and treacherously.

c. By a Frightful Homicide (Vrs. 27-29)

(1) John is Beheaded (27-28)

“And immediately ... an executioner ... beheaded him in the prison”. The executioner was a body guard, who acted as executioner of capital sentences. John is thought to have been in prison about seventeen months and it was now about three years from the commencement of his ministry. “And brought his head in a charger”. The request was strictly carried out in every detail. It would seem that the head was brought while the feast lasted; so the prison where John was kept must have been near. It was then given to the dancing maid and by her to her heartless mother, the principal actor and guiltiest party in this terrible tragedy.

(2) John is Buried (29)

“His disciples ... took up his corpse and laid it in a tomb”. Where John was buried no one knows. Tradition says at Samaria where in the crypt of a ruined church the pretended tomb is show to travelers. Matthew tells us (Matt. 14:12) that after the burial the

disciples went and told Jesus, showing their tender feelings toward John and their confidence in Jesus as a friend to their master. They knew also that Jesus would sympathize with them.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. What amazing power has truth over the conscience of even wicked men! Men may hear, yet not heed the truth, such as Herod.
2. Believers who would be faithful to God must not fear the face of man.
3. A wicked daughter readily obeys the desires of a wicked mother.
4. A guilty conscience is the sinner's tormentor (Vr. 16). See Matt. 27:3-5; Jn. 8:9.
5. Women through grace become angels of mercy, but through sin demons of wrath (Vrs. 19,24). See 1 Kgs. 19:2; 21:25).
6. The festivities of this world open large and convenient channels to temptation and sin (Vr. 21). See Dan. 5:1-5; James 5:5-6; 2 Pet. 2:12-14.
7. Sin is always degrading, progressive, and enslaving. Herod and Herodias were unlawfully married, indulged in immoral pleasure, and finally found their hands stained with innocent blood. See 2 Tim. 3:13; James 1:15.

LESSON # 19 MARK 6:32-44 (Matt. 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Places: Desert Place, Near Bethsaida, says Luke. "A Mountain" says John.
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Apostles, Multitude, also Philip, Andrew, and a lad says John.
3. Principal Purpose: To reveal that Jesus is the true Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35,41,48,51). A foreshadowing of Jesus' passion in which His body is broken for us.

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

After the Lord had said to His apostles: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile", they embarked, setting sail for the other shore of the Lake Tiberius, a distance of some ten miles. Did they rest? They had a short boat ride across the sea, then they land, and behold, the multitudes are there to greet them. The great importance of this miracle of the loaves and fish may be inferred from the fact that all the evangelists relate it. Mark and John are the fullest, entering into most details. John alone follows this miracle with a long discourse on Jesus, The Bread of Life.

As the imprisonment of John formed an era in Christ's ministry when He commenced His active and public labors in Galilee (Matt. 11:4); so did the death of John form another era when He extended His labors into northern Galilee and east of the Jordan. Heretofore He had made Capernaum the center of His missionary endeavors in eastern Galilee. But now He makes but brief visits to this scene of His former labors. He now extends His journeys into Decapolis (7:31) and northern Galilee, going north-east as far as Caesarea Philippi (8:27).

II. INTERPRETATION

1. CHRIST AND THE MULTITUDES (Vrs. 33-34)

“And the people ... out of all the cities ... came together unto Him”.

This great company of men, women, and children were the inhabitants of Capernaum, the dwellers in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and other cities and villages by the Sea of Galilee, and other southward going pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. The Passover was near, which began that year, A.D. 29, on April 27th (John 6:4).

a. His Compassion (Vr. 34)

“Was moved with compassion”. Instead of being displeased that the multitudes should encroach upon His retirement, He was moved with compassion for them. His emotions of pity were deeply excited toward them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd. They were without any spiritual teacher to guide and warn them, and hence were exposed to all kinds of spiritual danger and destruction from false teachers and spiritual foes. The inspiration and love that brought Him from Heaven to earth was burning with fervent passion for the souls of these masses.

b. His Ministration (Vr. 34)

“He began to teach them many things”. Luke (9:11) adds, “and healed them that had need of healing”. Matthew (14:14) omits reference to His teaching, and simply says: “He healed their sick”. John (6:3-4) says: “And Jesus went up into a mountain and there He sat with His disciples” which was the posture of teaching (Matt. 5:1). Also John notes that “the Passover ... was nigh”. So Jesus gives Himself to a ministry of word and work. “My Father worketh even until now, and I work” (Jn. 5:17). The Apostles watched Him and also rested; but for Him there was no rest until He had accomplished His God-given mission. And so once again, with unstinted sacrifice, He gives Himself to this crowd of eager, earnest listeners.

2. CHRIST AND THE MESSENGERS (Vrs. 35-40)

a. Their Conversation (Vrs. 35-37)

“And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came unto Him and said”.

While Christ is still employed with the multitude in teaching and healing, His apostles come to Him with a suggestion that He now dismiss the multitude. The reason for their suggestion is based upon a threefold argument: First, “This is a desert place”. They were in a place away from the cities and villages, an uninhabited an isolated place; Secondly, “The time is far passed”. The day was beginning to wear away and darkness would soon overtake them. And, Thirdly, “They have nothing to eat”. How they knew this we are not told, but very probably from the general appearance of the people, who seemingly had no provisions, at least of any great amount. Jesus then says to His disciples: “Give ye them to eat”. He further declared that there was no necessity for sending them away (Matt. 14:16). This was calculated to excite their expectation and strengthen their faith. Then he turns to Philip, in order to try his faith (John 6:6) and says: “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat” (John 6:5-6)? Philip in turn answers his Master: “Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them” (John 6:7). The apostles in turn ask Christ if they shall go and buy that amount of bread (Mark 6:37). A penny was the Roman silver coin worth about fifteen cents.

b. The Consultation (Vr. 38)

“How many loaves have ye? ... five and two fishes”. Without directly replying to the question of the disciples, Jesus begins to consult them concerning the amount of food at hand, and commands them to go and see. “When they knew”. John tells us how they knew: Andrew gave the information that a lad had five barley loaves, an inferior kind of food, and two small fishes (John 6:8-9). Loaves were usually made in the form of round cakes, and generally about half an inch in thickness. The language of the four evangelists implies that this was all the food on the grounds (Matt. 14:17; Luke 9:13). Five small loaves and two fish among five thousand men, without women and children.

c. The Commission (Vrs. 39-40)

“... make all sit down”. With authority Jesus commands the disciples to have the people “sit down”. The disciples would have sent the tired and hungry away, but Jesus command is a rest in faith looking unto Him. “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). The order of Jesus is quickly obeyed. The multitude now form regular groups, squares or parallelograms each consisting of a hundred or fifty. Thus all confusion was prevented and order established. Thus the multitude could be easily served, and as readily counted. “...upon the green grass” fixes the time of the year as being Spring, and near Passover, probably in April.

3. CHRIST AND THE MIRACLE (Vrs. 41-44)

This is one of the Lord’s greatest public miracles. It is unique in that all four evangelists record it and the only one that all four record.

a. The Preparation (Vr. 41)

And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to Heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves”.

The Blessed and Broken Bread. Note that He did not break the fish. Then they were divided among them; the bread being a type of His body which was broken (1 Cor. 11:24). Our Lord reveals both His humanity and deity. As Man He lifts His eyes heavenward toward His Father and gives thanks. He expressed His gratitude for the gifts and implores a blessing upon them for human need. As God He breaks the bread and it multiplies in His hand; the fish also are multiplied, and the thousands are fed. The original word translated “blessed” is used in three ways: First, praising God for favors (Luke 1:64); Secondly, invoking God’s blessing (Luke 2:34); and Thirdly, God’s conferring His favors (Hebr. 6:14; Acts 3:26). These three met in Jesus. As Man He praised God and implored His blessing; while as God, He granted it. Breaking the bread was the usual custom of preparing bread for eating.

b. The Presentation (Vr. 41)

“And gave them to His disciples to set before them”.

God never does what man can do. The disciples receive the food from Jesus for distribution among the multitudes. We are “workers together with Him” (2 Cor. 6:1). What was true here in the physical is also true in the spiritual. Mark alone tells us that “the two fishes divided He”. He separated them into parts. The breaking and dividing suggest an instantaneous act; while the giving to the disciples and then to the people suggest continuous acts.

c. The Participation (Vrs. 42,44)

“And they did all eat and were filled. This is indeed a matchless and marvelous statement. It reveals the power and provision that only comes from Christ. Such can be the close of every day in companionship with the Lord of Glory – the Miracle Master. The Bethsaida Banquet may be our experience every day in the spiritual realm for He “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). Mark then tells us that there were “five thousand men” who partook of this meal. This would exclude women and children. So the multitude could have been at least fifteen thousand in all.

d. The Preservation (Vr. 43)

“And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments and of the fishes”.

“That nothing may be lost”, adds John (6:12). Here is a lesson in economy and prudence. In this lesson of preservation, we may learn to be daily thankful for His blessings to us. There were twelve baskets full of fragments or one for each of the Apostles; suggesting a continuous supply for them all. There is always more left with our Lord than when we begin with Him.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. Every blessing, whether physical or spiritual comes from our Father in Heaven (Vr. 41; James 1:17).

2. There are many Biblical expressions of Divine miracles, such as giving of the manna (Exod. 16:4); bringing water from the rock (Exod. 17:6); multiplying the widow’s oil (2 Kings 4:2-7); turning water into wine (John 2:9); and the miracle of our lesson.

3. We cannot multiply the bread, but we can multiply the blessing (Vr. 41; 2 Cor. 5:20).

4. The Apostles faced a crisis – big crowd, and no food. But there is no crisis where there is the Christ.

5. We should be careful never to waste either our physical or spiritual blessings (Vr. 43; 8:8; Matt. 7:6).

6. This world is a spiritual desert; but Christ is the living Bread, and sufficient for all (Vrs. 41-44; John 6:35).

7. The Lord often tries our faith –“Give ye them to eat” (Vr. 37). That which seems doomed to failure turns out to be a manifestation of His power and provision. (Phil. 4:13).

8. Here is a beautiful scene of the coming Millennial Kingdom. In that day there will be no scant dependence on human provision and foresight. The very orderliness of the scene suggests the presence of a government which functions perfectly.

LESSON # 20 MARK 6:45-56 (Matt. 14:22-32; John 6:15-21)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Places: Sea of Galilee, Mountain, Land of Gennesaret, Bethsaida.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Disciples.

3. Principal Purpose: To reveal the Omniscience of Christ on the mountain; His Omnipresence on the sea; and His Omnipotence on the sea and over sickness.

From the desert place experience of feeding the multitude, Jesus now sends His disciples across the sea to the other shore; then He sends the multitude away, and He goes up the mountain to pray.

“A ship is a bit of romance that carries us miles away”. There is an element of romance in this story of the Sea of Galilee, which makes it one of the most fascinating in the Gospel records. This is a night scene on the stormy Sea of Galilee. Life has its nights as well as its days. They are inseparable in this life. There is sunshine and shadow; summer and winter; day and night; heat and cold; joy and sorrow; tears and laughter; mountains and valleys; life and death; riches and poverty; the Cross and the Crown.

Of the three records of this incident, Mark enters most into detail, but omits all reference to Peter’s walking on the water, which alone is recorded by Matthew. John gives a brief, but independent account, with several additional particulars. Luke omits it.

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie makes note of the fact that: “The plan of the Master to secure for His disciples retirement and rest after their labors, had miscarried through the eagerness of the people, but the interruption brought to them a new revelation of Himself. For those who are patient and expectant, plans unexpectedly altered will prove to be occasions of fresh unfoldings of the Person and Power of the Lord”.

At the end of the feeding of the five thousand a crisis arose (John 6:14-15), which caused Jesus to send the disciples on the ship; dismiss the multitudes and go Himself to the mountain.

II. INTERPRETATION

a. ON THE LAKE OF GALILEE (Vrs. 45-52)

The disciples had just witnessed a great miracle, the feeding of the multitude (Vrs. 42-44). They are now about to witness another miracle, salvation on the Sea of Galilee.

1. A Satisfying Commencement (Vrs. 45-46)

Someone has said: “All that begins well, ends well”. But that is only true of those who begin with Christ.

a. Began with Divine Instruction (Vr. 45)

It was the Lord who commanded them by His sovereign Divine authority to launch into the deep and cross the sea. They were to go “unto Bethsaida”. The boat in returning would then go across the northeast corner of the Lake to Bethsaida. The name Bethsaida means: “A house of fishing”. They were to go “before” unto the other side. Jesus would follow later.

b. Began with Divine Intercession (Vr. 46)

“He departed into a mountain to pray”. This reminds of Hebrews 7:25: “He ever liveth to make intercession for them”.

The mountain where Jesus retired to pray is unknown. He sent the disciples in the boat, then dismissed the multitude, and went to pray. Perhaps He retired in prayer because they sought then and there to crown Him King (Jn. 6:15), or because of the hardened hearts of

unbelief on the part of His disciples (Vr. 52). This mountain became for Christ, not only a Throne of Privacy and a Temple of Prayer, but also a Tower of Perception as we shall see.

2. A Stormy Continuation (Vrs. 47-50,52)

“The ship was in the midst of the sea”. Matthew adds: “tossed with the waves: for the wind was contrary” (14:24).

The Apostle Paul later on had several harrowing experiences with ships and the sea – “thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep, ... in perils of the sea” (2 Cor. 11:25,26).

a. They were in Physical Danger (Vr. 48)

“toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them”.

Toiling the entire night, they had not gone more than three or four miles (John 6:18-19), something more than half of their way across. The word translated “toiling” here and “distressed” in R.V. is best translated “tormented” as in Matt. 8:6,29. They were tormented by the violent exercise in rowing the boat to the other shore.

b. They were in Mental Danger (Vr. 49-50)

“...supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out, ... and were troubled”.

They thought that Christ was a ghost or an apparition, indicating approaching evil; and so they “cried out” for fear. So they all saw Him and they became agitated and greatly disturbed mentally.

c. They were in Spiritual Danger (Vr. 52)

“Their heart was hardened”. The word occurs also in 3:5. Paul uses the word in Rom. 11:25 where it is translated “blindness”. They like many others saw merely the outward miracles of the Lord; and did not seem to understand the higher spiritual laws of the Kingdom. We remember, however, that this took place before the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. The great spiritual truths would become more evident after the gift of the Holy Spirit had come.

That in which they trusted was likely to fail. The wind had whipped up the sea to the extent that they were about to succumb to these angry waves.

That which might have helped became a hindrance. It says: “The wind was contrary”. The wind blowing with them could have been a great help, but blowing against them became a great hindrance. Israel at one time waited for her neighbors to come and help her. But alas, she had to cry: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” (Jer. 8:20).

That which they did not realize was actually taking place. Their Master was on the mountain seeing them in toil and praying for them. No storm could ever drown those who have a perceiving and praying Master.

3. A Serene Culmination (Vrs. 48,51-52)

The scene now changes into that which only the Master of land and sea could perfect.

a. By a Divine Manifestation (Vr. 48)

“And about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea”.

He comes at an unexpected watch – “the fourth watch”. The Jews recognized only three watches: (1) from sunset to 10P.M. (Lam. 2:19); (2) the middle watch from 10P.M. to 2 A.M. (Judg. 7:19) and (3) the morning watch from 2 A.M. to sunrise (Ex. 14:24; 1 Sam. 11:11). But after the Roman supremacy the number of watches was increased to four, and sometimes described by their numerical order as here and sometimes by “even, midnight, cock-crowing, morning” (Mk. 13:35). So this fourth watch was just before daybreak. As in nature so in the spiritual realm, the darkest hour is just before daybreak. “Man’s extremity is always God’s opportunity”.

b. By a Divine Message (Vr. 50)

“And immediately He talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid”.

The surging billows which were the source of the disciple’s fear and dread, now become the pavement for the feet of their Master. He came “walking on the sea”, an unexpected way. He does not remove the cause of their trouble (wind and waves) immediately, but gives to them rest and peace in the midst of the storm. It is greater victory to have the Lord in the lion’s den, and the fiery furnace than to be without and not have him. It is better to have the thorn and know the sufficiency of God’s grace than to be without His grace, which saves and sustains.

“Take courage” or “Cheer up” indicates the graphic style of the Greek. Mark here does not record Peter’s attempt to go to his Lord upon the Lake (See Matt. 14:28-30). “It is I; “Be not afraid”, fear not any danger, since I am here. So after the vision which brought fear and fright, there comes the voice which gave them faith and fortitude.

c. By a Divine Miracle (Vr. 51)

“And He went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased”.

John says: “Then they willingly received Him into the ship; and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went”. The language clearly indicates that a miracle of grace and glory had taken place. They were instantly saved and reached their destination in security. Their great astonishment is strongly expressed: “sore amazed in themselves”. “Beyond measure” suggests their internal amazement, and “wondered” suggests their external astonishment.

It is blessed to see in this miracle, a proof of His power over the wind and the waves. It is wonderful to see Him walk on the water. But is it not more marvelous to see in all this a sign of His far greater power over the rebellious hordes of the unseen world, and the surging masses of mankind? When He returns again, then He will indeed speak peace to the trembling hearts of His terrified disciples. What an awesome time of trouble is impending over the world today. Only the Master can still the tempest and bring in His peace.

B. ON THE LAND OF GENNESARET (Vrs. 53-56)

1. Landing on the Shore (Vrs. 53-54)

As the morning dawned the disciples moored their boat on the plain of Gennesaret. The news of Jesus' arrival spread rapidly in the whole region. Gennesaret is a fertile, crescent-shaped plain, on the northwestern shore of the Lake of Gennesaret, some three miles in length and two in width.

2. Healing of the Sick (Vrs. 55-56)

We have here a vivid description of the excitement among the people of that region. They spread the news all over the plain that Jesus was there (Matt. 14:35). As Jesus moved about in their villages, cities, and country, they laid out the sick in the streets that He might touch them. Many touched the "border" or hem of His garment and thus were made whole. The borders of the garment had "a ribband of blue". It derived from Jehovah's instruction in the Law. The word "blue" is from a root meaning "to finish". It would remind them of the finished work of Christ on the cross, His complete obedience to His Father's will.

III. INSTRUCTION

This story is a parable and prophecy of Christ's present position, His ministry, and return. (1) His departure to heaven and intercessory prayer (Vr. 46; Rom 8:34; Hebr. 7:25; Jn. Ch. 17). (2) Israel, meanwhile among the nations, of which the latter, the sea is symbolical (Vr.47; Dan. 7:2; Jn. 17:14-18; Rev. 17:15). Christ's continuous observation of His own (Vr. 48). He sees the winds of temptation, persecution and affliction. (3) Christ's return to them (Vr.48); Acts 1:11); He will then still the storm and save His own (Vr. 51) In our trials, let us trust and we shall triumph.

LESSON # 21 MARK 7:1-23 (Matt. 15:1-20)

I. INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Places: Galilee, House at Capernaum.
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Pharisees, Scribes, Disciples.

3 Principal Purpose: To challenge and condemn the "traditions of men" and to teach that the source of defilement is from within, not from without a man.

Mark now gives us a fresh glimpse of the organized opposition of the Pharisees and Scribes against Jesus. It is the unceremonious practice of eating with unwashed hands that becomes the object of their attack. Jesus counters with instruction on defilement and upholds the truth of the Law. Between the words of this chapter and the preceding one we have Christ's discourse on The Bread of Life (John 6:22-71). We also have the third Passover of His public ministry which He did not attend (See John 6:4; 7:1).

II. INTERPRETATION

A. JESUS AND THE PHARISEES (Vrs. 1-13)

1. Observation of the Pharisees (Vrs. 1-2)

The Pharisees and Scribes now “come together ... from Jerusalem” and “saw some of His disciples eat bread ... with unwashed hands”.

Some think that they could have been a formal delegation such as visited John the Baptist (John 1:19). They had come from Jerusalem to watch Jesus and to conspire against Him. They may have been sent by the Sanhedrin. They inspect the private lives of His disciples and note that they eat with “defiled” or with ceremonially unclean hands. In Acts 10:14,15,28; 11:8 the word “common” (koinos) is used and associated with “unclean”. The word means unhallowed or levitically unclean. There is no reference to personal cleanliness. The Jews used their hands in eating without knives and forks, so it was necessary that they should be clean. But the Pharisees transformed the washing of hands into a religious act and thus made it a religious tradition.

2. Objection of the Pharisees (Vrs. 3-5)

“They found fault” (Vr. 2). “Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders” (Vr. 5).

“They wash their hands off”. Literally it says “with their fist”, instead of the open hand, lest washing one hand with the other open hand would render it unclean. Lightfoot says: “When they washed their hands, they washed the fist unto the jointing of the arm. The hands are polluted and made clean unto the jointing of the arm”. This seems the most plausible explanation (See 2 Kings 3:11).

“Holding the tradition”. The oral law which constituted “the tradition” was handed down, say the Jews, from Moses through Joshua, the judges and the prophets. At this time it was not reduced to writing, but was afterwards compiled in the Mishna, or second law, by Rabbi Jehudah, a Jew of great wealth and influence, in the latter part of the second century. Two commentaries were added, the Gamara of Jerusalem, completed about the middle of the fourth century and the Gemara of Babylon, completed about A.D. 500. These, the Mishna and the Gemaras constitute the Talmud, which means instruction. The Jews attached more importance to their traditions than to their written laws. According to the Talmud: “The words of the scribes are lovelier than the words of the law. ... The words of the elders are weightier than the words of the prophets”. The Pharisees had charged Jesus with violating the written law (2:24; 3:1-6); now they charge him and His disciples with violating the “tradition of the elders”. The designation “elders” was first applied to men of age, elderly men (Gen. 24:2; 50:7). Afterwards it became an official title (Exod. 3:16; 4:29; 19:7; 24:1,9). The office grew out of the patriarchal system.

“... from the market” (Vr. 4). Here was great danger of being contaminated by contact with all classes. The words “wash” and “washing” (Vr. 4) are literally the Greek words: baptizo and baptismos, which apparently have the meaning of immersion. In verse three the word “wash” is from the Greek nipto, which has the meaning of wash. “Cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables” were also cleansed with water (See Lev. 11:32). In the matter of large articles such as tables or couches, part by part, was allowed, provided it all was covered with water. The Jews considered their tradition “a hedge around the Law”. But it really was in the words of another: “a dagger thrust at the revealed will of God”. So by their traditions they really abrogated the Law of God.

3. The Obligation of the Pharisees (Vrs. 6-13)

We have had the attack of the Pharisees; now we have the answer of Jesus. They had interrogated Jesus: “Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders”? Now He will instruct them: “He answered and said ...”. Now the Truth of God will meet head on with the traditions of Men.

a. Indictment from Isaiah (Vrs. 6-9)

“Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites”. Isaiah will now be brought in to charge them with the greatest offense. “Well” or “full well” (see Vr. 9). “Ye reject”, or set at naught and obliterate “the commandment of God”. Thus they obstinately clung to their customs and traditions of men. This is the first time that Jesus calls them “hypocrites”. The word means “actors” or “dissemblers”, those who had merely an outward profession. The quote is from Isa. 29:13 and speaks of lip service without heart service. They rejected divine precepts for human precepts. They made null and void the precepts of God in order that they might keep their own traditions.

b. Illustration from Moses (Vrs. 10-13)

“For Moses said”. Jesus now quotes first from the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12 and also from Exod. 21:17). This is one of the most striking illustrations of raising human tradition over the command of God.

“Moses said ... But ye say”. Here Jesus not only gives testimony to the divine origin of the Decalogue, but also to Moses as an inspired teacher and lawgiver. “Honor thy father and thy mother” not only in thought and word, but also in deed by providing for them in want and distress. “Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death” an intensive expression: let him end with death. “But ye say ... Corban, a gift”. Your tradition and your practice is in opposition to one of the most solemn and authoritative commands of God. “Corban” means something brought near, or devoted to God, as a gift, offering, sacrifice. It was applied to all offerings, and especially in fulfillment of a vow (See Lev. 1:2,10,14; 2:1,4; 7:13; Num. 31:50. So that if one pronounced the word “Corban” over one’s property it absolved him from the obligation of caring for his parents.

“By whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me”. Their tradition taught that whatever support or advantage might derive from one to his parents is “corban” or let it be corban, devoted to religious purposes. The worst feature of this tradition was that he still was allowed to use it for his own advantage. The natural result of this rule was both a dishonoring and a practical cursing of parents. Thus the one who says “corban” is bound by his vow, and so free from his duty to his parents. This says Jesus is but one of the “many such like things ye do”.

B. JESUS AND THE PEOPLE (Vrs. 14-16)

Jesus now “called all the people unto him” and gave them a very practical lesson. It was a lesson concerning defilement. “Hearken ... and understand”. Here is something important, so give diligent heed to my words. The Pharisees tell you of traditional defilement and ye have heard of ceremonial defilement (Lev. 11:8,26); but now hear and heed from whence real defilement comes and of what it consists. The Lord is now, not speaking of ceremonial defilement such as food forbidden by law, but moral defilement. This is seen from verses 21-23. So it is not that “from without a man, entering into him, but that which comes out from a man that defiles him”. So it is not food taken in that defiles morally; but wickedness of the human heart

coming out that morally defiles. So if they have ears to hear, let them hear, a call to serious and candid attention.

C. JESUS AND THE PARABLE (Vrs. 17-23)

Entering now into the house, Jesus is interrogated by His disciples concerning the parable He had just uttered (Vr. 17). Many feel that Jesus is not really telling the crowd a parable, but just a short, pithy, sententious, moralistic saying, intended to provoke thought. From Matthew 15:15 we learn that Peter was the questioner. The question of Peter shows the spiritual dullness of him and the disciples.

1. His Stern Rebuke (Vrs. 18-20)

“Are ye so without understanding also”?

Are also ye, my disciples, who have been so highly favored with my instructions, so void of understanding? Are ye without any comprehension as not to perceive the meaning of my remark? It revealed on the part of the disciples great spiritual ignorance. They looked upon the ceremonial part of meats instead of the deeper moral and spiritual values that stem from the heart. They were to be taught as Peter was later (Acts 10:11-16) that nothing from without, which enters a man, is able to defile him, making him morally or spiritually unclean.

“Heart” (Vr. 19) represents the inner man, the soul, as opposed to the stomach and intestines. “Purging all meats” means cleansing all food, impurities being separated and carried away. Thus the nutritious enters the blood stream, and becomes part of the body. So physically food is not defiling. That which cometh out of the heart, in a moral sense, defiles the man (Matt. 15:18).

2. His Serious Revelation (Vrs. 21-23)

Jesus now itemizes thirteen different forms of evil that can proceed out of the heart, and will defile a person:

(1) “Evil thoughts” – Not bad thoughts, but evil designs. From these spring the dark catalogue of sins now to be enumerated.

(2) “Adulteries” – Violations of the marriage vow. Note that this and other sins listed are in the plural suggesting many forms.

(3) “Fornications” – Violations of chastity in unmarried persons, especially those connected with temple worship.

(4) “Murders” – This is the sixth commandment. It deals with pre-meditated and uncontrolled desire to kill.

(5) “Thefts” – This is the eighth commandment: “Thou shalt not steal”.

(6) “Covetousness” – Desires to have more; greediness and gain which leads to fraud. The plural is used in the original – covetous thoughts and purposes. It is joined with “thefts” and “extortion” in 1 Cor. 5:10; with sins of the flesh in 1 Cor. 5:11; Eph. 5:3,5; Col. 3:5.

(7) “Wickedness” – The active working of evil. Delight in mischief and tragedies. Evil dispositions and counsels.

(8) “Deceit” – Fraud; Concealed dishonesty.

(9) “Lasciviousness” – Denotes all excess and extravagance in lust. Unbridled lust. Word occurs in 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:18. It is “wantonness” in Rom. 13:13.

- (10) “An evil eye” – An envious, grudging, malicious glance, revealing the temper within. See Deut. 15:9; Prov. 23:6; Matt. 20:15).
- (11) “Blasphemy” – Reviling, abusive language against God and man. See 3:28.
- (12) “Pride” – “Arrogance and self-exaltation.
- (13) “Foolishness” – Stupid wickedness, senselessness, folly.

“Ill-thinking is put first, the spring of all commissions; and unthinking last, the spring of all omissions” M. Henry. Jesus then sums up in verse 23 what He has said: “All these evil things”, emphatically wicked things, such as He had mentioned come forth from within, and “defile the man”. It makes him morally and spiritually unclean.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. We are prone to condemn the Pharisees for holding so tenaciously to their traditions. But how about our creeds, articles of faith, customs, ceremonies and rituals which take the place of the Scriptures? Dr. G. Campbell Morgan has noted this fact. He says: “No man who is living in true fellowship with God will consent to be mastered mentally by any creed that ever yet has been prepared for him”. “Life is more than a form of expression”. “Depend upon it; the souls who are enslaved by some form of ecclesiastical polity are weak and anemic”. “This teaching of Christ flings itself with force against every habit of excommunication on the basis of human creeds”. “The inner life is never reached by external ceremony”. “It seems to us so much simpler to live by rule than by principle, so much easier to find human sanction than to discover the will of God”. “I believe there are a great many services most regularly held, that Jesus Christ would never attend”!

2. No worship can be acceptable to God, in which the heart is not engaged (Isa. 29:13; John 4:24).

3. Traditions which merely supplement the Word of God are useless; those which contradict it are erroneous. (Col 2:8; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

4. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Psa. 51:10).

5. Like the disciples, many believers are too often inexcusably dull of spiritual understanding (Luke 24:25; Heb. 5:12).

6. The distinctions between clean and unclean, ceremonially, were made under the Old Covenant; but now in Christ such distinctions are done away. These ceremonial things were but shadows of Him who is the substance (Col. 2:16).

LESSON # 22 MARK 7:24-37. (Matt. 15:21-31)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Places: Tyre and Sidon, Decapolis, Sea of Galilee

2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Disciples (Matt. 15:23), A Woman, A Daughter, A Deaf and Dumb Man.

3. Principal Purpose: To reveal that Jesus is not only “the Son of David” for the Jew; but also “Lord” for the Gentile. To reveal how Israel can have an open ear and open mouth to proclaim His message.

In verses 1-23 of this chapter we find Jesus rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees for their traditions which made the Word of God of none effect (Vrs. 8,13). They were concerned with

externalities, such as washing of hands; while Christ was concerned with the internal heart of man (Vrs. 18-23). The two miracles now before us present the supernatural power of the Miracle Master over demons, deafness, and dumbness.

II. INTERPRETATION

A. JESUS ON THE COAST OF THE GREAT SEA (Vrs. 24-30)

Jesus now goes into retirement (Vr. 24). The places and purpose are noted. He goes with His disciples to the Mediterranean coastal towns – Tyre was a celebrated commercial city of antiquity, in Phoenicia. Sur is the modern name of the town, some twenty miles from Sidon. (See 2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kings 9:11-14; 10:22). Sidon, an ancient and wealthy town of Phoenicia. Its modern name is Saida. (See Gen. 10:19; Josh. 11:8; Judg. 1:31) Jesus entered into a house and sought retirement; but could not be hid we are told. This shows that Jesus' fame has reached even to these Gentile cities.

1. The Mother's Request (Vrs. 25-26)

“...a certain woman, ... a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation”.

Matthew calls her “a woman of Canaan” (15:22). She was a Gentile, a Syrophenician as distinguished from the Liby-phenicians of Carthage in Africa. Here was a mother whose daughter “had an unclean spirit”. “Grievously vexed with a demon” says Matthew. She now prostrates herself before Jesus, falling at His feet, and worshipping Him.

“Cast forth the demon” is her request. It is the cry of a desperate mother. Matthew says: “Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David”. She stands out in contrast to the Jewish leaders in her attitude toward Jesus; and also in contrast to His disciples in her keenness of perception. She was quick to learn as we shall see, while they were slow of understanding.

2. The Master's Reply (Vrs. 27-28)

In answer to her request, Matthew tells us: “But He answered her not a word”. “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (15:23-25). Mark adds: “Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs”. The silence of Jesus is based upon her mistake in calling upon Jesus as “The Son of David”. Being a Gentile she had no claim upon Him as the Jew's Messiah. She was not a daughter of Abraham, but a Gentile stranger to the covenants of promise, and alien to the commonwealth of Israel. (See Eph. 2:11-12).

We note three stages in Jesus' attitude and answer to this woman's plea: (1) Reserved: “He answered her not a word” (Matt. 15:23); (2) Refusal: “I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24); (3) Reproach: “It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs” (Matt. 15:26). Note that it says: “Permit the children FIRST to be filled” This reminds of Rom. 1:16: “To the Jew first, and also to the Greek”. “The dogs”- in the original the diminutive is used and should be translated: “little dogs” or puppies. Wycliffe has: “little whelps”. These were the little dogs in the household that feed under the table and not the wild and ferocious dogs that roam the countryside.

From this strange revelation of Jesus we now get the remarkable reception of this woman: “Yes Lord, yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs” (Vr. 28). “Lord

help me”. The magic word is “Lord”. When she cried this word and recognized her position as a little house puppy she got an answer. We marvel at the keenness of this woman to understand her position. Scroggie notes, “sorrow can make one very sharp” (Cpr. Rom. 15:8-9; Acts 10:36)

3. The Mother’s Reward (Vrs. 29-30)

“O woman, great is thy faith” (Matt. 15:28). “For this saying go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter. ... “she found the demon gone out”. By taking the least, and last place, she came into the greatest and grandest grace of Christ. Here is pure grace to one who was “without Christ, ... having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12) When she returned home the great restoration had taken place.

We have here an instance of a cure effected at a distance; other instances are: (1) the nobleman’s son at Capernaum (Jn. 4:46). (2) the centurion’s servant (Luke 7:6). This is no doubt the first act of healing in the Gentile world. When the mother returns home she found “her daughter laid upon the bed”. The evidence of her daughter’s cure is her quiet resting on the bed, instead of raving and rushing wildly, as she had done before. Thus she found the Savior’s declaration verified and her own strong faith realized.

B. JESUS ON THE COAST OF THE GALILEAN SEA (Vrs. 31-37)

The Lord and His disciples now leave the Gentile world and return to their own country, to the shores of Galilee by way of the Ten Cities called Decapolis (Vr. 31). Whether Jesus visited Sidon or merely passed by it is not certain. However, nothing is recorded of any ministry there.

1. THE CASE (Vr. 32)

“ ... one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech”.

Coming to the coasts of Galilee again, Jesus is confronted with a man who is both deaf and dumb. Earlier in His ministry He had been entreated by this people to leave them (5:17). Now they bring to Him this man “beseeching Him to put His hand upon him”. Evidently the maniac who had been set free by Jesus had fully obeyed the Lord’s command and ministered to his people. This is one of the few instances where the friends of the sufferer bring a needy one to Christ. The paralytic was borne of four (Mk. 2:3-5); the blind man of Bethsaida was led to Jesus (Mk. 8:22-26). This case and cure is related only by Mark.

2. THE CURE (Vrs. 33-35)

There are seven steps to be noted in this most unique process of the cure of this man:

a. “He took him aside from the multitude privately”. Jesus did not want to make him a public display.

b. “Put His fingers into his ears”. He literally “thrust” His fingers, See Rev. 14:19 where we have the same word. The ears were apparently the seat of his affliction.

c. “And spitting”. Where Jesus spat it does not say. Some one has suggested that He spat in His left hand and then took some with His right finger. Jesus used saliva in two other cases: (Jn. 9:6). Why He used saliva can only be conjectured. Some think it had healing power.

d. “and touched his tongue”. First his ears and then his tongue.

e. “And looking up to heaven”. The upturned look to heaven was expressive of an act of prayer and reliance upon His heavenly Father. Jesus did the same in the blessing of the loaves and fishes (Matt. 14:19); at the raising of Lazarus (John 11:41); and before His high priestly prayer (John 17:1).

f. “He sighed”. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15). It was a natural expression of distress (Rom. 8:23).

g. “Ephphatha, that is, Be opened”. This is an Aramaic word like that of “Talitha cumi” (5:41).

The peculiar method of healing that Jesus used here has been a mystery to theologians. But it is, no doubt, like other works of Christ a sign to His people. The meeting with the Greek woman and her need was a phase of kingdom service Israel at this time was incapable of meeting. Israel was intended to be a blessing to all nations (Gen. 12:3). The nation, in our Lord’s day was no more capable to proclaim the evangel of the kingdom than this deaf-mute. They did not hear Him themselves and so could not proclaim any message.

There are three elements in their preparation for the millennial ministry: His works, His words, His suffering. The works are signified by His fingers thrust into the man’s ears; the words by the saliva from His mouth; and the suffering of the cross by His groaning. The greatest missionary work will yet be accomplished by a repentant and restored Israel. The cure is instantaneous and complete – his ears are opened and his tongue is loosed. The man could now hear, and speak plainly.

3. THE CHARGE (Vrs. 36-37)

“... tell no man”, but they published it”.

It was not the time for public display. Our Lord was on His way to the cross with its suffering and sacrifice. But His words went unheeded. The more Jesus charged them, the more they proclaimed the miracle.

“And were beyond measure astonished”. The Greek word translated “beyond measure” is a double superlative. “Very superabundantly, superexcessively”. In an extraordinary degree. Their amazement was boundless. The word occurs only here in the N.T.

“He hath done all things well: the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak”. An exclamation of the highest approval and satisfaction. It reminds of creation: “And behold God saw everything that He had made, and, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31).

III. INSTRUCTION

1. “O woman, great is thy faith”. Her daughter is delivered from a demon. The grace and glory of triumphant faith.

2. The crumbs that fell from Israel’s table for Gentiles in the time of Christ’s earthly ministry cannot compare with “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8). We have “all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies” (Eph. 1:3); “chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world” (1:4); “predestinated us unto the adoption of children” (1:5); “accepted in the beloved” (1:6); “access by one Spirit unto the Father” (2:18).

3. “He hath done all things well”. (1) The work of substitution (John 19:30); (2) The work of salvation (Heb. 7:25); (3) the work of security (Jn. 10:27-30; Eph. 1:13).

4. An unbound tongue should always consist in a free-will binding of it to obedience to God’s word.

LESSON # 23 MARK 8:1-21 (Matt. 15:32-39; 16:1-4,5-12)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Places: Wilderness (West of Galilee), Dalmanutha.
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Disciples, Multitude, Pharisees, Herod.
3. Principal Purpose: To demonstrate the Divine Principle that: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

Mark now continues his narrative of Jesus in the region of Decapolis, by relating the second miraculous feeding of a multitude. Passing over to the western side of the lake, Jesus encounters again the Pharisees and suffers opposition from them. He then returns to the eastern side where He warns the Disciples against the doctrine of the Pharisees and Herod.

II. INTERPRETATION

A. MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF THE MULTITUDE (Vrs. 1-9)

The feeding of the five thousand (6:33-44), and now the four thousand are not conflicting accounts of the same event. There are both comparisons and contrasts in the two episodes. In both events there are hungry multitudes, in a desert place, very meager provisions, perplexed disciples, the command by Christ to be seated, the blessing, the breaking of the bread, the feast, the satisfaction, the surplus gathered up. In both we also see the compassion of Christ, and the misunderstanding of the disciples. On the other hand the contrasts are as striking as the comparisons. They were in different localities. In the first there were five thousand men, now there are four thousand. The former had five loaves and two fishes; now there are seven loaves and a few fishes. In the former the people had been with Jesus for a day, now they had been with Him three days. Before they had gathered twelve baskets of fragments, now there were seven baskets. In the former the baskets were small wicker baskets (kophinon), now they are large hampers (sphuridas – see Acts 9:25).

1. Setting of the Miracle (Vr. 1)

Having left the region of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus returned to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. Upwards of four thousand persons now gathered round Him and continued with Him for three days. Some commentators think that the people were either going or coming back from the Feast of Pentecost. The people had consumed all their food, and so there was nothing left after these three days with Jesus.

2. Substance of the Miracle (Vrs. 2-8)

a. Compassion of Jesus (Vrs. 2-3)

“I have compassion on the multitude”.

The word “compassion” literally means: “to be moved as to one’s bowels”. The bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity. He was so moved in mind as to produce physical emotion (6:34). This event was more urgent than the former because the multitude had

been with Him three days. Christ realized that if He sent them away, they would “faint by the way” because some had come from quite a distance.

b. Consultation with the Disciples (Vrs. 4-5)

The disciples had evidently forgotten the other miracle because they did not see how any food could be obtained in the wilderness.

Trench comments on the statement: “Whence can a man satisfy” by saying, “It is evermore thus in times of difficulty and distress. All former deliverances are in danger of being forgotten; the mighty interpositions of God’s hand in former passages of men’s lives fall out of their memories. Each new difficulty appears insurmountable, as one from which there is no extrication; at each recurring necessity it seems as though the wonders of God’s grace are exhausted and had come to an end”. See Exod. 17:1-7; 16:13; with Num. 11:21,23).

“How many loaves have ye?” interrogates Jesus. The disciples answer, “seven”. They must now have suspected what Jesus would do, because they do not exclaim as on the former occasion: “What are they among so many”? (John 6:9)

c. Command of Jesus (Vrs. 6-8)

The Master now gives two commands – to sit down and to eat. The people would lie down according to Oriental posture in eating. In the former miracle they sat on the grass, here they sit on the ground. The Lord then takes the seven loaves, gives thanks and broke them; likewise the few fishes. We note here the order of eating; the bread first, then the fish. With reference to the loaves, the Lord gave thanksgiving; with reference to the fish He gave praise. The people “were filled” and the remains were “seven baskets”. When the miracle took place is not certain; it could have taken place as He gave thanks and praise, or when the disciples gave the food to the multitude. (See 2 Kgs. 4:5-7) The number “seven” is prominent in this miracle. There were “seven loaves” and “seven baskets”.

3. Sequel of the Miracle (Vr. 9)

They were “about four thousand” that were fed on this day. Matthew adds: “besides women and children” (15:38). So there could have been upwards of twelve thousand who were fed. Then the Lord dismissed them, probably with a parting blessing. We note that in this miracle, Jesus fed less people with more food. In the former He fed more people with less food. Who can fully comprehend God’s ways? We must say with Paul: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and His ways past finding out” (Rom. 11:33).

B. SEEKING AFTER A SIGN (Vrs. 10-13)

Jesus and His disciples now take ship again, and pass over to the western side of Galilee, and come to Dalmanutha. It is thought that this place was near Tiberius. All we know of this place is recorded here (Vr. 10).

1. Request of the Pharisees (Vr. 11)

The Pharisees were the ritualists, the traditionalists of their day. They were strict observers of the Law; but had added many traditions of their elders to the Law of God. They

were unlike the Sadducees in their belief in the supernatural. “Seeking a sign from heaven, tempting Him”. The Pharisees are now accompanied by the Sadducees (Matt. 16:1). This same request had already been made three times: (1) After cleansing of the Temple (Jn. 2:18); (2) After feeding five thousand (Jn. 6:30); (3) After walking through the cornfields (Matt. 12:38). They wanted some visible sign in the sky, the credentials of a prophet. The Jews believed that demons could give signs on the earth; but only God could give a sign from heaven; that is, the manna from heaven, the sun and moon standing still for Joshua, the hail and rain of Samuel, fire and rain of Elijah, the sun on the dial of Hezekiah, thunder and lightning at the giving of the Law. It is not always wrong to seek a sign; but here their motive was wrong, “tempting Him”.

2. Reply of Jesus (Vrs. 12-13)

“He sighed deeply in His spirit and saith”. The groaning in His spirit is literally, a groaning upwardly (ana-stenaxas), out of the depths of His spirit upwards. This compound verb occurs no where else in the N.T. If they did not believe in the signs of the Messiah as given on earth, they would not accept a sign from heaven. Signs from heaven will be given at His Second Advent (Matt. 24:27-31). There will be no sign from Heaven given to this generation; but Matthew adds (16:4) that the only sign to be given will be that of Jonah. This was the sign of His own suffering, death, entombment in the earth, and resurrection in newness of life. Death, burial and resurrection of Him that is greater than Jonah.

“And He left them”. Not only leaving their company, but also leaving them to themselves. He “departed to the other side”. “If the plough of grace cannot force its way through your ice-bound heart today, what likelihood is there that it will enter tomorrow” says McCheyne.

C. THE LESSON ON LEAVEN (Vrs. 14-21)

Jesus and His disciples return again to the eastern side of the lake (Vr. 13). So they go back and forth. They are “driven by unbelief and drawn by faith” says Scroggie.

1. Its Reason (Vr. 14)

“... forgotten to take bread, neither had they ... more than one loaf”. In the hurry of their unexpected re-embarkation they had altogether omitted to make provision for their personal needs.

2. Its Revelation (Vr. 15)

“Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod”. Leaven is a sour dough in which fermentation is going on; fermentation is decomposition. This fermentation is due to yeast plants and micro-organisms. On account of the air containing yeast plants and micro-organisms, anything organic, like meat, milk, vegetables, etc. being exposed to the air will ferment, decompose and sour. Man also is an organic body and like a sponge for absorbing in the mind false doctrine. False doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16:12) brings mental and spiritual decomposition. Fermentation always makes gas, and gas makes things light; both carbonic acid gas in bread or Pharisaical doctrine gas in the minds of men. Nowhere in the Bible is leaven ever used of anything that is good. The leaven of the Pharisees was hypocrisy (Luke 12:1); of the Sadducees, unbelief; of Herod, worldliness.

3. Its Result (Vr. 16)

“They reasoned among themselves”. They held a dialogue or argument with one another. The Greek word is dialogizonto. The disciples thought He gave this parable because they had no bread. They might have argued that the material leaven of the Pharisees was unclean to them. But they finally understood that He talked about the doctrine of the Pharisees (Matt. 16:12).

4. Its Rebuke (Vrs. 17-21)

Jesus now proceeds to interrogate His disciples. In rapid fire He asks them nine questions:

- “Why reason ye, because ye have no bread”?
- “Perceive ye not yet, nor understand”?
- “Have ye your heart yet hardened”?
- “Having eyes, see ye not”?
- “And having ears, hear ye not”?
- “And do ye not remember”?
- “When I brake the five loaves...how many baskets full ...
took ye up”?
- “And when the seven ... how many”?
- “How is it that ye do not understand”?

What is the use of having organs if they do not function? A mind and heart are for understanding, for perception; eyes are for sight, and ears for sound; and memory for intelligent thought and reasoning. Why is it that you do not understand or comprehend my language? Have your hearts become so hardened, stupefied, notwithstanding all my miracles and my message? The Lord had given a long discourse on Himself as “The Bread of Life” following the miracle of Feeding the Five Thousand (John 6:26-65). Matthew adds a concluding remark that they finally understood that He referred to the doctrine or teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees; and we may also add here of Herod. The teaching of all these classes was formal, ceremonial, carnal, and worldly; and all alike opposed to Christ.

III. INSTRUCTION

1. The two miracles of the loaves and fish. One might ask why did the Lord perform two different miracles in feeding the multitudes? John 2:11 tells us that the miracles of Jesus were signs. (The word “miracle” should be “signs”). Why did the Lord bless and brake five loaves in one instance and seven in this one? What did they signify? The answer lies in Jesus’ words to Satan: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). So the Incarnate, Living Word, and the Written Word are the true bread of God. The written Word is represented in separate books, and these may represent the loaves given to the multitude. The pre-kingdom testimony is divided into two distinct periods; one covered by the Book of Acts, and the other at the end of the age, in the Tribulation Period. The first sign of the five loaves represents the past means of subsistence, of the kingdom saints. This period is represented by the Gospels – Matthew, Mark, and Luke, (John is the Gospel for the Kingdom Period itself) Acts, and Hebrews. The future wilderness need of His kingdom people will be met by seven epistles, corresponding to the seven cakes of this miracle. They are James, First and Second Peter, First, Second and Third John, and Jude.

2. We should come to Christ and the Word seeking light and truth; but beware of raising trivial and frivolous objections (Vr. 11; John 8:6-8).
3. One error may pervert a whole system of doctrine, or affect the whole of one's practice (Vr. 15); 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 5:9.
4. No doubt the greatest sin of believers is spiritual ignorance, and dullness of spiritual apprehension (Vrs. 16-18); 1 Cor. 3:1; Heb. 5:12.
5. Let us be more anxious about spiritual than bodily nourishment (Vrs. 16-17), John 6:27.
6. The considerations of past mercies and experiences should strengthen our faith, and help us understand God's present providence (Vrs. 18-20), Ps. 77:10-12; Hebr. 10:32.
7. It was an old saying among the Puritans: "Brown bread and the Gospel are good fare".
8. There can never be any spiritual want to those who feed upon the Living Bread, Jesus Christ.

LESSON # 24 MARK 8:22-38 (Matt. 16:13-30; Luke 9:18-21)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Places: Bethsaida, Caesarea Philippi.
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Blind Man, Disciples, Peter, People.
3. Principal Purpose: To demonstrate the blindness and healing of Israel; and to openly reveal His crucifixion and resurrection.

This lesson of the healing of the blind man is a sign to the leaders of Israel, who are spiritually blind. This was the condition of Israel, and only Christ can make them see. His method is unique, and has its dispensational implications.

In our last lesson Jesus was in the region of Decapolis; and now comes to the city of Bethsaida Julias. There was a Bethsaida on the western shore of Galilee. This city is at the northern tip of the Sea. From Bethsaida Julias He goes Caesarea Philippi a city which lay some twenty-five miles north of Galilee, and three or four miles east of ancient Laish or Dan. It was situated at the southern ridge of Mount Hermon. The city was named Caesarea in honor of the Roman Emperor Augustus. It was called "Philip's Caesarea" after the Herod who rebuilt it and to distinguish it from the other Caesarea on the Mediterranean. It was supposed to be the most beautiful city in the land.

A. THE RESTORATION AT BETHSAIDA JULIAS (Vrs. 22-26)

This is now the second of the two miracles (7:31-37) recorded only by Mark. In both of these Jesus employed strange means to perform the cures. In this healing of the blind man, it is the only cure that was gradual.

1. The Setting of the Cure (Vr. 22)

The Master now comes to Bethsaida Julias on His way to Caesarea Philippi. Here a blind man is led to Jesus that He might touch him. This city was named Julias by Philip the

Tetrarch, in honor of the daughter of Augustus. Some think that he became blind either by disease or accident, because later on he knew both trees and men (Vr. 24).

2. The Substance of the Cure (Vrs. 23-25)

a. As Seen in the Method (Vrs. 23,25)

Jesus takes the blind man by the hand and leads him out of the town. In the other only miracle recorded by Mark, Jesus led a deaf and dumb man from the multitude (7:33).

He anoints the man with the moisture of His mouth.

He lays His hands upon him twice (Vrs. 23,25).

He inquires of the progress of his restoration.

Jesus demonstrates His power of word by spitting on the man's eyes, and His power of work by the touch of His hands. Then the second time Jesus put His hands upon his eyes.

b. As Seen in the Miracle (Vrs. 24,25)

First there is Partial Restoration – “I see men as trees walking”. (Vr. 24). As men from their motion, and as trees from their height. Some ancient manuscripts read: “I see the men; for I see them, as trees, walking”. He sees men, yet undefined in shape and figure, as trees. He sees indistinctly, obscurely and might suppose the men to be trees did they not move.

Secondly, there is Perfect Restoration (Vr. 25). “He was restored and saw every man clearly”. The word translated “clearly” literally means “far shining”, “far-beaming”. He could see clearly far and near, or perfectly.

The gradual process of the cure distinguishes this miracle from all others. The Lord could have healed this man completely at the first, but He did not choose to do so. This is indeed another sign in the restoration of Israel's spiritual sight. At first the blind man's sight was partial; then later he saw clearly. So it was with Israel in the past, during the ministry of the Gospels and the Acts – Israel saw only partially. But in a future application of the power of the Messiah it will be perfect (See Deut. 28:29; Isa. 29:18; 35:5; 42:7,16,18; 66:8; Zech. 12:6-13:1). Both in the pre and post resurrection era the Kingdom prospect was vague; but it will not be so at the end of the age. We have accounts of several miracles of healing the blind (See Ch. 10:46-52; Matt. 9:27-31; 15:29-31; Jn. 9:1-7).

3. The Sequel of the Cure (Vr. 26)

“He sent him away to his house saying, neither go into ... nor tell it in the town”. Bethsaida Julias was apparently not his town. It was not the time for public demonstration. Jesus was now going into retirement with His disciples as we see in the following lesson. He would now speak openly and fully about His coming suffering, death, and resurrection.

B. THE REVELATIONS AT CAESAREA PHILIPPI (Vrs. 27-38)

We come now to what might be considered the most crucial episode in the life of our Lord before the crisis of the Cross. In view of the Cross which He could plainly see looming up on the horizon, He urgently desired to speak with His chosen Twelve about Himself, and His

Passion. Of the three accounts of this incident Mark's is the briefest. In Mark's record which is really Peter's, we note that all praise of Peter is omitted (Matt. 16:17). This incident now becomes the central point in Jesus' training of the Twelve. Jesus now travels north with His disciples to the region or villages of Caesarea Philippi.

1. PREPARATION FOR THE CRISIS (Vrs. 27-30)

We have in this section what is called "The Catechetical Method". The word "catechism" or "catechize" is from the Greek word "katecheo" meaning "to instruct orally by question and answer method". The Greek word occurs eight times in the N.T. (Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; 21:21; 21:24; Rom. 2:18; 1 Cor. 14:19; Gal. 6:6 (2)).

Interrogation: "Whom do men say that I am"? – Information: "John the Baptist" ... "Elias", "One of the prophets" (Vrs. 27-28).

Interrogation: "Whom say ye that I am"? – Information: "Thou art the Christ". "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

a. People's Conviction (Vrs. 27-28)

The answer given by the disciples relative to the conviction of the people concerning Jesus is based upon the question of Jesus: "Whom do men say that I am"? Their first answer was "John the Baptist". Herod thought that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead (Matt. 14:2; Mk. 6:14). Herod held John the Baptist in high esteem, and did not want to behead him, although he had put him in prison. The second person is "Elias". His name would be mentioned because of Mal. 4:5 and also the great power of Jesus like unto that of Elias. The third is "one of the prophets". The people called Him a prophet (John 6:14). In addition to Elijah, the Jews expected another prophet to come before the advent of the Messiah, namely Jeremiah (Matt. 16:14). Jesus did not need this information because He knew what men thought and said of Him. But it would lead up to the next and most vital question.

b. Peter's Confession (Vrs. 29-30)

"But whom say ye that I am"? This was the main question. You have told me of the confused and conflicting views of the people, but you, who do you declare me to be? Peter, then speaks up representing the twelve, gives his matchless confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). He saw the deity of Christ. Here is language of firm conviction, not merely of human opinion, but confidently: "The Christ of God" (Luke 9:20). The performance of the Cross would have no meaning without a true conviction concerning the deity of Christ's person. Then Jesus charges them: "Tell no man of him". The language is strong, implying that they would incur His displeasure should they disobey. The time for public proclamation had not come. The Messiah had not gone to the Cross; nor had the disciples been endued with the Holy Spirit of power.

2. PREDICTION OF THE CRISIS (Vrs. 31-33)

Peter's confession led on to an announcement by Jesus that filled the disciples with desolation.

a. The Revelation (Vr. 31)

We have now reached a pivotal point in the ministry of Jesus. Up to this time we have seen Him as the Sovereign Son of David (2 Sam. 7:14; Matt. 1:6). “From that time forth” (Matt. 16:21) is the beginning of that portion of Christ’s life and ministry when we see Him as The Sacrificial Son of Abraham – a greater than Isaac to pass through death, burial, and resurrection in reality as Isaac did in type (Heb. 11:17). His great disclosure may be summarized in three words: Rejection, Redemption, and Resurrection. The Lord thus began to correct all the mistaken views of Himself, and to prepare His disciples for the great events to follow, and to better understand the ancient prophecies (Isa. 53:4-10; Dan. 9:26; Luke 24:26,27,44,46). The “elders, chief priests, and scribes” would reject Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and crucify Him.

b. The Rejection (Vrs. 32-33)

First, we have Peter’s rebuke, “This shall not be unto thee” (Matt. 16:22). Now the bold confessor had become the bold denouncer. In his ignorance he gives vent to his impulsive and ardent temperament, highly elated and proud with the position he had just taken in confessing Jesus, and with the approved benediction of Jesus in return. So now he takes Jesus aside and rebukes Him, “Be it far from thee Lord; this shall not be unto thee” (Matt. 16:22). J.A. Alexander thinks that this “is one of the most natural and lifelike incidents recorded in the Scriptures. Affectionate and ardent, but capricious and precipitate, imperfectly instructed even in the great truth which he had avowed in behalf of his brethren and himself”.

Secondly, (Vr. 33) we have Jesus’ rebuke: “Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men”. See Matt. 4:10 Here was the wilderness over again. Satan was influencing Peter to stop Christ from going to the cross. Matthew adds the explanatory clause: “Thou art an offence unto me” (16:23), an aggravation, exceedingly displeasing to God and to me. The believing Peter was indeed a part of the foundation stone (Matt. 16:18); but the unbelieving Peter “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence” (1 Pet. 2:7-8). Peter’s views were carnal, not spiritual (See Isa. 55:8; Rom. 8:5; Col. 3:2).

3. PARTICIPATION IN THE CRISIS (Vrs. 34-38)

Our Lord now calls the people and His disciples to him in order to instruct them in the spiritual standards of discipleship.

a. A Solemn Consideration (Vr. 34)

“Let him deny himself and take up his cross”. The believer’s life must emerge into an act of self-renunciation, self-repudiation. Denial of self is more than self-denial. We may deny ourselves something in order to have more later. Denial of self touches our inherited nature which is evil. It is Satan’s ally in us, which is conspiring with the Devil against God. Denial of self is to be followed by “take up His cross and follow me”. The Cross represents a total commitment to God to do His will, even though it might mean suffering and death. “Follow me” says Jesus. The crown would follow the cross; glory will follow grief; and greatness will follow grace. Isaac carrying the wood (Gen. 22:6) and Christ carrying His cross (Jn. 19:17) are symbolical of cross bearing.

b. A Solemn Certification (Vrs. 35-37)

Jesus now sets before the people and His disciples the paradox of losing and saving. J.D. Jones has paraphrased it thus; “Whosoever will make it his first business to save or preserve his natural life and worldly well-being, shall lose the higher life, the life indeed; and whosoever is willing to lose his natural life for my sake, shall find the true eternal life”. Jesus now brings together the two philosophies of life and death – Peter’s and His own. Peter was for saving; Jesus was for losing; but Peter’s saving would be loss, and Jesus’ losing would be saving or gain. “What shall it profit a man” (Vr. 36). Jesus now gives a further reason for denial of self and following Him. The interrogative form makes the statement more emphatic. If a man acquires the whole world with its wealth, prestige, power, and enjoyments, and “lose his own soul” it means nothing. None of it can insure future life and glory. Then the Lord gives the last step in this masterly argument – “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul”? The word “exchange” literally means “as a ransom price”. The Greek word here occurs in the Septuagint O.T. at Ruth 4:7; Jer. 15:13. If a man forfeits his life in this world for that which is unprofitable spiritually, then how can he possibly redeem it?

c. A Solemn Condemnation (Vr. 38)

There is a judgment day coming when the eyes of God will be searching and sifting human souls. A denial of the Lord here will bring shame in the day of His great appearing. That generation was called “adulterous” because its heart was estranged from God (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 31:32). So Christ’s future attitude toward men will be determined by men’s present attitude toward Him. Mark says that “when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the Holy Angels”. Luke says: “When he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s and of the Holy angels” (Luke 9:26).

III. INSTRUCTION

1. Sinners are spiritually blind (Vr.22; Jn. 9:39; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Jn. 2:11).
2. Christ attached immense importance to what men thought about His Person. Christianity is not a teaching merely, or a philosophy of life, or moral precepts; but the Gospel of a Person, Jesus Christ. “That I may know Him” says Paul (Phil. 3:10) is my highest ambition.
3. A revelation of His Person will lead to a revelation of His Passion. All the words and works of Christ are useless for an abiding life without the crisis of the Cross.
4. A person’s permanent wealth does not consist in cash, but in Christ. Discipleship must first and last be the dominant mind of one whose mind is stayed on Christ (Isa. 26:3; Phil. 2:5-8).
5. “No pain, no palm; no thorn, no throne;
No gall, no glory; no cross, no crown” . . . Penn.

LESSON # 25 MARK 9:1-13 (Matt. 17:1-9; 10-13; Luke 9:27-36)

INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Places: “An High Mountain” “Down from the Mountain”.
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Peter, James, John, Elias, Moses, God.

3. Principal Purpose: To give a preview or adumbration of the glory and the crown which would follow the grief and the cross. To further charge the Disciples and correct their views of Elijah.

The event of the Transformation is recorded in three of the Gospels. It would seem therefore that it is of great importance. Verse one of chapter nine is closely linked with 8:38. Our lesson here is a miniature picture of the coming glory revealed in 8:38. This revelation of the glory follows immediately upon the Lord's mention of His sufferings, and rejection (8:31). So there is here a close connection.

Dr. E.W. Bullinger points out the fact that in the O.T., while the glory is often mentioned without the sufferings of Christ (See Isa. Chs. 11; 32; 35; 40; 60), the sufferings are never mentioned apart from the glory (See Luke 24:26; 1 Pet. 1:11; 3:18; 4:13; 5:1). Luke tells us that this transformation took place as Jesus prayed (Luke 9:28-29). There are only two subjects recorded for which He prayed: His sufferings (Matt. 26:39,42,44); and the glory (John 17:1,5,24). It was on this "holy mount" that Jesus received from God the Father "honor and glory" (Greek time kai doxa) (2 Pet. 1:17-18). Heb. 2:9 tells us that He was "crowned with glory and honor (doxa kai time), for the suffering of death". This has reference to the High Priest (Exod. 28:2), who at his consecration was clothed with garments "for glory and for beauty". In the Greek Septuagint of this O.T. passage we have the same words (time kai doxa). Thus our Lord in this Trans-formation was being consecrated for the special office of High Priest.

INTERPRETATION

A. ASCENT TO THE MOUNT OF TRANSFORMATION (Mark 9:1-8)

I. THE SETTING (Vrs. 1-2)

The Lord had just told His disciples of His rejection and suffering that would lead to His death; and that on the third day He would rise again.

1. The Prediction (Vr. 1)

Jesus now tells His own that there would be some there who would not die until they had seen the Kingdom of God coming with power. They had witnessed His humiliation and weakness. He had walked and worked among them as the Man from Nazareth, the lowly Galilean. This verse while it opens chapter nine rightly belongs to chapter eight. Of its placing Dr. Morison says: "It was in a mood of mental somnolence (drowsiness) that Hugo de Sancto Caro concluded the eighth chapter with the thirty-eighth verse, and carried forward into a new chapter the verse before us".

2. The Period (Vr. 2)

Matthew and Mark say: "And after six days". Luke says: "about an eight days". Dr. Bullinger says: "It took place about six days (exclusive reckoning), or about eight days (Luke 9:28), (inclusive reckoning) from the Lord's prediction". It is dated in all three Gospels from the first mention of the Lord's sufferings (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). It has no place in John's Gospel because it is the Gospel for the Millennium, when Israel will again be in favor with God.

3. The Persons (Vr. 2)

“Peter and James and John”. These seem to be the specially favored apostles. They were along when Jesus raised Jairus’ daughter (5:37); they witnessed His agony in the Garden (14:33). Now they are chosen to behold His transformation. Peter later writes about it in his second epistle (1:16-18). John in a general way says: “We beheld His glory” (1:14). When we come to Elias and Moses we will see the relationship of these three to them.

4. The Place (Vr. 2)

“an high mountain”. Tradition says it was on Mt. Tabor which was southwest of the Sea of Galilee. But as Jesus was in the vicinity of Mt. Hermon it most likely was on a spur of that mountain chain. It says “high mountain” and this would best fit the Hermon region.

II. THE SCENE (Vrs. 2-4)

“He was transfigured before them”.

1. The Transformation (Vrs. 2-3)

The Greek word is metamorphoo. He was metamorphosed (change to a different form) before them. The word “transfiguration” deals with outward appearance; while transformation includes the inward essence. Satan is said to be at present transfigured into a messenger of light (2 Cor. 11:14). The Lord’s physical body of flesh and blood was a veil which hid His innate splendor. On the mount His glory shone out to mortal eyes. From the inner glory there was manifested also an outer glory – “His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow”. John tells us (1 Jn. 1:5) that “God is light”; that He dwells in light (1 Tim. 6:16) adds Paul; and the Psalmist says that He covers Himself with light (Ps. 104:2). Therefore when Christ appeared in the form of God, it was in the form of light. Matthew adds: “His face did shine as the sun” (17:2); and Luke says: “The fashion of His countenance was altered” (9:29). When Christ comes again it will be in this inner and outer glory (Rev. 1:16). So He became brighter than the sun in all its glory, and whiter than the driven snow. In commenting on the word “shining” (stilbonta) Alexander says: “A still more expressive term in the original, applied by Homer to the glistening of polished surfaces and to the glittering of arms; by Aristotle, to the twinkling of the stars; and by Euripides, to the flashing of lightning”.

There were faint glimpses of Christ’s glory in the case of Moses whose face shone when he descended from the mount (Exod. 34:29-35); and that of Stephen before the Sanhedrim (Acts 6:15). The fuller’s trade was to cleanse linen and give it a glistening whiteness. But the fuller’s work was imperfect.

2. The Representation (Vr. 4)

“... there appeared ... Elias and Moses ... talking with Jesus”.

Moses, the great Law-giver and leader of Israel, representing the Law. Elijah, the great Prophet, representing the Prophets. Together with these two there are the three N.T. Apostles, Peter, James and John. So there are both the Old and New Covenants here. Besides, there is Jesus and God, making the number a perfect seven in all. Moses and Elijah represent the roots of the Kingdom; while Peter, James and John the fruits. These latter represent three different classes who will enter the Kingdom. James stands for those who died in faith in all the

past. He was assassinated by Herod (Acts 12:2). Peter represents those who will come out of The Great Tribulation of the future, for he ministers to those in the great time of Jacob's Trouble. He also died as a martyr. John represents those who will live to the end time and enter the Kingdom alive (Jn. 21:18-23). These all will enter the kingdom and meet there Moses and Elijah (See Matt. 7:12). That this was no mere vision of Elijah and Moses is seen from the facts that they saw them and talked with them. What they talked about is revealed by Luke: "and spake of His decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (9:31). They speak of those things which both the Law and Prophets had typified and foretold.

III. THE SEQUEL (Vrs. 5-8)

1. The Venture of Trepidation (Vrs. 5-6)

"... let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias. ... were sore afraid".

Peter had in mind the Feast of Tabernacles or the time of the ingathering (Lev. 23:42-43). But before the Feast of Tabernacles there must come the Feast of Passover and Pentecost. So Peter in his holy, spiritual ecstasy wanted to prolong the feeling; but it was only mingled joy, confusion, and terror. Peter should have taken to heart the conversation of the exodus of Christ, and not His eisodus into the Kingdom. The time of rest and glory had not come.

2. The Voice of Testimony (Vr. 7)

"... A voice came out of the cloud, saying, this is my beloved Son: hear Him".

This testimony has been given in The Psalms (2:7); The Prophets (Isa. 42:1); and The Law (Deut. 18:15). It was also given at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:17). A cloud overshadowed them and out of the cloud came a voice. This was a different covering than that which Peter had suggested. Matthew says it was "a bright cloud" (17:5). It was the symbol of Divine presence, as was the cloud over the tabernacle (Ex. 40:38), the cloud on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 24:16,17), and the cloud in Solomon's temple (1 Kgs. 8:10,11). See also Ex. 16:10; Ezek. 10:4; Rev. 14:14. It was similar to that at the ascension (Acts 1:9). They were commanded "to hear Him". Obey Him as the true Messiah, the greater Prophet and Law-giver (Deut. 18:15-19; Acts 3:22; 7:37; Heb. 1:1,2). Peter looks back upon this scene (2 Pet. 1:17) and says: "there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory".

3. The Vision of Triumph (Vr. 8)

"... no man any more, save Jesus only".

The celestial visitors "Elias and Moses" now vanish from the scene. At first the disciples fell prostrate on their faces (Matt. 17:6); then recovering from the shock of the Voice from Heaven, they suddenly gaze around and see no one "save Jesus only". This was the One that the Law and the Prophets had fore-shadowed and foretold. Moses is gone. The law is swallowed up in Christ (Rom. 10:4). Elijah is gone. The Prophets are all in Christ (Deut. 18:18; Zech. 1:5).

B. DESCENT FROM THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION (Vrs. 9-13)

“... they came down from the mountain”. The time for the Millennium had not come. This was only a preview, an adumbration of that glorious time. So down into the valley they must come.

I. The Charge (Vr. 9)

“... tell no man what things they had seen”.

This scene could neither be understood nor experienced until the Master had been crucified, buried, and risen from the dead. Then they could relate it. If Jesus did not die and rise again these glories could never take place, and hence had no meaning.

II. THE CONCERN (Vrs. 10-11)

“...what the rising from the dead should mean”. “Why say the scribes that Elias must first come”?

The Master had told them (Vr. 9)) that the Son of Man would rise from the dead. The Greek of verse ten is “to ek nekron anastenai”, which literally translated is “the out of dead ones to rise”. Paul uses practically the same expression (Phil. 3:11) when he speaks of wanting to attain to the out-resurrection from out of the dead ones”. In the case of both Christ and Paul the question is a resurrection before the general resurrection. All the Jews, except the Sadducees, held to a resurrection from the dead (John 11:24; Acts 23:6-8). The Jews expected their Messiah to live forever (Jn. 12:34).

The second question of the disciples had to do with the coming of Elijah. Dr. Lightfoot says: “It would be an infinite task to produce all the passages out of the Jewish writings which one might, concerning the expected coming of Elijah”. He was to restore to the Jews the pot of manna and the rod of Aaron, to cry to the mountains, “Peace and blessing come to the world, peace and blessing come into the world”! “Salvation cometh, Salvation cometh, to gather all the scattered sons of Jacob and restore all things to Israel as in ancient times”. The scribes taught that Elijah would come personally, settle controverted questions, restore the theocracy, and prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. The problem of the disciples was that Jesus had come first, and now Elijah came after Him. So they thought that Mal. 3:1-4; 4:5 had just been fulfilled on the mount.

III. THE CONCERN (Vrs. 12-13)

The Master now answers their questions, and gives further information concerning Elijah in the person of John the Baptist. It was true that Elijah must first come, as the scribes said. But the rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection of Messiah were also predicted. (See Ps. 22:6; Isa. 53:2,3; Dan. 9:26; Zech. 13:7). The “restoreth all things” was a brief summary of the prophecy concerning Elijah. “He shall prepare the way before me”; he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children”. This John the Baptist began to do (Luke 1:17; 3:3-13). See also Acts 3:21-23. “Elias is indeed come”. Jesus having shown the relation between the work of Elijah and of himself, He now relieves their perplexity about the coming of Elijah, by showing that not merely had Elijah appeared on the mount, but John the Baptist had come in the spirit and power of Elijah and had suffered death. The Lord’s answer in Matt. 11:14 is here important: “And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come”. Note that it all hinged on the word “if”.

INSTRUCTION

1. Christ's coming in glory will be with great power (Rev. 19:11-16), a contrast to His first coming in humiliation.
2. The glory of the coming kingdom will not consist in the lightning, thunder and fire of Sinai, or any other spectacular scenes; but in the transformation of Messiah who has now left His earthly human garb to be clothed in the garments of glory and beauty.
3. As the disciples knew and talked with Moses and Elias, so we shall know each other in the future world and speak together.
4. Christ is Lord both of the living and the dead (Rom. 14:9; Rev. 1:18; 3:7).

LESSON # 26 MARK 9:14-29 (Matt. 17:14-21; Luke 9:37-43)

INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Persons: Jesus, Disciples, Multitude, Scribes, Epileptic lunatic son, Father of son.
2. Principal Places: "Down from the mountain" (Vr. 9), House.
3. Principal Purpose: To teach His disciples and the multitude their desperate need of Calvary and Pentecost.

All the three evangelists place this miracle after the transformation on the mount. The Italian painter Raphael (1483-1520), in his picture, has enshrined forever the contrast between the scene on the mount of glorification and that which awaited the Savior and the three apostles on the plain below; between the harmonies of heaven and the harsh discords of earth. There is not another contrast in all the Gospels as this: between the open heavens and the sons of glory on the mount; and the valley of tears with its terrible forms of demon-possession, misery, pain, and unbelief.

INTERPRETATION

I. THE SETTING (Vrs. 14-16)

From the Mount of Transformation we come now down in the valley of tribulation. From a preview of a glorious future we come to a presentation of a grievous failure.

1. Disputing Scribes (Vrs. 14,16)

"... a great multitude, ... and the scribes questioning with them. ... What question ye with them"? It seems that the scribes had taken advantage of Christ's absence, and the failure of the disciples, to undermine Christ's influence with the multitude. But the return of Jesus discomfited them.

What is the point of your debate, the subject of your dispute or contention with them? This particularizing of the scribes as the interrogators is peculiar to Mark. So are verses 15,16. The dispute had centered around the lunatic son.

2. Delighted People (Vr. 15)

“Were greatly amazed” is our English translation of ekethaubethesan, a word peculiar to Mark, found nowhere else in the N.T. Mark has a way of bringing out the feelings of his characters. Mark uses six different words expressing fear, wonder, trouble, amazement, and extreme astonishment. The Lord’s face, like that of Moses (Exod. 34:30) perhaps had traces of the celestial glory from the mount, and thus filled the multitude with awe and wonder. So it is no wonder they ran and saluted Him. They would also remember His display of power over disease and demon possession.

II. THE STORY (Vrs. 17-27)

The rehearsing of this tale by Mark is very graphic. Peter’s memory of this event must have been impressionable and retentive. He no doubt told it to Mark. Verses 21-27 are peculiar to Mark.

1. THE CASE PRESENTED (Vrs. 17-24)

a. A Distraught Father (Vrs. 17,21,22)

“my son”. “mine only son” (Luke 9:38). The Lord then questions the father (Vr. 21), not for His own information, but for the strengthening of the father’s faith and to show the severity of the case. “Even from a child” said the father. “If at all thou canst” (Vr. 22). This is a strong expression of an infirm faith. “Have compassion and help us”. This is a strong, earnest entreaty. The father uses the word “us” twice, joining the life and health of his child with his own. (See the prayer of the Syrophonician woman for her daughter Matt. 15:22,25).

b. A Demon-possessed lad (Vrs. 17,18,20,22)

“...hath a dumb spirit” (Vr. 17). It was the demon who made him dumb. He could not utter articulate words, though he could suddenly cry out (Luke 9:39). He also had a “deaf spirit” (Vr. 25). In Matthew 17:15 the lad is described as a lunatic, probably an epileptic. He was possessed with a demon which caused deafness, dumbness, and epilepsy. “It taketh him” (Vr. 18). It literally, seized hold of him. The Greek word is katalabe, from whence we get catalepsy, a loss of voluntary motion. It also “teareth him” or dasheth down; used in classical Greek of beating the ground and beating drums. The child also “foameth”. This was the effect of the violent paroxysms. He also “gnashed with his teeth”. He grinds with his teeth. “He pineth away”, swooning away, his strength becoming entirely exhausted.

Mark gives great detail in the convulsions of the child as he is brought to Jesus. When the demoniac saw the Lord he fell to the ground, wallowing and foaming (Vr. 20). So the sight of Jesus infuriated the demon. He had great wrath for his time was short (Rev. 12:12) if the nation had repented. The father further describes the horrible condition of his son (Vr. 22). He regards the demon as an enemy who would kill his son. “It hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters”. In Matt. 17:15 the father called his son a “lunatick”. The original word literally means “moonstruck”. Epilepsy was supposed to be affected by the changes of the moon (luna).

c. The Defeated Disciples (Vr. 18)

Jesus had left nine apostles behind when He ascended the mountain with Peter, James and John. These nine were now confronted with a demon-possessed lad. But they were

not strong enough to cast out the demon. This result was a lack of faith, prayer, and fasting (Vrs. 19,29). Jesus had given them power over unclean spirits (6:7). But now they falter, and the enemies prevail. Their faith was not equal to the exigency.

d. The Denounced Generation (Vr. 19)

“O faithless generation” – Christ is accusing them of being without faith (See Heb. 11:6). Did Jesus speak directly here to the father, or to His nine apostles, or to the scribes? No doubt He is talking to the whole multitude. In Matthew and Luke He calls them a “faithless and perverse generation” (Matt. 17:17; Luke 9:41). The scribes had no faith, the multitude merely was amazed at seeing Him and the apostles and the father had weak faith. “How long shall I be with you”? Here was holy displeasure at their unbelief and hardness of heart. “Suffer you” or bear with you. How great the unbelief of the people in view of the long time He had exercised His ministry among them.

e. The Demand of Faith (Vrs. 23-24)

“If thou canst, all things possible to the one believing”. “I believe; help thou my unbelief”. The whole question hinges upon believe. The difficulty was not in the power of Christ; but in the faith of the father. So Jesus strongly implies and affirms His own ability, but conditions the cure upon the father’s faith. The effect of the Lord’s reply was instantaneous, “Lord, I believe”. At once with earnestness he “cried out”. The best authorities omit “with tears”. But the father confessed that his own faith was weak and ineffective. The word for “help” in this verse is the same as the one translated “help” in verse 22. So he wanted the same help for his unbelief as for his son’s demon-possession. On the thought of unbelief, Dr. G. Campbell Morgan says: “The supreme interest of this valley scene is that of unbelief, revealed in different phrases. There were the scribes, willful and persistent unbelief; there was the father, unwilling unbelief; there was the boy, irresponsible unbelief; and there were the disciples, unconscious unbelief. The whole atmosphere was an unbelieving atmosphere”.

2. THE CURE PERFORMED (Vrs. 25-27)

a. He Rebuked the Spirit (Vr. 25)

“Thou dumb and deaf spirit, come out of him”. The prayer of the father was a prayer of faith. Jesus helps his faith and heals his son. Jesus thus connects the demon with his deafness and dumbness. Then Jesus says: “enter no more into him”. This is the only time Jesus gave such a charge to a demon.

b. He Released the Son (Vr. 26)

“...rent him sore and came out of him”. The kingdom of Satan is stirred into fierce activity by the coming near of the Kingdom of Christ. Someone has said that the spirit acts like an outgoing tenant, who cares not what mischief he does. So terrible was this last paroxysm that the lad “was as one dead”. Many looked upon him and said: “He is dead”.

c. He Raised the Son (Vr. 27)

“Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up; he arose”. While most of those present thought the lad was dead, Jesus lifts him by the hand and he is raised to restored life. This was the second exhibition of divine power; and was the completion of the miracle. See the

reviving power of the Master's touch (Matt. 17:7; Rev. 1:17). Luke (9:43) adds that "they were all amazed at the mighty power of God".

III. THE SEQUEL (Vrs. 28-29)

Jesus and His disciples now enter a house; and He holds a conversation with them regarding their inability to cast out the demon.

1. THE INTERROGATION (Vr. 28)

"Why could not we cast him out"? Mark here is very brief; Matthew is much fuller; and Luke omits this entirely. These apostles had cast out demons on other occasions; and now when they attempted, they failed. It was just natural to ask why the failure now.

2. THE INFORMATION (Vr. 29)

"...by prayer and fasting". "This kind" refers no doubt to the spirit, rather than the condition of the boy. So there must be grades among the spirits. This must have been one of the worst. As yet the apostles of Christ had not fasted (See 2:18). With "prayer and fasting" there is also the need of faith. Prayer and fasting would lead to that kind of faith that overcomes.

INSTRUCTION

1. Our Lord descended from the mountain to face Golgotha. Instead of power and glory He now faces weakness and shame. The lesson from this sign miracle is that the demon will not come out of Israel during the Lord's absence in the Acts Period, nor the Great Tribulation and the long intervening period of the Church, the Body of Christ. During these periods Israel will be thrown into many convulsions, and finally left for dead. But when Christ comes again, all will be restored to normal health and happiness.

2. The Lord does not look at the oratory of our prayers, how eloquent and long they may be; nor at the arithmetic, how many they may be; nor at the logic of them, how methodical they are; but at their Biblical and spiritual content, how much faith they contain.

3. Cramer says: "Unbelief is the greatest sin, hinders the greatest works of God and plunges the soul in condemnation".

4. Weak faith is nevertheless faith; so pray for its increase.

5. There is only one who has complete power over Satan and his kingdom and that is our Lord (Vr. 25; 1 Jn. 3:8; Rom. 8:37).

LESSON # 27 MARK 9:30-50 (Matt. 17:22-23; 18:1-14; Luke 9:44-50)

INTRODUCTION:

The ninth chapter of Mark opens with "The Transfiguration of Christ" recorded in verses 1-13. Then follows the incident at the foot of the mountain in which His disciples proved impotent in casting out the demon from a possessed boy. Jesus then performed the miracle (14-29). Jesus with His disciples leave the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi at the foot of Mt. Hermon, and go through Galilee, evidently along by-paths, for the express purpose of giving them further instruction relative to His passion. They listened, but did not understand His revelation. Then they come to Capernaum and to the house of Peter. This was Jesus' headquarters during His Galilean ministry; and in this neighborhood He performed mighty

miracles and spoke matchless messages. Our lesson for today has its setting in Capernaum, located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, on the plain of Gennesaret.

1. Principal Places: Province of Galilee, Capernaum.
2. Principal Persons: Twelve Apostles, Child, John.
3. Principal Purpose: To predict His coming passion and to present His concern for humility.

In our last lesson we saw a boy who was demon-possessed; a father who was greatly distraught; disciples that were utterly defeated; and scribes who were disputing among themselves.

INTERPRETATION:

I. PREDICTION CONCERNING DEATH AND RESURRECTION (30-32)

This is now the second time Jesus tells His disciples of His coming passion and resurrection (8:31). In both He is to be taken by wicked man, killed; but would rise again. From the regions of Hermon He now turned His steps once more toward Galilee. It was the last time He would visit the scene of so great a part of His ministry. The words “and passed” have the meaning of “by-ways” or aside from the more frequented roads. He wanted to remain incognito, travelling in a private and quiet manner toward Capernaum (Vr. 30).

1. His Humiliation

“The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men” (Vr. 31). As He now journeys with His disciples He teaches them three things concerning Himself and coming events. This deliverance was first of all done by the “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). This had been the discussion of sufferings and death on the mount (Luke 9:31). Humanly speaking, it was Judas who betrayed and delivered up his Master.

2. His Crucifixion (Vr. 31)

“And they shall kill Him”. The fact of His decease was the subject discussed by Moses and Elias with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:30-31). This was to be accomplished at Jerusalem.

3. His Resurrection (Vr. 31)

“He shall rise the third day”. The resurrection of Christ was the grand finale of His humiliation and crucifixion. If Christ did not rise then preaching and faith are vain; we are still in our sins: and those who have died in Christ have perished (1 Cor. 15:14,17,18). The Gospel of Christ is centered around His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The sequel to this revelation of Christ brought both ignorance and fear to His disciples (Vr. 32). Mark says they “were afraid”. Matthew adds “exceeding sorry”. His words concerning His violent death contradicted all their expectations. It struck such terror in them that they were afraid to question Him. Luke adds: “It was hid from them, that they perceived it not” (Luke 9:45). It was part of the divine plan that they should not understand.

II. PREDICTION CONCERNING DISCIPLESHIP AND REWARD (Vrs. 33-50)

Our Lord is soon to enter upon His great God-given mission – the tragedy and triumph of the Cross. He had spoken seriously of this to His disciples, but they had not understood Him. Instead, they were occupied with personal matters concerning their greatness in the Kingdom. This leads Jesus to the teaching of rebuke against self-seeking.

1. The Interrogation (Vrs. 33-34)

“What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way”? But they could not answer His searching question because it made them conscious of their self-seeking. They now come to Capernaum and enter into a house, most likely that of Peter. Matthew (17:24-27) relates the miracle in providing for the payment of the tribute money. We need to keep in mind here that these disciples, three of them, had just been on the Mount of Transfiguration, and had witnessed the glory of the kingdom reign of Christ. This scene was fresh in their minds. Some have condemned the disciples for their concept of the kingdom, as in the words of one expositor: “They still hugged their carnal conception of an earthly empire”. But Jesus never rebuked them for their conception of the kingdom, not even after their question in Acts 1:6. What they did not understand was that their King could not wear a crown without a cross. It is their self-centeredness and self-seeking ambitions that Jesus rebukes.

2. The Instruction (Vr. 35)

The desire to be first can only come from being last and servant of all. The path to the highest honors is through humility (Matt. 20:27; 23:12). So lowliness is the path to greatness; and, service is the path to sovereignty. Pride is never productive of pre-eminence in the Kingdom of God. Morison says: “The great sociological law of the kingdom of heaven is not this: Use thyself for thyself; still less is it this: use others for thyself, but it is this: Use thyself for others”.

3. The Illustration (Vrs. 36-37)

“And He took a child”. Jesus had on another occasion used a child as an object lesson (Matt. 18:3-4,10). Here in Matthew Jesus teaches that to be truly great one must become as little children, humble and unpretentious. Children are this naturally and the disciples are required to be this voluntarily. The lesson which Mark and the other Synoptists record is the duty of receiving what little children represent, an object of kind treatment. Self-esteem and disregard of others are first cousins. So true greatness is not in self-seeking but in self-sacrifice. Jesus is the great example (Phil. 2:5-11) A little child becomes a beautiful symbol of the true disciple who humbly, submissively, and confidently yields himself up to the Savior’s will, guidance, and protection. A little child represents simplicity, an absence of anything doubtful or lacking in genuineness; also sincerity, motives that are always clear and pure; and, sensitivity, a conscience tender and nature sympathetic. So that reception of such a child in Christ’s name was regarded as reception of Himself, and also of the Father who sent Christ.

4. The Interruption (Vrs. 38-42)

“...we saw one casting out demons in thy name, and he followeth us not”. From the subject of self-esteem, the Lord now meets intolerance. John was one of them who aspired to kingdom greatness (See 10:35-37). He now seems to want to change the subject and interrupts Jesus about a man casting out demons, but did not follow them. So he was forbidden (Vr.38). It seems that John having been convicted of selfishness, now wants to parade his zeal.

a. Its Reason (Vr. 38)

“We forbid him”. Here is that sectarian spirit that would forbid anyone preach unless he is one of us (Gal. 6:4; Phil. 1:15-18). Here is that pernicious exclusivism which narrows the ministry down to an exclusive sectarianism. “He followeth not us”. Here is a pernicious ecclesiasticism. If we do not follow certain men we are anathema and excluded from the ecclesiasticism. Note it says: “followeth not us”, not Thee. “Some are so outrageously wedded to their own creed that they would rather let sinners perish than suffer those who differ from them to become the instruments of their salvation. This is vanity and an evil disease”. – A. Clarke. W. Graham Scroggie remarks: “This is an old and vigorous evil and stains almost every page of church history. It set up the inquisition in Spain. It kindled the fires in Smithfield. It drove the Pilgrim Fathers across the seas. It silenced Richard Baxter. It flung John Bunyan for twelve years into Bedford Gaol. It drove John Wesley from the pulpit to the fields and it is still at work. It is the spirit of narrowness, exclusiveness, bigotry, intolerance; the view that ‘we are the people’ and that who does not think as we do, and do as we do, must be wrong; that whoever cannot pronounce our shibboleth, our test-word or party phrase, should be condemned and opposed. It is pathetic and tragic! If a man is Christ’s follower what does it matter whether or not he is our follower”!

b. Its Rebuke (Vrs. 39-40)

“Forbid him not”. Here Jesus rebukes both exclusiveism and ecclesiasticism; because His truth cannot be bottled up, nor circumscribed by walls of human devices. His truth will break out, and leave the dead formalism behind. So the great question is: Are we with Him or with some organization, some church body, some denomination or sect? We cannot claim as Christ did, to be the norm of truth and the test of reality. Christ after addressing Himself to the man in question (Vr. 39) lays down the general principle: “For he that is not against us is on our part”. Bishop Rule says: “Better a thousand times that the work of warring against Satan should be done by other hands, than not done at all”. We may have many surprises in a day to come to find that God has blessed not a few who did not wear our badge. (See Num. 11:24-29). There can be no neutrality in the contest between God and Satan.

c. Its Result (Vrs. 41-42)

Jesus now speaks of rewards in two categories – helping others and hindering others. The positive reward is: “Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water in my name”. The material value of a gift does not necessarily determine its spiritual significance. The impelling motive is: “because ye belong to Christ”. So the smallest service done in the name of Christ shall not go unrewarded. If a cup of cold water given in the name of Christ is rewarded; how much more the casting out of demons in His name. The negative is: “Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, ... it is better” if he were “cast into the sea”. So it is better to lose one’s life than ensnare another’s soul.

Dr. Scroggie says: “For a man to be at the bottom of the sea with a millstone round his neck would not necessarily do his soul any harm, but to live on earth to be an occasion of sin to others would do one’s soul irreparable damage”. This mode of drowning as a punishment is noted by Josephus (Antiq. 14:10,15). The millstone referred to here was not the small one usually turned by women (Matt. 24:41) but the larger one turned by a donkey.

5. The Illumination (Vrs. 43-50)

The Lord now illuminates the whole scene with the dire results of offence. From the harm done to others Jesus now passes to the harm one may do to himself. This section is considered by many expositors as most difficult of interpretation. It must, however, be seen in the context of its dispensational setting. Jesus is here talking about the Kingdom of Heaven. It can therefore have no reference directly to The Church, the Body of Christ.

a. Physical Surgery (Vrs. 43-48)

The Lord will now present truth relative to a prevention from total destruction. There is no need to spiritualize this truth. It has to do with a physical kingdom here on earth. This passage has a series of triplets:

(1) The “hand”, “foot”, “eye”. The “hand” stands for accomplishment; the “foot” for advancement; and the “eye” for aspiration.

(2) The statement: “Where their worm doeth not, and the fire is not quenched” occurs three times, Vrs. 44,46,48.

(3) The word “hell” occurs three times, Vrs. 43,45,47.

The English word “hell” is from the Anglo-Saxon word helan, to hide. It literally means: “a hidden place”. Hell is a translation of two Greek words – Geenna, and Hades. There are three Greek words in the N.T. which must be distinguished:

(1) Hades, meaning “the unseen world”. It occurs eleven times (Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; 1 Cor. 15:55; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14). It is translated “hell” in every place except 1 Cor. 15:55 where it is rendered “grave”. It is equivalent to the O.T. word “Sheol”. The word Sheol occurs 65 times and is rendered “grave”

(2) Tartarus – It occurs only in 2 Pet. 2:4. It is the place for fallen angels. Homer, the Greek epic poet describes it as subterranean, and is the prison of the Titans, or giants, who rebelled against Zeus.

(3) Geenna – This is a transliteration from the Hebrew word Gai Hinnom, from the Valley of Hinnom. Tophet is the Hebrew word, because it was a place in this valley. Geenna occurs some 12 times and is always rendered “hell” (Matt. 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; Jas. 3:6).

Originally this phrase: “The Gehenna of fire” was applied to the “Ravine of Hinnom” also called “Tophet” (2 Kings 23:10; Isa. 30:33; Josh. 18:16) on the south of Mount Zion. Its total length is a mile and a half. It is a deep, retired glen, shut in by rugged cliffs, with the bleak mountain sides rising over all. It became notorious in the times of Ahaz and Manasseh as the scene of the barbarous rites of Molech and Chemosh, when the idolatrous inhabitants of Jerusalem cast their sons and daughters into the red-hot arms of a monster idol of brass placed at the opening of the ravine (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chron. 28:3; Jer. 7:31). To put an end to these abominations the place was polluted by Josiah, who spread over it human bones and other corruptions (2 Kings 23:10,13,14) from which time it seems to have become the common cesspool or dump of the city.

It is to be carefully noted that it is the “worm dieth not” and “the fire is not quenched”, not that which is cast into it that is not burned or devoured forever. This place is not to be confused with “The Lake of Fire” (Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14,15).

b. Spiritual Seasoning (Vrs. 49-50)

We have here the two elements, “salt” and “fire”. Salt is a preservative, and fire is a purifier. The sacrifices in Israel were subjected both to salt and to fire (Lev. 2:13; 1:13). The “Day of the Lord” will declare what kind of work has been done (See Mal. 3:2,3; 4:1; 1 Cor. 3:13). There is a contrast here between “wood, hay, stubble” (1 Cor. 3:12) which will be cast into geena to be burned up; and “gold, silver, precious stones” which will abide the fire and be purged and preserved.

“Have salt in yourselves”. “Ye are the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13). Paul told the Colossians: “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6). Salt is that element that prevents disintegration and corruption and preserves soundness and health. It is only a lasting purity and preservation that can bring peace. Therefore “have peace one with another”. So “Have salt in YOURSELVES, and peace one with ANOTHER”. This will never make for an ambitious and contentious spirit (Vr. 33), or an uncharitable zeal (Vr. 38).

INSTRUCTION:

1. We shall not be permitted to behold and enjoy the glories of our Lord before beholding His sufferings (2 Tim. 2:12)
2. The believer must beware of pride and ambition, and of seeking after greatness and pre-eminence. Such a course leads to strife and contention (Jer. 45:5; 2 Cor. 12:7).
3. It is the design of God that believers should have a saving and preserving influence within them – the grace of God (2 Cor. 12:9).
4. Believers are not machines, but moral beings who are required “to work out our own salvation” (Phil. 2:12-13; Rom. 12:1-2).
5. “In the kingdom of humility there is no contention. The more humble and simple we are, the nearer we are to the Saviour” – Gossner.

LESSON # 28 MARK 10:1-16 (Matt. 19:1-12; 13-15; Luke 18:15-17)

INTRODUCTION:

In this chapter we have Mark’s summary account of the Lord’s last journey to Jerusalem. He takes His final departure from Galilee, and passes through Perea. Here He lays down the laws concerning divorce; receives and blesses little children; tests the rich young ruler; gives His discourse on riches and forsaking all for His sake; foretells His death and resurrection for the third time; hears and discourses upon the ambitious request of James and John. After passing to the west of Jordan, He heals Bartimaeus at Jericho.

1. Principal Places: Coasts of Judea, The Jordan River, A house.
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Pharisees, Young children, Disciples.
3. Principal Purpose: To show forth the ideals of marriage in both parents and children, relating them to the Biblical concept.

Between Mark 9:50 and 10:1 there lies a period of some three or four months, which were full of ministry and message by our Lord. This period is passed over by Mark; but is

recorded by John chs. 7-12; and by Luke chs. 9:51-18:14. Why Matthew and Mark pass over most of the Lord's ministry in Perea is not known. Both Matthew and Mark relate principally the Galilean ministry of Jesus; while the events in Perea and Judea are related principally by Luke and John.

“And He arose from thence” (Vr.1); from Galilee (9:30) and especially from Capernaum (9:33), which was the center of His missionary ministry in Galilee. “Into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan”. This country was called Perea, and was under Herod Antipas. Thus He came to the borders of Judea by way of Perea, and not by way of Samaria. Here the people come to Him as they had done before and “He taught them again”.

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE MATTER OF MARRIAGE (Vrs. 1-12)

Mark here begins to relate a new mode of opposition to Jesus by the Pharisees. They had found fault with Him for violating the law (2:24); and transgressing the traditions of the elders (7:5); had referred His power to Beelzebub (3:22); and had demanded a sign from heaven (8:11; Matt. 12:38). But in every instance they had met with almost signal failure. Now they seek to entangle Him in a controversy which they thought would be impossible to answer without antagonizing one or another party. The question is now a moral one relating to marriage.

1. Interrogations (Vrs. 2-3)

a. By the Pharisees

“Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife”; or as Matthew puts it: “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause” (Matt. 19:3). Jesus is now in Perea, a territory over which Herod ruled. Herod had put away his wife for no other reason than that he wanted to marry Herodias, his brother's wife. It was because John the Baptist protested against this that he lost his life. Now the Pharisees expect to put the Lord on the horns of a dilemma. If He agreed with Herod's act it could easily be used against Him. And if He condemned it, that could be used to inflame the Herodians. So in any event the Pharisees hoped to trap Jesus this time, and cause Him embarrassment and curtail His influence. There were two rival schools of thought among the Jews on the matter of divorce. The followers of Rabbi Hillel held that anything that displeased a husband in his wife gave him the right to divorce her. The followers of Rabbi Shammai held that “uncleanness” in Deut. 24:1 referred to unchastity and therefore denied the right to divorce a wife except for adultery. The Pharisees asked this question, not for information, but for temptation. “Nothing is lawful to any man who doubts its lawfulness” – Farrar.

b. By the Lord (Vr. 3)

“What did Moses command you”? The Lord is equal to the occasion. He is greater than Moses. He knew the hardness of their hearts. Here He sanctions the divine authority of Moses and brings the Pharisees to the statement by Moses that was the cause of their discussions.

2. Information (Vrs. 4-9)

a. By the Pharisees (Vr.4)

“Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement and to put her away” (Deut. 24:1). The Pharisees admit that Moses did not command, but only “suffered or permitted a bill of divorcement to be given. Deut. 24:1-4 teaches that if a husband puts away his wife and she is united in marriage to another man, he can never take her again to himself. For him she has been defiled. So the bill of divorcement was irrevocable.

b. By the Lord (Vrs. 5-9)

Jesus now answers and says that it was for the depraved and low condition of society that caused Moses to make this rule to regulate, not to introduce easy divorces (Vr. 5). The Lord then goes back to the original creation of Adam and Eve and gives the Pharisees God’s original intention and standard for marriage.

(1) The Essential Fact – “God made them male and female” (Vr. 6; Gen. 1:27). Jesus then goes beyond the law and bases the union of male and female on the original creation. Adam was both male and female in one body when he was first created. Later God took from Adam, not a rib, but a side part, and built a woman. Therefore in marriage a male and female are joined together again to make one complete human being, as Adam was at his creation. So they become a physiological unit. Eve was “bone” and “flesh” of Adam.

(2) The Experiential Fact – “Shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife” (Vr. 7; Gen. 2:24). According to the original intention and the Lord’s statement, marriage is to be the closest tie and the most indissoluble of all. Matt. 19:9 rebukes the adultery of Herod and all others in the severest terms. The relation between husband and wife is closer and stronger than even between parent and child.

(3) The Effectual Fact – “and they two shall be one flesh” (Vr. 8; Gen 2:24). They are united into one, the one being the part of the other. There should be an interest in all their relationships. They are members of each other and belong to each other (See 1 Cor. 7:4; Eph. 5:28-31). “What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder” (Vr.9). No man has a right to destroy such a union. Only one cause was given by our Lord as a ground of divorce, namely fornication (Matt. 5:32). Paul makes the desertion because of distress, of a husband or wife the ground of divorce (See 1 Cor. 7:15). God being the author of marriage, it is of divine origin. What God therefore has instituted, man must not sever. Death alone should sever this union (Rom. 7:1-3).

3. Instruction (Vrs. 10-12)

Jesus and His disciples now withdraw into a house. The disciples interrogate Jesus for more information about the subject of divorce. They seemingly did not fully understand. Mark notes several confidential words spoken by Jesus in a house: (1) the power of casting out demons (9:28-29); (2) The great in the Kingdom of Heaven (9:33-37); and here (3) the law of marriage. Jesus then teaches His disciples that if either husband or wife put away their mate, they commit adultery (Vrs. 11-12). When the disciples heard this they say: “If the case of a man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry” (Matt. 19:10). The Lord answers by citing the case of celibates (“eunuchs” – castrated males, or males born without external genitals”. Some are celibates through natural cause; others through force of circumstance; and others by voluntary celibacy

(Matt. 19:12). These would be exempt from marriage. Otherwise marriage is a divine institution for the propagation of the human race.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan says: “When I hear of women’s sphere, I am always inclined to remind those who speak of it, that she has no sphere. I will immediately add to that, neither has a man a sphere. The sphere of Divine expression is the unity of man and woman, in which she is a hemisphere and he a hemisphere. “Male and female created He them”. That is the eternal purpose underlying the Divine thought and conception”.

There is a fine allegorical representation of marriage on an antique gem belonging to the Duke of Marlborough. It presents the marriage of Cupid and Psyche. (1) Both are winged, to show the alacrity with which husband and wife should help each other; (2) Both are veiled, to show the modesty attending this relation; (3) Hyman or marriage holds a lighted torch, leading them by a chain, to show they are unitedly led by pure love; (4) The chain is not of iron or brass, but of pearls, indicating that they are not slaves, but willing lovers; (5) They hold a dove, an emblem of innocence and fidelity; (6) A winged cupid has gone before to prepare a feast of love; (7) Another comes behind with ripe fruits to place in their hands, a promise of happiness in children; (8) The genius of love follows them, with wings of feathers shriveled, to intimate that love is never to fly away, but ever to abide with them.

II. THE CHILDREN’S CHARTER (Vrs. 13-16)

From the moral problem of marriage we now come to the social problem of parents and children.

1. Recognition (Vr. 13a)

“brought young children that He should touch them”. We are not told who brought these children to Jesus, but most likely it was their mothers. Matthew adds: “that He should lay His hands upon them and pray for them” (19:13). Hebrew mothers were accustomed, in this manner, to seek a blessing for their children from the rabbis. The Talmud says: “After the father of the child had laid his hands on his child’s head, he led him to the elders, one by one, and they also blessed him and prayed that he might grow up famous in the law, faithful in marriage, and abundant in good works”. Jacob put his hands upon his two grandsons of Joseph and blessed them (Gen. 48:14).

It was the patient , gentle influence of Monica which turned her gifted son Augustine from a profligate to a saint. Abraham Lincoln confessed that all he had and all he ever hoped to become was through the influence of his Godly mother. None are so small or so young but what they need the touch of the Master’s hand.

2. Rejection (Vr. 13b)

“his disciples rebuked those that brought them”. And this in spite of the stern and solemn warning about putting a stumbling-block in the way of a little one (Matt. 18:6). Why did the disciples rebuke the parents? Why did they try to hinder the children from coming to Christ? Prof. Warfield says: “Because the children did not need healing and could not receive instruction”.

3. Revelation (Vrs. 14-15)

“For of such is the kingdom of God”. Here we see the Lord defending the children. He is indeed the children’s friend. “Feed my lambs” (Jn. 21:15) was the charge given to Peter by the Chief Shepherd. When Jesus said: “Of such is the Kingdom of God” He rescued the child from the neglect and contempt with which he was regarded in the ancient world. He says: “of such”, showing that it is not to children only, but to all who have the simplicity and the faith of a little child. Jesus saw in little children symbols of the character, disposition, and conduct of true believers. They were also the most susceptible to the gospel upon arriving to years of accountability. Since all were made sinners through Adam and since Christ died for Adam’s sin, we conclude that those who die before committing actual transgression and rejection of Jesus Christ, are saved by the blood of Christ. See Rom. 5:12-19. Some build infant baptism on this passage. But the passage cannot be regarded as an argument for it, an illustration of it, or as a kernel containing its germ. This is really an argument against infant baptism because they came and went away without any act or use of water. Rather this passage teaches that we should pray for our little ones, instruct them and lead them to Jesus.

4. Reception (Vr. 16)

“And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them”. Jesus “folded them in His arms”. Twice we read of our Lord taking persons into His arms and both times they are children (See Mk. 9:36; 10:16). Some of the best manuscripts say that He “fervently blessed them”. The prophet Zechariah predicts that in a coming day there will be a beautiful scene: “And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof” (8:5). This will take place in Jerusalem in the coming Kingdom of Heaven.

INSTRUCTION:

- 1, Every age has its Pharisees whom the Devil uses to tempt and to test God’s people (2 Pet. 3:16; Rev. 2:9).
2. The Bible is our standard of appeal in all matters of our Christian faith. Jesus appealed to the O.T. as of Divine Authority. (John 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 3:2).
3. On account of the hardness and depravity of the heart God has given permissive laws which would alleviate the greater of two evils.
4. Christianity has elevated the woman in her original rights. In heathen countries she has been degraded; and among the Jews she was denied the right of divorcement, while she could be divorced for the most frivolous cause.
5. To love children and to feel an interest in their spiritual welfare is Christ-like, we must bring them to Him by prayer and instruction.

LESSON # 29 MARK 10:17-31 (Matt. 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Places: Coasts of Judea, west of Jordan (Vr.1), From a house (Vr. 10), “into the way” (Vr. 17)
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Ruler (Luke 18:18), Disciples, Peter.

3. Principal Purpose: To set forth the principles of rejection and reward in relation to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Lord is now presenting to us His encounter with a rich young ruler; then His discourse on riches; and the reward for those who have forsaken all for Christ's sake. This lesson seems to have occurred soon after Christ's blessing the little children (Matt. 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30). Mark again is the fullest and most vivid of all the Gospel narrators. Luke is the briefest. Matthew (19:28) however, records a promise to the twelve not found in the other evangelists.

INSTRUCTION:

I. THE RULER'S REFUSAL (Vrs. 17-22)

We are accustomed to study the ministry of our Lord in relation to the poor, the blind, the halt, the leper, the demon-possessed, and the dead. But here we find Him discoursing with a rich young ruler. In the eye of man this young ruler was perfect. His life had many virtues and beautiful characteristics and yet the Lord had to say: "One thing thou lackest". One match may cause a world war. One little thing can make a world of difference. This ruler was young, noble, wealthy, strong, courteous, educated, cultured and religious. He displayed a degree of moral earnestness. He came "running and kneeling" – speed and homage. He employed the language of veneration – "Good Master" shows character and authority. He was religiously inclined. He knew the Law and kept it.

1. A Sincere Request (Vr. 17)

"What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life"? It is Mark alone who tells us that he "came running and kneeled". Though this young ruler of a synagogue had all that the world might consider sufficient for happiness; yet he lacked something. He may have heard Jesus discourse on little children and the kingdom. Like the Pharisees and others he did not come "tempting Him" (Vr. 2) but with reverence and desire to be taught. "What good thing" says Matthew. He must have felt a lack in his life that kept him from inheriting eternal life.

2. A Strange Rebuke (Vr. 18)

"Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God". The young ruler had just addressed our Lord as "Good Master". Jesus was not making this interrogation to evade the vital question of the young man, but to give the necessary foundation for His answer, namely that absolute goodness resides in God only. Therefore if Jesus is "good" He is also God. The Lord is saying to him: "You falsely call me "Good Master" unless you recognize that I came from God and that deity resides in me". So this young ruler falsely called Him "Good Master" unless he acknowledges that He has come from God and is God.

John Calvin puts the emphasis upon the word "why". "Dost thou know what thou meanest when thou givest me this appellation"? This ruler must have considered Jesus just another good Rabbi.

Stier puts the Lord's question into two pointed syllogisms: "Either (1) there is none good but God – Christ is good, therefore Christ is God; or (2) there is none good but God – Christ is not God, therefore Christ is not good".

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan says: “When Jesus asked that question He meant one of two things. There is no logical escape from it. He either meant, I am not good, or I am God. He either meant to tell him He was not good, or He claimed Deity”.

3. A Searching Reply (Vrs. 19-21)

“Thou knowest the commandments”. Jesus now brings him right to the Law. Under the Law God had said to Israel: “Ye shall do my judgments and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein; I am the Lord your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do he shall live in them; I am the Lord” (Lev. 18:4-5).

a. The Lord’s Declaration (Vr. 19)

With rapid fire Jesus now recites several of the commandments, but not in order. He relates the seventh, sixth, eighth, ninth and fifth. He particularly omits the tenth which deals with covetousness, that He might convict him out of his own mouth when he makes his answer. “Defraud not” Jesus adds. The word means “deprive none of what is theirs”. The same word occurs in 1 Cor. 6:7,8; 7:5; 1 Tim. 6:5; James 5:4. It may have been given to give the sum of what these commandments teach, or probably, of the tenth commandment. Perhaps this young man had committed “corban” (See Lesson #21). The Law could indeed give life to all who perfectly kept it. See Luke 10:28; John 12:50. But to those who could not keep it, it was fitted to make men sinners (Rom. 7:7-9). Jesus quotes as specimens from the Decalogue things that pertain between man and man. This is where the young man no doubt was deficient.

b. The Ruler’s Devotion (Vr. 20)

“...all these have I observed from my youth”. This ruler seems to be sincere, moral, and upright in his answer. But yet he felt a lack of something that would give him assurance of eternal life.

c. The Lord’s Demand (Vr. 21)

“One thing thou lackest – go, sell, give”. In order to rightly interpret this story one must recognize the dispensation under which this young man lived. He lived under Law, and in order to have eternal life by Law one must keep all the commandments perfectly. James says: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all (2:10). Under the Law it is DO; under grace it is DONE. When Israel entered the land of Canaan, each one received an inheritance sufficient for a living (See Joshua Chs. 13-22). This could not be sold outright. It could only be mortgaged till the next jubilee. No one could acquire much land without encroaching on the allotment of others. That is why it is so difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom. He must of necessity lose his riches and enter on the basis of his own inheritance. When the kingdom is finally established everyone will come in only on his own allotment. This is what troubled the rich young ruler. He was not willing to give up these riches. This has no bearing on our present conduct for our inheritance is among the celestials: “in the heavenlies”. (See Eph. 1:3).

All human kingdoms have a high place for those who have wealth. They have no difficulty in entering. The wealth of the world is the controlling factor in government. Policies are dictated, laws passed, treaties made and wars are fought, all to protect invested capital and to promote the accumulation of wealth. The majority of human kind have become the slaves of the

minority, who hold in bondage by the bonds of gold and silver. There is no human remedy. In God's kingdom all will be reversed.

4. A Solemn Result (Vr. 22)

Jesus had just told this young ruler to “go, sell, and give to the poor” then, to “take up the cross and follow me”. Our Lord had presented to him a life of self-renunciation, self-denial, and discipleship of the despised Nazarene. But the young man became “sad” and “went away grieved”. The truth makes men sad, mad, or glad. Naaman went away in a rage (2 Kings 5:12); Gehazi went out as a leper (2 Kgs. 5:27); the Ethiopian “went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39), and this ruler went away sad. This young man was covetous and self-righteous. He was convicted, but not converted. Christ gave him the word of life, but the deceitfulness of riches choked it (Matt. 13:22). He “went away grieved”. The Greek is “lowering” as applied to the sky. For all who reject Christ there is foul weather ahead. This word occurs in one other place (Matt. 16:3): “for the sky is red and lowering”. Scripture is silent concerning the finale of this young man; but very shortly hundreds in Jerusalem sold their good and laid them at the apostle's feet (Acts 4:34-37).

II. THE RICH REJECTED (Vrs. 23-27)

The Lord now brings a message on riches to His disciples, which was occasioned by the incident which had just occurred. “Jesus looked round about”. Mark notices especially the looks and gestures of Jesus as we have seen.

1. Affirmations of the Lord (Vrs. 23-25)

“How hard it is for them that have riches to enter into the kingdom of God”.

Bengel observes that the countenance of Christ is often described as moved and affected by a deep and painful feeling for his hearers (Mk. 3:5,34; 8:33; Luke 6:10; 22:61). With difficulty shall a rich man become the subject and attain the blessings of the Kingdom age. The Lord addresses His disciples as “children” to soften the sadness and sternness of His words. It is an appellation of affection. Before the Kingdom Age comes the Lord will destroy the great city of Babylon with all its riches (See Rev. chs. 17&18).

2. Astonishment of the Disciples (Vrs. 24,26)

“...astonished at His words. ... astonished out of measure”. They were filled with amazement at what He said. They were astonished at first at His words; now they are exceedingly, or excessively amazed. “Who then can be saved”? Here is an abrupt question of strong surprise. They had thoughts of a Kingdom with great power and wealth. So Jesus' words were the more amazing and difficult to accept.

3. Application by the Lord (Vrs. 25,27)

We have first an application by way of illustration and then a direct revelation. “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”. Here is a strong proverbial expression. This figure has been variously interpreted: - (1) Some have rendered it an “anchor rope”, as though the word “kamilon” was used and not the

word “kamelon”. This is very far-fetched. (2) Others think it refers to the side gate for foot passengers, close by the principal gate, called in the East “the eye of a needle”, or the little gate within the larger. (3) But it is better to understand the words literally, as an Oriental proverb. The Arabs have a proverb of an elephant going through a needle’s eye. Lightfoot refers to instances in the Talmud of similar proverbial expressions in regard to the elephant. In Matt. 23:24 we have the figure of “swallowing a camel”. This is a proverb expressing the greatest conceivable difficulty, the greatest human impossibility of a rich man entering the kingdom of God.

But what is impossible with men is possible with God (Vr. 27). It is only God who can break the spirit of covetousness, and change the heart and make the rich humble, believing, self-denying, and obedient. A rich man once said: “I owned \$50,000 and I was a happy man. Now \$500,000 owns me. It says “Run here” and I run. It says “Trust in me” and I trust in riches. “I am rich, unhappy and hanker for more”. “But” he was asked: “Why then do you not give away the \$450,000 and return to your happy state”? “Ah” said the man, “did you ever hold the handle of a galvanic battery? The more the juice the tighter the hold”. Beware of covetousness!

III. REFUSALS REWARDED (Vrs. 28-31)

This paragraph naturally follows what had just taken place. The disciples had seen the rich young man go away sorrowful; and, had heard Jesus talk on riches and the kingdom. Peter’s mind had been busy. And now he sees the opportunity to take advantage of the situation.

1. Peter’s Request (Vr. 28)

“...we have left all and have followed thee” and Matthew adds: “what shall we have therefore” (Matt. 19:27). Peter is saying in effect, when you called us we left all, our property and business, and followed Thee. They had forsaken all. None of them was rich; yet they had broken many fond ties and made many sacrifices. James and John, sons of Zebedee, had hired servants (1:20); Matthew was a man of some wealth (Luke 5:29).

2. Jesus’ Reply (Vrs. 29-31)

“He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, ... and in the age to come life eternal”. The answer of the Lord is in three parts:

a. A special promise to the twelve as given by Matt. 19:28. Those who have followed Him in the regeneration shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

b. A general promise to all the believers in the kingdom (Vrs. 29-30). No one has forsaken “house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands” for the Master and the message but what shall receive “an hundredfold in this life, and in the next life eternal. But there will be persecutions also. This has proven a stumbling block to many who try to apply this to the present age of grace. They have left all, but do not have a hundredth part of what they left. The reference is strictly confined to Jewish disciples in that era. After Pentecost the disciples had all things common, so that they had interest in hundreds of houses and lands (Acts 2:44; 4:32). Even widows had plenty. Our reward today is in the heavenlies.

c. A proverbial fact in regard to the final distribution of rewards (Vr. 31). “...first shall be last; and the last first”. God will exercise His sovereign pleasure as to first and last in the matter of rewards. This is illustrated by the parable of The Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16).

INSTRUCTION:

1. “A great fortune is great slavery”. - - Seneca
“He hath riches sufficient who hath enough to be charitable”. – Sir T. Browne
“Great abundance of riches cannot of any man be gathered and kept without sin”. – Erasmus
“Riches, for the most part, are hurtful to them that possess them”. – Plutarch
2. If we belong to Christ, and we do, then He can demand a complete surrender of all to him, our time, our talents, and our treasury. There should be a complete acquiescence of the human will in the divine, and an entire conformity to the divine requirement.
LESSON # 30 MARK 10:32-45 (Matt. 20:17-28; Luke 18:31-34)

INTRODUCTION

1. Principal Places: “Going up to Jerusalem”.
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Twelve Apostles, James, John.
3. Principal Purpose: To reveal that Jesus Christ, God’s Servant, became the supreme Sacrifice before He became the supreme Sovereign, and that His disciples must learn that humility precedes all honor in the Kingdom.

Christ is now fast approaching the culmination of His earthly career. We have seen Him come as the Son of David, presenting the kingdom in miracle and message, and rejected as King. Now He is presenting Himself as the Son of Abraham. Sacrifice is the dominant word ever before Him and this He endeavors to teach to His disciples. The Cross must precede the Crown; sacrifice must be accompanied by self-denial. Both will lead to that kind of service that is pleasing in the eyes of the Lord.

“And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them”. Jerusalem was about four thousand feet higher than the Jordan Valley, so it could be said that He was going up to Jerusalem. We have the indications of a continuous journey from Galilee to Judea, though it was interrupted by discourses and miracles. But He does not make His miraculous power prominent on this last journey. Jesus was the head leading them forward. There seems to be a solemn determination in His gait which “amazed” His followers and made them “afraid”. We have here the intensity of purpose. Both at the outset of His life as well as at the close, He had one all-absorbing purpose: “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business”? and “He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem”(Luke 2:49; 9:51). Cowper sings: “The Savior, what a noble flame was kindled in his breast, when, hastening to Jerusalem, He marched before the rest”. It was the Passover Feast to which He was hastening.

INTERPRETATION:

1. CHRIST AND HIS CROSS (Vrs. 32-34)
 1. Preparation for the Message (Vr. 32)

“He took again the twelve and began to tell them what things should happen unto him”. He began again to relate what He had twice before told them (8:31; 9:31). But now He speaks more fully. Taking the twelve apart from the others, He tells them confidentially concerning the approaching crucifixion and resurrection. Before He had told them that He must

suffer; now He tells them that He must suffer at the coming Passover at Jerusalem. Before He had foretold in general terms His betrayal; now He foretells a double betrayal or delivering up: first to the chief priests and second by them to the Gentiles. Before He had told His death; now more particularly describes His crucifixion.

2. Prediction of the method (Vrs. 33-34)

Our Lord now gives a sevenfold prediction or prophesy of the things that were related to His crucifixion; and then announces His resurrection. This sevenfold prediction is divided into two parts among two classes of people – the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jews would perform a threefold part and the Gentiles a fourfold part.

Among His own people: First He would be delivered into the hands of the chief priests and the scribes; which constituted the Sanhedrim, the highest civil and ecclesiastical court of the Jews. Secondly, they would condemn Him to death: the Sanhedrim could pass sentence of death, but only the Roman governor could execute that sentence. Thirdly, He would be delivered to the Gentiles. Christ was first betrayed by one of His own apostles and then by the highest court of His nation.

Among the Gentiles He would be mocked, scourged, spit upon, and finally nailed to a cross. Then, as a gleam of light in this abysmal blackness He foretells His resurrection. The mocking is fulfilled in Ch. 15:16-21; the scourging in Ch.15:15; and the spitting in Ch. 15:19. The killing is recorded in Ch. 15:25. So both Jews and Gentiles are responsible for His death.

II. THE APOSTLES AND THEIR AMBITION (Vrs. 35-45)

This is an amazing sequel to what had just preceded. It shows how completely the apostles failed to comprehend the key to the entrance to the Kingdom (See Luke 18:34). The Lord had talked about a cross, but they talk about a crown. He had spoken of suffering, but they about reigning. He had said what was going to happen to Him but they talk about what they want.

1. The Request of Ambition (Vrs. 35-37)

“Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand, in the glory”. This is the bold request of James and John. Matthew tells us it was the mother who requested this for her sons. The Lord had told them that they would sit upon twelve thrones in the kingdom and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).

The right hand and the left hand were the highest and next to the highest places of honor in Eastern royal courts. The three who had been specially honored among the Apostles were Peter, James, and John. Perhaps they wanted higher places than Peter, fearing he would be the highest among the Apostles. There is in this request both selfishness and great faith. They had intense desire for pre-eminence in the coming glory; but at the same time a great faith in the King and Kingdom which would come in great power and glory. These disciples wanted to experience what Christ persistently refused to do – avoid the Cross and grasp the Crown. Every attempt of self-exaltation is after the similitude of Satan’s sin. He sought to lift himself out of creaturehood into Godhood. This was the reason for the “condemnation of the Devil” (1 Tim. 3:6). “Pride goeth before a fall”.

2. The Reply to Ambition (Vrs. 38-41)

“It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared”. How little they knew the cost of glory and the spiritual laws which govern the highest honors in the Kingdom. Jesus gently told them that prizes in a competition, or positions in a Kingdom, are not promised before-hand by an umpire or a servant, but given to those who win them. The sons of Zebedee wanted to be first and the ten were unwilling to be last. Such was the energy of the carnal nature in the twelve and in all who look for a Crown without the Cross.

“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?” (Vr. 38) “We can” (Vr. 39). “Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized” (Vr. 39). Both the cup and the baptism stand for His passion, the totality of His suffering in Gethsemane, at Gabbatha and on Gologotha. Scroggie thinks that the drinking of the cup is active and the baptism is passive.

The “cup” may represent the cup of internal suffering (Ch. 14:34-36; Jn. 18:11). The “cup” is a common figure in the Bible, sometimes representing Joy (Ps. 16:5; 23:5; 116:13) and sometimes sorrow (Ps. 11:6; 75:8; Isa. 51:17; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 16:19).

The “baptism” refers to the overwhelming external sufferings. Dr. Geo. Campbell, the Scotch scholar translates the phrase: “Can ye undergo an immersion like that which I must undergo”? We have such expressions as: “Plunged in affliction”, “immersed in suffering”, “overwhelmed with sorrow”. In the Scriptures we have such expressions as: “All thy waves and billows have gone over me” (Ps. 42:7); “I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me” (Ps. 69:2); “We went through fire and through water” (Ps. 66:12). The figurative expression involves a painful submersion into suffering and dying.

“We can”. This is an expression of mingled sincerity and self-confidence. “Ye shall indeed”. You will be called upon to pass through suffering and be partakers with me. James was beheaded (Acts 12:2) and John was banished to Patmos (Rev. Ch. 1). “To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give”. In the Kingdom all sovereignty will be based on service. None will rule there who have not suffered. When the ten heard what James and John requested they had mingled feelings of grief and indignation (Vr.41).

3. The Remedy for Ambition (Vrs. 42-45)

“... The Gentiles exercise lordship over them and their great ones exercise authority” (Vr. 42). Superiors in Gentile governments exercise it by force. Peter in his first Epistle warns the elders against “being lords over God’s heritage” (1 Pet. 5:3). Christ takes the Gentiles as an example. This would be a forceful argument because the Jews belittle the Gentiles, considering themselves in all things superior to them. “The Gentiles exercise lordship, ... exercise authority”. Superiority in worldly governments can only be sustained by force. The Gentiles lord it over their subjects, ruling in an oppressive manner.

“But it shall not be so among you”. The greatest must be ministers and the chiefest must be servants” (Vrs. 43-44). Entrance into the kingdom is free. Position in the kingdom depends upon the price that they are prepared to pay in sharing the glories of Christ the King. It is not favoritism, but fitness that decides the places of honor to be given. The more humble the service, the more exalted the greatness in God’s sight. The Greek word translated “minister” is diakonos, from whence we get the word deacon; and the word translated “servant” is from the

Greek word doulos or bond-slave. For the use of diakonos see Jn. 2:5,9; Luke 22:27; Acts 6:1,2; Rom. 13:4; Matt. 22:13; 1 Cor. 3:5. The second word “doulos” is a stronger word than diaconos, denoting a more humble service, the most self-denying labors.

“For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Vr. 45). The Lord having given the principle of greatness in The Kingdom; now gives the greatest pattern – Himself. He now enforces the precept and principle by His own example. He, the King of the Kingdom, and the Head of the Church, voluntarily entered upon the greatest humiliation, the most self-denying service. Sacrifice, self-denial, and the most humble service are avenues to glory. Neither Salome, nor her two sons knew the mind of Christ. Remember Paul’s admonition to the Philippians – “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5-8).

The word translated “ransom” is from the Greek word lutron, the price paid for letting loose. It occurs also in Matt. 20:28. A ransom was the price paid to redeem one from death (Exod. 21:30) or from slavery (Lev. 25:51). Christ came to give His life (Jn. 10:18). He gave His life for “many” in contrast to the one He gave.

INSTRUCTION:

1. “The tallest trees are most in the power of the winds, and ambitious men of the blasts of fortune” – Penn.
2. “Fling away ambition; by that sin the angels fell; how can man then, the image of his Maker, hope to win by it?” – Shakespeare.
3. Parents may desire the highest worldly positions for their children, from pride and ignorance.
4. Ambitious and envious feelings may creep into believer’s hearts.
5. Let us always serve the Lord with sacrifice, self-denial, and simplicity.
6. Humility is a foundation grace, and is necessary to true usefulness.

LESSON # 31 MARK 10:46-52 (Matt. 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Places: Jericho, Out of Jericho.
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Disciples, Blind Bartimaeus.
3. Principal Purpose: To reveal that men are blind in sin and need the Light of Life (John 8:12; 9:5).

The Setting: ... “came to Jericho, ... went out of Jericho”. Jericho signifies “the Fragrant Place”. It was a city of Benjamin (Jos. 18:21). It was the ancient stronghold of the Canaanites, taken by Joshua (Jos. Chs. 2,6). It was founded the second time under Hiel the Bethelite (1 Kings 16:34). It was visited by Elisha and Elijah before the latter “went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kings 2:4-15); and was, in the days of Christ, surrounded by towers and castles. Jericho was on a plain about five miles west of the Jordan, and six miles north of the Dead Sea. Near the

ancient city was “Elisha’s Fountain”. The city when Jesus visited it, had been rebuilt, and may have exceeded the ancient city in its splendor. It was also called “the City of Palm Trees” (Deut. 34:3). It had a school of the prophets (2 Kgs. 2:15-18). Jericho lay on a direct route from Perea to Jerusalem. It was also the residence of the publican, Zacchaeus (Luke 19:2). Today nearly the whole plain is waste and desolate. An Arab village, called Rihah, stands on the plain.

The three Gospel records differ in their account of the Lord’s healing blind men at Jericho. Matthew says: “And as they departed from Jericho, ... two blind men sitting by the wayside”. Luke says: “as He came nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man”. Mark says: “And as they came to Jericho, and as they went out of Jericho, blind Bartemaeus sat by the highway side”. Those who seek to harmonize these healings into one event have great trouble. We believe there were four blind men healed at Jericho. This solves all the problems and has a spiritual application. Most commentators are ignorant of Biblical Numerics and the Lord’s use of signs as He performed His miracles (See John 2:11. The word “miracles” should be “signs). The number four is a world number, and this miracle of opening four blind eyes is a sign of Jesus: “I am the light of the world” (Jn. 8:12). So there were four blind men healed at Jericho; one as He was nearing the city (Luke 18:35), Bar Timeus at His going out (Mk. 10:46), and two more at His going out (Matt. 20:29). For further details see Appendix 152 in The Companion Bible.

It is interesting to note that our Lord did not go down to Jericho, the city of the curse (Josh. 6:26) until He had been rejected. It seems that only Mary, of all the Lord’s disciples, had her eyes opened to the truth that He was to enter the place of the curse and die (See Matt. 26:12).

I. THE CASE PRESENTED (Vrs. 46-48)

“...blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the wayside begging”. The name Bartimaeus means “the son of Timaeus”. This is a surname or added name. This surname was common among the Jews. See such other names as Bartholomew (Matt. 10:3); Barjona (Matt. 16:17; Barabbas (Matt. 27:16); Barnabas (Acts 4:36); and Barjesus (Acts 13:6).

1. His Condition (Vr. 46)

“Blind ... begging”. Mark says “a great number of people” had now gathered at Jericho. These were pilgrims from Perea and Galilee meeting at this central point to go to the Passover at Jerusalem. There would be many blind beggars among these pilgrims who reaped a special harvest from the charity of the pilgrims. Bartimaeus was not an occasional beggar; he was a perpetual beggar. Being blind he was in those days incapacitated to do any work.

2. His Courage (Vrs. 47-48)

“Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me”. “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”. It was when this blind man “heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth” that passed by, he began to call upon Him as the Son of David. The Great Miracle-worker from Nazareth had become familiar to the sick and afflicted of Palestine. Jesus was both familiarly and contemptuously known as the inhabitant of Nazareth (Mk. 1:24; 14:67). But this blind man does not call on Him as The Nazarene, but as the royal descendant of David and successor to his throne – the Messiah (12:35). The angel of the Lord had applied this title to Joseph (Matt. 1:20). This blind man acknowledged the Messiahship of Jesus, and was heard as we shall see. On another occasion a Gentile woman called on Jesus as the “Son of David” and was not heard (Matt. 15:22-23). He cried: “Have mercy on me”. This is both a confession of his misery, unworthiness, and

helplessness, and an expression of confidence in the ability and willingness of Jesus to help him. This is the essence of prayer – our great need and His great help.

3. The Charge (Vr. 48)

“Many charged him that he should hold his peace”. Many admonished him sternly that he should be silent. Such cries may have seemed ill-timed and discourteous to the crowd. Archbishop Trench in his *Miracles* (pp. 343-344) says: “Here it has been often said, is the history of many a soul. When a man is in earnest about his salvation, and begins to cry that his eyes may be opened, that he may walk in his light who is the light of men, when he begins to despise the world and to be careless about riches, he will find infinite hindrances, and these not from professed enemies of the gospel of Christ, but from such as seem, like the multitude, to be with Jesus and on his side. Even they will try to stop his mouth, and to hinder an earnest crying to Him”. But in spite of charge by the crowd this blind man heard, cried, and believed.

II. THE CURE PERFORMED (Vrs. 49-52)

“Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole”.

1. He is Called (Vr. 49)

“Jesus commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, ... He calleth thee”. Jesus then stood still and said: “Call him”. Here is a graphic description of a wonderful scene. Here Divine condescension and simplicity mingle with the sublime command of Christ. Jesus not only recognized this blind man’s need, but rebuked the multitude who would silence him. But popular feeling often swings from one side to the other and so now the crowd says: “Be of good comfort, rise”. Cheer up, take courage in thy heart, rise from thy place, and go to Jesus. These words of the people are found only in Mark.

2. He Came (Vr. 50)

“...rose, and came to Jesus”. He cast aside his abba or upper garment, through eagerness and joy, that it might not hinder his speedy movement to the Great Healer. The Greek suggests that he leaped up in haste and expectation and came to Jesus with the least possible delay.

3. He Confessed (Vr. 51)

“What wilt thou that I should do unto thee”? “Lord, that I might receive my sight”. The Greek word translated “Lord” is “Rabboni”. This is a title of the greatest reverence. The same form was used by Mary Magdalene to her risen Lord (John 20:16). There were gradations of honor in this title – Rab, or Master was a title of respect; Rabbi, or my Master was of greater honor; and Rabboni, or my great Master, was the greatest honor of them all. Sight was the great desire of this man, and he came to the right source for Jesus is the Light of the World (John 8:12).

4. He was Cured (Vr. 52)

“And immediately he received his sight”. Jesus now says: “Go thy way” implying that his request was granted. His faith was sufficient for Jesus said: “thy faith hath made thee whole”. It had saved him in respect to bodily blindness. So immediately upon receiving sight, he

made good use of it for “he followed Jesus in the way”. If this is the same blind man as recorded by Luke (18:43) then he followed “glorifying God” and “gave praise to God”.

INSTRUCTION:

1. Spiritual sight can only come by the power of Deity, though faith.
2. Those seeking spiritual sight will meet with obstacles and opposition both from the world and from religion; but this should excite to greater desire for the spiritual cure.
3. The sinner today need not cry & plead for the mercy of God; for God has been adequately merciful in Jesus Christ. One needs only to accept the finished work of Christ. (Eph 2:5-8).
4. It should be a natural result to follow Jesus Christ after our eyes have been opened to see Him and His glorious work.

LESSON # 32 MARK 11:1-11 (Matt. 21:1-11; Luke 19:29-38; John 12:12-15).

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Places: Jerusalem, Bethphage (House of Unripe Figs), Bethany (House of Figs), Mt. of Olives.
2. Principal Persons: Two disciples, The Lord.
3. Principal Purpose: To fulfill the prophecy that His first Advent was to be one of lowliness, humility, and rejection (Psa. 118:25-26; Isa. 62:11; Zech. 9:9). He would first come in saving grace; then in saving glory.

We have now reached a week in the life of our Lord, which more than any other, is crowded with momentous events. Up to this time Jesus had carefully avoided, so far as possible, arousing public excitement. His miracles had been performed quietly, and nearly always He had requested those who were healed to say nothing about it. But now, He determined to enter Jerusalem publicly, and openly announce His claim to Messiahship.

The six days which follow our lesson for today, correspond to the six days of Creation; and form an era in time when a world is re-created and the fearful rulers of darkness are met, quelled, and triumphed over. It is a significant fact that taking the four Gospels together, more than one-quarter of the whole record of the life of Christ is taken up with the events of the last six days of His life on earth. The event we are about to consider is recorded in all four Gospels. This is now the Lord's last public ministry before His death; and the close of His prophetic ministry.

This event has been called The Triumphant Entry of Christ into Jerusalem. But it could better be called, His Tragic Entry. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan says: “So we see Him coming nigh, coming in the majesty of meekness, stripped of all those things which men usually associate with royalty; riding upon an ass. We are often told this was a royal thing to do; but let it be remembered that there was a clear distinction between animals upon which kings rode, even in the East, and the animal usually described as “a beast of burden” upon which our Lord rode as He came into the city. I suggest one method by which the meekness, the lowliness, the poverty, the absurdity of the entrance may be understood. In imagination think, not as a Hebrew, but as a Roman; and think of the triumphal entry of a Roman emperor into his city; and then look at this pageant of poverty, lacking all the things usually associated with royalty and greatness. A

procession of poverty, the scattering of the clothes the people wore, the broken branches of the trees, and the shouting of the Galilean mob! So He rode in the dignity of a great meekness, divested of all the things that humanity had for so long associated with Kingship and still associates with Kingship”.

Zechariah 9:9 records four features of Messiah’s First Advent:

(1) “Thy King cometh unto thee: He is just” (or was justified and vindicated – Isa. 45:21; 53:11; Jer. 23:5-6).

(2) “Having salvation” – Referring to His own death and sufferings out of which He was delivered and by which He became the Savior of others (Isa. 53:8,10,11).

(3) “Lowly” – afflicted and oppressed (Ps. 22:24; Isa. 53:4,7).

(4) “Riding upon an ass” – Fulfilled in our text.

Fulfillment of Dan. 9:25-26. Sir Robert Anderson in his book, *The Coming Prince* has calculated that exactly on the day when Christ rode into Jerusalem, these 69 weeks were fulfilled, and Christ went on to Calvary to be crucified.

The Lamb selected. The Law of the Passover required that the Lamb be selected on the 10th day of the first month, namely Nisan (our April) Exod. 12:3. Then it should be kept until the 14th day (Exod. 12:6). Then it was to be killed. Some think this entry into Jerusalem of Christ was like the selection of the lamb.

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE PREPARATION (Vrs. 1-6)

Jesus now comes with His disciples “to Jerusalem”, the goal of their journey from Jericho. Jerusalem means: “dwelling or foundation of Peace”. It was also known as Jebus (Judg. 19:10); and Salem (Ps. 76:2; Gen. 14:18); and City of David (2 Sam. 5:9); and The Holy City (Matt. 4:5; 27:53). It was the capital and most noted city in Palestine. During Jesus’ sojourn in Palestine He did not visit Jerusalem many times. Some think only about six or seven times. It was the temple rather than the city that drew Him for He was to fulfill the Law and to keep the festivals. At His first visit a sacrifice was offered for Him (Luke 2:22-24). And on this His last visit He Himself became the sacrifice. Just outside of Jerusalem on the slopes of the Mount of Olives lay the two villages of Bethpage and Bethany. The Mount of Olives is a high ridge east of Jerusalem, and parallel to the city; but separated from it by the valley of the Kedron.

1. Absolute Ownership of the Master (Vrs. 1-3)

The command to the two disciples: “He sendeth forth two of His disciples, . . . go your way”; the taking of the colt, “loose him and bring him”; the message to the owner, “the Lord hath need of him”; all reveal the autocratic power of Christ. As the King-Messiah He had a right to claim the service of the colt (1 Sam. 8:16) and as Jehovah it was His (Ps. 50:10). We do not know who the two disciples were that Jesus sent to bring the colt. Some think they were Peter and John (See 14:13 with Luke 22:8). They were to select a colt “whereon never man sat”. Animals for sacred purposes were selected from those which had never been used by man, ceremonially clean and unblemished (Num 19:2; Deut. 21:3; 1 Sam. 6:7). Jesus was born of a virgin and was buried in a new tomb (Matt. 1:25; Luke 23:53).

The ass here may represent lowliness, but also can be typical of redemption. The firstling of an ass must be ransomed with a lamb (Exod. 13:13). The animal He rode was a type of the ransomed, and the Lamb of God rode on him. Redemption, then a reigning Lamb.

2. Absolute Obedience of the Messengers (Vrs. 4-6)

“And they went their way”. As their Master had said, they find “the colt tied”. Matthew mentions “an ass tied and a colt with her” (21:2). Matthew pays special attention to the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy according to Zech. 9:9, where both animals are mentioned, though the colt only was needed. The question of those who stood by the colt asked: “What do ye, losing the colt”? This would indicate that Jesus had no pre-arranged understanding with the owner. However, the owner no doubt knew of Jesus, and quickly let the colt go.

II. THE PRESENTATION (Vrs. 7-11)

Our Lord’s presentation to the people is called The Triumphal Entry; but it could better be called The Tragic Entry. His Triumphal Entry will take place when He comes riding upon the white horse with the armies of Heaven following (Rev. 19:11-16). The Lord must fulfill a threefold office in His ministry, namely that of Prophet, and Priest, and Potentate. His entrance into Jerusalem, riding on the back of a colt, was His official presentation as a Prophet. The prophetic office was connected with humiliation, suffering, rejection, and sometimes death. In His heavenly ministry He functions as a Priest (Hebr. 7:15-25). When He comes again, riding on the white horse, He will fulfill the office of King or Potentate.

1. Riding Upon A Colt (Vr. 7)

“They brought the colt to Jesus, ... and He sat upon him”. “The Lord hath need of him”. What a paradox this presents. The cattle upon a thousand hills were His; and now He has need of the colt of an ass! What heights of glory and power, and what depths of self-abnegation and poverty are here brought together! They “cast their garments” on the colt for Jesus to sit upon them. Note what the captains did to Jehu when they proclaimed, “Jehu is king” (2 Kings 9:13). The horse was an animal of pride and war; the ass of humiliation and peace. It is significant that the Roman rulers seemingly took no notice of this procession into Jerusalem.

2. Rejoicing of the People (Vrs. 8-10)

3.

“Hosanna; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord”. There seem to be three groups here. The one group remove their outer garments (abbas or hykes, the cloak worn over the tunic). These they spread on the road before Him. Another group cut down branches and made a bed of straw, rushes or leaves as the original word means. The third group, those going before and after, shouted the acclaim of “Hosanna”. The word is made up of two Hebrew words, found in Ps. 118:25, and means “Save now”. It was a joyful acclamation and greeting. It was also an invocation of blessing on Jesus for Him “that cometh in the name of the Lord” and “Blessed be the kingdom of our father David”.

Palm branches were the symbols of joy and victory (Lev. 23:40; Rev. 7:9). The first “Hosanna” was for the King, and the second for His Kingdom. From Luke 19:37 and John 12:17-18 we learn that the reason why the people met Jesus with these royal honors so enthusiastically, was because of the miracles they had seen, especially the raising of Lazarus.

3. Rejection by the Pharisees (Ps. 118:22; Luke 19:39-40)

While the people at large honored Him and rejoiced, the leaders murmured and rejected Him. So we see the Servant of Jehovah coming in the majesty of meekness. He is stripped of all paraphernalia which men usually associate with royalty; riding upon the colt of an ass. This was truly a pageant of poverty”.

4. Retirement to Bethany (Vr. 11)

“...He went out unto Bethany with the twelve”. How significant that after He entered the city and temple, it says: “He had looked round about upon all things” and then left to go to Bethany, which also has been interpreted to mean: “House of rejection”. Matthew tells us that when He entered the city the people asked: “Who is this”? The answer was “Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee”. They may have expected that He would display some unmistakable sign and acclaim the scepter and ascend the throne of David. But they were disappointed. “He looked round about”. Of this Morgan says: “It was the look of investigation, the look of inquisition, the look of One who has the right so to look; the look of the supreme and final authority; it was also the look of the heart of an infinite compassion, the look of the eyes bedewed with tears”.

INSTRUCTION:

1. “Be Thou supreme, O Jesus Christ; Thy life transfigures mine; and through this veil of mortal flesh, Lord, let Thy splendors shine”.

2. “The Lord hath need” – an amazing fact. “He giveth to all life and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). In the light of Ps. 50:9-12 and Isa. 40:12-17 we greatly wonder.

3. The majority of these people acclaimed Christ, but did not accept Him.

4. The ass was by nature in the wilderness, in barren lands; it is scornful, heedless, restless, and searching (See Job 39:5-8). It was also an unclean animal, and condemned under the Law. Christ rode into Jerusalem on an ass; and was made a curse for us (Gal.3:13).

5. Our Lord displayed that He was meek and lowly in His salvation entrance into Jerusalem. How unbecoming then for those who claim to take up His cross and follow Him to be filled with pride, avarice, and worldly ambition (Phil. 2:3-5; Eph. 4:1-2).

LESSON # 33 MARK 11:12-22 (Matt. 21:18-19; 12-16; Luke 19:45-48)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Jesus, Scribes, Chief Priests, Peter, God.

2. Principal Places: Bethany, Jerusalem, Temple.

3. Principal Purpose: To reveal that Israel was not ready to receive either national or spiritual blessings.

Jesus now comes from Bethany with His disciples and enters the city of Jerusalem, the goal of His journey. Jerusalem signifies, “dwelling or foundation of peace”. It was also known as Jebus (Judg. 19:10); and Salem (Psa. 76:2; Gen. 14:18); “The City of David” (2 Sam. 5:9; “the Holy City” (Matt. 4:5; 27:53); and was the capitol and most noted city in Palestine.

The scene now changes. From the meek and lowly Nazarene, sitting upon a colt, we see the mighty God wielding His power of judgment over nature as well as men. He judges a fig tree and the men who merchandise in the temple.

Cursing and destruction were not the usual methods of our Lord. When Isaiah was denouncing the leaders of his day, and foretelling the Divine judgment that would befall them, he said: “Jehovah will rise up as in Mount Perazim, He will be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon; that He may do His work, His strange work, and bring to pass His act, His strange act” (Isa. 28:21).

Our lessons so far in this chapter cover three days. On the first day He entered the city on the colt, looked at the Temple, and then retired to Bethany. On the second day He went back to Jerusalem with His disciples, and then destroyed a fig tree, cleansed the Temple and in the evening left the city. On the third day He returned to Jerusalem, saw the withered fig tree, and instructs disciples. This last visit of our Lord to Jerusalem was official, it was solemn and condemnatory. This last visit is the great finale in the rejection of our Lord. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11). It will now be true as Matt. 21:43 says: “The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof”.

INTERPRETATION:

I. CURSING OF THE FIG TREE (Vrs. 12-14; 20-22).

When the Lord now comes “from Bethany, He was hungry” (Vr. 12). We do not know the circumstances. Maybe He spent the night fasting and arose before the morning meal. It is a proof of His humanity. He will now give proof of His deity. Hunger was a part of His humiliation.

1. The Pretension (Vr. 13)

“And seeing a fig tree ... He found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet”. There stood alone, a single fig tree, by the wayside (Matt. 21:19) having nothing but leaves. The leaves were an indication that there should be fruit; for the fruit came first. The fig season had not arrived as yet. It usually came in the month of June. So here was a lone fig tree putting forth leaves, and yet no fruit. This was the month of April. Here there was a mere fair profession without production. The fig tree was one of the most common and valuable trees of Palestine (Deut. 8:8); and was a symbol of peace and plenty (1 Kgs. 4:25). The development of the leaves was premature and unnatural. Its signs were false; its appearance deceptive. It was thus an apt emblem of the hypocritical nation. Israel, with their high profession, their show of ritual and formal worship, without the fruits of righteousness (Jer. 2:21; Luke 13:6-9). The Jews alone among the nations professed to be worshippers of Jehovah, but they were barren of fruit.

2. The Pronouncement (Vr. 14)

“No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever”. “And presently” or immediately “the fig tree withered” says Matt. (21:19). However, the disciples did not notice it until the next morning. This is the only miracle of judgment or destruction by Jesus on record. Some have been critical of Jesus for cursing an inanimate object such as this fig tree. However, it apparently was a useless tree, and after all Jesus was the one Who had created it (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16). The Messiah was to show His power over the material world. Thus the Lord exhibited at once a parable and a prophecy in action. The fig tree is a symbol of Israel’s national blessings. The barrenness of the

tree pictured Israel's national fruitlessness. The leaves pictured their externalism and sham. The cursing of the tree portended His rejection of the people who had rejected Him. "His disciples heard it". Mark notices this fact that at first they heard His words and later they would notice His work.

3. The Principle (Vrs. 20-22)

"They saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. ... Have faith in God". In the morning of the next day as they were coming to the city, they see how complete the curse of Jesus had been. It was a thoroughly blasted tree, dead in root, branch, and leaves. It was Peter who called to attention the matter of the fig tree. This is one of the special references to Peter in this Gospel which confirms the common opinion that Mark wrote under his direction. They were to "have faith in God" as the personal source of miraculous power. Faith is not sense, nor sight, nor reason, but simply taking God at His word, believing the truth. Faith makes visible things that are invisible, absent things present, and things that are far off to be very near. Faith is trust or confidence in God, apprehended under the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Faith is the herald of every blessing from God.

II. CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE (15-19)

The scene now changes again. We see now the mighty God wielding His power over sin in His Father's House of Prayer. This is the second time He cleanses the Temple (See Jn. 2:13-17). We have seen the Lord as the Prophet coming as a meek and lowly Nazarene sitting upon a colt riding into Jerusalem. We have also seen Him as the Potentate cursing the fig tree, an emblem of Israel nationally. Now He comes as a Priest to cleanse His Father's Temple. He gives now the final judgment on the spiritual side of Israel's apostasy by entering the Sanctuary and driving out the traders. Covetousness is leaven and idolatry (1 Cor. 5:10; Col. 3:5). The Passover was approaching so He cleanses the Father's House of leaven, and rebukes them for worshipping money instead of praising the Lord. Temple trade was conducted in the Court of the Gentiles ostensibly for the benefit of the worshippers. There were dealers in animals for sacrifice; money changers to accommodate those who had foreign money, as only Jewish currency was acceptable in the Temple.

1. The Rebuke (Vrs. 15-16)

"... cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves". With a flaming soul and holy anger, He found the Temple overrun with mercenary traffic of all kinds. It was noisy with yelling hucksters, and crowded with greedy and gullible merchants. The House of Prayer must not be a place of trickery and thievery. For the convenience of Jews and proselytes coming from a distance there were sacrificial animals, incense, oil, wine, and other commodities for the service and sacrifices. They also had to exchange their Roman, Greek and Eastern money for the coin required. For the use of doves see Lev. 12:6,8; Luke 2:24; See also Matt. 17:24-27. They were also using the temple courts as a short cut from one part of the city to another. He rebuked them for using the courts as public streets, and forbade any such traffic.

2. The Reason (Vr. 17)

"My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer. ... made it a den of thieves" (See Isa. 56:7; Jer. 7:11). The Temple was dedicated as a sacred place of prayer for all people. It was to be a place of inestimable privileges, holy obligations and high expectations.

But the traffickers had made it a den of robbers and bandits. What our Lord alluded to is one of “those foul caves which He had so often seen, where brigands wrangled over their ill-gotten gains” – Farrar. This cleansing would point out to the Jews the corrupt and decayed character of their temple service, and that its fall, with that of the theocracy and begun. Prayer was a principal part of worship (See 1 Kings 8:33,35,38). We have here an adumbration of Mal. 3:1-3 when “the messenger of the covenant” would come to the temple for purification (See Matt. 3:12).

3. The Reaction (Vrs. 18-19)

“The Scribes and Chief Priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him”. Mark omits the healing of the lame man and the children crying hosanna, as mentioned by Matthew 21:14-16). The leaders saw that their own influence, authority and gains were endangered by the works and teaching of Jesus; so they seek to put Him out of the way. But they “feared Him” because He was a powerful teacher and miracle-worker. “All the people was astonished at his doctrine”.

INSTRUCTION:

1. It is not enough that we have an outward profession and an appearance of fruitfulness; we must bear fruit, if we would meet our Lord’s approval (Matt. 7:20-23).

2. It is a serious thing to defile the temple of God, which Paul says is our body (See 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 3:16-17).

3. The miracles and messages of Christ should strengthen our faith and encourage our prayers (Phil 4:6; Hebr. 7:25).

LESSON # 34 MARK 11:22-33 (Matt. 21:23-27; Luke 20:1-8)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Jesus, God, Disciples, Chief Priests, Scribes, Elders.

2. Principal Places: Jerusalem, Temple.

3. Principal Purpose: To emphasize the necessity of faith, prayer, and forgiveness; and to answer the challenge of Christ’s authority.

We enter now upon a section which the Dr. G. Campbell Morgan calls the “dark background of hostility”. The Lord is now seen to be acting in condemnation and punishment. He will be in the midst of His foes up to and including His crucifixion. The discourse and dialogue which now we have before us follow upon the two judgments of Jesus, namely, cursing of the fig tree, and cleansing of the Temple.

INTERPRETATION:

I. DISCOURSE ON FAITH, PRAYER AND FORGIVENESS (Vrs. 22-26)

This discourse follows upon Peter’s observation that the fig tree was withered away from the roots and up.

1. As Seen in a Right Relation to God (Vrs. 22-24)

“Have faith in God”. This is a strong expression which says, hold a strong and steadfast trust and confidence in God. “...shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea”.

This was a proverbial expression for something very difficult. The Rabbis, who could solve questions of great difficulty, were called ‘rooters up of mountains’ or a ‘remover of mountains’. Lightfoot says: “They called Rabbah Bar Nachmani, a rooter up of mountains, because he had a piercing judgment”. There is a close connection between the fig tree – Israel politically – and the mountain – Rome’s oppressive tyranny. If Israel would have had faith in God, the Roman oppressors would have been scattered among the nations (the sea), and Israel would have been free. The word translated “doubt” means “to discriminate, distinguish, discern (Matt. 16:3; Acts 15:9; 1 Cor. 11:29). Someone has said: “It is not possible to pray with full persuasion that we shall receive, without first being satisfied that what we ask is according to the will of God. This we cannot know without divine revelation”.

Prayer is the vey language of faith, so Jesus passes on to speak concerning prayer (Vr. 24). True prayer is inspired by God, and is always in the name of Christ (Jn. 14:13). We are to exercise childlike faith and “believe that ye receive them”. The answer to prayer may not be immediate, but the promise of an answer is always immediate. See Dan. 9:3,23,25.

2. As Seen in a Right Relation to Man (Vrs. 25-26)

“When ye stand praying, forgive”. There were several postures in prayer among the Jews. There was standing in the instance of Hannah (1 Sam. 1:26); and of the Pharisee (Luke 18:11). There was also the solemnity and humiliation expressed in kneeling in the instance of Solomon (1 Kgs. 8:54; Dan. 6:10). There was also prostration as seen in Joshua (7:6), and Elijah (1 Kgs. 18:42).

Faith in God would lead to forgiveness, one of the characteristics of godliness. They were to exercise the spirit of forgiveness as an essential condition for God to forgive them. This is the positive side of forgiveness. “But if ye do not forgive” (Vr. 26) then the negative side comes into play, and God will not forgive. So the spirit of forgiveness is essential to acceptable prayer, and an evidence of forgiven sin. Faith, prayer, and forgiveness in this context are set in the Kingdom of Heaven message. We, today, in the Church, the Body of Christ have “forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7). We are to be “forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32). In Israel, nationally, forgiveness was on a much lower level. It depended on their response and could be revoked. There are no conditions, no qualifications, and no demands specifically given us to fulfill; except to remember that God has for Christ’s sake forgiven us. Much confusion here would be dispelled if we see our exalted position in grace, and revel in it, and not drag it down to the precarious position set forth here. This is not the rich and redundant favor which is ours today in Christ Jesus.

II. DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE LEADERS AND JESUS ON AUTHORITY (Vrs. 27-33)

The three accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are very similar. Mark is the most vivid. Jesus and His disciples are now walking by the chief priests, scribes, and elders (Vr. 27). These three classes composed the Sanhedrim, the highest ecclesiastical court of the Jews. (See again

1:22; 7:3; 8:31). The elders acted in concert as a political body in the time of the Exodus (Exod. 19:7; Deut. 31:9). They exercised authority under the Judges (Judg. 2:7; 1 Sam. 4:3); also under the Kings (1 Sam. 30:26; 1 Chron. 21:16; 2 Sam 17:4), and during the Captivity (Jer. 29:1; Ezek 8:1) and after the return (Ezra 5:5; 6:7,14; 10:8,14) and under the Maccabees (1 Macc. 12:6; 2 Macc. 1:10). The leaders of the nation laid great claim to their powers of debate; so they deemed it best to lay a snare for Him. The question itself seemed innocent enough; and had they honestly asked for information, He doubtless would have given it to them. He seldom listened to men's mere words.

1. The Leader's Question (Vr. 28)

“Who gave Thee this authority to do these things”? “By what authority”? Are you a Priest, Scribe, Prophet, Rabbi, or what? The word translated “authority” is the Greek word exousia which means “delegated power”, or the liberty and right to put forth power. In this verse they challenge Jesus in religious matters; in 12:14 they challenge Him on a civil matter; and in 12:23 on a domestic matter. By “these things” is no doubt meant the cleansing of the Temple, performing miracles and teaching. It was the Sanhedrim who authorized teachers in the Temple and tried false prophets; but Jesus had not been authorized by them. The Mosaic Law had given directions for the discovery, rejection and death of false prophets (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22). Their questions were legitimate, but their motive was wrong for they wished to entrap Him. (Luke 19:47). But His works and doctrines were evidences that He was the Messiah, and that He came from God (Jn. 3:2; 10:24,25,37,38; 12:37).

2. The Lord's Question (Vrs. 29-30)

“The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men”? In an indirect way the question of John contained the answer that they desired. If the Baptist was commissioned by God to prepare His way; surely then His authority must far exceed that of John, for John renounced himself in favor of Jesus, saying he was not worthy to untie his shoe string (1:7). John had distinctly testified to the Messianic authority of Christ (Jn. 1:29-34,36). Did John act by authority of God, or by his own? Was he a true prophet or a false one? This was a fundamental question, really involving the question they asked. So if they acknowledge John as a prophet they must acknowledge Him.

3. The Leader's Reasoning (Vrs. 31-32)

“From heaven ... Why then did ye not believe him”? “Of men ... feared the people”. To this latter reasoning Luke adds: “all the people will stone us” (Luke 20:6). So whichever way they answered they were trapped. To acknowledge that John was a true prophet would be to condemn themselves for rejecting both John and Jesus. They did not dare to face the alternative and so were driven to a weak and evasive reply.

4. The Leader's Reply (Vr. 33a)

“We cannot tell”. They take a neutral stand on a lie. So against all the evidence they had seen of John's prophetic office, and doubtless against their own convictions, they answer that they do not know. This answer was false and hypocritical as to their confession of ignorance.

5. The Lord's Reply (Vr. 33b)

“Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things”. The Lord had no time for insincere and inconsistent questions. When they are not willing to come God's way – the way of repentance and baptism of John, and acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, there can remain nothing but judgment. To answer such people is but a waste of time. It would do no good. Someone has said: “Him that inquires we are bound to instruct, but him that tempts we may defeat with a stroke of reasoning”.

This is one of our Lord's brief answers replete with meaning. If you cannot judge of John and his teaching, you are unqualified to judge of mine.

INSTRUCTION:

1. All rejection of Christ whether it be skepticism, doubt, or open rebellion has its roots in insincerity and inconsistency.

2. Faith and prayer go together; and so do prayer and submission to God's will.

3. The answer to the prayer of faith is certain, though not manifest at once.

4. The servants of Christ must expect opposition and that their authority will be questioned by the enemies of truth (Jn. 15:20-21).

5. Those of high ecclesiastical office and authority may be spiritually blinded (Matt. 23:24; Rev. 3:17-18).

6. Formalists and wicked opposers of Christ will feign ignorance, and will lie, rather than injure their popularity, or confess the truth (Acts 4:15-18; 6:10-14).

7. Those who do not honestly seek after truth must expect to remain in error (Isa. 29:15; 2 Thess. 2:11-12).

LESSON # 35 MARK 12:1-12 (Matt. 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19)

INTRODUCTION:

The Setting: We are now in the last week of our Lord's ministry. We are rapidly nearing the Cross. After our Lord's entry into Jerusalem on the colt, the cursing of the fig tree, and the cleansing of the temple; our Lord's authority is questioned by the leaders of the nation. He answers by asking a question concerning John the Baptist: “The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of man”? They would not answer Him, and so He does not tell them by what authority He did the miracles (Ch. 11).

1. Principal Persons: A certain man (God). Husbandmen, Servants, Son (Jesus), Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders (11:27).

2. Principal Places: Jerusalem, Temple (11:27).

3. Principal Purpose: To give a history of Israel's rejection and judgment in parabolic form.

Besides the individuals who are important characters in this parable we have four outstanding things that make up the story:

- A Vineyard – Israel’s Provision.
- A Hedge – Israel’s Possession.
- A Winefat – Israel’s Production.
- A Tower – Israel’s Protection.

Jesus spoke three parables in the temple at this time (See Matt. 21:1-22:14). They are: (1) The Two Sons: showing that the leaders of the nation were being surpassed by the penitent publicans and sinners; (2) Wicked Husbandmen: showing that the rejected Kingdom would be removed from them and given to another nation; (3) The Marriage Feast: Giving the final doom of those who rejected the kingdom.

Mark gives us now the second of these parables. As there were four physical parts to the parables; so now there are four divine and human parts: The Owner (God); The Husbandmen; The Servants; and the Son (Jesus Christ). The fact of the vineyard was not foreign to these Jews either as a physical fact or a prophetic symbol. Isaiah 5:1-7 speaks of the vineyard. Israel was the vineyard that God had planted, fenced it in, built a tower and a winepress; and expected fruit from the same. But He got none, neither in O.T. times nor in N.T. times. See also Deut. 32:32-33; Ps. 80:8-16; Ezek. 15:1-6; Hos. 10:1). This parable shows the fearful guilt of the Jewish people in persecuting the prophets and murdering them and now they are about to do the same with their Messiah.

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE PARABOLIC STORY (Vrs. 1-8)

“And He began to speak unto them in parables”. The word parable occurs some twelve times in Mark. The word occurs also in Matthew and in Luke. It does not occur in John’s Gospel.

1. Provision Expended (Vr. 1)

... planted a vineyard, set a hedge, digged the winefat, and built a tower”. The householder himself stood all the expense of the “planting”, “digging” and “building”. God planted His earthly people under Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:1-8); under Moses (Deut. 9-14); and under Joshua (Josh. 1:1-9).

The “hedge” was a fence either of thorn-bushes, or a stone wall to keep out the wild boars (Psa. 80:12-13), foxes (Neh. 4:3; S. of Sol. 2:15). The “winefat” or wine press consisted of two parts, hollow places cut out of the rock on a slope; the upper was the press where the grapes were trodden out by foot, amid singing and other expressions of joy (Judg. 9:27; Isa. 16:10; Jer. 25:30); the lower trough into which the juice flowed through a hole.

“And built a tower”. This was a “tower of the watchmen”, rendered cottage in Isa. 1:8; 24:20). Here the watchers lived (Isa. 5:2). With slings they would scare away wild animals and robbers. These watch-towers were built of stone both circular and square in shape and generally fifteen or twenty feet in height. “And let it out to husbandmen”. These were the political and spiritual leaders of Israel (Ezek. 34:1-4; Mal. 2:7). The land of Israel was selected, secluded, and yet central (Gen. 13:15; 15:18). God also separated them by covenant and law

from the Gentile nations round about. There were three kinds of leases: (1) Where the laborers received a proportion of the produce for their payment; (2) where full rent was paid; (3) where a definite part of the produce was to be given by the leasers, what ever the harvest. Such leases were given by the year, or for life, or were hereditary. The words “of the fruit” in verse two shows that it was the latter in this parable. God had taken Israel out of Chaldea and Egypt, and planted them in a good land, the land of Canaan, that flowed with milk and honey, corn and wine. He hedged them about with promises and privileges. He built strong towers of defense in His covenants and Law. The “man” then “went into a far country”. “For a long time”, says Luke. So Israel became the tenant of God’s vineyard, and was expected to produce fruit for the Master.

2. Production Expected (Vr. 2)

“Receive of the fruit of the vineyard”. God has made everything to be fruit-bearing. A fruitless plant is of no value. There may be flowers and leaves, but if there is no fruit it has no permanent value. What God expects in the physical kingdom, He expects in the spiritual kingdom. So God sent His servants, the prophets, from time to time to require of His people repentance and righteousness.

3. Perfidy Exhibited (faithless, disloyal) (Vrs. 3-8)

We have here a deliberate breach of faith, a revelation of treacherous acts.

a. To The Servants (Vrs. 3-5)

“He sent a servant” (Vr. 2)

“Again he sent another servant” (Vr. 4)

“He sent another, and many others” (Vr. 5)

These were the Judges, the Prophets, John the Baptist, and His Apostles. All three of the Evangelists show that the husbandmen treated the servants worse and worse. Mark is the most particular in describing the gradation of their crimes. They caught the first servant, beat him, and sent him away empty. The second servant was stoned, wounded in the head, and sent him back shamefully handled. The third one was killed. And many others were beaten and killed. The casting of stones was a common way of death among the Jews (See Deut. 21:21; Josh. 7:25; Acts 7:58). Note the confession of the Levites in Neh. 9:26. The treatment of the three servants is a fair specimen of the general treatment given all the servants.

b. To the Son (Vrs. 6-8)

“This is the heir; come, let us kill him”. Finally God sent His Son, and when He came they said: “We will not have this man reign over us. We will have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15). So they “killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard”. Christ was cast out to die between Heaven and Earth; not allowed to die in His own creation. God’s only Son, well-beloved, marks as strongly as possible the difference in rank between Christ, and all the other servants. Compare Gen. 37:20 with John 11:47-53. This reminds of Naboth (1 Kgs. 21:13); with Him Who suffered without the gate (Hebr. 13:12-13).

II. THE PARABOLIC SEQUEL (Vrs. 9-12)

“He will come and destroy the husbandmen” or as we have it in the original: “Miserable men, miserably he will destroy them”. “Will give the vineyard to others”. “The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner”.

1. Murderers Destroyed (Vr. 9)

Isaiah (5:5-7) tells us that God withdrew His protection – “Hedge taken down”; removed their privileges – “not pruned nor digged”; and finally meted out punishment – “trodden down; no rain”. According to Matthew 21:41 the Jewish rulers give this answer, and thus pass sentence on themselves. Jesus may have repeated the answer to give it emphasis and His approval. According to Luke 20:16 the people then say: “God forbid”. It was in the year A.D. 70 that Titus the Roman general laid siege to the city of Jerusalem, captured it and destroyed it. Their house was then left unto them desolate (Luke 13:35); and they suffered “affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation, (Mk. 13:19). At Jerusalem it is said, 1,100,000 perished by the sword, famine, and pestilence. Besides, 97,000 were sold as slaves, and vast multitudes perished in other parts of Judea. See Matt 23:34-36.

2. Successors Employed (Vr. 9)

“will give the vineyard unto others”. The Greek word here for “others” is allos, denoting another of the same kind – numerical distinction. It is not the Greek word heteros, meaning another of a different kind, denoting generic distinction. Thus He will give it to a new Israel; not to a Gentile nation as some say. A new nation will be born in one day (Isa. 66:8). This nation of a yet future day will bear fruit for God out of His vineyard.

3. Scriptures Fulfilled (Vrs. 10-11)

“The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner” (Psalm 118:22-23). The stone was there and then being rejected; but it would ultimately be the Chief Corner Stone. Man’s rejection cannot annul God’s purpose. His word will stand. His promise is true.

Luke adds: “Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder (20:18). To the Jews Christ became a stumbling-block, a skandalon. They rejected Him and stumbled upon Him. Hence they were broken and remain such to this day. See Isa. 8:14-15; Dan. 2:34,35,45. Peter quotes this prophecy (1 Pet. 2:7) with a similar application. It is marvelous because it is the Lord’s doings. It is a wonderful display of wisdom, grace, and power.

4. Leaders Conspire (Vr. 12)

“Sought to lay hold on Him, but feared the people”. The time was at hand when the Son of Man would be taken, and according to the parable be cast out and killed. So these leaders now begin their nefarious task of watching, spying, and seeking to trap Him. The leaders now end their direct conflict with Jesus, and go their way to plot against Him privately, opposing Him indirectly.

INSTRUCTION:

1. The husbandmen reveal the deceitfulness and wickedness of unbelief.
2. We have here the patience and longsuffering of God – He planted, watered, hedged, and built during many years of Israel’s history.
3. It is the rejection of His Son that brings the final judgment.

4. God who bestows all gifts and blessings has a right to our service (Jam. 1:17; 1 Pet. 4:7-11).
5. The history of the Jewish nation is the best argument for the unbelief and depravity of human nature (Jer. 17:9; Acts 7:51-52; 1 Thess. 2:15-16).
6. Christ is the Rock on which are built our hopes, joys, and full salvation (1 Cor. 10:4; 1 Pet. 2:8).
7. To leave Him and go away will not help anyone. It is better to fear God than to fear man.

LESSON # 36 MARK 12:13-27 (Matt. 22:15-33; Luke 20:20-40)

INTRODUCTION:

1. PRINCIPAL PERSONS: Jesus, Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees.
2. PRINCIPAL PLACES: Temple at Jerusalem (11:27)
3. PRINCIPAL PURPOSE: To refute the hypocrisy and unbelief of the leaders of the nation.

This chapter opens with a parable (Vrs. 1-12) of The Husbandmen and the Vineyard in which the Chief Priests and Pharisees discerned that Jesus spoke of them (See Matt. 21:45-46). They now seek to trap Him, or catch Him in a trap by questions of tribute money to Caesar; and marriage relationship in the resurrection.

First the Pharisees and the Herodians join hands to trap Jesus. The Pharisees were a strict legal sect and leaders of the patriotic party opposed to all foreign rule. The Herodians were a political Jewish party attached to the fortunes of the Herodian Family. Though not Romans, they favored the Roman rule and opposed the political views of the Pharisees. Though bitter enemies, they now join hands against Jesus. The Sadducees were a liberal sect who rejected the supernatural, including the resurrection. The Pharisees were the ritualists; the Herodians, the royalists; and the Sadducees, the rationalists. Our Lord is in the Temple teaching, and the leaders are there. They are not sitting at His feet, like Mary, seeking His wisdom; but watching and weighing every word that they might “catch Him in His words”. There was now a concerted effort to get rid of Him.

INSTRUCTION

I. IN THE REALM OF THE POLITICAL (Vrs. 13-17)

“...sent unto Him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians”. Mark does not notice the private council of the Pharisees and the spies (Matt. 22:15; Luke 20:20), but simply mentions the two parties. So now the Herodian royalists unite themselves with the ultraorthodox Pharisaic party. They come in the simplicity of a guileless spirit and a desire to solve a perplexing problem; but it was “to catch Him”, as a bird is caught in fowling. They supposed He must answer with either a “yes” or a “no” and thus they would have Him.

1. The Interrogation (Vrs. 14-15)

“Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not”? It is with a great show of respect together with empty compliments and flattery that they introduce their question (Vr. 14) – “Master thou art true, and carest for no man, but teachest the way of God in truth”. This was

nothing but hypocritical flattery. Dr. W. Graham Scroggie says: “Their trap was covered with the flowers of flattery”. However, what they said about Jesus was true. It was true that Christ was not influenced by rank or position, not even by Caesar, but was perfectly impartial (Lev. 19:15).

“Shall we give or shall we not give?”. The tribute spoken of here was a poll tax payable to Rome. If the Lord had said “Yes” then they would have condemned Him according to Deut. 17:15. And, if He had said “No” then the Herodians would have taken Him as against Caesar. So now they thought they had Him. This tax was later resented by a Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:37). For this he died and his followers dispersed. The name Caesar was the family name of Julius Caesar, the first Roman emperor, and applied to his successors, as a designation of their office, and a representation of Roman power. The Caesar now reigning was Emperor Tiberius. The Jews were nowhere forbidden to pay tribute to a foreign conqueror. But they were forbidden to set a stranger over them as king (Deut. 17:15).

2. The Investigation (Vrs. 15-16)

“Why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny, that I may see it”. This coin was a Roman denarius. By accepting this as current coin they virtually acknowledged themselves as Roman subjects. “Whose is the image and superscription?” This silver coin bore on its surface the head of Tiberius Caesar, encircled with a wreath of laurel and bound round with sacred fillet. The superscription running round would be “Tiberius Caesar, Divi Augusti filius Augustus Imperator”. Both the coin and their answer showed that they were peacefully submitting to Caesar’s government, and enjoying his protection.

3. The Instruction (Vr. 17)

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”. In the Lord’s answer He honored both Government and God. Obey Caesar’s government, and pay him fully for his protection. Paul expands this idea in Rom. 13:1-7. Then also render unto God whatever is due Him – your obedience and the whole circle of religious duty. (1 Tim. 2:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-16)

Alford says: “Man is the coinage, and bears the image of God. (Gen. 1:27; 9:6; Acts 17:29; James 3:9) We owe then ourselves to God and this solemn duty is implied, of going ourselves to Him with all that we have and are”. “They marveled at Him”. Matthew says: “They heard, marveled, and left Him” (22:22). The wisdom of His reply may well command our admiration. He laid down a great moral principle, which is applicable in every age and will bring the highest good to man and to the glory of God. It is no wonder that His interrogators “could not take hold of His words and held their peace (Luke 20:26).

II. IN THE REALM OF THE THEOLOGICAL (Vrs. 18-27)

The Pharisees and the Herodians having been properly answered; the Sadducees now come with their attempt to trap Him. The question is now one of marriage after the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees were liberals who did not believe in the supernatural, nor in the resurrection. The Sadducees accepted the Pentateuch only and so they raise a question relative to the future life on a domestic regulation which Moses had spoken of (Deut. 25:5-10). They denied the resurrection and a future life; so their question was not some difficulty, but a trap. These Sadducees had stood aloof while the Pharisees and Herodians interrogated Jesus; but now they come forward, thinking they can trap Him.

1. The Interrogation (Vrs. 19-23)

“In the resurrection therefore, ... whose wife shall she be of them? For the seven had her to wife”. The Sadducees now quote from the Law of Moses (Deut. 25:5). This is called “The Levirate Law” from Levir, the Latin word for brother-in-law. This law was recognized by other Oriental nations. The Sadducees bring to Jesus what might well have been an imaginary case in which seven brothers were married to the same woman, but left no issue. In the apocryphal book of Tobit 3:7-8 there is recorded the case of “Sara, the daughter of Raguel, was also reproached by her father’s maids, because she had been married to seven husbands”. So then the firstborn was regarded as the offspring of the deceased brother. If seven brothers had this women to wife and there is a resurrection, then there would be confusion in the future life is their argument.

2. The Investigation (Vr. 24)

“Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God”? They are charged with being: Ignorant of the Scriptures; and therefore ignorant of the power of God. They do not understand the Scriptures in their deeper spiritual import, nor to the power of God which can remove all obstacles in the way of a future life. Since God is omnipotent, the dead can be raised, and they will be raised. The same twofold ignorance and unbelief are at the foundation of the principal objections to the doctrine of the resurrection at the present day (Acts 26:8; Rom. 4:17; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:34-36). Jesus refers to the O.T. as the authoritative word of God.

3. The Instruction (Vrs. 25-27)

Jesus proceeds to do two things in His answer: He gives them an answer to their immediate question (Vr. 25); and then shows that their belief in no resurrection is all wrong (Vrs. 26-27).

a. Relationships in Heaven (Vr. 25)

“When they shall rise, neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels”. The Sadducees denied both the resurrection and the existence of angels and spirits (Acts 23:8). So Jesus reply embraces the whole area of their unbelief. They “neither marry” with reference to males; “nor given in marriage” with reference to females. Their existence, relations and state will be similar to those of angels; not earthly, mortal, and sensual; but heavenly, spiritual, and immortal. “Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God” (Luke 20:36). Being themselves immortal, they are not dependent on the marriage relation for the preservation of their species. As no such relation exists among the angels, so it will not exist among the saints in heaven.

b. Resurrection in the O.T. (Vrs. 26-27)

Moses revealed that the dead will be raised when he met Jehovah at the burning bush. The words of Jehovah were: “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ... the God of the living”. The Sadducees could accept no part of the O.T. without believing in the resurrection. The Sadducees had brought forward the name of Moses to perplex Him; now He brings forth the same name and refutes them.

Jehovah is the great “I Am”, the ever faithful, the unchangeable, the living and eternal God. Jehovah sustained a personal relationship to the patriarchs in life, death, and resurrection. So He is their God absolutely without reference to time. So He is not the God of the dead, or of the extinct, as the Sadducees used the word dead. God is not the God of the non-existent or the annihilated. Though Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are dead, the God of resurrection and power will fulfill His covenants with them. “I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those thing which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17).

“Ye therefore do greatly err”. He now charges the Sadducees with error in their interpretation of Scripture, and in rejecting the doctrine of resurrection. Luke then adds: “And after that they durst not ask him any question at all” (Luke 20:40). Matthew adds “And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine (Matt. 22:33). The Sadducees were put to silence.

INSTRUCTION:

1. The opposition of the wicked to Christ is great. His enemies unite in conspiring against Him; play the hypocrite, yet act as friends (Psa. 2:2; 12:2; 55:21).
2. Hypocrisy and deceit against Christ will not escape His detection, nor His withering curse (Isa. 29:15-16; Heb. 4:13).
3. The distinction made by Jesus between duties to God and to government are yet in harmony; but must never be mingled together (Rom. 13:7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).
4. Opposers to Christianity can best be met by pressing home to them the plain facts and evidences of Christianity in the Bible.
5. A thorough and experiential knowledge of Scripture is the best antidote against and preventive of all error (2 Tim. 3:15).

LESSON # 37 MARK 12:28-40 (Matt. 22:34-46; 23:1-39; Luke 20:41-47)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Scribe, Jesus, Disciples.
2. Principal Places: Temple (Vr.35)
3. Principal Purpose: Christ’s final teaching as to the Commandments; His Lordship; and, the Pride of the Scribes.

In this section, Mark continues the account of the conflict between Jesus and the ecclesiastical leaders which He began in chapter 11:27. In chapter 11:27-33, He foiled the leaders in their demand for His authority and credentials. In chapter 12:1-12, He shows their guilt and terrible doom in the Parable of the Vineyard, which was let out to wicked husbandmen. Gladly would they have laid hands upon Him, but they were restrained by fear of the people. They therefore resort to artifice, hoping to entrap Him and in some way render Him obnoxious either to the Romans or to the people. First, certain Herodians are sent to enquire concerning paying tribute to Caesar; but His answer only excites admiration and astonishment (12:13-17). Next, Sadducees come and ask a perplexing question regarding the resurrection; but they are put to silence (12:18-27). One more question from His foes is given, which is part of our present

lesson, and then Jesus Himself asks a question, and condemns the enemies before closing this chapter with the story of the poor widow and her mite.

INSTRUCTION:

I. THE QUESTION OF THE SCRIBE (Vrs. 28-34)

“Which is the first commandment of all”? The questioner of our Lord is now a Scribe, a Biblical scholar, who represented the Pharisees (Matt. 22:34-35); but his character and motives seem to be nobler than those of the men whose spokesman he became. He no doubt perceived that Jesus had answered the others well; and it is upon this perception that his question is asked. He was no doubt pleased to see the Sadducees overthrown; but was now ready to show his superior skill.

On the question on the first commandment in importance, the schools of Hillel and Shammai were disagreed. This lawyer asked the question to tempt the Lord (Matt. 22:35), hoping that He would commit himself as an enemy of tradition. These rabbinical schools taught that there were important distinctions between the commandments, some being greater than others, some hard and weighty, others easy and of less importance. The great commands were the observance of the Sabbath, Circumcision, and minute rites of sacrifice and offering, and the rules respecting fringes and phylacteries. They belittled the ceremonial and moral law, which they pretended to weigh and classify. They concluded that there were 248 affirmative precepts, being as many as the members of the human body, and 365 negative precepts, being as many as the arteries and veins, or the days of the year; the total number being 613, which is also the number of the letters in the Decalogue. These were the “strivings about the law” mentioned in Titus 3:9. These Pharisees were great on tithing of anise, mint, and cumin, but neglected the weightier matters of the law (Matt. 23:23).

1. The Commandments (Vrs. 29-31)

a. The First Commandment (Vrs. 29-30)

“Hear oh Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ... soul, ... mind, and strength”. We might have expected the Lord to choose one of the Ten Commandments. But none of these compares with the one selected. The negative precepts, thou shalt not, are not in the same class as this positive one based upon love. (See Deut. 6:4-5). The first, because it is the oldest; because it exalts God to the place of sovereignty over all our affections; because it is at once the foundation and summit of all law. It proclaims the unity of God. It requires supreme love for God. Jesus may have pointed to the Scribe’s phylactery, containing the Shema (Deut. 6:4).

The Lord fixes the responsibility for obedience on the lawyer by using the pronouns “thou” and “thy” eight times. He is admonished to love the Lord his God with all his “heart” (kardia) the seat of all his affections; His “soul” (psuche), the seat of all his senses; his “mind” (dianoia), the seat of his intellect; and his “strength” (ischus), the seat of all his powers. So these four express the whole man in his love to God. It means – Thou shalt love God supremely.

b. The Second Commandment (Vr. 31)

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”. (See Lev. 19:18). The Lord had really answered the Scribe in the first commandment, but He would not have him stop there. Again it is love, first and always. Perfect love to man can spring only from perfect love to God. Loving others dignifies self-love; loving only oneself degrades self-love. This love would replace all human legislation. Love would take care of all our problems, economically, politically, socially, and religiously. So the second commandment is of the same kind, a part of the great law of love. As the first commandment is a summary of the first table of the Law, of the duties we owe to God (the first five commandments – Ex. 20:3-11); so the second is a summary of the second table (commandments six thru ten – Ex. 20:12-17), the duties we owe to men. A right love towards men springs from our true love to God (Rom.13:9-10). These two according to Jesus are the greatest commandments.

2. The Confession (Vrs. 32-33)

“And the scribe said unto Him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth”. This scribe was honest and therefore while questioning he was convinced by the answer. Honest questioning results in conviction of truth, and in accepting higher revelations of the truth. “... more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices”. To love God and one’s neighbor is better than all the types, shadows, and symbols of religion. “Thou hast said the truth”. What else could he say to Him who is the Truth (John 1:17; 14:6). See 1 Sam. 15:22; Hos. 6:6; Micah 6:6-8). The original meaning of the whole burnt offering was that it was a sacrifice of the offerer himself, soul and body, to God.

3. The Commendation (Vr. 34)

“Thou art not far from the kingdom of God”. Truly yes, for he was now in the presence of the King. Not far because he had just accepted the truth of its highest law. Yes, he was not far; but alas! Not in. Not far is always too far. What a tragedy to be so near, and yet so far. To merely apprehend the truth is not sufficient. There must be personal appropriation of the truth. The word translated “discreetly” is nounechos, and means intelligently or wisely. It is used only here in the N.T. So the Scribes and Pharisees dared not entangle Him any more with subtle questions; but they did not desist from their wicked plans to destroy Him.

II. THE QUESTION OF THE SAVIOR (Vrs. 35-40)

After having silenced all His opposers, and the last one who represented them is almost brought into the kingdom, Jesus proceeds to ask a question about the scribes: “How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David”? While still teaching in the temple, Jesus turns to the Pharisees (Matt. 22:41) and asked this pointed question. Jesus had silenced their questions; now He silences their answers. Up to now Jesus had been on the defensive; now He turns to the offensive. They had disputed His claims as the Son of God Messiah; now He shows the incongruity of their views while believing that the Messiah would be the son of David.

1. The Seeming Contradiction (Vrs. 36-37)

“David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is He then his son”? The Lord will now convict the Pharisees and Scribes of ignorance and false views of the Messiah. How could the Messiah be both David’s son and Lord? The Lord quotes Psalm 110:1. His enemies

could not answer this question, and so silence again reigns; but the common people listened to Him gladly.

The answer lies in the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-16) where God promised to David a perpetual House, Throne, and Kingdom. Only Christ could fulfill the demands of this covenant. He alone could be both son and Lord of David. "I will set up thy seed after thee ... I will be his father, and he shall be my son". Christ is both the son of David, and the Son of God (Matt. 1:1; John 3:16). Psalm 110 is more frequently quoted in the N.T. than any portion of the O.T. See Acts 2:34-35; 1 Cor. 15:25; Hebr. 1:13; 6:6; 7:17,21). If David acknowledged him as his superior and sovereign, from what source, and by what means is He his son, and hence his inferior? The answer can only lie in the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ (See Rom. 1:3-4).

2. The Severe Condemnation (Vrs. 38-40)

In solemn terms our Lord now warns against the doctrine of the scribes and Pharisees, which is leaven (8:15), denouncing their hypocrisy. Here was religious profession in profusion.

"Beware" says our Lord of the professor who parades in "long flowing robes" merely for the show of it all.

"Beware" of the professor who loves to be noticed because of his "salutations in the marketplaces". Love of vanity and pride.

"Beware" of the professor who occupies the front seat in the sanctuary, near the reading desk or the sacred ark.

"Beware" of the pretender who takes the "uppermost rooms at the feasts".

"Beware" of the cunning ferocious beasts who "devour widow's houses" accepting their substance from a voracious avarice.

"Beware" of the pretender with his long, sanctimonious prayers, making religion a mask to gain the confidence of the people.

For all such there shall be "greater condemnation".

Among the Pharisees there was great profession of love to God but little practice of love to man. Today there seems to be greater love to man, with all the philanthropic endeavors and social schemes, but little real love to God.

The Pharisees had a love of peculiarity (long robes); popularity (salutations in the market); prominence (chief seats in the synagogues and at feasts); possessions (widow's houses); pretended piety (long prayers).

INSTRUCTION:

1. The duties we owe to God and man do not conflict; but rather confirm and support each other. Love is the essence of both (Rom. 13:8,10).

2. Many acknowledge the wisdom and power of Christ's doctrine, without having its saving benefit (Acts 13:41).

3. It is important what we think of Christ – His nature and His work. What is He to us? (Matt. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:23-24).

4. Jesus recognized the O.T. Scriptures as written by inspiration of the H.S. (Luke 24:25-27).

5. Love of human honors and flatteries are unbecoming a follower of Christ (Phil. 2:5; 1 Pet. 5:5).

6. One can have intellectual perceptions of truth without knowing experientially its saving grace and glory. “If thou are not far off, enter; better otherwise to have been far off” – Bengel.

LESSON # 38 MARK 12:41-44 (Luke 21:1-4)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Jesus, Poor Widow, Disciples.
2. Principal Places: The Treasury in the Temple at Jerusalem.
3. Principal Purpose: To reveal that God weighs actions and motives rather than methods and amounts of money we give (1 Sam. 2:3).

We have before us now a most brief but perfect incident. There are seventy-seven words in the original language, a perfect story, exquisite alike in form and substance. It is a crisis period in the life of our Lord. He is being rejected by the nation to whom He had come with the blessings of God. It is a scene of intense hostility. He is exercising His authority in the solemn work of denouncing and rejecting a fruitless nation. This incident is a ray of light in the midst of the dark night. Christ had just cursed a barren fig tree, a type of Israel’s national blessings; He had cleansed the temple from its mercenary merchandising and now finally condemned His adversaries.

“And Jesus sat over against the treasury”. This treasury consisted of thirteen brazen chests called “Trumpets because the mouth into which the money was cast was wide at the top and narrow below. They stood in the outer “Court of the Women”. Jesus had just condemned the Pharisees which “devour widow’s houses” (12:40). Perhaps this was one of those widows. Here she was a widow, alone and poor. The background for this episode lies in 11:27 to 12:40. In these verses Christ is seen among His adversaries. He had come to Jerusalem and to the Temple (11:27). Four outstanding questions are then asked of Jesus:

(1) Question relative to Christ’s Authority. “By what authority doest thou these things and who gave thee this authority to do these things? (11:28). This was asked by the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders. He interrogates them concerning the Baptism of John whether it was from Heaven or from men. He then applied the Parable of the Householder and the Husbandmen, who rejected both the servants and the son.

(2) Question relative to Tribute Money. “Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not” (12:14). Here the Pharisees and Herodians join together to trip Him. He answers: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s”.

(3) Question relative to Marriage in Heaven. “Whose wife shall she be of them” (12:23)? Now come the Sadducees who say there is no resurrection. They come with a case of seven men who had the same wife. Jesus answers: “They neither marry nor are given in marriage”.

(4) Question relative to the Greatest Commandment. (12:28-34). “Which is the first commandment of all?”. The Scribes now come. Christ answers: Love to God and to one’s neighbor. This is the central principle of the Law, the true essence of the Law.

INTERPRETATION:

I. PRESENTATION BY THE WIDOW (Vrs. 41-42)

Our Lord now passes from the inner courts of the Temple where He had met His enemies; and now comes to the outer courts, known as the “Court of the Women”. Here there stood the great chests which received the offerings for the priests, the temple service, and for the poor”. There He sat down, lingering in temple precincts, gazing with longing and love-lit eyes upon the desolate wilderness in the midst of which He found Himself, looking for some flower, some fruit, something that would satisfy His heart” – G. Campbell Morgan. And so in the midst of the desolate darkness of the nation, He does find a jewel, a flower that glistens like a sparkling dewdrop. A poor widow comes to the treasury chest and places therein her two mites (lepta), meaning thin or tiny, the smallest copper coin, equal to one-fifth of a cent. It was the minimum required by law that she could give. Jesus said that she cast in “all that she had, even all her living”. I hope none of us are persuaded to doubt this statement of Jesus!

1. It was a Gift of Love

“Which commandment is the greatest of all”? “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God ... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”. Such had been Christ’s answer to the Scribe. The offerings were both to God and to the poor; to the priest and to her neighbor. So her gift fulfilled the Law of Love, the greatest commandment in the Law of God.

2. It was a Gift of Faith

The Temple was the Father’s House, and her gift was a symbol of faith in God. When Jesus had cursed the fig tree, and it withered up by the roots to the amazement of the disciples, Jesus said: “Have faith in God” (11:22). The rulers had challenged Jesus’ authority, thus revealing their lack of faith in God. But here is this “poor widow” whose faith is such that she is willing to sacrifice her all unto God and His work. It took real faith on her part. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. 11:6). Like this woman all the heroes of Faith recorded in Hebrews chapter eleven bear witness.

3. It was a Gift of Sacrifice

“All that she had, even all her living”. Here is a tremendous dedication. We have seen a coalition of the Pharisees and the Herodians asking a question relative to tribute money. It was a question of selfishness, of expedience. But here we have a gift of real sacrifice. A wealthy man was solicited for money. “Yes” he said, “I would gladly give my mite”. “The widow’s mite” asked the solicitor? “Yes” he said, thinking to shelter himself behind her mites. “I shall be satisfied with half her gift”. The man was worth about \$70,000.00.

4. It was a Gift of Worship

Here was a gift of true spirituality, a demonstration of her spiritual life. The Sadducees had come with a question of their materialistic philosophy. She is an argument against all their rationalism and materialism. Thus in this dark hour Jesus had found in this woman and her gift that true worship not found in any of His enemies. Her sacrificial and spiritual giving contradicted all of their hostile atmosphere. It is easy to give what we do not have. A man was willing to give half his sheep, horses, and hogs if he had one hundred. But he became angry when asked to give one of his two hogs.

II. PROCLAMATION BY THE LORD (Vrs. 43-44)

1. His Observation

“And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury”. Note that He beheld “HOW” they gave. The Lord was not looking at the twist of the hand or the poise of the head. He saw what was peculiar to Him – the Omniscient One – the character, the motive, and spirit of the givers. He saw the motive, the reason for giving, the impulse of the donation, the spirit of the offering.

Hannah in her prophetic song and prayer said: “For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed” (1 Sam. 2:3). The Lord balances every gift we make, every prayer we utter, every song we sing by the weight of “HOW”. Sometimes in the accounts of gifts made there is at the bottom that remarkable group – the miscellaneous, or amounts under. This widow would have been in that group. “All the music, the poetry, the praise is in that group” says Dr. Morgan. Christ is still observing “HOW”.

2. Her Vindication

“Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury”. Our Lord does not say that: - - this widow hath done wonderfully, or done very much, or as much as anyone; but she has put in “more than they all”. Jesus puts every giver into two classes: those who give of their abundance; and those who give of their want.

After this incident in the Court of the Women, and apparently while the Savior was still there, two of His apostles, Andrew and Philip, brought to Him the inquiring Greeks, who had desired to see Him (Jn. 12:20-22). This was followed with a clear pre-vision that He was about to be “lifted up” (12:32). He then leaves the temple which He never again entered. His public ministry was over.

INSTRUCTION:

1. God measures our giving not so much by what we give, as by what is left.
2. The outward act reveals the inward essence.
3. It was her character “how” that determined her content “all”.
4. The motive behind the giving of the two mites was love. A poor Russian woman gave a ruble to the Bible Society. When hesitation was evinced in accepting it from her in her poverty, she said: “Love is not afraid of giving too much”.
5. “Who shuts his hand hath lost his gold, Who opens it, hath it twice told”. – Geo Hebert.
6. A person has contributed his mite when he was given half his living, and his two mites when he has given all his living.
7. “Jesus unseen – but who all hearts can see,
Still sits and overlooks the treasury!
Cast in your offerings where his cause invites,
Ye rich your talents, and ye poor your mites.
Render to God the things that are his due,
He gave His Son, who gave himself for you” Montgomery.

LESSON # 39 MARK 13:1-37 (Matt. Ch. 24; Luke Ch. 21)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Jesus, Peter, James, John, Andrew.
2. Principal Places: Temple at Jerusalem.
3. Principal Purpose: Christ's presentation in a prophetic picture both what would take place partially at the end of the Acts period; and fully during and at the end of the Tribulation Period. It has become therefore a Historicist-Futurist Prophecy.

In this chapter we have a remarkable prophetic discourse which is recorded by the Synoptic Gospels – Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They all place it in the same relation to the ministry of Jesus – at its close. It is given most fully by Matthew. There are three outstanding events recorded in this prophecy: First, the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem; second, the character of The Great Tribulation; and thirdly, The Second Coming of Christ.

The discourse is an answer to two questions put to Jesus by four Apostles, Peter, James, John and Andrew (Vr. 3). They have to do with the time of the prophecy – “when” and with things – “What”. If there are any problems with this discourse they can be solved by understanding that we have here two horizons: one forty years distant from the time of utterance; and the other still in the future. If we understand that the present interval of God's transcendent grace was an absolute secret, concealed in God (Eph. 3:9), then the times of the kingdom could not be revealed at this time (Acts 1:7). If we lift out of time the present Dispensation of the Secret (Eph. 3:9), and place the Tribulation Period next to Acts chapter 28 all is clear as to time. We are therefore in the interval between the destruction of the Sanctuary at Jerusalem (A.D.70) and the still future events given in the Book of the Revelation under the four seals.

Our Lord, while here on earth, gave four lengthy discourses: The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. Chs. 5-7); The Parables of the Kingdom (Matt. Ch. 13); The Olivet Prophecy (Matt. Chs. 24-25); and The Upper Room meditation (John Chs. 13-17). There is an element of prediction in all of them; however, this one is pre-eminently prophetic. The terminology used in this chapter and in the other Gospels reveal its Jewish setting. There are such terms as “synagogues” (Vr. 9), “Daniel the prophet” (Vr. 14), “Judea” (Vr. 14), “tribulation” (Vr. 24), “the Sabbath day” (Matt. 24:20), “the Twelve Tribes of Israel” (Matt. 24:30), and “the Holy Place” (Matt. 24:15).

INTERPRETATION:

I. A GENERAL DECLARATION (Vrs. 1-13)

Following this general declaration in these verses there is a revelation of The Great Tribulation specifically in verses 14-23; and then in verses 24-37 a revelation of the termination with the Second Coming.

1. Setting of the prophecy (Vrs. 1-2)
 - a. Leaving the Sanctuary (Vr. 1)

Luke omits this fact. Jesus now leaves the temple and goes to sit on the Mount of Olives. This act of Jesus is more than just a passing event. Once before the Divine

Glory had left the temple. It went from the Cherub to the threshold of the house; thence upon the cherubims; then to the midst of the city; and finally, to the mountain on the east of the city (See Ezek. 9:3; 10:4,18; 11:23).

b. Lauding the Structure (Vr. 1)

“See what manner of stones, and what buildings are here.”

The disciple who made this comment was perhaps Peter, who frequently was a spokesman for the twelve (Matt. 16:16; John 6:68). The lamentation over Jerusalem, and the denunciation against her may have led the disciples to turn His attention to the magnificence of the temple (Matt. 23:37-38), and to plead for its preservation.

Josephus describes the temple as built of white marble, its face toward the east, covered over with plates of gold, appearing in the distance like a mountain covered with snow, with its gilding dazzling as the rays of the sun. Some of its stones were forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad.

The first temple was built by Solomon (B.C. 1014-1007) and was wonderful for richness, beauty, and the splendor. Four centuries later (B.C. 586) it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The second temple was built by Zerubbabel, by authority of Cyrus the Persian (B.C. 517). A rival temple was built on Mt. Gerizim, by the Samaritans (B.C. 409). Zerubbabel’s temple was plundered in B.C. 170, and again in B.C. 54. Herod the Great began to restore and enlarge it in B.C. 17; but the work was completed by Herod Agrippa. This temple was destroyed under the siege of Jerusalem by Titus (A.D. 70).

c. Loosing the Stones (Vrs. 2)

“there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

In less than forty years after this prophecy, “Zion was ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem became heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest” (Micah 3:12).

Titus was amazed at the massive buildings of Jerusalem including the temple; and traced his triumph to the hand of God. Titus tried in vain to save the temple; but his men became furious in their demolition of this beautiful structure. Truly the hand of God was also in it. Josephus concludes that the walls and precincts of the temple were so thoroughly leveled and dug up that none visiting the city would believe it had ever been inhabited. The Talmud says, “On the ninth day of Ab (July-August) the city of Jerusalem was ploughed up.

2. Situation of the Prophecy (Vrs. 3-4)

a. The Questioners (Vr. 3)

Peter, James, John and Andrew now come to Jesus with some pertinent questions. The little company had left the temple site, crossed the Kedron Valley and came to the Mount of Olives. Josephus says that the siege of Jerusalem began on this mount, and at the Passover, the time of this prophecy.

b. The Questions (Vr. 4)

“When shall these things be?” “What shall be the sign” of their fulfillment?” When the company had come over to the Mount of Olives, these four apostles immediately begin to ask Him questions about what He had said. Their request was twofold: When? And What?.

They wanted to know the time and the token; the season and the sign. One would have thought that they would ask concerning why this should happen, and how it could be averted; but instead they ask concerning its time, and a sign of its coming. The questions as recorded by Matthew embrace three points: (1) the time of the destruction of the temple; (2) the sign of His coming; and (3) the end of the age (Matt. 24:3).

3. Substance of the Prophecy (Vrs. 5-13)

The Lord, in His answer, ignores the time element and comes immediately to the signs relating to their personal lives. He speaks of the difficulties, the disappointments, the distresses they would encounter.

a. There would be deception (Vrs. 5-6)

“lest any man deceive you” ... “I am Christ; and shall deceive many”. “take heed” is one of the key-notes of this chapter, along with “pray” and “watch”. The deception would come in the form of a false Christ, coming in the name of Christ, and saying, “I am Christ”. Christ begins by giving them a cautionary and admonitory word. Josephus speaks of the land being overrun with magicians, seducers, and imposters who drew the people after them into the wilderness, promising to show signs and wonders. One such was a Theudas, who led a large body to the Jordan promising to divide the river as Elijah and Elisha had done. Paul speaks of such false messiahs to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:28-31).

The opening of the first seal brought a rider upon a white horse, with a bow and a crown, riding forth conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6:1-2). This is not Christ, but Antichrist.

b. There would be Destruction (Vrs. 7-8)

Following the deception of false Christs there would come wars, earthquakes, famines, and great sorrow. The second seal brought the red horse of war; the third seal brings forth a black horse with famine; and a fourth horse, pale and representing death (Rev. 6:3-8). Not only would there be wars, but “rumors of wars”. There were many wars in the first century threatening to the Jews. The “rumors of wars” would be exaggerated; but nevertheless frightful and more terrible than war itself. There were earthquakes in Crete (A.D. 51); in Phrygia (A.D. 67); and at Pompeii (A.D. 63).

Following the wars there would come famines. Historians speak of several famines, in different parts of the world, which happened in the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54), one of which was particularly severe in Judea, about 44-47. (See Acts 11:28). Suetonius (Roman historian, 2nd cent.) and Tacitus (Roman historian, 2nd cent.) speak of famines about this time. There was also a famine in Judea in the third year of Nero’s reign, about A.D. 56. All of these things would bring “troubles” of commotions and tumults. Josephus records many insurrections and tumults. The threat of Caligula to put his image in the temple caused a great commotion. But these are only “the beginning of sorrows”. These are not the end, but the beginning of birth-pangs as the original word means. It is applied to intense sufferings which precede a change for better or worse. (See Rom. 8:22; 1 Thess. 5:3). These are the birth-pangs bringing forth the glorious kingdom of Christ.

c. There would be Defamation (Vrs. 9,11-13)

Persecution would dog the steps of those who follow Christ in these days. They will be delivered up to councils, beaten in the synagogues, brought before kings, betrayed in their own household. From the Acts and Epistles we learn that the things foretold here actually took place. (See Acts chs. 4,9,22,23,25,26; 2 Cor. 11). “But take heed to yourselves”. This in order to guard against matters of danger to them. They would be in danger of becoming offended, disaffected toward the cause of Christ (Matt. 24:19); or their love might wax cold (Matt. 24:12); or they might trust in themselves instead of trusting in the Spirit (Mk. 13:11).

They were to present a testimony against these ungodly men. Paul gave his testimony to King Agrippa (Acts 26:1) and to Caesar (2 Tim. 4:16). See also Acts 4:8; 16:20; 22:30. Persecution in the early church resulted in the furtherance of the gospel (Acts 8:4; Phil. 1:12). Jesus cautions them against trusting in themselves instead of the Holy Spirit (Vr. 11; Matt. 10:19-20). They were to let their defense be extemporaneous, giving the Holy Spirit freedom to act see Acts 4:8-12). This can have no reference to our preaching and teaching today, except to say that in general we all must rely on the Holy Spirit’s ministry – See 1 Tim. 4:13,16.

Their persecution would be so severe that even in the tenderest relationships of life, brother, parents, children, betrayal and death would ensue (Vr. 13). “Hated of all men for my name’s sake”. Christianity is exclusive, and therefore Christians were hated by both Jews and Gentiles. (See Acts 28:22; James 4:4; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16; 4:14) The Jews hated the preaching of the New Covenant that superseded the Old. Gentiles were reluctant to give up their pagan idolatry. Tacitus said of Christianity that it exercised enmity to the human race. Jesus then promises salvation to the persevering, the ones who endure to the end. It is said that not a single believer perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. They fled to Pella where they remained in safety. So it will also be in the Tribulation.

II. A GREAT DESOLATION (Vrs. 14-23)

The great chronological event for the time of the end is the middle of the seventieth week of Daniel (See 9:27; 12:11). The Antichrist called “the abomination of desolation” breaks his covenant with Israel, the daily offering ceases, and the Antichrist sets up his image. This sets up the beginning of the great unparalleled affliction, such as has never yet been known to the persecuted Jews. So terrible will it be that not a soul would be saved if God had not shortened those days.

1. Departing Hastily (Vrs. 14-16)

There seems to be some asylum for those who flee to the mountains of Judea. In the Book of the Revelation this flight is spoken of under the figure of a woman (See Rev. 12:6). So to the wild fastnesses southeast of Judea they flee before the fury of the Satanic onslaught, with no preparations, no provisions, nothing to preserve them alive for the three and a half year’s sojourn. Yet they will be miraculously fed and sheltered, as they were once before in the forty years wanderings in the wilderness. Here is where the so-called Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) will be really prayed and its petitions answered. According to the record of Eusebius (260-3407), the believers were divinely directed to flee to the wilderness or to Pella. They were to flee with all possible haste, and not descend into their houses to collect any goods. The housetops in Palestine were flat-roofed, and communicated with each other, so that a person could proceed to the city walls and escape without coming down into the street. Also those in the field who were laboring

without their upper or outer garment must not turn back to get it. He must escape without his full dress, or garments at home.

2. Disturbing Hindrances (Vrs. 17-18)

“But woe to them” who are bearing children and are nursing infants in those days. The suffering of both would be greatly increased. The flight would be far too difficult, or almost impossible. Also in the inclement weather of a Palestine winter such a flight would be beyond endurance, especially to those unaccustomed to hardship. Yet in the midst of it all, their safety is assured.

3. Dangers Heralded (Vrs. 19-20)

Josephus declares of the calamities attending the fall of Jerusalem in almost the same words of this prophecy. He says: “the misfortunes of men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so terrible as theirs were”. The city at this time was densely crowded by the multitudes that had come up to the Passover. Pestilence ensued, and famine followed. Acts of violence and cruelty were perpetrated which cannot be described. Mothers killed, roasted, and devoured their infant children. 97,000 were taken captive by the Romans and 1,100,000 perished in the siege. If this were terrible in A.D. 70 what will it be in the coming tribulation! If the Lord in His pitying mercy had not shortened those days no flesh would have been saved. (See Lev. 26:29; Deut. 28:56-57).

4. Deceiving Harbingers (Vrs. 21-23)

“Take heed. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise”. Many of God’s people in their ignorance of the Scriptures and unbelief will accept anyone who says: “I am Christ”. But He is not to be found anywhere on earth. He will come in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory (Vr. 26). Josephus tells that false prophets and imposters prevailed on multitudes to follow them into the desert, promising there to display signs and wonders (See Acts 21:38). If such impostures took place in A.D. 70 how much more will there be “signs and lying wonders” before the final coming of Christ (2 Thess. 2:1-10). “But take ye heed” – an emphatic admonition in the original. To be forewarned was to be forearmed”. The Lord has exercised the caution to foretell these dangers, so you exercise a like caution in guarding against them.

III. A GLORIOUS DEMONSTRATION (Vrs. 24-37)

“After that tribulation”. This refers back to the previous verses. The tribulation is also spoken of as: “the latter days” (Deut. 4:30), “time of end” (Dan. 12:9), “the great tribulation” (Matt. 24:21), “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). In Daniel 12:1 we have mention of this unparalleled, unprecedented time of sorrow. After speaking of Antichrist (Dan. 11:36-45) we read: “And at that time (the time of the end) shall Michael stand up, that great prince of Daniel’s people (Israel) and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time”. This Great Tribulation is seen in such passages as, Deut. 4:23-31; Jer. Ch. 30; Dan. 12:1; Matt. Ch. 24; Mark 13:14-23; Rev. Chs. 6-19.

1. Sign of the Son of Man (Vrs. 24-27)

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven” (Matt. 24:30). The Second Coming of the Lord will be preceded by celestial phenomena. Some have taken verses 24-25 to be figurative, meaning great calamities and revolutions among the nations of the earth.

But we believe they are to be taken literally and that the actual sun, moon and stars are meant. See also Isa. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 3:15. The sun, moon and stars have been a part of Israel's history (See Gen. 15:12,17; 37:9; Josh. 10:12-13). There will be terrific phenomena and changes in nature that will take place before Christ's coming. There will be darkness, as during the crucifixion of our Lord (Mk. 15:33); and in the plague of Egypt (Exod. 10:22-23). There will be falling or shooting of meteors. And the powers or forces of nature, the elements of the heavens, shall be shaken, agitated and convulsed as the waves of the sea (Heb. 12:26).

The Lord now tells of His Second Coming. It is spoken of elsewhere as actual and visible (Acts 1:9,11; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Pet. 3:10,12; Jude 14; Rev. 1:7). "Coming in clouds" as He ascended (Acts 1:9). See also Ex. 16:10; 19:18; Dan. 7:13). This coming of the Lord will be in "great power and glory". He will come with the actual possession of power and a glorious visible display of this power (Ps. 68:17; Acts 7:55; Rev. 19:11-16). "Then shall He send His angels". Angels are elsewhere described as attending Christ at His coming, and active in both saving and judging. (See Matt. 13:41,49) They shall gather to Him all His elect, his chosen followers from every quarter and from the remotest places on earth under heaven (Deut. 4:30-32; Ezek. 37:9-10). They shall be gathered "from end of earth to end of heaven", a strong expression. They will come from the whole visible creation, wherever the elect are found. This gathering will be for safety, for enjoyment, for rewards in Christ's Kingdom. The wicked also will be gathered for punishment.

2. Sign of the Fig Tree (Vrs. 28-31)

"Learn a parable of the fig tree". The sign of the fig tree is its tender branch and leaves, revealing the coming of summer; and prophetically signaling the coming of the Messiah. The fig tree is political Israel. While we cannot say today that this parable is being fulfilled; yet there are signs that we cannot be far from this event. The Zionist movement, which had its beginning Aug. 29-31, 1897 when Theodor Herzl convened the first Zionist Congress at Basil; the Balfour Declaration, recognizing the right of the Jews to their ancient homeland; the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, as a political unit with a land, a flag, a national anthem, army and navy; the new Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus all these acts and facts indicate that Israel is now a political unit in the land that God gave them in Abraham.

"This generation shall not pass, till all these things be done" (Vr. 30). The meaning of this statement has been variously interpreted. Some hold that it refers to the Jews then living; others to the Jewish nation; and still others to the Jews as a people. However, the meaning here is no doubt that "this generation" means those who know and observe these signs, the generation of His followers who shall be living when these signs occur. In this case it can refer both to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 as a type, and the future coming of Christ for salvation and judgment as an antitype. So now the Lord affirms that His words shall certainly be accomplished (Vr.32). "Heaven and earth may pass away; but His words shall not pass away". (Ps. 89:34-37; Jer. 33:25-26).

3. The Sign of the Porter (Vrs. 32-37)

The Son of Man is now likened to a person who takes a journey into a far country; and gives his servants work to do and his porter is admonished to watch. Our Lord reverts now to the first question of His apostles in verse 4: "When shall these things be"? No one but the Father knows the day and hour of all these events. Verse 32 has been a problem for expositors down through the centuries. Some have even gone so far as to reject the verse. But it is found in all the ancient manuscripts and versions.

The Arians (followers of Arius, Presbyter of Alexandria, who denied the divinity of the Son of God; Maintaining that He was a creature, and susceptible of both vice and virtue, died 336 A.D.) taught that the Son was ignorant even in His divine nature. Our Lord possessed two complete and perfect natures, the divine and the human. In His divine nature He knew all things whatsoever, but in His human nature He knew only such things as He willed to know. As it was not expedient at that time to reveal that day and hour, He willed to be ignorant of it. But this ignorance implied no limitations of Christ's divine nature. Christ had no will but His Father's. When the Father willed to withhold from Him any of His designs, His will was subject to the Father's. In His human nature our Lord "increased in wisdom and stature" (Luke 2:52); to have prayed to the Father (Matt. 14:23; 26:39,42-44); to have received a commandment from the Father (John 14:31). This is all a part of the mystery of His incarnation.

a. Teaches an Attitude of Waiting (Vr. 33)

"Watch and pray". Two words in the Greek N.T. are both translated in our English Version, "watch". Hence these two words have a difference in meaning; not necessarily contradictory, but complementary to each other. The word here in verse 33 means "lie sleepless". So we have suggested here the idea of waiting. This attitude is not so much an act as it is a state of wakefulness.

b. Teaches an Attitude of Working (Vr. 34)

"To every man his work". Now lest they take the attitude of star-gazers, our Lord admonishes them to labor. "Be doing something, that the Devil may always find you engaged" – Jerome.

c. Teaches an Attitude of Watching (Vrs. 35-37)

"Watch ye therefore; ... I say unto all, watch". In these verses the word translated "watch" takes on a different meaning from the word in verse 33. Here it means "to keep awake". It is given twice to emphasize the need of wakefulness. Paul uses this same figure in Eph. 5:16 when he says: "Buying up the opportunity", or "redeeming the time". The figure is that of the marketplace; a merchant man, eager and alert, their hearts set upon the business. The night was divided into four watches of three hours each – "at even", from sunset to nine o'clock; "at midnight", from nine to twelve; "at the cockcrowing", from twelve to three; "in the morning", from three to sunrise. In the temple the priest, whose duty it was to superintend the night sentinels of the Levitical guard might at any moment knock at the door and demand entrance. He came suddenly and unexpectedly, no one knew when. Matthew tells us how the Lord further impressed the lesson of watchfulness by the parables of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13); The Talents (Matt. 25:14-30). Jesus addresses the apostles particularly and all generally "Be awake, be vigilant", which is the practical lesson of this discourse. "Would you have my Master find me idle"? – was a frequent saying of Calvin. (2 Pet. 3:11-14).

LESSON # 40 MARK 14:1-9 (Matt. 26:1-13; Luke 22:1-2; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:2-8).

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Chief Priests, Scribes, Jesus, Simon the Leper, Unnamed Woman, Apostles.
2. Principal Places: Bethany
3. Principal Purpose: To reveal the deep emotions of hate and love toward the Messiah.

In chapter eleven Mark closes the prophetic work of Christ in the realm of ministration, “For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister”; and now he proceeds to Messiah’s prophetic work in the realm of manifestation, “and to give His life a ransom for many” (10:45). “The dominant note of this paragraph is emotional. As we read it we are conscious of emotional suspense, suppression, expression, caution, courage. The atmosphere is charged with feeling. As we attempt to visualize the scenes, we observe the personalities: ... and central to them all, Jesus. Watching the faces, and listening to the speech of all, we detect tones which express intense and conflicting feelings; anger and affection, devotion and antagonism, evil, gladness and beneficent sorrow. Gathered around the Son of Man are foes and friends, all strangely moved”. – G. Campbell Morgan

In this chapter Mark gives us the following: The conspiracy of the Jewish leaders against Jesus; the anointing at Bethany; the engagement of Judas to betray Him; the preparation for the Passover, its actual celebration, the pointing out of the traitor, and the institution of the Lord’s Supper; His departure to the Mount of Olives, and His predictions concerning the scattering of the Twelve and the fall of Peter; His agony in Gethsemane and His betrayal; His arraignment before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, and the three denials of Peter; form the topics of this chapter.

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE MESSIAH’S REJECTION (Vrs. 1-2)

1. Its Setting (Vr. 1)

“After two days”. This is equivalent to two days before the Passover. Three different dates have been set for the crucifixion of Jesus. Expositors have suggested, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the latter being the most popular, and the one commemorated. But the popular view may not necessarily be the right one. It is this writer’s conviction that Christ died on Wednesday of Passion Week. Jesus arose “on the first of the Sabbaths” (literal translation of the Greek) see Mark 16:2; Lev. 23:3). Christ had to fulfill the prophecy of Jonah – “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:40) see appendixes 144 and 156 in Companion Bible. Therefore He died on Wednesday and arose on Saturday, according to the Scriptures.

“Was the feast of Passover, and of Unleavened Bread”. The Passover was on the 14th of Nisan, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread commenced on the 15th and lasted for seven days, deriving its name from the Mazzoth, or unleavened cakes, the only bread allowed during that week (Exod. 12:34,39; Deut. 16:3). It is also called “the bread of affliction”. From the close connection between the Passover and the week of Unleavened Bread they are generally treated as one, both in the Old and in the New Testament. Josephus describes it as “a feast of eight days”.

The Passover was instituted in commemoration of God's passing over, or sparing the Hebrews when He destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians. On the tenth day of the month Abib (Exod. 13:4) or as it was afterwards called, Nisan (Esth. 3:7), answering most nearly to our month of April, a male lamb or kid, without blemish, was selected. On the fourteenth day of Nisan, it was slain in the temple between three and six o'clock. In the evening, after sunset, the beginning of the fifteenth day, the pascal supper was eaten. Bitter herbs and unleavened bread were to be eaten with it, and to be done originally in haste, standing, with loins girt, feet shod, and staff in hand. The standing posture and the apparent readiness for a journey was at last discontinued. This month was reckoned as the first month of their religious year.

2. The Substance (Vrs. 1-2)

"The chief priests and the scribes sought how they might ... put Him to death". We are now confronted with a definite consultation and conspiracy of the Jewish leaders, the Sanhedrim, against Christ. The rage of these men was wrought up to its highest pitch by the rebukes and denunciations that the savior dealt out to them in the temple. They were anxiously waiting to give vent to their bitter, hostile feelings by apprehending and destroying Him. But because of His popularity with the people (Vr. 2), they decide upon craft and subtlety to accomplish their evil designs. However, they didn't want to do it on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people. Christ said, "after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified" (Matt. 26:2). These leaders were vile, vicious victims of the viper's venom!

II. THE MESSIAH'S RECEPTION (Vrs. 3-9)

The scene now changes from "the mount of Olives over against temple" (13:3) and the council chamber of the chiefs of the city to a little hamlet, Bethany, nestling among the hills on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. The scene is in the home of Simon the leper where an unnamed woman anoints the head of Jesus, bringing both criticism and also commendation upon her act. All the Gospel records speak of an anointing of Jesus. Some think there were only two in all; but a careful study of the circumstances will reveal there were three. In Luke 7:36-50 we have an unnamed woman in the home of a Pharisee anointing the feet of Jesus. This took place in Galilee, maybe in the city of Capernaum. In John 12:2-8 we find Jesus in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, where Mary anoints the feet of Jesus. This took place "six days before the Passover" (Jn. 12:1) and at Bethany. In Matt. 26:1-13 and in our text we have another anointing at Bethany by an unnamed woman, upon the head of Jesus and taking place "two days" before the Passover (Mk. 14:1).

1. Inauguration (Vrs. 3,8)

"There came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment ... and she brake the box and poured it on His head". "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying". What a beautiful act this is in the midst of the tragic setting! The pure and precious spikenard is for Him. Upon the Cross, into the Tomb and up to Glory the aroma of her spikenard would follow the Master. Thus she became identified in His death, burial, and resurrection. O woman, great is thy faith and glorious thy future! She came with an "alabaster"; "box" is not in the original. At Alabastron in Egypt was a manufacturer of small cruses or vases for holding perfumes, which were made from a stone found in the neighboring mountains. The Greeks called these vases alabastrons from the city where they were made. The "spikenard" was made of pure nard. It came from India. It was the costliest anointing oil of antiquity. She broke the neck or crushed the whole flask and poured it on His head. "She is come aforehand". This word occurs also at 1

Cor. 11:21; and Gal. 6:1. The word means “to outstrip, get the start of, anticipate”. And literally, “what she had, she did”. This was an act of prospective love, in anticipation of His great work on the Cross. The act of faith and love of this woman stands in striking contrast to the avarice of Judas and murmurings of the others.

2. Indignation (Vrs. 4-5)

“Some had indignation, ... why was this waste of the ointment made? And they murmured against her”. Covetousness is the subtlest and deadliest of all sins. “Thou shalt not covet”. Here was pretension to take great interest in the poor. They argue that “it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence”. This was about a laborer’s wages for one year. In the earlier anointing by Mary it was Judas Iscariot who objected to the waste. John tells us that he was a thief. It could be that this earlier incident affected the other disciples so they too murmured. It could be that their motive was right in wishing to relieve the poor.

3. Intervention (Vrs. 6,9)

“Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me”. Jesus now takes up her defense against their complainings, and against their avaricious and thievish spirit. She has done a beautiful deed. She has committed no offense, but has given proper expression to her grateful and reverential love. “This gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world”. Jesus proceeds to bestow upon her and confer one of the greatest honors ever bestowed upon a mortal. Her deed shall be immortal, and “a memorial of her”. It shall be held in everlasting remembrance, and she shall be everywhere spoken of. The broken bottle will spread the aroma of this glorious Gospel. This woman is one in the world’s history; the only one in regard to whom Jesus made such a promise.

4. Information (Vr. 7)

“Ye have the poor with you always, ... but me ye have not always”. Those who talk much about the poor will have constant opportunities to do much for them. So this verse suggests that under no reorganization of society will poverty be banished; not until the Lord comes and rules as King over the earth.

INSTRUCTION:

1. Men should fear lest God permit them to carry out their wicked designs sooner than they expect. At the feast, though they said, “not on the feast day” (Vr. 2). God overrules everything to His glory.

2. Love counts nothing too precious for the Lord (Vr. 3).

3. A covetous and selfish spirit begrudges the gifts and sacrifices of love to Christ (Vr. 4)
1 Tim. 6:10.

4. Whatever honors our Savior’s death is pleasing to God and to Him.

5. Our deeds of love and sacrifice are held in everlasting remembrance. Ps. 112:6; Mal. 3:16; Acts 10:31.

6. Christian works are often misunderstood and undervalued by men; but in the final reckoning God will defend and reward His own.

LESSON # 41 MARK 14:10-31 (Matt. 26:14-35; Luke 22:3-39; John 13:1-30; 18:1; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Places: Jerusalem, Upper Room, Mt. of Olives.
2. Principal Persons: Judas Iscariot, Chief Priests, Disciples, Certain Man, Jesus (Called Master, & Son of Man).
3. Principal Purpose: To set forth the rebellion of sinful men in the person of Judas; and redemption of sinful men in the person of Jesus Christ.

With this lesson we are entering into the very heart of Christ's work of redemption. We are going to be looking at the preparations for the Passover, then its participation, and the predictions that followed. Our Lord had just honored the act of anointing by Mary with one of the greatest commendations given to a human being. This became a severe rebuke to Judas (John 12:7-8) who suggested that it be sold and the money given to the poor. The words of Jesus would put Judas in insignificant contrast to the devoted Mary. Stung with these words of Jesus Judas was aroused to his act of treachery. And so he proceeds to betray Jesus and sell him to the authorities during the Passover.

INTERPRETATION:

I. PREPARATION BEFORE THE PASSOVER (Vrs. 10-16)

1. In the Diabolical Decision of Judas (Vrs. 10-11)

“And Judas Iscariot ... went unto the chief priests to betray Him unto them”. Note the four words in these verses – “betray”, “glad”, “money”, and “conveniently”. Here was deliberate betrayal on the part of Judas. He thought, planned, and counseled in regard to the taking of Jesus. His proposal was received by the chief priests with joy. It was an unexpected opportunity. They thought that now they could apprehend Him without delay. Judas bargain was thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15). This was the price of a slave's life (Exod. 21:32). Here was premeditated malice aforethought. Judas sought a convenient time, “in the absence of the multitude” (Luke 22:6) or without a tumult.

“Thirty pieces of silver, Burns on the traitor's brain;
Thirty pieces of silver, But Oh! It is hellish gain.
I have sinned and betrayed the guiltless, He cried with a fevered breath,
As he threw them down in the temple and rushed to a madman's death”.
(See Matt. 27:3-10)

2. In The Divine Directions of Jesus (Vrs. 12-16)

“Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover”? In these verses Jesus gives minute directions to two of His disciples, Peter and John (Luke 22:8), to prepare a place for the Passover. Our Lord reveals His supernatural foresight by giving the disciples the sign of a man bearing a pitcher of water, (this was usually a woman's work) and telling them to follow him into the house. The “guest chamber” or “large upper room” was located above the first story, the most desirable part of an oriental house. When the disciples enter the city, they “found as He has said unto them”. During the Passover universal hospitality

prevailed throughout Jerusalem. The only recompense that could be given was the skin of the pascal lamb, and the earthen dishes used at the meal.

“And the first day of unleavened bread”. This was the 14th day of Nisan or the first day of the feast, when the pascal lamb was killed (Exod. 12:6). The 15th day began the week of Unleavened Bread. This was the “high day” of John 19:31). The first day of Unleavened Bread was a Sabbath day. See Appendix 156 in Companion Bible. “They made ready the passover”. They slew the lamb, or had it slain, in the temple; its blood was sprinkled at the foot of the altar and its fat burned thereon; and the bitter herbs, the bread and wine were prepared. The killing of the pascal lamb is thus described by Starke in Lange’s Commentary: “A crowd of Israelites were received into the court, the gates were shut, the trumpets sounded. The householders slew their lambs. The priests formed a row which extended to the altar, received the blood in silver basins, which they passed on from one to another; and those who stood nearest the altar poured it out at its feet, whence it flowed subterraneously into the brook Kedron. The householder lifted the slain lamb to a hook on a pillar, took off its skin and removed the fat. This last the priest burned on the altar. The householder uttered a prayer, and carried the lamb to his house bound in its skin. The head of the house where the feast was held received the skin. When the first crowd departed another followed, and so forth”. As the Jewish day began at sunset and went to the next sunset, our Lord ate the Passover lamb, and was Himself the Pascal Lamb on the same day.

II. PREDICTION DURING THE PASSOVER (Vrs. 17-21)

1. By a Solemn Revelation (Vrs. 17-18)

“One of you which eateth with me shall betray me”. It is now evening on Wednesday the 14th of Nisan. As they sat and ate the Pascal Supper Jesus reveals His betrayer. He is known to the Savior; the Lord cannot be deceived. He can read the secrets of the inmost heart. “Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve” (Jn. 6:70-71). See Ps. 41:9.

2. By a Searching Interrogation (Vr. 19)

“...one by one, is it I”? “And they were exceeding sorrowful” (Matt. 26:22). The disciples became deeply stirred and upset. Even Judas with solemn hypocrisy asked the question (Matt. 26:25). Such a revelation in a company of only twelve would create a tremendous stir. “It is not I, is it”? To the eleven the very thought of treason was to their honest and faithful hearts insupportable, and excited great surprise and deepest sorrow.

3. By a Sure Identification (Vrs. 20-21)

“It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish”. “Then Judas ... answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said” (Matt. 26:25). Matthew points out that all the disciples said “O Lord” (Kurie); while Judas said “Master” (Rabbi). “One ... that dippeth with me in the dish”. This “dish” was called the charoseth – a sauce made of vinegar, figs, dates, almonds, and spice, and provided for the passover. “Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed”! What a calamity, and what a curse befell this individual, who betrayed the Master. Then Satan entered him as John tells us (13:27). Then the traitor went forth, and it was night (Jn. 13:27-30). “Good were it for that man if he had never been born”.

III. PROVISION DURING THE PASSOVER (Vrs. 22-25)

After Judas had gone out into the night, Jesus proceeds with the Passover meal and initiates the new memorial service, which would commemorate His death on the Cross. “And as they did eat”, He introduced the memorial supper. It is generally accepted that Judas had left before the Lord institutes the Supper.

1. The Symbol of Christ’s Body (Vr. 22)

“Jesus took bread and blessed and brake, ... this is my body”. “Jesus said, I am the bread of life” (Jn. 6:35). Bread is considered the staff of life. It nourishes our physical body. Christ is the living manna from Heaven who is our spiritual food. “Take eat”. It is only by appropriation that natural bread can be of any blessing; and so with Christ, the Bread of Life. The simple figure of speech here used has caused much misunderstanding. The Greek and Hebrew use of “to be”, is not expressed when dealing with matters of fact. But when a figure is intended, the verb must be used. “This is my body” means that the bread represents His body. “This my body” (without the verb) would be used if He were speaking actually of His physical frame.

2. The Symbol of Christ’s Blood (Vrs. 23-24)

“And He took the cup, ... This is my blood of the New Covenant”. “When I see the blood I will pass over you” (Ex. 12:13). “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). The Old Covenant was made in blood with their fathers in the wilderness (Exod. 24:8). So the New Covenant with the blood of the Lord. The same act is performed with the cup as with the bread. Jesus “took the cup”, gave “thanks” and “gave it to them; and they all drank of it”. It is called “the cup of blessing” (1 Cor. 10:16).

Theories relative to the Lord’s Supper:

(1) The Roman Catholic. The bread and wine are miraculously and materially changed to Christ’s body and blood; the priests partaking of both elements, the laity only of the wafer. This is called Transubstantiation. It was in A.D. 1418 that the Church of Rome enacted that only the officiating priests should partake of the cup. The Council of Trent, Sept. 17, 1562, declared “that in the Eucharist a true propitiatory sacrifice was offered for sin, in the same way as when Christ offered up himself as a sacrifice on the cross” and the council consigned all to damnation who should deny it.

(2) The Lutheran. The real body and blood of Christ stand in, with, and under the elements, but not as an actual transformation. Luther wanted to change the sacrament as little as possible from the Roman Catholic. This is called Consubstantiation.

(3) The Zwinglian. (Swiss Reformation leader – 1484 – 1531) He held that the Communion Service was merely a spiritual ordinance commemorating the death of Christ. Hence only a memorial service.

(4) The Calvinistic. (John Calvin, French theologian and reformer (1509-1564). He held that there was a real spiritual presence of Christ with believers in the service. He emphasized the words: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ; the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 10:16).

3. The Surety of Christ's Coming (Vr. 25)

"I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). This was the last time that our Lord partook of the Communion Service in that age; in the next age, the Millennial, He will eat and drink it again. This will be in commemoration of His work at Calvary. This indicates that the Kingdom will be postponed. In the Kingdom they would no longer look back to Egypt; but back to Calvary. Paul adds the words: "till He come" (1 Cor. 11:26).

The Lord's Supper is:

(1) A Thanksgiving Service. "And when He had given thanks" (1 Cor. 11:24). Called also The Eucharist, from the Greek word for thanks – eucharisteo.

(2) A Communion Service. (1 Cor. 10:16). The Greek word is koinonia – act of using a thing in common; fellowship.

(3) A Memorial Service. "This do in remembrance of me". (1 Cor. 11:24-25). The Greek word anamnesis, means remembering again.

(4) A Communication Service. "Ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). The Greek word kataggello means, to tell thoroughly.

Thoughts Concerning the Lord's Supper:

(1) The Lord connected intimately The Passover and the Supper. So did the Apostle Paul. He said: "Therefore let us keep the feast" (1 Cor. 5:8); and proceeded to give the ordinance of the Supper (10:16; 11:23-30).

(2) It is intimately associated with the judgment of sickness and death (1 Cor. 11:29-30). Is this compatible with a Dispensation of the Grace of God?

IV. PROTESTATION AFTER THE PASSOVER (Vrs. 26-31)

This takes place at the Mount of Olives after they had sung a hymn and left the upper room. (Vr. 26). This is the only recorded instance of singing by Jesus and His disciples. They sang or chanted the Hallel Psalms (115-118). These were used both during and after the meal. Jesus passes out of the city, down the deep gorge on the eastern side, crosses the Kedron to a grove at the foot of the Mount of Olives named Gethsemane, where He often came with His disciples (Luke 22:39; John 18:2). He goes thither to enter upon His sufferings, and to be betrayed by His enemies.

1. By Means of Prophecy (Vrs. 27,28,30)

"All ye shall be offended because of me this night". These words are taken from Zech. 13:7. The Shepherd will be smitten and the sheep scattered. See Vr. 50. Jesus in quoting this prophecy intimates that a suffering Messiah is in accordance with the purpose of God, and that His followers would be scattered. God gave His Son to be smitten and crucified (Acts 2:23). See also Zech. 11:8-13; 12:10).

"But after that I am risen, ... into Galilee". The angel referred to these words on resurrection morning (Mk. 16:6-7). After His resurrection He will go before them as a Shepherd (Jn. 10:4,27). See also Matt. 28:16; John 21:1; 1 Cor. 15:6.

“Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice”. Before morning Peter would deny His Lord three times - See Verses 66-72. It is thought that Peter denied His Lord within four hours of his affirmation of loyalty.

2. By Means of Protest (Vrs. 29,31)

“Although all shall be offended, yet will not I”. Ardent and impulsive as ever, the apostle could not endure the thought of such desertion. His protestations of fidelity are more fully given in Matt. 26:33; John 13:37). “If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee”. The reply of Jesus in verse 30 leads Peter to make a still stronger assertion. “He spake the more vehemently”, uttering what is here said, and more with greater earnestness. How little Peter knew his own strength!

INSTRUCTION:

1. That Jesus should be crucified on the day which ushered in the Pascal Supper is highly significant (1 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 3:25).
2. The Lord is the searcher of hearts, and knows all of the plans and purposes of His professed followers (Vr. 18; Rev. 2:23).
3. Christ’s death was in accordance with the eternal purpose of God (Vr. 21; Luke 24:44; Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:20).
4. Singing is a fitting and divinely appointed part of worship (Vr.26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jam. 5:13).
5. To be forewarned of an evil is to be forearmed; but even then self-confidence is generally a precursor to a fall (Vrs. 27-31; Prov. 16:18; Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 10:12).

LESSON # 42 MARK 14:32-42 (Matt. 26:36-46; Luke 22:40-46; John 18:1-2)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Places: Gethsemane
2. Principal Persons: Jesus, Disciples, Peter, James, John.
3. Principal Purpose: Christ went to Gethsemane to drink the bitter cup of sin, sorrow, and suffering that we might drink the better cup of salvation.

The history of the human race is one of sin and sorrow, and suffering; but it can also be one of grace and glory. There are three gardens recorded in sacred history: (1) The Garden of Eden; (2) the Garden of Gethsemane; and (3) the Garden of Paradise. The first garden presents a place of sin and sorrow on humanities part; the second, a garden of sin and sorrow on Christ’s part; and the third, a scene of neither sin nor sorrow. We look with shame back to Eden, with sorrow back to Gethsemane, and with satisfaction on to Paradise.

The Supper being ended, and the words of the institution being inaugurated, Christ then speaks the precious words of John chapters 14,15,16,17. With His disciples He then leaves the city of Jerusalem, going out the East Gate, crossing the Brook Kedron, and ascending the steep slope of the Mount of Olives. To the right it is thought, was the Garden of Gethsemane. The traditional spot as seen now is surrounded with a rough stone enclosure some twelve feet in height, 168 long on the north side, and 180 feet on the west side. There are eight venerable olive trees, which may have grown from the roots of the former. The Roman general Titus cut down

all the trees around Jerusalem during the siege that occurred 40 years later. Latin monks keep the place now as a flower garden.

“It is proper that in a garden the blood of the Physician should be shed as a medicine, because in a garden the sickness of the sick originated” – Augustine

On that Passover evening in the Garden of Gethsemane our Lord entered into the greatest contest and conquest ever staged in human history. The accounts of Matthew and Mark are the fullest and very similar. Matthew mentions the three prayers of Jesus; Mark mentions two, but implies the third. Luke’s account is concise, but vivid. Luke mentions the appearance of the angel, the bloody sweat and sorrow. John refers merely to the fact that Jesus and His disciples entered a garden, without any account of the agony. The various accounts in the Gospels show they correspond with the purpose of each evangelist in presenting the life of Christ.

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS (Vrs. 32-35,39)

“And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane”. The name means “oil-press”. It was a garden (Jn. 18:1) or olive orchard. “Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples” (Jn. 18:2).

1. The Persons (Vrs. 32-33)

As Jesus entered Gethsemane that night, it was the Innocent Holy One going to meet the horrible fact of Man’s sin and iniquity. Three companies are here seen in the eleven disciples and the Lord – 8 remained at the garden entrance; Peter, James, and John went with Him into the garden; and then Christ alone went a little farther. These same three had been with Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration, also witnessed the raising of Jairus’ daughter.

2. The Pressure (Vrs. 33-34)

“A place named Gethsemane”. “Began to be sore amazed”. “And to be very heavy”. “My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death”. With Gethsemane meaning “oil-press” and Kedron meaning “turbid” or “black”, we have the perfect site for His agony. In His sore trouble He calls for human sympathy. His sorrow had made Him nigh unto death. It almost killed Him, the agony was so great. So He beseeches the three to watch with Him. From the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley there is now to be pressed the aroma of grace and glory. His agony became so great that Luke tells of His sweat as great drops of blood. It is the agony of a spiritual conflict (See Heb. 5:7). The Author of life is now subjecting Himself to death by taking on Himself the sin of the human race. “to be very heavy” expresses extreme anxiety and anguish. Besides here it is used in Matt. 26:37 and Phil. 2:26. “Exceeding sorrowful” means grieved on every side; shut in by distress (See Mark 6:26; Luke 18:23). Jesus leaned upon men He loved, and they fail Him. He trod the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Him (Isa. 63:3).

3. The Prayer (Vrs. 35,39)

“Went forward, fell on the ground and prayed. And again He went away and prayed”. Three times we are told He goes away and prays (Matt. 26:39,42,44). Paul prayed three times that the Lord would remove his thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:8). Jesus had often frequented this garden for prayer (Jn. 18:1-2) so even Judas knew the place of prayer. All the days of Christ’s

earthly pilgrimage He had uninterrupted communion with God. “I knew that thou hearest me always” (Jn. 11:42) was His confident statement. His prayer was attended by great physical exhaustion and agony so the His sweat was drops of blood. His posture is indicative of His extreme humiliation. Luke says he “kneeled down”. Matthew says “on His face”.

II. THE PLACE OF RESIGNATION (Vr. 36)

The Garden of Gethsemane is also a place of absolute obedience. As always He is the obedient Son of His Father in Heaven. Lord Palmerston said to a French officer: “English soldiers are not the bravest in the world; but they are brave five minutes longer”.

1. His Participation (Vr. 36a)

“Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me”. Three times our Lord prayed that this “cup” might be taken away, the cup of iniquity which He is made to drink. Scripture speaks of three cups: The cup in iniquity which Jesus drank in Gethsemane; the cup of fury or trembling which every sinner will have to drink (Isa. 51:17); and the cup of salvation (Ps. 116:13). “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). Here we have the innocent, holy, Lamb of God bearing away the sins of the world – being made to drink the bitter cup. Three times our Lord met the Devil in the wilderness and won a signal victory over him. Three times Jesus agonizes over the cup in Gethsemane and wins a signal victory. Mark alone has preserved for us the word “Abba”. It is also used by Paul in Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6. It is an Aramaic word for father.

2. His Proclamation (Vr. 36b)

“Nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt”. Man was a disobedient rebel. Disobedience and rebellion shut Man out of the first Eden. Implicit obedience and faith in His Father brought victory for sinful man through Jesus Christ. These words of Jesus constitute the glory and climax of prayer. When one like Christ is resigned, submissive, and obedient to the will of God then prayer has reached its climax.

My will, not thine, opened the flood gate of sin in Eden.

Thy will, not mine, cancelled sin’s guilt in Gethsemane.

There are two distinct wills in Christ – the human will being always subject to the Divine will.

III. THE PLACE OF REJECTION (Vrs. 37,38,40-42)

His disciples could not watch with Him, but fell asleep. Judas, the betrayer now comes to help the mob take him.

1. The Drowsy Disciples (Vrs. 37,38,40)

“And he cometh and findeth them sleeping”. “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. Luke tells us they were sleeping for sorrow. Simon Peter is singled out by the Lord as to remind him of his weakness. The expression “one hour” may refer to an indefinite length of time. Some find in this an intimation of the length of the agony. Then directing His remarks to all three reminds them to be watchful, with the addition of prayer, lest they fall under the power of temptation. Your higher spiritual nature is ready and willing, but your lower physical nature is feeble. Returning a second time He still finds them sleeping, “for their eyes were heavy”,

weighed down and burdened with drowsiness. They were confounded and ashamed, and did not know what “to answer Him”.

2. The Time of the Traitor (Vrs. 41-42)

“The hour is come, ... he that betrayeth me is at hand”. His disciples could not watch with Him. It is here and now that the betrayer will come and take Him, and present Him to the mob. “Sleep on now, and take your rest”. There may have been a bit of irony in these words of Jesus. The victory is over, it is won. I do not need your sympathy now; sleep on. Or He could have meant: sleep on now, if you can, with the enemy so near. As Paul received the message from the Lord: “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:9); so the Lord in His agony and prayer had an angel from Heaven come and strengthen Him (Luke 22:43). God did not save Him from this hour, but gave Him strength and composure to meet the betrayer and go calmly to the Judgment Hall and Calvary. “Rise up, let us go”. Calmly Jesus leaves the Garden to meet His enemies. Verse 42 is a vivid picture of great earnestness and haste.

INSTRUCTION:

1. Gethsemane is a revelation of the guilt of sin; but also the glory of salvation.
2. Christ was made a curse (Gal. 3:13) and was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21); and while bearing our sin was forsaken by God (Mk. 15:34). No one but Himself could ever know what that meant: we can only stand in awe and wonder.
3. Watchfulness and prayer are the best safeguards against temptation (Vr. 38). Eph. 6:18.
4. What self-denial and self-sacrifice should we make for Him who endured so much for us! Gal. 6:14
5. Jesus has set us an example of entire submission to the will of God. Phil. 2:6-8

LESSON # 43 Mark 14:43-52 Matt. 26:47-56; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-11)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Jesus, Judas, Great Multitude, Peter (Jn. 18:10), Certain Young man (may be Mark).
2. Principal Places: At the Garden Gate, or on the way to Jerusalem.
3. Principal Purpose: To reveal that Jesus as The Lamb of God must suffer, bear shame, and be God’s sacrifice alone (Isa. 53:7; John 16:32).

This lesson will deal with the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and the events that ensued. The accounts of Matthew and Mark are the most extended and are of about equal length. John is fullest in narrating the first part of the betrayal. Luke is briefest. Matthew alone speaks of the twelve legions of angels; Mark alone relates concerning the youth who fled away naked; Luke alone records that Jesus healed the servant’s ear; and John alone tells us of Jesus going forth to meet Judas and his band, and their going backward and falling on the ground. These variations in the Evangelists are interesting as exhibiting variety in harmony.

INTERPRETATION:

I. ARRIVAL OF JUDAS (Vrs. 43-45)

“Judas, one of the twelve” now comes to be a guide to them who were to take Jesus, arrest Him, try Him, and condemn Him to death (Acts 1:16). Without his help they could not have found Jesus in this place of retirement. Judas had an hour or two before eating the Passover with Jesus and the eleven. Judas knew this place (Jn. 18:2).

1. His Company (Vr. 43)

“...a great multitude with swords and staves”. Judas had gathered together a multitude from the temple guard consisting of “the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders”. No doubt many others followed along for the excitement. They come “with lanterns and torches and weapons”. While the pascal moon was at its full this rocky ravine of the Kedron had deep shadows and darkness. It is thought that this whole company consisted of a band of Roman cohort, quartered in the tower of Antonia; then men who guarded the temple, and the chief priests and elders and finally their servants, such as Malchus (John 18:10).

2. His Conspiracy (Vrs. 44-45)

“Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he”. Judas was to give the multitude a sign, namely the kiss, lest they take one of His disciples. So Judas by his kiss not only distinguished Jesus, but also by so doing detained Him. “Take Him” is a strong word in the Greek, meaning overpower, seize, secure Him. The kiss was a common mode of affectionate salutation in the East. It was used among the early Christians as a symbol of love and brotherhood (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14). (See also Luke 7:38,45; 15:20; Acts 20:37). Jesus evidently advances to meet them, and in awe they start backward and fall to the ground (Jn. 18:4-9).

Judas adds to his sin of conspiracy that of hypocrisy by kissing Jesus fervently, which is the meaning of the word in verse 45. At this point Matthew inserts the question: “Friend, wherefore art thou come”? And then Jesus adds (Luke 22:48): “Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss”? In analyzing Judas character according to Scripture revelation we find that he was (1) Unregenerate (John 13:11; 3:5; 17:12); (2) Devil possessed (Luke 22:3; John 13:27); (3) Son of Perdition (John 17:12). Yet he was one of the twelve (Mk. 3:13-19); called by Christ (Matt. 11:28); saw the power of Christ’s miracles and heard His words. He finally repented of his act, but it was only remorse; and ended his life by hanging (Matt. 27:3-5).

II. ARREST OF JESUS (Vrs. 46,48,49)

The hands that formed the world, the planets, the sun, and the moon and the stars are now bound by the hands of wicked men. But if the shackles of sin are to be broken, He must be bound. If the bars of death are to be loosed, He must submit. Some day the men who took Him and bound Him will stand before Him as their Judge (Acts 17:31).

1. His Incarceration (Vr. 46)

“And they laid their hands on Him and took Him”. It was “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts

2:23). Our lord was made a prisoner, because He would in all things be treated as a malefactor, to be punished for our crime, and as a surety under arrest for our debt.

2. His Interrogation (Vrs. 48-49a)

“Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me”? Their acts were the occasion for these words. Such an array of force and weapons would be a becoming preparation against a notorious robber like Barabbas. He had been daily with them in the temple, and yet they had not taken Him there. So their present violence was needless, and only proved their malignity and moral weakness. The reason for the present success is seen in His quiet submission, “This is your hour and the power of darkness” (Luke 22:53).

3. His Instruction (Vr. 49b)

“But the Scriptures must be fulfilled”. All this has come to pass in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. This ought to remind the Scribes of the many Messianic predictions of their Scriptures, and how they were unconsciously fulfilling them. See Isa. 53:7-12; Zech. 13:7; John 10:35. Back of the Scriptures were the counsel and plan of God for the salvation of sinners through His Son, which find expression in His Word (1 Pet. 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8). So “that thus it must be” (Matt. 26:54).

III. THE ANGER OF PETER (Vr. 47)

“...smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear”. The one who wielded the sword was Peter (Jn. 18:10); and the servant’s name was Malchus (Jn. 18:10). Here Simon Peter displays his characteristic impetuosity. Luke tells us that it was his right ear (Luke 22:50) and also tells us that the Lord touched and healed it. There were two swords in the hands of the disciples (Luke 22:38). When the disciples saw what was happening they said: “Lord, shall we smite with the sword”? (Luke 22:49) And before the answer came, Peter took to the sword and smote the servant’s ear. Jesus rebuked Peter with the interrogation that twelve legions of angels were at His command if He needed them. There were some 6,000 in a legion. Someone has called Peter’s act “The Vanity of Violence”. Instead of using the sword Peter should have used the power of prayer that would have brought discernment.

IV. THE ABANDONMENT BY ALL (Vrs. 50-52)

1. By the Twelve (Vr. 50)

“They all forsook Him and fled”. This has reference to the eleven disciples. Even the impetuous Peter who had made so many promises; and the disciple whom Jesus loved. They saw Him arrested and bound, and understood from His words that He did not intend to deliver Himself. But now all panic-stricken they deserted Him.

2. By the One (Vrs. 51-52)

“And there followed him a certain young man, ... And he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked”. This episode is as characteristic of Mark, as that of the two disciples journeying to Emmaus is of Luke. There are many conjectures as to the name of this “certain young man”. The most plausible one is that it was John Mark, the son of Mary, the friend of Peter. He lived at Jerusalem with his mother (Acts 12:12). He was no doubt awakened by all the tumult of the crowd, and came to see what was taking place. He had about his body a linen cloth.

Fine linen which is worn by the Orientals at night. Only the rich wore these garments. They attempted to arrest him as one of Jesus followers. As they laid hold of him he escapes leaving the linen wrapper with them. Fear conquers the sense of shame.

INSTRUCTION:

1. Hypocritical discipleship and treacherous friendship are far more injurious than open hostility. They who acknowledge Christ in word, but deny Him in deed, are fast following in the steps of Judas (Ps. 41:9; Prov. 27:6; Matt. 7:21).

2. When Christians have recourse to violence for Christ they most surely take off the ear, the spiritual hearing, from their opponents.

3. Jesus stood alone as our Sacrifice and Savior. All human help failed Him, so we must despair of all things human for our salvation, and trust in Him alone. (Acts 4:12; Rom. 4:4-5; Eph. 2:5-9)

LESSON # 44 MARK 14:53-65 (Matt. 26:57-68; Luke 22:54,63-65; John 18:24)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Places: Palace of the High Priest.

2. Principal Persons: Jesus, High Priest (Caiaphas), Chief Priests, Elders, Scribes, Peter, Servants.

3. Principal Purpose: To reveal the injustice and inhumanity of sinful men against The Son of Man.

The trial of the Lord Jesus Christ was in two main parts; and each part was in three stages:

1) The Jewish or Ecclesiastical

a) Before the High Priest, Annas (John 18:12-24).

b) Before the High Priest, Caiaphas (Mark 14:53-65; Matt. 26:57-68; Luke 22:63-65).

c) Before the whole council, Sanhedrim (Mark 15:1; Matt. 27:1; Luke 22:66-71)

2) The Roman or Civil

a) Before Pilate (Mark 15:1-5; Matt. 27:2,11-14; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38).

b) Before Herod (Luke 23:6-12).

c.) Before Pilate (Mark 15:6-15; Matt. 27:15-26; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39 – 19:16)

In Mark we have the record of the Jewish Trial in the second stage and a mention of the third. In the Roman Trial Mark records the first and third stages. In the Jewish Trial they accused Jesus of blasphemy when He admitted that He was The Son of God. In the Roman Trial they accused Him of treason when He admitted He was a King. This second stage of the Jewish Trial seems to be the critical one, which Mark now records. Here the religious charges were preferred (Vr. 58); here Jesus declares His Messiahship (Vrs. 61,62); and here the authorities pronounce Him worthy of death (Vrs. 63,64).w

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE CONFRONTATION (Vrs. 53-62)

1. The Abduction of Jesus (Vr. 53)

“And they led Jesus away to the High Priest”. They bound Jesus first (Jn. 18:12) and then conducted Him across the Kedron Valley and up the road leading to the city and to the palace of the High Priest. The Roman power had interfered with the High Priest’s office. Antiochus (B.C. 160) had sold the office of the priesthood to the highest bidder. Annas was the legal High Priest, but he was deposed by the Roman government in favor of his son-in-law Caiaphas (Jn. 18:13). However, the Jews seem to recognize Annas as High Priest, according to the Law of Moses, which made the office hereditary. According to John 18:24, Jesus was first led to Annas who was High Priest according to the Mosaic Law and given a brief examination (Jn. 18:13,19-24), and then Annas sent Him bound for formal trial to Caiaphas, the acting High Priest under Roman appointment. Though it was about midnight, yet the chief priests, elders and scribes had assembled. Aaron was the first High Priest (Exod. 28:1-38) and the office continued in his family for about fifteen centuries. As the Roman governors changed the office at pleasure, it seems that it became an annual affair. John 11:51 says that Caiaphas was High Priest “that year”. Joseph Caiaphas was High Priest about nine years. The “chief priests” mentioned here may be other priests appointed by Rome for a season and then deposed (See Acts 4:6).

2. The Arraignment of Jesus (Vrs. 55-56)

“And the chief priests and all the council sought for witnesses against Jesus to put Him to death”. Mark passes over the details of the examination before Annas and the first commencement of insult and violence, recorded only by John (18:19-24). They “sought for witnesses”. By the law they were bound to secure the agreement of two witnesses on some specific charge. But they found no testimony against Him. It would, perhaps, have been easy to secure witnesses against Him on a charge according to Jewish law. He claimed to forgive sins (Mark 2:7); and was breaking the Sabbath (3:1-6). But the Jewish court could not execute a death penalty under Roman law. So they must get witnesses to prove a charge which would condemn Him under Roman law. But their witnesses “bare false witness” and did “not agree together”. No two agreed together, and hence the requisition of the law that at least two witnesses must agree, was not met. (Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

3. The Accusation against Jesus (Vrs. 57-61)

“We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple ... and within three days build another”. “Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed”? Finally two witnesses arose and gave false witness against Jesus (Vr. 57). “We heard Him say”. The statement now made concerning Christ destroying and building a temple was a perversion of Christ’s words. They were no doubt guilty of willful perversion, and therefore of perjury. Jesus had said: “destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up” (Jn.2:19). What the Lord said referred to His body and not His Father’s House, the Temple. “Destroy ye” and “I will destroy” are very different. “Made with hands” and “made without hands” are not found in Christ’s declaration. Words against the temple were held to be of the nature of blasphemy (Acts 6:13). But their testimony didn’t sufficiently agree to answer the demands of the Law (Vr. 59). The silence of Jesus was now getting to the High Priest, and so he interrogates Jesus: “Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed”? (Vrs. 60-61).

The High Priest seeing that the evidence was insufficient, and somewhat excited, rises from his seat and stands in the midst of the Sanhedrim. He now questions Jesus in the hope of incriminating Him. “Answerest thou nothing”? Why don’t you tell whether the testimony is true or false? But Jesus “held his peace, and answered nothing”. Here was a solemn and impressive silence, as Isaiah had foretold (53:7). What strange power there is in silence! The High Priest then interrogates Him: “I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God” (Matt. 26:63). Mark has “the Son of the Blessed One”. The appellation, Son of God, was given to the Messiah from Ps. 2:7.

4. The Affirmation of Jesus (Vr. 62)

“I am”. I am the Messiah, the Son of God. This is Christ’s first formal public declaration of His Messiahship and Deity. Christ is the faithful and true Witness. When Moses was sent to Israel they were to recognize his credentials when he told them: “I am sent me unto you” (Exod. 3:14). And also the Son of Man whom you now behold in humiliation, will some day come in exaltation. Now He is standing as a prisoner, but then sitting in His glory as Lord of Lords and King of Kings, at the right hand of omnipotence. And also “coming in the clouds” as Savior of His faithful remnant, and Judge of all His enemies. See Ps. 110:1; Dan. 7:13.

II. THE CONDEMNATION (Vrs. 63-65)

1. The Priest’s Indignation (Vr. 63)

Caiaphas has now gained his end. The accused had incriminated Himself. This was blasphemy, according to their judgment; and could be made constructive treason against the Roman government for a King would lead to rebellion against Caesar. All was uproar and confusion. So the High Priest rent his garment, not his priestly robes, but some undergarment. It was not lawful for him to rend his clothes (Lev. 10:6; 21:10); though tradition, based on 2 Kings 18:37 held it allowable in cases of blasphemy. “What need we any further witnesses”. So now prejudice, hatred, and haste unite in seeking the death of Jesus.

2. The People’s Indictment (Vr. 64)

“And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death”. The blasphemy has been heard, so now what think ye? He has incurred the capital penalty. In hot haste he presses for an immediate decision. This was of course an informal expression or vote. This whole trial was but a form, a judicial sham; His death had been determined upon before (Vr. 1) and His conviction was a foregone conclusion. No one in Israel should know more concerning the dwelling place of God than the High Priest. He alone, once a year, entered the Holy of Holies. Yet he did not know that it was empty! God was not there. The glory had departed. Ezekiel describes how it left the Cherubim for the threshold of the house (9:3); then went to the east gate (10:18-19); and then to the mountain (11:23). Now the glory returned; yet they did not recognize the Lord of Glory.

3. The Public Inhumanity (Vr. 65)

“... to spit on him,... to cover His face, and to buffet Him, ... and the servants did strike Him”. Dr. W. Graham Scroggie says of this verse” “Verse 65 must make its own impression, for there is no atmosphere here for exposition”. In those days a prisoner under sentence of death was ever delivered over to the mockery of the guards. Spitting was regarded by the Jews as an expression of the greatest contempt (Num. 12:14; Deut. 25:9) – See Acts 7:54,57;

23:2. Criminals were often taken to punishment with their heads covered. They “buffet Him” or smite Him with their fists. They also challenge Him to “prophesy” or speak through Divine influence. They make His Messiahship the object of insult and mockery. They smote Him with blows from the open hands.

INSTRUCTION:

1. Happy is that one against whom his enemies can allege nothing, except falsely (1 Kings 21:9-14; Ps. 27:12; 35:11; 64:5-6; Matt. 5:11).
2. There is a time for silence and a time to speak, Jesus treated frivolous and unjust charges with silence; but declared His character and mission (Isa. 53:7; 1 Pet. 2:23).
3. God gives the wicked the light of His truth, so that their deeds are without excuse (John 15:22; Rom. 1:20).
4. They, today, who jest at Christianity, make light of believers, and strive to injure the cause of Christ, would have mocked and spit upon Christ when He was here on earth.

LESSON # 45. MARK 14:54, 66-72. Matt. 26:69-75; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25,27)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Jesus. Peter. High Priest. Servants.
- 2.
3. Principal Places: Palace of the High Priest.
- 4.
5. Principal Purpose: To show the weakness of human nature which leads to fears and failures as illustrated in Peter’s action.

PETER’S THREE DENIALS				
<i>First Denial - Jesus Before Annas</i>				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Place:	The Court	Court, by fire	Court, by fire	The Court
Time:	Indefinite	Indefinite	Indefinite	Soon after entering
Interrogator:	A Damsel	Maid-servant	Certain Maid	Damsel that kept door
Question:	“Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee”.	“Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth”.	“This man was also with Him”.	“Art not thou also one of the man’s disciples”?
Denial:	“I know not what thou sayest”.	“I know not neither understand I what thou sayest”. A cock crowed	“Woman, I know him not”.	“I am not”.

PETER'S THREE DENIALS				
<i>Second Denial - Jesus Before Caiaphas</i>				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Place:	Porch	Porch	Indefinite	Standing & warming himself.
Time:	Indefinite	Indefinite	Little while	Sent to Caiaphas
Interrogator:	Maid	Maid-servant	Another	They
Question:	"This man also with Jesus".	"This is one of them".	"Thou are also of them".	"Art not thou one of his"?
Denial:	"I know not the man" With an oath	He denied it again	"Man, I am not".	"I am not".

PETER'S THREE DENIALS				
<i>Third Denial - Jesus Before Caiaphas</i>				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Place:	Indefinite	Indefinite	Indefinite	Indefinite
Time:	After a while	A little after	About an hour after	Indefinite
Interrogators:	By-standers	By-standers	Another	Servant of high-priest, kinsman of Malchus.
Question:	"Surely thou also art one of them; thy speech betrayeth thee".	"Surely thou art one of the m: thou art a Galilean".	"Of a truth this man also was with him; he is a Galilean"	"Did I not see thee in the garden"?
Denial:	He began to curse and swear: "I know not the man".	He began to curse & swear: "I know not this man of whom ye speak"	"Man, I know not what thou sayest".	Peter then denied again.
	Immediately a cock crowed.	The second time a cock crowed.	While he yet spake a cock crowed	Immediately a cock crowed

By: George W. Clark

The table above gives a good illustration of their independence and of diversity of statement without contradiction.

INTERPRETATION:

I. STEPS IN PETER'S DOWNFALL

There were three downward steps in Peter's life that lead to his denials in the court of the high Priest. Two we have already noticed; the third is in our lesson text.

1. He Fights (vr. 47)

It is John (18:10) who tells us that it was Peter who cut off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the High priest. This reveals Peter's mis-guided enthusiasm.

2. He Flees (vr. 50)

With all the rest of the disciples, he flees. When they saw Jesus arrested and bound, they left Him alone with His enemies. Here is cowardly withdrawal on the part of Peter and the others.

3. He follows far-off (vr. 54)

Peter sat at a distance, scarcely near enough for a mere spectator, much less a disciple. Seated with the servants he warms himself.

Peter is here seen as a half-hearted disciple. When Peter now goes into the court of the High Priest he greatly exposes himself to temptation. Mark with his characteristic detail, adds that Peter "warmed himself at the fire". God's biographies, unlike those of men, not only emphasize the good points in a person's life for our encouragement; but also depict his failures for our warning.

II. STAGES IN PETER'S DENIALS (Vrs. 66-71)

Our Lord is not the only one on trial, His disciple Peter is also being tried. He is confronted three times with evidence, and on all three he denies the truth.

1. The Interrogations (Vrs. 66,67,69,70)

"...one of the maids of the High Priest, ... and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth". "And a maid saw him again, and began to say ... This is one of them". "And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto". In the first question the maid or portress who admitted him asked him the question. "She looked upon him" with a fixed and earnest gaze. Jesus of Nazareth or better the Nazarene she calls Jesus. This was a contemptuous epithet among the Jews of Judea. (See Mk. 1:24). "A maid saw him again". A little while had intervened since the last denial (Luke 22:58). Then she says: "This is one of them". "Any man who is not supported by the hand of God" says Calvin, "will instantly fall by a slight gale, or the rustling of a falling leaf". For the third time he is approached by them "that stood by". They say to Peter: "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean". Having observed Peter's Galilean provincialisms, they now conclude that the charge made by the servants was true. The pronunciation and accent of the Galileans were indistinct and less pure than those of the inhabitants of Judea.

2. The Interjections (Vrs. 68,70,71)

"I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And the cock crew" (Vr. 68). "And he denied again" (Vr. 70). "But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak". (Vr. 71)

Peter thrown off his guard perhaps by the searching glances of the bystanders, replied at first evasively, that he neither knew nor understood what she meant. So he not only denies but pleads ignorance. Peter then goes out on the porch; and the first cock crowing takes place. The second denial was probably addressed to those around the fire. This denial is somewhat more deliberate than the first one. Assailed by the bystanders and by the kinsmen of Malchus, the apostle now fell deeper still. So he now not only, with an oath, repeats what he had said in the second, that he knew not of whom they spake, but affirms it with imprecations of divine wrath on himself if he spake not the truth. He invoked curses on himself, to take the most solemn oaths, in confirmation of the assertion. So in this lowest point of Peter's fall he gives way to profanity. And so now the cock crowed for the second time. Peter who was recklessly brave when his courage is called into question, finds himself a contemptible coward in spite of all his protestations. Only a few hours before he was ready to die for his Master. But let us not be too severe on Peter. He is the great and fearless apostle in the making. The Lord had said to him: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31) and then the Lord adds: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:32).

III. SOURCES IN PETER'S DEDICATION (Vr. 72)

There are now three things that lead Peter to a true dedication:

1. The Look of the Lord

"And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter" (Luke 22:61). In His own trial and agony, the Lord takes the time to look at the faltering and failing disciples. What a look this must have been!

2. The Word of the Lord

"And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him". All that the Lord had said, all His repeated warnings rushed back to his remembrance, and lit up the darkness of his soul. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Peter cast the word of Jesus over in his mind, going through the history of his denials, reflected upon them, until his whole soul was humiliated with shame.

3. The Tears of Peter

"And when he thought thereon he wept". This was not the remorse of Judas; but the Godly sorrow of true repentance. So Peter wept over his sins of lying, profanity, perjury, and disloyalty to Christ. Peter's sin was only an eclipse, not an extinction of his faith. Peter could pray the prayer of his ancestor David: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10). It was Charles Mackay who wrote: "O ye tears, O ye tears! I am thankful that ye run; Though ye trickle in the darkness, ye shall glitter in the sun; The rainbow cannot shine if the rain refuse to fall, and the eyes that cannot weep, are the saddest of all".

LESSON # 46 MARK 15:1-15 (Matt. 27:1-2; 11-25; Luke 23:1-5; 12-25; John 18:28-40; 19:1-15)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Chief Priests, Elders, Scribes, Jesus, Pilate, Barabbas, People.
2. Principal Places: Palace of High Priest, Pilate's Hall of Judgment (Jn. 18:28).
3. Principal Purpose: To set forth the principals of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility (Acts 2:23; 3:13-15).

This fifteenth chapter of Mark continues the history of the sacrificial work of Christ. He is formally and finally condemned by the Jewish leaders; and taken before Pilate, who examines Him and tries to release Him. But the people instigated by their rulers, demand the crucifixion of Jesus and the release of Barabbas. Desirous of satisfying the people and priests, Pilate grants their request. Barabbas is released, Jesus is scourged, mocked, and led forth to Calvary and crucified.

Concerning the cross, Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas says: "The cross was at once natural, unnatural, and supernatural; natural, because our Lord died as a human being; unnatural, because He was innocent and not guilty; and supernatural, because it was so important a part of the purpose of God, in providing pardon for the past, power for the present, and peace for the future".

We have already seen Jesus before the High Priest Caiaphas in His second Ecclesiastical trial; we are now to see Him in the third Jewish trial (15:1), and in the first (15:1-5) and third Civil trials (15:6-15) before Pilate. The action of the Sanhedrin in the second Jewish Trial (14:53-65) was irregular and illegal, because this council could not sit till after daybreak, and it was only shortly after midnight that they examined and condemned Jesus. So in order to give their verdict an appearance of legality they hastily met at dawn and ratified their decision. This we shall see now first to be followed by the trial before Pilate.

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE CONSULTATION (Vrs. 1-5)

We get now the final verdict of the Sanhedrin and the trial before Pilate.

1. The Indignation of the Priests (Vr. 1)

"And straightway in the morning ... the whole council, bound Jesus ... and delivered Him to Pilate". As the day dawned, a second meeting of the Sanhedrin was convened. The laws of the august court were supposed to be humane, and the proceedings were, in theory, conducted with the greatest care. The axiom current was: "the Sanhedrin was to save, not to destroy life". In trials before this court, the rules, according to the Talmud were:

- (1) The accused one to be held innocent until proved guilty.
- (2) No one could be tried or condemned in his absence.
- (3) Witnesses were to be warned of the value of life, and to omit nothing in the prisoner's favor.
- (4) He was to have counsel to defend him.
- (5) All evidence in his favor was to be admitted freely.

(6) Any member of the court who had favored acquittal could not later vote for condemnation.

(7) Votes of the youngest members were first taken that they might not be influenced by seniors.

(8) In capital offences a majority of two, at least, was required to condemn.

(9) A verdict of acquittal could be pronounced on the day of trial; of guilt only on the day after trial.

(10) No criminal trial could be carried through in the night.

(11) The judges must fast for a day before the trial.

(12) No one could be executed on the same day as the sentence.

So the trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin was therefore in violation of their rules, not preserving forms of justice, according to strict Jewish law. It is asserted that in the Talmud a new doctrine was invented permitting one falsely claiming to be Messiah to be tried and condemned the same day, or in the night, to relieve the Jewish nation over the sentencing of Jesus and giving Him over to Pilate. The Sanhedrin, no doubt, fixed upon the twofold charge of blasphemy and treason (Luke 23:2; John 18:37). They could condemn to death, but could not put the sentence into execution without sanction of the Roman governor (Jn. 18:31). The governors usually resided at Caesarea, but removed to Jerusalem during the great festivals to preserve order and exercise judicial functions. Some have called this trial before Pilate: “The irony of fate in which there is in Pilate’s dealings with Jesus the march of events to an issue the opposite of which the policy and cunning of men have intended. It is the moving finger of God”.

2. The Interrogations of Pilate (Vrs. 2a,4)

“And Pilate asked Him: Art thou the King of the Jews”? “And Pilate asked Him again, saying, answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they witness against Thee”. Evidently the Sanhedrin changed from the religious grounds of blasphemy which they had charged Him, and turn to the political. So now it becomes treason. Jesus is charged with being a king, and hence against Caesar (John 19:21). The new accusations led to further questions from Pilate. But Jesus is silent and Pilate is amazed, and confident of his innocence. Pilate no doubt wanted Jesus to deny the charges that he might declare His innocence and acquit Him. Pilate knew He was innocent (Vr. 10).

3. The Indifference of Jesus (Vrs. 2b,3,5)

“And He answering said unto him, thou sayest it”. “And the chief priests accused Him of many things: but He answered nothing”. “But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marveled”. Jesus told Pilate the real nature of His Kingdom (Jn. 18:37-38); which relieved Jesus of treason, since His kingdom was spiritual. The Jews, however, persisted in the charge, as they held Messiah’s Kingdom to be temporal, and hence opposed to Caesar. “Thou sayest it” is a strong affirmative answer.

The Jews now accuse Jesus of many things. Pilate accepted Jesus explanation of His kingdom and this angered the Jews. Jesus relieved of treason, they had to bring up other things. But Jesus is silent. Pilate now marvels. He wondered that Jesus no longer made any reply. This silence of Jesus continues until some time later when Pilate referred to his power to crucify Him or release Him (Jn. 19:10-11). Pilate now declares the innocence of Jesus (Luke 23:4; Jn. 18:28). The Jews become the more violent, accusing Him of stirring up the people throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee. Learning that Jesus is a Galilean, Pilate sends Him to Herod, the tetrarch

of that country, who mocks Him, and sends him back to Pilate (Luke 23:5-15). Mark omits this reference to Herod, and passes to the next expedient of Pilate to release Him.

II. THE CONDEMNATION (Vrs. 6-16)

Jesus is now again before Pilate. Barabbas is preferred to Jesus. Mark and Luke particularly describe the character of Barabbas. Matthew records the dream and message of Pilate's wife.

1. Prisoner Delivered (Vrs. 6-8)

Barabbas was a notable prisoner (Matt. 27:16) who was an insurgent (Mk. 15:7) and a murderer (Luke 23:19) and a robber (John 18:40). It was a custom at the Feast to release a prisoner. The origin of the custom is not known. The Romans were accustomed at their Bacchanalia to allow amnesty for criminals. So Pilate now resorts to an expedient, thinking the Jews would accept Jesus instead of Barabbas. Here was a celebrated robber, a rebel and a murderer, an insurgent against the Roman government. In three manuscripts his name is given in Matt. 27:16 as Jesus Bar-abbas and supported by the Armenian and Syriac Versions. He had led one of the numerous bloody insurrections against Rome. The multitude now clamor for release of a prisoner as had been done before and Barabbas was the one they wanted.

2. Pilate's Demands (Vrs. 9-14)

a. His First Appeal and Answer (Vrs. 9-11)

“Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews”? “that he should rather release Barabbas unto them”. Pilate thought that he might appeal to the people; for he knew that the leaders had delivered Jesus because of envy. Jesus was popular among the people, and so the leaders regarded Him as a formidable rival. He hoped the people would demand his release. So the leaders prefer to release a murderer and put their Messiah to death. Peter later referred to the act of the leaders (Acts 3:13-15). So the leaders move the people to ask for the murderer instead of Jesus.

b. His Second Appeal and Answer (Vrs. 12-13)

“What will ye then that I shall do unto Him whom ye call the King of the Jews”? “Crucify Him”. Pilate seems to have been taken by surprise that they would ask the release of Barabbas, the rebel, robber, and murderer, rather than Jesus who had committed no crime. So he is left in doubt as to what they would have him do with Jesus. The answer is now clear: “Crucify Him”. Crucifixion was a Roman, not a Jewish mode of punishment. The Jewish mode of execution was stoning (See Acts 7:58-60). Barabbas doubtless would have been crucified; so they ask for Jesus the punishment which Barabbas would have received. Even here the Scriptures and predictions of Jesus were fulfilled (See John 18:32; 12:32-33).

c. His Third Appeal and Answer (Vr. 14)

“Why, what evil hath He done”? “And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify Him”. If they insist on His death, they must show some crime that He has committed. Certainly He had done nothing demanding crucifixion. But the people stand adamant. They argue that Pilate had given them the choice of the prisoner to be released and the privilege of

deciding what shall be done with Jesus. They are saying we have expressed our desires; now you do your part in executing Him.

3. People's Decision (Vr. 15)

“...willing to content the people, released Barabbas, ... and delivered Jesus”. The Romans had found the Jews very difficult to manage, and so the emperors had often conceded to their wishes. They were desirous of satisfying both the leaders and masses. The same disposition is manifested to Paul by Felix and Festus (Acts 24:27; 25:9). From Matt. 27:24-25 we learn that Pilate vainly attempted to declare his innocency by washing his hands. So Barabbas is released to content the people. Pilate proceeds to scourge Jesus, a common prelude to crucifixion. In scourging, the criminal was bound firmly to a post, or column, his hands tied, his back laid bare, and the scourge made of three thongs of leather or small cords; and sometimes iron points or bits of lead were used. Paul received thirty-nine (2 Cor. 11:24). So Pilate gave the words: “Ibis ad crucem” or “Let Him be crucified”.

INSTRUCTION:

1. Barabbas has been called “Jesus Bar Abbas” or Jesus, the son of the father. Could it be that this Barabbas was one of those of whom Jesus had said: “Ye are of your father the devil” (Jn. 8:44)? If so they chose the antichrist and rejected The Christ.

2. “Jesus is standing in Pilate’s Hall, friendless, forsaken, despised by all, Hearken – what meaneth the sudden call; What will you do with Jesus?” “What will you do with Jesus? Neutral you cannot be”.

LESSON # 47 Mark 15:16-47 (Matt. 27:27-61; Luke 23:26-55; John 19:16-42)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Soldiers, Jesus, Simon of Cyrene, Chief Priests, Scribes, Centurion, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Joses, Salome, Joseph of Aramathea, Pilate,

2. Principal Places: Praetorium (Governor’s mansion), Golgotha, the Hebrew or Aramaic word for Calvary, the Latin word Calvariae.

3. Principal Purpose: “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Mark in this chapter continues the history of the sacrificial work of Christ, which he begins in the preceding chapter at verse 32. Christ is now formally and finally condemned by the Jewish rulers; then taken before Pilate who examines Him and at first proposes to release Him. But the people, instigated by their rulers, demand the crucifixion of Jesus and the release of Barabbas. Desirous of satisfying the people, Pilate grants their request. Barabbas is released and Jesus is condemned to die. The bigots and the mob have gained their end and now have their own way with “the Holy One and the Just” (Acts 3:14). The Roman power is brought into the service of the Jewish fanaticism and malice. All evil influences have conspired together. Now is their hour and the power of darkness. The world’s sin has culminated in the rejection of the world’s Savior.

The crucifixion of Christ was no after-thought with God. He did not conceive of this plan of redemption after man had sinned. We are told that Christ became the Lamb of God: “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1:19-20); and “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23).

Of all the people that have ever lived, Jesus Christ is the only one who came into this world for the purpose of dying.

“Beneath an eastern sky, Amid a rabble cry,
A Man went forth to die, For me.
Thorn-crowned His blessed head, Blood-stained His every tread,
Cross-laden on He sped, For me”!

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE MESSIAH’S DEGRADATION (Vrs. 16-20)

Jesus is now led by the soldiers into the court, called “Praetorium”. The R.V. renders the word “Palace”. This large palace court was where the guards were stationed. It was the headquarters of the Roman military governor. This palace was built by Herod, and where Pilate resided while at Jerusalem. They now call together the whole Roman cohort, that embraced from three to six hundred men. Before His crucifixion, Jesus is now subjected to the most inhuman devilish humility. Here on sees the depth of human degradation.

1. By Mocking Sport (Vrs. 17,18,20)

The soldiers clothe Jesus in purple, salute Him as “King of the Jews” and then take off the royal robe and clothe Him in His own clothes. While Jesus was before Herod his men of war had clothed Jesus in a gorgeous robe (Luke 23:11). Purple-red was a color worn by emperors. The ancient kings of Midian wore purple raiment (Judg. 8:26). In derision they clothe Him in a royal dress, and pay royal honors. “Hail” means “Joy to Thee”. It is similar to the Hebrew phrase: “Let the king live forever” (Neh. 2:3; Dan. 2:4). Here we have the lawless sport of a course and brutal soldiery who knew little of Jesus, except what they had heard from the Jews. But all this mockery Jesus bore meekly, submissively and silently (Isa. 53:7).

2. By Malicious Savagery (Vrs. 17,19)

They now crown Him with thorns, smite Him on the head and spit upon Him. Three times Jesus was subjected to savage mockery and cruelty: first, before Caiaphas (14:65); then before Herod (Luke 23:11); and now before Pilate in the Roman Palace. All this in addition to the official Roman scourging (15:15). More beastly brutality cannot be imagined! Jesus is now subjected to the curse of nature (Gen. 3:18), when they make a crown of thorns and place it on his head. This was placed in mimicry of the laurel and myrtle wreaths worn by victors at games, or by royal persons. They also smite Him on the head with a reed. The pain from this stroke would heighten the pain from the sharp thorns pressing into His brow. This reed would be the one that they placed in His hand (Matt. 27:29). Then to culminate their savagery they spit upon Him. This was an act expressing the deepest contempt (See 14:65; Isa. 53:3). He is now led forth to be crucified. The place of execution was outside the gates of the city. Thus it became Him to suffer without the gate (Heb. 13:12) See also Lev. 16:27; 24:14; Num. 15:35; 1 Kgs. 21:13; Acts 7:58. The four soldiers (Jn. 19:23) headed by a centurion who had charge of the crucifixion led Jesus forth to the place of execution.

II. THE MESSIAH'S CRUCIFIXION (Vrs. 21-41)

Dr. W. Graham Scroggie introduces this section with the words: “The plain and solemnly eloquent facts are, that Jesus, without being given any time for rest and recovery, was hustled out of the palace, the wood on which He was to be crucified was put upon His bleeding back, and, in the midst of a howling mob, He was led through the streets of Jerusalem towards a place outside its walls called Golgotha, or skull-place”.

1. As Seen in its Tragedy (Vrs. 21-36)

No records in the annals of human history, past, present, or future will ever approach this scene. It is climactic.

a. By Preparation (Vrs. 21-23)

Simon of Cyrene bears His cross (Vr. 21). It says “they compel”. This word is of Persian origin and means “to press into service” (See also Matt. 5:41; 27:32). Cyrene was an important city in northern Africa. Many Jews resided there. This Simon had no doubt come to Jerusalem to the Passover; and when Jesus could no longer carry His cross, he was pressed into service. The Cyrenians had a synagogue at Jerusalem (Acts 2:10; 6:9). There is a Simeon in Acts 13:1, a Rufus in Rom. 16:13; and an Alexander in Acts 19:33; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:14, but these may not be the same as this Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Isaac carried the wood to the offering on Mt. Moriah (Gen. 22:6).

The cross was of three forms – (1) It was originally a simple stake; (2) then it was made of two pieces of wood and formed like the letter X; (3) a transverse beam crossed the perpendicular at some distance from the top. It is thought that this latter was the cross on which Christ was placed because over His head there was placed the title: “King of the Jews” (Vr. 26: Jn. 19:19-20) and written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

Arriving at Golgotha (Vr. 22) which is called “The Place of a Skull” because it resembled in form a human skull, they nailed Him to the cross. Here He hangs suspended in untold torture. This place was apparently a well known spot. It was outside the gate (See Heb. 13:12) but near the city (Jn. 19:20) and near a thoroughfare (Luke 23:26). It was also near a garden or orchard and a new sepulchre (Jn. 19:41). Its site must remain undetermined.

Jesus is now offered “wine mingled with myrrh” (Vr. 23). It was given at the time of their arrival at the place of the crucifixion and just before He was nailed to the cross. But He refused it. He who gave Himself a voluntary sacrifice for us all would not becloud His brain or benumb His consciousness in the very act of making this sacrifice. Instead He drank to the very dregs the cup which His Father gave Him of suffering, humiliation and death. This custom could be founded on Prov. 31:6. Later they did give Him a drink (Vr. 36) which was no doubt the fulfillment of prophecy (Ps. 69:21).

b. By Presentation (Vrs. 24-36)

There is to be seen now the most inhuman degradation ever enacted upon any person (Vrs. 24-32). One can only say they are definitely diabolical. Every act in word or deed has its definite reason, physically, morally and spiritually. We see here now a concentration of evil forces who have come to torment the Holy One in His substitutionary work for us upon the cross. “They parted His garments, and cast “lots upon them” (Vr. 24). It was customary for the

soldiers who acted as executioners to divide the clothing of executed criminals among themselves. But the tunic, or undergarment, being seamless, was not divided but given to the one who should draw it by lot, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Ps. 22:18. Our Lord is now hanging naked on the cross which could be a single stake (crux simplex); or the dual cross pieces like an X (crux decussate); or most likely the stake and transverse beam (crux immissa). Crucifixion was the severest and most ignominious punishment among the ancients, a Roman mode of execution. To a proud Roman, the cross was a symbol of infamy, and crucifixion an unspeakable disgrace. It was abolished by Constantine (280-337).

Jesus was crucified the third hour (Vr. 25) according to Jewish reckoning which would be 9 A.M. Over the head of Jesus they place the superscription of His accusation: “The King of the Jews” (Vr. 26). The Jews violently protested against this superscription (Jn. 19:21-22); but Pilate who had already gratified their wishes in crucifying Jesus, conceded no more – “What I have written I have written”. The Jews wanted him to add that Jesus said He was King of the Jews. With Jesus “they crucify two thieves”; ... “And He was numbered with the transgressors” (Vrs. 27-28). Two robbers, with which Judea then abounded, were chosen as His companions (Isa. 53:12). It could be that these belonged to the band of Barabbas. In the apocraphal gospel of Nicodemus they are called Dimas and Gestas, Dimas being the penitent one. Jesus is placed between these malefactors and thus made the greatest criminal.

Then comes the presentation of the revilers and mockers (Vrs. 29-32). We first see the mocking multitude (Vrs. 29-30); then the mocking masters (Vrs. 31-32a); and finally the mocking malefactor (Vr. 32b). They misrepresent His word. They deride His claims. They jest at His agonies. The people, going and coming in and out of the city, wag their heads. This was a contemptuous and scornful shaking of the head as they “railed on Him”, or blaspheme Him. The most atrocious criminal was seldom ever mocked and derided when undergoing execution. “Aha” is an exclamation of derision. “Thou that destroyest the temple”. Jesus had not said this (See Jn. 2:19). So if you possess this power then “Save thyself and come down from the cross”. If He cannot do this they conclude that Jesus is an imposter, and revile Him accordingly. All three of Christ’s offices were mocked: First, His Prophetic office, “Prophesy who smote thee” (Luke 22:64); secondly, His Priestly office, “He saved others, himself He cannot save” (Mk. 15:31); and thirdly, His kingly office, “Hail, King of the Jews” (Matt. 27:29). Yes, He could have saved Himself; but then He could never have saved any sinner. Now the chief priests and Scribes mock Him with a peculiar venom and sting to their sarcasm – “He saved others, himself he cannot save”. They are compelled to acknowledge His supernatural power. Now they taunt Him with having lost it. If this King of Israel comes down they will “see and believe”. But they who would not be convinced by His preaching, and the raising of Lazarus would not believe had He come down from the cross (See Luke 16:31). So they now fulfill their own Scriptures (Ps. 22:7-8). The climax of the mockery is reached in the reproaches of His fellow-sufferers. One afterwards was convicted of his sin and convinced of Jesus’ Messiahship and repents (Luke 23:39-43).

The physical creation now seems to have seen enough and so we read “There was darkness over the whole land” (Vr. 33). This darkness lasted three hours. Creation itself bewails its Lord; for the sun is darkened, the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent (Matt. 27:51). As the night of our Savior’s birth was enlightened with the glory of the heavenly host (Luke 2:9) so now the day of His death is darkened with the gloom of a forsaken creation. It was the Syrian noontide and darkness obscured the whole land. This was a miracle for the Passover moon was at its full and so there could be no eclipse of the sun. This darkness was a herald of the next verse, representing the eclipse of the Sun of Righteousness, the darkness and distress which

overwhelmed His soul when the Father forsook Him, and left Him to meet the powers of darkness and death all alone.

Finally, we are presented with a Divine Destitution (Vrs. 34-36). “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me” (Vr. 34). The Lord quotes from Psalm 22:1. As Christ was being made a curse for us as He bore our sins, hanging in the place of the sinner, the Father God turned His face from Him. He who is “of purer eyes than to behold evil” (Habak. 1:13) turns away from His Son when the sins of a world were laid upon Him (Isa. 53:4,5,10; Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24). At this horrible moment our Lord experienced what every Christ rejecting sinner will realize in their banishment from the presence of God. The words, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani” are the Aramaic form. The Aramaic or Aramean words are given to show more clearly the reference to Elijah in the next verse. This may be what Heb. 5:7 refers to – “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears”. This is the only word from the cross that Mark records. The others are:

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

“Verily, I say unto thee today, with me thou shalt be in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

“Woman, behold thy son, Behold thy mother” (Jn 19:26-27).

“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me” (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).

“I thirst” (Jn. 19:28).

“It is finished” (Jn. 19:30)

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

“Behold, he calleth Elias” (Vr. 35). The Jewish people were expecting Elijah. They may have mistaken the word “Eloi” for Elias. Some commentators suppose that they said this in jest; but this seems improbable. Jesus had uttered the words: “I thirst” (Jn. 19:28). So they “filled a sponge full of vinegar, ... and gave him to drink” (Vr. 36). Burning thirst is the most painful aggravation of death by crucifixion. This drink was the sour wine and water called posca, the ordinary drink of the Roman soldiers. Earlier Jesus had been offered a drink which He refused (Vr. 23). This drink must not be confused with the offering of vinegar in mockery by the soldiers (Luke 23:36) which took place before the darkness. So now they wait to see if Elias would come and take Him down.

2. As Seen In Its Triumph (Vrs. 37-41)

The tragedy of the crucifixion is one thing, the triumph of the crucifixion is quite another. In its tragedy it is most repulsive; in its triumph it is most redemptive.

a. By the Confirmation of Christ (Vr. 37)

“And Jesus having uttered a loud cry, expired”. The word “ghost” is not in the original. Christ cried with a loud voice, revealing His triumphal power and victory. It reveals also that it was a voluntary death. He died by His own volition when He could say of His redemptive work: “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30) and then commend His spirit to God. Earlier He had said: “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself” (Jn. 10:18). So Jesus died in six hours instead of two or three days which it generally took.

b. By the Consumation of Mosaic Ritual (Vr. 38)

“The veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom”. In the tabernacle and the temple, the Holy Place was separated from the Most Holy by a curtain “of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen”. It was also adorned with figures of Cherubim

(Exod. 26:31). This veil stood for the fact that “the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest (Heb. 9:8). The rending of this veil was a type of the human body of Christ (Heb. 10:20) and signified that “a new and living way had been opened for all believers into the very presence of God. This veil, twenty feet long and thirty feet broad was rent from “top to bottom” signifying that God rent it and not man. Matthew 27:51-53 adds other phenomena, the earthquake, the opening of tombs, and the coming forth of departed saints from the tombs.

c. By the Confession of the Centurion (Vr. 39)

“Truly this man was the Son of God”. There was an impress of deity on His death as well as His life which was felt and recognized by the observing of every age. Even the infidel Rousseau (1712-1778) exclaimed: “If Socrates lived and died like a sage, Jesus of Nazareth lived and died like a god”. The spirit and conduct of Jesus, the darkness and the manner of his death, impressed this stern Roman soldier, the commander of a hundred men. He may have heard the High Priest interrogate Jesus: “If thou be the Son of God” and Jesus answer: “I am” (14:61-62). Whether this expression meant the conversion of the Centurion or not, it is difficult to say.

d. By the Compassion of the Women (Vrs. 40-41)

“Women, ... among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome”. These stood on the outskirts of the crowd and watched; while John and Mary the mother of Jesus stood nearer, so they could hear His voice. At least two of them remained and saw where they buried Jesus (Vr. 47). So when most of the Apostles fled, these women followed. Many of these women had seen His wonderful deeds and listened to His wonderful words; and had often ministered to Him. Now they behold Him bruised, broken, bleeding, and dying. Women seem to be the last to witness His death and the first to witness His resurrection. “Blessed women” says Scroggie.

III. THE MESSIAH’S ENTOMBMENT (Vrs. 42-47)

Of all the accounts of Jesus death and burial, John is the fullest. He relates that the Jews requested the legs to be broken and the bodies removed, so that they might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath. The request was granted, but the legs of Jesus were not broken because He was already dead; but one of the soldiers pierced His side and thus two predictions of Scripture were fulfilled (John 19:31-37; Ps. 34:20; 22:16). John also relates that Nicodemus brought spices and assisted in the burial. Mark is next to John in fullness and relates with minuteness the begging of the body of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea. The four accounts, while distinct, are beautifully harmonized and confirm one another.

Of the death of Christ, Richard Glover says: “He seems to burst the grave in entering it. There has ever since seemed to be a way out and the opening of graves and visitations of the glorified (Matt. 27:52) were only firstfruits, slight intimations of what is to be, a snowdrop peering above the wintry ground. That death is the great epoch of history, earthly and heavenly. The old things passed away and all things became new”. There are four words that sum up the salient features of the death of Christ:

(1) It was Natural. It was a real death, not a shadow death. The death of the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe. It was Immanuel who died.

(2) It was Un-natural. It was abnormal. Death is the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23); but He had no sin. He had to become sin (2 Cor. 5:21) in order to die. He “did no sin” (1 Pet. 2:22); had “no sin” (1 Jn. 3:5); “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21).

(3) It was Preter-natural. It was planned beforehand. He was the Lamb of God “slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). This pre-determined death has been called “the undergirding of the cross”.

(4) It was Supernatural. It was different from every other death. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (Jn. 10:17-18).

He struck His enemies to the earth when they came to arrest Him; He cried with a loud voice on the cross; He gave up the spirit on the cross; He commended the spirit into the Father’s hands; He was already dead when they came to break his bones; He had miraculous accompaniments at His death – the veil was rent in the temple; the earth shook; the graves were opened.

“And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation” (Vr. 42). The Romans were accustomed to let the bodies rot upon the cross and be devoured by birds. But the Jews were very careful to have the bodies taken down and buried before sunset (Deut. 21:22-23). Hence it was common to hasten the death of those crucified (Jn. 19:32). Josephus tells us: “So great care did the Jews take respecting the burial of men, that even the bodies of those condemned to be crucified they took down and buried before the going down of the sun”. For Christ’s body a new tomb stands ready and distinguished individuals attend his burial. We are told it was “the preparation, the day before the sabbath”. John tells us that this sabbath “was an high day” (Jn. 19:31), which means that it was the first day of Unleavened Bread and not the weekly sabbath or Saturday.

1. Joseph’s Request (Vrs. 43)

“went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus”. Joseph has an excellent description given of him. Though a “Counselor” i.e. one of the Sanhedrin, he is “an honorable counselor”, one who waited for the Kingdom of God”; a “good man” and “just”, who though a “disciple ... secretly for fear of the Jews” (Jn. 19:38), was not moved by fear to be untrue, but had pleaded in the counsel the cause of Christ. Luke (23:51) tells us he “had not consented to the counsel and deed” of his brethren. Matthew tells us that Joseph was “a rich man of Arimathea” (27:57). He “waited for the Kingdom of God”. He was like Simeon (Luke 2:25) and Anna (Luke 2:36). Coming “in boldly unto Pilate”, he is no longer a secret disciple, but casts away all fear. It was not a light matter that Joseph had undertaken. For him to take part in a burial would defile him for seven days, and make everything unclean that he touched (see Num 19:11; Hag. 2:13). He would be secluded throughout the whole Passover week, with all its holy observances and rejoicings. In the apocryphal, Acts of Pilate it is said that the Sanhedrin caused Joseph to be imprisoned for this act of love.

2. Pilate’s Reply (Vrs. 44-45)

“And Pilate marveled if he were already dead: ... And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph”. Death by crucifixion did not generally come until after some three days and thirty-six hours is said to be the earliest that it would take place. Pilate therefore marveled at the request of Joseph and after evidence from the centurion “gave the body to Joseph”. The standing of Joseph as a member of the Sanhedrin, doubtless had its weight; and Pilate’s troubled conscience would naturally desire to give Jesus a decent burial. Joseph asked for “the body of Jesus”. Pilate gave him “the corpse”. There is a great difference in the two words. Joseph begged for the “body” (soma), which in Greek writing was used for a living body,

a body in its entirety and beauty. But Pilate gave Joseph a “corpse” (ptoma), or “a ruin”. The believer sees in the body of Jesus a coming resurrection with complete entirety and complete beauty. The unbeliever sees only a ruin, the end of a life.

3. Joseph’s Removal (Vr. 46)

“And he took Him down and laid Him in a sepulcher”. Joseph having secured the body of Jesus, and bringing the linen; together with Nicodemus (Jn. 19:39), formerly a secret disciple like himself, and who brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes (Matt. 27:60). This new tomb was in a garden near Golgotha (Jn. 19:41). The traditional site under the present Church of the Holy Sepulcher is in doubt as the actual burial place. A large stone is then placed before the entrance to the tomb, sealed with an official seal and to prevent removal of the body a military guard is set before it. The stone was so heavy that the women, on going to the grave, were perplexed to know how to remove it (16:3). Scroggie says of our Lord: “Conceived in a virgin womb, concealed in a virgin tomb”.

4. Women’s Respect (Vr. 47)

“Mary Magdalene and Mary of Joses beheld where he was laid”. Mark closes the account of Christ’s burial by stating that the two Mary’s of verse 40, “beheld where He was laid”. They mark the tomb of His burial, so that they might visit it and anoint the body for final burial, after the Sabbath. Matthew says that they were “sitting over against the sepulcher” (27:61).

INSTRUCTION:

1. The suffering, death, and burial of Christ is God’s answer to the awesomeness of sin.
2. The enemies of Christ may strip us of our natural clothes; but can never disrobe us of the garments of righteousness.
3. Christ died a triumphant death that we might live a triumphant life.
4. “He was wounded for our transgressions” (Isa. 53:5) Wounds, according to the definition of a surgeon, are divisions of the soft parts of the body by a mechanized force, applied externally, and fall into a five-fold classification:
 - (1) Wounds of Contusion – By a rod, beating and bruising the victim (Matt. 27:30; Mk. 15:19).
 - (2) Wounds of Laceration – By sharp thongs, breaking the skin of the back (Matt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15).
 - (3) Wounds of Penetration – Thorns platted into a crown and pressed down on His head and brow (Matt. 27:29; Mk. 15:17).
 - (4) Wounds of Perforation – Nails driven through His hands and feet (Jn. 20:25; Col. 2:14).
 - (5) Wounds of Incision – Spear opening of His side (Jn. 19:34).
5. “For this very reason we believe; because Christ did not come down from the cross” – Bengel.
6. Christ in His death paid the ransom for sinners, made a full redemption for sin, being made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:6-15; 1 Pet. 3:18).
7. “Christ does not save men by His life,
 Though that was holy, sinless, pure,
Nor even by His tender love,
 Though that forever shall endure;
He does not save them by His words,

Though they shall never pass away,
Nor by His vast creative power,
That holds the elements in sway;
He does not save them by His works,
Though He was ever doing good;
The awful need was greater still,
It took His death, His cross, His blood”.

Annie Johnson Flint

LESSON # 46 MARK 16:1-14 (Matt. 28:1-8; Luke 24:1-8, 9-11, 13-35; John 20:1-2, 11-18)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, Salome, Young Man (angel), Peter, Disciples, Two disciples, Jesus.
2. Principal Places: Sepulcher.
3. Principal Purpose: To reveal the resurrection of Jesus; and to reveal this best attested fact in human history.

Mark closes his Gospel with a brief account of the Resurrection, Commission and Ascension of Christ. In comparing this chapter with the accounts of the resurrection as given by the other evangelists, the fact is at once apparent that they were independent narrators. Each writer had a specific purpose, divinely guided by the Holy Spirit. In comparing the four records we find:

(1) Matthew sets forth the Regality or Majesty. Here is might and majesty of the glorious fact. There is the earthquake, the countenance of the angel like lightning and his raiment as white as snow (28:2-3).

(2) Mark sets forth the Reality or Actuality of the fact. The women bring sweet spices and come to anoint Him. They ask “Who shall roll away the stone”? Christ is seen as really dead and there are hindrances together with fear. They “trembled and were amazed”.

(3) Luke presents the spiritual necessity. Emphasizes the truthfulness of Christ’s words (24:7). Everything was to convince: they found the stone rolled away, found not the body of Jesus; but heard: “He is not here, but is risen”.

(4) John presents the Practicality of it. He sets forth the influences of the resurrection upon the disciples. They “saw and believed”. “Seeth the stone rolled away”. “They have taken away my Lord”. “Saw the linen clothes, and napkin wrapped together in another place”. All this to stimulate belief, trust, faith.

A study of the resurrection from these four Evangelists gives a marvelous masterpiece of this glorious gospel – the fact and fruit of our Redeemer’s resurrection. No historical fact in all of secular or sacred writings is so well authenticated as the resurrection of Christ. The empty tomb of our Lord says to Science and Philosophy: “Explain the event”! It says to History: “Reproduce this event”! It says to Time: “Blot out this event”! And, it says to Faith: “Believe and receive this event”! The historicity of Christ’s resurrection is vital to Christianity. Could any of the theories opposed to the fact be shown to be true, that proof would be the destruction of the Christian’s ground of faith and hope. Alas, that today it should be necessary, as in the first

century, to ask: “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead” (Acts 26:8)? Yet it is, for there are still attempts to destroy its trustworthiness. But we say with faith and confidence: “But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20). So as Jesus had been “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40), He arose again. Resurrection is an essential part of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3,4).

The resurrection is vital to the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:14-17); to our salvation (Rom. 10:9); to our hope (1 Cor. 15:17-19); to our immortality (1 Cor. 15:52-53); and to our victory (1 Cor. 15:54). The darkest days in human history were the days between the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ. The Lord of Life is dead and buried in a tomb. The brightest day in human history was the day when Christ arose from the dead. The Lord of Life is alive forevermore.

INTERPRETATION

I. THE HUMAN PREPARATION (Vrs. 1-4)

We are now introduced to three women, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Salome, who “had bought sweet spices” to anoint the body of Jesus (Vr. 1). It was these same women who had watched the crucifixion from a distance (Vr. 40); and the two Marys had beheld where they laid Jesus (15:47). While all three women had bought spices and were coming to the tomb, it sees from John 20:1 that Mary of Magdala came first “when it was yet dark”. So the “they” of Mark 16:2 would then refer to the second Mary and Salome who came “at the rising of the sun” (Vr. 2). “And passing of the Sabbath” (Vr. 1). This would be the first day of Unleavened Bread, which was a Sabbath. In verse two we read that the women came early “on the first of the Sabbaths”. This would be on Saturday. So Christ arose on the weekly Sabbath or Saturday. There is no word in the original language for the English words “day” and “week”. The crucifixion would then have taken place on either Thursday or Wednesday of that week. Friday was “a high day” (John 19:31) or first day of Unleavened Bread.

1. Their Product (Vr. 1)

“had bought sweet spices”. These were odorous perfumes and preventatives of putrefaction, such as myrrh, aloes, etc. They evidently regarded the death of Jesus as a finality. They apparently had no thought of resurrection. But their love survived His death and in their hearts they gave Him the same homage that they had given Him when alive.

2. Their Problem (Vrs. 2-4)

“Who shall roll away the stone”? The women now come “very early on the first of the Sabbaths, ... at the rising of the sun”. Matthew speaks of two Sabbaths, one before and one following the coming of the women. He says: “But late of the sabbaths, at the drawing on toward one of the sabbaths” (Matt. 28:1). As God rested from all His creative work on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2), it is appropriate that Jesus should also arise on this day in perfect rest from His redemptive work. Mark alone records the question about rolling away the stone. The women now seem to have thought of the difficulty for the first time and not to have known that the stone was sealed, and that the sepulcher was guarded (Matt. 27:62-66). Tombs belonging to rich families were often large structures, generally with a vestibule or open corridor in front of the opening leading to the place where the body was deposited.

Then, unexpectedly and with surprise, they behold that the stone has been rolled away. For a few moments it appeared as if all their labor of love, in the preparation of spices, would be thrown away – that the last tender ministry must be given up. But now they discovered to their delight that this obstacle had been taken away. Coming near to the tomb Mary Magdalene sees that the stone is rolled away, and she quickly returns to Jerusalem to tell Peter and John: “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him” (John 20:2).

II. THE ANGELIC PROCLAMATION (Vrs. 5-8)

Entering the tomb they were astonished and affrighted to see a young man, an angel from heaven, sitting on the right side. Then in the most comforting and assuring language the angel gives the profound proclamation: “He is Risen”. The first preacher of the resurrection was an angel, a true ev-angel-ist. “He is risen” is one word in the Greek (egerthe) – “He was raised”.

1. The Miracle Confirmed (Vrs. 5-6)

“He is not Here”. It is conjectured that all entered the tomb, except Mary of Magdala, who seeing in the rolling away of the stone the confirmation of her worst fears, so fled away to tell Peter and John. On her return to weep at the tomb she met the risen Lord (Vr. 9). Luke 24:3-4 says: “Two men stood by them in shining garments”. See also John 20:11-12. Matthew and Mark speak only of one, which may be that only one was the speaker, the other confirming the testimony by his presence. See Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16. Seeing the empty tomb and the angel caused great fear and fright. They were afraid and bowed down their face to the earth (Luke 24:5).

“Behold the place where they laid Him”. The appearance of this particular spot where the women three days before had seen the body of Jesus placed (15:47) would corroborate the angelic testimony. The orderly arrangement of the grave-clothes showed that the body had not been stolen, but was confirmatory of His resurrection (Jn. 20:6-8). Here then is the confirmation of this most stupendous event. He who is the life could not be held by death. Here were the evidences of a quiet and actual resurrection, not a hasty snatching away of the body by deceivers. “Jesus of Nazareth” the man of humiliation who had been crucified is now the glorified Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Message Conveyed (Vrs. 7-8)

“Go your way, tell His disciples and Peter”. The Apostles in general, but Peter in particular were to have the matchless message. What a gracious message it was to the one who had denied Him, but who had deeply and truly repented. It would assure Peter of His Lord’s forgiveness. “He goes before you into Galilee”. The angel was careful to confirm and convey that truth to them (Mark 14:28). Here is a prediction that would evidence the truth of the resurrection. So when they returned from the Feast of Unleavened Bread to Galilee, He would be there to meet them.

“They went out quickly”. Overwhelmed with alarm at the sight they had seen and the words they had heard, they fled trembling and amazed. There was both speed and silence in their movements. Matthew 28:8 tells us that when they came to the city they ran to bring the disciples the word of resurrection.

III. THE DIVINE PRESENTATIONS (Vrs. 9-14)

From the four Gospels and from Paul we gather the following appearances of Jesus after His resurrection and before His ascension:

- (1) To Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:14-18).
- (2) To the other women (Matt. 28:9-10)
- (3) To Simon Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).
- (4) To two disciples (Mk. 16:12; Luke 24:13-31).
- (5) To the eleven Apostles (Mk. 16:14; Luke 24:33-49).
- (6) To the apostles, without Thomas (John 20:19-25).
- (7) To the apostles with Thomas (John 20:26-29).
- (8) To disciples on shore of Lake Tiberius (John 21:4-22).
- (9) To five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. 15:6).
- (10) To the eleven on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20).
- (11) To James (1 Cor. 15:7).
- (12) To the eleven at Mt. Olivet (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:4-12).

After His resurrection and ascension He was seen also by Paul (1 Cor. 15:8). Stephen also saw the glorified Lord (Acts 7:55). John also saw Him on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:13-18). Of these appearances, Mark now tells of three:

1. To Mary Magdalene (Vrs. 9-11)

The risen Lord now presents Himself first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She who had been one of the greatest sinners among those who followed Him receives the first of His resurrection appearances. While the precise condition of His body is not given, yet it is sufficient to say that it was in some respects like His former body and again in some respects unlike. In appearance, in the marks upon it, and in ability to take and eat food it was quite like the former. But now He could come and go, appear and disappear in a most mysterious manner. He walks and talks unrecognized and vanishes as mysteriously as He appeared. This is the sphere of the supernatural. Dean Alford suggests that the normal condition of His body before the resurrection was to be visible to mortal eyes; the normal condition after His resurrection was to be invisible.

John 20:11-18 gives a full and detailed account of Jesus' appearance to Mary. Mark now mentions a second time (See Vr. 2) that Jesus arose on the first of the sabbaths, marking the significance of this day. The mention of seven demons in the life of Mary is suggestive of the words of John (1 Jn. 3:8) "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil". Mary then brings the glad news to the others who were weeping and mourning; but they did not believe her words (Vrs. 10-11). Those that had been in communion and companionship with Him now are in a state of utter unbelief. For them hope and faith were eclipsed. When the women told these things "their words seemed to them as idle tales" (Luke 24:11).

2. To Two Disciples (Emmaus) (Vrs. 12-13; Luke 24:13-35).

Luke gives us the full account of these two doubting disciples on their way home to Emmaus from Jerusalem. One of them was named Cleopas (Luke 24:18); the other is unnamed. Some have guessed it was either Nathaniel or Luke. The Lord appeared in another form it says, so that they did not know Him. It was His glorified form. These were not two of the apostles, but disciples, perhaps of the seventy. They recognize the Lord in the breaking of bread (Luke 24:30-35). But the apostles did not believe them.

3. To The Eleven Apostles (Vr. 14)

To assure them that his appearance was real, he spoke to them, reproving them because of their “unbelief and hardness of heart”. After feeding of the five and four thousand He had spoken of the hardness of their hearts (8:18-21). Mark gives an ascending scale of appearance: first to one woman, then to two men, and now to eleven apostles. The women who had showed such loyalty at the cross and the tomb are given priority; the men who had shown such fear and cowardice come in last. Jesus would teach them the importance of believing upon evidence (John 20:29).

INSTRUCTION:

1. The resurrection proves that Jesus is The Infallible Prophet. He had predicted His resurrection (Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19). So if He had not risen, He would have been a false prophet. He is also The Infallible Priest. If Jesus is dead, death hath conquered over Him. It would prove Him to be a sinner. But He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec and lives forever (Heb. 7:15-17). He is again, The Infallible Potentate. A dead man cannot be the Lord of all. John saw Him in all His glory on Patmos, the One who lives forever (Rev. 1:18).

2. The stone at the door of the sepulcher illustrates many hindrances in the believer’s life. Men often make unnecessary anxiety. Don’t worry; it may never happen”!

3. If we look with believing eyes into Christ’s grave, all our anxiety vanishes; for Christ’s resurrection is our resurrection (Col. 2:12; 3:1-4).

4. As the woman was first to sin, so a woman was first to seek and find a risen Savior (Gen. 3:6; 1 Tim. 2:14; Mk. 16:9).

5. How strong and many the evidences of Christ’s resurrection! Nothing but unbelief can reject it (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

6. “‘He is risen’ the angels announce it, the empty sepulcher witnessed it and the appearance of Jesus confirmed it”. Scroggie.

LESSON # 49 MARK 16:15-18,20 (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Jesus, Eleven Apostles.

2. Principal Places: Mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16)

3. Principal Purpose: To command and commission the Apostles for their would-wide ministry.

Verses 9-20 are not found in two of the oldest Greek manuscripts, the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus. So the genuineness of these verses is influentially disputed, but not absolutely disproved. They cover a period of forty days and tell of our Lord’s Appearances and of His Commission to His disciples and His Ascension into Heaven. The five-fold Commission is fulfilled in the Acts period. It is not our purpose to go into a full discussion of this textual problem. We believe that the External Evidence in which the great majority of the manuscripts have these verses shows its validity in the text. Also the Internal Evidence of our present text is fully corroborated, as we shall see in our study. For a full discussion of this matter see Appendix 168 in the Companion Bible. Our feeling is that because these sign gifts passed away after the Acts Period, they were eliminated by certain scribes as no longer relevant.

This so-called “Great Commission” (see also Matt. 28:18-20) was given by Christ to the eleven apostles. Judas, who fell by transgression, was later replaced by Matthias to complete the number twelve (Acts 1:26). This number is significant as it denotes Governmental Perfection. It occurs twenty-two times in the Book of the Revelation. There are twenty-two main characters or letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The twelve apostles will sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). The names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb will be inscribed in the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb’s wife (Rev. 21:9-14). The twelve apostles had the Gospel of the Circumcision committed unto them (Gal. 2:7-9); as Paul had the Gospel of the Uncircumcision. Their ministry had to do with “the hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20) both for the Jew and the Gentile during the Acts Period. After Paul pronounced the judgment of Isaiah ch. 6 upon Israel (Acts 28:25-27), he no longer ministered in the “hope of Israel”, but became a minister of the Secret, Christ’s Body, the Church (Col. 1:24-25).

INTERPRETATION:

I. THE COMMAND (Vr. 15)

“Go ye ... and preach ... to every creature”. First of all, Jesus declares that “All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). This prepares the way for the command to preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven, with the effect of believing and not believing. Then follows the signs that shall attend those who minister. He concludes by saying: “Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

1. Its Proclaimers (“said unto them” – the eleven)

The eleven apostles together with Matthias (Acts 1:26) formed the original nucleus as the proclaimers of this Kingdom Gospel. The other Apostles were – Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James (Acts 1:13).

2. Its Place (“all the world”)

Mark says to all the “kosmos” while Matthew says to all the “ethnos” or nations. During the ministry of our Lord on earth, He had commanded His disciples: “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not” (Matt. 10:5). But now after His resurrection they were to go into all the world, to all the nations. This command was never fulfilled because of Israel’s impenitence.

3. Its Proclamation (“Preach the Gospel”)

Matthew (28:19) says: “Teach all nations, ... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”. This is the Gospel of the Kingdom. It is first a Gospel of Repentance (Mk.1:15). Then it is also a Gospel of Restoration (Acts 1:6). The next verse will give further particulars concerning this Gospel. When this Gospel has been fully proclaimed it will extend “to all the creation” (Rom 8:19-23). Creation will then be delivered from bondage to enjoy the liberty of the children of God. This Gospel of “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations” (Luke 24:47).

II. THE COMMISSION (Vrs. 16-18)

The commission is twofold: First, the means of conversion; and then the ministry of confirmation.

1. Its Kingdom Salvation (Vr. 16)

Mark says: “believeth and is baptized”. Matthew says: “teach, ...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (28:19). “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”. Jesus is definitely saying that faith and baptism are necessary requirements for salvation. This is baptismal salvation through the act of faith. Nothing is said here as to the mode of baptism or quantity of water (sprinkling, pouring or immersion). Nothing is said concerning the quality of the water (warm or cold, rain, spring, river, lake, or ocean water). Some have twisted this passage and practice as if it read: “He that believeth and is saved, should be baptized”. More confusion and separations have occurred because of water baptism than any other Christian practice. The Divine order is “Preach, believe, be baptized, be saved”.

“He that believeth not shall be damned”. The Greek word translated “damned” is *katakrito* and means “to give judgment against, and pronounce judgment against”. The judgment here may well be the kingdom judgment of “outer darkness” (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30), which those will experience who have no faith. So he who fails to believe, fails to repent and to experience the remission of sins will experience the condemnation due to his sins. Jesus was baptized by John (Matt. 3:15-16); but He did not baptize, leaving that to His disciples (John 4:2).

2. Its Kingdom Signs (Vrs. 17-18)

And these signs shall follow them that believe:

- (1) “In my name shall they cast out demons”
- (2) “They shall speak with new tongues”.
- (3) “They shall take up serpents”.
- (4) “If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them”.
- (5) “They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover”.

The history of the Acts of the Apostles is the record of the fulfillment of the promise as to these five signs:

For sign number one – casting out demons, see Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:12.

For sign number two – speaking with tongues, see Acts 2:4,11; 10:46; 1 Cor. Chs. 12-14.

For sign number three – taking up of deadly serpents, see Acts 28:3-5; Luke 10:19.

For the fourth sign – drinking any deadly thing, there is no recorded instance in the Scriptures; but we feel sure such cases did occur.

For the fifth sign – laying hands on the sick and healing them, see Acts 3:7; 9:17; 20:10; 28:8-9.

These are the recorded examples of the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise here in Mark, and of God’s witness in Hebrews 2:3-4. There were doubtless many more that are not recorded; but these are written and prove sufficient testimony borne by “them that heard Him”. Throughout the Acts there were individuals who received the witness of Jehovah’s messengers, but Israel as a nation did not repent. We may well ask: Why did not Israel become a blessing to all the nations? Why did not the expectation of a groaning creation issue in the glory that was about to be revealed? Why were not the prophesies which God has spoken by all the prophets

then fulfilled? There can be only one answer and that is THE IMPENITENCE OF ISRAEL: the disobedience which refused to listen and heed the call to “repent” (Acts 2:38; 3:19). After the crisis in Acts chapter 28 there was no further need for such signs.

It is an extraordinary but true fact that not one of the terms: “signs”, “wonders”, “divers miracles”, “gifts of the Holy Spirit” is to be found in Paul’s Prison Epistles. Paul who used the signs during the Acts period never used them afterwards. Instead we read: “Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick” (2 Tim. 4:20); Of Epaphroditus we read: “For indeed he was sick nigh unto death” (Phil 2:27; and to Timothy in his sickness Paul said: “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” (1 Tim. 5:23). Is this the same Paul who laid hands on the sick and they recovered? Is this the same Apostle of whom it is written: “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11-12)? Is this the Apostle who in Acts ch. 28 “laid hands on him and healed him”? Yes, the same Apostle, but not the same Dispensation. He is now the revelator of The Dispensation of the Secret – (Eph. 3:2-9; Col. 1:25-26. Besides these signs during the Acts period there were also the raising of dead to life, as Tabitha by Peter (Acts 9:40) and Eutychus by Paul (Acts 20:10-12).

III. THE CONFIRMATION (Vr. 20)

“They went forth, ... preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, confirming the word with signs following”. They went forth, but not immediately. They were commanded not to “depart from Jerusalem” but to “tarry” there until Pentecost, and be endued with the Holy Spirit power from on high (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). The Gospel of the Kingdom had gone far in that apostolic age. From Jerusalem it had gone to Babylon in the far East and to Rome in the West. Paul says in Rom. 15:19, “... from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ”. Illyricum was an extensive district lying along the east coast of the Adriatic, from Italy on the north to Epirus on the south, with Macedonia on the east. It was the Divine power of the Lord that worked with them to establish the Gospel during those forty years.

INSTRUCTION:

1. God will not exclude anyone from eternal blessedness who does not exclude himself through unbelief.
2. The signs accompanying the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom reveal that not only will there be spiritual remission and restoration, but also mental and physical healing.
3. A changed life is the greatest evidence of the Divine origin of the Gospel of Christ.
4. It is an incontestable fact that these signs have not followed in the wake of missionary endeavor succeeding the apostolic age. If so, why not? This is the great question which every Bible believer should seriously ponder, and find the true answer. The answer is simple if we carefully read Paul’s Prison Epistles and note the change in the Gospel and the Dispensation.

LESSON # 50 MARK 16:19 (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Principal Persons: Jesus, Eleven Apostles, Two Angels.
2. Principal Places: Bethany, Mt. Olivet.
3. Principal Purpose: To reveal the Exaltation of Christ, as One having pre-eminence, exalted above angels, crowned with glory and honor (Col. 1:18; Heb. 1:3-4; 2:9; Phil. 2:9; Eph. 1:21).

The Ascension of Jesus Christ was the last link of that golden chain of events which was connected with the earthly life and work of the Son of God; The Incarnation, The Crucifixion, The Resurrection, and The Ascension. Upon these four pillars our faith stands or falls. The first three have been given much time and thought; the fourth has often been neglected. Yet it is a very essential part of Christ's redemption for us.

There is a God-Man in glory, at the right hand of God. He is there in a body of flesh and bone (Luke 24:39; Eph. 5:30). He has been in glory in this form now over nineteen hundred years. This glorified God-Man – (1) Existed with God the Father and was equal with Him before the ages began (Phil. 2:6); (2) He took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man (Phil. 2:7); (3) He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8); (4) But God raised Him from the dead and He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs (Rom. 6:4; Phil. 2:9); (5) He has become Head over all things to the Church which is His Body (Eph. 1:22-23); (6) He has taken a seat at His Father's right hand (Eph. 1:20) from whence He will descend at His glorious Second Advent (Acts 1:11).

The Attending Circumstances are as follows: Forty days after His resurrection He ascended on High (Acts 1:3). Forty is a Biblical number of probation, testing, verification. It is found many times in the history of Israel. During these days He established His identity and the certainty of His resurrection. He ascended from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12; Zech. 14:4; 2 Sam. 15:30). Mountains had been a part of Christ's earthly life. There were – The Mt. of Proclamation (Matt. Chs. 5-7); The Mt. of Presentation (Matt. 17:1-8); The Mt. of Prediction (Matt. Chs. 24-25); The Mt. of Propitiation (Matt. 27:33-56); and The Mt. of Provision (Matt. 28:17-20). "While He blessed them He was parted from them" (Luke 24:51). His Ascension like everything else He did was for the specific purpose of blessing human kind.

Christ being received up into glory is a part of The Mystery of Godliness (1 Tim. 3:16). "Received up" is the only form of the word lambano in the N.T. It means more than went up; it indicates arrival and welcome. The Lord ascending into Heaven and the Holy Spirit descending from Heaven are the two basic facts that form the complement of the closing chapters of all the four Gospels.

The fact that the Lord ascended, "and sat on the right hand of God" is recorded only by Mark; and thus forms a most appropriate and striking conclusion to his Gospel. It gives the idea of Christ's majesty and rule. Being identified in all the work of Christ, He has taken us into the very presence of God (Eph. 2:6). Of this, Barrows in his Sermon on the Ascension says: "the place of all places in the universe of things, in situation most eminent, in quality most holy, in dignity most excellent, in glory most illustrious, the inmost sanctuary of God's Temple above".

INSTRUCTION:

I. THE FACT OF HIS ASCENSION

As far back as the days of the Psalmist we have foregleams of The Ascension of Christ.

1. It was Prefigured

It was typified or pre-figured by the High Priest, who went into the Holy of Holies once every year with the blood of the sacrifice (Lev. 16:14; Heb. 9:7). So Christ has entered into the heavenly Holy of Holies with His blood to cleanse the heavenlies and then to return like the High Priest (Heb. 9:12).

2. It was Predicted

By the Psalmist (68:18; 110:1). Like the Roman conquerors, our Lord ascended and led the captives in glorious triumph (Eph. 4:8). Who this multitude of captives might be is not stated. It could have been the fallen angels who were kept in the deepest abyss or Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) that He led in triumph before all the principalities and powers in the heavenlies to show His triumph over all enemies.

By Daniel (7:13). Daniel saw in a night vision the “Son of Man” coming with the clouds of Heaven.

By Jesus Himself (John 6:62).

3. It was Proclaimed

By Peter (Acts 2:33-34; 5:31; 1 Pet. 3:22). He speaks of His exaltation, as a Prince and Savior at God’s right hand and that the heavenly powers are subject to Him.

By Paul (Eph. 1:20; 4:8-10; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:14). Paul in Ephesians uses the expression “in the heavenlies” or upon the heavenlies, five times: 1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12.

II. THE FORCE OF HIS ASCENSION

We may not have thought of the Ascension of Christ as a vital force; but it has proved to be a real power and blessing.

1. Sustained Stephen (Acts 7:56)

Stephen the first martyr of the Pentecostal Church was being stoned to death, when a vision of the Ascended Lord came to Him. What a sustaining power this must have been!

2. Convicted Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:3-5; 26:12-13,19)

It was the vision and the voice of the Ascended Christ that completely changed the life of Saul the persecutor to Paul the proclaimer of the Gospel of the Grace of God. He left his religious fanaticism for his new-found Christian zeal.

3. Comforted John on Patmos (Rev. 1:17)

John, on the lonely isle of Patmos, was in a state of “tribulation”. There he received a vision of the exalted, glorified Christ. It brought fear into his being; but the Lord comforted him with the words, “Fear not; I am the first and the last”. The force of the Ascension is thus seen to console, to convict, and to comfort.

III. THE FRUIT OF HIS ASCENSION

The Ascension of Christ has brought and will bring far-reaching consequences.

1. A Heavenly Deliverer (Eph. 4:8; Ps. 68:18).

Christ has now the “keys of hell and death” (Rev. 1:18). He is the Ruler of the underworld of all the evil powers. He can lead all the evil captives in triumph and will finally “put all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor. 15:25).

2. A Heavenly Forerunner (Heb. 6:20)

He has entered within the heavenly veil, and is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. The Aaronic priesthood was no forerunner. Christ could not follow in that office. He was from Judah, not Levi. The Aaronic Priesthood was an imperfect priesthood and could never have entered into the heavenly Holy of Holies. Christ is a perfect Forerunner for His people Israel.

3. A Heavenly Advocate Heb. 9:24; 1 John 2:1)

As in the days of Job, so Satan still has access to the presence of God. He is there to accuse. But Christ is there to plead the cause of the saint, secure his peace, and bestow His blessing (Rom. 8:33).

4. A Heavenly Intercessor (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25)

Not only does the Ascended Christ plead the cause of His own; but He also prays for them (John 17:9). His prayers are always heard by the Father (John 11:41-42).

5. A Heavenly Coming (John 14:3,28)

The climax of His Ascension will come when He returns again. His Second manifestation will mean the glorious manifestation with Him in glory (Col. 3:4); the salvation of His faithful remnant on earth; destruction of all His enemies; and the setting up of His glorious Kingdom.

Our Glorious Head is seated “In the Heavenlies” today. Hence we look to Him for salvation over “the wiles of the Devil”; for sustenance in “all spiritual blessing” and satisfaction in having completeness in Him (Eph. 6:11; 1:3; Col. 2:10).

