

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE



Gospel of Mark

CHURCH OF  THE NAZARENE

NOTICE TO CLT PARTICIPANTS AND EDUCATORS

This is a contract. By using these materials you accept all the terms and conditions of this Agreement. This Agreement covers all Leader's Guides, Student Guides, and instructional resources included in the Continuing Lay Training (CLT) website.

Upon your acceptance of this Agreement, Continuing Lay Training grants to you a nonexclusive license to use these curricular materials provided that you agree to the following:

1. USE OF THE MODULES.

- You may distribute educational materials in electronic form to students or other educational providers.
- You may make and distribute electronic or paper copies to students for the purpose of instruction, as long as each copy contains this Agreement and the same copyright and other proprietary notices pertaining to the Module. If you download the educational materials from the Internet or similar online source, you must include the CLT notice for the Module with any online distribution and on any media you distribute that includes the educational content.
- You may translate, adapt, and/or modify the examples and instructional resources for the purpose of making the instruction culturally relevant to your students. However, you must agree that you will not sell these modified materials without express, written permission from CLT.

2. COPYRIGHT.

The material is owned by CLT and is protected by United States Copyright Law and International Treaty provisions. Except as stated above, this Agreement does not grant you any intellectual property rights in the Module.

3. RESTRICTIONS.

- You may not sell copies of these educational materials in any form except to recover the minimum reproduction cost of electronic media or photocopy expense.
- You may not modify the wording or original intent of the educational material for commercial use.

CLT Bible Study

GOSPEL OF MARK

Dr. Daryll Stanton, editor
Nataliia Skyba, contributing editor
First printing 2023

Continuing Lay Training
17001 Prairie Star Parkway
Lenexa, Kansas 66220 USA

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Welcome to the Continuing Lay Ministries series of Bible studies. You are engaged in a study venture that will be both helpful and enjoyable. Here are a few suggestions that will make this Bible study the most beneficial to you.

1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.
2. The Bible version used for this study is the New International Version (NIV). The editor primarily used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.
3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses, but it does not tell what they say.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Note that scriptures from the Gospel of Mark do not have the book's name. If the Bible reference is (1:6-8), you will find these verses (6-8) in the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark. Other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example Isaiah 53:1 and John 17:1.
5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.
6. You may want to mark your study Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own.
7. Finally, read the Bible passage again to better understand its meaning.
8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the document, all of the words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically. For pronunciation of additional terms and their definitions please refer to *A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English* (Eby, et al, 2004).

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here are two suggestions.

1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another person read the Continuing Lay Ministries outline.
2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

Continuing Lay Training
17701 Prairie Star Parkway
Lenexa, Kansas 66220
888-243-2767
913-577-2811

OUTLINE

Chapter 1. Introduction

- A. Mark: The Man
- B. Mark: The Book

Chapter 2. The Servant Presented (1:1-13)

- A. His Pedigree (1:1)
- B. His Forerunner (1:2-11)
- C. The First Great Test (1:12-13)

Chapter 3. The Servant at Work (1:14–10:52)

- A. In Eastern Galilee (1:14–7:23)
- B. In Northern Galilee (7:24–9:50)
- C. In Perea and Judea (10)

Chapter 4. The Servant's Suffering and Sacrifice (11:1–15:47)

- A. Sunday—"Day of Triumph" (11:1-11)
- B. Monday—"Day of Authority" (11:12-19)
- C. Tuesday—"Day of Controversy" (11:20–13:37)
- D. Wednesday—"Day of Retirement" (14:1-11)
- E. Thursday—"Day of Treachery" (14:12-52)
- F. Friday—"Day of Suffering" (14: 53–15:47)

Chapter 5. The Servant at Work (1:14–10:52)

- A. Saturday—"Day of Silence"
- B. Sunday—"Day of Triumph"

Methods of Study

Study Questions

Pronunciation Guide

CHAPTER 1 Introduction



NOTES

A. MARK: THE MAN

I would like you to meet Mark. You will always be glad you met Mark, for he wrote what some have called “The New Testament Reader’s Digest.” His Gospel perfectly fits this busy, swift-moving twenty-first century. So, let me introduce John Mark!

Being a Jew by birth, he was given the Jewish name John; but, being a Roman citizen, he was surnamed Marcus, or Mark. His mother, Mary, was considered wealthy, for she had a Greek servant girl (Acts 12: 13). The home was a gathering place for the Christians after Pentecost, so John must have been acquainted with the apostolic group. He has been identified, although not positively, with the young man who fled at the time of Christ’s betrayal (Mark 14: 51); the fact that this is recorded only in Mark’s Gospel makes this all the more likely.

John Mark was a cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4: 10), who was a wealthy Levite from the Island of Cyprus. Peter, it seems, lived for a while in Mark’s home (Acts 12: 12), and to Peter goes the honor of winning Mark to Christ (I Pet. 5: 13). So, when we first meet Mark (Acts 12: 25) he is already an accepted member of the Early Church. Paul and Barnabas visited Jerusalem, bringing an offering for the needy (Acts 11: 30), and they esteemed Mark so highly that they took him with them on their return to Antioch [an-TEE-aak].

Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13: 5), his ministry apparently being to instruct the new converts. His refusal to go farther than Perga [PER-guh] (Acts 13: 13) is well known—we wish the reasons were as well understood. Scholars give as probable reasons: first, that Paul was gradually coming into the ascendancy over Barnabas, Mark’s cousin; also, that Mark differed with Paul’s policy of taking Gentiles [JEN-tielz] into the Church. This latter reason is gathered from the fact that the Hebrew name, John, is used exclusively in the account at this time (Acts 13: 5, 13). We know that such an attitude would quickly disqualify a person for missionary work as far as Paul would be concerned. So, when the second missionary journey was planned Paul insisted that Mark be left out (Acts 15: 38).

The passing of time caused Paul to reverse his opinion of Mark (Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24), and in his very last days Paul paid him a high compliment (2 Timothy 4: 11). Of Mark it could be said, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try



NOTES

again.” We have already noted the friendship between Peter and Mark. It is thought that they, with Paul, spent some time together in Rome. Mark traveled widely, thus better fitting himself to write to a great audience. His ministry of service to both Peter and Paul would naturally induce him to picture Christ as the Mighty Servant.

Later in life Mark went to Alexandria [a·luhg·ZAN·dree·uh], where he founded the church and became its first bishop. We are told that he was martyred, about A.D. 62, in the eighth year of Nero’s [NEE-rowz] reign. With regal bearing Matthew announces the King of the Jews. In noted contrast Mark hurries to shout out the news to all the world that the Mighty Servant of God is here and already at work!

B. MARK: THE BOOK

Peter’s influence on Mark shows up clearly in the style of writing, and we are glad. For Peter was colorful, and the vividness of the big fisherman can be seen all through the Gospel; it sparkles and fairly snaps with action. Evidence of the friendship of the two is seen in the fact that both quote the same passage from Isaiah (Mark 1:3; I Pet. 1:24, 25). Mark’s Gospel was written in Rome after the death of Paul but before the fall of Jerusalem, likely before A.D. 60. It is now generally conceded that Mark’s was the first Gospel written, and both Matthew and Luke had it at hand when they wrote their accounts.

Matthew quoted extensively from the Old Testament. Mark has but one such reference—a double one in the opening verses of the Gospel (Mark 1: 2, 3). The absence of references to Jewish scripture or law lets us know that Mark had Gentiles in mind. He was writing to Romans to show them Jesus Christ as the Servant Sublime. Matthew and Luke record the events of Christ’s birth, and John stresses his preexistence. But, Mark has Jesus step to the stage full-grown, tall and strong, dressed for the tasks at hand. The symbol of Mark’s Gospel is an ox, ready for either service or slaughter. This was Isaiah’s vision (chapter 53), and Mark shows how literally Christ fulfilled it.

Keep these characteristics in mind as you study Mark:

1. Frequent mention of multitudes of people, yet through them Jesus moves with calm and skill—a servant of the Most High.
2. Miracles are prominent (nineteen of them) and parables scarce (only four).
3. Noteworthy are the many healings involving the demon possessed.
4. Bustle and activity is the atmosphere of Mark. Two of every three verses begin with “and,” giving a breathlessness of movement. “Straightway” (also translated



NOTES

“forthwith” and “immediately”) is used forty-two times—more than in all the rest of the New Testament. For Mark the King’s business requires haste.

5. Picturesque little details are added by Mark that give color and vividness to the scenes—just the things you would expect Peter to remember.

6. Mark deals almost totally with Jesus’ Galilean ministry: only a very slight mention is given the Perean [per-REE-uhn] and Judean [joo-DEEN] ministries.

A logical and simple outline of the book is found in Mark’s own statement “to minister, and to give his life” (10:45): chapters 1–9, “to minister”; chapters 11–16, “to give his life.” A somewhat more complete outline is suggested to help us get into the heart of this book.

The Servant Presented (1:143)

The Servant at Work (1:14 to 10:52)

In Eastern Galilee (1:14 to 7:23) In Northern Galilee (7:24 to 9:50)

In Perea and Judea (10:1-52)

The Servant Sacrificed (11:1 to 15:47)

The Servant Raised to Life (16:1-20)

Antioch [an-TEE-aak]

Perga [PER-guh]

Gentiles [JEN-tielz]

Nero’s [NEE-rowz]

Perean [per-REE-uhn]

Judean [joo-DEEN]

Galilee [GAL-uh-lee]

CHAPTER 2

The Servant Presented (1:1-13)



NOTES

A. HIS PEDIGREE (1:1)

What a remarkable, yet blunt, way to begin the story! This (1:1) has been well called the title of the book. “Gospel” is best translated “evangel” or “good news”. Of the six times the word appears in Mark, two are in the opening (1:1) and the closing verses (16:15).

Mark combines the titles for Christ (1:1) as does no other Gospel writer. “Jesus” is the personal name, given by command of the angel (Matthew 1:21), and means “salvation of Jehovah (Yahweh).” “Christ” is the official title, the Greek equivalent of Messiah, and means “the anointed One.” “Son of God” pictures the deity, the oneness with the Father.

Matthew pictures Jesus as the Messiah King; Luke, as the Son of Man; John, as the Son of God. But, Mark combines all three in his presentation. Mark uses the title “Jesus” exclusively till after the Great Confession in 8:28. The title “Christ” appears throughout the rest of the book. The title “Son of God” is used twice before 8:28 (both times by evil spirits—3:11; 5:7). It also appears twice after 8:28 (once by the high priest—14:61, and once by the centurion—15:39).

B. HIS FORERUNNER (1:2-11)

Both the double Old Testament references (1:2-3, cf. Mal. 3:1; Isa. 40:3) speak of divine visitations to be preceded by forerunners. The forerunner was the officer sent ahead of visiting monarchs to see that roads were smooth and free from obstructions. John was a striking figure. His message (1:4, 7-8) was stern, and his appearance (1:6) was rugged. In poverty and power John reminds us of Elijah [ee-LIE-juh], whose place he took in prophecy (9:11-13).

1. John’s Success

Here we first hear of great crowds (1:5), which becomes characteristic of Mark throughout. “All the land of Judah” cannot be taken to mean that all Judeans repented, but masses flocked from all parts of Judea, and many did repent and were baptized.

2. John’s Message Was about a Superior One

NOTES

- a. Superior in Person. While John was the fingerpost. Christ was the Way of salvation (1:7).
- b. Superior in Product. Under John's ministry people broke with sin. Christ's ministry cleansed from inner pollution. The symbols: water for outer sins, fire for inner sin.
- c. Superior in Time. John's ministry was temporary, but Christ's was abiding and permanent

Quickly Jesus moves from Nazareth with its obscurity and quiet to Galilee [GAL-uh-lee], center of activity and need (1:9). Why His baptism?

- (1) To place a divine stamp of approval on John's ministry.
- (2) To identify himself with the people He came to save.
- (3) As baptism was a sign of regenerating grace already received, Christ wished to say that. He was ready to dispense that grace.
- (4) It was an ordination to the ministry John had announced. The dove (1:10) is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, gentle and harmless. The voice (1:11) and the descending dove do not suggest that Christ had been without the Spirit's presence, but here is outer proof and witness that the Father would give the Spirit limitlessly for his trying days and months ahead.

C. THE FIRST GREAT TEST (1:12-13)

Mark gives us the briefest account of the temptation of all the Gospel writers, but with Mark brevity does not mean unimportance. Here is one of Mark's characteristic touches that add vividness: "with the wild beasts" (1:13) speaks of the bitterness and grimness of that terrible conflict. Matthew uses the name "devil," meaning "accuser" (Matthew 4:1). Mark uses "Satan" or "adversary." In the drama Mark pictures four orders of beings: the Spirit, Satan, wild beasts, and angels. Mark gives no report of the outcome, as though that would be a foregone conclusion. Christ's temptation was desperately real—a battle for keeps. The driving of the Spirit (1:12) does not suggest any reluctance on his part, but underlines the utter necessity of the battle. Mark suggests that the forty days was one constant encounter with Satan (1:13) while other Gospels suggest the temptation came after the forty days. Yes, He knew our strongest and subtlest temptations, and knew them at their worst (Hebrews 4:15), yet He strode forth in victory.



NOTES

Elijah [ee-LIE-juh]
Galilee [GAL-uh-lee]

CHAPTER 3

The Servant at Work (1:14 – 10:52)



NOTES

A. IN EASTERN GALILEE (1:14 – 7:23)

1. Gathering His Forces (1:14-20)

Between verses 13 and 14 there elapses a year of time. It is known as the Year of Obscurity, and is recorded only by John (2:13 to 4:3), during which Jesus made his way from Judea to Galilee. He did not run from danger, as it may sound (1:14): instead He moved right into the danger zone. For Herod, who had killed John, reigned in Galilee.

Jesus is first the Preacher (1:14), secondarily a Miracle Worker (1:23). \ His message is positive, clear, and rugged: and the order is accurate, for repentance must precede belief (1:15). The men now called had formerly been disciples of John. So, they had likely known Christ for about a year. Some think they may have even followed him for a short time previously; but this was a permanent call, a life's career (1:16-19). The first four had seen Jesus earlier by the banks of Jordan [JOHR-dihn], and now are called from the shores of Galilee (1:16). Here we learn:

- a. There is always a moment of final decision for Christ.
- b. Christ capitalizes on our earlier training.
- c. Christ's call means abandonment of our plans and problems to him. He who calls must provide.

2. The First Miracle (1:21-28)

We learn of Jesus' unfailing custom of Sabbath [SAB-uth] observance (1:21) and his unexpected use of authority (1:22). His authority was his own, while the scribes only borrowed theirs. This first miracle was a conflict with demons, which is characteristic of Mark's Gospel. We note how correctly the demons evaluated Jesus (1:24). Some lessons:

- a. The satanic opposition to his ministry from the very outset.
- b. Devils were powerless in his presence. "Be quiet" literally means "Be muzzled" (1:25).
- c. His authority, already noted (1:22), is here under scored (1:27).

NOTES

3. Various Healings (1:29-45)

Christ had been lavish in his aid to strangers, and He was no less willing to help a friend (1:29-31). Note:

- a. The touch of Jesus hand. This is characteristic in Mark.
- b. As the demoniac (1:23) pictured the tyranny of passion, this (1:29-31) shows the distress of nagging domestic cares.
- c. The healing was instantaneous; and to help her better serve others, not to use the strength on herself (1:31).

Such thrilling news (1:31) brought out the crowds of afflicted, who waited till sundown—the end of the Sabbath day (1:32). Christ demanded silence of the demons, for He did not want publicity from that source. It is redeemed men, not vile demons, who are to advertise the Master.

Christ had a perfect spiritual balance in his life. After strenuous activity He retired for prayer. (The Scriptures list ten such periods of prayer, and some writers use them to divide his ministry.) This we can learn:

- a. He had contacted men, the world (1:16-20). He had contacted demons, the underworld (1:23-27). Now He contacts the Father, the upper world (1:35).
- b. Strength must be gained before strength can be given.
- c. Give to God the best hours of the day and He will help you in the worst hours.

Christ was not One to settle down. From the popularity and multitudes of Capernaum [kuh-PER-na-uhm], He moved out to the smaller, strange places (1:38), for sin and need were there (1:39). For the first time Mark shows the element of faith entering the scene of miracles (1:40), Demon-possession showed the tyranny of evil (1:22), but leprosy tells of the defilement of evil (1:40). Again, note that Jesus touched him (1:41). The command for silence (1:44) being ignored brings an immature ending to Christ's ministry (1:45). How often, perhaps, our lack of quick obedience has shut away from many the healing help of God!

4. A Sinner Meets His Savior (2:1-12)

In his first tour of Galilee (1:39-45), Jesus showed power over satanic and physical afflictions and became popular. Now He turns to treat sin, which is at the base of all other ills, and opposition springs up (2:6-7). "Uncovering the

NOTES

roof” suggests an almost reckless disregard for the material in the interests of the spiritual (2:4). The care of the home, the culture of the body must always be secondary to the welfare of the soul. Faith is shown as a prominent feature (2:5) and it was the faith of friends and not the afflicted person.

Christ proves his deity:

- a. By measuring their faith while no word was spoken (2:5).
- b. By reading the minds of the scribes (2:8).
- c. By the double cure, spiritual and physical (2:10-11). If He could heal, He must be God; and if God, then He was able to forgive sins also (2:7, 11).

The title “Son of man” appears for the first time in Mark (2:10) and is suggested by Jesus himself. This does not suggest that He is merely human but his exaltation of humanity in redemption.

5. Matthew Joins the Team (2:13-17)

Jesus was opposed for his attitude toward sin (2:1-12), and now He is opposed for his attitude toward sinners (2:13-17). Mark calls Matthew by his original name, Levi, and in true Christian courtesy does not call him a publican [PUH-bli-kuhn] but a receiver of “custom” (2:14). His position as a tax collector meant:

- a. Matthew would be under suspicion, for he was the agent of a government that collected taxes by encouraging graft and dishonesty.
- b. Indirectly he was employed by Rome, but actually he paid Rome for the privilege of collecting taxes, which brought him great wealth.

As the custom booth was just outside Capernaum on the main caravan route, Matthew must have seen and heard Jesus often; so, this call was not totally without some preparation. But, Matthew’s decision was positive and final. The publican became a publisher of good news. He abandoned wealth here for treasures beyond. His feast (2:15) was to show gratitude to Jesus, and to witness to his publican friends. Christ’s presence in that crowd was not meant to argue that a Christian should keep his old acquaintances, but that every Christian should try to win his old friends (2:16). To this excommunicated group, the words of Jesus (2:17) must have come like a fresh spring breeze.

NOTES

6. Facing Controversy (2:18 – 3:6)

a. The Fasting Question (2:18-22)

Opposition springs from Christ's apparent indifference to their ceremonies. Fasts had multiplied from one a year as required by the law to as many as two a week. Christ says of fasting:

- i. It is done to subdue the body, that the soul might better have sway.
- ii. If done as a work of merit it is an abomination. Out of this there came an unforgettable statement of policy relative to the Christian program:
 - a. Christianity was to be promoted by principles and not ceremonies.
 - b. Jesus did not come to piece out Judaism, but to provide a whole, shining, new garment.

b. The Sabbath Issue (2:23–3:6)

Christ's apparent indifference toward the Sabbath angered the Pharisees [FAIR-uh-seez] again. He was accused of reaping—plucking the wheat, and threshing—rubbing it out (2:24). He nowhere denied having broken the laws. He justified his actions as a justifiable breach of law based on scripture (2:25, also 1 Samuel 21:6). Neither did Christ give license for Sabbath desecration (2:27); “made for man” literally means “made for man’s spirit.”

Christ worked by principle, and the Sabbath was for rest, only to be broken by works of mercy and necessity. Now He illustrates what works of mercy are (3:1-6). His anger flashes for some, his compassion is on others (3:5). In burning words (3:4) He announces the principle that to withhold help is next door to murder. Really Jesus had broken no law at all, for his healing had not required the calling of a doctor, which was what the law forbade. Here for the first time in Mark, Jesus asked for co-operation from the one healed (3:5).

7. By the Seaside (3:7-12)

As the crisis hastens on (3:6) Jesus withdraws for haven by the sea (3:7). But, there is no leisured quiet, no office hours for him who is humanity's only hope, and the masses seek him out (3:7-12). Here again Mark pictures demons bowing before the Deliverer (3:11), and again Jesus refuses to have their testimony (3:12). The Lord wanted, and finally received, witness from a better source (3:29).

NOTES

8. The Twelve Appointed (3:13-19)

The disciples were chosen, not by whim nor from pressure, but on our Lord's own responsibility and He always accepted the full care of their lives and their ministries (3:13 and John 15:16). Christ knew his ministry would be brief, and the task must be carried forward by some well-trained assistants. Those chosen had such apparent weaknesses that they could succeed only as they trusted him. In them He saw those qualities which, when sanctified, would make leaders of strength. He chose them so they could be more intimately his (3:13), to hear his message (3:14), and so they could be clothed by his power (3:15). Here is an interesting classification of the twelve:

- a. The strongest personalities, most gifted: Peter (surnamed Simon), James and John (surnamed Sons of Thunder).
- b. The reflective type, slower to speak or believe: Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew [bahr-THAHL-uh-myew], Thomas.
- c. The practical men, given to details, business like: Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus [AL-fee-uhs], Thaddeus [THAD-ee-uhs], Simon the Canaanite, Judas.

Secular history took no note of this handful of obscure men until Jesus touched them. Now history would be rather meaningless if they were left out.

9. The Unpardonable Sin (3:20-30)

Wrapped up in the needs of the crowds, Jesus forgot his own needs (3:20-21), and friends thought his mind was slipping (3:21). It is common: someone risks his life for thrills and the crowds applaud, while another person risks his life for souls and is labeled a fanatic. Opposition from his enemies was to be expected (3:6), but opposition from his friends must have been even more cruel (3:21,31). While friends accuse him of fanaticism, scribes charge him with demon-possession and of working by satanic power (3:22). Not being able to deny his miracles, they try to discredit them. We have Jesus' classic reply:

- a. Satan is too smart to undo his own work (3:23-26).
- b. Therefore, Jesus must be performing miracles on his own.
- c. This He must be doing in spite of, not because of, Satan (3:27)
- d. So He could not do these miracles had He not first defeated Satan (3:27).

NOTES

The unpardonable sin is, then, that blasphemy which gives Satan credit for the works done by the Holy Spirit (3:28-30). It is committed by those who have gone so low they no longer can discern between right and wrong. It is final and irremediable confusion in moral values.

10. The Family Versus the Kingdom (3:31-35)

The problem created by Christ's family was probably based on sympathy, not malice; but it nevertheless brought to him one of his most painful moments. They thought him insane (3:21) and came to rescue him (3:31-32). At this dramatic moment Mark introduces Mary for the first time. (The Roman Catholic doctrine of Mary-worship gets very little support from Mark's Gospel.) Jesus realized that human sympathy must give way for divine wisdom. He did not repudiate his own mother. He only widened his family circle to include all true followers (3:33-35).

11. Wondrous Words (4:1-34)

First, let us note the reason for Jesus' use of parables. They were given in a time of growing opposition (3:6), when Jesus was deeply grieved by the hardness of Jewish hearts (3:5). They were not given to cause spiritual harm to his enemies, as a surface reading might suggest (4:10-12), but to hide truth from their eyes, which if rejected would make their damnation worse (4:21-25). It gave a brighter and more vivid form to truth for those who earnestly sought after it. Parables are the natural method of Deity, for Jesus himself was the Supreme Parable—God hidden, yet revealed. Matthew gives a fuller explanation for the use of parables (Matthew 13:10-16).

a. The Sower—or better, The Soils (4:1-25)

- i. The "way side"—good soil—but hard footpaths that divided the fields. The seed found no reception and was quickly destroyed by satanic stealth (4:4, 15). This speaks of souls that are not kept mellowed.
- ii. The "stony ground"—good soil but shallow—not soil strewn with rocks, but a thin layer of soil over a rock sub-surface. This speaks of emotions stirred but no convictions that grip (4:5-6, 16-17). "Opinions are what a man holds; convictions are what hold the man."
- iii. "Among thorns"—good soil but undisciplined—speaks of people who want to be Christians but have no pattern of conduct—no rules for living. Careless habits permitted become the masters that will drive out the last vestige of religious faith (4:7, 18-19 and 1 Corinthians 9:25-27).

NOTES

- iv. The “good ground”—good soil, and fully receptive—teaches that fruitfulness can be expected of every Christian life, though all will not bear identical harvests (4:8, 20).

This parable says “in a nutshell” that there is a terribly heavy responsibility on those who hear the gospel (4:9, 23). Those who heed light shall have more; those who reject will receive less and less.

b. The Secret Seed (4:26-29)

This parable is recorded by Mark alone. The previous parable was a warning to those who hear the gospel; this is a solemn warning to those who preach the gospel. It suggests:

- i. The sower must have patience and trust God for suits (4:27).
- ii. Christian maturity—ripe grain—does not come immediately (4:28).
- iii. The stages in spiritual ministering—faithful sowing (4:26), patient waiting (4:27-28), joyful reaping (4:29).
- iv. Spiritual growth should not be forced, neither should there be satisfaction with stunted development.

c. The Mustard Seed (4:30-34)

With suspense Jesus prepared them for some spectacular illustration (4:30), and then proceeded by naming the most insignificant seed in all the catalog (4:31). The little band of men who accompanied with him were, even then, equally insignificant—even held in contempt by the great of the land. But a mustard seed, when grown, gives shelter to those who would have ignored it as a seed. Here Christ predicts that Christianity should, in time, be the only haven for the hearts that even then hated him and his little band (4:32).

12. Wondrous Works (4:35 - 5:43)

Following the matchless words of wisdom, Mark lists a cycle of mighty works; and there were some who could not accept either the words or the works (6:2). The four miracles are recorded in ascending climax, showing power over nature, demons, disease, and death.

a. Power over Nature (4:35-41)

- i. After a long day of exhausting ministry, Jesus sought quietness (4:35). There can be no continuing ministry of depth unless there are periods of solitude.

NOTES

- ii. Both weariness and absence of inner fear caused him to sleep.
 - iii. He did not overlook their plight. He only waited to be invited in as the Divine Deliverer. Christ does not force his omnipotence upon us.
 - iv. Notice the rebukes: their veiled rebuke to him (4:39), and then his rebuke to the disciples (4:40).
 - v. We learn that lack of faith may be as real a handicap as an actual opposition to the work of God.
 - vi. That even in the path of divine duty storms may come.
 - vii. His authority was immediate and unquestioned (4:39).
 - viii. "Rebuke" (4:39) is the same as the word used in 1: 25, where a demon was cast out.
 - ix. They asked for care (4:38); He gave them calm (4:39). We are safer in a storm with Christ than in a calm without him.
- b. Power over Demons (5:1-20)

Mark's Gospel is fairly punctuated with the sad wails of the demon-possessed, but here we see the most vividly painted of all such scenes. We can gather Mark's evaluation of the event when we recall that he gives it more space than does either Matthew or Luke, and this despite Mark's insistence on brevity. Demon-possession suggests the desire of evil spirits for human habitations, even as the Holy Spirit seeks our bodies for his dwelling. Let us note:

- i. The terribly destructive power of evil passions, lawless and unrestrained (5:3).
- ii. That sin finally isolates us from the help of the good and the friendships of the wicked (5:2).
- iii. Sin means restlessness and self-destruction (5:5).
- iv. Sin makes us a menace to society (5:4). The man's desire for worship (5:6) and the demon's uproar (5:7) reveal the inner confusion of the poor man. There is never deliverance until there is confession of need (5:9). "Legion" [LEEJ-uhn] not only pictured the great number of demons: but alludes to the Roman custom of enslaving a country by its cruel, prowling army legions.

To those who would object to a seemingly needless destruction of

NOTES

property (5:10-14), we would note:

- i. Spiritual redemption is so wondrous that any physical loss sustained in the process is not serious.
- ii. Destructiveness continues wherever demons abide.
- iii. Nature of demons is revealed in that they agreed to abide in animals (5:12).

The witness of a convert is often more effective among old associates (5:19-20), so the man is commissioned to preach in Decapolis.

c. Power over Disease (5:25-34)

A woman tremblingly approached Christ, cursed with twelve years of suffering and reproach (5:25-27). By Jewish law her husband was required to divorce her; she was refused admission to her home, excommunicated from the synagogue, and ostracized from society - what a plight! Previous physicians brought to her only poverty (5:26) and hopelessness. So, no wonder she pressed through to touch this Great Physician! Maybe her faith was too mechanical (5:28), but it was mightily sincere. Her "touch" was not that delicate caress, but rather the clutch of despair. Christ was now in route to the rich man's house to give aid, but stopped to help a penniless woman. There is proof of Deity. Jesus did not let her go until she had given her testimony and had received a reassuring word from him (5:31-34). Today we still like new converts to witness to their faith before they leave the place of help.

d. Power over Death (5:22-2, 35-43)

The preceding incident and this are intertwined: the woman, lonely and poor: and the man, wealthy and socially prominent - what a contrast! It shows that God is blind to the artificial partitions that segregate us from one another. Notice in the story:

- i. Jarius' faith (5:23) and Jesus' response (5:24).
- ii. His faith, like the woman's (5:28): was somewhat mechanical, thinking Jesus must touch to heal (5:23). Not like that of the centurion of the same city (see Matthew 8:8), who knew a word was enough.
- iii. Faith was first tested by delay (5:25-34), then by bad news (5:35), then encouraged (5:36).

NOTES

- iv. Jesus did not mean she had not died (5:39), but rather that she was only temporarily dead.
- v. He took five into the room: three disciples, for their spiritual edification; the parents, so the girl would not be terrified - even Deity works by common sense (5:40).
- vi. His command that she be fed showed the reality of the miracle, and further proof that He mixed generous portions of common sense with his healing (5:43).

13. Handcuffed by Unbelief (6:1-6)

On a previous visit Jesus came alone, performed no miracles, and had to flee (see Luke 4:16-29). This time He has his disciples with him, performs a few miracles (6:5), and leaves at his leisure (6:6). But, both visits are black-rimmed with failure. Why such unbelief in the face of so many mighty works (6:2)? Perhaps because:

- a. Jealousy was caused by his wide fame, and their obscurity (6:4).
- b. They could not see how a menial laborer (6:3) could be so used by God.
- c. Familiarity breeds contempt. However, in Christ's case it should not have been so, for the better they knew him the more perfect did He appear. Rather than knowing him too well, they really did not know him at all - that caused their unbelief. Believing in economy of operation, Jesus went where people would hear his words, and left Nazareth NEVER TO RETURN.

14. The Twelve Commissioned (6:7-13)

The disciples had been with him about a year. In touring the towns (6:6), He saw the great need and so sent out His disciples with a grant of unusual power (6:7). Their mission was to be brief, so only a little money was needed (6:8-9). This is no argument for penniless preachers, but a warning against unnecessary encumbrances in the ministry. They would render worthy service (6:7), so were to expect courteous treatment (6:10-11). Failure to receive these messengers was to be as serious as rejecting the Master (6:11, see also Matthew 11:22). Their message was repentance first (6:12) and healing second (6:13).

15. The Man Who Knew No Compromise (6:14-29)

Here we find the transition from popularity to persecution in Christ's

NOTES

ministry: and it is fitting that John's tragic fate should be fitted in at this point. It is the old story of a gnawing conscience that cannot be appeased (6:16). We note:

- a. A Christ-honoring ministry stirs up the forces of hate (6:14).
- b. Tampering with evil sets the stage for grosser wrong (6:18, 27).
- c. Men whose hearts are vile fear men whose lives are holy (6:20). And, cutting off a head does not stop the influence of a godly life.

16. Food for the Hungry (6:30-44)

The disciples are now called "apostles" since they were duly commissioned (6:7). Jesus wisely knew that exertion must be interspersed with relaxation (6:30-32, also 4:35), for no ministry is deeper than its powers of meditation. But, having sailed to Galilee's far northeastern shores, He did not dodge the throng. Instead of being irritated. He was compassionate (6:34). First, He fed their souls (6:34) then their bodies (6:35-36). The human, "Send them away", and the divine, "Give them something to eat" stand in bold contrast. Is it not too often our human solution - just get needs out of our sight? This miracle teaches us:

- a. Orderliness, thrift, and neatness are Christian virtues (6:40, 43).
- b. Our meager resources plus divine blessing will meet the need, however great (6:38, 41).
- c. His broken body would soon avail for the universal soul-hunger of man.

17. Courage for the Fearful (6:45-52)

The ministry of power (6:41) now yields to a ministry of prayer (6:46). In our harassing exhaustive age, we need to learn well this lesson!

His defiance of gravity (6:48) was not so much a miracle of divine power as a display of a divine Person. In eight hours, they had rowed only a short distance (6:47-48); and, though an earlier miracle on Galilee (4:40) was still fresh in memory, yet they feared when He came on the waves (6:49) and calmed the storm (6:51). How deeply embedded is unbelief!

18. Healing for the Suffering (6:53-56)

Christ was amazed, both at the unbelief of the disciples (6: 51, also 4: 40) and at the faith of the multitude (6:54-56). News must have spread far of the woman of Capernaum who touched and was healed (5:27) for they also

NOTES

sought the healing hem of his garment; and they were not disappointed (6:56).

19. Strong Words for Stubborn Hearts (7:1-23)

Needy multitudes departed and enemies gathered (7:1-2). They came eighty miles (129 kilometers) from Jerusalem to lay such a flimsy charge (7:2-5). Oh, the stupidity of evil! Jesus replied that the only real uncleanness is the defilement of one's spirit (7:14-23). Jesus, who was so patient with the hungry (6:34), became equally impatient with the hypocritical (7:6). He cited one illustration to prove their hypocrisy (7:9-13). Support of aged parents was the responsibility of children, and to curse parents was worthy of death (7:10). Still, they were taking the food that these aged parents needed and dedicating it to God -calling it Corban (7:11). Tradition permitted them to take such dedicated property and use it for their own gratification. By this ruse they were satisfying tradition, enriching themselves, and neglecting their parents. At such, Christ hurled his hottest wrath (7:6, 13).

B. IN NORTHERN GALILEE (7:24 TO 9:50)

1. A Gentile Shows Great Faith (7:24-30)

For the first time Jesus goes into a Gentile country. Having been rejected by his country's leaders, He concentrates on teaching his disciples the deeper meanings of grace. In this foreign area a Greek woman comes for help (7:26). More important than the racial issue is the fact that here is a mother with a breaking heart (7:25). We learn:

- a. Christ's redemption was to have a Jewish base, but would reach out to the world.
- b. His seeming harshness (7:27) was but to draw out her faith: that her reward might be the richer.
- c. She grasped the hidden meaning in his use of the word "dogs" (7:27) and accepted the invitation to become one of the household (7:28) and, being under the table, she could surely eat of the crumbs. She implied that the Jewish attitude toward Gentiles was at fault, and Jesus endorsed her views.

2. Hearing for the Deaf (7:31-37)

NOTES

From the area of Tyre [tair] and Sidon [SIGH-dn] Jesus went eastward to Decapolis [di-KAP-uh-lis]. The people who asked him to leave the country (5:17) now brought their needy (7:32). Mark alone records this miracle, and it has some rich truths:

- a. Notice the careful, deliberate steps in the healing. "Took him aside" for better concentration; touched tongue and ears, a sign to the man what He would do; "looked up" suggesting to the man the source of help; "sighed" revealing the depth of human need; and spoke the word of authority, which brought the relief.

3. Dining in the Desert (8:1-9)

How stubborn is unbelief (8:4) in the face of a similar miracle so recently performed (6:42)! The 5,000 were likely all Jews; the 4,000, likely most were Gentiles - but for each multitude the same abundance (8:8), the same thrift and neatness (8:8). Why not? This is the same Master.

4. Poison: Beware! (8:10-21)

For a brief time, Jesus returns to Jewish territory (8: 10-11). They who rejected the Eternal Sign from heaven are refused any further sign (8:12). Hurt of heart, Christ returns to Gentile soil (8:13). Hearty appetites and one loaf of bread give occasion for some needed teaching.

- a. Why should twelve men worry about bread when they had with them the One who had fed thousands?
- b. The leaven (heresy) of the Pharisees - insincerity, and of the Herodians - worldliness, was to be shunned as the vile poison it was (8:15).

5. The Double Touch (8:22-26)

This is Mark's first recorded healing of blindness. Here Christ steps back temporarily on Jewish soil (8:22). Again, note the careful steps to aid the man's faith (8:23, also 7: 23). The walk would gain the man's confidence and also give him a better view when vision was restored (8:23). This, the only gradual cure recorded in the Bible, is a symbol of the double cure for sin: first, opened eyes - then, full vision (8:24-25). Regeneration [ree-jeh-nr-AY-shn] brings light to the soul; entire sanctification [sank-tuh-fi-kay-shuhn] gives clarity of moral discernment - then men are men and trees are trees.

6. The Great Confession (8:27 - 9:1)

Away again to retirement in Gentile country - near Mt. Hermon - in wild but

NOTES

beautiful scenery, a perfect setting for the searching of their souls. First, He asks for the common views regarding himself: John the Baptist, the view of the unbelievers (6:16 and 8:28); Elijah or a prophet, the view of the humanists who rejected his deity. Next, He probes for their personal beliefs, and Peter speaks better than he knows (8:29). With this as a springboard, Jesus expounds the full cost of Messiahship (8:31).

For Peter there could be no such dismal sunset after so glorious a sunrise; but Christ replies that night must first come then the morning - not only for himself but for them as well (8:33-38). The cross mentioned here (8:34-36) is not some unavoidable burden, rather the cross of self-crucifixion (8:38, also Romans 6:6 and Galatians 2:20). Spiritual flirtation is condemned (8:38), but glory is promised (9:1).

7. The Mount of Vision (9:2-13)

What Peter confessed (8:27) was now confirmed high on the slopes of Hermon (9:2). The death Christ predicted (8:31), Moses and Elijah now came to discuss (9: 4, also Luke 9:31). The transfiguration of Christ was a bursting forth of inner glory, not like that of Moses (Exodus 34:29), which was a radiance of reflected glory. Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets; also, their unusual departures (Deuteronomy 34:5-6; 2 Kings 2:11) qualified them to speak with him about his momentous death.

Peter, clumsy but sincere, wanted to conserve the spiritual atmosphere (9:5), forgetting the unkindness that his action would bring to the heavenly visitors. This experience reassured the disciples of Christ's deity (9:7), and reassured Christ of glory awaiting him, which had been temporarily suspended for our sakes (John 17:5). Yet Jesus was the finally important Actor in the drama (9:8), and the One they later remembered (2 Peter 1:18). "Elias" [eh-LIE-uhs] of the Transfiguration was Elijah [ee-LIE-juh], the greatest of the prophets who was hated by Ahab [AY-hab]; the "Elias" of prophecy (Malachi 4:5) was John the Baptist, who was murdered by Herod (9:13 and 6:27).

8. The Valley of Need (9:14-29)

The nine disciples denied the blessing of the mountaintop still had opportunity for rich blessing in service had they not failed (9:18). This was the more embarrassing since they previously had succeeded in similar needs (6:7, 13).

This was one of the last recorded miracles and speaks of deepest degradation (9:18, 20, 22, 25-26). On the mountaintop the voice of the Heavenly Father: "This is my Son." In the valley, the voice of a distracted father: "I have brought my son" (9:17). What a picture - disputing scribes, distracted father,

NOTES

demoniac son, defeated disciples! What unbelief: stubborn unbelief in the scribes; unwilling unbelief in the father; unconscious unbelief in the disciples; irresponsible unbelief in the son! The father's "if you can" (9:22) Jesus turns right back in his "if you can" (9:23).

But let us get this - all of us: THE DISCIPLES WERE POWERLESS BECAUSE THEY WERE PRAYERLESS (9:29).

9. The Master Teaches (9:30-50)

a. About His Death (9:30-32)

Jesus returned to Galilee for his last visit in route to Jerusalem and Calvary [kal-vr-ee]. The mighty truths He had revealed to their ears (9:31), their hearts did not grasp (9:32). Always Jesus linked his resurrection with every mention of his death, for these are spiritual Siamese twins – and neither can survive separated.

b. About Real Greatness (9:33-37)

While He spoke solemnly of his humiliation (9:31), they chattered glibly of their exaltation (9:33-34). Perhaps the three felt superior, having had the mountaintop privilege. Christ announced that the principle of real greatness is:

- i. in serving others, not in mastering others (9:35).
- ii. not in position, but in simplicity (9:36-37) and service.

c. About Tolerance and Temperance (9:38-50)

John's sincere desire to protect Jesus' ministry prompted this discussion (9:38). Those are to be fellowshiped with, Christ says, are those who actually achieve spiritual results (9:40) and who minister in God's name and for God's glory alone (9:39).

It is serious to endanger the faith of babes in Christ (9:42), and equally serious to risk one's own spiritual welfare (9:43-48).

C. IN PEREA AND JUDEA (10)

1. The Sanctity of the Home (10:1-16)

Christ journeyed to Judea through Perea [per-REE-uh] on the east side of Jordan (10:1). This Perean [per-REE-uhn] ministry was one of teaching, and

NOTES

the Pharisees sought to ensnare him with a tricky divorce problem (10:2). The Shammai [SHA-ma-hee] school of the day was very strict relative to divorce, granting infidelity as the sole grounds. The Hillel [huh-lel] school of thought was very liberal, recognizing such petty things as personal dislikes as grounds for divorce. Christ stated the underlying principle of marriage (10:6-8), which is the very structure of society. Moses, Jesus said, did not encourage divorce. He only regulated a current evil. Christ stated that only unfaithfulness cancels the marriage vow, and only the innocent party is free to remarry on scriptural grounds (10: 8-12, also Matthew 5:32).

Closely akin to this is the sanctity of childhood, and Jesus revealed his attitude here with anger at the neglect of children (10:13-14). From this tender scene we would learn:

- a. Dependency and simple trust of childhood make a fitting example of the attitudes that bring salvation (10:15).
- b. Christianity gave childhood its first real chance.

2. The Wealthy Pauper (10:17-31)

Here is a study in contrasts: the simple faith of childhood (10:14) and the worldly entanglements of the ruler (10:16-17). The ruler's approach showed eagerness and reverence, and his request was wise (10:17). Jesus' reply should be noted. What seems on the surface to be a denial of his own deity (10:18) is a subtle argument for his deity. He was affirming his own goodness, and if good, then God - and if God, then what He said should be considered accordingly. Jesus quoted from the second table of the Decalogue, which referred to man's relationship to man. The first table referred to man's relationship to God. While professing to keep the letter of the commandments the ruler had never known the spirit of them, which was to love one's neighbor as himself. His refusal to do that (10:21) showed that he did not love his neighbor. Thus, he did not love God and, therefore, there would be no treasure in heaven. But, he bartered his soul for his bank account; his riches possessed him, which Jesus said was the sin (10:23-24).

As Christ suggested that wealth, uncontrolled bars the way to heaven (10:26-27), Peter recalled his personal sacrifice. Christ replied that there is no real Christian sacrifice, for we are always well paid - both here and hereafter (10:30).

3. Incidents by the Way (10:32-52)

- a. A Closer Look at Calvary (10:32-34)

NOTES

The pace quickened as they approached Calvary, and Jesus repeated the meaning of redemption, only adding more details (10:32-34, also 8: 31; 9: 31). These vivid touches (10:34) are typical of Mark.

b. A Revealing Look at Selfish Hearts (10:35-45)

Christ had just spoken of personal loss (10:33), and James and John came seeking personal gain (10:35-37). Jesus stated:

- i. To share in his glory, one must share in his suffering.
- ii. Heavenly rewards are earned, not given by way of a patronage system (10:40).

The other disciples were angry, we fear, because they had not thought of asking first. Not so much in anger as in sympathy, Jesus repeated the law of real greatness - serving others, not mastering others (10:44).

c. A Joyful Look by Blinded Eyes (10:46-52)

In Perea there was teaching only - no miracles; now back in Jewish territory another miracle is seen. Thinking that Jesus was too preoccupied with great events (10:33, 39-40) to be bothered with a lone blind man, the disciples tried to silence the cry (10:48). Bartimaeus seized his shining moment and we see great faith (10:47-48, 50) and a great relief (10:51-52).

NOTES

Jordan [JOHR-dihn]
Sabbath [SAB-uth]
Capernaum [kuh-PER-na-uhm]
publican [PUH-bli-kuhn]
Pharisees [FAIR-uh-seez]
Bartholomew [bahr-THAHL-uh-myew]
Alpheus [AL-fee-uhs]
Thaddeus [THAD-ee-uhs]
Legion [LEEJ-uhn]
Tyre [tair]
Sidon [SIGH-dn]
Decapolis [di-KAP-uh-lis]
Regeneration [ree-jeh-nr-AY-shn]
sanctification [sank-tuh-fi-kay-shuhn]
Elijah [ee-LIE-juh]
Ahab [AY-hab]
Elias [eh-LIE-uhs]
Calvary [kal-vr-ee]
Perea [per-REE-uh]
Perean [per-REE-uhn]
Shammai [SHA-ma-hee]
Hallel [huh-lel]

CHAPTER 4

The Servant's Suffering and Sacrifice (11:1 to 15:47)

NOTES

Here we recall the events of Passion Week, and we will follow the "Suffering Servant" (Isaiah 53) day by day as the shadows lengthen.

A. SUNDAY - "DAY OF TRIUMPH" (11:1-11)

Christ stages this Pageant of Poverty; and, where before He had discouraged publicity (7:36; 9:9), now He delights in the fullest expression (11: 9-10). A borrowed donkey, borrowed clothing, and borrowed branches speak of his poverty (11:2, 7-8; see also 2 Corinthians 8:9). Before departing from the Temple Jesus looked (11:11), and what He saw is shown in the next paragraph. Then, to Bethany [BEHTH-uh-nee] to find balm for his body and spirit.

B. MONDAY - "DAY OF AUTHORITY" (11:12-19)

What He saw on Sunday evening (11:11) causes this sweep of judgment on Monday (11:13-16). In the withering of the fig tree we see pictured the doom that is foretold for Israel. It tells us that God abhors fruitlessness (11:14; also see John 15:2; Isaiah 5:1-7). In the cleansing of the Temple, Christ revealed his hatred for commercial desecration of sacred things (11:15-17). First, selling was permitted near the Temple as a convenience; then, inside, but rigidly supervised; now it had debauched the whole scene. Beware, all who would commercialize the worship of God!

C. TUESDAY - "DAY OF CONTROVERSY" (11:20-13:37).

1. Withered Leaves (11:20-26)

Peter's surprise at the death of the tree (11:20-21) is not more amazing than Jesus' sweeping promise (11:22-23). As death was from the roots (11:20), so is spiritual death. When prayer dies, power wanes (11:24); and success in prayer is in direct ratio to our attitude of forgiveness (11:25-26). There is one sin that God cannot forgive - an unforgiving spirit (11:26).

2. Claims to Authority (21:23-27)

a. His sweeping power (11:1-11, 15-16, 28) stunned them.

NOTES

- b. Their trap: If his power was claimed as from God, then it would be blasphemy; if it was from political sources, then He would be disloyal to Jewish rulership.
 - c. His answer: If John was divinely sent, then they should believe his announcement of Christ as the Messiah; if John was humanly sent - that would never do, for all in all the people believed him to be a prophet.
- 3. The Wicked Tenant Farmers (12:1-12)

Christ has seized the initiative (11:29); for a while sits in judgment on the nation of Israel. This parable suggests:

 - a. Their question relative to his authority (11:28) was fully answered (12:10).
 - b. The vineyard was Israel (Isaiah 5); the servants (12:2-5) were the prophets, climaxing in John; the son was Jesus himself (12:6).
 - c. By killing the Son they lost, rather than gained, their inheritance (12:8-10).
- 4. Sermons from a Penny (12:13-17)

The Pharisees and Herodians [hero-di-an-s] - strange bedfellows indeed! They were ceaseless enemies until they joined in hatred of a common foe (12:13). The Pharisees considered it wrong to pay taxes to a heathen power. The Herodians said it was all right. They thought they had him trapped for sure (12:14). He saw the hypocrisy back of the flattery (12:14-15) and avoided either pitfall. He answered by saying: Pay your fare however you ride. Don't accept protection from Rome and not pay taxes; don't accept favor from God and deny him what is due him (12:17).
- 5. The Often-married Widow (12:18-27)

The problem posed was really one concerning the immortality of the soul; the poor widow who was passed around from brother to brother was but the excuse for the attempt to trap Jesus (12:19-23). Jesus made a twofold accusation: ignorance of the Scriptures (12:25) and refusal to believe in the power of God to raise the dead (12:26-27).
- 6. The Greatest Commandment (12:28-34)

The Sadducees [SAD-yoo-seez] were defeated: and a scribe came with a question of ethics (12:28). Seeing sincerity, Christ responded accordingly. Of the 613 laws recognized by the Jews, Jesus said the most important was love

NOTES

towards God (first table of the Decalogue) and then toward people (second table of the Decalogue).

7. Sound Instruction (12:35-44)

- a. The person of Christ is a question of deepest import (12:35-37). David could call the Savior "son" only if He were truly human and of the Davidic line. David could call him "Lord" only if He were from heaven and truly divine. So, the Incarnation is the answer - the divine-human Christ of God.
- b. Beware of strut (12:38-40), which is incompatible with any religious profession. Self-seeking (12:38-39), greed (12:40), and hypocrisy (12:41) the Savior condemns in burning words.
- c. Genuine Generosity (12:41-44)

It is so easy for us to praise the large donor, and overlook the faithful but small giver. Perhaps that is why we are given this familiar and blessed scene.

- i. Christ was not casting slurs on large gifts. He was heaping praise on sacrificial giving.
- ii. The widow's small gift (half a cent) has inspired more philanthropy through the years than any other gift ever given.
- iii. Her offering (the last bit of money she had) showed her faith in God's provision for tomorrow, her deep love for his cause that day.

8. Signs and Wonders (13:1-37)

As this is the most difficult passage in all of Mark, no one should be dogmatic as to its detailed interpretation. Clearly the two questions (13:4) refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ. The chapter answers these; but which verses deal with each event the best scholars cannot tell exactly. The vividness of Jerusalem's fate seems to color the description of the Second Coming. In fact, the former seems to be a symbol of the latter. Here are two suggested outlines:

- a. Both events considered (13:1-23)

Second Coming of Christ (13: 24-37)

- b. Fall of Jerusalem (13:1-4, 14-23, 28-30)

Second Coming of Christ (13:5-13, 24-27, 31-37)

NOTES

Thus, we see that no easy division of material is possible. But, we can note the general principles in this prophetic study.

- a. Beware of false Christs and prophets, many of whom will mask behind miracle-working and prophetic preaching (13:21-23).
- b. Rather than looking for universal peace and acceptance of the gospel, we should expect persecution and suffering as the end approaches.
- c. No one is authorized to set dates for Christ's return, for that is a secret carefully kept in heaven (13:32).
- d. Prayerful watching is urged upon all people (13:33, 35, 37).

D. WEDNESDAY - "DAY OF RETIREMENT" (14:1-11)

Here we watch two people step into the white light of undying fame: Mary, who gave the full example of devotion; and Judas, who left the supreme example of treachery. Mary's blessed act (14:3) shows us:

1. When a heart is brimming with love, no gift is extravagant.
2. Regular obligations (14:7) can well yield at times, to special acts of worship (14:4, 6, 8).
3. A loving heart sets forces in motion that never cease (14:9), for she has made "Alabaster Giving" an immortal thing.

Judas' stinginess shows all the blacker against this act of shining white love. It shows us how deep in sin a person can go who lives next door to Deity and yet has no heart fellowship.

Bethany was two miles (3 kilometers) from Jerusalem, and was Jesus' haven all the nights of Passion Week. The house of Simon was likely also the home of Mary and Martha, for it is thought they were related.

E. THURSDAY - "DAY OF TREACHERY" (14:12-52)

1. The Last Supper (14:12-26)

This is a sacred spot, and note how carefully it is chosen (14:13-15) and how well the meal was prepared. We learn:

- a. We should prepare our hearts carefully for the Lord's Supper, and closet ourselves in the upper room of the soul while partaking.

NOTES

- b. In such holy moments, heart treachery is as black as hell (14:18-21; see also 1 Corinthians 11:28-29). Judas left between the paschal supper and the institution of the Lord's Supper (between verses 21 and 22).
 - c. The symbols were to be always a reminder of Christ, like a picture in the billfold; they were never meant to become literal substitutions.
 - d. This supper, before a great separation, was a reminder of the next supper, at the time of final reunion (14:25, see also Revelation 19:9).
 - e. It is Christlike to face dark hours with a song on the lips (14:26). This was likely the Hallel Psalms (113 - 118).
2. Blood, Sweat, and Betrayal (14:27-52)

Gethsemane is the world's loneliest spot:

- a. Friends forsook him, as He had foretold (14:27). Vaunted loyalty (14:29-31) is best measured in deeds. Those for whom He denied himself everything would not deny themselves an hour of sleep (14:37, 40-41).
- b. The Heavenly Father forsook him, and this was the "cup" of the garden. The shattering knowledge that for the first time in eternity the Son must be denied the fellowship of the Father - and climb the hill ALONE! Small wonder that his sweat was bloody!

Prayer was Jesus' unfailing source of help, and his victory was in submission to the Father's will (14:36, 41).

A man as evil as Judas would naturally conclude his treachery with the foulest crime imaginable (14:43-45). Judas who was a thief (John 12:6), had Christ seized as a common thief (14: 48). Loneliness deepened (14:50), and even a distant follower fled (14:51-52). This is thought to refer to Mark and in true humility he paints his own failure in darkest hue.

F. FRIDAY - "DAY OF SUFFERING" (14:53-15:47)

1. Trial by Treachery (14:53-72)

Christ was first tried before Annas (the former high priest), then before Caiaphas (Annas' son-in-law, and high priest), then was taken before the council (14:53, 55-59). The trial was illegal, being held at night; the charges were petty and unfounded (14: 55, 59). One of Christ's own statements was misquoted (14:58, see also John 2:19).

NOTES

The treachery of the council was bad, but far worse was the treachery of a close friend (14:66-72). The lips that confessed (8:29) now flow with curses (14:71). But, happy ending! For there are tears and deep repentance (14:72).

2. Drama in Purple (15:1-47)

The drama will best unfold if we note the various actors:

- a. The multitude who once heard him gladly (12:37) and hailed him joyously (11:29) now cried for his blood (15: 8, 13). "God pity the person who depends on a crowd."
- b. The religious rulers saw to it that the pot of hatred was kept boiling (15: 1, 3, 11, 31) and uttered words more true than they knew (15:31).
- c. Pilate, the fence-straddler, without personal convictions, tried to please both Rome and the Jews (15:6-7, 12, 15). The Jews were denied the right to impose a death sentence; so, they appealed to Pilate (15:1).
- d. The soldiers were trained in the fine arts of cruelty (15:16-20, 23-25). Intending to insult Jesus by hanging him between two thieves, they actually fulfilled the Scriptures (Isaiah 53: 9). As was the custom, soldiers were paid for their part in the crucifixion by a gift of the dead man's clothes (15:24).
- e. Simon of Cyrene (15:21) had only a momentary contact with Christ and his cross, but won undying fame in the Christian records. No one can bear the cross without being better.
- f. The lonely, suffering Savior was patient under torture (15: 5, 18-20). He faced the abandonment of the Father (15:34), history's darkest hour, but the Father answered in wordless but eloquent approval (15:38) when the veil, sixty feet (18 meters) long by thirty feet (9 meters) wide, was rent from top down.
- g. Then there was the convinced centurion (15:39), the sympathetic women (15:40), Joseph of Arimathaea [ah-ree-muh-thee-uh], who let his heart dictate to his purse (15:42-46). The thieves, who were likely from Barabbas gang, died in a far better environment than that in which they lived. There is a bitter irony in that!



NOTES

Bethany [BEHTH-uh-nee]

Herodians [hero-di-an-s]

Sadducees [SAD-yoo-seez]

Arimathaea [ah-ree-muh-thee-uh]

CHAPTER 5

The Servant Raised to Life (16:1-20)



NOTES

A. SATURDAY - "DAY OF SILENCE" IS GIVEN BUT A PASSING MENTION (16:1).

After sundown the women brought spices for his anointing.

B. SUNDAY - "DAY OF TRIUMPH" DAWNS WHEN THE EARTH CAN THROW ASIDE ITS ROBES OF MOURNING.

Very early Mary Magdalene [MAG-duh-leen] came (John 20:1), then returned with the other Mary (16:1). The stone was rolled back, so all eyes could see clearly that He was risen. Christ arose before the stone was moved (Matthew 28:2).

1. Witnesses to the Resurrection

The empty tomb with the undisturbed graveclothes, the heavenly visitor (16:5-6), and the three appearances of Christ (16: 9-14) verified the startling news of the resurrection [reh-zr-EK-shn].

2. Lessons from the Empty Tomb

The cross is no longer a thing to be feared (8:32) but to be revered (Galatians 6:14).

The empty tomb proved his promises given earlier (8:31), thus showing his deity.

The beginning of the Christian Lord's day (16:2), honored by the New Testament Church (1 Cor. 16:2), and also by Christ himself (John 20:19, 26).

3. Sent Forth with Power

The ministry of the apostles was launched with signs and miracles (16:17), but Jesus plainly showed that faith is a prime requisite in serving him (16:14). Their message was to be clear (16:15), so their power would not be confusing (16: 18).

When He ascended (16:19) they dispersed to their various tasks (16:21). Jesus' reception in heaven was proved by his presence with them on their tours of duty (16:20).

NOTES

Mark closes his Gospel as abruptly as he began it. For we have noticed all the way through that Mark was a man who relied more on deeds than words. With Mark we have watched as the Mighty Servant carved out a Kingdom in the hearts of a few people. We saw him stoop to lift the heavy loads from the afflicted and the suffering. We saw the patience of his face, the steadiness of his hands, and heard the matchless word from his lips. Truly He was the Servant of God, and we will ever try to serve him better in our own lives. If that results from this study of Mark, the time spent will not have been in vain.

You will find it profitable to take the other volumes in the “Search the Scriptures” series.

STUDY QUESTIONS



NOTES

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1. Mark was a Jew by birth.
 - A. True
 - B. False
2. Mark's family was wealthy enough to have a servant.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. Barnabas was Mark's:
 - A. uncle
 - B. father
 - C. cousin
 - D. none of these
4. Who led Mark to the Lord?
 - A. James
 - B. John
 - C. Thomas
 - D. Peter
5. Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey.
 - A. True
 - B. False
6. Where did Mark desert Paul and Barnabas and return to Jerusalem?
 - A. Antioch
 - B. Rome
 - C. Perga
 - D. Cyprus
7. Paul and Barnabas agreed for Mark to accompany them on their second missionary journey.
 - A. True
 - B. False

NOTES

8. Which scripture references suggest that Paul's opinion of Mark improved?
 - A. Colossians 4:10
 - B. Philemon 24
 - C. 2 Timothy 4:11
 - D. all of these
9. Mark's Gospel was probably written after Matthew's Gospel.
 - A. True
 - B. False
10. Mark's Gospel was probably written primarily for the Jews.
 - A. True
 - B. False
11. Mark's Gospel portrays Jesus Christ as the Servant Sublime.
 - A. True
 - B. False
12. What is the symbol of Mark's Gospel?
 - A. a king
 - B. a lion
 - C. an ox
 - D. none of these
13. Bustle and activity is the atmosphere of Mark's Gospel.
 - A. True
 - B. False

CHAPTER 2. THE SERVANT PRESENTED

14. How was Jesus superior to John?
 - A. in Person
 - B. in Product
 - C. in Time
 - D. all of these
15. Mark pictures four orders of beings when Jesus was being tempted:
The Spirit, Satan, wild beasts, and angels.
 - A. True
 - B. False

NOTES

CHAPTER 3. THE SERVANT AT WORK

16. In the calling of the disciples, we learn that Christ capitalizes on our earlier training.
- A. True
 - B. False
17. The first miracle recorded by Mark was a conflict with:
- A. Romans
 - B. Samaritans
 - C. demons
 - D. none of these
18. Christ had a perfect spiritual balance in his life.
- A. True
 - B. False
19. Christ demanded the testimony of the demons, for He wanted publicity from that source.
- A. True
 - B. False
20. The scriptures list how many periods that Christ spent in prayer?
- A. 2
 - B. 5
 - C. 10
 - D. none of these
21. Demon-possession showed the tyranny of evil while leprosy tells of the defilement of evil.
- A. True
 - B. False
22. What faith is a prominent feature in Mark 2:5?
- A. the Jews
 - B. the Gentiles
 - C. friends
 - D. all of these

NOTES

23. In Mark 2:1-12, how does Christ prove his deity?
- A. By measuring their faith while no word was spoken
 - B. By reading the minds of the scribes
 - C. By the double cure, spiritual and physical
 - D. all of these
24. What does Christ say about fasting in Mark 2:18-22?
- A. It is done to subdue the body.
 - B. It is done that the soul might better have sway.
 - C. It is an abomination if done as a work of merit.
 - D. all of these
25. Christ worked by principle, and the Sabbath was for rest, only to be broken by works of mercy and necessity.
- A. True
 - B. False
26. Jesus announced the principle that to withhold help is next door to murder.
- A. True
 - B. False
27. Christ knew his ministry would be brief, and the task must be carried forward by some well-trained assistants.
- A. True
 - B. False
28. Who were the strongest personalities, most gifted, of the twelve disciples?
- A. Simon Peter
 - B. James, son of Zebedee
 - C. John
 - D. all of these
29. Who were the reflective type, slower to speak or believe of the twelve disciples?
- A. Andrew
 - B. Philip
 - C. Thomas
 - D. all of these

NOTES

30. Who were the practical disciples, given to details, business like?
- A. Matthew
 - B. James, the son of Alphaeus
 - C. Thaddeus
 - D. all of these
31. Blasphemy which gives Satan credit for the works done by the Holy Spirit is the unpardonable sin.
- A. True
 - B. False
32. Mark's Gospel lends much support to the Roman Catholic doctrine of Mary-worship.
- A. True
 - B. False
33. How is Mark's Gospel punctuated with the sad wails of the demon-possessed?
- A. Demon-possession suggests the desire of evil spirits for human habitations.
 - B. There is shown the terribly destructive power of evil passions, lawless and unrestrained.
 - C. The great number of demons is pictured.
 - D. all of these
34. In the story of the healing of the demon-possessed man, why was he sent commissioned to preach in the Decapolis?
- A. He was well-trained.
 - B. He was well-paid.
 - C. The witness of a convert is often more effective among old associates.
 - D. all of these
35. How long had the woman in Mark 5 been cursed with suffering and reproach?
- A. 1 year
 - B. 5 years
 - C. 10 years
 - D. 12 years

NOTES

36. Jarius' faith was first tested by delay, and then by what?
- A. financial matters
 - B. synagogue matters
 - C. national issues
 - D. bad news
37. How many accompanied Jesus to witness the healing in Jarius' daughter's room?
- A. 2
 - B. 3
 - C. 5
 - D. 7
38. When the disciples were commissioned in Mark 6, healing came first, and was followed by the preaching of repentance.
- A. True
 - B. False
39. John's tragic fate in Mark 6 is the old story of a gnawing conscience that cannot be appeased.
- A. True
 - B. False
40. In the miracle of food for the hungry, Jesus, first, fed their souls, and then their bodies.
- A. True
 - B. False
41. Jesus shows in Mark 6 the ministry of power must yield to a ministry of prayer.
- A. True
 - B. False
42. What is the meaning of "corban" in Mark 7?
- A. gifts dedicated to God
 - B. gifts to the poor
 - C. gifts to Romans
 - D. all of these

NOTES

43. What do we learn from the story of the Greek woman in Mark 7 who came to Jesus for help?
- A. Christ's redemption was to have a Jewish base.
 - B. Christ's redemption would reach out to the world.
 - C. The woman accepted the invitation to become one of the "household".
 - D. all of these
44. Which other Gospel writers also record the healing of the deaf man in Mark 7?
- A. Matthew
 - B. Luke
 - C. John
 - D. none of these
45. In the first feeding miracle, about 5000 Gentiles were satisfied.
- A. True
 - B. False
46. In the second feeding miracle of 4000, most of the people were Jews.
- A. True
 - B. False
47. What can we learn from the healing from blindness in Mark 8?
- A. It is the only gradual cure recorded in the Bible.
 - B. The man's faith brought instant healing.
 - C. The man was not healed.
 - D. none of these
48. Near what mountain do we hear Peter's great confession?
- A. Mt. Sinai
 - B. Mt. Galilee
 - C. Mt. Hermon
 - D. none of these
49. Jesus spoke of the crucifixion of self in Mark 8.
- A. True
 - B. False

NOTES

50. On what mountain did the transfiguration occur?
- A. Mt. Sinai
 - B. Mt. Galilee
 - C. Mt. Hermon
 - D. none of these
51. Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets on the mountain of the transfiguration.
- A. True
 - B. False
52. Moses and Elijah's unusual departures qualified them to speak with Jesus about his momentous death.
- A. True
 - B. False
53. Their experience of the transfiguration reassured the disciples of Christ's deity.
- A. True
 - B. False
54. What was the essential reason for the disciples' powerlessness in Mark 9:29?
- A. They were not good preachers.
 - B. They were busy with their own problems.
 - C. They were prayerless.
 - D. none of these
55. True greatness consists in serving others.
- A. True
 - B. False
56. Christ stated that only unfaithfulness cancels the marriage vow.
- A. True
 - B. False
57. What was commendable about the rich young ruler in Mark 10?
- A. He was eager.
 - B. He was reverent.
 - C. He had a wise request.
 - D. all of these

NOTES

58. The tragedy of the young ruler was that his wealth possessed him.
- A. True
 - B. False
59. In response to James and John's seeking of personal gain in Mark 10,
- A. To share in Jesus' glory, one must share in his suffering.
 - B. Heavenly rewards are earned.
 - C. Heavenly rewards are not given as in a patronage system.
 - D. all of these
60. How many miracles did Mark record in the Perean ministry of Christ?
- A. 1
 - B. 5
 - C. 7
 - D. none
61. Whose eyes were healed in Mark 10?
- A. a widow
 - B. a Pharisee
 - C. a Sadducee
 - D. Bartimaeus

CHAPTER 4. THE SERVANT'S SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE

62. What were borrowed items Jesus used in the Triumphal Entry?
- A. donkey
 - B. clothing
 - C. branches
 - D. all of these
63. The withered fig tree in Mark 11 shows that God abhors fruitlessness.
- A. True
 - B. False
64. The cleansing of the Temple in Mark 11 revealed Christ's desire for commercializing sacred things
- A. True
 - B. False
65. There is one sin that God cannot forgive - an unforgiving spirit.
- A. True
 - B. False

NOTES

66. The Pharisees considered it wrong to pay taxes to a heathen power.
A. True
B. False
67. The Herodians said it was all right to pay taxes to a heathen power.
A. True
B. False
68. Of the 613 laws recognized by the Jews, Jesus said the most important was love towards our enemies.
A. True
B. False
69. What vices did Jesus condemn in Mark 12:38-41?
A. self-seeking
B. greed
C. hypocrisy
D. all of these
70. Basic to Christ's admonitions about his return is that all people should be urged to engage in prayerful watching.
A. True
B. False
71. The nights of Jesus' Passion Week were spent in Cana of Galilee.
A. True
B. False

CHAPTER 5. THE SERVANT RAISED TO LIFE

72. The first visitor to the tomb on Sunday morning was Mary Magdalene.
A. True
B. False
73. The Resurrection story cannot be verified.
A. True
B. False
74. John 20:19 and 26 show that Jesus honored the first day as the Lord's day.
A. True
B. False



75. With Mark we have watched as the Mighty Servant carved out a Kingdom in hearts.
- A. True
 - B. False

METHODS OF STUDY

Have you enjoyed this study of Mark's Gospel? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Mark all the names of Jesus you can find in Mark's Gospel, especially those that emphasize him as Servant.
2. Compare Mark's presentation of the humanity of Jesus (for example: 3:5; 6:6, 31, 34; 7:34; 8:12, 33; 10:14; 11:12) to his presentation of the deity of Jesus (for example 1:1, 11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 12:1-11; 13:32; 15:39).
3. Carefully go through the occasions in Mark's Gospel where Jesus urged people to keep his Messianic secret (for example: 1:34, 44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36-37; 8:26, 30; 9:9). Think about times it was important to simply live for Jesus.
4. Give special attention to the passages on discipleship in Mark's Gospel, especially those arising from Jesus' predictions of his passion (for example: 8:34 – 9:1; 9:35 – 10:31; 10:42-45).
5. Consider both the human cause of the cross (12:12; 14:1-2; 15:10) and the divine necessity of the cross in Mark's Gospel.
6. Note the occasions in Mark's Gospel that Jesus is considered as "Teacher". Mark uses words like teacher, teach, teaching and Rabbi at least 39 times.

May the Jesus, the Servant, become even more of a power in your life as you study the Gospel of Mark!

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE



NOTES

Antioch [an-TEE-aak]
Ahab [AY-hab]
Alpheus [AL-fee-uhs]
Arimathaea [ah-ree-muh-thee-uh]
Bartholomew [bahr-THAHL-uh-myew]
Bethany [BEHTH-uh-nee]
Calvary [kal-vr-ee]
Capernaum [kuh-PER-na-uhm]
Decapolis [di-KAP-uh-lis]
Elias [eh-LIE-uhs]
Elijah [ee-LIE-juh]
Elijah [ee-LIE-juh]
Galilee [GAL-uh-lee]
Gentiles [JEN-tielz]
Hallel [huh-lel]
Herodians [hero-di-an-s]
Jordan [JOHR-dihn]
Judean [joo-DEEN]
Legion [LEEJ-uhn]
Magdalene [MAG-duh-leen]
Nero's [NEE-rowz]
Perea [per-REE-uh]
Perean [per-REE-uhn]
Perean [per-REE-uhn]
Perga [PER-guh]
Pharisees [FAIR-uh-seez]
publican [PUH-bli-kuhn]
Regeneration [ree-jeh-nr-AY-shn]
resurrection [reh-zr-EK-shn]
Sabbath [SAB-uth]
Sadducees [SAD-yoo-seez]
sanctification [sank-tuh-fi-kay-shuhn]
Shammai [SHA-ma-hee]
Sidon [SIGH-dn]
Thaddeus [THAD-ee-uhs]
Tyre [tair]