

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 1999 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4Ucopy.txt file on this CD.

* * * * *

TWENTY LESSONS IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK
By William M. Smith

Printed Book: No Date -- No Copyright

* * * * *

Digital Edition 05/18/99
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

CONTENTS

Introduction To This Digital Publication

- 01 -- The Author Of The Book
- 02 -- The Nature Of Mark's Gospel
- 03 -- The Conqueror Introduced By His Forerunner
- 04 -- The Conqueror Begins His Conquest -- Mark 1:12-45
- 05 -- The Conquest Of Sin And Palsy -- Mark 2:1-12
- 06 -- Jesus As Physician And Lord -- Mark 2:13-28
- 07 -- Jesus Healer And Teacher -- Mark 3:1-12
- 08 -- Jesus Appoints Helpers And Answers Criticisms -- Mark 3:13-35
- 09 -- Jesus Teaches By Parables -- Mark 4:1-41
- 10 -- Jesus Deals With Various Afflictions -- Mark 5:1-43
- 11 -- Jesus' Ministry In Connection With The Twelve -- Mark 6:1-56
- 12 -- Superficial Religion Rebuked And Faith Rewarded -- Mark 7:1-37
- 13 -- Life In Terms Of Profit And Loss -- Mark 8:1-38
- 14 -- Jesus Manifests His Glory And His Power -- Mark 9:1-50
- 15 -- Jesus' Ministry In Perea -- Mark 10:1-52
- 16 -- Jesus' Entry Into Jerusalem -- Mark 11:1-33
- 17 -- Jesus Encounters And Silences Critic -- Mark 12:1-44
- 18 -- Jesus Foretells Coming Events -- Mark 13:1-37
- 19 -- Jesus Under The Shadow Of The Cross -- Mark 14:1-72
- 20 -- The Trial, Crucifixion And Resurrection Of Jesus -- Mark 15:1-16:20

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION TO THIS DIGITAL PUBLICATION

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND LESSONS -- At the time these lessons were written, William M. Smith was serving as Superintendent of Union Bible Seminary, Westfield, Indiana. HDM now has in possession the following sets of 20 Lessons for Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Revelation. As we received them, these lessons were on loose-leaf sheets, printed on one side, and bound in folders. They could be used as either Sunday School or Bible Study lessons.

ABOUT THE DIVIDER BETWEEN THE CHAPTER NUMBER AND VERSE -- The divider between the chapter and verse is not consistent, sometimes being a period and at other times being a colon. I have left them as they were. Also, there was **NO PERIOD AFTER THE NUMBERED ASSIGNMENTS** at the end of the lessons, and I have also left that as it was. --
DVM

* * * * *

01 -- THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK

THE HUMAN AUTHOR of the second Gospel we believe to have been John Mark, though there are some who claim that the author of the Gospel of Mark was another man by the name of Mark. When we trace the history of the man Mark as it is briefly referred to in various places in the New Testament the evidence seems very clear that the John Mark referred to is the Mark who wrote the Gospel that bears his name.

The First Mention of John Mark in the Bible is in Acts 12.12. It was the night Peter the Apostle was delivered from prison by an angel. After the angel left him, and he had "considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying." From this it appears that the house of this woman Mary was a place of meeting for the believers, and from the fact that Peter thought of going to her house, it would appear that Peter was a frequent visitor there. Some believe that John Mark was a convert of Peter. This is substantiated by I Peter 5.13, where Peter speaks of "Marcus my son."

John Mark's Parentage. From the fact that his first name, John, is common among the Jews, and his last name, Mark, or Marcus, is common among the Romans, some believe that John Mark's father was a Roman, possibly a soldier, and his mother a Jewess. From the fact that no mention is made of the father, and the house is called the "house of Mary," it appears his father was dead before the time of the prayer meeting referred to.

Nephew of Barnabas -- From Colossians 4.10 we learn that John Mark was a nephew of Barnabas; "Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas." The inference is strong that Barnabas and Saul were in Jerusalem, and very likely at Mary's house, at the time of the release of Peter from prison, for the last part of chapter eleven of Acts relates how they had been sent by the church at Antioch with

relief for the Jerusalem Christians. And when Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch, they took John Mark with them, as stated in Acts 12.25.

Missionary Companion of Barnabas and Saul. When Barnabas and Saul went forth on their first missionary journey, Acts 13.1-5, they took John Mark along as a helper. But, on reaching Perga, in Asia Minor, John Mark "departed from them and returned to Jerusalem." His reason for leaving is not stated, possibly from homesickness, which still assails missionaries, or fear of dangers in the strange country they were entering. At any rate Paul felt it was a sign of unfaithfulness and independability, for, when Barnabas wanted to take him along on their second missionary journey, Paul objected. The last mention of John Mark in the Acts is Acts 15.39 where Barnabas separated from Paul and took a separate missionary journey to Cyprus.

Mark Recover: from his Declension. But John Mark had a restoration to usefulness and to Paul's favor. Paul, in Colossians 4.10, already referred to, recommends him to the church in Colosse. And in II Timothy 4.11 Paul writes to Timothy, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry." In the 24th verse of Philemon Marcus is again mentioned as one of Paul's fellow-laborers. As a result of Paul's request to Timothy to bring Mark with him, evidently Mark went to Rome at that time, and from the reference in Philemon, he was evidently in Rome at that time.

Mark in Babylon. Some think that Peter in mentioning Babylon in I Peter 5.13 is using the name symbolically of Rome, but the common sense of Scripture would indicate that he was actually at Babylon. Just when Mark left Rome to go to Peter in Babylon is not clear, but it appears that Mark was a companion of Peter for some time, and that from him he received much of the information he included in his Gospel.

Mark in Alexandria. Tradition indicates that, after the death of Paul and Peter, Mark went to Alexandria, Egypt, and became the first bishop of the church there and eventually suffered martyrdom there.

Mark's Knowledge of Jesus. From the fact that Mary, the mother of John Mark, lived in Jerusalem, and Jesus often was in the city, it is not at all unlikely that Mark had seen Jesus on various occasions. Some think that the young man who followed Jesus the night of the betrayal, after all the disciples had fled, who was clothed only in a linen garment, and fled when the young men caught his garment, was Mark, whose curiosity led him to hastily leave his bed to see what the commotion was about. Mark's Gospel is the only one that mentions the incident.

Why Mark Wrote a Gospel. In view of the fact that there were twelve Apostles, the inquiry is easy to rise, Why did the Holy Spirit select only two of them to write Gospels, and went outside the Apostles to get two others to write the other two Gospels? Perhaps no entirely satisfactory answer can be given, except God has inscrutable ways of carrying on His work. Possibly, if all the four Gospels had been by Apostles there might be a suspicion of connivance on their part to put something over on the public. But by using persons who were not Apostles, to write two of the Gospels they served as independent witnesses to the truth and corroborated what the two Apostles, Matthew and John, wrote.

It is to be observed that in a trial by jury, the witnesses of a crime are not chosen to be jurors. But persons who have not seen the crime committed, and have formed no opinion about it, hear the testimony of all the witnesses and from their combined testimony bring in their verdict. So these two independent witnesses who heard the testimony of the Apostles and others who saw and heard Jesus bring corroborative evidence of the truth of the two who were in actual contact with Jesus.

It is good that we have four views of the life of Christ from which we form a proper concept of the Person and work of Christ.

* * * * *

02 -- THE NATURE OF MARK'S GOSPEL

THE GOSPEL OF MARK contains only about two-thirds as much matter as the Gospel of Matthew, and at first it might seem to be abbreviation of the aforesaid Gospel. But a little study reveals the fact that it has many differences from all the other Gospels. Some even think that Mark was the first Gospel to be written, and that if there was any copying from one Gospel to another, Matthew and Luke copied from Mark. The best theory is that, with all the facts of the life of Christ before them, each Gospel writer was guided by the Holy Spirit in the selection and arrangement of the matter of the Gospel he wrote.

Difference. from Matthew. Some comparisons will show that the purpose and appeal of the Gospel of Mark are very different from Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew is designed to present Christ to the Jew as his Messiah. The Jews, guided by Old Testament prophecies, looked for a King and a Kingdom. Therefore Matthew presents Jesus Christ as a King and has much to say about a coming Kingdom. The term "Kingdom of heaven" occurs thirty-three times in Matthew, but not a single time in the other Gospels. Again, Matthew repeatedly refers to the Old Testament prophets and their predictions, and shows how Christ fulfilled them. But Mark refers to the Old Testament prophets only once in reference to their predictions of Christ.

Mark Adapted to Write his Gospel. It is evident, when God selects a person for some particular work He desires accomplished, He takes into consideration the disposition, education, experience and other things that adapt him for that work. For instance, note how by education and experience Moses was adapted to write the first five books of the Bible, and Paul to write his fourteen Epistles of the New Testament. It seems, from what has previously been said, that Mark's father was a Roman soldier. We can imagine Mark's father, on his return from a victorious campaign, taking little Mark on his knee and telling him of the exploits he has seen, and about the great Roman Empire that then ruled the world. He may have told him also how necessary it was for a soldier to obey orders and be a good soldier if he hoped to be promoted to eventually become a great man and a conqueror. Now, this is the view Mark gives of Jesus. First He is presented as an obedient Servant, and then as a great Conqueror.

Jesus, the Obedient Servant -- Psalm 40.7,8 undoubtedly refer to Jesus Christ -- "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." What might be termed the key verse of the book of Mark is

chapter 10.45 -- "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." The living creatures that Ezekiel saw in his vision Chapter 1.10 had four faces, one likened to a man, one to a lion, one to an ox, and another to an eagle. And in Revelation 4.7 we have the same living creatures, likened to a lion, a calf, a man, and a flying eagle. The four Gospels seem to be symbolized by these creatures, Matthew the lion, Mark the ox, Luke the man, and John the flying eagle, The ox symbolizes service, and it is as a servant that Jesus is represented in Mark.

Jesus, the Mighty Conqueror. Again Mark presents Jesus as a Conqueror. Read rapidly through the chapters and see Him conquering in every realm; in disease, death, infirmity, the elements, etc. Mark, accustomed to hear his father tell of the exploits of Roman generals, sets forth Jesus Christ as the mightiest Conqueror of all.

Distinctive Features. While Mark seems to the casual reader much like Matthew, there are very definite differences. Matthew gives Jesus' genealogy, for a King must prove his right to a throne by his pedigree. But Mark omits it entirely, for a servant and a great general need none. Service and ability are wanted in a servant. If a servant serves well no one asks for his pedigree. If a man rises to the rank of a great general, no one seeks for his genealogy. Matthew proves Jesus' right to the throne of David because of his genealogy. Mark proves Jesus the great Saviour because of His deeds.

Again, Matthew gives in full the Sermon on the Mount, for a King must set forth the laws concerning the kingdom he plans to establish. But a servant is not a lawmaker, so Mark omits the sermon. Many other differences in the way of omissions and additions might be mentioned, some of which we will note as we study the book.

The Gospel of Action. Activity characterizes Mark's Gospel. The Greek word *eutheos*, variously translated, "Immediately," "straightway," "forthwith," "anon," etc., occurs in the New Testament eighty times, but forty of these times it is used in Mark. It is a word for action. Notice also the speed with which Mark moves from one action of Christ to another. At the 16th verse of his first chapter Mark has gotten into the history of Christ's work as far as Matthew does in his fourth chapter.

Rapidity of Events. Notice the frequency of the word "and." Ten of the sixteen chapters begin with that word. And thirty-five of the forty-five verses of the first chapter begin with the same word. And is a conjunction and connects one action of Jesus with another. Jesus is pictured as going rapidly from one activity to another. He did this, He did that, that, and that, and, and, and.

Evidence of Peter's influence. It has already been suggested that Peter had much to do with the Gospel of Mark. If Mark was Peter's biographer he would perhaps naturally put in some things commendatory of Peter, and leave out things derogatory. But Peter seems to have suggested to Mark that he tell the rugged truth about himself. So Mark includes with Matthew that Peter cursed and swore when questioned about his relation to Jesus. On the other hand Mark omits what Jesus said about Peter being the rock, but records the rebuke Jesus gave him when he tried to persuade Jesus to avoid the cross. Things that would seem to glorify Peter are omitted, such as Peter's walking on the sea.

* * * * *

03 -- THE CONQUEROR INTRODUCED BY HIS FORERUNNER

THE Inspired Title of Mark's Gospel is "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Mark is one of four Bible books that has the word "beginning" in its first verse. They are Genesis, "In the beginning God;" Mark, "The beginning of the Gospel;" John, "In the beginning was the Word;" I John, "That which was from the beginning." Mark is writing about the beginning of the good news concerning Jesus Christ.

The Conqueror Identified. From the start Mark makes it plain who this Conqueror is. He is The Son of God. Not a son of Mary or a son of a man, though He is The Son of Man. Neither is He merely a son of God, one among many, as some would have us believe. As it is said in Hebrews 2.10, God is planning to "bring many sons unto glory," but none of the other sons can claim to be the "only begotten Son of God."

The Gospel Foretold. This glorious good news was foretold by the prophets. These prophets foretold various things of the coming Conqueror: His ancestry, where He would be born, of what tribe He would be, where He would live. But John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament type of prophets, says that He is here. The Gospel was not an afterthought with God. The prophets foresaw glimpses of the coming One, and doubtless longed for His arrival. It looked as though God was slow in bringing to pass His promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, but, as recorded in Galatians 4:4, "In the fulness of the time ... God sent forth His Son." God may seem slow in His actions, but, nevertheless is always on time.

The Conqueror's Herald. God, speaking by the prophets, said to His Son, "Behold I send My messenger before Thy face." This messenger was John the Baptist, and his work was to "prepare Thy way before Thee." The prophet Isaiah 40.3 foretells of this messenger that he is a "voice." Mark also calls him the "voice." John the Baptist himself, when asked his identity by priests and Levites, answered in the words of John 1.23, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." The voice of the forerunner prepared the way for the Word.

Preparation of the Way. Mark says, "make His paths straight." Isaiah enlarges this commission, "make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall he made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." These physical descriptions doubtless symbolize moral conditions. If we want Jesus Christ to come into our lives there must be repentance: high things must come down, crooked things must be straightened out. John's call was for a national repentance on the part of the Jewish nation. Some responded, but there was no national repentance.

John the Baptist's Work is characterized by the word baptize and baptism. He "did baptize in the wilderness," evidently referring to his baptizing with water, as stated in other Gospels. But he also preached the "baptism of repentance," that is the doctrine of repentance. From this we see that baptize and baptism do not always refer to water baptism. This distinction is important in studying the use of the word.

John's Fruitful Ministry. Though John the Baptist had no church building, tent, or tabernacle, and no modern means of advertising, the people flocked to hear his message. The chief note of his ministry was repent. The Jews from Jerusalem and Judea were most responsive to his ministry. He had an ample baptismal arrangement in the Jordan river, near which he preached. From Matt. 3.7,8 we know that he insisted on fruits of repentance before administering baptism. Also from Matt. 21.32 many official Jews did not believe John's message and submit to his baptism either of water or repentance.

John's Simple Clothing. Only two pieces of apparel are mentioned as making up John's wardrobe: a camel's hair garment held in place by a girdle of skin. Truly, as Jesus said in Matt. 11.8 they did not go out to see John because he was clothed in soft raiment. His was not the fashionable clerical garb.

John's Plain Diet. He evidently gathered his food in the wilderness. The locusts were a species of grasshopper. They are referred to in Leviticus 11.22 as suitable for food. Canaan had the reputation of flowing with milk and honey, so John the Baptist was able to discover bee trees or honey from crevices in the rocks of the wilderness. John was not a regularly engaged evangelist. No one hired him, and no one could fire him. Being the son of Zacharias a priest, John was eligible to minister in the Temple, but there is no record of his ever doing so. Some great evangelistic movements in the church age were initiated in open air meetings. George Whitefield held great open air meetings, attended by as many as 20,000 people, and he persuaded John Wesley to take up the same line of evangelism.

John Baptist's Ministry Temporary. John's ministry was simply introductory to the ministry of Jesus Christ. "There cometh One mightier than I after me," he told the people. He considered Christ so much greater than himself that he did not feel worthy to do the menial act of a servant in tying His shoe strings.

The Two Baptisms. John's baptism with water was a passing event, introducing and giving way before the greater baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Submits to John's Baptism. This is the reason some give why everyone should be baptized with water. Baptism with water never saved a soul, and never will. It should never be administered until after a person has been converted. It is the work of Jesus that saves the sinner. Jesus has fulfilled the ceremonial law. See Colossians 2.11,12. His circumcision relieves His people from that ordinance. His baptism relieves His people from baptism.

Jesus' Initiation. Having fulfilled all that was required, the heavens were opened to Jesus, the Spirit endued Him for service, and the Father declared Him His Son in Whom He was well pleased.

* * * * *

THE CONQUEST OF SATAN. It was necessary that Jesus be filled with the Holy Ghost before He began His conquests. His ministrations were all done through His human nature empowered by the Holy Ghost. Satan, the arch-enemy that had defeated the first Adam, must be met and defeated before Jesus undertakes to despoil his kingdom and rescue those held captive by him.

The Temptation is very briefly recorded in Mark's Gospel. For the details of the threefold temptation see Matthew 4.1-11 and Luke 4.1-13. Mark mentions one detail not stated in the other Gospels -- He "was with the wild beasts." The beasts of the earth were made savage as a result of the fall of Adam. The second Adam has control of them. Jesus, in order to gain the victory for man, was obliged to meet Satan as a man with only the weapons that are available for man. Jesus did not in this contest overcome Satan as God: but He had to overcome him as a man filled with the Holy Ghost. Matthew and Luke make it plain that Jesus overcame Satan simply by doing as the Bible said man should do.

Jesus' Early Ministry in Judea is not recorded in Mark's Gospel. This is recorded in the Gospel of John, chapters two to four. About eighteen months intervene between verses 13 and 14.

The Forerunner Imprisoned. John the Baptist, having introduced Jesus, now, according to his word in John 3.30, must decrease while Jesus increases. From great masses of people who attended John's preaching at the beginning of his ministry his audience diminished until he had one wicked old king to whom to preach, and he eventually beheaded him. John fulfilled his course, as stated by Paul in his speech in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, Acts 13.25. For John to have continued preaching to great crowds after Jesus began His ministry would have diverted attention and confused the people.

Early Ministry in Galilee. Jesus' ministry, like John's began with a call to repentance. John's reason for his call (Matt. 3.2) was that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Jesus' reason is that the kingdom of God is at hand. The terms are similar, but not exactly synonymous. Mark nowhere uses the term "Kingdom of heaven," which is confined entirely to Matthew's Gospel.

Call of the First Disciples. Simon (Peter) and Andrew, and James and John are now called to follow Jesus. They had all met Jesus before as recorded in the first chapter of John's Gospel, verses 35-42. They now leave their fishing, which was the occupation of all four of them, to Zebedee, the father of James and John, and the hired servants, and follow Jesus.

In the Capernaum Synagogue. Jesus went with other Jews to the synagogue on the sabbath day, and when opportunity offered He taught the people. His teaching astonished the people. It was not a mere repetition of platitudes, like scribes, but had the ring of authority.

Service Interrupted. The message of Jesus did not suit a man there who was possessed of an unclean spirit. He had, perhaps, been well behaved in the ordinary synagogue service when nothing was said to disturb him, but this preacher with His clean message stirred the evil spirit in him, and he cried out, "Let us alone." Notice the "us." There were two personalities there, the man and the unclean spirit. This evil spirit knew who Jesus was and testified of Him. Evidently the devil had passed the word down to all the other devils and evil spirits that they better look out for

Jesus. Since He had defeated Satan, other evil spirits would be no match for him. The unclean spirit recognized "the Holy One of God."

The Unclean Spirit Expelled. Jesus did not want nor need the testimony of evil spirits, so commanded him to hold his peace and come out of the man he was possessing. Notice the two personalities -- "he came out of him." But the evil spirit tore the man before leaving. This is how the devil and his evil spirits treat the people who give them hospitality. The evil spirit evidently used the man's vocal organs to cry with a loud voice. The people of the synagogue were amazed at what happened. They had not known what had been meeting with them sabbath after sabbath in their meetings for worship. It is not unlikely that there are meetings for worship now where, if a real Gospel preacher would preach, some would cry out against him. The immediate result of this incident resulted in Jesus becoming famous throughout all Galilee.

A Sick Woman with Company for Dinner, After the synagogue service Jesus with James and John went to the house of Simon Peter and Andrew for dinner; but the mother-in-law, who for some reason was in charge of the house, instead of Peter's wife, was very sick. The situation was embarrassing, but they did the right thing -- "they tell Him of her." Jesus quickly restored her, and "she ministered unto them."

An After-Sun-Set Service. During the afternoon the word had spread throughout the city and every one who had sick ones in the family waited until the sabbath was past at sun-set and then brought their sick to Him, and He ministered to all of them. Thus Jesus showed Himself the Conqueror of all manner of disease and affliction.

The Galilean Evangelistic Campaign. Jesus did not rest on His success. Early the next morning, before others were stirring, He was out in a solitary place praying. Simon and others found Him and said that every one was seeking Him, but Jesus did not remain to conduct a great healing campaign, as others might have been tempted to do. He said, "Let us go into the next towns that I may preach there also." This was His special work, rather than healing, which was incidental. A single verse tells of this extensive preaching tour, The Healed Leper. The leper said, "If Thou wilt," and Jesus responded, "I will." Instead of Jesus telling the healed leper to advertise the meeting, he told him to keep quiet about it, but go and offer under the priest's instruction the offering Moses commanded to make himself ceremonially clean, which would make it lawful to mingle with other people.

* * * * *

05 -- THE CONQUEST OF SIN AND PALSYP -- Mark 2:1-12

JESUS AGAIN IN CAPERNAUM -- Having finished His early ministry in Galilee, briefly mentioned in chapter one, verse 39, Jesus returns to Capernaum, which seems to have served as His headquarters after His rejection at Nazareth (see Luke 4.28-31). The word soon gets out that He is in town and a crowd gathers in the house where He is. It appears to have been a very distinguished crowd, for Luke says (Luke 5.17) that Pharisees and doctors of the law were there "out of every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem."

The Nature of Jesus' Preaching -- Mark says that on this occasion Jesus "spoke the Word unto them." This suggests that the essence of all preaching is the Word. This is also emphasized by Paul in his instruction to Timothy (II Tim. 4.20) "preach the Word." What Jesus preached was very likely what we now term as the Gospel. The subject matter of all preaching is the Bible.

Four Interested Men -- The news that Jesus was in the city spread, and people began coming from all directions. Four men were especially mentioned. Their names are not given, but we can name them from what they did.

Sympathy, as he came along, saw a palsied man, unable to go to Jesus, and it occurred to him that it would be a good deed to get this man to Jesus, for had not Jesus healed many when He was there before? While he was wondering how he could get him to Jesus, along came another man whom we may call Cooperation, who volunteered to help get the man to Jesus. Just then two other men came along, not yet named, and the four started to carry the palsied man to Jesus on his bed. When they reached the door of the house where Jesus was preaching they found it impossible to get in with the man in his bed. No one wanted to get out of the way to let the sick man in. But now the name of another man is learned -- Ingenuity suggested that they take the man up the outside stairway to the roof of the house. With much struggling and puffing they managed to get him up the narrow stairs and onto the roof. But now another obstacle was in the way: how shall they get the sick man to Jesus? Another man now reveals his identity -- Persistence says, "make a hole in the roof and let him down in front of Jesus." So they proceeded to remove some of the tiles from the roof. Perhaps they were acquainted with the owner of the house, and knew they could make it right with him, and repair the roof.

An Interrupted Service -- What the four men were doing evidently attracted some attention. We can imagine what some preachers would have done under such circumstances. They would, very likely, have said to the men -- "What are you fellows doing up there? Don't you know we are having a meeting here?" It is a wise preacher who knows how to turn everything that happens to good account. Such a preacher was Jesus. Perhaps bits of mortar and dust were falling on His head, but He was not perturbed. He simply turned the interruption into an occasion to emphasize the truth He was preaching.

What Jesus Saw -- There was one thing that Jesus seems always to be looking for, and that was faith. The record says, "Seeing their faith," that is the faith of the four men, and possibly that of the sick man. Jesus marveled at the faith of some, and at the lack of faith in others. He marveled at the faith of the Roman centurion (Matthew 8.10) and marveled at the lack of faith in some Jews, for instance, people of Nazareth, (Mark 6.6).

What Jesus Did -- Need always appealed to Jesus. He was willing to interrupt His discourse to the doctors to help a poor sick man who was not only palsied, but also a sinner. He dealt with the sin first, as possibly the cause of the physical trouble. "Son, thy sins are forgiven." This brought questioning to the doctors, who reasoned in their hearts: "Why doth this Man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" But Jesus read their thoughts and answered the questions they were not speaking.

The Invisible Miracle Proven by the Physical Miracle -- The Pharisees and doctors could not see what had been done in the sick man's heart, so Jesus wrought a miracle in the physical realm to prove what was done in the heart of the man. To forgive sins and to heal were equally possible for Jesus and He proves it by saying to the sick man, "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed. and go thy way into thine house."

The Man's Response -- The man who had laboriously been brought by four men to Jesus, went home on his own legs and carried his bed. His testimony was that he "went forth before them all." Pharisees, doctors, and the common people all saw it. The meeting ended in victory in spite of the critical attitude of the backslidden religious leaders. They doubtless had much reasoning about the events of the day. But, instead of believing in Jesus after the manifest power that He showed, they eventually brought Him to the cross as a malefactor.

Relation of Salvation and Behavior -- If the man had not risen up, taken up his bed, and gone home on his own feet, the critical scribes could well have said that they did not believe that Jesus forgave the man's sins. That would have been the logical conclusion.

There is an important truth couched in these words of Jesus -- "Whether is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?" Applying this truth spiritually we may ask the question, Whether is easier, for Jesus to forgive a man his sins, or to enable him to walk like a saved man afterward? It is sometimes true that a person claiming to be saved, does not "take up his bed and walk" so to speak. This fosters unbelief in sinners. If the man had been carried home by the same four who brought him, no one would have believed that Jesus had power on earth to forgive sins, as He claimed He had. What do sinners think of Jesus when those who claim to have been forgiven by Him go to the same places and do the same things that they did before?

* * * * *

06 -- JESUS AS PHYSICIAN AND LORD -- Mark 2:13-28

JESUS AT THE SEASIDE -- The seaside appears to have been a favorite place for Jesus to preach. There He was free from the restrictions of the leaders of the synagogues, who often interfered with His preaching. People of all classes felt free to come to Him in the outdoor meeting. Outdoor preaching is justified by what Jesus did, A multitude resorted to Jesus at this time, and He preached the Word to them.

The Call of Levi -- Leaving the open-air meeting by the seaside, Jesus passed by the custom house, and saw Levi, whose other name was Matthew (Matt. 9.9) the writer of the Gospel that bears his name. He appears to have been a kind of head clerk in the custom office. Jesus always called busy people for service. In Matthew's case it was an effectual calling, for immediately he "rose up and followed Him." Levi -- Matthew was evidently a Jew and had doubtless heard Jesus teaching in the synagogue, so he knew something of Him before this. The call perhaps came as a welcome opportunity to do what he may have been thinking about. His prompt response to Jesus' call is a good example for people now who receive a call to preach or for missionary work.

The Feast in Levi's House. Luke 5.29 says that the feast referred to was one that Levi made for Jesus in his own house. It appears that, after resigning his situation in the custom house, Levi made this feast as a farewell to his former associates in business. It seems to have been designed to bring his former acquaintances in contact with Jesus. Evidently it was a considerable company of publicans and sinners that gathered.

Religious Critics. Some scribes and Pharisees went along to the feast, not as invited guests, but to look on, as was customary in those days, They looked the crowd over and saw only what they described as publicans (hated by orthodox Jews as being tax-gatherers) and sinners. They did not go direct to Jesus with their criticism, but to His disciples, quite likely to try and slander Jesus to them, and discourage their following Him any more.

Jesus the Soul-Physician. When the criticism reached Jesus' ears He explained His conduct by saying, "They that are whole have no need of the physician." This doubtless inferred that the Pharisees considered themselves in no need of the instruction or companionship of Jesus. So Jesus went to "they that are sick." Jesus virtually meant that if these Pharisees, who considered themselves in no need of Jesus' help, why should they object to Him going to those who did need His help.

A Question about Fasting. From Matthew 9.14 it appears the question about fasting originated with the disciples of John the Baptist. John's disciples were evidently observing the custom of the Pharisees in regard to fasting, and wondered why Jesus' disciples did not observe the ordinance. In answer to the question Jesus likens Himself and His disciples to a wedding party where fasting would be out of harmony with the occasion. Fasting may be proper when the Bridegroom is taken away from them.

The Relation of Old and New. Patches of new cloth on an old garment do not fit. The color makes a contrast and the cloth shrinks with washing and pulls the stitches out. The bottles referred to are skin bottles made of goatskins. If new wine is put in an old wineskin the fermentation will swell the wine and burst the bottle. New garments, new bottles, and new wine are harmonious. Salvation from sin is not a patchwork. You cannot mend the old garment of sin with a new patch of reform. Only the new-born person can receive the wine of the Holy Spirit,

Misuse of the Sabbath Charged. Putting together the accounts of this incident in Matthew 12.1,2; Mark 2.23,24; and Luke 6.1,2, It appears that Jesus and His disciples were on their way to the synagogue for the morning service. They were taking a path through a wheat field (all grain is called corn in the Bible). The disciples were hungry, perhaps had not had breakfast that morning. They plucked off the wheat-heads, which was lawful, according to Deuteronomy 23.25, and rubbed the grain out in their hands. When the Pharisees saw this they objected to it as unlawful to do on the sabbath day. This was an infraction of some rules the Pharisees had added to the law of the sabbath. They evidently interpreted the actions of the disciples as reaping and threshing grain on the sabbath.

The Lord of the Sabbath Speaks. Jesus has authority as Lord of the sabbath to say what is right to do and not to do on the sabbath day. Necessity can set aside the rigidity of law. According

to what Jesus said David and his hungry men were justified in eating the sacred shewbread which was lawful only for the priests to eat.

Four Guiding Principles about the Sabbath. Gathering from the Gospels what Jesus did and allowed, we can formulate four principles regarding things to do on the sabbath,

1. Work necessary for preparing food to eat. This case of the disciples might be in that class. But we note in Mark 1.30,31 that after Jesus raised Peter's wife's mother from her sickness, she prepared a meal for them, and that was on the sabbath day.

2. Work necessary for the care of domestic animals. See Luke 13.15 where Jesus says even the Pharisees led their domestic animals out to water on the sabbath day. Luke 14.5 Is on the same line.

3. Work necessary for the care of the sick. Jesus healed on the sabbath day, as noted in Luke 14.3,4, and 13.10-13.

4. Work necessary for the conduct of worship. Jesus states a case of this when He says in Matthew 12.5 where the priests profane the sabbath and are guiltless. That is, in accordance with the law they slaughtered animals for sacrifice on the sabbath day.

While our First-day, or Lord's day, popularly called Sunday, does not have all the restrictions that governed the Jewish sabbath, these general rules may be helpful in deciding what to do and not to do on that day.

* * * * *

07 -- JESUS HEALER AND TEACHER -- Mark 3:1-12

THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND. In spite of the criticism Jesus generally met when He went to a synagogue, He was evidently a regular attender as a faithful Jew. The Pharisees had criticized His disciples on the way to the synagogue for plucking the heads of wheat and eating the grains, and now they are on the alert to see if they cannot find something to criticize about His conduct.

Jesus Questions the Pharisees. Jesus takes notice of the man with the withered hand, and asks him to stand forth. Before healing him Jesus asks the Pharisees if it is right to do good on the sabbath day, to save life or to kill. The wily Pharisees make no answer. In fact there was but one answer could be given, and they were not willing to admit the truth of it. Therefore they held their peace, but it was a sullen peace, and not the peace of a good conscience on their part. The look of anger Jesus gave them for their hardness of heart only served to augment their desire to silence Him by any means.

Jesus' Care for the Unfortunate Man. It is likely that the man with the withered hand was the most unfortunate person in the synagogue. It is worthy of note that Jesus generally took more notice

of the unfortunate than of the fortunate. This should be a great encouragement to poor sinners and the sick: that Jesus sympathizes with them and is prepared and able to help them.

Obedience the Secret of Blessing. It is to be observed that when Jesus healed a sick or unfortunate person He often required them to do something. On this occasion, before healing the withered hand, Jesus told the man to stand forth. If he had not responded to Jesus' request it is not likely he would have been healed. Jesus, as it were, put him on the spot. Probably every one in the synagogue was staring at him. If you want things from Jesus you must be willing to obey Him, even at the cost of some embarrassment. After obeying Jesus in standing up or coming forward, He was commanded to do the impossible: "Stretch forth thine hand." If he had not obeyed in what he could do, it is not at all likely that He could have been enabled to do what he could not do without a miracle. It is the same way about salvation: a person cannot regenerate himself, but he can make himself a candidate by going to an altar to pray. Few people get saved who do not make themselves conspicuous as candidates,

Benefit of a Good Habit. We have reason to believe that this man with the withered hand was a regular attender on the synagogue service. Jesus did a number of miracles in synagogues. In spite of the domineering attitude of the leaders in the synagogues, it was a good place to go. The same is true now; regular attendance at church is a good habit to form and maintain, even when the ministry may not be inspiring. In spite of hindering causes, a faithful person can get blessing from God in the places where God is supposed to meet His people.

An Unholy Alliance. The Pharisees were so angered by what Jesus did in healing the man with the withered hand that they even went to enlist a group that ordinarily they would have had nothing to do with. "The Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians." The Pharisees were the strictest sect of the Jews, while the Herodians were a political sect of Jews who favored the regime of king Herod. Ordinarily these two sects would have nothing to do with each other; but both were opposed to Christ, so they could agree in trying to hinder His ministry.

A Wicked Plot. These wicked sects planned together, not only to disrupt Jesus' work, but even took counsel "how they might destroy Him." Jealousy and envy were at the root of their opposition. What Jesus did brought favor from the common people, and the Jewish leaders saw their favor with the people slipping from them. Religious envy is a very malignant type of envy. Carnal ministers sometimes undertake to destroy the influence of preachers who excel them in preaching and popularity with the people. Such men may be classed with these envious Pharisees.

Jesus' Non-resistant Attitude. While Jesus could have uncovered the hypocrisy of these opposing sects, He did not argue with them. Instead, "Jesus withdrew Himself and His disciples to the sea." This was the sea of Galilee. Many of Jesus' activities were on or around this beautiful body of water.

A Great Open-air Gathering. No synagogue could hold the people who sought to hear Him. The shore of the lake with its sloping beach, made an excellent meeting place. It was a widely representative crowd that gathered on this occasion. His fame had spread beyond the borders of the Holy land. While people were there from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, they also came from other

places -- "Idumea" refers to the Edomites, descendants of Esau. King Herod, who reigned when Jesus was born, was of that nation. "From beyond Jordan," that is east of Jordan, Decapolis and Perea. "They about Tyre and Sidon." These were regions on the coast of the Mediterranean sea.

A Boat for a Pulpit, The crowd so pressed about Jesus that it was difficult for Him to move about, and all of the people could not see Him. In order to avoid crowding and make it so all the people could see and hear Him, Jesus asked His disciples to provide a boat from which He could preach to the people. Preaching and teaching were more important in the ministry than healing by miracles, in fact the people who pressed about Him for healing sometimes hindered His ministry of instruction.

Jesus' Ministry of Healing. It appears that Jesus was never indifferent to those who sought Him for healing, and it appears that He healed many on this occasion. It is noticeable that He cautioned those He healed to not advertise His healing power. This was quite different from some modern preachers with a reputation for healing.

* * * * *

08 -- JESUS APPOINTS HELPERS AND ANSWERS CRITICISMS -- Mark 3:13-35

ORDINATION OF THE TWELVE. Jesus retires into a mountain, which is not named. The principal thing done there was the ordination of the twelve disciples, afterward called apostles. Luke 6.12 indicates that He went to the mountain the night before and spent the night in prayer. It appears that Jesus designates all those called as disciples, and out of the number selected twelve who became apostles. The names of the twelve are given in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the first chapter of Acts. One thing is mentioned in Luke, not in the other places: John and James are called "Boanerges which is, The sons of thunder."

Misunderstood by His Friends. A multitude of people gathered at the time of the selection of the apostles, and among them were some of His friends, evidently people who had known Him before He began His ministry. They believed Him to have lost His mind, was "beside Himself." It is still common for people to judge a person who suddenly becomes earnest about religion to be crazy.

Criticism by the Scribes. A more serious charge is made by these from Jerusalem who have come to investigate the doings of Jesus. Matthew and Luke mention that Jesus had on this occasion cast a devil out of a man who was blind and dumb. This appears to be what brought out the criticism of the scribes, that He was casting out devils by the prince of the devils. The charge seems to carry the idea that Jesus and Satan were working in harmony, so that when Jesus desired to cast out a devil, satan consented to loosen his grip.

Jesus Reasons with the Scribes. Jesus did not at first condemn these scribes, but reasoned with them, showing the absurdity of their diagnosis of what He had done to the man who had been possessed by a devil. In doing this Jesus uses various parabolic statements as illustrations. If Satan is opposed to himself his kingdom cannot stand, nor can a divided house stand. Jesus shows the real facts involved in the case. He likens Satan to a strong man undertaking to protect his house.

But a stronger man, representing Jesus, binds the strong man, representing Satan, and then He can ransack his house.

Jesus Condemns the Attitude of the Scribes. Verse 30 indicates that these scribes had virtually charged that Jesus had an unclean spirit and was in league with the devil. This is why Jesus warns of the result of such an attitude. The scribes did not deny that Jesus really cast out the evil spirit from the afflicted man; they only questioned the source of the power He used in doing so.

The Unpardonable Sin. It appears that the breaking of any of the Ten Commandments can be forgiven. We infer this from Jesus' statement -- "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme." It is good that we can preach that God will forgive all these kinds of sin.

But there is a sin that will not be forgiven -- "he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness." The Holy Ghost is that member of the Holy trinity that has the most direct and intimate relation to men. If He and His admonitions are rejected the one rejecting cuts off his access to God. With such a person the Holy Ghost can do nothing: He cannot convict of sin or bring to repentance. In this connection read Hebrews 6.4-6 -- "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame." From this we gather that a person who has sinned the kind of sin here mentioned will never again feel the strivings of the Holy Ghost. If these scribes had not committed this sin, Jesus warns them that they either have or are in imminent danger of doing so. Bishop Ryle's column on this subject is reassuring -- "There is such a thing as a sin which is never forgiven; but those who are troubled about it are most unlikely to have committed it."

Mother and Brothers Interfere. While Jesus was addressing the crowd assembled around Him, Mary, His mother, and His half-brothers (the natural sons of Joseph and Mary) arrived from Nazareth and, as they could not get to Him, sent word they wanted to see Him, evidently intending to restrain Him from His work.

Who these "brethren" were has brought out many conflicting opinions. If we understand the Roman Catholic view, they hold that Mary was a perpetual virgin, and therefore had no more children after Jesus' birth. They claim that these "brethren" were children of Joseph by a wife he had before his marriage with Mary. There are definite reasons that this could not be. The genealogy with which the Gospel of Matthew begins is evidently written to prove that Jesus was the legal heir to the throne of David. Joseph was a lineal descendant of David the king. Jesus, though not his natural son, was his legal heir, and is often called the "Son of David." Now if Joseph had had sons before Jesus was born, one of those sons would have had priority over Jesus as the heir to the throne of David. The most natural understanding is the one most likely to be correct: that these brethren were sons of Joseph and Mary, born after Jesus' birth. One commentator has called attention to Luke 2.7 where it says of Mary "brought forth her firstborn Son." The inference from this is that she had later sons.

Human and Spiritual Relationships. At the beginning of His work it is noticeable that Jesus cast off the authority of His mother. We read in Luke 2.51 that Jesus was subject to Mary and Joseph, yet He could not in His ministry be subject to any human authority. He said to His mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" (John 2.4). So here He repudiates any authority that His relatives seem to be bent on exercising over Him. Spiritual relationships are superior to human. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother." It is noticeable that He did not say that any one was His father. He recognized always that God was His Father.

* * * * *

09 -- JESUS TEACHES BY PARABLES -- Mark 4:1-41

JESUS ADOPTS A DIFFERENT METHOD OF TEACHING. When Jesus adopted this different method of teaching it surprised His disciples, as we read in Matthew 13.10, and they inquired, "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" It seems that Jesus' purpose was to both reveal and hide truths: To the disciples He explained the parables, but to the unbeliever the parables were puzzles, as Jesus further states in Matthew 13.11 "It is given unto you (the disciples) to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (unbelievers) it is not given."

The Parable of the Sower. It is to be observed that the seed in every case mentioned was the same; but there were four kinds of soil, and the soil determined what the crop would be. There was the wayside soil, trodden hard by the feet of people walking there; there was shallow soil with the rock near the top, leaving no depth of earth; there was soil infested with thorns, preoccupied by another crop; and, finally, there was the good soil in which the seed could find root and bear a crop. And even there three grades of production are mentioned -- thirty-fold, sixty-fold, an hundred-fold.

The Parable of the Sower Interpreted. When the crowd dispersed, the twelve and other believers asked Jesus to interpret the parable, which He did. First of all He tells what the seed is -- the Word, that is the Gospel. The wayside hearer, occupied with other things, is a victim of Satan's wiles and he soon dispels any influence the Word has had on him. The stony ground hearer is very temperamental, gladly receiving the truth, and for a time showing great growth, but when persecution arises he wilts. The thorny ground represents the preoccupied man, cares and desires for riches soon crowd out the Word. But the man represented by the good soil, represents those who "hear the Word, and receive it."

Caution about Hearing. Notice that hearing is emphasized in the case of the good ground. Now Jesus cautions His disciples and others to be careful what they hear. vss. 23-25. It is absurd to light a candle and then put it under a bushel basket or under a bed. This may symbolize hiding one's spiritual light under the bushel of business, or under the bed of luxury. Increase is the result of use. If one does not use what gift the Lord has given him it will eventually be taken away.

Seed-time and Harvest. It is to be observed that Mark does not give all of the parables that Matthew reports in his 13th chapter; but he adds one that is not in any other Gospel. (See vss.

26-29) In verse 13 Jesus intimates that if the disciples have understood the first parable they would understand all of His parables. In other words His explanation of the parable of the sower is the key to the understanding of all of His parables. This being true, the "man" in this parable is Jesus Himself, for He has said in the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13.37, that the man is the Son of man. The words of the Gospel will take root. It may seem that Jesus, the Sower, is asleep, but the seed will develop from the blade to the ear, and eventually ripen, and then the harvest will be reaped and we do not know how near the time of harvest may be.

Parable of the Mustard Seed. In this parable it is Jesus Himself Who sows the seed of the mustard plant. The mustard is an herb, but this mustard plant grows into a tree, so large that the birds of the air find lodgment in its branches. Interested by the parable of the sower, the birds represent Satan that eateth up the seed of the mustard plant. It appears from this that God never intended that the church should ever become a great thing in the world. A tree, in Biblical typology means a nation, and there was a time in the Dark Ages that the Roman Catholic church, an ungainly large organization, undertook to rule the nations of the world, and that is still its objective. When the church builds great church buildings and establishes great institutions that give it a place in the world it soon becomes worldly.

Many Parables Spoken. Mark goes on to say that Jesus spake many other parables that day, doubtless the others that are recorded in Matthew thirteen, "as they were able to bear." Many of these things were so new to the disciples that they were unable to grasp all the meanings set forth in the parables. The disciples asked in Matthew why He used parables. In response He told them, as recorded in Matthew 13.17 -- "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." Perhaps we do not realize that we are privileged to know many things that the prophets of Old Testament times did not know. But are we appreciating and using this knowledge as we should?

Power Over the Elements. The chapter ends with a display of Christ's power over nature. Jesus was human as well as Divine, and was doubtless weary from the long day of teaching, and suggested to the disciples that they take a boat and cross over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus dropped to sleep on a pillow in the hinder part of the boat, while the disciples headed the boat for the other shore. One of those quick and violent squalls that occasionally sweep down on that lake soon churned the water into a rolling mass, filling the boat with water and threatening to swamp it. In desperation the disciples awake Jesus. Here we see Jesus the Son of man falling asleep on a pillow; but a little later we see Jesus the Son of God stilling the storm.

The Failure of Faith. Jesus questions His disciples as to why they were so fearful. He intimates that they have no faith. This makes us wonder what He meant the disciples would have done if they had exercised faith. Perhaps they would have said to each other, "No use being afraid, we need not awake Him, so long as He is on board we cannot go down." In our day the "old ship of Zion" seems about to swamp in the tides of unbelief and infidelity and coldness, but we may be sure it will not fail to bring its cargo to the port of heaven.

* * * * *

10 -- JESUS DEALS WITH VARIOUS AFFLICTIONS -- Mark 5:1-43

A DEMON-POSSESSED a MAN RELIEVED -- After the storm gave place to great calm, Jesus and His disciples proceeded on their voyage to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, here and in Luke called the "country of the Gadarenes." In Matthew it is called Gergesenes, a similar name. This demon-possessed man appears to have rushed at once to see who has come to his locality. He was evidently a dangerous character, and the disciples may well have feared what he might do to them. But Jesus, who had calmed the storm on the sea, was equal to the tempest raging in this man's spirit. This man was not just insane, as some would say, but actually possessed with a host of wicked spirits, called devils, or demons. These unclean spirits had such complete control of the man that they used his faculties to speak and act. Other similar cases are referred to in the Bible. It appears that spirits cannot speak unless they secure the use of some person or animal to speak or act in. All attempts to control this man had failed on the part of the people of that country, and they had abandoned him to his abode in the tombs or caves of the mountains.

When Jesus demanded that the evil spirit, that called his name Legion, for they were many, to come out of the man, the evil spirit begged that he be not tormented. In Matthew it says "before the time." Evidently the wicked spirits all know that their eventual doom is eternal torment. The spirits suggested as an alternative to hell that they be allowed to go into the herd of swine near by. Jesus gave His consent and they went into the swine, about two thousand in number. There were evidently enough evil spirits that there was one for every hog. This suggests what great capacity a man has. This capacity is what the Holy Spirit desires to fill. And how differently a man will act when filled with the Holy Spirit!

Jesus is Begged to Leave the Country. The inhabitants of that country deemed the hogs more important than the man. It may be inferred that the keepers of these hogs were unfaithful Jews, who, contrary to the law of the Jews, were keeping these hogs because they found a profitable trade selling pork to these heathen on that side of the lake. If this was so, they had a stern rebuke for their unwise conduct. "They began to pray Him to depart." Their prayer was answered. Jesus will not stay where He is not welcome and wanted.

The Man's Prayer Not Answered. While Jesus answered the prayer of wicked men, He did not grant the prayer of this man, who evidently had become a disciple of His. Jesus asked some persons to follow Him who excused themselves. See Matthew 8.21,22. This man desired to follow, but Jesus declined to allow him to do so. Generally, when Jesus performed a miracle, He told the ones benefited by the miracle to keep still about it. But He told this man to tell it everywhere. The reason is evident; this man was the only witness for Him on that side of the Sea of Galilee. The man was obedient. The first duty of a saved person is, as this man was told, to go to his friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for them. The man got so blessed in witnessing to his home folk that he extended his testimony to all Decapolis, which refers to ten cities.

A Ruler's Sick Daughter. When Jesus and His disciples returned to the west side of the Sea of Galilee a great throng awaited them. Among them was Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue,

who asked Him to come and lay His hands on his sick daughter. As Jesus started to respond to Jairus' request, He was interrupted by a woman seeking healing of her infirmity.

Healed by Touching Christ's Garment. This woman, whose name is not given, heard of Jesus, and that He had healed the sick. Faith manifests itself in different ways. Some believed Jesus' word, that it can heal at a distance, as in the case of the centurion (see Matthew 8.5-13). Jairus wanted the hand of Jesus on his daughter. This woman, on the other hand, believed that if she could even touch Jesus' clothes, she would be healed. Jesus responded to faith in all these manifestations. How encouraging to us! So the woman worked her way through the crowd until she could stretch out her hand and touch the hem of His garment, and she was immediately healed. But Jesus does not want His blessings to go without a testimony. So He brought her to give a testimony. From the fact that people were jostling Jesus on every hand and many were doubtless touching Him, no healing went out except in response to faith. It is possible to touch Jesus and not touch Him. How true it is that multitudes of people may attend a religious service and go away without a blessing, while others are greatly helped. They all touch the meeting, but all do not have faith.

The Healing of the Daughter of Jairus. While Jesus was delayed to some extent by stopping to deal with the afflicted woman, the daughter of Jairus died, and a messenger came from his home with the sad news, saying, "Why troublest the Master any further?" So far as the messenger was concerned all hope was gone now. But how good of Jesus to stimulate Jairus' faltering faith! And will He not stimulate your little faith in time of trouble? Jesus went on to the place where the little daughter lay dead. The hired mourners were making a great wailing, but, when Jesus said she was only sleeping, they turned their mourning into incredulous laughter. Jesus said the same about Lazarus (see John 11.11) "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." In both cases the persons were dead. Jesus thrust all these unbelievers out of the room where the little girl lay dead. Faith works in a believing atmosphere. Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl were all that Jesus admitted to the death chamber. From the fact that Jesus said "talitha cumi" some have inferred that Jesus here spoke in tongues. He was simply using the current Aramaic language which was generally spoken in Palestine at this time. Jesus advised them to give the restored child something to eat. Life restored by miracle must be sustained by ordinary means.

* * * * *

11 -- JESUS' MINISTRY IN CONNECTION WITH THE TWELVE -- Mark 6:1-56

VISIT TO HIS HOME TOWN -- "His own country" refers to Nazareth, where He had spent his life since He was brought back from Egypt as a child. The account says, "His disciples follow Him." On the sabbath day He went, as He was accustomed to do when living there, to the synagogue. This may have been the same occasion as that described by Luke (Luke 4.16-30) who gives more details of the experience. The people saw in Jesus only "the carpenter," who had doubtless for many years served as the village carpenter. Joseph, His foster father, who had been a carpenter, was doubtless dead, as mention is made only of His mother. In Luke 4.22 the people called Him "Joseph's son," and not the Son of God. He marveled at the unbelief of these people as He, at another time, marveled at the faith of the centurion (Matthew 8.10). Christ did no mighty work where the people called Him Joseph's son, and He does not now do mighty works for the

people who say He was Joseph's son. If any one does not believe Jesus is the Son of God, he cannot expect Him to do much.

The Mission of the Twelve. There appears to be a break in the narrative in the middle of verse 6. "He went round about the villages, teaching," appears to belong with what follows rather than what goes before. The demands on His time were increasing so He enlists the help of the twelve disciples. They are sent in twos, so they could encourage each other in the work. Their equipment was simple. They were told more what not to take than what to take. These instructions were not intended for present-day missionaries. Jesus gave different instruction later. See Luke 22.35,36. On this mission they were to go only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10.6). Now Christ's missionaries go into all the world. As they were going to their own people they were to depend on the hospitality of the people where they went. Refusal to extend hospitality to these ambassadors of Christ was a serious offense, and classed such a city as on a level with Sodom, or worse. What must be the penalty now for such people as will not receive Jesus Christ,

Herod's Treatment of John the Baptist. The account of John the Baptist's death is related between the time the twelve were sent forth and the time they came back. Mark is quite accurate in the order of the events he records, and it is quite likely that the execution of the Baptist occurred in the interval. On a visit to his brother Philip, Herod and Philip's wife became infatuated with each other and married. John the Baptist evidently preached in that locality and took occasion to denounce this evil marriage. Herodias, the wife of Herod, was much stirred up by John's preaching and seems to have tried to bring about his death. Perhaps this was why Herod put John in prison, to protect him from Herodias' plot to kill him. It seems Herod rather liked John the Baptist. He "did many things," but he did not do the right thing. Herodias watched her chance and schemed to bring about John's death. Herod's birthday was celebrated with a great feast. When Herod and his guests were probably drunk, Herodias' daughter, evidently by her former husband, came in and danced and greatly pleased these inebriated men. Herod, in his enthusiasm, promised whatever she would ask. She reported to her mother who told her to ask for the head of John the Baptist.

Herod Between Two Horns of a Dilemma. Herod had to do one of two things, neither of which he wanted to do when he came to his senses. He must break his oath or behead John the Baptist. He preferred to commit murder rather than break his oath, influenced very much by what his guests might think of him. This raises the question, Shall a person ever break a promise? It depends on what the promise is. We have a case in I Kings 2.13-22. Solomon's mother came to him and said, "I desire one small petition of thee." Solomon said, "Ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay." But when Solomon heard her petition he refused to grant what she asked. It would have disrupted his kingdom, which Bathsheba did not realize when she asked her petition. We do not know what Herodias did with the head she received. It will go badly with her at the judgment day.

John's Death was Timely. We read the inspired estimate of John's life. Paul, preaching at Antioch in Pisidia, said, "John fulfilled his course." (Acts 13.25). For John to have lived and continued preaching would have diverted from the work of Christ. There had already been some questioning which was the Messiah. John's disciples secured the body and buried it, and, as we are told in Matthew 14.12, went and told Jesus."

The Return and Report of the Twelve. The twelve finished their mission and returned to Jesus. Jesus proposes a much-needed vacation for a little rest. Possibly He was also moved to seek to get away from the crowd because of sorrow for John. They therefore sought a secluded place in a region that was not thickly populated. But they were defeated in their attempt to find rest. While they were crossing the lake in a boat the people out-went them on the shore and Jesus found a crowd prepared to meet Him as He stepped from the boat. While disappointed in His plan for rest, He showed no sign of displeasure, but, moved with compassion, ministered to the multitude.

The Multitude Ministered to and Fed. Some may find difficulty in reconciling the statement of the disciples that "this is a desert place," and the fact that they sat down on "the green grass." The meaning is that it was an uninhabited place. The miracle of feeding this five thousand is the only one found in all four Gospels.

The End of the Day. Other Gospels say the people wanted to make Jesus their king. The disciples may have had sympathy with the idea. So Jesus sends them away by boat and sends the crowd away. The disciples had a hard time rowing, but Jesus came to them toward morning. The word for spirit here is phantom and not the word used for spirit elsewhere in the Bible.

* * * * *

12 -- SUPERFICIAL RELIGION REBUKED AND FAITH REWARDED -- Mark 7:1-37

FAULT-FINDING PHARISEES AND SCRIBES. What doing in Galilee had reached the ears of the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem. It appears that the persons who criticized Jesus and His disciples were sent as an investigating committee. It is plain they came to try to find something they could criticize rather than looking for something good to report. They ignored all the blessings that accompanied Jesus' work and picked flaws in insignificant details that violated man-made additions to the law. This is an unfair method of persons who investigate the work of any religious group.

The Ground of Criticism. These spies keenly watched Jesus and His disciples, looking for something to criticize. At last they found what they were looking for. They saw some of Jesus' disciples eating before they had gone through the traditional ceremony of washing their hands. Since Mark is writing for Roman readers, he uses two verses explaining the customs of the Jews, which Matthew, writing for Jews, does not explain, as it was not necessary. The Pharisees ask Jesus, "Why walk not Thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders?" These traditions were additions to the law of Moses that had been handed down from earlier times -- a kind of unwritten code of conduct that had acquired importance in the minds of the Pharisees, equal or even superior to the Scriptures.

Jesus Uncovers Their Hypocrisy. Jesus plainly says, "you hypocrites." He refutes their tradition by reference to the Bible. Every Christian should be familiar with the Bible, and thus be able to answer caviling questions authoritatively. Cranmer, quoted by Ralph Earl in the Evangelical Commentary, aptly describes a hypocrite as "One who seeks to appear before men as he ought to be, but is not before God." Isaiah described these people hundreds of years before.

Then Jesus refers back to the law of Moses. He cites one of the Ten Commandments -- "Honor thy father and thy mother." In an attempt to add to the income of the treasury and thus add to their own gains, the Jews had formulated a tradition that, if a man would give the money, he ought to use to support his father and mother, to the treasury, he could tell his parents that it was "Corban" or devoted to God's work. According to the tradition this relieved a man of supporting his father and mother, thus making void the commandment given to Moses from the Lord.

Jesus instructs the People. Jesus uses the occasion to instruct the people in general. What Jesus said must be confined to the meaning Jesus put on His words. When He said that "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him," He did not mean that tobacco, beer, whiskey, opium, snuff, and the like did not defile a person. He was dealing with soilure that accidentally came off a person's hands or otherwise got into food. Jesus qualified what He said by, "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." This means a man must discern the meaning of what Jesus, or for that matter, what anyone says.

The Disciples Further Instructed. When Jesus was alone with the disciples, they asked for further comment on the subject. Jesus expresses surprise that they had not grasped the meaning of what He had said to the people. Soilure that goes into the mouth does not affect the heart, but goes through the alimentary canal and is finally cast out of the body without harm. But evil originates in the carnal disposition called the heart. When it comes out in words or actions it becomes actual sin, and defiles the man who does or utters it. The term "purging all meats," is generally interpreted as meaning that Jesus hereby removed the distinction between clean and unclean meats. This accords with what Paul says in I Timothy 4.1-5. Note especially the statement, "It is sanctified by the word of God and prayer,"

Jesus and the Syro-phenician Woman. After the controversy with the Pharisees Jesus sought to get away from the public, evidently to instruct His disciples privately. He retired into the borders of Phoenicia, went into a house, and would have no one know He was there, but He was soon discovered, especially by a heathen woman. She appears to have heard of Jesus' healing work and comes to Him to relieve her daughter of the unclean spirit that possessed her. Jesus' conduct on this occasion has puzzled some. He, Who was usually so easily approached, was now apparently so slow in responding to this needy woman. One explanation, and possibly a good one, is that Jesus was put in a peculiar position. With Him were His twelve disciples thoroughly set against doing anything for Gentile "dogs," as they were called. Indeed had not Jesus told them when commissioning them shortly before not to go to Gentiles or Samaritans? Regardless of the right or wrong of this prejudice of His disciples, Jesus recognized it and avoided offending them. In Matthew's account the woman is reported as approaching Jesus as the Son of David. Strictly speaking she had no claim on that basis. The disciples could find no fault with Jesus saying that the children must first be fed. The woman promptly took her place as a dog and as such pleaded her case, and won. Jesus supplied the woman's need and skillfully avoided offending His disciples. There is a principle here that must still be regarded. There are places in America where, if a stranger in the locality should treat the different races as on the same level, he will close the door to doing good to either race. Joseph recognized this principle when he set his brethren at one table and the Egyptians at another, and himself at still another. See Genesis 43.32.

Healing the Deaf and Dumb. Jesus and His disciples returned to the land of Israel by a circuitous route. On the way He was met by some persons bringing an afflicted man to Him. To avoid undue publicity, Jesus took him out of the town and cured his infirmity. Jesus did not exploit His healings as is the custom of some popular healers today.

* * * * *

13 -- LIFE IN TERMS OF PROFIT AND LOSS -- Mark 8:1-38

THIS CHAPTER deals with a variety of things, but climaxes with Christ's teaching of self-denial both by His coming death and by precept.

Another Multitude Fed -- In Lesson 11 we had the feeding of five thousand, which is reported in all four of the Gospels. Here we have the feeding of four thousand, recorded only in Mark and Matthew. How easy it is for people to forget the dealings of the Lord! We can wonder why the disciples, after so recently seeing Jesus feed the five thousand, should express perplexity about caring for the needs of this company. But it is no uncommon thing for people who have been delivered by some providence of God to doubt Him in a new crisis.

Pharisees Seek a Sign. It was demanded of Jesus by this group of Pharisees to authenticate His ministry by "a sign from heaven." They had seen miracle after miracle done by Jesus, that should have been a sufficient manifestation of His authority and power. But it seems they want some manifestation in a spectacular way from heaven, perhaps like Elijah's bringing fire down from heaven. Jesus refuses to respond to the request. No sign was given from heaven. In Matthew 12.39-41 Jesus tells them that, while they shall see no sign from heaven, they will have the sign of Jonah, in His rising from the dead after three days.

Forgotten Bread. Temporalities have a way of invading the affairs of even the most spiritual persons. These disciples with Jesus in the boat express concern about bread. They had forgotten to provide bread for this trip and are concerned about it. "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink?" are persistent questions that occupy a great deal of the ordinary person's time. When Jesus said to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod, the disciples thought He meant they were not to get bread from persons of that type. He meant, as explained in Matthew 16.12, the doctrine of the Pharisees and Herodians.

Dullness of Eyes and Ears. There is much that people see and hear that they do not apprehend. It was so with the disciples. Here they are worrying about bread when Jesus, Who had fed five thousand with little, and four thousand with still less, was with them in the boat. They had taken up twelve baskets of fragments in the first occasion, and seven baskets on the latter occasion. The words for baskets are different in the two places. In the first instance it is kophinos, lunch basket, in the latter instance the word is spuris, a hamper. We can take courage when Jesus was so patient with these disciples. Are we not sometimes equally dull?

Blind Made to See. While at Bethsaida the people bring a blind man to Him. To avoid publicity and thus hinder His desire to be alone with His disciples, He takes the blind man and leads him out of the town. The two touches by which He restored his sight is remarkable in its

being an unusual method. The first touch opened the man's eyes and he saw "men as trees walking." It appears that the image of things received by sight are up-side-down on the retina of the eye. The man may have seen men with their legs up like branches of a tree. But the second touch gave the man the right perspective, and then he "saw every man clearly." This may possibly symbolize two works of grace: the first regeneration, the second sanctification.

Jesus Identified. Jesus is now seeking a place of privacy where He may be alone with the chosen twelve and teach them things they need to know. Caesarea Philippi lay to the north of Palestine, near the foot of snowcapped Mount Hermon, and not far from the main source of the Jordan river. It is important that His disciples have a clear idea of Him and His mission on earth. He leads up to the subject by asking what they have heard others say about Him. They repeat various opinions they have heard: that He is John the Baptist restored to life after Herod had beheaded him, Elijah, for whom there was a prophecy of his return (Malachi 4.5), or some other Old Testament prophet returning to earth. These might all be considered good opinions, but none of them correct, all speculative. Having received these answers, Jesus put the question directly to them. "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter, likely the oldest of the disciples, answers, "Thou art the Christ," therefore the expected Messiah prophesied of in the Old Testament. Jesus approves the answer, but warns them not to tell others, as it would be premature in His purpose.

Jesus Reveals His Main Objective. The time had arrived when it was expedient that these disciples' minds were disabused of an erroneous idea of the work of Christ held in common with the Jews of that day -- that He was then to set up His earthly kingdom. The cross must come before the crown. It came as a shock to the disciples, who were looking forward to a position of honor in connection with the expected kingdom on earth. Peter was so disturbed that he seems to think Jesus is out of His mind, and rebuked Him for what he thought to be a false enthusiasm. But Peter, who had just been commended for his testimony, received a severe rebuke. Satan was using Peter to tempt the Lord.

Taking up the Cross. Jesus is not here speaking of becoming a Christian, but speaks as to Christians to follow Him in sacrifice. A cross is not something that befalls us that we cannot help. It is the voluntary taking up and doing something that could be avoided, but is necessary for the progress of the work of God.

How to Save One's Life. Here is a religions paradox: save your life by losing it! Primarily this Scripture is not speaking of saving one's soul in the sense of getting salvation. It is sneaking of one's life, We have a life to live in this world. We can live in such a way that we will have nothing to show for it when it is ended; or we can live It in such a way that we have saved it as an eternal treasure. If a person spends his life entirely on temporalities, and has nothing to show for the years spent, with what can he possibly buy back those years? If he owned all the world he could not do so.

* * * * *

A PROPHETIC UTTERANCE. The chapter divisions in Matthew and Mark put this first verse of chapter nine in different connections. The chapter and verse divisions we have in our Bibles were made long after the Bible was written. It is evident they were not made by an inspired hand. In Matthew 16.28 it is connected with what Jesus said about the Father's distribution of awards. In Mark this is put in the next chapter after the mention of the judgment and seemingly connected with the transfiguration. It may be considered a connecting link between the two lines of teaching. The evident meaning is that some who were standing in the company about Jesus at the time would see what He means by the "kingdom of God come with power." When the Bible speaks of a kingdom. It may refer to the spiritual kingdom as we see it now in the church, or it may mean the Millennial kingdom to be set up literally on the earth. It is plain none of them standing there lived to see the Millennial kingdom. It may be, however, and many so believe, that it refers to the transfiguration, the next thing mentioned in Matthew, Mark and Luke, as a miniature adumbration of Christ coming in His Millennial kingdom, Elijah representing the raptured saints who will not die, and Moses the dead and resurrected saints who will accompany Jesus when He returns in power. It may be that Peter so interprets it in II Peter 1.16-18.

Jesus Transfigured. -- Matthew and Mark say "after six days," and Luke says "about an eight days after." The former speak exclusively, of the days between the two events, the latter inclusively, counting the days at both ends. For instance there are six days between Sundays, but Sunday to Sunday is eight days. Why Jesus selected only Peter, James, and John on this and other occasions is not clear. It may be that they were always near to Him. The mountain appears to be Mount Hermon or some of its spurs. Luke says Jesus was praying when the transfiguration took place. The account is plain that Moses and Elijah appeared personally. They represented the law and the prophets. Both faded out of the picture when God spoke out of the cloud and said, "This is My beloved Son, Hear Him." This occasion would have encouraged Jesus to face what was shortly before Him, and also help the disciples who were present to anticipate with courage what was coming. John the Baptist was Elijah in office, though not personally Elijah. Compare John 1.21 and Luke 1.17. As instructed by Jesus, the three kept the secret, but did not understand what the rising from the dead meant.

Down from the Mountain. The nine disciples that did not go up the mountain had a very different experience. This may picture what Jesus will find when He comes back to earth -- a defeated church incapable of meeting need. It is stimulating to faith to read what Jesus said to the distressed father. "If Thou canst do anything." Jesus responded, "If thou canst believe." Evidently man's lack of faith hinders Christ's power from working. But note the man's response, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." But Jesus responded to the wavering faith and gave the man all he asked.

The Reason for Failure. "Why could not we?" In Matthew it is reported Jesus said, "because of your unbelief." This may not mean only prayer and fasting in dealing with a particular case, but may carry the thought of a constantly prayerful contact with God ready for any emergency that may arise.

Back to Galilee. While Jesus returned to where people would try to throng Him, He was still desirous of being alone to teach His disciples. It is evident He had a real job before Him as is

manifest in the things that occupied their minds. Jesus' patience with that group is an encouragement to know what He will put up with in His people today.

A Pertinent Inquiry. When alone with the disciples in the house, very likely Peter's house in Capernaum, Jesus asked what they had been discussing, but received no answer from them. However, He knew and took measures to disabuse their minds of erroneous notions. He sat down in the attitude of a teacher. It is evident that the way to be demoted is to seek the highest place. It seems that seeking a high place in God's work shows inability to fill the desired place. The office should seek the man instead of the man seeking the office.

The Manner of Dealing with Children. Doing good to children, and those young in the faith brings a reward. But putting a stumbling block before such merits drowning in the sea.

John's Sectarianism Corrected. The disciple John had observed some one casting out a devil and using Jesus' name in the process. He reports to Jesus, possibly with some pride, that he had forbid him doing that any more. That spirit still manifests itself in some strongly sectarian groups. Jesus evidently was glad that others beside His disciples were doing miracles in His name.

Drastic Resistance of Temptation. Anything that has a tendency to tempt us to do evil should be disposed of even if it is dear to us as a hand, foot, or eye. To mutilate the body cannot purify the heart, but the thing the heart goes out after that leads to wrong is to be discarded.

The Undying Worm In the Unquenched Fire. Jesus said more terrifying things about the final state of the wicked than any other Bible character. Three times He uses this description of the state of the lost soul. A worm that never dies will always gnaw; a fire that is never quenched is eternal. Much discussion could be engaged in as to the nature of this fire. The more important thing to think of is how to escape that fire.

The Salt of Fellowship. Salt has the property of making food palatable Salt is used among eastern tribes as a token of friendship. If they eat salt together it is a token of peace with each other. This may be what Jesus means when He says, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." He was perhaps getting the lesson across to the disputing disciples.

* * * * *

15 -- JESUS' MINISTRY IN PEREA -- Mark 10:1-52

FROM GALILEE TO PEREA -- Jesus now leaves Galilee for the last time, and crosses over the Jordan river to Perea. Mark confines His ministry there to this one chapter.

The Divorce Question Discussed. The Pharisees in asking Jesus the question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" were not seeking information, but setting a trap for Him. He was now in the territory ruled by Herod Antipas, who had not long since, beheaded John the Baptist for criticizing his marriage with a divorced woman, and for divorcing his own wife to do so.

The Question Referred to Moses. In response to the Pharisees' question Jesus asks another question. "What did Moses command you?" This was a wise shifting of the question, for the Pharisees claimed to believe what Moses wrote. Moses did permit a man to put away his wife, but Jesus said it was because of the hardness of the husband's heart who did so. Jesus did not say it was right, but referred to what it was at first, when God gave Adam one wife, a model for all marital unions.

The Disciples Further Inquire. When He and His disciples were alone in a house, they brought up the divorce question again. This time Jesus was more explicit. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her." From this it appears the adultery is in "marrying another." It is uncertain which wife is the antecedent of the pronoun "her," the one divorced or the one married afterward. Quite likely both wives would be involved in it, if the divorced wife remarried. The marrying of the new wife would place her in adultery.

Jesus Blesses Children. In Matthew 19.10, after Jesus had discussed the divorce question, His disciples said it was not good to marry. But immediately afterward Jesus takes up little children, the product of correct marriage and blesses them, thus sanctioning proper marriage. The disciples seemed to think Jesus had no time to bother with children, but Jesus said then, and still says, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me."

An Anxious but Disappointed Inquirer. The anxiety of this young man is indicated in the fact that he came "running." Jesus' response to his calling Him "good," is not a denial of His Deity and goodness, but calling the man a attention to the fact that He was God. Like many others, this man thought salvation is by "doing" instead of by "believing." Jesus took him at his word and gave him something to do. It is noted that Jesus passed over the first four commandments, duties to God, and repeated only the last six, duties to man. The seeker says he has kept these commandments, but still was unsatisfied, and says, in Matthew, "What lack I yet?" Jesus then gave him something to do that revealed that he had something he loved more than God. "He went away grieved, for he had great possessions."

The Lesson to His Disciples. It is hard for them who trust in riches to enter the kingdom, but not impossible, for nothing is impossible with God. Attempts to explain the needle's eye are all unnecessary. It is impossible for a camel to go through a needle's eye, and it is impossible for any man to get into the kingdom by his own efforts. Only as God undertakes can any one be saved.

Reward for Those Who Forsake Things for Jesus. In response to a remark of Peter's, Jesus states a great truth that holds good today. It is to be noticed that when Jesus says such a person who forsakes certain things He names, does not receive a hundred fold of fathers or wives. God is to be his Father, and he is to have but one wife. Notice the addition -- "with persecutions."

Jesus Again Foretells His Death and Resurrection. The disciples were apprehensive about going to Jerusalem. Jesus takes them aside and relates again what is to befall Him, but they but faintly understood what He meant.

Seeking High Places in the Kingdom. James and John, who had been favored on special occasions, seemed to think they were eligible for the best things in the coming kingdom they still

envisioned as soon to be set up. From Matthew 20.20 it is indicated that the mother possibly put them up to making the request. It is good for a mother to want the best for her sons, but she did not know, neither did they, the import of what they were asking. The baptism that Jesus asked them if they were able to receive, and which He said they would experience, evidently was not water baptism, but an experience they would go through. They would have that to go through with, but Jesus did not assure them places on His right hand and left hand in the kingdom.

The Basis of Promotion. The request of James and John stirred up rivalry among the other disciples. Jesus must have been grieved exceedingly by this spirit. But He calmly tells them how promotions are earned. He contrasts His kingdom with the kingdoms of the world. There rivalry is the rule and men praise those who assert themselves and win honor by their schemes and plans. But the reverse is true in the kingdom of God. Taking the place that Jesus did, Who came not to be ministered to but to minister and give His life for others. He who aspires for the great place will be servant of all But that spirit of James and John and the others is still present in the world, and men seek means of getting the best pastorate and best places.

The Persistent Beggar. On His way to Jerusalem Jesus passes through Jericho. Blind Bartimaeus sits by the wayside begging. He hears the tread of many feet, for a company is following Jesus on their way to Jerusalem to observe the Passover celebration soon to take place. He found in some way that Jesus was coming that way. He very likely has heard of Jesus' miracles and believes He can give him sight. His cries annoy the people and they tell him to shut up. But he cries the louder. He will not be denied. Jesus responds to his cries, and the people encourage him to go to Jesus. His prayer in answer to Jesus' inquiry was not long or complicated. His faith was responded to by receiving his sight. Jesus told him to go his way. His way was to follow Jesus.

* * * * *

16 -- JESUS' ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM -- Mark 11:1-33

THE OCCASION -- Chapter 10 ends with Jesus and those accompanying Him leaving Jericho. Many pilgrims were with Him on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the annual feast of the Passover, one of the great annual feasts of the Jews, commemorating the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and directly from the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn in every family. Omitting all reference to the trip from Jericho, Mark brings us to the events connected with Jesus' entering Jerusalem.

The Need of an Animal -- Jesus ordinarily walked from place to place. But now it was imperative that Jesus enter Jerusalem riding an ass. If He had not done so it could not be proved that He was the Messiah. Matthew gives the importance of this fact in chapter 21.4,5 where he says that this was done that the prophecy of the prophet (Zechariah 9.9) might be fulfilled Jesus owned no animal, neither did any of His disciples, and possibly all the pilgrims with them were on foot. It was an emergency, but the need was supplied in the manner described.

The Expectancy of the Pilgrims. From Luke 19.11 we learn that the people accompanying Jesus thought the kingdom of God was about to appear, an idea that Jesus endeavored to correct by a parable. But the idea evidently still prevailed, and was doubtless shared by the twelve disciples,

at least to an extent. Jesus' riding on an ass instead of a horse indicated the peacefulness of His intention of entering Jerusalem. The expectancy of the people was manifested by their demonstrations and salutations. The first day He was in Jerusalem He seems to have taken a survey of conditions, and went back to Bethany, probably the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. The City of Jerusalem would have been crowded and accommodations hard to find.

The Barren Fig Tree. This was an unusual fig tree. It is claimed that in Palestine fig trees put out their fruit before their leaves appear. Therefore for this tree to have leaves and not fruit was a profession that it had fruit. It was, so to say, a hypocrite. As such it was symbolical of the Jewish nation, which made great show of religious zeal in the keeping of the feasts and temple services, but was fruitless in spiritual things. Jesus' cursing of the tree is symbolical of what was soon to happen to the Jewish nation.

Cleansing the Temple. John 2.13-16 tells of a cleansing of the Temple by Jesus on an earlier occasion. But the traders were all back again. The work of these traders was probably a perversion of what was a legitimate practice. Many of the pilgrims who came to celebrate the Passover came too far to bring their sacrifices with them. So they were obliged to buy animals or doves for their use. But the chief priests seem to have made a monopoly of this matter. They charged exorbitant prices, and had brought the business into the temple court. Then, too, they had made a ruling that money offerings for the temple service must be paid in Jewish coin. Most of the people would have been using Roman money in the exchange the priests had a rake-off of considerable size. We do well to get the lesson, not to make places of worship places of buying and selling.

A Lesson from the Fig Tree. The day after the cursing of the fig tree the disciples noted that the tree was withered, and mentioned it to Jesus. Jesus takes occasion to teach a lesson of faith from the circumstance. There can be no likely reason for removing physical mountains, but mountains of difficulty do hedge in the way of a Christian many times, and only believing prayer will remove them. The greatest mountain is sin for a sinner. Believing prayer cannot be offered unless we ourselves are of a forgiving spirit toward those who have offended or wronged us.

Desire a Requisite of Prevailing Prayer. It is evident that an ardent desire is a prerequisite of a faith that receives things from God. People sometimes ask for a thing one day, and never think of it the next day. Other desires have arisen that obscure the other desire. We must desire it when we pray, and evidently the desire will not cease until the answer comes, and desire, coupled with faith seems to be sure of an answer.

A Personal Lesson from the Fig Tree. The profusion of leaves on the fig tree was a virtual claim that it had fruit. We must be careful that we do not profess what we do not have. There are undoubtedly people who can rightly be called hypocrites, making profession and yet have no fruit of the Spirit.

Events of Another Day. Jesus evidently spent the nights outside of Jerusalem, coming in the morning and leaving before sunset. The chief priests were bent on destroying Him secretly, and would have searched out His lodging place if in the city. Perhaps He did not always go back to Bethany to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. His being hungry on one morning would

indicate that, as they would hardly have allowed Him to go without breakfast. It may be He went some nights to Gethsemane and spent the nights in prayer.

The Question of the Officials. The chief priests were evidently very much wrought upon by what Jesus did in expelling the traders from the temple court. They, with the scribes and elders, accosted Him as He was walking in the temple and demanded His authority for doing "these things," evidently referring to His expulsion of the traders, which greatly interfered with their business and income. This was a very august assembly, evidently a committee from the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of the Jewish nation.

Jesus' Pertinent Counter Question. "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" This question evidently refers to all the activities of John the Baptist. This discussion was evidently in the presence of many people who were listening. Matthew 21.25,26 give the reason why they answered that they did not know. if they said of men, they feared they would lose the confidence of the people, and if they said from heaven Jesus would have inquired why they did not believe him.

* * * * *

17 -- JESUS ENCOUNTERS AND SILENCES CRITIC -- Mark 12:1-44

IN THE BEGINNING OF THIS CHAPTER Jesus again resorts to the parable method of teaching. Jesus' description of a vineyard would be perfectly understood by His hearers, as they were common in Palestine. When He had finished it will be remembered from last lesson that the Pharisees had demanded of Jesus His authority for doing what He had done, and the parable fits right in there. When He had done speaking the parable "they knew that He had spoken the parable against them." They doubtless thought of a similar parable in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, which is interpreted in verse 7 of that chapter -- "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel."

Attempts to Trap Jesus. Because of their fear of what the people would think and do the official Jews dared not seize Jesus and arrest Him. So they resort to various tactics to accomplish their purpose.

Question of Tribute to Caesar. The Pharisees, who naturally disliked the Herodians, the party that favored Roman rule, enlist them in a scheme to trap Jesus. First they flatter Jesus as an independent thinker who does not care what people think of Him. Then they spring their question, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" It was a knotty question to answer. A direct yes or no would have involved Jesus in difficulty. If He had said yes, the common people, who despised paying the tribute would have lost confidence in Him; if He had said no, then the Jews would have reported the matter to the Roman authorities and brought about His arrest as inciting opposition to the Roman rule. Jesus' response avoided both of these sides of the dilemma. Asking for a coin, He asked whose image was on it. They promptly answered, "Caesar's." That answer put them in the trap, and Jesus wisely said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Here He laid down a great principle of duty to state and duty to God. Paying taxes indicates that we are subjects of the state; paying tithes and offerings indicates that we are subjects of God, and all we have and are belongs to Him.

Question Concerning the Resurrection. The Sadducees, who believed neither in heaven, or hell, nor angel or spirit (Acts 23.8), nor resurrection, now try their tactics on Jesus. They imagine what is probably a hypothetical case (one that never happened). Referring to one of the provisions of the law of Moses, they suppose a woman who has been the wife of seven husbands. Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection? In answering Jesus told these men that they knew neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. Marriage is not practiced after the resurrection. Jesus refers back to what God said to Moses in the burning bush -- "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The "I am" indicates that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still living.

A Question Concerning the Commandments. A scribe, observing the wise answers of Jesus, probably not so intent on trapping Him as the others, asks which is the first commandment. Jesus answers by giving both the first and the second, involving love to God and love to man, thus covering the intent of the Ten Commandments. They who love God and man, will keep the commandments, for they have to do with duties to God and man. The scribe then made a remark that led Jesus to say he was not far from the kingdom. We wonder if it was one of those who are so near, and yet so far, and perhaps never really entered the kingdom.

Jesus Propounds a Question. Having silenced all His critics, Jesus next puts a question to His critics. If what the scribes say is true, that the Messiah will be the Son of David, how is this to be harmonized with what David said when he called the Messiah his Lord ? None of His critics could or would try to answer that question. The only answer is the incarnation. David naturally spoke of the second Person of the Trinity as his Lord. But by the incarnation He became a Son of David and was often so called during His earthly life. This is still the stumbling block of the unsaved Jew. The Jew may be convinced that Jesus Christ in His life on earth was a great Jew, even a prophet and a good man, but they are not prepared to acknowledge Him as Lord.

Instruction to the Common People. It is remarkable that the common people, who have not risen to high places in the church, often are nearer the truth than those in big offices. They heard Jesus gladly. He warns them to beware of the scribes who posed as great men. They devoured widows' houses, and then made long prayers.

Jesus Watches the Offerings Put in the Treasury. The discussions with the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and scribes had likely taken place in the court of the Gentiles, one of the open apartments adjoining the temple. Now He goes into the court of the women and sits down where He watches the people as they put their offerings into the receptacles there for that purpose.

Many wealthy Jews ostentatiously cast much money into the treasury. But a widow, perhaps one of those whose house the scribes had devoured, and then offered a hypocritical prayer, came along in the throng and quietly drops her two mites in the receptacle. That was all she had. Jesus took more note of her than all the others. He remarked to His disciples that she had given more than any of the others. It was all her living.

This unsophisticated woman probably little knew of the corruption that was in the priesthood. Some, knowing these things might not have given to the temple offerings. But to her the temple was God's house, and to her the offerings were given to God, and God rewarded her as

such. We cannot suppose that God allowed that woman to suffer for want of food and clothing, when His Son so highly commended her. That widow's act was worth recording in the Bible, and has been an inspiration to others of God's poor to give. Jesus still sits over against the treasury of God. What does He see you do about the offering?

* * * * *

18 -- JESUS FORETELLS COMING EVENTS -- Mark 13:1-37

THIS PROPHECY OF JESUS includes two events, both of which were future when He spoke, Both of these events are described as periods of disaster. One of the events has to do with things that happened at the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place about forty years after Jesus spoke these words, and the other refers to the tribulation at the end of this age, culminating in the second coming of Christ to set up the Millennium.

A Telescopic Prophecy. The two events are mingled in what Jesus says. It appears that some of His words apply to both events. The first event has in it the same features as the other; just as you put a small picture in a projector and cast the same picture in a larger shape on the screen.

Jesus Departs from the Temple. Jesus was rejected by the officials who had charge of the Temple. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John 1.11). "Your house is left unto you desolate." (Matthew 23.38). A disciple desired to attract His attention to the magnificent Temple. His response, that no stone would be left on another, seems to have so stunned them that they were silent, until, as He later sat on the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron valley from Jerusalem, four of the disciples asked Him about the matter.

The Disciples' Questions were about two things: "When shall these things be?" and "What shall be the sign?" What Jesus says is in response to these two questions. But first He cautions them to not be deceived by impostors who will claim to be Christ coming back, or false prophets about His coming. (verse 6) Christ is not specific in answering their question as to the time, but gives a series of events that will precede the time of the events referred to. The fact that He speaks of their being beaten in the synagogues would indicate He is speaking of events preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, while synagogues were still in the land. And yet it might also refer to the future for there are many synagogues in the land of Israel today.

Two Tribulations Involved. There are two warnings in what Jesus says that are very much alike. One is in verse 6, already referred to, and the other is in verse 21. We judge the first is a warning that applies to the events preceding or in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other to events preceding the second coming of Christ. There will be great afflictions and false prophets in both cases.

An Interval Between the Events is plainly suggested by verse 10, "The gospel must first be published among all nations." That could not be before the destruction of Jerusalem, but suggests what must be before the second coming of Christ. "The beginnings of sorrows," (verse 8) may apply to both periods, but especially to the birth-pangs preparatory to the birth of the Jewish nation that they will experience in the great tribulation that lies ahead. The world-wide convulsions that

have rocked the world in two world wars, may be some of these birth-pangs, and indicate the near approach of the end.

The Great Tribulation. From verse 19 to the end the application seems to be mainly of the events preceding the second coming of Christ, though, as before stated, there may be a preliminary application to the previous time of trouble in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem. The time of trouble that is greater than has been, and never will be again, very evidently refers to the great tribulation. For of the troubles concerning the fall of Jerusalem, it could not well be said that there will never be another time like it, for it will be as bad or worse in the great tribulation.

After This Tribulation the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give her light, which did not occur after the destruction of Jerusalem. Then they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. This marks these verses as definitely referring to the end time of this age. It is to be noted that the fact of Jesus coming for the church in the rapture is omitted, as that coming of Christ is not clearly revealed until we read the Epistles, especially of Paul.

The Gathering of the Elect. The elect very likely refers to the ancient people of God, the Israelites, or Jews as we know them. There is but a small remnant of the Jews of the world in the land of Israel today. It appears from this that the Jews from all over the world will flock to the land of Israel at the beginning of the Millennium.

The Fig Tree Sign. When Jesus came to answering the question of the disciples concerning the time of these events, He resorts to the parable method of teaching. The nature of the fig tree was well known to the disciples. It is quite generally believed by expositors of the Bible that the fig tree is a symbol of the Jewish nation, as "all the trees" of Luke 21.20 refers to other nations. When the fig tree puts forth leaves it is a sign that summer is nigh. So when we see the Jewish nation beginning to flourish, as it is now, we know we are approaching the time of the coming of the things here prophesied. It is to be observed that the generation that was living when Jesus uttered this prophecy lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem. It appears that the generation that sees these later signs may not pass until the Lord comes to set up the Millennial kingdom. But the exact time is still unrevealed. While we know not the time, we do well to regard what Jesus emphasizes -- Watch.

The Final Illustration. Jesus likens Himself to a man taking a far journey, but who is going to return. Notice, He gives every man work to do, and especially charges the porter, who may refer to the pastor of a church, or Bible student who studies these things, Let us then be busy and watchful, remembering what is said in Matthew 24.46 -- "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing."

* * * * *

19 -- JESUS UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS -- Mark 14:1-72

THE PLAN OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS and scribes to put Jesus to death, whether before or after the feast, did not develop, for He was crucified as our Passover on the anniversary of the first

Passover. This chapter records the greatest act of love shown to Jesus in His lifetime, and also an act of the most hateful kind.

The Expression of Love was manifested by Mary of Bethany, as identified by John 12.3. Jesus said of her act, "She is come beforehand to anoint My body to the burying." Later we read of several women coming to Jesus' tomb to anoint His body, but they were too late. Is it not strange that people found fault with Mary for anointing Him in time, but there is no record of any one finding fault with the women whose ointments were wasted? But similar perverted ideas still continue. It is easier to get five dollars from some people for a floral wreath to put on the casket of a diseased relative than to get a similar amount to send a missionary. The wreath is left to wither in the cemetery, while the five dollars to the missionary may be partly instrumental in saving a soul to shine as the stars for ever and ever.

The Expression of Hate came from one of the twelve disciples, for Judas seems to have been the chief objector to Mary's act of love as recorded in John 12.4-6. The next thing Mark records after Mary's act is Judas going out to plan the betrayal of Jesus.

Preparing for the Passover. Luke 22.8 records that the two disciples sent to find the place to eat the Passover were Peter and John. In the crowded Passover season it was not easy to find lodging and places to eat the Passover. By some means, not stated, a certain man was prompted to prepare a place for a company to keep the Passover. The place was still vacant when the two disciples were guided to the place by the sign Jesus gave. Just as Jesus knew where the two disciples would find the colt tied that He was to ride into Jerusalem, so He knew where this upper room was. He knew also just when the man with the pitcher of water would be going along the street to the house where the good man had the room prepared. Women generally were the water carriers, so this unusual case of a man carrying water would be conspicuous and easy to recognize, as it is unlikely any other man was carrying water at that time.

The Traitor Pointed Out. Mark does not give the details some of the other Gospel writers do, Jesus thus speaking gave Judas an opportunity to repent if he would. He repented eventually, but too late, and in his remorse committed suicide.

Jesus Our Passover. The Passover Lamb symbolized the sacrifice of Jesus as our Passover. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." (I Cor. 5.7). Every year the Jews kept the Passover they were showing forth the death of Christ until He came, The bread and wine of the Passover feast symbolized His body and blood soon to be offered.

Jesus' Forewarning was intended to prepare them for what was coming that night. All of them would be stumbled by what He did. They were accustomed to see Him the master of every occasion, and now to see Him surrender, evidently overcome by His enemies, would cause them to wonder and be confused. Why did He not walk away from His enemies as He had at times before?

Peter's Ignorant Boast. Peter insisted that he would not be offended. Jesus warned him of his denial, but Peter insisted. The others said similar things, but not so vehemently as Peter,

The Garden Experience. Jesus and the eleven come to Gethsemane. He leaves eight, evidently near the gate, and takes Peter, James, and John farther into the garden with Him. His charge for them to watch is of little avail, for He found them asleep the three times He returned to them. The agony of Jesus' prayer resulted in the attitude, "not what I will, but what Thou wilt." This is the attitude we should all take in prayer. It was not the physical suffering of the cross from which He shrank. It was more than martyrdom. Stephen, when he was being stoned, looked up into heaven and saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God, but when Jesus died He had to say, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." This was the bitter cup He consented to drink.

The Arrest of Jesus. As Jesus returned to the disciples the third time the mob sent by the Jewish authorities was coming. Peter, true to what he thought he should do, swung his sword, but to no avail. Jesus patched up the wound He made. Judas' perfidy in betraying Jesus with a kiss, is a most notorious example of wickedness. The eleven forsook Jesus and fled, evidently fearing they might be arrested.

The Trial of Jesus. The trial here is only one of several trials of Jesus. None of the witnesses agreed in their testimony, so He could not be condemned in that way. The high priest finally caused Jesus to incriminate Himself, according to their understanding of the law. Blasphemy, which they claimed He did, required the death penalty under Jewish law. The disgraceful treatment of Jesus after they had condemned Him was vile and mean in the extreme, Jesus was the Son of God at His trial, but He is coming again as the Son of man in the future. He is always both.

Peter's Denial. Peter and John followed eventually to the place of the trial. In the courtyard of the palace of the high priest they had built a fire as it was cold. Peter sought the warmth of the fire, and was soon accosted by a maid who inferred that he was with Jesus. Peter passed off the suspicion with a denial. But others took it up, and finally Peter was vehement in his denial. It is an anomaly that Jesus could depend more on the faithfulness of a rooster to crow on time than on the faithfulness of Peter to stand by Him in His trial. The rooster kept up its testimony, but Peter abandoned his testimony. Peter was not the last person to shrink in the face of danger. Professed Christians still do so on some occasions.

* * * * *

20 -- THE TRIAL, CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS -- Mark 15:1-16:20

THE TRIAL OF JESUS by the Jews violated their own regulations concerning such proceedings. But they endeavored to give it a semblance of legality by holding a session in the early morning to confirm what they had already determined to do in their night session.

The Trial before Pilate. As the Romans ruled Palestine at this time they refused to allow the Jews to execute criminals. If the Jews had executed Jesus it would have been by stoning. But the prophetic Psalm 22, verse 16 predicts His hands and feet shall be pierced. (It is well to read that entire Psalm in this study, for many things are there prophesied of this occasion). Jesus answered Pilate's first question, but refused to answer the accusations of the people, which made Pilate marvel. Pilate discerned that the Jews desired Jesus' execution because of envy, and tried to

set the mass of the Jews against their leaders by proposing to release Jesus if they demanded it. But the chief priests moved the people to call for Barabbas, who had actually done what the Jews accused Jesus of doing, opposing the government of Rome.

How thankful Barabbas should have been that Jesus died in his stead. If he followed the mob to the place of execution how truly he could say, "He died in my place." But that is what we can all say of Jesus, "He died in my place."

Pilate knew he was condemning an innocent man, but he yielded to the popular cry and gave his verdict to crucify Him. Pilate's scourging of Jesus was a cruel act that was not right or necessary. He perhaps thought it might help to bring him into favor with the Jewish elders, whose good opinion he was desirous of keeping.

The Treatment by the Soldiers, before taking Him out to the place of crucifixion, was humiliating in the extreme. The mocking as a king with royal robe, crown of thorns, and rod as a scepter, the hypocritical worship and spitting must have been extremely painful to Jesus' refined nature. There was one redeeming* feature of the spitting, it was not tobacco juice. ["Redeeming" here seems to me to be a poor choice of words. There was nothing "redeeming" in what they did. The fact that they did not spit tobacco juice did not in any way "redeem" their act from being a sinful affront to the dignity of God, Whose manifestation in the flesh they despised. --DVM]

The Cross was evidently too heavy for Jesus to carry after all that He had gone through. Simon of Cyrene, probably paying his first visit to Jerusalem, may have thought himself badly treated by the soldiers in compelling him to bear Jesus' cross, but what a story he could tell his children and grandchildren, that he was the one who bore Jesus' cross for Him. "Must Jesus bear the cross alone, and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for' every one, and there's a cross for me."

The Crucifixion. It is noticeable that all the writers of the Gospels refrain from relating the horrible details of the crucifixion. They simply say, "They crucified Him," and say no more. We wonder if it is good for preachers to enlarge on these details. He refused the drink that was supposed to have a sedative effect. He would bear the cross at its worst, and keep a clear mind. Jesus was treated as the worst of the three hanging on crosses that day. He was numbered with transgressors, and treated as though he was the outstanding criminal. There is no record of anyone taunting the thieves or ridiculing them.

The Darkness must have silenced the accusers and brought a dreadful silence over the scene. It was not an ordinary eclipse, as it was the wrong time of the moon.

The Bitter Cup, must have been what made Jesus cry out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Here He tasted death for every man, experiencing the misery of a world of lost souls for all of whom He tasted death.

The Rending of the Temple Veil must have startled the priests who were just then offering the evening sacrifice. Jesus' sacrifice fulfilled that of which the Temple and its services was a shadow.

The Testimony of the Centurion who superintended the crucifixion, that "This was the Son of God," is powerful testimony from an unexpected source.

Secret Disciples. It is one of the anomalies of human nature that the disciples who had been with Jesus openly, in this trying hour left the body of Jesus on the cross, while secret disciples Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (John 19.39), come boldly to the front and take down the body of Jesus and give it a decent burial,

Three Women at the Tomb of Jesus The first eight verses of chapter 16 tell of the visit of three women to the tomb of Jesus. They were late with their ointment, and it is not told what they did with it. Mary of Bethany had anticipated Jesus' death and had anointed Him. We find no record of this Mary visiting the tomb. She had done her anointing. She was accused of wasting it, but it was the other women's ointment that was wasted very likely. These women were anticipating how to get the stone away from the sepulchre so they could get in, but on arriving found the stone rolled away and the body of Jesus gone. The "young man" was doubtless an angel, who told the women Jesus was not there but had risen. He tried to get the women to see the place where the body of Jesus had lain, but they seemed not to notice the significance of the empty clothes, which so quickly convinced Peter and John He had risen. (See John 20.3-8). From Mark 16.9 It appears that Jesus' first appearance was to Mary Magdalene, evidently before He appeared to the three.

Other Appearances of Jesus. The brief mention of His appearing to two going to the country is told in detail in Luke 24.13-35. Later the same day He appeared to the eleven. By careful comparison of all the Gospels and some of the Epistles it appears that Jesus appeared twelve times after His resurrection.

The Signs Following -- Mark's Gospel closes with the information that the disciples went forth, the Lord working with them, and confirming their work with signs following. While these signs followed, we see no reason to believe that any or all of these signs will follow wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the church age. They confirmed the work of the Apostles and others at the initiation of the new age, just as the manifestations of Sinai initiated the age of law.

* * * * *

THE END