

**JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH—
COMMENTS ON MARK**

**--- Volume Three of Four ---
(Mark Chapters 10; 11; 12; & 13)**

A Practical Commentary on
The Gospel According to Mark

By
Joseph L. Looney II

2012 — 2014

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May, 2012, September; November, 2013

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(Consisting of Four Volumes)**

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The Gospel According to Mark

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop an expository and practical commentary on "The Gospel According to Mark." This study will include the harmonized sequential headings or listings from the other Gospel records. The theme of the Book of Mark is found in the key verse which is Mark 10:45. Jesus is speaking and He states, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Without question to minister is to serve. Jesus was speaking of Himself as the Servant of God, the Father. In this verse He reveals that His first advent was two-fold: (1) to give His life to pay the redemption price for the sinner and thus to save every sinner who will believe; and (2) to minister for God and to serve others and thus be the supreme example as to how sinners saved by grace are to live so as to point all people to Christ Jesus as the one and only Savior. The title, "Jesus, My Servant the Branch - Comments on Mark," is derived from many references in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, but more particularly from Zechariah 3:8 (KJV) "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH."

By

Joseph L. Looney II

May, 2012; April, 2014

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH—COMMENTS ON MARK - VOLUME 3 of 4

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THE SERVANT: ENCOURAGING HIS DISCIPLES BY PROPHECY

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It is my sincere prayer that God will bless the ministry of the Gulf Coast Baptist Institute and her sponsoring church, the Unity Missionary Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. I am grateful to this church, Gulf Coast Baptist Institute, Dr. Bruce Morris, Sr., (President), Sister Doris Scarlett (English Department), and Dr. Tom Scarlett (former President) for their patience, help, encouragement in this endeavor. I am thankful for the opportunity to write this dissertation in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Doctor of Theology program. Also, may the Lord bless Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Gillette, Wyoming, who has been gracious to this writer during the time of the writing of this thesis.

Also, I am grateful for the many pastors, preachers, Bible institute instructors, and others who have been a tremendous help and blessing along the way. They are too numerous to mention here. I thank God for having the opportunity to be taught and helped by each of these people. May God bless the memory of those who have been promoted to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. May He bless the ministry of those who continue to serve Him.

One brother of whom this writer is especially grateful is Jim C. Brasseal. He is pastor of Landmark Missionary Baptist Church, Lakewood, CO. At one time, he was Vice President and instructor of the Gulf Coast Baptist Institute from which he received his doctorate. Brother Brasseal has made many helpful suggestions. May God bless his ministry.

Most of all, I thank God and His dear Son, Jesus Christ, my personal Savior and Lord. To Him be the glory for all things. May His kingdom increase.

Joseph L. Looney II
Gillette, Wyoming
April 2012 through April, 2014

CREDITS, EXPLANATION, AND DEDICATION

CREDIT FOR SOURCES

Every reasonable effort has been made by this writer to give credit to all sources and authors where credit is due. However, over many years, this writer has read many comments from various sources in the course of sermon and lesson study and preparation. If any material from some of these many sources has been included in these comments and has not been documented, inadvertently or otherwise, this writer apologizes for the oversight.

EXPLANATION

The original intent was to write a commentary on all sixteen chapters of the Gospel of Mark for this dissertation (to be completed by the end of April, 2012). As of this date May 11, 2012, chapters ten through sixteen have not been completed. However, with the approval of Doctor Bruce Morris, Sr., President of the school, it was decided (due to the volume of the work on chapters one through nine) to allow this student to finish chapters ten through sixteen as soon as possible after May 11, 2012. The word count for Mark chapters one through nine is well over 100,000 words with over 350 pages, double spaced.

FINISHED

As of February, 2014, this dissertation is completed (all sixteen chapters of the Gospel of Mark) with 741 pages and over 242,000 words.

DEDICATION

The Late Brother Charles F. Hanes was a Missionary Baptist pastor/missionary for many years serving in Arkansas and South Dakota. He befriended this writer and was always a great encouragement. This work is dedicated to the memory of this dear brother.

Joseph L. Looney II
Gillette, Wyoming

April 2012 through February; April, 2014

FOREWORD

to the commentary entitled

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH—COMMENTS ON MARK

This paper or commentary was originally composed as a desertation submitted to Gulf Coast Baptist Institute of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Theology. With the written permission of the Gulf Coast Baptist Institute this writer now offers to the general public this commentary on The Gospel According to John Mark. There are four volumes. Volume One covers Mark chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Volume Two covers Mark chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9. Volume 3 covers Mark chapters 10, 11, 12, and 13. Volume 4 covers Mark chapters 14, 15, and 16.

It is without apology that this writer writes from the viewpoint of a Landmark Missionary Baptist pastor who was saved by the grace of God in June, 1960. God used the ministry of Central Missionary Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and the individual witnessing of Brother John Blake a follow engineering student at the University of Arkansas to bring this sinner to the realization that he needed to repent and trust in the Lord Jesus.

The overall plan of this writer is to write *verse by verse commentaries* on as many books of the 66 books of the Holy Bible as time permits in the time that he has left upon this earth until the Precious Lord Jesus Christ takes him home. The purpose of this is to help people who have the desire to understand the Word of Truth. It is this writer's prayer that God's Spirit will use this desertation and any in the future to help those who desire to know and understand the Bible. No doubt all questions will not be answered and there are human errors in this paper, but to the best of his ability and with the help of God, this writer has tried to get the correct and accurate teaching(s) of The Gospel According to John Mark. To God be the glory for any help and any good that may come from this effort.

In the service of the Master, Jesus Christ My Savior and Lord,
Joseph L. Looney II
Gillette, Wyoming
May, 2012; Sept; Nov, 2013; April, 2014

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

CREDITS FOR SOURCES -- ADDED REMARKS

This writer can not claim any originality for it is God who created him and has given him any ability that he may have, so the glory goes to God and His dear Son, Christ Jesus, who is this writer's Personal Savior and LORD.

Every reasonable effort has been made by this writer to give credit to all sources and authors where credit is due and when sources were known. However, over many years, this writer has read many comments from various sources in the course of sermon and lesson study preparations. If any material from some of these many sources has been included in these comments and has not been documented, inadvertently or otherwise, this writer apologizes for the oversight. It was and is not the intention of this writer not to recognize these sources. During in the ministry of this writer since 1971 and even before, he prepared and preached sermons from the four Gospel records of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John for the Mountain Grove Missionary Baptist Church near Alma, Arkansas, as well as the Unity Missionary Baptist Church near Paron, Arkansas, and Pine Top Missionary Baptist Church near Broken Bow, OK. In the course of the preparation for these sermons this writer leaned heavily on sermon booklets and commentaries by various preachers and writers. In many cases there are no formal references to these works in the text of this writer's commentary. Therefore, this writer acknowledges his debt to the work of all those preachers and commentators from which he had drawn resources for preaching and teaching.

APPRECIATION FOR PASTORS, PREACHERS AND INSTRUCTORS

Over the years the Holy Spirit of God has used several pastors and others to teach this writer spiritual and practical things from the Word of God. Some of those pastors were Charles Ashcraft in Fayetteville, Arkansas; Eugene Reagan in Jonesboro, Arkansas; Richard Folger in Russellville, Kentucky; Clarence Walker,

>>ADDITIONAL REMARKS (continued, page 2 of 3)

Carl Sadler, and Edward Overbey in Lexington, Kentucky; Gerald Scott Smith in Lexington, Kentucky; Buck Nicholson and E. Keith Simmons in Fort Smith, Arkansas; Hershel Adams in Alma, Arkansas; and J. C. James in Little Rock, Arkansas. Besides these brethren (some of whom were also my instructors in Baptist Bible institutes and seminaries) the following were also my instructors in various Baptist Institutes and Seminaries: Rocoe Brong, Johnny Thompson, and others in Lexington, Kentucky; John Penn, Charles Rogers, John Owen, Fred Vining, David Robinson, O. R. Baldwin, and Paul Goodwin, and L. D. Capell in Little Rock, Arkansas. {Much and special credit is due for one brother already mentioned and that is, Charles Rogers, this writer's Church Epistles' instructor, who required, influenced, and/or otherwise motivated this writer to write commentaries.} I thank the Lord-God of Heaven for being able to be under each of these pastors, preachers, and instructors.

May God bless the memory of those on this list who have been promoted to be with the Lord Jesus Christ and may He bless the continued ministry of those still alive, serving Him, and awaiting the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CREDITS DUE TO OTHERS

There have been many others who have been a big help to this writer along the way and especially in the writing of this dissertation. First of all, this writer would like to express thanks to Pat, his beloved and faithful wife, of over 56 years. She has helped this writer in many ways. During the process of writing this paper she has proofread many pages and helped in other ways.

Four other brethren who have been a big help are: Brother Norman W. Pierce of Rapid City, SD; Brother Jim Brasseal of Lakewood, CO; and the late Brother Chuck Hanes of Belle Fourche, SD. Each of these brethren have helped in various ways. Brother Pierce is a long time Missionary Baptist

>>ADDITIONAL REMARKS (continued, page 3 of 3)

pastor/missionary. At one time, he was a seminary instructor in the ABA school in Central Florida from which he received a doctorate. Brother Brasseal is also a long time Missionary Baptist pastor/missionary. He was at one time Vice- President of Gulf Coast Baptist Institute from which he received a doctorate. Brother Brasseal has read this thesis and had made many helpful suggestions and etc. The late Brother Charles F. Hanes was a Missionary Baptist pastor/missionary for many years. He was saved at Calvary Missionsary Baptist Church of Gillette, Wyoming, in the 1970's. He attended and received a Bachlor of Theology degree in 1987 from the Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock, Arkansas.

EXPLANATIONS ABOUT BIBLE QUOTATIONS:

All Bible quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted by abbreviations of the versions such as: NASB, the New American Standard Bible; NIV, the New International Version; AMP. BIBLE, the Amplified Bible. Quotations from other translations will be formally acknowledged in the sentence end parentheses and Bibliography.

DISCLAIMER

Use of other versions of the Bible other than the King James Version does not mean approval of the entire version by this writer. But rather it means that the translation of a particular verse was examined by the writer and found to be true to the Greek text(s) and versions available to him (to the best of his understanding and knowledge).

Joseph L. Looney II
Gillette, Wyoming
May, 2012; September, 2013; November 2013, April, 2014

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SEVEN---

**THE SERVANT: TEACHING ABOUT RICHES, FAITH, AND
FAITHFULNESS**

(Mark Chapter 10:1-52)

---CHAPTER 16---

Faithfulness in Marriage — Little Children Blessed

(Mark Chapter 10:1-16)

---CHAPTER 17---

Faithfulness in Leaving All and Following Jesus

(Mark Chapter 10:17-52)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SEVEN---

THE SERVANT: TEACHING ABOUT RICHES, FAITH, AND FAITHFULNESS

(Mark Chapter 10:1-52)

---CHAPTER 16---

Faithfulness in Marriage — Little Children Blessed

(Mark Chapter 10:1-16)

OUTLINE

- XVI. Faithfulness in Marriage -- Little Children Blessed** 10:1-16
- A. The Final Departure from Galilee to Go into Judaea 10:1
(Matthew 19:1,2)
 - 1. Beginning the journey from Galilee unto Perea 10:1a
 - 2. Multitudes following being healed and taught by Jesus 10:1b
 - B. Jesus Answering a Question and Teaching about Divorce 10:2-12
(Matthew 19:3-12; Luke 16:18)
 - 1. Old enemies posing an insincere question to tempt Jesus, 10:2
 - 2. Turning the tables on the Pharisees in asking a question 10:3-5
 - 3. Jesus answering from the Scriptures and an injunction 10:6-9
 - 4. A plainspoken private answer about divorce and remarriage 10:10-12
 - 5. Scriptural reasons when God allows remarriage Matthew 19:9
(1 Corinthians 7:10-16)
 - C. Jesus Blessing the Little Children 10:13-16
(Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17)
 - 1. Bringing little children unto Jesus to be blessed, 10:13,16c
 - 2. Jesus desiring little children to come unto Him, 10:13,14
 - 3. Receiving the kingdom as a little child, 10:14b,15
 - 4. Jesus demonstrating His love for little children, 10:16

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SEVEN---

THE SERVANT: TEACHING ABOUT RICHES, FAITH, AND FAITHFULNESS

(Mark Chapter 10:1-52)

---CHAPTER 16---

Faithfulness in Marriage — Little Children Blessed

(Mark Chapter 10:1-16)

Before commenting on chapter ten of Mark, certain things need to be noted in order to have a better understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus. First, it should be understood that much took place between Mark 9:50 and Mark 10:1. This is seen from the "harmonized sequential listings from the other Gospel records" as listed in the previous chapter of this dissertation. From a study of the other gospel records of John (chapters 7:11 through 11:54) and Luke (chapters 10:1 through 18:14) one can see and understand that there is a chronological gap in the gospel record of Mark.

This is by no means to say that there is anything wrong with the gospel record of Mark. No doubt, John Mark recorded the events just as God instructed him. As the apostle Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Therefore, to better understand the life and ministry of Jesus Christ,

the Ideal Servant of God, one needs to take note that John and Luke recorded many things that Mark did not. Apparently, two periods in the life and ministry of Jesus took place between the last verse of Mark chapter 9 and first verse of Mark chapter 10. These two periods are recorded by Luke and John. They are called "the Later Judean Ministry" and "the Later Perea Ministry" as noted in the "harmonized sequential listings." Mark chapter 10:1-52 and Luke chapter 19:1-28 record the events of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus concerning His final journey to Jerusalem.

This chapter of Mark emphasizes faithfulness and commitment in marriage, loving little children, faith in God, teaching about riches, forsaking all and serving in faithfulness to God and the rewards involved. Jesus also teaches that true greatness is about serving Him and others. The healing of the blind man manifests the compassion Jesus, the Servant, has for those who call upon Him in faith. Yet, His main purpose was and is to heal the spiritually blind who call upon Him in faith.

Mark chapter 10 may be divided into eight parts including one in Luke: one, the final departure from Galilee, 10:1; two, teaching concerning divorce and marriage, 10:2-12; three, blessing little children, 10:13-16; four, the rich young ruler, the perils of riches, and the rewards of forsaking all, 10:17-31; five, the third prediction about the cross, 10:32-34; six, the request of James and John and the renewed teachings on true greatness, 10:35-45; seven, healing blind Bartimaeus, 10:46-52; and eight, passing through Jericho and going to Jerusalem, Luke 19:1-28.

One purpose of this part of the Gospel of Mark is to provide for Jesus to move from Galilee (where most of His ministry took place) to Jerusalem. This is not the first time Jesus had traveled to Jerusalem. There is about a six to seven months time period between Mark 9:50 and 10:1. This time was spent by Jesus in Judea and Perea. During the Judean and Perea ministry, Jesus had been in and out of Jerusalem and

back to Galilee, but this would be His final trip to the Holy City. His death, burial, and resurrection would take place at the end of this journey. This first sub-division of Mark 10 may be divided as follows: one, the final departure from Galilee to go into Judaea, 10:1; Matthew 19:1,2; two, Jesus answering a question and teaching about divorce, 10:2-12; Matthew 19:3-12; Luke 16:18; and three, Jesus blessing the little children, 10:13-16; Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17.

A. The Final Departure from Galilee to Go into Judaea 10:1

(Matthew 19:1,2)

According to Mark 9:33 the last place mentioned as to the location of Jesus was Capernaum of Galilee. While Mark 10:1 does not mention from where Jesus arose, Matthew 19:1 states that "he departed from Galilee. . . ." Verse 1 of Mark 10 may be divided as follows: one, beginning the journey from Galilee unto Perea going towards Judaea, 10:1a; Matthew 19:1; and two, multitudes following being healed and taught by Jesus, 10:1b; Matthew 19:2.

Beginning the journey from Galilee unto Perea going towards Judaea (10:1a; Matthew 19:1) The first part of Mark 10 verse 1 states, "And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan. . . ." On the other hand, Matthew 19:1 records, "And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan." Hence, while the account in Mark 10:1 does not clearly state the location of Jesus before He started traveling, Matthew states plainly that Jesus went from Galilee "and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan." The country "beyond Jordan" east of Judaea and the Jordan River is called Perea (Robertson, Harmony 141; Pfeiffer 192). As one examines Mark 10:46-52, along with Mark 11:1 and Luke 19:1,28 it is clear that the events of Mark chapter 10 took place as Jesus was on His

way to Jerusalem. The narratives in Matthew, Mark, and Luke from this point until His death, burial, and resurrection will follow one another fairly closely. Jesus has now "set His face" toward the accomplishment of His divine mission: to die for sinful man. Luke 9:51 records, "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem"

Multitudes following being healed and taught by Jesus (10:1b; Matthew 19:2) The last part of verse 1 of Mark 10 relates "and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again." Matthew 19:2 records "And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there." Thus, once again great multitudes crowd around Jesus and as was His custom He teaches them. As mentioned previously, teaching was an important part of His ministry and so it should be of His ministers today. That Jesus healed people authenticated that He was who he said He was, the Son of God sent from God in heaven.

B. Jesus Answering a Question and Teaching about Divorce 10:2-12
(Matthew 19:3-12; Luke 16:18)

In this passage of Mark along with Matthew 5:31,32; 19:3-12; and Luke 16:18 Jesus reveals the Scriptural teaching concerning holy marriage between a man and a woman and also gives the only Scriptural reason(s) for divorce. Jesus brings in the Old Testament passages of Genesis 1:27; 2:21-25 and Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Another passage that must be considered is 1 Corinthians 7:10-16. All of these together explain the truth about ideal marriage, and the question of divorce and yet the forgiveness of God. This section of chapter 10 about Jesus answering a question and teaching about divorce may be sub-divided as follows: one, old enemies posing an insincere question to tempt Jesus, 10:2; Matthew 19:3; two, turning the tables on the Pharisees in asking a question of His own; 10:3-5; Matthew 19:7,8; three, Jesus

answering from the Scriptures and an injunction, 10:6-9; Matthew 19:4-6; four, a plainspoken private answer about divorce and remarriage; 10:10-12; Matthew 19:9-12; Luke 16:18; and five, reasons when God allows divorce and remarriage, Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16.

Old enemies posing an insincere question to tempt Jesus (10:2; Matthew 19:3) Verse 2 relates that the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him a question "tempting him." The word "tempting" is from the Greek present active participle form of $\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ (peirazo) and is the same word as used in 1:13 of the temptation of Jesus by the Devil. (This is the same participle as used in Mark 8:11. See page 278 of Division II.) Part of the meaning is to "put to the test" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c). One shade of meaning that Thayer gives is "in a bad sense, to test one maliciously, craftily. . ." (Thayer 498). "Tempting," being from a Greek present active participle, implies that they kept on tempting Him.

These old enemies of Christ posed an insincere question trying to tempt Him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" They wanted to catch Jesus off guard on "a subject on which they themselves had no agreement" (Wessel 710). This was while Jesus was in Perea, the territory ruled by Herod Antipas, the one of whom John the Baptist had denounced concerning his marriage to Herodias. (Pfeiffer 194; refer to pages 209, 210 of this dissertation). Perchance the Pharisees hoped the statements of Jesus on the subject of marriage and divorce would cause Him to suffer the same fate as John (Mark 6:14-28) (Robertson, Word Pictures 348; Wessel 710; and others). Part of the problem was that many of the Jews would put away a wife without giving a bill of divorcement and for any whimsical, irrational reason. In fact this question as recorded in Matthew 19:3 adds the words "for every cause." Commenting on this as given in Matthew, Robertson writes:

This clause is an allusion to the dispute between two theological schools over the meaning of Deut. 24:1. The school of Shammai took the strict and unpopular view of divorce for unchastity alone while the school of Hillel took the liberal and popular view of any easy divorce for any passing whim if the husband saw a prettier woman . . . or burnt his biscuits for breakfast (Word Pictures 153).

To those of the East "marriage was not a contract between equals; a woman did not marry, but was *given in marriage*" (Johnson *qtd. in* Wessel 711). (Even today the Arab men can divorce his wife, but she cannot divorce him).

Turning the tables on the Pharisees in asking a question of His own (10:3-5; Matthew 19:7,8) According to verse 3, Jesus turned the tables on these Jewish leaders and answered them by asking a question of His own. He asked them, "What did Moses command you?" He was saying to them, you claim Moses as your authority, so what did he say? These religious leaders quoted, in summary, part of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 by saying in verse 4, "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away." It would seem that the Pharisees did not accurately quote Deuteronomy 24:1 which states, "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house." The word "uncleanness" is from the Hebrew noun עֶרְוָה (*ervah*) which means ". . .nudity, shame, pudenda (implying shameful exposure), nakedness of a thing, indecency, improper behaviour, exposed" (Strong's 6172; Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c). This word "uncleanness" is translated "indecency" in The Amplified Bible. Thus the idea that a man could divorce his wife for any reason would not line up with what Moses actually commanded. The meaning of the word "uncleanness" would negate the idea that Deuteronomy 24:1 would allow "for every cause," but rather only in the case of unchastity alone or sexual impurity.

In Mark 10:5 "Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept." The expression "the hardness of your heart" is from the Greek noun σκληροκαρδία (sklerokardia). This word means "stubbornness (of persons hard to teach)" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c) and/or "hard-heartedness, i.e. (spec.) destitution of (spiritual) perception" (Strong's 4641). "Jesus did not question the law" (Wessel 711); but He explains that the reason Moses had written this was because of the hardness or stubbornness of their hearts, "to accommodate human weakness" (Wessel 711). Moses wrote this in order "to bring some order to a society who disregarded" the standards of God (Wessel 711). It is not according to the absolute will of God but according to His permissive will. This implies (as Jesus brings out in the next verses) that the absolute will of God is that marriage between a man and a woman is to be a lifelong union.

Jesus answering from the Scriptures and an injunction (10:6-9; Matthew 19:4-6,8) Jesus continues His answer in verses 6-9. Jesus said in Mark 10:6, "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." This is a reference back to Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."¹ From Genesis 1 and 2 Jesus reminds the Pharisees what God had instructed and inspired Moses to write from the beginning after the creation of the woman. Thus Jesus is stating to them that the original intent of God was and still is that marriage be between one man and one woman, period. This truth is brought out very clearly when Jesus declares in Matthew 19:8 "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."

Jesus quoted and explained Genesis 2:24 in verses 7,8 "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one

flesh: so then they are no more twain (*or two*), but one flesh (*or one*)."¹ Thus Jesus explains two things giving a two-fold injunction; one, marriage takes precedence over ties to father and mother; and two, God intended and designed that marriage be a continuing, confirmed for life union. The married couple is to be so entrenched and settled that they realize and live so that "they are no more twain, but one flesh." Jesus added the decisive clincher when He gives the command of verse 9, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." This injunction reveals that the authority of God is "behind the concept of the indissolubility of marriage" (Wessel 711). "Divorce is contrary to the divine institution and its very "nature" (Murray *qtd. in* Wessel 711). It is a dividing by man what God has joined together. Jesus said let not man put asunder what God has joined together as one. Henceforth, most preachers in the marriage ceremony will say as a response to the vows taken by the man and wife, something like this, "then are ye each given to the other for richer or poorer, for better or worse, in sickness or in health, till God by death shall part you."²

A plainspoken private answer about divorce and remarriage (10:10-12; Matthew 19:9-12; Luke 16:18) In verse 10 Mark records that while in private the Twelve asked Jesus to explain this teaching to them. Jesus gives them a straight-forward, plainspoken answer in verses 11, 12: divorce and remarriage by husband or wife is adultery. Verse 11 addresses the case of the husband putting away or divorcing his wife; whereas, verse 12 addresses the case of the wife putting way or divorcing her husband. In either case, the one who puts the other away and marries another, commits adultery. Robertson states, "Mere formal divorce does not annul actual marriage consummated by the physical union. Breaking that bond does annul it" (Word Pictures 349). (In Matthew 19:9 and Matthew 5:32 Jesus gives and makes an exception to this and this will be discussed in the next section.) Verse 12 shows

that "Jesus recognized the right of a woman to divorce her husband" according to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, "a right not recognized in Judaism" (Wessel 712). Wessel makes a significant statement when he writes, "Jesus, by putting the husband under the same moral obligation as the wife, raised the status and dignity of women" (712).

Reasons when God allows divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16) While Mark does not include any Scriptural reason when God allows divorce and remarriage, the parallel passage in Matthew does. In Mark 10:11-12 Jesus answers the question of His disciples by saying, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. *12* And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." But Matthew 19:9 records the words of Jesus as follows, Matthew 19:9 "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." The "except" is from the Greek words $\epsilon\iota\ \mu\eta$ (ei me) (The New Testament, The Greek Text 38). This combination Greek conjunction is translated "but, save, except, if not, and means "if not, unless, except" (Thayer 171, 408). In Matthew 5:32 Jesus said "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." The word "saving" is from the Greek word $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\kappa\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ (parektos). This word is used and translated three times: once "saving," once "except," once "be without." It means "except, with the exception of (a thing), besides" (Thayer 487). In these two passages in Matthew, the additional phrases of "except *it be* for fornication" and/or "saving for the cause of fornication," seem to make an exception that if a partner in the marriage relationship commits fornication or in other words sexual impurity then the non-guilty partner is allowed to divorce

and remarry without being guilty of committing adultery. This seems to be in line with what is taught in Deuteronomy 24:1.

The only other scriptural reason when God allows divorce and remarriage is found in the first letter that the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. This is found in 1 Corinthians 7:10-16. Paul is giving instructions to believers who are married to unbelievers. He writes:

And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: *11* But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife. *12* But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. *13* And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. *14* For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. *15* But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*: but God hath called us to peace. *16* For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife? (1 Corinthians 7:10-16).

In general, he is commanding according to the Lord that the believer married to an unbeliever is, if at all possible, to remain married. However, verse 15 states, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*: but God hath called us to peace." Since verse 15 states that, "A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*;" it would seem that divorce and remarriage is allowed in the case of desertion. Such desertion is conscious abandonment of duty. This is really in a real sense reverts back to the first allowed reason as given in Matthew 5:32; 19:9. So what are the scriptural reasons when God allows divorce and remarriage? The Bible only recognizes two: one, sexual impurity (adultery and/or fornication) according to Matthew 5:32; 19:9; and two, desertion by the unbelieving mate according to 1 Corinthians 7:10-15. Let this writer emphasize that the Bible teaches even in these cases everything should be done to forgive and be

reconciled if at all possible with the help of the grace and mercy of God. Why? The ideal is still one man and one woman "till God by death shall part you."

C. Jesus Blessing the Little Children 10:13-16
(Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17)

This passage tells of the relationship between Christ and little children. It is significant that it comes after the discussion on divorce since divorce affects not only the man and wife but children also. Robertson records, "This incident follows with singular fitness after the Lord's assertion of the sanctity of married life" (Swete *qtd. in Word Pictures* 350). This subdivision may be broken into the following segments: one, bringing little children unto Jesus to be blessed, 10:13,16c; Matthew 19:13; Luke 18:15; two, Jesus desiring little children to come unto Him, 10:13,14; Matthew 19:13,14; Luke 18:15,16; three, receiving the kingdom as a little child, 10:14b,15; Matthew 19:14b; Luke 18:16b,17; and four, Jesus demonstrating His love for little children, 10:16; Matthew 19:15. Beginning with this passage Robertson notes that, "From this point Matthew, Mark, and Luke will be parallel more frequently than they were even during the great ministry in Galilee" (*Harmony* 143).

Bringing little children unto Jesus to be blessed (10:13,16c; Matthew 19:13; Luke 18:15) Jesus loves children and here it is recorded that He blessed them. The first part of verse 13 says "they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them. . . ." The last part of verse 16 says he "blessed them." Matthew 19:13 implies that they brought them to Jesus so He would "pray" for them. The "they" probably refers to the parents and older brothers and sisters. Wessel declares that "Among Jews, as among other peoples, it was customary to bring children to great men to have them blessed (cf. Gen 48:13-20)" (713). The ages of these children are not given. Mark uses the term "young children" while Matthew uses "little children" and both are from the Greek noun παιδίον (paidion). This word means "a young child. . . infants. . . of a more advanced child; of a mature child" (Thayer 473). Luke uses the

term "infants" from the noun βρέφος (brephos) which means "an unborn child. . . a new-born child, an infant, a babe" (Thayer 105). Robertson suggest that "these children were of various ages" (Word Pictures 350).

Jesus desiring little children to come unto Him (10:13,14; Matthew 19:13,14; Luke 18:15,16) The last part of verse 13 relates that "*his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*." It is not stated why the disciples rebuked them for doing this. Maybe "they wanted to protect" the privacy of Jesus "from needless interruptions" (Wessel 713). But they found out that they were wrong to do so. This shows that Jesus has time for any and everyone that is brought to Him or that comes to Him. Verse 14 reveals "when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased" with the actions of His disciples. Only Mark records that Jesus was "much displeased." "Much displeased comes from the verb ἀγανακτέω (aganakteo). It means "to feel pain, grieve . . . to be indignant, moved with indignation, be very displeased" (Thayer 3). It is translated "have indignation, be much displeased, with indignation, be sore displeased." The reason Jesus "was much displeased" was because the disciples were implying that children were insignificant and lacked importance. This pained and grieved Jesus very much.

After seeing this Jesus "said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). The word "suffer" is from the aorist imperative of ἀφίημι (aphiemi). This verb has several shades of meaning, but in this context it means "to permit, allow, not to hinder" (Thayer 88,89). Being in the imperative mood it would amount to a command. Jesus was saying to His disciples, "Allow, do not hinder, the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not. . . ." In that He added "forbid them not," which is from another imperative verb, He was double emphasizing that the children be allowed to

come to Him. This shows His desire at that time and for all time. It is a pity that parents do not bring their children to Jesus today both by teaching them at home about the Lord and His Word and by bringing them up in faithful church attendance and by faithfully living for Jesus each and every day. At a time previous to this the Bible says in Mark 9:36.37 "And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, 37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." This relates to the next passage.

Receiving the kingdom as a little child (10:14b,15; Matthew 19:14b; Luke 18:16b,17) Referring to the little children and receiving them Jesus declares in the last part Mark 10:14 "for of such is the kingdom of God." This gives the reason Jesus wanted the children to be brought unto Him. Jesus expands on this in verse 15 when He says, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Robertson states, "Jesus here presents the little child with trusting and simple and loving obedience as the model for adults in coming into the kingdom" (Word Pictures 350). What is Jesus saying? What is involved? Children are taught to be obedient, trusting, and humble. These traits in a little child are what is needed for one to come into the kingdom of God. Self-will is just the opposite. Humility is the willingness to let the will of God be done in our lives no matter the circumstances, trusting God for all things. "The kingdom is both a gift to be received and a realm to enter" (Wessel 713). To receive or to enter the kingdom one must come like a child with repentance toward God and trusting completely in the Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 3:3 (KJV) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Jesus demonstrating His love for little children (10:16; Matthew 19:15)

This passage also relates to Mark 9:36,37 and Matthew 18:1-5. Mark 10:16 reports, "And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them." This demonstrates the love Jesus had for little children. It also manifests the love of God toward those who receive the kingdom of God as a little child, with humility and trust. But let it be remembered that being humble does not merit the kingdom for anyone, for none deserve it. In these verses Jesus is not saying nor implying "that children are in the kingdom of God because they are children" (Robertson, Word Pictures 350). However, this is the spirit in which one must be in order to receive this gift of God. It is well to remember what Jesus said in Mark 9:37 "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me."

Summary of Chapter

The "harmonized sequential listings" from John 7:11—11:54 and Luke 10:1—18:14 prove that much took place between Mark 9:50 and Mark 10:1. In this time gap, two periods in the life and ministry of Jesus took place: "the Later Judean Ministry" and "the Later Perea Ministry." Mark 10:1-52 and Luke 19:1-28 record the events of His earthly life and ministry concerning His final journey to Jerusalem.

As Jesus journeyed from Galilee unto Perea going towards Judaea, He "set His face" toward the accomplishment of His divine mission: to die for sinful man. As He traveled the people resorted unto Him, and he taught and healed them. That Jesus healed people, manifested His compassion and authenticated that He is the Son of God sent from God in heaven.

The Pharisees asked Jesus a question "tempting him." They challenged Him

with the question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife?" They wanted to catch Jesus off guard. Part of the problem was that many of the Jews would put away a wife without giving a bill of divorcement and for any arbitrary reason. This question as recorded in Matthew 19:3 adds the words "for every cause."

Jesus answered them by asking a question of His own. "What did Moses command you?" They answered, "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away," a reference to Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Jesus explains that Moses had written this because of the hardness of their hearts and because of the sinfulness and weakness of human beings. Jesus answers, "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." From Genesis, Jesus reminds the Pharisees that God inspired Moses to write that the original intent of God was and still is that marriage is to be between one man and one woman and be a lifelong union.

Jesus explains, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh." God designed marriage to be a continuing, confirmed-for-life union. Jesus declares, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

In private the Twelve asked Jesus to clarify His teaching about divorce and remarriage. Jesus answers that divorce and remarriage by husband or wife is adultery. The one who puts the other away and marries another commits adultery.

While Mark does not include any scriptural reason when God allows divorce and remarriage, Matthew does. Matthew 19:9 records Jesus as stating, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." This is a reiteration of Matthew 5:32. In these two passages the additional phrases of "except *it be* for fornication" and/or "saving for the cause of fornication,"

seem to make an exception that if a partner in the marriage relationship commits sexual impurity, then the non-guilty partner is allowed to divorce and remarry without being guilty of committing adultery.

The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:15 states (speaking of marriage between a believer and unbeliever), "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*: but God hath called us to peace." Since verse 15 states that, "A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*;" it would seem that divorce and remarriage is allowed in the case of desertion. Such desertion is conscious abandonment of duty and in a real sense reverts back to the first allowed reason as given in Matthew 5:32; 19:9. So the Bible only recognizes two scriptural reasons when God allows divorce and remarriage: one, sexual impurity, and two, desertion by the unbelieving mate. Nonetheless, the ideal is still one man and one woman "till God by death shall part you."

Mark 10:13-16 tells of the relationship between Christ and little children. As people brought little children to Jesus, he held them in his arms and blessed them. This reveals the love that Jesus has for children and for all people. However, "His disciples rebuked those that brought *them*. . . . When Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased" because this implied that children were insignificant and lacked importance. Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." This shows His desire at that time and for all time. Parents should bring their children to Jesus.

Jesus uses this incident as an object lesson to show what it takes to receive the kingdom of God. He declares about the little children "for of such is the kingdom of God." He proclaims, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Little children are curious, simple,

humble, believing and trusting. These traits in a little child show what is required for one to come into the kingdom of God. To enter the kingdom one must come like a child trusting completely in the Savior.

When Jesus took the children "up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them," He demonstrates the love He has for them. It also manifests the love of God toward those who receive the kingdom of God as a little child, with humility and trust. This shows that Jesus has time for any and everyone that is brought to Him or that comes to Him.

Chapter Notes

1. (See pages 365, 366; Mark 10:6-8) In quoting Genesis, Jesus the Christ, puts His stamp of approval upon it and also upon the fact that Adam and Eve were created by God and that they were the first man and the first woman.
2. (See page 366; Mark 10:9) This minister's response was passed on to this writer by his Baptist pastor (the late Brother Gerald S. Smith) in Kentucky in the 1960's. Of course, something like this declaration is found in most handbooks written for ministers.

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SEVEN---

THE SERVANT TEACHES ABOUT RICHES, FAITH, AND FAITHFULNESS

(Mark Chapter 10:1-52)

---CHAPTER 17---

Faithfulness in Leaving All and Following Jesus

(Mark Chapter 10:17-52)

OUTLINE

- XVII. Faithfulness in Leaving all and Following Jesus** 10:17-52
- A. The Rich Young Ruler, Peril of Riches, Rewards of Forsaking All 10:17-31
(Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30)
 - 1. Jesus and the rich young ruler 10:17-22
 - 2. The difficulty of a rich man entering the kingdom of God 10:23-27
 - 3. Forsaking all to follow Jesus and the rewards 10:28-31
 - B. The Third Prediction Concerning His Cross 10:32-34
(Matthew 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34)
 - 1. The amazement and fearfulness while continuing to Jerusalem 10:32a;
(Matthew 20:17a, Luke 18:31)
 - 2. Jesus taking the Twelve aside privately 10:32b
(Matthew 20:17b; Luke 18:31a)
 - 3. Prophesying about His death, burial, resurrection 10:33,34
(Matthew 19:18,19; Luke 18:32-34)
 - C. James and John requesting the best seats 10:35-45
(Matthew 20:20-28)
 - 1. James and John desiring a certain thing 10:35-37
(Matthew 20:20,21)
 - 2. Jesus answering with a challenge about suffering 10:38-40
(Matthew 20:22,23)
 - 3. The indignation against them 10:41
(Matthew 20:24)
 - 4. Another lesson in true greatness 10:42-44
(Matthew 20:25-27)
 - 5. Jesus, the supreme example of true greatness 10:45
(Matthew 20:28)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SEVEN---

THE SERVANT TEACHES ABOUT RICHES, FAITH, AND FAITHFULNESS

(Mark Chapter 10:1-52)

---CHAPTER 17---

Faithfulness in Leaving All and Following Jesus

(Mark Chapter 10:17-52)

OUTLINE (Continued)

- D. Healing Blind Bartimaeus upon Leaving Jericho 10:46-52
(Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43)
1. The blind man near Jericho 10:46
(Matthew 20:29,30a; Luke 18:35)
 2. The cry, confession, and faith of the blind man 10:47
(Matthew 20:30b; Luke 18:36-38)
 3. Trying to stop his cry for mercy 10:48
(Matthew 20:31; Luke 18:39)
 4. Jesus hearing him, called for him 10:49,50
(Matthew 20:32a; Luke 18:40a)
 5. The actual healing of this blind beggar 10:51,52
(Matthew 20:32b-34; Luke 18:40b-43)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SEVEN---

THE SERVANT: TEACHING ABOUT RICHES, FAITH, AND FAITHFULNESS

(Mark Chapter 10:1-52)

---CHAPTER 17---

Faithfulness in Leaving All and Following Jesus

(Mark Chapter 10:17-52)

Since this division is about Jesus, the Servant of God, teaching about riches, faith, and faithfulness, a word of explanation is needed about faithfulness and commitment. First of all, it should be emphasized that faithfulness and commitment go together. To be faithful, one must be committed. Faithfulness requires at least two things: one, faith in God and His Word; and two, forsaking self and serving God and others. (Jesus teaches this in Mark 8:34-38 along with 12:29-31.) This will bring true riches. In the first 12 verses of Mark chapter 10 Jesus taught faithfulness in marriage. This requires total commitment to the marriage, just as faithfulness requires total commitment to God and serving Him in the cause of Christ.

Jesus also teaches that riches will not get one to heaven. In other words, just because a person is rich in worldly goods does not mean they are saved (1 Peter 1:18-19). In fact, Jesus taught that in Matthew 19:23 "Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." Jesus further explained this

in Mark 10:25 when He said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Everyone, rich, poor, or in-between must exercise faith in Jesus Christ in order to be saved, to have eternal life. After one is saved by grace through faith, to follow Jesus one must exercise faith to forsake all and follow after Him. This portion of Mark 10 may be subdivided into the following parts: one, the rich young ruler, perils of riches, rewards of forsaking all, 10:17-31; Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30; two, the third prediction concerning His Cross, 10:32-34; Matthew 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34; three, James and John requesting the best seats and Jesus correcting them, 10:35-45; Matthew 20:20-28; and four, healing blind Bartimaeus upon leaving Jericho, 10:46-52; Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43.

A. The Rich Young Ruler, Peril of Riches, Rewards of Forsaking All 10:17-31
(Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30)

As Jesus continues His travels with His face set toward Jerusalem and the sacrifice that He will make for the sins of the world for all people for all time, He encounters a young man who is rich. The young man asks Jesus a very important question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" This question will bring about the teachings of Jesus on salvation, the perils of riches and the rewards of forsaking all to follow Him. Further, it is related to the third prediction of the cross, the discussion about true greatness, and the compassion of Jesus upon the blind man. This sub-section of Mark may be subdivided thusly: one, Jesus and the rich young ruler, 10:17-22; Two, the difficulty of a rich man entering the kingdom of God, 10:23-27; and three, forsaking all to follow Jesus and the rewards, 10:28-31.

All of these are interrelated by the common theme of riches and the kingdom of God. In context, these are very significant, for they follow the teaching of Jesus

about the importance of child-likeness which is a lesson in humility and of the recognition of human weakness and of the necessity of dependence on Jesus for entrance into the kingdom. Also they precede the third prediction of Jesus about His cross and resurrection. The impossibility of riches as a means to gain the kingdom according to verses 24-27 refers back to the teaching about children. On the other hand, the call to commitment of verses 29-31 looks forward to the prediction of the cross in verses 33-34. Jesus was committed to the purpose and will of the Father and He is the supreme epitome of faithfulness.

Jesus and the rich young ruler (10:17-22) The record in Mark 10:17 relates, "And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" The expression "when he was gone forth into the way" refers back to verse 1 and shows that Jesus was continuing His journey to Jerusalem. The one who was running shows that he was trying to catch up with Jesus and His caravan. He is identified in Matthew 19:20 as a young man. In Luke 18:18 he is identified as "a certain ruler." [A ruler "probably of the synagogue" (Clarke 147); Cf. Mark 5:22.] In Luke 18:23 he is called "very rich." Clarke suggest that he may have been a Pharisee (147,148) which refers back to Mark 10:2.

The earnestness of this young man is manifested by His running and kneeling before Jesus. This rich young ruler addressed Jesus by the reverential title of "Good Master" by which he manifested his high esteem and admiration for Jesus. He asks a very important and serious question that all would do well to ask, "What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He was thinking that this Teacher would tell him some Jewish works of righteousness by which he would merit and thus clinch eternal life. But, in contrast, "Jesus taught that eternal life . . . is a gift to be received" as

according to verse 15 and many more scriptures (Wessel 715). Please note that in verses 17-31 the terms about "eternal life," "salvation," and "entrance into the kingdom" are all used interchangeably (Mark 10:17,23-26,30). This question is another way of asking what the Philippians jailer asks of Paul and Silas in Acts 16:30, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

In verse 18 without hesitation Jesus asks him, "Why callest thou me good?" Jesus was testing his faith. Did this rich young ruler really know what he was saying since only God is good? Did he really believe Jesus was God? Jesus told this man, "*there is none good but one, that is, God.*" Concerning this, one has said, "Jesus calls him to sober reflection. What does the epithet 'good' mean? It belongs to God who is good; and it should not be used unthinkingly or as a flippant gesture of praise" (Martin *qtd.* in Wessel 715). "In other words, Jesus is saying, before you address me with such a title, you had better think soberly about what the implications are, and especially what they are for you" (Wessel 715).

Jesus continued His reply in verse 19 by asking this rich young man if he had kept the second portion of the Ten Commandments. "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother." All of these were first given by God to Moses in Exodus 20:12-17. These commandments all have to do with the relationship of man to man. Verse 18 involves the keeping of the first portion which has to do with the relationship of man with God. The command "Defraud not" is a restatement of the command, "Thou shalt not covet" from Exodus 20:17, since fraud is a manifestation of coveting. (It is significant that Jesus would name "Do not commit adultery" first, since just before this, He had answered the question of the Pharisees about divorce and marriage. This reemphasizes that God expects people to

be faithful in the marriage relationship.) Why did Jesus ask him this? Because the Jews believed, based on Deuteronomy 30:11-16, "that the man who kept the law would live" (Wessel 715) (See also Romans 10:4-8; Ephesians 4:7-10). But one should remember what the Bible says in James 2:10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all." Jesus wanted this man to understand this.

In verse 20 the rich young man answers that he had observed these commands from his youth. Wessel reports, "This probably refers to the age of thirteen, when every Jewish boy became *bar miswah* ("son of the commandment"; cf. Luke 2:42)" (715). The Apostle Paul thought like this young man before he was converted as per Philippians 3:6. Truly and sadly the young man did not understand that keeping the law required more than outward obedience. It requires inner obedience, which no man is able to do of himself (James 2:10; Romans 3:10-20; 10:1-4; Galatians 2:15,16; 3:10-13, 21-24). Paul wrote in Romans 3:19-20 "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin."

Matthew 19:20 relates that the young man, after saying that he had observed these things, asks Jesus, "What lack I yet?" According to Mark 10:21 the very heart of Jesus was touched by the sincerity of this young man for Jesus responded to him in love. This verse declares, "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." This young man exhibited some very fine qualities. He was humble, honest, and had a

genuine desire for help. He had good intentions. Jesus observed all of this and "beholding him loved him. . . ." The verb "loved" from the aorist of ἀγαπάω (agapao) carries the idea in this context of "a love called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the object loved" (Wuest 202). Wuest also says, "It is used in the New Testament of God's love, and the love that God is. The tense is ingressive aorist, speaking of entrance into a new condition" (202). Dana and Mantey state that, "The aorist signifies nothing as to completeness, but simply presents the action as attained" (193). They later write, "The action may be regarded from the viewpoint of its initiation, which we call the *ingressive* aorist" (195). Clarke explains it this way,

Not merely beholding, but looking with a fixed and earnest gaze, which the beholders did not forget. This exquisite touch of remembrance is peculiar to Mark. The gaze revealed a genuine love, of which the young man must have been aware, and which made itself manifest also to the disciples. . . . It is enough to say that the heart of Jesus lovingly yearned over the young man in his sincere though Pharisaic seeking after good" (149).

Jesus loved in the man what He saw to be good.

Nevertheless, He also saw something the young man lacked. The word "lackest" is from the present tense of ὑστερέω (hustereo) meaning "lack, have need of, fall short of . . . be in want or need . . . fall short of. . . ." (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c). Thayer says it means ". . . metaphorically fail to become a partaker, fall back from . . . be wanting from. . ." (646). Thus this young man came short of possessing eternal life. The present tense shows that he continued to fall short of eternal life. Wanting to help him, Jesus prescribed the only remedy, but it was a shocking remedy, "go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." Jesus told him to sell all his possessions and give. Give what and why? He was secure and trusting in his riches, so he must surrender all and put Jesus Christ first.

This tested the obedience and faith of this rich young ruler, but it was the only way for him to have "treasure in heaven" or "eternal life."

Further in verse 21 Jesus commanded him to "come, take up the cross, and follow me." The word "follow" is from ἀκολουθέω (akoloutheo) and means "to follow with another, to take the same road that another takes."¹ But for this man to do this he must give up all. This is what Jesus is telling him when He says, "come, take up the cross" (put self to death), since his "position, status, comfort" and wealth "prevented him from entering into eternal life" (Wessel 716). Mitton writes, "The only way to 'life' is through the narrow gate of full surrender through that gate we may take, not what we want, but only what God allows. For this man his wealth was the hindrance" (Mitton, *Gospel of Mark*, qtd. in Wessel 716). People need to understand that they "must not be attached to material things" (Wessel 716). Jesus was not telling the young man he could merit eternal life by selling all and following Him, for eternal life is a gift of God; it cannot be earned, only received by faith (Ephesians 2:8,9). This is why Paul and Silas told the Philippians jailer, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

His wealth was preventing him from having (saving) faith. Verse 22 verifies this truth. "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." The young man was seeking some advice from the Good Master, but not such radical measures that would affect his whole life. However, turning to Jesus in repentance and faith affects the entire life. Only after one repents and receives the grace of God by faith as it is in Christ Jesus will he want to follow Jesus. This answer caused the young ruler to be sad and to turn away grieved (see Luke 2:34,35). The word "sad" is from the Greek aorist active participle στυγνάζω (stugnazo). This word means "to become sad . . . used of the saddening of the face of nature or the

human face . . . used of a dark stormy night or the somber, gloomy man who broods over unwelcome thoughts" (Rienecker 116,117). This man was pained, "his hopes were dashed" (Swete *qtd.* by Wuest 204). "He . . . went away grieved: for he had great possessions." Why? Because "the one thing he wanted was beyond his reach; the price too great to pay even for eternal life" (Swete *qtd.* by Wuest 204). He was unwilling to leave all and follow Jesus. "So the security of wealth kept him out of the kingdom of God" (Wessel 716). Is this not the peril of riches?

The actions of this man reveal that he had not faith and thus had broken the first of all commandments to love God with all the heart, mind, and soul (Mark 12:28-30). Many times the accounts of the salvation of the souls of many of the Bible characters are not given or recorded. However, what is recorded is the actions of these people. While their actions did not and does not save them, their actions do show their faith in God which was like the faith of Abraham and David (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:1-8). The actions of born-again, blood-bought believers are important to God and to others (Ephesians 2:8-10).

The difficulty of a rich man entering the kingdom of God (10:23-27) This portion of Scripture is the discussion about the difficulty of entering the kingdom of God by a rich man. It could also be called "the perils of riches." Verse 23 records that "Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples . . ." Only Mark records that Jesus gazed upon the disciples with this deliberate look. Clarke writes, "Now again the deliberate look of Jesus round the whole circle of his disciples, gazing into each face, impressed itself on the memory of Mark's informant" (150). After the rich young ruler went away sad and failing to respond to the ultimate answer of Christ Jesus, the Savior makes a very striking pronouncement to His disciples. Jesus uses this encounter to teach His disciples a lessons about the relationship of material

riches and the entering into the kingdom of God. Thus He said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" The word "hardly" is from the adverb *δυσκόλως* (*duskolos*). It means "with difficulty" (Thayer 161). This could be paraphrased, "How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" Matthew 19:23 states "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." The "Lord does not declare the impossibility of a wealthy person being saved, but the difficulty of getting a wealthy person saved" (Wuest 204).

According to verse 24 "the disciples were astonished at His words." The word "astonished" is from *θαμβέω* (*thambeo*) meaning "to scare, to terrify, to be amazed" (Rienecker 117). Thayer adds "to be frightened" (282). This amazed frightening of the disciples is not surprising when one remembers that these disciples were Jews. To the Jewish mind wealth was an evidence of the approval of God and thus the wealthy could not be ungodly (Robertson, Word Pictures 352; Wuest 205). But Jesus explained His statement to them in the last part of verse 24 "Children how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God." The idea of the words of Christ in verse 24 is that it is hard or difficult for any one to enter the kingdom and especially it is hard for one who trusts in riches. Is this not the peril of riches?

The statement of Jesus in verse 25 about the fact that, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," caused the disciples to be "astonished out of measure, ..." according to verse 26. Robertson commenting on the parallel in Matthew 19:24 writes

Jesus, of course, means by this comparison, whether an eastern proverb or not, to express the impossible. . . . Jesus pointedly calls this thing 'impossible' (Matthew 19:26). The Jews in the Babylonian Talmud did have a proverb that a man even in his dreams did not see an elephant pass through the eye of a needle

(Vincent). . . . The word for an ordinary needle is *rhaphis*, but, Luke (18:25) employs *belone*, the medical term for the surgical needle not elsewhere in the N. T. (Word Pictures 157).

The word "astonished" as used in verse 26 is not from the same Greek word as that used in verse 24. The word "astonished" in verse 26 is ἐκπλήσσομαι (*ekplessomai*). It means "to expel by a blow . . . commonly, to strike one out of self-possession, to strike with panic, shock" (Thayer 198,199). It carries the idea of one being overwhelmed. Because of this the disciples asked among themselves, "Who then can be saved?" This is a very good question!

Jesus gave the divine answer in verse 27. "With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." With men it is impossible for anyone to be saved, but with God all things are possible. Jesus was not saying that the rich could not be saved, for the Old Testament is full of examples of men who were rich materially and also saved such as: Abraham, David, Solomon, Job and so forth. The Lord Jesus was saying that salvation is totally of God. No person can be saved by his own efforts. But by the grace of God any man, even a rich man can be saved and/or enter the kingdom of God when he receives Jesus Christ by repentance and faith (Mark 1:14,15; John 1:12,13; 3:16; 5:24; Acts 20:21; Ephesians 2:8,9). As Peter would later plainly state in 1 Peter 1:18-19 the saved are "...not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold. . . but with the precious blood of Christ. . . ." {Remember the words of James 2:5 "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"}

Forsaking all to follow Jesus and the rewards (10:28-31) The discussion of the previous verses prompted Peter to say to Jesus, as recorded in verse 28, seemingly speaking for the group, "Lo, we have left all and have followed thee." Peter probably

was saying this as over against the fact that the rich young ruler failed to give up all and follow Jesus. Although not given in Mark, Peter continued and said as recorded in Matthew 19:27, "what shall we have therefore?" Robertson calls this, "A pathetic question of hopeless lack of comprehension" (Word Pictures, 158). Peter was concerned about the future and he did not quite understand what the Lord meant. Many times this is true of many people today; this writer included. What he was saying could be paraphrased as follows: "Listen Lord, we have given up our fishing ships and so forth (our way of making a living), so what will be our reward?" But Peter and the other disciples were thinking of material rather than spiritual things.

In any case, in verses 29,30 Jesus makes a manifold promise introduced by, "Verily I say unto you. . . ." The word "verily" is from the Greek particle ἀμήν (amen). It is translated both "verily" and "amen." It is usually translated "verily" at the beginning of a sentence. Thayer states the meaning "at the beginning of a discourse - surely, truly, of a truth; at the end - so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled" (32). Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive. . . ." Jesus is saying of a truth, those who forsake the things mentioned for His sake and for the sake of the gospel, or in other words, those who put Jesus Christ first at all cost to himself or herself, will not fail: one, to receive back in his life "an hundredfold" what he has lost of those things mentioned (for significant reasons, He does not mention the wife in verse 30; see also Mark 12:23-27); two, he or she will not fail to suffer persecutions (see also Philippians 1:28-30); and three, to have eternal life now and forever (Wessel 717).

An example of receiving a hundred-fold could be the men of God who were circuit riding preachers in the United States in days gone by. God would provide for

them and the people of God would be their family. The widow in the Old Testament made an extra room in her house just for Elijah. God provided for the widow in many ways. Remember also the little lad who give up the fishes and loaves in John 6. God provides when people put him first (Matthew 6:33,34). Nevertheless, there will be persecutions. Clarke writes, "No easy way leads to these honors and rewards (2 Tim 3:12; 2 Cor 11:23-27; 6:4-10). Even when outward persecution is not, still the principle is the same: it is no easy way.—The **hundred-fold** will not prevent the persecutions; but neither will the persecutions interfere with the coming of the hundred-fold" (152).

The appropriateness of the statement about persecutions was made real to the saints at Rome and to believers today when they read about the sufferings and so forth of the dark ages of the saints of God. Many times in this modern age, missionaries and even pastors and their families suffer persecutions. Yet down through the years New Testament churches and people of God have flourished even more so during persecutions (Acts 3:1—8:4). The apostle Paul declared in Romans 8:18 "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

In verse 31 Jesus states "But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first." These words of Jesus are also found in other contexts in Matthew 20:16; Luke 13:30. In Matthew 20:16 Jesus said, "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." What does Jesus mean by this? It is speaking of the time of rewards and "the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10). So the last shall be first or rather judged first. And the first shall be last or rather the first shall be judged last. The Lord explains this in Matthew 20:1-16 in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. This judgment (the judgment seat of Christ) will be to

and three, prophesying about His death, burial, resurrection, 10:33,34; Matthew 19:18,19; Luke 18:32-34.

The amazement and fearfulness while continuing to Jerusalem (10:32a; Matthew 20:17a; Luke 18:31) Verse 32 begins by relating, "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. . . ." This confirms that Jesus is making His way to Jerusalem (see Mark 10:1, Luke 9:51). Robertson says in his footnote that Jesus and His company "will soon cross over Jordan near Jericho" from the east side of Jordan (Harmony 147). Mark records that Jesus was leading the disciples and that the Twelve following were both amazed or astonished and afraid. The word "amazed" is from the same Greek word θαμβέω (thambeo) as used in verse 24 translated "astonished." Again this word means "to scare; be amazed," and even "to be frightened." The word "afraid" is from the Greek verb φοβέομαι (phobeomai) meaning "to fear, to be afraid" (Rienecker 117). Both of these Greek verbs are imperfect meaning they were continually amazed and afraid. The use of both of these words together seems to emphasize the fear of the Twelve.

Why was this? Was it because of the way Jesus had set His face towards Jerusalem? "His manner stuck awe into the minds of the Twelve who were beginning at length to anticipate an impending disaster" (Swete *qtd.* by Wuest 208). This is most likely a fulfillment of Isaiah 50:7 and other Old Testament prophesies. Luke 18:31 records, "Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished." Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would set His face towards the things that would be accomplished in Jerusalem. "For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I

know that I shall not be ashamed" (Isaiah 50:7). Luke records in Luke 9:51-53 "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem."

Jesus taking the Twelve aside privately (10:32b, Matthew 20:17b; Luke 18:31a) The last part of verse 32 reports "And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him." Again Mark records that Jesus took the twelve aside privately. Wessel writes, "Jesus, as he so often does in Mark's Gospel, separated the Twelve from the crowd for renewed instruction about his coming passion" (718). Wuest states, "The atmosphere was so tense that there was danger of a real panic" (209). Jesus, knowing they were afraid, did this not only to inform them what to expect but to encourage them as well. He wanted to prepare them for the things that were to take place.

Jesus was also setting an example for all of His disciples of all time. The idea behind the words of Luke 9:53 "his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem" is that Jesus knew very well what would happen to Him and He was determined to do the will of the Father and give glory to the Father (see John 17:1-5). Clarke states that Jesus "went with his might. All that he commands us he himself has done, and the highest ambition for man is 'so to walk even as he walked.' To do that may sometimes be to press bravely into the sorrows of the kingdom, as he did" (152,153). The apostle John declares in 1 John 2:6 "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

Prophecy about His death, burial, resurrection (10:33,34; Matthew 19:18,19; Luke 18:32-34) Jesus for the third time predicts His death, burial, and

resurrection. He has prophesied this in Mark 8:31 and again in Mark 9:31. Mark 8:31 states "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." He says that He would "suffer many things." He revealed that the Jewish leaders would be the ones to reject Him and have Him killed. However, He said that "after three days" He would "rise again." Mark 9:31 records "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." In this case He is adding that the Gentiles would also be the ones responsible for killing Him. Together, these first two predictions show that both Jews and Gentiles would be guilty of taking the life of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But again He ends the prediction with the positive and sure hope of the fact that He would of a certainty "rise the third day." His resurrection assures the saved of their resurrection (2 Corinthians 4:14).

In this third prediction Jesus is more specific in his prophecy. Jesus proclaims in Mark 10:33-34 "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again." This prediction contains six things. One, Jesus is to be "delivered up" or He will be betrayed. (He was to be betrayed by one of His own to the chief priests and the scribes.) The fulfillment of His being "delivered up" or betrayed is recorded in Mark 14:10-11,43-46. It was carried out by Judas, one of the Twelve. Two, Jesus is to be condemned or sentenced to death by the Jewish Sanhedrin Council. This condemnation or sentencing is fulfilled and recorded in Mark 14:53-64. Three, Jesus

is to be delivered or handed over "to the Gentiles" by this Jewish Council. His being delivered or handed over to the Gentile rulers is fulfilled and recorded in Mark 15:1. Four, Jesus is to be mocked, spit on, and scourged or flogged. Jesus being mocked, spit upon and scourged or flogged is recorded in Mark 14:65; 15:15,19,20. Five, Jesus is to be killed or executed. Jesus being killed or executed by crucifixion is fulfilled and recorded in Mark 15:24-37. Six, yet again Jesus predicts that He shall be resurrected the "third day." That Jesus rose from the dead is fulfilled and recorded in Mark 16:3-9. These events are also recorded in the other Gospel records.

On the one hand this was a real tragedy, yet a sure hope. In it all He would be glorified and also He would justify all that believe in Him. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 4:23-5:1

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"

After the second prediction given in Mark 9:31, Mark records in 9:32 "they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him." After the third prediction Luke 18:34 records, that the Twelve "understood none of these things. . . ." The problem is that people in general still do not understand these things. The question that people need to ask in this day and age is "Do I understand what Jesus did and why He did it?" The answer from the Bible is He did this for each and every person who has ever lived including this writer. He did this so that each and everyone could be set free from the condemnation of sin and unbelief and be saved forevermore and one day go to heaven. Also this redemption is in order that after one is saved, each one might live for Jesus and walk even as He walked so that others will be saved.

C. James and John Requesting the Best Seats 10:35-45

(Matthew 20:20-28; Ephesians 3:20)

The subject of this passage is the request made by James and John for the best seats and Jesus correcting them. In correcting them Jesus renewed His teaching on true greatness. This passage should be studied along with Mark 9:30-37. Both passages teach lessons about true greatness and both follow predictions about the cross of Jesus. These passages reveal the spiritual immaturity of the apostles. At the same time, it is a proof of the inspiration of the Bible since it reflects on this immaturity. This section of chapter 10 may be sub-divided into five parts: one, James and John desiring a certain thing, 10:35-37; Matthew 20:20,21; two, Jesus answering with a challenge about suffering, 10:38-40; Matthew 20:22,23; three, the indignation against them, 10:41; Matthew 20:24; four, another lesson in true greatness, 10:42-44; Matthew 20:25-27; and five, Jesus, the supreme example of true greatness, 10:45; Matthew 20:28.

James and John desiring a certain thing (10:35-37; Matthew 20:20,21)

Verse 35 tells of a request by James and John saying to Jesus, "Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire." They wanted Jesus to grant the desire of their heart without even telling Him what it was that they desired. Matthew 20:20,21 records that the mother of James and John was with them and seems to be the leader in this request. According to Matthew she actually made the request while they all were worshipping Jesus. Robertson brings out that "they try to commit Jesus to their desires before they tell what they are, just like spoiled children" (Word Pictures 354). Yet the back-drop of this request (as suggested by Clarke 153) probably goes back to what Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 19:28 "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes

of Israel." (Also in the background Mark 10:29-30 should be considered.) However, it is ironic that it should come right after the third prediction of Jesus about His death, burial, and resurrection.

According to verse 36 Jesus asked them, "What would ye that I should do for you?" Their request is worded in verse 37, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory." They wanted the best seats and highest honor. These two disciples clearly believed Jesus was the Messiah and that He was going to Jerusalem to set up His earthly kingdom. Robertson commenting on verse 32 about the disciples being afraid implies that the Greek "idiom (*hoi de*) may not mean that all of the disciples were afraid, but only some of them" (Word Pictures 354). Evidently, James and John were not afraid but rather thinking that when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem He would inaugurate His kingdom.

Jesus answering with a challenge about suffering (10:38-40; Matthew 20:22,23) In verse 38 Jesus tells them, "Ye know not what ye ask. . . ." [Clarke notes that, "it is like the reply of a father to foolish children" (154). James and John were too ambitious.] In other words, Jesus told them that they did not know or understand just what it was that they were asking Him. Jesus explained that they would have to suffer with Him first. He posed the question, "can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" James and John answered in verse 39 that they were able to suffer with Him. Jesus in turn promised that they would indeed suffer and die for Him. The expression "drink of the cup" according to Wessel "symbolized trouble and suffering" (720). This is seen and found in the Old Testament (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17; Jeremiah 49:12; Ezekiel 23:31-34) and also in the New Testament (Mark 14:36; Matthew 26:39; Revelation 14:10). In both Mark 14:36 and Matthew 26:39 Jesus uses the term "cup" speaking of

His death that He would die on the cross. The word "baptism" is from the Greek noun βάπτισμα (baptisma) and means "immersion, submersion" (Thayer 94). The word "baptized" is from the verb βαπτίζω (baptizo) and means "to dip, to immerge" (Thayer 94). Thayer writes that βαπτίζω (baptizo) may be used "metaphorically, to be overwhelmed with calamities, of those who must bear them, Mt. xx.22,23. . . Mk. x. 38,39. . ." (94). Robertson says that "both the cup and the baptism" are "referring to death" (Word Pictures 355). Robertson also states that Jesus "had already used baptism as a figure for his death" (355). Jesus said, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50). Thus, in this context, the cup and baptism both speak of being plunged and overwhelmed with sufferings, pain, and the agony of the cross.

Indeed these two brothers did suffer persecution in the service of the Lord Jesus. Acts 12:1,2 reveals that James was killed by the sword at the hand of King Herod Agrippa I.² At the age of about 100, John was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea between Greece and modern day Turkey (Revelation 1:9). According to tradition John was banished to this island by one of the Roman Emperors. He was banished for preaching the Word of God as punishment as far as the world was concerned. Truly, these two brothers did suffer persecution in the service of the Lord Jesus. They were plunged and overwhelmed with sufferings, pain, and agony because of their testimony of Jesus and His cross. One should remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:24 "The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord."

Jesus continues His answer to these sons of Zebedee in verse 40. He declares, "But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared." He emphasizes that it would be given to

them "for whom it is prepared." In Matthew 20:23 Jesus adds that "*it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father." Wessel states, "Jesus refused to usurp the authority of his Father" (720). Wuest remarks, "As to the fact that our Lord does not have the authority to grant preferred places, Swete says: 'Christ is indeed the appointed distributor of all eternal rewards (2 Tim 4:8; Rev 22:12), but He will distribute them in accordance with the Father's dispositions.' " (Swete *qtd.* by Wuest 211). (See also 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10.) James and John were very naive in their request and they did not truly understand about what they were asking.

Previously, in Mark 9:35-37, "Jesus had rebuked the disciples for their spirit of ambition and jealousy" (Wessel 720). Nevertheless, it was still among them. Sometimes it takes a while to uproot and control ingrained sin and habits in the life of the born-again, blood-bought believer. Each believer in Jesus should ask himself or herself, "Do I have any ingrained sin and bad habits of which I need to be rid?" The solution is to take them to Jesus and ask Him to help and He will.

The indignation against them (10:41; Matthew 20:24) Verse 41 says, "when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John." Matthew 20:24 states of this "And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren." The words "be much displeased" in Mark and "were moved with indignation" in Matthew come from the same root Greek verb ἀγανακτέω (aganakteo). Mark uses the present active infinitive, while Matthew uses the aorist active indicative. This verb is translated in the New Testament "have indignation, be much displeased, with indignation, be sore displeased." It can mean "to be indignant or angry" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c). In any case, the other disciples were displeased and very indignant and possibly even angry with James and John. Robertson commenting on Matthew 20:24 says that ἀγανακτέω (aganakteo) is

"A strong word of angry resentment" (Word Pictures 162). This whole episode reveals that they did not understand the predictions of Jesus concerning His cross. Had they understood they would have been humble rather than ambitious and proud. Another question each believer should ask himself or herself is, "Do I need to learn to be humble?" Again consider the definition of humility as given by the late Dr. O. R. Baldwin. He taught that if one is to be humble, he or she has determined that the will of God will be done in his or her life and actions, regardless of what may happen and where one may have to go or to do (*from class notes and sermons preached; see page 338 of this dissertation.*). From this incident believers may learn not to be too ambitious to do their own will, but to be submissive to the will of God. Paul wrote in Romans 12:3,10 "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. . . . *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." He also exhorted the church in Corinth in 2 Corinthians 10:12 "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."

Another lesson in true greatness (10:42-44; Matthew 20:25-27) This incident called for another lesson in true greatness as given in verses 42-45. It should be brought out as Robertson declares, "Jesus does not condemn the desire to become great. It is laudable ambition" (Word Pictures 162; see also Clarke 155). To begin with, Jesus reminded them how it is in the Gentile world. Verse 42 states, "Jesus called them *to him*, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise

authority upon them." Gentile rulers exercise lordship over others and the great ones exercise authority over them. Jesus instructed them that this was not to be the case among the disciples, but on the other hand, "whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister" (Mark 10:43). The word "minister" is from *διάκονος* (*diakonos*). This is the word from which comes the English word "deacon." Thayer says that *διάκονος* (*diakonos*) means "one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master, a servant, attendant, minister . . . the servant of a king . . . a waiter, one who serves food and drink" (138). This word is translated "servant" eight times in the New Testament. So to attain and accomplish true greatness one must be a servant of God and of others. "Here is the paradox of the Kingdom of God. Instead of being lords, its great ones become servants, and its chiefs the bond-servants of all" (Gould *qtd.* in Wessel 720). This great paradox is to be practiced in the New Testament churches of the Lord Jesus Christ in this present church age. There are not to be any overlords in churches of the Lord Jesus nor in the association of churches. Thus, Missionary Baptist believe in the independence of a local church with the right to associate with other churches of like faith and order.

Jesus continued the paradox in verse 44 by saying, "whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all." Two words need to be explained. The word "chiefest" is from the word *πρῶτος* (*protos*) which means "first in time or place, in any succession of things or persons, first in rank, influence, honour, chief. . ." (Thayer 555). The word "servant" is not from the same Greek word translated "minister" in verse 43, rather it is *δοῦλος* (*doulos*). This word means "a slave, bondman, man of servile condition. . . metaphorically, one who gives himself up to another's will. . . those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing His cause among men. . . devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests. . ." (Thayer 157,

158). [Δοῦλος (Doulos) is a word that Paul, Peter, and James use in identifying themselves in many of the epistles.] To be "truly great" and "first of all" one must do as Jesus says, "be servant of all." Wessel concludes, "Among them greatness is not achieved by asserting rank but by humble service" (720). So to attain and accomplish true greatness in the kingdom of God, one must be a servant of God and of others. Jesus taught his same principle in Matthew 23:11-12 "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." (See also Luke 1:52; 14:11; James 1:9.)

Jesus the supreme example of true greatness (10:45; Matthew 20:28) In verse 45 Jesus gives the sum of it all by giving Himself as the supreme example. He is the Ideal or Model Servant of God. Jesus said, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."³ Jesus Himself is not exempt from the paradox. "The Son of man is not exempt from this rule; His kingship is also that of service and not of lordship" (Gould *qtd.* in Rienecker 118). The word "ransom" is from the Greek λύτρον (lutron) meaning "the price paid for release" (Rienecker 118). Thayer expands this definition by stating, "the price for redeeming, ransom. . . paid for slaves, captives. . . for the ransom of life. . . to liberate many from misery and the penalty of their sins" (Thayer 384). The preposition "for" in the expression "to give his life a ransom for many" is from the Greek preposition ἀντί (anti) and means ". . . indicating exchange, succession, for, instead of, in place of (something). . ." (Thayer 49). This shows that Jesus Christ gave His life "a ransom" in stead of the many. Thus the teaching that He is the substitute for those who believe in Him is taught. The whole idea relates to Isaiah chapter 53 and the truth that on Jesus was laid the sins of all human beings of all time (see 1

Timothy 2:6). Thus the fact that Jesus gave His life a ransom for many emphasizes the substitutionary element in the death of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the greatest of all because He humbled Himself and became the Ideal or Model Servant of God the Father. He became the greatest among human beings because He came to serve and to become the redeemer all people. He laid down His life for all people of all ages throughout all history, past, present, and future. The question for each believer is, "Will you not lay down your life for Him?" The Apostle Paul urged believers to do just that in Romans 12:1-2 when he wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Therefore, when Jesus is exalted by the God the Father in that day, all those who have laid down their lives for Him will be exalted also (Matthew 23:12; Luke 1:52; 14:11). Of Jesus Christ, Paul wrote in Philippians 2:9-11 "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; *11* And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (See also Acts 2:33; 5:31.)

D. Healing Blind Bartimaeus upon Leaving Jericho 10:46-52

(Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43)

Although Mark and Luke mention only one blind man, Matthew speaks of two. Bartimaeus was probably the most prominent and striking of the two. While Luke says they were drawing nigh to Jericho, Mark and Matthew speak of their going out

of Jericho. A. T. Robertson explains about the one versus two blind men and about there being an old Jericho and a new Jericho:

Matthew mentions two blind men, while Mark and Luke describe one, probably the more conspicuous one. —The discrepancy as to place, "as he went out from Jericho," "as he drew nigh unto Jericho," is best explained by the recent suggestion that the healing occurred after he left the old Jericho, and as he was approaching the new Jericho which Herod the Great built at some distance away (Harmony 149).

This miracle healing of the blind man may be divided as follows: one, the blind man near Jericho, 10:46; Matthew 20:29,30a; Luke 18:35,36; two, the cry, confession, and faith of the blind man, 10:47; Matthew 20:30b; Luke 18:37,38; three, trying to stop his cry for mercy, 10:48; Matthew 20:31; Luke 18:39; four, Jesus hearing him, called for him, 10:49,50; Matthew 20:32a; Luke 18:40a; and five, the actual healing of this blind beggar, 10:51,52; Matthew 20:32b-34; Luke 18:40b-43.

The blind man near Jericho (10:46; Matthew 20:29,30a; Luke 18:35,36)

Verse 46 further sets the stage by saying that there was "a great number of people" with Jesus and His disciples. Matthew 20:29 states, "a great multitude followed him." As they were going out of Jericho, they came by the place where a blind beggar was sitting by the highway begging. The name of this blind beggar was "Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus." Bartimaeus means son of Timaeus. Timaeus means "the unclean" (Strong's 924; 5090). Luke states that the blind man "hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant" (18:36).

The cry, confession, and faith of the blind man (10:47; Matthew 20:30b; Luke 18:37-38)

Verse 47 relates that "when he (*Bartimaeus*) heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me" He had heard of Jesus, the Son of God, and all that Christ had done. By calling Jesus "the son of David" he must have recognized Jesus as the Messiah. Matthew states that he along with the other blind man called Jesus "Lord." The word "Lord" in

Matthew 20:30 is from the Greek noun κύριος (kurios) and means "supreme in authority, God, Lord, master" (Strong's 2962). Calling Jesus "the son of David" and "Lord" was an expression of faith on the part of this blind man. He asks Jesus to "have mercy on me." This was also a confession of his sinfulness and of his faith.

Trying to stop his cry for mercy (10:48; Matthew 20:31; Luke 18:39) Verse 48 says that many tried to get this blind man to stop crying out for Jesus in that they "charged him that he should hold his peace. . . ." Luke 19:39 states, "And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. . . ." The word translated "charged" in Mark and the word translated "rebuked" in Luke is from the same Greek verb ἐπιτιμάω (epitimaō). Both Mark and Luke use the imperfect tense meaning "they continually rebuked him" (Rienecker 118). They wanted this blind man to leave Jesus alone and be silent so they strongly urged him to "hold his peace. . . ." Nevertheless, Mark 10:48 says, "but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me." "The remonstrance of the crowd only seemed to increase the vigor with which the blind beggar called out to Jesus" (Weust 214). Bartimaeus would not stop crying for Jesus to have mercy on him. He believed that God was merciful and gracious. He was being tested and he persisted in his faith in the Lord Jesus, the son of David, the Messiah. Genuine faith cannot be stopped nor caused to quit crying out to God.

Jesus hearing him, called for him (10:49,50; Matthew 20:32a; Luke 18:40)

As the blind man continued to cry out, Jesus heard and the God of heaven clothed in human flesh stood still. Verse 49 relates, "And Jesus stood still. . . ." Jesus stops and gives His full attention to the cry of this blind man. Next, Jesus "commanded him to be called." So "they call the blind man. . . ." The message was conveyed to the blind

man and he cast "away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus" (Mark 10:50). Clarke calls this action by Bartimaeus "the haste of hope" (158).

Note the change in attitude of the crowd when Jesus called for the man. They were "saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee." In effect the expression, "Be of good comfort," means "cheer up." Also the idea of the Greek word θαρσέω (tharseo) is "to have courage" (Rienecker 118). While Mark does not record that Jesus said "Be of good comfort," similar words fell from the lips of Jesus Himself only six other times in Matthew 9:2, 22 (with Luke 8:48); Matthew 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11. The people now encourage blind Bartimaeus. This calling by Jesus demonstrates the compassion that He continued to manifest toward those who called upon Him in faith. Jesus has compassion upon the lost when they call upon Him in repentance and faith. The Bible declares in 2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The actual healing of this blind beggar (10:51,52; Matthew 20:32b-34; Luke 18:40b-43) Verse 51 records that Jesus answered and said unto him, "What will thou that I should do unto thee?" Of course, Jesus knew before hand. Verse 51 continues and gives the request of the blind man. "Lord, that I might receive my sight." The word "Lord" in Mark 10:51 is not from the same word as that used in Matthew 20:30. Here the word "Lord" is from Ραββονι (rhabboni). This word means "master, chief, prince. . . a title of honor and reverence by which Jesus is addressed" (Thayer 560). It can also mean "teacher" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c). By addressing Jesus as Lord, an intensified form of "Rabbi" (Clarke 158), this man shows his great respect for Jesus. It would seem from verse 52 that Bartimaeus not only received physical sight but also spiritual sight. This is so

since Jesus told him, "Go thy way, thy faith hath made the whole." Luke records it this way in Luke 18:42 "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee."⁴ Bartimaeus was immediately able to see and he also followed Jesus. Jesus had compassion, but He did not come to heal every blind person. His main purpose was to come to heal the spiritually blind. Not long after this Jesus said in Luke 19:10 "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Summary of Chapter

In Mark 10:17-52 the Ideal Servant of God teaches about riches, faith, and faithfulness and total commitment. Faithfulness and commitment go together. Faithfulness and total commitment require at least two things: one, faith in God and His Word; and two, forsaking self and serving God in the cause of Christ.

The rich young ruler learned that the outward keeping of the commandments and possessing riches will not gain for one eternal life. Anyone who wants to inherit eternal life must exercise faith in Jesus Christ in order to be saved. Jesus commanded him to "come, take up the cross, and follow me." For this man to do this he must give up all. Yet, Jesus was not telling this young man he could merit eternal life by selling all and following Him, for eternal life is a gift of God; it cannot be earned, only received by faith. After one is saved by grace through faith, to follow Jesus, one must exercise faith and forsake all and follow after Him. Jesus warned that "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." He is saying that the peril of being rich is that it causes people to depend on riches and not God. Jesus is saying that being saved is impossible with men but possible through the grace of God.

After this Peter said to Jesus, "Lo, we have left all and have followed thee." In Matthew 19:27 Peter also said, "what shall we have therefore?" Paraphrased he was saying, "Listen Lord, we have given up our fishing ships and so forth, so what will be our reward?" Jesus makes a manifold promise, that anyone who forsakes all for His sake and the sake of the gospel will not fail: one, to receive back in his life "an hundredfold" what he has lost of those things mentioned in Mark 10:29,30; two, he will not fail to suffer persecution; and three, to have eternal life now and forever. However, the first shall be last, and last first.

For a third time Jesus gives the sure prediction that in Jerusalem He shall be delivered up by the chief priests and the scribes unto the Gentiles. He declares that they shall mock Him, spit upon Him, and scourge Him and then put Him to death, but He shall rise again after three days. Mark records that the disciples were continually both amazed and afraid. At least some of them seemed to be anticipating the impending disaster. Jesus told them these things to inform them and encourage them and to set an example. On the one hand, this was a real tragedy, howbeit a sure hope and in it all He would be glorified and also justify all that believe in Him (Romans 4:23-5:1). Yet, the disciples did not understand this prophesy (Mark 9:31; Luke 18:34). In this present age, people still do not understand these things. People need to ask, "Do I understand what Jesus did and why He did it?"

In spite of this prophecy about His crucifixion, James and John must have thought that when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, He would establish His kingdom and sit upon the throne of David. Thus they ask for the best seats. Jesus told them "Ye know not what ye ask." He asks them, "can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" When they answered, "We can"

in Mark 10:39, Jesus informs them, "To sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared."

Next, Jesus begins to give them another lesson in true greatness. He told them in Mark 10:43-45 that "whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." To attain and accomplish true greatness in the kingdom of God, one must be a humble servant of God and of others. Jesus is the supreme example and greatest of all because He humbled Himself and became the Ideal Servant of God the Father. He became the greatest among human beings because He came to serve and to become the redeemer all people. The question for each believer is, "Will you not lay down your life for Him."

Mark 10:45 reveals that Jesus Christ gave His life "a ransom" instead of the many. This teaches that He is the substitute for those who believe in Him and also it teaches the truth that on Jesus was laid the sins of all human beings of all time. Thus the fact that Jesus gave His life a ransom for many emphasizes the substitutionary element in the death of Jesus Christ.

The healing of blind Bartimaeus near Jericho is an example in Mark 10:45. Obviously, this blind man had heard of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus when he realized that Jesus was passing nearby he exercised his faith and cried loudly, "Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me." According to Matthew 20:36 he also called Jesus, Lord. Thus he confesses his sinfulness and expresses his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Many in the crowd rebuked him but Jesus, the Son of God, stood still and called for Bartimaeus. The man requested of the Lord "that I may receive my sight." (Luke 18:41). The Lord told him, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH - COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION EIGHT---

THE SERVANT: REJECTED AS KING IN JERUSALEM

(Mark Chapters 11:1-33; 12:1-44)

---CHAPTER 18---

Entering Jerusalem in Peaceful Triumph

(Mark Chapter 11:1-26)

---CHAPTER 19---

Questions Asked and Answered

(Mark Chapters 11:27-33; 12:1-44)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION EIGHT---

THE SERVANT: REJECTED AS KING IN JERUSALEM

(Mark Chapters 11:1-33; 12:1-44)

---CHAPTER 18---

Entering Jerusalem in Peaceful Triumph

(Mark Chapter 11:1-26)

OUTLINE

XVIII. Entering Jerusalem in Peaceful Triumph	11:1-26
A. Jesus Entering Jerusalem in Triumph	11:1-11
(Matthew 21:1-11, 14-17; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19)	
1. Jesus sending for a donkey 11:1-7	
(Matthew 21:1-7; Luke 19:29-35; John 12:12-19)	
2. The official presentation of Jesus as King 11:7-10	
(Matthew 21:7-9; Luke 19:35-38)	
3. Entering and looking around the city and the temple 11:11	
(Matthew 21:10,11,14-17; Luke 19:39-44)	
B. Cursing the Barren Fig Tree	11:12-14
(Matthew 21:18,19)	
C. Cleansing of the Temple	11:15-18
(Matthew 21:12-14; Luke 19:45-48)	
1. The findings of Jesus in the temple 11:15,16	
(Matthew 21:12; Luke 19:45)	
2. Casting out the merchandisers and rebuking 11:15-17;	
(Matthew 21:12,13; Luke 19:45,46)	
3. The hostility of the scribes and chief priests 11:18	
(Matthew 21:15; Luke 19:47,48)	
D. Lessons about Faith and Prayer from the Withered Fig Tree	11:19-26
(Matthew 21:19-22; Luke 21:37,38)	
1. The fig tree drying up by the roots 11:19-21	
(Matthew 21:19b; Luke 21:37,38)	
2. Having faith in God 11:22-24	
(Matthew 21:20-22)	
3. Giving a vital lesson on prayer 11:22-26	
(Matthew 21:22)	

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION EIGHT---

THE SERVANT: REJECTED AS KING IN JERUSALEM

(Mark Chapters 11:1-33; 12:1-44)

---CHAPTER 18---

Entering Jerusalem in Peaceful Triumph

(Mark Chapter 11:1-26)

The study of Mark has now progressed to the events of the last week of the earthly life of Jesus Christ before His crucifixion. With the close of Mark 10 and Luke 19 verse 28 the final journey of Jesus during His earthly ministry to Jerusalem is almost ended. Jesus is about to enter the Holy City where He will be crucified, buried, and raised from the dead to finish His work of redemption. Mark chapters 11 and 12 reveal "The Servant: Rejected as King in Jerusalem." These chapters along with chapters 13 and 14 tell of Jesus Christ entering Jerusalem and the preparatory events and teachings before His arrest and trials. The "opening of the eyes of blind" Bartimaeus "stands in sharp contrast to the blindness of the" Jewish "religious leaders Jesus shall encounter in Jerusalem (Wessel 722).

These chapters of Mark include: the preparatory events in entering the city, cleansing the temple, and the barren fig tree, questions of the religious leaders and public teaching in Jerusalem including the offering of the widow, and the Olivet

discourse about end time events. Chapter 14 speaks of the plotting of the Sanhedrin, His anointing in Bethany, Judas planning to betray Jesus, the final passover observance, the institution of the Lord's Supper, His agony in Gethsemane, His betrayal and arrest, the trial before the Jewish council, and the denials by Peter. Carter relates that this is "the fourth Passover of His ministry" (242).

This portion of the ministry of Jesus, the Servant, takes place in and around Jerusalem. Tradition states that this period begins with the Triumphal Entry on Sunday and ends with the Crucifixion on Friday and the Resurrection on the following Sunday (Wessel 722). It is the personal conviction of this writer that Jesus arrived in Bethany on Friday and was crucified on Wednesday and arose after six o'clock on Saturday evening which would be the first day of the week to the Jews. This would allow for Jesus to be in the grave three days and three nights (Matthew 12:38-40). This period is commonly known as the "Passion Week" of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This passage, Mark 11:1-26, includes at least four events that prepare the scene for the public teaching and conflicts of the next passage of 11:27—12:44. These events are: one, Jesus entering Jerusalem in triumph, 11:1-11; Matthew 21:1-11,14-17; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19; two, cursing of the barren fig tree, 11:12-14; Matthew 21:18,19; three, cleansing of the temple, 11:15-18; Matthew 21:12-14; Luke 19:45-48; and four, lessons about faith and prayer from the withered fig tree, 11:19-26; Matthew 21:19-22; Luke 21:37,38.

A. Jesus Entering Jerusalem in Triumph 11:1-11
(Matthew 21:1-11, 14-17; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19)

This event in the life of Christ is usually called the "Triumphal Entry." During this occurrence the multitudes recognized Jesus as the Messiah and the fulfillment of

the declaration of the Psalmist in Psalm 118:25,26. However, the Jewish leaders did not recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and were and had been plotting against Him (Mark 11:18; Matthew 21:15,16; Luke 19:39,47,48; John 11:57; 12:19). This subdivision may be broken into the following segments: one, Jesus sending for a donkey, 11:1-7; Matthew 21:1-7; Luke 19:29-35; John 12:12-19; two, the official presentation of Jesus as King, 11:7-10; Matthew 21:7-9; Luke 19:35-38; and three, entering and looking around the city and the temple, 11:11; Matthew 21:10,11,14-17; Luke 19:39-44.

Jesus sending for a donkey (11:1-7; Matthew 21:1-7; Luke 19:29-35; John 12:12-19) Verse 1 records that Jesus came near unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany. The location of both Bethphage and Bethany¹ was near the Mount of Olives.² Robertson notes that Bethphage "apparently lay on the eastern slope of Olivet or at the foot of the mountain, a little further from Jerusalem than Bethany" (Word Pictures 165). Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem (Smith 85). It was the village where Martha, Mary, and Lazarus lived.

Verses 1 and 2 record that upon arriving nigh to these villages Jesus "sendeth forth two of His disciples." He said unto them, "Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*." It is supposed that this nearby village was probably Bethphage (Barnes 215). The statement where Jesus said the colt was to be one "whereon never man sat" has to do with the fact that the colt was to be used for sacred purposes (Clarke 159,160). (Refer to Numbers 19:2; Deuteronomy 21:3 and 1 Samuel 6:7.) Jesus continues His instructions as recorded in Mark 11:3 "And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither." (Because He is God, Jesus has all knowledge.

He knew what the circumstances would be and what the answer would be.) The disciples went as they were told "and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?" (Mark 11:4-5). Luke 19:33 reveals that it was the owners that asked this question. When the two disciples replied as they were instructed by Jesus, the owners let them take the colt (Mark 11:6; Luke 19:34,35).

Wuest gives this explanation:

The fact that they were satisfied with the answer of the disciples, is explained by the consideration that the Lord was well-known in the neighborhood (John 11). They knew that this Prophet could be trusted, and its owners did not need the colt just at that time. They probably were proud of the fact that it would be used by Him (217).

Mark 11:7 states that, "they brought the colt to Jesus. . . ." Matthew 21:2-7 relates the disciples brought both "the ass, and the colt. . ." that is, the mother and the colt. Both John 12:14,15 and Matthew 21:2-5 reveal that this was the colt of an ass or a donkey. John and Matthew both refer to Zechariah 9:9 which states, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Matthew 21:4,5 states this was done to fulfill this prophecy of Zechariah. Matthew declares "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." (See also Isaiah 62:11.) Zechariah 9:9 teaches that the donkey was considered to be the beast of the Messiah (Wessel 723). Jesus mounted the colt for His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Why was a donkey used instead of a horse? It was first of all, the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah. The donkey was too slow for the battle of war (Barnes 215). The donkey was used as an emissary and symbol of peace (Barnes

215). "Kings and princes commonly rode on them in times of peace. . ." (Barnes 215). This is shown to be true by the message and prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

Mark 11:7 relates that after "they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him." They threw their outer garments upon the back of the colt to make sort of a saddle for Jesus (Wessel 724). In Zechariah 9:9 the daughter of Zion is told to "Rejoice greatly" and to "shout" She is also told their "King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly. . . ." All these things speak that Jesus came to bring peace. He came to reconcile the repentant believer to God through His suffering, death, and resurrection. He came to bring each repentant believer peace with God. He came to bring peace to all that will have it. When He comes the second time He will defeat all the forces of evil and rule and reign in peace for one thousand years. If He had entered riding on a horse, it would have pictured war. When He comes the next time, He shall ride a great white horse and He shall fight and defeat all the forces of evil (Revelation 19). Under His rule the earth shall have true peace for one thousand years.

The official presentation of Jesus as King (11:7-10; Matthew 21:7-9; Luke 19:35-38) Verses 7-10 speak of the official presentation of Jesus as King. This is also the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 and Psalm 118:25,26. Mark 11:7 says that after they brought the colt to Jesus and cast their garments upon the colt, Jesus sat upon him. Both Matthew and Luke relate that they set Him thereon.³ Afterward, He rode the donkey into Jerusalem. Clarke writes:

To enter Jerusalem riding on an ass was expressly to declare himself the promised King of Israel. Distinctly foreknowing and foretelling his own rejection (Mark 10:33,34), and perceiving that the time was now and the place Jerusalem, he would not fail to make his claim to the Messiahship openly and unmistakably in the very terms of prophecy. He had not yet been recognized as the spiritual King of Israel; now he would declare himself in such a way that his

claim could not be misunderstood, and would be either recognized or rejected as the Messiah (161).

The action related in verse 7 brought on that of Mark 11:8-10 which records the action of the people to show their praise and acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. Verse 8 states that "many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way." The people spread their garments on the road before Him and others cut branches off the trees and lined the road to pay royal homage (2 Kings 9:13) to this King riding into Jerusalem (Wessal 724). John 12:13 records that they, "Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him. . . ." Concerning this Barnes says that "The palm was an emblem of *joy and victory*. It was used by Roman soldiers, as well as the Jews, as a symbol of peace" (216). They were giving unto Jesus the red-carpet treatment. They were showing their deep respect and giving honor to Him.

Verses 9-10 tell even more of how the people honored Jesus. Verse 9 records "They that went before, and they that followed. . . ." The people surrounded Him, some went ahead of Him, and some behind crying out praises to God. Wuest comments, "Swete suggests that the former consisted of the crowds that poured out from the city of Jerusalem, the latter, those that had assembled at Bethany and Bethphage the night before" (218). The Lord Jesus was in the center of these two groups. They were crying out praises, "Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." What they said was a quote from Psalms 118:25-26, "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David. . . ." "Hosanna" is from the Greek ὡσαννὰ (hosanna) and literally means "oh save. . . an exclamation of adoration. . ." (Strong's 5614). It has the idea of "an exclamation of praise literally meaning, Save, I pray"

(Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c). "Hosanna literally means "save now," but had become simply an exclamation of praise" (Wessel 725). Actually these words of praise were a prophecy about the first advent of Jesus Christ made hundreds of years before His coming. The idea of this praise may go all the way back to Genesis 49:10 "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."

Luke puts it this way in chapter 19:37-38 "And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." However, the sad thing is that the people were expecting Jesus Christ to set up a physical kingdom at that time and throw off the rule of the Romans. Robertson writes, "They expect Jesus, of course, now to set up his rule in opposition to that of Caesar, to drive Rome out of Palestine, to conquer the world of the Jews" (Word Pictures 358).

Entering and looking around the city and the temple (11:11; Matthew 21:10,11,14-17; Luke 19:39-44) Verse 11 of Mark 11 says that Jesus entered the city and the temple or really the temple area⁴ and looked round about upon all things. No doubt, while there, Jesus observed all of the trade and commerce that was taking place in the temple courtyard (Mark 11:15,16). However, because the hour was late, the cleansing of the temple would have to wait until the morrow (Wuest 219; Wessel 725). Hence, because it was late in the day, He and the twelve went unto Bethany. Matthew 21:17 states that He lodged in Bethany.

Matthew 21:14 states that Jesus healed the blind and the lame that came to Him in the temple. Matthew 21:15-16 relates that while Jesus was in the temple the chief

priests and scribes seeing what wonderful things He had done and the praise given unto Him "they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Luke 19:39-40 reveals, "And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." This was the sovereign Lord of creation speaking.

Carter states of this entry by Jesus, "knowing that the chief priests and Pharisees had passed out that, if anyone should know where He was, that one was to report it (John 11:57), He was challenging them by. . ." His public entrance (248). Carter continues,

But it is noticeable that the ever watchful Romans, who were always quick to put down any move that might threaten their rule. . . did not take any notice of this Triumphal entry into the capital city. Therefore it was clearly evident that He had no intention of setting up a new visible Kingdom at that time—even though the people acclaimed Him as "the Son of David" (Matt. 21:9). . . (248).

Was it in the plan of God for Jesus to set up His earthly kingdom at that time and rule from the throne of David? The answer to this is a definite no, not at that time. He came the first time to die for all sinners and thus to save all who will repent and turn to Him in faith. The announcement by the angel to Joseph before His virgin birth confirms this. The angel declares in Matthew 1:21 "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Jesus Himself tells the purpose of His first coming when He states in Luke 19:10 "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The apostle Paul also confirms this when he writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:15, "This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save

sinner; of whom I am chief." If Jesus had not gone to the cross and suffered and died for all people of all time, there would be salvation for no one.

Further proof that it was not the plan of God for Jesus Christ to set up an earthly kingdom in His first advent is found in the prophecy that Jesus made of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. As Jesus was weeping over the city, He prophesied and said in Luke 19:42-44 "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." This destruction took place in about A. D. 70 by the Romans (Baker 239).

B. Cursing the Barren Fig Tree 11:12-14

(Mat. 21:18,19)

This passage is difficult for some, but really the clue to the interpretation is the context of the Triumphal Entry the day before, the subsequent cleansing of the temple, and the lessons about faith and prayer from the withered fig tree. Verse 12 relates that after lodging in Bethany, Jesus traveled back to Jerusalem and was hungry. According to verse 13 He saw a fig tree having leaves, but found no fruit. Mark relates "for the time of figs was not *yet*." In response Jesus "said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard *it*." Matthew 21:19 adds, "And presently the fig tree withered away." Mark gives this information after the cleansing of the temple (11:20). This account of the cursing of this fully leafed out tree without figs "has to do with judgment" (Wessel 726). Many times in the Old Testament the lack of figs was associated with judgment upon the people of Israel

(Jeremiah 5:17; 8:13; Hosea 2:12; 9:10; Joel 1:7,12; Amos 4:9; Nahum 3:12; Habakkuk 3:17).

It was spring time and the fig trees did not usually produce fruit until early summer.⁵ So why did Jesus curse this tree? This is the only recorded miracle of destruction by Jesus in the Gospel records. Jesus was using this as an illustration, a teaching device. The fig tree represents Israel implied by Hosea 9:10; Nahum 3:12; Zechariah 10:2. The fully leafed out tree without fruit symbolizes the hypocrisy, artificialness, superficialness, and shame of their relationship with God. Israel was ripe for the judgment of God and she would soon be judged (Matthew 23:37-39; 24:1-22; Mark 13:1-20; Luke 13:6-9; Luke 19:41-40.) The practical lesson is that the people of God are to be fruit bearers by living and witnessing for Christ (John 15:1-8; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Peter 1:3-8).

Yet right after this incident the Bible reveals in Luke 19:41, "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it." (See also Matthew 23:37-39.) Yes, Jesus wept for the people of Judea and Israel. Why? Because they did not understand that they could be saved if they would but repent and believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Each person should ask himself or herself, "Have I called upon His name in repentance and faith to save me, forgive me and one day take me to heaven. If a person is not saved, at death, that one will die and go to hell.

C. Cleansing of the Temple 11:15-18 (Matthew 21:12-14; Luke 19:45-48)

After the fig tree incident Jesus came to Jerusalem and went into the temple as revealed in the first part of verse 15. As He had observed the day before, the temple court (court of the Gentiles, the outer court) was being used for purposes for which it was not intended. He found the same trade and commerce that He had found

earlier in His ministry. John 2:14 states, "And (*He*) found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting." At that time He had cleansed the temple and said, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise" (John 2:16). This segment of Mark may be subdivided as follows: one, the findings of Jesus in the temple, 11:15,16; Matthew 21:12; Luke 19:45; two, casting out the merchandisers and rebuking, 11:15-17; Matthew 21:12,13; Luke 19:45,46; and three, the hostility of the scribes and chief priests, 11:18; Matthew 21:15; Luke 19:47,48. Wessel observed,

"The temple cleansing is sandwiched between the two incidents of the fig tree, an arrangement meant to link the accounts. The judgment symbolized by the cursing of the fig tree is initiated by Jesus' cleansing the temple, and the cleansing of the temple is prophetic of the destruction of Jerusalem and the eschatological judgment (cf. Mark 13) (727).

The findings of Jesus in the temple (11:15,16; Matthew 21:12; Luke 19:45)

As mentioned in Mark 11:11 Jesus had gone into the temple the day before and "had looked round about upon all things." Verses 15,16 reveal that He found those that "sold and bought, . . . moneychangers," those "that sold doves," and people carrying vessels through the temple. They had made a market place and shortcut out of the court of the temple, "probably the court of the Gentiles" (Clarke 164). To the Judge of all of heaven and earth, this was not right and was simply wrong. They were desecrating the purpose of the temple. They were making the temple a profane thing. This was sacrilegious, meaning "marked by debasement or defilement of what is sacred" (Ami Pro Version 3.0; Thesaurus). Some of these activities were legitimate and actually needed, but they should not have been using the temple to do this. Evidently these activities in the courtyard had been authorized by the high priest and the Sanhedrin Council (11:18).

Merchants were in the temple to sell animals for sacrifices to the pilgrims who came from afar. They provided banking services to exchange Greek and Roman coins into the Jewish half-shekels so the people could pay their temple tax (Clarke 164). The problem was these business men were profaning the temple and also making extra large profit. They were charging exorbitant prices. In short, they were profaning the temple, making it a common place. The temple was to be a place of the worship of Jehovah-God (Isaiah 56:7). On a practical note, it should be observed that there are people who are profaning New Testament churches in this day and age. Each church should be sure to keep the worship simple and according to the Word of God so that God will truly be honored and the gospel message the primary thing.

Casting out the merchandisers and rebuking (11:15-17; Matthew 21:12,13; Luke 19:45,46) Because they were making the house of God a common and profane thing, Jesus cleanses the temple. Verses 15,16 state that Jesus "began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple." The word "overthrew" is from the Greek verb καταστρέφω (katastrepho) meaning "to turn over, turn under. . . the soil with a plough. . .to overthrow, throw down" (Thayer 337). The English word "catastrophic" comes from this Greek root word. The actions of Jesus were a real catastrophe to these Jewish business men and the overseers of the temple.

In verse 17 Jesus taught them and in so doing, rebukes them and asserts His rightful authority. Jesus quotes and combines part of Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, when He says, "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves." The temple of God was to be a place of prayer and worship even for Gentiles (See also 1 Kings 8:41-43). However,

the court of the Gentiles had "become a noisy, smelly public market, the Jewish religious leaders were preventing Gentiles from exercising the spiritual privilege promised them" (Wessel 727, 728). By casting out the merchandisers and teaching, Jesus was directly challenging the authority of the high priest since these money-changers and merchants were there by his authority. In like manner and on a practical note it should be said that the main purpose of the assembling of the people of God as a New Testament Church is to worship God and to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The hostility of the scribes and chief priests (11:18; Matthew 21:15; Luke 19:47,48) This action of cleansing the temple by Jesus caused the scribes and chief priests to be hostile towards Him. Verse 18 says they "sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine." Jesus had challenged their authority and condemned their actions. Thus, they sought a way to destroy the Lord. The verb "sought" is in the imperfect tense and this implies that they were continually seeking to destroy Jesus. The verb "destroy" is from ἀπόλλυμι (apollumi). One shade of meaning is "to destroy. . . to put out of the way entirely. . . to declare that one must be put to death" (Thayer 64). They sought to put Jesus out of the way entirely. One way to do this was to get the Roman governor to declare that Jesus must be put to death. However, they did not do this openly "for they feared Him, because all the people was astonished at His doctrine." Luke 19:48 relates "for all the people were very attentive to hear him." The word "astonished" is from a very strong Greek word ἐκπλήσσομαι (ekplēssomai) meaning "to strike one out of self-possession to be struck with amazement" (Thayer 198, 199). The idea is "to strike out of one's senses" (Wuest 222). What a contrast between this teaching of

The fig tree drying up by the roots (11:19-21; Matthew 21:19b; Luke 21:37,38) Verse 19 is a verse of transition which simply relates that Jesus went out of the city in the evening time. He probably went to Bethany which was only about two miles away (John 11:18). He and the twelve most likely stayed in or near the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (John 12:1). Luke 21:37,38 gives a summary of these days and explains, "And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him." This summary statement in Luke covers the activities of Jesus from after His Triumphal Entry until His arrest.

The next morning Jesus and the twelve passed by the fig tree that Jesus had cursed the previous day and it had "dried up from the roots" according to verse 20. Verse 21 relates that Peter⁶ called this to the attention of Jesus and "saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away." As already stated the withered fig tree represents Israel because they had rejected Jesus as the Messiah as seen from Mark 11:18; John 11:57; 12:37,38. Concerning this Robertson notes, "The rejection of Jesus by the Jews is clearly set forth by John's Gospel. The Pharisees made many timid and afraid" (Harmony 158).

Having faith in God (11:22-24; Matthew 21:20-22) Matthew 21:20 records, that the disciples "marvelled" or wondered about the dried up tree, "saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!" After Peter called to remembrance the dried up fig tree, Jesus gives the answer in verses 22-26. Jesus uses this incident to teach His disciples some very valuable lessons about faith and prayer. The initial answer of Jesus to Peter and the rest was to tell them to "Have faith in God." Above all else, this is most important.

Just here the question should be asked and answered: What is faith? The Bible answer is found in Hebrews 11:1-3 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The word "substance" is from ὑπόστασις (hupostasis). Thayer says this word means "a setting or placing under . . . thing put under . . . that which has foundation, is firm . . . confidence, firm trust, assurance" (644,645). It has the idea of that which sustains, assures, confirms, and the title-deed. The word "evidence" from ἔλεγχος (elegchos) means proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested. . . the conviction. Rienecker says ἔλεγχος (elegchos) "was used in the papyri of legal proofs of an accusation" (706). It has the idea of "verification, certainty" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c).

These two great teachings, faith and prayer, are always a blessing to the people of God. In every dispensation men and women have prayed in faith to God. Prayer from a heart full of faith is a delight to the heart of God. Abraham, Moses, Hannah, David, and many others are good examples. Praying pleases God as well as "rests the weary." If one cannot sleep at night, then pray and study the Word of God. Someone has said, "the one is you talking to God the other is God talking to you" (Unknown). In every dispensation the principle and practice of faith is also seen. God loves and honors faith whenever and wherever He sees it (Matthew 8:10; 15:28; Mark 2:5; 5:34; 10:52). When God sees faith in the heart of the sinner, He forgives his or her sin (Acts 16:30,31; 15:9; 26:18; Romans 4:1-8). When God sees faith in the heart of the saint, He blesses that saint (Acts 6:8; 11:24; Romans 4:19,20; 2 Timothy 1:5; 4:7,8).

It requires faith to produce pardon for sin and sins. Paul declares that one is saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). The apostle John says the lost sinner

is saved by believing. John 1:12 declares, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name." Jesus said that faith made the woman whole who had an issue of blood. Jesus said in Luke 8:48 "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Faith in Christ Jesus will save any individual. Galatians 3:26 declares, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Isaiah 55:7 states, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." It requires faith to produce pardon.

It requires trusting faith to please God. Two well known Bible verses prove this, yet there are more. Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Romans 14:23b "... not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin." Noah pleased God because he had faith (Hebrews 11:7). Enoch pleased God because he had faith (Hebrews 11:5). Abraham pleased God because he had faith (Hebrews 11:8-10).

It requires faith to pray. The Bible declares in Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Prayer is exercising faith in God. James 1:5-6 proclaims "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." The believer is to ask in faith. The one who prays is not to waver. The born-again, blood-bought believer is to believe that God will grant the thing according to His blessed will. Prayer is expecting from God. That is, expecting

God to answer according to His will. James 4:3 states, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts." 1 John 5:14-15 declares, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." It is never possible for faith to overdraw its account in the bank of God. Philippians 4:19 says, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Thus every believer is to "Have faith in God." Why? Faith brings about our pardon for sin and the penalty of sin. Faith pleases God. Faith goes hand in hand with prayer. One cannot pray without faith.

Giving a vital lesson on prayer (11:22-26; Matthew 21:22) In these verses Jesus tells how to have prayers answered. The first thing is that one must "Have faith in God" (11:22). The background for this is the withered fig tree. It was the will of God that the fig tree wither, so it withered. Jesus is using this to teach a lesson on prayer and faith. If something is according to the will of God, it will come to pass. In verse 23 Jesus gives them a sure promise as a result of supreme faith. Jesus declares, "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." Jesus had taught this on at least two other occasions in Matthew 17:20; Luke 17:6. He says that a person who has such faith and does not waver can move mountains. Of course, Jesus is using figurative language (Wessel 729). Clarke writes, "Such language cannot possibly have been understood by them or meant by him in any sense but that of hyperbole" (165). The word "hyperbole" means "to exceed. . . extravagant exaggeration (as mile high ice cream cones)" (Merriam Webster's 610).

Jesus is using "a mountain as a symbol of great difficulty" (Wessel 729). So "the greatest possible difficulties can be removed when a person has faith" (Wessel 729). This is where James obtained his doctrine in James 1:2-7. Clarke states, "The thought is that works as impossible to human strength as the moving of the Mount of Olives to the sea shall be possible to faith and shall actually be wrought" (165). Jesus said in Mark 10:27 "With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." The faith that believers should have is faith that if something is according to will of God it shall be done. Clarke comments, "No man can expect, under this promise, that a mountain will be removed until he is convinced by good reasons that God wishes it to be removed" (165). Mark 11:23,24 must be interpreted by what Jesus said in John 14:13-15 and John wrote in 1 John 5:14,15. In John 14:13-15 Jesus declares, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*. If ye love me, keep my commandments." Anything that a disciple asks in the name of Jesus will have to be that which is in accord with the will of God. This is explained by John in 1 John 5:14,15 "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

In verses 23-26 Jesus sets forth the conditions for answered prayer. "There is a close connection between the kind of faith Jesus speaks of here and prayer" (Wessel 729). In verses 23,24 Jesus is addressing His disciples, most likely it is the twelve. In the first part of verse 23 Jesus says, "For verily I say unto you. . . ." In the first part of verse 24 Jesus says, "Therefore I say unto you. . . ." Jesus is addressing His disciples when He uses the pronoun "you." The twelve were saved men except for Judas and

the disciples assumed him to be saved until he proved otherwise. Thus, the first condition of answered prayer is that a person must be saved.

The second condition of answered prayer is that a person must be in the center of the will of God. In the second part of verse 24 Jesus says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray." The desire of a saved person should be that the will of God be done in his or her life. Being in the center of the will of God is what James and John teaches. James 4:3 states, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts." To be in the will of God the believer must not "ask amiss" for to do so is not desiring that the will of God be done. In James 4:7,8 the Bible declares, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded." If the believer submits himself to God, resists the devil, and draws near to God, he will be in the center of the will of God. John teaches in 1 John 5:14,15 the same thing in that he specifies that we must "ask any thing according to his will"

The third condition of answered prayer is found in Mark 11:22,24. The believer must have supreme faith in God. In the middle part of verse 24 Jesus says that the believer must "believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*." And again in Mark 11:22 "Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God."

The fourth condition is that one must have a clean heart. In the very last part of verse 24 Jesus said "and ye shall have *them*." That is, one will have "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray." But as previously implied, a saved person in the center of the will of God will have a clean heart. The psalmist wrote in Psalms 66:18 "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."

The fifth condition is that one must forgive others. Jesus declares in Mark 11:25-26 "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." This teaches that for a brother or sister in Christ to be forgiven of the Father they must forgive others. Jesus taught this same thing Matthew 6:14-15. Robertson wrote "Evidently God's willingness to forgive is limited by our willingness to forgive others. This is a solemn thought for all who pray" (Word Pictures 362).

If one does not truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then how does he expect his prayers to be answered by God. This is said because of what the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:5 "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Jesus commands that the believer pray unto God the Father in His name.

Faith taught by Jesus in this passage "is a faith that prays. . . . Prayer is the source of its power, and the means of its strength—God's omnipotence is its sole assurance, and God's sovereignty its only restriction" (Stauffer *qtd.* in Wessel 729). As a part of having the proper faith and prayers answered, Jesus taught His disciples that one must forgive others before God will forgive. This is part of having a clean heart and is reflected in the letter of Paul to the Ephesians in 4:30-32.

Summary of Chapter

Jesus had now entered into Jerusalem in peaceful triumph riding on the colt of a donkey. This was an animal for kings to ride upon as a show of peace. This was His official presentation as Messiah-King. He had been received by the multitudes but was rejected by the Jewish leaders. He had cursed the fig tree; a prophetic act of

judgment to come upon Israel. He cleansed the temple saying, "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves." Because of His actions and teachings, the scribes and chief priests "sought how they might destroy" Jesus. They had rejected Him as Messiah-King. But at that time they feared the reaction of the people who were "astonished at his doctrine" and "very attentive to hear him."

The next morning Jesus and the twelve passed by the fig tree that Jesus had cursed the previous day and it had "dried up from the roots." When the disciples saw it, they marvelled, and Peter exclaimed, "Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away." Jesus used the withering of the fig tree to teach them some very vital lessons about trusting in God and praying unto God. He knew what was ahead and knew they would need encouragement to face the days ahead and to carry on with the great Commission He would give His church. The withered fig tree represents Israel because they had rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

The initial answer of Jesus to the twelve was "Have faith in God." What is faith? The Bible answer is found in Hebrews chapter 11. These two great teachings, faith and prayer, are always a blessing to the people of God. Prayer from a heart full of faith is a delight to the heart of God. God loves and honors faith whenever and wherever He sees it. Thus every believer is to "Have faith in God." Faith goes hand in hand with prayer; one cannot pray without faith.

In Mark 11:22-26 Jesus also gives a vital lesson on prayer. The background for this is the withered fig tree, along with His declaration, "Have faith in God," and His statement about removing this mountain. He lays down five conditions or requirements for successful prayer. the first condition of answered prayer is that a person be saved (11:22-24). The second condition of answered prayer is that a person

must be in the center of the will of God (11:24; James 4:7,8; 1 John 5:14,15). The third condition of answered prayer is found in Mark 11:22,24. The believer must have supreme faith in God. The fourth condition is that one must have a clean heart (11:24; Psalms 66:18). The fifth condition is that one must forgive others (11:25-26). If one does not truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, then how do they expect their prayers to be answered by God (1 Timothy 2:5).

Chapter Notes

1. (See page 414) The name "Bethphage" means "house of unripe figs" (Thayer 101). The name "Bethany" means "house of depression or misery" (Thayer 100). Clarke says it means "house of dates" (159). Bethany near Jerusalem is not to be confused with "Bethany-beyond Jordan" which is thought to be "the name of the place where John was baptizing" (Baker 289). In John 1:28 this place is called "Bethabara."
2. (See page 414; Mark 11:1) Wessel states, "The Mount of Olives is directly east of the city, rising to an elevation of about twenty-six hundred feet. Its summit commands a magnificent view of Jerusalem and especially the temple mount" (723).
3. (See page 416; Mark 11:7) There is no contradiction between Mark 11:7; Matthew 21:7; or Luke 19:35. Mark says Jesus sat on the colt while both Matthew and Luke relates that they set Him thereon. Three different but related Greek verbs are used but the end result is the same.
4. (See page 418; Mark 11:11) The word "temple" is from the substantive adjective ἱερόν (hieron) and is not the word normally used for the temple proper which is ναός (naos). This word [ἱερόν (hieron)] speaks of "the whole. . . of the sacred enclosure, embracing the entire aggregate of buildings, balconies, porticos, courts" (Thayer 298,299) and all the rest belonging to the temple. Thus it is speaking of the temple area. There were four different courts in the temple. Starting from the outside going inward there was one, the court of the Gentiles, two, the court of the women, three, the court of Israel, and four, the court of the Priests, Next, there was the sanctuary itself.
5. (See page 421; Mark 11:14) Clarke speaks of the fact that in some cases the fig tree around Jerusalem produces figs early, as early as the leaves (Thompson *qtd.* by Clarke 163).
6. (See page 426; Mark 11:21) Later, this same Peter wrote about the judgment of God upon the world by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as recorded in 2 Peter 3:7-13.

End Note

A. The harmonized sequential listings from the other Gospel records have been gleaned from various sources and from study. This writer leaned heavily on A Layman's Harmony of the Gospels by John F. Carter and A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ by A. T. Robertson. Both of these are listed in the Bibliography. All other sources are also listed.

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION EIGHT---

THE SERVANT: REJECTED AS KING IN JERUSALEM

(Mark Chapters 11:1-33; 12:1-44)

---CHAPTER 19---

Questions Asked and Answered

(Mark Chapters 11:27-33; 12:1-44)

OUTLINE

- XIX. Questions Asked and Answered** 11:27—12:44
- A. The Question about the Authority of Jesus 11:27-33
(Matthew 21:23-27; Luke 20:1-8)
1. The Sanhedrin leaders asking Jesus about his authority 11:27-28
(Matthew 21:23; Luke 20:1,2)
 2. Jesus answering with a wise counter-question 11:29-30
(Matthew 21:24,25a; Luke 20:3,4)
 3. The dilemma of the religious leaders 11:31,32
(Matthew 21:25b,26; Luke 20:5,6)
 4. The answers of the leaders and of Jesus 11:33
(Matthew 21:27; Luke 20:7,8)
- B. The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers 12:1-12
(Matthew 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19)
1. Exposing the Jewish leaders 12:1-12
(Matthew 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19)
 2. The title and main features of this parable 12:1-12
(with Matthew and Luke)
 3. Israel, Jehovah's vineyard under tenants 12:1,12
(Matthew 21:42-46; Luke 20:16-18)
 4. The shameful treatment of the servants by the husbandmen 12:2-5
(Matthew 21:34-36; Luke 20:10-12)
 5. At the last, the landlord sending his beloved son 12:6-8
(Matthew 21:37-39; Luke 20:13-15a)
 6. Destroying the husbandmen and giving the vineyard to others 12:9
(Matthew 21:40-41; Luke 20:15b-16a)
 7. Taking the kingdom from Israel; giving it to fruit bearers 12:10,11
(Matthew 21:42-44; Luke 20:17-18)
 8. The Jewish leaders seeking to lay hold on Jesus 12:12
(Matthew 21:45,46; Luke 20:19)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION EIGHT---

THE SERVANT: REJECTED AS KING IN JERUSALEM

(Mark Chapters 11:1-33; 12:1-44)

---CHAPTER 19---

Questions Asked and Answered

(Mark Chapters 11:27-33; 12:1-44)

OUTLINE (Continued)

- | | |
|--|----------|
| C. The Question about Paying Taxes | 12:13-17 |
| (Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26) | |
| 1. The purpose of the question 12:13 | |
| (Matthew 22:15; Luke 20:20) | |
| 2. The question about paying taxes 12:14,15a | |
| (Matthew 22:16-17; Luke 20:21,22) | |
| 3. The answer of the all-wise Son of God 12:15b-17 | |
| (Matthew 22:18-22; Luke 20:24-26) | |
| D. The Question about Marriage in the Resurrection | 12:18-27 |
| (Matthew 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-40) | |
| 1. The Sadducees 12:18 | |
| (Matthew 22:23; Luke 20:27) | |
| 2. The trick question of the Sadducees 12:19-23 | |
| (Matthew 22:24-28; Luke 20:28-33) | |
| 3. The answer of the all-wise Master 12:24-27 | |
| (Matthew 22:29-33; Luke 20:34-38) | |
| E. The Question about the First Commandment | 12:28-34 |
| (Matthew 22:34-40; cf. Luke 10:25-27) | |
| 1. The question about the first commandment 12:28 | |
| (Matthew 22:34-36) | |
| 2. Jesus gives a two-fold answer 12:29-31 | |
| (Matthew 22:37-40) | |
| 3. The discreet response of the scribe Mark 12:32-34 | |
| F. The Question of Jesus about the Son of David | 12:35-37 |
| (Matthew 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44) | |
| G. The Denouncement of the Scribes and Pharisees | 12:38-40 |
| (Matthew 23:1-39; Luke 20:45-47) | |
| H. The Commendation of the Widow's Giving | 12:41-44 |
| (Luke 21:1-4) | |

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION EIGHT---

THE SERVANT: REJECTED AS KING IN JERUSALEM

(Mark Chapters 11:1-33; 12:1-44)

---CHAPTER 19---

Questions Asked and Answered

(Mark Chapters 11:27-33; 12:1-44)

In this portion of the study of Mark (all of chapters 11 and 12), all the incidents are leading up to the Servant being Rejected as King in Jerusalem. In Mark 12:10 Jesus asks the question, "And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." This verse implies that the Jewish leaders of that day had rejected Jesus as their Messiah and thus as their King; even worse, they rejected Him as their Savior. This is confirmed by Mark 12:12, "And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way." In this verse the pronoun, "they," refers to Mark 11:27 that names "the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders." The last few verses of Chapter 11 and almost all of Chapter 12 is concerned with "Questions Asked and Answered." These questions were asked by this group of Jewish leaders directed to Jesus and answered by Him. The Jewish leaders were trying to find some way to ensnare Jesus. They desired to

find some charge worthy of death against Him. They wanted Him out of the way. On the other hand, Jesus uses this opportunity to answer these questions by the religious leaders and to teach them and the public. Jesus loved them all and it was His desire that they come to the knowledge of the truth and experience the new birth as did Nicodemus (John 3:1-19; John 19:38-40).

The subject of Mark 11:27—12:44 is about the questions asked Jesus and His answers. This includes the parable of the wicked vinedressers, the question about the Son of David, the denouncement of the scribes and Pharisees, and the commendation of the giving of the widow. To test a Rabbi with hard questions was not unusual. Robertson says, "The Sanhedrin were within their rights in challenging the ecclesiastical and scholastic (scribal) standing of Jesus. He did not dodge in His answer" (Harmony 160). This passage probably is the record of the last day of the public ministry of Our Lord and Savior. The Jewish

Sanhedrin seek to break the power of Jesus with the people whose hero he is since the Triumphal Entry. The first attempt fails miserably, but it is followed by a series of other efforts to entrap Jesus and so turn the crowd against him. The three parables leave the rulers exposed by Jesus and they keenly feel the denunciation of the reply of Jesus (Robertson, Harmony 160).¹

This passage entitled "Questions Asked and Answered" may be divided into eight incidents. These include conflicts with the religious leaders that caused their final plot to kill Jesus any way they could. These incidents are: one, the question about the authority of Jesus, 11:27-33; Matthew 21:23-27; Luke 20:1-8; two, the parable of the wicked vinedressers, 12:1-12; Matthew 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19; three, the question about paying taxes, 12:13-17; Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26; four, the question about marriage in the resurrection, 12:18-27; Matthew 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-40; five, the question about the first commandment, 12:28-34; Matthew

22:34-40; Luke 10:25-27; six, the question of Jesus about the Son of David, 12:35-37; Matthew 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44; seven, the denouncement of the scribes and Pharisees, 12:38-40; Matthew 23:1-39; Luke 20:45-47; and eight, the commendation of the widow's giving, 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4.

A. The Question about the Authority of Jesus 11:27-33

(Matthew 21:23-27; Luke 20:1-8)

Jesus had come in triumph riding into Jerusalem on a donkey and the people praised and honored Him crying, "Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord . . ." (Mark 11:9-10). The blind and the lame came to Him and were healed (Matthew 21:14). When the Jewish leaders saw the wonderful things that Jesus did and heard the people praising Him, they were sore displeased and they told Him to rebuke His disciples (Matthew 21:15,16; Luke 19:39). After Jesus cleansed the temple, these leaders "sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine" (Mark 11:18; Luke 19:47,48). They had rejected Jesus as being the Messiah. So different groups of Jewish leaders began to question Him in order to entrap Him and to move the people against Him.

This passage in Mark 11:27-33 tells of the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders coming to Jesus asking Him who gave Him His authority to do these things. They questioned His authority. This subdivision may be divided as follows: one, the Sanhedrin leaders asking Jesus about His authority, 11:27-28; Matthew 21:23; Luke 20:1,2; two, Jesus answering with a wise counter-question, 11:29-30; Matthew 21:24,25a; Luke 20:3,4; three, the dilemma of the religious leaders, 11:31,32; Matthew 21:25b,26; Luke 20:5,6; and four, the answers of the leaders and of Jesus, 11:33; Matthew 21:27; Luke 20:7,8.

The Sanhedrin leaders asking Jesus about his authority (11:27-28;

Matthew 21:23; Luke 20:1,2) Verse 27 says that after the occasion of the withered fig tree and the lesson on faith and prayer, Jesus and His disciples came to Jerusalem and entered the court of the temple. Jesus was engaged in walking, teaching, and preaching the gospel. Very soon, He was confronted by the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. This combination of leaders "made up the Sanhedrin; the high court of the Jews" (Wessel 730). They had authority over the Temple and its courtyard. They were angered by the cleansing of the Temple and the other things Jesus had done. They also envied the popularity of Jesus. A. T. Robertson states, "These three classes were in the Sanhedrin. Clearly a large committee of the Sanhedrin including both Sadducees and Pharisees here confront Jesus in a formal attack upon his authority for cleansing the temple and teaching in it" (362). These religious leaders questioned Jesus as to the source of His authority. In Mark 11:28 they asked, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?" The word "what" is from the Greek word ποῖος (poios). It is an interrogative/indefinite pronoun. It could be translated "of what sort or nature" (Thayer 527). The word "authority" used here is from the Greek noun ἐξουσία (exousia). It is used some 103 times in the New Testament. It is translated "power" sixty-nine times and "authority" twenty-nine times. Thayer says this word means "power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases. . . physical and mental power. . . the power of authority (influence) and of right. . . the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed). . ." (225). These Jewish leaders wanted Jesus "first, to state the nature of His authority, and second, to name the person from whom He had received it" (Wuest 226).

The "these things" in verse 28 refer to the incident of the cleansing of the temple court yard and the "Triumphal Entry" among other things (11:1-10,15-17). Jesus had "taught them saying, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves" (11:17). The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders hoped they could bring Jesus into ill-favor among the people and thus clear the way to arrest Him (Wessel 730). They wanted an occasion against Him. Verse 18 states, "And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine" (See also Luke 19:47,48.) In all fairness it should be said that the Sanhedrin had a right to ask these questions. Clark writes, "Even a rabbi, according to Jewish custom, must have his credentials from the rabbi who had instructed him, a kind of diploma for authority; and Jesus had gone far beyond the assumptions of a rabbi. He had claimed the office of the Lord of the temple" (167). Truly, Jesus was even more than the Lord of the temple, but they had not accepted it.

Jesus answering with a wise counter-question (11:29-30; Matthew 21:24,25a; Luke 20:3,4) Jesus knew what was in their hearts. Nevertheless, He did not hesitate to answer them (John 2:24,25). He answered them with utmost wisdom by asking a counter-question. He "said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things" (11:29). He said that if they would answer His question, He would tell them by what authority He did those things. The question is found in Mark 11:30, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me." It was a simple question. It could be easily answered by anyone who was familiar with John the Baptist and what the Bible says about John. (Truly, not only the baptism of John was involved but the entire mission and ministry of John was involved.) The New Testament is very clear and positive

that John the Baptist was sent from God. The Bible says in John 1:6,7 "There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe." Some of these same Jewish leaders had previously questioned John the Baptist (John 1:15-32). John the Baptist testified that, "he (*that is, God*) that sent me to baptize with water the same said unto me. . ." (John 1:33). God called John and sent him to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus and to prepare the material or people for the New Testament Church Jesus organized during His personal ministry on the earth (John 1:6). If John the Baptist did not have the authority of heaven to baptize, then why did Jesus allow John to baptize Him and why did God the Father and God the Holy Spirit show their approval? (Mark 1:9-11) This question of Jesus emphasizes the importance Jesus placed on John the Baptist and his ministry. Each person should answer this question. As a believer in Jesus. "How would I answer the question that Jesus asked?" Did John have the authority of heaven? The Bible says he did. It makes a difference because it applies to people and New Testament churches even in this day. If authority to minister and baptize was important in that day, it is still important today.²

Jesus told them that if they would answer His question, He would tell them by what authority He did those things. Did Jesus have the authority of heaven? Did He have the approval of God? He did. He and God the Father are one (John 10:30). Jesus said in John 8:29, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

The dilemma of the religious leaders (11:31,32; Matthew 21:25b,26; Luke 20:5,6) Mark 11:31,32 reveals the dilemma of these religious leaders. "And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for

all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed." (Jesus had implied the answer in His counter-question.) Verse 31 says they reasoned among themselves. They knew the correct answer. But they knew if they gave it they would have to repent and believe in Jesus. This is the problem or dilemma with so many today, they do not want to admit that they are sinners and need to repent and put their trust in Jesus because they know it will be a life changing event and they are not ready to give up their sin. [Each one should ask himself "What about me?" For it is either Jesus or judgment forever in hell.] These Jewish religious leaders realized that if they said that the baptism of John was from Heaven (meaning by the authority of God), they would have to recognize the authority of Jesus as being from God and thus believe and accept Him as Savior and Messiah.

On the other hand, in verse 32 they reasoned that if they said that the baptism of John was of men, they would be opposed by the people since the people believed John was a prophet from God. Matthew 21:26 records that they reasoned, "But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet." Luke adds, "if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us. . . ." (20:6). John had baptized Jesus and also had recognized Jesus as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). John had recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ (John 10:40-42). Jesus and John are good examples of 1 Peter 2:15, "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." (These Jewish leaders were ignorant because they ignored and rejected the obvious truth that Jesus was the Messiah.) Robertson indirectly quotes Swete, "All three Gospels state the popular view of John as a prophet. . . . They feared John though dead as much as Herod Antipas did. His martyrdom had deepened his power over the people and disrespect towards his memory now might raise a storm" (Word Pictures 363).

treatment of the servants by the husbandmen, 12:2-5; Matthew 21:34-36; Luke 20:10-12, five, at the last the landlord sending his beloved son, 12:6-8; Matthew 21:37-39; Luke 20:13-15a; six, destroying the husbandmen and giving the vineyard to others, 12:9; Matthew 21:40-41; Luke 20:15b-16a; seven, taking the kingdom from Israel; giving it to fruit bearers, 12:10,11; Matthew 21:42-44; Luke 20:17-18; and eight, the Jewish leaders seeking to lay hold on Jesus, 12:12; Matthew 21:45,46; Luke 20:19.

Exposing the Jewish leaders (12:1-12; Matthew 21:33-46 (21:28-32; 22:1-14); Luke 20:9-19) Jesus silenced His opponents by His question about the authority of the baptism of John. He exposes them for what they were— hypocrites, blind guides, and serpents (Matthew 23:13-33.) They had rebelled against the Son of God. A. T. Robertson writes in the defense of Jesus,

Jesus has been criticized for lack of self-control in this exposure of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. One must bear in mind the tremendous sins of which the Pharisees are guilty. The very teachers of righteousness are now in the act of rejecting and finally crucifying the Son of God (Harmony 169).

Jesus exposed them by using three parables: one, the parable of the two sons found in Matthew 21:28-32; two, the parable of the wicked vinedressers found in Matthew 21:33-46, Luke 20:9-19 and Mark 12:1-12; and three, the parable of the marriage feast of the son of the king found in Matthew 22:1-14. The Jewish rulers keenly felt this denunciation as seen in Mark 12:12; Matthew 21:46; Luke 20:19. In Luke 20:19 the Bible records, "And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them." Matthew 21:46 states that they ". . .they feared the multitude, because they took him (*Jesus*) for a prophet."

The title and main features of this parable (12:1-12 with Matthew and Luke) This parable in Mark 12:1-12 has been titled differently by various

commentators. It has been called "the Parable: "of the Tenants;" "of the Cruel Vinedressers;" "of the Wicked Husbandmen," and "of the Householder Demanding Fruit from His Vineyard." But perhaps the title "Parable of A Certain Man Demanding Fruit from His Vineyard" is as descriptive as any. This writer has settled on the title "The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers." In the title "Parable of the Householder Demanding Fruit from His Vineyard" the word "householder" comes from the account in Matthew 21:33-46. The word "householder" from the Greek noun οἰκοδεσπότης (oikodespotes) means "master of the house" (Rienecker 63). Mark simply calls the householder, "A *certain* man," who planted a vineyard as does Luke. The idea is that a landlord planted a vineyard.

This parable is "directed against the irresponsible religious leaders" of the Jews of that day (Moule *qtd. in* Wessel 731). Wuest states, "His (*Jesus*) purpose was to expose the character or the hostility of the Sanhedrin" (228). The main features of the parable are: one, the vineyard is the nation of Israel (really, it is Israel representing the Kingdom of God and having kingdom authority from God); two, the certain man or householder is God; three, the wicked husbandmen or vinedressers are the Jewish religious leaders; four, the servants are the prophets; and five, the only son and heir is Jesus the Christ (Wessel 731). Of course, as with any parable this one should not be made to "walk on fours," that is, make everything have some spiritual meaning. To properly interpret a parable one must find the central idea. However, there does seem to be some significance in some of the other things presented. Wessel writes, "While it is true that most of Jesus' parables have but one point to make and the details have no separate significance, Jesus did use allegory on occasion (cf. Mark 4:13-20)" (731).

Israel, Jehovah's vineyard under tenants (12:1,12; Matthew 21:42-46; Luke 20:16-18) This parable reminds one of the passage in Isaiah 5:1-7 entitled "the Parable of Jehovah's Vineyard" (Scofield 716). Many times Israel is referred to as a vineyard (Psalm 80:8-16; Isaiah 5:7; Jeremiah 2:21). The prophet in Isaiah 5:7 declares, "For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." Mark 12:1 records, "And he (*Jesus*) began to speak unto them by parables. A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about *it*, and digged *a place for* the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country." The pronoun, "them," refers directly to "the chief priests, scribes, and elders" mentioned in Mark 11:27-33. Mark 12:12 makes this clear also. "And they sought to lay hold on him. . . ."

The items, such as the hedge, the place for the winefat, and the towers were familiar things in Israel in Bible days. This speaks of protection and all things needed to produce a bountiful crop. Also it was a common thing for a landowner to contract with tenants on a crop-sharing basis and then be an absentee (Wessel 731).

The idea as presented in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Psalm 80 is that God planted a vineyard and did everything possible in order for it to produce good fruit. As explained, the vineyard is speaking of Israel. However, Israel had not come up to the expectations of God and she brought forth wild grapes. She was so far afield that when the Messiah finally came she, as a whole, did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

The shameful treatment of the servants by the husbandmen (12:2-5; Matthew 21:34-36; Luke 20:10-12) When the harvest season was come, the landlord sent a servant to receive his fruit. Mark 12:2 records, "And at the season

he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard." The word "season" is from the Greek noun *καίρῳ* (*kairos*). This is the same word translated "time" in Matthew 21:34. Thus Matthew reveals the meaning of "season" by saying "when the time of the fruit drew near." In other words, this was the season to the gather fruits or the time for harvest. Verse 3 reveals that the wicked husbandmen or vinedressers caught the servant sent to receive the fruit that belonged to the landlord, "and beat him, and sent *him* away empty." Verses 4,5 relate that the landlord sent several servants on various occasions to receive fruit of the vineyard. In each case the servant was either beaten, stoned, or in some cases even killed. This very thing is spoken of in 2 Chronicles 36:15-16, "And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was* no remedy."

This speaks of God sending His prophets to Israel in the Old Testament and the rejection by Israel of the message of the prophets, the servants of God (Jeremiah 7:25; 25:4; Amos 3:4; Zechariah 1:6). Jeremiah proclaimed in Jeremiah 7:25 "Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them*." And Jeremiah 25:4 states, "And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear." Zechariah, a post Babylonian prophet, wrote, "But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us" (1:6).

The servants that God sent speak of the prophets and includes John the Baptist.⁴ God warned Israel, and warned her time and again, but she would not listen. The prophets preached the message of judgment and the dire need for Israel to return to the Lord. The prophets were persecuted and killed. Nevertheless, God sent them in His mercy and grace. This same thing is happening in the world today.

At the last the landlord sending his beloved son (12:6-8; Matthew 21:37-39; Luke 20:13-15a) As a last resort the landlord sent his only well beloved son saying, "They will reverence my son" (12:6). This represents God sending His only begotten and beloved Son, Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:17). The assumption of the landowner that they would surely reverence his son is not to be taken that God expected Jesus to be accepted by Israel. God knew beforehand what would happen. Nevertheless, He sent Jesus in His mercy and in His love, giving them an opportunity to repent and turn to Him. Surely, people will respect and honor Jesus. But do they? Each person should ask himself or herself, "Do I truly respect and honor Jesus?" Members of a New Testament church should remember the local church is the body of Christ, and He is the head. Members should ask themselves, "Do I honor the body of Christ, His church? If one honors not the church of Christ, they in effect honor not Christ Jesus.

Verses 7,8 relate, "But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard." The husbandmen, the wicked vinedressers, "saw the coming of the son as a golden opportunity" to fulfill their greedy desires to seize "the property" (Wessel 732). Thus they took the son, killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. This speaks of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and their turning Him over to the Gentiles to be crucified. John 1:11 says that, "He (*Jesus*) came unto His own (*His own things, His creation*) and His own

(*the people of Israel*) received Him not." They rejected the one and only King and Savior that God had sent. What a shame? what a disgrace? They honored not the well beloved Son, the very one, and the only one, who could and would redeem them and deliver them. Each person should ask himself or herself, "Have I rejected Jesus Christ?" Anyone who rejects Jesus as personal Savior will die in their sins and go to hell, the place of everlasting burning (John 8:20-26; Revelation 21:8).

Destroying the husbandmen and giving the vineyard to others (12:9; Matthew 21:40-41; Luke 20:15b-16a) The question is asked in the first part of verse 9, "What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?" Verse 9 is a key verse. Each one should ask this question, "What would I do if my faithful servants were treated so wickedly?" There was no reason for them to be treated so shamefully, except for the fact that the vinedressers were lustful, greedy and did not want to repent and admit they were wrong and unworthy. So what did the landlord do? Jesus gives the answer in the second half of verse 9 which states the landlord "will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others." Luke 20:16 adds, "...And when they (*the religious leaders*) heard it, they said, God forbid." A. T. Robertson explains that, "God forbid (me genoito). . . Literally,. . . (*means*) may it not happen." (*There is*) "No word "God" in the Greek." He continues by stating, "This was the pious protest of the defeated members of the Sanhedrin who began to see the turn of the parable against themselves" (Word Pictures, vol 2 251). Thus God took the kingdom away from Israel and gave it to a nation, a people, who would bring "fruits thereof" (*see Matthew 21:40-43*). As explained in earlier chapters, Jesus organized the church during His earthly ministry since the nation of Israel as a whole rejected Him. In establishing His church (*whether Jewish or Gentile or both in combination*), He gave

her kingdom authority to carry out His commands and commission with Jesus as her head (Matthew 16:19,28:18-20; Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:12-19).

Taking away the kingdom from Israel; giving it to fruit bearers (12:10,11; Matthew 21:42-44; Luke 20:17-18) Jesus finished His lesson and teaching by saying in verses 10-11 "And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" In verses 10,11 Jesus quotes from Psalm 118:22,23. "The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner. This is the LORD's doing; it *is* marvellous in our eyes." Jesus asked these leaders if they had read this Scripture. Peter refers to this Scripture in Acts 4:11 and 1 Peter 2:7. Acts 4:11 states, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." 1 Peter 2:7 states, "Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner." The rejected stone is Christ being rejected by these Jewish leaders. While Mark does not bring out that the kingdom would be taken from Israel and given to a fruit bearing people, Matthew states it clearly in Matthew 21:43,44 "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Matthew 21:44 and Luke 20:18 are almost identical. These verses may refer to Daniel 2:34,35,44,45.

Jesus was rejected but He became the head of the corner. Isaiah 28:16 proclaims, "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Paul writes in Ephesians 2:20 "And (*you all, that is, the church*

at Ephesus and any local true New Testament church) are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." He is the head of His church, and thus of each local New Testament church. The church as an institution became a multi-national organization (This is not to be taken that the writer endorses the universal invisible church doctrine; but simply that the institution of the Lord's church would and could manifest itself in every nation on earth as local churches in many locations preaching, believing, and practicing the truth of the New Testament).

This is part of the marvel spoken of in verse 11. The body of Christ is the mystery spoken of in Colossians 1:26-27 and Ephesians 3:1-9. The mystery is how the church (as an institution) would be the body of Christ to preach the gospel throughout the world. The Crucified One is the rejected stone which in the resurrection is made the chief corner-stone by God. Psalm 118 (verses 25,26) is also the Psalm referred to in Mark 11:9-10 when the people welcomed the Lord Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem on the donkey in the "Triumphal Entry" and they "...cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: *IO* Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." Nevertheless, the wicked vinedressers, the Jewish leaders, rejected Jesus.

The Jewish leaders seeking to lay hold on Jesus (12:12; Matthew 21:45,46; Luke 20:19) Verse 12 says that these leaders realized this parable was spoken against them. Matthew 21:45 relates, "when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them." Mark 12:12 states "And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way." At this point some details need to be noted that are found only in Matthew 21:45-46 where the record

obligation and responsibility to civil authorities. Civil governments are ordained of God. God is behind the authority and power of civil governments. The initial teaching for civil government as ordained by God is rooted in the first book of the Bible when God told Noah after the universal flood in Genesis 9:6 "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." This is the basis for all law and order and shows the value that God places on human life. It is also the basis for the death penalty and other penalties for disobeying the laws of the land. In any case, believers in Christ Jesus are to "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's"

However, the first obligation of the believer in Jesus Christ is to God. This was the testimony of the apostles in Acts 4:19 and 5:29 to "the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees" (Acts 4:1; 5:17). Acts 4:19 states, "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Acts 5:29 states, "Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."

Jesus had a combination of the Pharisees and Herodians come to Him at least once before. Mark records in 3:6 "And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." These two groups were normally opposed to one another, but once again they find a common ground in their opposition to Jesus. (For comments about the Herodians see comments on Mark 3:6 on pages 122,123 of this dissertation.) This passage will be discussed under the following particulars: one, the purpose of the question, 12:13; Matthew 22:15; Luke 20:20; two, the question about paying taxes, 12:14,15a; Matthew 22:16-17; Luke 20:21,22; and three, the answer of the all-wise Son of God, 12:15b-17; Matthew 22:18-22; Luke 20:24-26.

The purpose of the question (12:13; Matthew 22:15; Luke 20:20) Verse 13 relates, "And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words." The pronoun, "they," refers to the same ones who questioned the authority of Jesus in chapter 11:27,28. (See also 12:12.) This was the Sanhedrin counsel of the Jews, the religious leaders. These religious leaders were trying to find a way to entrap Jesus in order to bring Him in disfavor with the people so they could have Him arrested without an uprising of the people.

As was explained in the study of Mark 3:6 these two groups, the Pharisees and the Herodians, came together in their opposition to Jesus. As given previously, this verse can literally be rendered, "And going forth the Pharisees immediately with the Herodians gave counsel or plotted against Him that they might destroy Him" (Looney, Various translations). As shall be seen this was still their purpose on this new occasion. Since the Herodians had influence in the courts of law, the Sanhedrin felt their assistance to the Pharisees would be helpful in seeking the destruction of Jesus.

Verse 13 further reveals the Sanhedrin sent the Pharisees and the Herodians "to catch him in *his* words." The word "catch" is from ἀγρεύω (agreuo) meaning "to catch wild animals" (Wuest 231). This reveals their real, true purpose. They wanted to ensnare Jesus. "The Herodians were as obnoxious to the Pharisees on political grounds as the Sadducees were on theological grounds. Yet, the two groups united in their opposition to Jesus" (Wessel 733). It was their purpose "to entrap our Lord into some remark by which He would fatally compromise Himself" (Wuest 231). Matthew 22:15 says they "took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk."

The question about paying taxes (12:14,15a; Matthew 22:16-17; Luke 20:21,22) In verse 14 they use hypocritical flattery as a preface to their question. Today, people would say they were buttering Him up. They said, "Master, we know

that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. . . ." This brings to mind the question: if they knew that Jesus was and is true, then why did they not believe Him? The next part of that which they said to butter Him up was, "thou. . . carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men. . . ." If this was true concerning Jesus and it is, this simply means Jesus was not a respecter of persons whether great or small, rich or poor. The last part of what they said to Jesus was that they knew that Jesus taught "the way of God in truth. . . ." Certainly, this is true. Jesus was the embodiment of truth. He said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." What they said about Jesus was true, but they were being hypocritical and double-tongued because they did not believe it from their hearts.

Further, in verse 14 they asked Jesus a question trying to ensnare Him, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" There is more to this question than that which meets the eye. It is not only a question about paying taxes, but it also involves the responsibility each citizen has in respect to governmental powers (Romans 13:1-7).⁵ In asking this question they thought they were offering Jesus the alternative of popular disfavor or disloyalty to the Roman government. This was not much of a choice. Howbeit, Jesus was up to the task, for He is the Son of God. In the first part of verse 15 they explained their question by further requesting, "Shall we give, or shall we not give?" They were asking as Jews, "Was is right for them to pay taxes or not?" Because the Pharisees were of the chosen race, they thought they were not obligated to obey a civil government that was oppressive and evil, at least in their opinion. The Herodians believed it was right to pay this tax.

The answer of the all-wise Son of God (12:15b-17; Matthew 22:18-22; Luke 20:24-26) The second part of verse 15 relates that Jesus "knowing their hypocrisy,

said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see *it*." The word "hypocrisy" is from the Greek noun ὑπόκρισις (hupokrisis). It has the idea of "hypocrisy, insincerity, pretense" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c). The parallel in Matthew 22:18 records "But Jesus perceived their wickedness. . . ." Luke 20:23 records, "But he perceived their craftiness. . . ." Nonetheless, Jesus being the all-wise God knew their pretense and He was aware of why they tempted Him. This question gave Jesus another opportunity to teach the truth. The penny was the Roman coin called "the denarius." The English word "penny" is from the Greek noun δηνάριον (denarion) and was the name of the "Roman silver coin equivalent to the day's wage of a common laborer" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c).

Verse 16 reveals that after they brought Jesus a "denarius" He asks them, "Whose *is* this image and superscription?" The word "image" is from the Greek noun εἰκὼν (eikon) and means "an image, figure, likeness" (Thayer 175). (The modern word "icon" is derived from this word.) The word "superscription" is from the Greek noun ἐπιγραφή (epigraphē) and means "an inscription, title. . . in the N. T. of an inscription in black letters upon a whitened tablet. . . of the inscription on a coin." (Thayer 237). Jesus was asking, "Whose likeness or picture is this on this coin and to whom belongs this inscription?" They replied unto Jesus, it is that of "Caesar's." Caesar was the title of the Roman Emperor. Jesus gives them a truthful yet simple answer that is good for citizens of every government to follow. He very wisely avoided their snare by simply telling them the truth in verse 17. He said "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

This is a principle whereby the people of God can serve God and at the same time be good citizens of any government in any place at any time. Jesus actually put God first (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17).⁵ This is true since God is the One who

gives rulers and governments their power and authority to rule. One should remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The first obligation of any one is to be true to God and His Word (See Mark 12:28-34; John 13:34,35). The next obligation of any one is to be a good citizen. Therefore, born-again, blood-bought believers are to "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Mark records in verse 17 that "they (*that is, the Pharisees and the Herodians*) marvelled at Him." The verb "marvelled" is from the imperfect tense of the Greek verb and so it means they continued to be completely amazed. Explaining this amazement Clarke writes, "he had actually thrown new light on the question" (172). "They stood there amazed at Him, not so much at the profundity of His reply, as at the fact that there was nothing in the reply on which they could lay hold" (Wuest 234). However, later at His trial before Pontius Pilate the Jewish leaders deliberately distorted His answer as seen in Luke 23:2 "And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar. . . ." Notwithstanding, this is not what Jesus said. He simply said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

D. The Question about Marriage in the Resurrection 12:18-27

(Matthew 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-40)

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:19 "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." What did the apostle mean? He meant that if anyone believes in Christ as personal Savior and does not have the hope of the resurrection and heaven, then truly they are the most miserable creatures because they have trusted something that is false and without purpose and those who have died

beforehand have perished like animals. Yet, many believe this way, that is, they do not believe in the resurrection, even some who claim Christianity. Let this writer give a real true example. Years ago, this writer worked with a man who was a head engineer for the Square D Company in Lexington, Kentucky. He was not this writer's direct boss, but over the section of Industrial Engineers in which this writer worked. Upon talking to this head engineer on one occasion, He said that he believed when a person died, that was it. There seemed to be some of this belief in Corinth. The Apostle also wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:12-14 "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain." Evidently there were those among the church members at Corinth who said that there is no resurrection of the dead. Paul said, if that be true, why preach that Christ arose from the dead. He continued and stated, for if Christ is not risen, our preaching is vain or amounts to nothing and is even false. If that is true, the faith of every believer is devoid of truth and is fruitless, it is without effect, empty, imaginary, and unfounded.

The doctrine of the resurrection is the heart of the faith that is in Christ Jesus. Without it everyone is yet in their sins. Jesus said in John 8:24 "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins." Note that the pronoun "he" after "I am" in John 8:24 is in italics, meaning that it was supplied by the translators. What Jesus is saying is that they must believe that He is the "I Am" meaning the everlasting eternal one, Jehovah-God (Exodus 3:14). This implies the resurrection and more. Without the resurrection Jesus would not be the Messiah. If He is not the Messiah and is not raised from the dead, there is no hope. However, the resurrection is true; and because of the resurrection of Christ

every believer in Him has assurance of his or her own resurrection. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:14 "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you." The ones who do not believe shall be condemned to hell in the second resurrection forever under the wrath of God according to Rev 20:5-20; 21:8.

Jesus dealt with all kinds of people. (All believers can be assured that any opposition that they may face, He has already met it and He is with each and every believer.) Among those that Jesus met and dealt with were the Sadducees as recorded in Mark 12:18-27. They presented a question to try to trick Jesus and to find fault. They did not believe in the resurrection from the dead. They were a sad group of people. This section consists of the following: one, the Sadducees, 12:18; Matthew 22:23; Luke 20:27; two, the trick question of the Sadducees, 12:19-23; Matthew 22:24-28; Luke 20:28-33; and three; the answer of the all-wise Master, 12:24-27; Matthew 22:29-33; Luke 20:34-38

The Sadducees (12:18; Matthew 22:23; Luke 20:27) The next group that came to Jesus were the Sadducees "which say there is no resurrection" (Mark 12:18). They are an intriguing group. In this passage Jesus is confronted by them with a puzzling or tricky question. This is the first and only mention of this group by Mark. (They have been mentioned previously in the comments for Mark chapter 8 when parallel passages from the other Gospels were brought into the comments. See pages 277,278,281.) The Sadducees are mentioned a total of fourteen times in the New Testament "whereas the Pharisees are mentioned about one hundred times" (Wessel 735). In the time of Jesus, they "were small numerically, but they still exerted great influence politically and religiously" (Wessel 735). Yet, it seems that they were more political than religious which is not unlike a lot of people today. The Sadducees were

the "free-thinkers" and they represented many in the "well-to-do" class of people among the Jews (Carter 260; Wessel 735). Some of them may have been scribes. John F. Carter writes this about the Sadducees,

Opposed to the Pharisees were the Sadducees. For the most part, they were priests who were willing to compromise their Jewish principles for favors from the foreign rulers. Probably they began to appear as a separate class during the closing years of the Greek period. They took their name from Zadok, the priest who was faithful to David and Solomon when Abiathar, the other priest, fell away to Adonijah (1 Kings 1:32-34). Their distinguishing doctrines and characteristics were: (a) They denied the existence of angels, the immortality of the soul, and any idea of a future resurrection (Matt. 22:23; Acts 23:8). (b) They rejected the "tradition of the elders" and the so-called oral law, accepting as authoritative only the Old Testament. (c) They were severe in their judgment, and were not very popular with the common people (18).

Luke records in Acts 23:8 "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both." If the reader will allow a play on words, they were a "Sad" group to behold. Note well their name: "Sadd"—"U"—"cees." By their doctrines they cut themselves off from everlasting joy. They also condemned themselves to eternal condemnation. The Bible calls them by various derogatory names to warn them to turn to God. Jesus calls them hypocrites in Matthew 16:3. In Matthew 3:7 John the Baptist calls them a generation of vipers. (A viper was an adder, a poisonous snake, and very dangerous.) John, in effect, warned them "to flee from the wrath to come." John declares, not only to the Sadducees, but to all in John 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Paul writes and proclaims that only those believing in Jesus will be delivered from the wrath of God. Paul declares in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." The Sadducees were not only warned "to flee from the wrath to come," but they also were warned to repent in Matthew 3:8. At one time the

Sadducees came together with the Pharisees to demand a sign or a miracle of Jesus. Matthew 16:1 relates "The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven." Jesus told them in Matthew 16:4, "there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. . . ." What was the sign of the prophet Jonas? According to Matthew 12:40 it would be just "as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Jesus was speaking of His death, burial, and resurrection. So the Sadducees were a religious and political group who did not believe in the resurrection, angels, spirits, nor life after death. They like people today needed to repent and turn to Jesus in faith. It was this group that presented Jesus with what could be called a trick question on this occasion.

The trick question of the Sadducees (12:19-23; Matthew 22:24-28; Luke 20:28-33) By the question recorded in verses 19-23 about the resurrection the Sadducees hoped to baffle Jesus. The question is as follows:

Mark 12:19-23 "Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his wife behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife."

The purpose of the Sadducees was to discredit Jesus before the people. They hoped at the same time to win a victory over their old rivals, the Pharisees. This valid question was meant to be a trick question as seen from Mark 12:13. Probably it was one that the Sadducees had often raised and with it confounded the Pharisees. It involved the seldom used law of "levirate marriage (from the Latin *levir*, "brother-in-law")" (Wessel 735; Carter 260). Levirate marriage is a provision of the law of Moses with roots in Genesis 38:8 along with Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Naomi made reference to it

in Ruth 1:11,12. It "required that if a man died without children, his brother was to marry his widow" (Wessel 735). The purpose of the Levirate marriage "was to protect the widow and guarantee the continuance of the family line" (Wessel 735).

The Sadducees presented their question as a hypothetical case (Wuest 235). The case was, What if a woman married a man who died childless but had six brothers; so she married each brother in turn as each died being childless. So they ask, "In the resurrection therefore. . . whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife" (Mark 12:23). Even so, they clouded their real motive. But Jesus was wise to them. Jesus is wise to those today who act religious, but do not believe from the heart (Matthew 7:21-23).

The answer of the all-wise Master (12:24-27; Matthew 22:29-33; Luke 20:34-38) The Sadducees called Jesus "Master" in verse 19. The word "Master" is from διδάσκαλος (didaskalos). It means "an instructor. . . doctor, master, teacher" (Strong's 1320). Truly, Jesus is the Master-Teacher. He is the Son of God and Emmanuel. But this is not what the Sadducees meant. They were being double-tongued. In His answer given in verses 24-27 Jesus turned the tables on the Sadducees by converting their trick question into a valid one. The Master-Teacher used their question as another opportunity to teach truth and reveal error.

In verse 24 the Master charged them with gross error and gave two reasons for doing so. He did this by asking them a question, "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?" First, He said to paraphrase, "you do not even know nor believe your own Bible, the writings of Moses." This no doubt cut to the heart, because they claimed to know the Bible. Each believer should ask the question: "Do I really know what the Bible says?" Paul exhorts in 2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be

ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Second, He said in verse 24, you do not know (nor believe) in "the power of God." (Yet they were supposed to be religious leaders of that day.) They needed to read 2 Kings 6:24-33 and 7:1-20 which gives an account that truly illustrates the power of God.

Further, Jesus struck down all of their false beliefs when He declares in verse 25, "For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven." One, He states that the resurrection is real, but there would be no marriage in the resurrection and/or in heaven. Two, He states that this is so because in the resurrection each one will be like the angels in that they do not marry nor procreate. This statement by Jesus also shows that the angels are real. (This corrected the doctrine of the Sadducees that angels did not exist.) Three, by stating all of this Jesus confirms that there is life after death and that heaven is real. He proves that God has the power to bring about a different order of life in heaven. In heaven there will be no marriages, no births, nor deaths and life will be on a much nobler level (Luke 20:34-38; Revelation 21:22). Wessel writes,

Marriage will not exist as it does now, but all life will be like that of the angels. This evidently means that the basic characteristics of resurrection life will be service for and fellowship with God. . . . Also, since in heaven there will be no more death, the need for marriage and the propagation of the race will not exist (736).

The statement by Wessel in the above quote, "but all life will be like that of the angels," needs some explanation. Wuest does a commendable job when he states, "Human beings in the next life will not be angels, but human beings. They will be like angels in this respect, that they will not propagate their kind. Thus, the hypothetical case of the Sadducees has no relation to the future life" (236).

In verses 26, 27 Jesus presents proof positive from the Word of God (of which the Sadducees claimed to believe) that these doctrines (the resurrection and the

existence of angels) are true. In verses 26,27 Jesus proclaims, "And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err." Hence, Jesus refers them to the same books of Moses where they had found the law about a brother marrying the widow of his dead brother (Deuteronomy 25:5). He asks them a stinging question, "Have ye not read. . . ?" (This is a question each believer should ask himself or herself, "Have I read my Bible?") He directs them to the incident of the burning bush in Exodus 3:2-6 where God spoke to Moses and said, "I *am*. . . the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (See Luke 20:34-38.) By this Jesus declares that God is the God of the living.

Jesus presents these things as proof of the resurrection. Why? At the time God spoke to Moses; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been dead many years and yet He was their God. God said "I am." He did not say, "I was" their God. God is the God of the living and not the God of the dead; hence, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be living after they died.⁶ The doctrine behind the phrase "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob" is that God is the covenant God, the One who is faithful in all things (1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; Genesis 12:1-7). This also implies that God is the God of the living. Jesus finishes His answer to the Sadducees by saying, "ye therefore do greatly err." The practical lesson is that each believer should be careful not to err as did the Sadducees. All people are responsible to honor and worship the true God. To do so one must be born again from above by repenting of sin and trusting His Son who is the resurrection (John 11:25,26). All people are to honor Him in everyday life. Paul in preaching in Athens declares in Acts 17:27-28 "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from

every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." All people have life because of God, for Jesus said in Luke 20:38 "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him." Matthew 22:33-34 records that with His answer, Jesus astonished the multitudes with His doctrine and put the Sadducees to silence.

E. The Question about the First Commandment 12:28-34

(Matthew 22:34-40; cf. Luke 10:25-27)

Jesus had been questioned by several different groups: the Pharisees and the Herodians, the Sadducees, the chief Priests, the scribes, and the elders. Their purpose is expressed in Mark 12:13 "to catch him in *his* words." They wanted to find some occasion against Jesus. They wanted to bring Him to trial and have Him executed. They were jealous and envious of Jesus. They had rejected Him as the Messiah and as Saviour. The last question the Jewish leaders present to Jesus (as recorded in Mark) gets to the core of the religion of the Israelite people (12:34). It touches the sum and substance of the Law that God gave them through Moses. This last question covers the central meaning and sum of the Law. This passage will be discussed under the following particulars: one, the question about the first commandment, 12:28; Matthew 22:34-36; two, Jesus gives a two-fold answer, 12:29-31; Matthew 22:37-40; and three, the discreet response of the scribe, Mark 12:32-34.

The question about the first commandment (12:28; Matthew 22:34-36)

Verse 28 presents a question by one of the scribes. Mark seems to suggest that this was a sincere question (Wessel 736). This is stated because Mark records in verse 28 that when one of the scribes "heard. . ." Jesus and the Sadducees "reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him. . . ." Yet, the account in Matthew says this question was posed in order to tempt Jesus (22:35). This is further

implied by the statement in Matthew 22:34 "But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together." "Mark does not mention these details" (Carter 261). This again refers to what is stated in Mark 12:13. They were not so much interested in the truth, but rather they were interested in turning the people against Jesus. They wanted to be able to bring charges against Him that would be worthy of death. Simply put, they wanted Jesus out of the way. Matthew calls the person who asks this question a lawyer. There is no conflict since many of the scribes were also lawyers because they knew the Law (Carter 261). The reason this is stated is that the scribes were those who painstakingly made copies of the Old Testament Scriptures. While Matthew states that this lawyer-scribe was tempting Jesus, Robertson gives some credit to him by saying, "Mark here puts this scribe in a favourable light, "knowing that he had answered them well. . . . A few, among whom was the scribe, were constrained to admire, even if they were willing to criticize. . ." (Word Pictures 368).

This question is simply stated in verse 28. This lawyer-scribe wanted to know, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Matthew 22:36 records the question like this, "Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?" Again there is no conflict since Jesus calls His answer in Matthew 22:38 "the first and great commandment."

Jesus gives a two-fold answer (12:29-31; Matthew 22:37-40) The answer Jesus gives is two-fold. The first part sums up the first part of the Ten Commandments and the second part sums up the second part of the Ten Commandments. In His answer Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and part of Leviticus 19:18. Deuteronomy 6:4-5 says, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The answer of Jesus is given in Mark 12:29,30 "The first of all

the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment." What does this mean? It is to recognize God as the one and only supreme Being and to love God with all of one's being. The question arises. Are human beings, being in a sinful state, having a sin nature, able to keep this commandment? The answer is a resounding "no." This is implied by Jesus in the answer He gives to the lawyer in Luke 10:28. Therefore, it must be that each person needs a redeemer, a Savior. That Savior is Jesus Christ. He is the only Savior. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The apostle Peter states in Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name (*meaning the name of Jesus*) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Jesus continued His two-fold answer in verse 31 by saying the second is like the first which is to "love thy neighbor as thyself." God had Moses to write in Leviticus 19:18 "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: *I am* the LORD." This is related to the golden rule stated in Matthew 7:12, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." The key word is "love." In Mark 12:31 Jesus tied the second and the first commandments together as one by declaring, "And the second *is* like. . . ." Matthew 22:39 records that Jesus said, "And the second *is* like unto it. . . ."

In tying these two commands together Jesus is saying to keep one, you also must keep the other. This is also emphasized in the last part of His two-fold answer as

recorded by Matthew when Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 22:40 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." In other words, this is the sum of the Old Testament Scriptures and everything is based on this. The practical application of "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is found in what Jesus taught in John 13:34,35. Jesus said to disciples in John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Proper love one for another is how people know that born-again, blood-bought believers are His disciples. Hence, believers are to love one another like Jesus loves them (See Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8). The golden rule is also part of the practical application (Matthew 7:12). In the other occasion where this is discussed, the lawyer asks Jesus in Luke 10:29, "And who is my neighbour?" Jesus defines "neighbor" in the "Parable of the Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:30-37).

The discreet response of the scribe (Mark 12:32-34) Verses 32, 33 record the favorable response of the scribe. He addresses Jesus as "Master." "Master" is from the same Greek word [διδάσκαλος (didaskalos)] as used in verses 14,19. It could be translated "teacher." He said, "Well, Master. . . ." The word "well" is from the Greek adverb καλῶς (kalos). It could be rendered "honestly" (Strong's 2573) meaning that it is a good and becoming and excellent answer (The Analytical Greek Lexicon 211). Then he told Jesus that He "said the truth. . . ." meaning that he agreed with Jesus. Afterwards, he combined and paraphrased several Old Testament verses. He essentially repeated the answer that Jesus gave him. In the last part of verse 32 he combined Deuteronomy 6:4 and Isaiah 45:22 when he affirmed the answer of Jesus, "for there is one God; and there is none other but he. . . ." Again, Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD." Isaiah wrote, "Look unto

me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else" (45:22). The rest of the answer of this scribe is recorded in verse 33, of which all but the last phrase is a paraphrased echo of the answer of Jesus.

In verse 33 where the scribe states to love God and neighbor "is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices," is again a combination of several Old Testament verses such as 1 Samuel 15:22; Isaiah 1:10,11; and Psalms 40:6-8 which is explained in Hebrews 10:5-7. The sum of this is found in Psalm 40:8 and Hebrews 10:7. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 40:8 "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart." Hebrews 10:7 declares, "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." (See also Hosea 6:6.)

Verse 34 reveals that "Jesus saw that he answered discreetly." This was so because the scribe had said in verse 33 that "to love. . . is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." The application is that it is more important to love God and to do His will than anything else. The only reason that "whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" were necessary was because people are sinners. The "whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" did not take away sin as revealed in Hebrew 10:4; but they pictured and pointed to that which did, the cross of Jesus Christ. The "whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" pictured and pointed to Jesus dying for sins of all people of all time on the cross of Calvary. This meant that this scribe perceived that actual internal faith and obedience was more important to God than outward show (Isaiah 1:1-31; Micah 6:6-8; Psalms 51:16,17; 50:7-15; Jeremiah 7:22,23). The answer of this scribe reveals that the message of Jesus was getting through to him, so Jesus "said unto him, Thou art not far to the kingdom of God." Why did Jesus say this and not that he was part of the kingdom of God? Being God, Jesus knew the heart of this man and whether he actually believed on Him or not. Maybe it was that this scribe

had only the proper intellectual belief but had not repented and believed from his heart. It is one thing to know and have the proper knowledge of the truth and quite another thing to actually believe from the heart. To repent and believe in Jesus Christ as personal Savior from the heart is to be in the kingdom of God and to possess eternal life. Each person should ask himself or herself, "Do I possess eternal life? Have I been born again? Am I saved?"

Mark records in verse 34 "And no man after that durst ask him *any question*." This statement shows the forcefulness of the answer of Jesus to this ensnaring question so that they dared not to ask Him any more questions. Matthew 22:46 adds more information to this statement made in Mark 12:34. The statement in Matthew comes after the question of Jesus about the Son of David. Matthew 22:46 reports, "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*."

F. The Question of Jesus about the Son of David 12:35-37

(Matthew 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44)

In that ". . .no man after that durst ask him *any question*" Jesus set forth to ask and explain a question for these that opposed Him. In this Jesus was doing two things: one, He was showing them that they were wrong and needed to repent; and two, it was also and ever His purpose to draw them unto Himself so they would be saved. Furthermore, He wanted them to see that He truly was the Messiah foretold in the Scriptures. In this passage Jesus asks the question in verse 35, "How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?" and then He explains His answer. Jesus silences His enemies by showing that David called the Christ (or the Messiah) His Lord (Psalm 110:1). (The use of Psalm 110:1 by Jesus in this way proves that this Psalm is Messianic in nature.) Robertson explains,

The scribes all taught that the Messiah was to be the son of David (John 7:41). The people in the Triumphal Entry had acclaimed Jesus as the son of David (Matt. 21:9). But the rabbis had overlooked the fact that David in Psa. 110:1 call the Messiah his Lord also. The deity and the humanity of the Messiah are both involved in the problem (Word Pictures 370).

Before quoting Psalm 110:1 as recorded in the last half of Mark 12:36 Jesus said, "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost. . . ." This statement is an affirmation by Jesus that David was inspired by the Holy Spirit to say and write this. (This is a direct application of 2 Peter 1:21. See also Acts 28:25).

In Mark 12:36 Jesus quotes Psalms 110:1 where King David wrote, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Note that the first word "LORD" is all capitalized letters while the second word "Lord" is not. Thus the first word stands for Jehovah-God (the self-Existent or Eternal One) while the second stand for Messiah, the One who shall come and be the sovereign ruler over the Jews and Gentiles alike. This Messiah of the Old Testament is the Christ and Savior of the New Testament.

Jesus restates His question in Mark 12:37 where He says, "David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? The question of Jesus as found in Mark 12:35 is "How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?" Jesus was presenting a dilemma, a perplexing question. How can the One, King David called Lord, be also the son of David? In other words, "how can the Lord-God be the son of David? The answer is that God the Son came clothed in human flesh. Jesus is both the Son of David and the Son of God. Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus, according to the genealogy in Luke 3:31 was a descendant of the son of David called Nathan. Thus Jesus is Emmanuel, or God with us as prophesied in Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6. Carter writes, "The idea that the Christ would be One essentially divine, as well as human, probably had not occurred to the Jewish interpreters" (263).

The common people loved to hear Jesus speak. The last part of Mark 12:37 states, "And the common people heard him gladly." On the other hand, the religious leaders came to realize they could not entrap Jesus and take Him before the courts to have Him stoned to death. These religious leaders as a whole did not accept Jesus but rejected Him as the Messiah, Redeemer, and Savior. Having rejected Him, later on, they used illegal means to have Him put to death by the Roman government.

G. The Denouncement of the Scribes and Pharisees 12:38-40

(Matthew 23:1-39; Luke 20:45-47)

Mark uses only 3 verses while Matthew uses 39 verses to record the denouncement of these religious leaders by Jesus. This is most likely due to the difference in the primary recipients of these Gospel records. Matthew writes primarily for the Hebrews. Mark writes primarily for the Romans and the Gentiles.

In Mark 12:38 it states that Jesus "said unto them in his doctrine. . . ." The word "doctrine" is from the Greek word διδασκαλία (didache) which means "instruction (the act or the matter). . . doctrine, hath been taught." (Strong's 1322). Thayer says it means "teaching. . . that which is taught. . . doctrine, teaching, concerning something . . . the act of teaching, instruction" (144). Many times people say they do not want to hear doctrine. They will tell the preacher to preach only evangelistic messages. Yet, throughout the book of Mark, time and time again, Mark records that Jesus taught the people. When a pastor teaches the Word of God, he is following the example of His Master, even Jesus, our Savior.

Jesus in His denouncement of these religious leaders shows that religious people are not always of the Lord. Mark 12:38-40 records:

And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows'

houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

Matthew 23:5,6,7,14 gives the close parallel verses to the above, but Matthew expands on this. Luke 20:45 explains that Jesus was speaking to the people in the temple court yard. This verse says, "Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples." Yet, the religious leaders were still around. In many cases religious leaders may act good outwardly but inwardly are unclean.

The word "beware" from βλέπω (blepo) is translated "take heed" in Mark 13:5,6 with the idea of being wary, cautious, be careful, or be warned. Part of the definition given by Thayer is "to consider, contemplate, to look at, to weigh carefully, examine" (103). Jesus is saying to the people do not follow their example. The word "rooms" in verse 39 is from the word πρωτοκλισία (protoklisia). Thayer says this means "the first reclining place, the chief place, at table. . ." (554). Rienecker says πρωτοκλισία (protoklisia) means "the chief seat, the bench in the synagogues in front of the ark where the Scriptures were contained while facing the congregation. It was reserved for officials and persons of high distinction" (123). The scribes loved to dress to display their honored positions, to be recognized, and loved the places of honor. One thing "Jesus condemns is their seeking such honor for themselves instead of for God whom they professed to serve" (Wessel 739). In Matthew 23:27 Jesus says of them that they were "hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness." In Matthew 23:28 Jesus further says, "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

This passage in Mark 12:38-40 along with Luke 20:45-47 and Matthew 23 is a knock-out blow to all who make works an outward show and part of salvation in their religion. Jesus in Matthew 23 time and time again called these leaders blind or

blind guides and hypocrites. He pronounced "woe" upon them some 8 times in Matthew 23. This teaches that believers in Jesus are not to make a show of what they do for God. Believers should not toot their own horns.

In Matthew 23:8-12 Jesus takes time to give some specific instructions to His disciples and to believers today when He exhorts,

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Lastly, note that Jesus warns them to repent and believe in Him when He states in Matthew 23:33 "*Ye* serpents, *ye* generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Every person should ask this same question. The answer is as Paul told the Philippians jailer in Acts 16:31 "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

Jesus continues His warning to beware of the scribes in Mark 12:40, "Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation." The word "devour" is from κατασθίω (katesthio). Thayer says this means "to consume by eating. . . metaphorically to. . . squander, waste: substance . . . to devour i.e. forcibly appropriate: widows' property. . ." (339). The word "pretence" is from πρόφασις (prophasis). The idea behind this word is that of "alleged motive or cause, especially a motive or cause that is falsely alleged; pretext, pretense" (*Cranfield qtd.* by Rienecker 123). In Luke 20:47 this same word is translated "*for a show.*" In pretense the scribes "offered long prayers in the homes of these widows and for them. Thus they bent the widows to their will" (Wuest 241). "The scribes were employed to make out wills and conveyances of property" (Wuest 241). The idea is that the scribes would exploit the widow saying they would give

money offerings and other things for the temple when actually they used it for themselves. Robertson writes, "Terrible pictures of civil wrong by graft grabbing the homes of helpless widows. They inveigled widows into giving their homes to the temple and took it for themselves" (Word Pictures 371). This denouncement of the scribes and Pharisees is made plain enough when Jesus states in Mark 12:40 "these shall receive greater damnation" or condemnation.

H. The Commendation of the Widow's Giving 12:41-44

(Luke 21:1-4)

This incident is the last in the public ministry of the Savior, except the trial and the crucifixion. The setting of verses 41-44 is the area of the temple called the court of the women (Wessel 740). In this court both men and women were allowed to come. The temple treasury was located there. Carter states that, "According to Edersheim* there were thirteen "trumpet-shaped boxes" in the Court of the Women into which the people would cast their contributions for various causes connected with the temple worship" (266; see note).^{7*} Clarke notes that this "incident is fresh and striking after the mention of men who devour widow's houses" (178).

Mark 12:41 relates, "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much." Jesus sat down on a bench opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the people in their giving (Wessel 740). The word "against" from *κατέναντι* (katenant) means "directly opposite:--before, over against" (Strong's 2713). Why were these people giving and for what were they giving? They were giving as part of the worship to God and to help in the support of the ministry of the Temple, to support the priest, and the tribe of Levi. They had been commanded in the Law to tithe and to give freewill offerings. But one should remember that many believers tithed (a tenth of the

income) before the Law was given. Two examples will show this to be true. Abraham gave the tithes of the spoil of the war to free Lot to Melchizedek, king of Salem, the priest of the most high God (Gen 14:18-20). Jacob vowed to give God of all that God shalt give him, the tenth or a tithe (Genesis 28:20-22). Another example is that Jesus commended (along with a rebuke about other things) the scribes and Pharisees for tithing in Matthew 23:23. Tithing equalizes all, one to another, in the grace of giving. In any case, Jesus was watching their giving and Jesus watches the giving of believers in this present age also. The giving of believers is a part of the evidence of their love and devotion to God (2 Corinthians 2:7-11; 8:1-15,24; 9:1-15).

The last part of verse 41 says "and many that were rich cast in much." But it was a poor widow that caught the eye of Jesus. Verse 42 states, "And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing." This poor woman threw in two mites. She had two coins and "she freely gave both" (Clarke 178). The Greek word πτωχός (ptochos) rendered "poor" has the idea of "abject poverty, one who has literally nothing and is in imminent danger of real starvation" (Rienecker 124). The word "mite" is from the Greek word λεπτόν (lepton) meaning "the smallest Jewish coin" (Analytical Greek Lexicon 250). The "mite" was "equal to half a κοδράντης (kodrantēs)" (Analytical Greek Lexicon 250) translated "farthing." Rienecker describes the λεπτόν (lepton) as "a small copper coin worth normally about one-eighth of a cent" (124). (Some commentators use other values, but the idea is that the monetary value of the two mites was very little.)

Jesus uses this incident to commend the giving of this widow and to teach His disciples and all believers a lesson about giving as in verses 43, 44. Evidently the disciples were not sitting with Jesus, so He called them to Him in verse 43. Verse 43

relates, "And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury." Jesus made a very profound statement for He said that the widow had cast more in than all the rest. Jesus told why this was so in verse 44, "For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living." Mark uses the word "want" while Luke 21:4 uses the word "penury." Both of these words are from the Greek word ὑστέρημα (husterema) which has the idea of "destitution" (Thayer 646). The Amplified Bible renders verse 44 like this "For they all threw in out of their abundance; but she out of her deep poverty has put in everything that she had, [even] all she had on which to live."

The giving of this poor widow was more "in proportion, and also in the spirit in which she gave; it was in the latter that she was richer than all of them. . . . The means of the giver and the motive are the measure of true generosity" (Plummer *qtd. in* Wessel 740). Jesus meant that she was richer in spiritual things. It is not the amount, but ratio to the income that is really important. The giving of each believer should be in spirit like that of the widow. She proved her faith and love for God. Each believer should ask this question: "Am I proving my love for Jesus in my giving?" One should remember, no one can out give God! Concerning the statement of Jesus in Mark 12:43, she "hath cast more in, than all they," Clarke observes,

"First stated, then proved. The standard is willingness, the inward grace of charity; but willingness cannot be measured apart from the standard of ability. She gave out of her penury; they, from their abundance. Nominally, they gave much and she gave little; but really they gave little and she gave much, for they gave their fragments and she her all (179).

Wessel remarks that this occurrence:

sums up what has gone before in the Gospel and makes a superb transition to the story of how Jesus 'gave everything' for men (*Nineham qtd. in* Wessel 740).

Summary of Chapter

The incidents in Mark 11 and 12 lead up to the Servant being Rejected as King in Jerusalem. In Mark 12:10 Jesus asks the Jewish leaders, "have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." This implies that these Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus as their Messiah—King and as their Savior. This is confirmed by Mark 11:18 and 12:12. The last verses of Chapter 11 and all of Chapter 12 are taken up with "Questions Asked and Answered." These were questions asked by the Jewish leaders directed to Jesus and answered by Him. The Jewish leaders were trying to find some way to ensnare Jesus in order to find some charge worthy of death against Him. However, Jesus uses this opportunity to answer these questions of the religious leaders and to teach them and the public. Jesus loved them. It was His desire that they come to the knowledge of the truth and experience the new birth. Even the parable of the wicked vinedressers, the question about the Son of David, and the commendation of the giving of the widow are part of the teachings and answers of Jesus.

The first question is; from whence came the authority of Jesus (11:27-33)? He told them that He would tell them if they would tell him if the baptism of John was from from heaven or men. These leaders said they could not tell. Thus, Jesus said, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." Jesus then told them "The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers" which answers their questions about His authority and exposes them (12:1-12). Mark 12:12 and Matthew 21:45,46 relate that these leaders realized that this parable was spoken against them. This parable and two in Matthew caused the Sanhedrin to send groups of others to ask more questions.

The second question is asked by an unlikely combination of Pharisees and Herodians (12:13-17). This question is about whether it is "lawful to give tribute to

Caesar, or not?" They wanted to catch Jesus in His words. They were trying to get Jesus to admit that He was going to overthrow the Roman rule. Jesus answers the question after seeing the image of Caesar on the coin. He very wisely avoided their snare by simply telling them the truth, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Mark records that "they marvelled at Him" because "he had actually thrown new light on the question" (Clarke 172). "They stood there amazed. . . at the fact that there was nothing in the reply on which they could lay hold" (Wuest 234). Yet later the Jewish leaders deliberately distorted His answer.

The third question is asked by the Sadducees who say there is no resurrection nor angels (12:18-27). Their question involved the law of "levirate marriage" which "required that if a man died without children, his brother was to marry his widow" (Wessel 735). They presented the hypothetical question with this condition: what if a woman married a man who died childless but had six brothers; so she married each brother in turn as each died being childless; "In the resurrection therefore. . . whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife" (12:23).

The Master charged the Sadducees with gross error saying, "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?" Jesus struck down all of their false beliefs when He declares in verse 25 "For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven." He declares that the resurrection is real, but there would be no marriage in the resurrection. He states that in the resurrection each one will be like the angels in that they do not marry nor procreate. Jesus confirms there is life after death and heaven is real. He presents proof positive from the Word of God that these doctrines are true. In verses 26,27 Jesus proclaims, "And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake

unto him, saying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err." This declares that God is the God of the living. Why? At the time God spoke this to Moses; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been dead many years and yet He was their God. He is the God of the living and not the God of the dead, hence Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be living after they died. Jesus finishes His answer by saying, "ye therefore do greatly err." Matthew 22:33-34 records that Jesus astonished the multitudes with His doctrine and put the Sadducees to silence.

The last question presented to Jesus touches the sum and substance of the Law (12:28-34). This scribe wanted to know, "Which is the first commandment of all?" The answer Jesus gives is two-fold. Jesus states, "The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment." This means each person is to recognize God as the one and only supreme Being and to love Him with all of one's being. Jesus continued His two-fold answer by saying the second is like the first which is to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus is saying to keep one, a person also must keep the other. Jesus declares, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40). In other words, this is the sum of the Old Testament Scriptures and everything is based on this.

The scribe acknowledges the answer Jesus gave as a good and excellent answer. Verse 34 reveals that "Jesus saw that he answered discreetly." This was so because the scribe had said that "to love. . . is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." In other words, it is more important to love God and to do His will than anything else. This answer reveals that the message of Jesus was getting

through to him. Thus, Jesus said he was "not far to the kingdom of God." Mark records in verse 34 "And no man after that durst ask him *any question*." This statement shows the forcefulness and truthfulness of the answers of Jesus to these ensnaring questions.

Jesus set forth to ask and explain a question for these that opposed Him (12:35-37). In this Jesus was doing two things: one, He was showing them that they were wrong and needed to repent; and two, it was also and ever His purpose to draw them unto Himself so they would be saved. He wanted them to see that He was the Messiah foretold in the Scriptures. Jesus asks in verse 35, "How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?" and then He explains His answer. Jesus silences His enemies by showing that David called the Christ His Lord. Jesus restates His question in Mark 12:37, "David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son?" Jesus was presenting a perplexing question. How can the One, David called Lord, be also the son of David? The answer is that God the Son came clothed in human flesh. Jesus is both the Son of David and the Son of God. Thus Jesus is Emmanuel. The common people loved to hear Jesus speak. On the other hand, the religious leaders rejected Him and came to realize they could not entrap Jesus and take Him before the courts to have Him stoned to death.

Jesus denounces these religious leaders (12:38-40). Jesus tells the people to beware of the scribes. He is saying, do not follow their example. In Matthew 23:27 Jesus includes the Pharisees and calls them "hypocrites." Yet, in Matthew 23:33 He warns them to repent and believe in Him for He asks them "how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" This denouncement is made plain enough when Jesus states in Mark 12:40 "these shall receive greater damnation."

The incident of the commendation of the giving of the widow is the last in the public ministry of the Servant (12:41-44). As Jesus watched the giving of the people, He saw how that "many that were rich cast in much." Yet, it was a poor widow who cast in two mites that caught the eye of Jesus. Jesus uses this incident to commend the giving of this widow and to teach His disciples and all believers a lesson about giving. Jesus said, "That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury." Jesus told why this was so, "For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living." The giving of this poor widow was more "in proportion, and also in the spirit in which she gave; it was in the latter that she was richer than all of them. . . . The means of the giver and the motive are the measure of true generosity" (Plummer *qtd. in* Wessel 740). The giving of each believer should be in spirit like that of the widow.

Chapter Notes

1. (See page 438; introductory comments) The three parables referred to by A. T. Robertson are: one, parable of the two sons, Matthew 21:28-32; two, parable of the wicked husbandmen, Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-12; and three, parable of the marriage feast, Matthew 22:1-14.
2. (See page 442, Mark 11:30) Each believer needs to ask himself or herself did the church that baptized me have the authority of heaven to baptize? If the answer of any believer is no, then that believer does not have baptism that is approved of God. If the answer of any believer is no, then that believer does not have baptism that is approved by Jesus, and that believer does not have Scriptural baptism. Without baptism that meets the requirements of the Bible, baptism is invalid.
3. (See page 444; Mark 11:33) Anyone who believes the Bible and believes in Jesus as personal Savior knows and is sure that Jesus did everything He did by the authority of heaven, that is, the authority of God. Jesus said in Matthew 28:18 "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." In this verse word "power" is from the same Greek word as "authority" as used in Mark 11:27-33. Who gave Jesus His power and authority? It was from God the Father. Jesus came to this earth and was born of the virgin Mary by the authority and power of God Almighty. Jesus healed the sick, caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and raised the dead by the authority and power of God the Father. Jesus forgives sin by the authority of the Father. Jesus went to the cross and paid for our sins by His suffering and death and He did this by the authority of the God the Father. He arose from the grave by the authority and

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---CHAPTER 20---

Take Heed: For the Gospel Must be Published

(Mark Chapter 13:1-13)

---CHAPTER 21---

Take Heed and Be Watchful

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(Mark Chapter 13:1-13)

OUTLINE

XX. Take Heed: For the Gospel Must Be Published	13:1-13
A. Prophecy of the Destruction of the Temple (Matthew 24:1,2; Luke 21:5,6)	13:1,2
B. The Two-fold Question by Four Disciples (Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:7)	13:3,4
C. Warnings about Deceivers and Signs of the End (Matthew 24:4-8; Luke 21:8-11)	13:5-8
D. Warnings Regarding Persecution and Conflict (Matthew 24:9-12; Luke 21:12-18)	13:9,11-13a
E. A Call to Steadfastness (Matthew 24:13; Luke 21:19)	13:13b
F. The Gospel Must Be Preached to all Nations (Matthew 24:14)	13:10

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---CHAPTER 20---

Take Heed: For the Gospel Must be Published

(Mark Chapter 13:1-13)

This division may be entitled "The Servant: Encouraging His Disciples by Prophecy." It is divided into two chapters. Chapter 20 is entitled "Take Heed: For the Gospel Must be Published," 13:1-13. Chapter 21 is entitled "Take Heed and Be Watchful," 13:14-37. There are at least six "take heeds" or the equivalents (Jesus uses the word "watch") in Mark 13:1-37." These are exhortations and warnings to "take heed" for the gospel message must be published and "watch" for He shall one day return. He exhorts, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" and "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning" (Mark 13:33,35).

Now, the Servant is going to use prophecy to encourage His followers. This passage, Mark 13:1-37, is called by most Bible commentators the Olivet Discourse. The parallels are found in Matthew chapters 24 and 25 and Luke 21:5-36. This discourse is about the future of the church age and end time (eschatological) events.

It is called the Olivet discourse because beginning with verse 3 Jesus was sitting upon the Mount of Olives looking down upon the Temple and city. In this discourse Jesus seeks to prepare His disciples for the tragedy of His death and for the carrying on of His work after His departure and ascension. Jesus knows that it will not be long before He will be tried, falsely convicted, and carried to the cruel cross on Mount Calvary and be nailed to it. He had many times foretold of this and His disciples did not seem to understand nor did they perceive what it meant. Many do not understand it today and many do not care. They understand not that they need to be reconciled to God. In any case, Jesus is preparing them for His sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection and also His departing into heaven to be at the right hand of God, the Father. Thus, He is going to encourages them by prophecy, telling history in advance, so they and future believers would not be alarmed, dismayed, nor discouraged.

Although it is about future and end time events, the entire chapter is filled with practical explanations, admonitions, and exhortations for everyday life. The nineteen imperatives in verses 5-37 make it clear that the main purpose of Jesus was not to satisfy curiosity about the future but to give practical, ethical lessons (Wessel 742). The emphasis is not so much on the future and end time events, but rather, on the exhortations. Jesus is preparing His disciples and future believers to live and to witness in an unfriendly, even a hostile world (Wessel 742). Believers should not be alarmed or discouraged by what they observe or what persecutions and strife they may have to suffer or endure. The Lord foretold these things and He abides in every age with His disciples in the person of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:1-14). Jesus states in Mark 13:11, "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."

The meaning of this passage is tied very closely to the three major predictions by the greatest of all prophets. Jesus prophesied: one, the destruction of temple and Jerusalem, which took place in A. D. 70; two, the end of the church age; and three, His return.

The Olivet discourse consists of the following components: one, prophecy of the destruction of the temple, 13:1,2; two, the twofold question by four disciples, 13:3,4; three, warnings about deceivers and signs of the end, 13:5-8; four, warnings regarding persecution and conflict, 13:9,11-13a; five, a call to steadfastness, 13:13b; six, the gospel must be preached to all nations, 13:10; seven, the abomination causing desolation and the necessity of flight, 13:14-23; eight, the return of the Son of Man, 13:24-27; nine, the parable of the fig tree and the date of the consummation, 13:28-32; and ten, the need for watchfulness, 13:32-37.

Jesus and His disciples had just returned to Mount Olivet after the many questions presented by different groups of Jewish leaders (Mark 11:27—12:44). As Jesus and His disciples were departing from the Temple, Mark records that one of them brought to His attention the massive and beautiful structure of the Temple. He said, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*" The answer, warnings, and encouragement of Jesus proceeded from this. This portion of division nine, Mark 13:1-13, may be sub-divided as follows: one, prophecy of the destruction of the temple, 13:1,2; Matthew 24:1,2; Luke 21:5,6; two, the two-fold question by four disciples, 13:3,4; Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:7; three, warnings about deceivers and signs of the end, 13:5-8; Matthew 24:4-8; Luke 21:8-11; four, warnings regarding persecution and conflict, 13:9,11-13a; Matthew 24:9-12; Luke 21:12-18; five, a call to steadfastness, 13:13b; Matthew 24:13; Luke 21:19; and six, the gospel must be preached to all nations, 13:10; Matthew 24:14. The key verse in this section is Mark

13:10, "And the gospel must first be published among all nations." Jesus, the Model Servant of God, is telling His disciples and His church that no matter the circumstances, the gospel must be and even will be published or preached among all people of the world.

A. Prophecy of the Destruction of the Temple 13:1,2
(Matthew 24:1,2; Luke 21:5,6)

Verses 1-4 actually form an introduction to this eschatological discourse to the disciples. Verse 1 records that as Jesus was leaving the Temple one of His disciples exclaimed, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" Matthew 24:1 states, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to show him the buildings of the temple." The disciples were overwhelmed by the massive stones used to build the Temple and the magnificence of the buildings. The temple building and area had been refurbished and rebuilt by Herod the Great. This was the second temple which was built by Zerubbabel and the returning remnant from the Babylonian captivity (the book of Ezra). Someone has noted that the temple area covered about one-sixth of the city of Jerusalem of that day. As to the size of the stones used, Robertson writes, "Some of these stones. . . survive today and measure from twenty to forty feet long and weigh a hundred tons" (Word Pictures 373). [This refers to the foundation stones.]

The reply of Jesus in verse 2 was rather startling or shocking (especially in view of the weapons of destruction available in that day). Jesus declares, "Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." He said the Temple would be completely destroyed. This prophecy was fulfilled in A. D. 70 when the Roman General, Titus, with his army destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. This event is recorded in the history books. Wessel writes

regarding ". . .all the buildings on the temple platform, including the temple itself to which the prophecy refers, were utterly destroyed. So completely were they destroyed that no trace of them remains today. Even their exact location on the temple mount is disputed" (743). Robertson writes, "Only the foundation stones remain" (373).

B. The Two-fold Question by Four Disciples 13:3,4

(Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:7)

In verse 3 the scene changes to the Mount of Olives. However, the Temple and Jerusalem were in full view below them. Verse 3 relates, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately." These four disciples asked Jesus a question in private. However, Robertson observes that "probably all the rest drew up as Jesus began to speak this great eschatological discourse" (373). This is confirmed by Matthew 24:3.

Verse 4 records the two-fold question. These disciples wanted to know: one, "when shall these things be?" and two, "what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" Matthew 24:3 records the questions as three-fold, "when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" These are: one, "when shall these things be?" and two, "what *shall be* the sign of thy coming," and three, "of the end of the world?" "These things" refer to the destruction of the Temple as predicted in verse 2. The disciples wanted a sure sign, but Jesus was and is more concerned to prepare His disciples by exhortation and warning for the trials that lay ahead than to give dates and signs. The rest of chapter 13 of Mark contains the answer Jesus gave to the two-fold or three-fold question.

C. Warnings about Deceivers and Signs of the End 13:5-8

(Matthew 24:4-8; Luke 21:8-11)

Verses 5-13 could be considered together under the heading, "Warnings to the disciples." The warnings are indicated by the words "Take heed" in verses 5 and 9. In

verses 5-8 Jesus warns concerning the perils from the character of the age. This speaks of deceivers who claim to be "Christ" or some such and many signs which will come upon the earth and will seem to be signs of the end times. In verses 9-13 Jesus warns about personal danger amid persecution that they each will face even from the family of a believer. Nevertheless, Jesus calls upon His disciples to be steadfast.

In verses 5, 9, 23, 33 Jesus used the present active imperative form of the Greek verb βλέπω (blepo) rendered "Take heed" or "Take ye heed." Βλέπω (blepo) means basically "to see, discern. . . to weigh carefully, examine " (Thayer 103). In this passage, it carries the idea of watching in order to be careful and to be warned and beware (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c). This imperative verb is translated "beware" in Mark 8:15; 12:38; and Philippians 3:2. The repetitive use of this verb by Jesus is a clear indication that warnings, exhortation, and admonition is one of His basic concerns.

In verses 5 and 6 Jesus warns His disciples and all believers about being deceived and about deceivers. Robertson states that "This warning runs through the whole discussion" (Word Pictures 374). In verse 5 Jesus warns them to "Take heed lest any *man* deceive you." The verb "deceive" is from πλανᾶω (planao). It means "to cause to stray, to. . . lead aside from the right way. . . metaphorically, to lead away from the truth, to lead into error, to deceive. . ." (Thayer 514). Jesus further explains this by warning in "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and shall deceive many." The apostle John warns of this when he writes in 1 John 2:18, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." In 2 John 1:7 he writes, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." The work of Satan,

the Devil, is to lie and deceive as seen from Matthew 24:11,24; Luke 21:8; John 8:44; Ephesians 4:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; 1 John 3:7; 4:6; Revelation 12:9; 13:14; 20:2,3,8,10. In fact, Jesus calls the devil a liar in John 8:44 "Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." To lie is to deceive. Each believer needs to remember that the Devil is a liar and the arch-deceiver and should be careful not to be deceived by the Devil or his messengers. The practical application is that each believer should check out what is proclaimed with the Bible, the Word of God.

Matthew 24:4,5 is parallel to Mark 13:5,6. Robertson comments on Matthew 24:4,5 concerning some who have come claiming to be the Christ. He writes:

"Josephus (Wars VI, 54) gives there false Christs as one of the reasons for the explosion against Rome that led to the city's destruction. Each new hero was welcomed by the masses including Barcochba. "I am the Messiah," each would say. Forty odd years ago two men in Illinois claimed to be Messiah, each with followers (Schlatter, Schweinfurth). In more recent years Mrs. Annie Besant has introduced a theosophical Messiah and Mrs. Eddy made claims about herself on par with those of Jesus (Word Pictures 188, 189).

In verses 7 and 8 (along with Matthew 24:6-8) Jesus warns believers that they shall hear about many wars, nations rising up against other nations, earthquakes, famines, and other troubles. Jesus says "these *are* the beginnings of sorrows." In verse 7 Jesus declares, "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall not be* yet." He exhorts His disciple that they are not to be frightened or alarmed. Robertson puts it this way, "do not be scared out of your wits by them" (Word Pictures 189). Jesus continues in verse 8, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall

be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows."

This prophecy has both a near time and future time fulfillment. The word "end" refers both to the event of A. D. 70 and also the time of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. In general, history bears out that in the last 1900 to 2000 years there has been a major war on the average of about every 20 years. History records that before the destruction of Jerusalem that in the Roman Empire there were four earthquakes; four famines as well as hurricanes and storms (Robertson, Word Pictures 375). Thus Jesus reveals that there will be all kinds of other disturbances: nation against nation, earthquakes, famine, and trouble. Even recent recorded history proves this prophecy to have been fulfilled. Howbeit, it would seem that they will continue until the end. These all point to the sinfulness of men and that Satan is "the prince of the power of the air" (Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:2; John 12:31; 1 John 5:19). [This prophecy also knocks out the doctrine of post-millennialism, that things will get better and better until Jesus comes again.] This prophecy by Jesus reminds one of the prophecy of Isaiah 19:1,2, "The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. 2 And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, *and* kingdom against kingdom."

Jesus said all these things are the beginning of sorrows and thus are not to be taken as marking the end. The word "beginning" indicates that there are sufferings yet to come. Robertson remarks, "These woes, say Jesus, are not a proof of the end, but

of the beginning" (Word Pictures 189). Mark 13:7,8 (along with Matthew 24:6-8) should be compared with 2 Timothy 3:1-9.

D. Warnings Regarding Persecution and Conflict 13:9,11-13a
(Matthew 24:9-12; Luke 21:12-18)

Once again, Jesus warns His disciples to "take heed" and be on the lookout and consider because of persecutions of all kinds. Jesus declares in verse 9, "But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them." This verse reveals that they would be brought before religious and secular authorities. They were and over the last 2000 years this has been the case. Believers in this present day can expect the same as time draws nearer and nearer to the time the second coming of Christ. The book of Acts is literally filled with fulfillment of this prophecy. One can read about the persecutions of Peter, James, John, other apostles, and Paul. An example is given in Acts 5:40 where the Bible relates, "And to him they agreed: and when they (*the Sanhedrin*) had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." The experiences of Paul is recorded throughout the book of Acts and spoken of in his epistles and especially in 2 Corinthians 11. Jesus said the reason for this was so they would have the opportunity to witness for His sake. He said " and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them." This is reinforced by the declaration in verse 10 which will be discussed later.

In verse 11 Jesus says when you are led into judgment do not worry and be overly concerned about what to say. Jesus states in Mark 13:11 "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither

do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." Why should believers not worry about what to say? Jesus promises that in these cases that believers would be strengthened by the Holy Spirit who also will give them the words to say. Examples of this are found Jeremiah 1:9; Acts 6:10; and Acts 7:55. The prophet records in Jeremiah 1:9, "Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." Acts 6:10 relates of Stephen before the Jews in a synagogue, "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." Further in Acts 7:55 speaking of Stephen, Luke records, "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. However, the last part of Mark 13:11 should not be used to justify the lack of careful preparation for preaching (Wessel 746; Robertson, Word Pictures 376). In fact, the Apostle Paul exhorts in 2 Timothy 2:14 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Perhaps verse 12 speaks of the most regretful type of persecution. Jesus warns that many members of their own families would betray them even unto death. He declares in Mark 13:12 "Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death." Jesus had already warned of this in Luke 12:51-53. Jesus warns that the gospel would be the cause of families being split (Wessel 746). Luke 12:51-53 records, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the

mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." (Also Micah 7:2-6 should be considered.)

Not only is this so, (that the gospel will cause those within a family to turn and to be against one another), but in the first part of verse 13 Jesus declares, "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake. . . ." This shows that the world in general, which is controlled by Satan, "the god of this (*present*) world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), shall hate the people of God because of Jesus and His name sake. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:11-12 "Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." One Bible commentator explained it this way, "As there is nothing that excites such love as the gospel, when intelligently received, so there is nothing that occasions such hate as this same gospel, when passionately rejected" (Morison *qtd.* by Wessel 746).

E. A Call to Steadfastness 13:13b

(Matthew 24:13; Luke 21:19)

The last part of verse 13 is a call by Jesus to the people of God to be steadfast in the face of persecution and trial. Jesus said, "but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." The word "end" in this verse refers to the end of the life of the believer and not the end of the age as in verse 7 (Wessel 747). Jesus is speaking of standing firm, standing in face of persecutions and testings. This statement by Jesus does not imply that a born-again, blood-bought believer can lose his or her salvation or that anyone is saved or kept saved by works. Ephesians 2:8,9 clearly teaches that salvation is by grace through faith and not by works. Hence, Jesus is not teaching salvation by works nor is He teaching that one can lose his salvation.

(Also refer to 1 Peter 1:4,5). Rather, Jesus is emphasizing that genuine faith will issue in perseverance that will endure in the face of severe persecutions and trials. Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:12, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us." In Luke 21:19 Jesus said, "In your patience possess (or keep in control) ye your souls." Paul exhorts in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

F. The Gospel Must Be Preached to all Nations 13:10

(Matthew 24:14)

As stated previously, the last part of verse 9, "ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them" is reinforced by the declaration in verse 10. Jesus makes a very positive statement in verse 10 when He declares, "And the gospel must first be published among all nations." The parallel in Matthew 24:14 relates that Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The emphasis is that no matter the persecution, conflict, or strife the gospel must be and will be preached to all peoples in every generation. Verse 10 is a preview of the Great Commission as found in some form or another in everyone of the Gospel records of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and also Acts. Jesus declares after His resurrection to the twelve in John 20:20-21 "And when he had so said, he showed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Just as Jesus was sent of the Father, even so He sends His disciples working in and through His churches to proclaim the gospel to every person in every nation of the world. Thus, this is for the churches and for each member of each church.

It is the will of God that "...the gospel must first be published among all nations." Matthew 24:14 adds to this, "and then shall the end come." In this context the word "end" seems to refer to the Second Coming of Christ. What is Jesus emphasizing here? Jesus is emphasizing that instead of looking for signs of the end, the people of God are to get busy and spread the gospel for all nations must hear it before the end comes. This verse does not say that all will accept it. Jesus is saying, "Take heed: For the gospel must be published." This is the primary thing.

Summary of Chapter

In the Olivet Discourse the Servant uses prophecy to encourage His followers. He encourages them by telling history in advance so they and future believers will not be alarmed, dismayed, nor discouraged when persecutions and strife come upon them. Although the Olivet Discourse is about future and end time events, the entire chapter is filled with practical explanations, admonitions, and exhortations for everyday life. The many imperatives make it clear that the main purpose of Jesus was to give practical, ethical lessons. The emphasis is not so much on end time events, but rather, on the exhortations and encouragements. The Servant is preparing His disciples to live and to witness in an unfriendly world where the Devil is "the prince of the power" and "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2).

To understand this passage one must understand that the Servant made three major, true, and accurate predictions. He prophesied: one, the destruction of Temple and Jerusalem; two, the end of the church age; and three, His return. After the prophesy of the destruction of the temple, the disciples ask Jesus a two-fold or three-fold question. Matthew 24:3 records the questions as three-fold. These are: one, "when shall these things be?" and two, "what *shall be* the sign of thy coming," and

three, "of the end of the world?" The answer of Jesus was designed to prepare His disciples by exhortation and warning for the trials that lay ahead, rather than to give dates and signs.

Verses 5-13 expounds on the "warnings to the disciples." The warnings are indicated by the words "Take heed." Jesus warns concerning the perils from the character of the age. This speaks of deceivers who claim to be "Christ" or some such and many signs which will come upon the earth seeming to be signs of the end times. In verses 9-13 Jesus warns about personal danger amid persecution that they will face even from the family of a believer. Yet, Jesus calls upon His disciples to be steadfast in the face of the work of the Devil, the chief liar and arch-deceiver. Each believer needs to be careful not to be deceived by the Devil and his messengers. The practical application is that each believer should check out what is proclaimed with the Word of God.

In verses 7 and 8 Jesus warns believers that they shall hear about many wars, nations rising up against other nations, earthquakes, famines, and other troubles. Jesus says "these *are* the beginnings of sorrows." He exhorts His disciple that they are not to be frightened or alarmed.

Jesus warns His disciples to "take heed" and consider because of persecutions of all kinds. Jesus cautions in verse 9 that His disciples shall be brought before religious and secular authorities and even rulers and kings. He says it will be "for a testimony against them." This had been true in every generation. However, Jesus promises the presence and strengthening of the Holy Spirit in all these persecutions and even that the Spirit will give the believer the words to speak (13:11).

Verse 12 speaks of the most regretful type of persecution. Jesus warns that many members of their own families would betray them even unto death. Jesus had

already warned of this in Luke 12:51-53. Not only is this so, but in the first part of verse 13 Jesus declares, "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake. . . ."

This shows that the world in general, which is controlled by Satan, shall hate the people of God because of Jesus and His name sake. In any case, Jesus exhorts His people to be steadfast in the face of persecution and trial. He said, "but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Jesus is speaking of standing firm. He is emphasizing that genuine faith will issue in perseverance that will endure in the face of severe persecutions and trials (Mark 13:13; Luke 21:19; 1 Corinthians 15:58).

Jesus makes a very positive statement in verse 10 when He declares, "And the gospel must first be published among all nations." Matthew 24:14 adds, that it "shall be. . . for a witness unto all nations. . . ." The emphasis is that no matter the persecution, conflict, or strife the gospel must be and will be preached to all peoples in every generation. This is the will of God. Matthew 24:14 also adds, "and then shall the end come." Jesus is emphasizing that instead of looking for signs of the end, the people of God are to get busy and spread the gospel for all nations must hear it before the end comes. He is saying, "Take heed: For the gospel must be published." This is the primary thing.

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION NINE---

THE SERVANT: ENCOURAGING HIS DISCIPLES BY PROPHECY

(Mark Chapter 13:1-37)

---CHAPTER 21---

Take Heed and Be Watchful

(Mark Chapter 13:14-37)

OUTLINE

- XXI. Take Heed and Be Watchful** 13:14-37
- A. The Abomination of Desolation and the Necessity of Flight 13:14-23
(Matthew 24:15-26; Luke 21:20-24)
 - 1. The abomination of desolation 13:14a
(Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20)
 - 2. Fleeing to the mountains 13:14b-18
(Matthew 24:16-20; Luke 21:21-23)
 - 3. The demand for a future fulfillment 13:19,20
(Matthew 24:21,22; Luke 21:22,24-27)
 - 4. Another warning concerning deceivers 13:21,22
(Matthew 24:23,24,26)
 - 5. Taking heed and being alert 13:23
(Matthew 24:25)
 - B. The Return of the Son of Man 13:24-27
(Matthew 24:27-31; Luke 21:25-27)
 - 1. The signs of those days 13:24,25
(Matthew 24:27-29; Luke 21:25,26)
 - 2. The coming again of the Son of Man 13:26
(Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:27)
 - 3. Sending the angels to gather the elect 13:27
(Matthew 24:31)
 - C. The Parable of the Fig Tree and the Date of the Consummation 13:28-32
(Matthew 24:32-36; Luke 21:28-33)
 - 1. The parable of the fig tree 13:28,29
(Matthew 24:32,33; Luke 21:29-31)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION NINE---

THE SERVANT: ENCOURAGING HIS DISCIPLES BY PROPHECY

(Mark Chapter 13:1-37)

---CHAPTER 21---

Take Heed and Be Watchful

(Mark Chapter 13:14-37)

OUTLINE (Continued)

2. The certainty and reliability of this prophecy 13:30,31
(Matthew 24:34,35; Luke 21:32,33)
3. The date of the consummation 13:32
(Matthew 24:36; Luke 21:28)
- D. The Need for Watchfulness 13:33-37
(Matthew 24:42; Luke 21:34-36)
 1. Watching and praying 13:33
(Matthew 24:42; Luke 21:36)
 2. The parable of the porter 13:34-37
 3. The application to His disciples 13:35
(Matthew 24:42-44; Luke 21:34,35)
 4. The need to watch and not sleep 13:36,37
(Matthew 24:42-47; Luke 21:36)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION NINE---

THE SERVANT: ENCOURAGING HIS DISCIPLES BY PROPHECY

(Mark Chapter 13:1-37)

---CHAPTER 21---

Take Heed and Be Watchful

(Mark Chapter 13:14-37)

The main theme of Mark 13:14-37 is to "Take Heed and Be Watchful." The Ideal Servant continues His exhortations and encouragement using prophecy. Jesus uses the imperative verbs "take. . . heed" two times and "watch" three times. (The verb "watch" in verse 34 is in the subjunctive mood.) In Mark 13:23 He declares, "But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things," and in Mark 13:33, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." He exhorts His disciples to "watch" in verses 33, 35 and 37. In Mark 13:35 Jesus states emphatically, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh. . . ." The whole idea is that He shall return someday. Therefore, His disciples in every generation should be ready and watching for that day every hour. The idea is not unlike what Jesus commands the ten servants in Luke 19:13 when He gives forth the imperative "Occupy till I come." [The Greek word rendered "occupy" is *πραγματεύομαι* (pragmateuomai) meaning "to carry on a business" (Thayer 534).] So Jesus is saying

to believers to be ready for His return at any time, taking heed, watching and praying, and doing business for Him. Hence, He concludes emphatically, in Mark 13:37 "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

Jesus declares in verse 33, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: ye know not when the time is." He explains this in verse 35 when He states, "for ye know not when the master of the house cometh." He is explaining the statement He made in verse 32 "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Matthew 24:36 records it this way, "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." He is speaking of the day and hour of His return. But He does not want His disciples to be setting dates but rather to be watchful, serving Him, being ready when He does return. This is the purpose of this passage, Mark 13:14-37. This passage consists of the following components: one, the abomination of desolation and the necessity of flight, 13:14-23; Matthew 24:15-26; Luke 21:20-24; two, the return of the Son of Man, 13:24-27; Matthew 24:27-31; Luke 21:25-27; three, the parable of the fig tree and the date of the consummation, 13:28-32; Matthew 24:32-36; Luke 21:28-33; and four, the need for watchfulness, 13:33-37; Matthew 24:42; Luke 21:34-36.

A. The Abomination of Desolation and the Necessity of Flight 13:14-23
(Matthew 24:15-26; Luke 21:20-24)

Admittedly, this passage is very difficult to understand and interpret.¹ The prophecy herein seems to have both near time and future fulfillments. This subdivision may be broken into the following segments: one, the abomination of desolation, 13:14a; Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20; two, fleeing to the mountains, 13:14b-18; Matthew 24:16-20; Luke 21:21-23; three, the demand for a future fulfillment; 13:19,20; Matthew 24:21,22; Luke 21:22,24-27; four, another warning

concerning deceivers, 13:21,22; Matthew 24:23,24,26; and five, taking heed and being alert, 13:23; Matthew 24:25.

The abomination of desolation (13:14a; Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20) The first thing Jesus mentions in connection with future events is "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet." In Mark 13:14 Jesus states, "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains." The word "abomination" is from the Greek noun βδέλυγμα (bdelugma). It means "a foul thing (loathsome on acct. of its stench), a detestable thing. . . in the O. T. often used of idols and things pertaining to idolatry, to be held in abomination by the Israelites" (Thayer 99). Someone has said that βδέλυγμα (bdelugma) or "abomination" speaks of some "sacrilegious object causing the desecration (of a sacred place)" (Source unknown). Barnes states, "The Gentiles were all held in abomination by the Jews, Ac x. 28" (254). The word "desolation" is from the Greek noun ἐρήμωσις (eremosis). This word means "making into a desert, desolating" (Rienecker 125). The verb form of this word (used in Revelation 17:16 and 18:19) is from the verb ἐρημώω (eremoo). This verb means "to make desolate, lay waste. . . to ruin, bring to desolation. . . to despoil one. . ." (Thayer 249). The word "desolation" could be explained by the words: abandoned, deserted, forsaken, spoil, and waste or made a waste. Rienecker writes this expression "the abomination of desolation" is "A reference to the Anti-Christ (the man of sin) 2 Thess. 2:3f" (Hill *qtd. in* Rienecker 90). Along with this, it is significant that this word translated "abomination" is also used in Luke 16:15; Revelation 17:4,5; 21:27. In Revelation 17:1-5 the plural, "abominations," is used in connection with "the great whore" called

"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

This verse refers to what Daniel prophesied in Daniel 9:20-27; 11:31; 12:11. Some commentators seem to believe that this prophecy was partially fulfilled in the Maccabean period by Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, in 167 B. C. (Wessel 748; Robertson, Word Pictures 376). Robertson writes, "the very phrase applied in I Macc. 1:54 to the altar of Zeus erected by Antiochus Epiphanes where the altar to Jehovah was" (Word Pictures 376). However, in Mark 13:14 Jesus is speaking of a future time. In his comments on Matthew 24:15, Robertson relates,

The desolation in the mind of Jesus is apparently the Roman army (Luke 21:20) in the temple, an application of the words of Daniel to this dread event. The verb *bdelussomai* is to feel nausea because of stench, to abhor, to detest. Idolatry was a stench to God (Luke 16:15; Rev. 17:4). Josephus tells us that the Romans burned the temple and offered sacrifices to their ensigns placed by the eastern gate when they proclaimed Titus as Emperor" (Word Pictures 190).

Barnes advances the same basic idea as Robertson. He states, "The abomination of desolation means the Roman army, and is so explained by Lu. xxi. 20" (Barnes 254). This prophecy of Mark 13:14 was partially fulfilled in the events of A. D. 66-70 in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army. However, it would seem that the complete fulfillment will come during the Great Tribulation period yet future.

The abomination of desolation is speaking of "something detestable" that is a completely deserted, forsaken, spoiled waste in the all important view of God Almighty. It would seem that this was partially fulfilled by the unholy sacrifice made by the command of Antiochus Epiphanes, and again by the Roman Army. However, the abomination of desolation refers ultimately to the actions of the Antichrist during the Tribulation Period and possibly the Antichrist himself. Concerning the timing and fulfillment of "the abomination that causes desolation," Wessel understands it to have "a multiple fulfillment in (1) the Maccabean Period, (2) the events of A. D. 66-70,

and (3) the end time" (748). Wuest writes, "Our Lord's words now definitely reach forward to the Great Tribulation and to Antichrist, the Abomination of Desolation, who will violate the Holy of Holies of the Temple in Jerusalem" (249).

Jesus states, "when ye shall see the abomination of desolation. . . standing where it ought not. . . ." The word "standing" is from the Greek accusative singular masculine participle ἑστῶς (hestos)² from the verb ἵστημι (histemi). ἵστημι (histemi) means "to stand" (Rienecker 125). In that ἑστῶς (hestos) is masculine singular suggests a man as the one who is the abomination of desolation. This one stands "where he ought not" or rather is "usurping a plan that is not his" (NEB, Vaughan, The New Testament from 26 Translations 193). Matthew 24:15 says that this one is standing "in the holy place." This compares with 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10. In verses 3,4,8,9 Paul writes,

Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" And then shall that Wicked (*One*) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.

The one called the "man of sin," "the son of perdition," and "that Wicked (*One*) is one and the same, "whose coming is after the working of Satan. . . ." This is the one who will stand where he "ought not." Since the Greek ἑστῶς (hestos) participle translated "standing" is masculine singular, the pronoun "it" could be translated "he." Mark 13:24-26 and Matthew 24:29,30 seem to imply that the one referred to here appears before the coming of the Son of Man "in the clouds with great power and glory."

The middle part of Mark 13:14 states in parentheses "let him that readeth understand." This speaks of the saint or believer who prays, reads the Bible, and stays

in fellowship with Jesus and thus the Holy Spirit. This seems to be an added emphasis that believers should "take heed and be watchful." The one who reads, meditates, and studies the Bible will be ready when Jesus comes again or be ready to die, whichever come first (1 Timothy 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Fleeing to the mountains (13:14b-18; Matthew 24:16-20; Luke 21:21-23) In the last part of verse 14 Jesus tells them that "when ye shall see the abomination of desolation. . . standing where it ought not. . ." the ones in Judea should flee to the mountains with all haste.³ The urgency of this fleeing to the mountains is emphasized by what Jesus says in verses 15-18. In verse 15 Jesus warns those on "the housetop" not to "go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house." Most houses of that day in Judea had flat roofs and the people used them as a place for prayer, rest or observation (Clarke 185). Jesus was telling them when the time came they would not have time to descend the stairs and get anything out of their houses. Nor would those in the crop fields have time to grab their outer garment (verse 16). The outer garment would be especially helpful for warmth in the higher elevations at night. In verses 17 and 18 Jesus tells them to pray. Pray that the women be not with child nor giving suck to a baby in those days. And pray that the time of "flight be not in the winter." Nevertheless, they must be ready to flee to the mountains quickly. The main "thing was to get away from Judea" (Clarke 185). It is interesting to note that before the parallel passage of Mark 13:14b-18, Luke records, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (21:20). This was partially fulfilled in A. D. 66-70 but will be completely fulfilled during the tribulation.

The demand for a future fulfillment (13:19,20; Matthew 24:21,22; Luke 21:22,24-27) Jesus declares in verse 19 "For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as

was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be." The language of verse 19 demands a future fulfillment. The word "affliction" is from the Greek noun θλίψις (thlipsis). This word means "a pressing, pressing together, pressure. . . metaphorically oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits" (Thayer 291). In Matthew 24:21 this word is translated "tribulation." In fact, Matthew uses the word "great" before "tribulation." Jesus is looking forward to the Great Tribulation since the "affliction" or "tribulation" is such that it has not happened before nor "shall be." This is explained by the words, "such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be." Wuest comments, "The judgments of God which fall upon unbelieving Israel and the Gentiles nations will have no precedent in all past history, and no counterpart in all succeeding history" (250).

Similar language is used in Daniel 12:1 and Jeremiah 30:7. Daniel writes, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (12:1). Jeremiah writes, "Alas! for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (30:7). Jeremiah calls this "the time of Jacob's trouble. . . ." Daniel writes that it is "a time of trouble. . ." for "a nation. . ." and further God identifies this nation to Daniel as "thy people. . ." or in other words a remnant of Israel. It would seem that Jeremiah and Daniel are both writing about the same "time." Thus, it could be said that God is saying "for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble. . . ." God reveals in Jeremiah 30:7 that "he (*that is, Jacob, the nation of Israel*) shall be saved out of it." The book of Daniel confirms this when

God declares that "at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Who are those written in the book? This would be the Israelites that have been born again. As previously stated this is called "the time of Jacob's trouble." Hence, the language in Jeremiah 30:7 and Daniel 12:1 is very similar to what is found in Mark 13:19 and explains it. This "time, or in other words, "the days of affliction," was not completely fulfilled in A. D. 70. Wessel believes this time "looks forward to the Great Tribulation that will precede the End" (749).

Jesus continues in verse 20 to say, "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." This verse conveys the idea that this tribulation period will be so terrible that except God "had shortened" it no one could live during or through this time. The verb "had shortened" from the aorist active indicative of *κολοβόω* (*koloboo*) simply means to "shorten, cut short" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, v. 2.3c). The use of the aorist in this context is what Dana and Mantey call "the Culminative Aorist." They explain: "The aorist is employed in this meaning when it is wished to view an event in its entirety, but to regard it from the viewpoint of its existing results" (196). Jesus is saying that when the days of the Great Tribulation comes, God in His mercy will cause it to last only a certain amount of time. Otherwise, no flesh shall be saved. The term "the elect's sake" refers to born-again believers most likely, and more especially to the 144,000 Jews who are sealed. This is stated because of what is stated in Mark 13:19; Jeremiah 30:7; and Daniel 12:1. Wuest believes,

God, in mercy will shorten the period of the Great Tribulation so that Israel, the nation, might not cease to exist. In Revelation 7:4-8, we have 144,000 of Israel, the preaching remnant in the Great Tribulation period. These announce the coming of the Messiah, and lose their lives during that period by reason of the persecution of Antichrist. In Revelation 14 we see them in the Glory. The

period of divine judgments will be shortened in order that the lives of God's chosen out ones, namely Israel might be spared (250).

Another warning concerning deceivers (13:21,22; Matthew 24:23,24,26)

Because it would be such a serious problem, Jesus again warns His disciples in verses 21, 22 concerning deceivers (Please refer to verses 5,6). This is done for emphasis. He proclaims, "And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ; or, lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect." After saying this, Matthew records that Jesus reminds them, "Behold, I have told you before" (24:25).

God warns of false teachers and prophets throughout the Bible (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:20; 1 Kings 18:19; 22:6-12; Jeremiah 5:31; 23:9-18; Ezekiel; Matthew 7:15; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1). Wessel writes, "A crisis like that of the fall of the city would be sure to produce many false pretenders. So would the crisis of the approaching End" (749). Jesus says that many false Christs shall arise performing great signs and wonders. They will deceive and seduce many, yet they will not be able to deceive the true people of God. This language is comparable to that found in Revelation 13:12-15 and also 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11. The force of the phrase in Mark 13:22, "if it were possible, even the elect," is not to indicate that the true people of God will actually be deceived but is given to show how strong the deception will be. It is not possible because God guards his elect (John 10:27-30).

Taking heed and being alert (13:23; Matthew 24:25) Jesus exhorts to take heed and be aware of the things He has foretold. In Mark 13:23 He prompts and urges, "But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things." This shows that Jesus is saying all these things to prepare His disciples for that time, "the days of affliction." He is saying "be alert" for "I have foretold you all things." The word "foretold" is from the perfect tense form [προεῖρηκα (proeireka)] of the verb

προλέγω (prolego) which means "to say beforehand, i.e. predict, forewarn" (Strong's 4302). The idea is to "warn in advance. . . predict" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, v. 2.3c). This is the use of what Dana and Mantey call "The Intensive Perfect." They say the perfect tense "is a strong way of saying that a thing is" (202). Jesus is saying, I have told you all these things beforehand, so believe them and take heed and be alert at all times. Barnes explaining Matthew 24:25 states, "The reason why he told them before was that they might be on their guard, and be prepared for those calamities" (257). This was part of His encouragement to those disciples of that day as well as to believers in every age. Verses 21, 22 serve to warn believers, and for that matter all people, that the Anti-Christ will one day come upon the world scene.

B. The Return of the Son of Man 13:24-27

(Matthew 24:27-31; Luke 21:25-27)

The return of the Son of Man is a subject that Jesus speaks of many times. The Son of Man is the Servant of God, Jesus Christ. In the book of Mark, Jesus first identifies Himself as the Son of Man in chapter 2:10 (*this is the incident of the healing of the palsied man let down through a roof*) when He declares, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. . . ." The last time this is mentioned in Mark is when He was before the Sanhedrin and answered a question of the high priest as given in Mark 14:62 "And Jesus said, I am (*the Christ, and the Son of the Blessed*): and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (For further comments on the title "Son of Man" refer to the discussion on pages 291,292 for Mark 8:31.) This speaks of His return a second time.⁴ Jesus uses this truth to cheer and encourage His disciples. In John 14:1-3. Jesus states in verse 3, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."

This is a wonderful promise made about His coming a second time. He states in Mark 13:26 "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." He came the first time, meek and lowly, to die for all sinners in order to redeem sinful mankind. He will come the second time in "great power and glory" to rule and reign from the throne of David over the whole world. This subdivision may be broken into the following segments: one, the signs of those days, 13:24,25; Matthew 24:27-29; Luke 21:25,26; two, the coming again of the Son of Man, 13:26; Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:27; and three, sending the angels to gather the elect, 13:27; Matthew 24:31.

The signs of those days (13:24,25; Matthew 24:27-29; Luke 21:25,26) Jesus begins verse 24 by saying, "But in those days, after that tribulation. . . ." Jesus opens with the strong Greek adversative conjunction ἀλλά (alla) translated "but." It can be rendered "nevertheless, notwithstanding" (Thayer 27) and even "indeed" (Strong's 235). It connects what was just said in verses 14-23 with what is about to be stated. Wessel states, "Whereas the preceding verses (5-23) point to both the destruction of Jerusalem and the end time, vv. 24-27 speak only of the end time" (750). The words "those days" refer to the end time events. Jesus said "after that tribulation." The word "affliction" in verse 19 and the word "tribulation" in verse 24 are from the same Greek noun θλίψις (thlipsis). Jesus continues to say in verses 24,25 "after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken." Besides these discombobulations, Luke 21:25,26 records that there will be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity. . . Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." These will be the signs of those days and the coming of the Son of Man. The disturbances of the normal

functions of "the sun, moon, and stars occur at the close of the great Tribulation period, and are literal" (Wuest 251). This is the language of the prophets in Isaiah 13:9-11; Ezekiel 32:7-9; Joel 2:1-2,10; Amos 8:9; Zephaniah 1:14-16, to name a few.

The apostle John records in Revelation 6:12-14

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; *13* And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. *14* And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

The coming again of the Son of Man (13:26; Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:27)¹

Jesus makes it plain in verse 26 that He is coming again when He declares, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." This seems to refer to the second phase of the return of Christ which occurs at the end of the tribulation.⁴ This would concur with the context of verses 24, 25. In other words, the events of verses 24, 25 take place and then Jesus shall come "in the clouds with great power and glory." This would be in agreement with the adverb "then" which is from τότε (tote). This "demonstrative adverb of time" means, in this context, "then, at that time. . . of things future; *then* (at length) when the thing under discussion takes place (or shall have taken place). . ." (Thayer 629). In the first phase Jesus comes back in the air to get all the saints.⁴ This relates to the teaching of 1 Thessalonians 4:12-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-56. In the second phase, He comes at the end of the Great Tribulation and He returns with His saints.⁴ This relates to Revelation 19:11-16 and 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11. He will defeat Satan and the Antichrist.

Sending the angels to gather the elect (13:27; Matthew 24:31)¹ After declaring that the Son of Man shall come "in the clouds with great power and glory" Jesus states, "And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of

heaven" (13:27). Verse 27 could be speaking of the first phase of the return of Christ. However, it is more likely that the word "then" speaks of something which happened just after verse 26. Wuest says, "The gathering of the elect refers here to the regathering of all Israel at the second advent of Messiah" (251).

The Old Testament prophets speak much about the regathering of Israel. Verse 27 could be speaking of that event (Isaiah 10:20-22; 27:12,13; 35:8-10; 43:5,6; Jeremiah 31:16,17; 50:17-20; Ezekiel 37:21-24; 39:25-29 and others). Ezekiel 39:25,27 records "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; . . . "When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations." Further, Zechariah chapters 12—14 may have the key to the proper interpretation of Mark 13:27. Many Jews live outside of the land of Israel in this modern day. Zechariah 12:10-14 speaks of the repentance of the Israelites towards God in days of the Tribulation. Also, according to Zechariah 13:8 God shall preserve one-third of the Jews in the land of Israel. In that future day God shall bring to pass that in the land two-thirds of the Israelites will be cut off and die, but a third, the remnant, will remain alive. According to Zechariah 13:9 this one-third shall turn and call upon God (Isaiah 65:8). Zechariah 13:9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It *is* my people: and they shall say, The LORD *is* my God." After the parallel of these verses of Mark 13:24-26, Luke records, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (21:28). God will keep His promises to Abraham.

C. The Parable of the Fig Tree and the Date of the Consummation 13:28-32
(Matthew 24:32-36; Luke 21:28-33)

Once again Jesus uses a parable to emphasize His teachings. This time it is to underscore and stress His coming a second time and that His disciples in every time frame are to "take heed and be watchful." He wants His people to understand the importance of living for Him each day and to be ready when He shall return. This set of verses may be divided as follows: one, the parable of the fig tree, 13:28,29; Matthew 24:32,33; Luke 21:29-31; two, the certainty and reliability of this prophecy, 13:30,31; Matthew 24:34,35; Luke 21:32,33; and three, the date of the consummation, 13:35; Matthew 24:36; Luke 21:28.

The parable of the fig tree (13:28,29; Matthew 24:32,33; Luke 21:29-31) In verses 28, 29 Jesus uses the parable of the fig tree to indicate (how to know) when the end is about to come. Jesus remarks, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors." In the days of the New Testament as Wessel relates, "In Palestine most trees are evergreen, but the fig tree is an exception. In the fall it loses its leaves, and when in the spring. . ." it "begins to leaf out. . ." (751). Therefore, one knows that summer is near. In verse 29 Jesus is saying, "in like manner" one can tell when the end is nigh when one sees these things come to pass. One should take note of the pronoun "it" in verse 29. Of what is this speaking? Luke says, "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (21:31). In other words, when these things that Jesus mentions in the previous verses come to pass, the return of Jesus is very near and so is His establishing of His one-thousand year earthly reign.

The certainty and reliability of this prophecy (13:30,31; Matthew 24:34,35; Luke 21:32,33) Verse 30 is introduced by the expression "Verily I say unto you. . ." which can be rendered "Truly, I tell you true facts" (Looney II, Various translations). These are solemn and serious words to say the least. Jesus said, "that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done." The word "generation" is from γενεά (genea) and can mean "race" (Rienecker 126). Besides "generation," this word is translated "time, age, nation." Thayer says it means "metaphorically a race of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character" (112). Many interpretations have been made of the meaning of "generation" in verse 30. It could mean that all of these things will take place in only one generation, the last one before the one-thousand year reign of Jesus upon the earth.

Wuest translates verse 30, "This race will positively not pass away until these things, all of them, take place" (253). He makes these comments,

The Bible shows clearly that the Jewish nation is indestructible. All of God's purposes in salvation are channeled through that nation. What is said here is that the Jewish nation will not pass out of this earthly sphere to heaven before these things have come to pass. That is, the Jewish nation will remain on earth as a nation through the time of the fulfillment of these events. " (Wuest 253).

Wessel implies that "this generation" probably "is the final period before the End, however long it may be" (752). Both of these interpretations would mean the present church age shall not pass "till all these things be done." This final period includes the birth of Jesus, His crucifixion, His resurrection, His ascension, and His coming again, even though it has already been two-thousand years since His virgin birth.

In verse 31 Jesus powerfully and strongly declares, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." This verse strongly stresses the certitude and reliability of this prophecy. This includes all of the Olivet discourse, as well as the entire Bible. Heaven and earth refer to the whole of creation or all the

universe. The creation shall pass away (2 Peter 3:10-12) but the words of Jesus shall always remain, no matter the circumstance (Psalm 102:25-27; Isaiah 40.6-8; 51:6). This shows that the Word of God is certain and completely dependable.

The date of the consummation (13:32; Matthew 24:36; Luke 21:28) Jesus makes a clear, plain, simple, and emphatic statement when He asserts in verse 32, "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." According to Matthew Jesus declares, "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (24:36). These words of Jesus do away with date setting by any human being, that is, setting a specific time, day, and hour when He shall come again. Jesus says no one knows the day nor the hour of His return, no, not the angels, neither the Son, but the Father only. Only the Father knows this. Jesus told His disciples in Acts 1:7 "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."

Why did not Jesus know this? Wuest writes, "In verse 32, the Lord Jesus, speaking in the capacity of the Son of Man under the self-imposed limitation of the incarnation, says that even He Himself did not at that time know the hour of the Second Advent. . ." (253). Barnes notes, "One part of their [*the twelve*] inquiry was (ver. 3) *when* those things should be. He now replies to them by saying that the *precise* time would not be foretold" (261). It was not in the purpose and plan of the Trinity for Jesus, the Son of Man, to know this information. This emphasizes again that the responsibility and duty of believers in New Testament Churches are to carry out the Great Commission and to do the work of the Lord Jesus without being concerned about the day on the calendar when He shall return (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:7,8). They must remember the words of Jesus in Mark 13:10 "And the gospel

(agrupneo). It means "to be sleepless, keep awake, watch, to be circumspect, attentive, ready (Thayer 9). It has the idea to "be alert" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, v. 2.3c). The command is that they are to continually "watch." Jesus said not only to watch but also to pray. The word "pray" is from the imperative form of προσεύχομαι (proseuchomai). This is another command. In verse 33 the idea behind the Greek word καιρός (kairos) rendered "time" is the appointed "time" of God (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, v. 2.3c). If one prays, he or she will watch and will take heed to the commands of Jesus Christ and be ready at all times. Therefore, it will not make any difference to the ready believer as to "when" Jesus shall return, for the watchful and prayerful believer will be ready.

The parable of the porter (13:34-37) Robertson shows verses 34-37 in the form of a short parable called the Parable of the Porter (Harmony 183). It has some of the same features as that of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 and the pounds in Luke 19:12-27 (Wessel 753). Jesus says in Mark 13:34-35 "*For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:*" The man who went on a far journey represents Christ returning to the right hand of the Father. He left His house. What is His house? The answer is apparent in 1 Timothy 3:15 where Paul writes, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The house of God is His church. Before his sojourn the man gives his servants a privilege and a responsibility. The privilege is authority to carry out his commands. The word "authority" is from ἐξουσία (exousia) which is rendered power in Matthew 28:18.

The responsibility is a work for each and everyone of His servants serving Him together in and through His house, His church. This represents the task of proclaiming and spreading the gospel. Also the porter or doorkeeper is to watch. The word "porter" is from the Greek noun θυρωρός (thuroros) and could be rendered "doorkeeper." Rienecker says this word means "doorkeeper, the one who stood guard at the entrance of a courtyard which served several homes" (126).

The application to His disciples (13:35; Matthew 24:42-44; Luke 21:34,35)

In verse 35 Jesus applies this to His disciples. Jesus again exhorts them to watch. Verse 35 says, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:" The word "watch" in verses 34,35, and 37 is from a different Greek verb than the one in verse 33. {Wuest writes, "The former speaks of a sleeping man arousing himself, while the latter merely conveys the idea of wakefulness. The latter adds to the idea of wakefulness, the notion of alertness" (254).} This word is the present active imperative of γρηγορέω (gregoreuo). It means "to watch" and "metaphorically, give strict attention to, be cautious, active, to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one" (Thayer 122). Like the doorkeeper, the disciples of Jesus must be on guard and "to give strict attention" to the second coming of Jesus. Jesus emphasizes that this needs to be done at all times. In verse 35 He names the four watches of the night: evening, midnight, cock crowing, and morning or dawn are the names of the four nightwatches of soldiers (Robertson, Word Pictures 378). This stresses that the timing of the Master's coming again is unknown, therefore be watchful.

The need to watch and sleep not (13:36,37; Matthew 24:42-47; Luke 21:36)

In verse 36 Jesus continues the thought to be watchful in verses 33-35 when He says,

"Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." The idea is that He will come and He could come at anytime. In verse 36 the word "suddenly" is from the Greek adverb ἐξαίφνης (exaiphnes) meaning "of a sudden, suddenly, unexpectedly. . ." (Thayer 221). This emphasizes the suddenness and the element of surprise of the Parousia or of the return the Lord Jesus (Wessel 753). The promise is sure, yet "the when" is unknown.

Jesus asserts in verse 37 "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Jesus concludes in verse 37 with the imperative "Watch" (meaning give attention to - take heed and watch and "be vigilant") addressed not only to His disciples but to all people. Why? Because no one knows the hour and simply because He said to do so. Thus the people of God and "all" are to watch and pray for His soon coming kingdom and that His will be done (2 Timothy 4:1-8).

In verse 33 Jesus said "Take ye heed." In verse 35, "Watch ye therefore." In verse 36 "Beware lest He should arrive unexpectedly and find you asleep" (Vaughan, The New Testament from 26 Translations, Wey 193). In verse 37 "Watch." Yes! Vigilance is the order of the day because the time of His return is unknown to human beings.

Summary of Chapter

The Model Servant uses prophecy to exhort and encourage His disciples. He gives them signs of the end times and of His coming again. He is saying to them to be ready, to take heed and be watchful. In Mark 13:23 He declares, "But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things," and in Mark 13:33, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is," that is, the time of His return. He stresses to His disciples to "watch" time and time again. He states emphatically, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh. . . ." The whole idea

is that He shall return someday. Henceforth, His disciples in every generation should be ready and watching for that day every hour. He declares in verse 32 "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." He does not want His disciples to be setting dates but rather to be watchful, serving Him, being ready when He does return. He wants His disciples to "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). Jesus is saying to believers to be ready for His return at any time, taking heed, watching and praying, and doing business for Him. He concludes emphatically, in Mark 13:37 "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." This is the purpose of this passage, Mark 13:14-37.

He warns of the abomination of desolation.¹ This prophecy seems to have "a multiple fulfillment in (1) the Maccabean Period, (2) the events of A. D. 66-70, and (3) the end time" (Wessel 748). However, "Our Lord's words . . . definitely reach forward to the Great Tribulation and to Antichrist, the Abomination of Desolation, who will violate the Holy of Holies of the Temple in Jerusalem" (Wuest 249). Along with this, Jesus declares that at that time there will be the necessity of flight for there will be Great Tribulation such as has never been nor shall ever be afterwards. He also warns them again to beware of false Christs and false prophets; saying they "shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect" (13:22). Hence, Jesus declares, "But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things" (13:23).

Next, He reveals that He, the Son of Man shall return. He first gives them the sign of those days saying that, after the Great Tribulation, "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken" (13:24,25). After this He shall return, "coming in the clouds with great power and glory" (13:26). Then, He shall send His

angels to regather all of Israel (13:27).¹ In this regard, one should consider Ezekiel 39:25,27 and Zechariah chapters 12—14.

The Servant uses the parable of the fig tree to show His disciples that just as the leafing out of the fig tree reveals when summer is nigh; so when the things He prophesied are about to come to pass, believers will know the end is near. He assures them that these things are true, proclaiming in Mark 13:31 "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." He confirms that the date of the consummation is known only to the Father (13:32). This should stop anyone from trying to set a definite date for His return.

In the final analysis He punctuates the need for watchfulness, being alert, and being ready at all times for His return in Mark 13:33-37. He says "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning" (13:35). He says do not let Him find you asleep spiritually. He ends by emphasizing not only the need for His disciples to be alert, but "all" people to be alert and watchful. The readiness urged upon the disciples in Mark 13 is emphasized by more parables recorded only in Matthew chapters 24:43—25:46. These are the parables listed below in "the Harmonized Sequential." Each reader needs to ask himself or herself, "Am I ready for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ?"

Chapter Notes

1. (See pages 505,515,524,525) This writer would like to say that to him this chapter, Mark 13:14-37, has been the most difficult to interpret. He is sure that *the message of his Savior* is that every born-again believer *is to take heed, be ready, be busy for Him, and watchful for the end times and the soon coming again of Jesus Christ.* Thus the timing and sequence of events is not the most important thing.
2. (See page 508) In Mark 13:14 the word translated "standing" is from the Greek participle ἑστώς (hestos) from the verb ἵστημι (histemi) This is the word used in The New Testament, The Greek Text Underlying The English Authorised Version of 1611 or in other word the "Textus Receptus." However, in some text the form

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Joseph L. Looney (II): Landmark Baptist Preacher-Teacher

(About the Author)

Joseph L. Looney (II) was born in Shreveport, LA, and raised near Magnolia, Arkansas. He was the third child of Jack and Mary Looney who taught him right from wrong, about the Bible and the true God. His father worked in the oil fields. His mother was a school teacher and later a librarian at Southern State College (now: Southern Arkansas University). His father went to the Methodist Church. His father made a profession of faith and was baptized and became a member of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church southeast of Magnolia in 1969.

Upon graduation from Magnolia High School in 1956, Joe joined the U.S Army Reserves, "Six Month Active Duty Program" and served about 6 years in the Reserves. After the Six Month Program, Joe attended Southern State College, Magnolia. In the summer of 1957 while working for the Banner News, Joe met and later married Miss Patsy Ruth Griffis, December 27, 1957, at the Davidson Missionary Baptist Church near Waldo, AR. Pat has been a faithful, loyal companion ever since that time. (Pat worked as a school teacher and assistant for 31 years.) January, 1961, Joe received the Bachelor of Science--Industrial Engineering degree from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

In May, 1960, John Blake a follow engineering student revealed the following Scriptures (Romans 3:10,23; 6:23; 5:6,8 and etc.). Joe realized that he was lost and needed to be saved. Two weeks later Joe asked Christ Jesus to save him and forgive him of his sins and was saved at the age of 21 (June, 1960). He then followed the Lord in scriptural baptism and became a member of Central Missionary Baptist Church of Fayetteville, AR.

While working as an Industrial Engineer for Poinsett Lumber and Manufacturing Company in Trumann, AR, the Lord began dealing with Joe concerning the call to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. It wasn't until October, 1971, that Joe came before the Cavanaugh Missionary Baptist Church, Ft. Smith, AR, and surrendered to the Master's will by faith. In January, 1973, he accepted the pastorate of the Mountain Grove Missionary Baptist Church near Alma, AR. He was ordained in March, 1973, by the Cavanaugh Church under the ministry of Brother E. Keith Simmons. Joe worked as an industrial engineer for over 20 years in Arkansas and Kentucky (1960 -- 1982).

Joe has served the following Missionary Baptist churches as pastor from 1973 until the 2017:

Mountain Grove, near Alma, AR January 1973 -- July 1981

Unity, near Paron, AR March 1983 -- August 1986

Pine Top, near Broken Bow, OK June 1987 -- July 1995

Calvary, Gillette, WY August 1995 -- July 2014

Wards Creek, Simms, TX April through July, 2017 (Interim)

Joe and Pat are currently Members of Austin Chapel, De Kalb, TX

Education: Magnolia High School, Magnolia, Arkansas Graduated: 1956

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas

Graduated: January, 1961 BS-Industrial Engineering

Lexington Baptist College, Lexington, Kentucky

Attended: 1963-1968 (Concurrent with working for Square D Co.)

Missionary Baptist Seminary, Little Rock, Arkansas

Graduated: B. B. L., May, 1986; TH. B., May, 1987

Gulf Coast Baptist Institute, Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Master of Theology, May 4, 2001; Doctor of Theology, May 11, 2012

Service for Missionary Baptist Associations:

Annual Speaker for Central MBA of AR.; Messenger Meeting: Oct. 18, 1985

Annual Speaker for Macedonia MBA of OK.; Messenger Meeting: Sept. 30, 1989

Moderator for Macedonia MBA of OK.; Messenger Meeting: Sept. 1994 & elected for 1995

Moderator (& Moderator's Address) for Rocky Mountain MBA: August 4, 2000 (Greeley, CO)

Moderator (& Moderator's Address) for Rocky Mountain MBA: August 3, 2001 (Cheyenne, WY)

Assistant Parliamentarian for Rocky Mountain MBA for several years

Speaker for Graduation Exercises in May, 2012 for Gulf Coast Baptist Institute, Hattiesburg, MS

Organizer, Planner, and Moderator for the WyKota Landmark Baptist Fellowship Retreat (Meeting at Fort Robinson State Park near Crawford, NE) (2002 thru 2014)

Joe and Pat have three children, Joe L. Looney III (Baptist preacher) of Broken Bow, OK, Marietta Raney (school teacher in New Boston) of De Kalb, TX, and William Looney (computer building structure designer) of Lowell, AR; and four grandchildren.

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A Practical Commentary on The Gospel According to Mark

By

Joseph L. Looney II