

# **Jesus, the Power of God**

A study in the gospel of Mark

Andrew Swango

## Gospel of Mark - Introduction

Andrew Swango

### AUTHOR

He does not identify himself.

### Papias

Papias was an overseer at Hierapolis (southwest Asia Minor, next door to Laodicea) around AD 120. He wrote, "And the presbyter [John] said this. Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instructions... but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took special care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements." (Ante-Nicene Fathers, volume 1, page 154.)

### John Mark

In chronological order...

(Acts 12:12) First mention of John Mark. Church in Jerusalem was using his mother's (Mary) house as a meeting place.

**Read 12:12-16.** John Mark must have known Peter very, very early on.

(Acts 13) In AD 46, Paul and Barnabas were stationed in Syrian Antioch. The Holy Spirit spoke to everyone and said He had a mission for Paul and Barnabas. They sailed to the island of Cyprus and John Mark went with them. Then they sailed back to Asia Minor to a city called Perga of Pamphylia. From there, John Mark deserted them and went to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas continued their journey throughout Asia Minor.

(Acts 15:36-41) This is about three years later. **Read it.** So in AD 49, Paul and Silas went to the cities of Asia Minor (and on to Greece). Barnabas and John Mark went to Cyprus. Barnabas wanted to give John Mark a second chance just as Barnabas had given to Paul (Acts 9:26-28)!

(Col 4:10) In AD 60, Paul wrote Colossians from Rome when Paul was under house arrest. He implies that John Mark is with him and calls him Barnabas' cousin. It seems that Paul gave John Mark a second chance and forgave him.

(Phlm 24) In AD 61, Paul wrote to Philemon and noted that John Mark was with him.

(1Pet 5:13) In AD 61-63, at the end of Peter's first letter, he says that John Mark is with him. **Read it.** "Babylon" is probably Rome.

(2Tim 4:11) In AD 67, Paul wrote to Timothy from Rome while he was in deep prison about to be martyred. He told him to bring John Mark to Rome with him.

### DATE

The date is uncertain but can be narrowed down. Irenaeus (AD 180) and Clement of Alexandria (AD 195) wrote that Mark wrote it while in Rome. John Mark would have recorded the gospel as he heard Peter preach in Rome; we know both of them were there. Therefore, Mark most likely wrote the gospel in Rome around AD 62-64 which is when Peter was there.

### AUDIENCE

Many say that the gospel of Mark's audience was the Romans. This is because he was in Rome when he wrote it! You can see this is the case as Mark doesn't include a genealogy, very many OT quotations, and includes a few explanations for Jewish terms.

### STYLE

Compared to other gospels, Mark focuses on Christ's doings rather than His teachings.

Mark himself is to-the-point and doesn't give many details.

### THIS CLASS

#### Style

The style of this class will focus on three things: the awesome power of Jesus, an audience of Romans, and the perspective of this gospel from Peter's perspective.

#### Theme: Power

The theme of this class will be Jesus as the Power of God.

Mark 14:61-62, "The high priest questioned Him, 'Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I am and all of you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.'"

Other Scriptures that show Jesus as the Power of God: Acts 10:38, Rom 1:3-4, 1Cor 1:18, 1:24, 2:4-5, 4:20, 2Cor 10:4, Eph 1:18-23, Eph 3:20, Php 3:10, Col 1:11-12, 2Tim 1:7, 2Tim 3:2-5, Heb 1:3, Heb 6:4-6, Jam 5:16, 1Pet 1:5, 3:22, 2Pet 1:3, 1:16, Jude 1:25, Rev 4:11, 5:12, 7:12, 11:17, 12:10, 19:1.

## Gospel of Mark - Outline

Andrew Swango

- 1:1-8** John the Baptist.
  - 1:1 Introduction.
  - 1:2-3 Prophecy about John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.
  - 1:4-8 John the Baptist's ministry.
- 1:9-13** Baptism and temptation of Jesus.
  - 1:9-11 Jesus' baptism.
  - 1:12-13 Jesus' temptation.
- 1:14-20** Jesus begins His ministry.
  - 1:14-15 Jesus begins preaching.
  - 1:16-20 Jesus calls disciples.
    - 1:16-18 Peter and Andrew.
    - 1:19-20 James and John.
- 1:21-28** Jesus at the Capernaum synagogue.
  - 1:21-22 Jesus teaches with authority.
  - 1:23-26 Jesus exhumes an unclean spirit.
  - 1:27-28 Jesus' first spread of fame.
- 1:29-39** Jesus at Peter's house.
  - 1:29 Jesus and four disciples go to Peter's house.
  - 1:30-31 Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law.
  - 1:32-34 Jesus heals many.
  - 1:35-37 Jesus prays alone.
  - 1:38-39 Jesus widens His ministry.
- 1:40-45** Jesus heals a skin disease.
- 2:1-12** Jesus returns to His home in Capernaum.
  - 2:1-2 Jesus returns home and teaches.
  - 2:3-12 Jesus heals the quadriplegic and teaches the forgiveness of sins.
    - 2:3-5 Men bring the quadriplegic.
    - 2:6-8 The scribes grumble.
    - 2:9-10 Jesus says He can forgive sins.
    - 2:11-12 Jesus heals the quadriplegic.
- 2:13-22** Jesus and Matthew.
  - 2:13-14 Jesus calls Matthew.
  - 2:15-22 Matthew hosts a meal.
    - 2:15-17 Scribes and Pharisees question about associating with sinners.
    - 2:18-22 John the Baptists' disciples and Pharisees question about fasting.
- 2:23-28** Jesus in the grain fields.
- 3:1-6** Jesus in the Capernaum synagogue again.
  - 3:1-5 Jesus heals man with paralyzed hand on a Sabbath.
  - 3:6 Pharisees start plotting against Jesus.
- 3:7-12** Jesus along the Sea of Galilee.
  - 3:7-9 Jesus' fame from all around.
  - 3:10-12 Jesus heals diseases and unclean spirits.
- 3:13-19** Jesus on the mountain.
  - 3:13-15 Jesus takes his disciples and appoints 12 to be apostles.
  - 3:16-19 List of the 12 apostles.
- 3:20-35** Jesus returns to His home.
  - 3:20-21 Jesus' family rejects Him.
  - 3:22-27 Scribes accuse Jesus of being of Satan.
  - 3:28-30 Jesus describes the unforgiveable sin.
  - 3:31-35 Jesus' physical family asks for Him; He describes His spiritual family.
- 4:1-9** Jesus along the Sea of Galilee again (or from before).
  - 4:1 Jesus gets into another boat.

- 4:2-9 Parable of the Sower.
- 4:10-34** Jesus explains parables with the Twelve.
- 4:10-12 Jesus answers why He speaks in parables.
- 4:13-20 Parable of the Sower explained.
- 4:21-25 Jesus instructs the Twelve to spread His parables.
- 4:26-29 Parable of the Scattered Seed.
- 4:30-32 Parable of the Mustard Seed.
- 4:33-34 Jesus explained parables to the Twelve.
- 4:35-41** Jesus calms the Sea of Galilee.
- 5:1-20** Jesus in the country of the Gerasenes.
- 5:1-13 Jesus drives out Legion.
- 5:14-17 The people beg Jesus to leave.
- 5:18-19 Jesus instructs the man to preach.
- 5:20 The man goes to the Decapolis.
- 5:21-43** Jesus on another side of the Sea of Galilee.
- 5:21-24 Jairus asks Jesus to heal his daughter.
- 5:25-34 Jesus heals the woman who had bled for 12 years.
- 5:35-43 Jesus heals Jairus' daughter.
- 6:1-6a** Jesus in Nazareth.
- 6:1-3 Jesus teaches in the Nazareth synagogue.
- 6:4-6a Jesus unable to heal many because of unbelief.
- 6:6b-13** Jesus' Galilean ministry.
- 6:6b Jesus continues to visit the Galilean towns.
- 6:7-13 Jesus sends out the Twelve in pairs.
- 6:14-29** King Herod Antipas.
- 6:14-16 Herod hears about Jesus' fame.
- 6:17-29 Death of John the Baptist.
- 6:30-46** Jesus and the Twelve sail to a remote place. (Luke says this is Bethsaida, Luke 9:10ff.)
- 6:30-32 The Twelve return with their reports.
- 6:33-34 The crowds are already waiting for them.
- 6:35-46 Feeding the 5000 men.
- 6:47-52** Jesus walks on the water.
- 6:53-7:23** Jesus in Gennesaret.
- 6:53-57 Jesus' fame in Gennesaret.
- 7:1-5 Pharisees and scribes question about washing hands.
- 7:6-16 Jesus rebukes the traditions of men.
- 7:17-23 Jesus explains clean foods.
- 7:24-30** Jesus in Tyre and Sidon.
- 7:24 Jesus' fame in Tyre and Sidon.
- 7:25-30 Jesus heals the demon-possessed daughter of the Greek woman.
- 7:31-37** Jesus in the Decapolis.
- 7:31-37 Jesus heals a deaf man privately.
- 8:1-9** Jesus in Galilee.
- 8:1-9 Jesus feeds the 4000 men.
- 8:10-21** Jesus in Dalmanutha.
- 8:10-12 Pharisees ask for a sign.
- 8:13-21 Jesus warns about bad yeast.
- 8:22-26** Jesus heals the blind man in Bethsaida.
- 8:27-9:1** Jesus in Caesarea Philippi.
- 8:27-30 Jesus asks His disciples who He is.
- 8:31-33 Jesus predicts His death and Peter rebukes Him.
- 8:34-38 Jesus teaches the cost of being His disciple.
- 9:1 Jesus predicts the coming of the Kingdom of God.
- 9:2-13** Jesus is transfigured on the mountain.

- 9:2 Jesus takes Peter, James, and John.  
 9:3-8 Jesus is transfigured.  
 9:9-13 Jesus discuss these things with Peter, James, and John.  
**9:14-29** Jesus returns to the disciples and crowd.  
 9:14-19 The disciples could not heal a boy with a mute spirit.  
 9:20-27 Jesus heals the boy from the mute spirit.  
 9:28-29 Jesus explains the disciples' weakness.  
**9:30-50** Jesus in Capernaum again.  
 9:30-32 Jesus again predicts His death.  
 9:33-37 The Twelve argue over who is the greatest.  
 9:38-40 They discuss a man who drove out demons in Jesus' name.  
 9:41-50 Jesus explains rewards and punishments.  
**10:1-31** Jesus in Judea.  
 10:1-12 Jesus explains marriage, divorce, and remarriage.  
 10:13-16 Jesus blesses the children.  
 10:17-22 The rich young ruler.  
 10:23-31 Jesus teaches the disciples about wealth.  
**10:32-45** Jesus on the road to Jerusalem.  
 10:32-34 Jesus again predicts His death.  
 10:35-41 James and John ask to sit on Jesus' right and left.  
 10:42-45 Jesus teaches about servanthood.  
**10:46-52** Jesus heals Bartimaeus at Jericho.  
**11:1-33** Jesus in Bethany and Jerusalem.  
 11:1-7 Bethany - Jesus sends to disciples to get a donkey.  
 11:8-11 Jerusalem - The triumphal entry and return to Bethany.  
 11:12-14 Bethany - Jesus curses the fig tree.  
 11:15-19 Jerusalem - Jesus cleanses the temple.  
 11:20-26 Bethany - Jesus explains the withered fig tree and faith.  
 11:27-33 Jerusalem - Jesus' authority questioned.  
**12:1-13:37** Jesus in Jerusalem.  
 12:1-12 Parable of the Vineyard Owner; Jewish leaders want to arrest Him.  
 12:13-17 Pharisees test Jesus about paying taxes.  
 12:18-27 Sadducees test Jesus about the resurrection.  
 12:28-34 A scribe asks about the greatest commandment.  
 12:35-13:2 Jesus in the temple.  
 12:35-37 He confounds the scribes' teaching.  
 12:38-40 He exposes the scribes' hypocrisy.  
 12:41-44 Jesus recognizes the widow's giving.  
 13:1-2 Jesus predicts the temple's destruction.  
 13:3-37 Jesus on the Mount of Olives.  
 13:3-4 Peter, James, John, and Andrew ask about Jesus' predictions.  
 13:5-8 Jesus predicts false Christs, war, and natural disasters.  
 13:9-13 Jesus predicts persecutions for His followers.  
 13:14-20 Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem.  
 13:21-23 Jesus against predicts false Christs.  
 13:24-27 Jesus predicts His return with great power.  
 13:28-31 Jesus predicts that these events will happen very soon.  
 13:32-37 No one knows when these events will occur; Be alert!  
**14:1-2** The Jewish leaders look for a way to arrest and kill Jesus.  
**14:3-11** Jesus at the house of Simon the leper.  
 14:3-9 Woman anoints Jesus' head with oil.  
 14:10-11 Judas plans to betray Jesus.  
**14:12-16** Preparation for the Passover.  
**14:17-26** Jesus in the upstairs room.

- 14:17 Jesus and the Twelve apostles arrive.
- 14:18-21 Jesus predicts one of the Twelve will betray Him.
- 14:22 Jesus offers the bread as His body.
- 14:23-25 Jesus offers the fruit of the vine as His blood.
- 14:26 They sing then leave for the Mount of Olives.
- 14:27-31** Jesus on the Mount of Olives again.
  - 14:27-28 Jesus predicts His followers' flight, His resurrection, and His reappearing.
  - 14:29-31 Peter and the rest say they will not run.
- 14:32-52** Jesus in Gethsemane.
  - 14:32-36 Jesus prays alone.
  - 14:37-38 Jesus finds them sleeping.
  - 14:39 Jesus prays alone a second time.
  - 14:40 Jesus finds them sleeping a second time.
  - 14:41-42 Jesus prays and finds them sleeping a third time.
  - 14:43-46 Judas betrays Jesus to the mob of Jewish leaders.
  - 14:47-52 The disciples' response and flight.
- 14:53-72** Jesus at the home of the high priest.
  - 14:53-54 Jesus with the Jewish leaders; Peter with the temple police.
  - 14:55-65 The Jewish leaders' trial of Jesus.
  - 14:66-72 Peter denies Jesus three times.
- 15:1-15** Jesus before Pilate.
  - 15:1-5 Pilate questions Jesus.
  - 15:6-11 Barabbas released instead of Jesus.
  - 15:12-15 Pilate has Jesus crucified.
- 15:16-20** Jesus in the Roman headquarters.
- 15:21-41** Jesus at Golgotha.
  - 15:21 Simon the Cyrenian helps Jesus with the cross.
  - 15:22 Jesus arrives at Golgotha.
  - 15:23 Jesus is offered wine and myrrh.
  - 15:24 Jesus on the cross.
    - 15:24-26 Jesus is crucified.
    - 15:27-28 Jesus between two criminals.
    - 15:29-32 Jesus mocked by all.
    - 15:33-36 Jesus calls out to God.
    - 15:37 Jesus dies.
    - 15:38 The curtain of the sanctuary is torn.
    - 15:39 The centurion recognized Jesus.
    - 15:40-41 The women who had followed Jesus to the cross.
- 15:42-47** Joseph of Arimathea
  - 15:42-45 Joseph asks Pilate for Jesus' body.
  - 15:46-47 Joseph takes Jesus' body down from the cross and puts it in a tomb.
- 16:1-8** The women at the tomb.
  - 16:1-4 The women arrive at the tomb.
  - 16:5-7 An angel speaks to the women.
  - 16:8 The women run back very afraid.
- 16:9-18** Jesus appears to them.
  - 16:9-11 Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.
  - 16:12-13 Jesus appears to two disciples on a road.
  - 16:14 Jesus appears to all the Eleven.
  - 16:15-18 Jesus gives them their mission and His power.
- 16:19** Jesus ascends to heaven.
- 16:20** Jesus' disciples go everywhere and preach everywhere with great power.

## Gospel of Mark - Suggested 40-Week Schedule

*Andrew Swango*

<u>Week</u>	<u>Scriptures</u>
1	Introduction
2	1:1-13
3	1:14-20
4	1:21-28
5	1:29-45
6	2:1-12
7	2:13-28
8	3:1-12
9	3:13-27
10	3:28-35, Study on the Unforgivable (Eternal) Sin
11	4:1-20
12	4:21-41
13	5:1-20
14	5:21-34
15	5:35-43
16	6:1-29
17	6:30-52
18	6:53-7:23
19	7:24-37
20	8:1-21
21	8:22-9:1
22	9:2-13
23	9:14-29
24	9:30-50
25	10:1-16
26	10:17-31
27	10:32-52
28	11:1-19
29	11:20-33
30	12:1-27
31	12:28-13:2
32	13:3-23
33	13:24-37
34	14:1-16
35	14:17-31
36	14:32-52
37	14:53-15:15
38	15:16-28
39	15:29-47
40	16:1-20

The theme of Mark's gospel is the power of God (Mark 14:61-62). "The high priest questioned Him, 'Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I am, and all of you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.'" Jesus is the right hand of the Power! The four Ds that Jesus had power over: Danger, Demons, Disease, and Death.

The style of Mark's gospel focuses on Jesus' power, the audience of the Romans, and the perspective of Peter.

The translation I mostly use is the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB).

### **1:1 Introduction.**

In extra-Biblical material, the consistent theme is Jesus, God's Servant. After reading, it seems Mark's theme is Jesus, the Power of God.

Mark focuses less on Jesus' teaching and more on Jesus' doing.

Immediately. One of Mark's characteristics is how often he uses the word immediately. 41 times, average of 3 times per chapter, half of them are in the first four chapters. It usually shows Christ's power because it literally means "at once" and always means without delay. To the Romans who spoke Latin, it means "absolute (non-mediated)" or "next."

### **1:2-3 Prophecy about John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.**

Mal 3:1. The Romans wouldn't be expecting a Savior because they wouldn't commonly know about all the Jewish prophecies. Mark's quotation from Malachi leaves out a reference to the temple and the desire for a Savior the Jews already have. The Jews have expected a Prophet, salvation is from the Jews.

Is 40:3. In verse 40:5, Isaiah prophesied that all humanity would see Jesus. So here we are, the message of Christ being delivered to the Romans.

Wilderness. Mark wants to remind the Romans that the salvation of the world came from the wilderness, not from the pomp and circumstance of Rome and its urban majesty.

### **1:4-8 John the Baptist's ministry.**

Forgiveness of sins. John's baptism forgives sins (Luke 3:3)! Why aren't we just baptized into John? There is one big and important difference between John's and Jesus' baptisms: the Holy Spirit.

Flocking. John was popular! And he did not even do any miracles (John 10:41)!

Jordan. The Jordan river was the gateway for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. John the Baptist is the gateway for everyone to find salvation in Jesus.

Confessing their sins. John's ministry was a success in its message of repentance. A great example of repentance is Acts 19:18-20. When God's people repent like this, God's message grows and overcomes!

All the people. Sinful people came, but the Jewish leaders refused John's ministry (Luke 7:29-30).

Camel-hair garment. Camels were not common to Romans, they used horses. This is to help Romans readers (and us) understand the culture of Palestine.

Leather belt. John is dressing like Elijah (2King 1:2-8).

Locusts and honey. Locusts are the scourge of farmers. Honey is plain awesome. This is what Jesus' message will be about: it will have hardship as we leave our life of sin but it will have blessing as God displays His power in us. John learned the same lesson in Rev 10:9-10.

More powerful. And here we see the common theme in Mark. And John's statement is quite the understatement! Through this gospel, it can be seen that Jesus' true power is indescribably immense.

Holy Spirit. After John's ministry, his baptism became very inadequate; people need the Spirit (Acts 19:1-5).

### **1:9-11 Jesus' baptism.**

Nazareth. Matthew tells us that after Jesus' temptation, He moved from Nazareth to Capernaum (Matt 4:13). This becomes His new home which makes sense in Mark later.

Out of the water. Matthew and Mark records this is the time heavens opened. Luke says that at this time, Jesus was praying. Jesus was speaking to God as he was baptized.

Spirit, voice. What would Jews think about when they see God in three Persons here? They see Us in Gen.

They see Lord is one in Deut. Would this send them for a loop? Or would they assume that Jesus is going to be a superior prophet (until Jesus starts saying he is God)?

Voice. This voice becomes of one Jesus' witnesses that He is who He says He is ([John 5:37](#)). Jesus later tells the parable of the vineyard owner. Look at how Luke records this parable and how it relates to God's approval of Jesus here ([Luke 20:13](#)). This event is significant to the Jews (it fulfills [Is 42:1](#)).

Son. The Romans were familiar with the sons of the gods, such as Hercules. But this is unknown to them: God being born as a human. (And this God-Man is interacting with humans and His Father is pleased with Him.) The Romans would either think Jesus to be a myth, or recognize what a personal God we have—that He would be counted among humans.

### **1:12-13 Jesus' temptation.**

Drove. Jesus was driven there by the Spirit. Jesus, the Power of God submits to the authority of God. Though Jesus is all-powerful, He still submits to the Father's authority.

Wilderness. Desert bad translation; really, wilderness, that is, over there where no one lives.

Being tempted. The way Mark words this, it seems to imply that Satan tempted Jesus over the entire period of 40 days. Matt says that Jesus fasted during that time, then Satan tempted Him ([Matt 4:2-3](#)). Luke makes this order very clear ([Luke 4:2](#)). How do we reconcile? I don't know. As we have seen by Papias' report of Mark, Mark is not trying to be chronological. And we know that Luke is ([Luke 1:3](#)). So I believe Mark does not imply that Jesus was tempted over the entire 40 days.

### **1:14-15 Jesus begins preaching.**

Repent; kingdom of heaven is near. At first, Jesus goes out and preaches the same thing as John did ([Matt 3:2](#)). But notice that Mark records that Jesus says the time is fulfilled. Now, kingdom of God is not near but here! Now our calling is to be ready because Jesus' second coming is "near" ([Rom 13:11](#), [1Pet 4:7](#)).

Preaching. Jesus' ministry is greater than John's, [John 5:36](#). Mark is going to tell us a lot about these works!

Repent. Repentance is part of the forgiveness of sins and brings times of refreshing from God ([Acts 3:19-20](#)).

Repentance: out with the bad, in with the good.

Good news. But the "gospel" has not been fulfilled yet. Jesus is preaching what will be fulfilled now. Therefore, he is saying believe in Him. Jesus is the good news!

Later, Jesus prophesied that His message will go to all nations ([Mark 13:10](#)).

### **1:16-18 Calling disciples - Peter and Andrew.**

Sea of Galilee. In the gospels, this lake has had many names: Sea of Tiberias, Sea of Gennesaret. It's all the same lake.

Peter and Andrew. It's interesting that Peter (through Mark) does not go into detail about how he was called. Luke's gospel explains in more detail what happened between Jesus' arrival and Jesus' calling ([Luke 5:1-11](#)).

Bar-Jona. Peter's "last name" ([Matt 16:17](#)). In English, our equivalent is Jonah or John. As a last name, the English equivalent is Johansson or Johnson. Peter Johansson, Peter Johnson. Makes these people seem more common, right? Well, they are fishermen!

Left their nets. Peter and Andrew left EVERYTHING to be a disciple of Jesus, including their livelihood! But are the apostles the only ones Jesus has called to leave everything? [Luke 18:28-30](#). Just as Jesus made provisions for the apostles, Jesus makes provisions for everyone who leaves anything for His sake.

### **1:19-20 Calling disciples - James and John.**

Zebedee and hired men. It seems that James and John were sons in a big fishing business, and it seems that Peter and Andrew made up their small family business.

Follow Me. Peter and Andrew gave up everything to follow Jesus, and James and John were no different. Contrast the calling of these four men to [Luke 9:57-62](#).

### **1:21-22 Capernaum synagogue - Jesus teaches with authority.**

Synagogue. It may have been a tradition for traveling rabbis to speak when they visited a synagogue. If this is the case, then they already recognize Jesus as a serious teacher. The same happened with Paul ([Acts 13:14-15](#)).

Scribes. A person who copies what another person did/wrote. Isn't that what we all do? Jesus is the Author of all creation!

Authority. Some have said that the Jews spoke from authority but Jesus spoke with authority.

### **1:23-26 Capernaum synagogue - Jesus exhumes an unclean spirit.**

Nazarene/Holy One of God. The demon recognizes both Jesus' humanity and His deity. Peter made the same confession as this demon ([John 6:69](#)). Jesus' humanity and deity is important theology. But accepting

Jesus' humanity and deity is not sufficient (James 2:19). What separates us from demons is not our theology but our practicality. We recognize Jesus as Savior and Master. He is Savior over all our sin and Master over our entire life. Unlike demons, we are forgiven slaves to Christ, our Savior and Master. Convulsed, shouted. This often happened when Jesus exhumed a demon--as we will see (also to the apostles (Acts 8:7)). It should what kind of hold a demon can have over a person. That's not being quiet as Jesus said. Jesus is keeping the demon from deceiving, lying, or something else? Came out. This miracle seems early on and there is only a mention of Peter, Andrew, James, and John for a while. Know that before Jesus came to Capernaum like this, He and his disciples had already been to Cana to witness Jesus' first miracle in front of them (John 2:11).

### **1:27-28 Capernaum synagogue - Jesus' first spread of fame.**

Teaching and miracles. These are two witnesses for our faith in Jesus. Which one is a foundation for your faith? Do believe in your heart that Jesus is God because of his incredible doctrine or his incredible power?

You don't have to choose one, but our faith is based on witnesses such as these. For me, it's the teaching. Teaching and works. The people recognized Jesus' words and His works. Are we identified by these? How much power God can have on the world if we show the world the power in both teaching and works. For me, I am lacking in the works part.

Amazed. Capernaum was Jesus' home (Matt 4:13). Nazareth was Jesus' hometown (Mark 6:1). Both places had the same reaction and both places refused to believe in Jesus (Mark 6:1-3, Matt 11:23-24).

### **1:29 Peter's house - Jesus and four disciples go to Peter's house.**

#### **1:30-31 Peter's house - Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law.**

Mother-in-law. Wait, Peter was married? (1Cor 9:5) Then how could he be the first pope? Today, most people are familiar with the Roman Catholic Church. However, the Eastern Orthodox Church (which is stable in its traditions), merely recommends celibacy, but most of their bishops are married. It wasn't until the fourth century that the clergy was prohibited from marriage. One would think that since this account is mentioned in the three gospels (Matt 8:14, Luke 4), the Roman Catholic Church would someday re-think their tradition.

Serve them. There was so much power in Peter's mom's healing that she had plenty of energy to serve them all. Let Peter's mother be an example to us today (Rom 12:13). As Peter's mother was immortalized in Scripture, let us show our thanks by serving others without delay.

Sabbath. Remember that this is a Sabbath. Was Peter and the other three ready to leave because Jesus worked on the Sabbath? No! They see Jesus do good. What law can be against us if we are doing good (Gal 5:23)?

#### **1:32-34 Peter's house - Jesus heals many.**

Evening, after sunset. Notice that the crowds didn't come until after the Sabbath. The faith of Israelites are still weak.

Prophecy. Mark doesn't mention it, but Matthew shows that Jesus fulfilled prophecy by quoting Is 53:4.

#### **1:35-37 Peter's house - Jesus prays alone.**

Very early, while still dark. It is less than 12 hours between sunset and sunrise. Sunset is when everyone showed up at Jesus' door. How long did it take to heal everyone? Point: Jesus didn't get much sleep last night.

Wilderness. You'll notice in all the gospels that Jesus greatly desired to be alone from time to time. This will be addressed later.

Praying. When we visit someone, are we off routine? I normally read my Bible and pray in morning/evening, but I'll just spend time with family. Jesus was a guest at someone's house, but he was not on vacation from God!

#### **1:38-39 Peter's house - Jesus widens His ministry.**

All of Galilee. We need to get outside our comfortable circle of friends. Illegal immigrants, poor, rich, young, old, etc. Jesus' focused on his purpose, not on his convenience.

#### **1:40-45 Jesus heals a skin disease.**

Location. None of the other gospels specifies where this happened.

Skin disease. Is it leprosy?

Willing, can. The man knew Jesus had power, he didn't know if Jesus had the compassion to use it. This is worth showing to the nations: God is not an oppressive God who has all power but some compassion. He is a God with all power and all compassion. Why wouldn't every person want to hear about this? Priest, Moses. The law in regard to skin diseases and contaminated objects can be found in Lev 13-14. Say nothing to anyone. Here and in the other gospels, Jesus tells this man not to tell anyone. He even sternly warned Him! Obviously, the man's joy overcame his fear as well as his obedience to Christ. This man saw Jesus' power and it was so marvelous and wonderful that nothing else mattered. If only we could experience the power of Christ like this man did. Now, we will see that Jesus tells people to stay quiet and they go tell the world. This appears in Mark more than any other gospel, so let's talk about this. \*\*\* See "Don't Tell Anyone" study. \*\*\*

Application: Jesus told a some people to stay quiet, yet they told everyone; Jesus tells us to tell the whole world, yet we stay quiet???

### **2:1-2 Capernaum at home - Jesus returns home and teaches.**

Home. Jesus was at home? Didn't Jesus say that He didn't have a home (Matt 8:19-20, Luke 9:57-58)? So which is it: did Jesus have a home or not? My conclusion: Jesus had a home in Capernaum (Matt 4:13). So what is Jesus saying about not having a place to lay His head? Matt 8:20 and Luke 9:58 are in the context of Jesus teaching about counting the cost. These accounts are very similar to the account of Jesus and the rich young ruler (Matt 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 18:18-23).

### **2:3-5 Capernaum at home - Men bring the quadriplegic.**

Seeing their faith. Jesus didn't only heal people who had faith. But in this case, Jesus saw their faith. How can you see faith? Faith is an idea. Heb 11:1. Faith is the proof. Actions prove that there is faith. In fact, James says that faith is not faith unless it is proven with action. These men chose to go to great lengths to do what was necessary. Jesus saw these men's faith.

Your sins are forgiven. Why is that when Jesus sees their faith and has the power to heal this man, Jesus asks this question? Jesus is already one step ahead of everyone's thoughts. He plans to lead their thoughts to a new concept beyond the healing of the physical. He is going to prove that He has the power to heal the spiritual. Jesus is going to use the healing of the man to prove something to everyone else there: that He can forgive sins.

Forgiven. How can Jesus forgive the man's sins when the man didn't ask for this? Is confession a requirement to having sins forgiven? Confession is SO important, but Jesus forgave this man because he already demonstrated his faith.

### **2:6-8 Capernaum at home - The scribes grumble.**

God alone. The scribes might have thought about Is 43:25. They knew the prophets. They performed miracles but did not forgive sins. Their miracles proved that they were from God and doing God's will. Either a person can perform miracles (proving to be from God) and not forgive sins (because they are not God), or a person does not perform miracles (not having God's power) and forgiving sins (because they take the place of God). In the scribes' minds, a person cannot do both. They are either a spokesman for God with His power or a blasphemer claiming to forgive sins.

Understood their thoughts. How much power Jesus has! Heals paralytic, forgives sins, and can read your hearts/minds!

### **2:9-10 Capernaum at home - Jesus says He can forgive sins.**

Which is easier. Well, which is easier?

Son of Man. Jesus doesn't come out and say that He is God and this is why He can forgive sins. He refers to himself as the son of man, aka, a human. Does he do this to stir the anger in those who aren't going to believe in Him? Does He do this because if He said He was God here, then would they have stoned Him on the spot? Yet He only says that He is God indirectly. For He also said, "on earth."

Authority to forgive sins. In one event, Jesus shows that He has the approval of God because He has God's miraculous power and claims that He can forgive sins. The only conclusion that is that God approves of this man to forgive sins! Jesus has both because He is God!

### **2:11-12 Capernaum at home - Jesus heals the quadriplegic.**

Bed/Mat. When I think of "bed," I think of a large, four-post bed. When I think of "mat," I think of a small, comfortable rug. Literally: mattress.

Glory to God. The people gave glory to God. The scribes are alone in their dislike of Jesus. The people witnessed exactly who Jesus is, or at least they believed in the Father who has put this kind of approval and

power on Jesus. There are many people who respond favorably to God's power. And there are people today who respond favorably. We just have to show them God's power! Actions are the proof of our faith. Miraculous power is the proof that Jesus forgives our sins. Praise God that He has proved that He can forgive us. Why should we doubt His power?

### **2:13-14 Jesus calls Matthew.**

Location. Every gospel has this story after the healing of the paralytic. Therefore, it is probable that this was in Capernaum.

Levi. Is this really Matthew? Luke also tells this story and the meal at his house and calls him Levi (Luke 5:27-31). Matthew also tells this story and a meal and calls him Matthew (Matt 9:9-13). So based on the similarity of these events and exact conversations, Matthew himself bridges the gap between Levi and Matthew showing that he is also called Levi. Names were often changed when a person came to the Lord. Thaddeus and Judas son of James were the same person (Matt 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:16).

Son of Alphaeus. There is one other person who was the son of Alphaeus: James [the lesser] apostle. It's very possible that Matthew and James were brothers. Jesus seems to have gathered a lot of brothers: Peter and Andrew, James and John, Matthew and James.

Tax office. Jesus surrounded himself with low members of society (ex. fishermen). Now, he's letting an immoral tax collector to be one of His closest disciples! On one hand, point out that he is a former tax collector/man of dishonesty. On the other hand, how would we react if the elders or preacher took on an incredibly immoral man as their student? Would we be quick to judge, or would we seek to find out what kind of person this man is now?

Followed him. Luke records that Matthew left everything and followed Him (Luke 5:27). Matthew left everything just as all those fishermen did (Luke 5:11). It should show us that it doesn't exactly matter what we leave, but as long as we leave it for the betterment of Christ.

### **2:15-17 Matthew hosts a meal - Scribes and Pharisees question about associating with sinners.**

Similarity between Matthew and Zacchaeus. Both were tax collectors and both hosted a meal because of their repentance.

Tax collectors. It's important to note that these extremely low members of society were also the more open to the good news (Luke 3:12, 18:13-14).

Also guests. Why was Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners anyway? Probably because Matthew invited his friends. How excited he must be to show his fellow unrighteous friends the Man who can change you for the better! Do we have this kind of excitement that we aren't afraid to go to the riffraff to share Christ with them? The same reasons for Matthew to do this should be the same reasons for us: we used to be one of them.

Pharisees. This is the first mention of the Pharisees in Mark.

Call the righteous. Jesus didn't come to call the righteous; they don't need Doctor Jesus Christ. On second thought, there aren't any righteous people (Rom 3:23). Jesus is probably sarcastic here, "I didn't come to call the self-righteous."

### **2:18-22 Matthew hosts a meal - John the Baptists' disciples and Pharisees question about fasting.**

John's disciples. John still has some disciples around? Why haven't they come to know the one whom John preached about? What about people today such as Jews? They still hang on to a religion that has been replaced with something more powerful. For people today who know they should be baptized yet don't submit to this action of faith are like disciples of John the Baptist. They know the Power of God, but choose not to submit to it. What about people who have been baptized but don't go all the way by living an obedient life?

Wedding guests. Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a wedding. Life in Christ is not one of misery and regret. It is one of joy and fellowship. Jesus is saying that while He is on earth, it's time for a party! What people are experiencing while Jesus is on earth like this is something that all the prophets wanted to experience (Luke 10:23-24, 1Pet 1:10-12).

Old and new. Jesus didn't come to patch up the old, but to bring the new and to put it on hearts, not stone.

What Jesus is bringing is completely different than anything the Jews nor John the Baptist has to offer. You cannot teach an old dog new tricks? This is probably not the case because people CAN change with Jesus' power; anyone can change anything as long as their heart is open to Christ's power. The change Jesus is talking about is not changes in an individual but how different institutions (Judaism, Islam, Humanism, etc.) cannot co-exist.

### **2:23-28 Jesus in the grain fields.**

Location. In the other gospels, this story always follows a story that happened in Capernaum. It is probably this happened in Capernaum too.

Corn. Corn, i.e. maize, wasn't even "discovered" until the discovery of the Americas! Of course, "corn" may have meant something else in 1611 when they translated the KJV. Literally, "a [farm's] field."

Disciples. All the accounts only record Jesus' disciples doing this. We don't know if Jesus did it also.

Gleaning the fields. This was lawful as long as people didn't collect the food, but ate it there ([Deut 23:24-25](#)).

Abiathar. In [1Sam 21:1-6](#), David talked to a priest but it was not Abiathar. It was Ahimelech. We see in the following chapters that Abiathar was Ahimelech's son, took his place, and became one of David's companions. So in Mark/Peter referring to Abiathar, they are speaking of his involvement with David in these events and of his future priesthood. Or, their names were often switched, being family names ([2Sam 8:17](#)).

High priest. To make things more interesting, the Scriptures do not explicitly say that either Ahimelech nor Abiathar were the high priest. Yet the Scriptures do not speak of the high priest at all through 1 or 2 Samuel. According to [Jewish records and Josephus](#), Ahimelech and Abiathar were the high priests in their respective order. Throughout David's and Solomon's reign as kings, it can be seen that Zadok is the leading priest, though the Scriptures do not call him the high priest. Because of his importance in Scripture and because he is listed in Jewish traditions right after Abiathar, it can be seen that all three of these men were high priests. Abiathar would not have been high priest when David visited Nob, but he became high priest a no more than a few days later.

Not lawful. The bread belonged to the priests ([Lev 24:59](#)). This does not say that others cannot eat from this bread, but Jesus makes it clear that to do so was unlawful ([Mark 2:26](#)).

Sabbath made for man. As Jesus is saying, wouldn't the priests be guilty if they sacrificed on a Sabbath? Yet they do this. At another time, Jesus used the example of circumcision ([John 7:22-24](#)). As for a modern-day example, Paul said that women are to be silent in the church ([1Cor 14:34-35](#)); however, they are allowed to sing ([1Cor 14:15](#), [Eph 5:19](#), [Col 3:16](#), [Heb 2:12](#)). Therefore, God is more concerned with meeting needs than protecting religious statues. In like manner, we are to value the good of others over the strictness of regulations ([Gal 5:22-23](#), [1Cor 4:5](#)). The Pharisees strictly observed the regulation of the Sabbath, but they did not observe the purpose of the Sabbath. This is like looking at a picture on the wall and admiring the frame while ignoring the picture inside.

Sabbath made for man. Food has also been made for man, not man for food ([Col 2:16](#)).

### **3:1-5 Capernaum synagogue again - Jesus heals man with paralyzed hand on a Sabbath.**

Again. Jesus is again in the synagogue of Capernaum (see [Mark 1:21-28](#)).

They. Who is they? Probably the Pharisees (see [Mark 2:24](#)).

Sabbath, silent. How messed up: "Let's see if He will miraculously heal someone's impairment so that we can find blame in Him. Never mind the fact that Jesus can miraculously heal any disease and sickness. As long as someone does bad, then they are bad. Who cares if they do good."

Anger. Yes, Jesus feels anger and sadness. If someone choose bad over good for the sake of the law, would you feel angry? What can we learn from this? If our hearts are not soft with compassion, Jesus is going to get angry AT US. We should choose to do good no matter what kind of law tells us not to. After all, [Matt 12:11-12](#), [Gal 5:22-23](#), [1Pet 3:17](#).

He told the man. Jesus is feeling anger and sadness over these stubborn Pharisees. Does He rebuke them? Does He condemn them? Does He warn the crowds about their teaching? How does Jesus respond when He is angry? He heals the man! Instead of focusing on the bad like the Pharisees are trying to do, Jesus does not let His anger get the best of Him. Jesus uses His anger to focus on doing good. So what should we do when we are angry? Complain? Argue? Or should we use our anger as motivation to do good?

### **3:6 Capernaum synagogue again - Pharisees start plotting against Jesus.**

Herodians. Who were they? We don't know exactly, but it is universally believed that these were another party of Jews who favored the Herods. Most Jews did not favor Herod because his appointment as king was against the Law of Moses ([Deut 17:15](#)) on both counts: God did not choose Herod (the Romans did) and Herod was not an Israelite but an Edomite. Yet Herod was a practicing Jew, so the Jews who respected him and his reign were probably called Herodians. Practically speaking, the Herodians were Roman supporters while most Jews rejected Herod and Caesar as their kings. Jesus warned His disciples about the Herodians ([Mark 8:15](#)).

They. These very opposing sects will join together to battle the one they oppose more. "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." This kind of compromising is wrong!

Destroy. Destroy is a literal translation. Their hatred for Jesus is already so much! Are they jealous that they do not have the power of God as Jesus has?

### **3:7-9 Sea of Galilee - Jesus' fame from all around.**

Large crowd. Jesus probably didn't have to do a whole lot of traveling. The fame of His power is causing people to come to Him!

Idumea. (1) This is the Greek form of "Edom." Jesus is even reconciling sons of Abraham who were separated from Israel. (2) In Matthew's parallel passage, he replaces Idumea with Decapolis. This is very fascinating because it doesn't fit with this gospel being to the Romans. The Romans would know about the Decapolis, being cities that were Greek and Roman in culture instead of Jewish. And Idumea would mean something to the Jews since the Edomites have a very long history with the Israelites.

### **3:10-12 Sea of Galilee - Jesus heals diseases and unclean spirits.**

Touch Him. People knew of Jesus' incredible power. They knew that all they had to do was touch Him! We have the record of the woman who had bled for 12 years do this very thing.

Those possessed fell down. Demons were so afraid of Jesus' power. Since Jesus has so much power over them, all they could do was to recognize Jesus and plead for mercy. We should be so thankful that the forces of evil cannot do anything but fall down before Jesus, who is the Power of God. (This is like in the movie Cars with Mater, "I respect thee!" and in the movie Over the Hedge with Hammy, "OK, I believe in you." When we are confronted with a power greater than us, we cannot do anything but express our humility.)

### **3:13-15 On the mountain - Jesus takes his disciples and appoints 12 to be apostles.**

Location. In the other gospels, this account is around other stories that happen in Capernaum. It is possible that this is the mountain on the map.

Those He wanted... He also appointed. It looks like at this time, Jesus recognizes personal disciples outside of the Twelve apostles. Jesus may have appointed Twelve to be His witnesses and special men sent out to preach. (Apostle means ambassador.) But we should remember that God wants to us all of us. Jesus knows and uses all his disciples. We don't have to be someone great in order to do something great for God.

Appointed. Jesus prayed before He chose them (Luke 6:12).

Twelve. This is a significant number because this was the number of the tribes of Israel.

Authority. Jesus gives the Twelve the power to drive out demons. They are given a piece of God's miraculous power.

### **3:16-19 On the mountain - List of the 12 apostles.**

\*\*\* See "What Happened After Acts" study. \*\*\*

James, son of Zebedee. James was one of Jesus' three closest friends. He is the brother of John. Yet James was the first to die. Herod had him killed (Acts 12:1-2).

Philip. Just as Andrew went to go get Peter, Philip went to get Nathanael.

Bartholomew. Nathanael is Bartholomew? (If so,) Jesus had an incredible conversation with Philip/Bartholomew: [John 1:47-51](#).

Thomas. Unfortunate that Thomas is most famous for his doubts. Just as Peter had his terrible moment of weakness in denying Christ, Thomas' weakness was his doubting. Thomas went on to preach in India.

Iscairiot. Your footnote may say that Iscairiot comes from Kerioth, a city in Judea. This appears to be true.

Strong's Dictionary says Iscairiot is plural and literally means "inhabitants of Kerioth" or "Keriothite."

Who betrayed Him. Mark as well as the other gospel writers are very quick to point out who Judas really was.

He may have been one of the original Twelve. But when we read in Rev about how the city of New Jerusalem has on its twelve foundations and each of the Twelve apostles' names on the foundation (Rev 21:14), I believe the gospel writers want to know that Judas' name is not on them. Of course, Judas' position was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:15-26).

### **3:20-21 Capernaum at home again - Jesus' family rejects Him.**

Heard... set out. It's interesting Mark puts these two verses here. He says they heard about Jesus' fame and set out to see Him. They do not arrive until verse 31.

Restrain. This word literally means to seize or retain with strength. Jesus' family didn't come to convince Him to stop what He is doing, but to actively keep Jesus from doing it. [John 7:2-5](#).

### **3:22-27 Capernaum at home again - Scribes accuse Jesus of being of Satan.**

Scribes... Jerusalem. The religious leaders are all from Jerusalem, where the temple is. Jesus has so much of their attention, that they are sending men to lowly Galilee to learn from or challenge Jesus.

Beelzebub. (1) Transliterated, Beelzeboul, literally meaning the dung god. It is taken from the Hebrew, Ba'al Zebub, literally meaning Baal of the Fly, the god of the Ekronites. (2) Ekron was one of the five major Philistine cities located 22 miles west of Jerusalem. Ahaziah, king of Israel, sent men to Baal-zebub to see if he would live, but Elijah came and prophesied that he would die because he sought Baal-zebub (2Kings 1). (3) By the time of Jesus, this pagan god of flies was used as an insult. After all, who would worship the god of the flies anyway? (4) How does this apply to us? Jesus uses this insult and gives His followers a warning. [Matt 10:25](#).

He drives... the demons. Jesus' enemies must have wanted to accuse Jesus of heresy quickly and recklessly. After all, their logic is utterly faulty as Jesus will point out.

Ruler of demons. Jesus goes on to mention Satan. Then Satan is, in fact, the ruler of the demons.

Parables. It's fascinating that Jesus' response, in this case, isn't one of power or condemnation but of teaching.

Of course, it takes some simple teaching to refute such faulty and ridiculous accusations.

Kingdom/House divided. I once heard this answer on Jeopardy, "He said, a kingdom/house divided against its self cannot stand." I was excited because I knew a Jeopardy question: "Who was Jesus?!" But the correct question on Jeopardy was Abraham Lincoln. Of course, who do you think Abraham Lincoln got it from??

Drive out demons. Matthew and Luke add an additional statement by Jesus. [Luke 11:19-20](#).

Ties up the strong man. Jesus goes from a parables talking about Satan against Satan to a parable about Himself against Satan.

Strong Man. Who is the strong man? Satan. What kind of person can tie up a strong man? A stronger Man (Luke 11:21-22)!

Rob his house. When did Jesus tie up Satan? [Luke 10:17-20](#). Or, when did Satan fall like lightning? I don't know, but I believe it happened before Jesus or His followers performed miracles. Jesus is robbing Satan's house now! [Col 2:15](#).

### **3:28-30 Capernaum at home again - Jesus describes the unforgiveable sin.**

Forgiven... whatever blasphemies. Blaspheme in itself is forgivable. It is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that will not be forgiven.

Eternal sin. (1) We call this the unforgivable sin, but Jesus doesn't say that God is not able to forgive it but that God will not forgive it. (2) Matthew phrase this a different way: "this age and in the one to come" (Matt 12:32). The seriousness of this sin cannot be overstated! \*\*\* See "Unforgivable Sin" study. \*\*\*

### **3:31-35 Capernaum at home again - Jesus' physical family asks for Him; He describes His spiritual family.**

His mother and His brothers. (1) Where is Joseph, Jesus' [non-biological] father? After the incident where Jesus was found in the Temple after 3 or more days when Jesus was 12, there is no mention of Joseph. Many believe that Joseph died sometime between Jesus' ages of 12 and 30. (2) Though Mary and Jesus brothers tried to restrain Jesus now and Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him now (John 7:2-5), later we know that Mary and Jesus' [half] brothers believed in Him (Acts 1:14).

Standing outside. They would not come into talk to Jesus themselves? Why call Jesus from a distance and send others to go get Him? Didn't they come in order to restrain Him? Did Jesus' family not respect Jesus for who He is? We know that Mary already believed Jesus could perform miracles (John 2:1-11). Did Jesus' brothers, who did not believe in Him at this time (John 7:2-5), pressure Mary to join them in this?

Who are My mother and My brothers. Jesus did not put His physical family above His heavenly Father. In [Luke 14:26](#) when Jesus taught people to count the cost about their family, Jesus Himself put that into practice. But just as Jesus (Mark 7:11-13) and Paul (1Tim 5:8) taught, He did not neglect His physical family (John 19:26-27).

Circle around Him. Matthew says that Jesus motions to His disciples (Matt 12:49). Jesus recognizes that the people in the circle around Him are the ones who want to be His family, not those who stand a far off.

Whoever does the will of God. Jesus shows that those who are part of His true, spiritual family are those who do the will of God, that is, obey God. John later explains this in his gospel ([John 1:12-13](#)). Jesus point: I don't give dibs to my physical family, I give dibs to all those who want to be in my spiritual family.

### **4:1 Sea of Galilee again - Jesus gets into another boat.**

#### **4:2-9 Sea of Galilee again - Parable of the Sower.**

Parables. (1) Jesus did not give lectures on theology. He used stories that anyone could understand. (2) Parables help explain our condition as well as God's truth. Parables hide AND reveal truth. A parable hides the truth from the person who doesn't care or already disagrees with the parable (because of prejudice). A parable reveals the truth for the person who hungers and thirsts for a Power beyond than themselves.

Sprang up right away. Today, we have learned in agriculture that roots produce cytokinin. This growth hormone promotes cell division. In other words, more roots means plants grow faster. If this seed lands on shallow soil, it should grow more slowly. The plant that springs up immediately on rocky ground is unnatural. Jesus is saying that when a person has no roots (foundation), they should establish their roots (foundation) before they start growing in other ways.

#### **4:10-12 Explaining parables - Jesus answers why He speaks in parables.**

Alone with the Twelve, those who were around Him. Why does Mark phrase it this way? I infer that not all of the Twelve apostles asked Jesus about the parables. One thing that comes to my mind is when Mark recorded what Peter said, Peter was saying that he was not one of those who asked Jesus this question. Given to you. Jesus says this to the Twelve, but I believe Jesus is talking about all those who are good soil.

Jesus has given this to us to continue to preach! 1Cor 2:7-9.

"they may look... and be forgiven." Is 6:9-10. When Jesus quotes this verse, it appears that Jesus doesn't want people to find forgiveness. But Jesus doesn't teach in parables so that they would not accept Him. Instead, their unwillingness to perceive and understand comes first. If people wanted to look, they would perceive; if people wanted to listen, they would understand. But since many are unwilling to perceive and understand, they cannot turn back and be forgiven. Because many people are unwilling to accept Christ is why Jesus teaches in parables, not the other way around. In other words, people don't turn back and are forgiven because they do not perceive nor understand, not because Jesus teaches in parables. After all, if people were unwilling to accept Jesus' miraculous power, then why should they accept Jesus' teaching? After Jesus was finished teaching and ascended, Paul said that even the cross became a stumbling block to those who refuse to perceive and understand (1Cor 1:18-25). Paul also explained how people refused to perceive and understand, so God gave them over to their desire to sin (Rom 1:24, 1:28, 1:32). Augustine of Hippo and John Chrysostom said, "They could not because they would not."

Look, perceive; listen, understand. This is much like the difference between seeing and looking as between hearing and listening.

#### **4:13-20 Explaining parables - Parable of the Sower explained.**

How will you understand any. Is Jesus frustrated with them or is this parable one of the easiest parables to understand? You know, if Jesus has to explain this parable to people, this is just another example that shows that mankind is not as smart as we think we are. In reality and in all cases, we are utterly depend on God—even to explain His more simple teachings.

Sower. This person spreads God's Word. It's very beneficial to analyze the types of soil and such, but we must not forget about the sower and his importance. If there is no soil, then the soil would not have a chance to receive God's Word. God has given us the responsibility to be sowers of His Word. Paul gives the job description of God's sower (Gal 6:7-10).

Word. The Word of God. Often, we call this the Bible, and this is true, but remember that Word of God is more than a book we hold in our hands. It is the spiritual, breathed Word of God that can also be spoken and lived.

Path. This is a person with a hard heart. These people will not even receive the Word, all other kinds of people at least receive it. These people have already chosen to be an enemy of God before they hear about the goodness of God. If someone refuses to give God a chance, then Satan has already won such a person. To break this type of heart, a very humbling tragedy is often needed, unfortunately.

Satan. Maybe we don't know how Satan works, but when someone immediately rejects, we know that Satan played a hand in it. In our culture this is usually displayed when the person has made up his minds to live life for himself and be his own master—already a "disciple" of Satan.

Rocky. This is a person with a shallow heart. It accepts the joy of God but not the demands of God. These people lack or neglect to build a foundation of faith. The wise man builds his foundation on Christ, the foolish man does not (Matt 7:24-27, 1Cor 3:11). So what kinds of things do we need a strong foundation for? Peer pressure or persecution. These people have not built a foundation of God. They have left their foundation to be their social lives or reputations.

Pressure and persecution. These things are not easy things to battle for a Christian. Luke calls this "a time of testing" (Luke 8:13). When anyone finds themselves in moments where they are tested with peer pressure or physical persecution, it is hard for anyone to know what they will do in those moments. To battle these things, we need to be training our hearts and minds NOW, and be praying that the Spirit will give us the strength in those moments.

Thorns. This is a person with a crowded heart. It has not fully repented because it treats others things as important as Godly things. This kind of Christian may have a foundation of some strength, but this person lacks or has neglected to make his house sturdy. They may have strong belief in God—a foundation--, but

their words and actions are not displaying the nature of God—their house. What kinds of things may keep a person from bearing spiritual fruit? Physical worries, wealth, and anything we want but should not have. Typically, these are people who attend church! This person is comfortable in their Christianity as long as they stay away from sin. But this is only half of what it means to be a Christian. A Christian must bear fruit ( Luke 13:6-9).

Worries of this age. Jesus has addressed the sinfulness of worry (Matt 6:25-34). See also 1Pet 5:7.

Delusion of wealth. “Delusion” is the literal word here. Wealth is an illusion, an illusion caused by itself. Jesus says that delusion is inherent to wealth. Jesus calls wealth unrighteous money. Luke 16:9-13. God has given us a responsibility to use this unrighteous money He has given us to accomplish righteous things.

Desire for things. Jesus already mentioned wealth, but now He is talking about all forms of lust and materialism. Luke says this is the “pleasures of life” (Luke 8:14). Why would these things make a person unfruitful? It happens when a person puts any of these things over God’s will for their lives. No can serve both God and money. Eventually, one will conquer the other. This process usually happens over a long period of time. The change can be so gradual that the person doesn’t know it’s happening. When it comes to being fruitful, we cannot be lazy but be continually examining ourselves and moving more towards God’s will (Heb 6:11-12).

Good. This is a person with a good and honest heart (Luke 8:15). Those who really are good by letting God’s word enter their lives and change them will produce lots and lots of fruit. Jesus said we will know others by their fruit (Matt 12:33-35, Luke 6:43-45). Do others know who we are by our fruit? Tit 3:14.

Fruit. (1) Right now, if we are like the barren fig tree, then we need to accept God’s fertilizer and change. If we don’t bear fruit, we will be cut down. Instead, Paul calls us to bear fruit (Col 1:9-10). (2) Notice that Jesus doesn’t say 30, 40, or 100 times but 30, 40, and 100 times. Jesus is not talking about one particular crop producing more than another crop. He is talking about the same crop producing more and more and more! Christians cannot just bear fruit and call it a day. Christians are to be known by their ABUNDANT fruit.

#### **4:21-25 Explaining parables - Jesus instructs the Twelve to spread His parables.**

Lamp under basket, under bed, on lampstand. (1) Where does a light belong? We don’t put our lights on a lampstand. As mankind discovered electricity, we very wisely attached our lights to the ceiling. The ceiling is the best place for light to be distributed as best as possible. Does it make sense to put our lights under a basket or under our bed? (2) Where does a Christian belong? Shouldn’t a Christian be a place where they can shine as best as possible? Isn’t light most effective when it is penetrating the darkness? Does it make sense to put lights into a room that is already well-lit? Just as light effectively overpowers dark places, Christians should use God’s goodness to effectively overpower sinfulness. 2Cor 4:11.

Lamp. In the context of these six verses, Jesus isn’t specifically talking about Christians showing their goodness to the world. Jesus goes on to talk about revealing hidden things, listening, and responsibility. The light here, is an image of spreading God’s truth (Matt 10:27, Luke 12:3). It is a continuation of the parable of the sower. This will be the subject of the rest of these verses. A lamp should not be hidden or sheltered; it should be sharing its light!

Concealed to be revealed, hidden to light. Mark applies this to spreading the good news. Matthew and Luke go further and also apply this to spreading the good news in spite of persecution and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Matt 10:26, Luke 12:2).

Anyone has ears. Hear ye, hear ye! This message isn’t for a few, it is for all. If you have ears to hear what Jesus is saying here, you have a responsibility! This is shown in the next two phrases.

Measure you use will be measured. (1) In the end, if we spread seed in small measures, then the same small measure will be added to our account. If we spread seed without measure, then the same amount without measure will be added to our account. Can Jesus be more clear? He is going to hold us accountable for spreading His good news. (2) Mark applies this phrase to spreading the good news. In Matt 7:1-6, Matthew applies this phrase to judging. In Luke 6:37-38, Luke applies this phrase to judging and also applies it to forgiving. Since this phrase can be applied to many aspects of the Christian life, it is clear that the Golden Rule (Matt 7:12, Luke 6:31, Gal 5:14) is one of the God’s highest standards in how He will judge us on the last day.

Has, given; does not have, taken away. (1) In Matt 25:29, Matthew applies this phrase to the parable of the talents. In Luke 19:26, Luke applies this phrase to the parable of the ten minas. It’s clear that Jesus is talking about responsibility and how we will be held accountable. (2) God has given ability to each person. It starts with the ears. If you can listen, then you can do. Jesus has given us all we need. If we share our God-given abilities, God will share even more with us. If we have not shared, God will take away the ability He gave. 2Cor 10:12-15. (3) Which direction are you heading? Are you increasingly using your abilities as God increases your abilities? Or are you slacking in your abilities, thereby lacking in abilities God wants to give you? Remember the parable of the barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9).

#### **4:26-29 Explaining parables - Parable of the Scattered Seed.**

Sleeps. There is no need to worry about whether we are doing a good enough job in spreading the gospel. At the end of the day, after we have done what we could, it's good to sleep. A farmer goes to bed after a hard day of planting. Jesus said that the farmer doesn't know how seed grows, but if he knew that God brings forth the crops, he shouldn't worry about whether something will come from the ground. Evangelism is no different. After days of doing what we can to spread the gospel, we should know that God brings the increase (1Cor 3:6). It's our job to scatter and sleep. God works in the meantime.

[Waterer]. Paul said that he planted seed and Apollos watered (1Cor 3:6). As seed is continually planted in a person's soil, growth can also come from being watered. Jesus offered a special kind of water: living water that will never cause thirst and will be a spring of eternal life. Let's share Jesus' seed with others just as Paul did and Jesus' water with others just as Apollos did.

[Birds]. In the parable of the sower, Jesus warns that Satan snatches seed before it can penetrate. If we are scattering seed, we can help people submit to God so that the Devil will flee (Jam 4:7). Just as a farmer builds scarecrows to keep the birds away from crops, we should do what we can to keep Satan away and pray. Be a spiritual scarecrow so that the Devil doesn't steal the seed we scatter. As a spiritual scarecrow, we will be harmless to the soil and scary to Satan.

Crop is ready. Just as the farmer will harvest the crop only when it's ready, we, too, do not need to force people to come to repentance. Sin is something that the Spirit convicts (John 16:8) and repentance is something that God grants (2Tim 2:25). When the person is ready, then we harvest them with the sickle of baptism. But until the person is ripe, we should never force salvation. If salvation is pushed, it increases the chance that the person will later become a soil of rock or of thorns.

Harvest. Remember that we do not have to be the ones who scatter seed every time. Others before us have scattered seed and have watered it. Jesus is the one Who started it all. We should scatter seed and also be watchful for seed that is ready for harvest now ([John 4:35-38](#)). There are people in our world today who are ripe.

Therefore. We should accept all the duties of a farmer: we should be the scatterer, the waterer, the scarecrow, and the harvester.

#### **4:30-32 Explaining parables - Parable of the Mustard Seed.**

Kingdom of God. This is always the Church.

Smallest seed, tallest plant. The mustard seed is not a parable of smallness. It is not a parable of largeness. It is a parable of growth! And what growth is Jesus explaining to us! Jesus pointed out the smallness of the seed and the largeness of the tree just to illustrate that the Kingdom of God is characterized by the most incredible growth. In Matt 13 and Luke 13, Jesus also uses the parable of yeast and how it spreads throughout 50 pounds of flour to explain the growth of the Kingdom of God.

Birds. Jesus uses the birds as another image of how much growth is characterized by the Kingdom of God. How can an inanimate seed, smaller than any bird, something the birds might eat, and grow to be something so large and strong that birds come to rely on it?

The parable of the mustard seed is the story of Christianity. What Jesus is saying here is a prophecy. Christianity started small. It started with Jesus Christ, and after Him, the apostles. From about twelve men, Christianity has become the dominant religion of the world--even today. Take the Roman Empire as an example. In the first few centuries, the Roman Empire brutally persecuted Christians--just as a bird would eat mustard seeds. Then in the fourth century, the Roman Empire made Christianity the state religion--just as birds would nest in the branches.

The parable of the mustard seed is the story of the apostles. Jesus took two handfuls of men who were fishermen, tax collectors, and other very lowly professions and transformed them into apostles who turned the world upside down. These very common and every day men have been honored and held in higher esteem than anyone else in the world by most people. Their individual growth and transformation is one of the best examples of how the Kingdom of God works.

The parable of the mustard seed is the story of us. The mustard seed is our faith. The Kingdom of God has transformed innumerable people from lives of worthlessness to lives that will never die. As the song says, "Years I spent in vanity and pride, caring not my Lord was crucified, knowing not it was for me He died." It has caused men so hard-hearted or opposed to God to become great people of God. Look at Paul. These are people who we, in our prejudice, say, "That person would never change." The Kingdom of God has proven to cause changes in people that were believed to be impossible. May we have the faith like a mustard seed, a faith that grows to become something greater than its original potential. In this way, we would be able to say as the song says, "Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er..."

O for grace to trust Him more!" Jesus said that we should have the size of a mustard seed. Why? Because it's a faith that is expected to grow into something that was originally unimaginable. Matt 17:20, Luke 17:6.

#### **4:33-34 Explaining parables - Jesus explained parables to the Twelve.**

He did not speak to them without a parable. Who is them? Everyone? The public?

He would explain everything to His own disciples. Jesus didn't just explain His parables to His apostles, but to His disciples. Anyone who was willing to accept Jesus heard the truth behind the parables. Therefore, Jesus did not speak anything without a parable to those people who would not accept Him. (See notes on Mark 4:10-12.)

#### **4:35-41 Jesus calms the Sea of Galilee.**

Already filling. The Greek word is *gemizo* (G1072). The root word means to fill, this word means to entirely fill.

The boat is everything but underneath the water! Luke 8:23 adds that they were in danger.

Sleeping. Even though the boat was nearly under water?

Fearful. Why were they fearful? Because most of the boat was under water! Right? Why would the apostles tell this story later if they were in the right? They told this story and it is recorded in the gospels because it teaches us something. You're in a boat and a storm is raging. That boat fills with water and the storm continues. Doesn't life seem like this sometimes? You're in a situation that is beyond your control, and the outcome looks really bleak. Let this story remind us that Jesus is always in control. He is King and He has the power. When He is our King, His power will see us through and rescue us in the end. Remember that no matter what situations we find ourselves in, there is no reason to be fearful like the apostles were. Jesus is more powerful than our circumstances. This is why John said that even cowards will end up in the lake of fire, the second death (Rev 21:8).

Terrified. The apostles were fearful about the storm. But now they are terrified with Jesus! The word in verse 40 literally means timid, usually in matters of faith. Jesus was right to question their emotions. The word in verse 41 literally means fear, that is, fright or alarm. Who wouldn't feel scared if your friend spoke the words and completely calmed a storm that was about to kill you? This is more of a healthy type of fear. The same root word is used in Prov 1:7, and by Paul about Jesus Christ (Eph 5:21).

Sea obey Him. This another example and display of Jesus' power. We've seen Jesus have power over demons and diseases, but now we see Jesus' power over nature! After all, He created it in the first place (John 1:3).

[Jonah]. A very, very similar thing happened to Jonah. Jonah 1:1-6. Of course, a big difference is that Jonah was running from God and Jesus is God. Jonah was such a great prophet and preacher that he converted the entire town of Nineveh, a people who weren't even Jewish. Yet Jonah could do nothing against the storm; the crew threw him overboard. Jesus, on the other hand, commands the sea and the wind by His word! After the event with Jonah, the crew of the ship feared God--the exact same Greek word for fear that Mark used! (Jonah 1:15-16)

#### **5:1-13 Country of the Gerasenes - Jesus drives out Legion.**

Gerasenes. (1) Though not much of the country touches the southeast side of Galilee, the country was large, completely within modern day Jordan. It included the Roman-cultured cities of Raphana (north of modern Umm Qais, Jordan), Gadara (modern Umm Qais, Jordan), and Capitolias (modern Beit Ras, Jordan). (2) There is a different reading of this word in different Greek manuscripts. "Gerasenes" is not the correct reading, but "Gadarenes," named after the town in the region. The KJV and NKJV are correct with "Gadarenes" while most other translations have "Gerasenes." Both readings existed in the days of Origen (228 BC; ANF, vol 9, page 371). (3) The people in this story are Gentiles, not Jews. Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. But as we will see, Jesus healed and helped many Gentiles also. Jesus knew that His new covenant with mankind would later extend to the Gentiles. I believe if Jesus hadn't helped Gentiles--like He did in this story--, there would be a bigger debate today on whether Gentiles can be Christians.

A man. Mark says that it was "a man." Matthew says there were two demon-possessed men (Matt 8:28). Like Mark, Luke mentions a man (Luke 8:27).

Man...met Him. The man has an unclean spirit. Why would he voluntarily come to meet Jesus? I believe there is an inner conflict going on in the man. The man does not want these unclean spirits inside him. The man has probably heard the things Jesus is doing and knows that Jesus can heal him. He summons enough strength to come to Jesus in spite of the spirits inside him. Of course, God probably allowed the man to do this because the man is cured by Jesus which proves Jesus' glory and the man becomes a witness and preacher of Jesus in that country.

Lived in the tombs. He didn't hang around the cities like Mary Magdalene probably had. He lived outside the city in the tombs--which would be good for the city folk because they were not able to stop him or restrain him.

Even with chains. Chains cannot hold this man. Either he has greater skill than Houdini or the unclean spirits in him gave him supernatural strength. Luke adds that he was bound by chains, shackles and was guarded, but he still broke out and fled to deserted places (Luke 8:29).

Crying out among the tombs. (1) How horrible would it be to hear this in town? You wouldn't be able to enjoy your meal if you could hear the cries of this man outside the town. and late at night when you're trying to sleep, you hear the man who no one can restrain shouting. To me, that would be far more frightening than the howl of a wolf in the night. (2) Besides this, what if your family member died and you had to bury him? Would you dare bury him out in the tombs where this man lives? What about if one of your loved ones is buried in that graveyard? Would you have the courage to visit the grave while this man lives there? (3) Matthew says that the man was so violent that no one could pass that way (Matt 8:28). (4) Luke records that the man wore no clothes (Luke 8:27). (5) The point is this: for many reasons, everyone is afraid of this man.

Cutting himself with stones. Who would do this to their body but someone who is deceived in some way? Paul says that taking care of our bodies should be a given. He uses this argument when saying that the husband should take care of his wife as he would his own body (Eph 5:29). We know that a Christian's body is the temple of God (1Cor 6:19). Therefore, cutting yourself is an abuse that is not holy. Paul said to glorify God in your body (1Cor 6:20).

Knelt before Him. The man still has enough strength to give Jesus His due respect. The man wants to be healed!

He had told him. You can see that in verses 7 and 8, Mark is not chronological. Let's turn that around: Jesus said, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" then the man cried out with a loud voice, "What do You have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you before God, don't torment me!" Since Jesus had already addressed the demon, it is the demon that says this to Jesus, not the man.

Most High God. The demon says this phrase. The demon knows and believes exactly who Jesus is. As we saw before, let this be an example that belief is not sufficient. James said demons believe and shudder. Should we believe and obey?

Before God. The demon's requests "before God" for Jesus to leave him alone. Why would he say that? I believe it is because the demon knows that the Father is overflowing with mercy. The demon is saying, "Be merciful to me because God is watching and mercy is part of His nature."

Legion. This word is Latin in origin, so the Roman audience would certainly understand. The hearers of Peter and the readers of Mark would understand how many demons are in this man. A legion was around 5000 soldiers! That's a lot of evil within this man! But we can remember that God has a lot of angels. Jesus says that God can provide 12 legions! That's A LOT of good! (Compare: 5,000 demons here to 60,000 angels from God.)

Kept begging. Jesus let the demon plead for mercy. He didn't just remove the demon outright. Is He allowing the unclean spirit an opportunity to leave the man voluntarily because Jesus pulls out the "big guns"?

Not...out of the region. (1) Why would the demons want to stay in this region? It might have something to do with what Jesus says about demons leaving a person in Luke 11:24-25. (2) Instead of saying out of the region, Luke says that they begged that Jesus not banish them to the abyss (Luke 8:31). (About the abyss, see notes for Luke 8:31.)

Hillside. On the edge of the Sea of Galilee, the closest town to the only hill in the area is modern Tel Katsir, Israel. Verse 13 says "steep bank," therefore, Tel Katsir is the place this happened because it is the only place along the Sea that has any steep bank. Matthew says the hillside was a long way off (Matt 8:30).

2000 pigs. (1) Remember that these people are Gentiles, a Jew would never ever be found raising pigs, an unclean animal! (2) Because there were 2000 pigs, we know that there were at least 2000 demons! Because Legion means 5000, there were about 3 demons per pig.

Drowned. Why would the demons ask to be sent into the pigs only for the pigs to drown? Did the demons cause the pigs to do this or was this expected for the demons? Either way, the demons were left with inhabiting nothing. In the end, evil will not triumph!

#### **5:14-17 Country of the Gerasenes - The people beg Jesus to leave.**

Ran off and reported it. Compare this to the shepherds who were in the vicinity of Jesus' birth. [Luke 2:15-17](#).

But the Gerasenes go straight to the town. It seems that they don't care about Jesus, they care about losing all their pigs. After all, a farm losing 2000 pigs is a huge loss! Not to forget the water supply where they died is now ruined. The town will be devastated! But such a loss should be acceptable to us because this man's soul is now free, and he has chosen to follow Jesus.

Sitting, dressed, and in right mind. In the time it took the shepherds to go tell the town and region, the formerly demon-possessed man has had time to relax in his right mind.

Begged Him to leave. Luke adds that they ask Him to leave because they are so scared (Luke 8:37). This is not the kind of fear that the disciples had in the boat. This is the same kind of fear the apostles had afterward and what Paul says to have. (See notes on Mark 4:40-41.) But their fear is not directed in the right way. The apostles were afraid of Jesus' awesome power, and wanted to be a part of it. These people were afraid of Jesus' awesome power, and didn't want it bothering them. How many people today view Jesus in the same way?

#### **5:18-19 Country of the Gerasenes - Jesus instructs the man to preach and he goes to the Decapolis.**

This part of the story is not recorded in Matthew.

Go and report. We studied earlier that Jesus normally told people to not tell about Him. This is the only time when Jesus tells someone to go spread the news. \*\*\* See "Don't Tell Anyone" study. \*\*\*

#### **5:20 Country of the Gerasenes – The man goes to the Decapolis.**

Decapolis. This was a collection of ten cities. They had a predominately Roman-Greek culture as opposed to the Jewish culture of Palestine. These cities were listed by Pliny the Elder, a high-ranking Roman official who died in the explosion of Pompeii. The cities (and modern-day cities) that the man would have gone to were (in order of closest in proximity): Hippos (Ein Gev, Israel), Raphana (north of Umm Qais, Jordan), Gadara (Umm Qais, Jordan), Capitolias (Beit Ras, Jordan), Gerasa (Jarash, Jordan), Canatha (Qanawat, Syria), Pella (northwest of Amman, Jordan), and Philadelphia (Amman, Jordan).

#### **5:21-24 Another side of the Sea of Galilee - Jairus asks Jesus to heal his daughter.**

Other side. None of the gospels reveal where this place is.

One of the synagogue leaders. The Jewish leaders were opposed to Jesus. For Jairus to do this, he risks losing his friends, his status in the synagogue, and his job.

Death's door. In Mark, it literally is "has finality." In Matthew 9:18, it literally is "even now dead." In Luke 8:42, it literally is "in death."

#### **5:25-34 Another side of the Sea of Galilee - Jesus heals the woman who had bled for 12 years.**

Bleeding. (1) What kind of physical problem is this? Modern medicine cannot identify it. It's my opinion that this is the kind of bleeding that only occur with women. This woman is bleeding and it hasn't stopped over the last 12 years--when its supposed to stop after a week. (2) According to the Law of Moses, this woman is unclean during the entire time of bleeding (Lev 15:25-30).

Endured much under doctors. Other translations say suffered. This is the real meaning. Jesus used this word to describe what He would experience at the hands of the chief priests and scribes, that is, before the time of crucifixion. I don't spend much time imagining everything this woman has gone through because of doctors, especially if her bleeding is the bleeding unique to a woman.

Spent everything. Who wouldn't spend everything to stop such a such a horrible thing as constantly bleeding for 12 years.

Not helped, became worse. It is enough to be in a constant state of sadness because of this condition, but this adds insult to injury. All the money she spent to fix this problem has not helped. It's has made things worse!

"If I can just touch His robes." (1) Luke said that his gospel is chronological. Since that is the case, many people had already tried to the same things as the woman is about to. Luke says many were just trying to touch Jesus (Luke 6:19), and the healing of the bleeding woman happened later (Luke 8:44). In the next chapter of Mark, Mark also mentions how other people did this also (Mark 6:56). (2) Luke says she touched the tassel, or fringe, of His robe (Luke 8:44). (3) This is an example of great faith! Let's list all the reasons why this woman had incredible faith. 1) this woman believed that Jesus had SO much power all she had to do was touch Jesus' clothes. 2) If someone has the miraculous power to cure you, wouldn't you want to humble yourself before the person asking Him to do it? But she didn't plan for Jesus to know what she was going to do. She knew His power was so incredible, Jesus didn't even have to be aware of her healing. 3) She believed Jesus' power could heal a disease that was constant and had lasted 12 long years. 4) She believed this man, who had no medical background, had the power to heal her when no doctor in the world had this ability. Let these four reasons sink in. The woman had a faith that puts most of us to shame. This is the kind of faith that believes in the impossible! Jesus later says (Mark 5:34) that her faith has made her well.

Instantly her flow of blood ceased. (1) Her flow of blood didn't have to be cured immediately. It could have tapered off. Mark wants to be clear that what took 12 years for doctors to make worse, Jesus completely

fixed much sooner than 12 seconds. (2) In Matthew's gospel, it says that she was healed in the hour Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well." Obviously, Matthew is speaking generally, placing the healing within that hour. Mark is more specific, placing the healing in the exact moment.

She sensed in her body. (1) I'm not sure how she could sense that she was healed on the inside. Of course, today's medical community does not know what the problem was in the first place. Whatever it was, the woman felt instant relief. But if it was Jesus who healed us, would we expect anything different than feeling instant relief? (2) Because it says, "in her body," I believe her bleeding was internal and another reason why I have opinion that this was bleeding unique to a woman.

Power had gone out. Do think anyone can sneak blessings from God? How can you take from someone who is all-powerful and all-knowing? You cannot. Jesus' power wasn't given to Him by mistake, Jesus' power is part of His divine nature. Jesus knows that His power has blessed someone and Jesus knows who it was and her full story.

"Who touched My robes?" So why did Jesus ask this question? I believe He is testing the woman. She has the faith to rely on Jesus' power, but does she have the faith to look into Jesus' eyes, face-to-face? The same can be asked of us. We obey Jesus and we rely on His salvation, but are we afraid of having a relationship with Jesus? Are we afraid of looking Him in the eye? Do we see Him as Master and Judge, which He is, but do we see Him as Friend and Brother?

Pressing against You. (1) Luke says the crowds were "drowning" Him (Luke 8:42). (2) The crowd is pressing against Him from all directions. Of course, the question the disciples are asking is, "Lord, who isn't touching You?" The disciples recognize how strange it is that Jesus knows about this mysterious woman. How blown away they are when--out of ALL the people touching Jesus--a single, lonely woman steps forward and says it was her. What a surprise this would be to the disciples! Obviously, something amazing has happened to this woman! Jesus understands, but they do not understand until the woman tells her story.

Came with fear and trembling. (1) The woman planned to be healed by Jesus without His knowledge, but when Jesus knew it, the woman did not have the fear to run away. Instead, she had a healthy kind of fear so that she came to Jesus and gave Him His due reverence. In short, the woman had true humility. (2) The same humility existed in the Centurion who had great faith in Jesus ([Luke 7:6-10](#)). (3) Jesus healed the woman, and she responded this way. Jesus gives us salvation, and Paul said we are to accept it in the same way: with fear and trembling (Php 2:12). The words in that verse are the same root words.

Told Him the whole truth. Luke says that she explained her condition and how she was instantly cured (Luke 8:47).

[Jesus the Great Physician]. (1) The moral of this story is Jesus is the real physician. He cured all physical problems. But just because Jesus isn't walking the earth now, this does not mean He does not heal our sicknesses and such. His power is greater than any doctor or medical procedure this world can or will ever offer. (2) Remember Asa ([2Chron 16:12-13](#)). If God wanted His people to come to Him for physical healing before Jesus walked the earth, then how much more after Jesus has conquered death itself!

[Bleeding woman; Jairus]. Notice the contrast in these two people. Jairus was a ruler, the woman was nobody. Jairus was losing a daughter who gave him happiness, the woman was bleeding which gave her suffering. Jairus' money could not save his daughter, the woman became poor because she had already spent all her money on doctors. Yet BOTH of these people found answers and saw power in Jesus.

### **5:35-43 Another side of the Sea of Galilee - Jesus heals Jairus' daughter.**

While He was still speaking. All the gospels place the healing of the bleeding woman within the context of the raising of Jairus' daughter. This is interesting since the woman had bleed for 12 years and Jairus' daughter was 12 years old.

Teacher. Evidently, the people from Jairus' house are believers in Jesus because they call Him "Teacher." It is probable that Jairus and his whole family are believers.

Commotion. Matthew includes that there were also flute players (Matt 9:23).

Not dead but asleep. (1) I do not believe Jesus is talking about natural sleep; the girl has really died. The servants of Jairus could not have been wrong. All the people inside could not have been wrong. I believe Jesus used sleep as a figure for death ([John 11:11-15](#)). At least twelve times, NT writers use sleep as a figure for death (Acts 7:60, 13:36, 1Cor 11:30, 15:6, 15:18, 15:20, 15:51, 1Thes 4:13-15, 1Thes 5:10, 2Pet 3:4). (2) Death is not a scary thing if we see it as it really is. After all, every person who has ever lived will be "woken up" on the last day in the resurrection.

Laughing at Him. Apparently, the people at the house do not care much about the girl nor the family. If so, the proper response should have been anger. They should have shouted, "Why do you insult the family at a time of great sorrow?" Instead, they laugh. I have heard from somewhere that when someone died, there were professional mourners that could be hired in order to give the impression that the deceased was more

deeply loved. Is it possible that these people were hired to come and weep? Is there another explanation why the crowd would choose to laugh at Jesus?

By the hand. Remember that Jesus also took Peter's mother-in-law by the hand when He healed her fever (Mark 1:31).

Talitha kumi. This is Syriac (Chaldee). Why did Jesus use a foreign language? Could it be that a demon from Syria (Chaldea) had cause her to become sick and die?

Get up. It's interesting how often Jesus helps people "get up" throughout the gospel. For example, Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:31), the paralytic (Mark 2:11), the demon-possessed boy (Mark 9:27), and the apostles asleep at Gethsemane (Mark 14:42).

No one should know. (1) Of all the times Jesus told people not to tell that He had performed a miracle, this is the strangest. You've got Jairus coming to Jesus for help. You've got the servants saying the girl has died. You've got the mourners who are mourning her death. But how are the family, Peter, James, and John not supposed to tell anyone because the public is going to see this girl and know what happened? (2) Luke also records this (Luke 8:56), but Matthew does not. Instead, he said the news spread throughout the whole area (Matt 9:26).

Something to eat. It was believed by Jews in this time that spiritual beings did not eat, only physical beings ate. Eating was a sign that the person was real and physical, not an angel, a spirit, or a ghost. This can be seen in the book called Tobit. In it, Tobit is led around by the archangel Raphael in disguise. At the end when Raphael reveals himself, he says that Tobit was given visions of him eating, though he did not eat because he is an angel.

### **6:1-3 Nazareth - Jesus teaches in the Nazareth synagogue.**

Hometown. Remember: born in Bethlehem, grew up in Nazareth, and moved to Capernaum (after His baptism, the calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John).

Carpenter. Mark's gospel is all about sharing Jesus power. Before Jesus began to preach and do miracles, this power once resided in a lowly carpenter.

James (Iacobos), Joseph (loses), Jude (Ioudas), Simon (Simon), and sisters. Jesus had siblings!

James. James went on to be one of the most important leaders of the Jerusalem church. After all, he was Jesus' half-brother (Gal 1:19). James and Peter were the speakers at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

Paul said that Jesus appeared to James after His resurrection (1Cor 15:7). And of course, he wrote the letter we have today.

Jude. Since James was Jesus' brother and Jude says that James is his brother, then Jude is also Jesus' half-brother. We have his short letter.

With us. Obviously, Jesus' mother and four brothers still live in Nazareth.

Offended. (1) Literally, they were entrapped by Him. That is, they were entrapped by Jesus' past as a carpenter and unwilling to accept Jesus' present as the Power of God. (2) The people recognized Jesus' wisdom (verse 2), but they still didn't know the real Jesus (1Cor 1:21).

### **6:4-6a Nazareth - Jesus unable to heal many because of unbelief.**

A prophet is without honor in his hometown, among relatives, and household. (1) I have seen people experience this principle. They spend most of their years trying to convert their children. They have taught them well and their children know what it takes to become a Christian. But they are so used to their parents disciplining them their whole life, they have a habit of not finding any pleasure in their parents' teachings. But when someone outside of their family speak to them about Christianity, they are more open to listen and more honestly consider. (2) This principle from Jesus should remind us that just because we assume this or that person is being taught by their family, we should still reach out to those people. Perhaps they are calling victim to Jesus' statement here. You might have a perspective and a love that they can relate to.

Not able to do miracles. Why was Jesus not able to do many miracles? Matthew 13:58 says it was because of their unbelief. (1) Was it because of their unbelief because a person was healed by their faith? No, this was not always the case. Jesus cured a sick man who didn't have faith but ratted on Jesus (John 5:5-15). (2) Or was it because miracles wouldn't do any good but only cause more disbelief?

Amazed at their unbelief. Literally, "wondered through their faithlessness."

### **6:6b Galilean ministry - Jesus continues to visit the Galilean towns.**

In a circuit. What towns were included in this circuit? The towns probably include Capernaum, Nazareth, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Gennesaret, Dalmanutha, and Nain.

### **6:7-13 Galilean ministry - Jesus sends out the Twelve in pairs.**

[House of Israel]. In Matt 10:5-6, Jesus instructs the Twelve not to visit a town from any other nation, including Samaritan. They are only to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Authority. (1) Jesus has not yet died, the Spirit has not yet come down, yet Jesus' followers are already performing miracles! Remember, Jesus had already given the Twelve the power to expel demons (Mark 3:15). (2) In Matt 10:8, Jesus also gives them authority over the dead.

Take nothing. (1) Were they to take no bread, bag, money, nor extra shirt so that those they meet would have no reason to accuse them of greed or the like? (2) In Matt 10:8, Jesus says, "You have received free of charge; give free of charge."

Walking stick... sandals. (1) At least they are provided the necessities for traveling. Wait, does that mean that food, money, and a traveling bag are not necessary? (2) In Matt 10:10, Jesus tells them not to take sandals or a walking stick. How is this? After Jesus talks about no money and no bag, He says, "nor two shirts, nor sandals, nor sticks." It's easy to reconcile Mark and Matthew when you see that Jesus saying, "do not bring two shirts, nor two sandals, nor two sticks." And the structure of the sentence can easily carry this meaning. (3) However, Luke 9:3 plainly says they were not to take a stick.

[Lodging]. Mark 6:10-11 shows the instructions about lodging. Matt 10:11-15 goes into more detail.

Oil. This practice was continued into the NT. James gives instructions on it ([Jam 5:13-16](#)).

Shake the dust. Paul and Barnabas did the same thing to Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:51).

[The Seventy]. Jesus' instructions are very similar to what He gives to the Seventy, which is only recorded in Luke's gospel (Luke 10:1-12).

### **6:14-16 King Herod Antipas - Herod hears about Jesus' fame.**

Heard of this. Both Luke and Mark place this after Jesus commissions the Twelve. This is what caused the news about Jesus to reach Herod.

Jesus' name. But it wasn't the Twelve who were becoming known, but Jesus' name. Apparently, the Twelve were doing it right. They were giving Jesus all the glory. The people were not marveling at their power but Jesus' power. This is an important thing for Christians to remember. Their ability doesn't come from themselves but from God ([John 3:27](#)).

John the Baptist/Elijah/prophet. It was Jesus' name that had become famous, but the people thought that He was a person from the past? So these people thought that one of these past prophets rose from the dead and changed his name? What kind of weird rumors are these? Perhaps these rumors came to be because of how often Jesus predicted His resurrection from the dead. Some people may have misheard this and thought that Jesus had already raised from the dead. These rumors became so strong, that the apostles knew of these rumors. But for them, they knew the truth ([Mark 8:27-29](#)).

John has been raised. (1) In the context of Herod, it seems that these rumors are coming from Herod's advisors. They are delivering a few (weird) rumors as to who this Jesus is. Proverbs has a lot to say about bad counsel. Typical king, right? Herod takes advice from the wrong places (rumors) and does not investigate who Jesus is. Instead, Herod immediately assumes that this miracle worker is John the Baptist. Why? Because he was invested in that rumor. We see why in verses 17 through 29. (2) Let Herod stand as a bad example to us. Instead of investing ourselves in a rumor, we should be investigating the evidence. When it comes to who Jesus is, we are holding the evidence in our hands. The historical record of the witnesses of saw Jesus. They themselves investigated Jesus of Nazareth. May we also investigate Jesus so that we will come to know that He is the Son of God. (3) Interestingly, Matthew says a similar thing as Mark, but Luke paints a different picture of Herod. There, Herod's response was, "I beheaded John, but who is this I hear such things about?" and Herod wanted to see Jesus. (Luke 9:9)

### **6:17-29 King Herod Antipas - Death of John the Baptist.**

Herodias. The Herod family and their extremely convoluted relationships is only worth studying if you want your brain to turn to mush. Most of what we know comes from Josephus. Here is what we know that relates to the gospels.... Herodias was married to Herod Philip, her half-uncle. This Herod, Herod Antipas, visited his half-brother, Herod Philip. He saw Herodias and wanted to marry her. He is also her half-uncle. He put away his own wife and then married Herodias.

Not lawful. Why was Herod Antipas' marriage to Herodias unlawful? His sin is not some misinterpretation. The OT law was explicit. ([Lev 18:16](#), [Lev 20:21](#)) No wonder Herod Antipas was disturbed by John. He loved his wife more than He loved God.

She wanted to kill John. (1) Apparently, Herodias loves being in adultery with Herod Antipas. Both of them are willfully guilty! (2) Mark says Herodias wanted to kill John. Herod was in awe of him, protected him, knew he was righteous and holy, and like to hear him. However, Matt 14:5 says that it was Herod who wanted to kill John. I don't have an answer for this.

Righteous and holy man. Herod saw who John really was, but allowed John to be killed by his own command. The exact same situation as Pilate in the killing of Jesus! Remember in Romans 9-11 Paul explained how the Jews rejected Christ in order that the gospel could be preached the Gentiles (Rom 9-11). Herod's killing of John is a symbol of the Jews rejecting Christ. Just like Herod was not a Jew but an Edomite, God effectively said that the Jews were not His people anymore. In the same way, Pilate, a Roman, is a symbol of the Gentiles rejecting Christ. It was necessary that both the Jews and the Gentiles reject Jesus so that the OT Scripture could be fulfilled: "All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt. There is no one who does good, not even one." (Ps 14:3) Herod and Pilate are symbols of the Jews and the Gentiles-- everyone.

Herod disturbed/glad. (1) I see this everywhere today. "I really like Jesus, but I cannot really follow Him." This is why Jesus said, "Anyone who is not offended because of Me is blessed." (Matt 11:6, Luke 7:23) Herod liked John, but was offended by him. What is this? This is belief without repentance. What is repentance? It is the conviction of heart and mind that causes a person to change his actions. Herod had belief but did not have repentance. He did not change. Instead, he felt "disturbed." (2) Do you feel disturbed by Jesus? Don't be offended by Him. Repent!

She pleased Herod. How did the girl please Herod? One can certainly imagine. But wait. This is his wife's daughter!

Up to half my kingdom. Do you remember that Herod is an Edomite? What other Edomite do you know that sold double? (Gen 25:27-34) Yes, Esau is the father of all Edomites. Herod is making a very rash oath, exactly like his forefather. Like ancestor, like descendant.

He did not want to refuse her. Herod had too much pride to obey John's words and return his wife to his brother. But now he had to obey his own words!

### **6:30-32 Sailing to a remote place (Bethsaida) - The Twelve return with their reports.**

Apostles did and taught. The apostles' mission was successful. What better way to prepare them for their life-long and fully-devoted mission as apostles. This mission was just a small taste of what they will be known for from then until the end of time.

Rest for a while. It's this phrase that I'm sure Jesus said to them when they reached Paradise, "Come away to this remote place and rest for a [long] while." Of course, for all the apostles except for John, they all reached that Sabbath Rest after martyrdom. I feel that Jesus is going to say this to all who are victorious unto the end. But until each of us reach our death, there is no promise of physical rest. I have often heard the slogan, "Wear us out in your kingdom." This is a calling that I want to be called to. I want to sacrifice the pleasures and certainly the comforts of this life. As I look at my life, I have a LONG way to go.

Remote place. Luke 9:10ff tells us that they are going to Bethsaida. The other gospels also say this is a deserted place. I guess Bethsaida is one of those towns that were lucky if it had one gas station.

### **6:33-34 Sailing to a remote place (Bethsaida) - The crowds are already waiting for them.**

People ran there. How did the people know where Jesus was going? Remember that the Sea of Galilee is only 7 miles in diameter. And you can see far across a body of water.

### **6:35-46 Sailing to a remote place (Bethsaida) - Feeding the 5000 men.**

[Feeding the 5000.] This miracle is recorded in all four gospels.

[Mountain.] John records that Jesus sat down on a mountain (6:3) where there was much grass (6:10). \*\*\* See picture of Mountain at Bethsaida. \*\*\*

Disciples. Mark just says the disciples, but in the previous discussion (Mark 6:30-34), Jesus is with His apostles. Luke explicitly says that it is the Twelve apostles who tell Jesus this (Luke 9:12).

Already late. (1) In Mark 6:31, we see that it was because Jesus and His apostles were hungry that they traveled to this other side of Galilee. Now, Jesus has still been teaching the people until late in the day. Jesus did all this on an empty stomach. As Jesus told Satan a quotation of God telling us, "Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matt 4:4) Jesus demonstrated what is most important: the words of God are more important to life than food from the earth. (2) Luke adds that the apostles wanted the people to go find lodging also (Luke 9:12). So it is apparently very late.

Buy themselves something to eat. Wouldn't the people leave by their own choice if they wanted food? The apostles believe the crowd wants to go buy and eat food, but the crowd is too busy eating the spiritual food that Jesus has been giving them all day.

You give them something to eat. (1) I imagine Jesus is saying by this, "If you think you know what kind of food they really need, then why don't you give it to them." We may have heard our parents or spouses say a similar thing, saying, "If you think you know better, then why don't you do it?" This can be more clearly seen in Matt 14:16 where Jesus says, "They don't need to go away, you give them something to eat." (2) John

gives many more details about the conversation at this point ([John 6:5-10](#)). Jesus asks these questions to Philip to test him, Philip responds estimating 200 denarii, and Andrew speaks about the five loaves and two fish.

200 denarii. (1) Using the gold standard, one denarius contained 0.3272 grams of gold. The price of the gold in the United States on Nov, 30, 2013 for one denarius was \$9.87. Therefore, in today's money, the apostles are estimating almost \$2000 (\$1,974). (2) Using the day-wage standard, one denarius was a day's wage. Therefore, in today's money, this would be about \$40,000.

Go look... have the people sit down... blessed and broke the loaves. Jesus is doing this to show the apostles and all the people there that He is the bread from heaven. He is the Word of God. People do not live by bread alone, they live by the Word of God, Jesus Himself. After all, Jesus said in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life." And note that John places that statement after the feeding of the 5000 thousand.

Everyone ate and was filled. (1) The people were filled with the bread and the fish. This is evidence of the incredible power in this miracle! In fact, John adds, "As much as they wanted." (John 6:11) They weren't just satisfied; they were filled! (2) But the crowd was filled in more ways than that. The people were not leaving to go buy food. They stayed with Jesus to listen to His spiritual food. They had a hunger and thirst for righteousness. Because they valued Jesus' words more than bread alone, in this way, they fulfilled Jesus' beatitude: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matt 5:6). Jesus also said to see FIRST the Kingdom (Matt 6:33). Also, remember the example of Mary who sat at Jesus' feet while Martha worked around the house (Luke 10:38-42).

Collect leftovers so that nothing is wasted. Here is "God With Us" on earth. He can create as much food as He wants to feed thousands and thousands of people from one boy's supper. He feeds them so that they are filled. Yet with all this power, Jesus says, "Let us not waste a bit." (John 6:12, GNB) This speaks volumes to me. I made this statement from Jesus a part of my life. Jesus wants us to be efficient. He does not want us to lose anything. He wants us to waste nothing! Let this sink in. Think about this before you put things in the trash can. Think about this before you let your car run idle. But better yet, think about this when it comes to how you spend your time. Paul said to "redeem the time." (Eph 5:16) Don't waste a bit. Think about people souls. Do not let their spiritual lives go to waste, neither in this life nor the next. Don't waste a bit.

Twelve basketfuls. The apostles were the ones who started this whole thing. Now they are ending it, each holding an entirely full basket—more food than what they started with and more food than each of them could eat by themselves. Jesus is going to remind them of this lesson later (Matt 16:9, Mark 8:19). When Jesus reminds them of the feeding of the 5,000 and 4,000, it is in the context of the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod. Therefore, the message Jesus is trying to tell His apostles here is not proof that He can do miracles (though there is proof of that), it is proof that Jesus is the bread of heaven, the Word of God.

5,000 men. (1) The Greek is *aner*, that is, male, not *anthropos*, that is, human. There were 5,000 males, which means there could be around 15,000 people if you include women and children. (2) Matthew explicitly says what Mark implicitly says. Matthew 14:21 says, "Besides women and children." (3) The number of males in the church reached 5,000 after Pentecost when Peter and John were arrested in Acts 4:4.

Immediately made His disciple get into the boat. Why did Jesus so quickly have them get into the boat that they just arrived in? John gives us the details ([John 6:14-15](#)).

Said good-bye... went to the mountain. Literally, He said His good-bye to them. Jesus had His disciple leave quickly but Jesus said good-bye to the crowds before leaving them. Jesus is the king, the King of all kings, but not in the way the people wanted Him to be. He had to leave them to spend time alone in prayer.

### **6:47-52 Jesus walks on the water.**

Boat in the sea, Jesus on the land. Let's be reminded where everyone is at this time. The apostles are in a boat in the middle of the sea. Jesus is by Himself on land. Jesus and the apostles are not near each other.

They are at least a few miles from each other. This is important to set up a real glimpse of Jesus' power. Jesus saw them being battered. Does Jesus have eagle-eye vision? This may or may not be a miracle. Jesus is on a mountain, looking down on a small sea. The boat is large enough to hold at least 12 people.

However, the boat is against strong winds, it is at least five miles away, and according to John, it was dark (John 6:17).

3 am. The apostles have been rowing and rowing against this wind since evening. They have been trying to cross a sea that is only 7 miles wide for at least 7 hours straight!

Wanted to pass by. Why did Jesus want to pass by them? Mark is the only one who records this.

Ghost. If you had been without food for most of the day, spent time with the crowds all day, finally got a very good meal, saw that your teacher performed a miracle that feed 15,000 people, then spent another 7 plus hours rowing a boat getting nowhere, would you be delirious too?

It is I. In the Greek, this is the same thing that God told Moses from the burning bush: I AM. Jesus said the same thing about Himself in [John 8:58](#) and in other places.

[Peter]. (1) Mark did not record what happened to Peter, how Peter had the courage to walk on the water, lose his sight of Jesus, and how Jesus saved him from drowning.

(2) How interesting that this happened to Peter and Mark wrote his gospel from what Peter preached. Why would Peter have left this out of his preaching? I have a theory that I will discuss next.

Had not understood the loaves. (1) In Matthew's gospel, the people in the boat worshiped Jesus and said he is the Son of God (Matt 14:33). (2) They are seeing Jesus' power, but yet still cannot grasp how it all happens and Who this is. It doesn't make logical sense. The apostles themselves performed miracles with their own hands (Mark 6:7-12), wouldn't they then see the feeding of the 15,000 and no choice but to believe? Yet the Scriptures are clear that human beings do not work like that. For mankind, seeing is not always believing! ([Luke 16:31](#)) As Mark says, hearts can be very hard. (3) Before being too hard on the apostles, we need to think about how much we are like them. Remember that Peter is preaching this gospel in Rome and Mark is writing it down. When saying that the apostles' hearts were hard, Peter is very strongly pointing out HIS OWN weaknesses, that is, the weaknesses he once had, repented of, and now he regrets his formerly stubborn heart. Peter didn't explain what happened with him and how he walked on the water. Instead, he shares how he did not understand the basketful he held.

[At once the boat came to where they were heading.] The feeding of the 15,000 thousand was in Bethsaida, at the north-most end of Galilee. They go to Gennesaret. At a straight shot across the sea, it is a little over 7.5 miles from Bethsaida to Gennesaret. Yet John said that Jesus found them when they were about 3 or 4 miles out (John 6:19). Because the Sea of Galilee is about 7 miles in diameter, this puts them exactly where Mark says, "in the middle of the sea." (Mark 6:47) So according to both John and Mark, the boat is about 3 or 4 miles away from Gennesaret. Yet John says that as soon as Jesus got into the boat, they were at the shore of Gennesaret. It's a little hidden, but this is another miracle of Jesus immediately following His and Peter's walking on the water.

#### **6:53-57 Gennesaret - Jesus' fame in Gennesaret.**

Carry the sick. They failed at making Jesus their earthly king at Bethsaida. But they still rely on Jesus for His miraculous power.

Tassel. There was great power in Jesus' tassel. His tassel was all everyone needed in order to be healed (Matt 14:36).

#### **7:1-5 Gennesaret - Pharisees and scribes question about washing hands.**

Ate bread. This is similar to them accusing the disciples for eating from the grain fields on the Sabbath. Why would the disciples not follow the ritual washings anyway? Did Jesus tell them not to? Or did most Jews not follow these rituals, yet the hypocritical Pharisees expect a higher standard of Jesus' disciples over the common person. In other words, were they desperate to find something to accuse them of?

Tradition of the elders. (1) God commanded the washing of hands, but this was only for the sons of Aaron, after they entered the tent of meeting, and before they approached the altar (Ex 30:17-21, 40:30-32). This was also commanded the elders to wash their hands when they found a murder victim but did not know who murdered him (Deut 21:1-9). But there was no command from God. In verse 5, the Pharisees acknowledge that this is a tradition of the elders, not a command from God. What this washing entailed cannot be easily found today. Thankfully, Mark gives us enough to understand it. (2) Paul also mentioned these traditions of men ([Col 2:20-23](#)).

#### **7:6-16 Gennesaret - Jesus rebukes the traditions of men.**

Hypocrites. Whatever their reason to accuse Jesus' disciples, Jesus points out their hypocrisies.

Vain. (1) Note that Jesus said that these peoples' worship is vain. Many people will say that the teaching the commands of men as doctrines is sin based on this verse. However, do not forget the meaning of the word vain. It means to come to nothing, worthless, or meaningless. In this case, their worship to God is not being received by God. There is a big difference between God not listening to you and God holding sins against you. Here, Jesus says that this makes worship vain, not that doing this is sin. I take great comfort in this because how many things have I taught and much later learned that I was wrong. I was just teaching the same thing I heard from someone else. I thank God that He does not hold that against my account as sin. Remember the words of James where he says that if anyone can tame the tongue, he is complete ([Jam 3:2](#)). I believe he is saying that it is hard to teach perfect truth. But that should still be our aim as we grow as disciples of God. And now that I know more truth than I did in years past, I feel that my lips and my heart are much more closer to God. (2) When it comes to either vain worship or sin, a Christian should not

feel comfortable with either! What we teach does matter and we should take great care in it. James said this in the same chapter ([Jam 3:1](#)). Paul also said that God expects ignorance to diminish ([Acts 17:30](#)). Disregarding the command of God. Literally, they are leaving the command of God. Now here is the sin.

Teaching the commands of men as doctrines is vanity. But doing it so that it causes you leave God's commands is sin.

In order to maintain. (1) I see this as the crux of their sin here. They viewed their traditions are more important than the commands of God. Why else would they have rejected God's commands in order to keep the ones they created? Now this is a very serious sin. It places man's authority above God's authority over man. (2) Now for us, do not be so prideful as to think that we cannot be guilty of this also. If we think this way, we have pride. We constantly evaluate our teachings against other things. Every generation should be asking about, questioning, and evaluating the things we do; this helps them separate the Godly traditions from the manmade traditions. Firstly and in all cases, the Scriptures evaluate us. Along with the Scriptures, we can use other method to validate ourselves. The method I have found is Christian history. What ways might you evaluate yourselves in order to keep your traditions from invalidating God's commands? (3) I encourage you to find a reminder in your life that reminds you to stay away from this kind of pride. There were some occurrences in my past that I always think about to remind me to reject my pride so that I do not put traditions over God's commands. I also remember Paul's words about how knowledge is my temptation to be prideful ([1Cor 8:1-2](#)).

Honor your father and your mother. It was in this command of God that the Pharisees had invalidated. I wish Jesus would speak to us and tell us which of God's commands we are invalidating. This was one of the Ten Commandments.

Whoever speaks evil... put to death. This is found in Ex 21:17, Lev 20:9.

Corban. (1) Interesting that this word is a Hebrew transliteration. It means gift. In Matthew 15:5, he uses the Greek word, *doron*, which means the same thing. (2) What is the sin they were committing in layman's terms? The Pharisees were telling the people to give their money to the temple and keeping them from giving the money to their family. So this is what I call the sin of Corban today: not giving to your neighbor, who is any needy person you come in contact with, and instead giving it to the church. It's saying, "Sorry, needy person, I already gave at church." This is the sin of Corban.

You do many other similar things. Jesus pointed out this sin which was their elevating the traditions of men above the commands of God. But this is not the only tradition they do this with!

Nothing that goes into a person can defile him. Jesus explains this statement when he goes into the house. [Pharisees took offense.] (1) Matthew records a conversation with Peter after this statement and before He explains what he means about things going into and out from a person ([Matt 15:12-13](#)). (2) And no wonder they took offense, Jesus said they had nullified, "Honor your father and your mother," one of the Ten Commandments!

### **7:17-23 Gennesaret - Jesus explains clean foods.**

Parable. Apparently, Jesus' statement about what goes into and out from a man is a parable.

Nothing going into a man. Jesus doesn't make all foods clean explicitly clear in this statement. It is not until later that the apostles learned more about what Jesus meant here. As Mark later inserts, "He made all foods clean." Why wasn't Jesus make it clear He was talking about foods? Perhaps it would have been too radical for them to accept at this time. They were not mature enough yet. We learn later that the dietary laws of the Christians ([Acts 15:28-29](#)) goes back to the dietary laws God gave Noah ([Gen 9:3-4](#))!

What comes out. Jesus was talking about food. If Jesus is talking about food going into a man, what comes out of a man? Poop. Of course, this would make you unclean, but Jesus takes uncleanness to a whole new level. Physical uncleanness is not what is important. Spiritual uncleanness is what is important! Jesus lists many of the things that make us unclean. These things don't come out of our stomach (like poop), these come out of our heart. We are unclean when evil comes from our hearts.

### **7:24 Tyre and Sidon - Jesus' fame in Tyre and Sidon.**

Tyre and Sidon. In Mark's gospel, other than his two visits to the country of the Geresenes, this is Jesus' first time outside of the country of the Jews. As you can see from your map, this is also the farthest Jesus has travelled yet. But even here, His popularity is without measure.

### **7:25-30 Tyre and Sidon - Jesus heals the demon-possessed daughter of the Greek woman.**

Unclean spirit. The Gentiles were victims of Satan's demons also.

Greek. Mark says the woman is Greek. But why would a Greek woman be found in the non-Greek region of Tyre and Sidon. Mark explains by his next description of her....

Syro-Phoenician. That is, Syrian Phoenicia. Phoenicia was an ancient civilization that was conquered by the Persian Empire in 540 BC. When the Greeks came through, they Hellenized the culture just as was done with the Jews in Palestine. When the Romans ruled, the Phoenicia region became part of the Syrian province (by Pompey in 65 BC). This is the area where the woman was born, so when Mark uses this term, it is the reason why Jesus would find a Greek woman in the region of Tyre and Sidon.

[Canaan.] Matthew says the woman was a Canaanite. Canaan was a much more broad region than what Mark gives. Canaan included Phoenicia and also all of Israel. Where Matthew's description is more general, we learn from Mark's that she is certainly not a Jew.

Asking Him to drive out the demon. (1) Her background is not as important as her problem. She has a real need and she has come to Jesus for help. (2) Matthew records that this was a tormenting demon (Matt 15:22). (3) Matthew also records that she called Jesus by His Jewish title: Son of David (Matt 15:22). Somehow, she knew of the Jewish prophecies about the Messiah and believed that He is the Christ.

[Jesus did not speak to her.] At first, Jesus did not respond to her requests. Her persistence became so much that Jesus' disciples told Jesus to send her away (Matt 15:23).

Children satisfied first... dogs. (1) Jesus gives her a parable. Who are the children? We have seen before that Jesus commissioned His apostles to only go to the lost sheep of Israel—not even the Samaritans (Matt 10:6). In fact, in Matthew's account, Jesus explicitly calls them the house of Israel (Matt 15:24). Then who are the dogs? These would be the Gentiles. If this woman truly understood this parable, then she would know that Jesus is calling her a dog. (2) He tells her this as if to say that it's not His place to help her, but others are more important than her. Was Jesus really not intending to help her? This cannot be the case because why would Jesus be visiting these "dogs" in Tyre and Sidon anyway? No, Jesus with His all-powerful knowledge knows that this woman has great faith. He wants her to display her faith in a powerful way, so I believe He asks this question so that we can learn from her great example.

Eat the crumbs. Jesus gives her a parable. It appears that she fully understood it because she responds with a parable. Take a look at this. She admits that she is a dog. She admits that she does not deserve the bread of God. Yet she points out that there is bread to spare, and not just that, she is perfectly satisfied with the crumbs from the bread of God. In this Greek woman, we see qualities that are worth imitating: great humility, persistence, and dependence. God has asked us to possess these qualities; they are characteristics of a Christian. Let Jesus' words in Matt 15:28 be an example to us: "Woman, your faith is great!" In this story, she had everything against her: her nationality, her gender, her daughter under the power of Satan, Jesus' disciples, Jesus' silent treatment, and Jesus calling her a dog. But I believe by God's providence, all these things were piled on to her to make her faith that much more incredible and inspiring. I believe this was Jesus' goal.

Because of this reply. Jesus wanted the woman to reply like this. He wants to see our faith and He is one who rewards this kind of faith. This woman believed Heb 11:6 long before it was even written ([Heb 11:6](#)).

Lying on the bed. Who knows how long this girl was tormented. Now, the mother sees her child finally getting the rest she had always wanted to see her girl get. I imagine the sight of your child sleeping, knowing that a demon and its power were completely gone, was a joyous and peaceful sight.

### **7:31-37 Decapolis - Jesus heals a deaf man privately.**

Tyre, Sidon, the Decapolis. On the map, if you follow Jesus' route from Tyre to Sidon, to the Decapolis, and then back to the Sea of Galilee, what is the only city of the Decapolis that is part of this journey? The answer is that Jesus had visited Damascus!

Deaf and speech impediment. In this case, there is no mention of a demon. This is a miraculous healing of two physical impairments.

Sighed. The word for sigh is the same word Paul uses when talking about praying in the Spirit ([Rom 8:23, 26-27](#)).

Tell no one. Again, Jesus is telling those healed not to tell. He had told the Gentile man who was possessed by Legion to tell. But, here, He tells these Gentile people not to tell. Instead, they proclaimed it more.

All things well. I wonder if this became Jesus' song in Damascus. David had a song that the people sang to promote him over Saul. This probably seems like a similar type of phrase that spread Jesus' fame.

### **8:1-9 Galilee - Jesus feeds the 4000 men.**

[Galilee]. In Mark 7:31, it says that Jesus was making His way back to Galilee. According to the other accounts of this miracle, Jesus had already made it back to Galilee (Matt 15:29ff). Plus, in Mark 8:10, it says that after this miracle, He and his disciples immediately got into a boat and sailed across Galilee.

Compassion... three days and nothing to eat... collapse. Just like the crowd of the 5000 men did not leave to go buy food, these people also hunger and thirst after righteousness more than physical food. In this case, Jesus said it's been 3 days since they've had food. It was to the point that Jesus knew they could not make

it back home if they tried. What an overflowing of compassion Jesus must have had. He was filling them with spiritual food—the food that really matters—to the point where the people were becoming physically weak. These people aren't just balancing basic human needs, they have neglected all human needs in order to have their spiritual needs satisfied. But still, they have physical needs being unmet. Jesus' compassion must be so pure because these people have perfect faith in the spiritual but still need some physical things. It's like when a child does something that is so selfless, they end up suffering because of yet they do not regret their decision.

Seven loaves... baskets. (1) The way Jesus fed these people is the same as the way He fed the 5000 men.

However, this time, there were seven baskets left, the same number of loaves they began with. (2)

Application: no matter how much faith we have now, whether small or large, Jesus' power is sufficient to make that faith so great that the amount left over was more than what was needed. As Jesus said, "It will be given to you; a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and **running over**—will be poured into your lap" (Luke 6:38).

4000 men. (1) With the 5000, the Scriptures are clear that these were 5000 males. In this miracle, however, Mark just states 4000. In the Greek, it does not say males or people. He just lists the number. (2)

Matthew explicitly states that there were 4000 males besides women and children (Matt 15:38). So it appears that Mark said "4000" with the implication that it was just males—just like in the feeding of the 5000.

### **8:10-12 Dalmanutha - Pharisees ask for a sign.**

No sign. (1) Matthew records more to this conversation than Mark does (Matt 16:1-4). The reason Jesus doesn't give them a sign is because they pick and choose which signs to believe. They believe the signs of the coming weather, yet they won't believe the signs of the coming religious age—which are far more obvious. However, Jesus promises them a sign: the sign of Jonah. He doesn't explain it here, but He does at another time (Matt 12:39-40). If the Jews cannot believe the greatest sign, that is, His resurrection from the dead, then there is no point in giving them any other signs. They did not believe the signs that were already right in front of them. (2) For us, we should not be like them and demand that God manifests Himself before our eyes or ears. Otherwise, we would be as hard-hearted as the Pharisees. Instead, our faith only needs the signs that Jesus has already performed in the presence of many, many witnesses. Remember the Greek woman of SyroPheonicia? She did not ask for a sign but merely believed the reports about Jesus. John the Baptist asked for confirmation, Jesus didn't give him a sign but only confirmed that the reports about Himself are true. These people believed the reports; the Pharisees didn't even believe the signs.

[Went to the other side]. The way verse 13 is phrased gives me the impression that Jesus lands on the coast of Dalmanutha, the Pharisees immediately demand a sign, then Jesus gets right back into the boat and leaves. It seems that Jesus had only one poor conversation in Dalmanutha. Jesus must have knew that Dalmanutha was unworthy of His ministry at this time.

### **8:13-21 Dalmanutha - Jesus warns about bad yeast.**

He commanded them. They only had one loaf of bread for 13 or more men. They certainly have a physical need. But Jesus did not take the time to perform a miracle, have them catch some fish, or do something else to meet that need. Instead, Jesus tries to have them focus on spiritual things. Jesus was into meeting people's needs—that is true. But meeting people's needs is not as important as the people's spiritual condition.

Yeast. (1) The yeast Jesus is talking about is the teaching of the Pharisees and Herod (Matt 16:12). They are to be careful because their teaching is false but spreads quickly. (2) Paul used the same analogy of yeast when writing to the Galatians (Gal 5:7-10). (3) Do not think that yeast is always a bad thing. Jesus also used yeast to describe the kingdom of God (Luke 13:20-21). The teachings of Jesus can spread so quickly and thoroughly that it can change the whole person into the image of God.

Pharisees and Herod. Matthew says, "Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matt 16:6). (For information about the Herodians, see notes at Mark 3:6.)

Discussing. (1) Even though Jesus is giving them an important spiritual warning, their minds and their words are still focused on the immediate physical need. They focused on the immediate and not on the important. (2) Therefore, Jesus becomes angry with them. Can anyone blame Jesus? It must have been so frustrating for the all-knowing Son of God to see that His own disciples were stubborn and hard-hearted. Jesus has already given us everything we need, yet when we see the next problem come, we complain or worry.

[Questions]. Through Jesus' anger, He asks them 5 rhetorical questions. Take note of this. What is the common response when someone is angry? Isn't it outbursts, violence, insults, rash accusations, hateful speech, etc.? But how does Jesus express anger? He asks very direct questions. Jesus doesn't respond

with hate, He responds with teaching. He is trying to get His disciples to think correctly. In this case, they needed to be thinking spiritually—a quality every Christian should have—instead, they were thinking physically. Jesus reminded them of the spiritual hunger and thirst the people had and they were filled. Why should they ever have to worry about physical food when Jesus can give them spiritual food? When someone or something makes us angry, may we respond in the same way Jesus did. Let our anger be used to make something better, not worse.

[They understood]. Matthew explains that when Jesus reminded them of the feedings of the 5000 and 4000, they realized that Jesus wasn't talking about physical bread ([Matt 16:11-12](#)).

### **8:22-26 Jesus heals the blind man in Bethsaida.**

They brought. Interesting how they brought the blind man to Jesus. Could the blind man not find his way?

Perhaps that was the case; he was blind. But Mark said the disciples also begged Jesus to touch Him.

Could the blind man cry out to Jesus just like other blind men did ([Matt 21:14](#), [Mark 10:46-50](#))? In any case, Jesus will heal this man.

Out of the village. Jesus will tell the man not to go back into Bethsaida.

Trees walking. (1) The man must not have been born blind. How else would he know what a tree looks like?

(2) Why did Jesus only partially heal the man, ask him this question, and then fully heal him? It is speculation, but perhaps Jesus is showing the man his dependence on Jesus. Sure, Jesus could have instantly healed him, but the man could have taken it for granted. Don't we do the same with the majority of our blessings and our health? We didn't just happen to be in our current state. Many, many people have helped us to get where we are such as parents, teachers, and friends. But in ALL things, the Lord Jesus has brought us to where we are and has given us all our blessings—which are too numerous to count. This man has a memory of seeing trees walk. Perhaps this is his reminder that his sight is from God. What experiences do we have that remind us not to take a single blessing for granted?

Don't go into the village. We have discussed the possible reasons why Jesus frequently commanded this. In this case, he brought the man out before healing him. Since the man had not seen the town to know what he was missing, he could have more reason to obey Jesus by not returning to Bethsaida. What memories do we have that hold us back from doing more of what God commanded us?

### **8:27-30 Caesarea Philippi - Jesus asks His disciples who He is.**

Caesarea Philippi. This is a gentile area which is directly north of the Galilee region.

Who do people say I am. (1) Luke records that Jesus was praying privately with His disciples when He asked this question ([Luke 9:18](#)). (2) When the Power of God manifests Himself on earth, it cannot go without notice. The news about Jesus, His miracles, and His teaching spread very quickly. As with the game of telephone, the news can be distorted as it passes from person to person. Thus, there were many identities about Jesus being passed around. (3) Matthew records that Jesus referred to Himself in third person: the Son of Man ([Matt 16:13](#)).

John the Baptist, Elijah, a prophet. (1) The reports the disciples give Jesus is the same as the reports Herod heard. Notice that the disciples spoke truthfully here. Of course, they knew that Jesus was none of these people, but they answered Jesus' question truthfully. (2) Matthew records that the disciples say Jeremiah as one of the prophets.

Asked them. Jesus is speaking to His disciples. There is no implication that He is speaking to any one specifically.

Peter. (1) Of course, Peter is the first to answer. He gives the correct answer: Jesus is the Christ! (2) Matthew records that Peter also said, "...the Son of the living God!" ([Matt 16:16](#)).

[Simon son of Jonah]. Matthew records Jesus' response specifically to Peter ([Matt 16:17-19](#)).

Warned them not to tell. (1) This is odd because it does not follow a miracle as usual. Wouldn't Jesus want these bad reports to be proven wrong or at least spread the true news that He is the Christ? The reason Jesus did this is in the following three verses. Luke more closely ties those verses together with this passage as one single conversation ([Luke 9:21-22](#)). (2) One thing is for sure: the opposite is true for us ([Matt 10:27](#)). We are to proclaim Jesus' message in all situations, whether convenient or not ([2Tim 4:2](#)).

### **8:31-33 Caesarea Philippi - Jesus predicts His death and Peter rebukes Him.**

Suffer, rejected, killed, rise... rebuke. This must come as a real shock to the disciples. It's too easy for us to look back, knowing the full story, and understand what Jesus is prophesying. But the disciples are with a man who is also God. How can one who has all the power in the universe become a victim to Jewish leaders? To continue the theme of Jesus being the Power of God, I believe this was the angle of Peter's rebuke. Peter may have said, "Lord, you have the power to overthrow any disease and demon. You can overthrow any enemy too." If this was Peter's angle, then Satan had the same angle when he tempted

Jesus to use His power selfishly in the wilderness. No, Jesus has a higher purpose so He rebuked Peter in return. Though Peter rebuked Jesus privately, Mark makes it clear that Jesus rebukes Peter publicly.

Satan. (1) Remember that the Greek word (*satanas*) literally means “adversary.” Though I believe adversary is a better translation here, I can see how most translators remained consistent by translating this word as Satan. The devil is called THE Adversary. We have transliterated that into the devil’s proper name: Satan. (2) Let it be understood that Jesus is not saying that Peter is Satan or that Satan is within Peter. Again, the true meaning of Jesus’ name for Peter is to clearly show that Peter (and only Peter) is in direct opposition with Jesus at this time. (3) Paul used a similar name, “son of the devil,” when he rebuked Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8-10). (4) This is yet another example in Mark where Peter is shown to be in error. Before, we looked at how Mark (from Peter) did not record Peter’s walking on the water (see notes at Mark 6:47-52). I theorize that this is because Peter has become a changed man by the time Mark wrote the gospel and hates the man he once was. The error of Peter in this passage also can agree with this theory.

Things of God. Jesus is referring to God’s plan, God’s will, God design, and God’s providence—everything that God has set in motion that will certainly be accomplished. Later, Jesus quotes the Scripture that explained this divine plan (Matt 21:42).

### **8:34-38 Caesarea Philippi - Jesus teaches the cost of being His disciple.**

Crowd along with disciples. Jesus is done rebuking Peter in front of the disciples. He now goes right back to teaching the crowds.

Come after me. This is becoming Jesus’ disciple, student, follower, servant, whatever-you-want-to-call-it, or in one powerful word, a Christian.

Deny self. (1) We stop at the first thing in Jesus’ list: denial of self. Here is a command of Jesus that takes a lifetime to master—if such a thing can be mastered to perfection. Denying ourselves is a lifelong endeavor. As long as we are still in our physical flesh, there is still self that must be denied. Yes, on this command of Jesus alone, a preacher can write an entire lifetime of messages. This calling of Jesus is major. It’s difficult. And it’s required. (2) How can we work to more deny self? I suggest reading the Sermon on the Mount. When you are finished reading it, read it again. In fact, if you think you have a problem with denying yourself, read the Sermon on the Mount every day.

Take up his cross. (1) Taking up the cross does not mean that we should be bearing a burden. No, Jesus said that His burden is light (Matt 11:30). Taking up the cross means one thing: be willing to die the most painful death. If a person is to follow Jesus, they must be willing to die the most painful death—just like Jesus was willing and actually did when He picked up a literal cross and carried it for miles to the place where He would die. This calling of us bearing our crosses, the instruments of our death, was also spoken by Paul (2Cor 4:10) and the author of Hebrews (Heb 13:12-14). (2) For the follower of Jesus, death is not a scary thing because the Christian sees it as his reward (Rom 6:23, Php 3:10). Jesus said not to fear those who kill the body. The fear of death is a form of slavery which Jesus came to free us from (Heb 2:14-15). (2) How can we work to more take up our cross? We need to keep our eyes on Jesus who perfectly endured an actual cross (Heb 12:2). How do we do that? Read Matt 26-27, Mark 14-15, Luke 22-23, or John 18-19. In whichever gospel you choose, it takes two chapters to fully describe what Jesus means when He says to take up your cross. And the things that Jesus did is the same thing that we should be willing to do. Therefore, Jesus commanded His followers to take up their cross. Then Jesus took up His actual cross and endured it. Now, we are called by Paul and John to do the same thing (Php 2:5-8, Gal 6:14, 1John 3:16).

Follow me. (1) Here, Jesus uses the word that has a stronger meaning than just follow. It means to accompany the person along the way road. Jesus has not asked us to do anything that He Himself has not already done. And though Jesus has already done these things, He still accompanies us through them. He walks along side us. Jesus accompanies each one of us through it all. For example, Jesus said that He will drink the fruit of the vine anew in the kingdom of God. When we take the Lord’s Supper, Jesus is there with us. (2) Of course, we must be going the same direction as Jesus. Also, remember that though Jesus accompanies us, it is us that follow Him on His road. Jesus will not accompany us on our own roads.

Save his life will lose it. This is part of self-denial. We must consider our physical lives in this current world as good as lost in order for our spiritual lives to be saved in the world to come. If we see value in this physical life, we are in grave danger of losing our spiritual life.

Loses his life because of Me/gospel. (1) If we are to lose our life in this world, then all aspects of that life must be lost too. We cannot hold on to parts of this life if we expect to lose our life now and save our life later. As Paul did, we are to consider those parts of this life as rubbish as compared to the next. Those rubbish things include our money, our hobbies, our time, etc. (2) Jesus makes a promise here. If we die because of our faith in Jesus Christ and His gospel, then we will save our spiritual life in the end. Now, this was directly applicable to the church within the Roman empire from the days of Nero (63 AD) until the beginning of the fourth century. But the persecutions of Christians to the death is still easily found in the world today. Every

day, hundreds (and maybe easily into the thousands) of Christians die because of their faith in Jesus. (3) Though not all Christians are martyred, yet all Christians must consider their lives as already lost. [Save/Lose life.] Jesus' point is this: you have two options and one choice: physical life or spiritual life. Which one will you choose? You cannot serve both physical and spiritual. Clement of Rome (95 AD) wrote, "This world and the next are two enemies" (ANF, 7.518). Ashamed. If we are not choosing the future spiritual life over the present physical life, we are ashamed of Jesus and His words. Holy angels. This reference the angels is imagery of Judgment Day (Matt 13:49-50).

### **9:1 Caesarea Philippi - Jesus predicts the coming of the Kingdom of God.**

[Chapter break]. I do not know why the men who determine the chapters of the books of the Bible put a break before this verse. In Matthew and Luke, this verse appears right with Jesus' words about being ashamed of Him and His words. Kingdom of God with power. Jesus prophesied this again after His death (Acts 1:8). Then the prophecy was fulfilled on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

### **9:2 On the mountain - Jesus takes Peter, James, and John.**

Six days. Matthew also records this (Matt 17:1), but Luke records eight days (Luke 9:28). However, if you look closely at Luke's accounts, he is measuring the days from one of Jesus' statements at the feeding of the 4000, not from the events when Jesus was rebuking Peter and preaching in Caesarea Philippi. [Praying]. Luke records that they are going to the mountain to pray and the transfiguration happens while Jesus was praying (Luke 9:28-29). Transfigured. (1) What was Jesus transformed into? Who can tell? John Wesley said that it was the glory of Jesus' divine nature showing through His flesh. Whatever it was, we are given a description in the next verse. (2) Paul uses the same word when he talks about how we will be changed into spiritual glory (2Cor 3:18).

### **9:3-8 On the mountain - Jesus is transfigured.**

Extremely white. In the NT, the same appearance is given to the angels who rolled the stone away and to Jesus and the saints in Revelation. It certainly is descriptive of spiritual glory. [Face like the sun]. Matthew records that His face was like the sun (Matt 17:2). Elijah, Moses. The best explanation here is that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law and Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophets' prophecies. [Speaking of His death]. Luke is the only one to record what Jesus, Elijah, and Moses were talking about: Jesus' upcoming death in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). [Peter and the two asleep]. Luke also records that while Jesus was praying and before the transfiguration happened, the three apostles were sleeping (Luke 9:32). They woke up while the transfiguration was happening. Peter said. (1) If you look at verse 7, this interjection of Peter is right in the middle of their conversation with Jesus. It seems that Peter was interrupting them and all of them were ignoring him. They let his impulsiveness slight here, perhaps because—as it says—Peter was so terrified. (2) Luke records that Peter said this just as Elijah and Moses were leaving (Luke 9:33). Tabernacles. This is the word that is used for the tabernacle the Israelites used in the desert. But it is also the word used by Stephen when he talked about the home of the god Moloch. Peter could say that they should have a tabernacle of testimony for each one of these three like in the OT. Or Peter is using the word in a more casual sense. He wants to build a large tent over them so they could converse more pleasantly. We could try to analyze Peter's intended meaning, but he spoke this because he was terrified and it was the only thing he could say. I don't think even Peter knew what his intention was. [Cloud appeared]. Luke records the coming of the cloud (Luke 9:34). It happens right after He talks about tabernacle. It overshadowed them. So here is Peter wanting to build a tabernacle which is a large tent that gives shade. And right after he says this, here comes a cloud so overshadowing that the apostles become afraid as they enter it. Is the Father doing this to show the three apostles that mankind is through trying to do things their way? When it comes to His Son, is God saying, "No, I've got this. I will take care of it all." The Father says listen to His Son. We see at Jesus' death, the curtain of the tabernacle was torn in two. No, there will be no more need for any tabernacles. Jesus Christ is our tabernacle now. Voice from the cloud. The Father gives Jesus His approval. In the Mosaic Law (Deut 19:15), it says that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word will be established. On this mountain, you have the two or three witnesses: Elijah and Moses being two and the Father being the third. (2) Matthew adds, "In whom I am well pleased" (Matt 17:5) which God had also said at Jesus' baptism. In the KJV, NKJV, Luke read the

same as Mark, “Beloved Son,” but in other translations, Luke reads, “Chosen Son” (Luke 9:35). (Peter reads, “Beloved Son” (2Pet 1:17).)

Suddenly. (1) God always has the last word. (2) Matthew records that the three apostles’ heads went down when the Father spoke. When it was over, Jesus helped them up (Matt 17:6-7).

### **9:9-13 On the mountain - Jesus discuss these things with Peter, James, and John.**

Tell no one. (1) Again, Jesus tells them to keep this a secret for a while. Certainly, if this even was too grand and indescribable to see, then how would people react if the apostles shared this before people truly understood the magnitude of what Jesus came to do (resurrection) and who Jesus really is? As seen with the “sign of Jonah,” Jesus’ resurrection is the greatest display of God’s power to prove who Jesus is. It’s only in the light of this great event that people would begin to understand the transfiguration. (2) Peter did exactly what Jesus commanded. After Jesus’ resurrection, we have Peter’s words saying that he really did experience it (2Pet 1:16-19).

Rising from the dead should mean. (1) Since Jesus had already predicted His death, and now He is saying that He will rise from the dead, shouldn’t the three apostles put one and one together? Even they, the witnesses of the transfiguration, needed to see it in the light of Christ’s resurrection—which has not happened yet. (2) John records that even he and the apostles did not understand the raising from the dead even when they went in the empty tomb but before Pentecost (John 20:9).

Began to question. (1) Whatever the three apostles’ debating was about, it led them to this question.

Elijah must come first. This saying that they heard is a reference to Malachi 4:5 where God says, “I will send to you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.” (2) Matthew records that after this conversion, the three apostles understood that Elijah is John the Baptist (Matt 17:13).

Elijah comes first and restores; Son of Man suffer. Jesus acknowledges that Scripture and asks a question in return. Along with restoration, Jesus mentions suffering. Jesus wants them to know that you cannot have one without the other. This was the case with John the Baptist. He restored things by opening the way for complete restoration to come in Jesus Christ. But John still suffered, just as Jesus Christ will suffer also. If mankind had their way with John, then mankind will have their way with Jesus.

[We are to be transfigured]. We began this section with another place transfigured was used (2Cor 3:18). Paul uses it at another place (Rom 12:2). How much of a change did Jesus go through in His transfiguration? It says His face was like the sun, his clothes were whiter than snow, and He was shining. Paul says we are to be transfigured into God’s good, acceptable, and perfect will as we renew our minds. Paul says not to be conformed to this world. If we want to be transfigured like Jesus was and how Paul instructs, then we need to reject conformity to this world and renew our minds towards God’s incredible will. The difference between this world and God’s will is like the change Jesus went through on the mountain.

### **9:14-19 Among the disciples and the crowd - The disciples could not heal a boy with a mute spirit.**

Scribes disputing. This was the reason why Jesus asked them what they are arguing about. But for some reason, the scribes do to reenter into this event. What did the scribes have to do with this man and his demon-possessed child? Were the scribes saying that because the disciples could not drive it out that there was no real power in Jesus’ ministry after all?

Brought my son to You. Well, if the man brought his son to Jesus, why did He not wait but instead changed his mind and asked the disciples to drive it out?

Seizes him... become rigid. All of these things are physical symptoms to a spiritual problem. Sometimes we forget that there is a spiritual warfare going on all around us. If we see pain, anguish, hardship, or anything that is simply bad, then have we thought about if this was caused by something spiritual? Perhaps the bad thing was caused by sin. Perhaps not. Either way, we can always show the love of Christ to the world.

That is a powerful spiritual weapon to combat both the sinfulness of sin and the painfulness of life.

They couldn’t. Don’t be surprised that the disciples tried to cast out the demon at this time. Jesus had commissioned the Twelve to do things just like this. Then, Jesus commissioned 70 disciples to do things like this. Really, I expect the surprise was to the disciples. Jesus gave them authority to drive out demons, why couldn’t they drive this one out?

Unbelieving generation. Is Jesus speaking to the disciples and their not driving the demon out? Or is Jesus speaking to the man who went to the disciples instead of Jesus Himself? From verse 23, it seems like Jesus is referring to the man.

### **9:20-27 Among the disciples and the crowd - Jesus heals the boy from the mute spirit.**

Man: If you can. Matthew records that the man knelt before Jesus (Matt 17:14).

Jesus: If you can. Jesus seems to have been offending by how the man phrased his request. Jesus repeats it back to him and basically says: of course I can.

I believe, help my unbelief. This is very much a paradox. In the Greek, these words mean complete opposite things. How can someone believe yet have unbelief? I believe the man's statement is recorded for us in the gospels because it is worthy of application in our lives. In my mind, the man's knowledge and the man's belief are separated. The difference is between knowledge and belief. Intellectually, in his mind, the man knows Jesus can heal his son. But deeper than that, in his heart, he has a hard time believing Jesus can heal his son. The man knows Jesus can heal because he has heard the reports and all the witnesses testifying that Jesus is the Power of God. But when rubber meets the road, the man falls victim to the flesh and a secular mindset; he thinks, "It is impossible for a demon to be driven out." This kind of struggle happens to us today. "Is God really real?" "Why hasn't God shown Himself to my generation?" "I know God can forgive, but He cannot forgive me." "God loves me, but I don't feel it." God has seen fit to let this man remind us that though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. And we are to conquer our flesh. This is what Paul said in 1Cor 10 and what the author of Hebrews said in chapter 4. Look at Israel. Don't let your flesh tempt you and you be overcome by it as was the case with the Israelites. They serve as an example and a warning. When God gives us the truth, that truth should overpower our knowledge and our belief. God's truth should overpower our flesh and our spirit. When we have those times when we say, "I believe, help my unbelief," then focus on God and his truth.

Came out, shrieking and convulsing. Was the demon itself in pain from Jesus' words? Was this part of the process for the demon to detach itself from the boy? Was this the demon's last final hurrah before it lost control of the boy?

Dead... took him by the hand, raised him. Jesus did the same thing when He rose Jairus' daughter from the dead. Perhaps the boy did die from this experience.

### **9:28-29 Among the disciples and the crowd - Jesus explains the disciples' weakness.**

[Faith of a mustard seed]. It is here that Jesus tells the disciples that if they have faith as small as a mustard seed, they can move a mountain; nothing will be impossible. Because Jesus said all they needed was faith as a mustard seed, it is apparent that the disciples had no faith in this event. They must have been trying to do it by their own power.

Prayer and fasting. (1) They did not lack the power to drive out the demon because Jesus gave them that power when He commissioned them earlier. Instead, the disciples were lacking in their faith and devotion. The disciples had the power, but they were not tapping into it. (2) Is the same true for us? We have the Holy Spirit inside us. God Himself dwells within us. Paul prayed that Christians would use this power within us ([Eph 3:14-20](#), [Col 1:9-12](#)). Are we tapping into that power? Jesus said that prayer and fasting help us do that.

### **9:30-32 On the way to Capernaum - Jesus again predicts His death.**

Did not want anyone to know. Jesus wanted His return to Galilee to be quiet. This is just another example of Jesus trying to lessen His fame which is what we see as the reason why Jesus told people not to tell anyone.

Teaching His disciples... did not understand. The teaching Jesus gives here is a stumbling block to the Muslims. They see Jesus as a prophet, but the Koran says very clearly that Jesus was not crucified. Yet here, we see that Jesus Himself predicts His own crucifixion.

They did not understand. (1) Matthew records that the disciples were also distressed at this teaching. (2) Jesus was teaching the disciples again about this upcoming persecution, death, and resurrection. Whether the disciples understood or not (and in this case, they are not understanding), it is important that Jesus teaches them these things. Yes, it is to get them ready for the event, but that doesn't seem to work on them. I believe the reason that Jesus teaches them anyway is to establish prophecy. Jesus want to be clear that He taught them these things, even though they don't understand at the time. So after the resurrection happens and people understand, they can then see that Jesus was always the person who He said He was: the Son of God. (3) Luke records that the meaning of Jesus' statement was concealed from them. This implies that God kept them from understanding this. There can be no other reason for this but their own good. (4) There were many other things that Jesus did that the disciples did not understand... until after Jesus' resurrection. The apostle John had this to say about when Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem on a donkey and the people welcomed Him ([John 12:16](#)). Even about the resurrection itself, John said that they still did not understand it when it had happened ([John 20:3-10](#)). (5) After Pentecost, the apostles not only understood all about Jesus' resurrection, but they also understood the bigger picture about the great resurrection of everyone. This they preached as part of the New Testament message ([Acts 4:1-4](#)).

### **9:33-37 Capernaum once again - The Twelve argue over who is the greatest.**

He asked them. Jesus knows everything. He knows what they were arguing about. He is bringing their argument into the open in order to teach them a very, very important lesson.

They were silent. (1) They were arguing about very selfish things, and they know this. They don't want to admit to their selfish arguments. Well, convicted already, are they? (2) Even if they were convicted at this time or understood Jesus' teaching, this did not stop John, James, and their mother to ask Jesus to put these brothers on His right and left hands (Matt 20:20-27). And all the apostles fell into the exact same argument right after Jesus offers the first Lord's Supper (Luke 22:24-27). In both these cases, Jesus had to teach them yet again.

He said to them. As you can see, Jesus knows exactly what they were arguing about despite their silence.

Wants to be first. What kind of motivation do you have to be the kind of servant Jesus wants you to be? Is it a humility where you tell yourself you are worthless and deserve to be a servant to everyone else? Or is it a desire to be first? From what Jesus is saying, one can be last and servant to all because they want to be first. Jesus teaches another paradox. There are many things we can learn here: (A) we need to treat the most servant-like person we know like they are the first in important to us, (B) God will make whoever is last and servant of all IN THIS LIFE to be first in the everlasting age to come, and (C) we don't need a self-defeating kind of humility in order to serve others and CHOOSE the last place. That's right, being last and the servant of all is the duty of all, not just to those who are natural servants. Anyone who wants to be first in something can choose to become last and servant of all.

Receives child. Yes, if we are servants to even children in order to bring glory to Jesus, then Jesus will receive us. The point: no one is beneath you when it comes to you being their servant. No one!

### **9:38-40 Capernaum once again - They discuss a man who drove out demons in Jesus' name.**

Driving out demons... wasn't following us. I agree with the commentator, Albert Barnes, that this man was a follower of Jesus in the spiritual sense but was not a following in the personal sense like the apostles were. Perhaps this person was one of the 70 disciples Jesus had commissioned earlier and is still doing the Lord's work without traveling with Jesus in person.

Tried to stop him. (1) Based on the story that precedes this, the apostles might be trying to stop this man because of jealousy. They had just failed in driving out the deaf and mute spirit from the boy. (2) In trying to stop this man, the apostles were in the wrong as Jesus is about to explain. About this event, John Wesley recognized that Paul correctly applied Jesus instruction here. In referencing Php 1:15-18, John Wesley said, "Paul had learned a better temper [than John in this event], when he rejoiced that Christ was preached, even by those who were his personal enemies. But to confine religion to them that follow us, is a narrowness of spirit which we should avoid and abhor." Like Paul, may we not stop those who are preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in a different style as we are. Just as this man was bearing fruit in the miracles in Jesus' name, who are we to hinder others if their efforts are bearing fruit to God's glory?

Perform a miracle in My name. Jesus is showing that if someone confesses Jesus' glory and performs miracles, these two witnesses prove that the person speaks and acts the truth. Just as Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and His miraculous power proves that He is the Son of God, this man is proving that the power to perform miracles comes from Jesus Christ, also proving that He is the Son of God. This man cannot soon speak evil of Jesus because if he was not a true disciple of Jesus, then he would not be able to perform such miracles.

Who can soon afterward speak evil. I find it interesting that Jesus said that those who work out God's will not soon speak evil. Why didn't Jesus just say that those who do these things simply cannot speak evil? Instead, Jesus adds "soon afterwards." To me, this implies that it is possible for someone who has the faith to perform miracles in Jesus' name to sometime later deny Jesus' power. I believe it is Jesus' implication here that those who powerfully follow Him can possibly fall from grace by denying Jesus.

Whoever is not against us is for us. Mark records Jesus' words here about the man who was casting out demons in His name. In Matthew and Luke when the Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan, Jesus says, "Anyone who is not with Me is against Me." So you have these two phrases. John said that this man is not following Jesus. So is this man against Jesus or for Jesus? These phrases are a bit confusing when compared to each other, but if you look closely at them and look at the contexts when Jesus said them, these two phrases mean the same thing! One phrase is in relation to those who believe in Jesus' power and the other phrase is in relation to those who reject Jesus' power. When Jesus said, "Those not with Me are against Me," He was talking to the Pharisees who were certainly not with Jesus. Jesus' point is that they are against Him. When Jesus said, "those not against us is for us," He was talking about this man is for Jesus. This man believed that Jesus' power came from God. There are only two options for mankind: you are either on Jesus' side or you are against Jesus. This man was on Jesus' side and believed in Jesus' power even though he didn't travel around with Jesus. The Pharisees were against Jesus and rejected Jesus' power.

[Moses, Joshua, and the Sanhedrin.] Jesus could have quoted Scripture to John and the apostles for trying to stop this man. For nearly the exact same happened to Moses when Joshua tried to stop a couple prophets ([Num 11:16-17, 11:24-30](#)). If John and the apostles had heard this story in the synagogues, they should have known that they should not try to stop that man.

### **9:41-50 Capernaum once again - Jesus explains rewards and punishments.**

Cup of water in My name. (1) Jesus uses the good deed of sharing a cup of water as an example of all the good deeds we could do for others. I would like to point out that when we do good deeds, there is a very important aspect that we should not leave out. When we do good for others, we need to do it in Jesus' name. This is very important. It is possible to do good and not do it in Jesus' name. When we do, we are no better than when non-Christians do good for others. What does it mean to do something in Jesus' name? I wrote a study that looks at every passage in the NT that speaks of doing something in Jesus' name. There are a few different ways it is used, but there is one meaning that is clearer than all others. To do something in Jesus' name is to do something that brings Him glory. Paul shows this in two very, very similar verses: [Col 3:17](#) and [1Cor 10:31](#). Therefore, when you do good for others, make sure that you do it to God's glory. Be sure that the person knows that this good deed is only THROUGH you but really comes FROM God. Let others know that though you do good deeds, all blessings really come from God. The reason we do good for others is because of God's perfect love, because of His crucified Son, and because of the indwelling Holy Spirit. When we do good, to Them be the glory! Do not leave out this important aspect of our good deeds. Jesus said that if we do good deeds in this way, we will never lose our true reward. When you give good gifts, say it is from God for that is absolutely true. When people wish to thank you, accept their gratitude but be sure that you also redirect their gratitude toward the Giver of all good and perfect things. God is eternally more worthy of their gratitude than we are. (2) Remember that we ought to do good to both fellow Christians ([Matt 10:42, 25:40](#)) and our enemies ([Rom 12:20](#)).

One of these little ones. Perhaps Jesus is referring to the child He called in 9:36-37. In any case, Jesus is speaking about anyone who is immature or weak in the faith. These would include new Christians, Christians going through a time of serious doubt, Christians that are convinced that certain matters are sinful when the Bible does not explicitly address them, or Christians struggling with anything else that can shake their faith.

Better if millstone around neck and thrown into sea. Jesus uses this terrifying image to stress the seriousness of sin--especially if someone sins because of someone else. This is a very, very serious warning to all Christians. Make sure that your teaching doesn't result in someone committing sin. Yes, they will be accountable for their sin, but if you had a hand in causing it, God will hold you just as accountable.

Hand causes to sin, but it off. (1) Jesus warned those who cause others to sin. This is a warning to anyone who commits sin. Again, Jesus' point is to address the seriousness of sin. It's so important to be free from sin that if it costs even a part of your body, then so be it. If there is something you can do to be free from sin, no cost is too great. (2) There are many people today who preach that Jesus is not speaking literally. They say, "Certainly, Jesus isn't wanting people to cut off a hand. It's an exaggeration." However, when I read Jesus' words, I see His point and take His words as seriously and simply as I can. I believe to say that Jesus was not literal here is to undermine the seriousness of Jesus' point. Sin is far too important a problem. Firstly, Losing a body part is a small cost to keep from losing your entire body to the torments of Hell. Besides, in the great resurrection, God will restore our entire body to a glorified form. If it was necessary to lose a body part in this life, God will return it in spades in the next life. Secondly, In the parables of the treasure and the pearl of great price, those people sold everything they had in order to enter the kingdom of God. Why would our bodies be an exception to that? We should count even our bodies as lost when it comes to our devotion to the kingdom of God and our strivings to be sinless. Thirdly, we have accounts of the early Christians of the second and third centuries doing just this. Justin Martyr reported about a man in Alexandria to formally requested that a doctor made him a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of God. Origen himself became a eunuch so that he could better serve the kingdom of God. These men took Jesus' words literally. They did what was necessary in their cases to best serve the kingdom of God.

Worm does not die, fire is not quenched. (1) Jesus is quoting Is 66:24 which says, "They [the righteous] will see the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against Me; for their worm will never die, their fire will never go out, and they will be a horror to all mankind." Jesus is saying that we should do all that is necessary to remove sin from our lives. If we do not, if we hold part of our body more important than repenting of sin, then these are men who have rebelled against God. (2) There is a theory out there that says that the fires of Hell are not everlasting. The idea is that souls in Hell will be punished, but there will come a time when the soul is actually destroyed and the soul ceases to exist. They base this on Jesus words in Matt 10:28 where it says that God can destroy both soul and body in Hell. This is called annihilation theory. I believe

some people entertain this theory because it paints a very merciful picture of Hell. However, the Bible is clear that the fires of Hell are unquenchable, the worm does not die, and it is everlasting. The true meaning of everlasting is that it will last forever and ever. Therefore, it makes more sense that Jesus is speaking of the spiritual destruction of the soul and body in Hell, not the total annihilation of these.

Everyone will be salted with fire. (1) Verse 48 is speaking about Hell. Could verses 49-50 be speaking about Hell? I do not believe so because Mark says that "everyone will be salted," "salt is good," and "have salt among yourselves." Mark is saying there is fire and salt for the wicked and there is fire and salt for the righteous. There are two options, and you must pick one. One fire and salt is eternal torment in Hell while the other fire and salt is the persecution and discipline that comes to God's children. (2) There are Scriptures that talk about the fire and salt of Hell (2Thes 1:7-9, Jam 3:6, Jude 1:7). (3) There are Scriptures that talk about the fire and salt of God's children (1Cor 3:11-15, Heb 12:29, 1Pet 1:6-7, 1Pet 4:12-13, Rev 3:18-19).

Salt is good... have salt. Jesus plainly taught this about how the characteristics of a Christian are savoring (Matt 5:13, Luke 14:34-25). Paul also used salt to describe a Christian's speech (Col 4:6). [In the OT, salt was part of the covenant (Ex 30:35, Lev 2:13, Num 18:19, 2King 2:20-22, 2Chr 13:5).]

### **10:1-12 Judea - Jesus explains marriage, divorce, and remarriage.**

Judea and across the Jordan. At this point in Mark, this is the farther south Jesus has traveled. Judea is the region where Jerusalem is. Jesus has done so much and has become so famous yet He has not even visited Jerusalem, the capital of the Jews!

Is it lawful to divorce His wife. Matthew records that the Pharisees phrase the question asking about the reason for divorce, not just divorce in general (Matt 19:3). The answer to this question in Mark was not debated among the Jews. They all believed that it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife. The big debate among the Jews was which reasons were lawful for the man to divorce his wife.

Moses permitted. Yes, this command from Moses is found in Deut 24:1-4.

Hardness of your hearts. God commanded how divorce would work under the Law. Jesus is saying God didn't put this here because He wanted to. God is a God that brings people together; He is a God of unity, not separation. God gave commandments about divorce because of the weaknesses of mankind.

Beginning of creation. Sometimes we forget that God has established many things before the Law was even given. Jesus is saying that marriage was truly established with Adam and Eve, not with Moses.

No longer two but one flesh. The union of male and female, which we call marriage, is a physical union. The male and female do not become one in spirit or soul. This is why the marriage covenant ends at physical death (Rom 7:1-2). Marriage is not forever--unless it is the marriage of the church to Christ.

The disciples questioned Him. Divorce was a controversial subject for the Jews during Jesus' day. They had many questions and circumstances that Moses did not address. Now we have Jesus instructing us in the way of the new covenant. Jesus answers some questions, but marriage, divorce, and remarriage is still one of the most controversial subjects for us today, ironically.

[Except sexual immorality]. You may notice that Mark does not list any exception to the reason of divorce and remarriage. This exception is recorded by Matthew (Matt 19:9). When you read only Mark's account, you might assume that any divorce and remarriage is sinful.

If she divorces and marries another. In Jesus words (Matt 5:32, Luke 16:18), it appears that Jesus makes the woman the guilty party in all situations. I must admit, those two passages seem to clash with Mark 10:12.

Is the command for the men the same as the command for the women or are there different commands for them? It is in this that has caused marriage, divorce, and remarriage to be a controversial subject today.

Divorces, marries, commits adultery. I was considering sharing my conclusions on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. I decided not to do this for two reasons. One, who knows whether my beliefs on these things will change later on? Second, we could come across all sorts of different situation and every situation could be unique in its own away. To me, this is the solution to the controversy. I do not believe we can take Jesus' teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage and apply it universally. Usually, when you look at individual situations, and judge those against Jesus' commands, then it is much easier to determine God's will. This is why I'm glad God has established elders who can make the best judgments they can in regard to each individual case. And when we look at our own individual situation, we should know where we stand with God. Whether we are right or wrong in our judgments, we should do our best to come as close to the will of God as possible. God will give us grace when we are wrong. And God's ultimate judgment will bring justice to all things in the end regardless how we judge in our humanness.

[Paul's instructions on marriage]. See 1Cor 7.

[Divorce]. It doesn't seem that divorce is sinful in itself (Matt 1:19, 1Cor 7:10-11).

### **10:13-16 Judea - Jesus blesses the children.**

So that He might touch them. (1) Why would they want Jesus to touch them. Typically, children are healthier than adults. I don't think they are bringing their children to Jesus for healing. The only thing I can think of is that they want Jesus to bless their children. Children have their whole future ahead of them, so to have a blessing directly from God at such an early age is a great thing. Matthew records that the people wanted Jesus to pray for their children (Matt 19:13). Whatever their reasons were, Jesus became angry with the disciples when they were not letting the children come. (2) What can we learn from these parents? First, as they brought their children to Jesus while they were still little. A child is never too young to learn about Jesus and see the light of Jesus in those around them. Second, when someone is on fire for God and wants to do extraordinary things in order to experience Jesus, why do we sometimes hold them back? I have seen times when someone tries to convince someone else to slow down in their busy life in serving God and others. That may seem like a wise thing to do, and it is certainly good to warn someone about the possibility of wearing themselves out, but if the person wants to experience Jesus in ways that do not make sense to us, we must not stop them. In this case, the disciples were probably thinking that Jesus could do a lot of good for adults, the disciples were probably thinking that there isn't much of anything Jesus could do for children. But in reality, we are all children in God's eyes; we all completely depend on Him.

Rebuked. (1) What does it mean to rebuke? The Greek word literally means to pound upon. Simply, it means to aggressively correct someone. (2) Yes, Jesus rebuked things. Often, He rebuked the weather and demons. But Jesus also rebuked people—just like He rebuked Peter when Peter said Jesus would not be handed over to the Jewish leaders. But just because Jesus rebuked others, this does not mean that we have an open invitation to rebuke others. Sometimes a rebuke will work on someone. Perhaps first, we should try to correct someone with gentleness (Gal 6:1-2). In 1Tim 5:1, Paul tells Timothy not to rebuke an elder or an older person.

Indignant. This means to show anger. Yes, Jesus was angry with people. All the gospel accounts include the event when Jesus was angry with the merchants in the temple. This may have been the angriest Jesus ever got. If so, in Jesus' most angry state, He was never violent to anyone. As Paul said, "Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Do not give the Devil an opportunity" (Eph 4:26).

Like a little child. (1) You know, we often tell children to behave more like adults, but Jesus tells adults to behave more like children! (2) Jesus said we need to welcome the kingdom of God like a child. What does Jesus mean here? When Jesus took a child to Himself and explained who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus said, "Be converted and become like children... whoever humbles himself like this child... is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3-4). I believe the best characteristic of a child that we should emulate is humility. All other characteristics of a child are wrapped up in humility. (3) When we look at children, what other characteristics can we emulate? Because we do need to be like a little child or else we will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (A) Children accept authority. Do we accept and submit to the authorities we are under whether they are in the government, our parents, our employers, or our shepherds? (B) Children make fewer complaints. Do we continually complain about the same things or do we accept the world around us and try to make an impact on it? (C) Children enjoy much. Are we happy at the small things as well as the big things? Do we thank God when various parts of our day go well? (D) Children trust in the one on whom they are dependant. Children look at their parents and trust them. Children do not worry about where the food comes from; they know their parents will provide. When pain comes, children immediately run to their parents for help and care. Really, everything in their life depends on their parents. Do we depend on God in the same way? Do we trust that He will sustain us in all things? When we hurt, do we take our pain to God? (E) We better act like children if we are going to be children of God.

### **10:17-22 Judea - The rich young ruler.**

Rich young ruler. Why is he called this? Matthew, Mark, and Luke say he was rich. Matthew calls him young twice (Matt 19:20, 19:22). And Luke calls him a ruler (Luke 18:18).

Good teacher, what must I do. The rich young ruler is coming to the right person and asks the right question. Why call Me good? No one is good but God. (1) Is Jesus saying that He is not good? No, Jesus later said that He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14). Is Jesus saying that He is not God? No, Jesus later said that the Father and He are one and the people recognized that Jesus claimed to be God (John 10:30, 33). At another time, Jesus used a name for God, I AM, and applied it to Himself (John 8:58). (2) Why does Jesus seem to reject the rich young ruler's name for Him: good teacher? I believe Jesus is challenging the man's heart. He calls Jesus good with his lips, but does the rich young ruler's heart really believe that Jesus is good like God is good? We will see in verse 20.

[Which ones?] Matthew (Matt 19:18) records that Jesus tells him to keep the commandments and the rich young ruler asks, "Which ones?" Really, this is a dumb question. We know from Paul's writings that the answer, as the rich young ruler should have known, is all of them! Do not be like the rich young ruler.

When you have the entire New Testament in front of you, do not ask which parts should be obeyed or not. Do not treat the Bible like it's a buffet where you can just eat the parts that taste good to you. The answer is to obey all of it.

You know the commandments. Jesus only lists five of the Ten Commandments and adds, "Do not defraud." He does not list no other god besides God, do not make idols, do not take God's name in vain, remember the Sabbath day, and do not covet. Matthew records that Jesus also said, "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 19:19).

Teacher. The rich young ruler has dropped the "good" from the way he addresses Jesus. Jesus said God is good. We know that Jesus is God. Therefore, it appears that the rich young ruler does not believe that Jesus is God. Otherwise, the rich young ruler would have kept calling Jesus good.

I have kept these from my youth. The rich young ruler isn't that much different from many Christians today—especially if those Christians are focused on staying away from sin and nothing else. Staying away from sin is important and necessary, but what about doing the works of God? When Jesus calls the rich young ruler to follow Him and do the works of God, we see the rich young ruler does not have that kind of devotion.

Jesus said he lacks this one thing. Let his life be a warning that we cannot only focus on staying away from sin, but we must always look for ways to do the works of God.

Jesus loved him. (1) There are only three people in all of the New Testament where we read that Jesus loved a particular person specifically. These were Lazarus, whom Jesus rose from the dead, the apostle John, who leaned against Jesus' chest, and the rich young ruler. Let this be an example and proof that Jesus does love all people, whether they are His followers or not. In fact, Paul tells us that while WE were sinners and His enemies Christ died for us! Jesus' love knows no bounds. Even for those who reject Jesus because of their riches. (2) This also shows that Jesus did not turn the rich young ruler away on purpose. He wanted the ruler to make the correct life-changing choice. (3) If Jesus loved someone whom He knew would reject His teaching, then we must also love those who reject us and love those who reject Jesus.

Sell all you have. The instruction Jesus gives to the rich young ruler so that he might inherit eternal life is the same thing Jesus describes in the parables of the treasure in a field and the merchant looking for fine pearls. These aren't just parables that describe the true worth of the kingdom of God, these are instructions to us. Jesus said that the one who loves his life will lose it but the one who hates his life in this world will keep it eternally (John 12:25). Just because Jesus isn't telling us to sell everything like He does to the rich young ruler, this doesn't mean that we aren't called to do the same thing. After Jesus' conversion with the rich young ruler, He gives some additional teaching on wealth and the problems that come with it.

You will have treasure in heaven. I find it interesting that Jesus said that the ruler will find treasure in heaven after selling and giving to the poor but before he follows Jesus. To me, this shows that there is value in rejecting wealth and materialism and sharing with the poor. These are righteous acts with everlasting returns! Have you thought that our giving to the poor now is investing in heaven? Yes, when we sell things and give to the poor, we are investing in heaven in a very real and eternal sense. This is how we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven where moth or rust do not destroy and thieves cannot steal (Matt 6:20, Luke 12:33).

Many possessions. (1) In the end, Jesus challenged the rich young ruler with his biggest temptation. The man's great wealth ROBBED him of an eternal relationship with God! Jesus already knew that the ruler viewed his possessions as something greater than eternal life. This is also called idolatry. The ruler believed his righteousness was based on following explicit rules. However, Jesus shows that his external obedience was just concealing the covetousness of his heart. (2) Selling possessions and property is exactly what the Christians did in Acts 2 and 4 (Acts 2:45, 4:32-37). (3) What would Jesus challenge you with if you asked Him what you must do to inherit eternal life? What is your biggest temptation? You may not know whether or not you will pass the test or not, but at least you should know what your biggest temptation is. Know what it is. Pray hard and work hard so that you may not fall to your temptation. With God's power, all things are possible. No matter how strong a temptation may feel, God's power is always enough to offer you a way of escape so that you can bear it (1Cor 10:13). And let us pray for and help each other. (4) There is a man who is now an elder whom I admire very much. In public he would often share his greatest temptation: anger. I admire him for not keeping his temptation secret but share his struggles. Because of his openness and desire for accountability, I would often ask him about it and how he is handling his anger. I saw that his self control grew over time which made me thankful. I want to do the same thing. My name is Andrew Swango and my biggest temptations is lust. I'm also prone to greatly exaggerate things which is one of the many forms of lying. Those are my biggest temptations that I'm sure Jesus challenges me with. What are yours?

**10:23-31 Judea - Jesus teaches the disciples about wealth.**

Hard for wealthy to enter kingdom of God. Of course the disciples were astonished at this. What culture has existed where the wealthy are not greatly honored? It is in mankind's nature to look at wealth as the sign that a person must be blessed. This was certainly the case in Job's day. His friends said that he must have done some great sin that caused Job to lose all his wealth. However, Jesus takes the exact opposite approach. It's hard for anyone to see wealth differently than what comes naturally. Let Jesus' words really sink in. He said a wealthy person will have great difficulty entering the kingdom of God! In fact, it's so hard that a camel has a better chance moving through the eye of a needle! And THIS is what God has to say about wealth!

Who can be saved? The disciples ask the right question. They see that everyone has wealth to some degree. They are acknowledging that every person is wealthy to some degree. You may have seen that it is common for us and the people around us to make comments about how poor we are. Just keep your ears open and you will see that all around us. And this is completely ironic because of the culture and nation we currently live in! This kind of attitude is not only pessimistic, but it is also greedy and illogical. On the other hand, the disciples seem to view wealth optimistically. They see everyone as being wealthy. If the wealthy have difficulty entering the kingdom of God, then who can be saved? The disciples have the right attitude of wealth and ask a very good question.

With men it is impossible. Is Jesus talking about salvation in general or salvation in light of being wealthy? If salvation in general, Jesus is saying man cannot save himself. It takes God's power to save men. If He is talking about salvation in light of being wealthy, Jesus is saying a man cannot become so poor that entrance into the kingdom of heaven is a given. No, the deepest level of poverty is not a free (pun intended) ticket into the kingdom of God. Jesus' point is that there is no degree of wealth that God wants for you. However, the more wealth you hold onto, the more difficult it will be for you to enter God's kingdom. In short, entering the kingdom of God will be easier for those who use their wealth wisely and are moving from a state of greater wealth to a state of lesser wealth. If one is moving from a state of lesser wealth to greater wealth, their chance of entering the kingdom of heaven is becoming more and more difficult. Why? Because if we are moving in this direction, we are probably being affected by greed.

All things are possible with God. Jesus says that even the very wealthy can be saved, not because of themselves, but because of God. Since we are wealthy to some level, are we using our wealth as God wants us to? God has given us many, many instructions on how to use our wealth. We will look at those at the end.

We have left everything. (1) Peter said they have left everything, and this is completely true. We have already looked at this when Jesus called His first disciples. For example, we saw how John and James immediately left their father and their father's business at the moment's notice. What Peter says is true. (2) When Peter asked who could be saved, Peter's view of wealth was healthy. However here, Peter is speaking proudly. In effect, Peter is saying, "Well, if anyone should enter the kingdom of God, it would be us. After all, we have left everything!" We may believe that we are so dedicated to God. We look at the things we have sacrificed and may believe we have sacrificed enough to enter the kingdom of God, which is what Peter is doing here. Instead of believing that we have done enough to arrive, what kind of attitude should we have? I believe Jesus gives us a glimpse of the perfect attitude. It's an attitude that never believes they have arrived. Instead, it's an attitude that believes there is always more to give up in order to enter kingdom of God. Luke 17:10.

Left house, family, land because of Me will receive 100 times more. Here, Jesus lists what most people would consider to be the greatest things one could sacrifice. Yes, Jesus is calling us to leave houses, land, and even our family if by doing so, we can more easily enter the kingdom of God. Jesus says that if we give up our wealth, our families, our possessions for the kingdom of God now, then God will return these things multiplied by 100 in the age to come. Jesus is remind us that though we might experience great, great loss, now, but it is for our good and that loss is only temporary. Not only that, but the reward will be so incredibly greater in eternity. Paul clearly echoes Jesus' words here (Rom 8:18).

With persecutions. Jesus has listed things that we should choose to give up and sacrifice so that we can more easily enter the kingdom of God. But when it comes to rewards, Jesus adds persecutions to his list. Persecutions in this life is not something we choose to experience. If we are Christians, Jesus said that we will experience them. Jesus mentions them here because He wants us to know that we will be rewarded for all of our hardships in this life, whether we choose the hardships or the hardships are done to us.

First will be last and the last first. In this one phrase, Jesus shows that what the world considers first, that is, the wealthy, will end up being last. What the world considers last, that is, the poor, will end up being first. Do not think like the world thinks that wealth is a sign that the person is blessed. Instead, think how Jesus thinks; the poor more easily enter the kingdom of God. With what Mark has recorded here, the rich young ruler is first but will one day find himself in last place. The disciples who did leave everything for Jesus are in last but will one day find themselves in first place.

[God's instructions on wealth.] There are many, many, many teachings in the NT about how Christians should use their wealth. Here are some of my favorites. (1) Jesus said it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Being rich might be a sign that you are tempted by greed. 1Tim 6:9. Do you want to have more wealth? (2) When James talks about the rich, he does not speak well of him because of his greed. Jam 1:9-11, 2:5-7. Though Jesus, Paul, and James have some truths about the dangers of being rich, do not think that being rich in itself is sinful. Instead, the NT gives rich people instructions on how to use their wealth in spiritual ways. Paul warns the rich Christian not to be arrogant or to rely on their wealth. They are to use their riches to be rich in good works. 1Tim 6:17-19. Remember, Peter considered all men to be rich to some degree. All of these things are spoken to each one of us. When it comes to generous in sharing the wealth, John said we have an obligation when we see someone who is poorer than we are. 1John 3:17. The person who is richer should always be sharing with the person who is poorer. Paul does not expect the poorer person to share with the richer person. Paul said that in our giving, there should be equality and the goal is so that there will be no one in need among us. 2Cor 8:12-15.

### **10:32-34 On the road to Jerusalem - Jesus again predicts His death.**

To Jerusalem. Jesus has been traveling all around Galilee. He has even travel north to the Gentile regions of Tyre, Sidon, and Damascus. It is now that He is finally traveling to the capital city of Jerusalem. Began to tell what would happen to Him. Why does Jesus wait so long to travel to the greatest Jewish city? It's because Jerusalem is where Jesus will meet the greatest opposition and where Jesus will be killed. Jesus takes this time to remind His disciples and prepare them for what He came to earth for. Hand Him over to the Gentiles. Jesus' death could not have been something that was fabricated or planned in the minds of men. The events of His death involved parties that were enemies to themselves. The Roman Gentiles were no friends of the Jews. The Jews and Gentiles would not have worked together in the way they did to kill this innocent man. It all shows that Jesus' death and the events leading up to it were foreseen and put in place by God. On top of that, Jesus predicts these very things before He even goes to Jerusalem. Jesus predicted this would happen, which further proves that He is God. [They understood none of these things.] Luke records that though Jesus has predicted His death three times now, they are still not understanding (Luke 18:34).

### **10:35-41 On the road to Jerusalem - James and John ask to sit on Jesus' right and left.**

James and John. Matthew records that their mother was also requesting this of Jesus (Matt 20:20-21). [Mother of Zebedee's sons]. Let trace Mrs. Zebedee through the Scriptures to learn more about her. Matthew records that she was one of the women that followed Jesus to the cross (Matt 27:55-56). In Mark's parallel passage to these women at the crucifixion, we learn that her name is Salome (Mark 15:40). Also, Mark records that she was one of the ladies who brought spices to Jesus' tomb (Mark 16:1). In John's parallel passage, he records three women named Mary and another who is Mary's (Jesus' mother) sister (John 19:25). Therefore, if Salome is Mary's sister, that makes her Jesus' aunt and that makes James and John Jesus' cousins!

You don't know what you're asking. Jesus more often than not responded to questions with questions. At this moment, Jesus is not denying nor granting their request. Firstly, He wants James and John to understand all the details as well as what is at stake. Jesus has taught that whatever we do, especially in salvation, we need to count the cost.

Baptized with baptism Jesus is baptized. Jesus' question seems to be very cryptic. The Scriptures give many types of baptism such as bodily immersion, ceremonial washing, baptism for the dead, and persecutions (Luke 12:50) (as is the type here). If Jesus asked me this, I would certainly not answer that I am able. I would probably answer no or ask what He means.

We are able. You know, if James and John, the sons of thunder, are bold enough to ask Jesus to sit on His right and left, it is just as bold to answer that they are able to be baptized in this way without even knowing what Jesus means. I believe the brothers do not know that Jesus is talking about His coming persecution and death. However, it could be that they do know. Right before this, Jesus predicted His death for the third time.

You will drink the cup/be baptized. (1) Jesus isn't just saying this. This is a prophecy. In fact, James the son of Zebedee is the first apostle to be martyred (Acts 12:1-2). Though John the son of Zebedee was not martyred, he still endured the tribulation, being exiled to Patmos (Rev 1:9). (2) At another time, Jesus tells the apostles that they will sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28).

Not Mine to give. Jesus doesn't deny nor grant their request. Jesus says that He does not have the authority. Who does? God the Father. This is more proof that the Father and the Son are different Persons (yet they are fully united). In fact, the Father has already prepared those positions for the persons who will sit on Jesus' right and left. We don't know who they are. If Jesus knows, He does not reveal it.

Other ten disciples indignant. Fascinating that Peter is not the one who comes to Jesus and requests this. You think it would be Peter given his frequent nature. But this request by James and John caused all the other apostles to be angry at them.

#### **10:42-45 On the road to Jerusalem - Jesus teaches about servanthood.**

Gentiles. The word translated Gentiles is the same thing as "the nations." I believe "nations" would be a better translation here. Jesus is not merely pointing to non-Jews. Jesus recognizes the organization of rule and power in all nations.

Whoever wants to be great. The apostles had already received teaching from Jesus about this when the disciples argued about who was the greatest in the last chapter (Mark 9:33-37). Here, Jesus has to teach it again.

It must not be like that among you. (1) Luke records that Jesus said the greatest must become like the youngest (Luke 22:26). (2) Jesus points how the hierarchy of rule and power in the nations. There are people ruling over people ruling over people. There is not a nation on earth that doesn't have rulers that are supreme over their subjects. Yet Jesus said that the kingdom of God must not be like that. He says the greatest is your servant and the first person is the one who is slave to all. (3) You may ask, "Then what about the elders in the church?" This teaching is important and completely necessary for every Christian, but it is even more important for the elders. Peter took this command and specifically applied it to elders (1Pet 5:1-3). The key words that Jesus tells people not to do is to dominate or to exercise power (verse 42). One can still be a leader and have authority, but they demonstrate that authority by being a servant and a slave.

For even the Son of Man. What about Jesus? Yes, as our Teacher, Jesus is still our authority and He commands us; and a disciple is not above his teacher or a slave above his master (Matt 10:24). But look at what Jesus says here. Jesus does not lead by dominating over mankind nor exercising power over people. Jesus demonstrated His authority by serving mankind and giving up His very life to ransom mankind! Yes, Jesus became slave to all so that He will be First. Jesus said it best after He had washed the disciples' feet (John 10:14-15, 13:12-17). Paul also said it best (Php 2:5-8).

#### **10:46-52 Jesus heals Bartimaeus at Jericho.**

Jericho. I remember the first time I read Jericho when reading the NT. Wait, isn't this that city that was destroyed centuries and centuries ago by Joshua and the Israelites? Just like Rahab back then, there is still incredible faith in Jericho in Jesus' day.

Bartimaeus. (1) Matthew records that there were two men here (Matt 20:29-30). Therefore, Mark records that the name of one of them is Bartimaeus. (2) We already know that Jesus' fame is spreading all over the Galilee, Judea, and the Gentile countries. Bartimaeus probably heard about this miracle worker many times. But how would he ever travel so far north to Nazareth and Capernaum when he is blind? I'm sure his desire to see Jesus was incredible great and his blindness was keeping him from seeing Jesus. How amazing it would have been for him to hear that Jesus had come to Jericho! He now has the opportunity to be healed.

Son of David. This was a title that the people understood to be the coming Messiah. One time, when Jesus healed a demon-possessed man, the people were astounded and said, "Perhaps this is the Son of David!" (Matt 12:22-23) When Jesus makes His entrance into Jerusalem a few days before the Passover, the people shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Matt 21:9) The people knew this because the Scriptures said many times that the Messiah would be David's son (2Sam 7:12-13, Ps 132:11, Is 9:7, 11:1, 11:10, Jer 33:17). Jesus uses this prophecy to silence the Pharisees and scribes (Matt 22:41-46). Bartimaeus is calling for Jesus, giving Him the title of the Messiah. Bartimaeus believes that Jesus is the Messiah.

Many people told him to keep quiet. Bartimaeus wasn't even going to listen to these naysayers. This was his chance to be healed by Jesus! So he cried out louder. His love and desire for Jesus was above and beyond anything. No one would stop him from experiencing Jesus. Does Bartimaeus' love and desire for Jesus characterize our love and desire for Jesus? If not, we best be asking ourselves, "Why not?"

Threw off his coat and jumped up. It's one thing to love and desire Jesus beyond anything else. But how much greater is that when you come to realize that Jesus loves and desires you. Bartimaeus yearned to find Jesus. And now, he hears that Jesus is yearning to find him. Bartimaeus throws off his coat and jumps up, because this is the moment he gets to meet his Lord and Healer.

Rabboni. The only other time we see this is when Mary sees the resurrected Jesus (John 20:16). There, John tells us this means "teacher." However, we know that teacher is Rabbi. It has been suggested that Rabboni has a stronger, more personal meaning such as "beloved teacher" or "my dear teacher."

Go your way, he began to follow Him. Verse 46 says that Jesus was on His way out of town. Jesus tells Bartimaeus that he can go whichever way he wants to go. Did he have plans in life before he became

blind? He can pursue them now. He can go his way. Instead, Bartimaeus chooses to go Jesus' way. This was the moment he began following Jesus. To him, there was no other way but Jesus' way. (2) Luke records that Bartimaeus followed, glorifying God. And the people did the same (Luke 18:43).

\* With the exception of the cursing of the fig tree, this is the last miracle of Jesus which Mark records.

### **11:1-7 Bethany - Jesus sends to disciples to get a donkey.**

Bethphage, Bethany, Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives is on the outside of the Jerusalem wall. At the foot of the mount is the of Gethsemane. From Jerusalem, Bethphage (al-Shaykh, West Bank) is about 1.5 miles away and Bethany (al-Eizariya, West Bank) is about 2 miles away (John 11:18).

Village ahead of you. (1) Note that the two disciples do not go into Jerusalem to get the donkey but to a village on ahead of them. The only modern city between Bethphage/Bethany and Jerusalem would be Altur, a suburb of Jerusalem. (2) Matthew records that Jesus told them to bring the donkey and her colt (Matt 21:2, 21:7). (3) Matthew and John remind us that this fulfills another prophecy (Zech 9:9)

Say, the Lords needs it. (1) This reminds me of Moses' question about God's name at the burning bush (Ex 3:13-14). God's name then is similar to Jesus' name here. I AM is a name that doesn't seem to be very specific. Jesus' name of "Lord" in this passage is the same way. On the surface, God's names may not seem like much to the common person. But for those who want to dig deeper into who God is, they will find unlimited meaning. For example, Lord simply means Master. Now, if Jesus is your Master, then the meaning behind that name goes deeper than any ocean. For Jesus to be your Master, this name has to penetrate into your very soul. (2) On some level, the owner of the donkey must have known exactly who "the Lord" is. This name for Jesus was sufficient for this person to let Jesus' disciples take it (Luke 19:33-34). When you see "Jesus is Lord," is that sufficient enough for you to comply with obedience to Him?

### **11:8-11 Jerusalem - The triumphal entry and return to Bethany.**

Hosanna. This is originally a Hebrew word meaning: Save Now! The message of Mark is clear: Salvation is now. And this is the truth, for in less than one week, Jesus will die for the sins of all people.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. The people are quoting Ps 118:25-26 (Ps 118:21-29). (Note that verse 27 in the Septuagint includes celebrating the feast with branches!)

[Jerusalem shaken]. Matthew says the whole city was shaken (Matt 21:10). Literally this means to rock, in this case, to shake up the people. So if anyone ever asks you if Jesus knew how to rock, tell them that He rocked all of Jerusalem!

[Pharisees' reactions]. Luke and John record the reaction of the Pharisees. (1) Luke records that they asked Jesus to rebuke/silent His disciples. But nothing was going to stop this celebration--the rocks would cry out if no one else did (Luke 19:39-40)! (2) John records that they see that their opposition to Jesus has done nothing. It seems the whole world follows Him (John 12:19)!

Into the temple, went out to Bethany. Mark is the only writer who records that Jesus entered the temple at this time, but it wasn't until the next day that He makes a ruckus.

Bethany. During the feast of Passover, Jesus and the apostles aren't staying in Jerusalem but in Bethany. Lodging was probably much cheaper there. Besides, that's where Lazarus, Mary, and Martha lived (John 11:1). (2) Later, we learn that one person Jesus stayed with was a man named Simon who was a former leper (Matt 26:6, Mark 14:3). (3) Luke records that it is from Bethany where Jesus ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50).

\* There was donkey and there was Jerusalem, the first day. (Jesus dies on day six.)

### **11:12-14 Bethany - Jesus curses the fig tree.**

Nothing but leaves. Jesus is at Jerusalem for the Passover which means it is mid-April. Mark later records that when fig leaves sprout, summer is near (Mark 13:28). Since the fig tree already has mature leaves, we know that Palestinian summer has begun. Fig trees go through two harvest cycles a year. The first ripens around June and the second ripens around September. In order for the fig fruit to ripen by June, there should be some tiny bulbs on it in mid-April. Therefore, when Mark says it is not the season for figs, he means ripe figs that are harvestable. Instead, it is the season for early, unripe bulbs. Perhaps these bulbs are what Jesus is looking for. These early, unripe bulbs can be eaten. Because Jesus doesn't find these bulbs on the tree or this means the tree will not bear fruit this season. There are two reasons why a fig tree would not have bulbs in mid-April. First, fig trees do not produce any fruit until it is five or six years old, so this tree may be too immature. Second, this fig tree is barren.

May no one ever eat fruit from you again. (1) Here, Jesus curses the fig tree. Take note that God in the flesh has the power to curse. We've seen Jesus to wonderful and miraculous healings throughout this whole

gospel. He has used His divine power for the benefit of mankind. Here, Jesus uses His divine power in a destructive way. As we will see shortly, Jesus doesn't do this because He hates figs. Even this cursing from Jesus will prove to be for the benefit of mankind. He will use this story as a teaching lesson and warning to us. (2) Because Jesus reacts so angrily to this fig tree, there must be an application here. Most scholars explain that this fig tree is a symbol for the Jews. Jeremiah prophesied that though God gathered Israel, He will bring them to an end (Jer 8:13). More closely related, Hosea makes a prophecy and talks about the first fruits in the first season (Hos 9:10, 9:16-17). The fig tree was either too immature or barren. No matter which reason you choose, both of them can be applied to the Jews. Either the Jews, as a whole, were immature or barren to the point that they were unable to bear the true fruit of the Spirit. (3) And this is also a warning to us. This fig tree isn't producing fruit. According to John 15, what happens to branches that do not produce fruit? They are thrown into the fire (John 15:5-8). This is exactly Paul's point in Rom 11:13-24 when he says that Israel was cut off from the Root and the Gentiles were grafted in. If God is able to cut off the natural branches because of unbelief, anyone can be cut off because of unbelief. But by the same Power, anyone can be grafted back in because of belief. Think of it this way: leaves are not enough! Jesus expects fruit! What kind of fruit should you bear? If you do not know, read the end of Galatians 5. Jesus said that we will recognize others by their fruit (Matt 7:16). How will God recognize you unless you bear the fruit of His Spirit?

The disciples heard it. Matthew records this story as one continuous event. Mark places the cleansing of the temple in the middle of the story of the fig tree. We will revisit this in a moment.

### **11:15-19 Jerusalem - Jesus cleanses the temple.**

Throw out people buying and selling in the temple. Buying and selling the necessary animals for sacrifices was common for Jews--especially the poor. God said that if someone cannot afford an animal such as a lamb or goat, he could bring two doves or two pigeons (Lev 5:7). If this was not uncommon and God instructed it in some cases, why is Jesus throwing them out? It's because they are doing their business in the temple.

Money changers' tables, chairs, anyone carrying goods. Jesus is not acting out His anger on the people but on their businesses. John records more detail about this mentioning that Jesus even made a whip of cords to drive out the animals (John 2:14-17).

House of prayer. Jesus quotes Is 56:7. The context of this is about God calling the Gentiles (Is 56:6-8).

Den of thieves. Jesus references Jer 7:11. The context and message of Jesus' quotation is Jer 7:3-11. God now stands in the middle of the temple and sees it.

Looking for a way to destroy Him. This is Mark's first mention of the priests and scribes wanting to kill Jesus.

Apparently, they probably hand their hand in all the business what was being conducted in the temple.

[Application]. (1) What changes would He bring or disruptions would He cause if Jesus visited our place of worship? Is it a house of prayer or a house of comfort? Is it a house where sin is exposed and cleansed or a house where only the guilt is removed? Is it a house where God's reputation is glorified or a house where our reputation is magnified? (2) We no longer have the Jewish temple. Where is God's house of prayer now? 1Cor 3:16-17. If we are God's sanctuary because His Spirit lives within us, then how can we make God's house a house of prayer?

\* There was fig tree and there was house of prayer, the second day.

### **11:20-26 Bethany - Jesus explains the withered fig tree and faith.**

Early in the morning, withered. Matthew records that the tree withered immediately (Matt 21:19). But the disciples did not notice it until the next day.

Have faith in God. Jesus is about to give His disciples teaching on two important things: faith and forgiveness.

If one desires to have the power of God at his disposal, he will need both of these things.

Says to this mountain, be lifted up. (1) Matthew records that Jesus also taught this after the disciples could not drive out the demon that causes seizures (Matt 17:20). (2) Was Jesus speaking literally? Can we today command mountains to be thrown into the ocean by using God's power? When I look at the rest of the events of Jesus disciples in Acts as well as the events of the church over the next couple centuries, I don't see anyone commanding mountains to be thrown into the sea. But this does not make Jesus' words here any less powerful. When I look at the events in Acts, I see the apostles doing greater miracles than Jesus Himself performed--just as Jesus said. I see the church surviving the intense persecution from the Jews. I see the gospel taken far and wide to places like Rome, Spain, and Ethiopia. And in the centuries to follow, I see Christianity spreading to every corner of the Roman Empire and to every corner beyond it. I see the church spreading supernaturally rapidly while being brutally persecuted under many Roman Emperors. In all of this, I see belief that overcomes all the horrors the devil and the world can unleash. This is a belief that overcomes the world. John said this when he said, "This is the victory that overcomes the world: our faith," (1John 5:4). Therefore, Jesus tells us in verse 23 that if anyone believes something and does not

doubt, it will be done... for him. (3) Do not take Jesus' words here that God's power is ours to do with as we selfishly please. John echoes Jesus' words here and explains how God's will should play a part in our prayers (1John 5:14-15). (4) Also, the fruit that we bear also plays a part in our prayers (John 15:16). (5) One of the things that God wants to give us without measure is the Holy Spirit. Jesus encourages us to pray to God for more power in the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:11-13).

Does not doubt. We are to rid ourselves of our doubt so much that Jesus says in verse 24 that we should believe that we have already received them! With this kind of trust in God, Jesus promises that we will have what we ask. (See also Jam 1:6-7.)

Forgive. (1) Matthew puts this teaching immediately after the Lord's prayer (Matt 6:14-15). (2) What is the criteria that Jesus gives for when we should forgive someone? Is it when they do wrong to us? Is it when they hurt us? Is it when they treat us badly? No. All these reasons focus on them. Instead, Jesus says that we are called to forgive when there is something wrong in us. "If YOU have something against anyone." It doesn't matter what they have done to you, what they are doing to you, or if they desire to keep doing it. But if you have something against their actions, forgive them. (3) I once got into a discussion with a dear friend over this subject. What if the person refuses to repent? What if the person doesn't view their sin against you as wrong? My friend would say that you do not have to forgive them. I would say that you do have to forgive them. My friend bases his belief on Luke 17:3 which says, "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him." He says that we are to forgive only when the person repents. [\*\*\* Go into this further at a different time. For many verses on this, search your email for your debate with SRB. Email chain is titled Forgiveness and happened in Jan/Feb 2010. \*\*\*]

Father in heaven. Let Mark's words sink in. The forgiveness you receive from your Father in heaven is directly conditioned on your enemy receiving forgiveness from you.

[Mark 11:26]. You may have this verse in brackets or in a footnote at the bottom of your Bible. This verse appears in NT family of Greek manuscripts called the Byzantine text family (which the NKJV is based off of) but it is not found in the Alexandrian text family (all other translations after 1890). Did Mark actually pen this phrase or not? In the end, it does not matter because all Greek manuscripts have this phrase at Matt 6:15.

### **11:27-33 Jerusalem - Jesus' authority questioned.**

Chief priests, scribes, elders. These three titles pretty much encapsulate all the leaders of the Jews except for the Sanhedrin. I'm not sure if Mark is implying this or not through his silence, but notice how Mark does not mention the Sadducees or the Pharisees. Could Mark be implying that those who are asking Jesus about His authority are not members of the Jews sects but the actual persons of authority in Judaism? Mark could be implying this, but who can say?

By what authority; who gave you this authority. They want Jesus to explain the nature of His authority and who gave it to Him. Remember that from the very beginning, Jesus taught as one who had authority and not like the scribes (Mark 1:22).

I will ask you a question. Jesus knows their hearts. If they want to bring the truth out of Him, they should be willing to do the same. Jesus once said to do unto others what you would have them do to you. They want Jesus to answer their question, but they are too prideful to answer Jesus' question. Jesus knows that these men do not want the truth driven from them, so Jesus is about to expose them.

John's baptism. Jesus' question to them is not difficult at all. This is not some hidden thing. The answer is already known by the public. Those standing around probably expected what these Jewish leaders would say because there is a correct answer that everyone knows.

Argue among themselves. Instead of simply giving the correct answer to Jesus so that He would answer their question, they begin arguing about it. Why does such a simple question need private discussion? They know that their reputation is at stake. Their pride is taking over.

From heaven. (1) The correct answer puts them in a corner. Apparently, both they and the people knew that Jesus was the very person John spoke about and prepared the way for. Remember that when the Pharisees came to John, they didn't come for a baptism of repentance. John severely rebuked them calling them vipers. These Jewish leaders probably have the same pride that keeps them from believing John's prophetic message about Jesus being the Messiah. (2) John's ministry of baptism, repentance, and forgiveness was very, very popular. Remember that in Acts 18, a man named Apollos comes from Alexandria to Ephesus powerfully preaching John's baptism. John was famous and well-known even as far as Alexandria!

From men. The wrong answer is what they wanted to give. They didn't believe John. But they also fear the people because they did believe John.

We don't know. They decide to "plead the fifth." They believed they were in a catch-22 and felt that no answer was better than answering. Jesus didn't give them an open-ended question like they gave Him. Jesus gave them two possible answers and they couldn't even decide on one of them. Talk about being double-minded!

Neither will I tell you. (1) If someone isn't going to be honest with Jesus, what is the point of Jesus explaining to His authority to them? If these Jewish leaders already did not believe John's lesser ministry, how could they believe Jesus' greater ministry? (2) It can be easily argued that these Jewish leaders weren't going to believe it anyway. If the people (and they) already believed that Jesus is the one John talked about and John was a prophet from God, then they should already know the answer to the questions they asked Jesus. By what authority does Jesus do these things? Divine authority! Who gave Him this authority? God the Father did! Why was there a need for these Jewish leaders to ask Jesus these questions when the pieces to the answers were right in front of them? (3) Luke records that the Jewish leaders said the people would stone them if they said John's authority is from men. The Jewish leaders were afraid to get stoned, but it seems that the reason they asked Jesus about His authority is because they wanted to stone Him.

### **12:1-12 Jerusalem - Parable of the Vineyard Owner; Jewish leaders want to arrest Him.**

Parable. Man who planted a vineyard is God the Father. The tenant farmers are the Jews. The slaves are the prophets. The beloved son is Jesus Christ. Destroying the farmers is the destruction of Jerusalem. The others are the Gentiles, that is, spiritual Israel.

They beat some and they killed some. Could the Jewish leaders really not deny that their ancestors beat and killed the prophets? Certainly, if this was not true, then they would have called Jesus on it. But it seems clear that Jesus' account of how the prophets were treated by the Jews as a whole is very true. At another time when Jesus severely rebuked the Pharisees, He spoke very harsh condemnation about how the Jews have killed God's messengers ([Luke 11:47-51](#)).

What will the owner do? (1) Matthew records that the people responded to Jesus' question saying, "He will completely destroy those terrible men and lease his vineyard to other farmers who will give him his produce at the harvest" (Matt 21:41). (2) Luke records that Jesus answers His own question, then the people respond saying, "No, never!" (Luke 20:16).

The stone the builders rejected. Jesus quotes from Ps 118:22-23. There is a reoccurring theme in the gospels, especially John's. If you reject the Son, God will reject you. The only reason God will reject the Jews as a whole by destroying them is because they as a whole rejected Jesus, God's Son.

[The kingdom taken away from you.] Matthew records that when Jesus finishes this parable and quoting from Psalms, He plainly tells them, "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing its fruit" (Matt 21:43).

[Who falls on the stone.] (1) Luke records that Jesus applies this to His quotation from Psalm 118 (Luke 20:18). He says that anyone who falls on the corner stone will be broken into pieces, and if the cornerstone falls on anyone, it will grind him to powder. This is a reference to Is 8:15 where Isaiah prophesies that the two kingdoms of Israel will stumble over and be broken by this stone. He's talking about what the stone will do to unbelieving Jews. Jesus also refers to Dan 2:34-45 where Daniel prophesies that the kingdom of God will crush all previous kingdoms so that the wind will carry them away and not be found. He's talking about what the stone will do the unbelieving Gentiles. (2) Paul and Peter recount Jesus' role as the cornerstone ([Rom 9:31-33](#), [1Pet 2:6-8](#)).

They knew this parable was against them. Who? The chief priests, scribes, and elders.

They looked for a way to arrest Him. Wait, didn't Jesus just say that the Jews mistreated God's prophets? But here you have a self-fulfilling parable. This parable is just hastening the seizing, killing, and throwing out of the beloved Son. I would think the people who wanted to be Jesus' enemies would leave Him alone so that His parable would not come true. But these Jewish leaders are so hateful of Jesus, they don't care about what Jesus is saying. All they care is that Jesus is ruining their reputation.

Afraid of the crowd. (1) Just because the Jewish leaders did the right thing at this moment by not mistreating Jesus, this does not mean they have some level of self-control. The reason they didn't arrest Jesus on the spot was because they were afraid of the crowd. To them, that's all that mattered: their reputation with the crowd. (2) Matthew records that they feared the crowd because the crowd believed Jesus was a prophet (Matt 21:46). So we can see that most people were not enemies of Jesus. Most Jews at this time had faith in Jesus.

### **12:13-17 Jerusalem - Pharisees test Jesus about paying taxes.**

Pharisees and Herodians. (1) Remember that much earlier, these two enemies joined forces because they both wanted to be enemies of Jesus (Mark 3:6). (2) Luke records that these two parties actually sent their spies who pretended to be righteous (Luke 20:20).

We know You. (1) For two groups that have been plotting against Jesus since the beginning of His ministry, they sure know how to flatter Him. Perhaps they believe Jesus is merely a human and flattery will cause Jesus to misspeak. After all, they are trying to trap Him. I do not think that the Pharisees and Herodians

honestly believe their own flattering words about Jesus. (2) Their flattery sounds a lot like Moses' instructions for the tribal elders (Deut 1:17).

Is it lawful to pay taxes. This is actually a good question. When Moses gave the law for both religion and government, there was not anything about being ruled by another nation and paying taxes or tribute to that nation. In the times of the Judges and ever since the times of Assyrian and Babylonian exile, the Jews have probably debated this question often.

Why are you testing Me? Matthew records that Jesus calls them hypocrites right here (Matt 22:18).

The things that are Caesar's. (1) I remember when I was young and had recently received a ten-speed bicycle. Not long after, the city held a bicycle training and safety course for young kids. While there, a police officer helped kids engrave their names and phone numbers onto the frame of their bike. This way, if the bike was ever stolen, the owner was known. So I had my name and information engraved onto my bike. It was mine. No matter where my bike found itself, I was the owner of it. (2) The same is true for Roman money. Jesus is calling their attention to who governs their money. Caesar is who owns and governs their money because he has put his face on it. Jesus is answering the question about paying taxes by essentially saying, "It's not yours anyway. If Caesar made this coin and made it look like himself, then give it back to him." (3) What about your money? Whose image and inscription is on it? Never again should you ever ask yourself whether or not you should pay taxes. (See also Rom 13:6-7.)

The things that are God's. The exact same thing is true for God's things. Give back to God the things that have His image and inscription. What are those things? Humans are in God's image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27, 2:7). Jesus is not talking about mere taxes. Jesus is talking about you and everything about you. To Whom do you belong? Are you giving back to God the thing that is His?

Amazed at Him. If this teaching was new to you and you understood what Jesus was talking about, who wouldn't be amazed? In fact, every single time I re-read this teaching, I am amazed and convicted.

#### **12:18-27 Jerusalem - Sadducees test Jesus about the resurrection.**

Sadducees. (1a) As Mark says, they did not believe in the Resurrection of the dead. (1b) Along with that, they did not believe in angels nor spirits (Acts 23:8). (1c) Josephus (first century) and Hippolytus (ANF, 5.137, 205 AD) wrote that the Sadducees denied providence (while the Pharisees were very close to predestination). (1d) Origen (ANF, 4.418, 235 AD) and Hippolytus (ANF, 5.137) wrote that the Sadducees only accepted the law of Moses, that is, the Pentateuch, (as the Samaritans did also). (1e) Hippolytus wrote (ANF, 4.418) that the Sadducees had the strictest application of God's will. They rejected the Jewish Oral Laws (which the Pharisees commanded) and only accepted the written Scriptures (Pentateuch). They had the strictest interpretations of God's law, more or less ascribing to a "thus saith the Lord." (2) In this questioning of the Resurrection, Matthew, Mark, and Luke single out the Sadducees because of their rejection of the Resurrection and afterlife. Jesus and the gospel writers want to make it abundantly clear that there is a Resurrection of all the dead—which is also explicitly stated in John's gospel (John 20:25-29). The resurrection of all the dead is an essential belief of Christianity. When the early Christian church (after the times of the apostles) mentioned the Sadducees, it was nearly always to preach about the Resurrection. The Sadducees believed in a major false doctrine. As we will see, Jesus Himself gives them a very strong rebuke saying, "You don't know the Scriptures or the power of God," and, "You are badly deceived" (Mark 12:24, 12:27). (3) The resurrection of the dead was a huge difference between the Sadducees and Pharisees. Paul used this disagreement to his advantage in Acts 23:6-8.

Produce offspring for his brother. (1) This command from Moses is found in Deut 25:5-10 where Moses gives detailed instructions about it including the punishment for the brother-in-law who refuses to marry his deceased brother's widow. (2) But this command from Moses was not new to the Israelites. This commandment existed even in the time of Jacob and his twelve sons: Judah has a son named Er and gives him Tamar for a wife. The Lord kills Er because of his wickedness, so Judah commands his other son, Onan, to bear offspring through Tamar. Then Onan sins and the Lord kills him too. Then when Judah refuses to give his son, Shelah, to Tamar. This causes the situation between Judah and Tamar. From Judah and Tamar union, Tamar gives birth to Perez and Zerah. Perez later becomes an ancestor to Jesus Christ.

Seven brothers. This situation painted by the Sadducees was not exactly hypothetical. In the Jewish Bibles of Jesus' day, they had the book of Tobit. The events of Tobit occurred in Nineveh and Babylon about 70 years after Jonah. In it, there is a woman named Sarah who married seven times. Each time she married, an evil spirit killed her husband in the bridal chamber. She and her family were of the tribe of Naphtali and were righteous. Tobit doesn't say that these seven men were brothers, but they had to have been in keeping with the law of Moses.

You don't know the Scriptures or the power of God. Could there be anything worse Jesus Christ could have said to us? May Jesus' rebuke of the Sadducees drive us to not be like them. May we always be striving to know the Scriptures. May we always be striving to know the power of God.

They neither marry nor are given in marriage. There are two opposing statements about marriage today. In the first statement, a married couple may say that their love is forever. In the second statement, a married couple may vow, "Until death do us part." These statements contradict each other. According to Jesus, the second statement is the true one. Marriage ends at death. (See also Rom 7:1-3.) However, the Sadducees are using the first statement in their attempt to reject the resurrection and the "ridiculousness" of it.

Like angels in heaven. (1) We already saw that the Sadducees did not believe in angels. Jesus is straight up telling them they are wrong about the resurrection and afterlife. Jesus throws this in there to tell them they are wrong about angels also. (2) Luke records that the physically dead are like angels and are sons of God (Luke 20:36).

Book of Moses. Since the Sadducees only accepted the Law of Moses, the first five books, then Jesus is going to meet them on their turf. Jesus uses Ex 3:6 to prove that God is still their God even as they are now dead. God was not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob while they were still living. God IS their God EVEN NOW! Though these men are dead physically, they are not spiritually dead but living in their spirits! (2) Luke records that Jesus explained Himself saying that God is God of the living because all are living to Him (Luke 20:28).

You are badly deceived. Jesus again lets the Sadducees have it. How did the Sadducees come to believe the things they did? Whoever first taught the false doctrines of no afterlife and no angels was wrong. And ever since him, people have been deceived to believe those false doctrines. Those doctrines survive because of deception. There are many doctrines in Christendom today that are false. They had a beginning in men and everyone since those men, people have been deceived to believe those false doctrines. If Jesus came back today, to whom would He say, "You are badly deceived"? Certainly not us! Right? This is all the more reason to put more effort and time into knowing the Scriptures and the power of God.

[You have spoken well.] Luke records that the scribes said, "Teacher, you have spoken well" (Luke 20:39).

This shows that the scribes, who spent their days transcribing the Scriptures, agree with Jesus' use of Ex 3:6. Yes, God is—present tense—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[Silenced the Sadducees]. Matthew records that, because of this encounter, Jesus silenced the Sadducees (Matt 22:23). What a thing to say! Jesus' teaching was so strong that an entire party—the party that took care of the temple—was completely humiliated into silence.

### **12:28-34 Jerusalem - A scribe asks about the greatest commandment.**

One of the scribes. Matthew records that this scribe was an expert of the law (another name for a scribe?) and a Pharisee (Matt 22:35).

Heard them debating. This scribe already reminds me of myself. Whenever I hear anyone debating anything relating to Scripture, religion, or morality, I always want to join in. When I cannot join in, I'm content with listening. It seems that was all my friends and I did in college. But it was good for us and caused us to grow closer to truth more quickly than ever before. Wherever there is a debate, they have my ear.

[Personal note]. I always hope that the arguments that I have had with friends would end like this on Judgment Day. But I need to be careful. Though I want to be right, I shouldn't want this just so that I can be proven right, but that I have correctly understood truth. Think about the difference. Do you want to be proven right for your own sake, or do you want to be proven right because you have sided with God's truth? A good sign that we can be found in the latter is because we are very willing to change our beliefs. In the past, have you changed your beliefs because you learned that what you learned was false? If this feeling is unknown to you, then you probably want to be right for your own sake and have hardened your heart to everything beyond your beliefs. Do you feel that if you changed your beliefs, then you would look like a fool? Then you certainly are the kind of person who wants to be right for your own sake.

Saw that Jesus answered them well. This scribe must recognize that Jesus spoke with authority. He is witnessing the proof that Jesus is a prophet from God. This is his moment to ask Jesus a question that he has probably debated with his scribe friends.

Most important. (1) Some have counted that there were 618 OT commands. With that many to choose from, I can see how this could have been widely debated among the experts of the law. (2) Just because Jesus gives us the greatest commandment, this does not mean the rest do not matter. Yes, Jesus says there is a greatest commandment. But all of the Law and the Prophets are summed up in this greatest commandment. This can be easily seen when reading the context (Deut 6:1-9). Just as there is one greatest commandment but all commandments are rolled up into it, there is one God but all three Persons are rolled up into it. Perhaps this is why Jesus first states the nature and unity of God.

The Lord our God, the Lord is One. (1) Literally in Hebrew, "Yhwh, our Elohim, [is] one Yhwh," that is, "Jehovah, our God, [is] one Jehovah." Literally in the Greek: "The Lord, our God, is one Lord." (2) I find it interesting and am still a bit confused that Jesus would begin the most important command about the nature of God. It seems Jesus is just quoting what was probably a well known passage to the Jews: Deut 6:4-6. Jesus is selecting this as the most important command. But because Jesus includes this phrase about the nature of God, Jesus is not just sharing a command but wants us to call our attention to the whole passage (Deut 6:1-9).

Love the Lord your God with.... Jesus quotes Deut 6:5. Of course, He does not put these things in the same order. In fact, none of the gospels put these in the same order (Matt 22:37, Luke 10:27).

With all your mind. Jesus says to love God with all your mind. However, this is not found in Deut 6. Where does mind come from? It doesn't appear in all versions of the Greek Septuagint, but some Septuagint versions read Deut 6:5-6 this way: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your mind, and with all your soul, and all your strength. And these words, all that I command you this day, shall be in your heart and in your soul." However, Jesus is probably also referencing Josh 22:5 which says, "Serve Him with all your mind and with all your soul." So the conclusion must be that Jesus is combining a lot of things: Deut 6:4-5, Deut 6:1-9, and Josh 22:5 as one overall quotation and thought.

The second is. (1) The scribe asked for the most important commandment. Jesus responds with two. But these two are not equal. Loving God is greater than loving neighbor. As Jesus taught, "Disregarding the command of God, you keep the tradition of men" (Mark 7:8). And as Peter and the apostles said, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). When it comes to the people we love, there should be a hierarchy. Who is at the top of yours? (2) Jesus is quoting from Lev 19:18. It is good to get it in context (Lev 19:17-18).

Love your neighbor. Do not think that Jesus is speaking about the people who live next door to you. At an earlier time, Jesus taught who our neighbors are. Be reminded of the Good Samaritan. Note that in that same passage, the expert in the law states the greatest two commandments (Luke 10:25-37).

As yourself. (1) Jesus didn't say that you are to love the Lord our God as yourself. I believe the reason for this is no one can do this since you and God are far from equal. On the other hand, you and your neighbor are equal. You are both humans. You can love your neighbor as yourself because you and your neighbor are more alike than you may think. You may think the world revolves around you, but your neighbor has the same sinful nature as you and are both guilty of sin. You both live in the same world and see the same injustice as well as the same charity. You both are living now and are able to converse with each other. You both can see and touch each other. John has something to say about that (1John 4:20-21). You and your neighbor (who is everyone) have more in common than you think. Just as you know and love yourself, you are to love your neighbor with the same kind of love. (2) Paul gives a similar command to husbands (Eph 5:28). If we are called to love our wives as we love our own bodies, how much more should we love our neighbors as we love all of ourselves! (3) Jesus' point is this: you are not greater than your neighbor. Love them like they are equal to you in every way. But you know what? Paul says to love your neighbors ever greater than yourself (Php 2:3-4)! And this is what Jesus taught when He said, "This is My command: Love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:12-13). Jesus did exactly that and calls us to do the same. Even beyond that, Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that we are to love even our enemies in this way!

No other command greater than these. But both of these are greater than all others. They are greater than all others because they include all other commandments. In fact, Matthew records that Jesus said, "All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands" (Matt 22:39).

You are right, Teacher. This scribe, who saw Jesus debating and speaking well, already believed these to be the greatest commandments. We can see that there were people who did believe this. Before this, the man who wanted to make himself look good said this to Jesus. Then Jesus taught him about the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

More important than offerings and sacrifices. This scribe truly knows how to bear God's fruit. In this instance, he is referring to Samuel's words (1Sam 15:22) as well as David's (Ps 51:16), Hosea's (Hos 6:6), Amos' (Amos 5:22), and Micah (6:6-8) just to name a few.

You are not far from the kingdom of God. (1) Jesus had just gave the Sadducees some of the strongest rebukes ever. Here however, Jesus gives this scribe one of the best compliments ever. (2) Not only is Jesus describing this scribe's good spiritual health, but Jesus may also be telling him too keep His eyes open. In less than two months from this moment on Pentecost, the kingdom of God will arrive. It is not farfetched to believe that this scribe will see it and be one of the 3000 souls added to the church that day.

No one questioned Him anymore. When did their questions cease? Mark says it was here after Jesus taught the greatest commands (Mark 12:34). Matthew says it is after Jesus questions them about King David's Son (Matt 22:45-46). Luke said it was after Jesus rebuked the Sadducees (Luke 20:39-40). When was it?

It doesn't matter. After Jesus silenced the Sadducees, taught the greatest commands, and taught about King David's Son, Jesus silenced THEM ALL!

### **12:35-37 The temple - He confounds the scribes' teaching.**

Asked question. (1) Jesus is in the process of silencing His opponents (Matt 22:45-46, Mark 12:34, Luke 20:39-40). When they ask Him questions, they do not have answers. Now Jesus asks them a question and they do not have answers. (2) Matthew records that Jesus asked the Pharisees (Matt 22:41).

Messiah is the Son of David. We have already discussed that it was well known to the Jews that the Messiah would be David's Son. (Refer to notes at Mark 10:47-48.) What they may not have expected is that David's son would be greater than David himself.

David says. Jesus quotes Ps 110:1.

How can the Messiah be his Son. The only way someone's son could also be their lord (master) is if his son existed before him.

### **12:38-40 The temple - He exposes the scribes' hypocrisy.**

Scribes. At this time, Jesus is warning His disciples about the hypocrisy of the scribes. At another time, Jesus taught the same thing but as a rebuke to the Pharisees ([Matt 23:5-6](#) and context).

Long robes. (1) Long robes were an outward sign of greatness or majesty. The angels at Jesus' empty tomb had long robes (Mark 16:5). When Jesus speaks to John in Revelation, Jesus is wearing a long robe (Rev 1:13). (2) Or Jesus could be referring to the Scripture boxes or tassels that they would put on their robes (Matt 23:5). (3) What are we to do? We are to live in such a way that God will give us a robe of white (Rev 6:9-11, 7:13-14).

Want greetings. (1) I believe Jesus is referring to their titles as rabbi in which they took much pride. (2) What are we to do? We are not to call each other titles such as rabbi, father, or master. We are all brothers and we have one Father and one Master. Instead, we are to be a servant and humbled (Matt 23:8-12).

Front seats. (1) Perhaps Jesus is talking about how the Pharisees sat in the chair of Moses as if they were equal to Moses (Matt 23:2). (2) What are we to do? We are to live a new life, seated in the heavens (Eph 2:6).

Places of honor. (1) This was certainly common among the Pharisees (Luke 14:1-7). (2) What are we to do? We are to sit at the lowest place so that when the host arrives, he will honor you in the presence of all the guests. (Luke 14:8-11).

Devour widows' houses. (1) Jesus is probably referring to His earlier teaching on corban (Mark 7:10-13). They did not allow children to support their parents (probably because they were widowed) all in the name of God (that is, for the benefit of the Pharisees). Then Jesus said they do many other similar things. (2) What are we to do? We are to look after orphans and widows which is pure and undefiled religion (Jam 1:27).

Say long prayers only for show. (1) Jesus taught that hypocrites like to pray to be seen by people and idolaters like to say many words to be heard (Matt 6:5-7). (2) What are we to do? We are to pray to our heavenly Father in private and He knows what we need even before we ask Him (Matt 6:6-8).

Greater punishment. Hypocrites will receive a greater punishment. Sinning out of ignorance is one thing. Sinning in a moment of weakness is another thing. Sinning by giving the impression of incredible holiness is still another thing. Jesus says that the sin of hypocrisy deserves a greater punishment.

### **12:41-44 The temple - Jesus recognizes the widow's giving.**

Watched how the crowd dropped money. You can tell a lot about a person if you observed their giving.

Poor widow put in more. How can the widow's two tiny coins be worth more than the rich's large sums? Let it be known that God does not look at the amount only. The person is far more important to God. God does not look at the portion; God looks at the proportion. ("It is not the portion but the proportion that is important." -Greg Swango)

Surplus... all she had to live on. (1) There are two things here that we must focus on: surplus and all she had to live on. (2) God is pleased when we give to him—even out of our surplus. But Jesus is giving us a clear calling to go beyond that. Jesus wants us to give our wants. Another word for this is sacrifice. David understood this well when he said, "No, I insist on paying the full price, for I will not take for the Lord what belong to you or offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing" (1Chr 21:24). Does your giving cost you? Is it costing your wants? (3) But here, Jesus is not merely instructing us to sacrifice our wants. He praises the example of this widow because Jesus wants us to sacrifice our needs—the things we have to live on. This is great faith in action. The widow must have had great faith and trust in God to take care of her. When Jesus tells us to strive for this level of faith, there is no sufficient amount that we should give to God. There is no end to the things we could give up for Him. There is no point where our giving is complete. (4) Some Christians may say it is foolish to give away so many of your possessions that it puts you into extreme

poverty. To that kind of thinking I say: worldly wisdom! (5) Remember the church at Smyrna. Jesus said they had affliction and poverty yet He said they were rich (Rev 2:9). Also remember the words of Paul about being satisfied in whatever circumstance you find yourself (Php 4:10-13). (6) If God wants us to sacrifice our needs and give to Him--just as the widow did--, then where does that leave our surplus and our wants? I'm reminded of the song that says, "I'm satisfied with just a cottage below, a little silver and a little gold" (Mansion Over the Hilltop by Ira Stanphill). I agree with the cottage; that sounds very humble. But the second part about being satisfied with a little silver and gold, I have a problem with that. We shouldn't be satisfied with holding on to a little wealth for ourselves. We are to remember the example of the widow.

### **13:1-2 The temple - Jesus predicts the temple's destruction.**

Thrown down. (1) And here begins Jesus' prediction of many things, foremost is the destruction of the temple. (2) Could Jesus be talking about the temple of His body (John 2:19)? I do not believe so. There he is talking about His physical body. In this chapter, He is talking about many monumental things.

### **13:3-4 Mount of Olives - Peter, James, John, and Andrew ask about Jesus' predictions.**

Mount of Olives across from the temple. They are outside of Jerusalem now. By Mark's wording, I believe he is saying that they could see the temple from where they sat.

Peter, James, John, Andrew. This wasn't just Jesus' closest friends but also included Andrew. It seems that Jesus is saying these things to these four apostles only since they asked Him privately.

When... what. (1) Mark and Luke records that the apostles ask two questions: when will the temple be destroyed and what will be the sign when these things are about to happen? Matthew is more specific and splits the second question into two questions: What is the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?

(2) Already from the beginning, it is hard to determine if they are asking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the sign before it or if they are talking about Jesus' second coming.

### **13:5-8 Mount of Olives - Jesus predicts false Christs, war, and natural disasters.**

[Meaning of Prophecy]. This is warnings about the second coming.

No one deceives you. (1) Pay attention to Jesus' words. Anyone can take Jesus words here and apply them to whatever they think is best--including me. Listen to Jesus' words only as the true meaning. If you listen to other people's teaching, be extra careful that they do not misapply what Jesus is prophesying. I have done the best I humanly can to interpret Jesus' prophesies as accurately as possible. I feel that there is many place I could be very wrong, so remember Jesus' words here.

"I am He." Jesus doesn't begin by directly answering their questions. He begins with a warning. Do not be deceived by anyone who claims to be Christ. They may convince many, but you must not believe them.

["The time is near"]. Luke records that Jesus adds this statement about the deceivers (Luke 21:8). This is His point in the next couple verses.

Wars and rumors of wars. This is certainly a scary thing! It seems that there is always someone who is throwing around the idea of imminent war. But Jesus says not to be scared. These things will happen, but that doesn't not mean it is the end.

Nation will rise up against nation. (1) Jesus is prophesying that wars in many places will happen. But these will come before the end. Do not be deceived into believing that this or that war is the sign that the end is here.

(2) Jesus' prophecy sounds a lot like Isaiah's prophecy against Egypt (Is 19:1-4).

Earthquakes and famines. (1) Luke adds "plagues" as well as terrifying sights and great signs from heaven (Luke 21:11). (2) Jesus even says there will be many natural disasters that will happen. But these will come before the end. Do not be deceived into believing that this or that natural disaster is the sign that the end is here.

Beginning of birth pains. (1) Notice the time significance here. Birth pains come at the end of pregnancy but they come before the birth. All these things are just the beginning of the end of pregnancy. Jesus wants to call our attention to how early wars and natural disasters will happen in relation to the end. (2) The birth of what? If these things are the sign that a birth is coming, whose birth or what birth will that be???

### **13:9-13 Mount of Olives - Jesus predicts persecutions for His followers.**

[Meaning of Prophecy]. This is about persecution at any time.

They. Who is Jesus talking about? I believe it is the nations and possibly the deceivers also.

Sanhedrins... synagogues. We see that Jesus is including the Jews as persecutors.

Governors and kings. We see that people will put on trial, but it will allow Christians to witness to the nations.

We can see this powerfully displayed in the life of Paul. He appeared before multiple Jewish councils, Jewish kings, also appeared before the Romans Festus, Felix, and possibly Caesar himself (Acts 21-26).

Gospel to all nations. Here is a good point of reference for a sign that happens before the second coming. The gospel will be preached to all nations first.

Say it. Notice that Jesus encourages you to speak. The Holy Spirit does not force anyone to speak this or that. The Holy Spirit only provides what to speak. From this, one can see that we and the Holy Spirit are co-operators of our bodies. As Paul said, "The prophets' spirits are under the control of the prophets" (1Cor 14:32). Therefore, God does not overpower us, but uses us when we allow Him.

[Do not prepare]. Luke records some additional instructions about when you appear before officials (Luke 21:14-15).

Betray. (1) Just because you have family members, this does not make you or them exempt from being persecutors. Brother could still kill brother, father could still kill child, and children can even kill parents. They do this because they hate you because you believe in Jesus Christ. (2) Micah felt this way. It seems that Jesus is referring to Micah's description of Israel (Mic 7:2-7).

[Lawlessness multiplied, love grow cold]. Matthew records an additional description of these persecutors. He said, "Lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold" (Matt 24:12).

Endures to the end. (1) In the case of being martyred, the end is not the end of all things. When Jesus says to endure to the end, He means endure until your end--however you meet that end. In the end, Jesus will save your soul. As Jesus said, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul" (Matt 10:28).

(2) God watches over you and will not let you be punished by Him if you die for Him. Luke records that Jesus added, "Not a hair of your head will be lost" (Luke 21:18).

[Persecutions prophesied]. (1) Starting in the next verse, Jesus seems to be addressing something very specific. This section (verses 9-13) seem to be general and can be applied to anyone living at anytime. From the apostles themselves (as we see happen many times in Acts) even to the present day, there are Christians being persecuted and martyred because of the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus' words here do not have to apply only to a certain group of people at a certain time. It can easily apply to us. (2) Even though Jesus is the Prince of Peace, He is also the cause of Christian persecutions today. As long as there are people who wear the name of Christ, there will be sword pointed at them. Jesus and Paul prophesied this (Matt 10:34, John 15:20, 2Tim 3:12). And this sword is against Christians, who are by nature peacemakers! God will use persecution from unbelievers (the last) to show who are His true children (the first). In the end, Jesus will prove to be greater than any power that persecutes His children and give His children the honor they are due (John 16:33, Rev 2:10).

### **13:14-20 Mount of Olives - Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem.**

[Meaning of Prophecy]. This is about the destruction of Jerusalem.

Abomination of desolation. (1) Matthew records that this was spoken about by the prophet Daniel (Matt 24:15). It's hard to pinpoint exactly what Daniel prophesied but the clearest prophecy is at Dan 11:31. It describes an army which rises up, desecrates the temple, and abolishes the daily sacrifice. Then at Dan 12:9, it is prophesied that there will be 1290 days between the abolishment of the daily sacrifice and the abomination of desolation. (2) Luke's parallel passage is the biggest argument of what the abomination of desolation is (Luke 21:20). He said the desolation is near when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies. So from both Luke's and Daniel's descriptions, we can see that the abomination of desolation is the destruction of Jerusalem.

Standing where it should not. Matthew records "standing in the holy place" (Matt 24:15). I don't know what Jesus is referring to here. In Daniel's case, this was Antiochus Epiphanes setting up a statue of Zeus and sacrificing swine on the altar in 167 BC. In Jesus' prophecy, He could be speaking about Emperor Caligula who ordered a statue of Zeus (also himself) placed in the temple around 40 AD. But it does not appear this came to fruition. It could be Emperor Hadrian's temple of Saturn he build on top of the ruined Jewish temple around 130 AD. Or, most likely, this is just the presence of Gentiles in the holy places of the temple. This was true both with Antiochus Epiphanes and the Roman army under Titus. This is what Josephus recounts saying that the Romans brought their idols and images of the Emperor and placed them over the eastern gate (Wars of the Jews by Josephus, book 6, chapter 6, section 1.).

Flee. (1) Verses 15-18 is about how people should flee Judea in those days. (2) Luke is more descriptive in what area needs to be fled from (Luke 21:21). He said those inside the city must leave it and those in the country must not enter it. The area affected by the abomination of desolation only affects the city of Jerusalem.

Tribulation. The Scriptures do not use this word as if to describe one, single event--as many people use it today. Instead, this word simply means pressure or affliction.

The kind that hasn't been. (1) Jesus prophesies that the severity of this tribulation will be greater than any tribulation before it and any tribulation after it. (2) Luke records more specifics about this severe tribulation, saying, "They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be

trampled by the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). (3) Josephus uses very similar language when describing the destruction of Jerusalem, saying, "Accordingly, it appears to me that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews are not so considerable as they were" (Wars of the Jews by Josephus, preface, section 4).

The Lord limited those days. (1) God did not cause this abomination of desolation to last too long. Jesus says that if God had not ended it, then no flesh would survive! I don't believe Jesus is talking about all life in the world, but probably all life in Judea or Jerusalem. This might be seen in the actions of Titus, the Roman general who destroyed Rome (and later become Emperor). He originally planned to let Jerusalem starve out through famine. But because the Jewish armies pressed him to advance and he was being called to Rome, he shortened the siege and destroyed Jerusalem (Wars of the Jews by Josephus, book 5 chapter 12, section 1.). (2) Jesus tells us that God limited this tribulation for the sake of spiritual Israel. I do not know what all this means exactly, but God has the survival of His church in mind. (3) Luke says that the abomination of desolation will last "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Luke seems to imply this to be disbelieving Gentiles--not Gentiles who would later become Christians. In other words, this will last until the heyday of the disbelieving Gentiles has been long enough.

[Josephus]. All the things that Matthew, Mark, and Luke record from Jesus' prophecy can be found in Josephus' Wars of the Jews, including the number of people killed and the number of people captured. Because of the witness of Josephus, who refused to be a Christian, there is no doubt in my mind that Jesus is prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem.

### **13:21-23 Mount of Olives - Jesus against predicts false Christs.**

[Meaning of Prophecy]. This is about false christs at any time.

Look, here, there. (1) Luke records that Jesus spoke on this subject at a different time and with more detail (Luke 17:22-37). (2) Jesus makes it clear that this is His last incarnation or public appearance on earth until His final return on Judgment Day. Jesus' words here has no other meaning than that. (3) Matthew records that Jesus also warned that people will say, "He's in the wilderness," or, "He's in the inner rooms" (Matt 24:26). (4) I've heard that every good-sized city has at least one guy who walks around claiming to be Jesus. If there is one in your city, the average police officer would be familiar with that person. You may run into someone like this. However, sometimes, a movement arises where many people believe in their hearts that Christ has returned to earth. I have come in contact with this kind of person, and I would like to share my experience as an example of what Jesus teaches here. This group is called the World Mission Society Church of God. Here are their beliefs very briefly. Christ returned to earth, in South Korea in the 1960s. His name was Christ Ahnsahnghong to restore salvation to mankind which was lost in the 2nd century. Mankind are fallen angels who are given a second chance. The most important event in your salvation is eating the Passover per year. They many other heretical beliefs such as the rejection of the Trinity, believing that there is one God in one Person. But they also believe in a second deity which they call God the Mother. They believe God the Mother became incarnate, was the wife of Ahnsahnghong, and is still alive in South Korea today. The funny thing is the real Ahnsahnghong has died and he himself never claimed to be deity! Now, when I read Jesus' words in this passage, I specifically think of this group of heretics.

Perform signs and wonders. (1) Paul warns about a lawless one doing these things (2Thes 2:9-12). (2) If grand displays of power were mere deceptions like magicians today, then it would be easy for people--especially the Church--to recognize the deceptions. Jesus gives this warning for a reason. Even if we witnessed true supernatural powers from someone claiming to be great, then we need to remember Jesus' words here and be captivated by such a person. After all, notice that Jesus calls the christs and prophets false, not their signs and wonders. (3) The Pre-Nicene Christians wrote that they observed miraculous powers at the hand of people claiming to be great. What was their solution? They said to look at the person's fruit. Whether someone who has miraculous powers is from God or not is shown by their fruit. If the person and the power does good, then we can know that it is of God. But if the person and their power does wrong, then we can know that it is false.

[As lightning flashes]. Matthew (Matt 24:27) and Luke (Luke 17:24) record that Jesus gives them way He will return to earth: as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west. When Jesus returns, He will not walk this earth but come in the clouds instantaneously. Paul wrote that Jesus will descend from heaven with majesty, the Resurrection will occur, and we will meet Jesus in the clouds in the air (1Thes 4:16-17).

[Where the corpse is, the vultures will gather]. (1) Matthew (Matt 24:28) and Luke (Luke 17:37) record that Jesus said, "Where the corpse is, the vultures will gather." (2) This could be a reference to God's words to Job at Job 39:26-30. There, God says that He commands the birds, even the birds that find the slain and drink the blood. More likely, this is a reference to Ez 39:17-20. There, God says that when He destroys Gog and Magog, birds and wild animals will come and eat their fill of the blood and flesh of both soldiers and

animals. (3) What does this mean? Jesus is probably speaking about all the flesh that will die because of the destruction of Jerusalem. There was so many corpses at the destruction of Jerusalem that the English historian Henry Milman wrote, "The legionaries had to clamber over heaps of dead to carry on the work of extermination" (History of the Jews by Henry Milman, book 16). The vultures are the literal vultures that came after the Roman army destroyed everyone, or the vultures are the Roman army itself finishing off a city that had been under siege for at least two months. Jesus is saying there will be no salvation for Jerusalem. They will see death all the way until the death is cleaned up by vultures.

### **13:24-27 Mount of Olives - Jesus predicts His return with great power.**

[Meaning of Prophecy]. This is about the second coming.

In those days after that tribulation. (1) Jesus is not talking about the same days He has been talking about because He then says, "After the tribulation." The day he is referring to is the day the apostles asked about when they asked, "And what is the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matt 24:3). (2) Matthew records that Jesus said, "At once after the tribulation" (Matt 24:29). (3) Remember to God, a day is like 1000 years and 1000 years is like a day (2Pet 3:8). Jesus isn't saying that His second coming would be right after the destruction of Jerusalem. It was along those lines that the Thessalonians believed. Paul's message to them was often about how they should continue life and work (examples: 1Thes 4-5, 2Thes 2-3). They are to wait for Jesus' coming. Jesus' point is that His coming is the next thing that will happen.

Sun darkened... heavenly powers shaken. (1) This imagery was used frequently by prophets in the OT. Here are a list of them. Joel used it about the first destruction of Jerusalem (Joel 2:1-11). Isaiah used them about the destruction of Babylon (Is 13:9-11, 24:21-23). Ezekiel used them about the destruction of Egypt (Ezk 32:4-8). Haggai used them about the plundering of the nations for the new temple (Hag 2:6-9). And this imagery is used about the destruction of the nations in general (Is 34:1-4, Joel 3:12-16, Zeph 1:14-16, Rev 6:12-17). Joel and Peter used them about the coming of the Church (Joel 2:28-32, Acts 2:17-21).

[Nations perplexed by sea and waves]. Luke adds that the nations will be perplexed by the roaring sea and waves (Luke 21:25). This seems to be a reference to another passage about the destruction of nations at Is 17:12-13.

Coming in the clouds. (1) Jesus had already given some prophecies on how He would return: in His Father's glory and with the holy angels (Mark 8:38). (2) Daniel saw this in a vision (Dan 7:13-14). (3) Matthew records that when Jesus comes in this way, all the people of earth will see Him and mourn (Matt 24:30). (4) What happens on the last day? \*\*\* Refer to study on What Happens at Second Coming. \*\*\*

Send out angels to gather His elect. (1) The coming in the clouds and the gathering of the elect are images of Judgment Day (Matt 13:41, 13:49, 25:32-33). (2) Why all the talk about the sun being darkened and the heavenly powers shaken? It's because on Judgment Day, Jesus will end all rule, all authority, and all power; Jesus will also take the kingdom of God and hand it over to His Father (1Cor 15:24, Rev 11:15).

[Your redemption is near]. Luke records that when this happens, the children of God should take courage and find comfort in this (Luke 21:28). As Paul said, "It is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Rom 13:11).

### **13:28-31 Mount of Olives - Jesus predicts that these events will happen very soon.**

[Meaning of Prophecy]. This is about the destruction of Jerusalem.

Fig tree. It was in this same place, the Mount of Olives, that Jesus cursed the fig tree. He may have actually pointed at some fig trees that had the beginnings of fruit on them and pointed at the fig tree that didn't which was now withered.

Sprouts leaves, summer is near. Many times, it seems that winters just don't end. Trees have been bare for months. But once the leaves begin to sprout, it doesn't take long before the realization that the summer heat has arrived. In the same way, when the disciples see the signs that Jesus has given them such as Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, they will know that God's wrath is at the door.

This generation. Jesus concludes that this generation, the generation of the apostles will see all these things happen. What things? This tribulation and its signs. Jesus is predicting the destruction of Jerusalem. That is what this generation will see. They are less than 30 years away from that event. Also, Jesus said that His Second Coming will be the next thing to occur after that. About this event, Jesus will explain in verses 32-37.

Heaven and earth will pass away but not My words. Peter and John prophesied that the earth and the heavens will pass away, burned, and dissolved (2Pet 3:10, Rev 20:11). Yet even after this happens, the books will be opened, the Book of Life will be opened, and people will be either condemned or saved by them (John 12:48, Rev 20:12-15). Heaven and earth will pass away and Jesus' words will remain. Isaiah prophesied this (Is 40:7-8). And Jesus taught this to His disciples and the Pharisees (Matt 5:17-18, Luke 16:16-17).

### **13:32-37 Mount of Olives - No one knows when these events will occur; Be alert!**

[Meaning of Prophecy]. This is about the second coming.

That day. What day? Well, Jesus explained the signs for the destruction of Jerusalem and even said one of those signs is when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies. This day must be about His second coming since there are no signs nor foreknowledge of when this day will come.

Nor the Son. (1) Jesus makes it clear that the Father knows when this day will come but Jesus does not! Let this be one of the primary evidences that though the Son is God, the Son is not the Father. (2) Right before Jesus ascends back to heaven, the disciples ask Him if that was the time He would restore the kingdom (Acts 1:4-8). Even at that time, Jesus said the Father has set that by His own authority but they would receive the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem.

[The day of Noah]. (1) In Matthew's account before Jesus gives this parable, He gives the example of the people in Noah's day (Matt 24:37-39). They had no expectation that the world would be destroyed, then it did. (2) Luke records the same example but also includes the destruction of Sodom (Luke 17:26-33). Jesus says, "Remember Lot's wife!"

[One taken, one left]. (1) Matthew (Matt 24:40-41) and Luke (Luke 17:34-36) record what will happen to one who is ready and one who is not (Matt 24:40-41). In Matthew's account, notice that both the men and both the women are working. But they are working at their earthly jobs. There is another job that a Christians works at which is the kingdom of heaven. Though all four of these people are working, only one of the men and one of the women were working in the kingdom of God. They were spiritually awake. The other two were spiritually sleeping or dead though they are hard at earthly work. Are you hard at earthly work? If you are, then good! But the real and everlasting question is, are you hard at kingdom work? (2) What is Jesus talking about? I believe He is talking about when the angels will be sent out to separate the wicked from the righteous (Matt 13:41, 13:49, 25:32). If this is the case, then it is the wicked who are taken and the righteous who are left.

[Homeowner and thief]. Matthew records a parable about a homeowner and a thief (Matt 24:42-44). If the homeowner knew when the thief was coming, he would be prepared. The reality is that homeowners don't know when their home will be broken into. The same is true for us. We don't know when Jesus will return, so we need to be work in the kingdom just as a homeowner would work to keep the thief away. (2) Now, don't take this parable too far. Just because Jesus likens His coming to a thief, He is not saying He is anything like a thief! Remember that Jesus said a thief climbs in some other way than the door. But the shepherd comes to the sheep by entering through the door. Not only is Jesus the Good Shepherd but He is Himself the Door (John 10:1-13)! (3) It is from this parable that Paul wrote, "the Day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night" (1Thes 5:2). Jesus Himself said He will come like a thief (Rev 16:15). The one who is alert will remained clothed and not be spiritually naked.

It is like. (1) Jesus then speaks a parable to paint an illustration for His second coming. (2) Matthew records that Jesus explained the reward for the servant who is found awake: the master will put him in charge of all His possessions (Matt 24:47).

Sleeping. Jesus doesn't use the example of the servant who runs away or quits which would equate to Christians completely leaving God and abandoning their faith. Jesus does speak about that in Matthew's account (Matt 24:48-51). Jesus uses the example of sleeping. This is a Christian who has become lazy or apathetic in their faith and obedience. Are you spiritually sleeping? Or are you active in the kingdom of God?

Be alert. (1) Four times in this teaching Jesus says to be alert or to watch. This is a common theme of Jesus and His parables: we need to be ready. For example, in Matthew's account, this chapter is followed by the parable of the twelve virgins (Matt 25:1-13). (2) In this chapter, we have looked at a few things we should be ready for. All these things are echoed by the rest of the NT. (A) Paul warns about false teachers in 2Tim 4. (B) John warns about persecution in Rev 1. (C) Hebrews warns about those who fall away from Christ in Heb 6 and 10. (D) Peter warns about mockers in 2Pet 3. (E) Paul warns about haters of truth in 2Thes 2. (F) Paul warns about Christ's sudden return in 1Thes 5.

\* There was authority questioned, silencing of the questions, greatest command, hypocrisy condemned, prophecy of Jerusalem's end, prophecy of second coming, and other teachings, the third and fourth day.

### **14:1-2 The Jewish leaders look for a way to arrest and kill Jesus.**

After two days. The previous two days are combined by all the gospels.

Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Matthew records that the actual day of Passover is in two days (Matt 26:1-4). So Mark tells us that though the day happens in two days, the festival is beginning now. I do not believe it was uncommon for the people to start celebrating a couple days earlier. Their early celebrations probably also doubled as a time when they would prepare their homes for Passover by removing the leaven.

Not during the festival. Jesus was very, very, very popular. If they killed Him before or during the festival, it would certainly bring the people to anger. This is supposed to be a happy occasion! Of course, this didn't stop the chief priests to arrest Jesus the very next night.

#### **14:3-9 Simon the leper's house - Woman anoints Jesus' head with oil.**

Bethany. (1) John records that this dinner was organized by Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, whom Jesus rose from the dead (John 12:1-8). John also records that this happened six days before Passover. So Matthew and Mark are not chronological. This event happened six days before Jesus' death.

Simon. He is often called Simon the leper. His real name should be Simon the former leper!

Woman. John also records that this woman was Mary, Lazarus' and Martha's sister (John 12:3). Earlier, Mary is already described as the one who sat at Jesus' feet while Martha was busy with her housework (Luke 10:38-42).

Spikenard. Spikenard would have been imported from the regions of India, Nepal, or China.

Broke the jar. The Greek here means to shatter. Most scholars agree that the woman did not shatter whole jar. After all, to make that work right, then she would had to have broken it over Jesus' head. Instead, it says she shattered the jar and then anointed Jesus with the oil. I believe, she shattered the lid or top of the bottle to the point that the bottle would then cease to be of any use. And since it was just the lid or top, she was able to use it to anoint Jesus. So in the end, the oil and the bottle were both completely used up.

300 denarii. [See Mark 6:37 for the conversion to gold and US dollars!] In today's money, these mockers are estimating almost \$3000 (\$2,961). If the spikenard cost this much, then how much spikenard did she have? \$3000 worth of spikenard today equates to 2 liters (half gallon).

Always have the poor with you. (1) It's not Jesus' main point, but He prophesies that there will always be poor among us. This was already stated in Deut 15:11. This is even in the context of the year of Jubilee! Jesus says we can do whatever good for them we want--and we should. Jesus commands us to help the poor. However, there will always be people who are poor. Do not view this, saying, "Well, if there is no point in helping the poor since there will always be poor, what is the point of giving to them?" That is a defeatist attitude. Instead, say, "God has always provided His church with a way to help someone both monetarily as well as with the gospel of Christ." Jesus' words here are not defeatist. He is just pointing out that giving to the poor is good, but it is better to provide for Him while human beings are able.

Told in memory of her. Matthew, Mark, and John record this event (Matt 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, John 12:1-8). Some believe Luke also records this event, but I believe this is a different event (Luke 7:36-50).

#### **14:10-11 Simon the leper's house - Judas plans to betray Jesus.**

Judas. This event should come at a surprise because: how could someone so close to Jesus do this? But don't let this come completely out of left field. The gospel writers, when we are first introduced to the twelve apostles, say that Judas betrays Jesus (Mark 3:19). When Jesus predicts His betrayal at Mark 9:31, did Judas think that Jesus was talking about Him?

They were glad. We read in verse 1 that they were looking for a way to kill Jesus. This was their way to do it.

Silver. Matthew records that the chief priests weighed out the 30 pieces of silver for Judas (Matt 26:15).

He started looking. The chief priests have now passed the task on to Judas. He is now the one who is looking for the best way and time to betray Jesus.

#### **14:12-16 Preparation for the Passover.**

First day of Unleavened Bread. Technically, the first day of unleavened bread was the day after the evening when they sacrificed the Passover (Lev 23:5-8). The feast of unleavened bread was to last 7 days. Most scholars believe that the Jews extended it to 8 days because the day before, during the hours before they sacrificed the lamb, they were to remove all the yeast in their houses.

When they sacrifice the Passover lamb. (1) Is Passover this day or is Passover tomorrow? Jesus will die tomorrow. Yet all the gospel say that the day Jesus dies is the preparation day (Matt 27:62, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, John 19:31). We see from Lev 23 that the preparation day was the day they sacrificed the lamb. In fact, when Jesus was on trial in front of Pilate, the Jews did not enter the temple because they didn't want to become unclean and unable to eat the Passover (John 18:28). So the gospels are clear that Jesus died on Passover day, the day of preparation when they removed the leavened from their homes. Jesus died hours before they sacrificed the Passover lamb. So here is when Jesus prepares the Passover meal, but He isn't going to die until tomorrow which is Passover. So what day is Passover? Is it when Jesus ate with His disciples and then die the next day? Or is it when Jesus died on the cross which is said to be preparation day and when the Jewish leaders ate the Passover? There are only two possibilities: (A) Jesus ate the Passover one day early. He ate it with His disciples and then was crucified the next day when the people were preparing for the Passover and the Jews were ready to eat it. This view does not agree

with Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7 where it says it was the day they sacrificed the Lamb. (B) Jesus ate the Passover on the correct day. Then the next day was Friday, and the Jews were preparing for the Sabbath only, not the Passover. This view does not agree with John 18:28 where it says the Jewish leaders would not enter Pilate's palace so they could eat the Passover. Because of other evidences in the gospels as to the timing of Passover and the timing to which day of the week it is, I believe that Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples a day early. He would not be able to eat the Passover while He is on trial and while He Himself becomes the Passover lamb for all the world.

Two disciples. Luke records that they were Peter and John (Luke 22:7).

Go into the city. (1) If Mark is chronological, then Jesus may still be in Bethany with Simon the leper, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. If this is the case, then Jesus is telling the two disciples to walk a couple miles to the city. This would be an opportune time to doubt in Jesus. How would Jesus know that there is a man carrying a jug of water in Jerusalem two miles away? What if they find many men carrying jugs of water?

(2) Unlike most time when Jesus prophesied, this did not turn into an object lesson for the disciples. Jesus gave them instructions and they carried them out. There is no record of any complaints or any doubts on their part. Perhaps they are very, very eager to eat this Passover with Jesus, as He has been eager to eat it with them (Luke 22:15).

Large room upstairs. Today, there is a room in Jerusalem called the Cenacle. Since the fourth century, this room is believed to be the same room that Jesus ate the Passover/Lord's Supper with His disciples. Of course in later times, this room has been modified such as being wired for electricity. This room is also believed to be the place where Jesus washed the disciples' feet, where Jesus appeared to Thomas and the rest, where the disciples were gathered to elect Matthias as an apostle and received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Since the history of the Cenacle only goes back to the fourth century, we cannot be certain of its authenticity.

#### **14:17 Upstairs room - Jesus and the Twelve apostles arrive.**

Arrived with the Twelve. Since we know Peter and John were the two disciples who prepared the Passover (Luke 22:7), we can infer that they prepared it and then returned to Jesus. It was at this time, evening, that Jesus and the Twelve officially arrive for the Passover.

#### **14:18-21 Upstairs room - Jesus predicts one of the Twelve will betray Him.**

One will betray Me. Jesus has made some huge prophecies over His ministry. He has prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and He has prophesied about His own torture, death, and resurrection--probably the greatest prophecy Jesus ever made. Now, Jesus makes another huge prophecy. It's quite outlandish that someone would ever say one of their twelve closest friends will betray him. Or maybe it was not so outlandish. Only about 80 years earlier, Senator Brutus and his fellow conspirators murdered Julius Caesar. It is more than probable that the Twelve would remember this event. They would understand exactly what Jesus is saying. No wonder all of them were quick to deny it. No one in the Roman Empire wanted to be Brutus. Interestingly, two years after Brutus murdered Julius, he and his army tried to defend Rome but failed. After fleeing the battle, he committed suicide. Sound familiar?

"Surely not I?" The gospel point out that each apostle asks, "Surely not I?" What was Jesus' response to them? It is not recorded. However, Jesus did give an answer to one of the apostles. Matthew records that after Jesus said this, Judas Iscariot gave his reply, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Then Jesus said, "You have said it" (Matt 26:25).

Dipping bread with Me. Even though Jesus told Judas, "You have said it," the apostles must have not understood. John records his conversation with Jesus ([John 13:23-30](#)).

Woe to that man. Even though it is Jesus who is being betrayed and punished, He is not to be grieved or lamented. Instead, the punishment to the betrayer is far greater--so much greater that the all-knowing Jesus says that non-existence would have been better than the punishment this man will receive. Woe to that man!

[Judas leaves]. From how John tells of the events of that night, they eat the Passover, Jesus washes their feet, Jesus identifies His betrayer, Jesus gives the dipped bread to Judas, and then Judas leaves. What kind of person must Judas have been that he still desired to betray Jesus after the unforgettable event of Jesus washing Judas' feet. If something like that did not bring Judas to repentance, nothing would. Judas had already made the decision to betray Jesus and even when God washed his feet, he still wouldn't change.

#### **14:22 Upstairs room - Jesus offers the bread as His body.**

Bread. Why do we use unleavened bread for the Lord's Supper today? It is because leavened was supposed to be completely removed from all houses during Passover. When Jesus ate the Passover, He had to have used unleavened bread. Therefore, the only reason to use unleavened bread is based on the Old

Testament commands on Passover. Did you know that nowhere in the New Testament does it say or even imply that we should use unleavened bread in the Lord's Supper?

Broke it. Just because Jesus breaks the bread to pass out to His apostles, this action is not connected with Jesus' death. The bread was broken but Jesus' body was not. The King James Version at 1Cor 11:24 reads, "This is My body, which is broken for you." This word "broken" appears in many New Testament manuscripts (Textus Receptus family). But this is incorrect. Jesus' body was not broken, for if it was, then it wouldn't fulfill Old Testament prophecy, "Not one of His bones will be broken" (John 19:33-36, Ps 34:20). This practice of not breaking the bones was commanded regarding the Passover lamb, which Jesus was for us. So again, though Jesus breaks the bread, His body was never broken.

This is My body. What Jesus said, He meant. The bread that we eat really is His body. Some groups such as Catholicism believe that the bread ceases to become bread and becomes Jesus' physical flesh. This is called transubstantiation. Other groups have gone completely the other way saying that the bread will always be common bread which acts as a reminder. This is called memorialism. Jesus did not teach either of these doctrinal extremes. If Jesus meant that the bread becomes His physical body, then Jesus would be supporting cannibalism. Also, no one in the world says that once they eat it, it tastes like skin. If Jesus meant that the bread is nothing but common bread, then Jesus would have said, "Take and eat, this represents My body." Jesus doesn't use a simile, so we shouldn't either. So what did Jesus mean? Jesus said, "My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink" (John 6:55 and context). Jesus used a strong metaphor, which can be best explained as a combination of the two. The bread does not just represent Jesus' body. It is His spiritual body and no longer common bread. The bread does not become physical flesh. It is His spiritual body and not human flesh. Therefore, it is physical bread as well as Jesus' spiritual body. A term for this today is consubstantiation. This seems to be what the early Christians believed. Irenaeus wrote, "We offer to Him His Own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and spirit. For the bread which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist [Thanksgiving], consisting of two realities: earthly and heavenly" (ANF, 1.486). Therefore, the bread of the Lord's Supper is still bread, being earthly, and the bread of the Lord's Supper become Jesus' body, being heavenly. It is not just one or the other. It is both bread and Jesus' body.

#### **14:23-25 Upstairs room - Jesus offers the fruit of the vine as His blood.**

Cup. Luke records that Jesus took a cup and distributed it among the apostles before He took bread. Then after eating the bread, Jesus spoke about the fruit of the vine (Luke 22:17-20).

Establishes the covenant. The writer of Hebrews explains more details about how Jesus' blood establishes the new covenant ([Heb 9:12, 9:15-22](#)).

Shed for many. (1) This is quite the understatement. After all, John the Baptist said about Jesus, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) Jesus didn't die just for those who end up choosing righteousness. In fact, the opposite is true. Paul said that Jesus died for us while we were still sinners (Rom 5:8)! Jesus shed His blood for many. How many? Every sinner. How many sinners? Everyone without exception. (2) How powerful was the blood of Jesus, being just one man? Think about how many millions upon millions of animals were sacrificed in the Old Testament. Yet all of that blood was not powerful. The writer of Hebrews said, "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb 10:4). Yet the blood of Jesus Christ was powerful enough to take away the sins of the whole world and everyone who has ever lived on it.

Not drink until kingdom of God. (1) If you do a word study on the kingdom of God, it always refers to God's new covenant, the church. So when will Jesus drink this cup with us in a new way? When all of us are in the church, which is also Christ's body. At this moment, Jesus is drinking the cup, the fruit of the vine, with His disciples. But when Jesus' disciples are added to the church, Christ's body, it is at that time when Jesus can drink that cup with us in a new, spiritual way. (2) Paul wrote that when we drink the cup, we share in the blood of Christ and when we eat the bread, we share in the body of Christ (1Cor 10:16). By doing this, we are showing our full devotion to and spiritual unity with Jesus Christ. Paul said that we should not have this kind of union with demons, which would make the Lord jealous (1Cor 10:17-22). The Lord's Supper is a very important thing that has spiritual and eternal significance.

[In remembrance of Me]. Only Luke (Luke 22:19-20) and Paul (1Cor 11:24-25) record that Jesus also said, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

#### **14:26 Upstairs room - They sing then leave for the Mount of Olives.**

Psalms. The Greek word is *humno* which means to hymn, that is, hymn is used as a verb.

### **14:27-28 Mount of Olives again - Jesus predicts His followers' flight, His resurrection, and His reappearing.**

All of you will run away. (1) Just because the rest will not betray Jesus like Judas will, this doesn't mean that they are without sin. (2) From John's gospel, we know that Peter and John continue to follow Jesus after the rest of them run away. Of course, Peter denies Jesus and then runs away. But John stayed with Jesus all the way until He was crucified. In the end, John was the only one who was not afraid to run. I do not believe it is a coincidence that while John was the only one who did not run away, John was the only one who did not die a martyr for Jesus. John passed the "test" at this time. The rest of the apostles passed the "test" when they were willingly martyred for Jesus.

Strike the Shepherd, sheep scattered. Jesus quotes Zech 13:7.

Resurrected; I will go ahead to Galilee. (1) The time is now. He doesn't predict His sufferings because they are going to happen in a matter of hours. Jesus is focused on His resurrection. He makes this final prophecy about His resurrection which will happen in just three and half days. (2) Jesus is also looking forward to when He will see them all again. It won't be in the afterlife, Jesus will see them again in the peaceful area of Galilee--the place that is most familiar to the apostles.

### **14:29-31 Mount of Olives again - Peter and the rest say they will not run.**

I will certainly not. Peter implies that he has more faith and less fear than anyone else around. As we may know of Peter, he was impulsive, rash, bold, and very courageous. Yet what will we learn from Peter in this situation? Even someone as impulsive and courageous as Peter, he still succumbed to peer pressure. Peter plainly said that he is willing to die with Jesus! Talking the talk is one thing, being in a situation where it is difficult to walk the walk is another thing. When the time came for Peter to live up to his promise, he failed. As Jesus will say later, the flesh is willing but the spirit is weak. There is something Peter lacked during all this: God's Spirit. Praise be to God who gives Christians His Spirit so that now, our flesh is weak but our Spirit is stronger than our weakness. With God's Spirit inside us, there is no power greater than that which would cause us to sin.

Rooster crows twice. Matthew and John simply say rooster crows (Matt 26:34, John 13:38). Mark includes the rooster crowing twice. Mark repeats this showing that it happened just as Jesus said (Mark 14:72). Luke records Jesus said rooster crows today (Luke 22:34).

They all said the same thing. (1) Peter is not the only one who makes a promise and later breaks it. Everyone rallied behind Peter's statement and promised the same thing. (2) By the end of all the apostles lives, they died as true apostles of Jesus Christ. They all ran from Jesus and probably all denied Him too. But later, they received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and helped establish the church in various parts of the world. What can we learn from this? Even when someone denies Christ at His most vulnerable hour, there is room for repentance. Have you ever denied Jesus Christ three times and while He sees you through an open window? Even this person found forgiveness. Have you drug out Christians so that they are imprisoned or executed (like Paul did)? Even this person found forgiveness. Do not entertain the thought for even a second that someone is beyond salvation. Never entertain the thought that your sin is unforgiveable. God is in the business of saving sinners--even the uttermost sinner (Paul).

### **14:32-36 Gethsemane - Jesus prays alone.**

Gethsemane. John is the only writer that calls this a garden. Do not think that this was a garden in the sense that it was a place where they grew food. Instead, this was a garden was more like a conservatory or arboretum, that is, an extremely well-maintained park.

He takes Peter, James, and John. Normally, when Jesus takes these three closest apostles from the rest, a major event is about to happen, such as was the case with Jesus' transfiguration.

Deeply distressed and horrified... to the point of death. Jesus is about 18 hours away from His death. Of course all of the time leading up to His death will be filled with intense suffering. No wonder Jesus is in distress and sad to the point of death.

Remain here. Now Jesus is leaving His three closest friends behind. This must be a HUGE event!

Abba. The Hebrew word for father is "ab." Abba is like saying, "O Father!" So Jesus is speaking two languages, saying, "O Father, Father!" This is the literal definition, but the word may have had an especially personal significance in that day.

All things are possible. (1) Jesus recognizes that it is possible for God to change the coming events and not let Jesus die. Jesus even tells those who arrest Him that 12 legions of angels are waiting for the order (Matt 26:53).

Take this cup. Jesus uses the figure of speech for a cup to represent God's wrath as well as mankind's wrath which Jesus will soon experience.

Not what I will, but what you will. Jesus has His desire: He does not want to die. But Jesus has a desire that is greater than that. He desires to accomplish God's will. This is probably the greatest lesson God can teach us directly. We have all our selfish desires, our flesh is always nagging at us. But though our flesh wants one thing, our spirit should want another. Our desire to accomplish God's will so be so great that we choose to accomplish it rather than satisfy our own desires. One might say that we are in a spiritual Gethsemane every day. With all our actions, may we be like Jesus as we say to God, "Not my will, but Your will." That is a theme for every Christian should be reminded of every day. Would it transform our lives if every morning and every evening, we told God, "Your will, not mine"?

[Angels strengthened Him... sweat like blood]. (1) Some manuscripts of Luke (Textus Receptus) record that an angel came, appeared to Him, and strengthened Him. But being in anguish, Jesus prayed more fervently so that His sweat became like drops of blood (Luke 22:43-44). (2) I once heard someone share that the angel came and strengthened Jesus so that Jesus' anguish could be more fervently prayed. That is, the angel did not come to comfort Jesus, but to renew His energy to prolong His anguish and fervent prayers. (3) Luke said that Jesus' sweat was like blood. I have heard many try to explain how Jesus' sweat could have been blood. They explain it as a medical condition called Hematidrosis. Outside of Luke, this was reported by Leonardo da Vinci who described a soldier who did this before battle. Whether Jesus had Hematidrosis at this point or not does not need to be proven. Luke said that Jesus' sweat was like blood, literally, "His seat as if drops of blood." Luke, being a physician, doesn't say that Jesus' sweat was literally blood. If it was, I do not believe Luke would use a simile. So was Jesus' sweat actual blood or like blood? I believe Luke says it was like blood, so one does not have to prove Jesus had this certain medical condition. Yet, since this medical condition is real, perhaps Jesus did have it and Luke decided to describe it as a simile.

#### **14:37-38 Gethsemane - Jesus finds them sleeping.**

Simon. Notice that Jesus does not call Peter Peter, but Jesus calls him Simon. This was His name before he followed Jesus. Remember that Jesus changed his name to Peter. Jesus recognizes him as Simon because he is not acting like a follower of Jesus. It's like calling Barnabas Joseph. It's like calling Paul Saul. When Jesus calls him Simon, it's a warning.

Sleeping... one hour. Jesus had been by Himself praying for a while. Yet, from what He said, it was less than an hour. Jesus already told them to stay awake. Couldn't they stay awake for Jesus just one hour?

Stay awake and pray. Jesus asks these three apostles to do the same thing He is doing: stay awake and pray that temptation does not overcome you.

[Exhausted from their grief]. Luke records that the disciples were sleeping because they were so grieved also (Luke 22:45).

Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. (1) There are two ways to look at this phrase. One way is to look at our own spirits and how inwardly, we want to do the right thing. However, our flesh is weak and will not allow us to do the right thing. Another way is to look at God's Spirit inside us and how it's power pushes us to do the right thing. Even though our flesh is weak, the Spirit inside us is stronger. I believe Jesus had this second meaning in mind. Jesus is saying, "Though your flesh is weak and you feel like sleeping, the Spirit inside you is strong. The Spirit's willingness is stronger than flesh's weakness." Jesus wants Peter's spirit to overcome his flesh. (2) Tertullian lived in Carthage around 200 AD. He wrote, "We read that "the flesh is weak" and, hence, we soothe ourselves in some cases. Yet, we read, too, that "the spirit is strong." ...Why, then, do we (being overly prone to excuse ourselves) put forward the weak part of us? Why do we not look at the strong? Why should not the earthly yield to the heavenly?" (ANF, 4.41). (3) Oftentimes we hear about the passage in Rom 7 where Paul says, "I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate" (Rom 7:15) and, "The desire to do what is good with me, but there is no ability to do it. For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do" (Rom 7:18-19), Christians use this passage as the reason why they sin, as if sinning was inevitable for a Christian. However, this is not what Paul is talking about. He is talking about the life of a non-Christian, not a Christian. The inevitability or guarantee that one will sin is true for the non-Christian, not for the Christian. After hearing so many Christians use this passage as their excuse or as their comfort (as Tertullian put it), I wrote an 8-page study to prove that Paul is talking about a non-Christian in Romans 7 and a Christian in Romans 8. These two chapters are about the difference between a non-Christian and a Christian. For the Christian, committing sin is never inevitable nor a guarantee.

#### **14:39 Gethsemane - Jesus prays alone a second time.**

Prayed the same thing. I believe Jesus went off and prayed for nearly an hour like He had done before.

[Unless I drink it]. Matthew records that during this second time of prayer, Jesus said, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done" (Matt 26:42).

**14:40 Gethsemane - Jesus finds them sleeping a second time.**

They did not know what to say. They know they are failing Jesus incredibly. Did they not see how distress and sad Jesus is? Did they not obey Jesus' warnings which He has given twice? Their flesh is weak. Yet Peter and the apostles do not receive the full power of the Holy Spirit for another 50 days. God had not poured out His Spirit on all flesh yet. Even though Peter, James, and John are failing Jesus not once, not twice, but they will fail Him three times, we should cut them some slack because they are only relying on their own spirits at this time, not God's indwelling Spirit.

**14:41-42 Gethsemane - Jesus prays and finds them sleeping a third time.**

A third time. Jesus told them three times to stay awake. After these three times, Jesus isn't going to show any more mercy because the time is up. Jesus is about to be betrayed. His suffering is about to begin.

The time has come. Remember when Jesus' mother asked Him to help with the wine at the wedding in Cana and Jesus said, "My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4)? Remember when Jesus said that He is from the Father then the people tried to seize Him but did not touch Him because His hour had not yet come (John 7:30)? Remember when Jesus was in the treasury and said that He is Moses' Prophet and if you knew Him, then you would know the Father, but the people did not seize Him because his hour had not come (John 8:20)? Well, this is that hour!

My betrayer. Jesus has already identified Judas Iscariot as His betrayer. Jesus already knows the gravity of what is about to happen. Whether or not the apostles understand the gravity, they are about to.

**14:43-46 Gethsemane - Judas betrays Jesus to the mob of Jewish leaders.**

A mob with swords and clubs. The fact that Judas and the Jewish leaders bring a mob with weapons is evidence that they did not understand Jesus nor His teaching. Did they expect to fight Jesus and His followers? Jesus never taught nor did anything of the kind.

Rabbi. The way Judas addresses Jesus, it seems that Judas is trying to conceal from Jesus that he is the betrayer. Does Judas really believe he can hide this great sin from Jesus? How can Judas continue trying to hide his plot even after Jesus directly identified Judas as the betrayer hours before? Judas is guilty of lip-service. By his speech, he gives Jesus honor; by his actions, he sins against Jesus. Judas may or may not realize what a great sins he is committing... not only betrayal of the Son of God but also incredible hypocrisy. You and I may not be betraying the Son of God, but we should know whether or not we are committing hypocritical lip-service. Do you praise God with your lips but disobey God with your actions? James says this cannot be so (Jam 3:9-12).

[Why have you come]. (1) Matthew records that after Judas greets and kisses Jesus, Jesus asks him, "Friend, why have you come?" (Matt 26:50). There is no response by Judas. Did the mob take hold of Jesus before Judas could answer? Did Judas refuse to answer, as if to continue concealing his betrayal? Is Jesus asking Judas what purpose does he think to accomplish by this betrayal? The meaning behind Jesus' question and Judas' silence is speculation. (2) Luke records that Jesus asked, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48). It is not like Jesus doesn't know what Judas is doing. Jesus knows exactly what is happening and what is at stake if the mob takes Him.

**14:47-52 Gethsemane - The disciples' response and flight.**

[Strike with the sword]. Luke records that the disciples asked Jesus if they could strike with the sword (Luke 22:49). It appears that Peter takes his sword and goes to action before Jesus could respond. Of course, Jesus will have a rebuke for Peter.

Drew his sword. John records that this was Peter (John 18:10).

High Priest's slave. John records that the slave's name was Malchus (John 18:10). We learn later in John's gospel that he was a friend of the high priest. So it makes sense that he would know this slave's name. John might have even had conversations with Malchus.

[He healed him]. Luke records that Jesus healed Malchus' ear (Luke 22:51).

[Put your sword back]. (1) It is here that Jesus tells Peter to put his sword back, saying, "All who take up a sword will perish by a sword" (Matt 26:52). (2) It is also at this time that Jesus reveals that He could call 12 legions of angels (Matt 26:53).

Every day when I was among you. (1) Jesus points out that the Jewish leaders had plenty of time and opportunities to arrest Jesus. Jesus points out that they come to Him at night and with weapons, that is, they do this secretly which shows that Jesus is not a criminal. They are arresting an innocent man. At any other time, I believe Jesus would have rebuked or done something to keep from being arrested. That would be something Jesus could have done; John records that when Jesus identified Himself to the mob, the mob stepped back and fell to the ground (John 18:6). Jesus is pointing out that the only reason He is allowing them to arrest Him is because of the Scriptures which prophesied God's will. (2) Luke records that Jesus

adds, "But this is your hour--and the dominion of darkness" (Luke 22:53). How good Satan must feel at these words. Jesus is admitting defeat! Right? Well, As the story will play out, Satan believes he will win by killing Jesus. However, Jesus will win because Jesus will not only conquer Satan but also Satan's weapon, death itself! As Jesus said a little earlier in John's gospel, "The ruler of the world is coming. he has no power over Me" (John 14:30).

They all deserted Him. Just as Jesus just prophesied, the Shepherd is being struck, so the sheep are being scattered. As discussed previously, Peter follows Jesus to the house of the high priest and John follows Jesus all the way to the cross.

Young man ran naked. It is complete speculation as to who this was. I have heard that this was John Mark, the author of this gospel, the keeper of Gethsemane, or even Lazarus. It could be a figurative image portraying how naked the disciples are now being apart from Jesus or portraying how the Christians were to flee Jerusalem, leaving their coat, when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies. No one knows for sure who this is. It is my opinion that this was the keeper of the garden. Why? All he has is linen sheets and no clothes. That would not describe the disciples since they just came from the Passover meal. It seems that this young man lived close by, had gotten up from his bed, and joined Jesus sometime before the mob shows up. Yet, why is this man included in only Mark's gospel? Not only is the man unknown, but so is the purpose of recording his escape.

#### **14:53-54 Home of the high priest - Jesus with the Jewish leaders; Peter with the temple police.**

High priest. Matthew records that the high priest was Caiaphas (Matt 26:57). John records more detail showing that Jesus first went to the house of Annas. Annas was the former high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas, the current high priest (John 18:13). It was at Annas' house that Peter denies Jesus the first time (John 18:15-18). Annas questions Jesus' teaching, Jesus gets slapped for answering, and then Annas sends Jesus to Caiaphas' palace (John 18:24). It's there that Peter denies Jesus twice more and Mark picks up. Mark leaves out the visit to Annas.

#### **14:55-65 Home of the high priest - The Jewish leaders' trial of Jesus.**

No one... false testimony. As is seen in this trial, the Jewish leaders are fine with witnesses giving false testimony (which breaks one of the Ten Commandments), but they are still conducting an honest trial, looking for real evidence--of which they find none. Why is this? It is probably because the Romans took away the Jewish authority to execute capital punishment. Josephus and the Jewish oral traditions wrote that this happened under the Roman Procurator Caponius in 6 or 7 AD (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, 2:8; Josephus, Antiquities, 20:9; Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin, 24; Babylonian Talmud, 4:37). So it may be that the Jews were looking for a Roman reason to have Jesus executed. But this is probably not likely since the testimonies Mark gives are religious-based and not civil-based. Also, this restriction by the Romans did not keep the Sanhedrin from executing Stephen some time later (Acts 7).

Demolish this sanctuary and build another. If all we had was Mark's gospel, we would not know whether Jesus really said this statement or not because it's coming from a false witness. But you may remember that John records that Jesus said this after He cleansed the temple (John 2:19). Yes, Jesus really did say this. Mark just decided to put this true statement of Jesus here.

Jesus kept silent. (1) Jesus' silence does not mean that He is "pleading the fifth," which means Jesus is silent so that He does not incriminate Himself. The opposite is true! If Jesus spoke, it would only prove His innocence! If Jesus asked to be let go, they would have to do it. (2) Of course, this also is to fulfill Scripture. Isaiah said, "Because of His affliction, He did not open his mouth. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

Messiah, Son of the Blessed One. (1) The Sanhedrin knows what Jesus has been preaching. They ask Him plainly if Jesus is who they have been waiting for (the Messiah) and if Jesus is who He has said He is (the Son of God). How can Jesus pass up a question like this? (2) Matthew records that the high priest puts Jesus under oath with this question (Matt 26:63).

I am. (1) Jesus speaks. He tells the Sanhedrin who He is and He gives a prophecy about His glorious second coming. This is also the fulfillment of prophecy. David wrote, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit on my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool'" (Ps 110:1). (2) In this one powerful statement is the theme of Mark's gospel. Jesus will come at the right hand of the Power. Who is the Power? God the Father is the Power, and Jesus, the Son of the Power, is at His right hand. (3) Stephen was on trial not so differently than Jesus here. As they were stoning Stephen, Stephen saw Jesus at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56).

Tore his robes. (1) The significance of the high priest tearing his clothes goes beyond just his anger. This was forbidden by the law of Moses (Lev 10:6, 21:10)! The high priest is condemning an innocent Man, while in the same act, he become guilty of sin. (2) Note that Jesus, being our high priest, never had his clothes torn.

The Roman soldiers took it and cast lots for it so that it wouldn't tear (John 19:23-24). Jesus is so holy that even pagans wouldn't tear His clothes while the high priest tore his own clothes when he knew it was sin. Blasphemy. Jesus' trial might have gone on and on and on. Perhaps Jesus spoke in order to get the ball rolling. The Sanhedrin needed something to condemn Jesus for, so they decided on blasphemy. Yet in the end, they never had any evidence to the contrary. Instead, all evidence of Jesus' life proved He is exactly who He says He is.

Spit, blindfold, beat, insult, slapped. (1) And the suffering of Jesus begins. (2) Matthew and Luke give the reason why the Jewish leaders asked Jesus to prophesy. They ask Jesus to reveal who was hitting Him-- probably after being blindfolded (Matt 26:68, Luke 22:64). (3) Keeping a running list of the sufferings of Jesus, He was betrayed, arrested, abandoned by His closest friends, put on trial, spit upon, blindfolded, beaten, insulted, and slapped [by the Jews]. (4) Luke records that they said many other blasphemous things against Jesus (Luke 22:65).

#### **14:66-72 Home of the high priest - Peter denies Jesus three times.**

Rooster crowed. Peter received a warning. Certainly, a crowing rooster would cause him to remember Jesus' words but apparently it didn't work.

Galilean. Matthew records why Peter being a Galilean is important. Matthew records that the people recognized Peter's Galilean accent (Matt 26:73).

[Relative of Malchus]. John records that the third person to identify Peter was a relative of Malchus whom Peter had cut off his ear (John 18:26).

Curse and swear an oath. Peter sure isn't acting like Peter; he is acting more like Simon. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said both cursing and oath swearing are sin (Matt 5:22, 5:33-36). Peter is adding these sins to his sin of denial.

Rooster crowed second time. Remember that Jesus had already told Peter that he would deny Him before the rooster crowed twice (Mark 14:30). Jesus knew it would be before the second crow. The first crow was Peter's warning.

[Jesus looked at Peter]. Luke records that immediately after Peter spoke and the rooster crowed, "The Lord turned and looked at Peter" (Luke 22:61).

[Application]. This is Peter's lowest point. We can look at Peter and see how weak he was. Let us not forget to look at his example and see it as a warning for us. We should look at ourselves and ask ourselves if we are like Peter when he was his lowest. Peter repented. Peter changed. What things should we change like Peter did? Are we talking when we should be listening? Arguing when we should be obeying? Sleeping when we should be praying? Fighting when we should be submitting? Cursing when we should be loving? Running away when we should be following? Warming ourselves when we should be sympathizing?

\* There was Lord's Supper, foot washing, betrayal, no sleep, and Jewish trial, the fifth day.

#### **15:1-5 Before Pilate - Pilate questions Jesus.**

Morning. What reason can there be that Jesus got any sleep this night. He goes from an entire day, to the Passover and foot washing that evening, to praying in Gethsemane, to being arrested, to being on trial, to morning. He's been awake for nearly 24 hours and is probably exhausted. But he still has about 9 hours to go.

[Did not go in]. It is here that John records that the Jews did not go into Pilate's headquarters because it would defile them and they would be unable to eat the Passover (John 18:28). Therefore, it appears that this is Passover day and the lambs would be sacrificed this evening.

Pilate. From our perspective, the only non-Christian evidence that Pilate existed is from Tacitus, a first-century Roman historian, and Josephus. The first physical evidence that Pilate existed was discovered in 1961 in Caesarea Maritima (modern-day Caesarea, Israel). It was a stone, called the Pilate Stone, engraved with Pilate's name and the name of other Roman prefects of the area. The stone is dated to the time of Jesus. Agapius of Hierapolis, a 10-century Christian historian, wrote that Pilate became prefect in 28 AD, was removed from his office because of his sympathy to the Jews in 37 AD by Emperor Tiberias, then committed suicide about a year later in the first year of Emperor Caligula. Eusebius also wrote that Pilate committed suicide in about 38 AD (Eusebius, Church History, 2:7).

[Judge Him according to your law]. Even before Jesus identifies Himself, Pilate can already see this is not a Roman matter but a Jewish matter. Pilate tells them to go judge Jesus according to their law. Then the Jews reply that they cannot execute capital punishment (John 18:29-31). It appears that the Jews were trying to obey the Roman law which made illegal for them to execute someone. The Jews are telling Pilate that they want to execute Jesus, but they cannot because of a Roman law.

King of the Jews. (1) Pilate probably asks this because He remembers what happened five days before when Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem while the people shouted that Jesus is the king (Luke 19:38). (2)

John records more to this conversion (John 18:33-37). (3) Paul said that "Christ Jesus gave a good confession before Pontius Pilate" (1Tim 6:13).

Accuse Him of many things. At their own trial, they accused Jesus of many things and already knew that none of them held water. The only thing they believed Jesus was guilty of was blasphemy, yet here they are again, bringing up many other things which they could not prove in their own court.

Jesus did not answer anything. Jesus is once again silent to the charges against Him. Yet He speaks in order to identify himself.

[No charge]. Luke records that Pilate said that he found no proof for the charges against Jesus (Luke 23:4).

Luke goes on to say that even Herod could not find anything in Him deserving of death (Luke 23:15).

[Herod Antipas]. Luke records that when Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Jesus to Herod Antipas, who ruled Galilee. Because of the Passover, Herod was in staying in Jerusalem at this time. Luke 23:5-12.

### **15:6-11 Before Pilate - Barabbas released instead of Jesus.**

Pilate's custom. Pilate, in his efforts to keep rebellions from arising among the Jews, did this to please the people. He would pardon one man during the Passover. This probably really pleased the Jews because Passover was when they were delivered from the Egyptians. They like this tradition of Pilate because a man would be delivered from the Romans.

Crowd. Mark says the crowd came up and requested this. The people before Pilate were more than the Jewish leaders who brought Jesus. It now included people celebrating the Passover.

Because of envy. Pilate recognized that the Jewish leaders did not want justice but vengeance. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and the crowd had called Him a king just five days before. Jesus was the obvious choice.

Stirred up the crowd. The Jewish leaders, who had brought Jesus, stirred up the crowd. They knew that if Pilate let Jesus go, they would fail in their plot against Jesus. And later when the people would find out what the Jewish leaders are doing to their favorite Teacher, the people might revolt against them!

Barabbas. Mark implies that it was the Jewish leaders who suggested Barabbas, not Pilate. Matthew implies that Pilate suggested Barabbas--probably because Pilate believed they wouldn't want a murderer (Matt 27:17). However, the people called Pilate's bluff and called for Barabbas.

[Have nothing to do with Jesus]. It was here that Pilate's wife speaks to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for today I've suffered terribly in a dream because of Him" (Matt 27:19).

### **15:12-15 Before Pilate - Pilate has Jesus crucified.**

What to do with Jesus. Now that the people have spoken and have chosen Barabbas, a murderer, over Jesus, Pilate is in a predicament. Pilate is probably sad that he is releasing a man who took part in a rebellion and might cause him further grief. Now, Pilate still has an innocent man in front of him. Luke and John record that Pilate wanted to release Jesus (Luke 23:20, John 19:12).

[Jesus flogged and questioned]. After Barabbas is released, John records that Pilate took Jesus, had him flogged and brought out for trial another time (John 19:1-16). It seems that Matthew and Mark summarize this and place it after Pilate proclaims sentence (Matt 27:27-31, Mark 15:16-20).

[9am]. (1) John records that this happened at the sixth hour (John 19:14). However, the sixth hour cannot mean noon as it normally does in the gospels because Mark says Jesus was crucified at the third hour, or 9 am (Mark 15:25). John is either using Roman time, or John wrote a different time when he originally wrote this gospel. (1a) If John was using Roman time, this would be 6 am. But this still does not match the other gospels. Matthew, Mark, and John wrote that the Jews came to Pilate at or after dawn (Matt 27:1, Mark 15:1, John 18:28). This would be around 6 am. Also, before the Barabbas is released and the crowd shouts crucify, Luke Jesus was sent to Herod Antipas where He was questioned and mistreated (Luke 23:6-12). And all of this happens by around 6 am? Probably not. But John does say, "about the sixth hour," so he is being approximate, implying that it is an hour or so after. (1a) If John originally wrote a different time, how would we know? Peter of Alexandria wrote about 310 AD, "About the third hour, as the correct books render it, and the copy itself that was written by the hand of the evangelist, which, by the divine grace, has been preserved in the most holy church of Ephesus" (ANF, 6.282). So Peter says that the NT manuscripts in his day do not agree and he says the accurate and original time is the third hour, 9 am. This matches the gospels. Jesus brought to Pilate about 6 am, Jesus condemned to die and crucified about 9 am, darkness covering the whole earth at 12 pm, and Jesus dying at 3 pm. (2) If Jesus is brought before Pilate at dawn and is condemned to die by 9 am, then one can see how efficient the Romans were in their court system. The United States' 6th Amendment to the Constitution says, "The accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy... trial" (U.S. Constitution, Amendment 6). The U.S. have put laws in place that makes trials come speedily, but the United States is not as efficient as the Roman trials were.

Crucify Him. As the people demand horrible execution, Pilate insists that the people allow Jesus to be freed. Willing to please the crowd. (1) Pilate succumbs to fear. It's his duty to keep a Jewish rebellion from arising. In the end, he chooses peace for the people while choosing injustice for one man. Just like Peter, Pilate yielded to peer pressure. Just like Peter did not listen to the first rooster crow, Pilate did not listen to his wife. (2) Matthew records more detail about Pilate allowing Jesus to be condemned ([Matt 27:24-25](#)). (3) Roman law was believed to be very, very logical. Pilate abandoned the logic of Roman law. We do the same thing when we abandon logic when we sin. There is no greater logic than that of God's law; sin abandons God's logic. (4) Remember that the audience of Mark are the Romans. This speaks volumes to the Roman audience. How terrible it was for Jesus to go through all of these Roman tortures yet He was unjustly punished. How much anger the Roman audience would have felt about such injustice! Yet this message is timeless because every person who has ever lived is guilty of causing this.

Flogged and crucified. Roman citizens were treated relatively well when they committed capital crimes. They were allowed to be beheaded. But non-Roman citizens, that is, barbarians, were treated the most horribly. Scourging and crucifixion were given to them.

[Sufferings]. Keeping a running list of the sufferings of Jesus, He was arrested, abandoned by His closest friends, put on trial, spit upon, blindfolded, beaten, insulted, given other blasphemies, slapped, and tied up by the Jews. By the Romans, He was put on trial, flogged, and sent to be crucified.

### **15:16-20 Jesus in the Roman headquarters.**

Called the whole company together. Roman soldiers probably hated to be stationed in this backwater territory. They probably hated the Jews for many reasons including their riots, their "pagan" customs, and they being barbarians (non-Roman citizens). Here they have someone who is King of the Jews. They called all their friends to join them in torturing the King of the Jews.

Purple robe. A real symbol of majesty.

Crown of thorns. (1) This is an oxymoron. A crown is given to the highest ranking people. Thorns are given as torture. A crown of thorns is one of the greatest humiliations. (2) I wrote a devotional on the crown of thorns. In brief, thorns are a symbol of sin because they never existed until after the first sin was committed. Here, Jesus is given a crown of thorns which is a symbol for the king of sin. And this is what Jesus was for a moment. On the cross, He took all of mankind's sin that have ever or will ever be committed, and none of His own because He had no sin. He took all of these sins upon His body on the cross; He became sin... for us, so that we might become righteous for God.

Hitting Him with the reed. (1) Matthew records that they put a "king's" reed in His hand. So they take this reed and hit Jesus with "His own" reed. Another great humiliation. (2) If the soldiers are hitting Jesus in the head with this reed, what are they really hitting? They are hitting the crown of thorns, driving it deeper and deeper with strong force.

[Jesus did not fight back]. He left us an example in how we face any and all opposition. And He has called us to this (1Pet 2:21-23)!

[Sufferings]. Keeping a running list of the sufferings of Jesus, He was arrested, abandoned by His closest friends, put on trial, spit upon, blindfolded, beaten, insulted, given other blasphemies, slapped, and tied up by the Jews. By the Romans, He was put on trial, flogged, stripped, given a crown of thorns, mocked, spit upon, slapped, hit in the head with a reed, and sent to be crucified.

### **15:21 Golgotha - Simon the Cyrenian helps Jesus with the cross.**

Simon. (1) Nothing else is known about this Simon. (2) There was a Gnostic in the early second century named Basilides who said that Jesus did not take on flesh (a Gnostic belief) and that it was not Jesus who died on the cross, but Simon the Cyrene. This belief has carried forward into Islam. Muslims do not believe Jesus died but another died who looked like him. The most common person suggested is Simon the Cyrene.

Cyrene. That is, Cyrene, Libya.

Alexander. In 1941, Israeli archaeologists Eleazer Sukenik (who was involved in acquiring the Dead Sea Scrolls) and Nahman Avigad found a bone box near the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem. On it, the only legible words are "Alexander of Simon." Could this be the Alexander, the son of Simon the Cyrene, mentioned here in Mark? Around 2001, Tom Powers looked at the bone box and found the name QRNYT which is a Hebrew word with an unknown meaning. If the last letter was changed from a T to an H, then it would be the Hebrew word for Cyrenian. So it is very possible that this is the bone box of Simon's son, Alexander.

Rufus. (1) Simon's son, Rufus, might be the same Rufus in Rome mentioned in Romans 16:13. (2) Polycarp mentions a Rufus in his letter to the Philippians (ANF, 1.35) implying that Rufus died a martyr. Could this be the same Rufus as Mark lists or the same Rufus as Paul lists? This is completely unknown.

**15:22 Golgotha - Jesus arrives at Golgotha.**

[Women weeping]. Luke records that a large crowd followed Him with women who were mourning and lamenting. Jesus speaks to them and warns them of the coming final judgment (Luke 23:28-30).

Golgotha. (1) Golgotha was the name of this place. It literally means Skull Place. You might have also heard the name Calvary. Calvary is the Latin word for Skull. So while Calvary is the more popular name of this place, the Scriptures technically never call use the Latin name. (2) There is a rock face north of Jerusalem that looks just like a skull. It is very near what is called the Garden Tomb. This is not the location of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher but is half a mile north of it, outside Jerusalem. This location matches what Eusebius wrote saying that Golgotha was "in Jerusalem north of Mount Zion" (Eusebius, Onomasticon, v365). Coordinates for this location is 31.47019 N 35.13490 E.

**15:23 Golgotha - Jesus is offered wine and myrrh.**

Give Him wine with myrrh. (1) They tried to give Jesus the wine before they hung him on the cross, while they could still reach his mouth. (2) Matthew records that it was wine with gall. Gall is a secretion from the liver but is also used to describe anything bitter, such as the myrrh. (3) This also fulfilled prophecy spoken by David (Ps 69:20-21). Of course, the vinegar is offered to Jesus a little later.

He did not take it. Jesus did not take this. God has given Jesus a cup to drink and that cup has not passed from Him. If God wants Jesus to taste such horrible physical suffering, then Jesus is taking it all. Jesus isn't going to drink from the cup of bitterness but will drink the cup of God's wrath.

**15:24-26 On the cross - Jesus is crucified.**

Divided His clothes and cast lots. This fulfilled prophecy from Ps 22, the Psalm that is filled with prophecies about the crucifixion (John 19:23-24, Ps 22:16-18).

Nine in the morning. Mark said they crucified Jesus at 9 in the morning, the third hour. Therefore, from the time the crowd persuaded Pilate to crucify Jesus, to the time Jesus is flogged a second time, to the time Jesus arrives at Golgotha, to the time they crucify Him, it has been three hours (see also notes at Mark 15:12).

Crucified Him. From the time Jesus left Pilate's headquarters to the time He dies, the entire process is crucifixion. This was the time when they had fixed Jesus to the cross and lifted Him up.

King of the Jews. (1) John records that Pilate had this written and it said, "Jesus the Nazarene, The King of the Jews" in three languages: Hebrew, Latin, and Greek (John 19:19-20). (2) John records that the Jewish leaders went to Pilate and asked that He take the sign down (John 19:21-22). Pilate did not yield to them.

**15:27-28 On the cross - Jesus between two criminals.**

Counted among the outlaws. This is a fulfillment of Is 53:12.

**15:29-32 On the cross - Jesus mocked by all.**

Insults. This too is a fulfillment of Ps 22, the crucifixion Psalm (Ps 22:7-8 LXX).

Those who passed by. John records that the place where Jesus died was near the city and many people read it (John 19:20). So many of these people were probably merely passersby.

Demolish the sanctuary and build it in three days. Little did these people know that what Jesus had said is being fulfilled before their very eyes. They are the ones destroying the sanctuary, Jesus' body. It will be by the power of God that Jesus will receive back His body in three days.

We may see and believe. This would be a very tempting thing for me. If someone told me, "I will believe you, just show me this one thing." If that thing was in my power, then I wouldn't hesitate to show it. But in Jesus' case, He has already shown it. If they wouldn't believe His healing of the quadriplegic, the healing of the man born blind (which no one had ever done), and the raising of Lazarus, then they would not believe even if Jesus gloriously came down from the cross. I imagine it would make them even more angry at Jesus. As Jesus recounted Abraham's words, "If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

Those who crucified Him. (1) Jesus is hanging on the cross about to die. All these people are adding insult to injury--literally. Isn't Jesus' imminent death enough for the Jewish leaders? One can see how much they hated Jesus that when they had "won," they went out of the city to mock Jesus and to gloat in the death of their "enemy." (2) Jesus is getting it from all around: the passersby, the Jewish leaders, and now from the Roman soldiers. Luke records that even the criminal next to Jesus insults him (Luke 23:39)! (3) We're told in John's gospel that he and Jesus' mother are there (John 19:25-27). I'm sure they are listening to all of this. Could they be in a worse state of despair?

**15:33-36 On the cross - Jesus calls out to God.**

Sixth hour to ninth hour. During the brightest, hottest part of the day, there is darkness. Creation itself mourns over its Creator. Or, God is light, He turns His face until it is finished.

Whole land. (1) This Greek word is used both to identify a region such as the "land" of Judah or the whole earth such as: "Your will be done on 'earth' as it is in heaven." From the Scriptures, it is not clear. (2) The early Christians believed this to be a world-wide darkness and earthquake. Sextus Julius Africanus wrote (245 AD) that Phlegon of Tralles, a Greek historian who lived in the early second century, wrote about this darkness called it an eclipse. Africanus also explains that it is impossible for this to be an eclipse because this happened the day of the Passover, when it was a full moon. A solar eclipse can only happen around a new moon (as our modern science also says).

Ninth hour. This is the time Jesus dies. He has been on the cross for 6 hours (Mark 15:25).

Why have You forsaken Me. (1) Jesus quotes Ps 22:1, from the crucifixion Psalm. (2) What language is this? It's not Hebrew but it is close. It's not Syriac but it is close. It is probably Old Aramaic, which was the second-most common language of Judea at this time, the first being Koine Greek.

Elijah. Eloi, Aramaic for God, probably sounded like Helias, Greek for Elijah.

Vinegar/sour wine. (1) In the Greek, this is vinegar. This was to fulfill the other part of the prophecy of Ps 69:20-21. (2) John records that Jesus asked for something to drink and He drank this (John 19:28-30). John also said the vinegar had hyssop. This herb has a sweet aroma and a bitter taste. It is probably a symbol of the bitter sweet sacrifice of Jesus. Bitter because of the physical suffering and sweet because of Jesus' pleasing sacrifice to God. As Paul said, "Walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God" (Eph 5:2). The hyssop symbolizes this.

Elijah comes to take Him down. There is probably no good reason for the people to really believe that Elijah might come and take Jesus down. This is probably another insult, as the people did not expect this to actually happen.

### **15:37 On the cross - Jesus dies.**

The man with all power, who will sit at the right hand of the Power, dies.

[Sufferings]. Keeping a running list of the sufferings of Jesus, He was arrested, abandoned by His closest friends, put on trial, spit upon, blindfolded, beaten, insulted, given other blasphemies, slapped, and tied up by the Jews. By the Romans, He was put on trial, flogged, stripped, given a crown of thorns, mocked, spit upon, slapped, hit in the head with a reed, clothes gambled away, crucified on the cross, insulted by passersby, insulted by the Jewish leaders, insulted by those crucified with Him, insulted by those who crucified Him, forsaken by God, and died.

### **15:38 On the cross - The curtain of the sanctuary is torn.**

Curtain of the sanctuary torn from top to bottom. This was the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place, where the high priest would enter once per year (Ex 26:31-33). According to the pattern of the tabernacle, the tabernacle was 30 cubits (45 feet) tall, so this curtain had to have been 45 feet tall also (Ex 26:7-8). For a curtain that tall, no person would be able to tear it from top to bottom, only from bottom to top. Of course, no man tore the curtain; God did. The writer of Hebrews says that the way to enter into God's presence is no longer by a physical curtain, but through Jesus. His body is now the way for anyone, no longer restricted to the high priest only, to enter into God's presence (Heb 10:19-22).

[Saints were raised]. Matthew records that at this moment, many tombs were opened and many saints were raised. Then after Jesus' resurrection, they went into Jerusalem and appeared to many (Matt 27:52-53). These righteous people who lived under the Old Testament saints.

### **15:39 On the cross - The centurion recognized Jesus.**

Centurion. The centurion is a powerful witness to who Christ is--especially for Mark's Roman audience.

Crowd beat their chests. Luke records that at Jesus' death, the crowds went home beating their chests (Luke 23:48). It seems that the moment Jesus died, it was an incredible moment. The gospel says that the darkness was lifted, there was an earthquake, and Jesus words themselves probably showed strong witness to who He is.

### **15:40-41 On the cross - The women who had followed Jesus to the cross.**

Women looking on. (1) Who was there watching Jesus? Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and Joseph, and Salome the mother of James and John. There was also Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and John (John 19:25-26). So there are six women and John. If Mary the mother of James the younger and Joseph is the same as Mary the wife of Clopas, then there are four women, three of whom are named Mary.

[Side pierced]. (1) John records that Jesus' side was pierced by the Romans. He would know because he was there ([John 19:31-37](#)). (2) John said that this fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah, "They will look at Me whom they pierced" (Zech 12:10 MT). In John's vision in Revelation, he wrote about Judgment Day, "Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, including those who pierced Him" (Rev 1:7).

#### **15:42-45 Joseph of Arimathea - Joseph asks Pilate for Jesus' body.**

Already evening. Jesus dies at 3 pm and sunset is around 7 pm. There may have been some time that passed between Jesus' death and when Joseph goes to Pilate. So Joseph has less than four hours to take Jesus down from the cross and bury him. Joseph would need to finish before sunset when the Passover was sacrificed and eaten.

Preparation day... Sabbath. (See notes on [John 19:31](#).)

Arimathea. (1) This place is completely unknown outside of the gospels. Luke records that it is a town in Judea ([Luke 23:51](#)). (2) In the first or second century, there was a translation made of the Old and New Testaments into Aramaic called the Peshitta. In the Peshitta, Mark, Luke, and John read "Ramtha" instead of Arimathea. (Matthew reads Arimathea.) Ramtha is the same as Ramath. (3) Combining the evidences from Luke's description and the Peshitta's name (a Ramath in Judea), this could be one of two places. Ramath-lehi, a town where Samson visited ([Jdg 15:17](#)), or Ramathaim-zophim (modern-day Nabi Samuil, West Bank), a town north of Jerusalem where Samuel was born. The location of the first town is unknown; some has suggested it was just south of the Sea of Galilee. Ramathaim-zophim is much more likely. It is about 6 miles north of Jerusalem.

Sanhedrin. (1) Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest group of leaders for the Jews, besides the high priest himself. Wasn't it the Sanhedrin that just put Jesus on trial the night before? It seems that Jesus' trial did not include all of the Sanhedrin, or more likely, Joseph was too frightened at that time to speak out ([John 7:12-13, 19:38](#)). Luke implies that Joseph was there and did not agree with their plan ([Luke 23:51](#)). But in any case, Joseph is a member of the Sanhedrin and a believer. The Jewish leaders were not all bad. Nicodemus also was a ruler of the Jews and a believer. Joseph and Nicodemus actually buried Jesus together. (2) Matthew records that Joseph was rich ([Matt 27:57](#)). Luke records that he was good and righteous ([Luke 23:50](#)).

Looking forward to the kingdom of God. (1) This is another way of saying that Joseph was a believer in Jesus. And it carries more significance than that. It seems to imply that Joseph properly understood the nature of Jesus' kingdom to some degree. This can be seen in how He asks for the body of Jesus. Joseph displays hope. Unlike other Jews who rose up, gathered a following, died, and their movement ended ([Acts 5:36-37](#)), Joseph did not give up but honored Jesus by burying Him. Joseph fulfilled Jesus' prophecy about His burial and resurrection, perhaps because he understood it better than most of Jesus' followers. (2) Matthew records that he had become a disciple of Jesus.

Pilate surprised Jesus was dead. Crucifixion was so terrible. Its purpose was to inflict incredible suffering for as long as possible. Perhaps most of the people crucified hung on the cross all day. But Jesus, fulfilling prophecy and God's will, accomplished what He did. He experienced all of the pain, but it appears that God did not prolong His pain beyond what was necessary.

#### **15:46-47 Joseph of Arimathea - Joseph takes Jesus' body down from the cross and puts it in a tomb.**

He took Him down, wrapped Him, and placed Him in a tomb. (1) John records that Nicodemus joined Joseph in taking Jesus down and putting Him in the tomb ([John 19:39](#)). (2) Matthew records that Joseph made this tomb himself, probably with his money ([Matt 27:60](#)). (3) Matthew says the tomb was new ([Matt 27:60](#)).

Luke records that no one had ever been placed there ([Luke 23:53](#)). (4) John records that the tomb was in the same vicinity where Jesus was crucified ([John 19:41-42](#)).

Mary the mother of Jesus. This is the same Mary in [Mark 15:40](#). She was the mother of the apostle James the Less and a Joseph.

[Jesus is really dead]. The fact that Jesus was put in a tomb is evidence that He really died. This is probably more difficult for one who has grown up going to church. How can God die? The truth is: yes, Jesus really DIED. Jesus died just like every human dies. But wait, there has got to be something unique about Jesus' death, right? The only difference between Jesus' death and our deaths is that Jesus didn't deserve it.

#### **16:1-4 At the tomb - The women arrive at the tomb.**

[Resurrection]. The teaching of Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection is the foundational core of the gospel and the most important teaching of Christianity ([1Cor 15:1-8](#)). Jesus Christ's resurrection is the great proof that Jesus has superior power ([Rom 1:4](#)).

Marys. This is Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James the Less, and Salome, the mother of James and John.

First day of the week. All the gospels state that this was on the first day of the week. Of course, this day became a very significant day in the church. By the time of Paul, this was the day that Christians assembled together (Acts 20:7, 1Cor 16:2). John called it the Lord's day (Rev 1:10).

Sunrise. Matthew records that on their way to the tomb, there was a violent earthquake because an angel of the Lord approached the tomb.

Who will roll the stone away. This stone was so heavy that their statement implies that three women were not strong enough to roll the stone away. Little did they know that an angel of the Lord did this.

### **16:5-8 In the tomb - An angel speaks to the women; they ran and were afraid**

Entered the tomb. Who does the Bible list that went into the tomb on Resurrection Day? These three women, Peter, and John.

Young man. Matthew records that this was an angel (Matt 28:5). Luke records that there were two of them (Luke 24:4). So if we combine all the descriptions of the angels: there were two angels who looked like young men but only one of them spoke.

Amazed and alarmed. These are the common reactions when someone sees an angel.

See the place. The angel repeats the things that Jesus had prophesied about Himself (Mark 14:28). He also shows them the proof that Jesus is not there. Today, the empty tomb is still the greatest proof that Jesus was exactly who He said He was.

[Looking for the living among the dead]. (1) Luke records that the angels first asked the women why they are looking for the living among the dead (Luke 24:5). The tombs is not and since then has never been the place where people find Jesus. Is no longer dead and has left His own tomb. (2) Luke also records that the women remembered Jesus' words on the Mount of Olives right before Jesus was arrested (Luke 24:8). So the women were there and were scattered also. But though they remembered Jesus' words when the angel repeated them, they did not quite understand yet. The women go get Peter and John, saying, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him" (John 20:2). Then Mary Magdalene says the same thing to an angel after Peter and John leave (John 20:13).

[Power in resurrection]. Paul said that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead will raise us from the dead on Judgment Day (1Cor 6:14).

They said nothing to anyone. Luke records that the women went and told the Eleven apostles (Luke 24:9-13). Matthew also records that the women spoke to the disciples (Matt 28:8-10). So did the women go tell the apostles or not? The only clue is found in Mark's gospel. Mary Magdalene does not go and tell in verse 8, then later tells after she sees Jesus in verse 9-11. I believe that is the answer: Mark did not intend that their silence be permanent, only very temporary. I believe they were silent until they saw Jesus. Matthew records their encounter with Jesus (Matt 28:8-10). There, Matthew says they leave to go tell the news, which is what they do in the end, but he perhaps explains why they ended up telling everyone, because they saw and worshipped Jesus.

### **16:9-11 Jesus appears - Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.**

[Mark 16:9-20]. (1) Does your Bible have a footnote about Mark 16:9-20? It may say that some manuscripts do not have verses 16:9-20. This is because of the discoveries of the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus in the 1800s. These New Testament texts date back to the fourth century and are the oldest complete texts today. Neither of them contain Mark 16:9-20. (Verses 9-20 have been passed down through the ages using the Erasmus' Textus Receptus, or the Majority Text, which all translations before 1900 used as well as the NKJV.) So the question remains did Mark write verses 9-20 as was included in texts up until 1900 or were these verses not written by Mark which the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus imply? The greatest evidence is probably the Diatessaron which is a compilation of all the gospels written by Tatian around 170 AD. In it, Tatian quotes every verse of Mark 9-20 (ANF, 9.125). This is probably the greatest evidence since Tatian lived about 150 years before the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus were written. Irenaeus who was a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of John around 180 AD quotes Mark 16:19 saying it is "towards the conclusion of his gospel" (ANF, 1.426). The Apostolic Constitutions (230 AD) quotes Mark 16:16 (ANF, 7.457). The Apostolic Constitutions (350 AD) quotes Mark 16:17-18 (ANF, 7.479). Since there is evidence that Mark 16:9-20 existed in the second, third, and fourth centuries, we can conclude that Mark really did write it. (2) What does Mark 16:9-20 mean doctrinally? It brings out three minor doctrines. Mark 16:16 is used by some Christians to show the necessity of baptism. Mark 16:17 is used by some Christians to show the support of exorcism and speaking in tongues. Mark 16:18 is used by some Christians to support snake handling and poison drinking.

Early on the first day of the week. (1) A second time Mark mentions that it was the first day of the week. He wants us to know that it was still very early that Jesus appeared a second time to Mary Magdalene. (2) I

believe this is after Peter and John come to the tomb and go inside. And this is the same event as John records when she thinks He is the gardener ([John 20:11-18](#)).

They did not believe her. Mary goes to the disciples and tells them she has seen the Lord. Perhaps it is because of Mary's past, being possessed by seven demons, that the disciples do not believe her. She used to be crazy Mary, so perhaps she is crazy once again.

#### **16:12-13 Jesus appears - Jesus appears to two disciples on a road.**

Two on their way into the country. This is when Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus ([Luke 24:13-31](#)). This was Jesus' third appearance.

Did not believe them either. What did the Old Testament say? "By the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word will be established" (Deut 19:15). Here the disciples have two events and three people who say they have seen the Lord. Yet they still do not believe. No wonder Jesus is about to rebuke their unbelief. After all, they are unbelieving (or misunderstanding) of the prophecies Jesus gave them.

#### **16:14 Jesus appears - Jesus appears to all the Eleven.**

[Jesus appears to the Ten]. Before Jesus appeared to the Eleven, John records that Jesus appeared to the Ten. Thomas was not with them ([John 20:19-23](#)). This was Jesus' fourth appearance.

Eleven. Judas is the apostle who is not with them. This appearance includes Thomas. This was Jesus' fifth appearance.

Rebuked. (1) Jesus rebuked them for not believing the two Emmaus disciples nor Mary Magdalene nor the rest of the women. Their testimonies (along with His own prophecies that He made) should have been enough for them. (2) Luke records this conversion and adds that the disciples were still unbelieving because of their joy. Perhaps it was not until Jesus ate some food in their presence that they knew it was Jesus ([Luke 24:36-43](#)). (3) This is when Jesus appeared to Thomas also and Thomas believed ([John 20:24-29](#)).

[Jesus appears in Galilee]. Later, Jesus appears to the disciples a sixth time by the Sea of Galilee ([John 21:1-14](#)). It is at this time that Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him ([John 21:15-23](#)). This was Jesus' sixth appearance.

#### **16:15-18 Jesus appears - Jesus gives them their mission and His power.**

[Location]. Matthew records that the Great Commission was given in Galilee on a mountain there ([Matt 28:16-20](#)). Perhaps this is the Mount where Jesus preached His Sermon.

Great Commission. Matthew's and Mark's quotes of the Great Commission are slightly different ([Matt 28:18-20](#), [Mark 16:15-18](#)). The differences are as follows. Matthew begins with, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Matthew says to preach to "all nations" and Mark says to preach to all creation. Both say to baptize; Matthew says to baptize into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit while Mark says that baptism saves and unbelief condemns. Matthew says to teach all that Jesus commanded and Jesus is with us until the end of the age. Mark gives a list of signs for those who will believe: driving out demons, speaking in tongues, picking up snakes, drinking poison, and healing the sick.

Whole creation. Many translations say every creature, but "whole creation" is literal. I find this has more power behind it because it includes anything that has been created, not just living creatures. If Jesus' literal words includes inanimate objects, then His point is that there is no living person who should not be preached to.

You are to be so liberal in who you preach to that not even rocks are exempt—figuratively speaking.

Believes and is baptized will be saved. (1) Here, Jesus lists two of the necessary ingredients for salvation. Both belief and baptism are required if one is to be saved. If someone believes, then their belief must drive them to be baptized. That is what faith is: belief that results in action. Faith is a process, and belief comes before baptism. When all the ingredients of salvation are in place, salvation arrives. Now if someone says they believe but refuses to be baptized, to them I say, "Show me your belief without baptism and I will show you belief by being baptized" (see also [Jam 2:18-19](#)). (2) Less than a week later on Pentecost, Peter would preach, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" ([Acts 2:38](#)). Paul was told a similar thing ([Acts 22:16](#)).

Does not believe. Belief is the beginning of a walk with Jesus. If someone will not believe, then they are condemned right at the start of faith. See also [John 3:18](#), [3:36](#).

Signs of those who believe. I believe these were real signs of those who believed. God worked these signs through the believers to prove that they also were messengers from God just as Jesus was God's Messenger. These signs happened and they stand as even more proof of what Jesus came to do. In Acts, we see the apostles casting out demons (Paul in [Acts 16:16-19](#)), speaking in languages (the apostles in [Acts 2:1-10](#)), being bitten by snakes (Paul in [Acts 28:2-6](#)), and healing the sick (Peter and Paul throughout Acts). We don't have any record of them drinking poison, but we do have record of them raising the dead. I believe these powerful signs were temporary and faded in the early-second century. I do not believe it is

Mark intention that these signs are for every single believer. Jesus' words here are very similar to the Lesser Commission which He gives to His disciples in Luke 10:17-20. As seen in Acts, not every believer had miraculous gifts like these. Yet they all had the Holy Spirit who gave them some sort of gift, or ability, that they used for the church.

**16:19 Jesus ascends to heaven.**

[Final appearance]. Luke records that Jesus appeared to them a final time in Jerusalem and Bethany (Luke 24:50-53). And it was at Bethany that Jesus ascended into heaven. If this is the truth, then the last words Jesus said are found in Luke 24:44-49. Therefore, we infer that this was Jesus' seventh appearance. Blessed them. The final thing Jesus ever did before leaving this earth was blessing people. This is a powerful image of the entire life of Jesus. We can sum up Jesus' whole life by saying, "He came to bless people." Of course, the reach, the significance, the power of that blessing is beyond our comprehension. Yet by God's Spirit, we can tap into it.

**16:20 Jesus' disciples go everywhere and preach everywhere with great power.**

Preached everywhere. From the writings of the early Christians, we learn that they did just that. Thaddaeus went to Edessa which was a country along today's border of Turkey and Syria. Thomas traveled to India and established what became known as the Church of East. Christianity became so popular out there that it became the national religion of the Sassanid Empire. Within 20 years, Christianity was established in Egypt. John Mark, the author of this gospel, was martyred there. Within 250 years, Christianity was established in Britain. The only prominent disciple who never left Jerusalem was not one of the Twelve. James the Just, Jesus' half-brother, stayed in Jerusalem as an overseer. He was killed by the Jews in 62 AD.