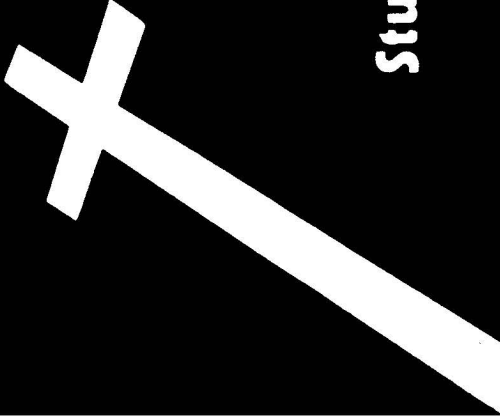




Studies in

**THE
GOSPEL
OF
MARK**

PART 1

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

PART 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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I, HAVE REPENTED
OF MY SINS AND HAVE TRUSTED JESUS CHRIST TO BE MY
SAVIOUR. I HAVE ACCEPTED HIM INTO MY HEART, BE-
LIEVING THAT HE IS THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND THE ONE
WHO HAS POWER TO SAVE ME.

SIGNED

CONCLUSION

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:20,21

Now that you have studied all the lessons of this first half of the Gospel of Mark, I would like to call your attention to some very important truths we have learned. **First**, if one is to receive salvation there must be genuine repentance. Mark 1:15. This means that you must be willing to admit your sins and be sorry for them and then be willing to leave your sins to follow Christ. **Next**, there is the matter of faith or of believing in Christ. This means that you must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That is, that He was more than a man living on earth; that God was actually dwelling or living in Christ. Read John 1:14. Now, if you believe these things, you are ready to trust Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, and to receive Him into your heart. John 1:12 and 13 tells us how this is done. This experience is called "being born again" and it is the only way whereby you can be saved. Read the words of Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3:3. God spoke through Paul in the verses written at the top of this page. Paul held back nothing needed by those to whom he had preached. He had preached to them concerning all things necessary to their salvation, that is, "**Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

Now if you have done the above things in sincerity, you must be willing to confess Jesus openly or publicly as we said in our last lesson. Jesus says that if we are ashamed of Him, He will be ashamed of us. Now, you can show that you are not ashamed of Jesus and that you want to accept Him as your Saviour and Lord by filling in and signing the form contained on the following page. May God lead you to salvation in Christ through the Holy Spirit who will work in your heart.

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GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

The BIBLE WAY Correspondence Course is designed for those who have had no previous training in Bible study. Yet it is presented in such a way that those who have studied the Bible for years will find help in these lessons.

The Purpose of these studies is to present God's plan of salvation, to train in Bible knowledge, and to promote Christian growth in the believer. Any and all are welcome to take this course.

A Bible should always be beside you as you study these lessons. You should read carefully each reference as it appears in the lesson you are studying. If there are words in the Bible or lesson which you do not understand, then you should look them up in a good dictionary.

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NOTE!

If you are to receive a certificate for MARK 1, your examinations must be completed and posted to us before:

clear again and again. Isaiah in chapter 53 tells us that this "Coming One" would bear our griefs, carry our sorrows, and by His stripes we would be healed (Isaiah 53:4,5).

THE WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP Chapter 8:34-37

Jesus also declared that not only was His way the way of the cross, but it was the way for all who followed Him. He was willing to die for us all. We too must be willing to die for our Master's sake and for the sake of the Gospel. Jesus then expanded this truth with three further statements. **First**, He said that the one who tries to save himself will fail. There are no works, no journeys, no formulae of prayers which can bring salvation to us. Christ has done it for us. We need only repent and accept Him. Paul also spoke concerning this thought when he said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" Ephesians 2:8,9. **Second**, Jesus said that the one who gives his life to God through Him shall indeed save it for eternal life. This means that when one gives himself to Christ he has not lost his life but rather he has gained a new life of everlasting endurance in Christ. **Third**, Jesus sums up this way of life by saying that the destiny of the soul of each person is far more important than all material things. Jesus here presents an alternative for each of us today. If we should succeed in gaining all the material things that are in the world, we would still be the losers if we missed receiving Christ as our Saviour. Jesus then asked the question, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" There is no merit on our part which can redeem a soul from Hell. Christ alone can save and keep the souls of men.

CONFESSING CHRIST Chapter 8:38

In the last verse of this chapter, Jesus includes all of us. He says that we must not be ashamed of Him on earth or else He will be ashamed of us before the Heavenly Father. This means that we must be willing to live like a Christian for the sake of Christ wherever we are and whatever we do. To confess Christ before men means not only that we will speak His name without shame in witnessing to others, but that our lives will continually be a powerful witness to the reality of Christ in our hearts.

Messiah or Christ who was to come. The long awaited Messiah was expected to rule in great power, to establish the kingdom of Israel, and destroy all other nations of the world. He was to be God's representative on the earth and would use His power to make the nation of Israel a nation of kings and rulers. This, however, was not the meaning of Jesus' Messiahship. Jesus said that He had come to suffer, and be rejected, and die, and rise from the dead (verse 31). When Jesus associated His Messiahship with suffering and death He was fulfilling a part of the Scripture (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53). The disciples and their fellow countrymen had failed to understand that these Scriptures spoke of the Messiah. Jesus let them know that they were wrong because He said that His kingdom was not of this world.

In Matthew's account, the confession by Peter is followed by the declaration by Jesus that upon this rock He would build His church. Let us be very clear at this point. Jesus did not establish any man as head of His church. Christ Himself is the only head of the church. Read also Colossians 1:18 . . . "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Ephesians 5:23 . . . "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." Jesus is saying that upon this kind of confession that He is the Christ, God's Anointed One, He would build His church. The church is made up of people who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and have been born again spiritually through repentance and faith.

THE MEANING OF JESUS' MINISTRY Chapter 8:31-33

Verse 31 comes to us as a statement by Jesus of what He knew would soon happen to Him. Through all this He was interpreting the meaning of His ministry on earth. Jesus had said that He had come to seek and save the lost, (Luke 19:10), and to give His life a ransom for many, (Matthew 20:28). Paul, the apostle, in later years added his own inspired thoughts to the meaning of Jesus' Messiahship when he said, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" 2 Corin. 5:19. And again in Acts 20:28, he tells us that it was God's plan to establish the church by the sacrificial death of Christ. Throughout the Old Testament, beginning with Genesis 3:15, promises of a Deliverer had been made by God. The way of this deliverance was made

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF MARK

MARK 1:1-8

Memory Verse:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. John 20:31

INTRODUCTION:

The study of the Gospel of Mark is divided into two sections of twelve lessons each. The first twelve lessons deal with the first eight chapters of Mark. The second set of twelve lessons deal with the last eight chapters. In order to receive the most from these lessons, you should do the following things:

1. Put your lesson lectures before you, and open them to the lesson you plan to study;
2. Open your Bible to the Gospel of Mark, to the passage of Scripture to be studied;
3. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you read and study these lectures.

Now you are ready to begin. Read the Bible passage **first**. This is important. Then read again each verse or group of verses referred to in the lectures. In this way you will understand well all that is taught in these lessons.

The Importance of Mark's Gospel

An understanding of the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus is necessary in order to understand clearly Christianity today. The short Gospel written by Mark gives us an opportunity to know this story better. Mark presents the story of Jesus' ministry only, but does not begin with an account of His birth. Since Mark's Gospel was probably the earliest one of the Gospels to be written, it may be that the story of Jesus' birth was so well known that Mark did not think it wise to write it is his gospel.

THE MEANING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

MARK 8:27-38

Memory Verse:

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Mark 8:36

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus had spent much time with the disciples and they had seen His miracles and had heard His teachings. Now it was urgent that He know just what they thought of Him and His ministry on earth. In other words, Jesus needed to know if the disciples understood the meaning of His ministry. The opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees was soon to be turned into open and organized hatred. Jesus wanted to be sure of the disciples' faith in Him as Lord and Saviour.

THE GREAT CONFESSION Chapter 8:27-30

At last Jesus was able to be alone with His disciples in the region of Caesarea Philippi. Now He wishes to know exactly what they think of Him. At this time Jesus wanted to know if the disciples knew the meaning of His ministry. Jesus asks the question first concerning the opinions of the people regarding His ministry. The answers varied greatly and none were correct. Some, like Herod, thought that Jesus was John the Baptist come to life. Others thought of Him as Elias who had been a prophet of power and miracles. Still others thought of Him as some kind of prophet, but they did not know what kind of prophet He was. Then the important question was asked, "What is your opinion of me?" (verse 29). It was Peter who answered for the group in a clear confession, "Thou art the Christ."

The Meaning of Peter's Confession

Peter's words were true. They were what Jesus had wanted to hear from the disciples. Now what did this mean? First, let us consider what the Jews of that day meant when they spoke of the

WHY MARK WROTE THIS BOOK Chapter 1:1

Let us look at the words of Mark's Gospel. In Chapter 1, verse 1, Mark says that his writing is going to be about the "gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God". What does he mean by the word, "gospel"? The word "gospel" means, "good news". This good news is that God has sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to the earth. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus was more than just a man. Read Colossians 2:9 and John 1:14. The Bible teaches that He was God, living in a body of flesh. Isaiah, a prophet of the Old Testament, foretold the coming of Jesus. This is recorded for us in Isaiah 7:14. In Matthew 1:21, we read that this prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was born. Jesus then was truly God in the flesh, revealing Himself to all mankind.

JOHN THE BAPTIST Chapter 1:2-8

The ministry, or work, of John the Baptist is described briefly for us in Mark 1:2-8. The coming of John the Baptist fulfilled another prophecy that a fore-runner would tell of the coming of God's Son. Read Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 for these prophecies. John the Baptist had one great task, to "prepare the way" for Jesus. How did John the Baptist prepare the way? Mark tells us that he preached a message of two great truths: the necessity of repentance for the remission of sins, and the coming of Jesus soon.

THE MEANING OF REPENTANCE Chapter 1:4

In verse 4, John is said to have preached, "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins". The words of the original language at this point clearly show that he preached "concerning baptism which was based on the kind of repentance which brought remission or forgiveness of sins". The word **repentance** involves at least the following things in its meaning:

1. First, there must be a recognition of sin in one's life. Unless the sick person recognizes that he is sick, he will not seek help for himself and will remain sick or even grow worse. First, then, **we must see that there is sin in our lives, and that we must do something about it.** Read Romans 3:10 and Romans 3:23.
2. Next, there must be an admission of sin on the part of the sinner. This means **that after we have seen our sin, we must agree that we are the ones who did it.** It is no good

earthly king and ruler. Even so today, there are many who refuse to learn about God. They have the witness of the created world about them, the truth contained in the Bible and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Jesus refused to give them a special sign because He knew they were not sincerely seeking the truth. He wanted them to believe because of His teachings and His actions before them daily. The religious leaders were expecting a Messiah who would establish the kingdom of Israel, drive out the Roman rulers, and perform miracles to impress the crowds. Jesus insisted that He had come to seek and to save the lost and give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28).

THE DISCIPLES SLOW TO LEARN Chapter 8:14-21

As Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee again, He spoke to them warning about the Pharisees. In doing so, Jesus gave the illustration of the leaven used in making bread, but the disciples misunderstood. Then He spoke to them more plainly and rebuked them for being so slow to understand the meaning of the two miracles of feeding the crowds. Jesus was telling His disciples that physical bread and the eating of it is not nearly as important as receiving spiritual food for everlasting life.

THE BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA Chapter 8:22-26

Arriving at Bethsaida, Jesus was met by a group of people bringing a blind man to Him. As in the case of the deaf man, Jesus used an unusual way of healing. He took him aside and, using spit, anointed the man's eyes. The use of the spit, which was considered to have healing powers in those days, and the gradual healing were helps done by Jesus to this man to strengthen his faith. Even so today, Jesus deals with us according to our needs and circumstances. Let us consider one statement made by the man during the process of healing. The man said, "I see men as trees, walking." That is the man saw objects but they were not clearly defined. People seemed to him to be like trees with branches extending from them. In our world today there are many who are only partly cured by contact with Jesus. They still see people as objects like trees and not as immortal souls worth more than all the wealth of the world. Oh, that we might see the true value of a person in the sight of God. May our prayer be that we might not just see people as trees walking, but that we might see them as Jesus sees them, as precious souls for whom He died on the Cross.

to try to blame someone else, even the Devil, for our sin. We must agree with God that we are guilty and that we deserve His righteous judgement on our sins.

3. Following this, there comes sorrow, true sorrow for our sins. It is not enough to be sad that our sins have caused us to suffer. We must be sad because our sins have also caused God to suffer. Read also Psalm 51:4.
4. Then comes, at last, a willingness to turn away from our sins and leave them in order that we might follow God. If we are sorry for our sins only because we have been caught, then we are like the thief who is not sorry he has stolen, but he is only sorry that he has been caught and will have to pay the penalty for his wrong-doing. Unless a person is truly repentant, he will return again and again to his sins.

CONFESSION OF SIN NECESSARY BEFORE BAPTISM Chapter 1:5,6

In verse 5, we read that those who were baptized by John had confessed their sins. Only those who have agreed with God that they are sinners and have confessed their sins to Him, are ready to receive baptism. In Romans chapter 6, verses 3 and 4 Paul says that baptism shows burial and resurrection. The putting of the body under water shows the death and burial of the old nature of the believer. The raising out of the water shows that he is now alive in Christ. This picture must be acted out by one who has experienced the fact of being born again in Christ through faith. The only true picture of this experience is by the putting of the believer under the water.

Only the person who repents of his sins and believes in Christ and is willing to follow Christ in a new way of life, should be baptized.

JOHN FORETELLS THE COMING OF JESUS Chapter 1:7,8

In verses 5 and 6, we read something more about this man called John the Baptist. John's preaching about repentance and about Jesus received great support because the people recognized that his preaching was from God. Mark says that "all" the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem went out to hear him and to be baptized by him. John lived a life of self-denial and sacrifice. This was not done to impress the people. He was more concerned

about his message than he was about his place of living. His place of living showed his desire to break away from the established religion of Jerusalem, the headquarters of the Scribes and Pharisees. His clothing and food showed his dependence upon God and reminded the people of Elijah who had lived in the wilderness. His message concerned the Holy One of God who was to come soon. John's life was completely dedicated to "preparing the way" for Jesus. In verse 7, John called Jesus the "one mightier than I", and in verse 8 he identified Jesus as the bringer of the Holy Spirit of God. Thus John introduces to us the kind of person Jesus, God's Son, would be. In our next lesson we shall see Jesus introduced to us by Mark.

JESUS RESTORES SPEECH AND HEARING Chapter 7:31-37

There is no miracle which shows more beautifully Jesus' way of treating people. He did not think of a man as just another sick person, but He treated him as an individual with his own special needs. First, He took the man aside. Deafness and dumbness are embarrassing afflictions. Jesus took the man aside and dealt with him alone. Also we see the way Jesus healed the man. Because the man could not hear or speak, Jesus used actions to show him what He was about to do. Putting His fingers in the man's ears, touching his tongue, and looking to heaven spoke a wordless message to the man. The comment of the people concerning the healing was that Jesus had done all things well. This recalls to us the words of God in Genesis 1:31 where God's creation is spoken of as being "very good". When Jesus came, bringing healing to men's bodies and salvation to their souls, He had begun the work of creation all over again. Sin had ruined God's first creation. Now God in Christ, was "re-creating" man.

FEEDING THE FOUR THOUSAND Chapter 8:1-9

In spite of Jesus' command that His miracle of healing the deaf mute not be told abroad, the word was spread so much that four thousand people gathered to hear Him. For three days they listened to His teaching. Then because of His love (verse 5), Jesus decided to feed them. Once again, Jesus took the small amount of food brought to Him and multiplied it to feed the multitude. This miracle has been confused sometimes with the feeding of the five thousand recorded earlier in chapter 6 of Mark. However, according to Jesus' own words in chapter 8:19-20, they are two separate miracles. The details are different, but the significance of both miracles is the same. For the crowds, they were miracles of love and power. For the twelve disciples, they were miracles of instruction.

THE PHARISEES DESIRE A SIGN Chapter 8:1-13

After the feeding of the crowd, Jesus and His disciples passed over a part of the sea to another region. Here they met a group of Pharisees seeking a sign from Him. The amazing thing was that they had seen so many miracles Jesus had performed and still they wanted another one for themselves. It seems that what they wanted was some kind of unusual display across the heavens that would attract wide attention. This too was a part of their idea of the coming Messiah who would lead them as an

SOME FURTHER MIRACLES

MARK 7:24-8:26

Memory Verse:

And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. Mark 7:37

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus' popularity with the crowds and the opposition of the Pharisees caused Him to withdraw again from Galilee. This time He went into the country of Phoenicia which was Gentile territory. The inhabitants of Phoenicia were descendants of the ancient Canaanites. The two most important towns in this area were the seaports of Tyre and Sidon. Tyre lay 40 miles north-west of Capernaum. Its name means "The Rock". It was so called because off the shore lay two great rocks joined by a ridge three thousand feet long. This ridge formed a natural breakwater and Tyre was a famous seaport. It was from Tyre and Sidon that sailors first learned to steer their ships by the stars. Sidon lay some 60 miles north of Capernaum and was also an important port city of its day.

ALL PEOPLE ARE ALIKE TO JESUS Chapter 7:24-30

We come to consider first a moving and memorable event which took place here in this Gentile country. Jesus had just wiped out the differences between clean and unclean foods. Now He was removing the differences between so called "clean" and "unclean" people. The Jews had no dealings with others outside their own race except in certain ways which called for purifying ceremonies afterwards. The Syrophenician woman came asking for help for her sick child. Jesus' reply seems harsh as He refers to her and her people as "dogs". However, Jesus was taking a word used in a bad sense by the Jews about Gentiles and turning it into a word of hope. The word used by Jesus means, "little pet dogs" and not the despised dogs of the street. Her answer showed faith in Jesus and her own humility. At any rate the action of Jesus speaks louder than words to us. He healed the sick Gentile girl.

THE PREPARATION FOR JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY

MARK 1:9-20

Memory Verse:

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. Mark 1:15

INTRODUCTION:

In this lesson we want to study two events which are an important part of our understanding of the ministry of Jesus.

1. **His baptism.** Why was Jesus baptized? What is the meaning of His baptism?
2. **His temptations.** Were the temptations real? What is the meaning of the temptations of Jesus?

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS Chapter 1:9-11

Having described briefly the mission and ministry of John the Baptist, Mark now begins to tell the story of Jesus. The public ministry of Jesus began that day when Jesus appeared near the Jordan River to be baptized by John. At first John refused, saying that Jesus should baptize him. Read also Matthew 3:13-17 for an account of the baptism of Jesus. The question naturally arises, "Why was Jesus baptized since he had no sins to confess?" Jesus' baptism was full of meaning . . . for Jesus Himself, for John, and for all who have believed and have been baptized since that day. The significance of the baptism of Jesus can be shown in the following ways:

1. Jesus Approved John's Baptism

The baptism of Jesus by John showed His approval of John's work and ministry. To the people who came to hear him, John had preached repentance followed by baptism. In fact, baptism was such an important part of his ministry that he was called, not "John the Preacher", or "John the Prophet", but "John the Baptist" or "Baptizer". Many might have said, "We understand

the need for repentance but why should we submit to this baptism?" By coming to John in the presence of all the people, Jesus was saying, "I agree with John's message and I agree with his baptism to which I submit myself." Jesus in this way approved the baptism of John and identified Himself with the people He came to save. In Matthew's account of Jesus' baptism, Jesus says, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," (Matthew 3:15). Notice the word "us". In this way Jesus was identifying Himself with all people on the earth who needed to submit to this kind of baptism.

2. The Approval of Baptism as a Christian Ordinance

Further, in submitting to baptism, Jesus approved it as a Christian ordinance. Baptism was not a new thing, but it received a completely new meaning under John's ministry. When Gentiles accepted the Jewish religion of that day, they were required to do three things. **First** there was **circumcision**. **Then** a sacrifice had to be made in the temple for him. **Lastly**, he was baptized, showing his cleansing and showing the new relationship he had assumed. John, however, knew that to be born a Jew was not enough. He was calling his fellow countrymen to a living faith, renewing their covenant with God in their hearts. At the close of His earthly ministry Jesus would say to His followers in every generation, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 28:19.

3. A Public Proclamation

Also, we see in Jesus' baptism a public action opening His public ministry. For thirty years Jesus had lived privately in Nazareth. Now He was openly dedicating Himself to His ministry among the people.

4. The Approval of God

And lastly, we see the approval of the Heavenly Father upon Jesus at His baptism. Mark records the voice from heaven, saying "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (verse 11). These words recall once again the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah. The words, "Thou art my Son" come from the Psalms and are part of the coronation ceremony of the Messianic King. Read Psalm 2:7. The phrase, "in whom I am well pleased" is from the description of the "Servant of the Lord" the prophecy of Isaiah 42:1.

1. A Christian's religious life must come from a genuine personal experience of grace in the heart.
2. The reality of religion must be tested, not in terms of religious acts, but in terms of Christian motives. Christianity is not a matter of eating or not eating certain foods. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and as such should be used only in a way that would bring honour to God.
3. The final authority for the child of God in matters of faith and practice, is the Word of God, the Bible. The words of men must be considered in the light of what the Bible teaches.

were ignoring the commandments of God while carefully following the commandments of men. **Second**, Jesus accused them of substituting the regulations of men for the laws of God. True religion can never be produced by men. It must always come from God.

THE TRADITIONS OF MEN AGAINST THE LAWS OF GOD

Chapter 7:9-13

Jesus used strong words in verse 9 when He said:

"You make an excellent job of completely nullifying the command of God in order to observe your own tradition."

Translation by William Barclay, **The Gospel of Mark**.

Then an example of this very thing is given by Jesus. Moses commanded honour to parents, but the tradition allowed possessions to be declared "corban" under oath. This oath had originally meant that a part or all of a man's wealth had been dedicated to God and was to be given to the temple. However, men began to use it as a way of escaping their responsibility to their parents. They would declare their possessions "corban", but had no intention of giving this to God's work. In this way they were living by the traditions of the elders, but breaking the commandments of God.

THE REAL DEFILEMENT Chapter 7:14-23

This passage, when it was spoken, may well have been the most revolutionary passage of the New Testament. Jesus clearly defines the difference between the Jewish religion and the faith He had come to establish. To the Pharisees, religion was an outward conformity to rules and regulations. To the followers of Jesus, religion is an inward experience of God's grace. This way of grace was revealed by Jesus and comes through Him. Here in one tremendous statement Jesus swept away man-made religions. He declared that real defilement is a matter of an unclean heart. This can be changed only through an experience of repentance and faith resulting in the new birth. See 2 Corinthians 5:17 and John 3:3.

SOME LESSONS TO REMEMBER

The following major truths come to us from this passage:

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS Chapter 1:12,13

Also in this lesson we would like to consider the temptation of Jesus. Why was Jesus tempted? He was tempted because Satan and all the forces of evil wanted to crush this Holy One of God who had come to save sinners. Satan knew that if Jesus could be led into sin through temptation, then Jesus could not be the Saviour of men. Only a sinless Saviour could die as **the** sacrifice for sinners. If Satan had won the victory over Jesus there could have been no salvation for us. Read of Jesus' wonderful victory over Satan in Matthew 4:1-11.

THE PREACHING OF JESUS Chapter 1:14,15

Verses 14 and 15 of this first chapter of Mark introduce the preaching ministry of Jesus. Two facts stand out here that point toward the characteristics we shall look for in the ministry of Jesus. **First there is His preaching.** His message, like that of John the Baptist, was of repentance and faith. But unlike John's message, Jesus could proclaim the arrival of the Kingdom which John had foretold. **Secondly, we see the selection of disciples by Jesus.** These were to be men closely associated with Him who could carry on this work after His death—a death of which He already knew. The preaching of Jesus was a very important fact of His Ministry; Jesus would not allow other things to interfere with this preaching. We read that even His healings were performed in terms of spiritual healings (see Mark 2:5). Continually Jesus was asking those whom He had healed to remain quiet about their being healed by Him. This He did that He might continue to preach and teach and not be sought for healing alone. The physical body is important, but the soul of man is far more important.

THE DISCIPLES CHOSEN Chapter 1:16-20

Not all of the twelve disciples Jesus chose are listed here by Mark. It is significant that Jesus called them to be with Him and gave them a task at the same time. He wanted to teach and train them in a special way so that after His death they could carry on His work. They were to be the beginning of the Church of which He was the founder. The task Jesus gave them was that of becoming "fishers of men." That is, they were to be "learners" of Him and they were to bring others to know Him as Saviour. Before this they had caught fish. Now they would give themselves to bringing men to Jesus Christ.

LESSON THREE

THE MINISTRY OF JESUS BEGINS

MARK 1:21-2:12

Memory Verse:

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Mark 2:10

INTRODUCTION:

In these verses in Mark we see something of the Galilean ministry of the Lord. This area was to claim the largest part of His time, so it is well that we look closely at the events described here for us. Most of Jesus' disciples came from this part of Palestine. At the trial of Jesus the maiden in the courtyard of the high priest (Matthew 26:69-75) even recognized Peter's accent as that of a Galilean. The Galileans lived north of Samaria and their lives were lived about the lake of Galilee. The names of some of their towns give us a clue to the importance of this lake in the lives of the people. For example the name of the town, "Bethsaida", means "house of fish". It was on this lake that Jesus found Peter, Andrew, James and John engaged in the business of fishing. Let us now look more closely at Jesus' ministry in this area.

JESUS IN GALILEE Chapter 1:21,22

Jesus began His public ministry in the province of Galilee. This province was in the northern section of Palestine, west of the Jordan River. Life in the area centred around the beautiful Sea of Galilee with some nine towns clustered around its shores. One of these towns was Capernaum. Why did Jesus begin His ministry in Galilee? Probably because the Galileans were deeply religious people, yet they were not under the domination of the religious and political leaders nearly so much as the people of Jerusalem and Judea. Also, with the highways of commerce running through Galilee, Jesus' message could quickly spread to Egypt, Arabia, Syria and other places. **Further**, Galilee was the scene of Jesus' childhood. He would give to Galilee the opportunity that the people of Judea were not yet ready nor willing to receive.

This tradition was an attempt to apply to the people generally a law that was originally given for the priests in the handling of holy food. The Scribes and Pharisees were not at all concerned about whether the disciples' hands were actually clean or dirty, but whether or not they had washed them by a certain ceremony. This ceremony told how much water was to be used, how the hands were to be held, and so on. A person or a thing could become unclean in various and uncertain ways. For example, a hollow piece of pottery could become unclean on the inside but not on the outside. A flat piece of leather could not become unclean, but a hollow piece of leather could become unclean on the inside or the outside. There were thousands of other rules which were worked out by the Scribes, who had set themselves up as authorities on all matters of interpretation regarding Jewish laws and traditions.

THE ANSWER OF JESUS Chapter 7:5-8

The Pharisees and Scribes had come to trap Jesus and His disciples in some disobedience to these laws. They did not come to try to discover what Jesus was teaching concerning faith in God. They were not interested in the many miracles He was performing. They had no care for the people Jesus was healing and helping. They were concerned only with the fact that Jesus and His disciples had broken a traditional law concerning the way to wash one's hands. Oh the blindness of those people. But there are those today who still insist on trying to live by the letter of the law, which they can never do, and forget the moral principles of the law. The laws of sacrifices contained in the Old Testament have been fulfilled and thus have been done away with. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God, toward whom all the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed. Likewise, other ceremonial and traditional laws have been fulfilled and thus done away with. Let us not forget that Jesus was God and therefore was the Maker of all moral laws. His interpretation of what the moral law really was should outweigh any interpretation of man today.

In Jesus' answer, He accused the Pharisees and Scribes of two things. **First**, He said that they were hypocrites. This word means a play-actor or one who acts out a part. These people attempted to do things outwardly and cared nothing about the inward attitudes and sins hidden there. Jesus quoted from Isaiah 29:13 to show these people what they were really doing. They

THE DANGER OF MAN-MADE RELIGION

MARK 7:1-23

Memory Verse:

There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. Mark 7:15

INTRODUCTION:

In chapter seven we begin to see more organized opposition to Jesus. Heretofore the various synagogue elders and rulers had risen against Jesus. Groups of Scribes, Pharisees and Herodians had objected to His teachings. Now however, Jesus is approached by a group of Scribes and Pharisees who had been sent from Jerusalem to question Him directly regarding certain matters. The tragic thing about this encounter of Jesus with the delegation from Jerusalem was that they had come only to find fault and to discredit Jesus. If they had come with an open mind, willing to be taught, they could have gone away greatly changed in their hearts. May you, dear student, come to the Bible with a mind that is open and ready to learn the truth that God has for you.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN Chapter 7:1-4

Jesus faced in this chapter the most serious challenge presented to Him by the Pharisees and Scribes. Jesus and His disciples were accused of breaking the laws of the Old Testament and breaking the laws or traditions of the elders. The laws here spoken of mean the Ten Commandments and also the first five books of the Old Testament, called the books of law. When the Scribes and Pharisees accused Jesus and His disciples of breaking the traditions of the elders, they were speaking of men's interpretations of the Old Testament. This explains the reference to hand washing. The tradition of the elders insisted that the Jews should wash their hands frequently not simply as a matter of good health and physical cleanliness, but also after any contact with a person who was not a Jew.

JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUE Chapter 1:23-28

On the Sabbath day, Jesus entered the synagogue and taught. We are not told by Mark **what** Jesus taught in this synagogue, but we are told **how** he taught, for it was soon clear to the people that this man was different. Just how different He was from the Scribes and Pharisees was shown as soon as Jesus healed the man with the unclean spirit. The power of God in Jesus was evidence to the evil spirit that it was about to be destroyed. The demon cried out proclaiming Jesus as the Holy One of God. Even though the demon spoke the truth about Him, Jesus would not allow the testimony because it came from an unclean source. Then Jesus spoke peace and cleansing to the demon possessed man. The amazement of the people now included not only the words of Jesus, but His deeds also. The authority of His teachings was confirmed by His power demonstrated in this healing.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW HEALED Chapter 1:29-31

As a result of both His authority in preaching and His demonstration of power as a healer, His fame and reputation spread to the surrounding area in Galilee. Upon entering the house of His disciple, Peter, Jesus learned of the sickness of Peter's mother-in-law. The disciples were learning quickly to tell Jesus of all their troubles. Jesus was just as quick to heal this sick one, who immediately began to serve them with food. This miracle was performed in the quietness of a private home. Jesus did not need or want the presence of a crowd. His healings were not for show, but demonstrated His love and power as the true Son of God. The fact that the healed woman rose and immediately began to serve them teaches us much. Each of us who is a born again Christian has been healed of the sin disease in our hearts. This healing comes as a result of the forgiveness of our sins which can only lead to death if they are unforgiven. We too, ought to rise up to serve our Lord Jesus Christ today. Let us not ask, "What can the church do for me?" But rather let us ask, "What can I do for the cause of Christ in and through my church?"

THE BEGINNING OF THE CROWDS Chapter 1:32-34

The things that Jesus had done in Capernaum could not be hidden. So at evening Peter's house was surrounded with crowds seeking the healing touch of Jesus. They waited until evening came because the law forbade the carrying of any burden

through a town on the Sabbath day. Read Jeremiah 17:24 for this. They had no clocks or watches in those days so a time for the ending of the Sabbath was agreed upon. The Sabbath ended when the sun had set and three stars could be seen. So the people waited until they could count the three stars and then brought their sick ones to Jesus and He healed them. Three times we have seen Jesus healing people. In the synagogue, in Simon Peter's house, and now in the streets. Jesus recognized the claim of everyone. Wherever there was trouble Jesus was ready to use His power. He selected neither the place nor the person; He realized the universal claim of human need. In fact, so many came to be healed that Jesus withdrew to another area of Galilee so that He might continue His ministry of preaching.

JESUS IN THE OPEN COUNTRY Chapter 1:35-45

From Capernaum Jesus went throughout the region or district of Galilee preaching in the synagogues and healing the sick. One further incident of healing stood out in Mark's mind in this first chapter. That was the healing of the leper. Two things are important in this healing. **First**, there is the compassion and love of Jesus for this outcast man. All lepers of that day were forced to live apart from their families outside the towns. Sometimes they would gather in small groups and live in the caves. But Jesus loved this unlovely man and touched him and healed him. Jesus touched the untouchable and loved the unlovely. But His touch and His love brought deliverance and peace to the man. **The second thing** of importance in this healing is that such a terrible disease as leprosy could be completely cured by Jesus. To the people of that day, leprosy was a curse from God and only God could remove the curse and bring healing. Jesus showed at once that He possessed divine power as God in human form on the earth. Leprosy was also often linked with sin and wrongdoing in the life of the afflicted person. So Jesus demonstrated His power over the effects of sin. He not only can heal the body, but even more important, He can heal the sin-sick soul of men.

FOUR TRUE FRIENDS Chapter 2:1-12

Now let us look at the incident found in the first 12 verses of chapter 2 in Mark. Here we saw two groups and two individuals that call for our attention.

each of us determine that we will be the kind of person who is willing to serve and help others and not one who is only seeking selfishly some material gain.

lost their courage and their faith. This would never do. Jesus went to reassure them. All too soon storms of persecution more terrible than a storm at sea would arise against the disciples. They must be certain that Jesus was able to help them meet every challenge. The fact that the disciples had not learned this well is shown by Mark's statement, "For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened." (verse 52).

Jesus' Words for Us

Think what the words, "It is I; be not afraid," spoken by Jesus to the struggling disciples must have meant to them. There in the midst of the sea, with danger of perishing in their minds, Jesus Himself came to them and spoke peace to them. We are not told why they did not recognize Him but likely it was because they did not expect Him. Perhaps the rain from the storm hindered their vision. At any rate, on his arriving at the boat and entering it, the storm stopped and the sea became calm. Jesus' presence always brings peace and calm. To the early Christians, suffering persecution on every hand, these words of Jesus must have brought peace to them as they read Jesus' words, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." These same words of Jesus are for us today. Whenever we feel that the storms of life are too much for us, let us look up and hear again the words of Jesus, "Be not afraid".

IN GENNESARET Chapter 6:53-56

On arriving at the other side of the lake of Galilee they were met once again by crowds which began to gather as soon as they recognised Jesus. His arrival in any area was good news to the sick and crippled. This was the time of great popularity for Jesus; everywhere He went the crowds gathered to hear Him. Sick ones were brought to Jesus, and everyone that He touched was healed. The tragic thing about these many people who came to Jesus was that they came for what they could get from Him. When the time came that Jesus began to call on them for loyalty during persecution, they began to go away. Jesus was to ask the disciples if they too would leave Him and go away. Sadly, it is true of many today. They come to Jesus and the church to seek something for themselves. They do not come to offer themselves to Christ. So many ask, "What can the church do for me?" when they ought to be asking, "What can I do for the church and my God?" May

1. **First, we see the HINDERERS.** These were the people who were in the way so much that the sick one could not be brought to Jesus. We too may be hinderers if we claim to be Christians, but do not live as Christians should. We may actually be in the way of others, keeping them from coming to Jesus to be saved.
2. **Next, we see the HELPLESS.** This is the paralytic who could do nothing for himself. The Bible says that all have sinned and that all are absolutely helpless to save themselves. Therefore, many people are like this crippled man. They have not repented of their sins nor have they been to Jesus for salvation and cleansing. They are as helpless as this poor paralyzed man.
3. **Also, we see here the HELPERS.** These four men who brought their friend to Jesus believed that Jesus could heal him. Notice in verse 5 that it was **their** faith Jesus saw. Do you believe that Jesus can save others from their sins? Then you also ought to bring others to Him.
4. **Last of all, we see Jesus the HEALER.** Jesus is the only one who has power to forgive sins and heal the body. God has given men knowledge and skill and He uses them to heal bodies today in our hospitals and clinics and elsewhere. Also, He uses preachers, whom He has called, to preach the word of salvation and forgiveness of sin to lost people everywhere.

LESSON FOUR

JESUS' MINISTRY IS DIFFERENT

MARK 2:13-3:6

Memory Verse:

And he said unto them, the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. Mark 2:27

INTRODUCTION:

This is probably the most important lesson in understanding the ministry of Jesus. There are some people even today who do not recognize the differences Jesus made. Jesus did not come to destroy the law of God. He came to bring the law to its highest fulfillment. However, we must be absolutely clear on this point. Jesus did not come to be bound by the rules and traditions of men which were often contradictory and against the true laws of God. Jesus made it clear that it is far more important to have a right relationship in the heart with God than to obey some religious rules made by men, and not agree with the greater laws of God. We must remember that the Bible is our only authority for matters of faith. Our authority is not based on a man or in an institution. By reading and studying our Bible carefully we may know the true will of God and His teachings.

JESUS' AUTHORITY IS DIFFERENT.

The ministry of Jesus was different. This was quickly recognized by the people. They spoke of His authority as being from Himself and not like that of the Scribes and Pharisees. The Scribes and Pharisees quoted at length from the traditions and interpretations of the Old Testament as made by the Rabbis and other ancient teachers. The people saw Him heal the sick, give sight to the blind, cast out demons, and speak of the forgiveness of sins. Truly, this **One** was different from all other men. Now, from Jesus' actions and His own words, they were made aware that His ministry was going to be different.

Opposition from the ruling Scribes and Pharisees in the synagogues drove Jesus to the open country. His ministry then became one of preaching to those who came out to Him. He also instructed His disciples in a special way. Let us look at some

six months to earn enough to give one meal to this crowd." But the disciples had once again forgotten the power of Jesus. Taking a little boy's lunch, Jesus served the crowd which had been split into groups at Jesus' command.

A Lesson for Us

This incident shows us two reactions to human need. The disciples were saying, "These people are tired and hungry send them away." Jesus saw the same tired and hungry people yet He was saying, "These people are tired and hungry. We must do something about it." We also see here two reactions to human resources. The disciples were saying, "Anything we could do for these people could not be enough." But Jesus was saying, "Give me what you have. It is enough." These loaves were not like our loaves of bread today. They would be more like our rolls. The fish would be small salt fish eaten as relish with rolls. Yet Jesus fed five thousand people with them. Let us remember that our little given to God can be used by Him and multiplied many times over. Our talents can be used by God and be made to bless many people. Let us ask ourselves what we can do for others through dedicating ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CONQUEST OF THE STORM Chapter 6:45-52

After the multitude had been fed, Jesus sent the disciples away in a boat. Mark does not tell us why Jesus sent the disciples away before He sent the crowd away. John (John 6:9) tells us that the crowd tried to make Jesus king. The crowd was thinking what a wonderful king He would be. Here was One who could raise the dead, heal the wounded, and supply food for an army that could conquer the world. The people had in their minds so strongly the idea of a political kind of Messiah (Saviour), that Jesus wanted more time to teach them why He had come. So Jesus sent the disciples away to let them get some rest and then He dispersed the crowd and retired to the mountain to pray. At about 3:00 o'clock in the morning Jesus came to them walking on the water. Whenever the disciples needed Him, Jesus was available. He left His time of prayer with all the problems pressing in upon Him to go to those in need. Here is a miracle which seems to have no spiritual meaning and purpose until we look at it more closely. It was, first of all, the natural response of Jesus to human need. It was also another opportunity to teach the disciples a much needed lesson. When things looked bad, the disciples invariably

JESUS' MASTERY OVER THE LAWS OF NATURE

MARK 6:33-56

Memory Verse:

For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I, be not afraid. Mark 6:50

INTRODUCTION:

When the disciples came back from their mission, they reported to Jesus all that they had done. The demanding crowds were so insistent that the disciples had no time to eat. Jesus told them to come with Him to a lonely place on the other side of the lake that they might have peace and rest. Here we see the way of Christian life. The Christian life is a continuous going into the presence of God for strength to meet the problems and difficulties faced day by day. We need to have a time to be in the presence of God daily so that He may fill our lives to face whatever may come.

In the remaining verses of this chapter, we see three incidents which Mark has recorded to give us further insight into the ministry of Jesus. In these incidents we see not only Jesus' power revealed, but also His love and concern.

FIVE THOUSAND FED Chapter 6:33-44

The crowd watched the boat in which Jesus and His disciples travelled so as to meet them on the other shore. Instead of being angry at the crowds that would not leave them alone, Jesus had compassion and love for them. His mind recalled immediately a picture of forsaken sheep, wandering about without a shepherd. Jesus Himself, that great Shepherd of the sheep, was thinking of what He could do for them. And so without further hesitation, Jesus began to teach them again. Jesus' love is further illustrated in His feeding of the crowds. The disciples wanted to send the people away, complaining that it would take two hundred penny worth of food to give even a little to each one. The translation "penny" is from a word "denarius", which was standard pay for one day's labour. The disciples were saying, "It would take a man

events which showed the difference between Jesus' ministry and the ministry of the Scribes and Pharisees.

1. There was the call of Matthew (Levi) to be a disciple.

Mark 2:13-14

Matthew was a man hated by the Scribes and Pharisees and by his own people. As a tax collector (publican) his job was to collect money for the enemy occupying the land of the Jews. The Romans would sell the right to collect taxes in a certain area to the highest bidder. He, in turn, might sell parts of his area to others at a profit to himself. These last ones would be pressed to collect enough to pay for their right to collect taxes and make a profit in turn for themselves. Some of the tax collectors were greedy men and would collect far more than the cost of their tax rights and a fair profit for themselves. The tax collectors were not loved by the Romans for collecting the taxes and they were hated by the Jewish people for their business. Yet Jesus saw what Matthew could become as a disciple. The first book of our New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew, was written by this disciple of Jesus.

2. Next, we see Jesus eating with the outcasts of that day.

Mark 2:15-17

Apparently Matthew gave a dinner for Jesus and His disciples and invited his fellow tax collectors and friends. However, when the Jewish leaders saw Jesus eating with them, they condemned Him for it. Their word "sinner" would include anyone who had not lived according to their traditions and laws. Jesus' answer was that His purpose in being there was to save souls. The Pharisees and others who condemned Jesus were like the sick person who does not recognize his need and therefore is not ready nor willing to be helped.

3. Following this there arose the question of fasting.

Mark 2:18-20

All the Jews fasted one day each year on the Day of Atonement, but the Pharisees fasted two days each week. This they did, not to glorify God, but to get praise for themselves from the people. Their fasting was not nearly so serious as it might sound for they could eat

before sun up and after sun down on the days of fasting. Their fasting was during the daylight hours only. During this time they painted their faces to show others that they were fasting. This was another reason why Jesus condemned them.

4. **Jesus then gave two illustrations to show that His ministry was to be different.** *Mark 2:21-22*

First, He gave the example of sewing new, unshrunk cloth on to an old garment. Secondly, He gave the example of putting new wine into old wine skins. There were no glass bottles in that day. The people used skins in which to preserve wine. Old skins became hard and when new wine was put in them they would burst from the expansion, losing the wine and the skin too. These two examples show that Jesus meant that His ministry could not be contained by the old Jewish religion. Just as the new cloth would tear the old cloth and the new wine would burst the old wine skins, so the new faith and interpretation Jesus brought from God could not be contained in the old legal system. Let us say again that Jesus did not come to destroy the Old Testament teachings, but to bring fulfilment to them and to correct many wrong interpretations of men concerning these teachings.

JESUS' ACTIONS ARE DIFFERENT *Chapter 2:23-28*

One further event showed just how different Jesus' ministry was going to be from that of the Scribes and Pharisees. As Jesus and the disciples passed through the grain fields on the Sabbath, the disciples plucked some of the heads of grain and ate them. To the Pharisees, plucking the small heads of grain on the Sabbath was a sin. However, Jesus showed that He was greater than the laws which they had made to burden the people concerning the Sabbath observance. Jesus declared Himself to be the owner of the Sabbath. As God in the flesh He could do as He wanted with the Sabbath. Jesus said that He would teach His disciples through the Holy Spirit who was coming (Read John 14:26). Later in Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2, it is plain that Sunday, the Lord's Day, had become the day of worship for the Christians, further showing the difference between the Jewish religion and the ministry of Christ.

defend John. Some today are like Herod who will sell out to Satan when the testing time comes. Herodias was a wicked woman who waited her chance to destroy John. She would not have to meet John again, but she forgot about the judgement of God. The daughter of Herodias was a partner to the wicked deed. She danced the sinful dances of that day and then used her favour with Herod to demand the death of God's prophet.

THE DISCIPLES RETURN *Chapter 6:30-32*

When the disciples returned and told Jesus all that had happened, He took them aside for a time to rest. The disciples had served the people. Now they needed time to be with Jesus.

who liked to dress for show. It would indicate that their dependence was in God in the matter of provisions. It would show their willingness to accept and be accepted by the common people.

THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST Chapter 6:14-29

The success of the preaching and healing tour by the disciples came to the attention of Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee. Hearing of the miracles and preaching, Herod was convinced that John the Baptist, whom he had killed, had come to life again. With the mention of John the Baptist, Mark tells us something of the details of John's death.

Herod Antipas had visited his half-brother, Herod Philip in Rome, where he persuaded Herodias the wife of Philip to return with him to Palestine. He abandoned his own wife at that time. This was a sinful arrangement, breaking both Jewish and Roman laws, and above all, God's law. John the Baptist spoke out against this open sin and met with the wrath of Herodias. Herod seized John, but for fear of the people was content to leave him in prison. Herod even liked to hear John preach and in his heart knew that all John said was true. But because of Herodias, Herod kept John locked in prison. Herodias, waiting her chance (verse 21), carried out a plan. At a party in honour of Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests. Herod was so pleased that he promised to fulfill her request up to half his kingdom. Being instructed by her mother, the girl asked for the head of John the Baptist to be brought on a tray. Herod at once regretted the foolish promise he had made. However, because of his oath before the assembled guests, he granted it. And so John the Baptist was beheaded in prison. When John's disciples heard of his death they came for his body and buried it. The forerunner of Jesus had fulfilled his mission. He had proclaimed Jesus' coming and now he had passed from the scene. Herod thought that Jesus was John risen from the dead. Others thought He was a prophet like the prophets of the Old Testament. Both opinions were wrong. He was more. He was God revealed in human flesh. He was God visiting mankind to bring salvation to them.

Also in this story we see the characters of Herod, Herodias, and Herodias' daughter revealed. Herod both hated and admired John. He hated John for his words, but he admired John for his courage and truthfulness. Yet when the test came, he failed to

JESUS' LOVE IS DIFFERENT Chapter 3:1-6

The final act of Jesus which drove His enemies to hate Him and to seek to kill Him, was the healing of the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day. We read that Jesus became angry at them because they thought more of observing a day than of healing a crippled man. The Pharisees and Herodians, who were enemies, joined together to seek to destroy Jesus. They had come to the synagogue, not to worship God, but to accuse Jesus. Jesus was angry at them, but He was also grieved that they would not understand what he was trying to do on earth. They not only refused to believe Jesus, but they made plans to destroy Him. The word "destroy" means that they intended to use every means available to them to crush the work of Jesus and to kill Him. This shows us how sin can blind the eyes and distort a person so that he can not even recognize God when he sees Him. Jesus Christ, who was God living on earth as man, was grieved because of the unbelief of these who not only refused to recognize His true identity, but also began to plot to destroy Him.

LESSON FIVE

THE TIME OF POPULARITY

MARK 3:7-35

Memory Verse:

And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. Mark 3:25

INTRODUCTION:

The response to Jesus' ministry was by no means entirely negative. There were a great many people who were attracted by His miracles and His teachings. The common people were greatly moved by the ministry of Jesus. They crowded around Him wherever He went. Try as He would to get rest and to pray or to teach His disciples, Jesus simply could not get away from the surging crowds. When He withdrew from the towns to the sea, they followed Him, coming from widely scattered areas.

THE WITHDRAWAL Chapter 3:7-10

There seems to have been two reasons for Jesus' withdrawal from the synagogues at this time. One reason was that the Scribes and Pharisees and other religious leaders were becoming more and more hostile toward Jesus and His teachings. There was much more that Jesus wanted to say and do, so He withdrew from the areas where the Scribes and Pharisees had the greatest influence.

Another reason was the crowds of people who followed Him from the heavily populated towns. However, Jesus did not escape this group for the crowds came from miles around to hear Him, to be healed by Him, and to watch His miracles. In fact, so many people were rushing to touch Him, without waiting for Jesus to touch them, that He had to keep a small boat in readiness so as to escape their desire to touch Him.

JESUS SILENCES THE EVIL SPIRITS Chapter 3:11,12

Mark tells us that Jesus forbade the evil spirits to witness for Him. Even though the words they spoke were true, they came

Joseph was probably dead. Also when Jesus was on the cross He asked His disciple John to look after His mother. This too would indicate that Joseph was dead. The naming of Jesus' brothers and sisters here also gives us a tiny glimpse into His home life. Jesus was the only One ever born who had an earthly mother and a heavenly Father. Mary and Joseph had children according to the natural process after the birth of Jesus. Matthew 1:24-25. There is no evidence in the Bible to contradict the fact that these were children born to Mary and Joseph after Jesus' miraculous birth. However, the main point we should notice here is the unbelief of the people. Consequently, because of their unbelief, Jesus could do no great miracle there. This may be true of us today. We must believe that Jesus has the power to save us. We must commit ourselves to Him, else, even today, Jesus can do no mighty work in our hearts. And so Jesus left them at Nazareth. Let us pray that we do not drive Him away from our hearts by our unbelief.

THE TWELVE SENT OUT Chapter 6:7-13

Here we get a glimpse of the future plan of our Lord when He established the church. He was to commission His church to go and preach unto the ends of the earth. See Matthew 28:19-20. He sent out the twelve with a particular mission in mind. First, they brought the Lord's message. That message was the same as preached earlier by John the Baptist and by Jesus Himself . . . "repent". To repent means to change one's mind and then to be willing to fit one's actions to this change of mind. Repentance is hard, for it hurts. It means admitting our wrong and being willing to do something about it. The disciples not only brought the Lord's message, but they also brought the Lord's mercy. They brought help and healing. The repentance they preached led to forgiveness and salvation. In their healing the disciples used oil. It was the best known remedy of that day for sickness. Jesus was using the old cures, but His power was accompanying it to bring new power to the old method. Even so today, God uses modern medicines and modern methods and puts His own power within. God still is the Great Physician working today and all healing comes from Him.

Another thing we must consider is the instruction given by Jesus to the twelve He sent out. They were to go in simple dress, complete trust, and to accept the hospitality afforded them. These things would show that they were not like the Pharisees

LESSON EIGHT

CHRIST IS REJECTED AT HIS HOME TOWN: HIS MINISTRY EXPANDS

MARK 6:1-32

Memory Verse:

But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. Mark 6:4

INTRODUCTION:

Mark records that, after raising Jairus' daughter from the dead, Jesus "came into his own country", that is, into Galilee. Jesus had been away from His home area for some time now and His fame had reached Jerusalem and other areas to the south. Evidently, His reputation had been spoken of in Nazareth too, for when He arrived there the crowds enquired as to the source of His wisdom and power. It was sad that those to whom He would have gladly and lovingly ministered refused His help. Mark tells us that Jesus was even astonished that their unbelief was so great.

REJECTED IN NAZARETH Chapter 6:1-6

The return of Jesus to Nazareth was not a social visit. He came back to His home as a rabbi or teacher with His own company of disciples or learners. It was customary in those days for teachers to walk about teaching. What brought surprise and amazement to the people of Nazareth was that Jesus had not been trained in the Rabbinic schools for this kind of teaching. Yet they had to admit His great learning and wisdom and His authority in teaching and preaching far exceeded that of the other rabbis. Another thing which disturbed the people of Nazareth was that Jesus had always been a working man. The word "carpenter" means "craftsman". A craftsman was one who was skilled in wood working and could make furniture or even build a house. The fact that He is called the "son of Mary" indicates to us that

from an impure source, the demons. The unclean spirits had knowledge that Jesus was the Son of God, yet this knowledge did not save them. So men may profess belief in all the truth of Scripture but still be heathen. However, they were forced to obey Him and come out of the sick persons. It may be even today that an impure life lived by one who professes Christ as Saviour may forbid any word of testimony from his lips. There is a saying, "What you **do** speaks so loud I can't hear what you are saying." That is to say, one may speak good things with his mouth, but if the way he lives is contrary to what he says, then what he does will be taken more seriously than what he says. How tragic for the Christian, saved by the sacrifice of Christ to be unable to give a good testimony for his Lord because his life denies the truth of what he is saying. May we not be silenced in this way.

THE TWELVE CHOSEN Chapter 3:13-15

It was previously stated that Jesus withdrew from the towns because He had much to teach His disciples. But even there in the open He was thronged by crowds, so He selected His personal disciples from among the many, and took them aside to instruct them further. In verses 14 and 15 of this chapter we read that Jesus ordained them. That is to say, He selected them from among the many and set them apart for the work He wished them to do. He also gave them power over evil spirits, and power for healing. Later on, the book of Acts records for us some of these accounts. God still gives these powers of preaching, healing, and casting out of evil spirits today. However, He gives it only to those whom He chooses and always for His own glory and not to glorify or honour any person.

THE TWELVE NAMED Chapter 3:16-19

The twelve apostles or disciples of Jesus are here named for us. It is interesting to note that we know very little about most of the first twelve disciples. One of these twelve, Judas, betrayed our Lord. Peter denied Christ at His trial. And yet we know that it was from this small number that God was able to establish the church on earth. When the disciples finally became convinced that Jesus was Lord and Christ, probably after His resurrection, then they became a powerful force for God. They cast out evil spirits. They healed in Jesus' name, and they preached with great power.

THE ACCUSATION OF "FRIENDS" Chapter 3:20,21

Once again we read of a large crowd gathering around Jesus and His disciples. This time the crowd is so insistent for the attention of the disciples and Jesus that they scarcely had time to eat. This brings about the accusation that perhaps Jesus is a mad man, that He has lost His sense of reason altogether. Some have suggested that these "friends" mentioned here are the members of Jesus' family referred to again later in this chapter. They may have been acquaintances of Jesus who knew Him in Nazareth. Jesus Himself said that a prophet has no honour in His own country. This was certainly true in Jesus' case.

THE ACCUSATION OF THE SCRIBES Chapter 3:22-27

Now the Scribes, who apparently have come from Jerusalem for the purpose of accusing Jesus presented a more serious charge against Him. They accused Jesus of using demonic power from Beelzebub, the prince of devils, to cast out the evil spirits. However, by a simple parable Jesus turned the accusation back upon them. Jesus said that, if Satan's power is being used against the evil spirits, then Satan's empire is divided against itself which is sure proof of its coming destruction. Jesus said, "And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand" (verse 24). This was also sure evidence that Jesus was not using demonic power.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN Chapter 3:28-30

In verse 28-30, Jesus says that the accusing Scribes are in danger of committing the unpardonable sin. What is this sin? Jesus says that all kinds of sins can be forgiven except this one against the Holy Spirit. That is to say, their sin was that they refused to recognize Jesus as God in the flesh, revealed to men. In fact, they insisted that Jesus was even controlled by Satan himself. In other words, they were calling the very Son of God a servant of the devil. To these there could be no repentance and therefore no forgiveness. They refused to recognize the only true source of forgiveness, that is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is very clear at this point. There can be no forgiveness nor salvation apart from Jesus Christ. See also Acts 4:12 and John 8:24. The only unpardonable sin then is unbelief which denies Christ as Lord and Saviour, therefore cutting oneself off from the only source of forgiveness.

arrival of Jesus and the returning Jairus. Their surprise turned to mocking when He spoke of the little girl as being asleep. Their laughs mentioned here by Mark, furnish convincing proof of the actual death of the child. However, their scorn turned to amazement when the dead child was brought to life again by Jesus.

Jesus' power is adequate to meet every circumstance in life. His power is able to do the most wonderful thing in all the world for you. He can forgive your sins, cleanse your life, and give you everlasting life. Read Ephesians 2:5.

THE TOUCH THAT HEALED Chapter 5:25-34

Another incident showing Jesus' power over disease was the healing of the woman who touched His garment. Several important things may be noted here. **First**, there was the woman's apparently hopeless condition. Her sickness was of a long duration—twelve years, and she had spent all she had to get help. Instead of getting better she only grew worse. She was becoming desperate for help so she decided on a plan. **Next**, we see her faith that she would be healed if she could only touch the garment of Jesus as He passed by. **Then** we see that her faith was justified. She was truly healed by Jesus upon touching His clothes. Now, Jesus wished to see who was healed in this way, not to scold her, but to further bless and encourage her.

JESUS HAS POWER OVER DEATH Chapter 5:35-43

This could be called the supreme test of Jesus' power. To have power over death meant that without doubt this was God in the flesh living among men even as John was to say in his Gospel (John 1:14). But let us first look at this man Jairus, who came to request Jesus' help for his daughter who at this time was still alive, but very ill. Here was a man who went to great trouble to get help for his little girl and he was not disappointed. **First**, we see that Jairus forgot his prejudices. No doubt this synagogue ruler knew of Jesus' expulsion from the synagogue at Nazareth, but now in the fact of great trouble he forgot all prejudices. Even so should our present day prejudices melt away in the presence of Jesus Christ in whom there is no prejudice or distinction because of class or colour. **Secondly** we see that Jairus forgot his pride. He, the ruler of the synagogue, came and threw himself at the feet of Jesus. This recalls to our minds the story of the Syrian general, Naaman, (see 2 Kings 5) who had to humble himself and obey the instructions of Elisha. When he obeyed, he was healed. **Thirdly**, Jairus forgot his friends. Apparently none of his friends would come, so he had to forget them and leave his daughter at the critical point of death. In fact, she was so ill that messengers came bringing news of the little girl's death while they were still on the way. At this news, Jesus encouraged Jairus to maintain the faith he had already shown.

Jesus took only three of His closest disciples to the house of Jairus. There we see the tumult usually associated with death. The mourners and friends have looked with surprise at the

JESUS' TRUE FAMILY Chapter 3:31-35

At last even the family of Jesus comes to try to take Him home with them. We must infer that at this time Jesus' earthly family did not recognize Him for who He really was. Later, however, we find the mother of Jesus and Jesus' brothers among the disciples who met to pray after Jesus' ascension. Acts 1:14. Still later we find James, the brother of Jesus, a strong leader in the Jerusalem church, (Read Galatians 1:19). However, of great significance is the statement of Jesus that those who do the will of God are truly in His family. This means that all who truly believe in Jesus and accept Him into their hearts can become a member of His family. Jesus told Nicodemus (John 3) that even he must be "born again" before he could ever see the kingdom of God. So must we be born again by faith in the Lord Jesus to become part of God's family which includes all races, men and women. Everyone who has been born into the family of God by the spiritual new birth of repentance and faith in Christ is a true member of the family of God.

LESSON SIX

PARABLES AND THEIR MEANINGS

MARK 4:1-34

Memory Verse:

And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred. Mark 4:20

INTRODUCTION:

Mark now turns, for the moment, from the miracles of Jesus to the teaching of Jesus by parables. One definition of a **parable** is that it is an **earthly story with a heavenly meaning**. It is perhaps more accurate to say that a **parable is a brief story told by way of comparison to teach some lesson or central truth**. The word "parable" means "to cast alongside". A parable then is a story cast alongside a major truth to bring its meaning more clearly to the mind. A parable is like an illustration used by a speaker to clarify some point in his message. In interpreting parables we must be careful not to press the meaning beyond that intended by the speaker. A parable will be told to illustrate one, or at the most, two main truths. Its meaning must not be pressed into many types or allegories of truths not intended by the original speaker. In learning the lessons from a parable we must ask the following questions:

1. **What is the lesson or lessons the speaker wished the hearers to receive?** It is not our privilege to interpret meanings not intended by the speaker into a parable.
2. **How does the parable bring out these lessons?**
3. **What application can I make of these truths in my life?** If we will keep these questions in mind as we study the parables of Jesus we shall gain much accurate spiritual knowledge.

calm and peaceful. It is a large lake, measuring only about eight miles in width and about fourteen miles in length. However, because of the surrounding mountains and valleys, sudden storms could spring up on the lake. This is what happened on that day. As the storm burst upon them, the disciples awakened Jesus who was asleep in the back part of the ship. They give us some idea of the intensity of the storm in their words of fear lest the boat sink with them. At His word, the waters were calmed. Then Jesus rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith. Perhaps He was suggesting to them that whenever the storms of doubt and fear assailed them, they must again turn to Him in faith. At any rate the effect on the disciples was one of fear or great respect. The storm had not suddenly abated on its own. It had subsided at the express word of Jesus and so they wondered what kind of man He was. They were learning little by little that Jesus was no ordinary man, but that He was the Son of God with power.

JESUS HAS POWER OVER DISEASE Chapter 5:1-24

Jesus' power over disease is illustrated by two incidents recorded here by Mark. The **first** instance has to do with the Gadarene demoniac (verse 1-20). Upon crossing the sea and touching the shore, Jesus and His party of disciples were met by a man possessed of evil spirits. We learn how serious his condition was from the following facts. He lived in the caves which also served as tombs. He could not be helped by his fellow men for they could in no way control him. Further, he was cutting himself on the sharp rocks of the area. However, upon seeing Jesus, the demons within the man cried out Jesus' identity as the Son of God, and pleaded for mercy. We read in James 2:19 that the devils "believe", that is, they know that there is one true God. They do not believe in the sense of accepting Christ nor of repenting of their sins. Jesus asked the man's name and received the reply, "Legion". The demoniac felt sure he was possessed by thousands of evil spirits resembling a legion of soldiers. Then Jesus allows the demons to enter the pigs feeding nearby giving the demon-possessed man absolute proof of his deliverance. Apparently, this was the assurance the man needed for after this he was well. In fact he desired to go with Jesus, but Jesus asked him to preach first to his own people, which he did to their amazement. It is sad that the owners of the swine were more concerned about their material loss than they were about the wonderful cure of the sick man.

JESUS' POWER AS THE SON OF GOD

MARK 4:35-5:43

Memory Verse:

And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? Mark 4:41

INTRODUCTION:

In the first chapters of Mark's Gospel, we have seen the power of Jesus in the realm of healing sickness and in the miracles of feeding the thousands. Now Mark will show us that there is no area where the power of Jesus is not supreme. The natural elements of wind and wave and storm obey His command. All manner of sicknesses flee before His healing touch. Finally, as if it were the supreme test, Mark shows that Jesus has power over death itself.

THE POWER OF JESUS IS COMPLETE

The teachings of Jesus brought evidence that here was no ordinary man. The common people recognized that He possessed an authority from within Himself which was not like that of the Scribes (Mark 1:22). Now even further proofs by demonstration are given showing the power of Jesus in every realm of life. Jesus had power and authority over nature. John 1:3 tells us that it was Jesus who was together with God in the Creation. This means that Jesus was co-existent and co-equal with God. Also, we see His power over disease, including every kind of evil spirit. Furthermore, we see His power over that greatest enemy of mankind, death. Thus Mark shows that there is no area where the power of Jesus is not supreme.

JESUS HAS POWER OVER NATURE Chapter 4:35-41

Jesus was tired from preaching and healing. Wishing to get away from the crowds for a short time, Jesus and His disciples entered a boat to cross the sea of Galilee. Ordinarily this sea was

JESUS TEACHES IN PARABLES Chapter 4:1,2

We are told in verse 34 of our lesson material in Mark chapter 4, that Jesus made great use of teaching by parables. The parables of Jesus are known throughout the world for their beauty and clarity. The master Teacher knew how to impress the minds of those who heard Him with the truth. Jesus' parables taught eternal, spiritual truths which are as true for us today as they were for the people who heard Him speak them for the first time.

JESUS EXPLAINS A PARABLE Chapter 4:3-20

Here in this chapter, Jesus tells the parable known as the "Parable of the Sower". Then He gives us His own interpretation of the story. We might call this the "Parable of the Soils" for it is the condition of the soil which determines the outcome of the harvest in each case. Jesus explains that His story is not just about farming as carried on in that day and time, but there is a deeper, spiritual meaning in the story. First, Jesus identifies the seed as the Word of God, or the Gospel. The sower would be the one who preaches or otherwise distributes the Gospel. We notice that in each of the four types of soil the sower is the same and the seed is the same, but the results are far different in each case. Let us look at the description of the soils and the results obtained in each one.

1. The Hard Ground

First, there is the seed which fell along the path. This hard soil which was packed by the feet of many people could not receive the seed into itself. This kind of ground represents the people who hear the Word of God, but do not receive it. Therefore the devil snatches it away and no fruit is harvested from it. The devil, here represented by the birds, is quick to take away any good word which may fall into your heart. Jesus says we must not only listen, but we must receive the Word with understanding, being willing to practise what it tells us.

2. The Stony Ground

The second kind of soil is that which has the stones in it. That is, the soil is a thin covering over the underlying rock. There is much soil like this in the country of Palestine where Jesus told this story. This soil represents those who receive the Word of God when they hear it, but they do not go on with God. They receive

the Word of God, recognizing that it is good and true, but they are unwilling to act as they know they should in fulfilling this Word. There are many people like this today who say they want to be Christians, but they are not willing to be obedient to the Word of God which has been sown in their hearts. This kind of soil supports the seeds long enough to get them started, but when the time of most important growth comes, there is no depth of soil to feed the plants, so they wither and die. There are some who appear to have believed, but their actions show that they have made a commitment with their mouths only and not with their lives.

3. The Thorny Ground

The third type of soil is that which has not been cleared of the roots of thorn bushes which had been growing there. The soil may look good and it may seem to be well prepared, but underneath the soil lies danger to the seed. Jesus says that this type of soil represents those who hear the Word, receive it in their hearts, but never bear fruit because of other things within. The cares of the world are the interests in things opposed to God. This could include the love for drinking or other bad habits which destroy one's interest in the things of God. The deceitfulness of riches is the desire to possess things so much that the desire to be possessed by God is lost. The deceit in riches is that it promises many good things then but in the end, riches can not bring any of the lasting and most important values of life. Then the most tragic consequence of all this is that the seed, representing the Word of God, is completely choked off and no fruit is harvested.

4. The Good Ground

However, at last we find some good soil in which the seed grows to maturity and produces a wonderful harvest. These are the hearers who receive the Word of God, believe it truly in their hearts, and then act upon what they have heard and received. May you, dear reader, be like those who heard, received, and acted upon what they heard and received. If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, then do so today and be fruitful for God.

THE SHINING LAMP Chapter 4:21-25

Those who heard Jesus' parable may well have asked, "If so many refuse to accept the Word, why go to the trouble of

proclaiming it?" Jesus answered such a question in this brief parable. He said, in effect: "You have no choice. You must bear witness of God's grace in your life so that others who live in darkness may come to know and receive this Gospel also." A lamp is not lit to be hidden, neither is the Christian saved to hide his witness. We are saved to serve.

THE SECRETLY GROWING SEED Chapter 4:26-29

This short parable further illustrates that sometimes we can not know what the effects of the outgoing of the Gospel will be until much later. This parable tells us something about growth of the Kingdom of God. Like nature's growth, the growth of the Kingdom is **imperceptible**. We can not see a plant growing, but if we return after several days' absence we can notice it. The growth of the Kingdom is also **constant**. Night and day, year by year the Kingdom is growing. The growth of the Kingdom, like nature, is **inevitable**. Even the gates of hell can not hold back the advance of God's Kingdom. See Matthew 16:18.

THE MUSTARD SEED Chapter 4:30-34

The beginning of the kingdom is small like the mustard seed. Jesus may have been referring to His own ministry, confined to the little land of Palestine, but the time would come when His words and His quickening touch would be known and felt around the world. All of these parables show that if the seed of the Gospel is faithfully sown, though the beginnings may be small, there will be ultimate growth and harvest.