

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

**--- Volume Two of Four ---
(Mark Chapters 6; 7; 8; & 9)**

A Practical Commentary on
The Gospel According to Mark

By
Joseph L. Looney II

2012

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The Gospel According to Mark

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

By

Joseph L. Looney II

May, 2012; April, 2014

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH—COMMENTS ON MARK - VOLUME 2 of 4

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JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK
Outline With The Harmonized Sequential Listings from all Four Gospels^B

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

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

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

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

CREDITS, EXPLANATION, AND DEDICATION

CREDIT FOR SOURCES

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

EXPLANATION

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

FINISHED

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

DEDICATION

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

Joseph L. Looney II
Gillette, Wyoming

April 2012 through February; April, 2014

FOREWORD

to the commentary entitled

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH—COMMENTS ON MARK

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

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

CREDITS FOR SOURCES -- ADDED REMARKS

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

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

APPRECIATION FOR PASTORS, PREACHERS AND INSTRUCTORS

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

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

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

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

CREDITS DUE TO OTHERS

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

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

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

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

EXPLANATIONS ABOUT BIBLE QUOTATIONS:

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

DISCLAIMER

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

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

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FOUR---

**THE SERVANT: REJECTED YET SHOWING
COMPASSIONATE POWER**

(Mark Chapter 6:1-56)

---CHAPTER 9---

Rejection Overcome by Preaching and Martyrdom

(Mark Chapter 6:1-29)

---CHAPTER 10---

Compassion Manifested -- Needs Supplied

(Mark Chapter 6:30-56)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FOUR--- THE SERVANT: REJECTED YET SHOWING COMPASSIONATE POWER

(Mark Chapter 6:1-56)

---CHAPTER 9--- Rejection Overcome by Preaching and Martyrdom (Mark Chapter 6:1-29)

OUTLINE

- IX. Rejection Overcome by Preaching and Martyrdom** 6:1-29
- A. Rejected in His own Hometown 6:1-6a
(Matthew 13:54-58)
{Actually this is the second rejection at Nazareth}
1. Followed by His disciples into His own country 6:1
 2. In the synagogue teaching on the day of worship 6:2a
 3. The opposition and rejection by the hometown people 6:2b,3
 4. The reasoning behind their rejection 6:4
 5. The marveling of Jesus because of their unbelief 6:5, 6a
- B. Sending Forth the Twelve (see v. 4) 6:6b-13
(Matthew 9:35—11:1; Luke 9:1-6)
1. Teaching the Word of God in the villages 6:6b
 2. Calling and sending the twelve to preach 6:7
 3. Instructions for the journey 6:8-10
 4. A message of both salvation and judgment 6:11
 5. The nature of the mission of the apostles 6:12,13
- C. Herod Antipas Responding to the Fame of Jesus Christ 6:14-29
(Matthew 14:1-12; Luke 9:7-9)
1. Confession of Herod about Jesus 6:14-16
 2. The explanatory account of the beheading of John 6:17-28
 3. Honoring of John in his death by his Disciples 6:29

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FOUR--- THE SERVANT: REJECTED YET SHOWING COMPASSIONATE POWER

(Mark Chapter 6:1-56)

---CHAPTER 9--- Rejection Overcome by Preaching and Martyrdom

(Mark Chapter 6:1-29)

This new division begins with Mark 6:1 and continues through the last verse of Mark 6, verse 56. It is entitled "The Servant: Rejected yet Showing Compassionate Power." It is divided into two chapters: chapter nine, rejection overcome by preaching and martyrdom, 6:1-29; and chapter ten, compassion manifested — needs supplied, 6:30-56. Jesus was most likely in Capernaum when He overcame the hostile powers of disease and death in the healing of the woman with the flow of blood and in raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead (5:21-43). Afterward, He came into His own country or hometown of Nazareth. While there, the Ideal Servant of God is rejected by the people of His own home country. Yet, He overcomes this rejection through His preaching and teaching and indirectly through the martyrdom of John the Baptist. This is stated because Herod Antipas, when he had heard of Jesus, said, "That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him" (Mark 6:14). This section, concerning the rejection of Jesus

consists of the following: one, rejected in His own hometown, 6:1-6a; two, sending forth the Twelve, 6:6b-13; and three, Herod Antipas responding to the fame of Jesus Christ, 6:14-29.

Most people have felt rejected at one time or another. The way that Jesus dealt with rejection is a good example for the people of God to follow. Jesus stressed that His people are to "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22; Hebrews 11:6). This is still needed in this modern age. The example of Jesus is the example to follow. Church trouble is stressful, but it is no time to quit. When Jesus was rejected, He continued to trust in the Heavenly Father. He dug in deeper and was committed even more and implemented the program of God: which is to preach and witness to the saving grace of God.

A. Rejected in His own Hometown 6:1-6a

(Matthew 13:54-58)

This opposition and rejection of Jesus as recorded in Mark by His hometown neighbors and former townspeople is actually His second rejection at Nazareth. Both John F. Carter (141, 142) and A. T. Robertson (Harmony, 77) agree that this is the second rejection of Jesus by the people of Nazareth, the first being recorded in Luke 4:16-30. Robertson writes:

There is no sufficient occasion to identify this visit to Nazareth with that described by Luke. That was at the very beginning of the great ministry in Galilee, and this is near its close. The details are quite different. It is perfectly natural that after a long interval he should give the Nazarenes another opportunity to hear his teaching, and to witness miracles, which he would not work for them when demanded, but now voluntarily works in a few cases, so far as their now *wonderful* unbelief left it appropriate (Harmony 77).

This passage about Jesus being rejected by the people of His own hometown may be divided into five parts: one, followed by His disciples into His own country, 6:1; two, in the synagogue teaching on the day of worship, 6:2a; three, the opposition and

rejection of the hometown people, 6:2b,3; four, the reasoning behind their rejection, 6:4; and five, the marveling of Jesus because of their unbelief, 6:5, 6a.

Followed by His disciples into His own country (6:1) This verse states "And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him." Jesus now goes back to his home country. The question arises, "Where is His home country?" Although Nazareth is not mentioned by either the account of Matthew or Mark, the context indicates that this is the last visit of Jesus to His hometown. The words "own country" from πατρίς (patris) means "one's native country; one's fatherland, one's own country . . . one's own native place i.e. a city" (Thayer 496). Luke confirms that the home country of Jesus was indeed Nazareth for he records "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up . . ." (4:16). Matthew adds, "And he (*Joseph*) came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He (*Jesus*) shall be called a Nazarene" (2:23). Hence, Jesus was considered to be from Nazareth.

Verse 1 also relates that the disciples of Jesus followed Him to Nazareth. The word "follow" is from the Greek present participle of ἀκολουθέω (akoloutheo). The present tense denotes continued action. The idea is that the disciples of Jesus followed Him and they continued to follow Him. These disciples set a good example for all believers. {What does it mean to follow Jesus, today?¹ For the answer please see the *Chapter Notes*.} These events (Mark 6:1-30) at the hometown of Jesus and the sending out of the twelve are a mile-post in the ministry of Jesus Christ since it is about a year "till His Crucifixion" (Robertson, *Harmony* 85).

In the synagogue teaching on the day of worship (6:2a) The first part of verse 2 says, "And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue . . ." On the day of worship Jesus was in the synagogue teaching. As an

Israelite, Jesus worshipped the heavenly Father on the day of worship in the house of worship. In the book of Hebrews believers are exhorted by God to assemble themselves together on the day of worship, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." This was the example of Jesus. It should not be taken lightly, but followed by His people. This reinforces a point made previously, and that is, that teaching and preaching the Word of God is to be the main part of the worship in the New Testament Church.

The opposition and rejection by the hometown people (6:2b,3) On "the sabbath day" as Jesus began to teach "many hearing *him* were astonished. . . ." The verb "were astonished" is from the imperfect passive form of ἐκπλήσσομαι (ekplēssoumai) meaning "to be amazed, to be overwhelmed" (Rienecker 102) and also "to strike out with panic, shock, astonish . . ." (Thayer 198, 199). These people were overwhelmed that a mere hometown boy could know so much. They wondered when and where He had received His education. They were confused and in unbelief. They were asking themselves "Are His miracles of God or of Satan?" (Wessel 665). In Mark 1:22 the same verb translated "were astonished" is used as in 6:2. But in 1:22 the people in Capernaun "were astonished" at His doctrine and were surprised; but they believed Jesus was from God. Whereas in Nazareth the people could not understand how and from where this hometown boy could have such wisdom. This was in spite of their knowledge about the "mighty works . . . wrought by his hands."

Verse 3 gives the clear reason these people were struck with astonishment. The first part of verse 3 records the questions in their minds, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" They were asking, Is not this the one who built furniture and

houses in this, our town? They considered Jesus as just a common ordinary fellow raised among themselves. They were thinking, "How could this boy whose family is right here with us be the Son of God?" Those named in this verse are younger half brothers and sisters to Jesus "born to Mary and Joseph according to natural biological processes" after the virgin birth of Jesus (Wessel 665). The people of Nazareth did not comprehend Jesus in His entirety. They looked at Him as only "**a**" son of Mary and Joseph. It behooves each person to ask and consider the question that Jesus later presented to the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42). "Is He really the Son of God?" "Is He really the Saviour?" "Is He my Savior?"

The opposition and rejection of Jesus as the Son of God is made apparent in the last part of verse 3. It declares, "And they were offended at Him." The verb "were offended" is from the Greek imperfect passive form of *σκανδαλίζω* (*skandalizo*) meaning "to cause to stumble, passive to be offended" (Rienecker 102) with the idea of someone or something becoming a stumbling block. The English words "scandal and/or scandalize" are derived from this Greek word. Thayer includes as part of his definition of *σκανδαλίζω* (*skandalizo*) "to be offended in one, . . . i.e. to see in another what I disapprove of and what hinders me from acknowledging his authority . . ." (576, 577). The use of the imperfect tense of this verb means they were offended and they continued to be so. "In the language of Webster, they were completely flabbergasted" (Wuest 120). It was not so much that Jesus was a stumbling block in Himself, but the things He taught and did became a stumbling block to many. Jesus was not at fault but the people were at fault. They rejected Jesus because of jealousy and unbelief in their own hearts (6:6). This same type of thing happens in churches today. People get offended and are caused to stumble or to become a stumbling block. Usually, when things go wrong in the church the first one the people blame is the

preacher. This is usually the case because people do not want to accept the truth and also because they do not want to make an abiding commitment to be faithful to Jesus and His body, the local church. Each person should ask themselves, "Have I rejected Jesus as my personal Savior? If a person continues in rejection of Jesus, and never accepts Him as his or her personal Savior, they need to remember there is coming a great day of judgment and he or she will face the Holy God without Jesus as his or her advocate (1 John 2:1,2). Each person needs to remember that there is no remedy for his or her sin and sins without Jesus as his or her personal Savior and thus, he or she will be turned into hell fire (Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8).

The reasoning behind their rejection (6:4) Jesus gives the reasoning or the answer to their rejection when He declares in verse 4 "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." {Similar words are found in John 7:5; 4:44; Matthew 13:57}. This saying of Jesus in verse 4 has its parallel in both Jewish and Greek proverbs (see also Isaiah 49:7; 53:3). One of these is that: "Familiarity breeds contempt" (Wessel 665). These hometown people were incapable of appreciating who Jesus (a prophet and yet much, much more) was because they identified Him as just being an ordinary fellow from their own town and not as one who was something great and certainly not the promised Messiah. Like people today, if the people of Nazareth had been studying the Scriptures as they should have, they would have recognized Jesus as the Messiah and believed (Acts 17:10-12). Each person needs to recognize and understand that Jesus Christ is a someone greater than all, that He truly is God, the Son of God. If one does not do so, then maybe, just maybe, he or she needs to take a second look. Each one needs to think about his or her commitment to Christ. Is it what it should be? If not, then one needs to recommit and rededicate himself or herself to the greatest One of

all, Jesus the Son of God, the one and only Savior, the Head of His Body, the church. The best time to do this is today. The Bible says in James 4:17 "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."

The marveling of Jesus because of their unbelief (6:5, 6a) Verse 5 says Jesus could do no mighty works in Nazareth "save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*." The reason why has already been explained in verses 3 and 4. Verse 6a further explains why Jesus was unable to do great works in Nazareth. It was not because He did not have the authority and power but because of the unbelief of these people. God never forces people against their own will. Mark says this response of unbelief of His neighbors was a real source of wonderment to our Lord. The first part of verse 6 declares that Jesus "marvelled because of their unbelief." The word "marvelled" is from the Greek word θαυμάζω (thaumazo). It is used about 31 time in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and is translated "marvel, wonder, have in admiration, and admire" in most cases. It is only used of Jesus here in Mark 6:6 and in Matthew 8:10 and in the parallel, Luke 7:9. In these two cases (Mark as opposed to Matthew and Luke) it is used in opposite ways. Robertson writes:

Jesus had divine knowledge and accurate insight into the human heart, but he had human limitations in certain things that are not clear to us. He marvelled at the faith of the Roman centurion where one would not expect faith (Matt. 8:10 = Luke 7:9). Here (*Mark 6:6*) he marvels at the lack of faith where he had a right to expect it, not merely among the Jews, but in his own home town, among his kinspeople, even in his own home (Word Pictures 307).

It is a sad and dangerous thing to limit God. If there is something about Jesus and the doctrines of the Bible one does not really believe then one is limiting God (Psalms 78:41). Hence, every believer should be like the centurion and not like those at Nazareth. Each believer should cry out to Jesus just as did the father of the little

child who "said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).
(The last part of verse 6 will be discussed with verse 7.)

B. Sending Forth the Twelve 6:6b-13

(Matthew 9:35—11:1; Luke 9:1-6)

Jesus was opposed and rejected but He did not quit. After Jesus "marvelled because of their unbelief" He dug in and overcame with more preaching and witnessing. The last part of Mark 6:6 states, "And he went round about the villages, teaching." Jesus did not use artificial nor superficial programs to attract people; He stayed the course. If the Word of God and the truth and power of the Gospel message will not do the job and attract folks, nothing else will in the way that God wants things to be done. The program that God has prescribed in the Bible is to preach the Word in public assembly and to witness the truth to individuals. The only God honoring way to attract people to Jesus is to use the same method that He used: preach and witness to the Word of the Gospel. After the stoning of Stephen, there came upon the church at Jerusalem a great persecution. Luke records in Acts 8:4 "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." This was both preaching to many and witnessing to others one on one. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and the church at Ephesus in 2 Timothy 4:2 "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." This subdivision about the Servant sending forth the twelve to preach is made up of the following particulars: one, teaching the Word of God in the villages, 6:6b; two, calling and sending the twelve to preach, 6:7; three, instructions for the journey, 6:8-10; four, a message of both salvation and judgment, 6:11; and five, the nature of the mission of the apostles, 6:12,13.

Teaching the Word of God in the villages (6:6b) The last part of verse 6 is a transition passage. It seems that because of His rejection at Nazareth, Jesus went to

the surrounding villages, teaching. Robertson and Carter put verse 6b as parallel to Matthew 9:35-38 (Robertson, Harmony 78; Carter 146). Matthew 9:35 states that Jesus was "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." In doing this Jesus saw a great need for laborers. Thus he said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37,38). Most likely, as a result of this ministry, Jesus decides to send out the Twelve. The emphasis is on teaching the Word of God. Yet all the while Jesus set an example for all to follow in that He established a godly influence among the people.

Calling and sending the twelve to preach (6:7) According to verse 7 Jesus called or summoned the twelve unto Himself "to send them forth two by two." Jesus had carefully trained these men and this was to be additional practical training. He had said He would make them fishers of men (1:17). He had taught them and they had witnessed His mighty works. Now, He begins to send them out on a special mission. The infinitive verb "to send" from ἀποστέλλειν (apostellein) carries "the idea of official representation" (Wessel 667). (The word "apostle" comes from the root form, ἀποστέλλω (apostello).) They were His delegates, His apostles, and their ministry was to be an expansion of His ministry. (This goes along with Matthew 9:35-38.) Later, Jesus would say unto them as a New Testament church in John 20:21 "Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you." His sending them forth "two and two" is rooted in the statement of Moses found in Deuteronomy 19:15 that "at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter (*or truth*) be established" (See also Deuteronomy 17:6). Jesus not only sent them forth to preach but also "gave them power over unclean spirits." The word

"power" is from the Greek word ἐξουσία (exousia) which means authority. This is not dynamite power. He gave them authority over the demons which is made plain in Luke 9:1 "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases." Christ has this authority and now He delegates it to the apostles. This does not mean that He has given anyone this power and authority today (1 Corinthians 13:1-13). If it is not written that He did, then believers should not believe that He has given this power to some today. Luke 9:2 makes it clear what was the main thrust of their mission; for it declares, "And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." This is confirmed in Mark 6:12. What about the last part of Luke 9:1 and 9:2, that they were sent "to cure diseases" and "to heal the sick?" The Twelve were sent to do this in that day; but today preachers are only sent to do the first part according to the Great Commission given to His churches for today.

Instructions for the journey (6:8-10) In verses 8, 9 Jesus commands or instructs the Twelve to take with them only what they had on their backs except for a staff. They were to be shod with sandals but were not to take scrip, bread, money, nor an extra coat. The word "scrip" is from the word πήρα (pera) which means "a wallet, a leathern sack, in which travellers and shepherds carried their provisions" (Thayer 508). Why was this? It was a lesson on faith. They were to believe and learn that their needs would be supplied. They were to rely on God for their needs. Where God sends, God supplies the needs of those He sends (Luke 10:7; Philippians 4:19; 1 Timothy 5:17,18).

In verse 10 Jesus "said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place." The idea of this was that God would use His people to take care of His messengers. The urgency of their mission is also

gleaned from these instructions to the Twelve. Their message was the same as His: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (1:15). The ministry of the gospel is still a matter of utmost urgency and calls for absolute total commitment to God (Matthew 10:37-42).

A message of both salvation and judgment (6:11) In verse 11 Jesus declares, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. . . ." While the message of the gospel is the gracious message of salvation by grace through faith, it also warns of the consequence of not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Jesus tells them what to do if an individual or a household or even a city would not receive them nor hear their message of the love, mercy, and grace of God. In this event as they left, they were to shake the dust off their feet for a testimony against them. This action declared such a city "to be heathen and to make it clear that those who rejected the message must now answer for themselves" (Wessel 667). Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." The message of the gospel is a message of "judgment as well as salvation" (Wessel 667). Note this truth as expressed by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:14-17,

Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

Mark 6:11 is parallel to Matthew 10:14,15. In the first part of verse 11 Jesus teaches that persecution can be expected by the messengers of the gospel. The Apostle Paul comments on this in 2 Timothy 3:12 when he writes "Yea, and all that

will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Not receiving the messenger and the message of God is a form of persecution. Jesus explained further to His disciples in Matthew 10:40 where He declares, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." In the last part of Mark 6:11, Jesus reminds them of the cataclysmic devastation and havoc of judgment that God brought upon Sodom and Gomorrha in the days of Lot because of their sin. And in the coming day of judgment, Jesus declares, "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." Thus for those who will not receive His messengers and the true message of salvation in this present church age, Jesus is saying that their judgment will be "more awful" (Carson 246) than for the future judgment for those of Sodom and Gomorrha. [Among other things, Jesus is teaching in these verses that there are degrees of punishment in hell.] D. A. Carson in his comments on Matthew 10:14,15 writes, "Thus the disciples began to learn that the advance of the kingdom was divisive (vv. 34-35; cf. 2 Cor 2:15-16) and would meet with violent opposition (see on 11:11-12)" (246).

The nature of the mission of the apostles (6:12,13) Verses 12, 13 reveal the nature of the mission of the apostles. It was the same as that of Jesus. First they were to preach "that men should repent." They were to herald the good news of the kingdom of God to mankind and men in return were to repent. In other words, men were to have a complete change of heart: turning from self, sin, the world, Satan, and condemnation to the mercies of God and thus be converted. The twelve also were to perform and did perform miracles in order to show that they were from God just as Jesus did. But the real emphasis in this passage is the preaching and teaching as seen in Matthew 9:35; 11:1; Luke 9:6. Preaching is to be the main job of the messenger.

C. Herod Antipas Responding to the Fame of Jesus Christ 6:14-29

(Matthew 14:1-12; Luke 9:7-9)

This portion of Mark 6 includes the martyrdom of John the Baptist. According to the first six verses of Mark 6, Jesus was rejected by His own hometown people where He had been raised. But even though He was rejected, He overcame it by preaching, teaching, and increasing the preaching and teaching by sending forth the Twelve on a limited commission. That Jesus overcame this rejection can be seen from the fame of the Servant as recorded in verses 14,15. Verses 14-28 record the way Herod Antipas and others responded to the fame of Jesus Christ and the fact that Herod had had John the Baptist beheaded. This passage seems to be parenthetical. It is an explanation of the reaction of Herod to the reports of Jesus Christ and His spreading ministry. These reports may have been caused by the sending out and resultant ministry of the apostles. However, it could have been that Herod just simply heard of the ministry of Jesus himself. This segment of Mark may be divided into three parts: one, confession of Herod and others about Jesus, 6:14-16; two, the explanatory account of the beheading of John, 6:17-28; and three, honoring of John in his death by his disciples, 6:29.

Confession of Herod and others about Jesus (6:14-16) When King Herod heard of the fame and expanding ministry of Jesus Christ, he believed this one must be John the Baptist risen from the dead. Verse 14 relates "And king Herod heard *of him*; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him."

"The Herod mentioned here is Antipas, son of Herod the Great and his mother's name was Malthace" (Wessel 668; Scofield's Notes 1018). He is called Herod the tetrarch in Matthew 14:1 and in Luke 9:7. [After Herod the Great died, his rulership was divided four ways by the Caesar of Rome (Pfeiffer 194)]. He was the tetrarch

(meaning the ruler of the fourth part) of Galilee and Perea or Peraea.² Antipas had built his capital on the southwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee and had named it after the ruling Caesar, Tiberias (Wessel 668; Rairdin, PC Bible Atlas for Windows, Ver 1.0j).

Luke records, "Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead" (Luke 9:7). Mark 6:14 (along with Luke 9:7 and Matthew 14:2) explain the perplexed or confused thinking of Herod and gives evidence that the preaching of Jesus had a profound effect on the people of that day. In fact, it was so dynamic that Herod thought Jesus to be John the Baptist raised from the dead. Herod had heard of the mighty works performed by Jesus and this caused him to be afraid. This wicked man had a consciousness of his iniquity, evilness, and sin.

Verse 15 reveals that others thought Jesus to be Elias or Elijah which would be according to the prophecy of Malachi 3:1; 4:5. Malachi 4:5 declares, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." Still others viewed Jesus as just an ordinary prophet like those of the Old Testament, but not "the Prophet" foretold in Deuteronomy 18:15-18 which speaks of the Messiah or the Christ.

Verse 16 gives the view of Herod as already stated above. This verse adds that Herod said and confessed, "It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead." This view of Herod was caused more by his guilty conscience than what he had heard of Jesus since he was directly responsible for the beheading of John (Wessel 669). According to Luke 9:9 Herod was asking, "who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him."

The explanatory account of the beheading of John (6:17-28) The account of the beheading of John the Baptist is given here, but his death had taken place before this time as gleaned from the confession of Herod in verse 16. This explanation of the beheading of John the Baptist is at once a sad commentary on the depravity of the human race. On the other hand, it reveals the true character of one of the great servants of God. John exhibits the moral courage that a true preacher must have in the face of incurring the wrath of powerful, wicked men. John stood for the principles of the Word of God. Each church congregation should pray for her preacher that he will have that courage by the enabling grace of God.

Verses 17 relates that Herod himself had ordered that John be arrested and imprisoned. This verse further states that this was done for the sake of Herodias, who had been the wife of his brother Philip, since Herod had illegally and immorally married her. [The timing of this imprisonment was very early in the ministry of Jesus as recorded in Mark 1:14 and Matthew 4:12. While in prison, Matthew 11:1-19 records where John had sent messengers to Jesus.]

Verses 18 further explains why John was imprisoned. John had said unto Herod, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Herod was denounced for his adulterous union with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. The Law says in Leviticus 18:16 "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it *is* thy brother's nakedness" and Leviticus 20:21 states "And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it *is* an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless." Robertson comments on this to say, "While the brother was alive . . . " (Word Pictures 311) the Law according to Leviticus 18:16; 20:21 was in effect. However Robertson goes on to say, "After a brother's death it was often a duty to marry his widow" (Word Pictures 311). (Concerning this see Mark 12:18-27;

Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Ruth 1:11,12; 3:2, 11-13; 4:1-10.) This pronouncement of John unto Herod, "cost him his head, but it is better to have a head like John's and lose it than to have an ordinary head and keep it" (Robertson, Word Pictures 114).

Verses 19-20 records the conflict between Herodias and Herod. "Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." The pronoun "him" in verse 19 refers back to "John" in verse 18. This first "him" is from the Greek dative pronoun αὐτοῖς (autoi) from the root αὐτός (autos). This is the use of the "dative of disadvantage" since it is used in a "negative aspect" (Dana and Mantey 84, 85) since the verb "quarrel" has a negative sense. The word "quarrel" from imperfect tense of ἐνέχω (enecho) means "to have it in for someone, to hold a grudge (Rienecker 103). Ἐνεῖχεν αὐτοῖς (eneichen autoi) translated "had a quarrel against him:" is rendered by Robertson "had it in for him" (Word Pictures 311).

The wicked Herodias wanted John put to death, but Herod would not allow it for he feared John of whom he recognized as a holy and righteous man. This manifests the reputation of John. He had a good report of those not of the faith. Every preacher should have a good report whether people like him or not (1 Timothy 3:7). Concerning the evil designs of Herodias, the Bible commentator T. W. Manson says that Herodias knew that "the only place where her marriage certificate could safely be written was on the back of the death warrant of John" (*T. W. Manson qtd. in Wessel 670*). Nevertheless, Herod refused to put John to death because he was awed by the pure moral fiber of John and he feared John as evil ones fear the good (*Wessel 670*). The record says in verse 20 that Herod "heard him gladly" but evidently he was puzzled by his message of repentance and judgment to come. In any case, it says that

Herod "when he heard him, he did many things . . ." meaning that as Herod heard John preach he tried to reform himself. The preaching of John had a positive effect upon Herod. But Herod hesitated and wavered between the wicked desires expressed by Herodias and the truth and judgment preached by John.

According to verses 21-23 Herodias finally got the opportunity to execute her hate upon John. At the celebration of the birthday of Herod, when all of his military and political leaders (lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee) were present at a banquet, the daughter of Herodias danced before Herod and his guests. The context ("a convenient day was come") suggests that this lewd dance was part of the strategy of Herodias to get rid of John. Robertson writes, "The maudlin group lounging on the divans were thrilled by the licentious dance of the half-naked princess" (Word Pictures 313). The dancing so pleased Herod and his court that Herod offered her whatever she wished, "unto the half of my kingdom." [It is suggested by Wessel that the expression "unto the half of my kingdom" "may have been a kind of proverbial way of expressing openhanded generosity and *should* not be taken literally" (670). See also Esther 5:3,6; 7:2.] One should be careful what he or she offers, it may cause much trouble.

Verses 24,25 confirm that this dance was part of the deliberate and thought-out plans of Herodias to have John put to death. When the daughter went to her mother and asked, "What shall I ask?" Herodias was quick to reply, "The head of John the Baptist." Also, Mark does not mention any surprise on the part of the girl. In fact, verse 25 says she went "with haste" or immediately back to Herod to make an evil two-fold request: one, she asked for the head of John "by and by" and two, she wanted it on a charger or platter. The words "by and by" is from the Greek word

ἐξαυτῆς (exautes) which means "immediately" (Rienecker 104). In other words, she wanted John executed at once.

Verses 26-28 state,

And the king was exceeding sorry; *yet* for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

These verses record the actual order of execution and death of John the Baptist. Mark says that Herod was made "exceeding sorry" by the request of the daughter of Herodias. The depth of his sorrow is expressed very graphically by one Greek noun περιίλυπος (perilupos) meaning "encompassed with grief, very sad, exceedingly sorrowful" (Thayer 503). The idea is that Herod was greatly distressed. This is the same word used to describe the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane in Mark 14:32-34. Nevertheless, Herod, because of his oath and his guests, did not refuse this evil request. He should have stood up for justice, but alas, he did not. He could have just as easily pleased God rather than men. Verses 27, 28 report that Herod sent and had John beheaded immediately and delivered his head to the damsel or girl who gave it to her mother. What a sad commentary on the justice system of that day.

Honoring of John in his death by his disciples (6:29) Verse 29 relates, "And when his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb." This ends this shocking account of the death of John by telling that his disciples came and gave John a respectable burial. Herod, no doubt, thought he was finished with this righteous prophet, but this was not to be. The memories of John was stirred in the mind of Herod by the ministry of Jesus and his fears returned once more as according to verses 14-16.

The Gospel Records have quite a bit to say about John the Baptist and his ministry. In honoring his death some of the facts about John the Baptist should be mentioned. That is, who he was and what he did. First of all, it should be said that he was faithful to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a man sent from God (John 1:6). John the Apostle was not speaking of himself but of the one in the other Gospels called John the Baptist. He witnessed of Jesus and said that Jesus was preferred before me and that Jesus is the Lamb of God (John 1:15, 29). John was called John the Baptist because he baptized those who repented and believed his message of truth that the kingdom was at hand for the Messiah or the Christ had come (Matthew 3:2; John 1:28; 3:23-24). John baptized Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; John 1:32). John prepared his disciples for Jesus to take and build His Church (John 1:35, 40). John did no miracle but all things that he spake of Jesus were true (John 3:26-27; 5:33; John 10:40-41).

Summary of Chapter

The Ideal Servant of God was rejected by the people of His home country. Yet, He overcomes this rejection by preaching, teaching, and increasing the preaching and teaching by sending forth the twelve on a limited commission. That Jesus overcame this rejection can also be seen from the fame of the Servant as recorded in verses 14,15. After the beheading of John and when Herod Antipas heard of Jesus, he claimed that it must be John risen from the dead, "and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him." Jesus was rejected but He did not quit. The way that Jesus dealt with rejection is the good example for the people of God to follow. Jesus stressed that His people are to "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22; Hebrews 11:6). When rejected, He continued to trust in the Heavenly Father. He was committed even

more and implemented the program of God: which is to preach and witness to the saving grace of God.

Jesus gives the reasoning behind their rejection when He declared, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country. . . ." In fact, "they were offended at Him." These hometown people were incapable of appreciating who Jesus was because they identified Him as just being an ordinary fellow from their own town and not as one who was someone great and certainly not the promised Messiah. Like people today, if the people of Nazareth had been studying the Scriptures as they should have, they would have recognized Jesus as the Messiah and believed He was and is someone greater than all, that He truly is God, the Son of God.

Jesus marveled because of their unbelief. This was the reason "He could . . . do no mighty work" in Nazareth "save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*." It was not because He did not have the authority and power. It is a sad and dangerous thing to limit God. Each believer should cry out to Jesus just as did the father of the little child who "said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

As a result of His teaching ministry, Jesus summons and sends forth the Twelve two by two on a special mission. He had carefully trained them and this was to be additional practical training. He had taught them and they had witnessed His mighty works. Their mission was urgent and their message was the same as that of Jesus: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (1:15). The message of the gospel is the gracious message of salvation by grace through faith; yet, it also warns of the judgment to come. It behooves each person to consider the answer to the question that Jesus presented later, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42) It is a dangerous thing to reject Jesus.

Concerning the account of the beheading of John the Baptist, let it be noted that Satan was behind it. Satan wanted to stop the work of God. But the death of one of the faithful servants of God never stops His work, for God will always raise up someone to take his place. Satan wants to put every true New Testament church out of business. There are those who once walked in the truth who have departed and gone off into error but that will not stop the work that God has for a New Testament church to do. This passage in Mark 6 tells of the sad end of the life of a righteous, humble, and faithful servant. Four things should be learned from this account. One, this is but one example of a righteous man suffering at the hands of wicked men. But let it be remembered that Jesus said the servant is not better than his master. Two, let it be noted that this gives the account of a ruler who makes a vain promise because he is carried away by carnal lust. This somewhat compares to the case of the sin of David and the result seen in the death of Uriah. Three, this account shows that the beauty of the soul and mind far exceeds fleshly beauty. Four, this shows what happens when a wicked woman has her own wicked way by using her own daughter to get it done. This exhibits the depths of depravity. The Bible teaches that all are depraved and sinners. It also reveals that Jesus is the remedy to cure and deliver the repentant believing sinner from his sins and to justify him before God. One day Jesus will come again and take all believers to heaven. It is a dangerous thing to reject Jesus.

Chapter Notes

1. (See page 195; Mark 6:1.) First, to truly and genuinely follow Jesus, one must be saved by having trusted Jesus and His shed blood. Second, after one is saved he or she must have followed Jesus in scriptural baptism. Third, one should join a New Testament church, one that believes sound doctrine. Fourth, one must learn the Word, follow the will of God, and practice what He teaches. Jesus said in John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Fifth, one must do His will according to His Word and Way. Each saved

person ought to ask himself, "Am I a true disciple of Jesus" The disciples of Christ were called Christians "first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). They were called this because they were Christ-like or like Christ. A person can be saved and not be Christ-like. Thus each saved individual should ask himself, "Am I being Christ-like." The exhortation to each believer in Christ Jesus is that he or she should follow Jesus in His every step and be Christ-like.

2. (See page 205, Mark 6:14.) "Peraea was the area east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, extending northward from the Arnon to the town of Pella" (Pfeiffer 192). Pfeiffer states that it is "the Greek equivalent of Transjordan, 'the land beyond' " (192).

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FOUR--- THE SERVANT: REJECTED YET SHOWING COMPASSIONATE POWER (Mark Chapter 6:1-56)

---CHAPTER 10--- Compassion Manifested - Needs Supplied (Mark Chapter 6:30-56)

OUTLINE

X. Compassion Manifested -- Needs Supplied	6:30-56
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1. The apostles returning and needing to rest	6:30-31
2. The compassion of the Savior	6:32-34
3. The concern and suggestion of the disciples	6:35-36
4. The compassionate solution of Jesus	6:37-44
B. Walking on Water (Matthew 14:22-33; John 6:14-22)	6:45-52
1. The Servant sending the multitudes away	6:45
2. The Servant departing to pray alone	6:46
3. The Servant walking on water	6:47-52
C. The Servant Well Received and His Healing at Gennesaret (Matthew 14:34-36)	6:53-56

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FOUR---

THE SERVANT: REJECTED YET SHOWING COMPASSIONATE POWER

(Mark Chapter 6:1-56)

---CHAPTER 10---

Compassion Manifested -- Needs Supplied

(Mark Chapter 6:30-56)

Mark 6:30 is the beginning of the second withdrawal and return which continues until Mark 7:23 (Hiebert 106). Many reasons have already been stated for these retirements of Jesus and His disciples. (See comments on Mark 4:34ff, page 163 of this dissertation.) One of the main reasons was that Jesus could train His disciples (Robertson, Harmony 85). [Disciples need training today. This is one good reason to study the Word of God, attend Sunday School, and church worship services at every opportunity.] These withdrawals also were designed to provide much needed rest from the onslaught of the great crowds (Robertson, Harmony 85). Just because the twelve were called apostles did not mean they were super humans, even Jesus needed rest. These retirements were mostly taken around the Sea of Galilee and began to occur about a year before the time of the crucifixion. This particular withdrawal was an occasion for Jesus to manifest His compassionate power which is readily seen in the feeding of the five thousand and in the healing of many in the land of Gennesaret.

This second withdrawal and return may be divided as follows: one, feeding of the five thousand, 6:30-44; two, walking on water, 6:45-52; three, healing more people near Gennesaret, 6:53-56; and four, controversy with the Pharisees concerning defilement, 7:1-23 (Hiebert 106). In these events the compassion and power of Jesus is manifested in spite of His being rejected. By His loving power Jesus supplied the needs of the people and in so doing taught the disciples of that day and today some very valuable lessons about depending on God. His praying and walking on water and the miraculous healing of many in the land of Gennesaret also revealed His compassion and power.

This subdivision of Mark chapter 6 is entitled "Compassion Manifested — Needs Supplied." Verse 34 is the key which reports, "And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." Jesus shows His compassion in feeding the people with both spiritual food and physical food. This portion of Mark may be divided as follows: one, feeding the five thousand, 6:30-44; two, walking on water, 6:45-52; and three, the Servant well received and His healing at Gennesaret, 6:53-56.

A. Feeding the Five Thousand 6:30-44
(Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13)

The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle that is recorded in all four Gospel records other than the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. This is to say that, all other recorded miracles are only recorded either in one but not more than three of the Gospel records. This is the first of two miraculous feedings of the multitudes. Mark 8:1-10 and Matthew 15:32-39 record the feeding of the four thousand. Two things should be noted about these miraculous feedings. The first thing is that Jesus

did not hesitate to multiply the loaves for the multitude. However, the Lord Jesus refused to make bread out of stones for Himself. Why? Because in the feeding of the multitude He had the two-fold purpose of blessing them and also to perform a miracle in order to prove that He truly was the Son of God. Whereas in Matthew 4:3-4, Satan knew Jesus was God and Jesus would not bow down to Satan. The second thing to note about these miraculous feedings is that Jesus would not allow Himself to be the earthly king of the multitudes and keep on multiplying the loaves. Why? Because He would have been bowing down to them.

This feeding of the five thousand plays an important role in the Gospel according to Mark (Wessel 672). Mark refers to it two different times: once in 6:52 and again in 8:17-21. From this is gleaned that Jesus intended by these miraculous feedings to teach His disciples, present and future, that with God all things are possible; yet they are impossible with men (Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37). Also "the feeding of the five thousand" shows the great contrast between the diet of the court of Herod and that of the peasant (Lane *qtd in* Wessel 672). At the same time, it shows as someone has said, that, "little is much in the hands of the Lord." The segments of this passage may be divided as follows: one, the apostles returning and needing to rest, 6:30-31; two, the compassion of the Savior, 6:32-34; three, the concern of the disciples, 6:35-36; and four, the compassionate solution of Jesus, 6:37-44.

The apostles returning and needing to rest (6:30-31) These verses set the scene for the feeding of the five thousand. Verse 30 tells of the apostles gathering back unto Jesus after He had sent them forth on a mission of preaching repentance, casting out demons, anointing with oil many who were sick, and healing (Mark 6:7-13). Notice the use of the word "apostles" in verse 30. The use by Mark of the word "apostles" in this context is particularly significant in that what they had been

doing explains the work of an apostle and gives a correct definition of the word as used in the New Testament. The English word "apostle" comes from the Greek noun ἀπόστολος (apostolos). Ἀπόστολος (apostolos) means "...one sent out. It indicates one sent out with the personal authority (*and responsibility*) and as a representative of the one sending" (Rienecker 28; see Matthew 10:2). This is the way it is used in this chapter of Mark and throughout the Bible. The words "gathered themselves together unto Jesus" means they assembled together with Him. Is this not what a church does? This further shows that Jesus established His church during His personal ministry on the earth. They assembled with Jesus in order to give Him a full report of their activities while they were away on the mission of which He had commanded.

The last part of verse 30 also relates that the apostles told Jesus "all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught." Again this shows that teaching was an important part of their mission. Pastors and preachers are to teach the Word. One cannot separate teaching from preaching or preaching from teaching. Ephesians 4:11 is a proof text for this for it relates, "And he gave (*to the church*) some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and (*or even*) teachers." Take note that the word "and" from the Greek conjunction καί (kai) may be translated "even" (Dana and Mantey 249-252) so the last "and" in Ephesians 4:11 can be "even" so that it could be read and understood to say "pastors even teachers" meaning they are one and the same. Teaching was then and is now an important part of the ministry of the pastor/preacher. It is following the example and teaching of the Lord Jesus and the apostles according to the New Testament (Matthew 28:19,20). Take note, they quoted from other parts of the Scriptures to show that they were not just pulling things out of the air (Acts 10:34-43; 17:1-3).

Verse 31 indicates that the apostles had worked hard and were weary. Their

mission evidently was successful because it seems to have created much interest. Mark records that so many were "coming and going" that they did not have time to even eat. This is why Jesus said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." The Greek verb for "rest" is in the aorist imperative indicating that this was a command. Even pastors need to rest. [Along with this, it should be said that pastors should not ignore their families, but should take time out for them and with them.]

The compassion of the Savior (6:32-34) Verses 31,32 imply that they departed by ship by themselves to a desert place. The word "desert" is from the Greek adjective ἔρημος (eremos) and means a "lonesome" place, or a "desert, desolate, solitary" place (Strong's 2048). It was a quiet place where they could be alone and rest. But according to verse 33 this was not to be. The people followed them by running along the seashore. Verse 33 says, "And the people saw them departing, . . . and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him."

Verse 34 records the compassion of Jesus upon the great crowds that had gathered unto Him, for it says that He "was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." On the one hand, "Jesus had every right to be annoyed with the crowd" (Wessel 673); instead He viewed them "as sheep not having a shepherd" This reminds one of the plea of Moses to God concerning this same thing when he prayed that God would give the people of Israel someone to be their shepherd leader after he, that is, Moses was dead (Numbers 27:15-17). Even in this modern day, people are "as sheep not having a shepherd." Hence, God calls men to be undershepherds over His flock. This is the reason for pastors for churches (1 Peter 5:1-6). Jesus saw the people as precious sheep that needed a shepherd to guide and lead them and thus He

responded with compassion and in love. This response of our Lord Jesus is also given in Matthew 9:35-38 where it relates,

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few; 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Ezekiel 34:5ff also refers to this. This portraying of people being scattered and "as sheep not having a shepherd" denotes the lack of their having spiritual guidance. Thus Jesus "began to teach them many things." Again, mark well, the emphasis on teaching. People today need the same when it comes to spiritual things.

The concern and suggestion of the disciples (6:35-36) By this time, it was very late in the day. Verse 35 says, "when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed." The disciples realized that the people were hungry and they became concerned for them. So they came to Jesus to remind Him that this was a desolate place and that it was quite late. In that day, there were no fast food places unto which to resort. Verse 36 records their suggestion as to how to solve the problem. They suggested that Jesus send the people away to neighboring villages so they could buy food and thus satisfy their hunger. But Jesus had a better plan; He always does.

The compassionate solution of Jesus (6:37-44) The answer of Jesus to His disciples is given in verse 37. His answer suggests that He was using this incident to teach His disciples a lesson and to manifest His compassion upon these people. Jesus was always teaching; was He not? He said to them, "Give ye them to eat." In saying this, Jesus used the Greek emphatic irregular plural personal pronoun ὑμεῖς (humeis) from σύ (su) to make the message clear (Dana and Mantey 123; Thayer 591). He

was saying, "you all (ye yourselves) give them something to eat." How could they? Good question! Their reply indicates how appalled they were at this command. They said to Jesus, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth¹ of bread, and give them to eat?" It was as if they said, "Lord, surely, you do not mean what you said." But one should not judge them too quickly. Is not this response a very common one? This amount of money would take about eight months for a common laborer to earn according to some scholars (Wessel 673). This can be verified by a brief study of the "Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard" recorded in Matthew 20:1-16. The apostles thought this would be impossible. Jesus was going to teach them a lesson in faith.²

In verse 38 Jesus asked them, "How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes." John 6:9 records that it was actually a lad who had "five barley loaves and two small fishes." In that verse the disciples ask Jesus, "but what are they among so many?" This was a small meal even for a lad. But Jesus was now ready to proceed with His solution to the problem. Nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing is too hard for God and all things are possible with Him. Verse 39 relates that Jesus ordered His disciples to arrange the people in an orderly fashion. So they sat down upon the grass "in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties" (verse 40). This was "to facilitate the distribution of food" (Wessel 673). God is a God of order and not of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). [The green grass suggests that this was in "late winter or early spring" (Wessel 674) or about the time of the passover (Robertson, Word Pictures 317).]

Verse 41 reveals that after Jesus took the five loaves and two fishes that, "He looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves. . . ." This is the example from Jesus Himself that people ought to thank God for their food and everything else (Matthew 6:8-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Jesus gave the food to His disciples to give

to the people. He did not give it directly to the people. God uses people in His plan. (So it is that He gave the Great Commission to the church and the church as a whole and the individual members are to spread the Gospel.)

Verses 42, 43 record that all the people, not only ate and all were filled but that twelve baskets full were taken up. What a miracle! This truly was a biblical miracle. This was truly the Son of God. [Robertson writes that this was "a . . . miracle that only God can work. . . . And three eyewitnesses report it: the Logia of Matthew, the eyes of Peter in Mark, and the witness of John the Beloved Disciple (Gould). The evidence is overwhelming" (Word Pictures 317).] Verse 44 states that "they that did eat . . . were about five thousand men." This word for "men" is not the generic ἄνθρωποι (anthropoi) meaning mankind or human beings, either males or females; but ἄνδρες (andres), men as opposed to women and children. So there were more human beings eating than five thousand men as Matthew verifies in Matthew 14:21. This miracle further shows the compassion of the Savior. He taught the people and fed them. It is truly a blessing to be taught the Word of God. This feeding is symbolic of His filling the saved with spiritual food.

B. Walking on Water 6:45-52
(Matthew 14:22-33; John 6:14-22)

In Mark 6:45-56 the Servant manifests His compassion upon His disciples and upon the people of Galilee. To better explain Mark 6:45-52 it is very helpful to consider the parallel passages from the other Gospel records and especially that of John. This passage may be divided as follows: one, the Servant sending the multitudes away, 6:45 (Matthew 14:22; John 6:14-16); two, the Servant departing to pray alone, 6:46 (Matthew 14:23; John 7:15c); and three, the Servant walking on water, 6:47-52 (Matthew 14:24-33; John 6:14-22).

The Servant sending the multitudes away (6:45 along with Matthew 14:22;

John 6:14-16) Verses 45 says, "And straightway (*after the feeding of the five thousand*) he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people." Neither verse 45 nor verse 46 give the reason why Jesus commanded His disciples to leave by ship, "while He sent away the people." Nor do these verses in Mark explain why He Himself departed to the mountain to pray so quickly. However, the parallel in John 6:14-15 suggests that it was to prevent "a messianic uprising" (Wessel 675; see also Robertson, Word Pictures 317, 318) to proclaim Jesus the political King as a result of the miracle.

John records, "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14). No doubt, these people were thinking of the Old Testament declaration in Deuteronomy 18:15-18 where it states that God would raise up a prophet from among them like unto Moses. The Israelites were expecting a king like David to come and set up His earthly kingdom (2 Samuel 7:11-17). This is implied in John 6:15 which declares, "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." Many are the prophecies in the Old Testament that a king would come that would conquer the enemies of Israel: some of which are Genesis 49:50; Numbers 24:17-19; 2 Samuel 10,11,12,13,16; Isaiah 9:6,7, and many more.

This uprising to take Jesus "by force, to make him a king . . ." was nothing short of a major crisis in the life of Jesus (John 6:14,15). If Jesus had yielded to this desire of the multitudes, Satan would have won. Part of the temptation by Satan was to promise to Jesus the kingdoms of the world as seen from Luke 4:5-7 and Matthew 4:8,9. Satan wanted Jesus to worship him and this would have defeated the plan and

purpose of God to redeem sinners. While it is true that the kingdoms of the world belong to Jesus, in the plan of redemption, Jesus must first die for sinners and pay for the sins of the sinner on the cross of Calvary. By so doing, that is redeeming sinners, Jesus would advance His spiritual kingdom and give solid ground for the commission of His New Testament church. Someday Jesus will return at the end of this present age and install His visible kingdom and rule and reign for a thousand years. Therefore, John 6:14-16 explains why Jesus commanded His disciples to leave by ship, sent the multitudes away, and then He Himself departed to the mountain to pray quickly. This is a good example of what the Bible means when it states in 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*." (This is not to imply that Jesus in any way would have yielded to temptation.) Jesus is not only the Savior but also the perfect, sinless example for everyday life.

The Servant departing to pray alone (6:46 along with Matthew 14:23; John 7:15c) After sending everyone else away Jesus "departed into a mountain to pray." Matthew 14:23 and John 6:15 state that Jesus was alone. As previously implied, Mark 6:46 records and gives a great example of how Jesus avoided temptation and each believer would do well to imitate Him in this. He went alone to the Father to pray. The "mention of Jesus praying is further evidence of the crisis nature of the situation" (Wessel 675) after the feeding of the five thousand. There are at least two other times that Mark mentions His praying and these are found in Mark 1:28-35 and 14:32-36. These were also crisis situations. "Each incident involves the temptation not to carry out . . ." the plan of God for Him of "suffering, rejection, and death" (Wessel 675, see also Robertson Word Pictures 318). The example of Jesus praying should challenge

each born-again believer to be a person of prayer. (John F. Carter has a good discussion on these verses on page 155 of his A Layman's Harmony of the Gospels. This writer leaned heavily upon this discussion.)

The Servant walking on water (6:47-52 along with Matthew 14:24-33; John 6:14-22) Mark 6:47 states, "And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land." This verse sets the scenario for the incident of Jesus walking on the water. It was evening. The ship with the disciples was in the midst of the sea and Jesus was alone on the land. Verse 48 says it was the fourth watch. This would be "between three and six in the morning" (Wuest 137). Verse 48 further states that they were toiling or straining at the oars for the wind was contrary to them (John 6:18). As these things took place Jesus came walking on the water and it seemed to them as if He would just walk on past them.

Verse 49 states "But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out." When they saw Jesus they thought they saw a ghost. The word "spirit" or "ghost" is not from the usual word that is translated spirit or ghost but rather from the Greek noun φάντασμα (phantasma) and means "an appearance, an apparition, spectre" (Thayer 649). Michael S. Bushell states that it can mean "ghost" (Bible Works for Windows). This Greek word is used only two times and is translated "spirit." The English word "phantom" comes from this word. The word "apparition" means "a visible appearance of something not present and especially of a dead person" (Ami Pro Version 3.0; Thesaurus). Of course, Jesus was not and is not dead and far from it, for He is Jehovah God. Nevertheless, the disciples were troubled for they did not know whether it was a good or evil spirit.

Verse 50 declares "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." The words of Jesus to identify Himself are "it is I." From the Greek this could be

translated simply, "I am" (Berry, 108) This is how God identified Himself to Moses in Exodus 3:14 where "God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." From this the name Jehovah is derived which means the everlasting God, and the one who is to come. Thus the words of Jesus had reassuring force when He told them "Be of good cheer . . . be not afraid." Robertson writes, "They had never seen him or any one walk on the water. His voice reassured them" (Word Pictures 319). What wonderful news this was to them and also to believers today. This proves that Jesus is present with the believer in every situation and circumstance no matter how bad it may seem.

Verse 51 records that when Jesus entered the ship the wind ceased.³ This is the second time Jesus manifested His power over storms and wind and proves that He is always there with each believer in the storms of life (Mark 4:35-41). Mark states three things about the disciples of Jesus in this verse: one, "they were sore amazed," two, they were "in themselves beyond measure," and three, they "wondered." The whole incident is symbolic of the storms that come into the life of a believer and that as the believer trusts in God, the Savior will calm the winds and still the waves.

Verse 52 tells the reason for their complete amazement. In this incident as over against the previous time when a storm came up (4:35-41), Jesus was far away from them in physical presence as far as they knew. They had truly not evaluated and understood the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and the other recent miracles (Carter 156, 157). The verb "was hardened" from the Greek perfect passive participle of πωρόω (poroo) meaning "to cover with a thick skin, to harden by covering with a callus, metaph(orically), to make the heart dull, (passive) to grow hard, callous, become dull, lose the power of understanding" (Thayer 559). The use of the perfect tense by Mark pictures the state or condition of their hearts. Their hearts were hardened. Barnes explains, "Their *mind* was dull to perceive it. This does

not mean that they were *opposed* to Jesus, or that they had what we denominate *hardness of heart*, but simply that they were slow to perceive his power" (354). They had not understood that this was "the sovereign Lord of the universe" (Wessel 676). Oh, how often believers forget what God has done for them and that He will continue to be there for the believer always and see each one through every crisis in their lives on this earth.

C. The Servant Well Received and His Healing at Gennesaret 6:53-56
(Matthew 14:34-36)

Whereas Jesus was rejected in His own town of Nazareth, He is well received in the area of Gennesaret. According to verses 53, 54 Jesus and His disciples passed over the sea and came into the land of Gennesaret and immediately the people recognized Him. These people knew that this was the One who performed miracles. What they needed to recognize was that this was the Son of God (the One who could save their souls and heal them from the dreaded disease of sin). This passage, verses 53-56, "serves as a summary" of the work of Jesus "in Galilee before He withdrew to other regions" (Wessel 677). (Some other summaries are recorded in 1:32-34 and 3:7-12). Robertson writes, "We are now near the close of the Galilean ministry with its many healing mercies and excitement is at the high pitch" (*Bruce qtd. in Word Pictures 320*).

Verse 55 reveals that people literally ran all over the place in order to carry people to Jesus so they could be healed. Verse 55 relates, "And (*the people*) ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was." Oh! that believers would be so zealous in getting the Gospel to the sin sick souls of hell-bound men! What is worse? That someone is sick and disabled physically or that someone is spiritually sick, doomed,

praying and walking on water and the miraculous healing of many in the land of Gennesaret also revealed His compassionate power in spite of His being rejected.

Verse 34 is the key which reports, "And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." Jesus saw the people as precious sheep that needed a shepherd to guide and lead them and thus He responded with compassion and love. His compassion is manifested in the feeding of the people with both spiritual food and physical food. The feeding of the five thousand shows that, "little is much in the hands of the Lord."

These things show that teaching was an important part of their mission. Teaching with a loving heart is an important part of the ministry of the preacher. It is following the example and teaching of the Lord Jesus.

After supplying the needs of the hungry multitudes with the miraculous feeding, Jesus sent them away and commanded the apostles to sail to Bethsaida unto the land of Gennesaret. Jesus Himself went up into a mountain to pray to the Father. The next incident is that of Jesus walking on water and calming the wind and the waves. This shows that absolutely nothing is too hard for God. However, when the disciples saw Jesus they were troubled for they "supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out." Immediately Jesus "talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." When Jesus entered the ship the wind ceased. By this Jesus was saying that He was the great "I am." The disciples were greatly amazed and they wondered. This shows that as one trusts in God, the Savior will calm the winds and still the waves of the storms in this life. Even after all of these miracles, the disciples had not understood that this was the all powerful sovereign Lord of the universe. This manifests the compassion of Jesus and that He will continue to be there for the believer always and see him through every crisis in his life on this earth.

Even though, Jesus was rejected in His own town of Nazareth, in the region of Gennesaret He was well received. Whatever the circumstance, Jesus manifested His compassion and by the power of God supplied the needs of the disciples and the people.

Chapter Notes

1. (See page 226; Mark 6:37.) Comments on the value of a penny will be forth coming in chapter 19 under the discussion of Mark 12:13-17. Read also Matthew 20 and 22.
2. (See page 226; Mark 6:37.) In the feeding of the five thousand Jesus taught the disciples that all things are possible with God. This is also true of building churches. It is impossible for mere humans to make a go of a church, either to build or rebuild it, but nothing is impossible with God. The Bible clearly states in Psalms 127:1 "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Just because a church is small in the eyes of the world does not mean it is not big in the eyes of God. The Bible teaches in Zechariah 4:10 "For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth." Except the Lord were merciful and gracious and a God of love, all of the saved would still be in their sins and on the way to hell. There is a song which says, "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down." People cannot build a church any other way except that they follow the way of God spelled out in the Book of God. And the Spirit is the power behind it. The Bible states in Zechariah 4:6 "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:28 "But there is a God in heaven" Therefore, remember the admonition of Joshua in Joshua 24:15, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve"
3. (See page 231; Mark 6:51.) A. T. Robertson states, "Mark does not give the incident of Peter's walking on the water and beginning to sink. Perhaps Peter was not fond of telling that story" (Word Pictures 319). This incident is only recorded in Matthew 14:22-32.

End Note

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

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FIVE---

THE SERVANT: EXPOSING VAIN VERSUS TRUE WORSHIP

(Mark Chapters 7:1-37; 8:1-9)

---CHAPTER 11---

Traditions of Men Versus Commandments of God

(Mark Chapter 7:1-23)

---CHAPTER 12---

Faith of a Gentile—Healing a Deaf Man—Feeding Four Thousand

(Mark Chapters 7:24-37; 8:1-9)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FIVE---

THE SERVANT: EXPOSING VAIN VERSUS TRUE WORSHIP

(Mark Chapters 7:1-37; 8:1-9)

---CHAPTER 11---

Traditions of Men Versus Commandments of God

(Mark Chapter 7:1-23)

OUTLINE

- XI. Traditions of Men Versus Commandments of God** 7:1-23
{*Controversy with the Pharisees about Defilement*} (Matthew 15:1-20; John 7:1)
- A. The Traditions of Men about Washing Hands 7:1-5,13b
(Matthew 15:1,2)
1. The occasion for this controversy 7:1,2
 2. An explanation of . . . practices of the Pharisees. . . 7:3,4
 3. The complaint/charge of the Pharisees against the disciples 7:5
 4. The summation of the answer of Jesus 7:13
- B. Unfounded Traditions Making the Word of God of None Effect 7:6-13
(Matthew 15:3-9)
1. Calling them hypocrites and the answer of Jesus 7:6,7
 2. Further explanations of His rebuke 7:8,9
 3. A particular illustration using "Corban" 7:10-12
 4. Setting aside the Law by their practice of traditions 7:13
- C. Jesus Revealing the True Source of Defilement 7:14-23
(Matthew 15:10-20)
1. Exhorting the people to hearken to the truth about defilement 7:14-16
 2. Answering with clear truth the question about defilement 7:15,16
 3. A more detailed and fuller explanation unto the twelve 7:17-19
 4. The true source of defilement, a sinful heart, 7:20-23

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FIVE---

THE SERVANT: EXPOSING VAIN VERSUS TRUE WORSHIP

(Mark Chapters 7:1-37; 8:1-9)

---CHAPTER 11---

Traditions of Men Versus Commandments of God

(Mark Chapter 7:1-23)

This division includes Mark chapter 7 through verse 9 of chapter 8. It is entitled: "The Servant: Exposing Vain Versus True Worship." The first part of Mark chapter 7 concludes the second withdrawal of Jesus and His disciples which began in Mark 6:30 and continues until the end of Mark 7:23. After manifesting His compassionate power by the feeding of the five thousand, by walking on water, and by the healing of many in the land of Gennesaret, some of the Pharisees and certain of the scribes came to Jesus and engaged Him in a controversy concerning defilement, 7:1-23. This section may be entitled "Traditions of Men Versus Commandments of God" which exposes vain worship over against true worship. True worship comes from the heart and is according to the Word of God. The next chapter, covering 7:24—8:9, may be entitled "Faith of a Gentile—Healing a Deaf Man—Feeding Four Thousand" which exemplifies true worship.

Mark 7:1-23, in summary is about the controversy that Jesus had with the Pharisees about defilement. The Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus as given in

verse 5, "Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?" Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13 and then declares in verses 7-8, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do." {The word "vain" is from the adverb μάτην (maten) and means ". . .folly, i.e., to no purpose:--in vain" (Strong 3155).} The condemning indictment is that the Pharisees and the scribes were "...teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" implying that they really did not understand the Old Testament and the Law of Moses. Jesus further rebukes them by saying in verse 9, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." They were not worshipping God from their heart nor according to the Scriptures; they worshipped to no purpose.

The cause of this confrontation was that the Pharisees and certain of the scribes from Jerusalem had come down and found fault with the actions of the disciples of Jesus because they did not wash their hands before eating. They said this caused the disciples of Jesus to be defiled. Jesus answers them in verse 15 (See also Matthew 15:18).

Previously under the discussion of Mark 2:16, 17, the Pharisees and their beliefs have been identified and discussed. However, a brief review and some additional information is in order. The word "Pharisee" from φαρισαῖος (Pharisaios) is from a Hebrew word that means "to separate" (Thayer 649). In the time of Jesus "according to Josephus they numbered more than 6000" (Thayer 649). They had the noble cause to keep alive the reverence for the Law but had their own interpretations. They sought to bring God under obligation to themselves (Luke 18:11,12) and thus for the most part contradicted the written Law. They regarded the interpretations by

the scribes as equally authoritative with the written Law itself. Their distinguishing doctrines were: one, they believed in ceremonial washings (Luke 18:12; Matthew 6:2, 6, 7, 16); two, they believed in fasting twice a week; and three, proselyting others to make converts (Matthew 23:15). To their credit they believed in some correct biblical beliefs such as divine providence, the free will of man, life after death, and a future resurrection. "They held strenuously to a belief in the existence of good and evil angels, and to the expectation of a Messiah" (Thayer 649). Nevertheless, they criticized Jesus throughout His ministry and were the foremost persecutors of Jesus and His ministry. They were being used as agents of Satan, yet they prided themselves in being morally correct, self-denying, self-righteous, and self-sacrificial. They claimed they kept the traditions of the fathers, but they were petty and trifling about the Law. They were, in some ways, like the Greek Stoics according to Josephus. They emphasized form more than spirit. Jesus called them hypocrites and truly they were (7: 6).

This chapter, "Traditions of Men Versus Commandments of God" may be divided as follows: one, the traditions of men about washing hands, 7:1-5,13b; two, unfounded traditions making the Word of God of none effect, 7:6-13; and three, Jesus revealing the true source of defilement, 7:14-23.

A. The Traditions of Men about Washing Hands 7:1-5,13

(Matthew 15:1,2)

Verses 1-13 compares and contrasts the commands of God versus traditions of men. These verses will be divided into two sub-divisions. Verses 1-5,13 may be divided thusly: one, the occasion for this controversy, 7:1,2; two, an explanation of the beliefs and practices of the Pharisees about washing of hands and so forth, 7:3,4; three, the complaint and/or charge of the Pharisees against the disciples, 7:5; and

four, the summation of the answer of Jesus, 7:13.

The occasion for this controversy (7:1,2) Verse 1 states, "Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem." Why did they come? As discussed previously the Pharisees and scribes came to investigate the ministry of Jesus as seen from 2:16-18; 2:23—3:6. According to Mark 3:6 it was their design to find some reason to destroy Jesus. Verse 2 says "And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed, hands, they found fault." The verb "found fault" is from the Greek verb ἐμέμψαντο (emempsanto) which is first aorist indicative from μέμφομαι (memphomai). This Greek word is also found in Romans 9:19 and Hebrews 8:8. The Analytical Greek Lexicon defines this word as "to find fault with, blame, censure, to intimate dissatisfaction with" (263). The use of the aorist implies that it was a settled thing as far as they were concerned. It was their purpose to find fault and censure or condemn Jesus and His ministry. This is stated based on the previous incidents cited already. Hence, this verse reveals the occasion and reason for this controversy. The Pharisees and some of the scribes who were teachers of the Law came from Jerusalem and gathered around Jesus and His disciples and saw some of the disciples eating with unwashed hands. The fault they found or contention (expressed specifically in verse 5) was not that the disciples were being unhygienic (Wessel 677). No, that was not it at all. It was a question of ceremonial and/or ritual purity versus defilement. That this was important to the Jews is shown in that "an entire division of the Mishnah" (a Jewish scribal commentary on the Law) "is devoted" to "ceremonial cleannesses" (Wessel 677, 678; Robertson, Word Pictures 321).

An explanation of the beliefs and practices of the Pharisees about washing of hands and so forth (7:3,4) Verses 3, 4 record, "For the Pharisees, and all the

Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." These verses are really parenthetical and serve as an inspired explanation of what the Pharisees believed and practiced about such things (Clark 97). Whereas, Matthew does not give this explanation in his account, Mark explains the Jewish traditions to his Gentile readers and this gives an example of their customs (Wessel 678; Clark 97). The idea of verse 4 is that the Jews would come in contact with the Gentiles in the market-place and hence be defiled (Wessel 678). They would wash themselves before eating so as not to be ritually unclean. As already stated the Pharisee and scribes prided themselves in keeping the Law; but the problem was that they had added many traditions, which in the day of Jesus, were mostly in oral form. In about A. D. 200 these oral regulations were written down to form the Mishnah, a Jewish scribal commentary on the Law (Wessel 678).

The word "tradition" comes from the Greek noun παράδοσις (paradosis) which is derived from the verb παραδίδομι (paradidomi). The basic meaning of this word is "tradition" which means:

"a giving over, giving up . . . a giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing, i.e. tradition by instruction, narrative, precept . . . objectively, what is delivered, the substance of a teaching . . . of the body of precepts, esp. ritual, which in the opinion of the later Jews were orally delivered by Moses and orally transmitted in unbroken succession to subsequent generations, which precepts, both illustrating and expanding the written law, as they did were to be obeyed with equal reverence" (Thayer 481, 482).

Rienecker writes that this word παράδοσις (paradosis) or "tradition" speaks of "the body of commentary added to the law and transmitted orally. The scribes and Pharisees regarded it as equal importance with the law. It was later written and codified and formed the Mishnah" (*Hill qtd. by Rienecker* 45).

The complaint and/or charge of the Pharisees against the disciples (7:5) In verse 5 the Pharisees and scribes express their complaint by asking Jesus a question. This gives the reason "they found fault." Verse 5 says "Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?" The word "unwashen" is from the Greek adjective ἄνιπτος (aniptos) which means "not washed according to ritual law" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows). The Pharisees wanted to know why the disciples of Jesus did not follow the traditions of the elders nor wash before eating. The belief of the Pharisees was that the disciples polluted themselves.

The summation of the answer of Jesus (7:13) The answer of Jesus to the Pharisees is found in the next few verses, but the sum is given in verse 13. In this verse Jesus declares that their doctrines and traditions (7:9) made "the word of God of none effect . . . , which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye." Jesus was saying that "the tradition of the elders" did not line up with the Word of God and so they made the Word of God of none effect. Jesus was not condemning traditions except for those that contradict and make void the Word of God. Tradition based on the Word of God is one thing, but those that are contrary to the Word of God are quite another. The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:15 "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." The word tradition used in Mark 7 verses 3,5,8,9,13 is from the same root Greek word as the plural word, traditions, used by Paul. But in 2 Thessalonians 2:15 the context speaks of doctrines that Paul taught as directed by the Spirit of God, while those used in Mark 7 verses 3,5,8,9,13 clearly speak of traditions of men that were and are actually contrary to the teachings of the Word of God. Hence, "the tradition of the elders" actually make the Word of God of none effect or void.

B. Unfounded Traditions Making the Word of God of None Effect 7:6-13

(Matthew 15:3-9)

It was true in the days of the earthly ministry of Jesus that unfounded tradition(s) and doctrines made the Word of God of none effect and it is still true today. Wessel gives a good summary of verses 6-13 when he writes "the very purpose for which the commandment was given was set aside by the tradition. This is what is meant by 'nullifying' (*of none effect*) . . . the word of God" (678). Verses 6-13 may be divided as follows: one, calling them hypocrites and the answer of Jesus from the Old Testament, 7:6,7; two, further explanations of His rebuke, 7:8,9; three, a particular illustration using "Corban," 7:10-12; and four, setting aside the Law by their practice of traditions, 7:13.

Calling them hypocrites and the answer of Jesus from the Old Testament

(7:6,7) Verse 5 records the question to Jesus by the Pharisees and scribes, "Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?" In verses 6, 7 Jesus answers them by calling them hypocrites and quoting Isaiah 29:13. Jesus answered and said, "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me." The word "hypocrite" is from a Greek noun ὑποκριτής (hupokrites). Normally, this word means "one who pretends to be other than what he is" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows). Thayer says it means "one who answers, an interpreter, an actor, stage player . . . pretender, hypocrite" (643). Rienecker defines the word ὑποκριτής (hupokrites) as used in the parallel in Matthew 15:7 "hypocrite, a legalist who manipulates the law w(*ith*) casuistry and hair-splitting interpretations for his own benefit" (45). (Casuistry has the idea of deception.) From this the idea is that of a "actor" or "one who impersonates another" (Rienecker 17: from the usage by Jesus in Matthew 6:2). Jesus used this term "hypocrite" some 14 times in the book of

Matthew to refer "to people whose worship" and service "is merely outward and not from the heart" (Wessel 678). There is a lot of this type of worship going on today.

These were words of rebuke by the Son of God to men who served God with the lips but not from or with the heart. In fact, Jesus said in verse 7 that they worshipped in vain or without purpose because they were teaching for doctrines the commandments of men rather than the true Word of God. This is why Jesus said unto them in verse 13 that they made "the word of God of none effect through your tradition. . . ." Their traditions or doctrines were *unfounded* because they were not based on the truth. Jesus said in John 4:23-24 "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth." The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 "Charity (*or love*) . . . rejoiceth in the truth." (See also 2 John.) True worship comes from the heart and must be based and grounded in truth.

Further explanations of His rebuke (7:8,9) In verses 8, 9 Jesus further explains His rebuke by contrasting the "commandments of God" over against the "traditions of men." He declares, "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." Jesus said they laid aside the true Word of God for traditions of men. These were traditions that failed to get to the heart of the commandments of God. Jesus said that, in fact, they had rejected the commands of God so they could keep their own traditions. Churches and people in this present day need to be careful not to do this same thing; for many do this very thing.

A particular illustration using "Corban" (7:10-12) In verses 10-12 Jesus gives a particular illustration of what He was saying in verses 6-9. This illustrates how they had honored God with their lips but not with their heart. In verse 10 Jesus gives a quote from the Old Testament for He said, "For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death." Jesus quotes from Exodus 20:12 and 21:17 in verse 10 which says that parents are to be honored but on the other hand, the death penalty was to be applied to those who cursed their parents. (See also Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18-21.) These Scriptures emphasize the importance God puts upon honoring parents. However, as seen from verses 11, 12 by means of the traditions of the elders, "the responsibility of children to their parents could easily be circumvented" (Wessel 678). Jesus speaks of one of these tradition practiced by the scribes and Pharisees when He declares, "But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother." The word "Corban" is actually from Hebrew and Aramaic origin respectively (Thayer 355; Analytical Greek Lexicon 237). The Greek noun is Κορβάν (Korban) which means "a gift offered (or to be offered) to God . . . the sacred treasury" (Thayer 355, 356). It was from the "Hebrew term for a gift set apart for God" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows). If a son declared something to be Corban, he was saying it was "a gift devoted to God" (Wessel 679). By declaring what one intended for his parents to be Corban, "it could no longer be designated for his parents" (Wessel 679; see also Robertson, Word Pictures 323). However, by this "a son did not necessarily promise it to the temple nor did he prevent its use for himself. What he did do was to exclude legally his

parents from benefiting from it" (Wessel 679; see also Robertson, Word Pictures 323). The Amplified Bible renders Mark 7:11, 12,

"But [as for you] you say, A man is exempt if he tells [his] father or [his] mother, What you would otherwise have gained from me [everything I have that would have been of use to you] is Corban, that is, is a gift [already given as an offering to God], Then you no longer are permitting him to do anything for [his] father or mother [but are letting him off from helping them]."

The practice or tradition of Corban was a hypocritical way of legally not helping father or mother. This made the commandment to honor father and mother of none effect or void.

Setting aside the Law by their practice of traditions (7:13) Verse 13 refers directly back to verses 10-12. The practice of the traditions of the elders set aside the Law. Jesus told them in verse 13 that you, (the Pharisees and scribes) were "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye." Jesus makes it clear and plain by this one example that the Pharisees and those with them who practiced Corban and other such things set aside the true Law of Moses by practicing the traditions of the elders. They, therefore, nullified the Word of God. Jesus was telling them that they were being hypocritical and thus deceiving themselves as well as others. They were rendering void the authority of the Word of God. They were, in fact, setting aside and also invalidating the Word of God (Robertson, Word Pictures 323; Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:9). Each born again believer should be careful not to be guilty of doing the same thing.

C. Jesus Revealing the True Source of Defilement 7:14-23

(Matthew 15:10-20)

According to "the tradition of the elders," eating with unwashed hands defiled a man. But Jesus taught that the tradition of the elders actually make the Word of God of none effect or void. Why? Because they did not line up with the Word of God.

Jesus taught that those who teach "for doctrines the commandments of men" actually worship God in vain and in folly (or to no purpose) (Mark 7:7; Strong 3155). Therefore, if a Jew eating with unwashed hands (when coming from the market-place and being in contact with Gentiles) did not make him ceremonially unclean nor defile him, then what did defile him? If not walking according to the tradition of the elders did not pollute a person, what did? The short answer is that defilement comes from the sinful heart or that which comes out from the heart; evil things defile (Mark 7:20-23; Matthew 15:18-20). In verses 14-23 Jesus reveals the true source of that which defiles and pollutes both Jew and Gentile. This sub-section may be divided into four parts: one, exhorting the people to hearken to the truth about defilement, 7:14-16; two, answering with clear truth the question about defilement, 7:15,16; three, a more detailed and fuller explanation unto the twelve, 7:17-19; and four, the true source of defilement, a sinful heart, 7:20-23.

Exhorting the people to hearken to the truth about defilement (7:14-16)

According to verses 14-16 Jesus turned away from speaking directly to the Pharisees and called all the people and told them to listen to Him and understand. Verse 14 states, "And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and understand." The verb "hearken" is from the aorist imperative of ἀκούω (akouo) meaning to listen or hear with understanding (Strong 191). The use of the imperative mood in this context means it is very important for one to give audience and to understand what is being said. Jesus reinforces this by using the word "understand" which is from the aorist imperative of συνίημι (suniemi) meaning "to put together, i.e. (mentally) to comprehend . . . consider, understand, be wise" (Strong 4920). Jesus wanted them to listen and perceive with

understanding concerning the sum and substance or the gist of His teaching about what is clean and what defiles.

Answering with clear truth the question about defilement (7:15,16) In verse 15 Jesus clearly answers the question raised in verse 5. In verse 15 Jesus teaches them the clear truth when He declares, "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." He states plainly what does and does not make a person unclean. The Amplified Bible rendered verse 15, "There is not [even] one thing outside a man which by going into him can pollute *and* defile him, but the things which come out of a man are what defile him *and* make him unhallowed *and* unclean." In other words, edible foods do not defile a man. Jesus was making it clear that spiritual things are what is really important in the relationship and fellowship that a person has with God. Therefore, that which "comes from within, out of the heart and the will— what one thinks, says, desires, and does—these only" (Wessel 680) make a person unclean or defiled in the eyes of God. Jesus emphasizes this by His statement in verse 16, "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus is saying now you think about what I have said and let it sink down between your ears (Please refer to the comments on Mark 4:9,23; see also Luke 9:44, James 1:5). Jesus wanted them to use spiritual wisdom that only comes from God and His Holy Word.¹

A more detailed and fuller explanation unto the twelve (7:17-19) Verses 17-23 serve as a more detailed and fuller explanation of what Jesus meant by verse 15. However, as revealed in verses 17, 18, this is explained in private to His disciples when they questioned Jesus about it. Verses 17,18 relate, "And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that

whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him." Jesus "expressed surprise" (Wessel 680) at their question (not that He Himself was surprised; He expressed surprise and amazement for their benefit). He was saying, do you still not comprehend nor understand spiritual truth after all the time I have taught you (Wessel 680). Christ Jesus expects His people to grow up in Him.²

In Mark 7:19 Jesus continues to explain that the reason that nothing (speaking of food) that enters "a person from outside defiles him is because it enters the stomach and not the heart" (Wessel 680). Jesus declares, "Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught,³ purging all meats?" The word "heart" is from the Greek word καρδιά (kardia) which as to physical life refers to "that organ in the" *human* "body which is the centre of the circulation of the blood, and hence was regarded as the seat of physical life" (Thayer 325). However, it also refers to "the centre and seat of spiritual life, the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavours [so in English *heart, inner man, etc.*]. . . of the understanding, the faculty and seat of the intelligence . . . of the will and character" (Thayer 325). Rienecker gives this summation under the reference for καρδιά (kardia) for Matthew 5:8, "the heart is the center of the inner life of the person where all the spiritual forces and functions have their origin" (12). It is the heart that "is the center of human personality and that which determines" (Wessel 680) the thinking and action of the person (Romans 10:6-10; Isaiah 29:13; Acts 10:9-16; 11:5-10; Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:10). Jesus said this to further explain His statement of verse 15 and also in preparation for the statements in verses 20-23 to show that it is what comes forth out of the heart that defiles a man and reveals his sinful nature. This is in contrast and over against the

unfounded teachings of the Pharisees and the scribes and the traditions of the elders which Jesus said made the Word of God of none effect.

The true source of defilement, a sinful heart (7:20-23) In verses 20-23 Jesus further shows (in more detail) that what comes out of the heart, the inner being, is what defiles a man (Matthew 15:18-20). Jesus declares in verse 20 "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man." Next, Jesus gives a list recorded in verses 21, 22 of the things that originate or come out of the heart of men that defile them and reveal their sinful nature. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts (*evil thoughts generate the works of the flesh that follows*), adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness (*malice, the desire to hurt others*), deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." This list is not meant to be exhaustive but rather representative. It is comparable to the lists given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9-12; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-9.

In verse 23 Jesus says "All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." These proceed from out of the heart of man because as these verses teach and the Bible in general teaches, man is basically not good but rather totally depraved in his nature as received from Adam. Verse 23 is further explanation of verse 20 which is a restatement of verse 15 (the answer to the question of verse 5) and this is done no doubt for emphasis. Matthew 15:20 (the parallel to Mark 7:23) records it this way (specifically referring back to Matthew 15:1-9 and Mark 7:1-9), "These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

Summary of Chapter

Some of the Pharisees and the scribes came to Jesus and involved Him in a controversy concerning defilement. They saw the disciples of Jesus eating with

unwashen hands and found fault. They asked Jesus "Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?" They believed that a Jew was defiled before God if he did not go through a ritualistic washing of their hands before they ate bread. Jesus uses this occasion to teach about and to expose vain worship and to reveal the true worship of God. In so doing He contrasts "the Traditions of Men Versus the Commandments of God. "

Jesus called the Pharisees and scribes hypocrites, quoting Isaiah saying "as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me." He also rebuked them in saying, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men." Jesus was telling them they were substituting their own doctrines instead of abiding by the commandments of God and therefore their worship was without purpose and value. He was comparing and contrasting the traditions of men over against the commandments of God. He exposes vain worship over against true worship. True worship comes from the heart and is according to the Word of God. Defilement comes out from the heart because of the sinfulness of man. Jesus further rebukes them saying, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." They were not worshipping God from their heart nor according to the Scriptures. They worshipped to no purpose.

Jesus uses the example of the particular tradition of Corban to show that they were not keeping the commandment to honor their parents, father and mother, part of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:12). Therefore their unfounded traditions made the Word of God of none effect, null and void.

Finally, Jesus reveals the true source of defilement by saying, "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." The Pharisees believed that defilement

came from contact with the Gentiles and so forth. They would wash themselves before eating so as not to be ritually unclean. The belief of the Pharisees was that the disciples polluted themselves. But Jesus taught that defilement came out from within a man from out of the heart of the man (Mark 7:18-23). This is summarized in Matthew 15:18 where Jesus says, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man." Also in Mark 7:23 Jesus said, "All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Following unfounded traditions bring about vain or false worship. On the other hand, true worship comes from following the teaching of God in His Word.

The doctrines of the scribes and the Pharisees were unfounded because they were not based on the truth. Jesus said in John 4:23-24 "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth." True worship comes from the heart and must be based and grounded in truth.

Chapter Notes

1. (See page 249 and comments on Mark 4:9,23 from chapter 7 pages 153, 157.) "People who know and want to know will hear and add to their knowledge. People who do not know and do not want to learn will lose their curiosity" (153). "The idea is that since you have ears, use them, and use them in a spiritual way to perceive spiritual truth and disseminate the same" (157).
2. (See page 250.) This is like a lot of people who have been in New Testament churches for years and years. One would think they would know the truth — the many, many doctrines of the Bible — yet there are many who are still "babes in Christ" and they get offended easily by the truth presented from the Bible (1 Corinthians 3:1; 1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:11-15; 6:1-12). This is one reason pastors and teachers have to go over and over the basic teachings of salvation by grace, scriptural baptism, the Lord's Supper, truth about the church and so forth. "Babes in Christ" have to be fed the milk of the Word and yet sometime or another they need the meat to grow thereby. God and His Son, Jesus Christ, want church members (and all believers) to grow up in Christ Jesus and be mature in Him, understand the doctrine

of God, the entire Bible and the things that make true Landmark Missionary Baptist different from others (2 Peter 3:14-18; Ephesians 4:1-3, 12-16).

3. (See page 250 for 7:19.) For the understanding of the words "belly" and "draught" the following is offered" The word "draught" is from the Greek noun ἀφεδρών (aphedron). Wuest gives this comment: "The word 'belly' is koilia 'the bowels.' Liddel and Scott in their classical lexicon define this word [*draught from ἀφεδρών (aphedron)*] as a privy, a place where the intestinal discharges are deposited. The word does not refer to a part of the physical body" (Wuest 149). Bushell defines "draught" as toilet or latrine ([Bible Works for Windows](#)).

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FIVE---

THE SERVANT: EXPOSING VAIN VERSUS TRUE WORSHIP

(Mark Chapters 7:1-37; 8:1-9)

---CHAPTER 12---

Faith of a Gentile—Healing a Deaf Man—Feeding Four Thousand

(Mark Chapters 7:24—8:9)

OUTLINE

XII. Faith of a Gentile - Healing a Deaf Man - Feeding Four Thousand 7:24—8:9

(Matthew 15:21-39)

A. The Faith Request Appeal of a Syrophenician Woman 7:24-30

(Matthew 15:21-28)

1. Traveling into the nation of Tyre and Sidon 7:24

(Matthew 15:21)

2. A Greek woman making an appeal for needed help 7:25,26

(Matthew 15:22)

3. Jesus replying to this humble request 7:27

(Matthew 15:23,24)

4. Answering Jesus with a confession 7:28

(Matthew 15:25-27)

5. Making the daughter whole, 7:29,30

(Matthew 15:28)

B. Healing a Deaf and Dumb Man 7:31-37

(Matthew 15:29-31)

1. Healing a deaf and dumb man 7:31-35

2. The exceeding amazement of the people 7:36,37

3. This healing: a partial fulfillment of a prophecy Isaiah 35:5,6

C. Feeding Four Thousand 8:1-9

(Matthew 15:32-39)

1. The occasion for the feeding 8:1-3

(Matthew 15:32)

2. Feeding the multitude 8:4-7

(Matthew 15:33-36)

3. Four thousand men fed and filled and seven baskets leftover 8:8,9

(Matthew 15:37-39)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION FIVE---

THE SERVANT: EXPOSING VAIN VERSUS TRUE WORSHIP

(Mark Chapters 7:1-37; 8:1-9)

---CHAPTER 12---

Faith of a Gentile—Healing a Deaf Man—Feeding Four Thousand

(Mark Chapters 7:24—8:9)

In the first 23 verses of Mark chapter 7 the Servant exposes vain worship by renouncing the traditions of the Pharisee that were not based on the commandments of God (7:6-9,13,15,19-23). In Mark 7:24—8:9 the Servant continues to expose vain worship versus true worship. This passage teaches the elements of true worship.

Jesus taught that true worship must be based on the Word of God. Any tradition that is not based on the Word of God and replaces the Word such as Corban makes the Word of God of none effect. In the controversy about defilement which involved worship, Jesus taught the truth about worship and defilement and quotes Isaiah 29:13. He said that the Pharisees worshipped Him in vain because they insisted on their unfounded traditions. He said they had rejected the commandment of God and replaced them with their own tradition. He explained in 7:15, "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." In Mark 7:19 Jesus explains the reason that nothing that enters "a person from outside defiles him is because it enters the

stomach and not the heart" (Wessel 680). In Mark 7:20-23 Jesus is teaching defilement comes because man is totally depraved — sinful, evil, and wicked. Man needs to be redeemed — needs to be born again from above (John 3:3-7,16).

The tradition of the elders said if one does not keep the ritual or ceremony properly he is defiled, but the Word of God says a man is defiled by what he is by nature, a sinner. Therefore, a man must repent of sin and believe in the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ. Then the redeemed man can worship God from a redeemed heart. True worship can only come from a redeemed heart lifted up to God through faith in Jesus the Redeemer. True worship brings praise, honor, and glory to God. God will not accept worship from an unredeemed heart. God will not accept false worship nor worship that is not based on the Word of God (John 4:23-24).

This passage, Mark 7:24—8:9, is also known as the third withdrawal and return¹ (Hiebert 106). It may be entitled "Faith of a Gentile—Healing a Deaf Man—Feeding Four Thousand" which exemplifies true worship. In these three events Jesus continues to demonstrate the elements of true worship: one, the faith request appeal of a Syrophenician woman, 7:24-30; two, healing a deaf and dumb man, 7:31-37; and three, feeding four thousand, 8:1-9. These incidents teach elements of true worship; one, true worship is always accompanied by faith based on the Word and power of God; two, true worship will always cause one to have a greater opinion of God; and three, true worship involves recognizing that God is sufficient for all things (whether one believes or not God is able).

A. The Faith Request Appeal of a Syrophenician Woman 7:24-30
(Matthew 15:21-28)

This incident recorded in Mark 7:24-30 shows that Jesus practiced what He preached in the first part of chapter 7. The Pharisees thought they would be defiled

by being among Gentiles, but Jesus goes into a Gentile nation in part to show that the traditions of the elders were invalid. This incident emphasizes that the gospel of the kingdom is not limited to Israel but is also for the Gentiles. Jesus commanded His New Testament church in Mark 16:15 "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Jesus tasted death for every person in all the world in every age. The writer of Hebrews wrote "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (2:9). Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. This is declared in 1 John 2:1-2, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*" That Jesus "is the propitiation" means the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross is the covering, accepted sacrifice, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. In other words, God accepts what Jesus has done to pay in full for the sins of every person who ever lived or that shall ever live. The justice of God is completely satisfied with the sacrifice Jesus made for sin and for the sins of the whole world (Isaiah 53:1-12).

This sub-division may be divided into the following parts: one, traveling into the nation of Tyre and Sidon, 7:24; Matthew 15:21; two, a Greek woman making an appeal for needed help, 7:25,26; Matthew 15:22; three, Jesus replying to this humble request, 7:27; Matthew 15:23,24; four, answering Jesus with a confession, 7:28; Matthew 15:25-27; and five, making the daughter whole, 7:29,30; Matthew 15:28. In order to get a fuller picture and understanding of this incident the accounts in both Mark and Matthew should be considered together. Clarke writes, "The narrative is given more fully, vividly, and characteristically by Mark; the conversation, by

Matthew. Without Matthew's report, indeed, our knowledge of the incident would be comparatively fragmentary. Mark tells the story as from an eye-witness; Matthew, as from an ear-witness" (104).

Traveling into the nation of Tyre and Sidon (7:24; Matthew 15:21) Leaving the land of Gennesaret (6:53) Jesus and His disciples traveled into the nation of Tyre and Sidon which was north and west of Israel. The last part of verse 24 states that He "entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid." They entered into this house hoping no one would discover them. Clarke suggests this was the house of a friend (Clarke 104). This indicates that Jesus again sought rest and time to give special training and instruction to the Twelve (Clarke 104). Jesus was training His church to do the task He called them to do. Nevertheless, His fame had spread far and wide and He could not keep His presence secret.

A Greek woman making an appeal for needed help (7:25,26; Matthew 15:22) Mark 7:25 states that "a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet." According to Mark 7:26 this woman was a Greek woman born in Syrophenicia. (This would be in the southern part of present day Lebanon.) Matthew 15:22 says she was, "a woman of Canaan." Pfeiffer explains that "Canaan" is "an appropriate description because the Phoenicians were descendants of the ancient Canaanites" (206). This certain woman "besought him (*Jesus*) that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter." Matthew adds that she "cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Being a Greek she was a Gentile and not a Hebrew, nonetheless, she expressed her faith in Jesus by making this request. She was worshipping Jesus as the son of David (meaning the Messiah of Israel), the Son of God, the all powerful One. Notice that she fell at the feet of Jesus.

She believed in Him and that He was merciful. She had heard of His fame and she believed this was the anointed one of God. She had a dreadful problem that only God could solve. One of her loved ones was seriously affected by an unclean spirit, even a devil. She besought Jesus, indicating a very serious request, that Jesus ". . . would cast forth the devil out of her daughter." It is very evident (from 7:28; Matthew 15:22,27) that whether Jesus would cast out the devil or not, she still believed in Him as the Savior and Lord of her life. She had genuine faith in Jesus. Clarke writes, "She had not seen him; faith came by hearing" (105). This is taught in Romans 10:17.

Jesus replying to this humble request (7:27; Matthew 15:23,24) Matthew 15:23 records that at first Jesus "answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." And then Jesus answered in Matthew 15:24 "and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Jesus did it this way to test her faith. (Of course, this was for her benefit for He knew how it would play out.) Mark 7:27 gives the reply of Jesus to the woman's humble request. Jesus said, "let the children first be filled: for it is not meet (*good or right*) to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." This reply was in the form of a veiled comparison between children and little dogs [from κυνάρῳις (kynariois) that is, little dogs or puppies, that were household pets (Rienecker 108)]. To the mind of the Jews the children represent Israelites and the dogs, Gentiles. Jesus tested her faith by discouraging her seemingly in every way. He even called her a dog. A person may think this is terrible, but the Bible teaches all are sinners and unworthy of the mercy and grace of God. No one (and the writer includes himself) deserves the love and grace of God. But this fact should make each one even the more appreciative of the mercy and grace that God extends to all by and through

His Son. Most people, after being called a dog, would have stomped off and left, but not this woman. This woman knew she was a sinner. But she believed that Jesus was the merciful, gracious Son of God. Hence, she persisted in humble prayer.

Answering Jesus with a confession (7:28; Matthew 15:25-27) According to Matthew 15:25 this woman came "and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me." She was humble and contrite even after Jesus had said unto her in Mark 7:27, "Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs." She answered with what amounted to a confession combined with her appeal and request by saying as recorded in Mark 7:28 "Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Matthew 15:27 puts it this way "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." By answering, "Yes, Lord . . ." or "Truth, Lord . . ." she admitted that she was an unworthy dog but continues to recognize Jesus as Lord. She refused to believe that she was excluded from the mercy, grace, and blessing of God. So by faith she finished her response by saying, "yet (*or even*) the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Jesus did not say that there were no provisions for the dogs. The little puppies were fed by the children. She willingly admits she is a dog and will be satisfied with a crumb. What an example of faith! According to Clarke she is saying, "True; even for the dogs there is provision: they eat the crumbs, just as I am praying that I may do" (106).

Making the daughter whole (7:29,30; Matthew 15:28) That Jesus was pleased with her reply is evident in verse 29 for He said unto her, "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." Matthew adds in 15:28 that Jesus also said unto her "O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Mark 7:30 declares, "And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed." Her reply revealed her humility and faith.

Finally, Matthew 15:28 records "And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Wessel remarks, "This is the only instance of healing at a distance found in Mark's Gospel" (683). This incident manifests that Jesus is truly co-equal with God. This demonstrates His power, love, mercy and grace. Jesus has power to save any and all who believe² whether near or far. *This event reveals that: true worship is always accompanied by faith based on the Word and power of God.*

B. Healing a Deaf and Dumb Man 7:31-37

(Matthew 15:29-31)

According to verse 31 Jesus left Tyre and Sidon and traveled into the regions of Decapolis.³ Seemingly, this was so He would be staying out of the area where the Jews lived and the unfriendly area ruled by Herod Antipas (Robertson, Harmony 95; Word Pictures 327). Decapolis was a territory and a league of ten originally free Greek cities (*populated largely by Gentiles and part of the area ruled by Herod Philip*) located mostly on the east side of the Sea of Galilee and the River Jordan.⁴ (This area would today be part of the nation of Jordan and part of southern Syria.) Mark 7:31-37 records the healing of a deaf and dumb man. Mark is the only one to record this particular miracle although some believe Matthew 15:29-31 is broadly parallel to it (Robertson, Harmony 95, 96; Carter 162). The sub-section of Mark contains the following segments: one, healing a deaf and dumb man, 7:31-35; two, the exceeding amazement of the people, 7:36,37; and three, this healing: a partial fulfillment of a prophecy, Isaiah 35:5,6.

Healing a deaf and dumb man (7:31-35) According to verses 31, 32 while Jesus was in the regions of Decapolis they brought unto Him "one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. . ." The word "deaf" is from the Greek adjective κωφός (kophos) and means "blunted, dull. . . blunted (or lamed) in tongue; dumb. . .

blunted, dull in hearing deaf" (Thayer 367). It is translated dumb eight times, deaf five times, and speechless one time. The words "impediment of his speech" is from the Greek substantive adjective μογιλάλος (mogilalos) and means "speaking with difficulty" (Thayer 416). This word is used only here in the New Testament. It is used in the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament in Isaiah 35:6 where it is translated "dumb." The idea is that this man could not speak clearly and plainly. He had a great deal of trouble talking. The last part of verse 32 states that "they beseech him to put his hand upon him." Wessel declares that "the people brought the deaf mute to Jesus and begged him to lay His hand upon him" (683). Apparently, the poor man was unable himself to make the request understood. The word "beseech" is from the Greek verb παρακαλέω (parakaleo).⁵ This word means "to call to one's side, call for, summon . . . beg, entreat, beseech" (Thayer 482). Among other ways, it has been translated "pray" 6 times. This could be called an illustration of intercessory prayer.

Jesus begins to answer this request immediately. Verses 33 states "And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue." Someone has suggested that the action of Jesus in verse 33 of putting fingers on the ears of this man and spitting and touching his tongue was done to help the man exercise faith and to indicate that his ears and tongue were to be put back to their normal use (Wessel 684 along with Clarke 108,109). Next, verse 34 declares that Jesus "looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened." The "looking up to heaven" and the sigh was "a way of showing the man that God was the source of His power" (Wessel 684 along with Clarke 108,109). The word "Ephphatha" is an Aramaic word that Mark says means "Be opened!" The Greek word εφφαθα (epphatha) means "be thou opened, receive the power of hearing, the ears of the deaf and the eyes of the blind being considered as

closed" (Thayer 265). Verse 35 says the two-fold healing was done "straightway" meaning immediately (which the reader may remember is a term that Mark uses very frequently). "His ears were opened" and he could both hear and "spake plain." Rienecker says he could speak "correctly" (109).

The exceeding amazement of the people (7:36,37) According to verse 36, Jesus charged the people "that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*." This was like Jesus had charged the same before in 1:43-45; 3:12; and 5:43. The reason was so that He could go about His work "in retirement and quietness" (Clarke 110) as He was in the process of training His disciples. Wessel explains, "He did not want a false concept of him as only a miracle worker to spread lest it touch off a messianic insurrection and prevent him from accomplishing his God-appointed mission" (684). Nonetheless, verses 36, 37 record the exceeding amazement of the people. In part these verses state, "but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*; And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." The verb "hath done" is from the third person singular of the perfect tense of the Greek verb ποιέω (poieo) which is πεποίηκεν (pepoieken). The Greek perfect tense "expresses the continuance of completed action" and also it "expresses the present result of a past action" (Davis 152). The action of Jesus in the minds of these people was something else and they were convinced that He was able to do anything by His power. They ceased not to be amazed for the first part of verse 37 declares that they "were beyond measure" meaning exceedingly astonished (The same is expressed in Luke 5:26). Since it appears that Matthew 15:29-31 is broadly parallel to this passage in Mark, the words of praise recorded in Matthew 15:31 could be added to this. Matthew records,

"Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel."

This healing: a partial fulfillment of a prophecy (Isaiah 35:5,6) This healing of this deaf and dumb man as recorded in Mark 7:31-37 and the healings as recorded in Matthew 15:29-31 are partial fulfillment of Isaiah 35:5-6 "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." This partial fulfillment of this prophecy is another proof that the Bible is true and that it is the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). The complete fulfillment of Isaiah 35 will take place during the one thousand year reign of King Jesus, the Messiah, upon the earth.

In any case, this incident of Jesus healing this deaf and dumb man proves that: true worship will always cause believers to have a greater opinion of God. This is shown by the raised and greater opinion that these people had as seen from Mark 7:36,37. They "were beyond measure astonished" and believing with settled conviction that Jesus "hath done all things well." To this could be added that "they glorified the God of Israel" (Matthew 15:31).

C. Feeding Four Thousand 8:1-9

(Matthew 15:32-39)

This incident given in Mark 8:1-9 is being grouped with Mark chapter 7 because it teaches another precept which exemplifies true worship. True worship involves recognizing that God is sufficient for all things. God is omnipotent (almighty, all powerful), omniscient (all knowing and all wise), and omnipresent (all present: present at every place all the time.). These truths are taught throughout the

Bible and especially in Psalm 139. Whether one believes it or not, God is able. (Little is much in the hands of the LORD-GOD of heaven.) This passage is about Jesus feeding the four thousand. Some have said that it is the same as the feeding the five thousand recorded in Mark 6:30-44. However, this is a separate and distinct event and the reasons will be discussed later. This subdivision is made up of the following components: one, the occasion for the feeding, 8:1-3; Matthew 15:32; two, feeding the multitude, 8:4-7; Matthew 15:33-36; and three, four thousand men fed and filled and seven baskets leftover, 8:8,9; Matthew 15:37-39.

The occasion for the feeding (8:1-3; Matthew 15:32) Verse 1 is connected to the previous chapter by the words, "In those days. . . ." Verse 1 relates, "In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them." They were still in Decapolis in the same region where the deaf and dumb man had been cured. They had nothing to eat and verse 2 reveals the reason. Jesus proclaims in verse 2, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat." They had been there in that remote place for three days.⁶ (That it was remote is proved by the use of the word "wilderness" in verse 4.) By use of the word "multitude," the presence of a huge crowd is also implied. No doubt, as was His custom, Jesus had been teaching this great multitude. Jesus recognized the need of the people and called His disciples to Himself and states, "I have compassion on the multitude." The verb "have compassion" is from the Greek σπλαγχνίζομαι (splanchnizomai). This verb means "to be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, have compassion (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity)" (Thayer 584). (In that day, they used the word "bowels" like people today use the word "heart" meaning the seat of emotion and love and so forth.) It has the idea of to

"feel sympathy" (Strong's 4697) for someone. Jesus was saying, "I pity their condition. I am disposed to relieve them" (Barnes 358). Jesus knew that He could not send them away without food because according to verse 3 He said, "And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers (*different ones*) of them came from far." The words "will faint" from the future tense of ἐκλύομαι (ekluomai) means they will collapse or "be exhausted" (Rienecker 109).

Feeding the multitude (8:4-7; Matthew 15:33-36) Verse 4 relates that the disciples were dubious that they could feed so many people, for they answered Jesus and said "From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness?" One may wonder if they had forgotten the feeding of the five thousand. It is easy to criticize the disciples for their show of little faith by this question they asked; and yet, each believer has times when his faith is not what it should be. Verses 5 and 7 relate that Jesus fed the multitude with only seven loaves and a few fishes after He blessed the food and gave thanks. Verse 6 states that Jesus "commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people." Even though Mark does not record in 8:6 that Jesus "commanded them to make all sit down by companies. . ." and so forth as He did in 6:39,40, it is safe to assume that the feeding was done in an orderly fashion (1 Corinthians 14:33). After they set down He took the loaves, gave thanks and brake the bread, setting the example for people today. Subsequently, He gave to the disciples to distribute the food among the people. (This again shows that God uses people in His kingdom work.) Verse 7 adds that Jesus also blessed the few small fishes and ordered that they be given out also.

Four thousand men fed and filled and seven baskets leftover (8:8,9; Matthew 15:37-39) Verse 8 says the people did eat and were filled, and again, as in the feeding of the five thousand there was food left over. As always the provisions of Jesus were sufficient. Some have thought that this was the same feeding as the feeding of the five thousand mentioned in chapter 6. In this regard, please note that the word "baskets" as used here is from σπυρίς (spuris) meaning a large basket (Rienecker 110; Acts 9:25) while the word in 6:43 is κόφινος (kophinos) meaning a smaller wicker basket (2894). This and the other facts prove that there were two different feedings. This is besides what Jesus said in verses 19, 20 which shows two feedings of the multitudes: one of five thousand and another of four thousand.

Verse 9 states that four thousand were fed this time. Matthew makes it clear that this was only the number of the men for he says in Matthew 15:38, "And they that did eat were four thousand men [*from ἄνδρες (andres) meaning male*], besides women and children." This was another great miracle by which the people should have realized that Jesus was and is God.

This incident of feeding the four thousand teaches another precept which exemplifies true worship. *True worship involves recognizing that God is sufficient for all things. Whether one believes it or not, God is able.*

Summary of Chapter

In this passage, Mark 7:24—8:9, the Servant continues to expose vain worship versus true worship. These verses teach the elements of true worship. Entitled "Faith of a Gentile—Healing a Deaf Man—Feeding Four Thousand," these events exemplify, teach, and demonstrate the requirements for true worship.

First, the faith request appeal of this Gentile woman teaches that true worship is always accompanied by faith based on the Word and power of God. She expressed

her humble faith in Jesus by making this request. She besought Jesus, indicating a very serious request, that Jesus "would cast forth the devil out of her daughter." It is genuinely evident that whether Jesus would cast out the devil or not, she still would have believed in Him as the Savior and Lord of her life. Notice that she fell at the feet of Jesus. She was worshipping Jesus as the son of David (meaning the Messiah of Israel), the Son of God, the all powerful One. [She believed in Him and that He was merciful. She had heard of His fame and she believed this was the anointed one of God.] She had genuine faith in Jesus. Paul writes, "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The first requirement of true worship is that it is always accompanied by faith based on the Word and power of God.

Other doctrines taught is that this incident emphasizes that the gospel of the kingdom is not limited to Israel but is also for the Gentiles; it is for the whole world. It also teaches that the child of God, though tested, should persist in humble prayer. He told this woman in Mark 7:29 "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." He made her daughter whole (Matthew 15:28). This incident manifests that Jesus is truly co-equal with God and demonstrates His power, love, mercy, and grace. Jesus has the power to save any and all who believe in Him.

Second, the event of healing a deaf and dumb man teaches that true worship will always cause one to have a greater opinion of God (7:31-37). [Matthew 15:29-31 is broadly parallel to this passage in Mark.] The action of Jesus in healing this man in the minds of these people was something else and they were convinced that He was able to do anything by His power. They ceased not to be amazed. These people had a higher and greater opinion of Jesus as seen from Mark 7:36,37. They "were beyond measure astonished" and were believing with settled conviction that Jesus "hath done

all things well." To this could be added that "they glorified the God of Israel" (Matthew 15:31). This incident proves that: *true worship will always cause believers to have a greater and higher opinion of God and will cause them to praise and glorify Him.*

Third, the feeding of the four thousand (8:1-9) teaches another precept which exemplifies true worship. True worship involves recognizing that God is sufficient for all things. God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. These truths are taught throughout the Bible. Whether one believes it or not, God is able. In this passage about Jesus feeding the four thousand Jesus was saying, "I pity their condition. I am disposed to relieve them" (Barnes 358). Jesus knew that He could not send them away without food because according to verse 3 He said, "And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far." As always the provisions of Jesus were sufficient. (Little is much in the hands of the LORD-GOD of heaven.) This was another great miracle by which the people should have realized that Jesus was and is God. *True worship involves recognizing that God is sufficient for all things. Whether one believes it or not, God is able.*

Chapter Notes

1. (See page 257.) Some have questioned at times whether Jesus ever left the land of Israel. Mark 7:24, 31 along with Matthew 15:21 clearly shows that Jesus did go into the borders of Tyre and Sidon during this retirement. Another thing that A. T. Robertson observes on page 95, as well as other places, is that Jesus carefully kept away from the territory ruled by Herod Antipas (Harmony 94, 95).

2. (See page 262.) Concerning another overall teaching of Mark chapter 7, it could be said that it brings out the truth that the apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 2:11-14. In Ephesians 2:13-14 Paul declares, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off (*Gentiles*) are made nigh by the blood of Christ. *14* For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us.*" Salvation (and the grace and mercy of God) is for both Jews and Gentiles. Arno C.

Gaebelein in commenting on Matthew chapter 15 (*the parallel to Mark chapter 7*) writes, "The first part of this chapter reveals the desperate condition of Israel. The second part, the healing of the daughter of the Canaanitish woman, shows typically the call of the Gentiles and the salvation in store for them, if they believe" (779).

3. (See page 262.) Some call this a separate withdrawal from that noted with the beginning of Mark 7:24; others consider it the same (Robertson, Harmony 95; Carter, 161,162; Hiebert 106).

4. (See page 262.) In reference to Decapolis please refer to dissertation Division 3 -- Chapter 8 for Mark Chapters 4:1-41; 5:1-43; page 178 comments on Mark 5:20.

5. (See page 263; Mark 7:32.) The noun form of the verb παρακαλέω (parakaleo) (translated "beseech" in Mark 7:32) is παράκλητος (parakletos) and is translated four times as "Comforter" in John chapters 14; 15; 16; Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit. This noun is also translated "advocate" once in 1 John 2:1. John is speaking of Jesus Christ.

6. (See page 266.) Some commentators believe that this does not mean that they had no food for all of the three days, but that now on the third day the supply is very low or completely depleted (Barnes 165, 358; Clarke 110). Certainly, the wording seems to mean that "now, this being the third day they have nothing more to eat."

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SIX---

THE SERVANT: JESUS THE CHRIST

(Mark 8:10-38; 9:1-50)

---CHAPTER 13---

Proved by Testimony

(Mark Chapter 8:10-9:1)

---CHAPTER 14---

Proved by Transfiguration

(Mark Chapter 9:2-29)

---CHAPTER 15---

Proved by Teaching

(Mark Chapter 9:30-50)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SIX---

THE SERVANT: JESUS THE CHRIST

(Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1-50)

---CHAPTER 13---

Proved by Testimony

(Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1)

OUTLINE

- XIII. Proved by Testimony** 8:10—9:1
{Discipleship Characteristics Revealed - must believe, beware of leaven, learn in stages, know who Jesus really is, must die to self and the world.}
- A. The Pharisees Demanding a Sign from Heaven 8:10-13
(Matthew 16:1-4)
1. Traveling into parts of Dalmanutha 8:10
 2. The Pharisees asking for a sign from heaven 8:11
 3. Jesus sighing deeply, showing love yet disgust 8:12
 4. Leaving the insincere Pharisees 8:13
- B. Forewarning His Disciples Concerning Leaven 8:14-21
(Matthew 16:5-12)
1. The disciples forgetting bread 8:14; Matthew 16:5
 2. Jesus warning against leaven 8:15; Matthew 16:6
 3. Misunderstanding the warning and being corrected 8:16-2; Matthew 16:7-12
- C. Healing a Blind Man in Stages 8:22-26
1. Beseeking Jesus to touch a blind man 8:22
 2. A gradual method of restoring sight 8:23-24
 3. Complete restoration of sight and the charge 8:25,26
- D. Jesus Asking, "Whom do men say that I am?" 8:27-30
(Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-21)
1. Traveling to Caesarea Philippi 8:27; Matthew 16:13
 2. Asking a crucial question 8:27; Matthew 16:13
 3. Answering the question 8:28; Matthew 16:14
 4. Making the question personal 8:29a; Matthew 16:15
 5. The answer of Peter 8:29b; Matthew 16:16
 6. The response of Jesus Matthew 16:17-19
 7. Warning them not to tell 8:30, Matthew 16:20

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SIX---

THE SERVANT: JESUS THE CHRIST

(Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1-50)

---CHAPTER 13---

Proved by Testimony

(Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1)

OUTLINE (Continued)

- E. The Announcement Concerning His Cross and Rebuke of Peter 8:31-33
(Matthew 16:21-23; Luke 9:22)
 - 1. The first prediction about His cross 8:31,32a
 - 2. The rebuke of Peter and Jesus rebuking Peter 8:32b,33
- F. The Requirements of Discipleship and Cross-bearing 8:34-37
(Matthew 16:24-27; Luke 9:23-25)
 - 1. Teaching people the prerequisites for following Jesus 8:34
 - 2. The believer saving or losing his life and/or soul 8:35
 - 3. The incomparable value of the soul 8:36,37
- G. Be Not Ashamed Of Jesus; A Coming Taste of Glory 8:38—9:1
(Matthew 16:27,28; Luke 9:26,27)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SIX--- THE SERVANT: JESUS THE CHRIST (Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1-50)

---CHAPTER 13--- Proved by Testimony (Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1)

After the feeding of the four thousand and the other miracles performed by Jesus, the people around Him should have realized that Jesus is God and the Christ. In chapters 8 and 9 it is proved specifically that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ" meaning the Servant is the Messiah, the Son of God, the One sent from God to be the Redeemer and Savior. This is the subject of Division Six of this dissertation which includes Mark chapters 8:10-38; 9:1-50. In Mark chapter 8 verses 10 through Mark chapter 9 verse 1 this is "Proved by Testimony." This will be the subject of this dissertation chapter, chapter 13. In Mark chapter 9 verses 2-29 that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ" is "Proved by Transfiguration." This will be the subject of dissertation chapter 14. In Mark chapter 9 verses 30-50 that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ" is "Proved by Teaching." This will be the subject of dissertation chapter 15. Of course, to some extent there is some overlapping of these subjects in all of these dissertation chapters.

The scripture passage of Division Six (Mark chapters 8:10—9:50) is the fourth and final withdrawal before Jesus takes His journey to Jerusalem as recorded in Mark chapter 10:1-52. This retirement lasts for about six months (Robertson, Harmony 98-110; Carter 165-179). {Note: Robertson and Carter seem to end this retirement at the end of Mark 9:32.}

In Mark chapter 8:10—9:1 Jesus reveals true *discipleship characteristics which are: one, to be a disciple of Jesus one must first be saved by repenting of his or her sins and believing that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior; two, disciples must learn to beware of leaven; three, they must understand that they will learn in stages; four, disciples must know who Jesus really is; and five, they also must die to self and the world and live for and unto Jesus (Galatians 2:20)*. These characteristics are taught as the main subject of the passage is developed. They go right along with the main subject since the living testimony of each true disciples verifies to the world that the Servant (is) Jesus the Christ. The subject "Proved by Testimony" means that this passage proves that the Servant is Jesus the Christ. The testimony provided in this chapter shows that Jesus is the Messiah, the One sent from God to be the Redeemer and Savior. This passage may be divided as follows: one, the Pharisees demanding a sign from heaven, 8:10-13; Matthew 16:1-4; two, forewarning His disciples concerning leaven, 8:14-21; Matthew 16:5-12; three, healing a blind man in stages, 8:22-26; four, Jesus asking, "Whom do men say that I am?" 8:27-30; Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-21; five, the announcement concerning His cross and rebuke of Peter, 8:31-33; Matthew 16:21-23; Luke 9:22; six, the requirements of discipleship and cross-bearing, 8:34-37; Matthew 16:24-27; Luke 9:23-25; and seven, be not ashamed of Jesus; a coming taste of glory, 8:38—9:1; Matthew 16:27,28; Luke 9:26,27.

A. The Pharisees Demanding a Sign from Heaven 8:10-13

(Matthew 16:1-4)

As previously noted, the Pharisees and others with them (sometimes it was the scribes and other times it was the Sadducees or the Herodians) continually entered into disputes with Jesus. Their purpose was so they could bring charges against Him and make Him to be thought of as a false prophet in the eyes of the general population and when possible, destroy Him (8:11; 3:6). This incident of Mark 8:10-13 seemingly took place after Jesus traveled back into Jewish territory. This sub-division may be divided into four parts: one, traveling into parts of Dalmanutha, 8:10; two; the Pharisees asking for a sign from heaven, 8:11; three, Jesus sighing deeply, showing love yet disgust, 8:12; and four, leaving the insincere Pharisees, 8:13.

Traveling into parts of Dalmanutha (8:10) After sending the four thousand away, Matthew 15:39 records that Jesus, "took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala." Mark 8:10 records that "straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha." Notice the word "coasts" and "parts." Magdala was "a small town on the West shore of the Sea of Galilee, between Tiberias and Capernaum." *Most likely this was the "home of Mary Magdalene"* (Rairdin, PC Bible Atlas for Windows, Ver. 1.0j). Dalmanutha was the same village or one very near to Magdala. These villages were "about three miles north of Tiberias" (Pfeiffer 308). Clarke writes, "The name Magdala *is* the same as 'Migdol,' a tower." (112). Clarke declares that, "The use of the two names affords an excellent illustration of the independence of the two narratives" (112). Robertson states that "Mark here uses 'parts' (*mere*) in the same sense as 'borders' (*koria*) in 7:24 just as Matthew reverses it with 'parts' in 15:21 and 'borders' here in 15:39" (Word Pictures 330). The significance of the geography is that, as mentioned previously, this would be Jewish territory and thus the Pharisees came to tempt Jesus.

The Pharisees asking for a sign from heaven (8:11) The scribes with the Pharisees had previously requested that Jesus give them "a sign from thee" in Matthew 12:38-40. Now the unlikely grouping of the Pharisees with the Sadducees came together seeking "a sign from heaven." Verse 11 states "the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him." Matthew 16:1 includes the Sadducees with the Pharisees. This was an unlikely grouping since they did not usually get along; but now they have a common cause which is to tempt Jesus. That this request by the Pharisees was not sincere is evidenced by the fact that their purpose was to tempt Jesus. The word "tempting" is from the Greek present active participle form of πειράζω (peirazo) and is the same word as used in 1:13 of the temptation of Jesus by the Devil. Being the present active participle gives the idea that they kept on doing this. The temptation of Jesus "in the wilderness was not a once-for-all experience" (Wessel 688). Satan came back time and time again to tempt Him (Wessel 688). One would think that the mighty works that Jesus had already been doing would have been enough for any one to perceive and understand that Jesus was the Christ, the True Messiah. These Pharisees and the people had already seen many signs and one more would not make any difference. If the miracles that Jesus had already performed did not convince them that He was the Messiah, nothing would. When people will not believe the truth, nothing will convince them otherwise. They wanted a sign from a higher level, one direct from heaven (at least, that is what they said). They sought this sign "tempting him." They once again were trying to entrap Him. They were doing their best to find an occasion to have Jesus arrested and to charge Him with teaching false doctrine and of blaspheming Jehovah-God — anything to get Him out of the way.

Jesus sighing deeply, showing love yet disgust (8:12) The first part of verse 12 states that Jesus, "sighed deeply in his spirit. . . ." The verb "sighed deeply" is from a Greek aorist active participle that is only used here in the New Testament. The word is ἀναστενάζω (anastenazo) which means "to draw up deep sighs from the bottom of the breast, to sigh deeply" (Thayer 42). This means He sighed or groaned deeply within His spirit. The word "spirit" in this context has the idea of "the seat of the emotions, passions, and affections" (Barnes 359). This deep sigh was a show of His exasperation with the Pharisees. Yet it showed His love for His enemies. "His heart was deeply affected at their wickedness and hypocrisy" (Barnes 359). This groaning from deep within Him depicted the "grief and disappointment" in His heart because of the unbelief of these, of all people, who should have believed (Wessel 688).

In Matthew 16:3,4 Jesus called them hypocrites and said, "ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. . . ." Jesus says to them Mark 8:12, "Why doth this generation seek after a sign?" Then He said truly, "There shall no sign be given unto this generation." (That is, one like they sought would not be given.) The parallel in Matthew 16:4 explains that the only sign would be that of Jonas (or Jonah) of which He had spoken of already. According to Matthew 12:38-39 when "certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees" said to Jesus "Master, we would see a sign from thee." Jesus replied unto them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." What is the sign of Jonah? What does it mean? The answer is found in Matthew 12:40 where Jesus states, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Jesus was

referring to the fact that after cruel suffering and death; He would be raised from the grave and this is all the sign that anyone would need. His resurrection is the ultimate proof that He is the Son of God, the one and only Savior (Acts 2:24; Romans 1:1-4). This testimony proves that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ."

Leaving the insincere Pharisees (8:13) In verse 13 after making such a forceful and powerful point as is stated in the last part of verse 12 and Matthew 16:3,4, Jesus entered a ship once again, departing "to the other side." He left the Pharisees because they were not sincerely seeking the truth. Jesus makes the point in Matthew 12:41 that the men of Ninevah would "rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here." In Matthew 12:42 Jesus makes another point that "The queen of the south (*or of Sheba*) shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here." The One greater than Jonas or Solomon is Jesus. The conclusion of this is: if people will not repent when the truth is preached and will not listen to the wisdom of the Word of God then there is nothing else that can be done for them (Luke 16:27-31). Jesus left the Pharisees and departed because they were not sincerely seeking the truth. If people do not want the truth, then, they reject it against themselves to their condemnation (Luke 7:30; Philippians 1:28; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16; John 3:36; Acts 17:30). This Servant of the most high God is Jesus the Christ — the One they had been expecting to come for centuries even from the time of Adam. From this is learned that to be a disciple of Jesus one must first be saved by repenting of his or her sins and believing that Jesus is the Son of God, and the One and only Savior. This is the first characteristic of discipleship. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith *it is* impossible to

please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

B. Forewarning His Disciples Concerning Leaven 8:14-21

(Matthew 16:5-12)

Because the disciples had forgotten to take bread, Jesus used this occasion to forewarn them concerning the leaven of false doctrines and unfounded traditions. He is telling them not to make the same mistakes that the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and Herod¹ were making. The leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees has a religious connection while that of Herod has a political, worldly connection. Although not mentioned in Mark as they are in the parallel passage in Matthew 16:6-12, they were also to beware of the leaven of the Sadducees. The leaven of the Sadducees was skepticism of spiritual things and besides they had a know-it-all attitude. Jesus wants His disciples to beware of religious errors, worldliness, and entrapment in things political. The people of God should be careful not to go to the world for answers which can be found in the Word of God and through praying. This set of verses may be divided as follows: one, the disciples forgetting bread, 8:14; Matthew 16:5; two, Jesus warning against leaven, 8:15; Matthew 16:6; and three, misunderstanding the warning and being corrected, 8:16-2; Matthew 16:7-12.

The disciples forgetting bread (8:14; Matthew 16:5) Verse 14 declares, "Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf." This verse sets the stage for the passage by saying that the disciples had forgotten (for some unmentioned reason) to take bread with them on the ship except for one loaf. Why? It could have been because of "their quick departure from the Pharisees" (Wessel 689). In any case, they only had about one loaf (and it would have been a small loaf) with them to share with 13 men.

Jesus warning against leaven (8:15; Matthew 16:6,11,12) According to verse 15 Jesus used this opportunity to warn His disciples about the dangers of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. Verse 15 says Jesus "charged them . . ." The word "charged" is from the Greek verb of διαστέλλομαι (diastellomai). This verb also has the idea to "to admonish, order. . ." (Thayer 142) or "command" (Rienecker 110). Jesus used the imperfect tense [διαστέλλετο (diastelleto)] which means He repeatedly charged or admonished them. He was saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and *of* the leaven of Herod." The two Greek verbs Jesus used here are from the present active imperative forms of ὀράω (horaō), "take heed," and βλέπω (blepo), "beware," respectively. Using the present imperative and both verbs together, Jesus is giving a double warning of which He meant as a continual charge and warning. Jesus was saying to them, beware and keep on being beware of this leaven and take heed and keep on taking heed. Believers of every generation would do well to understand that this applies to them also.

Leaven normally involves the principle of fermentation. It is usually a symbol of evil with corruption and evil will spread just as a small amount of yeast in bread dough will spread throughout the lump. The word "leaven" is from the Greek noun ζύμη (zume). Thayer says it means:

leaven, metaph(orically) of inveterate mental and moral corruption, viewed in its tendency to infect others." *He comments to say*, "It is applied to that which, though small in quantity, yet by its influence thoroughly pervades a thing; either in a good sense as in the parable Mat. 13:33; or in a bad sense (*I Corinthians 5:6-8*), of a pernicious influence, . . . "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. . . (273).

Being in unbelief the Pharisees desired a sign. Herod desired to see a miracle as according to Luke 23:8 where the Bible relates, "And when Herod saw Jesus. . . he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him." Jesus is telling His disciples not to

make the same mistakes as the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and Herod (or Herodians) were making. Barnes explains it like this:

It is not improbable that he cautioned them against them all. The Pharisees sought his life, and were exceedingly corrupt in their doctrines and practice; the Sadducees denied some of the essential doctrines of religion, and the Herodians probably were distinguished for irreligion, sensuality, and corrupt living. They were united, therefore, with the Pharisees and Sadducees in opposing the claims of Jesus (359).

To this Carter weighs in and writes:

The leaven of the Pharisees is named in Luke 12:1 as hypocrisy. (*Consider also Matthew 23.*) The leaven of the Sadducees might well be named as rationalism or skepticism in religion and willingness to compromise one's scruples to obtain political or economic favors. The leaven of Herod must have been a cunning and utter disregard for the principles of right and wrong in order to advance one's personal ends (165).

To sum it up Jesus is forewarning them to beware of the leaven or corruption of all of these groups, whether it involves things religious, things worldly, or things political.

Misunderstanding the warning and being corrected (8:16-21; Matthew 16:7-12) Verse 16 relates, "And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is because we have no bread.*" This indicates that the disciples did not understand the spiritual implication of what Jesus said and thought He was rebuking them for not having brought more real bread. Verses 17-21 demonstrates that this was not the case, but that Jesus was disappointed that they did not understand the spiritual truths involved. In verse 17 Jesus says "unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?" In verse 18 He asked them three questions (paraphrased): one, "Do you not have eyes so that you can see?" two, "Do you not have ears so that you can hear?" and three, "And do you not remember the recent events that took place?"

Then in verses 19, 20 He reminds them of the feeding of the five thousand, the four thousand, and the many baskets of food left-over. He was saying, this being the

case, surely you do not think I was speaking of literal bread but rather the spiritual. The idea is that Jesus wanted them to understand He was speaking of the false doctrines of the Pharisees and of Herod. In verse 21 Jesus asks them, "How is it that ye do not understand?" Before believers of this day condemn the disciples, each one needs to make sure that he or she understands the basics of the Bible. In this present day true believers must beware of the many movements and "ism" outside as well as among the true New Testament churches. True churches must be careful that they do not let the world get into the church² nor allow corruption and false doctrines to pervade the work of the Lord.

The account in Matthew helps one to understand that they were to beware of false doctrine. Matthew 16:11-12 states, "How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." One false doctrine of the Pharisee was that they believed in salvation by works while the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. Disciples of Jesus must learn to beware of the leaven of false teachers and their false doctrine, as well as, beware of worldly practices. This is the second characteristic of discipleship. In Isaiah 8:20 the prophet proclaims, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."

C. Healing a Blind Man in Stages 8:22-26

Verse 22 states "And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him." The name Bethsaida [from βηθσαϊδα] means "house of fishing" (Thayer 101). It was probably the Bethsaida located³ "in lower

Gaulanitis on the eastern shore of Lake Gennesaret, not far from where the Jordan empties into it" (Thayer 101). [This seems logical since they traveled from this Bethsaida to "the towns of Caesarea Philippi" according to verse 27.] The circumstances of restoring the sight to this blind man are similar to that of the healing of the deaf and dumb man as recorded in Mark 7:31-38. This event of the miracle healing of the blind man may be divided as follows: one, beseeching Jesus to touch a blind man, 8:22; two, a gradual method of restoring sight, 8:23-24; and three, complete restoration of sight and the charge, 8:25,26.

Beseeching Jesus to touch a blind man (8:22) Upon arriving in Bethsaida some of the people brought a blind man to Jesus for healing. The healing of this blind man in stages is only recorded by Mark. They "besought him to touch him." The verb "besought" is from the same Greek word as the used in Mark 7:32 rendered "beseech." They were begging and entreating Jesus to restore sight to this blind man. These that brought the blind man expressed great faith "for they believed" that Jesus could, by only a touch, heal the man (Barnes 359). But Jesus did not work it that way in this particular event. Jesus had a lesson to teach the disciples.

A gradual method of restoring sight (8:23, 24) These verses reveal that Jesus used a gradual method to perform this healing — the only one done this way by our Sovereign Lord. Could Jesus have done this to teach that spiritual things are revealed here a little and there a little because His disciples learn spiritual things in stages (Isaiah 28:10-13, Hebrews 5:11-14, 2 Timothy 2:15)?

According to the first part of verse 23 Jesus first led the man outside the town. Why did He do this? Mark does not say. Most of the miracles of Jesus Christ were done in public except for this one and the ones recorded in 5:35-43 and 7:31-37 (the raising of the daughter of Jarius from the dead and the healing of the deaf and dumb

man in Decapolis). According to last half of verse 23 Jesus did three things in the first part of this healing. One, He spit on his eyes. Why? Robertson suggests this was to encourage his faith (Robertson, Word Pictures 333). Next, Jesus put His hands on him. Last, Jesus "asked him if he saw ought" or "asked him, whether he could see anything" (Vaughan, 26 Translations 165). The man gave his answer in verse 24. After looking up he said, "I see men as trees, walking." He saw, but not clearly. The man's answer reveals at least two things as noted by Wessel: "(1) the man had probably not been born blind or else he would not have been able to identify trees as trees and (2) the return of his sight was gradual" (691). Why gradual healing? The inspired writer does not reveal it. However, it could be that Jesus wanted to illustrate that disciples learn in stages, step by step as they walk with the Lord Jesus, pray, and meditate and study His blessed Word (this is suggested in a round about way by Barnes 360 and Wessel 691, 692). In any case, this is taught in 2 Peter 1:3-9.

Complete restoration of sight and the charge (8:25,26) Verse 25 relates, "After that he (*Jesus*) put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly." Thus, Jesus again laid his hands on the man and made him look up and the man was completely cured. Why did Jesus effect the cure in this way? Part of the answer may be found in what the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 11:33 "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Jesus is the Sovereign God. Wessel declares, "One thing is certain. The early church did not make up this story!" (691). This is yet another proof of inspiration. In verse 26 Jesus sent the man to his house and gave him specific instructions, a specific charge, not to go into the town nor tell it there. This charge was like He had given in other similar cases. Why? Jesus did not want a sensation created before He moved on to Caesarea

Philippi. Why? He had much to tell and teach His disciples and did not want to be thronged by the crowds. Barnes suggest that it was, "Lest it excite the jealousy of the Pharisees, and produce commotion and danger" (360, 361). This charge or command gives testimony and proves that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ." Also from this passages it is demonstrated that disciples must understand that they will learn in stages, which is the third characteristic of discipleship.

D. Jesus Asking, "Whom do men say that I am?" 8:27-30
(Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-21)

This passage concerns the question of Jesus to His disciples about His true and divine identity as "the Son of the living God." It includes the confession of Peter that Jesus is the Messiah or the Christ. [Please take note this is not the first time that Jesus is identified as the Messiah sent from God (Robertson Harmony 99)] These comments shall include some of the parallel passages in Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-21. Many commentators take this event to be the beginning of the second half of the Gospel of Mark (Wessel 692). They had come "into the towns of Caesarea Philippi." This section of Scripture shall be divided as follows: one, traveling to Caesarea Philippi, 8:27; Matthew 16:13; two, asking a crucial question, 8:27; Matthew 16:13; three, answering the question, 8:28; Matthew 16:14; four, making the question personal, 8:29a; Matthew 16:15; five, the answer of Peter, 8:29b; Matthew 16:16; six, the response of Jesus, Matthew 16:17-19; and seven, warning them not to tell, 8:30, Matthew 16:20.

Traveling to Caesarea Philippi (8:27; Matthew 16:13) Verse 27 relates "And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?" This verse along with Matthew 16:13 records they went into the towns or coasts of Caesarea

Philippi (formerly called Paneas and the modern name is Banias). Caesarea Philippi was near the Sea of Galilee and at the foot of Mount Hermon, about 1,150 feet above sea level (Wessel 692). Herod Philip had rebuilt the city of Paneas and renamed it in honor of Tiberias Caesar and himself (Pfeiffer 205). This name distinguishes it from another city by the name of Caesarea near the Mediterranean Sea.

Asking a crucial question 8:27; Matthew 16:13 It was near Caesarea Philippi that Jesus asked the crucial question, "Whom do men say that I am?" Matthew 16:13 records the same question with more detail where it says Jesus asked "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" By so doing Jesus identifies Himself as "the Son of man." This title shows Jesus as the representative of man (of every person). It pertains to His mission as the Anointed One of God to suffer, to die, to be buried, and to rise again for all of mankind. Isaiah is very plain about this aspect of the mission of the Messiah in Isaiah 53. Jesus used this question "as a preliminary to His second question" of verse 29 of Mark 8 (Wessel 693).

Answering the question (8:28; Matthew 16:14) In verse 28 along with Matthew 16:14 and Luke 9:19 the disciples answer that various people give different answers. First they said that some say that thou art "John the Baptist" which is quite logical in some respects since Jesus and John taught the same things. Next, they said that some say "Elias," known as Elijah in the Old Testament. Matthew adds that some say Jesus was Jeremias or Jeremiah. In all three accounts the disciples add that others say that Jesus was "one of the prophets." Luke records that others said that Jesus was "one of the old prophets . . . risen again." By these answers some of the people may have had Deuteronomy 18:15-18 in mind.

Making the question personal (8:29a; Matthew 16:15) In first part of verse 29 Jesus gets down to brass tacks. He asked His disciples directly, "But whom say ye

that I am?" [Each person, who has ever lived or who shall ever live on the earth must answer this question of Jesus, whether he is right or wrong.] When Jesus addressed the disciples with the pronoun "ye" He uses the emphatic Greek irregular pronoun ὑμεῖς (humeis) from σὺ (su) to make the message clear (Dana and Mantey 123; Thayer 591). Wuest states that this pronoun is "the personal pronoun used for contrast" (166). He writes that Jesus was saying, "As for you, in contradistinction to others, who are you saying that I am?" (Wuest 166). Wessel puts it this way, "Who do you, *yourselves*, my most intimate and trusted friends — in contrast to other people who neither know nor understand me — think I am?" (693). Jesus wanted them to answer the question for themselves. Each reader needs to consider, "What is my answer? If a person has it right he or she has a personal relationship with Jesus, and if so, that one has been born again."

The answer of Peter (8:29b; Matthew 16:16) True to his character Peter gives the ready answer as the spokesman for the group by saying as recorded in the last part of Mark 8:29, "Thou art the Christ." Luke 9:20 records the answer of Peter, "The Christ of God." Matthew 16:16 records the full answer of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." [But the question for every person is "Do you know Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God?"]

The Greek word for "Christ" is Χριστός (Christos) which translates the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ (mashiyach) or "Messiah" (Strong's H4899). It means the "Anointed One" of God (Strong's G5447). Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. This is the word used in the Old Testament to designate that King whom God would provide Israel, who will occupy the throne of David forever (Daniel 9:25-26). Peter gave the correct answer. This testimony proves that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ."

The response and charge of Jesus (8:30; Matthew 16:17-20) While Mark does not record this response, Matthew 16:17 records that Jesus replied to Peter "and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." What is important is that each person consider who has revealed the answer of this question to them. This being revealed to a person by just "flesh and blood" is not enough. To be real and true each one must have been convicted by the Father in heaven through the work of the Holy Spirit that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. But at that time, the concept of Peter of the Messiah was not of one who would suffer, be rejected, and die as Jesus revealed in Mark 8:32-33. Peter and the others had much to learn.

Because the disciples and others had much to learn, Jesus charged them in verse 30 to tell no man of His Messiahship as of yet. Verse 30 relates "And he charged them that they should tell no man of him." The word "charged" in Mark 8:30 is from ἐπιτιμάω (epitimaō) meaning "to rebuke, to warn" (Rienecker 110). This idea behind ἐπιτιμάω (epitimaō) is that it is a strong admonishment and a sharp warning (Thayer 245) not to reveal at that time that Jesus is "the Christ" (Matthew 16:20). They needed further instructions of which He was about to give in the next few verses and next two chapters of Mark.

One thing they needed to learn (as well as all other believers need to learn) is recorded in Matthew 16:18 where Jesus states emphatically and forcefully, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Jesus was at that very time building His church. He built it on Himself (He is the rock). It would not go out of existence since He states "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Refer to the comments on pages 65, 66).

E. The Announcement Concerning His Cross and Rebuke of Peter 8:31-33
(Matthew 16:21-23; Luke 9:22)

A word of explanation is needed at this juncture about Mark 8:31—9:1. These verses consist of three main parts. The first main part is Jesus giving His first prediction about His cross and also His rebuke of Peter in Mark 8:31-33. The second main part of Mark 8:31—9:1 is Jesus beginning to teach His disciples concerning the requirements of discipleship and cross-bearing in Mark 8:34-37. (He gives more instruction concerning discipleship in 9:35; 10:29-30; 10:38-39.) The third main part is the believer should not be ashamed of Jesus for He is coming in His glory in Mark 8:38—9:1.

This first sub-section which is the announcement concerning His cross, 8:31-33, may be divided as follows: one, the first prediction about His cross, 8:31,32a; and two, the rebuke of Peter and Jesus rebuking Peter, 8:32b,33. Other predictions of His cross are given in 9:31 and 10:33-34. The teaching about His cross was previously veiled but now stated openly. These all stress the suffering of Christ. Why? Because Jesus was to suffer and die for the sins of humanity, not His own for He had no sin (1 John 2:1,2; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5).

First prediction about His cross (8:31-32a; Matthew 16:21) In verse 31 Jesus begins to teach His disciples "that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." He was teaching them the real meaning of His Messiahship. By using the title "Son of man," Jesus is identified as the Messiah and the incarnate Son of God manifested in human flesh (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6,7; Matthew 2:21-25; John 1:1,2,14). (Refer to page 115 of this dissertation.) He is calling the Messiah the Son of Man, which is Himself. This title is used over eighty times in the four Gospel records. It has its roots in the Old Testament in Psalms 8:4; 80:17; Isaiah 56:1,2;

Daniel 7:13-14; and in Ezekiel over ninety times. Jesus continued by saying that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected, be killed and rise again. This was necessary because of the sin and sins of mankind and because it was the plan of God in order to redeem men from their sin. His rejection would be led by three groups: the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and yea, sadly, by the general public. "These three groups made up the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court" (Wessel 695). The leaders of the Jews put Jesus to the test and He did not meet their test of Messiah so they rejected Him. They wanted someone like David to lead them out from under the rule of Rome and any other world power. They did not understand that first the Messiah must die for the sins of the whole world just as the prophet Isaiah said He would in Isaiah chapter 53. In the last part of verse 31 Jesus speaks of the sure hope of His victory over death for He states emphatically that He would "after three days rise again." Death and the grave could not keep Him for He was not a sinner (Acts 2:22-24; Romans 1:3,4). This gives the believer the sure hope of the resurrection (2 Corinthians 4:14-18).

The first part of verse 32 says that Jesus "spake that saying openly." In other words, He spoke of His suffering openly or plainly. The verb "spake" is from the imperfect Greek tense ἐλάλει (elalei) from the root λαλέω (laleo). The imperfect tense means that Jesus began to speak and continued to speak this thing.

The rebuke of Peter and Jesus rebuking Peter (8:32b,33; Matthew 16:22-23) Peter did not like what Jesus was saying. So Peter "took him (*aside*), and began to rebuke him (8:32b)" [The word "rebuke" [from ἐπιτιμάω (epitimaō)] is the same word that was translated "charged" in verse 30. In this context it has the idea "to chide . . . reprove, censure severely . . . to admonish . . ." (Thayer 245). This is also the same word used by Jesus to "rebuke" the raging, storming wind in 4:39.] To Peter

a suffering Messiah was unimaginable. The Messiah was to be strong like David and lead the nation to greatness. However, this was also the position of the Hebrew religious leaders. Messiah will do this in His second coming.

Verse 33 records that Jesus rebuked (same word as used in verse 32) Peter sternly in no uncertain terms. Verses 33 relates, "But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." Jesus spoke this rebuke intentionally in the presence of all the disciples so that they would get the message also. Sometimes this is needed today. The apostle Paul instructs pastors to do this when needed in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The words of this rebuke show that Peter was on the side of Satan in his rebuke of Jesus. Jesus told Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan." This is like the rebuke Jesus gave to Satan himself in Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 4:8. Satan through Peter was still tempting Christ to take a shortcut. But Jesus knew that this shortcut was evil, wicked, and against God in every way and against man also. The reason for this rebuke was that Peter was looking at things from the negative and human viewpoint as well as the satanic viewpoint. The word "savourest" is from the Greek verb φρονέω (phroneo) and means "to have understanding, be wise. . . to be of the same mind i.e. agreed together, cherish the same views. . ." (Thayer 658). The idea is to promote a certain way of thinking. In this case, Peter was not thinking of the plan and purpose of God, but was thinking and pursuing "those things which gratify the flesh" (Thayer 658). On the other hand, Paul wrote in Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Peter was opposing the divine will of God in wanting a popular political messiah. "This was the way the world thought" (Wessel 696) and it was totally wrong.

F. The requirements of discipleship and cross-bearing 8:34-37

(Matthew 16:24-27; Luke 9:23-25)

The Gospel of Mark was primarily written to the saints in Rome. Nevertheless, it is for all people everywhere which is emphasized in the first part of Mark 8:34, "And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them. . . ." He was reminding them, the original, primary, and immediate recipients, as well as all born-again, blood-bought believers that to follow Jesus is to follow the path of suffering and even death. When Jesus spoke these words, "It was as if he were already carrying his cross to Golgotha; he had accepted it, and, spiritually, it was already upon him" (Clarke 123). Jesus was following this path and it would lead Him to victory over death, hell, Satan, and the grave. This would particularly be a source of encouragement and strength to these saints "faced with persecution and trials" (Wessel 697). "Mark is saying . . . such experiences are normal in the life of the discipleship" (Wessel 697). Jesus suffered; His disciples shall suffer (Matthew 10:24; John 15:15-21).

So far in this chapter, four characteristics of discipleship have been presented. In Mark 8:34-37 the fifth characteristic is taught. Disciples of Jesus must learn *to die to self and the world and live for and unto Jesus (Galatians 2:20)*. Sometimes this is referred as cross-bearing. When His disciples show forth these five characteristics, this gives testimony that "The Servant: (is) Jesus the Christ." This passage, 8:34-37, may be divided as follows: one, teaching people the prerequisites for following Jesus, 8:34; two, the believer saving or losing his life, 8:35; and three, the incomparable value of the soul, 8:36,37. These verses are very much like Matthew 10:38-39.

Teaching the requirements for following Jesus (8:34) The last part of verse 34 states, Jesus "said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." From the Greek text the words

"Whosoever will come after me" literally may be rendered "Whosoever desires after me to come" (Berry 115). In other words, Jesus is saying, if you want to (or desire to) be My disciple, here is what you must do. Hence, Jesus calls the people unto Him according to verse 34 to teach not only the Twelve but everyone else the requirements of discipleship and cross-bearing. He gives three conditions which are: one, denying one's self; two, taking up one's cross; and three, following Jesus. [He gives more instruction concerning discipleship in 9:35; 10:29-30; 10:38-39 John 13:34,35; 14:15.]

When Jesus says, "let him deny himself" He means to renounce or abandon self — to quit living for the self interest. Robertson declares the believer is to "Say no to himself, a difficult thing to do" (Word Pictures 336). Denying self involves initial repentance at the point of faith and continual repentance everyday thereafter. "God, not self, must be at the center of life" (Wessel 697). When Jesus says, "and take up his cross," He means the believer is to put self to death. The believer dies with Christ when he is converted and he is to continue to reckon self as dead. The cross is the instrument of cruel death. To follow Jesus means "to walk the same road" with Him. (Wuest 52). The prophet said in Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" One interesting thing is added by Luke, "And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (9:23). Luke records that Jesus said to do these things "daily, and follow me." Actually, this is not only interesting but a challenging command of our Lord. It was because of this challenging command of our Lord that the apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And *that* he died for all, that they which

live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

The believer saving or losing his life (8:35) Jesus gives a very wise saying in Mark 8:35, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." This seems to be contradictory. L. D. Capell includes the parallel of Mark 8:35, which is Matthew 16:25, in his chapter entitled "Paradox" from his book entitled Biblical Figures of Speech. Capell defines this figure of speech, the paradox, like this: "*A proposition seemingly absurd yet true to fact; a wise saying which appears foolish; a saying which unites words whose literal meanings appear to be incongruous, if not contradictory, but they are so cleverly and wisely joined together as to enhance the real sense of the words*" (142). Capell states, "To save life is to lose it" (144). Then he quotes Matthew 16:25 and says, "Is it possible for one to save his life? Of course one cannot save himself spiritually; that is by the grace of God" (Capell 144, 145). Next, Brother Capell quotes Ephesians 2:8 then he writes:

It is noted that Jesus was talking (*in Matthew 16:25*) to His own disciples who were already born again. The salvation of the soul from hell does not in any way depend upon the believer's conduct. However, the reward for the life lived after one is born again does depend on his conduct.

The context of the paradox indicates that Jesus was emphasizing that a true servant of the Lord could not be selfish. The meaning then is this — if one determines to live a self-centered life, then he wastes his own life. On the other hand, the servant who loses himself in the service of the Lord, centering his interests upon Christ, saves his life — that is, he does not waste it (145).

In Mark 8:35-37, as well as in Matthew 16:25-26, the word "life" and the word "soul" are translations of the same Greek noun, ψυχή (*psuche or psyche*). This word, this concept, is not easy to be understood. Thayer gives this definition:

breath, the breath of life, the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing . . . life . . . that in which there is life, a living being, a living soul . . . the soul, the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions (our heart, soul etc.) . . . the soul regarded as a moral being designed for

everlasting life, the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death (distinguished from other parts of the body) (677).

In these verses, Mark 8:35-37 and Matthew 16:25,26, the Greek word ψυχή (psuche) would be easier to understand if it is rendered "life" rather than "soul." What Clarke write about this word ψυχή (psuche) helps one to understand:

That word [*ψυχή (psuche)*] is used here, not in two senses, but in two aspects or applications, which the hearers, familiar with such sententious (*expressive*) utterances, would well enough understand. As descriptive of human nature (Clark 123), "spirit is life as coming from God, soul is life as constituted in men. Consequently, when the individual life is to be made emphatic, 'soul' is used" (Laidlaw as qtd. by Clark 123).

Clarke continues to relate, "Under Laidlaw's definition, which seems sufficient, the word psyche [*yuch, (psuche)*] can plainly have two aspects, a higher and a lower, which are fairly represented by "life" and "soul" in the present passage" (Clarke 123).

Wuest gives a good interpretation of this passage on page 171 of his Word Studies. His interpretation agrees with that of Clarke and Capell. "The word "life" here is not βίος (bios) referring to one's physical existence and its needs but ψυχή (psuche), referring to the soul, that part of man which wills, and thinks, and feels . . . to the will power, the reason, and the emotions, to the personality with all his activities, hopes, and aspirations" (Wuest 171). What Jesus is saying in verse 35a is, "For whosoever would desire to save his life shall lose it" (Wuest 171). This is speaking to one who has already been born again and is seeking to follow Jesus. Remember, verse 34 is part of the context. So it is that the person who lives so as to satisfy self — to gratify the flesh — will lose his life. Wuest declares, "God has so created man, that he does not find complete rest and satisfaction until his entire being is swallowed up in the sweet will of God" (171).

In verse 35b Jesus continues, "but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." Jesus is not giving the terms upon which God

will save "the soul" (*as Missionary Baptists commonly call it*) or that is, the spirit, or in other words, to be born again. Self-denial never saved a soul from sin (Wuest 172) and the condemnation of sin. Only the blood of Jesus can save a soul from sin and the condemnation of sin. (L. D. Capell taught the same thing.) Jesus is laying down the requirements for one to have a rewarding, fruitful life for Christ Jesus and His Gospel. In other words, the only life worth living is the self-denying, God-controlled life. The self-controlled life will only be wasted and its works burned up (1 Corinthians 3:11-16). So for the believer to live his life for Jesus is to save it. But for the believer to live his life for self is to lose his life.

The incomparable value of the soul (8:36,37) In verse 36 Jesus declares, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The word "lose" in verse 36 is from a different word from "lose" in verse 35. The word "lose" in verse 35 is from future tense of the verb ἀπόλλυμι (apollumi). This word means "to destroy. . . to put out of the way entirely. . . render useless. . . to lose. Thus in verse 35 the idea is to lose future rewards. The word "lose" in verse 36 is from the aorist passive infinitive of ζημιόω (zemioo). Ζημιόω (zemioo) means ". . . to sustain damage, to receive injury, suffer loss . . . to forfeit his life" (Thayer 272). This verb being in the passive has the idea of to suffer loss, to lose and even to forfeit. Clarke renders verse 36, "For what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and to forfeit his psyche, life, or soul?" (124). The verb "profit" [ὠφελέω (opheleo)] is in the present indicative active and relates to present as well as future time since the kind of action for the present tense is durative or linear or "going on" (Davis 25). "The value of man to himself is here set above all other values in the world" (Clarke 124). The idea is that man loses or forfeits himself in living for self only. In other

words, if a person is saved, but does not live for Jesus, in that, he lives for self and self-gratification, consequently at the judgment seat of Christ this person will lose all of the rewards that could have been his. It will be as the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

In Mark 8:37 Jesus continued and declares, "Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul *or life*?" In other words, once a person has lost the reward that could have been earned during his earthly life, there is no turning back to regain it and there is no way to buy it back. Clarke translates verse 37, "For what is there that he can give, out of all his possessions, as a price with which to buy back his soul when once he has lost it?" (124). This is certainly a sobering thought and truth.

G. Be Not Ashamed Of Jesus; A Coming Taste of Glory 8:38—9:1

(Matthew 16:27,28; Luke 9:26,27)

Mark 8:38 with 9:1 "form one paragraph" in the Greek New Testament "and should go together" (Robertson, Word Pictures 337). Jesus warns in Mark 8:38 "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." The word "therefore" shows verse 38 to be the conclusion to verses 34-37. The verb "be ashamed" is from the aorist passive subjunctive of the Greek verb ἐπαισχύνομαι (epaischunomai). Being the aorist passive subjunctive, the expression "Whosoever. . . shall be ashamed" could be rendered "Whosoever is ashamed" (Robertson, Word Pictures 337). "It is not a statement about the future conduct of one, but about his present attitude toward Jesus" (Robertson, Word Pictures 337).

What did Jesus mean by the phrase "in this adulterous and sinful generation?"

Clarke writes a lengthy but good explanation of this:

Literally, "in this generation, the adulteress and sinner;" adulterous in the sense of Jer. 3:20; 31:32; Ezek. 16:31,32; Matt. 16:4. The union between Jehovah and Israel was symbolized, in the prophets, by marriage, and the unfaithfulness of Israel by the conduct of an adulterous wife. Now Jesus charges his own generation with such adultery: it is false to God, and stands forth "an adulteress and a sinner." Jesus was condemned for having to do with adulterous and sinful persons, but the great adulteress and sinner was the generation that condemned him. Yet even in the midst of such a generation his follower must not blush to come after him bearing his cross (124).

Hence, Jesus was saying that the generation at that present time was an adulterous and sinful generation who had rejected the very One who came to redeem them. Have the generations changed for the better since the time of the earthly ministry of Jesus? Truly, over the last two thousand years the generations have not changed. Thus Jesus proclaims that if anyone is ashamed of Him and the work of His kingdom in this present life, He will be ashamed of that one in the future. Over in opposition to being ashamed of Jesus, the apostle Paul is a good example for believers to follow today; for he wrote in Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Paul encouraged Timothy to be faithful to Christ Jesus when he declares in 2 Timothy 1:12 "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." The word "ashamed" in these two verses is from the same Greek word that Jesus used in Mark 8:38. This verse is a summation of what Jesus had been teaching. Of the saved person this speaks of the loss of rewards. There are many saved people who do not serve the Lord. This is a tragedy second only to that of those who are never saved. Born-again, blood-bought believers who deny self and die to self and the world and

follow Jesus and live for His gospel are manifesting the fifth characteristic of discipleship. In manifesting the characteristic of discipleship, believers are proving to a lost and dying world by their testimony that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ." The last part of the verse 38 is speaking of the second coming of Christ and future judgment.

Mark 9:1 serves as a connecting link between 8:38 and 9:2. In 8:38 Jesus refers to His second coming and 9:2-8 gives the account of His transfiguration. What did Jesus mean by saying that "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Various interpretations have been advanced. However, the simplest and most straight forward interpretation is that Christ was speaking of the fact that some of them would see Him in His transfiguration. The transfiguration was a pre-manifestation of the Second Advent — the Kingdom coming with the King in power to set up His millennial reign. To go along with this, to the apostle John was Jesus revealed as the coming King of Glory in all His majestic power in the visions of the book of the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." John saw "the kingdom of God come with power."

Summary of Chapter

Is Jesus the Servant in truth the Christ, the Messiah? In Mark chapters 8 and 9 it is proved specifically that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ" meaning the Servant is the Messiah, the Son of God, the One sent from God to be the Redeemer and Savior. These chapters prove that Jesus the Servant is the Christ by testimony, transfiguration, and by the teaching of the Servant. Mark chapter 8 not only answers this question by testimony, but in this passage Jesus reveals true *discipleship characteristics*. These characteristics go hand in hand with testimony given in Mark

chapter 8 to prove that the Servant is Jesus the Christ. The daily testimony of each true disciple verifies to the world that the Servant is Jesus the Christ.

The Pharisees with the scribes and/or the Sadducees and/or the Herodians continually entered into disputes with Jesus. Their purpose was to bring charges against Him and make Him appear to be a false prophet in the eyes of the general population and when possible, destroy Him. They wanted Jesus to give them a sign from heaven. Their request was not sincere; for their purpose was to tempt Jesus. Jesus told them, "There shall no sign be given unto this generation." Jesus would not perform any miracles just for show. In Matthew 16:4 Jesus explains that the only sign would be that of Jonas (Matthew 12:38-40). Jesus was referring to the fact that after His suffering and death; He would be raised from the grave. His resurrection is the proof that He is the Son of God, the one and only Savior. This testimony proves that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ" Even the negative testimony of the enemies of Jesus prove that He is the Christ

After leaving the Pharisees, Jesus warns His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and of Herod. Jesus wants His disciples to beware of religious errors, worldliness, and entrapment in things political. True churches must be careful that they do not let the world get into the church nor allow corruption to pervade the work of the Lord. Disciples of Jesus must learn to beware of the leaven of false teachers and their false doctrine, as well as, beware of worldly practices in order to keep their testimony pure and effective.

When some people brought a blind man to Jesus for healing, the Sovereign Lord used a gradual method to heal him. Why gradual yet complete healing? Perhaps, Jesus wanted to illustrate that disciples learn in stages, step by step as they

walk with the Lord Jesus, pray, and meditate and study His blessed Word. This miracle gives testimony and proves that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ."

Near Caesarea Philippi Jesus asked the significant question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Mark 8:27; Matthew 16:13). In so doing Jesus identifies Himself as "the Son of man." The initial answer by His disciples reveals what the people thought. It was then that Jesus asked his disciples directly, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answers, as the spokesman for the Twelve, by saying in Matthew 16:16 "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This answer gives testimony that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ."

In verse 31 Jesus begins to teach concerning His cross and resurrection. He was teaching them the real meaning of His Messiahship. The leaders of the Jews had rejected Jesus as the Messiah. They wanted someone like David. Because of this announcement Peter rebukes Jesus. Hence, Jesus rebukes Peter telling him, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." The Twelve at that time did not understand the mission of the Messiah.

After this, Jesus taught the requirements of discipleship and cross-bearing. His disciples must learn to deny self, die to self and the world, and live for and unto Jesus. Luke 9:23 adds that a disciple is to "take up his cross daily, and follow" Jesus. The believer should not desire to save his own life (to satisfy self); for in so doing he will lose it.

Jesus proclaims in verse 38 that if anyone is ashamed of Him and His words in this present life, He will be ashamed of that one when He comes again. Over in opposition to being ashamed of Jesus the Apostle Paul is a good example for believers to follow; for he wrote in Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. . . ." Upon giving this warning not to be ashamed of Him, He speaks of His second

coming and future judgment when He comes in glory with the holy angels. In manifesting the characteristic of discipleship, believers are proving to a lost and dying world by their testimony that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ." In Mark 9:1 Jesus is speaking of the fact that some of the Twelve would not taste death, until they saw Him in His transfiguration, a pre-manifestation of the coming again of the Messiah in glory to set up His millennial reign.

Chapter Notes

1. (See page 281) When Jesus says to beware of the leaven of Herod, He most likely includes the group called the Herodians who followed Herod. (See the comments about the Herodians on 3:6, pages 122,123).
2. (See page 284. Verses 15-21) The question is ask sometimes: Why is there so many different religions and so many different denominations? Part of the answer is that people do not check out the Bible for the answers and for truth and they have let themselves be "...carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness. . . ." (Ephesians 4:14).
3. (See page 284) What is the location of Bethsaida? There seems to have been one Bethsaida on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee near unto Dalmanutha and another on the northern and/or eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. A good Bible map shows a village named Bethsaida "in lower Gaulanitis on the eastern shore of Lake Gennesaret, not far from where the Jordan empties into it" (Thayer 101). A second small fishing village named Bathsaida is the one located "on the west shore of Lake Gennesaret, home of Andrew, Peter, Philip and John" (Thayer 101). The one on the eastern shore is most likely the one spoken of in verse 22 since they had sailed from Dalmanutha to the other side according to verses 10,13 (Clarke 116; Wessel 691; Pfeiffer 204,205,290; Fausset 91). This also seems logical since they travel from this Bethsaida to "the towns of Caesarea Philippi" according to verse 27. Bethsaida is mentioned seven times in the Gospel records: Matthew 11:2; Mark 6:45; 8:22; Luke 9:10; 10:13; John 1:44; 12:21. The apostle John writes in John 1:44 that Philip, Andrew, and Peter were from the city of Bethsaida. This is most likely the one on the western shore.

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SIX---

THE SERVANT: JESUS THE CHRIST

(Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1-50)

---CHAPTER 14---

Proved by Transfiguration

(Mark Chapter 9:2-29)

OUTLINE

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1. The discussion of the resurrection 9:9-10; Matthew 17:9; Luke 9:36
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1. The other disciples, the multitude and the scribes 9:14-15
(Matthew 17:14; Luke 9:37)
 2. A boy with a dumb spirit the disciples could not heal 9:16-18
(Matthew 17:14-16; Luke 9:38-40)
 3. The disappointment of Jesus towards His disciples 9:19
(Matthew 17:17; Luke 9:41)
 4. The power of the evil spirit and the request of the father 9:20-22
(Luke 9:42a)
 5. The rebuke of the father by Jesus and his faith 9:23-24
 6. The dethroning of Satan; a magnificent display of the power of Jesus 9:25-27
(Matthew 17:18; Luke 9:42,43)
 7. The reason the disciples could not heal this boy 9:28-29
(Matthew 17:19-21)

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SIX---

THE SERVANT: JESUS THE CHRIST

(Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1-50)

---CHAPTER 14---

Proved by Transfiguration

(Mark Chapter 9:2-29)

In chapter 8 and the first verse of chapter 9 proof is given that Jesus, the Servant, is truly the Christ of God. First of all, this was "Proved by Testimony" from a negative view. It was proved by the answer or testimony Jesus gave the Pharisees when they demanded a sign from heaven. He told them in Matthew 16:4 that the only sign they would get was that of the prophet Jonas as He had declared in Matthew 12:38-40. This was in reality the sign of His resurrection from the dead. The healing of the blind man is also a testimony to the fact that Jesus, the Servant, is indeed the Christ of God. The answer of Peter to the question of Jesus, "whom say ye that I am," that Jesus was the "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16) also proves that Jesus, the Servant, is truly the Christ of God.

That Jesus is truly the Christ of God is also proved by the testimony of Jesus Himself that He would suffer, die, and after three days be raised from the grave. No one but Jehovah-God could make such a claim. Jehovah-God is the self existent One, the eternal God, the Creator who is holy and righteous in every way and in every

aspect of His being. The Bible states in Romans 1:4 that Jesus was "declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The Bible declares in Acts 2:24 that "God hath raised (*Jesus*) up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Death and the grave could not keep Him, for He was not a sinner. He was and is the Redeemer, the Christ, the Holy One of Israel, the One sent from God and He is God (John 10:30).

In Mark 8:34-38 Jesus declares in a nutshell the requirements for being His disciple. The believer gives positive testimony that Jesus, the Servant, is truly the Christ of God when He follows Jesus in denying self and taking up his cross. True discipleship confirms the testimony of the believer to a non-believing, crooked and perverse world of lost people (Philippians 2:15,16). This testimony manifests that Jesus, the Servant, is the Christ of God.

In Mark chapter 9 verses 2-50 Jesus is proved to be the Christ by His transfiguration and by His teaching. The first part of Mark chapter 9, verses 2-29, proves that Jesus, the Servant, is truly the Christ of God. Hence, the title of this chapter is "Proved by Transfiguration." This passage will be discussed under the following particulars: one, transfigured on the mount, 9:2-8; Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36; two, the discussion of the resurrection and Elijah, 9:9-13; Matthew 17:9-13; Luke 9:36; and three, healing a boy with an evil spirit the disciples could not heal, 9:14-29; Matthew 17:14-20; Luke 9:37-43.

A. Transfigured on the Mount 9:2-8

(Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36)

In Mark 9:1 Jesus informs His disciples "That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come

with power." While Bible commentators have given various interpretations of verse 1, it seems that the simplest interpretation is that some of them would see Jesus transfigured appearing in all of His magnificent glory and power as He will appear in the day of His coming again to set up His kingdom. Wessel states, "The Transfiguration is a revelation of the glory of the Son of God, a glory now hidden but to be manifested completely and openly at the end of the age, when the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father to render judgment on the world" (698). This subdivision is made up of the following components: one, a glimpse of things to come, 9:2; two, taking Peter, James, and John up into an high mountain, 9:2; three, seeing Jesus in all His glory, 9:3; four, Elijah with Moses appearing and talking with Jesus, 9:4; five, the impulsive character of Peter, 9:5,6; six, an overshadowing cloud and hearing a voice, 9:7; and seven, seeing Jesus only, 9:8.

A glimpse of things to come (9:2) The transfiguration was a glimpse of things to come at the end of the age. It is referred to directly by Peter in 2 Peter 1:13-19 and indirectly in the writings of John in Revelation 1:7,12-16. The purpose of this pre-manifestation of the glory of the Son of Man seems to be rooted in the revelation by Jesus in 8:31-38 of His soon suffering, death, resurrection, and the requirements of discipleship. Each believer through the Spirit should let Jesus control and fill his or her life and thus be a living testimony that Jesus, the Servant, is the Christ. In the new birth the born-again, blood-bought believer accepts by faith and comes to realize who Jesus really is, the one and only Savior, Redeemer and LORD. Jesus told this inner circle of disciples (Peter, James, and John) in 9:9 to "tell no man. . ." about the transfiguration till after His resurrection. So the purpose was to prepare them for His forthcoming death and to bolster their faith and/or prove to them who He is. Believers who live after the cross need to remember that believers before the cross did not

understand the necessity of the cross as completely as believers afterwards. Also seeing Jesus in His majestic glory reinforces the doctrine of His second coming.

Taking Peter, James, and John up into an high mountain (9:2) Verse 2 states "And after six days¹ Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them." [Why a mountain? At least part "of the purpose was to ensure privacy" (Carson 384).] Luke 9:28 reveals the motive for going up on the mountain. It was to pray. Luke 9:28 declares, "And it came to pass about an eight days¹ after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray." Praying is very important. This is evidenced by Luke 18:1 "And he (*Jesus*) spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him up in a high mountain "after six days." Six days after what? "After six days" refers back to the time of the announcement of His sufferings and so forth.¹ What announcement? It was the announcement of His death, burial and resurrection. It included the making plain about the requirements for discipleship and the way for a saved (and secured) believer to save his or her life (Mark 8:27—9:1). The transfiguration most likely serves the purpose to encourage the disciples and to manifest to them that God had a greater purpose in redemption than just that of restoring the kingdom of Israel (of which He shall do in the second coming of Jesus).

The high mountain was most probably Mount Hermon (over 9,000 feet) which is in the immediate vicinity of Caesarea Philippi just north of the Sea of Galilee (Wessel 698). A. T. Robertson writes, "The tradition which places the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (*about 1900 feet*) is beyond question false" (Harmony 102). "Liefeld² (p, 167, n. 27) has plausibly suggested" that it could have been "Mount

Miron (3,926 feet), "the highest mountain within Israel and on the way from Caesarea Philippi to Capernaum" (Carson 384, this is not a direct quote from Liefeld). Mount Meron is "located to the west of the Sea of Galilee" (Wessel 700). (Wessel spells the name of this mountain "Merón" while Carson spells it "Miron").

Why did Jesus take only these three? That is, Peter, James, and John. Jesus did not explain it. There are some things that are not important or necessary for believers to know, but just to accept by faith that God knows best. These are the same three who were present when Jesus raised the daughter of Jarius (5:35-43).

The last part of 9:2 states, "and he was transfigured before them." What is the meaning of this? It is explained in Luke 9:29 where the Bible states, "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* glistening." The words "was transfigured" is from the Greek aorist passive indicative of the verb μεταμορφόομαι (metamorphoomai). Thayer writes μεταμορφωω (metamorphoo) means "to change into another form, to transfigure, to transform, . . . of Christ, his appearance was changed, . . . and i.e. was resplendent with divine brightness" (405). It is like the larvae which spins a cocoon and becomes a beautiful butterfly. The larvae becomes what it really is, "ugly yet beautiful." To be transformed is to allow that which is from within to come out and be revealed. So the flesh of Jesus was glorified. All the majesty and glory of the Son of God came shining through when He was transformed. This is something these disciples never forgot. (The original author of this illustration about the larvae changing into a beautiful butterfly is unknown to this writer.)

The practical application of this to the daily lives of born-again, blood-bought believers is given by Paul in Romans 12:1,2 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable

unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Paul used the same verb μεταμορφωω (metamorphoo) when he instructed the child of God "to be transformed." In other words, the child of God is to allow what he really is inside [a redeemed and justified saint, a citizen of heaven (1 John 3:1,2; Philippians 3:20,21 and many more references)] to come shining through. Luke says the countenance of Jesus was altered and so the every day countenance of the believer should be also.

Seeing Jesus in all His glory (9:3) Verse 3 reveals what Peter, James, and John saw. They saw Jesus in His glorified state. Mark 9:3 relates "And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." The clothes of Jesus became shining. Mark 9:3 says, "exceeding white as snow. . . ." Matthew 17:2 says, "and His face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light." Luke 9:29 uses the word "glistening" meaning dazzling. The participle "shining" from στίλβω (stilbo) is in the Greek present tense. Thus it speaks of continuous action. The idea of the verb is to gleam or glitter like the reflection of a flashing sword or bright shield caught in the brilliant sunlight (Wuest 175). This verb is used of a polished bright surface. Jesus was shining like the shekinah glory in the tabernacle. The last part of Mark 9:3, "so as no fuller. . . can white them," emphasizes this brilliant, dazzling, shining appearance of Jesus. [A "fuller" was one who prepared fabrics and dyes and "one who bleaches" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows, Version 2.3c).] John refers to this in John 1:14 by using the word "glory." Peter writes of it in 2 Peter 1:15-18. The "transfiguration" of Jesus proves that the Servant is Jesus the Christ. [The transfiguration on the mount is comparable to the vision

given to the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:7,12-18. However, John gives a much fuller description.]

Elijah with Moses appearing and talking with Jesus (9:4) Verse 4 says, "And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus." The word "appeared" is from the Greek aorist passive indicative verb ὤφθη (ophtha) which is from the root ὁράω (horao). This verb means "to see with the eyes. . . come to see. . . to look at or upon, observe give attention to; . . . *in the passive* "was seen. . . appeared" (Thayer 451, 452). These Old Testament saints were made to appear with Jesus. Elias of the New Testament is the prophet Elijah of the Old Testament (1 Kings 17:1). Since there is no letter "j" in the Greek the name is spelled Elias (Wuest 175). Concerning the statement "they were talking with Jesus," Wuest gives the following pertinent information that emphasizes the importance of their conversation: "We have a periphrastic construction here. It consists of the verb of being in the imperfect tense and the present tense participle. The emphasis is upon durative action. Mark wishes to convey to the reader the impression that the conversation with these two heavenly visitors was a protracted one" (175).

While Mark does not reveal the subject of the conversation, Luke says they "spake of his (*Jesus*) decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (9:31). This emphasizes the death of Jesus on the cross. This shows that His sacrifice for sin for the whole world should not be taken lightly. This reveals what is the subject of eternal focus. (The appearing of Moses takes away the view of the those who say Moses lost his salvation.) The appearance of Moses and Elijah proves that there is life after death for both those who have already died and those who shall die. Luke 9:31 notes that Moses and Elijah³ "appeared. . ." with Jesus in glory. This speaks of the resurrection and that it is important. Christ is the resurrection of the believer. No

other religion has the sure promise of the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus proves Him to be the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One of God.

The impulsive character of Peter (9:5,6) Verses 5, 6 reveal the impulsive character of Peter. "Here is impetuous, unpredictable Peter, intruding himself into the conversation" (Wuest 175). Verse 5 states that Peter "said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." From the context it would seem that Peter spoke too soon. The record in Luke 9:32 implies that while Jesus prayed, Peter and the others with him had fallen asleep. Luke 9:32 records, "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." This may in part explain the suggestion that Peter made to Jesus in the last part of Mark 9:5. The first part of what Peter said shows he was greatly moved by and appreciative of being allowed to share in this manifestation of the glory of Jesus Christ. The second part of his statement shows he did not understand it.

The word "good" as used by Peter is from the Greek adjective *καλός* (*kalos*). The idea of the word *καλός* (*kalos*) in this context is, this is beautiful or pleasing or it is "beautiful to look at. . ." (Thayer 322). The word "tabernacle" from *σκηνή* (*skene*) means "a tent, tabernacle" and refers here to a tent "made of green boughs, skins, and other materials. . ." (Thayer 577). Bushell says it means a "tent, temporary shelter; tabernacle (of a worship place); house, home, dwelling-place (Bible Works for Windows). "Peter was probably thinking of the booths used to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles" (Swete *qtd. in* Rienecker 112). The purpose of Peter was probably to prolong this glorious experience. However, verse 6 makes it plain that Peter really did not know what to do or say for it declares, "For he wist not what to say; for they

were sore afraid." This teaches believers the need to learn to control the tongue as taught in the book of James and other places. Someone has said, "that fools rush in where angels dare to tread." Several of the Proverbs bear this out. Proverbs 29:11 states "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise *man* keepeth it in till afterwards." Proverbs 29:20 declares, "Seest thou a man *that is* hasty in his words? *there is* more hope of a fool than of him." Proverbs 30:32 gives this sage advice, "If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, *lay* thine hand upon thy mouth." The wise preacher wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:7, "A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." Peter still did not understand the full significance of the greatness of the Lord Jesus and that He was far and above greater than Moses and the Law and Elijah and the Prophets. Wessel observes that "Peter again stumbles at the necessity of a suffering Messiah" (699). Further Wessel explains that Peter "was frightened and at a loss as to what to say. So he impulsively spoke, and what he said was not worth saying" (699). While Proverbs 25:11 states, "A word fitly spoken *is like* apples of gold in pictures of silver," this was a time when silence would have been golden.

An overshadowing cloud and hearing a voice (9:7) Verse 7 declares "And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him." The Greek construction of "And there was..." is from the ingressive aorist for the root verb γίνομαι (ginomai). The ingressive aorist is ἐγένετο (egenoto) and hence suggests the initiation of a new condition such that the cloud came over them all of a sudden (Dana and Mantey 195, 196; Wuest 177). This suddenness is reflected in the parallel verses in Matthew 17:5 and Luke 9:34. The first part of Matthew 17:5 states "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. . . ." This particular word "cloud" is from the Greek noun

νεφέλη (nephele). This is the same word Paul used in 1 Corinthians 10:2. The idea of νεφέλη (nephele) is a cloud of a definite form and size as opposed to νέφος (nephos), a "shapeless collection of vapor" (Thayer 424, under synonyms). [Νέφος (nephos) is used only in Hebrews 12:1.] As that in 1 Corinthians 10:2, this cloud is "the Shekinah Glory Cloud which guided Israel out of Egypt, which rested above the Mercy Seat beneath the golden Cherubim in the Holy of Holies" (Wuest 175). This was the cloud that overshadowed them. This manifested the glory and presence of God Almighty.

Just as at the time of the baptism of Jesus (1:11), in the last part of verse 7 God speaks from heaven and says, "This is my beloved Son: hear Him." The Greek text states ". . . Ὁυτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε" (The New Testament, The Greek Text 82). This literally says, "This is the Son of Me, the dearly-beloved One, Him hear ye" (Looney Various Translations). There are two facts that God emphasizes in this statement from above: one, that this Jesus is the Messiah who is the Son of God, and two, He is the dearly-beloved One which speaks of a deep abiding strong love in the Greek [ἀγαπητός (agapetos) — this adjective is derived from the noun ἀγάπη (agape)]. Notice that the pronoun "Him" is placed before the predicate "hear ye." This emphasizes that believers are to listen to Jesus and take heed to the Word of God. This statement direct from God the Father in heaven proves that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ." Thus this is "Proved by Transfiguration." The verb "hear" is from the imperative present tense of ἀκούω (akouo) which is ἀκούετε (akouete). This command from God, "hear Him. . ." is a command to be constantly obeyed. It could be translated, "You be continuously listening to My only Son" (Looney Various Translations). This verb, ἀκούω (akouo), (being in the imperative) carries the idea of obeying what is heard (Thayer 22,23).

While Mark does not include the reaction of Peter, James, and John, Matthew does. Matthew 17:6 relates "And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid." At the voice of God the Father, direct from heaven, the disciples fell on their faces and were very much afraid. Matthew 17:7 records the action of Jesus "And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid." Jesus in all His majesty and glory gives them assurance by touching them and saying, "...Arise, and be not afraid." This was "tenderness in their time of fear" (Robertson, Word Pictures 141). What wonderful words of Jesus and even now from heaven He tells the precious believer the same thing. Oh! that believers (including this writer) would hear and obey our precious Savior and Lord.

Seeing Jesus only (9:8) After the Father spoke and Jesus touched them and spoke tender assuring words to them, no one was seen but Jesus only. Verse 8 records "And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves." Mark uses the adverb ἐξαίπνια (*exapina*) which is "a somewhat rare later Greek form for ἐξαίφνης (*exaiphnes*)" meaning "of a sudden, suddenly, unexpectedly" (Thayer 221). Ἐξαίφνης (*Exaiphnes*) is used 5 times in the New Testament, but ἐξαίπνια (*exapina*) is used only this once. It refers not to their looking around but to the sudden change in the circumstances. Moses and Elijah were gone and they saw only Jesus. In all of this situation the "uniqueness of Christ Jesus is highlighted. . ." (Wessel 700). He is the only begotten Son of God the Father in Heaven.

B. The Discussion of the Resurrection and Elijah 9:9-13

(Matthew 17:9-13; Luke 9:36)

The transfiguration of Jesus is a major turning point in the earthly ministry of the Servant who is Jesus the Christ. Later, after the death, burial, resurrection, and

ascension of Jesus back to the right hand of the God the Father, Peter, James, and John would better understand what it all meant. No doubt God wanted these disciples to witness this momentous event to confirm to them that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Jesus makes a statement about His upcoming death and resurrection and this causes the discussion about the resurrection and the prophet Elijah.

The first part of verse 9 relates "And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them. . . ." This links the account of the transfiguration recorded in verses 2-8 with the last part of verse 9 through verse 13. This subdivision consists of two subparts as follows: one, the discussion of the resurrection, 9:9-10; Matthew 17:9; Luke 9:36; and two, the question about Elijah, 9:11-13; Matthew 17:10-13.

The discussion of the resurrection (9:9-10; Matthew 17:9; Luke 9:36) "As they were coming down from the mountain," Jesus gave the three disciples orders to tell no man about His transfiguration until after His resurrection. Verse 9 reports that "he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead." To broadcast this experience of the pre-manifested glory of the Son of Man "before the Cross would have been too much in keeping with" *the then* "current popular ideas of messiahship" (Wessel 700). Jesus must first suffer and die for the sin of all mankind in order to fulfill the purpose of God to redeem sinful man (Acts 2:22-36; Ephesians 1:3-14). The very last part of verse 9 once again assured these disciples that Jesus would be raised from the grave (8:31). The resurrection of Jesus assures all believers that they, also, will be raised from the grave. (For specific scriptures that show that believers will be raised from the dead read 2 Corinthians 4:14-17; Romans 8:10,11,18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.)

In verse 10 Mark records that the three disciples obeyed the instructions of Jesus, for it states, "And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." Luke puts it this way, "And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen" (9:36). Nevertheless, they were puzzled about the resurrection of the Son of Man. The idea of a general resurrection was not foreign to the Jews (Job 19:23-27; Psalm 17:15). However, a special resurrection of the Son of Man was something that was a wonderment to them. Yet, if they had read Isaiah 53:10 that the days of the suffering Messiah shall be prolonged by the LORD-GOD, they might have understood it. However, they did not inquire of Jesus about the up-standing from the dead. Rather they asked Him another question as seen in verse 11.

The question about Elijah (9:11-13; Matthew 17:10-13) Verse 11 relates that the three disciples asked Jesus, "Why say the scribes that Elias (*Elijah*)⁴ must first come?" They had been reminded of Elijah by having seen him on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus. Since they believed that Jesus is the Messiah, the three disciples may have wondered how it was that the coming of Elijah was second. It seems they may have thought that the appearing of Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration may have been the coming of Elijah as spoken of by the scribes. This question refers to the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6 which states "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." [The expression "he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" amounts to saying that God through the preaching of Elijah would cause the

people to repent and cause many in Israel to get right with God.] Wessel notes that the prophecy in Malachi is saying the ministry of Elijah at that time would involve "leading the people to repentance" (701). This prophecy also says that Elijah would be sent by God before the coming of the Messiah. This perplexed these disciples. They wondered how could Jesus, the Messiah, appear before Elijah came back and the prophecy in Malachi be fulfilled and be correct. Jesus gives the answer in Mark 9:12,13 when He declares "Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him." The question comes to mind: Who is this Elias or Elijah? Is Jesus speaking of the prophet who is spoken of in 1 and 2 Kings or of someone who was to be like Elijah? The answer to these questions is given in the parallel passage in Matthew 17:11-13. In Matthew 17:12 Jesus states "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them." This Elijah must be someone who is like Elijah.

Jesus is saying three things about this person: one, He has already come; two, the political and religious leaders of the Jews did not recognize who he was ("they knew him not"), and three, they did to him "whatsoever they listed" (wanted or desired to do to him). The word "listed" comes from the Greek verb θέλω (thelo). This word means "to will, (have in mind), intend; to be resolved or determined, to purpose; . . . to desire, to wish. . ." (Thayer 285, 286). Jesus implies in the last half of Matthew 17:12 with the word "likewise" that this Elijah had suffered (as would the Son of Man) because of the will or intentions of the desire of the political and religious leaders of the Jews. The only one to answer to these three things that Jesus

said about Elijah would be John the Baptist. [The Greek name Ἠλίας (Elias).is from the Hebrew and means "either 'strenght of Jehovah' or 'my God is Jehovah' " (Thayer 277). And certainly, this meaning would fit John.] John was the forerunner of Jesus who prepared the way for Jesus. However, John was not recognized by the Jewish leaders as the one who fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah 40:3-5 and Malachi 3:1. (Nevertheless, John was the one who fulfilled these prophecies.) John was imprisoned and beheaded by King Herod (Mark 6:14-28). Two more reasons to believe that Jesus was speaking of John the Baptist is what Jesus said in Matthew 11:11-15 and the statement made in Matthew 17:13. In Matthew 11:12-15 Jesus declared "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. *13* For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. *14* And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come. *15* He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matthew also records "Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist" (17:13). In Mark 9:11-13 along with Matthew 17:11-13 Jesus links the ministry of John the Baptist, Elijah, and Himself together.

Hence, in Mark 9:12,13 Jesus is saying that Elijah, namely John, did indeed come first as the scribes taught and restored all things in that God through his preaching caused many people to repent and turn back to God. (Luke records in 1:17 that Gabriel told Zacharias that John would, "...go before Him (*the Lord*) in the spirit and power of Elias. . . .") Jesus also reveals that this does not preclude the suffering of the Son of Man. This is seen in the statement of Jesus in Mark 9:12 when He said, "how (*meaning why*) is it written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought." This most likely is referring to Isaiah 52:13—53:12 where Isaiah gives a vivid picture, prophecy, and reason or purpose for the suffering of the

Messiah. Isaiah also implies, as previously noted, the resurrection of the suffering Messiah. In Mark 9:13 Jesus declares that Elijah had already come but the people had done unto him what they wanted to do to him even as it is written of him. This gives the evidence as to whom Jesus was speaking.

C. Healing a Boy with an Evil Spirit the Disciples Could Not Heal 9:14-29

(Matthew 17:14-20; Luke 9:37-43)

Now that Jesus the Servant has been proved to be the Christ by testimony and transfiguration and after the discussion of the resurrection and Elijah, Jesus with Peter, James, and John rejoined the other disciples. Once again a great multitude had gathered and the scribes were questioning with His other nine disciples. Also a man whose son was vexed with a dumb spirit come to Jesus for help. This man had requested the disciples of Jesus to heal his boy but they could not. Luke 9:38 relates that this boy was the only child the man had. This caused the man to be all the more desirous that his child be healed. This subdivision about the healing of this boy may be broken into the following segments: one, the other disciples, the multitude and the scribes, 9:14-15; Matthew 17:14; Luke 9:37; two, a boy with a dumb spirit the disciples could not heal, 9:16-18; Matthew 17:14-16; Luke 9:38-40; three, the disappointment of Jesus towards His disciples, 9:19; Matthew 17:17; Luke 9:41; four, the power of the evil spirit and the request of the father, 9:20-22; Luke 9:42a, five, the rebuke of the father by Jesus and his faith, 9:23-24; six, the dethroning of Satan and a magnificent display of the power of Jesus, the Son of God, 9:25-27; Matthew 17:18; Luke 9:42,43; and seven, the reason the disciples could not heal this boy, 9:28-29; Matthew 17:19-21.

The other disciples, the multitude and the scribes (9:14-15; Matthew 17:14; Luke 9:37) As Jesus and the inner circle join the other nine disciples they saw

a great crowd about them and the scribes questioning with them. Mark 9:14 records "And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them." Luke is the only one who mentions that it was "on the next day, when they were come down from the hill. . ." (9:37). These scribes were arguing or debating and trying to confound the other disciples. The word "questioning" is from the present participle συζητοῦντας (suzetountas) which is from συζητέω (suzeteo). This Greek verb means "to seek or examine together. . . to discuss, dispute, question" (Thayer 594). It has the idea of to argue. Robertson explains: "It was just like the professional scribes to take keen interest in the failure of the nine disciples to cure this poor boy. They gleefully nagged and quizzed them" (Word Pictures 340).

When Jesus arrived upon the scene all the people immediately "when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him" (Mark 9:15). The word "beheld" is from the root Greek verb ὁράω (horaō). It has the idea "to see. . . to perceive with the eyes. . . to turn. . . the attention to anything. . ." (Thayer 451). The multitude of people, upon recognizing Jesus, ran to Him being "greatly amazed." The words "were greatly amazed" are from the verb ἐκθαμβέομαι (ekthambeomai) which means "to throw into terror or amazement. . . to be struck with amazement. . . to be thoroughly amazed, astounded" (see ἐκθαμβέω; Thayer 195). Thayer adds that the idea is "*to be amazed*, for joy at the unexpected coming of Christ" (195). They were "overwhelmed with wonder" (Wessel 701). Why were they so greatly astounded? Probably because "He arrived at" a very opportune time to meet "a critical need" (Wessel 702). In so doing they "saluted him" or joyfully welcomed Him.

A boy with a dumb spirit the disciples could not heal (9:16-18; Matthew 17:14-16; Luke 9:38-40) According to Mark 9:16 Jesus "asked the scribes, What

question ye with them?" He wanted to know what the subject of the debate that the scribes had with his disciples. (This is not to say that the omniscience Jesus did not already know.) In verse 17 before the answer could be given by the scribes, a man from the multitude replies that he had "brought unto thee my son, which had a dumb spirit." Matthew 17:14 adds that this man came to Jesus, "kneeling down to him." In other words, the man humbled himself before Jesus. The word "dumb" comes from ἄλαλος (alalos). This word means "speechless, dumb, wanting the faculty of speech" (Thayer 25). Rienecker adds that it means "not able to speak" (113). This same word, ἄλαλος (alalos), is used only here and in Mark 7:37 and 9:25. In Mark 9:18 this father describes very graphically the harm done to his son. The man said of this dumb spirit, "And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. . . ." This evil spirit caused seizures of a destructive magnitude. In Matthew 17:15 the father calls his boy a "lunatic." The word "lunatic" is from the word σεληνιάζομαι (seleniazomai) which means "to be moon-struck or lunatic. . . to be epileptic" (Thayer 573). Thayer adds that "this meaning (to be epileptic) is doubtful as the Greeks knew nothing of epilepsy" (573). At any rate, this was the work of an unclean demon spirit. Luke 9:42 along with Matthew 17:18 verifies that this was a demon spirit or "the devil." In the last part of Mark 9:18 the man tells Jesus that "I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not." The casting out of devils had been part of the limited commission of the disciples and they had even been successful at it as according to Mark 3:15 and 6:7, 13.

The disappointment of Jesus towards His disciples (9:19; Matthew 17:17; Luke 9:41) Mark 9:19 reveals the disappointment of Jesus towards His disciples. This verse reveals the answer of Jesus, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be

with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me." Jesus was crying out with bitter disappointment directed primarily to His disciples. He calls them a "faithless generation" or an unbelieving generation. The word "faithless" is from the Greek ἄπιστος (apistos) and means "without faith or trust. . . unfaithful. . . unbelieving, incredulous. . . without trust (in God)" (Thayer 57). Both Luke 9:41 and Matthew 17:17 says, "O faithless and perverse generation." The word "perverse" is from the perfect passive participle of διαστρέφω (diastrepho). It means "distorted, twisted in two, corrupt" and/or "twisted, turned, distorted" (Rienecker 52, 167). This word "perverse" is also used by Paul in Philippians 2:15. (See also Deuteronomy 32:5,20.) Clarke writes, "Here expressly. . . he ranks his own disciples with the generation to which they belong, since he finds in them the ordinary unbelief" (132). John A. Broadus writes "They were not unbelieving through lack of evidence, but through *perverse* neglect or rejection of the evidence" (375). The context suggests that they actually had a misplaced faith. They had cast out devils before and so they were confident they could do it again. But this confidence was evidently in themselves rather than in God.

In the last part of Mark 9:19 Jesus declares, "how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me." Broadus calls this "momentary impatience" (375). Clarke writes, "How long shall this generation, whose unbelief I am learning so thoroughly, vex me so? How long must I live among the faithless?" (132). Nevertheless, Robertson writes, "Jesus is not afraid to undertake this case. We can always come to Jesus when others fail us" (Word Pictures 341). Subsequently, Jesus in His loving kindness instructs that the boy possessed by this unclean demon spirit be brought to Him.

The power of the evil spirit and the request of the father (9:20-22; Luke

9:42a In these verses the power of the demon spirit is demonstrated. Mark 9:20 records "And they brought him (*the boy*) unto him (*Jesus*): and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him (*caused him to have a convulsion*); and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming." The evil spirit demonstrated his great power in causing the boy to have another seizure. Luke 9:42 states "the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. . . ." In Mark 9:21 Jesus asked, "How long is it ago since this came unto him?" The father answered, "Of a child." Further the father states in verse 22 "And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him. . . ." This man was emphasizing that these seizures had almost caused the boy to be destroyed. Then he said to Jesus, "if thou canst do anything, have compassion (*or pity*) on us, and help us." This compares to cry of the woman of Syrophenicia who had said, "have mercy on me" (Matthew 15:21) and the leper who had said: "if thou wilt" (Mark 1:40) (Robertson, Word Pictures 342).

The rebuke of the father by Jesus and his faith (9:23-24) Neither Matthew nor Luke records this rebuke and the response of this father. Verse 23 serves as a rebuke and instructions to the man at the same time for questioning the power of Jesus to heal the boy. Jesus said, "If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth." Jesus is telling him it is not a question of "if" Jesus had the power but did the father have the faith.⁵ For Jesus promised, "All things are possible to him that believeth." Jesus was encouraging the faith of this distressed man. This revelation and promise of Jesus prompted the man according to verse 24 to immediately cry out and say with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." This father realized "his faith was far from perfect" and so with "a beautiful display of honesty, he asked Jesus to help him overcome his unbelief" (Wessel 703). The Amplified Bible renders Mark

9:24, "At once the father of the boy gave [an eager, piercing, inarticulate] cry *with tears*, and he said, Lord, I believe! [Constantly] help my weakness of faith!" Believers in every age need to request that Jesus help them to increase their faith.

The dethroning of Satan and a magnificent display of the power of Jesus, the Son of God (9:25-27; Matthew 17:18; Luke 9:42,43) This passage reveals the dethroning of Satan and sets forth a magnificent display of the power of Jesus proving that the Servant (is) Jesus the Christ and the Son of God. According to Mark 9:25 Jesus rebukes the foul and evil spirit, casting him out and charging him to enter the boy no more. Luke adds that "Jesus. . . healed the child, and delivered him again to his father" (9:42). Matthew records that "Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour" (17:18). (This is in contrast to the methods Jesus used in the healing of the deaf and dumb man in Mark 7:31-37 and the blind man of 8:22-26). In coming out of the boy, the unclean spirit affected the boy so severely that he seemed to be dead to the crowd of people according to Mark 9:26. He "was exhausted" (*Swete qtd. by Wuest 186*), but he was not dead. According to verse 27, the boy responded to the touch of Jesus and arose. Mark 9:27 declares, "But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose." Luke 9:43 alone records, "And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. . . ." and "they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did. . . ." Oh, how this manifests the unlimited power and majesty of God! To God be the glory!

The reason the disciples could not heal this boy (9:28-29; Matthew 17:19-21) When Jesus and the disciples had come apart from the crowd into a house, privately, they asked Jesus as recorded to verse 28, "Why could not we cast him out?" The nine disciples wanted to know the reason they could not heal this boy. Jesus answers them in verse 29, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and

fasting." This was an indication of the lack of proper faith. "Spirits of such malignity were quick to discern the lack of moral power and would yield to no other" (*Swete qtd. by Wuest* 187). Matthew gives more explanation but concludes the same way. In Matthew 17:20 Jesus states it was, "Because of your unbelief. . . ." Apparently as implied in the comments for verse 19, "they had taken" this ability to cast out demons "for granted" and "had come to believe it was" (Wessel 704) of themselves rather than of Jesus the Christ. This is reflected in statements of Jesus. They had misplaced faith and "showed their lack of prayer" (Wessel 704). They were overly self-confident rather than consciously God-confident.⁶ As stated previously, They had cast out devils before and so they were confident they could do it again. But this confidence was evidently in themselves rather than in God. Jesus not only reproves them but instructs and encourages them according to Matthew 17:20 when He declares, "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (See Mark 11:22,23). When Jesus said in verse 29, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting," the idea of fasting is that of self control. Clarke writes, "But prayer and self-control go harmoniously together as the means by which an efficient faith may best be sought" (135). Proper praying manifests the faith of the believer in God and His Son.

Summary of Chapter

In Mark 9:2-50 Jesus is proved to be the Christ by His transfiguration and by His teaching. Mark 9:2-29, proves that Jesus, the Servant, is truly the Christ of God not only by the transfiguration of Jesus but also by the other events as recorded in

these verses. More proof is given by the discussion of the resurrection of Jesus, the question about the coming and appearance of Elijah, and by healing a boy with an evil spirit the disciples could not heal.

The transfiguration of Jesus was a glimpse of things to come. The purpose of this pre-manifestation of the glory of the Son of Man seems to be rooted in the revelation by Jesus in 8:31-38 of His soon suffering, death, resurrection, and the requirements of discipleship. Further, the purpose was to prepare them for His forthcoming death, to bolster their faith and/or prove to them who He is, and to encourage the disciples and to manifest to them that God had a greater purpose in redemption than just that of restoring the kingdom of Israel.

Jesus took the inner circle of the disciples up into an high mountain. Luke 9:28 reveals that the motive for going up on the mountain was to pray. While on the mountain praying, Jesus "was transfigured before" these disciples. This means that "the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was white and glistening*" (Luke 9:29). All the majesty and glory of the Son of God came shining through when He was transformed. This is something these disciples never forgot. They saw Jesus in His glorified state.

The practical application of this to the daily lives of born-again, blood-bought believers is given by Paul in Romans 12:1,2. Paul instructed the child of God "to be transformed." The child of God is to allow what he really is inside [a redeemed and justified citizen of heaven] to come shining through. The countenance of Jesus was altered and so the every day countenance of the believer should be also.

Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus on the mount. They were discussing the decease of Jesus which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. This emphasizes the death of Jesus on the cross and that it should not be taken lightly. The cross of Christ

is the subject of eternal focus. Their appearance with Jesus proves there is life after death for the believer and speaks of the sure promise of the resurrection.

When impulsive Peter saw Moses and Elijah with Jesus, he spoke too soon, suggesting that they make three tabernacles, one for each of the three. It was then that the shekinah glory cloud appeared and God the Father spoke from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son: hear him." This manifested the glory and presence of God Almighty and that only Jesus is the dearly-beloved One. He is to be worshipped for He is the Messiah who is the Son of God. Believers are to listen to Jesus and take heed to the Word of God. The transfiguration and this direct statement from God in heaven proves that "The Servant (is) Jesus the Christ."

After this Jesus gave the three disciples orders to tell no man about His transfiguration until after His resurrection. This assured these disciples that Jesus would be raised from the grave. The resurrection of Jesus assures all believers that they too will be raised from the grave. Next, they asked Jesus about the prophecy of Elijah coming first. Jesus answered that Elijah did come first before the Messiah and that he did suffer. The context of Mark 9:12,13 along with Matthew 11:12-15 and 17:11-13 shows that Jesus was speaking about John the Baptist, His forerunner.

After coming down from the mount, Jesus and the three disciples rejoined the other disciples. A great multitude had gathered and the scribes were arguing and trying to confound the other disciples. About this time a man whose son was vexed with a dumb spirit come to Jesus for help. He had requested the disciples to heal his boy but they could not. This demon spirit caused seizures of a destructive magnitude.

Since the casting out of devils had been part of the limited commission of the disciples and they had even been successful at it, Jesus was disappointed that His disciple could not heal this boy. He charges them with being part of the faithless and

perverse generation. The context suggests that they actually had a misplaced faith. Their confidence to do such was evidently in themselves rather than in God.

Subsequently, Jesus in His loving kindness instructs that the boy possessed by this unclean demon spirit be brought to Him. Upon being brought to Jesus, the evil spirit demonstrated his great power causing the boy to have another seizure. These seizures had almost caused the boy to be destroyed. Thus, the father said to Jesus, "if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Whereupon, Jesus said, "If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth." Jesus was encouraging the faith of this distressed man. Immediately this father cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Believers in every age need to request that Jesus help them to increase their faith.

Jesus rebuked this evil spirit, casting him out and charging him to enter the boy no more and the boy was cured from that very hour. In coming out of the boy, the unclean spirit affected the boy so severely that he seemed to be dead; but he was not dead. The boy responded to the touch of Jesus and arose. This was a dethroning of the devil as to the possession of this boy and sets forth a magnificent display of the power of Jesus proving that the Servant (is) Jesus the Christ and the Son of God.

The nine disciples wanted to know the reason they could not heal this boy. Jesus told them, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." This was an indication of the lack of proper faith and self control. "They had taken" this ability to cast out demons "for granted" and "had come to believe it was" (Wessel 704) of themselves rather than of Jesus the Christ. Even so, Jesus not only reproves them but instructs and encourages them according to Matthew 17:20 when He declares it was, "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder

place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Proper praying manifests the faith of the believer in God and His Son.

Chapter Notes

1. (See page 309) Mark 9:2 and Matthew 17:1 both says "And after six days. . . ." Luke 9:28 states "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings. . . ." Barnes explains it this way: "That is, six days from the conversation recorded in the last chapter (*Matt 16 or Mark 8*). Luke (xi.28) says, about an eight days after. Matthew (*and Mark*) mentions the six days that intervened between the day of the conversation and the transfiguration. Luke includes both those days, and thus reckons eight. Besides, Luke does not pretend to fix the precise time. He says, "*about* an eight days after" (175).
2. (See pages 309 and 310) Wessel explains in his notes: "Another possible site for the Transfiguration has recently been suggested by W. Liefeld, "The Transfiguration Narrative" (*New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, edd. R. N. Longenecker and M. C. Tenney [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974], p. 167)." (Please note the difference in spelling of Liefeld or Liefeld by Wessel and Carson. Wessel spells the author's name "Liefeld" and also "Liefeld" while Carson spells it "Liefeld").
3. (See page 312) Someone has observed that these two Old Testament men, Moses and Elijah, represent those of the two groups involved in the resurrection and the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Moses died and will be resurrected while Elijah "went up by a whirlwind into heaven" without ever having died just like Enoch who walked with God (Genesis 5:22-24; Deuteronomy 34:1-8; 2 Kings 2:11).
4. (See page 318) The name Elijah means "my God is Jehovah."
5. (See page 325) Some religious groups take this (in Mark 9:23,24) and say the reason people do not receive miracle healings today is that they do not have enough faith. But the answer to the reason that people are not miraculously healed today is that "the day of miracles" is past and ended as proved by 1 Corinthians 13:8. Refer to the comments on Mark chapter 4:35-41, dissertation chapter 8.
6. (See page 327) In reference to the statement: "They were overly self-confident rather than consciously God-confident," it would be good to give a test of whether a New Testament church can do something or not. According to Dr. O. R. Baldwin a church should ask herself these two questions: one, "ask if something is scriptural" and two, "is it within reason?" If the answer to both is "yes" then a church may proceed.

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SIX---

THE SERVANT: JESUS THE CHRIST

(Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1-50)

---CHAPTER 15---

Proved by Teaching

(Mark Chapter 9:30-50)

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JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH- COMMENTS ON MARK

---DIVISION SIX---

THE SERVANT: JESUS THE CHRIST

(Mark Chapters 8:10-38; 9:1-50)

---CHAPTER 15---

Proved by Teaching

(Mark Chapter 9:30-50)

In this portion of Mark chapter 9, proof is given that the Servant is Jesus the Christ of God by the doctrines that He teaches. Proof that the Servant is Jesus the Christ of God has already been given in Mark chapters 8 and the first half of chapter 9 by testimony and by the transfiguration. In Mark 9:30-50 Jesus sets forth to teach His disciples some important lessons. It is significant and consequential that Jesus for the second time prophesies and teaches concerning His cross. Next, He teaches how a born-again, blood-bought believer may be first or approved with God. Jesus taught this because the disciples were disputing about greatness. This includes an around about rebuke to them by Jesus. Last, He taught them concerning the seriousness of sin along with the demanding essentials and necessities of discipleship. These teachings of Jesus prove Him to be the Christ of God. Accordingly, He expects His disciples in every age to teach others to show all peoples everywhere that the Servant is Jesus the true Messiah, the One sent from God, the one and only Savior. This division can be sub-divided as follows: one, the second prediction concerning His cross, 9:30-32;

Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:43-45; and two, teaching the disciples while in Capernaum, 9:33-50; Matthew 18:1-14; Luke 9:46-50.

A. The Second Prediction Concerning His Cross 9:30-32
(Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:43-45)

After casting out the foul evil spirit from the boy His disciples could not heal, Jesus with His disciples passed through Galilee. While doing so Jesus gives forth a second prediction concerning His death on the cross. The first prediction about the cross was given in 8:31 and the third in Mark is given in 10:33-34. These three predictions are also recorded in Matthew 16:21; 17:22,23; 20:18,19 and Luke 9:22; 9:44,45; 18:31-34. This is rather striking, very noticeable. These prophecies emphasize the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This passage consists of the following parts: one, departing, passing through Galilee, and teaching, 9:30,31a; Matthew 17:22a; and two, predicting again about the His death and resurrection, 9:31b,32; Matthew 17:22b,23; Luke 9:43-45.

Departing, passing through Galilee, and teaching (9:30,31a, Matthew 17:22a) Leaving the area of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus now continues His journey toward Jerusalem. Verse 30 relates "And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*." The wording of verse 30 along with Luke 9:51 shows that Jesus was now finished with His public ministry in Galilee and had His face set toward Jerusalem. This verse reveals three significant things: one, they departed from the place of the healing of the boy with the demon spirit; two, they passed through Galilee; and three, Jesus wanted no one to know their whereabouts. The first part of verse 31 states "For he taught his disciples. . . ." The verb "taught" is from the imperfect form of διδάσκω (*didasko*). The imperfect means that Jesus taught and continued to do so. This reveals why He wanted no one

to know their whereabouts. Teaching was a very important part of the ministry of Jesus and it is an important part of the ministry of pastors today. The series of withdrawals and retirements were for the purpose of training and teaching the Twelve. This period was just about over and they needed to be away from the multitudes.

Predicting again about the His death and resurrection (9:31b,32; Matthew 17:22b,23; Luke 9:43-45) What Jesus taught in the last part of verse 31 reveals why He wanted them to be away from distractions and to be able to pay attention and meditate on what He was teaching. He prophesied "unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." This was the second prediction of His death, burial, and resurrection (up-standing of the dead). The verb "is delivered" is from the Greek present passive of παραδίδωμι (paradidomi) and in this case used as the futuristic present tense. Concerning "the futuristic present tense" Dana and Mantey write, "This use of the present tense denotes an event which has not yet occurred, but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass" (185). It is interesting and revealing to take note of their further comments about this particular usage of "the futuristic present tense:"

While the present is thus used "in appearance for the future," it in reality retains its own temporal and essential force, being employed to denote a future action "either because it is already firmly resolved upon or because it follows because of some unalterable law" (Thayer's translation of Lunneman's revision of Winer: *Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament* qtd. in Dana and Mantey 185).

This verb "is delivered" from παραδίδωμι (paradidomi) may be rendered "is going to be delivered over" or "to be betrayed." (This same Greek word is translated "is betrayed" in Matthew 26:2.) The futuristic present has the purpose of startling and arresting the attention (Rienecker 114). The event of "the betrayal is still in the

full. It is so serious that Jesus said "if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43-44). Sin is so serious that God prepared hell or the lake of everlasting fire for the devil and his angels and also for the unredeemed, the unsaved (Matthew 25:41). Sin is so serious that Jesus instructed His disciples that it is better to be saved or enter into eternal life: maimed, crippled, and/or blind in one eye than having two eyes, both feet and both hands to be cast into hell fire: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43-48). Sin is serious and Jesus demands that His disciples be living sacrifices in order to get the message of eternal salvation to this lost, doomed, and dying world (Romans 12:1,2).

The teachings of Jesus while in Capernaum at this time may be sub-divided as follows: one, the dispute about greatness and the rebuke of the Lord, 9:33-42; Matthew 18:1-14; Luke 9:46-50; and two, the demanding requirements of discipleship and seriousness of sin; 9:43-50; Matthew 18:1-14; Luke 14:34,35. It is a shock to find the disciples contending with one another over who would be the greatest. But it must be remembered that they were only human and at that time did not understand the teaching of Jesus about His cross. They were looking for Him to set up His rule and reign very soon. Nevertheless, He explains that to be great one must become like a little child and be humble. Jesus goes on to bring out in the last few verses of Mark chapter 9 that Holy Spirit led self-discipline is the key to being one of His disciples. Jesus is proved to be the Christ of God by His own teaching to His believers and by the teachings of His true disciples to others.

The dispute about greatness and the rebuke of the Lord (9:33-42 Matthew 18:1-14; Luke 9:46-50) Verse 33 relates "And he came to Capernaum: and being in

the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" Jesus and His disciples have come back to the headquarters of His earlier Galilean ministry and to the house that most likely belonged to Peter and Andrew (Clarke 136) (Mark 1:29). Jesus uses this time to give them obviously needed instructions which continue through verse 50. Jesus asks the question about what they were disputing along the way. Verse 34 says "But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest." This implies that they were "embarrassed and ashamed" (Wessel 706) and this is why "they held their peace" since it was about who would be greatest. They were Jews who were a proud and haughty people and the disciples were influenced by their own people (Wessel 706). But the question is: "Are believers a whole lot different in this day and age?" In verse 35 the Twelve were taught by the Master of All that "If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all." Jesus was teaching them a lesson in humility and that humility was the key to being the "greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4). This means being a "servant of all." In Matthew 18:4 the Model Servant declares, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." One can be humble and yet defend divine truth (Moses is a good example of this and Jesus is the best example of this.) Humility does not mean that disciples are to let folks beat them down. Dr. O. R. Baldwin gives one of the best definitions of humility to be found. He taught that if one is to be humble he or she has determined that the will of God will be done in his or her life and actions, regardless of what may happen and where one may have to go or to do (*from class notes and sermons preached*).

Jesus illustrates the truth of verse 35 in verses 36, 37 by taking a little child in His arms and telling them all how to be truly great in the eyes of God. Verse 36

relates, "he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them." Verse 37 records what Jesus said and is related to John 14:1,9-12. In John 14:1 Jesus states "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." In verse 37 Jesus said that whosoever shall receive a little child "in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." The Twelve were to become like children (humble, trusting, obedient, loving) to become His "true representatives" (Wessel 706) and servants. Thus, if people will receive them, they are receiving Christ and if Christ, then God also. Jesus taught this principle by being the humble servant of all and of the Father. Therefore, He was and is the greatest of all. Jesus said in Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." This principle when believed and practiced will put strife and envying out of New Testament churches and cause them to grow, glow, and go for Christ. Disciples of Jesus must become like children in humility to become His true representatives and servants. If people will receive His representatives, they are receiving Christ and if Christ, then God also. Jesus declares to His disciples in Matthew 10:40-41 "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." The context of Matthew 10:40-42 shows that what Jesus is teaching here in Mark 9:34-42 is very similar to what He taught in Mark 8:34-38.

Verses 38-42 are really an extension of the lesson in humility and true greatness and should go with verses 33-37. The statement of Jesus in verse 37 provoked an answer by John who seems to have been speaking for the whole group since the

plural pronoun "we" is used. In a way, John seems to be saying, "this is what we did, do you approve?" Verses 38 records "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us." John did not name the one they saw casting out devils in the name of Jesus of whom the disciples had rebuked because he did not follow with them. Perhaps they did not know him. At the best they did not believe he was following Jesus in the right way.

Jesus answers John in verses 39, 40 with a common sense answer. Jesus said, "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part." His answer is an application of Matthew 7:20 where He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." In essence the answer of Jesus told them not to forbid such a one doing a mighty work in the name of Jesus for such a one would not be able to "lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part" or is for us. This is similar to what Moses told Joshua in an incident in Numbers 11:26-30 where Moses said, "would God that all the LORD's people were prophets. . . ." This is similar to the rejoicing of the apostle Paul that in every way Christ was preached, whether from the best of motives or not (Philippians 1:12-20).

This is a lesson of charity and mutual recognition but not one of compromising the truth. The key to the whole teaching is the fact that whatever is done is to be done "in my name," that is, the name of Jesus (9:39-41). (There may have been some jealousy involved on the part of the apostles since they had just been discussing greatness and earlier had failed in casting out the evil spirit of the boy.) In Matthew 12:30 Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me."

Verse 41 seems to go with verse 37 before Jesus was interrupted by John. Yet it serves as a good example of the principle stated in verses 39, 40. In verse 41 Jesus declares "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." Jesus is saying that anyone who gives one of His disciples a drink of water in His name because they belong to Christ they shall not lose their reward. The small act of giving a drink represents the fact that God recognizes all things, big or small, done in the name of Christ. For, to do something for a representative of Christ is to do it for Christ (Matthew 10:42, 25:40; 1 Corinthians 3:23). What is the reward? To receive the approval of God.

Verse 42 seems best to be put with what precedes rather than what follows it (Wessel 707). Jesus is continuing with the answer to the response of John in verse 38. In verse 42 Jesus states, "And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." The words "little ones that believe in me. . ." means the same as the ones in verse 41 that Jesus said "belong to Christ." The verb "shall offend" is from the aorist subjunctive of the Greek verb σκανδαλίζω (skandalizo) meaning "to cause to stumble, to cause one to stumble in his faith" (Rienecker 114). Jesus is still referring back to verses 38-40. Thus Jesus is saying that if a person is serving Him, that is, doing things in His name and is a believer in Him, he will receive his reward and others should not cause such a one to stumble by discouraging him. In fact, Jesus said death by drowning would be a better experience than that one should be the cause of the stumbling of one of His servants. The word "millstone" is from two Greek words (The New Testament, The Greek Text 84). The first word is λίθος (lithos) and means "a stone, of small stones. . . of a large stone. . . of building stones. .

. *metaphorically* of Christ" (Thayer 378). The second word is *μυλικός* (*mulikos*) and means "belonging to a mill" (Thayer 419). Literally, *λίθος μυλικός* (*lithos mulikos*) could be rendered, "a large stone belonging to a mill" (Looney, various translation). This most likely speaks of the large upper stone in a mill. Clarke writes that this "is not the stone of the ordinary hand-mill. . . but the stone of the larger mill that was turned by beasts of burden" (Clarke 139). This millstone was one that was turned by a donkey in contrast to the small hand-mill served by a woman of that day. Jesus used this method of death because "the Jews, with their fondness for paying funeral honors to the dead, may well have had a great horror of it" (Clarke 139).

The demanding requirements of discipleship and seriousness of sin (9:43-50; Matthew 18:1-14; Luke 14:34,35) The general subject of Mark 9:43-50 is that the Spirit led and aided self-discipline is required of the disciple of Jesus Christ. [This amounts to being filled (or being controlled) by the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).] Jesus uses the language of exaggeration to make His point and to emphasize it. He is also showing the great and immensely precious value of entering life or the kingdom of God over against being cast into hell. Jesus wants all of His disciples, disciples in every generation, to realize just how serious sin is.

In verses 43-48 Jesus is teaching concerning the seriousness of sin, and yet He is illustrating the demanding requirements of discipleship. He is speaking, in a sense, to both the lost and to the saved. Jesus said,

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:43-48).

Jesus is using statements about the hand, foot, and eye, saying if they cause one to stumble, to sin, and even not to enter the kingdom of God, it would be better if the hand or foot were cut off and the eye plucked out. Wessel writes, "The main point of vv. 43-50 is that it so important to enter into life—i.e. eternal life. . . that radical means must be taken to remove what can prevent it, viz., sin" (708). The cutting off of the hand or foot or the plucking out of the eye is not to be taken literally but figuratively and in a spiritual sense. The Hebrews, like others, were accustomed to representing the affections of the mind by the members or parts of the body. To the lost Jesus is saying you must abandon sin, repent and turn to God, otherwise you will be cast into hell where the fire shall never be quenched and the worm dieth not. So Jesus uses these illustrations to show it is better to enter worthwhile life (life eternal) and yet be maimed than not to enter at all and be cast into hell.

On the other hand, He wants the saved to understand that they must abandon sin if they would live the abundant life — life empowered by God giving glory to God and satisfying both to God and to the person himself. The seriousness of sin is emphasized by the commands to cut off the hand, cut off the foot, and pluck out the eye. These body members represent the occasion of sin and apostasy. To put this into focus consider what the apostle John wrote to born-again, blood-bought believers:

Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17).

Jesus makes it clear and plain that it is better to enter life and/or the kingdom of God maimed, or lame, or blind than to be in possession of all that is natural to man and to be cast into hell. This is figurative since it is true that sin dwells in the heart. Self-mutilation is not really being taught nor is it true that people in heaven will be

lame, one eyed or the like. **Two things need to be noted: one, no one is ever saved by self mutilation or suicide or self-destruction or self-violence; and two, once a person is saved by grace through faith in Jesus, he or she is safe and secure and will never be cast into hell.**

Jesus is teaching self-conquest through the power of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Romans 6:19; Colossians 3:1-11). The apostle Paul wrote:

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

In Colossians 3:1-11 Paul declares that the believers are to ". . .Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. . . ." In Mark 9:43-48 Jesus is using the bodily members as convenient illustrations of that which is nearest and most indispensable to a person. Jesus is teaching that the believer should sacrifice what is nearest and dearest to him if it causes one to stumble. It is better to endure the sacrifice than, by avoiding it, lose thyself. This again is referring to the teachings of Jesus in Mark 8:34-38. On the positive side, Jesus would have His disciples dedicate their hands, feet, and eyes to service for Him and to be living sacrifices unto Him of which the Bible says is reasonable service (Romans 12:1,2).

The word "hell" in verses 43,45,47 is from the Greek word γέεννα (geenna) (pronounced and spelled "gehenna" in English). Wessel writes "The word translated 'hell' is *gehenna*, a Greek form of the Hebrew words *gehinnom* ("Valley of Hinnom")" (708). The Analytical Greek Lexicon says of γέεννα (geenna),

properly *the valley of Hinnom*, south of Jerusalem, once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch, and afterwards polluted with every species of filth,

as well as the carcasses of animals, and dead bodies of malefactors; to consume which, in order to avert the pestilence which such a mass of corruption would occasion, constant fires were kept burning; hence, *hell*. . . (76).

This literal valley was at one time a place where human sacrifices were made. These human sacrifices were put to a stop by King Josiah (2 Kings 23:10), but then this valley became a garbage dump and place of rubbish, animal carcasses, human excrement and so forth (Wessel 708). Fires were kept burning there all of the time and worms never died. Isaiah 66:24 speaks of this very thing. Jesus uses the picture of something familiar to the Hebrews to show in small degree what the eternal place of punishment would be like. Hence, He uses the word γέεννα (*geenna*) to name the real literal place of literal eternal punishment where the worm never dies and the fire never, never shall be quenched. Robertson says this is "Not Hades, but Gehenna. . . . It is thus a vivid picture of eternal punishment" (346). The parallel in Matthew 18:8 makes it clear that Jesus was speaking of being "cast into everlasting fire." Thus "gehenna hell" or "gehenna hell fire" is the place of eternal punishment as spoken of in Matthew 25:41,46. This is what Jesus meant in this passage in Mark 9:43-48. This is speaking of the lake of fire as used in Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8. Hell is a place of fire, brimstone, and eternal torment and should be preached as such today to warn the lost sinner of the lake of fire and thus to flee to Jesus as personal Savior.

Jesus declares in Mark 9:43-48 the same thing three times to emphasize the eternal nature of hell. He declares, speaking of hell, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Both verbs "dieth not" and "is not quenched" are present indicative verbs. Davis says that "Continued action, or a state of incompleteness, is denoted by the present tense,—this kind of action is called *durative* or *linear*. The action of the verb is shown in progress, as *going on*." (25). This means that hell is a place of everlasting punishment. The verb in verse 43 "never shall be quenched"

comes from ἄσβεστος (asbestos) means "unquenchable" and is the word from which the English word asbestos is derived.

In verses 49-50 Jesus continues to teach on the demanding requirements of discipleship. In context verse 49 refers to the unquenchable fire of Gehenna-hell of verse 48 and forward to the Spirit led self-discipline of verse 50 (Wuest 193). These verses continue to show that Spirit led and aided self-discipline (that is, to allow the Spirit to control the daily life of the believer) is required of the disciple of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:18). This echoes what Jesus taught about discipleship in the last part of Chapter 8. Jesus declared in Mark 8:34-35 "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Admittedly, verses 49,50 are very difficult to interpret. Clarke states of these two verses, "A saying without parallel, and one of the most difficult in the Gospels" (142). Wessel, more or less, echoes this statement of Clarke by writing that this is "one of the most difficult verses in Mark" (709). The interpretation of Mark 9:49,50 must be given in the light of the definitions of the words "salt, salted, fire, and saltiness" and Leviticus 2:13.

In the strictest sense, the word "salt" means "a crystalline compound, sodium chloride. . . occurring as a mineral" (American College Dictionary 1071). It is commonly called table salt. In a figurative sense, "salt" can mean "Common Sense" and/or "a dependable steadfast person or group of people — usually used in the phrase *salt of the earth*" (Merriam Webster's 1098). In verses 49,50 Jesus is using the words, "salt, salted, and fire," in the figurative sense. The word "salt" in verse 49 is from ἅλς (hals)¹, a primary root (Strong's 251). The word "salt" used three times in

verse 50 is from ἅλας (halas)¹ and figuratively means "prudence" (Strong's 217).

Thayer says ἅλας (halas) means,

salt with which food is seasoned and sacrifices are sprinkled . . . salt is a symbol of lasting concord, because it protects food from putrefaction and preserves it unchanged. Accordingly, in the solemn ratification of compacts, the Orientals were, and are to this day, accustomed to partake of salt together. . . . (salt speaks of) wisdom and grace exhibited in speech: Col. 4:6 (25).

The verb "shall be salted" used twice in verse 49 is from the future indicative of ἁλίζω (halizo) which means "to salt, season with salt, sprinkle with salt" (Thayer 27). It has the idea of "to restore flavor" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows v. 2.3).

The words "have lost saltness" used in verse 50 is from ἄναλος (analog) means "without salt, unsalted" (Thayer 39). It has the idea of "insipid" (Bushell, Bible Works for Windows v.2.3c). Thayer says the words "salt have lost his saltness" means "salt destitute of pungency" (39).

Jesus said in verse 49 "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." To interpret verse 49 one must consider Leviticus 2:13, "And every oblation of thy meat-offering (*meal-offering*) shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." The expression "meat-offering" or meal or grain-offering is from the Hebrew noun מִנְחָה (minchah). This word is "from an unused root meaning to *apportion*, i.e. *bestow*. . . tribute, spec. a sacrificial *offering* (usually bloodless and voluntary): —gift, oblation, (meat) offering, present, sacrifice" (Strong's 4503). Jesus is using Mark 9:49 as an application and commentary on Leviticus 2:13. Crumley comments on Leviticus 2:13:

The "Meat Offerings" . . . were to include salt as an essential ingredient. Salt typifies spiritual character, Matt. 5:13; Mark 9:49; Luke 14:34; Col. 4:6. It is a symbol of a covenant which cannot be broken, Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5. In the ancient world, it was customary that one extend hospitality even to his enemy. And if that hospitality included the eating of food seasoned with salt,

this constituted a perpetual bond which prohibited either of the two parties from harming the other (Crumley, The Pentateuch 534).

Commenting on Leviticus 2:13 Cook writes "Not only every Minchah, but every animal offering was to be accompanied by salt. It was the one symbol which was never absent from the Altar of Burnt-offering, showing the imperishableness of the love of Jehovah for His People" (116). Another commentator states,

Salt is necessary in the diet and was a necessary ingredient in all the offerings. It became a symbol of God's covenant (v.13) and is so used in his covenant with the priests in which he gave them their portion of the peace offering (Num 18:19). It is referred to again in connection with the Davidic Covenant (2 Chron 13:5). (Harris, R. Laird 542).

The term "a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD" is used in Numbers 18:19. In 2 Chronicles 13:5 the Bible speaks of the Davidic covenant (that the kingdom would belong to David and his sons) as "a covenant of salt" and implies that it is an everlasting covenant. "Hence, 'a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord' is an *indissoluble* covenant" (Fausset 620).

The word "fire" is used in many ways beside that which cooks food and heats and comforts the place of dwelling and so forth. "Fire is represented as the symbol of Jehovah's presence and the instrument of his power, in the way either of approval or of destruction" (Exodus 3:1,2; 14:19,24 etc.) (Smith, William 193). The presence of God was represented by the fire of the burning bush (Exodus 3:1,2; Acts 7:30) and "through the pillar of fire and of the cloud" (Exodus 13:21-22; 19:14-24; 40:38) and so forth. Destroying fire is used as representative of the power and judgment of God (Numbers 11:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 12:18; etc.). Hebrews 12:29 states "For our God *is* a consuming fire." Malachi 3:2,3 speaks of God as "like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver. . . ." Fire as in the

fire of the refiner is used to get rid of the dross. Fire is a symbol of the work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-3).

In first part of Leviticus 2:13 the Bible says, "every oblation. . . shalt thou season with salt;" so Jesus declares in the first part of Mark 9:49, "For every one shall be salted with fire." Hence every person, whether lost or saved is salted or seasoned or goes through the fire. [In both cases, each one proves the everlasting aspect of the covenant of salt: one is a covenant of the wrath of Jehovah and the other a covenant of everlasting love, peace, and joy in the kingdom of the heaven (Clarke 142).] The fire may be the fire of the refiner or it may be the consuming fire and fire of judgment. If a person dies and is never saved by trusting Jesus, they will one day experience the everlasting fire of God in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:9-15; 21:8). Thus they "shall be salted with fire." On the other hand, the saved "shall be salted" (or seasoned) with fire of the refiner to be purified and to be rid of the dross. God uses the fires of persecution, trials, suffering, and His hand of chastening in the life of the believer to cause him to be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus (Romans 8:28,29; Hebrews 12:3-14). The believer is to be a living sacrifice. The apostle Paul wrote,

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Romans 12:1-2).

The apostle Peter declares "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7). Also consider "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:" (1 Peter 4:12). Hence, Jesus said in the last part of Mark 9:49 "every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

The right amount of table salt is an essential element in the physical life of the human body. Without it the human body cannot function properly for very long. This can also be said of the Spirit of God in relationship to the spiritual life of the born-again, blood-bought believer. The new birth is an operation of the Holy Spirit of God upon the heart of the repentant believer at the point of faith in Jesus. Afterward, the Spirit dwells in the heart of the believer forever. During the earthly life of the believer the believer is to serve Christ in the power of the Spirit. The believer has a choice. He or she can either yield to the Spirit or not. In verses 49,50 Jesus is saying yielding to the Spirit to serve Him is to have salt in oneself. "Salt" in verses 49,50 may very well represent the result of the work of the Spirit upon the heart of the believer. "Every one must be salted somehow, either with the unquenchable fire of Gehenna or the severe fire of self-discipline. Wise is he who chooses the latter alternative" (*Expositor's qtd.* in Wuest 193).

In Mark 9:50 Jesus states "Salt is good" meaning it has many uses that are a blessing and help to mankind. Jesus is now using it "in a domestic setting and not a religious. . . one as in verse 49" (Wessel 709). "As one of the most essential articles of diet, salt symbolized hospitality; as an antiseptic, durability, fidelity and purity" (Smith, William 581). Jesus had called His disciples the salt of the earth in Matthew 5:13. He used it in the sense of a preservative. Jesus continues in verse 50 to say "but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it?" Salt can lose its saltiness (Matthew 5:13; Luke 14:34). "Jesus is warning His disciples not to lose that characteristic in them that brings life to the world and prevents its decay" (Wessel 709). What is that characteristic? It is the devotion of the disciples to Jesus and His Great Commission to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20). It is to allow the Spirit to lead and guide in self-discipline and

these verses Jesus teaches some very important lessons not only for the Twelve, but for His disciples in every age.

It is significant that Jesus for the second time prophesies and teaches concerning His cross. No one, no mere human could do this. Only the Triune God would know this; only God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit would be able to predict about the cross of Calvary.

Next, because His disciples were disputing among themselves as to who should be the greatest, Jesus teaches how a believer may be first or approved with God. He declared in verse 35 "If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all." Setting a child in the midst of them, He taught that one must become like a little child. In Matthew 18:4 Jesus declares, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." In Mark 9:37 He states, "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." This type of teaching is not what man in his pride would think nor teach. Only One sent from God would teach this. According to Mark 10:45 and for that matter the entire book of Mark teaches that Jesus was the Ideal, Model Servant of God. Besides being the Redeemer, He is the perfect example.

Jesus also taught them that anyone who would serve Jesus in His name should not be forbidden to do so. He taught in verse 39, 40 that whoever is doing a mighty work in the His name, that such a one would not be able to "lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part." This is an application of Matthew 7:20 where He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Jesus further taught that anyone who gives one of His disciples a drink of water in His name (*doing even a small thing*) because they belong to Christ they shall not

lose their reward. To do something for a representative of Christ is to do it for Christ. On the other hand, Jesus taught that if a believer, one of His little ones, is serving Him according to His Word, he will receive his reward and others should not cause such a one to stumble by discouraging him. In fact, Jesus said death by drowning would be a better experience than that one should be the cause of the stumbling of one of His servants.

Last, in verses 43-48 Jesus taught concerning the seriousness of sin, and yet He is illustrating the essentials and necessities of discipleship. He is speaking, in a sense, to both the lost and to the saved. He shows the great and immensely precious value of entering life or the kingdom of God over against being cast into hell. He uses exaggeration and figurative language to emphasize His point. Jesus uses statements about the hand, foot, and eye, saying if they cause one to stumble, to sin, and even not to enter the kingdom of God, it would be better if the hand or foot were cut off and the eye plucked out.

To the lost Jesus is declaring you must repent and turn to God, otherwise you will be cast into hell where the fire shall never be quenched and the worm dieth not. He wants the saved to understand that they must abandon sin if they would live the abundant life — life empowered by God giving glory to God. Jesus would have His disciples dedicate their hands, feet, and eyes to service for Him and to be living sacrifices unto Him (Romans 12:1,2).

Jesus uses the vivid picture of something familiar to the Hebrews, the Valley of Hinnom, to show in small degree what the eternal place of punishment, Gehenna-hell, would be like (Mark 9:43-48). Gehenna-hell is the real literal place of literal eternal punishment where the worm never dies and the fire never shall be quenched. This is the place of eternal punishment as spoken of in Matthew 25:41,46; Revelation

20:11-15; 21:8. Hell is a place of fire, brimstone, and eternal torment and should be preached as such today to warn the lost to flee to Jesus as personal Savior.

In verses 49-50 Jesus continues to teach on the demanding requirements of discipleship. Verse 49 refers to the unquenchable fire of Gehenna-hell of verse 48 and forward to the Spirit led self-discipline of verse 50 (Wuest 193). Jesus is using the words, "salt, salted, and fire," in the figurative sense. According to their spiritual condition, every person shall be salted or seasoned with either the fire of the refiner so as to be rid of dross and to be conforming to the image of Christ; or if lost and they die in that condition, they will be seasoned with the consuming fires of hell. Jesus is using Mark 9:49 as an application and commentary on Leviticus 2:13. The Old Testament teaches that "a covenant of salt" is an everlasting and indissoluble covenant. Hence every person, whether saved or lost is salted or goes through the fire. [In both cases, each one proves the everlasting aspect of the covenant of salt: one is a covenant of the wrath of Jehovah and the other a covenant of everlasting love, peace, and joy in the kingdom of heaven (Clarke 142).] The believer is to be a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1,2).

In verses 49,50 Jesus is saying that yielding to the Spirit to serve Him is to have salt in oneself. In verse 50 Jesus states "but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it?" Salt can lose its saltiness. "Jesus is warning His disciples not to lose that characteristic in them that brings life to the world and prevents its decay" (Wessel 709). That characteristic is the devotion of the disciples to Jesus and His Great Commission to "preach the gospel to every creature." It is to allow the Spirit to lead and guide in self-discipline and "self-sacrifice to Jesus Christ and His gospel" (Wessel 709). This characteristic will be lost if they continue their selfishness and wrangling about who should be greatest. Thus Jesus admonishes them

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

(About the Author)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Calvary, Gillette, WY August 1995 -- July 2014

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

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

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

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas

Graduated: January, 1961 BS-Industrial Engineering

Lexington Baptist College, Lexington, Kentucky

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

Missionary Baptist Seminary, Little Rock, Arkansas

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

Gulf Coast Baptist Institute, Hattiesburg, Mississippi

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

Service for Missionary Baptist Associations:

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

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

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

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

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

Assistant Parliamentarian for Rocky Mountain MBA for several years

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

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

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

BACK COVER PAGE

JESUS, MY SERVANT THE BRANCH — COMMENTS ON MARK

--- Volume Two of Four ---

(Mark Chapters 6; 7; 8; & 9)

A Practical Commentary on The Gospel According to Mark

By

Joseph L. Looney II