



# E3 DISCIPLESHIP BIBLE



**ENGAGE**

**EQUIP**

**EMPOWER**

FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

SAMPLE CONTENT | NOT FOR SALE

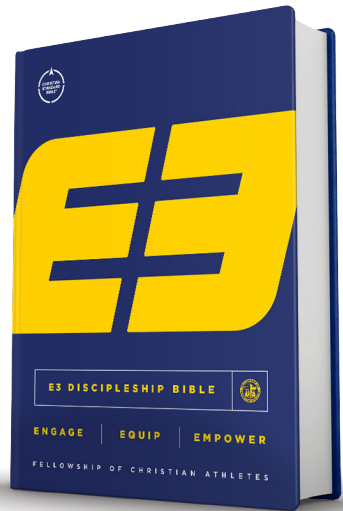


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# ABOUT THE E3 DISCIPLESHIP STUDY BIBLE

Since 1954, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes has been challenging coaches and athletes to use the powerful medium of athletics to impact the world for Jesus Christ, reaching millions worldwide. The *CSB E3 Discipleship Bible* is full of intentionally crafted discipleship tools and resources based on the E3 discipleship method—Engage. Equip. Empower.



**As athletes engage with Scripture, they are equipped with biblical truth and empowered to share the gospel and disciple others.**

E3 discipleship-focused questions, articles, and commentary are placed alongside the corresponding biblical text for personal or group study. Also included is a unique interactive video and sharing feature through the use of QR codes associated with articles and other discipleship and evangelism resources in the front matter. This Bible makes an excellent gift for athletes and coaches currently participating or serving in FCA, as well as alumni or others whose lives have been impacted by the ministry of FCA.





## FEATURES

- Foundational discipleship-focused study notes on every page of the Bible
- Nearly 30 articles introducing the E3 discipleship method and related resources
- Over 60 discipleship focused topical articles with devotional and interactive QR code content
- More than 150 feature boxes for further study with discovery and application questions placed alongside the corresponding Scripture passage
- “99 Verses for the Christian Competitor” callouts placed throughout the Bible
- Over 40 character spotlights to inspire coaches and athletes
- Genre and book introductions with book-specific reading plans
- Two-column text format
- 9-point type size that is easy to read
- Words of Christ in red
- Full-color immersive design
- Smyth-sewn durable binding
- Ribbon marker for easy referencing between pages
- Presentation page for gift-giving
- Full color maps

The *CSB E3 Discipleship Bible* features the highly readable, highly reliable text of the Christian Standard Bible® (CSB). The CSB captures the Bible’s original meaning without sacrificing clarity, making it easier to engage with Scripture’s life-transforming message and to share it with others.



# ABOUT FCA



The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is touching millions of lives...one heart at a time. Since 1954, FCA has been challenging coaches and athletes on the professional, college, high school, junior high and youth levels to use the powerful platform of sport to reach every coach and every athlete with the transforming power of Jesus Christ. FCA focuses on serving local communities around the globe by engaging, equipping and empowering coaches and athletes to unite, inspire and change the world through the gospel.

## VISION

**To see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.**



## MISSION

**To lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.**

## VALUES

Our relationships will demonstrate steadfast commitment to Jesus Christ and His Word through Integrity, Serving, Teamwork and Excellence.

### INTEGRITY

We will demonstrate Christ-like wholeness, privately and publicly.

(Proverbs 11:3)

### TEAMWORK

We will express our unity in Christ in all our relationships.

(Philippians 2:1-4)

### SERVING

We will model Jesus' example of serving.

(John 13:1-17)

### EXCELLENCE

We will honor and glorify God in all we do.

(Colossians 3:23-24)

## METHODS

As FCA matures, we seek to make disciples through our methods of engaging, equipping and empowering coaches and athletes to know and grow in Christ and lead others to do the same.

### ENGAGE

1 THESSALONIANS 2:8

We engage relationally by connecting with individuals and through events in many different environments by building genuine trust, sharing our lives and sharing the gospel. We strive to connect with coaches and athletes where they are on their spiritual journey.

### EQUIP

EPHESIANS 4:12

After cultivating relationships and once coaches and athletes come to faith in Christ, we want to equip them with Christ-centered training, events, resources and on-going support in what it means to be a follower of Christ, growing in God's Word and applying it to life.

### EMPOWER

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

Once equipped, we empower faithful leaders who desire to use their time, talents and treasures to help other coaches and athletes experience the gospel, grow in their faith and share Him with others. We desire to develop disciples who make disciples, assisting them so that they can in turn engage, equip and empower others to know and grow in Christ and lead others to do the same.

THE CSB WAS CREATED TO HELP MORE  
PEOPLE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE  
WORD OF GOD.



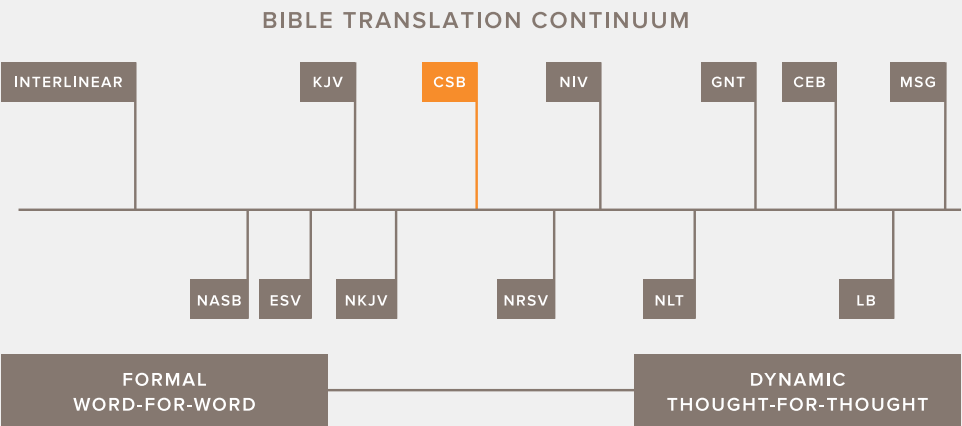
**ACCURATE. READABLE. SHAREABLE.**

The Christian Standard Bible presents the truth of God’s Word with accuracy and clarity for today’s readers, equipping them for lifelong discipleship. It’s a Bible you can teach from with confidence and a Bible you can share with your neighbor who is hearing God’s Word for the very first time.

**OPTIMAL EQUIVALENCE**

The CSB was created using Optimal Equivalence, a translation philosophy that pursues both linguistic precision to the original languages and readability in contemporary English.

In the many places throughout Scripture where a word-for-word rendering is clearly understandable, a literal translation is used. When a word-for-word rendering might obscure the meaning for a modern audience, a more dynamic translation is used. This process assures that both the words and thoughts contained in the original text are conveyed as accurately as possible for today’s readers.

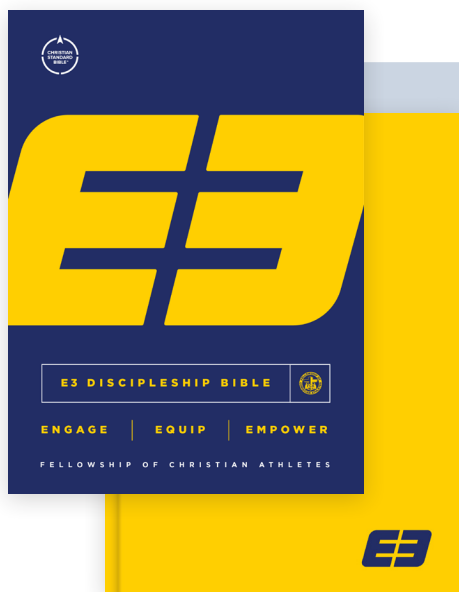


Bible translations shown in the top half of the chart are original translations directly from ancient languages to English. Versions shown below the line began with the English text of another Bible translation.

LEARN MORE AT [CSBIBLE.COM](https://www.csbible.com)



## AVAILABLE EDITIONS



**HARDCOVER, JACKETED**

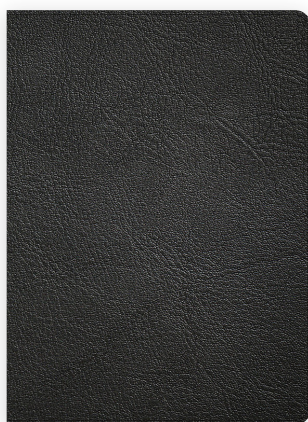
**ISBN: 978-1-0877-4220-5**

**\$39.99**

**ePUB**

**ISBN: 978-1-0877-4738-5**

**\$24.99**



**BLACK GENUINE  
LEATHER**

**ISBN: 978-1-0877-4219-9**

**\$99.99**



**NAVY  
LEATHERTOUCH®**

**ISBN: 978-1-0877-4217-5**

**\$59.99**

**INDEXED**

**ISBN: 978-1-0877-4218-2**

**\$69.99**

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY BIBLE

More than 150 feature boxes for further study with discovery and application questions placed alongside the corresponding Scripture passage

Over 40 character spotlights to inspire coaches and athletes

This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called "woman," for she was taken from me.  
  
24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

**WARM-UP:** Read Genesis 3:1-24  
**WORKOUT:** How can God's questions (vv. 9,11) give Adam the opportunity to confess his sin and repent? What does this demonstrate about God's grace and forgiveness?

**WRAP-UP:** What was Adam's sin, according to God (v. 17)? To whom do you sometimes listen instead of God?

**THE TEMPTATION AND THE FALL**  
3 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden'?"  
4 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. But about the

219 Like man, animals were formed out of the ground, but they received neither the breath of life from God (v. 7) nor the image of God. By giving names to the animals, Adam showed that he ruled the animals and that he perceived the nature of each animal.  
221 Because God took one of his ribs to use as his raw material, the woman would correspond perfectly—though not identically—to Adam. Like Adam, the woman possessed God's image.  
222-23 Adam's first recorded words express his delight with God's handiwork and his recognition of the unique suitability of God's last recorded acts in the creation accounts. As with no other work of other craftsmen, this one was singularly suited for the man, being bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Adam viewed her as his equal. The Hebrew term *ishah*, woman, also refers to the feminine complement to *ish*, the man.  
224 God's timeless design for marriage is declared here. The one flesh relationship certainly involves sexual union, but also includes a husband and wife coming together in spiritual, mental, and emotional harmony.  
225 Because the devastating effects of sin had not yet ravaged nature or humanity, there was no need for clothing.  
321 Though we know the serpent was an instrument of Satan (Rev 16:13; 2v 12; 20:2), it was just a created being, its description as cunning suggests it offered a wisdom not based on the fear of God.  
32-3 The woman's claim that God said, "You must not . . . touch the tree, or you will die," goes beyond anything recorded in God's instructions to Adam. Therefore it seems that Adam had given his wife an additional command beyond what God said, or else Eve herself exaggerated the command as Satan tempted her to view God as selfish and overly restrictive.  
324-5 The serpent boldly contradicted what she had reported to be God's command. He then skillfully lied (in 3:4-5) by distorting God's word (Mt 4:8), implying that God had prohibited people from eating the

**EVE: CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT**  
Forgiven. Created by God and taken from the flesh and bone of her husband Adam, Eve was the first wife and first mother. While she gave birth to the temptation of Satan in the garden and disobeyed God, she was redeemed by the kind and loving heart of the Father in the aftermath of her and her husband's sin.

fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, "You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die."  
4 "No! You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

**SIN'S CONSEQUENCES**  
8 Then the man and the Lord God walking in breeze," and the trees of the garden and said  
9 "And he said was afraid because  
10 Then he asked: Did you eat  
you not to eat fr  
11 The man re  
with me—she  
and I ate."

Genre and book introductions with book-specific reading plans

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW

READING PLAN

Matthew 1:1-2:23  
Matthew 3:1-4:25  
Matthew 5:1-48  
Matthew 6:1-34  
Matthew 7:1-8:17  
Matthew 8:18-9:26

Matthew 9:27-10:42  
Matthew 11:1-12:21  
Matthew 12:22-13:23  
Matthew 13:24-46  
Matthew 14:1-36  
Matthew 15:1-16:12

Matthew 16:13-17:27  
Matthew 18:1-19:15  
Matthew 19:16-20:34  
Matthew 21:24-46  
Matthew 22:1-46  
Matthew 23:1-39

Matthew 24:1-51  
Matthew 25:1-46  
Matthew 26:1-27:26  
Matthew 27:27-46  
Matthew 28:1-20

AUTHOR

Technically anonymous, but early Christian tradition assigns this Gospel to the apostle Matthew

DATE

AD 55-65

BIG PICTURE

Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah, created the Church and commissioned His followers to tell others the good news.

SUMMARY

Matthew divided his Gospel into three sections: the introduction (1:1-4:16), body (4:17-16:20), and conclusion (16:21-28:20). He began by recounting events surrounding Jesus' birth (1:18-2:23) and then moved to Jesus' baptism and temptation (3:1-4:16), which prepared Him for His three-year ministry of preaching, teaching and healing (4:23). Perhaps no portion of Scripture is as well known as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5-7). In chapters 8-10 Matthew recorded ten miracles in which Jesus demonstrated His authority over disease, natural catastrophes, demons and death. Matthew showed a variety of responses to Jesus' authority and recorded a series of Jesus' par-

ables (chaps. 11-18). Chapters 19-25 mark the transition from Galilee to Jerusalem. Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem, cleansed the temple and taught why He did what He did and who He was. In chapters 26-28 Matthew related the conspiracy that ended in Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection.

KEY THOUGHT

Jesus told His followers to make disciples of all nations, showing the inclusive nature of the gospel. Abraham, from whom Matthew traced Jesus' lineage (1:1-2), was told that he would bring a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:1-3). Matthew presents Jesus as the new Abraham, the founder of a new spiritual Israel consisting of all people who choose by faith to follow Him. Throughout Christian history believers have sought to take the good news of salvation in Jesus to all peoples and nations. We call them missionaries. We call them witnesses. We call them obedient.

TAKEAWAY

The Great Commission that concludes Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 28:16-20) informs us that the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of the world, has appointed us and will enable us to make disciples of all who will believe.

PASSAGES FOR FURTHER STUDY

5:1-12 . . . . . ATTITUDES  
7:24-29 . . . . . FAITH IN ACTION  
13:1-23 . . . . . FOUR SOILS  
14:22-33 . . . . . FEAR AND DOUBT

16:13-28 . . . . . FOLLOWING JESUS  
20:20-28 . . . . . SERVING OTHERS  
28:1-20 . . . . . RESURRECTION POWER

Foundational discipleship-focused study notes on every page of the Bible

## ENCOURAGEMENT OF JOSHUA

**1** After the death of Moses the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses's assistant.<sup>2</sup> Moses my servant is dead. Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I am giving the Israelites.<sup>3</sup> I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses.<sup>4</sup> Your territory will be from the wilderness and Lebanon to the great river, the Euphrates River—all the land of the Hittites—and west to the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>5</sup> No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you.

Be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

\*"Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their ancestors to give them as an inheritance.<sup>7</sup> Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go.<sup>8</sup> This book of instruction

## JOSHUA: CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

**Leader.** He walked faithfully with God and led closely with Moses. After Moses died, Joshua was the one to lead the Israelites into the promised land after 40 years in the desert. Even though the Israelites were fearful of conquering the land God had shown them, Joshua had faith and convinced people to trust what God had promised them.

## JOSHUA PREPARES THE PEOPLE

**10** Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, **11** "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get provisions ready for yourselves, for within three days you will be crossing the Jordan to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you to inherit.'"

**12** Joshua said to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, **13** "Remember what Moses the LORD's servant commanded you when he said, 'The LORD your God will give you rest, and he will give you this land.'<sup>14</sup> Your wives, dependents, and livestock may remain in the land Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But your best soldiers must cross over in battle formation<sup>15</sup> ahead of your brothers and help them.<sup>16</sup> Until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as he has given you, and they too pos-

"99 Verses for the Christian Competitor" callouts placed throughout the Bible

## PRAYER



## LOOKING FOR A MIRACLE / Jolee Paden

## READY

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the herald, who proclaims peace, who brings news of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your reigns!'"

## SET

Your team is down by 15 points with two minutes left in your championship game. Time is not on your side and morale is running low. Fans in the stands are faithful, but their hope is fading. Only a miracle of momentum would carry you toward a win. In times like these, you are desperate for a miracle. You cling to hope and make every move you can to try to shift the projected trajectory of this scorecard.

In times of uncertainty, we search for possibility. In times of hopelessness, we search for a savior. "People are looking for miracles," my friend said

as we discussed the recent path of destruction pandemic has created. Death, job loss, and interference in future plans...

How are we preparing to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ at a time like this? How are we to be the carrier of miracles for the glory of God? Let us stir one another to be a people made of the Holy Spirit's attentiveness, generosity, and peace. Your encouragement could be the answer to someone's prayer. Your generous gift could be a miraculous provision. Keep your eyes open, hands ready, and watch God move through

## GO!

1. As you pray for those in need, how might God be asking you to be a part someone's answered prayer?
2. Ask God to highlight people who are in need of financial, spiritual and emotional prayer.
3. What needs do you have at this time? Ask God to step into your life and partner with you to listen for His voice and direction.

Nearly 30 articles on biblical principles and patterns to introduce the E3 discipleship process

## EQUIP

## EQUIP WITH SCRIPTURE



## SCRIPTURE

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."<sup>2</sup> Timothy 3:16-17

Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? The term was traditionally used to describe someone who followed another for the purpose of learning. Think of discipleship in two parts: the source and the subject, or the teacher and the teaching. Not only will a disciple learn the teaching, but they will become like their teacher (Luke 6:40). To be equipped is to conform to the words and ways of Jesus. To do this, God gives us His Word.

The Source: Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Following Jesus Christ as a disciple is about learning a way of life laid out in the commands of God, but it is also rooted in a relationship with our Savior who loves us. God's Word points us to a person, Jesus Christ. The Subject: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching... so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In other words, the Bible has authority, is without error and is necessary and sufficient for disciples to learn and grow in their relationship with Jesus.

Disciples of Jesus are people of the Word! We are to be immersed in it. To do so is to be like a tree planted by streams of water that bears fruit in every season (Psalm 1:3). However, sometimes studying God's Word can feel intimidating. Therefore, disciples should be equipped with a simple pattern for studying the Bible. FCA recommends using the Discovery Bible Study (DBS) method because it helps people to discover truths of God and apply them to their lives.

The Word of God transforms lives. Knowing this, the most important question you can ask someone is "Will you read the Bible with me?"

## TAKE ACTION

Invite people from your E3 Map to read the Bible with you.

## TOOLS

The CORE (see page 1618)  
Discovery Bible Study Training (see page 1619)  
Discovery Bible Study Method (see page 1620)  
Discovery Bible Study Sets (see page 1621)

## PASSAGES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 1:1-6 (p. 609); John 14:6 (p. 1299); Luke 6:40 (p. 1228)

SEE PAGE XXXIX FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT E3 DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING.

Over 60 discipleship focused topical articles with devotional and interactive QR code content

# INTRODUCTION TO **MARK**

**READING PLAN**

- |                |                 |                    |                    |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| ■ Mark 1:1–45  | ■ Mark 5:21–43  | ■ Mark 9:2–32      | ■ Mark 12:13–44    |
| ■ Mark 2:1–3:6 | ■ Mark 6:1–29   | ■ Mark 9:33–10:12  | ■ Mark 13:1–37     |
| ■ Mark 3:7–35  | ■ Mark 6:30–56  | ■ Mark 10:13–31    | ■ Mark 14:1–31     |
| ■ Mark 4:1–20  | ■ Mark 7:1–37   | ■ Mark 10:32–52    | ■ Mark 14:32–72    |
| ■ Mark 4:21–41 | ■ Mark 8:1–26   | ■ Mark 11:1–25     | ■ Mark 15:1–41     |
| ■ Mark 5:1–20  | ■ Mark 8:27–9:1 | ■ Mark 11:27–12:12 | ■ Mark 15:42–16:20 |

**AUTHOR**

Technically anonymous, but early Christian tradition assigns this Gospel to John Mark

**DATE**

AD 50–60

**BIG PICTURE**

In His life, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecies and the role of the Suffering Servant of the Lord, notably through His death as “a ransom for many” (10:45).

**SUMMARY**

Mark’s Gospel begins with a prologue (1:1–13), which is then followed by three major sections. The first (1:14–8:21) tells of Jesus’ Galilean ministry. There Jesus healed and cast out demons and worked miracles. The second section (8:22–10:52) is transitional. Jesus began His journey that would take Him to Jerusalem. This central section begins and ends with two accounts of Jesus giving sight to blind men. The final section (11:1–16:8) involves a week in Jerusalem. Mark devoted more attention to these final eight days of Jesus’ earthly life than any of the other Gospel writers. From the time Jesus entered the city, He was at

odds with the religious leaders, who quickly brought about His execution. A brief appendix (16:9–20), in which some of Jesus’ appearances, His commissioning of His disciples and His ascension are recorded, is attached to the Gospel.

**KEY THOUGHT**

Mark identified his theme in the first verse: “the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus as the divine Son of God is the major emphasis of his Gospel. God announced it at Jesus’ baptism in 1:11. Demons and unclean spirits recognized and acknowledged it in 3:11 and 5:7. God reaffirmed it at the transfiguration in 9:7. Jesus taught it parabolically in 12:1–12, hinted at it in 13:32 and confessed it directly in 14:61–62. Finally, the Roman centurion confessed it openly and without qualification in 15:39. Mark’s purpose was to summon people to repent and respond in faith to the good news of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God (1:1,15).

**TAKEAWAY**

Mark emphasized Jesus’ mighty acts and His role as the Suffering Servant, who calls followers to take up their own cross and follow Him. People cannot remain neutral about Jesus. They have to decide to be either for Him or against Him.

**PASSAGES FOR FURTHER STUDY**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1:29–39 . . . . . TIME WITH GOD       | 10:35–45 . . . . . AMBITION AND COMPETITION |
| 4:35–41 . . . . . FEARS AND STRUGGLES | 11:12–19 . . . . . ANGER AND STANDING UP    |
| 6:30–44 . . . . . USEFUL FREE TIME    | 14:32–42 . . . . . HELPING OTHERS           |

## THE MESSIAH'S HERALD

**1** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.<sup>a,2</sup> As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:<sup>b</sup>

See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;

he will prepare your way.<sup>c,d</sup>

**3** A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight!<sup>e</sup>

<sup>4</sup> John came baptizing<sup>f</sup> in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> John wore a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.

<sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, "One who is more powerful than I am is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I baptize you with<sup>g</sup> water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

<sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. <sup>10</sup> As soon as he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him

## MARK: CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

**Truthful.** Mark was a disciple who accurately recorded Jesus Christ's life events and teachings. Mark's Gospel affirms that Jesus was the Messiah and that, by believing in Jesus, people can obtain salvation.

like a dove. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased."

## THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

<sup>12</sup> Immediately the Spirit drove him into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving him.

## MINISTRY IN GALILEE

<sup>14</sup> After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, proclaiming the good news<sup>h,i</sup> of God: <sup>15</sup> **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"**

## THE FIRST DISCIPLES

<sup>16</sup> As he passed alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen.

<sup>17</sup> **"Follow me,"** Jesus told them, **"and I will make you fish for people."** <sup>18</sup> Immediately they left their

<sup>a</sup>1:1 Some mss omit *the Son of God* <sup>b</sup>1:2 Other mss read *in the prophets* <sup>c</sup>1:2 Other mss add *before you* <sup>d</sup>1:2 Mal 3:1 <sup>e</sup>1:3 Is 40:3 <sup>f</sup>1:4 Or *John the Baptist came* <sup>g</sup>1:8 Or *in* <sup>h</sup>1:14 Other mss add *of the kingdom* <sup>i</sup>1:14 Or *gospel* <sup>j</sup>1:17 Or *you to become fishers of*

**1:1** Mark's Gospel starts at the **beginning of the gospel** (Gk *euangelion*, meaning "good news"). The name *Jesus* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, meaning "Yahweh is salvation." Jesus is identified as **Christ** (or Messiah) and **Son of God**. Jesus is often identified as God's Son in Mark: at His baptism (v. 11), by demons (3:11; 5:7), at the transfiguration (9:7), at His trial (14:61), and by the centurion's confession (15:39).

**1:2–3** As it is written is a formulaic expression indicating the authoritative character of the OT (7:6; 9:13; 11:17; 14:21,27). The phrase **in Isaiah the prophet** introduces a mixed quotation from Ex 23:20; Is 40:3; and Mal 3:1. Hence some manuscripts read "in the prophets." In its original context, **Lord** refers to God. The **messenger** announces the coming of God Himself. The Gospel writers applied the words to Jesus, who is God in flesh (Jn 1:14).

**1:4** Mark introduces John as **baptizing in the wilderness**, a place that recalled Israel's disobedience (Jos 5:6) and God's redemption. John called for a **baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**. "Repentance" means "to change one's mind." It involves a deliberate turn from sins.

**1:5** That John attracted the **whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem** indicates his appeal among both country folk and urbanites.

**1:6** John's dress was like Elijah's (2K 1:8) and other prophets (Zch 13:4). Mark's description suggests that John was the Elijah who was expected to return and call the nation to repent before the day of the Lord (Mal 4:5–6).

**1:7–8** John announced that the coming one was **more powerful** and that he was **not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals**—a task for Gentile slaves. The coming one was also superior in His work: **he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit** (Ac 11:16; see note at Ac 1:8). John's baptism was symbolic; Jesus's baptism would introduce the reality.

**1:9–11** **Nazareth** is mentioned only here in Mark (cp. 6:1). Three things occurred as soon as Jesus came up out of the water. **The heavens were torn open . . . the Spirit descended**, and **God's voice came from heaven**. **My beloved Son** indicates the Son's uniqueness and recalls Abraham's love for Isaac (Gn 22:2,12,16). Only Israel (Ex 4:23) and Israel's king (Ps 2:7) were called God's son in the OT. The divine declaration in Mk 1:11 announced Jesus's eternal relationship to God. All three persons of the Trinity were represented at Jesus's baptism.

**1:12–13** The same **Spirit** who descended on Jesus at His baptism now **drove him into the wilderness**. "Drove" is a strong term used for the driving out of demons (vv. 34,39; 3:15,22–23; 6:13; 7:26; 9:18,28,38) and other forced expulsions (5:40; 9:47; 12:8). In

the **wilderness forty days** recalls Israel's testing for forty years as well as Moses's (Dt 9:18) and Elijah's (1K 19:8) forty-day wilderness fasts. **The angels were serving him** may indicate that they ministered to Jesus in unstated ways throughout His temptation, though He was not fed until the end (Mt 4:11). Angels also ministered to Elijah during his forty-day wilderness fast (1K 19:1–8).

**1:14–15** The words **after John was arrested** indicate an interval between vv. 13 and 14, possibly as long as a year if this parallels Jn 4:3,43. Mark did not include Jesus's early Judean ministry (Jn 3:22–36). Further details about John's arrest and execution appear in Mk 6:17–29. **The time is fulfilled** points to the fulfillment of the OT promises. In the person of Jesus, the **Kingdom of God** was so near that announcement of its arrival demanded immediate response—**repent and believe**.

**1:16–20** Mark included two accounts of Jesus calling fishermen, two pairs of brothers, to become His disciples. These four formed the core of the group (v. 29; 3:16–18; 13:3; see notes at 5:37; 9:2; 14:33). Mark emphasized Jesus's authority to call people to leave all and follow Him. According to Lk 5:7–10, the two pairs of brothers were partners in the fishing business.

**1:16–18** The **Sea of Galilee** was a freshwater lake about twelve miles long and seven miles wide that lay seven hundred



**WARM-UP:** Read Mark 1:29–39

**WORKOUT:** Why did Jesus Christ go off to “a deserted place” by Himself (v. 35)? What does this show regarding His priorities?

**WRAP-UP:** How often do you spend time alone with God? How can you make this more of a priority?

nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup> Going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat putting their nets in order. <sup>20</sup> Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

#### DRIVING OUT AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

<sup>21</sup> They went into Capernaum, and right away he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. <sup>22</sup> They were astonished at his teaching because he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not like the scribes.

feet below sea level. Also known as the Sea of Gennesaret (Lk 5:1) and the Sea of Tiberias (Jn 21:1), it hosted a thriving fishing industry. Brothers **Simon** and **Andrew** hailed from Bethsaida, across the northern end of the lake (Jn 1:44), but they now lived in Capernaum (Mk 1:29). **Follow me** is the heart of NT discipleship. It involves adopting Jesus's values and lifestyle. **I will make you fish for people** expands on their former profession. The words also point to a second aspect of discipleship—the call to serve the Lord and people through ministry.

**1:19–20** The phrase **going on a little farther** links the call of the second pair of brothers—**James** and **John**—in time and place to the first pair. The fact that **hired men** were present implies their fishing business was prosperous. Leaving this to follow Jesus meant leaving a nice living. Like the first pair of brothers in v. 18, these **followed** Jesus. Mark's words in the Greek directly link their response in v. 20 to Jesus's command in v. 17.

**1:21–22** **Capernaum**, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, became Jesus's home (2:1) and headquarters (Mt 4:13). Mark did not record what Jesus **began to teach in the synagogue**, but he did say that the people were **astonished**. This was a regular reaction to Jesus's teachings (6:2; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18). What impressed lis-

teners was the **authority** with which Jesus taught. His authority contrasted with that of the **scribes** who mastered the Torah and treasured traditional interpretations (oral traditions). In Mark the scribes were Jesus's fiercest opponents (2:6,16; 11:27) and were among the main instigators leading to His death (8:31; 10:33; 11:18; 14:1,43,53; 15:1,31).

**1:23–24** **Just then** links this event to vv. 21–22. Mark used **unclean spirit** to denote a demonic spirit. “Unclean spirit” contrasts with the demons’ identification of Jesus as the **Holy One of God**. **Have you come to destroy us?** Clearly the demons recognized and acknowledged the person and work of Jesus before humans did.

**1:25–26** On the basis of the authority of His word, Jesus **rebuked** and expelled the spirit, commanding it to **be silent**, [lit “be muzzled”] and **come out of him**. The **spirit threw him into convulsions** (see note at 9:26–27), and **shouted** its desperate but futile resistance to Jesus.

**1:27–28** The people were **amazed** to see an exorcism, especially given the authoritative manner in which Jesus accomplished it. Their statement that the **unclean spirits . . . obey him** indicates their belief that what He did to one spirit, He could do to all. **At once** indicates how quickly the story of these events traveled **throughout . . . Galilee**.

<sup>23</sup> Just then a man with an unclean spirit was in their synagogue. He cried out, <sup>24</sup> “What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!”

<sup>25</sup> Jesus rebuked him saying, **“Be silent, and come out of him!”** <sup>26</sup> And the unclean spirit threw him into convulsions, shouted with a loud voice, and came out of him.

<sup>27</sup> They were all amazed, and so they began to ask each other, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” <sup>28</sup> At once the news about him spread throughout the entire vicinity of Galilee.

#### HEALINGS AT CAPERNAUM

<sup>29</sup> As soon as they left the synagogue, they went into Simon and Andrew's house with James and John. <sup>30</sup> Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her,<sup>a</sup> and she began to serve them.

<sup>32</sup> When evening came, after the sun had set, they brought to him all those who were sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town was assembled at the door, <sup>34</sup> and he healed many who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

#### PREACHING IN GALILEE

<sup>35</sup> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted

**1:29–31** As soon as they left the synagogue connects vv. 29–34 to the same Sabbath day as vv. 21–28. **Simon and Andrew's house** was large enough to host Jesus and His followers. Archaeologists have identified such a house near the synagogue in Capernaum. **Simon's mother-in-law** indicates that Peter was married. First Co 9:5 suggests Peter's wife was supportive of His ministry. Jesus did not speak any words to heal Peter's mother-in-law; He simply **took her by the hand**. The phrase **raised her up** is a common expression for Jesus's healings in Mark (2:9,11; 3:3; 5:41; 9:27; 10:49).

**1:32–34** The expressions **when evening came** and **after the sun had set** emphasize that the Sabbath prohibitions against work were over since the Sabbath ended at sunset. Those who were **sick and demon-possessed** recalls the two types of healings Jesus performed earlier that day (vv. 23–26 and 30–31). That there is a difference between disease and demon possession is affirmed by Mark's description of Jesus's actions: He **healed the sick but drove out the demons** (3:10–11; 6:13). That Jesus healed various diseases points to the comprehensive nature of His healing powers.

**1:35–39** **Very early in the morning** and **while it was still dark** together indicate that Jesus did not rest much after the previous

place; and there he was praying.<sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions searched for him,<sup>37</sup> and when they found him they said, "Everyone is looking for you."

<sup>38</sup> And he said to them, "Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too. This is why I have come."

#### A MAN CLEANSED

<sup>39</sup> He went into all of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.<sup>40</sup> Then a man with leprosy<sup>a</sup> came to him and, on his knees,<sup>b</sup> begged him, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."<sup>41</sup> Moved with compassion,<sup>c</sup> Jesus reached out his hand and touched him. "I am willing," he told him. "Be made clean."<sup>42</sup> Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.<sup>43</sup> Then he sternly warned him and sent him away at once,<sup>44</sup> telling him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go and show yourself to the priest, and offer what Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."<sup>d</sup> <sup>45</sup> Yet he went out and began to proclaim it widely and to spread the news, with the result that Jesus could no longer enter a town openly. But he was out in deserted places, and they came to him from everywhere.

#### THE SON OF MAN FORGIVES AND HEALS

**2** When he entered Capernaum again after some days, it was reported that he was at home.<sup>2</sup> So many people gathered together that there was no

more room, not even in the doorway, and he was speaking the word to them.<sup>3</sup> They came to him bringing a paralytic, carried by four of them.<sup>4</sup> Since they were not able to bring him to<sup>e</sup> Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after digging through it, they lowered the mat on which the paralytic was lying.<sup>5</sup> Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

<sup>6</sup> But some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts: <sup>7</sup> "Why does he speak like this? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

<sup>8</sup> Right away Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were thinking like this within themselves and said to them, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?<sup>9</sup> Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat, and walk?' <sup>10</sup> But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he told the paralytic — <sup>11</sup> "I tell you: get up, take your mat, and go home."

<sup>12</sup> Immediately he got up, took the mat, and went out in front of everyone. As a result, they were all astounded and gave glory to God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

#### THE CALL OF LEVI

<sup>13</sup> Jesus went out again beside the sea. The whole crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. <sup>14</sup> Then, passing by, he saw Levi the son of

<sup>a</sup>1:40 Gk *lepros*; a term for various skin diseases, also in v. 42; see Lv 13–14 <sup>b</sup>1:40 Other mss omit on his knees

<sup>c</sup>1:41 Other mss Moved with indignation <sup>d</sup>1:44 Or against them <sup>e</sup>2:4 Other mss read able to get near

evening's activity. The early hour explains how He got out of town undetected. The motion verbs **got up, went out, and made his way** describe Jesus's search for a **deserted place**, the same word used for the wilderness where John preached (v. 4) and where Jesus was tempted (v. 12). **Simon and his companions** refer to the four disciples Jesus called. This is the first time Mark depicted Peter as the leading disciple. Apparently everyone expected more miracles, but Jesus intended to **preach**, thus returning the focus to the start of His ministry (vv. 14–15).

**1:40–45** Legislation related to **leprosy** appears in Lv 13–14. **Came to him** shows the sick man initiated the action and that he broke protocol in doing so. His words **if you are willing, you can make me clean** affirmed Jesus's ability while submitting to His willingness. That Jesus was **moved with compassion** is a detail only Mark recorded (see parallels in Mt 8:1–4; Lk 5:12–16). To touch someone with leprosy violated OT law and rendered a person unclean. Nevertheless, **Jesus reached out his hand and touched him**, healing the man immediately. Jesus told him to follow the requirements of Lv 13:47–14:54 **as a testimony** to the priests of his cure. We do not know whether he completed the prescribed rites, but he disobeyed Jesus's command to **say nothing to anyone** about his healing.

**2:1–3:6** This section contains five conflict stories relating to Jesus's authority. In each, Jesus was accused of blasphemy, challenged about His association with sinners, rebuked for neglecting religious customs, and accused of breaking Sabbath laws.

**2:1** He was at home probably refers to Peter's house (see note at 1:29–31).

**2:2** The word (Gk *logos*, see also 4:33; 8:32) was later used to refer to Christian missionary preaching (Ac 6:4; 8:4; 17:11; Gl 6:6; Col 4:3). Here, it refers to the good news (Mk 1:14–15).

**2:3** This is the only time Mark mentioned a **paralytic** (cp. Mt 8:6).

**2:4** Removed the roof. Most houses in Palestine were single-story, flat-roofed structures with an outside staircase. The roof was used for work, drying laundry, sleeping, or prayer. Over the crossbeams small poles or branches were placed and covered with thatch and mud. A **mat** (vv. 4,9,11–12) was a poor person's pallet (6:55; Jn 5:8–11; Ac 5:15).

**2:5** Their faith refers to those who carried the paralyzed man as well as the paralytic himself. Rather than a word of healing, Jesus spoke forgiveness over the paralytic after addressing him as **son**. **Your sins** is plural and possibly specific. Only here did Jesus link sin and infirmity. Possibly there was a direct relationship between this man's sins and his paralysis.

**2:6–7** The scribes supposed Jesus was **blaspheming** when they heard Him declare the man's sins forgiven. Death by stoning was the prescribed penalty for blasphemy (Lv 24:16; Jn 10:33), and it was the charge on which Jesus was eventually executed (Mk 14:64).

**2:8–11** The answer to Jesus's question **which is easier** is of course the unverifiable claim to have forgiven the paralytic's sins. After all, forgiveness of sins is a quality that cannot be checked against visible evidence, and so anyone can claim to forgive sins. Actually having the authority to do it is another thing altogether. To prove His right to forgive sins, Jesus undertook the more verifiable (yet still remarkable) task of healing the man. **Son of Man** was Jesus's favorite self-designation. It derives from Dn 7:13–14, where the messianic Son of Man is given **authority** (see note at 1:21–22).

**2:12** This proved that Jesus could forgive sins. **They were all astounded** recalls 1:27. The scribes accused Jesus of usurping God's prerogatives (2:7), but the crowd **gave glory** to God because of Jesus.

**2:13–14** Sea refers to the Sea of Galilee. Only Mark identified the tax collector as **Levi the son of Alphaeus** (cp. Mt 9:9; Lk 5:27, from which we learn that "Levi" was another name for Matthew; Mt 10:3). The **toll booth** was probably a local customs booth. Tax collectors were regarded as no better than thieves or Gentiles. **Follow me**

Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me," and he got up and followed him.

<sup>15</sup> While he was reclining at the table in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating<sup>a</sup> with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who were following him. <sup>16</sup> When the scribes who were Pharisees<sup>b</sup> saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat<sup>c</sup> with tax collectors and sinners?"

<sup>17</sup> When Jesus heard this, he told them, "It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners."

#### A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

<sup>18</sup> Now John's disciples and the Pharisees<sup>d</sup> were fasting. People came and asked him, "Why do John's disciples and the Pharisees' disciples fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

<sup>19</sup> Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the groom is with them, can they? As long as they have the groom with them, they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup> But the time<sup>e</sup> will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day. <sup>21</sup> No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new patch pulls away from the old cloth, and a worse tear is

made. <sup>22</sup> And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost as well as the skins. No, new wine is put into fresh wineskins."

#### LORD OF THE SABBATH

<sup>23</sup> On the Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to make their way, picking some heads of grain. <sup>24</sup> The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

<sup>25</sup> He said to them, "Have you never read what David and those who were with him did when he was in need and hungry — <sup>26</sup> how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest and ate the bread of the Presence — which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests — and also gave some to his companions?" <sup>27</sup> Then he told them, "The Sabbath was made for<sup>f</sup> man and not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> So then, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

**3** Jesus entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a shriveled hand. <sup>2</sup> In order to accuse him, they were watching him closely to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath. <sup>3</sup> He told the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand before us." <sup>4</sup> Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good

<sup>a</sup>2:15 Lit *reclining together* <sup>b</sup>2:16 Other mss read *scribes and Pharisees* <sup>c</sup>2:16 Other mss add *and drink* <sup>d</sup>2:18 Other mss read *the disciples of John and of the Pharisees* <sup>e</sup>2:20 Or *the days* <sup>f</sup>2:27 Or *because of*

recalls 1:17–18. This is the standard term in the Gospels for discipleship. He got up and followed him shows Levi's response to Jesus's call was immediate.

**2:15–17** Reclining at the floor-level table on an elbow with the feet extended across the floor was the traditional dining posture. Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to a banquet that included notorious figures—sinners and tax collectors (cp. Lk 5:29). "Sinners" refers to those who deliberately violate God's laws. By dining with such people, Jesus in some sense identified with them. Far from condoning their sins, Jesus dwelt among them because He had come to save sinners. On scribes, see note at 1:21–22. Most scribes were Pharisees. Pharisees ("separated ones") strictly observed the written and oral law, believed in angels and resurrection, opposed Greek influence, and were esteemed by the people. They were constantly in conflict with Jesus. The righteous whom Jesus says He didn't come to call is an ironical reference to the self-righteous Pharisees.

**2:18** The question about fasting arose because the behavior of Jesus's disciples contrasted with that of disciples who belonged to John the Baptist and the Pharisees. Fasting was only required on the Day of Atonement (Lv 16:29–30, but see Est 9:31 and Zch 8:19 for fasts originating in the postexilic period). In NT times, the Pharisees fasted on Mondays and Thursdays (Lk 18:12). It was considered an act of piety (Mt 6:16–18).

**2:19–20** A wedding typically lasted seven days. Guests (lit "sons of the bridal

chamber") may refer to wedding guests or the groom's attendants. The groom recalls John the Baptist's designation of Jesus (Jn 3:29). Will be taken away suggests forcible removal and shifts the focus to Jesus's coming death. Jesus stated that after He had been violently "taken away" as John the Baptist had been (1:14), His disciples would fast as John's disciples were doing now.

**2:21–22** These are Jesus's first parables in Mark. Wineskins were made from soft, pliable goatskins. Old wineskins that already had been used to ferment wine lost their elasticity, became brittle, and would burst if used again, resulting in the loss of the containers and the new wine. Both sayings indicate the impossibility of integrating Jesus's teachings (the new) with the religious structures and practices of traditional Judaism (the old).

**2:23–24** What is not lawful does not specify what regulations were broken. The controversy was that they did this on the Sabbath, a day of rest on which no work was permitted (Ex 20:8–11; Dt 5:12–15). Harvesting and threshing grain on the Sabbath was specifically forbidden (Ex 34:21). The ripened grain places this narrative in late spring or early summer. On the Pharisees, see note at vv. 15–17.

**2:25–26** Jesus defended His disciples by appealing to David's flight from King Saul (1Sm 21:1–6). In the time of Abiathar the high priest is peculiar to Mark (cp. Mt 12:3; Lk 6:3) and is debated because the event actually happened when Abiathar's father Ahimelech was high priest. However, Abi-

athar was the only high priest to escape Saul's slaughter of the priests (1Sm 22:19–20), and he was well-known throughout David's era. Thus Mark's reference is a fitting approximation. The bread of the Presence refers to twelve loaves of unleavened bread placed in the temple's holy place to represent Israel's twelve tribes. These were replaced every Sabbath, and only priests could eat them (Lv 24:5–9). Which is not lawful is a repetition of the Pharisees' phrase in v. 24, allowing Jesus to declare that while David's actions were technically a violation of OT law they were not condemned.

**2:27–28** Mark alone recorded Jesus's declaration about God's priorities regarding the Sabbath and humans. On Son of Man, see note at vv. 8–11. Lord even of the Sabbath turned the issue to Jesus's authority and affirmed His status.

**3:1–2** The synagogue that Jesus entered . . . again was probably the one in Capernaum. To accuse is a legal term for bringing a charge against someone (cp. 15:3–4). The Pharisees are almost certainly the ones who were watching him closely (v. 6). To see whether he would heal indicates they did not question Jesus's ability to heal. They only wanted to know whether He would dare to do so on the Sabbath. Only life-saving medical treatment and preventive medical measures were regarded as legal on the Sabbath.

**3:3–4** Stand before us indicates that Jesus was about to heal the man (1:31; 2:9, 11–12; 5:41; 10:49). Is it lawful recalls the previous exchange (2:24, 26).

Jesus went up the mountain and summoned those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, to send them out to preach.

MARK 3:13-14

on the Sabbath or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. <sup>5</sup> After looking around at them with anger, he was grieved at the hardness of their hearts and told the man, "**Stretch out your hand.**" So he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. <sup>6</sup> Immediately the Pharisees went out and started plotting with the Herodians against him, how they might kill him.

#### MINISTERING TO THE MULTITUDE

<sup>7</sup> Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a large crowd followed from Galilee, and a large crowd followed from Judea. <sup>8</sup> Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and around Tyre and Sidon. The large crowd came to him because they heard about everything he was doing. <sup>9</sup> Then he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, so that the crowd wouldn't crush him. <sup>10</sup> Since he had healed many, all who had diseases were pressing toward him to touch him. <sup>11</sup> Whenever the unclean spirits

saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God!" <sup>12</sup> And he would strongly warn them not to make him known.

#### THE TWELVE APOSTLES

<sup>13</sup> Jesus went up the mountain and summoned those he wanted, and they came to him. <sup>14</sup> He appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, <sup>a</sup> to be with him, to send them out to preach, <sup>15</sup> and to have authority to <sup>b</sup> drive out demons. <sup>16</sup> He appointed the Twelve: <sup>c</sup> To Simon, he gave the name Peter; <sup>17</sup> and to James the son of Zebedee, and to his brother John, he gave the name "Boanerges" (that is, "Sons of Thunder"); <sup>18</sup> Andrew; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, <sup>19</sup> and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

#### A HOUSE DIVIDED

<sup>20</sup> Jesus entered a house, and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat. <sup>21</sup> When his family heard this, they set out to restrain him, because they said, "He's out of his mind." <sup>22</sup> The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and, "He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons."

<sup>a</sup>3:14 Other mss omit *he also named them apostles* <sup>b</sup>3:15 Other mss add *heal diseases, and to* <sup>c</sup>3:16 Other mss omit *He appointed the Twelve* <sup>d</sup>3:20 Or *eat a meal*; lit *eat bread*

**3:5** The reason for Jesus's emotion was the hardness of their hearts, an expression describing willful rejection of God's truth. Mark used this phrase twice of the disciples (6:52; 8:17).

**3:6** Only Mark mentions the Herodians here (cp. Mt 12:14; Lk 6:11). They are also mentioned in Mk 12:13 and Mt 22:16, and possibly alluded to in Mk 8:15. The Herodians were Jewish supporters of Herod the Great and his family, here specifically Herod Antipas of Galilee. The Herodians are allied with the Pharisees in the NT, which is ironic because the Herodians supported Hellenism (Greek influence), while the Pharisees opposed it. The linking of these groups indicates that opposition to Jesus involved the unlikely unification of diverse political and religious factions.

**3:7–8** Galilee and Judea, including Jerusalem, were Jewish areas. Idumea was the OT Edomite area south of Judea in the Negev. Its population was mixed Jewish-Gentile. Beyond the Jordan refers to the Jewish area of Perea, east of the Jordan River. Tyre and Sidon were in the old Phoenician area north of Galilee and were largely Gentile, but they included a Jewish presence. The phrase large crowd emphasizes the large area over which Jesus's fame had spread.

**3:9–10** Jesus had healed many. Therefore, those who were afflicted with diseases sought to touch him. Mark describes one such encounter in 5:24–34.

**3:11–12** On you are the Son of God, compare 1:1,11,24. To this point in Mark, only the Father and the unclean spirits fully

understood Jesus's identity. Not to make him known recalls 1:25,34,44.

**3:13–15** The mountain here is not identified. Jesus spent the night praying (Lk 6:12). Summoned those he wanted seems to indicate more than just the twelve disciples (cp. Lk 6:13). The number twelve recalls the twelve tribes of Israel (cp. Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30). The purpose clauses identify the apostles' functions: They were to be with him and learn His message, to preach, and to have authority to drive out demons.

**3:16–17** Verses 16–19 identify the Twelve men whom Jesus appointed as apostles. The NT contains three other such lists (Mt 10:2–4; Lk 6:14–16; Ac 1:13), and these contain variations in names and order. Peter is first in all lists. Only Mark says that Jesus nicknamed James and John the Sons of Thunder, possibly because of their temperament (Lk 9:54). Peter, James, and John made up Jesus's inner circle (Mk 5:37; 9:2; 14:33).

**3:18–19** On Andrew, Peter's brother, see note at 1:16–18. Philip is not mentioned again in Mark. Bartholomew may be Nathanael (Jn 1:45–46) otherwise he is not mentioned in the Gospels again. Matthew is mentioned only here in Mark, but he is the same person as Levi the tax collector (2:14; Mt 9:9; 10:3). Thomas appears in Jn 11:16; 20:24. James the son of Alphaeus is not mentioned again. He is distinguished from James who was the son of Zebedee. Thaddaeus is not mentioned again in the NT and is not in Luke's lists (Lk 6:14–16; Ac 1:13). Possibly he is the same as "Judas the son of James" (Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13). Simon

the Zealot (cp. Lk 6:15) is literally "Simon the Cananean," an Aramean rendering of "zealous" and not an indication that he was a Canaanite. The term was used of religious and political zealots but here likely refers to Simon's piety (cp. Ac 21:20; 22:3; Gl 1:14) and distinguishes him from Simon Peter. Nothing more is said about him in the NT. Judas Iscariot appears last in each list. "Judas" is the Greek form of "Judah." "Iscariot" probably indicates that he hailed from Kerioth and thus may identify him as the only Judean among the group.

**3:20–21** To this point Mark has not mentioned Jesus's family, and after this extended section they are mentioned only in 6:3. After introducing them in 3:21, Mark picks them up again in vv. 31–35. To restrain him is the same verb used for "arrest" in 6:7; 12:12; 14:1,44. Mark hinted that Jesus's family tried to do what the Jewish authorities sought to do. Neither Matthew nor Luke mention that Jesus's family thought He was out of his mind (cp. Ps 69:8).

**3:22** Between the introduction of Jesus's family (v. 21) and discussing their actions (vv. 31–35), Mark places an incident with the scribes (v. 22) and two parabolic sayings (vv. 23–26,27–30). The description of the scribes as those who had come down from Jerusalem indicates they were an official delegation (cp. 7:1). They were saying that He was possessed by Beelzebul (see notes at Mt 12:24; Lk 11:14–16) and drives out demons by the ruler of the demons (see note at Mt 9:34). The scribes and Pharisees did not deny Jesus's power; instead, they



<sup>23</sup> So he summoned them and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand but is finished. <sup>27</sup> But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can plunder his house.

<sup>28</sup> "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for all sins and whatever blasphemies they utter. <sup>29</sup> But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"<sup>a</sup> — <sup>30</sup> because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

### TRUE RELATIONSHIPS

<sup>31</sup> His mother and his brothers came, and standing outside, they sent word to him and called him. <sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around him and told him, "Look, your mother, your brothers, and your sisters<sup>b</sup> are outside asking for you."

<sup>33</sup> He replied to them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" <sup>34</sup> Looking at those sitting in a circle around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" <sup>35</sup> Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

<sup>a</sup> 3:29 Other mss read *is subject to eternal judgment*    <sup>b</sup> 3:32 Other mss omit *and your sisters*

attributed His power to Satan (Mk 1:13; cp. Mt 10:25; 12:24,27; Lk 11:15,18–19).

**3:23–27** This is the first mention of parables in Mark, though Jesus had already used them (2:17,21–22). A parable is an analogy or comparison that includes proverbial sayings, allegories, or narrative. Jesus used parables to reject the scribes' logic of 3:22. Neither a kingdom nor a house is strengthened by internal divisions. Attacks on Satan's kingdom came not from within but from God's kingdom. In Jesus's reference to external attack on a strong man's house and tying him up, Satan was the strong man (v. 27; cp. Is 49:24–26; Rv 20:1–3).

**3:28–30** Truly I tell you is a declaration of Jesus's authority to declare truth. This is the first time it appears in Mark (8:12; 9:1,41; 10:15,29; 11:23; 13:30; 14:25,30). All sins that people commit, including blasphemies (see note at 2:6–7), can be forgiven—except whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit. This person never has forgiveness, and is guilty of an eternal sin (a sin with eternal consequences). Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is attributing Jesus's works to Satan, claiming that Jesus was empowered by evil.

**3:31–35** This completes the account begun in vv. 20–21. Mark did not name Jesus's mother, His brothers, or His sisters (cp. 6:3). Possibly Joseph was dead by this time. The phrases standing outside and sent word indicate there was no direct contact between Jesus and His family, only messages exchanged. Whoever signifies that being part of Jesus's most significant

family, His spiritual family, is a possibility for all people.

**4:1–20** Between the parable (vv. 3–9) and its interpretation (vv. 13–20), Mark places Jesus's explanation for why He spoke in parables (vv. 10–12). For Mark, the parable of the seeds and soils is the key to understanding the rest of Jesus's parables (v. 13).

**4:1** Again recalls 2:13 and 3:1. The sea refers to the Sea of Galilee (see note at 1:16–18). He got into a boat to use it as a floating platform from which to teach.

**4:2–3** The imperative listen calls for obedience to what is taught, not mere comprehension. The sower represents Jesus.

**4:4–7** Three failures based on soil type and circumstances are pictured. The seed that fell along the path did not have time to germinate (profess faith) before birds (Satan) devoured it. The seed that fell on rocky ground . . . grew up rapidly, meaning there was early evidence of faith, but it quickly withered away when the sun (pressure, persecution) came. The seed that fell among thorns (worries) was choked and didn't produce fruit.

**4:8** The seed that fell on good ground . . . producing fruit that increased. Jesus pointed to the productive nature of the good soil versus the unproductive or transitory yield of the others. He reinforced this by specifying a bountiful increase (cp. Gn 26:12) of thirty, sixty, and a hundred times.

**4:9** Let anyone who has ears to hear listen recalls His initial admonition ("Listen!") in v. 3 and prepares His listeners for

### THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

**4** Again he began to teach by the sea, and a very large crowd gathered around him. So he got into a boat on the sea and sat down, while the whole crowd was by the sea on the shore. <sup>2</sup> He taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them, <sup>3</sup> "Listen! Consider the sower who went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> As he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. <sup>5</sup> Other seed fell on rocky ground where it didn't have much soil, and it grew up quickly, since the soil wasn't deep. <sup>6</sup> When the sun came up, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it didn't produce fruit. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good ground and it grew up, producing fruit that increased thirty, sixty, and a hundred times." <sup>9</sup> Then he said, "Let anyone who has ears to hear listen."

### WHY JESUS USED PARABLES

<sup>10</sup> When he was alone, those around him with the Twelve asked him about the parables. <sup>11</sup> He answered them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to those outside, everything comes in parables <sup>12</sup> so that

they may indeed look,  
and yet not perceive;

the important information in vv. 10–12 (cp. v. 23; 7:14; 8:18).

**4:10–12** These verses, among the most difficult in the NT, give Jesus's rationale for teaching in parables. Interpreters are divided as to their meaning. It may be that one of Jesus's purposes in using parables was to deliver judgment against hard-hearted listeners.

**4:10** Verses 10–12 were not part of Jesus's lakeside teaching but were spoken when he was alone. This is the first mention of the Twelve since they were chosen in 3:14.

**4:11** Jesus distinguished two audiences: you (pl) to whom revelation has been given (by God) and those outside. Outsiders only heard parables; insiders learned the secret. "Secret" is literally "mystery" (Gk *mysterion*). In the NT, *mysterion* refers not to esoteric knowledge or secret rites that are discoverable by human effort, but to truth that is hidden and can be known only if God reveals it (Dn 2:18–19,27–30,47). The secret relates to the kingdom of God, which is what Jesus came to announce (1:15) and what He will begin to explain in 4:26–32.

**4:12** So that (Gk *hina*) can indicate purpose or result. Thus Jesus's quotation of Is 6:9–10 either offers the reason for His teaching in parables or describes the result. Matthew 13:13 reads "because" (Gk *hoti*), and thus states the result of the hearers' unwillingness, not its cause. Mark's abbreviated quotation of Is 6:9–10 reverses the first two clauses, drops the first half of v. 10, and changes "and be healed" to and be



**WARM-UP:** Read Mark 4:35–41

**WORKOUT:** If “even the wind and the sea obey him” (v. 41), what does that teach you about Jesus Christ’s power in your life?

**WRAP-UP:** What “storms” are raging in your life right now? How can Jesus calm them?

they may indeed listen,  
and yet not understand;  
otherwise, they might turn back  
and be forgiven.”<sup>A,B</sup>

#### THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED

<sup>13</sup>Then he said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand all of the parables? <sup>14</sup>The sower sows the word. <sup>15</sup>Some are like the word sown on the path. When they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word sown in them. <sup>16</sup>And others are like seed sown on rocky ground. When they hear the word, immediately they receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup>But they have no root; they are short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately fall away. <sup>18</sup>Others are like seed sown among thorns; these are the ones who hear the word, <sup>19</sup>but the worries of this

age, the deceitfulness<sup>o</sup> of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. <sup>20</sup>And those like seed sown on good ground hear the word, welcome it, and produce fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred times what was sown.”

#### USING YOUR LIGHT

<sup>21</sup>He also said to them, “Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket or under a bed? Isn’t it to be put on a lampstand? <sup>22</sup>For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing concealed that will not be brought to light. <sup>23</sup>If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen.” <sup>24</sup>And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear. By the measure you use, it will be measured to you — and more will be added to you. <sup>25</sup>For whoever has, more will be given to him, and whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

#### THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED

<sup>26</sup>“The kingdom of God is like this,” he said. “A man scatters seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup>He sleeps and rises night and day; the seed sprouts and grows, although he doesn’t know how. <sup>28</sup>The soil produces a crop by itself — first the blade, then the head, and then the full grain on the head. <sup>29</sup>As soon as the crop is ready, he sends for the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

#### THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

<sup>30</sup>And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use to describe it? <sup>31</sup>It’s like a mustard seed that, when sown upon the soil, is the smallest of all the seeds on the ground. <sup>32</sup>And when sown, it comes up and grows taller than all the garden plants, and produces large branches, so that the birds of the sky can nest in its shade.”

<sup>A</sup> 4:12 Other mss read *and their sins be forgiven them* <sup>B</sup> 4:12 Is 6:9–10 <sup>C</sup> 4:15 Other mss read *in their hearts*  
<sup>D</sup> 4:19 Or *seduction*

forgiven. Turn back expresses repentance. “Be forgiven” is a divine passive, meaning “be forgiven by God.”

<sup>4:13–20</sup> Jesus responded to the question of v. 10 and interpreted His own parable.

<sup>4:13</sup> For Mark this verse is key: Whoever does not understand this parable will not understand all of the parables of Jesus.

<sup>4:14–20</sup> In Jesus’s explanation, the seed sown (cp. 1Co 3:5–9) is the word (cp. 2:2); the birds become Satan; the sun and its scorching become distress or persecution (i.e., religious persecution); withered becomes fall away; the choking from the thorns is specified as the worries of this age, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things (i.e., from misplaced priorities, see Mt 6:24–34); and the good ground is identified as those who hear the word, welcome it, and produce fruit. Clearly Jesus’s emphasis was on “the word” (Gk *logos*)—used eight times in these verses—and on hear—used four times. Those

who hear the word, welcome it, and produce a crop are true disciples, even though they produce varying results (Mt 25:14–30).

<sup>4:21–34</sup> Mark concludes his section on Jesus teaching in parables with four epigrams (vv. 21–25), two parables about the kingdom of God (vv. 26–29, 30–32), and a brief explanation of Jesus’s parabolic teaching method (vv. 33–34).

<sup>4:21–23</sup> Lamp refers to a small clay lamp that was placed on a lampstand to maximize illumination. The lamp represents Jesus. A basket refers to a grain container that would hold about two gallons. The rhetorical questions assume that light should not be hidden. The sayings in v. 22 are an example of synonymous parallelism that emphasizes that Jesus is only temporarily to be concealed.

<sup>4:24–25</sup> Pay attention to what you hear reinforces vv. 9 and 23 and the emphasis on hearing in vv. 13–20. Jesus’s words to His disciples are almost the opposite of those given to outsiders in v. 12. Hearing is vital

(Rm 10:17), and God will grant more revelation and understanding to those who listen to and respond. Some will neither hear nor benefit from revelation (Mk 4:25).

<sup>4:26–29</sup> Mark includes two parables related to the kingdom of God (vv. 26–29, 30–32; cp. 1:15). Like seed, God’s kingdom contains within itself the power to grow. The only human role is planting. Once planted, seeds grow and become a harvest. The sickle is a symbol of the final judgment (Jl 3:13; Rv 14:15).

<sup>4:30–32</sup> Mark’s second kingdom parable (cp. Mt 13:31–32 and Lk 13:18–19) contrasts a small beginning with disproportionate growth. Technically a mustard seed is not the smallest of all the seeds, but it was apparently the smallest seed used in Jesus’s time and thus was metaphorical for very small things (Mt 17:20; Lk 17:6). The mustard seed produces a bush up to six feet tall with large branches on which the birds of the sky can nest. The OT used this image for Gentiles finding a

## USING PARABLES

<sup>33</sup> He was speaking the word to them with many parables like these, as they were able to understand.

<sup>34</sup> He did not speak to them without a parable. Privately, however, he explained everything to his own disciples.

## WIND AND WAVES OBEY JESUS

<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he told them, **"Let's cross over to the other side of the sea."** <sup>36</sup> So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup> A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup> He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?"

<sup>39</sup> He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, **"Silence! Be still!"** The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> Then he said to them, **"Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"**

<sup>41</sup> And they were terrified<sup>a</sup> and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

<sup>a</sup>4:41 Or were filled with awe

<sup>b</sup>5:1 Some mss read Gadarenes; other mss read Gergesenes

<sup>c</sup>5:12 Other mss read All the

place among God's people (Ps 104:12; Ezk 17:22–23; 31:6; Dn 4:9–21).

**4:33–34** Mark concludes his section on Jesus's parabolic teaching with a final explanation. With many parables like these indicates Mark (and the other Gospel writers) included only a selection of Jesus's parables (cp. v. 2). He did not speak to them without a parable indicates that parables were Jesus's regular method of public teaching, but in private he explained everything to his own disciples.

**4:35–36** On that day refers to the same day that Jesus delivered His teaching in vv. 1–34. When evening had come is typical of Mark's dual references in which the second time marker is more specific than the first. In this case the words indicate that Jesus had been teaching all day, and they help build suspense for what follows since a storm on the water at night is more frightening. The other side of the sea refers to the eastern side, which was Gentile territory.

**4:37** The Sea of Galilee lies almost seven hundred feet below sea level. It is surrounded by highlands. To the northeast is Mount Hermon, which rises over nine thousand feet above sea level. When the cold air from Mount Hermon meets the rising warm air from the sea, it often results in a storm that sweeps down on to the lake from the heights. Because fishing boats of the day had low sides, the boat was already being swamped.

**4:38** The stern (rear) of the boat had a raised deck on which fishermen could sit or lay. The cushion was for the helmsman. For the only time recorded in the Gospels, Jesus was sleeping. Exhausted from teaching, He entrusted Himself to God (cp. v. 27; Pss 3:5;

4:8). Don't you care that we're going to die was softened in Mt 8:25 and Lk 8:24. The words recall Jnh 1:14.

**4:39** The phrase Silence! Be still! recalls the exorcism of 1:25 in which Jesus rebuked and silenced the demon. The use of the perfect tense means "be still, and stay still." Nature responded immediately. The great calm of v. 39 contrasts with the great storm of v. 37. This transformation was accomplished by just a word from Jesus.

**4:40** Jesus's rebuke of His disciples was not as harsh in Mt 8:26 and Lk 8:25. Afraid refers to timidity and lack of confidence in God. Faith is trust in God. Lack of faith thus made them fearful in the crisis.

**4:41** They were terrified is literally "they feared a great fear." The great storm that Jesus turned into great calm now led to great fear. Their terror is understandable in light of the teaching that only God can make the wind and the sea obey him (cp. Pss 65:7; 89:8–9).

**5:1–20** The healing of the demoniac is recorded in Mt 8:28–34 in shortened form and in Lk 8:26–39. Jesus brought calm to a raging man just as He brought calm to the raging sea.

**5:1** The region where Jesus and His disciples landed is unclear.

**5:2** A man is reported as "two demon-possessed men" in Mt 8:28. On unclean spirit, see note at 1:23–24.

**5:3–5** Mark's description is the most detailed in the Gospels. Three times he mentioned the tombs where the demoniac lived. They were cut from rock or were natural mountain caves. Tombs, burial places, and items associated with the dead were unclean for Jews. Though shackles and

## DEMONS DRIVEN OUT BY JESUS

**5** They came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gerasenes.<sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup> As soon as he got out of the boat, a man with an unclean spirit came out of the tombs and met him. <sup>3</sup> He lived in the tombs, and no one was able to restrain him anymore — not even with a chain — <sup>4</sup> because he often had been bound with shackles and chains, but had torn the chains apart and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

<sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and knelt down before him. <sup>7</sup> And he cried out with a loud voice, "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you before God, don't torment me!" <sup>8</sup> For he had told him, **"Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"**

<sup>9</sup> "What is your name?" he asked him.

"My name is Legion," he answered him, "because we are many." <sup>10</sup> And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the region.

<sup>11</sup> A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. <sup>12</sup> The demons<sup>c</sup> begged him, "Send us to

chains were repeatedly used, no one was able to restrain or subdue him. "Subdue" can refer to taming a wild animal (Jms 3:7). The man's supernatural strength is indicated by the fact that he had torn the chains apart and smashed the shackles. The man was always crying out, his shrieks echoing among the tombs and on the mountains. He was a danger to himself and others.

**5:6** From a distance does not indicate discrepancy between vv. 2 and 6. Verse 6 resumes the story from v. 2 after Mark's description of the demon-possessed man.

**5:7–8** What do you have to do with me virtually repeats the unclean spirit's words from 1:24. The demoniac's identification of Jesus as Son of the Most High God answered the disciples' question from 4:41 and underscored that the spirits knew who Jesus was. Ironically the spirits asked Jesus not to torment them as they had tormented the possessed man.

**5:9** My name is Legion indicated the strength of the demons. A Roman military legion consisted of about six thousand soldiers (cp. the number of pigs in v. 13). The name "Legion" thus serves to indicate a large number (because we are many), explains the supernatural strength of the man, and magnifies the fact that Jesus was the "more powerful" one (1:7) who could "enter a strong man's house" and tie him up (3:27).

**5:10** Out of the region may refer to the false idea that demons were territorial.

**5:11** Pigs were unclean to Jews. Herding them was forbidden (Lv 11:7; Dt 14:8). The large herd reminds us that this event took place in a Gentile area.

**5:12** In v. 10 the unclean spirits begged Jesus not to send them out of the region.

the pigs, so that we may enter them.”<sup>13</sup> So he gave them permission, and the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs. The herd of about two thousand rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned there.

<sup>14</sup>The men who tended them ran off and reported it in the town and the countryside, and people went to see what had happened. <sup>15</sup>They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. <sup>16</sup>Those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and told about the pigs. <sup>17</sup>Then they began to beg him to leave their region.

<sup>18</sup>As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged him earnestly that he might remain with him. <sup>19</sup>Jesus did not let him but told him, **“Go home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.”** <sup>20</sup>So he went out and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed.

#### A GIRL RESTORED AND A WOMAN HEALED

<sup>21</sup>When Jesus had crossed over again by boat<sup>a</sup> to the other side, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the sea. <sup>22</sup>One of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet<sup>23</sup> and begged him earnestly, “My little daughter is dying. Come and lay your hands

on her so that she can get well<sup>b</sup> and live.”<sup>24</sup> So Jesus went with him, and a large crowd was following and pressing against him.

<sup>25</sup>Now a woman suffering from bleeding for twelve years<sup>26</sup> had endured much under many doctors. She had spent everything she had and was not helped at all. On the contrary, she became worse. <sup>27</sup>Having heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his clothing. <sup>28</sup>For she said, “If I just touch his clothes, I’ll be made well.” <sup>29</sup>Instantly her flow of blood ceased, and she sensed in her body that she was healed of her affliction.

<sup>30</sup>Immediately Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and said, **“Who touched my clothes?”**

<sup>31</sup>His disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing against you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’”

<sup>32</sup>But he was looking around to see who had done this. <sup>33</sup>The woman, with fear and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup>**“Daughter,”** he said to her, **“your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed from your affliction.”**

<sup>35</sup>While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue leader’s house and said, “Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher anymore?”

<sup>36</sup>When Jesus overheard<sup>c</sup> what was said, he told the synagogue leader, **“Don’t be afraid. Only believe.”** <sup>37</sup>He did not let anyone accompany him

<sup>a</sup>5:21 Other mss omit *by boat*    <sup>b</sup>5:23 Or *she might be saved*    <sup>c</sup>5:36 Or *ignored*

In this verse they **begged** to be sent into unclean animals.

**5:13 Drowned** refers to the **pigs**, not the spirits (cp. Mt 12:43–44). None of the Gospel authors comment on the loss of animal life or its economic impact. The action of the demon-possessed pigs reemphasizes the self-destructive impulse caused by demon possession (Mk 5:5).

**5:14–15 Sitting . . . dressed . . . in his right mind** proved the man’s healing. They **were afraid** echoes the reaction of the disciples in 4:41. Ironically, the people were more afraid of the one who cast out demons than they were of the demoniac.

**5:16–18** The spirits begged Jesus (vv. 10, 12), the people of the region begged Jesus (v. 17), and now the healed man **begged** to stay with Jesus.

**5:19–20** Jesus told the man to tell his **own people . . . how much the Lord** had done for him. People changed by Jesus must tell the world about His miraculous works. **The Decapolis** (lit “ten cities”) refers to a league of ten Greek cities spread throughout Syria, Jordan, and Palestine. They were predominantly Gentile and were largely independent from Rome.

**5:21–43** The intertwined miracles involving Jairus’s daughter and the bleeding woman occur in all three Synoptic Gospels (cp. Mt 9:18–26; Lk 8:40–56). Both miracles involved uncleanness.

**5:21 The other side** refers to the western side of the Sea of Galilee. Mark has already recorded key ministry events **by the sea** (1:16–20; 2:13–15; 4:1–34). Mark’s description of Jesus’s return is virtually identical to that given in 4:1 before He crossed the lake.

**5:22–23 Synagogue leaders** such as Jairus were respected laymen responsible for synagogue oversight and activities. **Fell at his feet and begged him earnestly** shows Jairus’s desperate concern for his **little daughter**. Luke recorded that she was his only daughter (Lk 8:42). The ruler’s request **lay your hands on her** shows awareness of Jesus’s method in other healings (1:31, 41; 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). Jairus’s word for **get well** also means “be saved.” The same word was used of the woman in v. 28 and in Jesus’s proclamation in v. 34.

**5:24–26** The implication is that the **woman suffering from bleeding** was beset with vaginal bleeding, making her unclean according to OT law (Lv 15:19–33). That this had gone on for twelve years (cp. v. 42) and she had been treated by **many doctors** but **not helped at all** indicates an illness that was beyond the help of current medicine. Furthermore, she was financially depleted—**she had spent everything she had**.

**5:27–29** The climax that has been building since v. 25 is finally reached with **touched**. The woman fulfilled her intent to reach out and touch Jesus. **His clothing** is

clarified in Mt 9:20 as “the end of his robe.” Many Jews wore tassels on the corners of their outer garments (Nm 15:38–39; Dt 22:12). On **instantly**, see note at 1:9–11.

**5:30–31 At once** are the same words as “instantly” (v. 29). As soon as the woman was healed, Jesus knew that **power** (*Gk dunamis*) **had gone out from him**. This reaction is not reported in His other healings.

**5:32–33 Fell down before him** recalls the actions of Jairus (v. 22) and the demoniac (v. 6).

**5:34** Only here did Jesus address someone as **daughter**. It reassured the trembling woman. **Your faith has saved you** recalls the healing of the paralytic in 2:5 and anticipates 10:52. **Go in peace** was the usual Hebrew blessing at dismissal (Ex 4:18; Jdg 18:6; 1Sm 1:17; 25:35; 2Sm 15:9; 2Kg 5:19; Lk 7:50; Ac 16:36; Jms 2:16). Jesus used the word **affliction** (v. 29) to assure the woman that her cure was permanent.

**5:35** This resumes Jairus’s story (vv. 21–24) after the interruption. Precious time had been lost, with the result that the girl had died.

**5:36** Jesus’s words to Jairus (**only believe**) are a present tense imperative, “Keep believing.”

**5:37** On other important occasions (9:2; 14:33), **Peter, James, and John** accompanied Jesus while the other disciples waited behind (see note at 1:16–20).

except Peter, James, and John, James's brother. <sup>38</sup>They came to the leader's house, and he saw a commotion — people weeping and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup>He went in and said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep." <sup>40</sup>They laughed at him, but he put them all outside. He took the child's father, mother, and those who were with him, and entered the place where the child was. <sup>41</sup>Then he took the child by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha koum*"<sup>a</sup> (which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, get up"). <sup>42</sup>Immediately the girl got up and began to walk. (She was twelve years old.) At this they were utterly astounded. <sup>43</sup>Then he gave them strict orders that no one should know about this and told them to give her something to eat.

#### REJECTION AT NAZARETH

**6** He left there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup>When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. "Where did this man get these things?" they said. "What is this wisdom that has been given to him, and how are these miracles performed by his hands?" <sup>3</sup>Isn't this

the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren't his sisters here with us?" So they were offended by him.

<sup>4</sup>Jesus said to them, "**A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his household.**" <sup>5</sup>He was not able to do a miracle there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. <sup>6</sup>And he was amazed at their unbelief. He was going around the villages teaching.

#### COMMISSIONING THE TWELVE

<sup>7</sup>He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs and gave them authority over unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup>He instructed them to take nothing for the road except a staff — no bread, no traveling bag, no money in their belts, <sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals and not put on an extra shirt. <sup>10</sup>He said to them, "**Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that place.**" <sup>11</sup>**If any place does not welcome you or listen to you, when you leave there, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.**" <sup>12</sup>So they went out and preached that people should repent. <sup>13</sup>They drove out many demons, anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

<sup>a</sup>5:41 An Aramaic expression. <sup>b</sup>6:11 Other mss add *Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom or Gomorrah on judgment day than for that town.*

**5:38–39** The commotion and people weeping and wailing were typical of Middle Eastern funerals. Flute players were also present (Mt 9:23). The mourners could have been friends or hired professionals. Before even seeing the girl, Jesus declared she was **not dead but asleep**. This earned Him much derision. He meant that her sleep was not the sleep of final death.

**5:40** The laughing indicates skepticism and mockery. Those who were with him refers to Peter, James, and John (v. 37).

**5:41** Taking the girl's body by the hand technically made Jesus unclean. *Talitha koum* (lit "little lamb, arise!") is Aramaic. Her spirit returned at this command (Lk 8:55).

**5:42–43** That Jesus arranged for the girl to get something to eat proves His practical concern for her.

**6:1** Jesus's hometown was Nazareth (see note at 1:9–11).

**6:2** The words he began to teach assume Jesus was invited to do so. Unlike Luke (Lk 4:16–21), Mark did not focus on the content of Jesus's teaching. In Galilee Jesus regularly taught (Mk 1:21–22, 39) or performed miracles (1:23–28, 39; 3:1–6) in the synagogues. After His rejection at Nazareth, there is no record of Jesus entering a synagogue again. Synagogues are mentioned again only in Mark as places of hypocrisy and persecution (12:39; 13:9). As was true in Capernaum (1:22), people in Nazareth were astonished by Jesus's teaching.

**6:3** Isn't this the carpenter? The parallel in Mt 13:55 reads, "Isn't this the carpenter's son?" Luke 4:22 has, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" A carpenter (Gk *tekton*) was a craftsman in wood and stone. Son of Mary may

hint at Jesus's supposed illegitimacy or indicate that Joseph had died (no mention is made of him in v. 4 or elsewhere in Mark, but see Jn 6:42). This is the only time Jesus's mother is mentioned by name in Mark. Jesus's brother James later became leader of the Jerusalem church and was killed on orders from the high priest in AD 62 (Josephus, *Ant.*, 20.9.1). He authored the book of James. Judas probably was the author of the book of Jude. Joses ("Joseph") and Simon are not named again in the NT (but see Jn 2:12; 7:5; Ac 1:14; 1Co 9:5). Jesus's sisters are not named, but the plural indicates He had more than one.

**6:4** Jesus used this self-applied proverb elsewhere (Jn 4:44). In Mark's version (cp. parallels in Mt 13:57; Lk 4:24) Jesus named three settings where a prophet is dishonored—in his hometown, among his relatives (referring to 3:20–21, 31–35), and in his household.

**6:5–6a** Matthew treats he was not able not as a statement about limitations of power but as a statement of fact ("he did not do," Mt 13:58). The reason was the people's unbelief. Previously they were astonished at Jesus (v. 2). In an ironic twist, Mark alone ended the narrative (cp. Lk 4:25–30) with Jesus being amazed at them. What amazed Him was their lack of faith. The people of Nazareth did not refer to Jesus by name but only as "this man," a sign of contempt.

**6:6b** This is the third time Jesus went on a preaching circuit in Galilee (1:14, 39).

**6:7** He summoned the Twelve recalls 3:13. To send them out recalls 3:14. Authority over unclean spirits recalls 3:15. In pairs reflects common-sense wisdom (Ec

4:9–10) and was Jesus's usual practice (Mk 11:1; 14:13; Lk 10:1), which was followed in the early church (Ac 8:14; 9:38; 11:30; 12:25; 13:2; 15:39–40). The practice ensured companionship and mutual support, and it fulfilled the OT requirement of two witnesses (Dt 17:6; 19:15; 2Co 13:1). "The Twelve" are called "apostles" after they returned (Mk 6:30).

**6:8–9** According to Mark, the disciples were to take a staff . . . belts . . . sandals . . . shirt. These were the same items God told the Israelites to take on their departure from Egypt (Ex 12:11). Matthew's and Luke's accounts prohibit the walking stick (Mt 10:10; Lk 9:3) and Matthew forbids sandals (Mt 10:10; cp. Lk 10:4). According to Mark, they were not to take bread, a traveling bag . . . money, or an extra shirt.

**6:10–11** The disciples were to stay in one home until they left a given town and not look for better lodging. If they were not welcomed, they were to shake the dust off their feet. Jesus elaborated more on this when He sent out the seventy-two (Lk 10:10–11), and it was the practice of the earliest missionaries (Ac 13:51; cp. Ac 18:6). As a testimony against them, can be rendered "as a witness to them," signifying a call to repentance (cp. 1:44; 13:9).

**6:12–13** That people should repent was the content of their preaching, modeling the messages of John the Baptist (1:4) and Jesus (1:15). The ministry of the Twelve is summarized as preaching and teaching (6:30), exorcism, and healing. Anointing sick people with oil is mentioned here, in a parable in Lk 10:34, and in Jms 5:14.



## JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED

<sup>14</sup> King Herod heard about it, because Jesus's name had become well known. Some<sup>a</sup> said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that's why miraculous powers are at work in him." <sup>15</sup> But others said, "He's Elijah." Still others said, "He's a prophet, like one of the prophets from long ago."

<sup>16</sup> When Herod heard of it, he said, "John, the one I beheaded, has been raised!"

<sup>17</sup> For Herod himself had given orders to arrest John and to chain him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. <sup>18</sup> John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." <sup>19</sup> So Herodias held a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not, <sup>20</sup> because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing he was a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard him he would be very perplexed,<sup>b</sup> and yet he liked to listen to him.

<sup>21</sup> An opportune time came on his birthday, when Herod gave a banquet for his nobles, military commanders, and the leading men of Galilee. <sup>22</sup> When Herodias's own daughter<sup>c</sup> came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I'll give it to you." <sup>23</sup> He promised her with an oath: "Whatever you ask me I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

<sup>24</sup> She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?"

"John the Baptist's head," she said.

<sup>25</sup> At once she hurried to the king and said, "I want you to give me John the Baptist's head on a platter immediately." <sup>26</sup> Although the king was deeply distressed, because of his oaths and the guests<sup>d</sup> he did not want to refuse her. <sup>27</sup> The king immediately sent for an executioner and commanded him to bring

**WARM-UP:** Read Mark 6:30–44

**WORKOUT:** The disciples thought they were getting a break (v. 31), but they ended up serving. What does this passage say to you about the use of your free time?

**WRAP-UP:** How can you use your free time in a God-pleasing way?

John's head. So he went and beheaded him in prison, <sup>28</sup> brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. <sup>29</sup> When John's disciples heard about it, they came and removed his corpse and placed it in a tomb.

## FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

<sup>30</sup> The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> He said to them, "**Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest for a while.**" For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

<sup>32</sup> So they went away in the boat by themselves to a remote place, <sup>33</sup> but many saw them leaving and recognized them, and they ran on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>34</sup> When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd and had compassion on them, because they were like

<sup>a</sup>6:14 Other mss read *He* <sup>b</sup>6:20 Other mss read *When he heard him, he did many things* <sup>c</sup>6:22 Other mss read *When his daughter Herodias* <sup>d</sup>6:26 Lit and those reclining at the table <sup>e</sup>6:33 Other mss add and gathered around him

**6:14–15** The story of Herod Antipas, Herodias, and John is similar to that of Ahab, Jezebel, and Elijah in 1Kg 21. In fact, Elijah's name is closely tied to this story (Mk 6:15). **King Herod** was Herod Antipas (born 20 BC), a son of Herod the Great. He ruled Galilee and Perea from 4 BC to AD 39. Jesus **had become well known** because of His circuit preaching and the mission of the Twelve. The three opinions about Jesus's identity (that He was **John the Baptist**... **Elijah**, or a prophet) are given again in 8:28 as reflections of popular opinion.

**6:16–17** Herod's belief that Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected prompted him to reflect fearfully on the **one** he had **beheaded** (see Josephus, *Ant.*, 18.5.2). John was imprisoned (1:14) **on account of Herodias**. Herodias was formerly married to Herod's half-brother, Herod Philip, and had a daughter with him named Salome. Herod Antipas convinced Herodias to leave Philip and marry him instead. To clear the way, Herod Antipas had to divorce his own wife.

**6:18** John the Baptist repeatedly condemned this marriage as **not lawful** (Lv 18:16; 20:21).

**6:19–20** These verses contrast Herodias's and Herod Antipas's conflicting opinions about John the Baptist. Herodias **held a grudge**... **wanted to kill him**, and asked for a way to do so. Anti-pas, on the other hand, **feared John and protected him**, and considered him a **righteous and holy man**.

**6:21** It is ironic that wicked Herod's birthday became the death day for righteous John.

**6:22** Mark does not name Salome, but the Jewish historian Josephus does (Josephus, *Ant.*, 18.5.4). **Girl** (vv. 22, 28) is the same word Jesus used of the twelve-year-old in 5:41. **Danced and pleased** do not necessarily carry a nuance of sensuousness, though it is possible.

**6:23** Herod's **oath** recalls King Ahasuerus's words to Esther (Est 5:3, 6; 7:2). Since Antipas was only a deputy of Rome, the promise was a hyperbolic figure of speech, not a literal promise (cp. 1Kg 13:8).

**6:24–25** From this point the story moves quickly to conclusion. Note the double reference to **immediately** (vv. 25, 27) and the words **hurried** and **at once** in v. 25. Salome was a pawn in her mother's hands.

**6:26–28** Herod was **deeply distressed**. The only other time Mark uses this word concerns Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (14:33).

**6:30–31** Mark refers to the Twelve as the **apostles** only here and in 3:14 when they were appointed. **Reported to him all that they had done and taught** refers to the mission of vv. 7–13. A **remote place** recalls 1:3–5, 12–13, 35, 45 and provides the ideal setting for the miracle that echoes the provision of bread in the wilderness. **They did not even have time to eat** recalls 3:20 and prepares the way for the story that follows.

**6:32** Mark does not name the **remote place** (cp. Lk 9:10). In Mark this was Jesus's third journey by **boat** (4:35–5:1, 21–22).

**6:33–34** The word for **compassion** refers to intestinal organs, which were thought to be the seat of the emotions. The word is only



He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves. He kept giving them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. Everyone ate and was satisfied. They picked up twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish. Now those who had eaten the loaves were five thousand men.

MARK 6:41-44

sheep without a shepherd. Then he began to teach them many things.

<sup>35</sup> When it grew late, his disciples approached him and said, "This place is deserted, and it is already late. <sup>36</sup> Send them away so that they can go into the surrounding countryside and villages to buy themselves something to eat."

<sup>37</sup> "You give them something to eat," he responded.

They said to him, "Should we go and buy two hundred denarii<sup>a</sup> worth of bread and give them something to eat?"

<sup>38</sup> He asked them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."

When they found out they said, "Five, and two fish." <sup>39</sup> Then he instructed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup> So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. <sup>41</sup> He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves. He kept giving them to his disciples to set before the people. He

also divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup> Everyone ate and was satisfied. <sup>43</sup> They picked up twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish. <sup>44</sup> Now those who had eaten the loaves were five thousand men.

### WALKING ON THE WATER

<sup>45</sup> Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>46</sup> After he said good-bye to them, he went away to the mountain to pray. <sup>47</sup> Well into the night, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the land. <sup>48</sup> He saw them straining at the oars,<sup>b</sup> because the wind was against them. Very early in the morning<sup>c</sup> he came toward them walking on the sea and wanted to pass by them. <sup>49</sup> When they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out, <sup>50</sup> because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke with them and said, "Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." <sup>51</sup> Then he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. They were completely astounded, <sup>52</sup> because they had not understood about the loaves. Instead, their hearts were hardened.

### MIRACULOUS HEALINGS

<sup>53</sup> When they had crossed over, they came to shore at Gennesaret and anchored there.

<sup>54</sup> As they got out of the boat, people immediately recognized him. <sup>55</sup> They hurried throughout that region

<sup>a</sup> 6:37 A denarius = one day's wage    <sup>b</sup> 6:48 Or *them being battered as they rowed*    <sup>c</sup> 6:48 Lit *Around the fourth watch of the night* = 3 to 6 a.m.

used of Jesus in the NT (see note at 1:40–45). Jesus saw the people as leaderless and needy (like sheep without a shepherd). In fulfillment of Is 40:11, Jesus cared for His flock.

**6:35–44** The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels (Mt 14:13–21; Lk 9:10–17; Jn 6:1–15).

**6:35–36** The words **this place** is deserted mark the third mention of the remoteness of the place (vv. 31–32, 35). After pointing out it was late, the disciples commanded Jesus to send them away.

**6:37** Jesus responded with a command of His own. **You** is emphatic. Obviously the disciples did not have two hundred denarii (a denarius was a day's wage). In fact they had just returned from a mission on which they had taken no bread or money (v. 8). Feeding this many people was a big challenge. (Cp. Moses's wilderness situation in Ex 16:1–35; Nm 11:13, 22; and Elijah's in 2Kg 4:42–44.)

**6:38** The disciples focused on what they lacked, but Jesus focused on what they had—five . . . loaves and two fish. The loaves were probably small, round, flat barley biscuits; the fish were probably dried.

**6:39–40** Matthew (14:19) and John (6:10) mention the grass on which the people sat, but only Mark says it was green, indicating springtime.

**6:41** Looking up to heaven was a position of prayer (cp. 7:34). The Gospel writers did not record Jesus's prayer, but the traditional Jewish blessing over bread would

have been appropriate: "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the world, who bringeth forth bread from the earth."

**6:42** The verb **was satisfied** is used of fattening animals. Thus Jesus provided abundance, not just sustenance.

**6:43** The **twelve baskets** matches the number of apostles and tribes of Israel. The word for "baskets" denotes large, heavy containers.

**6:44** A total of five thousand men were fed. Mark's word (Gk) *andres* ("males") is gender specific. Matthew adds "besides women and children" (Mt 14:21) which mean that considerably more than five thousand people were fed.

**6:45** The word **immediately** is characteristic. **Made** is a strong verb that carries the sense of "compelled." Mark did not say why Jesus rushed His disciples away, but Jn 6:14–15 indicates that the people wanted to make Him king.

**6:46** After he said good-bye to them refers to the disciples. For the second time in Mark, Jesus went off by Himself to pray.

**6:47** Well into the night apparently refers to a time quite late since v. 48 refers to "very early in the morning."

**6:48** The phrases **straining at the oars** and **the wind was against them** do not picture the same situation as 4:35–41 when Jesus calmed wind and sea. **Very early in the morning** (lit "around the fourth watch of the night") reflects the Roman method of dividing the night into four watches.

The fourth was from 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. **Walking on the sea** is meant literally and is verbally parallel to "on the land" (v. 47).

**6:49** The disciples thought Jesus was a ghost (Gk *phantasma*), which expresses the idea of illusion.

**6:50** Jesus reassured the disciples with two commands: **Have courage and don't be afraid**. The words **it is I** are literally "I am" (Gk *Egō Eimi*), the divine name of God in Ex 3:14 (cp. Is 41:4; 43:10–11; 48:12). Jesus did what God alone could do and used God's name to identify Himself.

**6:51** In 4:35–41 the wind ceased when Jesus commanded it to stop; here it stopped when he got into the boat. . . . **Assounded** was the usual reaction to Jesus's power (cp. 1:22, 27; 2:12; 5:15, 20, 42).

**6:52** Mark diagnosed a twofold problem: the disciples had not understood and their hearts were hardened. Hard hearts (spiritual insensitivity) characterized the Pharisees at the synagogue in Capernaum (3:5).

**6:53–56** This is Mark's third summary of Jesus's ministry (cp. 1:35–39; 3:7–12).

**6:53** Gennesaret was a fertile plain on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee between Capernaum and Tiberias.

**6:54** The people immediately recognized Jesus. This contrasts with the disciples, who had failed to recognize Him (v. 49).

**6:55** The mats on which the sick were carried were the same type used by the paralytic (2:2–12).

and began to carry the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.<sup>56</sup> Wherever he went, into villages, towns, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch just the end of his robe. And everyone who touched it was healed.

#### THE TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS

**7** The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him.

<sup>2</sup> They observed that some of his disciples were eating bread with unclean — that is, unwashed — hands.

<sup>3</sup> (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, keeping the tradition of the elders. <sup>4</sup> When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they have washed. And there are many other customs they have received and keep, like the washing of cups, pitchers, kettles, and dining couches.) <sup>5</sup> So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why don’t your disciples live<sup>b</sup> according to the tradition of the elders, instead of eating bread with ceremonially unclean<sup>c</sup> hands?”

<sup>6</sup> He answered them, “Isaiah prophesied correctly about you hypocrites, as it is written:

This people honors me with their lips,  
but their heart is far from me.

<sup>7</sup> They worship me in vain,  
teaching as doctrines human commands.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Abandoning the command of God, you hold on to human tradition.”<sup>e</sup> He also said to them, “You have a fine way of invalidating God’s command in order to set up<sup>f</sup>

your tradition!”<sup>10</sup> For Moses said: **Honor your father and your mother;**<sup>6</sup> and **Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death.**<sup>11</sup> But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or mother: Whatever benefit you might have received from me is *corban*’” (that is, an offering devoted to God),<sup>12</sup> “you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother.”<sup>13</sup> You nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many other similar things.”

<sup>14</sup> Summoning the crowd again, he told them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup> Nothing that goes into a person from outside can defile him but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.”

<sup>17</sup> When he went into the house away from the crowd, his disciples asked him about the parable. <sup>18</sup> He said to them, “Are you also as lacking in understanding? Don’t you realize that nothing going into a person from the outside can defile him? <sup>19</sup> For it doesn’t go into his heart but into the stomach and is eliminated” (thus he declared all foods clean). <sup>20</sup> And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him.” <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of people’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, <sup>22</sup> adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, self-indulgence, envy,<sup>g</sup> slander, pride, and foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within and defile a person.”

#### A GENTILE MOTHER’S FAITH

<sup>24</sup> He got up and departed from there to the region of Tyre. <sup>h</sup> He entered a house and did not want anyone

<sup>a</sup> 7:4 Other mss omit *and dining couches* <sup>b</sup> 7:5 Lit *walk* <sup>c</sup> 7:5 Other mss read *with unwashed* <sup>d</sup> 7:6–7 Is 29:13 <sup>e</sup> 7:8 Other mss add *The washing of jugs, and cups, and many other similar things you practice.* <sup>f</sup> 7:9 Or *to maintain* <sup>g</sup> 7:10 Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16 <sup>h</sup> 7:10 Ex 21:17; Lv 20:9 <sup>i</sup> 7:15 Some mss include v. 16: “If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen.” <sup>j</sup> 7:22 Or *evil eye* <sup>k</sup> 7:24 Many early mss add *and Sidon*

**6:56** Villages, towns, and country sum up the entire region of Galilee. **Marketplaces** (*Gk agora*) were the busiest centers of local life. The statement that **the sick . . . begged** Jesus to heal them recalls the man with skin disease (1:40), the demoniac (5:10,12,17–18), and the synagogue ruler (5:23) where the same word is used. Their desire to **touch just the end of his robe** recalls the desire of the bleeding woman (5:28).

**7:1–23** This is Jesus’s longest conflict speech in the Gospel of Mark.

**7:1** On the **Pharisees and scribes**, see notes at 1:21–22; 2:15–17; and 3:22.

**7:2** As in 2:18,24, the dispute occurred over the actions of Jesus’s disciples. **Unclean . . . hands** refers to ritual cleansing, not hygiene.

**7:3–4** These verses are an explanatory parenthesis. This is Mark’s only reference to **the Jews** as a group. **The tradition of the elders** (cp. vv. 5,8–9,13) refers to oral traditions that had grown up around the written law. Such traditions became the heart of rabbinic Judaism. Apparently when the Pharisees returned from the **marketplace** they did more than just ritually wash their hands; they thoroughly purified themselves.

**7:5** Jesus replied in v. 8 that **the tradition of the elders** is merely “human tradition.”

**7:6–7** The word for **hypocrites** refers to an actor who hid behind a mask. Thus the word

means “pretender.” Jesus’s quotation from Is 29:13 clearly defined what a hypocrite was and focused on God’s condemnation of those who taught as **doctrines human commands**.

**7:8–9** Jesus accused the scribes and Pharisees of **abandoning the command of God** while keeping **human tradition**. They made their oral traditions more important than God’s law.

**7:10** By quoting the fifth commandment (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16) and Ex 21:17 (Lv 20:9), Jesus introduced a specific example of what He charged in Mk 7:8–9.

**7:11–13** You say is emphatic and pits the rabbis’ teaching against **the word of God**. The rabbinic custom of **corban** (modified from Lv 27:28; Nm 18:14) allowed a person to devote all his material goods to the Lord. The rabbis shamefully allowed corban to excuse sons from meeting the material needs of their aging parents. **You do many other similar things** emphasized that the corban practice was representative of other hypocritical Pharisaic practices.

**7:14–15** Jesus broadened His audience to **the crowd** and expanded His topic to true defilement. Verse 15 is the heart of His teaching. A person is defiled by what comes out, not what goes in.

**7:17–18** The disciples asked Jesus privately about **the parable** of v. 15. Jesus

repeated what He had said and rebuked them for their lack of **understanding**.

**7:19** What goes into a person’s stomach doesn’t defile because it is digested and **eliminated**. Recall that Mark was written under Peter’s influence and that Peter learned in Ac 10:15 that all foods are clean. Thus the parenthetical statement of Mk 7:19 indicates that Mark, Peter, and others looked back afresh on Jesus’s saying and realized that He had pronounced all foods clean. They failed fully to grasp this when Jesus originally uttered it.

**7:20–23** Jesus listed thirteen moral problems to illustrate His point about internal defilement. The first seven are plural and indicate repeated acts. **Sexual immoralities** (*Gk porneia*) includes all illicit sexual practices outside marriage. **Evil actions** is a term for maliciousness. The last six evils are all singular, indicating attitudes. **Envy** refers to jealousy, covetousness, and a grudging attitude. The word for **pride** refers to exalting oneself above others. **Foolishness** is lack of moral judgment.

**7:24–8:10** These verses describe Jesus’s ministry in the Gentile areas of Tyre, Sidon, and the Decapolis.

**7:24** Tyre was on the Mediterranean coast northwest of Galilee. Jesus went to **the region of Tyre**, which refers to the ad-

to know it, but he could not escape notice.<sup>25</sup> Instead, immediately after hearing about him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit came and fell at his feet.<sup>26</sup> The woman was a Gentile,<sup>a</sup> a Syrophoenician by birth, and she was asking him to cast the demon out of her daughter.<sup>27</sup> He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, because it isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

<sup>28</sup> But she replied to him, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

<sup>29</sup> Then he told her, "Because of this reply, you may go. The demon has left your daughter."<sup>30</sup> When she went back to her home, she found her child lying on the bed, and the demon was gone.

### JESUS DOES EVERYTHING WELL

<sup>31</sup> Again, leaving the region of Tyre, he went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through<sup>b</sup> the region of the Decapolis.<sup>32</sup> They brought to him a deaf man who had difficulty speaking and begged Jesus to lay his hand on him.<sup>33</sup> So he took him away from the crowd in private. After putting his fingers in the man's ears and spitting, he touched his tongue.<sup>34</sup> Looking up to heaven, he sighed deeply and said to him, "Ephphatha!"<sup>c</sup> (that is, "Be opened!").<sup>35</sup> Immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak clearly.<sup>36</sup> He ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more they proclaimed it.

<sup>37</sup> They were extremely astonished and said, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

<sup>a</sup>7:26 Or a Greek (speaker) <sup>b</sup>7:31 Or into <sup>c</sup>7:34 An Aramaic expression

ministrative district around Tyre and not to the city itself.

**7:25–26** This woman was a Gentile who lived according to Greek culture. A Syrophoenician (a Phoenician from Syria) reflects Mark's use of double expression, with the second term being more specific. **Fell at his feet** recalls the actions of Jairus (5:23) and the Gerasene demoniac (5:6).

**7:27** In Jesus's curt statement, the children refers to the Jews (cp. Mt 15:24). Jews typically referred to Gentiles as dogs. Since Jews considered dogs unclean (Ex 22:31; 1Kg 21:23; 22:38; 2Kg 9:36; Pr 26:11; Mt 7:6; 2Pt 2:22), calling someone a dog was an insult (1Sm 17:43; 24:14; 2Sm 16:9; Is 56:10–11).

**7:28** Lord can be a divine title or just a polite address. The woman asserted that even though dogs did not eat with the children at the table, they did eat the crumbs that fell to the floor (cp. Lk 16:21). She accepted the priority of Jesus's mission to the Jews but pointed out that Israel's privileges did not exclude Gentiles from enjoying the overflow.

**7:29–30** The narrative returns to the exorcism, which was the occasion for the woman's coming to Jesus. His words **because of this reply** in Matthew's account focuses on the greatness of the woman's faith (Mt 15:28).

**7:31–37** This account is likely part of a larger healing ministry in the Decapolis that Matthew summarized (Mt 15:29–31). Jesus's

reception this time contrasts with that of His first visit (cp. Mk 5:17) and possibly hints at the success of the Gerasene demoniac's proclamation (5:20).

**7:31** By way of Sidon . . . the Decapolis indicates Jesus traveled more than twenty miles farther north before turning southeast. The entire journey was more than 120 miles. On the Decapolis, see note at 5:19–20.

**7:32** Difficulty speaking is also used in the Greek version of Is 35:5–6, a passage that Jesus fulfilled with this miracle.

**7:33–34** Only here and in 8:22–26 did Jesus take the person He healed aside in private. **Spitting** (cp. 8:23) probably means Jesus spit into His hand and applied saliva to the man's tongue (Jn 9:6). **Looking up to heaven** is a sign of prayer (see note at 6:41). **Sighed deeply** indicates Jesus's deep emotional involvement. Mark translates the Aramaic word *Ephphatha* parenthetically (cp. 5:41).

**7:35** He began to speak clearly indicates that, like many deaf people, he was previously able to make sounds but not form coherent words.

**7:36** Proclaimed is the word Mark used for telling others about Jesus (Gk *kērussō*). The people of the Decapolis now responded as the Gerasene demoniac had done (5:20).

**7:37** While Jesus's other healing miracles brought astonishment and amazement (1:22,27; 2:12; 5:20,42; 6:2,6,51), this is the only time that **extremely** or "beyond all

### FEEDING FOUR THOUSAND

**8** In those days there was again a large crowd, and they had nothing to eat. He called the disciples and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they've already stayed with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come a long distance."

<sup>4</sup> His disciples answered him, "Where can anyone get enough bread here in this desolate place to feed these people?"

<sup>5</sup> "How many loaves do you have?" he asked them.

"Seven," they said. <sup>6</sup> He commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground. Taking the seven loaves, he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people. So they served them to the crowd. <sup>7</sup> They also had a few small fish, and after he had blessed them, he said these were to be served as well. <sup>8</sup> They ate and were satisfied. Then they collected seven large baskets of leftover pieces. <sup>9</sup> About four thousand were there. He dismissed them. <sup>10</sup> And he immediately got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

### THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND HEROD

<sup>11</sup> The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, demanding of him a sign from heaven to test him.

<sup>12</sup> Sighing deeply in his spirit, he said, "Why does this generation demand a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign

measure" appears. He has done everything well echoes the Septuagint wording of Gn 1:31. Once again, Jesus had done what only God could do (Ex 4:11).

**8:1–10** The feeding of the four thousand fulfilled the request of the Syrophoenician woman in 7:28 for the Gentiles to eat the children's crumbs.

**8:11** In those days refers to the time Jesus spent in the Decapolis (7:31).

**8:7** The phrase a few small fish can refer to sardines or fish scraps.

**8:8** Seven large baskets corresponds to the number of loaves (v. 5). The Greek word for baskets differs from the Jewish term in 6:43. This term refers to a hamper large enough to hold a person (Ac 9:25).

**8:9** The number four thousand is not gender specific as in 6:44. It implies men, women, and children (as Mt 15:38 makes clear).

**8:10** The district of Dalmanutha is mentioned only here in the NT and in ancient literature. Matthew identifies the place as Magadan, which was on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

**8:11** Back on the western side of the lake, Jesus was again accosted by the Pharisees. On Pharisees, see note at 2:15–17. A sign from heaven could refer to "a sign from God" or to "a cosmic phenomenon." The Pharisees demanded further divine confirmation to test Jesus. They were trying to discredit Him and His authority.

will be given to this generation.”<sup>13</sup> Then he left them, got back into the boat, and went to the other side.

<sup>14</sup> The disciples had forgotten to take bread and had only one loaf with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup> Then he gave them strict orders: “**Watch out! Beware of the heaven<sup>a</sup> of the Pharisees and the heaven of Herod.**”

<sup>16</sup> They were discussing among themselves that they did not have any bread. <sup>17</sup> Aware of this, he said to them, “**Why are you discussing the fact you have no bread? Don’t you understand or comprehend? Do you have hardened hearts?**” <sup>18</sup> **Do you have eyes and not see; do you have ears and not hear?**<sup>b</sup> And do you not remember? <sup>19</sup> When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of leftovers did you collect?”

“Twelve,” they told him.

<sup>20</sup> “**When I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many baskets full of pieces did you collect?**”

“Seven,” they said.

<sup>21</sup> And he said to them, “**Don’t you understand yet?**”

#### HEALING A BLIND MAN

<sup>22</sup> They came to Bethsaida. They brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. <sup>23</sup> He took the blind man by the hand and brought him out of the village. Spitting on his eyes and laying his hands on him, he asked him, “**Do you see anything?**”

<sup>24</sup> He looked up and said, “I see people — they look like trees walking.”

<sup>25</sup> Again Jesus placed his hands on the man’s eyes. The man looked intently and his sight was restored and he saw everything clearly. <sup>26</sup> Then he sent him home, saying, “**Don’t even go into the village.**”<sup>c</sup>

#### PETER’S CONFESSION OF THE MESSIAH

<sup>27</sup> Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, “**Who do people say that I am?**”

<sup>28</sup> They answered him, “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets.”

<sup>29</sup> “**But you,**” he asked them, “**who do you say that I am?**”

Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”<sup>30</sup> And he strictly warned them to tell no one about him.

#### HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION PREDICTED

<sup>31</sup> Then he began to teach them that it was necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and rise after three days. <sup>32</sup> He spoke openly about this. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But turning around and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “**Get behind me, Satan! You are not thinking about God’s concerns<sup>d</sup> but human concerns.**”

<sup>a</sup> 8:15 Or yeast    <sup>b</sup> 8:18 Jr 5:21; Ezk 12:2    <sup>c</sup> 8:26 Other mss add or tell anyone in the village    <sup>d</sup> 8:33 Or about the things of God

**8:12** The word for **sighing deeply** points to despair rather than anger. In his **spirit** (cp. 2:8) refers to Jesus’s inner being and the depth of His dismay. On **truly I tell you**, see note at 3:28–30.

**8:13** **He left them** marks Jesus’s break with the Pharisees. After v. 15 they are mentioned only in 10:2 and 12:13. **The other side** where Jesus went was Bethsaida on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (see note at v. 22).

**8:14** **One loaf** of bread was not enough to feed those in the boat.

**8:15** Jesus’s double warning indicates strong admonition. **Leaven** permeates, spreads, and grows. It is a symbol for evil or corruption (1Co 5:6–8; Gl 5:9). In Matthew the leaven is identified as the teaching of the Pharisees (Mt 16:12), while in Luke it is their hypocrisy (Lk 12:1). After this, nothing more is said about leaven or Pharisees.

**8:16–20** Jesus used the disciples’ discussion about bread to rebuke them. His reference to deafness recalled His healing of a man who was deaf (7:32–37); His reference to blindness anticipated His next miracle (8:22–26). He was disappointed that His disciples lacked spiritual perception.

**8:21** This repeats the question of v. 17. The disciples still did not get it. This is Jesus’s most severe rebuke of the disciples in the Gospel of Mark, but there was a bright spot. They didn’t understand yet what Jesus was about.

**8:22–10:52** In this section, Jesus completed His ministry in Galilee and began His

journey to Jerusalem. It was time to leave the crowds, limit His miracles, and teach the disciples about His impending death.

**8:22** **Bethsaida**, on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, was the hometown of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (Jn 1:44; 12:21). Mark does not record Jesus’s previous visit to Bethsaida, but Luke associates it with the feeding of the five thousand (Lk 9:10). **They brought** presumably refers to the blind man’s friends (cp. 2:3–5; 7:32). This is Mark’s first account about the healing of a **blind man** (cp. 10:46–52).

**8:23** Jesus’s taking the blind man **out of the village** and then **spitting** on him recalls 7:33 (cp. Jn 9:6–7). **Laying his hands on him** recalls 5:23; 6:2,5.

**8:24–25** After Jesus’s first action, the man’s vision was only partially restored. This is the only miracle of Jesus in which healing did not occur immediately and completely.

**8:26** No reason is given for Jesus’s command to avoid the village.

**8:27–30** Peter’s confession near Caesarea Philippi is the watershed of Mark’s Gospel.

**8:27–28** **Caesarea Philippi** was twenty-five miles north of Bethsaida in the foothills of Mount Hermon. Caesar Augustus gave the city to Herod the Great. Herod’s son Philip rebuilt, enlarged, and renamed it in honor of Caesar Augustus. **The villages** refers to surrounding settlements. Jesus’s question and the disciples’ response recall the opinions voiced to Antipas in 6:14–15.

**8:29** **The words but you** are emphatic and call for a deeper answer. Jesus asked

His disciples to state their own belief. **Peter** responded, **you are the Messiah**. This is the first time in Mark’s Gospel that a person made this identification. To this point, only God (1:11) and demons (1:24,34; 3:11; 5:7) had testified to Jesus’s true identity. The word “Messiah” (Christ) means “anointed one” and refers to God’s appointed deliverer and King.

**8:30** **Strictly warned** is the same Greek verb Jesus used (1:25; 3:12) to silence unclean spirits. His command to **tell no one** was a response to the popular misunderstanding that the Messiah would be a military conqueror. Jesus had to teach His disciples that the Messiah would actually suffer and die.

**8:31** This is the first of three times in Mark that Jesus predicted His death (see notes at 9:31; 10:33–34). On **Son of Man**, see note at 2:8–11. Jesus will now use this title often, including in His death predictions. It was **necessary** points to the fact that His suffering and death were essential to God’s purposes. The **elders**, the **chief priests**, and the **scribes** were the three power groups of the Sanhedrin, the ruling Jewish body. Jesus would be **killed**, not by a lawless mob but by Israel’s religious leaders. Each of His predictions also ends with His resurrection as the final part of the divine necessity.

**8:32** Peter could not accept a suffering Messiah. He took Jesus **aside** in a bid to convince Him to stop speaking of His death.

**8:33** **Get behind me, Satan** are the same words Jesus spoke to the devil during the wilderness temptation (Mt 4:10).



## TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

<sup>34</sup> Calling the crowd along with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me and the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life? <sup>37</sup> What can anyone give in exchange for his life? <sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

**9** Then he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come in power."

## THE TRANSFIGURATION

<sup>2</sup> After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves to be alone. He was transfigured in front of them, <sup>3</sup> and his clothes became dazzling — extremely white as no launderer on earth could whiten them. <sup>4</sup> Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it's good for us to be here. Let's set up three shelters: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — <sup>6</sup> because

**8:34** The kind of Messiah Jesus was had implications for anyone who wanted to be His follower. An incorrect understanding of Jesus's messiahship leads to an incorrect understanding of discipleship. **Deny himself** is found only here and in the parallels (Mt 16:24; Lk 9:23). It refers to a denial of self-centered interests. To **take up a cross** refers to the fact that crucifixion victims were made to carry the crossbeam to the site of their execution.

**8:35–37** The words **save and lose** show that Jesus was speaking not merely of physical life but of the essence of humanity: the soul. The sure way to save the soul is to lose it (entrust it to Jesus). There is no exchange rate high enough for the soul; money cannot buy it. Jesus's words echo Ps 49:7–9.

**8:38** The phrase **my words** refers to the gospel. **This adulterous and sinful generation** is used only here in the NT (cp. Mt 12:39; 16:4) and is based on the language of OT prophets (Is 1:4; 57:3–13; Ezk 16:32–41; Hos 2:2–6). Jesus's present rejection is contrasted with His future glory. His coming with the **holy angels** is spelled out in 13:26–27.

**9:1** Jesus previously used this solemn introductory formula (**Truly I tell you**) in 3:28 and 8:12. **Some standing here is clarified** by v. 2. **Until they see the kingdom of God come in power** is clarified by Jesus's transfiguration in vv. 2–13. This saying precedes the transfiguration in all three Synoptic Gospels (Mt 16:28; Lk 9:27).

**9:2** **Six days** appears to refer to the time between Peter's confession and Jesus's transfiguration. It may also tie Jesus's experience to Moses's (Ex 24:15–17). On **Peter, James, and John** as Jesus's inner circle, see note at 1:16–20. The **high mountain** is

often identified as Mount Tabor, but Mount Hermon or Mount Meron may be better candidates. As He was **transfigured**, Jesus's nature was not changed but unveiled.

**9:3** **Dazzling** connotes extreme whiteness that is beyond natural explanation (Mt 17:2 describes them as "white as the light"). Matthew (17:2; cp. Lk 9:29) adds that Jesus's face glowed like the sun (cp. Ex 34:35).

**9:4** Mark probably intended to indicate Moses as the greater OT figure by saying **Elijah appeared with Moses**.

**9:5** The **three shelters** Peter mentioned relate to the Jewish custom of building booth-like shelters during the Festival of Shelters (Lv 23:39–43). Perhaps Peter wished to prolong this experience, but his words wrongly implied equality among the three persons.

**9:6** Peter proves that when you don't know what to say, it's best to keep quiet. But he was not alone in his uncertainty; all the disciples were **terrified**.

**9:7** A **cloud** is often a symbol of God's presence in the OT (Ex 40:34–38). The **voice from within** echoes Ex 24:15–18. **Them** probably refers to all six persons on the mountain. The divine announcement recalls the divine words at Jesus's baptism (see note at 1:9–11). This time Jesus's Sonship is confirmed to others, not just to Jesus, and the hearers are told to **listen to him** (cp. Dt 18:15). God's words affirmed Jesus's teaching in Mk 8:31–38 about His suffering and the requirements for discipleship.

**9:8** Not even Moses or Elijah can compare with Jesus. The spotlight was on Him and Him alone.

**9:9** Nine times in Mark's Gospel Jesus enjoined people to be quiet about his mes-

he did not know what to say, since they were terrified.

<sup>7</sup> A cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my beloved Son; listen to him!"

<sup>8</sup> Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup> They kept this word to themselves, questioning what "rising from the dead" meant.

<sup>11</sup> Then they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

<sup>12</sup> "Elijah does come first and restores all things," he replied. "Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? <sup>13</sup> But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did whatever they pleased to him, just as it is written about him."

## THE POWER OF FAITH OVER A DEMON

<sup>14</sup> When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes disputing with them. <sup>15</sup> When the whole crowd saw him, they were amazed and ran to greet him. <sup>16</sup> He asked them, "What are you arguing with them about?"

siaship. This is the only time when He put a time limit on the injunction. Jesus's prohibition indicated that His glory and mission could not be understood fully until after His death and resurrection.

**9:10** This verse indicates continued lack of understanding among Jesus's inner circle (cp. 8:31).

**9:11** On the scribes, see note at 1:21–22. The question here was based on Mal 4:5–6.

**9:12–13** Jesus affirmed the scribal teaching about Elijah and his role, but Elijah's coming did not change the fact that the **Son of Man must suffer many things** (cp. 8:31). Jesus then made two startling statements: **Elijah had come already**, and he suffered because the people **did whatever they pleased to him**. Jesus was identifying Elijah with John the Baptist. The treatment John received (6:16–29) foreshadowed the way Jesus would be treated.

**9:14–29** These verses reveal what the other disciples were doing while Jesus and His inner circle were on the Mount of Transfiguration. Mark's account is twice as long as the parallels (Mt 17:14–20; Lk 9:37–43).

**9:14** The scribes, again showing hostility toward the disciples (cp. 2:6,16; 3:22; 7:1), have no further role in Mark's account.

**9:15** Only Mark in the entire NT used the verb **for were amazed** (cp. 14:33; 16:5–6). It refers to intense emotion.

**9:16–18** That the disciples couldn't drive... out this demon is surprising because Jesus had commissioned them to do this (3:15; 6:7) and they had previously succeeded in doing so (6:13). The symptoms were similar to epilepsy, but Mark says they were the result of unclean spirits (9:17,20,25).



<sup>17</sup>Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a spirit that makes him unable to speak. <sup>18</sup>Whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't."

<sup>19</sup>He replied to them, "**You unbelieving generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me.**" <sup>20</sup>So they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, it immediately threw the boy into convulsions. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup>**"How long has this been happening to him?"** Jesus asked his father.

"From childhood," he said. <sup>22</sup>**"And many times it has thrown him into fire or water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."**

<sup>23</sup>Jesus said to him, **"If you can?^ Everything is possible for the one who believes."**

<sup>24</sup>Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

<sup>25</sup>When Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, **"You mute and deaf spirit, I command you: Come out of him and never enter him again."**

<sup>26</sup>Then it came out, shrieking and throwing him into terrible convulsions. The boy became like a corpse, so that many said, "He's dead." <sup>27</sup>But Jesus, taking him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up.

<sup>28</sup>After he had gone into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

<sup>29</sup>And he told them, **"This kind can come out by nothing but prayer."**<sup>a</sup>

## THE SECOND PREDICTION OF HIS DEATH

<sup>30</sup>Then they left that place and made their way through Galilee, but he did not want anyone to know it. <sup>31</sup>For he was teaching his disciples and telling them, **"The Son of Man is going to be betrayed<sup>c</sup> into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after he is killed, he will rise three days later."** <sup>32</sup>But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask him.

## WHO IS THE GREATEST?

<sup>33</sup>They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, **"What were you arguing about on the way?"** <sup>34</sup>But they were silent, because on the way they had been arguing with one another about who was the greatest. <sup>35</sup>Sitting down, he called the Twelve and said to them, **"If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all."** <sup>36</sup>He took a child, had him stand among them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup>**"Whoever welcomes<sup>e</sup> one little child such as this in my name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but him who sent me."**

## IN HIS NAME

<sup>38</sup>John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone<sup>e</sup> driving out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he wasn't following us."

<sup>39</sup>**"Don't stop him,"** said Jesus, **"because there is no one who will perform a miracle in my name who can soon afterward speak evil of me."** <sup>40</sup>For whoever is not against us is for us. <sup>41</sup>And whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you belong to Christ—truly I tell you, he will never lose his reward.

<sup>a</sup>9:23 Other mss add *believe* <sup>b</sup>9:29 Other mss add *and fasting* <sup>c</sup>9:31 Or *handed over* <sup>d</sup>9:37 Or *"Whoever receives*

<sup>e</sup>9:38 Other mss add *who didn't go along with us*

**9:19** Jesus's words **you unbelieving generation** recalls 8:38.

**9:20** The reaction of **the spirit** when it **saw** Jesus was similar to that of other demonic spirits (see notes at 1:25–26 and 5:7–8).

**9:21** The duration of the condition made Jesus's healing all the more impressive.

**9:22** To **destroy him** shows the evil intention of demons. The father asked for **help** based on Jesus's **compassion** (see notes at 1:40–45 and 6:33–34). **If you can** was an appropriate qualifier, considering the disciples' failure to cast out the demon.

**9:23** At issue was not Jesus's ability but the father's faith—**everything is possible for the one who believes** (cp. 5:36; 10:27).

**9:24** Both faith and unbelief resided in the father's heart. Mark previously used **unbelief** when describing the people of Nazareth (see note at 6:5–6a).

**9:25** The demonic spirit was **mute and deaf**, rendering the boy mute (v. 17). When Jesus issued the **command to come out of him**, He used a word that emphasized His authority. The demon was able to resist the disciples, but not the Lord. Jesus's com-

mand to **never enter him again** is unique in all the exorcisms in the Gospels.

**9:26–27** The unclean spirit responded like one that Jesus had cast out earlier (see note at 1:25–26).

**9:28–29** To the disciples' question **why**, Jesus told them **this kind** (apparently a very resistant and powerful evil being) required spiritual preparation on the part of the exorcist, specifically **prayer**.

**9:30** This is the last reference in Mark to **Galilee** until after Jesus's resurrection (see 14:28; 16:7 and notes there).

**9:31** Jesus's second death prediction is the briefest of the three (see notes at 8:31; 10:33–34), and has much in common with the others. The new element in this prediction is that He would be **betrayed**.

**9:32** Luke explains why the disciples **did not understand**: "It was concealed from them so that they could not grasp it" (Lk 9:45).

**9:33** This is the last time Jesus returned to **Capernaum**. The house may have been Peter's (see note at 1:29–31).

**9:34** They were **silent** also described the people in the Capernaum synagogue (3:4).

**9:35** **Sitting down** was the posture assumed by a teacher (4:1–2; Mt 5:1). Jesus's teaching reversed human thinking. In His value system, being **first** did not come through aggressiveness and privilege but through humility (Mt 18:4) and by being **servant of all**.

**9:36–37** Jesus used a **child** as an object lesson. He did not command His disciples to become like children but to **welcome** those who are like a **little child**. A child is an example of a person with no status and no rights.

**9:38** It is ironic that the disciples told this man to stop **driving out demons** when they had failed at the same task (vv. 14–29). Apparently they thought they were the only ones authorized to do this (3:14–15; 6:7,13). The episode recalls Nm 11:26–29.

**9:39–41** Jesus gave three reasons not to stop the man. First, anyone who performed a **miracle** in Jesus's name wouldn't turn and **speak evil** of Him. Second, there is no middle ground. A person is either **against** or **for** Jesus. Third, anyone who extends a kind gesture (giving a **cup of water** was a kind Eastern courtesy) in **my name . . . will never lose his reward**.

## WARNINGS FROM JESUS

<sup>42</sup> "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to fall away—it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

<sup>43</sup> "And if your hand causes you to fall away, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and go to hell, the unquenchable fire.<sup>a 45</sup> And if your foot causes you to fall away, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.<sup>a 47</sup> And if your eye causes you to fall away, gouge it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,<sup>48</sup> where **their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.**<sup>c 49</sup> For everyone will be salted with fire.<sup>b,e 50</sup> Salt is good, but if the salt should lose its flavor, how can you season it? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

## THE QUESTION OF DIVORCE

**10** He set out from there and went to the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Then crowds converged on him again, and as was his custom he taught them again.

<sup>2</sup> Some Pharisees came to test him, asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

<sup>3</sup> He replied to them, "What did Moses command you?"

<sup>4</sup> They said, "Moses permitted us to write divorce papers and send her away."

<sup>5</sup> But Jesus told them, "He wrote this command for you because of the hardness of your hearts.<sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of creation God<sup>f</sup> **made them male and female.**<sup>g 7</sup> For this reason a man will leave his father and mother<sup>h 8</sup> and the two will become one flesh.<sup>i</sup> So they are no longer two, but one flesh.<sup>9</sup> Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

<sup>10</sup> When they were in the house again, the disciples questioned him about this matter.<sup>11</sup> He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.<sup>12</sup> Also, if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

## BLESSING THE CHILDREN

<sup>13</sup> People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.<sup>14</sup> When Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.<sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive<sup>j</sup> the kingdom of God like a little

<sup>a</sup>9:43 Some mss include v. 44: *Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.* <sup>b</sup>9:45 Some mss include v. 46: *Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.* <sup>c</sup>9:48 Is 66:24 <sup>d</sup>9:49 Other mss add *and every sacrifice will be salted with salt* <sup>e</sup>9:49 Lv 2:13; Ezk 43:24 <sup>f</sup>10:6 Other mss omit *God* <sup>g</sup>10:6 Gn 1:27; 5:2 <sup>h</sup>10:7 Some mss add *and be joined to his wife* <sup>i</sup>10:7–8 Gn 2:24 <sup>j</sup>10:15 Or *not welcome*

<sup>9:42</sup> To cause someone to **fall away** refers to hindering discipleship or causing someone to sin. **Little ones** refers to immature disciples. A **heavy millstone** was the one donkeys turned to grind wheat. As terrible as drowning was, Jesus said it would be **better** than suffering the punishments of vv. 43–48.

<sup>9:43–48</sup> The body parts and admonitions are figures of speech that warn disciples to guard their sight and actions against participation in evil, for recklessness here can lead to spiritual downfall (cp. Jb 31:1,5,7). This is the only place where Mark used the word for **hell** (Gk *gehenna*). The imagery for hell developed from the Hinnom Valley southwest of Jerusalem. This valley was used for pagan human sacrifice (2Kg 16:3; 21:6; Jr 7:31), hence the association with **unquenchable fire** and perpetual rot (**their worm does not die**).

<sup>9:49–50</sup> Jesus's puzzling statement in v. 49 probably drew on the association of fire and salt in the sacrificial context of Lv 2:13. The first salt saying of Mk 9:50 occurs elsewhere (Mt 5:13; Lk 14:34) and focuses on the **good uses of salt**, which disciples must reflect on (Mt 5:13). Salt from deposits around the Dead Sea could **lose its flavor** since it was not pure sodium chloride. Disciples who lose their saltiness are no longer effective witnesses. The second "salt saying" of v. 50 draws on the OT custom of using salt in making covenants of peace (Lv 2:13; Nm 18:19; 2Ch 13:5; cp. Col 4:6).

<sup>10:1</sup> The words **from there** probably refer to Capernaum (9:33). **Judea** was south; **across the Jordan** refers to Perea or Transjordan. This latter area was under the jurisdiction of Antipas and may explain the reason for the question in v. 2.

<sup>10:2</sup> Two major schools of thought differed on the justifications for divorce (Mt 19:3). Shammai's school was strict; Hillel's liberal. The Pharisees' motive was to **test** Jesus (8:11; 12:15). Perhaps if this encounter occurred in Antipas's territory, they hoped Jesus would answer as John the Baptist had done and suffer the same fate (see note at 6:16–17).

<sup>10:3–4</sup> Jesus asked, **What did Moses command you?** They responded based on Dt 24:1–4, but this passage did not command divorce. It only acknowledged it, protected the woman's rights, and prohibited a husband from remarriage his original wife if he married another woman in between. Once again the Pharisees were misusing Scripture.

<sup>10:5</sup> The phrase **hardness of your hearts** refers to closing one's heart to God's truths. Moses allowed divorce as a concession to spiritual hardness.

<sup>10:6–8</sup> Through the use of two quotations from Genesis, Jesus moved from the later concession to God's original intention **from the beginning of creation**. By quoting Gn 1:27 Jesus established that marriage is between a **male and female**.

<sup>10:9</sup> Jesus emphasized that marriage is a divinely established institution. His final statement, **let no one separate**, refers to the husband, not a judicial court (cp. v. 11). Thus Jesus answered the question of v. 2 and ruled out divorce.

<sup>10:10</sup> Jesus's disciples were stunned by His teaching and asked what He meant.

<sup>10:11–12</sup> Though Jesus appeared to associate remarriage with **adultery**, He did not rule out all remarriage but emphasized that if a divorce is not grounded in biblically valid reasons, subsequent marriage is adulterous. Mark did not include the exception clauses of Mt 5:32 and 19:9. This is a reminder that this passage does not contain all of Jesus's teaching on divorce and remarriage.

<sup>10:13</sup> People probably refers to parents. **Little children** was clarified by Luke as "infants" (Lk 18:15). **Touch them** is clarified in v. 16 as "blessed them."

<sup>10:14</sup> This is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus was **indignant** (cp. 3:5). The word indicates strong anger. Jesus allowed the children to come to Him, but the real point related to **such as these**. This saying pertains to the kind of people to whom God's kingdom **belongs**.

<sup>10:15</sup> Jesus's second saying relates to how a person welcomes and **enters the kingdom of God**. A little child accepts what is given as a gift without asserting his rights or claims (cp. Mt 18:3). To **enter**

child will never enter it.”<sup>16</sup> After taking them in his arms, he laid his hands on them and blessed them.

#### THE RICH YOUNG RULER

<sup>17</sup> As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>18</sup> “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked him. “No one is good except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: **Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud; honor your father and mother.**”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>20</sup> He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth.”

<sup>21</sup> Looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, “You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come,<sup>b</sup> follow me.”<sup>22</sup> But he was dismayed by this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

#### POSSESSIONS AND THE KINGDOM

<sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”

<sup>24</sup> The disciples were astonished at his words. Again Jesus said to them, “Children, how hard it is<sup>c</sup> to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

<sup>26</sup> They were even more astonished, saying to one another, “Then who can be saved?”

<sup>a</sup>10:19 Ex 20:12–16; Dt 5:16–20 <sup>b</sup>10:21 Other mss add *taking up the cross, and* <sup>c</sup>10:24 Other mss add *for those trusting in wealth* <sup>d</sup>10:29 Other mss add *or wife*

God’s kingdom a person must accept it as a gracious gift.

**10:16** The phrase **taking them in his arms** is one word in Greek. Jesus not only received the children, He also **blessed** them. The word for “blessed” is intensified, conveying Jesus’s sincerity.

**10:17** The **journey** language continues, reminding readers that Jesus was on His final sweep toward Jerusalem (v. 1; 8:27; 9:2,30,33). Matthew (Mt 19:22) states that this man who approached Jesus was “young,” and Luke (Lk 18:18) that he was “a ruler.” Mark indicates that he was wealthy (Mk 10:22). Hence the man is referred to as “The Rich Young Ruler.” His actions—**ran up, knelt down**—suggest earnestness and respect. He knew he was not entitled to life after death. Verse 23 shows that **eternal life** and “the kingdom of God” are synonymous.

**10:18** Jesus’s rebuff directed the man to God. In asserting that only God is **good**, Jesus did not deny His own deity. He only indicated that human judgment cannot serve as ultimate judge of good and bad.

**10:19** The **commandments** were from the second tablet of the law, those that focused on behavior and relationships (Ex 20:12–16; Dt 5:16–20).

**10:20** The young man again addressed Jesus as **teacher**, but this time he did not add “good” (v. 18).

**10:21** **Looking at him** is an intensified form of the verb, indicating close scrutiny. Only Mark states that **Jesus loved him**. The phrase **you lack one thing** shows that perfect obedience to the law does not merit eternal life. The “one thing” involved divesting himself of his possessions and becoming a disciple (1:17; 2:14). In exchange for earthly possessions, he would **have treasure in heaven**.

**10:22** He was **dismayed** is a descriptive verb used only here in Mark. It means “shocked” or “appalled.” The effect of Jesus’s **demand** must have been visible on the young man’s face. Rather than following Jesus (v. 21), he **went away**, choosing his **many possessions** over Jesus. He is an example of 4:19 (see note at 4:14–20).

**10:23** **How hard it is** refers to extreme difficulty. Rather than an advantage, possessions are a hindrance to entering God’s kingdom.

**10:24** **On were astonished**, see note at 1:21–22. Perhaps the disciples understood wealth as a sign of God’s blessing (Dt 28:1–14).

**10:25** Jesus used a proverb for impossibility. The **camel** was the largest animal

in Palestine, and one certainly could not squeeze through **the eye of a needle**.

**10:26** The astonishment of Jesus’s disciples increased from “astonished” in v. 24 to **even more astonished** in v. 26. **Be saved** (Gk *sōzō*) is equivalent to “enter the kingdom of God” (vv. 23–25), “eternal life” (vv. 17,30), “heaven” (v. 21), and “the age to come” (v. 30).

**10:27** The phrase **looking at** connotes great intensity. It recalls how Jesus looked at the young man (v. 21).

**10:28** As usual, **Peter** served as spokesman for the disciples (8:29,32; 9:5; 11:21). In his judgment, he and the disciples had done what Jesus commanded the rich man to do (10:21).

**10:29** **Truly I tell you** was Jesus’s solemn oath formula. He placed equal importance on Himself and the gospel.

**10:30** The promised compensation (**a hundred times more**) covered **this time** (see 3:34–35) and **the age to come**. Following Jesus provides no protection against suffering, but the reward includes **eternal life**. The rich ruler sought this (v. 17) but walked away from it (v. 22).

**10:31** Jesus emphasized the reversal of values that is so prominent in Christian discipleship (cp. Mt 19:30; 20:16; Lk 13:30).

**WARM-UP:** Read Mark 10:35–45

**WORKOUT:** How is Jesus Christ’s teaching about greatness (v. 43) different from what the world teaches?

**WRAP-UP:** What does it mean to be a servant to others? Do you tend most often to be a servant or the one served?

<sup>27</sup> Looking at them, Jesus said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God, because all things are possible with God.”

<sup>28</sup> Peter began to tell him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.”

<sup>29</sup> “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said, “there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father<sup>d</sup> or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel,<sup>30</sup> who will not receive a hundred times more, now at this time — houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions — and eternal life in the age to come.<sup>31</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

## THE THIRD PREDICTION OF HIS DEATH

<sup>32</sup> They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. The disciples were astonished, but those who followed him were afraid. Taking the Twelve aside again, he began to tell them the things that would happen to him. <sup>33</sup> "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death. Then they will hand him over to the Gentiles, <sup>34</sup> and they will mock him, spit on him, flog<sup>a</sup> him, and kill him, and he will rise after three days."

## SUFFERING AND SERVICE

<sup>35</sup> James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him and said, "Teacher, we want you to do whatever we ask you."

<sup>36</sup> "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked them.

<sup>37</sup> They answered him, "Allow us to sit at your right and at your left in your glory."

<sup>38</sup> Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup I drink or to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

<sup>39</sup> "We are able," they told him.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with. <sup>40</sup> But to sit at my right or left is not mine to give; instead, it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

<sup>41</sup> When the ten disciples heard this, they began to be indignant with James and John. <sup>42</sup> Jesus called them over and said to them, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it

over them, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them. <sup>43</sup> But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave to all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."<sup>b</sup>

## A BLIND MAN HEALED

<sup>46</sup> They came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting by the road.

<sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

<sup>48</sup> Many warned him to keep quiet, but he was crying out all the more, "Have mercy on me, Son of David!"

<sup>49</sup> Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called the blind man and said to him, "Have courage! Get up; he's calling for you." <sup>50</sup> He threw off his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

<sup>51</sup> Then Jesus answered him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Rabboni,"<sup>c</sup> the blind man said to him, "I want to see."

<sup>52</sup> Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has saved you."

Immediately he could see and began to follow Jesus on the road.

## THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

**11** When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples <sup>2</sup> and told them, "Go into the village ahead of you. As soon as you

<sup>a</sup>10:34 Or scourge <sup>b</sup>10:45 Or in the place of many; Is 53:10–12 <sup>c</sup>10:51 Hb word for my lord

**10:32** The road trip continues (vv. 1,17; 8:27; 9:2,30,33–34). The eastern approach to Jerusalem goes up because of the city's elevation. Jesus was walking ahead of them, showing He was not afraid of what awaited Him.

**10:33–34** This is Jesus's third and most detailed prediction of His passion and resurrection. Jesus's use of *we* must have frightened the disciples even further. In this final prediction, Jesus declared that the chief priests and the scribes would condemn him to death (see notes at 14:53 and 14:64) and hand him over to the Gentiles since they lacked authority to carry out the sentence (15:1–2).

**10:35–45** James and John failed to realize the implications of Jesus's suffering and death.

**10:35–36** This is the only time in Mark that James and John acted on their own apart from the other disciples, and they did so selfishly. Most likely they asked Jesus to grant their request even before they spelled it out because they knew they were being selfish.

**10:37** The right side was the highest position of honor, the left the second. James and John caught a glimpse of Jesus's glory in the transfiguration (9:2–13); now they wanted more. It was their mother who suggested they make this request (Mt 20:20–21).

**10:38** The cup and baptism refer to Jesus's suffering and death (14:36).

**10:39–40** You will may predict Jesus's martyrdom (Ac 12:2) and John's exile (Rv 1:9). It is for those for whom it has been prepared is a divine passive, indicating that God would decide who would receive places of honor.

**10:41** The other disciples became indignant, the same verb used of Jesus in v. 14.

**10:42** That Jesus instructed all His apostles in this lesson shows that all of them struggled with the same greed that led James and John to seek places of honor.

**10:43–44** Becoming great in Christian leadership means becoming a servant—that is, doing your Master's will and humbly working for the good of others.

**10:45** The greatest example of servant leadership is the Son of Man. Giving is the essence of servanthood, and Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many (cp. Is 53:10–12). "Ransom" refers to the price paid to release a slave. The words of v. 45 are crucial to Jesus's self-understanding of His death.

**10:46–52** Mark concludes the "on the road" section just as he began it—with the story of a blind man (8:22–26). This account contrasted what the blind man could see with what the disciples could not (10:35–45).

**10:46** The city of Jericho lay seventeen miles northeast and 3,500 feet below Je-

rusalem. The large crowd was made up of Passover pilgrims.

**10:47–48** This is the second time Mark identifies Him as Jesus of Nazareth (1:24), and the only time in Mark that someone addressed Jesus as Son of David, a messianic designation based on 2Sm 7:11–14 (cp. Mk 11:10; 12:35–37).

**10:52** In contrast to His healing of the blind man in 8:22–25, Jesus simply announced your faith has saved you, and Bartimaeus could see.

**11:1–11** Mark 11–16 covers "Holy Week." The material Mark devotes to these last seven days of Jesus's life comprises one-third of Mark's entire Gospel. Thus Jesus's final days in Jerusalem are crucial to a proper understanding of Jesus and His mission. Jesus's royal procession into Jerusalem took place on what is now called "Palm Sunday." His entry into Jerusalem is recorded in all four Gospels.

**11:1** This is Jesus's first recorded visit to Jerusalem in Mark. (Lk 2:41–52 records Jesus's visit as a boy and John's Gospel indicates several visits.) Bethphage (lit "house of unripe figs") was located on the slope of the Mount of Olives, a large hill east of Jerusalem. Bethany was two miles east of Jerusalem.

**11:2** The village ahead of you was probably Bethphage.



enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here right away.'"

<sup>4</sup> So they went and found a colt outside in the street, tied by a door. They untied it, <sup>5</sup> and some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" <sup>6</sup> They answered them just as Jesus had said; so they let them go.

<sup>7</sup> They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and he sat on it. <sup>8</sup> Many people spread their clothes on the road, and others spread leafy branches cut from the fields. <sup>9</sup> Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted:

*Hosanna!*

**Blessed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord!**<sup>8</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Blessed is the coming kingdom  
of our father David!

*Hosanna* in the highest heaven!

<sup>11</sup> He went into Jerusalem and into the temple. After looking around at everything, since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

#### THE BARREN FIG TREE IS CURSED

<sup>12</sup> The next day when they went out from Bethany, he was hungry. <sup>13</sup> Seeing in the distance a fig tree with leaves, he went to find out if there was anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves;

**WARM-UP:** Read Mark 11:12–19

**WORKOUT:** In what way had the temple area been made into "a den of thieves" (v. 17)? Why did Jesus Christ get so angry about it?

**WRAP-UP:** Where do you need to take a righteous stand? How can you go about this?

for it was not the season for figs. <sup>14</sup> He said to it, "**May no one ever eat fruit from you again!**" And his disciples heard it.

#### CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

<sup>15</sup> They came to Jerusalem, and he went into the temple and began to throw out those buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, <sup>16</sup> and would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple. <sup>17</sup> He was teaching them: "**Is it not written, My house will be called a house**

<sup>11:8</sup> Other mss read *others were cutting leafy branches from the trees and spreading them on the road* <sup>11:9</sup> Ps 118:26

<sup>11:3</sup> Commentator R.T. France supposes that these words were a "prearranged password."

<sup>11:4</sup> Outside in the street indicates the colt was in plain sight.

<sup>11:5</sup> Someone did ask as Jesus predicted in v. 3.

<sup>11:6</sup> This verse may indicate that Jesus arranged in advance to borrow the colt.

<sup>11:7</sup> The two unnamed disciples threw their clothes on the donkey to create a makeshift saddle. Even though Mark did not quote Zch 9:9 in this account (as did Mt 21:5; Jn 12:15), the messianic symbolism of Jesus's action is clear.

<sup>11:8</sup> Clothes and leafy branches were traditionally draped across the road to receive a king (cp. 2Kg 9:13).

<sup>11:9</sup> The two groups (those who went ahead... those who followed) may refer to fellow pilgrims traveling with Jesus (10:46) and those who came out of Jerusalem to meet them (Jn 12:9; cp. Mt 21:10–11). The crowd's shouts were recitations from Ps 118:25–26, the last of the Hallel psalms sung at Passover. *Hosanna* is Hebrew for "save us."

<sup>11:10</sup> Only Mark recorded this shout from the crowd. The words echo Bartimaeus's cry (10:47–48).

<sup>11:11</sup> Herod's temple was being reconstructed, a project that had been going on for more than forty-five years (13:1; Jn

2:20). Bethany, two miles east of Jerusalem, was where Jesus apparently lodged during Passover.

<sup>11:12–26</sup> Matthew recorded the temple clearing (Mt 21:12–17) and the cursing of the fig tree (21:18–20) as distinct events. Mark divided the cursing of the fig tree (Mk 11:12–14) from its withering (vv. 20–21) and placed the clearing of the temple in between (vv. 15–19). Thus he meant for readers to see the connection between the barren fig tree (symbolic for Israel) and the barren temple. Jesus's cursing of the fig tree was an acted-out parable of God's judgment on Jerusalem and the temple.

<sup>11:12</sup> The next day was Monday of Holy Week.

<sup>11:13</sup> Jesus spotted a fig tree that bore nothing but leaves. Even though it was not the season for figs, the leafy tree should have been covered with edible buds (Gk *paggim*).

<sup>11:14</sup> Jesus's words express a curse (v. 21). This is the last of Jesus's miracles recorded in Mark and the only miracle of destruction in the Gospels. In the OT, the fig tree was a symbol of Israel (Jr 24:1–10; Hs 9:10; cp. Lk 13:6–9). The episode recalls Jr 8:13; Hs 2:12; and Mc 7:1.

<sup>11:15–18</sup> Scripture prophesied that the Messiah would purify the temple (Ezk 37:26–28; Mal 3:1–4). Jesus's temple cleansing is clearly messianic. John recorded a

cleansing at the beginning of his Gospel (Jn 2:13–17).

<sup>11:15</sup> Having noted all that went on in the temple the day before, Jesus now returned, probably to the Court of the Gentiles, where most buying and selling occurred. People who traveled from afar needed to purchase pure, unblemished animals once they arrived for Passover. Money changers exchanged idol-engraved Greek and Roman coinage for imageless Tyrian or Jewish temple coins that could be used to buy sacrificial items or pay the temple tax (Ex 30:11–16). Doves were offered by women after childbirth (Lv 12:6–8; Lk 2:22–24), by cleansed lepers (Lv 14:22), by those healed of bodily discharges (15:14, 29), and by those who could not afford more expensive sacrifices (5:7, 11). Sheep and cattle were sold also (Jn 2:14). The Court of the Gentiles had become a virtual stockyard.

<sup>11:16</sup> Only Mark adds the information in this verse, indicating further inappropriate use of the temple as a thoroughfare or shortcut.

<sup>11:17</sup> The written text Jesus quoted was Is 56:7. Only Mark added for all nations. The den of thieves quotation is from Jr 7:11, part of Jeremiah's sermon in which he condemned temple goers for their attitudes and behaviors and predicted the temple's destruction (7:12–15).



of prayer for all nations?<sup>a</sup> But you have made it a den of thieves!"<sup>b</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The chief priests and the scribes heard it and started looking for a way to kill him. For they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was astonished by his teaching.

<sup>19</sup> Whenever evening came, they would go out of the city.

#### THE BARREN FIG TREE IS WITHERED

<sup>20</sup> Early in the morning, as they were passing by, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. <sup>21</sup> Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered."

<sup>22</sup> Jesus replied to them, "Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup> Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. <sup>24</sup> Therefore I tell you, everything you pray and ask for — believe that you have received<sup>c</sup> it and it will be yours. <sup>25</sup> And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing."<sup>d</sup>

#### THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHALLENGED

<sup>27</sup> They came again to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came <sup>28</sup> and asked him, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do these things?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; then answer me, and I will tell you by what authority

I do these things. <sup>30</sup> Was John's baptism from heaven or of human origin? Answer me."

<sup>31</sup> They discussed it among themselves: "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' <sup>32</sup> But if we say, 'Of human origin' — they were afraid of the crowd, because everyone thought that John was truly a prophet. <sup>33</sup> So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

#### THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD OWNER

**12** He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug out a pit for a winepress, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenant farmers and went away. <sup>2</sup> At harvest time he sent a servant to the farmers to collect some of the fruit of the vineyard from them. <sup>3</sup> But they took him, beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>4</sup> Again he sent another servant to them, and they<sup>e</sup> hit him on the head and treated him shamefully. <sup>5</sup> Then he sent another, and they killed that one. He also sent many others; some they beat, and others they killed. <sup>6</sup> He still had one to send, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <sup>7</sup> But those tenant farmers said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' <sup>8</sup> So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. <sup>9</sup> What then will the owner<sup>f</sup> of the vineyard do? He will come and kill the farmers and give the vineyard to others. <sup>10</sup> Haven't you read this Scripture:

<sup>a</sup>11:17 Is 56:7 <sup>b</sup>11:17 Jr 7:11 <sup>c</sup>11:24 Some mss read you receive; other mss read you will receive <sup>d</sup>11:25 Some mss include v. 26: "But if you don't forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your wrongdoing." <sup>e</sup>12:4 Other mss add threw stones and <sup>f</sup>12:4 Other mss add and sent him off <sup>g</sup>12:9 Or lord

**11:18** Jesus's last word in v. 17, "thieves" (Gk *lēstēs*), involved foreshadowing since within three days He would be arrested as if He were a thief ("criminal," 14:48) and within four days would be crucified between two thieves ("criminals," 15:27). The words a way to kill him recall the plot in 3:6 by the Pharisees and Herodians.

**11:19–20** The destruction of the fig tree echoes Hos 9:10,16.

**11:21** This is the second time Mark records Peter addressing Jesus as Rabbi (9:5). Peter served as spokesman for the disciples (8:29,32; 9:5; 10:28).

**11:22** The proper object of faith is God, not the temple.

**11:23–24** Jesus's saying on faith and impossibilities (cp. 1Co 13:2) began with His solemn formula, Truly I tell you (cp. 3:28; 8:12; 9:1,41; 10:15,29). He gave a negative condition (does not doubt in his heart) and a positive condition (but believes) for fulfillment of this promise (cp. Jms 1:6).

**11:25** A second condition to petitions being granted is to forgive others. Standing while praying was the usual Jewish posture for public prayers (cp. Lk 18:9–14). If you

have anything against anyone recalls Mt 5:23–24 (cp. Mt 18:21–35).

**11:27–12:44** In this section Mark recorded a series of conflict stories with the religious leaders.

**11:27** The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders made up the Sanhedrin, the seventy-member governing body of the Jews. These were representatives, not the whole body. In His first death prediction, Jesus named these groups as those who would put Him to death (see note at 8:31).

**11:28** The questions focused on the nature (by what) of Jesus's authority (Gk *exousia*) and on who gave it to Him. Jesus's authority had been at issue since the beginning (1:22,27; 2:10). These things probably refers to His temple clearing and His royal entry into the city.

**11:29–30** John's baptism encapsulates John the Baptist's entire ministry. From heaven means "from God." Jesus's question turned the tables on the Pharisees. If they admitted that John was sent by God, they would have to admit the same about Jesus.

**11:31–33** A genuine prophet has authority from heaven. If John was a prophet from God,

Jesus was even more so. Unwilling to admit this, the authorities refused to answer Jesus.

**12:1** The phrase a man planted a vineyard points to the song of Is 5:1–7 in which Israel is symbolized by a vineyard. Tenant farmers and absentee landlords stand for Israel's leaders.

**12:2–5** Harvest time for a vineyard might be as late as the fifth year after the vines were planted (Lv 19:23–25). The mistreated servants stand for the prophets.

**12:6** The beloved son in this parable is Jesus. The adjective "beloved" is used two other times in Mark—both spoken by the Father in reference to Jesus (1:11; 9:7).

**12:7** Come, let's kill him were the words spoken by Joseph's brothers (Gn 37:20).

**12:8** Matthew (Mt 21:39) and Luke (Lk 20:15) report that the son was cast out before being killed. Mark's order (seized him, killed him, and threw him out) indicates they did not give the son a proper burial.

**12:9** The man who planted the vineyard (v. 1) and sent his servants and son is identified as the owner . . . Give the vineyard to others alludes to the upcoming gospel mission to the Gentiles.

**The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.**

**<sup>11</sup> This came about from the Lord and is wonderful in our eyes?<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>12</sup> They were looking for a way to arrest him but feared the crowd because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. So they left him and went away.

#### GOD AND CAESAR

<sup>13</sup> Then they sent some of the Pharisees and the Herodians to Jesus to trap him in his words. <sup>14</sup> When they came, they said to him, “Teacher, we know you are truthful and don’t care what anyone thinks, nor do you show partiality but teach the way of God truthfully. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”

<sup>15</sup> But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius<sup>b</sup> to look at.” <sup>16</sup> They brought a coin. “Whose image and inscription is this?” he asked them.

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

<sup>17</sup> Jesus told them, “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were utterly amazed at him.

#### THE SADDUCEES AND THE RESURRECTION

<sup>18</sup> Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and questioned him: <sup>19</sup> “Teacher, Moses wrote

for us that if a man’s brother dies, leaving a wife behind but no child, that man should take the wife and raise up offspring for his brother.<sup>c</sup> <sup>20</sup> There were seven brothers. The first married a woman, and dying, left no offspring. <sup>21</sup> The second also took her, and he died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. <sup>22</sup> None of the seven<sup>d</sup> left offspring. Last of all, the woman died too. <sup>23</sup> In the resurrection, when they rise,<sup>e</sup> whose wife will she be, since the seven had married her?”

<sup>24</sup> Jesus spoke to them, “Isn’t this the reason why you’re mistaken: you don’t know the Scriptures or the power of God? <sup>25</sup> For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup> And as for the dead being raised — haven’t you read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God said to him: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob?<sup>f</sup> <sup>27</sup> He is not the God of the dead but of the living. You are badly mistaken.”

#### THE PRIMARY COMMANDS

<sup>28</sup> One of the scribes approached. When he heard them debating and saw that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, “Which command is the most important of all?”

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, “The most important<sup>g</sup> is Listen, Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”

<sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with

<sup>a</sup>12:10–11 Ps 118:22–23 <sup>b</sup>12:15 A denarius = one day’s wage <sup>c</sup>12:19 Gn 38:8; Dt 25:5 <sup>d</sup>12:22 Other mss add *had taken her* and <sup>e</sup>12:23 Other mss omit *when they rise* <sup>f</sup>12:26 Ex 3:6,15–16 <sup>g</sup>12:29 Other mss add *of all the commands* <sup>h</sup>12:29 Or *the Lord our God is Lord alone*.

**12:10–11** Jesus concluded by quoting Ps 118:22–23, the first verse of which is also quoted elsewhere (Lk 20:17; Ac 4:11; Rm 9:33; 1Pt 2:6–8). Only Mark and Matthew (Mt 21:42) includes Ps 118:23, which adds a strong providential element. **Cornerstone** may refer to a foundation cornerstone, the capstone on a column, or the keystone in an arch.

**12:12** Fear of the crowd is also mentioned in 11:32; 14:1–2.

**12:13** The fact that the Pharisees (see note at 2:15–17) and the Herodians (see note at 3:6) were sent indicates an approved delegation. The same groups are united in 3:6 in the plot against Jesus in Galilee. They hoped to trap Jesus with a trick question.

**12:14** The specific tax the Pharisees and Herodians had in mind was the Roman poll tax imposed when Judea became a Roman province in AD 6. This tax was particularly offensive to Jews as it represented their subjugation to Rome.

**12:15** If Jesus answered “yes,” He would be seen as pro-Roman and would alienate the crowds. If He said “no,” the Pharisees and Herodians would denounce Him as a revolutionary (Lk 20:20). Jesus was not fooled. He saw their hypocrisy and realized they were testing Him. A denarius was the equivalent of a day’s wages (Mt 20:9–10).

**12:16–17** The denarius bore an image of Tiberius Caesar (reigned AD 14–37) with an inscription professing his divinity. Since Jesus was asked about giving (vv. 14–15), He replied with a lesson about ownership. The coin had Caesar’s image, so it belonged to Caesar. Jesus supported the legitimacy of human government, but He raised the issue to a higher level. He did not identify the things that are God’s, but since humans bear God’s image (Gn 1:27), we have an obligation to give to God that which bears His image—ourselves.

**12:18** The Sadducees arose in the second century BC during the Maccabean revolt. They were closely associated with aristocratic and priestly classes; accepted only the books of Moses (the Pentateuch) as Scripture; denied bodily resurrection, future judgment, the existence of angels, demons, and spirits; and affirmed human free will (v. 18; Ac 23:6–8; Josephus, *Ant.*, 18.1.4).

**12:19–23** The Sadducees approached Jesus with a situation based on the books of Moses. Specifically, the case involved the levirate (or brother-in-law) marriage law (Dt 25:5–6). This law obligated a male sibling to marry his deceased brother’s widow in order to preserve the family name and inheritance. Based on this, the Sadducees presented a scenario designed to make the doctrine of resurrection look absurd. Their

question assumed that the future life will be like the temporal life.

**12:24–27** Jesus declared that the afterlife will be different from life on earth. In heaven people will not marry or be given in marriage. By going to the book of Moses, specifically Ex 3 and the passage about the burning bush, Jesus used the part of the OT that the Sadducees recognized as Scripture. The point of the OT quotation is that Abraham . . . Isaac, and Jacob were long dead by the time God spoke to Moses, but God declared He was their God. Since God is not the God of the dead but of the living, they must still be alive.

**12:28–40** This section describes three encounters with the scribes. The scribes were allies of the chief priests and elders (see note at 11:27).

**12:28** The phrase **one of the scribes** may indicate that others were standing by ready to challenge Jesus (cp. Mt 22:34–35). This is the first time in the temple that an individual approached Jesus rather than a group. He wanted to know which command was most important. The rabbis had counted 613 commandments in the books of Moses. They classified 365 as prohibitions and 248 as commands. They further divided the commandments into weightier and lesser (“least” in Mt 5:19).

**12:29–30** Jesus quoted the Shema (Dt 6:4–5), a Scripture passage that pious Jews recited

**all your strength.**<sup>A,B</sup> <sup>31</sup> **The second is, Love your neighbor as yourself.** *There is no other command greater than these.*"

<sup>32</sup> Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, teacher. You have correctly said that he is one, and there is no one else except him. <sup>33</sup> And to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding,<sup>o</sup> and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself, is far more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices."

<sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, **"You are not far from the kingdom of God."** And no one dared to question him any longer.

#### THE QUESTION ABOUT THE MESSIAH

<sup>35</sup> While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he asked, **"How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David?"** <sup>36</sup> David himself says by the Holy Spirit:

**The Lord declared to my Lord,  
'Sit at my right hand  
until I put your enemies under your feet.'**<sup>E</sup>

<sup>37</sup> David himself calls him 'Lord.' **How, then, can he be his son?"** And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

<sup>A</sup>12:30 Other mss add *This is the first commandment.* <sup>B</sup>12:30 Dt 6:4–5; Jos 22:5 <sup>C</sup>12:31 Lv 19:18 <sup>D</sup>12:33 Other mss add with *all your soul* <sup>E</sup>12:36 Ps 110:1

every morning and evening. The words affirmed monotheistic orthodoxy (the Lord is one), identified the primary affection with which people were to relate to God (love), and emphasized the necessity to do so with one's total being: heart (affections); soul (spirit); mind (intelligence); and strength (the will).

**12:31** The scribe asked Jesus for one commandment, but Jesus gave him two. Love for neighbors is rooted in love for God, the first commandment. No one before Jesus had combined these commandments (Lv 19:18; Dt 6:5), but it became standard for his followers (Rm 13:8–10; Gl 5:14; Jms 2:8–11; 1Jn 4:11,19–20).

**12:32–33** Only Mark records the scribe's response and Jesus's praise. The scribe saw that the love Jesus spoke of was far more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices.

**12:34** Jesus told the scribe that he had answered wisely. Ironically the scene ended with Jesus judging the scribe rather than vice versa. Having foiled all questioners, Jesus now posed His own question (v. 35).

**12:35** Jesus's question related to the scribes and their understanding of Messiah (1:1; 8:29) as son of David (see note at 10:47–48). This identification, based on God's promise in 2Sm 7:12–16, was commonplace in Jesus's time.

**12:36–37** Jesus quoted Ps 110:1, the OT text quoted and alluded to most frequently in the NT (thirty-three times). Jesus affirmed the psalm's Davidic authorship and inspiration by the Holy Spirit (cp. 2Sm 23:2; Ac 1:16). The scribes identified Messiah as David's son (vv. 35–36), but David identi-

fied Messiah as His Lord. Therefore, Messiah was not just a descendant of David. He was David's Lord.

**12:38–39** The phrase he also said indicates that Mark's summary in vv. 38–40 is only a brief part of the extensive condemnations of the scribes and Pharisees (cp. Mt 23; Lk 11:37–54). Naming four examples of what the scribes took pleasure in, Jesus first condemned them for showmanship. Their long robes were festive garments that were unreasonable for everyday wear. Greetings in the marketplaces refers to the fact that people were expected to rise in the presence of scribes. The best seats faced the congregation, identifying those seated as teachers and distinguished persons. On places of honor at banquets, see Jesus's comments in Lk 14:7–11.

**12:40** Jesus condemned the scribes for dishonesty and hypocrisy. Widows were among the most vulnerable people. To defraud them was despicable (Is 1:17,23; 10:2; Jr 7:6; Ezk 22:7; Zch 7:10), whether by embezzlement or other fraudulent means. Jesus identified these greedy scribes as thieves. The phrase these will receive harsher judgment refers to God's eschatological judgment (cp. 9:42–48).

**12:41** Previously Jesus was in the Court of the Gentiles. The temple treasury was in the Court of the Women, so named not because only women were allowed there but because that was as close as women could come to the sanctuary. The treasury consisted of thirteen trumpet-shaped chests into which worshipers deposited their freewill offerings. Apparently the trumpet shape of the collection boxes amplified the sound of coins

#### WARNING AGAINST THE SCRIBES

<sup>38</sup> He also said in his teaching, **"Beware of the scribes, who want to go around in long robes and who want greetings in the marketplaces,** <sup>39</sup> **the best seats in the synagogues, and the places of honor at banquets.** <sup>40</sup> **They devour widows' houses and say long prayers just for show. These will receive harsher judgment."**

#### THE WIDOW'S GIFT

<sup>41</sup> Sitting across from the temple treasury, he watched how the crowd dropped money into the treasury. Many rich people were putting in large sums. <sup>42</sup> Then a poor widow came and dropped in two tiny coins worth very little. <sup>43</sup> Summoning his disciples, he said to them, **"Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.** <sup>44</sup> **For they all gave out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had — all she had to live on."**

#### DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE PREDICTED

**13** As he was going out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, **"Teacher, look! What massive stones! What impressive buildings!"**

<sup>2</sup> Jesus said to him, **"Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another — all will be thrown down."**

when they were dropped in, making it obvious when rich people deposited large sums.

**12:42–44** The two tiny coins are identified as *lepta*—copper coins of little value. The widow's gift meant more than the larger gifts of rich people because she gave in spite of her poverty. The phrase **all she had to live on** meant she would not have enough for her next meal.

**13:1–37** This chapter is often called Jesus's Olivet Discourse (cp. Mt 24–25; Lk 21). The themes of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans in AD 70 seem to be interwoven with the final tribulation and Jesus's return. Some interpreters assign all of Mk 13 to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Most believe Jesus used the earlier destruction to foreshadow the end times. Some who hold this latter view assign vv. 1–13 to the first-century events and vv. 14–37 to earth's last days. Others assign vv. 1–31 to the first century and vv. 32–37 to the end times. Still others find an A1–B1–A2–B2 pattern and assign vv. 1–13 and 28–31 to the first century and vv. 14–27 and 32–37 to the end times.

**13:1** The massive stones and buildings of the temple complex were truly impressive. Herod's temple had been under construction for almost fifty years, and the Jewish historian Josephus said some of the stones were sixty feet long. Archaeologists have found stones forty-two feet long, eleven feet high, and fourteen feet deep, weighing more than a million pounds.

**13:2** Jesus prophesied (announced, not merely predicted) the destruction of the great buildings. Symbolically in the withering of the fig tree (11:12–14,20–21) Jesus

## SIGNS OF THE END OF THE AGE

<sup>3</sup> While he was sitting on the Mount of Olives across from the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?”

<sup>5</sup> Jesus told them, “Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>6</sup> Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and they will deceive many. <sup>7</sup> When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don’t be alarmed; these things must take place, but it is not yet the end. <sup>8</sup> For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. <sup>9</sup> These are the beginning of birth pains.

## PERSECUTIONS PREDICTED

<sup>9</sup> “But you, be on your guard! They will hand you over to local courts, <sup>10</sup> and you will be flogged in the synagogues. You will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a witness to them. <sup>11</sup> And it is necessary that the gospel be preached to all nations. <sup>12</sup> So when they arrest you and hand you over, don’t worry beforehand what you will say, but say whatever is given to you at that time, for it isn’t you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

<sup>12</sup> “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. <sup>13</sup> You will be hated by

everyone because of my name, but the one who endures to the end will be saved.

## THE GREAT TRIBULATION

<sup>14</sup> “When you see the **abomination of desolation**<sup>c</sup> standing where it should not be” (let the reader understand), “then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. <sup>15</sup> A man on the housetop must not come down or go in to get anything out of his house, <sup>16</sup> and a man in the field must not go back to get his coat. <sup>17</sup> Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days!

<sup>18</sup> “Pray it<sup>d</sup> won’t happen in winter. <sup>19</sup> For those will be days of tribulation, the kind that hasn’t been from the beginning of creation until now and never will be again. <sup>20</sup> If the Lord had not cut those days short, no one would be saved. But he cut those days short for the sake of the elect, whom he chose.

<sup>21</sup> “Then if anyone tells you, ‘See, here is the Messiah! See, there!’ do not believe it. <sup>22</sup> For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and will perform signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the elect. <sup>23</sup> And you must watch! I have told you everything in advance.

## THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

<sup>24</sup> “But in those days, after that tribulation: The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; <sup>25</sup> the stars will be falling from the sky, and the

<sup>a</sup>13:8 Other mss add *and disturbances* <sup>b</sup>13:9 Or *sanhedrins* <sup>c</sup>13:14 Dn 9:27 <sup>d</sup>13:18 Other mss read “Pray that your escape

had already prophesied their end. Some question the accuracy of **not one stone will be left upon another** because some stones remain today in the Western Wall, but this was not part of the temple itself but the foundation that supported the platform on which the temple stood.

**13:3 The Mount of Olives** rose three hundred feet above Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley. It provided a panoramic view of the temple and Jerusalem.

**13:4 These things and all these things** refer to Jesus’s comment in v. 2 and the temple’s destruction. According to Mark and Luke (Lk 21:7), the disciples asked a double question. Their first question was about **when** the destruction would occur; their second asked what **sign** would precede it.

**13:5–13** Jesus began His discourse by warning that His followers would experience persecution **because of Him**. (v. 13).

**13:5 Watch out** (cp. vv. 9, 23, 33) lays on the disciples the responsibility to avoid being deceived. Jesus had accused the Sadducees of being deceived (12:24, 27).

**13:6** False claimants and false teachers can be popular. The phrase **in my name** may mean these impostors would claim to teach in Jesus’s name or that they would claim to be Messiah (cp. Mt 24:5).

**13:7 Wars and rumors of wars** are not signs of the end but characterize the entire age. Jesus said **these things must take place**, meaning they are part of God’s plan.

**13:8** Natural disasters are not signs of the end, only the **beginning of birth pains**.

Though troubling, these pains are harbingers of hope and new life.

**13:9 Hand you over** refers to betrayal. On being **flogged**, see 2Co 11:24–25. **Governors and kings** referred to Roman political authorities. Thus Jesus’s disciples could expect to experience persecution from Jewish and Gentile powers, from religious and secular authorities.

**13:10** Persecution is the context in which universal proclamation of the **gospel** will take place.

**13:11** Jesus admonished His disciples against anxiety that would distract them from their witness. God would give the appropriate response through His **Holy Spirit**. This is the last reference to the Spirit in Mark (1:8, 10, 12; 3:29; 12:36) and the only one that pictures His role with believers. On the Holy Spirit as Counselor, see Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.

**13:12** Some Christians will experience betrayal by family members, even to the point of **death** (cp. Mt 10:34–36).

**13:13 You will be hated** indicates the animosity unbelievers often feel toward Christians because of the **name of Jesus** (cp. 1Pt 4:16). Jesus did not warn His followers so they could seek safety but so they would endure faithfully.

**13:14 The abomination of desolation** is drawn from Dn 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 (cp. Mt 24:15) and was used to describe the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BC (see the apocryphal book 1Macc 1:54). Jesus’s reference may be to some event prior to AD 70 or to the “man of lawlessness”

(2Th 2:3–10; cp. Rv 13:1–10, 14–15). Mark did not identify the location for **standing where it should not be**, but Matthew (Mt 24:15) said “in the holy place,” meaning the temple’s sanctuary (cp. 2Th 2:4).

**13:15–16 On housetop**, see note at 2:4. Laborers who worked in the fields often laid aside their outer garments as they worked.

**13:17 Woe** is not a condemnation as in Mt 23:13–32 but a cry of pity for **pregnant women and nursing mothers** unable to move quickly.

**13:18 Winter** weather along with swollen streams that could not be crossed would add to the difficulty of their flight (cp. Mt 24:20).

**13:19** This verse is drawn from Dn 12:1. The intensity of these **days of tribulation** (cp. Rv 7:14) will exceed what was experienced in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

**13:20** The Lord will curtail the tribulation for the sake of the **elect**, emphasizing God’s sovereign choice.

**13:21–22 False prophets** were a problem in both the OT (Dt 13:1–5; 18:20–22) and the NT (Mt 7:15; 24:11; Lk 6:26; Ac 13:6; 2Pt 2:1; 1Jn 4:1). **Signs and wonders** is a standard expression for miracles in the OT and NT. The false messiahs and false prophets will have no trouble performing signs—but their purpose will be to **lead astray**. These words foreshadow Paul’s in 2Th 2:9–12.

**13:23** Jesus had also told them to **watch** in v. 5.

**13:24–25** Just as Jesus warned of earthly signs occurring before the tribulation, He



powers in the heavens will be shaken.<sup>26</sup> Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.<sup>27</sup> He will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

### THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

<sup>28</sup> "Learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near.<sup>29</sup> In the same way, when you see these things happening, recognize<sup>a</sup> that he<sup>b</sup> is near — at the door.

<sup>30</sup> "Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things take place.<sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

### NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR

<sup>32</sup> "Now concerning that day or hour no one knows — neither the angels in heaven nor the Son — but only the Father.

<sup>33</sup> "Watch! Be alert!<sup>c</sup> For you don't know when the time is coming.

<sup>34</sup> "It is like a man on a journey, who left his house, gave authority to his servants, gave each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to be alert.<sup>35</sup> Therefore be alert, since you don't know when the master of the house is coming — whether in the evening or at midnight or at the crowing

of the rooster or early in the morning.<sup>36</sup> Otherwise, when he comes suddenly he might find you sleeping.<sup>37</sup> And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Be alert!"

### THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

**14** It was two days before the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a cunning way to arrest Jesus and kill him.<sup>2</sup> "Not during the festival," they said, "so that there won't be a riot among the people."

### THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

<sup>3</sup> While he was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,<sup>a</sup> as he was reclining at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured it on his head.<sup>4</sup> But some were expressing indignation to one another: "Why has this perfume been wasted?<sup>5</sup> For this perfume might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii<sup>e</sup> and given to the poor." And they began to scold her.

<sup>6</sup> Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a noble thing for me.<sup>7</sup> You always have the poor with you, and you can do what is good for them whenever you want, but you do not always have me.<sup>8</sup> She has done what

<sup>a</sup>13:29 Or you know <sup>b</sup>13:29 Or it <sup>c</sup>13:33 Other mss add and pray <sup>d</sup>14:3 Gk leprosy; a term for various skin diseases; see Lk 13:14 <sup>e</sup>14:5 A denarius = one day's wage

also spoke of cosmic signs occurring after that tribulation. He declared that the powers in the heavens will be shaken as if with a heavenly earthquake (cp. Heb 12:26–29). His language is drawn from Is 13:9–10; Jl 2:10–11, 30–31; 3:14–16.

**13:26** Jesus drew the wording for this verse from Dn 7:13. They will see refers to those living when these events occur. The clouds are a reference to God's presence (9:7; 14:62; Ex 19:9; 1Kg 8:10–11; Ps 97:2; Dn 7:13). The phrase with great power and glory contrasts with the Son of Man's first coming in weakness and humility.

**13:27** The angels are regularly pictured as accompanying Christ on His return (8:38; Mt 13:39–41; 16:27; 25:31). The two phrases from the four winds and from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven stand in apposition to each other. The language is based on Dt 13:7; 30:4; and Zch 2:6. The former refers to the cardinal points—north, south, east, and west. The latter refers to the extremities of earth and heaven. There is no place in all creation where the elect are that will be overlooked (cp. Ps 107:1–3; Is 45:5–7; 49:12; Mt 8:11; Lk 13:29).

**13:28** For Jesus's previous use of a fig tree, see notes at 11:13 and 11:19–20. When the fig tree sprouts, usually in March or April around Passover, summer is near.

**13:29** Just as Jesus's followers knew how to read the signs of the coming summer, so also when they saw these things

happening they were to know that a cataclysmic event was near. It is unclear whether Jesus was referring to Jerusalem's fall or His return in the end time.

**13:30** Truly I tell you was Jesus's standard indication of a solemn pronouncement. The generation that will not pass away until all these things take place is either Jesus's contemporary generation that would live to see the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (cp. 8:12, 38; 9:19) or the eschatological generation that will be alive when the end begins.

**13:31** Heaven and earth will pass away because they are temporal by nature. Jesus's words, however, will never pass away. Only God can make this claim (Is 40:8; 51:6). Jesus's words are as sure and permanent as God's Word (Mt 5:18; Lk 16:17).

**13:32** That day or hour indicates Jesus was speaking of the eschatological future. When the end will come is unknown to angels or even the Son. Only the Father knows (Ac 1:7).

**13:33** Be alert expresses the idea of staying awake and watchful. Even though Jesus's disciples don't know when the time is coming, they are to be ready and faithful.

**13:34–37** Jesus's followers are to be like the doorkeeper, always on the alert for the master's coming. Evening, midnight, the crowing of the rooster, and early in the morning are the four watches of the night based on the Roman identification of them. Suddenly

indicates not the speed but the unexpectedness of the master's return.

**14:1** The temporal clause—it was two days before—points to the start of the Jewish Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. This means the Sanhedrin plotted to kill Jesus some time between sunset on Tuesday and sunset on Wednesday.

**14:2** The Sanhedrin hesitated to act because of Jesus's popularity among the people who had flooded into town for Passover.

**14:3** On Bethany, see notes at 11:1 and 11:11. An alabaster jar was a long-necked perfume vase that was considered a luxury item. A woman (Mary of Bethany, according to Jn 12:2–3) poured expensive perfume of pure nard on Jesus's head.

**14:4–5** Some people expressed indignation at the waste of expensive perfume, which was the equivalent of three hundred denarii.

**14:6** Jesus rebuked the critics of this woman. What they considered wasteful was actually a noble thing (lit "a good work"). Her act was noble because she did it for the Son of God, who is worthy of great sacrifices.

**14:7** Christ's followers could always minister to the poor, but they would not always have the chance to serve Jesus in person. On concern for the poor, see Dt 15:1–11.

**14:8** The phrase she has done what she could is almost identical to what Jesus said



she could; she has anointed my body in advance for burial.<sup>9</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

<sup>10</sup> Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. <sup>11</sup> And when they heard this, they were glad and promised to give him money. So he started looking for a good opportunity to betray him.

#### PREPARATION FOR PASSOVER

<sup>12</sup> On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrifice the Passover lamb, his disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare the Passover so that you may eat it?"

<sup>13</sup> So he sent two of his disciples and told them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. <sup>14</sup> Wherever he enters, tell the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' " <sup>15</sup> He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there." <sup>16</sup> So the disciples went out, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

#### BETRAYAL AT THE PASSOVER

<sup>17</sup> When evening came, he arrived with the Twelve. <sup>18</sup> While they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me — one who is eating with me."

<sup>19</sup> They began to be distressed and to say to him one by one, "Surely not I?"

<sup>20</sup> He said to them, "It is one of the Twelve — the one who is dipping bread in the bowl with me. <sup>21</sup> For the Son of Man will go just as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for him if he had not been born."

#### THE FIRST LORD'S SUPPER

<sup>22</sup> As they were eating, he took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." <sup>23</sup> Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. <sup>24</sup> He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant,<sup>a</sup> which is poured out for many. <sup>25</sup> Truly I tell you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new<sup>b</sup> in the kingdom of God."

<sup>26</sup> After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

<sup>a</sup>14:24 Other mss read *the new covenant*    <sup>b</sup>14:25 Or *drink new wine*; lit *drink it new*

about the poor widow's donation (see note at 12:42–44). The widow gave almost nothing of monetary value; this woman gave a wealthy gift, but Jesus commended both equally. Jesus interpreted the perfume as a makeshift anointing oil for His coming burial.

**14:9** Jesus anticipated that the gospel would be proclaimed in the whole world (cp. 13:10). When this happened, this woman's act would be told in memory of her (cp. Mt 26:13). Your reading of this verse fulfills this promise.

**14:10** Mark mentions Judas Iscariot here, in the account of Jesus's arrest (vv. 43–45), and in the listing of the Twelve (3:19). The phrase *went to* places the initiative for Jesus's betrayal clearly on Judas; he wasn't recruited by the authorities. **Betray** is used of John the Baptist (1:14), of Jesus (9:31; 10:33; 14:10–11, 18, 21, 41–42, 44; 15:1, 10, 15), and of Jesus's disciples after Him (13:9, 11–12). Judas's actions stand in strong contrast to those of Mary in 14:3–9.

**14:11** Only Matthew (Mt 26:15) indicates how much money Judas was given. The phrase *a good opportunity* recalls the Sanhedrin's hope to arrest Jesus "when the crowd was not present" (Lk 22:6) so they would not cause a riot (Mk 14:1–2).

**14:12** Jesus decided where they would observe the Passover, but His disciples were responsible to prepare it. Preparations included obtaining and preparing a lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, wine, crushed fruit, etc.

**14:13–14** Luke (Lk 22:8) identifies the two . . . disciples as Peter and John. Go into the city indicates they were outside Jerusalem, probably at Bethany. A man

carrying a jar of water was unusual. Normally women carried water in earthenware pitchers whereas men used animal skins. **Meet** could mean either "encounter" or that the man was looking for them. The owner of the house was apparently acquainted with Jesus since they identified Him only as the Teacher.

**14:15–16** The "guest room" (v. 14) was a large room upstairs, probably the spacious roof chamber of a wealthy man. The room was ready to accommodate a large group. Found it just as he had told them stresses the exact fulfillment of Jesus's words.

**14:17** When evening came marked the start of a new day by Jewish reckoning. According to Ex 12:8, the Passover meal had to be eaten at night and be finished by midnight.

**14:18** Jesus had said earlier that He would be betrayed (9:31; 10:33). Now He added that the betrayer would be one of His disciples. The words *one who is eating with me* did not immediately identify the betrayer since all of the disciples were dining together. Rather, the words point to Ps 41:9 and add to the magnitude of the treachery since eating together in the ancient Orient involved a certain intimacy and demanded one restrain from hostile actions.

**14:19** No one attempted to refute Jesus or make accusations. Apparently Judas was above all suspicion at this point. The disciples' statement *surely not I* expected both a negative response and a word of reassurance from Jesus.

**14:20** That the betrayer was dipping bread with Jesus meant he was seated nearby (Mt 26:25; Jn 13:23–30).

**14:21** On Son of Man, see note at 2:8–11. Previously Jesus had stated His betrayal was predicted by Scripture (9:12). This verse unites God's prophesied plan (just as it is written) with human actions and responsibility.

**14:22** The institution of the Last Supper is recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels (vv. 22–26; Mt 26:26–29; Lk 22:19–20) and by Paul (1Co 11:23–25). Mark did not specify at what point in the traditional course of the Passover meal Jesus instituted the Last Supper. This is my body is metaphorical.

**14:23** They all drank from one cup. "Eucharist" derives from the Greek word for giving thanks.

**14:24** The phrase blood of the covenant recalls the institution of the Mosaic covenant at Sinai when the Israelites were sprinkled with blood (Ex 24:1–8; cp. Heb 9:19–20; 10:28–30). Jesus's blood established a new covenant. Poured out for many recalls Jesus's words in 10:45 and Isaiah's words (Is 53:11–12) about Messiah dying on behalf of others.

**14:25** Jesus's solemn formula Truly I tell you focused the group's attention on the eschatological future. Even though Jesus had explained His death and its meaning, it would not be the end for Him. The day (cp. 13:17, 19–20, 24, 32) would come when He would drink with them in the kingdom of God (cp. 15:43–46).

**14:26** The Passover meal traditionally ended with singing the Hallel psalms (Pss 115–118).

# FAILURE



## RESPONDING TO MISTAKES / FCA

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### READY

**“Immediately a rooster crowed a second time, and Peter remembered when Jesus had spoken the word to him, ‘Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ And he broke down and wept.”**

Mark 14:72

### SET

How do you react when you make a mistake on the field? Do you criticize yourself or become angry? Sometimes on the golf course, especially during college, I would hit a bad shot at a critical moment and get frustrated. Then I would follow that mistake with a bad decision on the next shot and get into even more trouble. With experience, I got better at controlling my emotions.

There are numerous examples of people making mistakes in the Bible. Some people became great warriors for Jesus Christ; others followed a path of self-destruction. Peter is a great example of someone making a bad choice. On three occasions, Peter de-

nied he knew Jesus Christ. Peter could have allowed the guilt he felt to destroy him; but he confessed, sought forgiveness and became a leader of the early Church.

Peter’s response to the mistake and the Lord’s restoration allowed him to move forward. The good news is that the Lord is still in the restoration business. He knows we will make mistakes but He is more interested in our response than in the mistake itself. If we respond with anger or self-pity, chances are we will make many more. If we seek forgiveness and learn from our mistakes, God forgives us and restores us.

**GO!**

► **WORKOUT** Mark 14:66–72 (p. ???); Luke 22:31–34 (p. ???); John 21:15–19 (p. ???)

**WARM-UP:** Read Mark 14:32–42

**WORKOUT:** Jesus Christ told Peter, “Stay awake and pray” because “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (v. 38). How do these words apply to you?

**WRAP-UP:** Is someone in your life facing a time of crisis? How can you “stay awake” to help that person?

#### PETER’S DENIAL PREDICTED

<sup>27</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will fall away,<sup>a</sup> because it is written:

**I will strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep will be scattered.<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>28</sup> But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”

<sup>29</sup> Peter told him, “Even if everyone falls away, I will not.”

<sup>30</sup> “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to him, “today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”

<sup>a</sup>14:27 Other mss add *because of me this night*    <sup>b</sup>14:27 Zch 13:7    <sup>c</sup>14:34 Or “My soul is swallowed up in sorrow

<sup>d</sup>14:36 Aramaic for *father*    <sup>e</sup>14:38 Or *won’t be put to the test*

**14:27** Jesus told His disciples, **All of you will fall away . . .** It is written grounds Jesus’s prediction in OT Scripture, specifically Zch 13:7. Jesus’s prediction of the disciples’ desertion and of Peter’s denial is recorded in all four Gospels (Mt 26:31–35; Mk 14:27–31; Lk 22:31–34; Jn 13:36–38).

**14:28** Jesus referred to His resurrection and added that He would gather His disciples again in Galilee for a new mission (cp. 16:7).

**14:29–31** Quick-tongued Peter declared his steadfastness, but Jesus infallibly foreknew that Peter would cower in the face of opposition. Not only would he desert like the others, but he would also deny Jesus three times.

**14:32** Gethsemane means “olive press.” Located across the Kidron Valley on the western slope of the Mount of Olives, it was Jesus’s regular meeting place with His disciples (Jn 18:2).

**14:33** Peter, James, and John were the inner circle of Jesus’s disciples (5:37; 9:2; 13:3). Each had pledged his willingness to die with Jesus (10:38–39; 14:29,31). Mark uses two rare words to describe Jesus’s emotions. **Deeply distressed** occurs only in Mark (v. 33; 9:15; 16:5–6) and has the nuance of “greatly alarmed.” The word for

**troubled** expresses extreme anxiety, and it occurs elsewhere in Mt 26:37 and Php 2:26.

**14:34** The phrase **to the point of death** indicates the depth of Jesus’s distress. Lk 22:44 adds, “His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.”

**14:35** **Fell to the ground** pictures Jesus collapsing under His burden (Mt 26:39; cp. Lk 22:41). **The hour** refers to Jesus’s divinely appointed death (Jn 7:30; 8:20; 12:23,27; 13:1; 17:1). **If it were possible** was a request for God to change His divine plan.

**14:36** **Abba** is Aramaic for “father” and is a term of intimacy. Jesus’s words **all things are possible for you** affirmed God’s power and recalled His teaching (10:27). **This cup** refers to personal suffering and death (cp. 10:38–39) but also to God’s judgment on sin (14:24; cp. Jr 25:15–16; 2Co 5:21; 1Pt 2:24). **Not what I will, but what you will** recalls Jesus’s model prayer (Mt 6:10). Not His personal desire but the Father’s will defined Jesus’s life (Jn 5:30; 6:38).

**14:37** Peter was singled out for his failure to stay awake because of his bold claims earlier in the evening (vv. 29–31). **One hour** may be idiomatic rather than literal.

**14:38** Though Jesus addressed Peter in v. 37, His warning in v. 38 is addressed to the others as well since the verbs are plural

<sup>31</sup> But he kept insisting, “If I have to die with you, I will never deny you.” And they all said the same thing.

#### THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

<sup>32</sup> Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his disciples, “**Sit here while I pray.**” <sup>33</sup> He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. <sup>34</sup> He said to them, “**I am deeply grieved<sup>c</sup> to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake.**” <sup>35</sup> He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup> And he said, “**Abba,<sup>d</sup> Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will.**” <sup>37</sup> Then he came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “**Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn’t you stay awake one hour?**” <sup>38</sup> **Stay awake and pray so that you won’t enter into temptation.** <sup>e</sup> **The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.**” <sup>39</sup> Once again he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. <sup>40</sup> And again he came and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him. <sup>41</sup> Then he came a third time and said to them, “**Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has come. See, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.**” <sup>42</sup> **Get up; let’s go. See, my betrayer is near.”**

#### JUDAS’S BETRAYAL OF JESUS

<sup>43</sup> While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, suddenly arrived. With him was a mob, with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. <sup>44</sup> His betrayer had given them a signal.

in Greek. The warning to **pray so that you won’t enter into temptation** recalls the petition from Jesus’s model prayer (Mt 6:13). Jesus’s acknowledgment that the **flesh** is weak may have applied to Himself also that night, given His suffering. Natural human weaknesses (hunger, fatigue, etc.) can pose great spiritual danger.

**14:39–40** The stupefied disciples **did not know what to say to him**. This recalls Peter’s experience on the Mount of Transfiguration (9:6) and the disciples’ silence in 9:34.

**14:41–42** Enough was a cry of exasperation and served to awaken the sleepers. Jesus had prayed “that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him” (v. 35), but God did not grant that request. **Get up; let’s go** was a call to meet the mob head on, not an encouragement to flee (cp. Jn 14:31). **See** indicates they could see the torches of the approaching throng.

**14:43** In fulfillment of Jesus’s prediction in 8:31, the mob hailed from the **chief priests, the scribes, and the elders**—the three parties of the Sanhedrin. This was an officially sanctioned arrest party.

**14:44** Signal refers to a sign agreed on in advance. The specific signal was a **kiss** (probably on the cheek). While a kiss was

"The one I kiss," he said, "he's the one; arrest him and take him away under guard." <sup>45</sup> So when he came, immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. <sup>46</sup> They took hold of him and arrested him. <sup>47</sup> One of those who stood by drew his sword, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear.

<sup>48</sup> Jesus said to them, "**Have you come out with swords and clubs, as if I were a criminal, to capture me?**" <sup>49</sup> Every day I was among you, teaching in the temple, and you didn't arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

<sup>50</sup> Then they all deserted him and ran away. <sup>51</sup> Now a certain young man, wearing nothing but a linen cloth, was following him. They caught hold of him, <sup>52</sup> but he left the linen cloth behind and ran away naked.

#### JESUS FACES THE SANHEDRIN

<sup>53</sup> They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes assembled.

<sup>54</sup> Peter followed him at a distance, right into the high priest's courtyard. He was sitting with the servants, <sup>55</sup> warming himself by the fire.

<sup>55</sup> The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they could not find any. <sup>56</sup> For many were giving false testimony against him, and the testimonies did not agree. <sup>57</sup> Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, stating, <sup>58</sup> "We heard him say, 'I

will destroy this temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another not made by hands.'" <sup>59</sup> Yet their testimony did not agree even on this.

<sup>60</sup> Then the high priest stood up before them all and questioned Jesus, "Don't you have an answer to what these men are testifying against you?" <sup>61</sup> But he kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest questioned him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

<sup>62</sup> "I am," said Jesus, "and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven."<sup>c</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? <sup>64</sup> You have heard the blasphemy. What is your decision?" They all condemned him as deserving death.

<sup>65</sup> Then some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to beat him, saying, "Prophecy!" The temple servants also took him and slapped him.

#### PETER DENIES HIS LORD

<sup>66</sup> While Peter was in the courtyard below, one of the high priest's maidservants came. <sup>67</sup> When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth."

<sup>68</sup> But he denied it: "I don't know or understand what you're talking about." Then he went out to the entryway, <sup>d</sup> and a rooster crowed.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>14:48 Or *insurrectionist* <sup>b</sup>14:54 Or *temple police, or officers, also in v. 65* <sup>c</sup>14:62 Ps 110:1; Dn 7:13 <sup>d</sup>14:68 Or *forecourt*

<sup>e</sup>14:68 Other mss omit and a rooster crowed

a common greeting (Lk 7:45; Ac 20:37; Rm 16:16); this is the only time a disciple is recorded as greeting Jesus this way (cp. 2Sm 20:9–10).

**14:45** Rabbi means "my great one." It was an address of honor to one's teacher.

**14:46–47** The attack on the high priest's servant is recorded in all four Gospels (Mt 26:51–52; Lk 22:49–51; Jn 18:10–11). John identifies the attacker as Peter and the servant as Malchus (Jn 18:10). Apparently Jesus's disciples asked if they should defend him with swords (Lk 22:49), but Peter didn't wait for a reply. On Jesus's disciples carrying swords, see note at Lk 22:35–38. Jesus restored Malchus's ear (Lk 22:51).

**14:48–50** The Scriptures that must be fulfilled are not identified, but v. 50 points to Zch 13:7 (quoted in v. 27) as one of them. They all deserted him refers to the fleeing disciples.

**14:51–52** The young man is unidentified. Some have suggested he was John Mark, the author of this Gospel.

**14:53–65** No single Gospel comprehensively records Jesus's trials, and each emphasizes different perspectives and events. It is clear, however, that both Roman political authorities and Jewish religious leaders were involved in handing down Jesus's death sentence.

**14:53** They refers to those who arrested Jesus (vv. 43, 46). Matthew said the high priest was Caiaphas, who served from AD 18–36 (Mt 26:57). That all three parties as-

sembled indicates this was a meeting of the Sanhedrin (vv. 43, 55).

**14:54** Peter followed the arrest party and ended up warming himself (cp. Jn 18:18) in the high priest's courtyard.

**14:55–56** The entire Sanhedrin, especially the chief priests, had already decided to put Jesus to death, so they went looking for evidence to justify their plan. Many witnesses gave false testimony that did not agree under cross-examination. The OT required the agreement of two witnesses in a capital case (Nm 35:30; Dt 17:6; 19:15).

**14:57–58** Some who gave false testimony claimed firsthand experience. Made with human hands indicates human agency; not made by hands indicates divine agency (cp. Ac 7:48; 17:24; Heb 9:11, 24).

**14:59** Only Mark notes that the accusers did not agree even on this (cp. Mt 26:60). The Jews took threats against the temple seriously (cp. Jr 26:7–24). This charge was issued against Jesus again while He hung on the cross (Mk 15:29).

**14:60** Frustrated with the ineptitude of the proceedings, Caiaphas stood up and questioned Jesus himself.

**14:61–62** Kept silent points to the prophesied Suffering Servant's response in Is 53:7 (cp. Ac 8:32; 1Pt 2:21, 23). Throughout Mark's Gospel, Jesus had shied away from the title *Messiah* to avoid misunderstanding, but here He embraced it. I am (cp. Mt 26:64; Lk 22:67) echoes the divine name (Ex 3:14). Jesus then switched to His favorite

self-designation *Son of Man* and quoted from Ps 110:2 and Dn 7:13. To be seated at the right hand was an honor (cp. 10:37, 40). Coming with the clouds of heaven is often understood as a reference to the second coming, but you will see leads some interpreters to understand that Jesus was referring to His post-ascension enthronement in heaven.

**14:63** Tearing one's clothes symbolized grief (Gn 37:34; Jos 7:6; 2Sm 1:11–12; 2Kg 2:12) or horror at blasphemy (2Kg 18:37; 19:1). Witnesses were no longer needed since Jesus had incriminated Himself by claiming He was the Messiah.

**14:64** Deserving death indicates death by stoning for blasphemy (Lv 24:10–16).

**14:65** To spit in a person's face (Mt 26:67) was the ultimate insult (Nm 12:14; Dt 25:9; Jb 30:9–10). Jesus predicted this would happen (Mk 10:34; cp. 15:19). Isaiah described this as one of the sufferings of the Servant of the Lord (Is 50:6).

**14:66** This picks up from v. 54. The phrase the courtyard below indicates Jesus's hearing was held in the hall above the entry level to the high priest's house.

**14:67** As Peter stood in the courtyard of the high priest's house (see note at v. 54), a servant said she had seen him with the man from Nazareth (a contemptuous usage, as is "the Galilean," Mt 26:69).

**14:68** Only Mark records Jesus as predicting a rooster would crow twice (vv. 29–31). This is a logical place for the first



<sup>69</sup>When the maidservant saw him again, she began to tell those standing nearby, "This man is one of them."

<sup>70</sup>But again he denied it. After a little while those standing there said to Peter again, "You certainly are one of them, since you're also a Galilean."<sup>A</sup>

<sup>71</sup>Then he started to curse and swear, "I don't know this man you're talking about!"

<sup>72</sup>Immediately a rooster crowed a second time, and Peter remembered when Jesus had spoken the word to him, "**Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.**" And he broke down and wept.

## JESUS FACES PILATE

**15** As soon as it was morning, having held a meeting with the elders, scribes, and the whole Sanhedrin, the chief priests tied Jesus up, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.

<sup>2</sup>So Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He answered him, "**You say so.**"

<sup>3</sup>And the chief priests accused him of many things. <sup>4</sup>Pilate questioned him again, "Aren't you going to answer? Look how many things they are accusing you of!" <sup>5</sup>But Jesus still did not answer, and so Pilate was amazed.

## JESUS OR BARABBAS

<sup>6</sup>At the festival Pilate used to release for the people a prisoner whom they requested. <sup>7</sup>There was

one named Barabbas, who was in prison with rebels who had committed murder during the rebellion. <sup>8</sup>The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them as was his custom. <sup>9</sup>Pilate answered them, "Do you want me to release the king of the Jews for you?" <sup>10</sup>For he knew it was because of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. <sup>11</sup>But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so that he would release Barabbas to them instead. <sup>12</sup>Pilate asked them again, "Then what do you want me to do with the one you call the king of the Jews?"

<sup>13</sup>Again they shouted, "Crucify him!"

<sup>14</sup>Pilate said to them, "Why? What has he done wrong?"

But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!"

<sup>15</sup>Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them; and after having Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified.

## MOCKED BY THE MILITARY

<sup>16</sup>The soldiers led him away into the palace (that is, the governor's residence) and called the whole company together. <sup>17</sup>They dressed him in a purple robe, twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on him. <sup>18</sup>And they began to salute him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" <sup>19</sup>They were hitting him on the head with a stick and spitting on him. Getting down on

<sup>A</sup>14:70 Other mss add *and your speech shows it*

crowding, even though it apparently escaped Peter's notice.

**14:69** This time **those standing nearby** were made aware of Peter's identity.

**14:70** Peter's accent identified him as a **Galilean** (Mt 26:73).

**14:71** Peter's denials escalated. **To curse** means to call down God's curse on oneself (cp. Ac 23:12,14,21). **To swear** refers to taking an oath in God's name. Peter's cursing and swearing backed his strongest denial—I **don't know this man**.

**14:72** **Immediately** links Peter's third denial to the fulfillment of Jesus's prophecy (vv. 26–31). Jesus turned and looked at Peter (Lk 22:61) and then he **remembered** Jesus's prediction and his own vow of steadfastness. The last sentence of the verse indicates Peter's total remorse.

**15:1** This verse is often seen as a third Jewish trial in which the **whole Sanhedrin** legalized their verdict in the **morning** (cp. Lk 22:66–71). Decisions reached at night were not binding. Being **handed . . . over** is repeatedly emphasized in this chapter (vv. 1,10,15) and throughout Mark. **Pilate** was a Roman official among the Jews during AD 26–36. Pilate resided at Caesarea Maritima but found it expedient to stay in Jerusalem during Passover and other major Jewish festivals because of the large number of pilgrims flooding the city and the potential for unrest.

**15:2** Pilate focused on whether Jesus claimed to be **King of the Jews**. Clearly the Sanhedrin's condemnation based on blasphemy (14:64) had turned into charges

of sedition and treason. This is the first use of this title in Mark's Gospel, but Pilate repeatedly used it (15:2,9,12,26; cp. v. 32). The words recall the quest of the wise men at Jesus's birth (Mt 2:2). Jesus's reply, **you say so**, can be understood as either noncommittal or as an acknowledgement, but not as a denial.

**15:3–5** Pilate's question involves a double negative. It is matched by Mark's double negative that Jesus **did not answer**. Pilate was amazed at Jesus's silence because he could free Him if His answers were satisfactory.

**15:6** Mark is silent about Pilate's attempt to extricate himself from the situation by sending Jesus to Herod Antipas (cp. Lk 23:5–12), the same Herod as in Mk 6:14–29. Here, in 15:6–15, Pilate tried another maneuver involving a custom to **release for the people a prisoner**. This custom is not documented outside the NT and was apparently done only at the Passover festival (Jn 18:39).

**15:7** The rebels who were in prison with Barabbas probably included the two criminals who were crucified with Jesus. Mark gave no other details about the **rebellion**, which may indicate that his readers were familiar with it and thus did not need him to spell it out.

**15:8–9** **The crowd**, coached by Jesus's enemies, asked Pilate to follow his custom of releasing a prisoner. Pilate instinctively offered them the **King of the Jews** (vv. 2,9,12,26). Thus Pilate unknowingly confessed Jesus's true status.

**15:10** Pilate recognized that **envy** was why the **chief priests** wanted Jesus dead.

**15:11–12** Again the **chief priests** (vv. 1,3,10) manipulated the course of events. **Stirred up** suggests they incited the crowd to riot. Ironically, the **crowd** chose Barabbas ("son of the father") over Jesus, the true Son of the Father.

**15:13–14** This is Mark's first reference to crucifixion. None of Jesus's death predictions specifically mentioned crucifixion, though He had hinted at it (8:34). R.T. France points out that it was the usual provincial penalty for political rebellion.

**15:15** **Wanting to satisfy the crowd** at the cost of justice, Pilate **handed** Jesus over. Being **flogged** means Jesus was whipped with leather cords that had pieces of bone or metal tied in them that would rip the flesh off one's back. Being **crucified** was a punishment for slaves and rebels.

**15:16** **Company** reflects the Greek equivalent of the Latin "cohors/cohort," which totaled six hundred soldiers. Mark does not use "company" in its technical sense, but he indicates that a large group of soldiers mocked Jesus.

**15:17** The soldiers used makeshift substitutes for the **robe . . . crown**, and scepter of a king. **Purple** was a royal color.

**15:18** **Hail, King of the Jews** was a mocking corruption of the greeting, "Hail, Caesar."

**15:19** They beat the King of the Jews on the head with a stick.

their knees, they were paying him homage.<sup>20</sup> After they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his clothes on him.

#### CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO CRIMINALS

They led him out to crucify him.<sup>21</sup> They forced a man coming in from the country, who was passing by, to carry Jesus's cross. He was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

<sup>22</sup> They brought Jesus to the place called *Golgotha* (which means Place of the Skull).<sup>23</sup> They tried to give him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.

<sup>24</sup> Then they crucified him and divided his clothes, casting lots for them to decide what each would get.<sup>25</sup> Now it was nine in the morning<sup>a</sup> when they crucified him.<sup>26</sup> The inscription of the charge written against him was: **THE KING OF THE JEWS**.<sup>27</sup> They crucified two criminals<sup>b</sup> with him, one on his right and one on his left.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Those who passed by were yelling insults at<sup>d</sup> him, shaking their heads, and saying, "Ha! The one who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,<sup>30</sup> save yourself by coming down from the cross!"<sup>31</sup> In the same way, the chief priests with the scribes were mocking him among themselves and

saying, "He saved others, but he cannot save himself!<sup>32</sup> Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe." Even those who were crucified with him taunted him.

#### THE DEATH OF JESUS

<sup>33</sup> When it was noon,<sup>e</sup> darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.<sup>f</sup> <sup>34</sup> And at three Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lemá sabachtháni?*" which is translated, "**My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**"<sup>g</sup>

<sup>35</sup> When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "See, he's calling for Elijah."

<sup>36</sup> Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, fixed it on a stick, offered him a drink, and said, "Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down."

<sup>37</sup> Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed his last.<sup>38</sup> Then the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.<sup>39</sup> When the centurion, who was standing opposite him, saw the way he<sup>h</sup> breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"<sup>i</sup>

<sup>40</sup> There were also women watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.<sup>41</sup> In Galilee these women followed him and

<sup>a</sup>15:25 Lit was the third hour <sup>b</sup>15:27 Or revolutionaries <sup>c</sup>15:27 Some mss include v. 28: So the Scripture was fulfilled that says: And he was counted among criminals. <sup>d</sup>15:29 Or passed by blasphemed <sup>e</sup>15:33 Lit the sixth hour <sup>f</sup>15:33 Lit the ninth hour, also in v. 34 <sup>g</sup>15:34 Ps 22:1 <sup>h</sup>15:39 Other mss read saw that he cried out like this and <sup>i</sup>15:39 Or a son of God

**15:20** The phrase led him out to crucify him refers to the centurion and the execution squad, not to the company of soldiers.

**15:21** Condemned prisoners customarily carried the crossbeam, or *patibulum*, to the site of their execution, where it was attached to the vertical beam. The Greek biographer Plutarch wrote: "Every criminal condemned to death bears his cross on his back" (*Moralia*, 554 A/B). Apparently Jesus was too weak from being flogged and beaten to carry it all the way. Roman soldiers had the right to press citizens of subject nations into compulsory service (Mt 5:41), so they forced Simon to carry Jesus's cross. Simon was a Jewish Cyrenian from the north coast of Africa. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus, indicating that readers in Rome probably knew these men (Rm 16:13). Simon apparently became a Christian due to this experience.

**15:22** Golgotha is Aramaic for Place of the Skull. The traditional site of the crucifixion is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, located outside the city walls (Lv 24:14; Nm 15:35–36; Heb 13:12).

**15:23** Wine mixed with myrrh was a primitive narcotic. The offer fulfilled Ps 69:21.

**15:24** They crucified him is all Mark writes about the main event of the gospel. The crucifixion took place on Friday, now known as Good Friday. That the four soldiers of the execution squad divided his clothes and cast lots for them fulfilled Ps 22:18 (cp. Jn 19:23–24).

**15:25** Nine in the morning is literally "the third hour." Jews reckoned the time of day from sunrise.

**15:26** The charge on which a person was condemned was often written on a placard and hung around his neck. In Jesus's case, it was nailed to His cross (Jn 19:19). All four Gospels record the words differently (cp. Mt 27:37; Lk 23:38; Jn 19:19), possibly because the inscription was trilingual (Jn 19:20). THE KING OF THE JEWS ironically proclaimed the truth about Jesus.

**15:27** Criminals is the word used to describe Barabbas in Jn 18:40 (cp. Mk 14:48). Jesus's crucifixion between criminals was meant as a parody of His kingship (as if He had attendants on either side) but by God's design the whole event really was His royal enthronement. The phrase one on his right and one on his left recalls the request of James and John (10:37, 40).

**15:29–30** Insults means "blasphemies." Those who passed by were thus guilty of the very thing for which the Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus (14:64). The bystanders' insults and shaking of their heads fulfilled Ps 22:7 and Lm 2:15.

**15:31** Once again the chief priests led the mockery of Jesus. Their derision along with that of the scribes went to the heart of Jesus's mission: To save others, Jesus refused to save himself (10:45).

**15:32** On Messiah, see note at 8:29. The religious leaders' mockery recalls the second charge Jesus faced before the Sanhedrin (14:61). Mark reported that the two crucified with Jesus also taunted Him. One of them repented (Lk 23:39–43).

**15:33** Noon was literally "the sixth hour," and three in the afternoon was "the ninth hour." The darkness was supernatural and

represented God's judgment (Ex 10:21–23; Am 8:9–10).

**15:34** At 3:00 p.m. Jesus cried out with a loud voice the Aramaic phrase, *Eloi, Eloi, lemá sabachtháni*. As usual, Mark provided a translation. Even when Jesus felt most abandoned by God, He affirmed His relationship with His Father—my God, my God, quoting the opening words of Ps 22:1. Jesus endured God's wrath as the sin-bearer.

**15:35–36** Perhaps bystanders mistook *Eloi* for *Elijah* (Aramaic *Eli*) since there was a tradition in Judaism that Elijah would return (9:11–13; Mal 4:5). Sour wine, made with vinegar and water, was a drink of the soldiers, not the wine of v. 23. This action fulfilled Ps 69:21 (see note at Jn 19:28–29).

**15:37** The content of Jesus's loud cry (reported by all three Synoptic Gospels) is specified in Jn 19:30—"It is finished." Luke records Jesus's final words (Lk 23:46).

**15:38** The curtain of the temple hung before the most holy place in the temple. Its tearing symbolizes unhindered access to God, made possible because of Jesus's atonement for sin on the cross (Heb 6:19–20; 9:3; 10:19–22). The only other use of the Greek word for torn in Mark is in 1:10 when God tore open the heavens at Jesus's baptism.

**15:39** The Gentile centurion who presided over the execution was the first in Mark's Gospel to confess Jesus as the Son of God (cp. 1:11, 24; 3:11; 5:9; 9:7). His confession matched Mark's opening statement (1:1).

**15:40** This is the first reference to Mary Magdalene in Mark. Jesus expelled seven demons from her (16:9; Lk 8:2). She came from Magdala on the western side of the

took care of him. Many other women had come up with him to Jerusalem.

### THE BURIAL OF JESUS

<sup>42</sup> When it was already evening, because it was the day of preparation (that is, the day before the Sabbath), <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin who was himself looking forward to the kingdom of God, came and boldly went to Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. <sup>44</sup> Pilate was surprised that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had already died. <sup>45</sup> When he found out from the centurion, he gave the corpse to Joseph. <sup>46</sup> After he bought some linen cloth, Joseph took him down and wrapped him in the linen. Then he laid him in a tomb cut out of the rock and rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. <sup>47</sup> Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus were watching where he was laid.

### RESURRECTION MORNING

**16** When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they could go and anoint him.

<sup>a</sup>**16:8** Other mss include vv. 9–20 as a longer ending. The following shorter ending is found in some mss between v. 8 and v. 9 and in one ms after v. 8 (each of which omits vv. 9–20): *And all that had been commanded to them they quickly reported to those around Peter. After these things, Jesus himself sent out through them from east to west, the holy and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.*

Sea of Galilee. **Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph** is called "the other Mary" in Mt 27:61. Possibly she was the mother of James the son of Alphaeus (Mk 3:18). **Salome** is named only in Mark (v. 40; 16:1). She was the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Mt 20:20; 27:56).

**15:41** In Mark, only women (v. 41; 1:31) and angels (1:13) serve or help Jesus. The **many other women** who made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem did so for Passover.

**15:42–47** Jesus's burial, an important element in early Christian proclamation (1Co 15:3–4), is recorded also in Mt 27:57–61; Lk 23:50–56; and Jn 19:38–42.

**15:42** Jesus's burial was hastily performed because it was **already evening** on Friday. The Sabbath was soon to begin, a time when burial labors were not permitted. **The day of preparation** (the day before the Sabbath) was when pious Jews prepared whatever they needed for the Sabbath.

**15:43** **Joseph of Arimathea** was a secret follower of Jesus (Mt 27:57; Jn 19:38). That he was a **prominent member of the Sanhedrin** and opposed their verdict (Lk 23:51) shows that this group was not unanimous in its decision to seek Jesus's execution (cp. Mk 14:55,64; 15:1). Joseph went **boldly** to Pilate to ask for Jesus's body. This contrasts with his formerly secret discipleship (Jn 19:38). The Romans often let criminals rot on their crosses, but the Jews objected to leaving the dead hanging overnight (Dt 21:22–23).

**15:44** Crucifixion victims often survived for days before dying. Jesus died in about six hours. Thus He **surprised** Pilate a second time (v. 5).

**15:45** Pilate **gave** Joseph Jesus's body without demanding the bribe that families sometimes had to pay to retrieve the bodies of their loved ones.

**15:46** Only Mark mentions that Joseph **bought some linen cloth** in which Jesus was **wrapped**. Matthew (Mt 27:60) informs readers that the **tomb** was Joseph's own. Luke (Lk 23:53) and John (Jn 19:41) add that it had never been used. Readers should understand the tomb as a family tomb, not an individual burial crypt. To seal the tomb and prevent looting, they **rolled a stone against the entrance**. The large, circular, flat stone rolled in a track cut into the rock at the tomb entrance.

**15:47** The women who witnessed Jesus's death also witnessed His burial.

**16:1–8** Women were the first to know that Jesus was risen (Mt 28:1–8; Lk 24:1–8; Jn 20:1–2). Mary Magdalene's name heads the list in all four Gospels. The role of women in this account is astonishing since Judaism did not accept the testimony of women as legally valid.

**16:1** The Sabbath was over at about 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. This allowed the women to buy more **spices** that evening. All three women had witnessed Jesus's crucifixion (15:40), and two of them had witnessed His burial (15:47). They would also be the first witnesses to His resurrection. On **Mary the mother of James**, see note at 15:40. The Jews anointed bodies to cover the stench of decay.

**16:2** **The first day of the week** was Sunday. **Very early in the morning** probably indicates when the women left for the tomb, whereas **at sunrise** indicates when they arrived.

<sup>2</sup> Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb at sunrise. <sup>3</sup> They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance to the tomb for us?" <sup>4</sup> Looking up, they noticed that the stone — which was very large — had been rolled away.

<sup>5</sup> When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side; they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup> "Don't be alarmed," he told them. "You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they put him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there just as he told you.'"

<sup>8</sup> They went out and ran from the tomb, because trembling and astonishment overwhelmed them. And they said nothing to anyone, since they were afraid.

[Some of the earliest mss conclude with 16:8.]<sup>a</sup>

**16:3** That the women wondered who would **roll away the stone** reveals that they did not know that the tomb was sealed or guarded (Mt 27:62–66).

**16:4** According to Matthew (Mt 28:2–4) an angel had rolled away the stone.

**16:5** The stone was not moved to let Jesus out but to let witnesses enter. That the women **entered the tomb** confirms it was a large family tomb. The **young man dressed in a white robe** (Mt 28:3; Ac 1:10; 10:30) was an angel (Mt 28:5; Lk 24:4). Luke mentions two angels (Lk 24:3–4); Mark focuses on the spokesman.

**16:6** The words of reassurance (**don't be alarmed**) are a standard feature in angelic manifestations (Dn 10:12,19; Mt 28:5; Lk 1:13,30; 2:10; Ac 27:24). On three previous occasions in Mark, He was designated **Jesus of Nazareth** (1:23; 10:47; 14:67). Here the word serves to connect the historical Jesus who was crucified to the one who has risen. . . . See the place where they put him recalls 15:47 (cp. Jn 20:6–7) and indicates the shelf inside the tomb on which Jesus's body was placed.

**16:7** Go, tell are the two things that all followers of Jesus are to do. Peter is given special mention only in Mark as an encouragement following his denials of Jesus (14:66–72). The message for the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee recalls Jesus's prophecy in 14:28.

**16:8** Trembling and astonishment overwhelmed the women, whether from fear or excitement (cp. Mt 28:8). Most likely it was both. The phrase **they said nothing to anyone**, stated only by Mark, is a strong double negative. It does not imply that they forever kept silent but that they initially refused to speak about their bewildering experience (Mt 28:8; Lk 24:9–10).

**THE LONGER ENDING OF MARK:  
APPEARANCES OF THE RISEN LORD**

[<sup>9</sup> Early on the first day of the week, after he had risen, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. <sup>10</sup> She went and reported to those who had been with him, as they were mourning and weeping. <sup>11</sup> Yet, when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe it.

<sup>12</sup> After this, he appeared in a different form to two of them walking on their way into the country.

<sup>13</sup> And they went and reported it to the rest, who did not believe them either.

**THE GREAT COMMISSION**

<sup>14</sup> Later he appeared to the Eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table. He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who saw him after he had risen.

<sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;<sup>a</sup> <sup>18</sup> they will pick up snakes;<sup>b</sup> if they should drink anything deadly, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will get well."

**THE ASCENSION**

<sup>19</sup> So the Lord Jesus, after speaking to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup> And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the accompanying signs.]

<sup>a</sup>16:17 = languages    <sup>b</sup>16:18 Other mss add *with their hands*

**16:9–20** These verses do not appear in some of the earliest manuscripts of Mark's Gospel.



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