

BIBLE SURVEY

MARK

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

Who was Mark?

John Mark was born in Cyrene in Africa, of the tribe of Levi. While John (*Johanna*) is a Hebrew name meaning *The Lord has shown grace*, Mark comes from the Latin *Marcus*. John Mark was a cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10) and of the apostle Peter. His mother, Mary, played an active role in the early days of the Church in Jerusalem. John Mark received an excellent education and was fluent in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. He had the privilege of growing up in a God-fearing home and surrounded by the leaders of the early Church.

The Upper Room

His mother, Mary's, upper room was the venue for the Passover supper, used by the Lord Jesus for His Last Supper with His disciples. It was in the same upper room that the Lord appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection. It was to John Mark's mother's home that Peter went, when freed from prison (Acts 12:12).

The Evangelist

John Mark was present at the Wedding at Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11). He was one of the 70 disciples sent out to proclaim the Gospel (Luke 10:1-17). Mark was the young man, who, on the night that the Lord was betrayed, was following the Lord wearing a linen garment (Mark 14:51-52).

The Missionary

John Mark accompanied the Apostle Peter on his Missionary journeys in Jerusalem and Judea. He was also privileged to be part of the Apostle Paul's first Missionary journey (Acts 13). Although he failed to complete his mission, he later repented, restored and made restitution to rebuild Paul's trust in him. So much so, that Paul, in his pastoral letter to Timothy, describes Mark as *"helpful to me in my ministry"* (2 Timothy 4:11). Mark became a co-worker with the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:13). Mark established churches in Pentapolis and in Alexandria, Egypt.

The Gospel Writer

It was under the apostolic authority of Peter that the Gospel according to Mark was written. Unlike the Epistles, the Gospels do not name their authors. However, the early Church Fathers are unanimous in affirming Mark as the author of this Gospel. Justin Martyr, in A.D.150, referred to the Gospel of Mark as the memoirs of Peter and that Mark had written this Gospel under his mentorship. Irenaeus in A.D.185, described Mark as *"the disciple and translator of Peter."* And recorded that Mark's Gospel consisted of what Peter had preached about Christ. Clement of Alexandria (A.D.195) also affirms that Mark wrote this, the second Gospel in our New Testament. Papiyas, Bishop of Hieropolis, writing A.D.140 stated: *"and the presbyter John said this: Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, in exact order that he related the sayings, or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord, nor accompanied Him. But afterwards he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instructions to the necessities of his hearers but... Mark made no mistake in thus writing things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took special care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements."* (From the *Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*, by Papiyas).

An Evangelistic Journalist

Mark's Gospel is the shortest Gospel and it is full of rapid action. Mark's Gospel is the easiest to read, and it can be read in a single sitting. Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark omits the genealogies and details about the birth of Christ. He begins with the baptism and temptation of Jesus. The Gospel of Mark is breathless, fast-paced, compelling and effectively builds up the dramatic tension to focus on the climactic last week of the Lord's ministry on earth culminating in His betrayal, crucifixion and Resurrection. It is presented like News headlines proclaiming the greatest News of all time.

The Structure of Mark

There are three clear phases in the ministry of Jesus: In the first phase, Jesus was very **popular**, as thousands came to Him to be healed. The second phase is characterised by controversies, confrontation and **conflict** with the Jewish religious leaders and the third phase, as Jesus concentrated on preparing His twelve disciples for His coming **betrayal** and death. The first two and a half years of Jesus' public ministry are covered in chapters 1 to 9. Chapter 10 covers the next six weeks, and chapters 11 to 16 covers Jesus' last week.

The Geographic Structure of Mark

The Gospel of Mark begins with the baptism of Jesus at the River Jordan, which is at the lowest point on the earth's surface, below sea level. Then there is a steady ascent through Galilee to Caesarea Philippi, climaxing at the watershed of the highest point in Israel, Mount Hermon, the snow-capped mountain where He was transfigured.

Caesarea Philippi

At the foot of Mount Hermon is the town of Caesarea Philippi, which was named after Caesar and Philip, one of the sons of Herod the great. Philip built a statue to Caesar and named the town after Caesar and himself, hence the name Caesarea Philippi. This town is located at the source of River Jordan which emerges at the foot of Mount Hermon. The source of the water is the snow from Mount Hermon, which melts and filters through a crack on the side of the mountain, flowing out through a hole beneath the actual surface of the river.

Who is Jesus?

At this polytheistic town, which also had a statue to the Greek god Pan, the Lord Jesus Christ asked His disciples the critical question: *"Who do men say that I am?" So they answered, 'John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.'* He said to them, **'But who do you say that I am?'** Peter answered and said to Him, **'You are the Christ.'** Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him." Mark 8:27-30

Jesus Warns His Disciples

"And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But ...He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind Me, satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.' When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, **'Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My Words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.'**"

Mark 8:31-38

Mount of Transfiguration

After this Jesus took Peter, James and John up the mountain by themselves and He was transfigured before them. *"His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus."* Mark 9:3-4. *"And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a Voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!'"* Mark 9:7

The Lord Predicts His Betrayal and Death

From this watershed, high point, in the Gospel, the story rapidly progresses downhill to the final confrontation with the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem and Christ's betrayal, suffering and death. From this pivotal point, the Lord began to speak plainly to His disciples of His coming betrayal and death. *"For He taught His disciples and said to them, 'The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.' But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him."*

Mark 9:31-32

John the Baptist

All four Gospels focus on the messenger who prepared the way for the Lord: John the Baptist. Mark's Gospel begins: *"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.' 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.' John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, 'There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'"* Mark 1:1-8

A Baptism of Repentance

Malachi 3 prophesied that a prophet like Elijah would come and prepare the way for the Lord who would come suddenly to His Temple. Here John the Baptist comes dressed like Elijah, preaching like Elijah and calling the people to a baptism of repentance. The Jews required Gentile converts to be baptised to symbolise washing away the filth of their past as idol worshippers and Gentiles. Here John the Baptist required them to be baptised. This was shocking and scandalous to them! Was he suggesting that they were like unclean Gentiles and idol worshippers? Yes. John's baptism symbolised death and resurrection. Dying to one's old life and being born again to a new life.

The Baptism of Jesus

In Mark 1:9, the public ministry of the Lord Jesus begins. Although Jesus does not need to be baptised, he chose to identify with John and be an example for us by going through the waters of baptism. *"And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a Voice came from Heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.'"* Mark 1:10-11

The Trinity

At the baptism of Jesus at the River Jordan, we see a picture of the Trinity. God the Father speaking from Heaven, the Holy Spirit coming down like a dove and the Lord Jesus Christ coming up out of the water. Three distinct Persons. One God.

The Temptation of Jesus

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness and He was there forty days tempted by satan (1:12-13). We see baptism and temptation crowded together. Immediately after this

anointing for His earthly ministry, He is driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, where He hears whispers from hell. The baptismal benediction from the Father is only a preparation for spiritual warfare in the wilderness with the evil one. **Temptation can be part of our preparation for service.** Suffering, testing and trials are as much a part of God's plans as success and triumphs. There is nothing wrong with being tempted. The sin comes when we give in to temptation. *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but **God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.**"* 1 Corinthians 10:13

Power Packed Ministry

Then follows a relentless whirlwind of activity as the Lord teaches those who are in darkness, encourages those without hope, heals those who are sick and suffering, frees those who are under the power and bondage of satan, pardons those who are sinful and repentant, preaches by the sea shore, selects four fishermen to become His first disciples, so that they can learn to be fishers of men. *"And **they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.**"* Mark 1:22.

Called to Service

The Lord does not call people from idleness, He calls busy and successful workers to follow Him. *"Then Jesus said to them, **'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.'** They immediately left their nets and followed Him."* Mark 1:17-18. *"And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him."* Mark 1:20. *"He said to them, **'Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.'**"* Mark 1:38

Who is the Greatest?

The disciples began to argue amongst themselves as to who was the greatest. The Lord rebuked them: *"And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, **'If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.'** Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, 'Whoever receives one of these little children in My Name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.'" Mark 9:35-37*

Servant Leadership

Later James and John came up and ask the Lord to grant that they may sit on His left and right hand in the Kingdom. *"But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' They said to Him, 'We are able.' So Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with, you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.' And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, 'You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. **Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'**"* Mark 10:38-45

The Messianic Secret

Mark is primarily concerned with what Jesus did. Mark makes it clear how the Lord revealed Himself to His followers gradually. Jesus would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was (1:25,34). After having healed the man of leprosy, Jesus sent him away with a strong warning: *"See that you do not tell anyone about this"* (1:44). When speaking to the demons, Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone who He was (3:12). After having raised Jarius' daughter to life, He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this (5:43). (Numerous

other cases where the Lord required silence concerning His true identity are found in Mark 7:24, 7:36, 8:26, 8:30, 9:9, and 9:30). Even on Mount Hermon, the Lord required His disciples to keep quiet about His identity. This Messianic Secret reflects the Lord's concern to complete His Mission without interruption. His disciples needed to gradually understand who He was, but the Lord desired to keep His identity hidden from the masses. Premature recognition of His Messiahship would lead to intense agitation and a demand that He become some kind of political messiah. While many in Judea were expecting the Messiah to be some kind of military and political deliverer, they were ignoring the Old Testament prophecies of the suffering Servant (Isaiah 53), the Shepherd who would be struck and the sheep scattered (Zechariah 13:7). This would hinder His ministry and hasten His death. He needed this time to train and prepare His Apostles to fulfil the Great Commission after His death.

The Tireless Servant of God

Mark gives us an insight to how crowded the Lord's life was with words and works of mercy, healing the sick, feeding the starving, exercising power over disease, power over nature, authority over demons and authority over death. The Lord cleansed lepers, stilled the storm, delivered people who were demon possessed, healed a paralytic, raised Jarius' daughter, healed a woman of haemorrhaging, healed a man with a withered hand, walked on the sea, healed the gentile woman's daughter, healed the epileptic boy, healed two blind men, healed a deaf mute, and healed the blind man at Bethsaida.

Crowded and Harassed

As a result the Lord was constantly pressed in and harassed by crowds. His devotions were interrupted (1:35-37), there was no time to even finish a meal (3:20), the Lord continually was pressed for help to such an extent that His family and friends said that He was unbalanced (3:21). The Lord was pursued even when He sought rest (6:31-34). The key word that one reads over and over in Mark's Gospel is: *immediately*.

Overwhelmed by Frenzied Crowds

"When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognised Him, ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well." Mark 6:53-56

The Suffering Servant

Mark presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the suffering Servant of the Lord. He focuses on the actions of Jesus, particularly emphasising His service, suffering and sacrifice. Mark, along with emphasising Christ's divine power, also demonstrates His humanity: His disappointments (3:5), His weariness (4:38), His compassion (10:21).

Escalating Conflict with Religious Leaders

Early on the escalating conflict with the Jewish religious leaders rears its ugly head. *"When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you.'* And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, *'Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'* But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, *'Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins' - He said to the paralytic, 'I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.'* Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, *'We never saw anything like this!'"* Mark 2:5-12

The Call of Matthew Levi – The Tax Collector

Jesus called Levi sitting at the tax office: "**Follow Me**" so he arose and followed Him. Matthew organised a feast at his house so that many tax collectors could hear teachings from the Lord: *"And when the scribes and pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, 'How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard it, He said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.'"*

Mark 2:16-17

Controversies over the Sabbath

Other controversies followed. The pharisees complained about the Lord attending feasts and not fasting enough (2:18-22). When disciples ate some grain on the Sabbath, the pharisees complained that it was not lawful to pluck the heads of grain on a Sabbath. *"But He said to them, 'Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: how he went into the House of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?' And He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.'"* Mark 2:25-28

The Religious Leaders Plot to Destroy Christ

When the Lord healed a man with a withered hand in the synagogue, the pharisees were ready to kill Him. *"Then He said to them, 'Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they kept silent."* Mark 3:4. Jesus healed a man. *"Then the pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him."* Mark 3:6. Out of concern for the Fourth Commandment, they were willing to break the Sixth Commandment!

Pressed by the Frenzied Crowds

The multitude pressed in around Jesus so that He could not so much as have a meal. *"But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind.'"* Mark 3:21. When Jesus' family, His brother and mother came to call for Him, Jesus declared: *"For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."* Mark 3:35

Accused of Serving Satan

The scribes of Jerusalem accused Jesus of being Beelzebub, the ruler of demons. Jesus answered them. *"... 'How can satan cast out satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.'"* Mark 3:23-27

The Parable of the Sower

In Mark 4, the Lord gives the parable of the sower and warns of those who are so **hard-hearted** that the seed of the Word does not take root in their heart. Those who are of **stony ground**, who hear the Word, immediately receive it with gladness, but have no root in themselves and so they endure only for a time. Afterwards when tribulation or persecution arises, for the Word's sake, they immediately stumble. There are also those who are like **thorny ground**, who hear the Word, but the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the Word and it becomes unfruitful. *"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew*

up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.' And He said to them, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!' But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, 'To you it has been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.' And He said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the Word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the Word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts. These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the Word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the Word's sake, immediately they stumble. Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the Word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. **But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the Word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.**" Mark 4:3-20

All Secrets Will be Revealed

The Lord warned: "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light." Mark 4:22

You Will Reap What You Sow

"...Take heed what you hear. **With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.**" Mark 4:24-25

We Will be Judged According to the Light that we Have Received

When the Lord sent out His disciples, two by two, to Evangelise, he taught: "And whoever will not receive you, nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, **it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!**" Mark 6:11

Hypocrites Condemned

When the pharisees rebuked the Lord for His disciples not following the traditions of the Jews, Jesus answered and said to them: "...Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: **'This people honours Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'** For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men - the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do. He said to them, 'All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban' - (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the Word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do." Mark 7:6-9. Jesus warned His disciples. "...Take heed, **beware of the leaven of the pharisees and the leaven of Herod.**" Mark 8:15. **"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea."** Mark 9:42

The Heart of the Problem is the Problem of the Heart

When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, 'Hear Me, everyone, and understand: **There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.**" Mark 7:10-15. "For

from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." Mark 7:21-23

Confronting Demon Possession

Immediately after coming off the Mount of Transfiguration, the Lord's disciples were confronted with a demon possessed boy, who foamed at the mouth, gnashing his teeth, becoming rigid and convulsing violently. The evil spirit threw him into the fire and water to destroy him. The disciples were unable to cast out this demon. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it *"Deaf and dumb spirit I command you come out of him and enter no more!"* Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly and came out of him.

The Pharisees Test Jesus

The pharisees sought to test Jesus by asking Him under what circumstances it would be lawful to divorce his wife. *"...And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. **Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.**"* Mark 10:5-9

The Disciples Try to Prevent Children Coming to Jesus

When the disciples sought to prevent parents bringing their little children to Jesus, the Lord was greatly indignant and said: *"...'**Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the Kingdom of God.** Assuredly, I say to you, **whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.**' And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them."* Mark 10:14-16

What Must I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?

When a rich young ruler came running to Jesus asking Him what he must do to inherit eternal life, the Lord rebuked him. *"Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' '**Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.** You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honour your father and your mother.' And he answered and said to Him, 'Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.' Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, **'One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.'** But he was sad at this Word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God!' And the disciples were astonished at His Words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.' And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, **'Who then can be saved?'** But Jesus looked at them and said, **'With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.'**" Mark 10:17-27*

Another Prediction

Jesus warned His disciples. *"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."* Mark 10:33-34

The Lord Has Need of It

In chapter 11, we read how the Lord approached Jerusalem. "...He sent two of His disciples; and He said to them, 'Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it. And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, '**The Lord has need of it,**' and immediately he will send it here.'" Mark 11:1-3. And so it happened.

Palm Sunday

The Lord rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, as prophesied in Zachariah 9:9. And the people shouted out "...**Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!' Blessed is the Kingdom of our father David that comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!**" Mark 11:9-11. And Jesus went into the Temple.

Cleansing the Temple

"So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the Temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the Temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the Temple. Then He taught, saying to them, Is it not written, '**My House shall be called a House of prayer for all nations?**' **But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'** And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching." Mark 11:15-18

The Fig Tree Withered

The Lord approached a fig tree which had leaves, but no fruit. In response the Lord declared: "**Let no one eat fruit from you ever again**" (Mark 11:13-14). The next day the disciples saw that the fig tree had dried up from its roots (Mark 11:20).

If You Refuse to Forgive Others

The Lord taught on the importance on forgiveness. "*And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in Heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in Heaven forgive your trespasses.*" Mark 11:25-26

By What Authority Do You Do These Things?

The conflict with the Jewish religious leaders reaches a climax as a series of attacks are launched, attempting to undermine the authority of Jesus before the people in the Temple. The chief priests the scribes and elders came to trick or trap Jesus. "*Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the Temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. And they said to Him, 'By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?' But Jesus answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: **The baptism of John - was it from Heaven or from men? Answer Me**.' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we say, 'From Heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men' - they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. So they answered and said to Jesus, 'We do not know.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.'*" Mark 11:27-33

The Wicked Tenants

"*Then He began to speak to them in parables: 'A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. And again he sent another, and*

him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those vinedressers said among themselves, '**This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.**' So they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. **Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. Have you not even read this Scripture: 'The Stone which the builders rejected has become the Chief Cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes'? And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them...**" Mark 12:1-12

Is it Lawful to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

"Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His Words. When they had come, they said to Him, 'Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?' But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, 'Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it.' So they brought it. And He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription is this?' They said to Him, 'Caesar's'. And Jesus answered and said to them, '**Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's**'. And they marvelled at Him." Mark 12:13-17

What About the Resurrection?

The Sadducees who were the materialists of their day and did not believe in a resurrection of the dead, came up with a ridiculous scenario of a woman who had been married to seven brothers without any offspring. They asked "Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife." Mark 12:23

You Do Not Know the Scriptures

"Jesus answered and said to them, '**Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?** For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in Heaven. But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. **You are therefore greatly mistaken.**" Mark 12:24-27

The Greatest Commandment

When a scribe questioned Jesus as to what is the greatest Commandment, Jesus replied: "**And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength... You shall love your neighbour as yourself.**" Mark 12:30-31

Who is the Son of David?

After that no one dared question Him. Then Jesus posed a question of His own to the religious leaders: "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool. Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?..." Mark 12:35-37. The Messiah predates King David and is much more than the Son of David.

They Devour Widows' Houses

"Then He said to them in His teaching, 'Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, **who devour widows' houses**, and for a pretence make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation. Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given

to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood." Mark 12:38-44

Funding Corruption and Hypocrisy

Many misunderstand and misapply this passage, teaching that Jesus was commending the example of this poor widow, that we should put everything in to the offering as she did. But that cannot be. The entire context is the Lord warning the people to beware of the scribes and pharisees who devour widows' houses, who for religious pretence make long prayers. They will receive greater condemnation. This widow put in all that she had, all that she had to live on. That is not wise or responsible. And for what was that money going? Not for God's work, but for the very people who wanted to betray and kill the Son of God! If we miss this context we miss the whole point the Lord is making. This is the final condemnation of the great chapter of confrontation with the Jewish religious leaders in Mark 12. They devour widows' houses. They will receive greater condemnation.

The Temple is Doomed to Destruction

As they went out of the Temple, one of His disciples pointed out the magnificent Temple to the Lord Jesus. The Lord responded and said to him; "...*Do you see these great buildings? **Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.***" Mark 13:2.

Beware of Coming Deception and Persecution

The Lord warned of deceptions and coming turmoil and persecution, of being delivered up to councils and beaten in synagogues. Brother will betray brother to death. A father his child. Children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. "***And you will be hated by all for My Name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.***" Mark 13:5-13

Mistaken

Those, who today, go to Jerusalem to pray at the wailing wall believing it to be part of the Temple, are mistaken. Jesus made clear that not one stone would be left upon another. The over 11,000 stones making up the wailing wall are not part of the original Temple. Josephus in his Antiquities of the Jews, makes clear that every part of the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. The Wall that is today being presented as a tourist attraction was part of Fort Antonio, which was built by king Herod the great and named after Mark Antony. The historian Josephus makes clear that only Fort Antonio was left standing after the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Malicious Treachery

The prolonged escalating controversy between the Jewish religious leaders and the Lord Jesus Christ reaches its climax in Jerusalem. "*Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.*" Mark 14:10-11

Conspiracy

The Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and Romans had little in common. However, they conspired and co-operated to crucify Christ. The Jewish religious leaders charged Jesus with blasphemy for saying that He was the Son of God. They demanded the death penalty for Him. Many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. Some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, we heard Him say, "*I will destroy this Temple made with hands and within three days I will build another made without hands.*" But not even then did their testimonies agree.

Are You the Christ?

*"And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, 'Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?' But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, '**Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?**' Jesus*

said, **'I Am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of Heaven.'** Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?' And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, 'Prophecy!' And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands." Mark 14:60-65

Political Intrigue

However, the Sanhedrin could not put someone to death since the land was occupied by the Romans and was under Roman law when it came to the death penalty. They needed Roman approval for this death sentence, but in Roman law blasphemy was not a crime. Therefore the Jewish high priests and pharisees, when they came before Pilate, did not charge Jesus with blasphemy, but treason. Pilate was not convinced. *"For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them."* Mark 15:10-11

Schemes and Screams

The Lord was tried before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, the Roman governor, and king Herod, who had killed John the Baptist and whose father had murdered the children of Bethlehem. While condemned by Anais and Caiaphas the high priests, and by Sanhedrin, Pontius Pilate, on three occasions, declared Him innocent. ***"This Man has done nothing wrong. This man has done nothing to deserve death. I will have him scourged and let Him go."*** Herod also dismissed Him. Yet, despite being effectively declared **Not Guilty** three times, the Roman governor, Pilate, bowed before the scheming of the religious leaders and the screams of the mob to release Barabbas and crucify Christ.

Mob Rule

"Pilate answered and said to them again, 'What then do you want me to do with Him...? So they cried out again, 'Crucify Him!' Then Pilate said to them, 'Why? What evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, 'Crucify Him!' So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified."

Mark 15:12-15

The Worst Crime in History

The greatest sin of any age is the rejection of Jesus Christ. The worst crime ever committed in the history of the world was the betrayal, illegal trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark's Gospel clearly presents us with the choice, to follow the world, or the Word of God.

On the First Day of the Week

*"Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, 'Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?' But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away - for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. **He is risen! He is not here.** See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples - and Peter - that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.'" Mark 16:1-7*

Christ Jesus Has Risen from the Dead

The first sight of the empty tomb and the Angels' announcement that Jesus had risen, threw the women into wild excitement. They ran to tell the others, in joy, fear, anxiety, wonder and bewilderment. At the Resurrection the Roman guards had fled, frightened and dazed, to tell the priests and seek their protection from the wrath of the Roman governor. Mary Magdalene ran

ahead of the group to announce to the disciples that Jesus had risen. When Peter and John reached the tomb they saw the empty shroud. Mary Magdalene who had followed after Peter and John, returned to the tomb and remained alone outside weeping. She saw the Angels and then the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to her. Jesus later appeared to the other women as they came back from telling the disciples. Jesus then appeared to the twelve (John 20:26-31) and to seven of the disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21) and to the eleven disciples in Galilee with 500 others (Matthew 28:16-20). Jesus also appeared to James (1 Corinthians 15:7), Jesus also appeared in Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 1:3-8).

The Great Commission

*"Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, **'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.'**"*

Mark 16:14-15

The Gospel in a Nutshell

Later at Cornelius' household in Caesarea, the Apostle Peter declared: *"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, Whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His Name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."* Acts 10:38-43

When We Work for the Lord He Works With and Through Us

Mark's Gospel presents us with a clear picture of the person and work of Christ and the exhortation to respond in Faith and obedience. Trust and obey for there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey. ***"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the Word through the accompanying signs."***

Mark 16:20

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