

Portraits of Jesus

A Study of the Gospel of Mark

by Gary Fisher

The Gospel of Mark is the earliest and shortest of the four New Testament gospels, and it delivers a fast-moving, action-focused portrait of Jesus as the suffering Son of God who brings God's kingdom through His teaching, miracles, and ultimately His death and resurrection.

Mark presents Jesus as a powerful yet humble Messiah whose mission centers on serving others and giving His life as a ransom. The book emphasizes urgency, discipleship, and the cost of following Him.

Major Themes

Jesus as the suffering servant (central to Mark's message).

Urgency ("immediately" appears frequently).

The Kingdom of God breaking into the world.

Faith vs. misunderstanding—even the disciples struggle.

The cost of discipleship—following Jesus means sacrifice.

Jesus' authority over nature, demons, sickness, and sin.

Why Mark Matters

Mark gives a raw, vivid, and human portrait of Jesus. It's the gospel that feels closest to eyewitness reporting—fast, direct, and emotionally honest. It challenges readers to respond: Will you follow Jesus even when it's costly?

Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit. Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

Then move on to the next lesson or the next course in order. **Please study all lessons in all courses in order as listed.**

Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

Authority of Jesus

Lesson 1

Jesus lived almost 2000 years ago, but even today people all over the world serve Him. We know this man primarily through four Bible books: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. First-hand acquaintance with these writings will help us understand Jesus and His message.

This course surveys Mark's narrative of Jesus' life. As you study each lesson, please keep a Bible at your side so that you can verify what you are learning by the Scriptures. You will notice that Mark is divided into sixteen major sections (chapters), each of which contains small divisions (verses). When a notation like 5:12 is used in these lessons, you should look at the fifth chapter of Mark and the twelfth verse.

A couple of items before we get started: to profit most from these lessons, you need an open heart to receive what Jesus taught and did. Allow His words to direct you as you read. A prayer for God's guidance at the beginning and end of each study is recommended. If you don't understand something mentioned in this course or in your reading of Mark, please feel free to write your question down and send it to us along with your completed lesson. We'll be happy to answer it if we can.

John Prepares the Way

>>> Read Mark 1:1-8. <<<

Please read Mark 1:1-8 in your Bible before continuing the lesson. In the very first verse, Mark announced that he would write about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is surprising, therefore, that he did not start out by telling about Jesus Himself; instead, he described the work of John the Baptist. This was because John was to prepare the way for Jesus. John fulfilled this mission by preaching to get people ready for the coming of the Lord.

John's message focused on two themes that will help us get ready to receive Christ. First, he preached about repentance. To repent means to decide to change. John was telling his hearers that they had to reverse their life's direction to get ready for Christ; those unwilling to change could not come to Him. Second, John declared the greatness of Jesus. He said Jesus was so great that he himself was not even worthy to stoop down and untie His shoes. This was an amazing declaration because one does not have to have much worth to untie somebody's shoes. In fact, in John's day, untying shoes was considered to be a slave's lowest duty - John wasn't worthy to be Jesus' humblest slave! So, for us to be ready to receive Jesus, we must repent (change our lives) and recognize His awesome greatness.

1 John came to prepare the way for whom? (a) Moses, (b) Mohammed, (c) Jesus, (d) Peter. Answer: (put the letter of the correct answer in the blank) _____.

2 What word in our study means "to decide to change"? Answer: The word is (put the correct word[s] in the blank) _____.

3 John said he was unworthy to: a) untie Jesus' shoes; b) carry Jesus' bags; c) stand beside Jesus; d) talk to Jesus. Answer : _____.

Early Events in Jesus' Career

>>> Read Mark 1:9-15. <<<

Just like thousands of others, Jesus came to John to be baptized. But as He emerged from the water, something startling occurred: The Holy Spirit came down upon Him in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God was showing His approval of Jesus in a dramatic way.

Then Jesus entered the wilderness where the devil tempted Him. While Matthew and Luke provide more specific information about the temptations (Matthew 4; Luke 4), Mark's brief account shows two things. First, Jesus experienced temptation as all men do. Second, doing what pleases God, as Jesus did when He was baptized, does not exempt one from temptation. Satan often intensifies his efforts when a person begins to serve God.

4&5 What two amazing things happened when Jesus was baptized? Answer: The _____ came on Him in a form like a dove, and a voice spoke from _____ saying, "This is my beloved Son."

6 Where was Jesus baptized (v9)? Answer: He was baptized in the _____ River.

7 For how many days was Jesus tempted by Satan in the wilderness (v13; cf. Luke 4:1,2)? Answer: _____ days (give a number).

8 What message did Jesus preach (v15)? Answer: He told people to repent and believe in the _____.

Jesus Calls Four Fishermen

>>> Read Mark 1:16-20. <<<

As Jesus walked along, He saw two of His friends, Peter and Andrew, who were professional fishermen. He asked them to follow Him and become fishers of men. At once, they quit their jobs and began following Christ. He next found James and John, and requested that they do the same. With no hesitation, they left not only their occupation but also their father, and began to accompany the Lord. Clearly, these men

recognized Jesus' greatness. He was the one whose shoes John was unworthy to untie. God had specially acknowledged Him by His own voice from heaven. So when Jesus demanded radical action (to drop everything and follow Him), they responded immediately.

Note -- Characteristics of followers of Jesus: *These fishermen demonstrated the meaning of discipleship. When Jesus called, they: 1) acted immediately, 2) left both job and family, and 3) started following Him.*

Christ calls today through His Word. When we perceive His greatness, we too will: 1) obey immediately all He says, 2) put Him ahead of everything, including our job and family, and 3) follow Him, allowing His example to direct every step.

People who know that Jesus wants them to change, but put it off, are not like these four fishermen.

9 Which of these things did the disciples **not** do when Jesus called them? a) decide immediately; b) leave family and job; c) follow Jesus; d) go to school for training.

Answer: _____.

10 What did Jesus say He would make these men (v17)? Answer: He would make them fishers of _____.

Jesus Amazes the Crowds

>>> Read Mark 1:21-28. <<<

Jesus' teaching astounded the multitude in the synagogue (a synagogue was like a church among the Jews). He taught with authority. He issued His commands as if He had the right to tell others exactly what to do!

Jesus' actions showed that He really had the authority that He claimed. In this paragraph, He cast out a demon. How? By His words! Nothing more. When Jesus merely said, "Be quiet and come out of him," the demon left the man. His words had authority even over demons. The calmness with which Jesus expelled demons reflected His power: He never argued or struggled or created a scene. He simply ordered the demons to leave and they left. No wonder people were amazed. He had demonstrated the credentials to prove His authority.

Note -- Need for authority: *In every area, authority is essential. To determine distance, it is necessary to have a yardstick or standard of measure by which to calculate length. Thus, if someone wishes to know how long a room is, he measures it. There is no other way to know for sure. God has provided a yardstick in religion: Jesus and His words. When we wish to know whether something is right or wrong, we should evaluate it by the standard of the Scriptures. This should be done with every teacher and teaching - even this correspondence course. Therefore, you need to have a Bible at*

your side while you are studying, and continually refer to it to be sure that what is taught in these lessons is true. The Bible is our yardstick.

11 What amazed the multitudes about Jesus? a) physical appearance; b) intelligence; c) wealth; d) authority in teaching. Answer: _____.

12 How did Jesus expel the demon? a) by conducting a seance; b) by a magical formula; c) by a simple command (rebuke); d) by taking up a collection. Answer: _____.

13 What purpose did Jesus' miracles serve? a) they made Him rich, b) they demonstrated His authority and proved He was from God, c) they proved people today can do miracles, d) they served no purpose whatever. Answer: _____.

Jesus Heals Many

>>> Read Mark 1:29-34. <<<

Jesus came into Simon Peter's house and found his mother-in-law sick in bed with a high fever (see Luke 4:38). He spoke to her, raised her up, and the fever left her. She then began waiting on Jesus and the disciples. He also healed many others who were brought to Him.

Several features of Jesus' healings are noteworthy:

* He healed immediately, with no delay.

* He healed everyone who came to Him regardless of their disease. (Compare Matt. 8:16,17; Luke 4:40,41.)

* He healed so completely that Simon's mother-in-law was able to get up and start waiting on them. After a fever breaks, it normally takes a few days for a person to recover his strength. Jesus' healings put people back as if they had never had their maladies in the first place!

* Jesus sought to avoid publicity. He ordered the demons not to announce who He was.

14 Whom did Jesus heal in this story? Answer: He healed Simon Peter's _____.

(Thought question: If Peter had a mother-in-law, what does this tell you about Peter? Note that "Simon" is just another name for Peter -- Matt. 4:18; 8:14,15.)

15 Which is **not** characteristic of Jesus' healings? a) He healed many (i.e., all of the many who came); b) He healed completely; c) He healed immediately; d) He healed so He could become rich and popular. Answer: _____.

Jesus Continues His Journeys

>>> **Read Mark 1:35-39.** <<<

Jesus frequently sought solitude for prayer. Prayer during the daytime was nearly impossible since the crowds continually pressed on Him, so He skipped sleep to be able to talk with His Father that He missed so much. After finally finding Him that morning, the disciples reported that everybody in the town where He had been was seeking Him. Nevertheless, since He wanted to be able to get the message to as many people as possible, He insisted on moving on to other towns.

16 Jesus arose early in the morning for what purpose? Answer: He arose to _____.

Jesus Heals a Leper

>>> **Read Mark 1:40-45.** <<<

Painful open sores caused everyone to dread leprosy. Those who contracted it were quarantined because the disease was highly contagious. In this story, Jesus did what no one else dared do - He touched a leper. When He did so, the man was healed immediately. His sores were instantly transformed into smooth skin. The Lord then instructed the cleansed leper to report his healing to the priest (a requirement of the law of Moses - Leviticus 13-14), but to tell no one else. The man, however, went out and told everyone - the exact opposite of what Jesus had said. Undoubtedly he was thrilled that he had been healed and probably imagined that spreading the news about Jesus would honor Him. But the fact remains that he did just what Jesus had said not to do. As a result, the Lord was thronged by such large crowds that He could no longer publicly enter into cities, but had to remain in unpopulated areas. We should learn a lesson: All disobedience, even well-intentioned, hurts Jesus' work.

17 After Jesus spoke, how long was it till the leprosy was healed? a) several weeks, b) several days, c) immediate, d) the Bible does not say. Answer: _____.

18 After Jesus had healed the leper, He told the man to show himself to whom? Answer: He was to show himself to the _____.

19 What result occurred because the leper disobeyed Jesus' orders? a) he became a leper again; b) Jesus was thronged by crowds so large that He couldn't enter a town; c) Jesus praised his evangelism; d) he became an apostle. Answer: _____.

Summary: This chapter shows the greatness of Jesus: John was unworthy to untie His shoes; God spoke from heaven endorsing Him; He expelled demons by a mere word; He healed the sick immediately regardless of the nature of their infirmity. This chapter also indicates how we should respond to His greatness: immediately obey everything He says no matter what sacrifice is required; respect the authority of His message; and, obey Him even when His command seems unreasonable.

Opposition to Jesus Grows

Lesson 2

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

>>> **Read Mark 2:1-12.** <<<

As a result of His teaching and miracles, Jesus' popularity grew rapidly. So many wanted to hear Him that they filled the house in Capernaum where He was teaching and crowded around it. Just then, five men arrived, eager to see Jesus too. One of them was paralyzed and the other four carried him on a stretcher. It was impossible for them to get in through the door, so they climbed up on the roof, dug a hole in it and let the paralytic down through the opening they had created. You can imagine the commotion among the crowd in the house below.

When Jesus saw the faith they had demonstrated, He told the lame man that his sins were forgiven. That was probably not what the man had expected, but it is every man's greatest need. The scribes who were present thought Jesus had blasphemed because God alone can forgive sins. Jesus read their minds and asked: Which is easier to say—your sins are forgiven, or get up and walk? To prove His ability to forgive sins (something invisible and therefore impossible to verify), He healed the paralytic who then got up and walked. Jesus proved His power to conquer invisible, spiritual problems by overcoming a visible, physical problem. The crowd was dumbfounded. They had never seen anything to compare with Jesus.

Note -- Who will reach Jesus? Consider the five men as they approached the house in which Jesus was teaching. They had come in order to see Him, but their way to Jesus was blocked by a big obstacle: the crowd. Many would have simply turned around and gone back home. Not these men. They were determined, even desperate, in their desire to see Jesus. Their procedure, unroofing the roof, was radical but it worked. Even today, those who want to come to Jesus frequently encounter barriers in their path. The only ones who actually reach Him, are those who are absolutely determined and who refuse to allow anything to keep them from following Him. How determined to be with Jesus are you?

1 What did the paralytic and his friends do when they were unable to reach Jesus? a) gave up and went home; b) waited for God to open a path through the crowd; c) offered a financial contribution; d) took off part of the roof so the paralytic could enter the house through the opening. Answer: _____.

2 What did Jesus do for the paralytic before healing him? Answer: He _____ his sins.

3 Who alone can forgive sins? Answer: Only _____ can forgive sins.

4 How did Jesus prove He has the power to forgive sins? Answer: He _____ the paralyzed man.

(Thought question: If only God can forgive sins, but Jesus proved that He could forgive sins, what does that prove about the nature of Jesus?)

Jesus Socializes with Outcasts

>>> Read Mark 2:13-17. <<<

One of Jesus' more surprising actions was calling Levi to be a disciple. Levi had been a tax collector. In that era, tax collectors were viewed as both thieves and traitors because they used dishonest tactics to raise funds for the hated Roman invaders. Adding a tax collector to His inner circle was hardly a move that could be expected to increase Jesus' popularity! Later, Levi held a banquet in Christ's honor. He invited his friends: other tax collectors and sinners. The scribes and Pharisees were outraged because they thought it improper for a teacher of religion to eat with immoral people. When Jesus overheard their criticism, He asked: Who needs a doctor--the sick or the well? His purpose, He said, was not to call righteous, but sinners. The Lord never hesitated to break society's norms and customs.

5 Name the tax collector whom Jesus called. Answer: His name was _____.

6 What reason did Jesus give to explain why He socialized with sinful people? a) He wanted to participate in their sins; b) He did not believe that sinful people can be a bad influence on good people; c) He wanted to teach the sinners to repent; d) He believed sinners will be saved, even if they don't change. Answer: _____.

Jesus' Disciples Don't Fast

>>> Read Mark 2:18-22. <<<

Some of the Pharisees and disciples of John came to Jesus asking why He and His disciples didn't fast like other religious people did. Jesus explained by illustration. He said that no one would fast at a time of celebration, such as a wedding. His own presence on the earth made it a joyous time of feasting because He was the bridegroom. Since fasting should fit the occasion, it was inappropriate in this situation. He also explained that just as no one would put new wine in old bottles or a new patch on old jeans, it was equally out of place to put the newly revealed gospel of Christ into the old traditional forms of the Jews. Fasting was just not the right thing to do when the Son of God Himself was present.

7 How did Jesus explain why His disciples didn't fast? a) He said they did fast, but did it secretly; b) He said that His presence made it a time of joy in which fasting was

inappropriate; c) He condemned all fasting; d) He admitted they were wrong and should have fasted. Answer: _____.

Disciples Break Sabbath Traditions

>>> Read Mark 2:23-28. <<<

The more popular Jesus became, the more outspoken His opponents' attacks. Jesus and His disciples provided easy targets for their critics, because they refused to follow the religious traditions of their age. Jewish tradition regarding the Sabbath day prohibited all activity, including plucking grain to eat, but Jesus and His followers ignored these cherished doctrines. When the Jewish officials criticized the disciples, Jesus defended their actions by noting His opponents' inconsistency: they justified David when he broke God's law, but they condemned Him when He merely violated men's traditions. Then He explained that God had intended for the Sabbath command to provide relief for man, not be an additional burden. Finally, Jesus proclaimed His authority over the Sabbath saying that He Himself was Lord of the Sabbath. If Jesus created the Sabbath, surely He knew what activities violated it.

8 What did Jesus call Himself? Answer: He was Lord of the _____.

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

>>> Read Mark 3:1-6. <<<

As their hatred of Jesus mounted, His enemies searched for every possible chance to attack Him, but He kept evading their traps. On this occasion, a man with a withered hand was in the synagogue. Jesus asked His opponents' opinion on whether or not to help the man, but they refused to reply. Jesus then told him to stretch his hand out. Apparently He neither touched him nor did any other physical thing--He merely asked the man to reach his hand out. When he did, it was healed. Jesus' critics were furious and began plotting to assassinate Him.

Note -- To save a life or to kill: In 3:4 Jesus asked His opponents: Should one save a life or kill on the Sabbath? They chose not to reply, which showed that they were not interested in truth, but only wanted to discredit Him. It is always easy to find fault, but it is much harder to give a positive recommendation. Normally Christ healed men by laying His hands on them or performing some other physical sign. If He had accompanied the healing by physical action in this case, they would have attacked Him for doing medical work on the Sabbath, something contrary to their tradition. This time, however, Jesus did nothing--He merely told the man to reach his hand out. Even Jesus' enemies did not believe it wrong to stretch out your hand on the Sabbath. Thus, He outsmarted His opponents; they were furious. When a man in an argument begins to get angry, it is a sure sign that he is losing. As it turned out, Jesus' enemies are the ones who plotted to kill on the Sabbath, because He had done good.

9 How many sins did Jesus commit during His lifetime (see 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21,22; Hebrews 4:15)? Answer (give a number): _____.

10 The activities Jesus did on the sabbath violated what rules? a) only uninspired Jewish traditions; b) the 10 commands; c) the Law of Moses; d) the New Testament; e) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

11 What did Jesus' enemies do after He had healed the man with the withered hand? Answer: They plotted to _____ Jesus.

Jesus' Popularity Grows

>>> Read Mark 3:7-12.<<<

Though Jesus frequently tried to withdraw, people followed Him from everywhere. He continued teaching, healing and casting out demons. While neither the crowd nor the religious leaders seemed to have recognized His true identity, the demons confessed Jesus as the Son of God. He declined their testimony, however, since He did not want the recommendation of the Devil.

Jesus Appoints Twelve as Apostles

>>> Read Mark 3:13-19. <<<

Jesus needed to train apprentices to represent Him and preach the gospel after His departure. He chose twelve of His followers for that job. The twelve He chose were an unlikely bunch: included were four fishermen, a tax collector, a revolutionary (Simon the "Zealot"), a skeptic (Thomas), and a traitor (Judas Iscariot). Jesus proved that He could work with and make something out of even the most unpromising material.

12 What work did Jesus empower the apostles to do (read Mark 3:15,14 and Matt. 10:1)? a) preach the gospel; b) heal diseases, c) cast out demons, d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Accusations of Satanic Influence

>>> Read Mark 3:20-30. <<<

While Jesus' family thought He had gone crazy, the Pharisees charged that He accomplished His work through the power of the devil. They were desperately seeking to discredit Him and diminish His influence. Jesus' devastating reply silenced them. First, He said that it would be unreasonable and even disastrous for the devil to begin attacking himself. Civil wars don't produce strong kingdoms. Second, Christ explained that He had come to rob the strong man (the devil), taking from him the souls that had been under his control. Logically, He would need to disarm Satan to accomplish this goal, so expelling demons was a predictable facet of His strategy. Finally, He warned of

the serious consequences of hardening one's heart to the point of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. These scribes were demonstrating a malicious and possibly fatal attitude toward the work of God.

* 13* How did Jesus' enemies explain His ability to cast out demons? a) He did it by the power of the devil; b) He did it because He was the Son of God; c) it just seemed like He expelled demons but He really didn't; d) they didn't try to explain it. Answer: _____.

14 What did Jesus say would happen to a kingdom that was divided against itself (v24)? Answer: He said that kingdom cannot _____.

Jesus' True Family

>>> Read Mark 3:31-35. <<<

Jesus' physical family didn't understand Him. They came to try to talk to Him, perhaps to persuade Him to take a break. He refused to give them a private hearing, explaining that His family no longer had a special claim on His attention. Jesus' true family consists of those who hear and do His will. This incident shows that Mary had no special influence or privilege; Jesus treats all of His obedient followers equally.

15 Who wanted to talk to Jesus? a) His aunt and cousins, b) His mother and brothers, c) His father, d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

16 Who did Jesus say are His real family members? Answer: Those who _____ the will of God.

Summary: Jesus was continually under attack. He was criticized because He forgave sins, ate with sinners, didn't fast, didn't observe the religious establishment's Sabbath doctrines, and cast out demons. He never cracked under the intense scrutiny and pressure. Much to the contrary, He continually affirmed principles that are extremely important even for our service to Him: 1) the priority of forgiveness of sins over physical healing, 2) the importance of recognizing one's spiritual sickness, 3) the fact that fasting is to be done only when it fits the circumstances, 4) the uselessness of religious traditions, and 5) the critical danger of hardheartedly rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Teaches in Parables

Lesson 3

Parable of the Sower

>>> **Read Mark 4:1-20.** <<<

Please read this story in your Bible before studying the lesson. Jesus frequently taught in parables. A parable is a story with a spiritual application. Here, Jesus described a farmer who went out to sow seed in his field. Naturally, as he went along scattering it with his hand, the seed fell onto different types of ground. The harvest depended on the kind of soil where the seed fell.

The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant, so they asked Him to explain. Jesus described four types of people who hear the word of the gospel. The first type is like hard-packed soil. These hard-hearted people do not let the word penetrate into their life; they reject it immediately because they have closed their mind. The second type is like seed sown in rocky places. The idea here is of a thin layer of topsoil covering a large rock. When seed is sown in such a place, it will germinate and grow in the shallow soil, but it will not develop deep roots. When the sun comes out and it doesn't rain for a few days, the plant will wither and die. This represents a person who eagerly receives the word, but doesn't develop roots through faith and Bible study. This person will not have the ability to withstand the temptations and persecutions that come along in life. Third, Jesus described the thorny soil. In this ground, the plant is overshadowed by taller weeds which suffocate fruit production. This soil symbolizes people who receive the word and although they allow it to continue in their lives, permit competing interests to dwarf it. These other influences may not be bad things in themselves, but they dominate the person's life so much that the seed can't bear fruit. Finally, Jesus described good soil in which plants bear abundant fruit. This soil represents Christians who are diligent in the service of God.

Note -- Which soil are you? Everyone has a place in the parable of the sower. Jesus wants us to evaluate which type of soil we are. 1) Hopefully, we won't be the hardened, wayside soil. If we are, we will close our mind to the truth and refuse to allow the gospel to penetrate our heart and change our life. 2) Perhaps we'll be the rocky soil. On the surface we appear to be growing and serving the Lord enthusiastically. But we aren't deepening our roots through faith, through study and through a deeper personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When times become tough, we will fall away and others will marvel, because on the surface it looked like we were doing so well. 3) If we end up being the thorny soil, we will continue to "be a Christian," but our life will be dominated by other activities and we will never have much time or attention to share with spiritual concerns. This is probably the most subtle danger, because the

plant in thorny soil never completely falls away. As a result, we can soothe our conscience and believe that we are still doing OK, when in fact, we aren't bearing fruit.
4) Ideally, we will be the good soil that bears the fruit of righteousness for the Lord.

Note -- Meditations on the seed: Jesus explained that the seed represents the word of God (Luke 8:11). There are many lessons that can be learned by the analogy between seed and the word. For example, seed always produces after its kind. That is, rice seed always produces rice plants, corn seed produces corn plants, and pumpkin seed produces pumpkin plants. There are no exceptions. By the plant that results, one can determine what seed was planted. So it is in the spiritual realm. When the pure word of God is planted, the resulting plants are Christians. When you end up with other things--say Buddhists, Mormons, or Jehovah's Witnesses, you know that something besides the word of God was planted. To produce a Buddhist, you must plant the teachings of Buddha. To get a Mormon, the book of Mormon and the teachings of the Mormon church must be planted. Jehovah's Witnesses are formed by planting the teachings of their organizational headquarters, the Watchtower Society. What would happen if you merely planted the Scriptures, without mixing in any other teachings?

Seed never changes. It would be theoretically possible to eliminate pumpkin plants from the face of the earth. Yet if pumpkin seeds were preserved, someone many years later could plant them, and again produce pumpkins. So also in Christ. The seed is the word of God (1 Peter 1:23-25). Even if there had not been servants of Christ on the earth for a long time, when people returned to following the Bible only, they would become Christians. Our goal should be to reproduce pure disciples of Christ in the twentieth century, just like they were in the first.

1 What is a parable? Answer: A parable is a physical story with a _____ application.

2 What kind of soil did Jesus describe? (a) wayside soil, (b) stony soil, (c) thorny soil, (d) good soil, (e) all of these. Answer: _____.

3 What does the seed represent? Answer: It represents the _____ of God.

4 What does the wayside soil represent? Answer: It represents people whose hearts are hardened, so that Satan takes the _____ from their hearts.

5 The rocky soil represents people who do well for a while, but then fall away because of what? a) hardened hearts, b) tribulation or persecution, c) too much Bible study, d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

6 Is it possible for a person who has received the word to fall away (see also Galatians 5:4)? (yes or no) Answer: _____.

7 In the thorny soil, the thorns represent what? a) hardened hearts, b) false doctrines, c) cares of the world and deceit of riches, d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

8 What was the principal characteristic of the good soil (v20)? Answer: It bore _____, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

9 How does seed reproduce (see also Galatians 6:7)? Answer: Whatever a man sows, that is what he will _____.

10 What causes people to become members of various different religious groups? Answer: They hear and accept the _____ taught by those groups.

Parable of the Lamp

>>> **Read Mark 4:21-25.** <<<

Jesus compared the Word of God to a lamp. It would be useless to buy a lamp, and then stick it under a bed. After all, a lamp's purpose is to illuminate--if you can't see it, it does no good at all. The Bible is a light. But it is useless if it remains closed on the bookshelf. In order to receive profit, we must open it up and read it.

Although studying the Scriptures is essential, many read the Bible in vain, because they don't read it correctly. It is significant that in the middle of a text stressing the importance of hearing the word, Jesus emphasized the need to be careful how we hear (4:24). The fact that people who read the Bible come to markedly different conclusions about what it means demonstrates that many are not understanding it properly. Some are careless and simply don't put much effort into their study. Others twist the Scriptures intentionally, misinterpreting them to try to confirm the beliefs and practices they have already determined to follow.

Note -- How to study the Bible: *There are some common sense principles that can help you understand the Scriptures as you study. First, learn to study in context. The Bible has two main divisions: the Old Testament (first 39 books) and the New Testament (last 27 books). The New Testament is the part that directly relates to us today since it contains the teachings of Christ and the apostles. The Old Testament gives the background of God's preparation of the Jewish nation for the coming of Christ. These Testaments are subdivided into books (66 in all). It is probably best to study book by book. This Bible course was designed to take a person through the gospel of Mark step-by-step.*

You need to concentrate on what you read in the Bible to be able to understand it. Since each book is divided into chapters, it is helpful to approach your Bible study by working with a chapter at a time. Read through the chapter two or three times. On the first reading, work to simply discover what the chapter contains, but on the second reading, you can begin to try to analyze the main points. Keep a notebook handy. Jot down a note or two about the main ideas or events of the chapter. A notebook is a good place to write down questions that arise as you study. Writing them down so that you won't forget them allows you to progress in your study without getting sidetracked. Later, you can search for the answers to these questions yourself, or you can ask

someone else to help you. Those who are mailing you these lessons would be happy to try to help answer your Bible questions.

11 What does the lamp in 4:21 represent? Answer: It represents the word of _____.

12 When people do not study the Bible diligently enough, what will result? a) sin, b) false teaching, c) ignorance, d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Parable of the Seed

>>> Read Mark 4:26-29. <<<

Jesus said that the kingdom of God was like a farmer who planted a seed. That night he went to bed. The next morning he got up and tended to other responsibilities. Meanwhile, the seed germinated, began to grow and finally bore fruit. Jesus was teaching several things by this story. First, the one who plants the seed is not responsible for its growth; that is, the one who teaches the gospel doesn't control the growth of the word in the heart of the one who heard. Second, the growth of the word in a person's life is gradual. One does not hear the Bible today and become a mature Christian tomorrow. But if the hearer's heart is right he will allow the word to shape and mold his life step-by-step so that he can become the kind of person God wants him to be.

13 What part did the farmer play in the growth of the seed? Answer: He just planted the _____.

14 Who decides whether or not a person who hears the word will believe and obey it? a) God decides for the person, b) the person who hears decides for himself, c) Satan decides, d) no one decides. Answer: _____.

Parable of Mustard Seed

>>> Read Mark 4:30-34. <<<

Jesus said that the kingdom is like a mustard seed. The mustard seed is tiny, but grows to be a great shrub. So also, God's kingdom began in a small way during the ministry of an impoverished carpenter, Jesus, but gradually became a dominant world force. Christians' efforts to work for the Lord's kingdom may seem insignificant, but God is able to grow large mustard trees from tiny seeds.

15 What is the lesson of the mustard seed parable? Answer: God's _____ began small but would grow and become powerful.

Jesus Does the Impossible

Lesson #4

Jesus Stills the Storm

>>> **Read Mark 4:35-41.** <<<

Jesus consistently demonstrated His authority by doing things which were totally beyond human capacity. In this case, while the disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee by boat, Jesus fell asleep on a cushion. A great storm arose, and the disciples panicked. In desperation, they awoke Jesus saying: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He got up and calmly rebuked the wind and the sea. The storm ceased. He then turned to the disciples and reproved them for their lack of faith. Though they had seen Jesus perform many miracles, they were always amazed by each new one. They said: "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Note -- How well do we sleep? *Considering the things that the disciples had already seen Jesus do, their doubts about His ability to quiet the storm are astonishing. They had seen Him heal multitudes of people, cast out demons and prove Himself equal to any task at hand. Suddenly, they despaired because of a storm on the sea. Obviously, they didn't really think Jesus could solve this problem because they were amazed when He did. How could they have been so slow and so distrustful? What about us? Do we not believe that Jesus can handle any situation, if we trust and obey His will? Have we not seen in the Scriptures how Jesus can solve every problem? How do we react when we confront a fresh crisis in our lives--do we trustingly and confidently turn to Jesus, or do we throw up our hands in despair? How well do we sleep?*

1 What was Jesus doing when the storm arose on the sea? (a) praying, (b) reading Scripture, (c) sleeping, (d) rowing. Answer: _____.

2 How did Jesus calm the storm? Answer: He calmly _____ the wind and the sea.

3 How did the disciples react to this miracle? (a) They ignored it. (b) They were afraid, (c) They were angry. (d) All of the preceding. Answer: _____.

Jesus Casts out a Legion of Demons

>>> **Read Mark 5:1-20.** <<<

When Jesus got out of the boat, a wild man met Him. The man, inhabited by thousands of demons, could not be subdued by human force, and so he lived as a savage among the

tombs. The demons within the man were scared of Jesus. They asked Him not to send them out of the country (to the abyss, Luke 8:31). Instead, they wanted to be able to enter a nearby herd of swine. Evidently, if the demons had been expelled without having permission to go into another being, they would have had to return to Hell. No doubt it was better to inhabit a pig, if necessary, than to be sent back to that awful place. Surprisingly, Jesus granted the demons' request. They left the man and entered the pigs. The herd went berserk because of the presence of the demons within them, ran headlong and plunged off the cliff. The pigs drowned and presumably the demons had to return to the abyss. Perhaps they thought they had outsmarted Jesus when He allowed them to enter the swine, but the truth is, Jesus outsmarted them! In the end they had to return to the abyss--they merely took a roller-coaster ride to get there.

Meanwhile, those who had been tending the hogs went into the city and told the townsfolk about what Jesus had done. What a tremendous opportunity for this small town to have Jesus present! They didn't look at it as an opportunity though; they asked Jesus to leave. The man who had been healed wanted to follow Jesus, but He told him to return to his home and start preaching.

Note -- They asked Him to leave! *At first, it may seem incredible that the people of the town didn't want Jesus to stay. But think about what they had just lost: 2000 pigs. Some people owned them; some folks were planning to make money slaughtering, processing and selling them. He had hurt the town's economy. They evidently loved material possessions more than they loved Jesus; because of that, they missed out on the supreme privilege. They asked Him to leave. Do we ever invite the Lord to leave our lives because we love material things more than we love Him?*

Note -- Jesus' surprising instructions: *When the man who had been healed wanted to follow Him, Jesus gave him strange orders. He refused to allow the man to accompany Him, but asked him to return and tell about his healing in the city. There are two surprising things about this command: 1) Jesus didn't allow the man to accompany him. Putting myself in the demoniac's place, I can see why he would have wanted to be with the one who cured him; but Jesus said no. Would it not have been a wonderful thing to be in Jesus' presence? Certainly. But what Jesus preferred was for the man to testify of His work in the city. Sometimes God may not want us to remain in secure and comfortable surroundings, but rather go to the lost and preach. 2) Jesus normally was telling folks not to tell about their healings (see Mark 1:40-45). Why the sudden change here? Remember where Jesus was. He was on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had not wanted to be thronged by spectators in the Capernaum area, west of the Sea, but in this wicked town, He was in no danger of becoming too popular. The people in this place needed someone to report the miracle.*

4 What measures had been attempted to subdue the demoniac (v4)? a) psychology, b) shackles and chains, c) shock therapy, d) drugs. Answer: _____.

5 What name did the demons wear (v9)? Answer: _____.

6 Where did the demons say they wanted to go? Answer: They wanted to go into a herd of _____.

7 What happened to the swine when the demons entered them? Answer: They ran off a cliff and drowned in the _____.

8 What did the townspeople ask Jesus to do? Answer: They asked Jesus to _____.

9 What did Jesus tell the demoniac to do after he had been healed? a) Tell no one what had happened, b) Lie about what happened, c) Tell everyone what happened, d) Commit himself to an asylum. Answer: _____.

Jesus Heals Woman with Hemorrhage

>>> Read Mark 5:21-34. <<<

A synagogue official named Jairus requested Jesus to come and heal his daughter who was dying. As Jesus was journeying to his house, a desperate woman in the multitude touched the Lord. She had been bleeding for 12 years, had gone to many doctors, and spent all of her money, but had only worsened. She thought that by touching Jesus she could be healed. Sure enough, when she touched Jesus' coat, she could sense that the flow of blood immediately dried up and she was well. Suddenly, Jesus asked who had touched Him. The disciples thought it was a strange question since there was a huge crowd thronging Jesus. Many had "touched" Him. But the woman knew what Jesus meant. Terrified, she came forward and confessed. Jesus reassured her saying that her faith had made her well.

Note -- Why did Jesus embarrass her? Obviously, the woman with the bleeding was hoping to avoid publicity. She didn't make her presence known, but silently touched Jesus' clothes and was healed. Then Jesus put her on the spot by asking who touched Him. She was trembling as she admitted what she had done. Why did He draw attention to this shy lady? Perhaps there are two reasons: 1) If He had not, the woman would have believed that she had been healed by some sort of magic associated with Jesus' clothes. He wanted her to know that He had consciously healed her. Many touched His clothes and were not healed; she was healed by the will of the Lord. 2) If Jesus had allowed her to leave thinking she had "stolen" the healing, her conscience might later trouble her. By publicly identifying her, He was able to comfort and encourage her, telling her to go in peace.

10 How long had the woman had her problem of bleeding? Answer: _____ years.

11 How had she tried to get well previously? Answer: She had spent all her money on _____.

12 When was the woman with the bleeding healed? a) she was not healed; b) when she believed on Jesus; c) when she asked Him to heal her; d) when she touched Jesus' clothes. Answer: _____.

13 How did the rest of the multitude find out about Jesus' miracle? Answer: He asked who had _____ Him, and the woman confessed.

Jesus Heals Jairus' Daughter

>>> Read Mark 5:35-43. <<<

During the delay caused by the healing of the woman, people came to tell Jairus not to bother Jesus any longer because his daughter had died. Jesus told them to believe and He continued on to the house. There, the mourners laughed when Jesus told them that the girl was "sleeping." He wasn't denying the reality of her death, but was affirming that He would soon raise her; therefore, her death was more like sleep. He took only three disciples and the girl's parents, went into her room, and told her to get up. She did. The witnesses were astounded.

Please notice the theme that runs through the stories in this section of Mark: Jesus can do what is humanly impossible. First, the storm. The disciples were desperate, but Jesus calmed it with a mere word. Then, the demoniac. Though many had tried, no one had been able to bind nor subdue him. Jesus expelled the demons with a word and the man returned to normal. Then, the woman. No physician had been able to heal her though she had spent all her money in the effort. With one touch, she was completely cured. Finally, the daughter of Jairus. When one dies, all attempts to cure the sickness end, because everyone knows you can't raise the dead. Jesus did. Four times in this part of Mark, Jesus entered situations that were humanly impossible and emerged victorious.

14 Why did people suggest that Jairus not bother Jesus any more? Answer: Because the girl had _____.

15 Who was in the room when Jesus raised the daughter (v37,40)? a) Jesus, b) the girl, c) the girl's parents, d) Peter, James, and John, e) all the preceding but no one else. Answer: _____.

16 What does the Bible account say that assures us the girl was really alive again? Answer: She arose and _____.

(Thought question: Considering the nature and purpose of these miracles, who alive on earth today can do such things as these? What can we learn as a result?)

Rejection at Nazareth

>>> **Read Mark 6:1-6.** <<<

Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth. Despite convincing proofs that He was the Son of God, His own townspeople rejected Him. They knew His family and His background and they refused to believe that someone they viewed as a peer could be greater than they. Because the people didn't have enough faith to bring their sick to Him, Jesus healed few. The people in Nazareth forfeited an ideal opportunity to have the Lord with them.

Note -- Great opportunities: *It is tragic to see people discarding the fantastic opportunity to be blessed by Jesus. In the country of the Gadarenes, they simply asked Jesus to leave (5:1-20). Here in Nazareth, they refused to believe and therefore didn't even bring their sick for Jesus to heal. As a result, they missed out on the opportunities that others, like Jairus and the woman with the bleeding, benefited from. What about us? Do we take advantage of the opportunity to know Jesus and to be blessed by Him?*

17 What had been Jesus' profession before He began His ministry (v3)? Answer: He had been a _____.

18 Which of Jesus' family members did the people of Nazareth know (v3)? a) His mother Mary, b) His brothers, c) His sisters, d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

(Thought question: What does this tell you about Mary?)

19 How did the people of Jesus' hometown (Nazareth) react to Him? a) They rejected Him, b) They believed in Him, c) They made a hero of Him, d) all of the preceding. Answer: _____.

The Message Spreads

Lesson 5

Jesus Sends out the Twelve

>>> **Read Mark 6:7-13.** <<<

Please make sure to pick up your Bible and read each paragraph as you proceed with this lesson. In this section, Jesus sent His twelve apostles out in pairs on a preaching tour. This marked the fourth stage in their career. Earlier, they had heard Jesus, been called by Him, and been chosen as apostles. Here they were sent out as His representatives to proclaim the message of repentance. The mission was urgent, so Jesus forbade them to take extra provisions. This restriction was not intended to be permanent (see Luke 22:35-36), but was appropriate for this brief mission (see Mark 6:30). Sending out six pairs of preachers both facilitated the spread of Jesus' message and gave the apostles valuable practical experience.

1 What message did Jesus' apostles preach (v12)? Answer: They said people should _____.

2&3 What were they to do when people would not receive their message (v11)? Answer: They should shake off the _____ from their _____.

Herod Fears Jesus

>>> **Read Mark 6:14-29.** <<<

Perhaps because of the additional groups of preachers being sent out, Herod, the governor, heard about Jesus. His guilty conscience made him worry that Jesus was John the Baptist whom he had beheaded some time earlier. This paragraph tells why Herod had killed John. John had been preaching against his marriage telling him that it wasn't right for him to have Herodias, who had been his brother's wife. As a result, he imprisoned John, but did not wish to kill him. Herodias did. One day, he had a party with many important guests. His stepdaughter provided "live entertainment." Because of her provocative dance, Herod rashly vowed to give her anything she asked, up to half of his kingdom. Upon receiving instructions from her mother, the girl requested that John's head be served to her on a platter. Herod hated to do it, but he didn't want to lose face in front of his dinner guests, so he obliged the girl's request and John was murdered.

Note -- Sins that beheaded John the Baptist: John was a righteous preacher who was murdered because of several sins: 1) an unlawful marriage; 2) resentment and bitterness on the part of Herodias; 3) a lustful dance; 4) a rash promise; and 5) Herod's lack of courage in not breaking the sinful vow. Actions that produced such bitter fruit should be carefully avoided by Christians today. 1) Despite the frequency of divorce and remarriage in our society, Christians must not act against the Lord's instructions (see Mark 10:2-10; Matthew 19:9). 2) All disciples must rid their lives of resentment and bitterness, because they build up and lead to hatred, harsh words and revengeful actions. 3) Lustful behavior provokes every form of sexual sin in our society. Followers of Christ should avoid nightclubs, dances and other activities that encourage sensual feelings. 4) No one should make any promise without careful thought. 5) All should have the courage to do what is right regardless of the presence of others.

4 Who did Herod think Jesus was? Answer: He thought He was _____.

5 Why had Herod arrested John the Baptist? Answer: John had preached that it was not lawful for Herod to have his brother Philip's _____.

6 How did Herodias' daughter please Herod? Answer: She _____ before him on his birthday.

7,8,&9 What promise did Herod make to Herodias' daughter, and what did she ask for then? Answer: He promised to give her anything up to half of his _____, so she asked for the _____ of _____.

(Note: For more information about unscriptural marriages, see lesson 7 on Mark 10.)

Unsuccessful Attempt to Rest

>>> Read Mark 6:30-44. <<<

When the disciples returned from their preaching trip, Jesus sought to leave the multitude in order to spend time with them privately. They had been so busy they hadn't even had time for meals. Therefore, Jesus and the twelve crossed the Sea of Galilee by boat. The multitude followed Jesus on foot and were already there waiting when the Lord and His apostles landed. Instead of being perturbed, Jesus felt compassion for them because He knew that they were like sheep without a shepherd. He taught them. Then He discussed the options for feeding the huge crowd. The disciples had only five loaves of bread and a few fish. To buy enough food at the market would have been prohibitively expensive. So Jesus simply had the crowd sit down by hundreds and fifties on the grass and He multiplied the food. All ate, were filled and more leftovers were gathered than the amount they had started with. Once again we see Jesus as the One who had the authority to handle every situation.

10 How did Jesus feel toward the multitude who pursued him while he was trying to get away for a time of rest? a) He was angry, b) He was compassionate, c) He didn't care about them, d) all of the preceding. Answer: _____.

11,12,13,&14 Fill in the numbers. Jesus' disciples had _____ loaves and _____ fishes. They fed _____ men and had _____ baskets of leftovers.

The Trip Back across the Sea

>>> **Read Mark 6:45-56.** <<<

Jesus sent the disciples in a boat across the sea. Meanwhile, He went to a mountain to pray. In the wee hours of the morning, He saw the disciples still struggling in their boat. A storm had arisen and they were strenuously rowing trying to get across. He simply walked across the sea to them. At first they thought He was a ghost, but He identified himself, got into the boat, and the storm suddenly stopped. Though the disciples had seen Jesus do many amazing things, every new incident seemed to surprise them. When they landed on the shore, many recognized Jesus and began to bring sick folks for Him to heal. As usual, the Lord healed all that were brought to Him.

15 While the disciples got on a boat to cross the sea, what did Jesus do? Answer: He went to a mountain to _____.

16&17 How did Jesus go to the disciples? Answer: He _____ on the _____.

Jesus vs. Traditions

>>> **Read Mark 7:1-13.** <<<

The Pharisees and scribes challenged the disciples because they ate with unwashed hands. The issue here was not hygiene, but religious ritual. The Pharisees had developed elaborate cleansing procedures that they believed were a part of God's will. The truth is, God had never commanded these washings; they originated with the doctrines and traditions of men. Jesus answered His critics by pointing out the difference between God-given commandments and human traditions. He showed that their insistence on following rules established by men caused them to actually break God's law. He cited the case of "Corban." This was a Jewish tradition that prohibited a person from using his resources to provide for his aging parents if he had previously declared those resources "dedicated" to God. Their obedience to men's doctrines led them to disregard God's will.

Note -- Men's doctrines vs. God's commands: Men continue to follow their own traditions and doctrines rather than God's word. Just like the scribes and Pharisees, people today believe that their doctrines actually are God's will. They haven't learned how to distinguish between unnecessary rules and binding commands. Jesus showed how easy it is to tell the difference: Look at their source. Any religious practice or

teaching that comes from man is wrong; those which come from God are right. We should examine everything we do to see whether it comes from God or man. Everything from God is in the Bible. So if what I believe isn't taught by Scripture, I can know it must be from man.

18&19 What criticism did the Pharisees and scribes raise against Jesus' disciples?

Answer: The disciples did not _____ their hands before they _____ food.

20 What was the authority behind this religious practice? Answer: It was a _____ of the elders.

21 What did Jesus say about service to God that is based on the doctrines of men (v7)?

Answer: He said their worship was _____.

Emphasis on the Heart

>>> Read Mark 7:14-23. <<<

The Pharisees focused primarily on external things. But Jesus showed that what actually defiles a person are the things inside his heart. In the Bible, the heart refers to the mind or spirit of man. Every sin germinates and grows within man's spirit and is then expressed in external action. In this way, the Lord showed how foolish it was for the Pharisees to be frantically seeking external purity by a ritual hand washing procedure. This principle also proved that God no longer had rules prohibiting the eating of certain foods.

Note -- We need a heart check-up: *Jesus' words should motivate us to carefully examine our own heart. Heart disease is a warning symptom, and if not detected and cured, will result in all manner of sin. Jesus warned about greed, envy, pride, and lust. These attitudes are wrong, and must be checked at their onset. We must care for our heart by feeding on the pure Word of God and constantly seeking the Lord.*

22 What causes a person to be defiled? Answer: A person is defiled by things that come from out of his _____.

Jesus Heals a Gentile Woman's Daughter

>>> Read Mark 7:24-30. <<<

Jesus had traveled to a predominantly Gentile area. Before this, almost all of His work had been done with Jews. He had healed Jews; His apostles were Jews; and He preached to Jews. Jesus wanted to have some time alone with the apostles, so He withdrew to a Gentile region north of Galilee. He had hoped to stay there undetected, but a Syrian woman found out He was there and came requesting that He heal her demon-possessed daughter. At first, Jesus refused. He said that it was not good to take bread from the children and feed it to the dogs. What he meant was that according to

God's plan it wasn't time yet to heal and teach the Gentiles; the Jews (the children) were the ones God intended to be the recipients of the bread (healings and blessings in general) first. God planned that later on through the Jewish people the gospel would be introduced to the Gentiles. This woman showed great faith, humility and quickness because she responded: Yes, but even the dogs under the table get to eat the crumbs. She implied that just a mere crumb of Jesus' miraculous power would be sufficient to heal her daughter. She also recognized that this did not signal the beginning of a major Gentile "campaign." As a result, Jesus healed her daughter. The conversation had made it clear that she would not misinterpret the healing as a sign that the time for the Gentiles had come.

23 Of what race or nationality was the woman who came to Jesus? (a) Jewish, (b) Hindu, (c) Greek/Gentile (Syrophoenician), (d) American. Answer: _____.

24 What problem did she want Jesus to solve? Answer: She wanted Him to cure her daughter who had a _____.

25,26,&27 What did Jesus tell her, and how did she respond? Answer: He said that the children's bread should not be thrown to _____. She said that even the dogs get to eat the _____ that fall from (or are under) the _____.

Jesus Heals a Deaf Man

>>> Read Mark 7:31-37. <<<

Please read this paragraph in your Bible before continuing. You undoubtedly noticed that Jesus used an unusual procedure to heal this deaf man. After taking him away from the crowd, Jesus put His fingers into the man's ears, and touched the man's tongue with His own saliva. Apparently, Jesus was using "sign language" to communicate with him, and to let him know who was about to heal him. Had Jesus not done this, the man would have suddenly begun to hear, but would not have understood why. The multitude's affirmation was absolutely correct: "He has done all things well!"

28 Where did Jesus put His fingers? Answer: He put them into the deaf man's _____.

29 What effect did the miracle have on the crowds? Answer: They were amazed and said that Jesus did everything _____.

Defective Spiritual Vision

Lesson 6

Jesus Feeds 4000 Men

>>> **Read Mark 8:1-10.** <<<

Huge crowds were constantly following Jesus. On this occasion, they had been in a wilderness area and hadn't eaten for three days. Jesus didn't want to send them home hungry for fear they would faint during the trip. So He asked for a food inventory: there were seven loaves and a few small fish. Jesus directed the multitude to sit down, and then began serving the food. Miraculously, the supply didn't dwindle. Each loaf generated a large basketful of leftovers besides feeding 4000 men. Jesus' power could not be disputed.

1 How many men did Jesus feed on this occasion? (a) 4000, (b) 5000, (c) 12, (d) none. Answer: _____. (Note carefully: This is a multiple choice question. In order to answer correctly, the student must insert a **letter**, not a number!)

2 How many baskets of food were taken up from the seven loaves and few fish (v8)? Answer: _____ baskets.

Warning about Leaven

>>> **Read Mark 8:11-21.** <<<

Despite much evidence of Jesus' power and authority, the Pharisees challenged Him to show a sign from heaven. He refused their request. They were simply blind to all evidence and no sign would ever be enough to convince them. Then Jesus and His disciples began to cross the sea by boat. The disciples were worried because they had forgotten to take enough bread with them for the trip. Jesus warned about the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. Immediately, the disciples imagined that He was criticizing them for having forgotten the bread. Jesus knew what they were saying to each other and rebuked their hard-heartedness. After all, He had twice produced enough food to feed thousands with abundant leftovers. They should have known that He could handle problems with insufficient food. His warning wasn't about the leaven of bread, but about the false teaching and hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Herod. Bad attitudes spread like leaven and He was worried that the disciples might be contaminated by them.

3 What request did the Pharisees make that Jesus refused to grant? Answer: They wanted Him to perform a _____ from heaven.

4 What warning did Jesus give to His disciples? Answer: They should beware the _____ of the Pharisees.

5&6 In saying this, what did Jesus mean by "leaven" (see also Matt. 16:12; Luke 12:1)? Answer: He referred to their false _____ and their _____.

Jesus Heals a Blind Man in Two Stages

>>> Read Mark 8:22-26. <<<

Normally, Jesus' healings were complete and immediate. This case was different--He applied saliva to on the eyes of the blind man, laid His hands on him, and then asked what he saw. The man reported seeing men like trees walking around. So Jesus touched his eyes again, and his vision was perfectly restored. Why didn't Christ heal this man all at once, like He normally did? Jesus' healings were signs, symbols of spiritual truths. In this case, the two-stage healing of the blind man symbolized how men's understanding and insight is often healed in two steps. The disciples, for example, weren't totally blind, for they understood that Jesus was the Son of God (see 8:29). But, on the other hand, they still didn't perceive Jesus' complete ability and therefore had defective vision (see 8:17-18, 31-33). They needed to be touched again so they could see clearly.

Note -- Don't be satisfied to see men like trees walking: Consider the situation of the blind man. While blind, he saw absolutely nothing. When Jesus first touched him, his vision improved: he saw men, though they looked like trees. To one who had been totally blind, that was fantastic progress. But Jesus could do more--He touched the man again and he began to see perfectly. Unfortunately, in the spiritual realm, some are satisfied with one touch. They see, but not clearly. Many don't even realize that they need a complete cure, that they should not be content to see men like trees walking. Consider, for example, someone whose life has been totally devastated by sin. He hears about Jesus, begins to follow many of His teachings and his life improves. Sadly, however, He is unaware that he lacks understanding of Jesus' word in many areas and that he should not settle for distorted vision. Let's check out our own lives. Could it be that we still are not seeing clearly and that Jesus could restore our vision perfectly?

7 How did the blind man see after Jesus first touched him? Answer: He saw men that looked like _____ walking around.

8 How did he see after Jesus finished with him? Answer: He saw everything _____.

The Strength and Weakness of Peter

>>> Read Mark 8:27-33. <<<

Jesus asked what the public thought about Him. The disciples reported varying opinions: John the Baptist, Elijah, etc. When Jesus asked their own opinion, Peter

boldly responded: Thou art the Christ. It was a brilliant insight. Nevertheless, when Jesus went on to warn about how He was going to be rejected and crucified, Peter was horrified. He could not imagine the Lord being killed. He began to correct Jesus telling Him that this would never happen! Jesus sternly rebuked Peter: "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." Peter was tempting Him not to suffer. Temptations are often strongest when they come through people we are close to. So Jesus flatly rejected Peter's advice. Isn't it strange that one minute Peter proclaimed Jesus to be Christ, the next he was calling Him aside to inform Him that He was mistaken! If Jesus was truly the Christ, Peter had no business arguing with Him. Nor do we.

9 Who did people consider Jesus to be? a) John the Baptist, b) Elijah, c) one of the prophets, d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

10 What did Peter confess regarding Jesus' identity? a) He was a great teacher; b) He was a sublime philosopher; c) He was the Christ; d) He was a prophet, but not Divine. Answer: _____.

11 How did Peter react to Jesus' announcement of His coming suffering? Answer: He took Jesus aside and began to _____ Him.

12&13 What did Jesus say was the reason Peter would not believe Jesus was going to die? Answer: He was not minding the things of _____ but the things of _____.

The Conditions of Discipleship

>>> **Read Mark 8:34-9:1.** <<<

Jesus plainly explained what was required to become His disciple. He said that you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Him. These requirements are demanding. A person does not naturally deny himself; rather, he usually does what he wants. Death to self is painful, but that is exactly the meaning of taking up one's cross. The cross was an instrument of death--to take it up would be to die to oneself and to one's own desires in order to serve Christ. There is no profit in gaining the entire world, only to lose one's soul in the transaction. It is worth everything to submit to God's stringent requirements for discipleship.

Note -- Deceptive discipleship: Jesus highlighted the requirements for being a disciple because it is so easy to imagine that you are a follower of Jesus when, in fact, you aren't. Discipleship is not mere church membership or moral living. It is total devotion to Jesus Christ. It is to die to self and live 100% for the Lord. Am I really Jesus' disciple?

14 Which of the following was not given as a requirement for being a disciple? a) deny self; b) take up one's cross; c) follow Jesus; d) speak in tongues. Answer: _____.

15&16 How did Jesus teach the importance of proper priorities? Answer: He asked what profit a man would have if he could gain the whole _____ but then lose his own _____.

17&18 Jesus said some of the people standing there would not die before they saw what (9:1)? Answer: They would not die till they saw the _____ of God come with _____.

(Thought question: How can this statement be harmonized with the doctrine that says Jesus' kingdom still has not come even today?)

Jesus Is Transfigured

>>> **Read Mark 9:2-13.** <<<

Jesus had taken three of His closest friends with Him to a high mountain. There, he began to glow with breathtaking brilliance. Just then, Elijah and Moses appeared, talking with Jesus. The disciples were awestruck. Moses was the great Lawgiver, the one who had led Israel out of Egyptian bondage and through the wilderness. Elijah was a great prophet, one of two men in the Old Testament who went directly to heaven without dying. And there they were talking to Jesus. Peter was profoundly moved by the occasion and suggested that they build three tabernacles: one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah. No doubt he felt that it would honor Jesus to receive a tabernacle alongside Moses and Elijah. But God's voice boomed from heaven: This is My beloved Son, listen to Him. Moses and Elijah vanished. Only Jesus remained. As they descended, Jesus told the disciples not to tell anyone about what had happened until after He was raised from the dead.

Note -- The greatness of Jesus: God's rebuff of Peter's suggestion to construct three tabernacles teaches volumes. The problem with Peter's plan was that it put Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah. He isn't. Jesus is above everyone--in this case, above the greatest figures of the Old Testament era. Our problem is like Peter's. We often tend to build multiple tabernacles. One for Jesus and one for our parents. Or one for Jesus and another for our pastor, for our church, or for a favorite activity. This won't do. Jesus must have the only tabernacle; He must be the supreme authority in our life. Nothing else can be on a par with Him.

19&20 What two Old Testament characters appeared on the mountain and talked with Jesus? Answer: _____ and _____.

21 What did Peter want to do on the mountain when he saw Jesus together with these men? Answer: He wanted to build three _____.

22&23 What did the Father then say about Jesus? Answer: He said that Jesus was His _____, so people should _____ to Him.

24&25 When were Peter, James and John permitted to tell about the transfiguration?
Answer: They could tell about it after Jesus had _____ from the _____.

The Disciples Fail to Cast out a Demon

>>> **Read Mark 9:14-29.** <<<

As Jesus descended the mountain, He noticed great commotion in the valley. The crowd ran to meet Him. While Jesus had been with three of the apostles on the mountain, the others had been unable to cast a demon out of a boy. Since the apostles had normally been able to cast out demons (notice Mark 6:13), this failure puzzled them and surprised the bystanders. Jesus' enemies were taking advantage of this lapse to discredit Him. The father of the tormented lad asked Jesus to do something, if He could. The Lord turned his statement back on him: "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." The father said that he believed, but recognizing the possibility that his faith was not as strong as it needed to be, he begged Jesus to help his unbelief. With that, Christ commanded the unclean spirit to leave the boy. The demon cried out and threw the boy into convulsions, but left. Later, the disciples asked why they had been unable to cast out the demon. Jesus explained that they were not relying on God enough, but on their own power: "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer." Perhaps their prior success in expelling demons had caused them to be self-reliant, and they had neglected to pray in faith to God so that He would cast out the demon.

26 What problem did the man's son have? Answer: He was possessed by a _____ that caused him to be mute.

27 What happened when Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit (demon)? The spirit (demon): a) cried out, b) convulsed or tore him, c) came out, d) all of the preceding.
Answer: _____.

Summary: Time and again the disciples demonstrated a lack of clear spiritual understanding. They saw Jesus multiply loaves and fishes, but failed to see that He could handle another food emergency. Peter affirmed that Jesus was the Christ, but thought it best to give Him some needed "advice." He believed Jesus was great, but on the same level with Moses and Elijah. The nine disciples in the valley boldly attempted to expel a demon, but without relying on the Lord. They were like those formerly blind who even now saw men like trees walking.

Jesus Accepts the Lowly

Lesson #7

Jesus Announces His Death, Rebukes Pride

>>> Read Mark 9:30-37. <<<

Please read the text in your Bible as you study each part of the lesson. Jesus wanted to prepare His disciples for the tragedy that was nearing. He warned them that He would be betrayed into men's hands and be killed, but encouraged them by announcing that three days later He would rise again. The disciples did not understand; they were too busy arguing about who would be the greatest in Jesus' coming kingdom. Knowing what they had been disputing, Jesus took a child into His arms and used him as a model of the humility that should characterize disciples. It must have disappointed Him greatly to see the disciples vying for power while He was preoccupied with His coming suffering.

1&2 What did Jesus predict was going to happen to Him? Answer: Men would _____ Him, but on the third day He would _____ from the dead.

3 About what subject were the disciples arguing? Answer: They disputed about which of them was the _____.

4&5 What did Jesus say one should do, if he wants to be first of all (v35)? Answer: He should be the _____ of all and the _____ of all.

Jesus Warns of the Dangers of Stumbling

>>> Read Mark 9:38-50. <<<

John related how he had seen someone expelling demons in Jesus' name and had forbidden him to do so. Evidently John thought that no one should have been doing any work for the Lord who was not following in their immediate company. But Jesus had commissioned many to go out, preach, and expel demons (see Luke 10). He was pleased with those who were faithfully serving Him in other places.

Jesus went on to warn of the danger of causing someone to fall. He said that it would even be better to tie a huge stone around a man's neck and cast him into the sea than for him to cause another to stumble. He also warned of the danger of allowing anything to cause us to stumble. The Lord encouraged radical, decisive action: cutting off a hand or a foot or plucking out an eye in order to avoid abandoning Him. He was not speaking literally--but He was forcefully declaring that we should sacrifice anything that is

tempting us to sin. He described Hell as a horrendous place of maggots and perpetual fire that must be avoided at all cost.

6 What had John tried to stop someone else from doing? Answer: Someone was casting out _____.

7 A person would be better drowned in the sea rather than to do what? Answer: It would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone around the neck rather than to cause someone to _____.

8 What lesson is taught by Jesus' statements about cutting off a hand, foot, or eye? a) if we pray, He will miraculously restore the missing member; b) He doesn't care if we suffer; c) we should be willing to make great sacrifices to avoid the consequences of sin; d) we won't miss the body part anyway. Answer: _____.

Question about Divorce

>>> **Read Mark 10:1-12.** <<<

Jesus' opponents decided to test Him with a hard question. They asked Him whether it was right to divorce. In their society as in ours, there was much disagreement, even among religious people, as to whether or not it was right to divorce and, if so, under what circumstances. Jesus answered their question by reminding them that in the beginning God created only one man and one woman. He intended for marriage to be a permanent union. Because God joins people together when they marry, it is wrong for man to separate them. Later He explained to the disciples that it is not only wrong to divorce, but that a divorced person who remarries is committing adultery.

Note -- The need for commitment in marriage: Many people today enter marriage with the notion that they will divorce if it doesn't work out. This is wrong. Throw-away marriages are opposed to God's created order. God forbids divorce. The only exception is when one divorces his mate because of sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9). In any other case, divorce is sinful and remarriage is adultery. The fact that men frequently disobey God does not change what He said.

9 What principle did Jesus use to forbid divorce (v9)? Answer: What God has joined together, man should not _____.

10 In what circumstance did Jesus allow divorce and remarriage (Matt. 19:9)? a) when one of the partners no longer loves the other; b) when there is abuse; c) when one divorces a spouse because he/she committed fornication; d) when irreconcilable differences exist. Answer: _____.

11 If a man or woman divorces his/her spouse (not for fornication) and remarries, what did Jesus say about the remarriage (v11,12)? Answer: It is _____.

Jesus Blesses the Children

>>> **Read Mark 10:13-16.** <<<

The disciples never seemed to want Jesus to be bothered, so they were constantly trying to keep certain kinds of people away from Him (see 10:46-52). In this case, it was children. When Jesus saw that they were hindering the children from approaching Him, He was indignant and rebuked them. He said that the kingdom of God itself belongs to people who become like children. He took the young people into His arms and began to bless them. He always had time for children.

12 Whom did the disciples try to stop from coming to Jesus? a) Pharisees; b) children; c) sinners; d) tax collectors. Answer: _____.

13 What reason did Jesus give why He wanted to receive children? a) He wanted to baptize them; b) He wanted to give them candy and ice cream; c) He hoped their parents would give Him money; d) the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like little children. Answer: _____.

(Thought question: If the kingdom belongs to those who are like little children, then are little children born guilty of sin?)

Rich Man Considers Cost Too High

>>> **Read Mark 10:17-31.** <<<

A rich young man ran up to Jesus requesting information on how to receive eternal life. Jesus first told him to keep the commandments, which the man said he had done. Then Jesus ordered him to sell all that he owned, give the proceeds to the poor, and start following Him. The man wanted eternal life, but not at that price. He turned away, saddened. Many follow in this young man's steps. They desire eternal life . . . as long as they don't have to make too many sacrifices. Jesus referred to these people when He remarked about how difficult it is for those who are rich to enter heaven. He said that it is easier to thread a camel through a needle than for a rich man to be saved. The disciples were shocked. The Lord explained that with God all things are possible, but that it is hard for rich people to go to heaven, because of the tendency to trust in material possessions and not in God.

Note -- The lack of one thing: As Jesus talked to the rich man, He observed that he lacked only one thing: he only needed to get rid of his possessions. It became obvious that Jesus had properly diagnosed the man's need, because the man was unwilling to do so. He indeed was valuing his possessions over the Lord. To follow Jesus, we must give up anything in our life that is more important to us than He is. It is interesting that this man lacked only one thing. Some people have the idea that one sin is not all that bad. They think that while they may be failing in one area, at least they serve the Lord faithfully in all the others. This story shows clearly that even one thing can keep a

*person from being accepted by God. Is there **one thing** in your life that is separating you from faithfulness in the Lord's service?*

**14* What did the rich man want Jesus to tell him? Answer: He wanted to know what he should do to inherit _____.*

**15* What was the rich man's reaction when Jesus told him that he needed to sell all and give the money to the poor? Answer: He went away _____.*

**16* How many things in our lives that we refuse to repent of does it take to keep us from pleasing God? (a) none, (b) one, (c) we must do more evil than we do good, (d) the Bible does not say. Answer: _____.*

Greatness in God's Kingdom

>>> Read Mark 10:32-45. <<<

For the third time, Jesus warned the disciples about what was going to happen when they got to Jerusalem. He gave a detailed description of the suffering He would experience there. Meanwhile, James and John were imagining a different scenario. They asked Jesus to agree to do whatever they would request. Jesus asked them what they wanted; He was not going to sign a blank check by agreeing before they made the request. They replied that they wanted to sit on Jesus' right and left hand; that is, they wanted the chief positions in His administration. Jesus responded by asking if they could drink the cup He was going to drink or be baptized with His baptism, and they said they could. Jesus was referring to His sufferings which were often spoken of as a cup of agony that He would have to drink (see Mark 14:36) and as a baptism (immersion) in pain (see Luke 12:50). They had no clue as to His real meaning, but they enthusiastically accepted the challenge. Jesus then replied that He did not have the authority to grant their request, because He was not the one who assigned the positions of honor in the kingdom.

The other disciples were incensed. James and John had gotten the jump on them. They themselves wished to have the highest positions and resented the fact that the sons of Zebedee had requested them first. Jesus took some time to define what greatness in the kingdom really meant. He said that in human affairs, whether government or business, the greatest have the most authority. But, He explained, it isn't that way in the kingdom of God. Rather, the greatest is the one who humbles himself most and serves most. He pointed to Himself as the model. He had not come to be served, but to serve and to offer Himself as a sacrifice for others.

Note -- True greatness: *We still desperately need these lessons of Jesus. Many, even in religion, are seeking to be great by trying to gain honor, glory and power. Churches are infested with "politicians" who want the limelight and who vie for positions of maximum control and authority. We should be ashamed. Jesus was born in a stable outside a small town. He lived His life as a village carpenter and itinerant preacher.*

He accumulated neither riches nor worldly power. Yet, today, many of His selfproclaimed followers seek and promise the very things He rejected, as they pursue higher and higher positions in churches. It is hard to imagine that Jesus would feel at home in their costly cathedrals. It is impossible to believe that He would preach the "gospels of health and wealth" so popular today. Jesus said the way to true greatness was the road of service and suffering.

17&18 What did James and John want Jesus to do for them? Answer: They wanted to sit one at Jesus' _____ and the other at His _____ in His glory (kingdom).

19 According to Jesus, how can you become great in the kingdom? a) attend the biggest church with the most beautiful building; b) give lots of money; c) take a high position of authority in the church; d) humble yourself and serve others. Answer: _____.

Jesus Heals Bartimaeus

>>> Read Mark 10:46-52. <<<

As Jesus passed through Jericho, a blind beggar cried out. The crowds tried to silence him, thinking that the Lord should not be bothered with such unimportant people. But Jesus called the blind man to come to Him and healed him. The beggar began to follow Him. Few rich men followed the Lord (see 10:17-22), but many of the poor and downtrodden did.

20 What was the name of the blind man Jesus healed (v46)? a) Peter; b) Bartimaeus; c) Thomas; d) Andrew. Answer: _____.

21 What did the blind man keep calling Jesus (v48)? Answer: He called Him _____.

Summary: Jesus accepted the humble folks, even though the disciples tried to turn them away. He accepted the man who worked for Him but was not in His personal company; He welcomed the children; He invited the blind beggar. He rejected those we might have accepted: a rich ruler with so much to offer, and all those who sought position and greatness. The great one in the kingdom is the servant.

Jesus vs. Jewish Leaders

Lesson 8

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

>>> **Read Mark 11:1-11.** <<<

Jesus sent two disciples into Jerusalem to bring him a colt. As He rode it into the city thousands of people lined the route, spreading their clothes and leafy branches in His path to honor Him. While the enthusiastic crowd cheered, Jesus remained calm. Why had He chosen to enter the capital on a donkey, not on some great white steed (see Zechariah 9:9-10)? His life reflected one of His favorite sermons: greatness in the kingdom comes to the one who humbles himself.

1 What did Jesus ride when He entered Jerusalem? (a) a horse, (b) a boat, (c) a chariot, (d) a donkey colt. Answer: _____.

2 As Jesus entered Jerusalem what did the crowd **not** do? a) put their clothes in the road; b) shout praises; c) try to prevent Him from entering the city; d) lay leafy branches in His path. Answer: _____.

Jesus Curses a Fig Tree and Expels Commerce from the Temple

>>> **Read Mark 11:12-26.** <<<

Jesus was hungry and saw a fig tree in leaf. When He approached, He observed that it had no fruit. He cursed it and by the next day, it was withered up. Jesus' action taught the amazed disciples some lessons. First, people who bear no fruit will be cursed by God. This principle applied to the Jewish nation as a whole, because it was bearing no fruit for the Lord. Second, Jesus noted that God has the power to wither fig trees and move mountains; in short, to respond to prayer. What we must do is to trust Him and turn to Him with our needs.

When Jesus entered the temple He saw a stockyard and money-changers' booths. Some people were selling the special coin used to pay the temple tax, while others sold animals for sacrifices. Jesus began to cast out these merchants, overturning the money-changers' tables and the vendors' chairs. He said that the temple was supposed to be a place of prayer but had been turned into a robbers' den.

Note -- Would Jesus cleanse the temple again? Why did Jesus vehemently oppose these activities? It wasn't because He was against selling animals or changing money; rather, He opposed the perversion of the temple's function. God had given the

temple for spiritual purposes, and it was wrong to make it a bazaar. We must never use what God has given us for purposes He has not authorized. God gave us a pattern for the local church. Its function is to worship, teach the gospel and help needy Christians. But many churches have begun to do other things: they sponsor recreation, entertainment, secular education, etc. If Jesus returned, would He not come to churches and begin to cast out all of the unauthorized practices that have crept into them?

3 What was on the fig tree that Jesus saw? a) figs; b) leaves, but no figs; c) neither figs nor leaves; d) rotten figs. Answer: _____.

4 Whom did Jesus expel from the temple? a) money changers and animals sellers; b) priests; c) harlots and murderers; d) Gentiles. Answer: _____.

5 What was the main problem with the money changing and animal sales? a) it was always wrong to sell animals and change money; b) they were cheating people in the transactions; c) these activities weren't a part of God's purpose for the temple; d) there was no problem with it. Answer: _____.

(Thought question: What else have we already studied about people who change what God has revealed in His will? Hint: Restudy Mark 7.)

Question about Jesus' Authority

>>> Read Mark 11:27-33. <<<

Jesus' bold actions in the temple stirred opposition. The Jewish leaders thought that the temple belonged to them, so they questioned Jesus' right to come into it and make such drastic revisions. Jesus replied to their challenge with a question. He asked whether John's baptism came from God or men. They consulted among themselves and decided that it would be politically unwise to answer. Their refusal demonstrated that they were not sincerely seeking truth. Therefore, Jesus refused to answer their question.

Note -- Jesus' question is a model: *Jesus asked the Jewish leaders an outstanding question: Did John's baptism come from God or man? This is the question that we should ask about every religious practice. Anything that originates in man should be rejected; all that God commands should be carefully observed. There is an easy way for us to determine whether a given teaching or activity comes from God or man. Everything that comes from God is in the Bible. If a particular doctrine or practice is not in the Bible, it is not from God. We should verify everything we do by this simple test: Does it come from God or from man?*

6&7 When Jesus asked the Jewish leaders about John's baptism, what two choices did He give for its origin? Answer: He asked whether it came from _____ or from _____.

8 Why did Jesus refuse to answer the Jewish leaders' question? Answer: They proved they were dishonest because they refused to _____ His question.

Parable of the Vineyard

>>> **Read Mark 12:1-12.** <<<

Jesus told about a man who planted a vineyard, equipped it with first-class installations and then rented it out. His rent was to be a share of the crop. When the harvest time arrived, he sent servants to collect, but the renters beat, mistreated and even killed them. Finally the owner of the vineyard sent his son to demand payment, but they killed him too. How outrageous! The owner would undoubtedly destroy his tenants and rent the vineyard out to others. The story meant this: God was the owner of the vineyard; the Jews were the renters. God blessed the Jews greatly and expected them to bear the fruit of righteousness, truth, mercy, etc. He sent prophets to collect this "fruit," but they were mistreated and killed. Finally He sent His son, Jesus, whom they murdered. God would certainly destroy the Jewish nation and give His blessings to others. The religious leaders understood that Jesus had spoken this story against them (12:12).

***Note -- God's stone:** Jesus spoke of the stone the builders rejected which God used as His chief cornerstone (12:10-11). He was speaking of Himself, rejected by the Jewish leaders, but selected by God as the foundation of His great building. These words were being fulfilled as Christ spoke. The Jewish authorities, intent on building their own religion, decided Jesus was unsatisfactory--He wasn't suitable for their building. God often reverses human values, however. That which men rejected, God chose and exalted above all (see Philippians 2:5-11).*

9 What did the renters **not** do to the ones sent to collect the fruit? a) mistreat; b) beat; c) kill; d) give the fruit. Answer: _____.

10 Jesus spoke this parable to rebuke whom? a) His disciples, b) the religious leaders of the Jews, c) Old Testament prophets, d) no one. Answer: _____.

11 In the Scripture about the stone rejected by the builders, the stone referred to whom (see also Acts 4:11)? Answer: The stone was _____, who was rejected by the Jews' religious leaders.

Question about Taxes

>>> **Read Mark 12:13-17.** <<<

The Jews were desperately seeking to discredit Jesus. To do so, various groups began to ask Him questions designed to trap Him. They asked about paying taxes. At this time, the Jews were ruled by the Romans, who were the ones receiving the tax money. The people hated the Roman government and thought it was contrary to the will of God. So Jesus was trapped. If He said not to pay taxes, He would be guilty of treason and liable

to prosecution. If He told them to pay, patriots would view Him as a traitor and even disloyal to God. Jesus didn't answer the question at first. Instead, He requested a coin. He asked whose name and picture were on it. They replied: Caesar's. Since you put your name and picture on something you own, Caesar's markings on the coin showed that it belonged to him. The Jews had no right to withhold Caesar's property from him when he requested it. So Jesus said simply: Give back to Caesar what belongs to him; and give to God what belongs to Him. His answer could not be challenged. It still provides the basis for our relationship to government. We should pay our taxes **and** serve the Lord.

12 What question was Jesus asked (v14)? Answer: Is it lawful to _____ to Caesar.

13&14 What answer did Jesus give (v17)? Answer: Render to Caesar the things that are _____ and to God the things that are _____.

Question about the Resurrection

>>> **Read Mark 12:18-27.** <<<

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They asked a question designed to show that the doctrine of the resurrection was absurd. It involved the invented case of a woman who was married to seven brothers in succession. They asked Jesus to tell them whose wife she would be in the resurrection, since all of them had been married to her. Jesus' reply revealed the ignorance of the Sadducees: There is no marriage in heaven. Furthermore, Jesus showed how even the Old Testament proved the resurrection. He cited the text where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and described Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, even though they had been dead for hundreds of years. If death was the end of existence (as the Sadducees believed), then God would have been calling Himself the God of that which doesn't exist. For God to call Himself their God, in some sense Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must still have been "alive" and thus the Sadducees' view of death was wrong.

15 What did the Sadducees believe? Answer: They believed there is no _____.

16 How did Jesus answer their question about marriage? Answer: He said that, when we rise from the dead, there will be no _____.

17 How did Jesus prove the Sadducees' belief about resurrection was wrong? Answer: He quoted a passage in which God said, "I am the _____ of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," even after those men were dead.

Question about the Greatest Commandment

>>> **Read Mark 12:28-34.** <<<

A scribe tried his hand at stumping Jesus. He asked Him to name the greatest commandment in the law. Jesus easily replied that it was to love God. He added that the

second was to love others. This response demonstrated remarkable insight. Instead of choosing a specific command, Jesus cited the principles that form the foundation for all of the God's laws. Even the scribe had to admit that Jesus' answer was right.

18&19 What did Jesus say are the greatest commands? Answer: The greatest command is to _____ God, and the second greatest is to _____ your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus Condemns the Scribes

>>> **Read Mark 12:35-40.** <<<

After weathering their barrage of questions, Jesus asked His opponents a question: How could the Christ be both David's son and David's Lord? This question was crucial, because the scribes' objection to Jesus was that He (a mere man they thought) claimed divine authority. Jesus showed by His question that the Old Testament had predicted that the Messiah would be both David's son (human) and David's Lord (divine).

20 How did Jesus show that the Jewish leaders misunderstood the Christ? Answer: They thought the Christ would just be David's son (i.e., He would be human), but Jesus quoted a passage showing He would also be David's _____ (i.e., He would be Divine).

Observations on the Collection

>>> **Read Mark 12:41-44.** <<<

Jesus sat and observed people contribute into the temple treasury. He saw many rich people deposit large offerings. He also saw an impoverished widow give two small coins which were nearly worthless. The Lord explained that the widow had contributed more than the rich--she put in everything she had, while they had simply given their surplus.

Note -- Jesus contradicts modern views of giving: Many modern churches seem to regard large donations more highly than small ones. Some honor wealthy donors in special ways and allow them more influence in church policy; occasionally they even ridicule small contributions as unworthy of the Lord. It is clear that the Lord Himself viewed giving in a very different way. He was unimpressed by the absolute size of the offering, whether large or small, but very concerned with the attitude of the giver. To Jesus, the gift of the widow, while having almost no monetary value, was worth much more than the large and impressive donations of the rich. We need to think of riches like Jesus did.

21 How did Jesus' view of giving differ from that of most religious leaders then and now? He said the most important thing is: a) how much we give, b) the attitude with which we give, c) we must give a tenth, d) we must give as much as others give. Answer: _____.

Final Teachings of Jesus

Lesson 9

Jesus Warns of Coming Events

>>> **Read Mark 13:1-13.** <<<

As they left the temple area, one of the disciples pointed to the magnificent buildings and commented on their splendor. Jesus replied that they all would be torn down. This remark astonished the disciples and they asked when this would happen and what sign there would be of the temple's impending destruction. Jesus began answering by telling about some things that would happen before the temple was destroyed. He warned of false Christs, wars, natural disasters and great persecution. These events would be unsettling for the Christians, but Jesus assured them that they were not signs of the overthrow of the temple. It is remarkable that some people have taken these things that Jesus said were not signs of the destruction of the temple and used them to try to predict the date of the return of Christ.

1 According to v1-4, what subject was Jesus discussing in these verses? Answer: The destruction of the _____ in Jerusalem.

2 Instead of saying that the events of these verses were signs of the immediate end, what did Jesus say in v7? Answer: The end is _____.

The Destruction of the Temple

>>> **Read Mark 13:14-30.** <<<

This paragraph is one of the most difficult in the gospel of Mark. Several things should be carefully observed: 1) Jesus said that all of these things were going to occur within that generation (13:30). 2) We know that Jerusalem and the temple within it were destroyed by Roman armies in the year 70 A.D. Contemporary reports chronicle Jerusalem's horrible siege and tell that thousands (possibly more than a million) died in the conflict. 3) Jesus warned the Christians to flee to the mountains. History records that the disciples fled to a mountain fortress near the Dead Sea. As far as we know, no Christians perished in that war. It always pays to listen to Jesus.

3 What did Jesus tell the disciples in Judea to do when they saw the evil thing in the temple (v14)? Answer: They should _____ to the mountains.

4 When did Jesus say all the things in 13:1-30 would occur? a) when He returns for the final judgment; b) within that generation; c) no one knows; d) 2000 years later.

Answer: _____.

Jesus Warns of His Return

>>> **Read Mark 13:31-37.** <<<

In verse 30 Jesus said that the destruction of the temple would occur within that generation. But in verse 32, He spoke of an event that would occur at a totally unknown time. He was referring to His own return and the destruction of the world. Not even Jesus Himself knew when that would occur. So, He exhorted everyone to be alert and constantly prepared His return.

Note -- Practical lessons: 1) *We should not believe anyone who claims to be able to predict the date of the Lord's return. If Jesus didn't know, surely no mere man does. Anyone who claims to be able to discern the time of Jesus' return by a careful study of prophetic texts is claiming to know more than the Lord Himself and should not be taken seriously.* 2) *Since we don't know when the Lord will come back, we should always be ready. If you knew for sure that the Lord would come back today, would you change some things in your life? Then why not just assume that He is returning today (for He might), and make the changes immediately. It is utterly foolish to procrastinate in our repentance.*

5 Who knows when Jesus will return (cf. 1 Thess. 5:1,2)? a) those who study prophecies; b) the angels; c) Christians; d) only the Father. Answer: _____.

Anointing of Jesus

>>> **Read Mark 14:1-11.** <<<

What contrasting attitudes toward Jesus! The chief priests and scribes searched for a way to kill Him. Judas offered to betray Him. But a single woman spent 300 days' wages for perfume which she poured over His head. The disciples criticized her for this extravagant act of love. They viewed it as a waste of money, and thought it would have been better to have sold the perfume and given the money to the poor. But Jesus defended her saying that she had anointed His body for burial and that in all the world people would tell of her deed.

6 What did the woman pour over Jesus' head? Answer: She poured out a flask of expensive _____ made from nard (spikenard).

7 What did the disciples think should have been done with the perfume? Answer: They thought it should be sold and the money given to the _____.

The Last Supper

>>> **Read Mark 14:12-26.** <<<

Passover was an annual feast commemorating God's sparing the Jews in the tenth plague on Egypt (see Exodus 11-12). Jesus sent the disciples to prepare the feast, then He ate it with them. During the meal, Jesus warned that one of them would betray Him. He was trying to prepare the apostles for the traumatic night to follow. The Lord also took some of the bread and grape juice of the Passover and said that it was His body and blood. In this way, He initiated the observance of the Lord's Supper, a feast that was continued by the early Christians (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

***Note -- Is it I?** It is interesting to observe the disciples' reaction to Jesus' prediction that one of them would betray Him. Each asked: Is it I? They were thinking of the possibility of their own fall. Unfortunately, this moment of introspection soon vanished and in the next paragraph they return to brash overconfidence. Surprisingly, they did not ask: Is it Judas? Apparently they had not observed anything in Judas' behavior during the months they had spent together that signaled that he was disloyal. When we read Jesus' warnings in the Bible, we also should ask: Is it I?*

8 When Jesus predicted that one of the disciples would betray Him, what did they ask? Answer: They asked, "_____?"

9&10 In the Lord's supper, what do the bread and fruit of the vine remind us of? Answer: The bread reminds us of Jesus' _____, and the fruit of the vine reminds us of His _____.

Jesus Predicts the Flight of the Disciples

>>> **Read Mark 14:27-31.** <<<

Jesus told the disciples that they would all fall away. Peter retorted that though the others might, he would never abandon Him. Christ replied that he would deny Him three times that very night. Again Peter denied it saying that he would even be willing to die with Him. Perhaps Peter's overconfidence was one reason he fulfilled this very prophecy a few hours later.

11 What did Jesus predict Peter would do that very night? Answer: Peter would _____ Jesus three times.

12 How did Peter respond to this prediction? Answer: He said he would rather _____ than deny Jesus.

Jesus Prays in the Garden

>>> **Read Mark 14:32-42.** <<<

Jesus took His disciples into a garden and asked them to watch and pray. He told them that He was deeply distressed. He went a little farther and prayed that God would take the cup of suffering away from Him. Jesus knew how terrible His death would be. He asked, however, that God's will be done above all. Each time He returned to His disciples, they had fallen asleep. Jesus wrestled with His griefs and fears alone, without human support.

Note -- The true suffering of Jesus: *This paragraph reveals Jesus' deep grief as He thought about what He was going to suffer. He knew exactly what was about to happen and He dreaded it. Was He thinking only of physical pain? Crucifixion certainly was an agonizing experience--the victim slowly suffocated as he grew gradually weaker and finally unable to pull his body up against the nails to breathe. But others have suffered similar executions with less dread than Jesus. There must be something Jesus feared besides pain. Several passages teach that Jesus bore the sins of the world on the cross (Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21). He suffered the punishment for man's sin, which was spiritual death, separation from God. His greatest agony was being cut off from His Father on the cross (study Mark 15:34). Because He suffered this punishment of utter separation from God, His faithful followers will never have to.*

13 What did Jesus pray for in the garden? Answer: He asked for the _____ to pass from Him.

14 Whose will did Jesus say should be done? (a) His own will, (b) His Father's will, (c) the will of the Jewish leaders, (d) all of the preceding. Answer: _____.

Jesus Is Arrested

>>> **Read Mark 14:43-52.** <<<

Judas had bargained with the chief priests to betray his Master. He had promised to lead them to the place where He spent the night, away from the crowds. Although Jesus knew the plan, He went again to the usual spot where He knew Judas could easily find Him. A troop of soldiers with the traitor leading the way interrupted the calm of the night. Judas kissed Jesus, a signal that it was safe to arrest Him. One disciple tried to defend Jesus by sword, severing the ear of a man in the arrest party in the process (see Luke 22:50-51; John 18:10-11 for more details). But then the disciples lost their nerve and fled. Jesus remained alone with His captors and Judas.

15 Who betrayed Jesus for money (cf. v10,11)? Answer: Jesus was betrayed by _____.

16 What sign did he use to identify Jesus for the captors? Answer: He betrayed Jesus with a _____.

Jewish Trial of Jesus

>>> **Read Mark 14:53-65.** <<<

Though it was very late at night, Jesus was brought before the Jewish supreme court and tried. They bribed false witnesses who told contradictory stories about Him. For a time, it appeared that the court would be unable to find consistent testimony by which to convict Jesus. Finally, the high priest asked Him if He were the Christ. When Jesus said, "Yes," they used this statement as evidence of blasphemy and convicted Him. Then they spat on Him, mocked Him and beat Him.

17 Why was the Jewish court unable to convict Jesus on the basis of the testimony of the false witnesses? a) their testimony was inconsistent; b) the witnesses refused to testify; c) they could not allow false witnesses to testify in their court; d) Jesus refuted what they said. Answer: _____.

18 What was finally used to convict Jesus in the Jewish trial? Answer: He admitted that He was the _____, the Son of the Blessed One.

Peter Denies Jesus

>>> **Read Mark 14:66-72.** <<<

Peter had slipped into the courtyard to watch the trial. Various people began to recognize him. A servant-girl asked him if she hadn't seen him with Jesus. Peter claimed not to understand what she was talking about. Then she began to tell others that he was a disciple and he flatly denied it. Finally, others noticed his Galilean accent and accused him of following Jesus. With this, Peter panicked, vehemently denying Jesus, even asking God to curse him if He knew the man. The cock crew and Peter remembered Jesus' warning. He came to himself with a sickening awareness of the horrible deed he had done. He rushed out and began weeping in despair.

Note -- Failure of the disciples: *The disciples failed Jesus miserably in His hour of greatest need. They fled. Peter denied Him. Why? They had been such loyal supporters. Think back upon contributing factors in their failure: 1) They hadn't listened when Jesus had frequently warned them of His impending suffering. They had been too eager to argue about who would be the greatest in the kingdom. 2) They were overconfident. Earlier that evening, Jesus warned them that they would flee, but they didn't believe it. 3) They didn't watch and pray in the garden as He instructed. Thus, they were not mentally prepared to face the challenge. We could fail in the hour of temptation for these same reasons.*

19 How many times did Peter deny Jesus during the Jewish trial? Answer (give a number): _____.

20 How did he react when he realized that he had denied Jesus? a) killed himself; b) apologized to Jesus; c) gave up being an apostle; d) fled away and began to cry. Answer: _____.

Jesus' Death, Burial and Resurrection

Lesson 10

Jesus on Trial before Pilate

>>> **Read Mark 15:1-21.** <<<

Please read each section in your Bible as you study the lesson. Although the Jewish leaders had tried Jesus and convicted Him of blasphemy, they led Him to the Roman governor Pilate for yet another trial. The Jews did not have authority to carry out sentences of capital punishment that were determined by their own courts; capital crimes had to be tried by Roman officials. Thus, very early the next morning they brought Jesus to Pilate, hoping that he would concur with their decision. They accused Jesus of many things, but He remained silent. Pilate was amazed that He didn't try to defend Himself. The governor perceived that this was not really a question of criminal action, but that the Jews were jealous of Jesus. Therefore, he made several attempts to release Him. He was eager to appease the Jews, however, and was unable to persuade them that Jesus should be released. Though he did not believe Jesus was guilty, he ended up sentencing Him to death because he feared the start of a riot. Roman soldiers scourged Jesus, mocked Him, and led Him out to be crucified.

Note -- Physical suffering of Jesus: *Jesus suffered intensely in his last few hours. After being up all night, subjected to the stress of six different trials (if we compare the accounts in Matthew, Luke and John also), He was scourged. Scourging was accomplished by tying bits of bone, metal and glass to a whip and then striking the victim's back. This procedure produced excruciating pain, much loss of blood and sometimes even death. The victim's back became a bloody mass. After scourging Him, they took thorns, wove them into a crown, put it on Jesus' head, and began to beat on it, causing intense pain. They put a scarlet robe on Him [see Matt. 27:28; Mark's account calls it "purple"], only to later rip it off, undoubtedly tearing open the blood-dried wounds on His back in the process. Then came the crucifixion. In an execution of this type, they would literally nail the "criminal's" hands and feet onto a piece of wood and then set it upright into a hole. To breathe, the victim had to continually raise himself so that his lung cavity could expand. Pain and fatigue would begin to diminish the effectiveness of this effort and the lungs would begin to fill with fluid. As exhaustion took hold, the victim would be slowly asphyxiated because of a lack of oxygen and finally die.*

1 What did Pilate conclude was the real reason the Jews wanted Jesus to be crucified (v10)? (a) They believed in Him, (b) they envied him, (c) they wanted Him to be king, (d) they were sincerely disappointed in Him. Answer: _____.

2 Why did Pilate sentence Jesus' execution despite believing He was innocent (v15)?
Answer: He wanted to please the Jews and avoid a _____.

3 The man who was released in Jesus' place was guilty of what (v7)? Answer: He had participated in an insurrection in which he had committed _____.

4&5 After Jesus had been scourged, what did the soldiers put on His head? Answer: A _____ made of _____.

Jesus' Crucifixion

>>> **Read Mark 15:22-41.** <<<

It was a standard act of mercy to give a narcotic to condemned criminals when they were crucified. The drug would dull the pain a bit and allow the victim to pass away more comfortably. Jesus refused this tranquilizer. He was determined to suffer in full consciousness.

The ridicule grew. The soldiers who guarded the cross gambled for Jesus' clothes. Bystanders laughed at the idea that He could rebuild the temple when He couldn't even save Himself. Come down from the cross, they taunted, and we'll believe in You! Some Jewish officials standing nearby smirked that He had been able to save others, but was powerless to save Himself. Even the two thieves who were executed on either side of the Lord ridiculed Him.

From noon until 3 p.m. the sky was dark. Shortly thereafter, Jesus cried out in anguish, using the very words of Psalm 22:1: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" Then after a few more minutes, He cried out again and died. At that moment the temple veil split in two, and a centurion who was observing exclaimed, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

Note -- The majesty of Jesus' death: There were multiplied ironies in the events of those final hours. As they ridiculed Jesus saying that He had saved others, but now couldn't save himself, they were unaware that He was fully capable of saving Himself, but that if He had, He would not have saved others. He died voluntarily. He had at His disposition thousands of angels that could have rescued Him, but He deliberately chose to lay down His life because He loved us. Jesus had the power to do anything He wanted against His tormentors, but he subdued all desire for revenge and actually prayed for God to forgive those who were treating Him so cruelly (Luke 23:34). By dying as He did, Christ provided the sacrifice that would forgive men's sins. Therefore, the temple veil was torn in two from top to bottom. The veil had blocked access to God's presence--it was a symbol of man's sin. Since Jesus' death atoned for sin, the veil was severed, demonstrating that with sin removed men could once again enter into fellowship with God. Truly, this man was the Son of God!

6&6 What was written above Jesus, while He hung on the cross (v26)? Answer: A sign over Him said, "The _____ of the _____."

8 The people mocking Christ said they would believe on Him if He would do what? Answer: They would believe if he would _____ from the cross.

9 What occurred in the temple when Jesus died? Answer: The _____ of the temple was torn in two.

10 Jesus was crucified with what kind of men? Answer: He was crucified between two _____.

Jesus' Burial

>>> Read Mark 15:42-47. <<<

Joseph, a prominent Jewish official and secret disciple of Christ (see John 19:38), asked Pilate for permission to bury Jesus' body. He had to act quickly since according to Jewish law He could not bury the body on the Sabbath day, which officially began at sundown. He gathered the corpse up in a sheet and put it in a hole chiseled into the wall of a cave, which served as a typical grave in that era. He closed off the cave by rolling a large rock over the entrance.

11 In whose tomb was Jesus buried (v43)? Answer: The tomb belonged to _____. (Cf. Matt. 27:57-60.)

12 How did Pilate make sure Jesus was dead (v44,45)? Answer: He asked the _____ if Jesus was dead.

13&14 What was the tomb made of, and how was the opening sealed (v46)? Answer: It was hewn out of _____, and the opening was covered with a large _____.

Body is Missing!

>>> Read Mark 16:1-8. <<<

A few loyal women had prepared spices and went out to Jesus' tomb early on Sunday morning. They were planning to embalm His body in order to give it a more honorable burial than had been possible in the few minutes that had been available on Friday afternoon. As they walked down to the cave, they thought about how hard it was going to be for them to roll that large rock away from the entrance of the burial cave. When they arrived, however, they saw that the rock had already been removed and the cave was open. Inside, an angel told them that Jesus had arisen and was on His way to Galilee. He asked them to tell the disciples and Peter. The women fled away very frightened.

Note -- Tell the disciples and Peter: *The angel told the women to invite the disciples "and Peter" to meet Jesus in Galilee. Since Peter was himself a disciple, it seems unusual that he would be singled out and receive a special invitation. Perhaps it was because the Lord knew that Peter would no longer feel himself worthy to be counted as a disciple after having denied Him, and therefore, Jesus gave him a special invitation to the meeting. What tenderness the Lord showed!*

15 On what day did Jesus arise from the dead (v1,2)? Answer: The _____ day of the week.

16 Why did the women go to the tomb early on the first day of the week? Answer: They wanted to _____ Jesus' body.

17 What did the young man (angel) say had happened to Jesus? Answer: He said Jesus was not there because He had _____.

Jesus Commissions the Disciples

>>> **Read Mark 16:9-20.** <<<

The disciples had never expected to see Jesus again. They watched Him die and knew about His burial. They were very sad. Because of this, the news of the empty tomb and Jesus' appearances seemed too good to be true. They refused to get their hopes up. Later, when He did appear to them, He rebuked them for being so slow to believe. Then He gave orders for their future work, telling them to go everywhere and preach the gospel to all. He told them what to preach: The one who believes and is baptized will be saved. He gave them signs to confirm their message.

Note -- He that believes and is baptized shall be saved: *Jesus set forth the conditions of salvation. He requires faith and baptism. Unfortunately men of our day have tried to eliminate one or the other of these two requirements. Some try to eliminate faith. They teach that infants, who are too young to believe, should be baptized. But Jesus' order was belief first, then baptism. Throughout Scripture only those who believed and repented were considered qualified for baptism (study Acts 2:38, 41; 18:8; John 6:44-45). Others teach salvation by faith only, without baptism. But Jesus clearly said that baptism was a requirement to receive salvation (see John 3:5). In accordance with this command of Jesus, the apostles insisted that water baptism was a prerequisite to receiving forgiveness of sins and the new life in Christ (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21).*

The gospel of Mark closes with a note about the results of the great mission Jesus entrusted to the apostles. After He had ascended back to heaven, they went out and began to preach everywhere, just like Jesus told them. The Lord blessed their revelation of the gospel message with signs to confirm it, just as He said He would.

18 What did Jesus say His disciples should do with the gospel (v15)? Answer: They should go into all the world and _____ the gospel.

19 What did Jesus say one must do to be saved (v16)? a) just believe in Jesus; b) just be baptized; c) pray the sinner's prayer; d) believe and be baptized. Answer: _____.

20 What purpose was to be accomplished by miraculous signs (v20)? Answer: As inspired men preached the gospel, the accompanying signs served to _____ the word.

Mark's story of Jesus is over, but we hope that your study of Jesus' life and teachings is not. Besides Mark, three other New Testament books tell about Him: Matthew, Luke and John. Perhaps now you would like to begin to read them to learn more details of His story. Or, perhaps you prefer to continue your study by learning the story of how the apostles began to take the gospel all over the world: read the book of Acts. Bible study is a great journey and your adventure has just begun. Please be sure that you meditate and reflect on the great message of the Word of God as you read, and make sure you apply what you learn to your life.