

# LESSON ONE

## The Gospel of Mark

### Who Was Mark?

- 1) He was the son of a well-to-do lady of Jerusalem whose name was Mary, and whose house was a rallying point and meeting place of the early Church (Acts 12:12).
- 2) Mark was the nephew of Barnabas.
  - a) Mark and Barnabas split with Paul when Mark left the missionary party.
- 3) Mark vanishes from history for many years.
  - a) Tradition has it that he went down to Egypt and founded the church of Alexandria.
  - b) When Mark reemerges, Paul writes from prison to the Colossians stating that Mark was there with him.
  - c) In the prison letter to Philemon, Paul mentions Mark as being among his fellowworkers.
  - d) When Paul is waiting for death, he writes to Timothy and asks him “to get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry.”
- 4) Towards the end of the second century there was a man called Papias who stated that Mark’s gospel was nothing other than a record of the preaching material of Peter.
  - a) Peter called Mark “my son.” (1 Peter 5:13).
- 5) Two reasons why Mark is a book of supreme importance.
  - a) It is the earliest of all the gospels.
  - b) It embodies the record of what Peter preached and taught about Jesus (Mark may be the nearest approach we will ever possess to an eyewitness account of the life of Jesus).

### The Characteristics of Mark’s Gospel

- 1) Mark’s aim was to give a picture of Jesus as he was.
- 2) Mark tells the facts of Jesus’ life in the simplest and most dramatic way.
- 3) Mark never forgot the divine side of Jesus.
  - a) He begins his gospel with the declaration of faith, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”
  - b) To Mark, Jesus was God among us.
- 4) Again and again, Mark speaks of the impact Jesus made on the minds and hearts of those who heard him.
  - a) “They were astounded at his teaching.”
  - b) “They were all amazed.”
  - c) “And they were filled with great awe, and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’
  - d) “And they were utterly astounded.”
- 5) Though Mark speaks of the divinity of Jesus, no gospel gives such a human picture of Jesus.
  - a) He was a carpenter (not a carpenter’s son as mentioned by Matthew).
  - b) The Spirit immediately *drove* Jesus into the wilderness (Matthew and Luke said he was *led up by the Spirit*).
- 6) No other writer speaks as freely of Jesus’ human emotions.

- a) “Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit.
  - b) He was moved with compassion.
  - c) He was amazed at their unbelief.
  - d) He was moved with righteous anger.
  - e) Jesus could feel the pangs of hunger.
  - f) He could be tired and wanted to rest.
- 7) One of the great characteristics of Mark was that he over and over again inserted the little vivid details into the narrative which are the hallmark of an eyewitness.
- a) In the story of little children, only Mark says that *he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.*
  - b) In the feeding of the five thousand, Mark alone states that they sat down *in hundreds and in fifties.*
  - c) When Jesus and his disciples were on the last journey to Jerusalem, only Mark tells us, *‘and Jesus was walking ahead of them’*
  - d) In the stilling of the storm, only Mark mentions that *Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.*
- 8) Mark’s realism and his simplicity come out in his Greek style.
- a) Style not carefully developed and polished (tells the story as a child might tell it).
  - b) He adds statement to statement connecting them simply with the word *and*
    - i) In the third chapter alone, *and* occurs almost thirty times
    - ii) As if he was breathless in making the story as vivid to others as it is to himself..
    - iii) Mark is very fond of the historic present.
      - (1) “And when Jesus heard it, he *says* to them.”
      - (2) “Those who are strong do not need a doctor, but those who are ill.”
      - (3) “And when they come near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and to Bethany, to the Mount of Olives, he *sends* two of his disciples, and *says* ‘to them...’”
      - (4) “And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of The Twelve, *comes...*
  - c) Mark often uses the very Aramaic words which Jesus used.
    - i) To Jairus’ daughter, Jesus said, “*Talitha cumi*”
    - ii) To the deaf man with the impediment of speech, he said, “*Ephphatha?*”
    - iii) In the garden, he says, “*abba*, Father.”
    - iv) . On the cross, he cries, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani.*”

### The Beginning of the Story

- 1) Mark begins the story of Jesus, not with his birth, but with the dreams of the prophet of long ago.
  - a) “Lo! I send my messenger before you and he will prepare your road for you. He will be like a voice crying in the wilderness, Get ready the road of the Lord. Make straight the path by which he will come.”
  - b) History is a process directed by the God who sees the end in the beginning.
- 2) John came announcing a baptism of repentance.
- 3) John was different.
  - a) Lived in the wilderness.
  - b) Wore clothes of camel’s hair.

- c) Ate locusts and wild honey.
- 4) Jesus' baptism by John presented a problem.
  - a) John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, meaning that it was for those who were sorry for their sins and who wished to express their determination to have done with them.
  - b) Jesus was the sinless one.
  - c) Jesus' baptism could have been four things.
    - i) It was a moment of decision (When John emerged, the moment of decision had come).
    - ii) It was the moment of *identification*.
      - (1) Identified with a movement back to God.
    - iii) It was the moment of *approval*.
      - (1) Mark's account is God speaking directly to Jesus: "You are my beloved Son."
      - (2) Matthew's account was God speaking to the crowd: "This is my beloved Son."
    - iv) It was the moment of *equipment*.
      - (1) The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove (a symbol of peace and gentleness).
      - (2) Jesus will conquer, but the conquest will be the conquest of love.
- 5) The Temptation.
  - a) Forty days a number of trial, tribulation, hardship.
    - i) Israel forty years in the wilderness.
    - ii) Forty days considered a complete fast.
      - (1) Moses.
      - (2) Elijah.
  - b) It was Satan who tempted Jesus.
    - i) The word *Satan* in Hebrew simply means an *adversary*.
      - (1) Became *one who pleads a case against a person*.
      - (2) Became that of an accuser.
      - (3) The task of Satan was to say everything that could be said against anyone.
    - ii) The other title of Satan is the *devil*, which comes from the Greek *diabolos*, which literally means *a slanderer*.
      - (1) Search for everything that can be said against an individual to the thought of one who deliberately and maliciously slanders all human beings in the presence of God.
      - (2) Took on Persian thought that is based on the conception that in this universe there are two powers—a power of the light and a power of the dark.
    - iii) In the New Testament, it is the devil or Satan who is behind human disease and suffering (Luke 13:16).
    - iv) It was Satan who seduced Judas.
    - v) It is the devil whom Peter identified as our adversary.
    - vi) It is the devil whose power was broken by Christ.
      - (1) Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil.
      - (2) Jesus came to destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil.
- 6) After John was put into prison, Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God.
  - a) Believe the gospel (the good news).
    - i) The good news of truth (Galatians 2:5; Colossians 1:5)

- ii) It is good news of hope (Colossians 1:23).
  - iii) It is good news of peace (Ephesians 6:15).
  - iv) It is the good news of God's promise (Ephesians 3:6).
  - v) It is good news of immortality (2 Timothy 1:10).
  - vi) It is good news of salvation (Ephesians 1:13).
- b) Repent.
- i) Literally means a change of mind.
  - ii) Godly sorrow works repentance.
    - (1) Sorry for the consequences of sin.
    - (2) Sorry for the sin.
- c) Believe.
- i) To believe is simply to take Jesus at his word.
  - ii) To believe that God is the kind of God that Jesus had told us about.
  - iii) To believe that God so loves the world that he will make any sacrifice to bring us back to himself.
  - iv) To believe that what sounds too good to be true is really true.
- 7) Jesus' call of his disciples.
- a) Call to simple folk.
  - b) Call to those who were doing their day's work.
  - c) Jesus offered them a task, not a bed of ease.
- 8) Jesus teaches in the synagogues.
- a) They were completely astonished at the way he taught.
  - b) He taught them like one who had personal authority, and not as the experts in the law did.
- 9) The Temple and the synagogue.
- a) The synagogue was primarily a teaching institution.
    - i) Prayer.
    - ii) The reading of God's word.
    - iii) The exposition of God's word.
  - b) The Temple was the place of worship and sacrifice.
- 10) The synagogue was more influential than the Temple.
- a) The law required that where there were ten families, there would be a synagogue.
  - b) If a man had a new message to preach, the synagogue was the logical place.
- 11) The organization of the synagogue.
- a) There was a ruler of the synagogue, or the administrator.
  - b) There was the distributor of alms.
  - c) There was a minister, who was responsible for taking out and storing away of the sacred rolls on which Scripture was written.
    - i) For cleaning of the synagogue.
    - ii) For the blowing of the silver trumpet, announcing the Sabbath.
- 12) Jesus spoke as one who had authority.
- a) The scribes always referred to an authority when making a statement.
  - b) Jesus spoke by his own authority.
- 13) Jesus not only spoke, but he did.
- 14) Three things that Jesus never separated
- a) Words and actions. The statement and the exhortation were put into action.
  - b) Soul and body.

- i) Some types of Christianity that spoke as if the body did not matter.
  - ii) Human beings are soul and body (as well as spirit), and God wants to redeem the whole person.
  - iii) Earth and heaven.
    - (1) Jesus' vision that God's will be done in earth as in heaven.
    - (2) That heaven and earth become one.
- 15) Jesus casts out devils or demons.
- a) The Jews, as well as the entire ancient world, believed strongly in demons and devils.
  - b) Whether one believes in demonology or not, the Jews did.
  - c) The demons knew that when Messiah came, they knew that would be their end.
  - d) Jesus did not go through some elaborate exorcism—he simply spoke the word of authority.
- 16) Healing of the leprous man.
- a) Three kinds of leprosy.
    - i) The *nodular or tubercular leprosy*
      - (1) Begins with an unaccountable lethargy and pains in the joints.
      - (2) Nodules appear, whereby the whole appearance of the face is changed until the afflicted person loses all human appearance and looks like a lion or a satyr.
      - (3) The nodules grow larger and larger; they ulcerate and from them comes a foul discharge.
      - (4) The eyebrows fall out; the eyes become staring.
      - (5) The voice becomes hoarse.
      - (6) The hands and the feet ulcerate.
      - (7) Ends in mental decay, coma and ultimately death.
    - ii) The *anaesthetic leprosy*.
      - (1) Initial stages are the same, but the nerve trunks also are affected.
      - (2) The infected area loses all sensation.
      - (3) The muscles waste away; the tendons contract until the hands become like claws.
      - (4) There is always disfigurement of the fingernails.
      - (5) Ensues chronic ulceration fo the feet and of the hands and then the progressive loss of fingers and of toes—eventually, a whole hand or a whole foot may drop off.
    - iii) The third type is the most common—combination of modular and anaesthetic leprosy.
  - b) The fate of the leper.
    - i) Rendered unclean, and banished from the fellowship of others.
    - ii) Must go with rent clothes, bared head, covered lips.
    - iii) Had to cry, “unclean, unclean.”
    - iv) Lepers not only had to bear the physical pain of their disease, they had to bear the mental anguish and the heartbreak of being completely banished from human society and totally shunned.
  - c) A revealing picture of Jesus.
    - i) He did not drive away a man who had broken the law (the leper had no right to have spoken to him at all).
    - ii) Jesus stretched out his hand to touch the leper (which was forbidden).
    - iii) Having cleansed him, Jesus sent him to fulfill the prescribed ritual.
      - (1) He fulfilled the human law and human righteousness.

(2) He did not recklessly defy the conventions, but when need be, submitted to them.

## LESSON TWO

### Thy Sins Be Forgiven Thee

- 1) Because of Jesus' miracles, he had attracted the attention of the leaders of the Jews.
  - a) One of the functions of the Sanhedrin was to be the guardian of orthodoxy.
    - i) It was their duty to deal with a false prophet.
    - ii) They no doubt were critically watching every move that Jesus made.
  - b) "Thy sins be forgiven thee" no doubt came as a shock.
    - i) An essential to Judaism that only God could forgive sins.
    - ii) For any human to do so would be to insult God, which was blasphemy.
  - c) Was also their belief that anyone who was sick had sinned.
- 2) Which is easier, to say "Thy sins be forgiven" or "take up your bed and walk."
  - a) You say that I have no right to forgive a sinner and he cannot be cured till he is forgiven.
  - b) Very well, "Watch this!" (if the man be healed, he must have been forgiven).
  - c) Jesus spoke the word and the man was healed.
  - d) The Jews were caught at their own game (Jesus refuted them using their own rules).

### The Call of Matthew

- 1) Doors of synagogue were closing on Jesus; he took to the open air and open streets.
- 2) Galilee was one of the great road centers of the ancient world.
  - a) Judaea is on the way to nowhere; Galilee is on the way to everywhere.
  - b) All land traffic had to go through Palestine.
  - c) Palestine divided up.
    - i) Judaea was a Roman province under a Roman procurator.
    - ii) Galilee was ruled by Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great.
    - iii) To the east the territory which included Gaulonitis, Trachonitis and Batanaea was ruled by Philip, another of Herod's sons.
  - d) Capernaum was the first town, and must have been the center for taxation.
    - i) Where Matthew lived.
    - ii) Unlike Zacchaeus, in the service of the Romans, Matthew worked for Herod Antipas.
- 3) Matthew was hated.
  - a) People never knew how much they had to pay.
  - b) The tax-collectors extracted from them as much as they could possibly get and lined their own pockets with the surplus that remained after the demands of the law had been met.
- 4) Jesus wanted a man no one wanted.
- 5) Of all the disciples, Matthew gave up most.
  - a) He literally left all to follow Jesus.
  - b) When he left his tax collector's job, he could never go back.
- 6) Tax at Levi's (Matthew) house.
  - a) Jesus goes among those whom the Pharisees would never have been associated.
  - b) Pharisees would have looked on them with bleak condemnation and arrogant superiority.
  - c) Jesus: "A doctor goes where he is needed."
  - d) The great missionary C. T. Studd had four lines of doggerel that he loved to quote:

Some want to live within the sound  
Of church or chapel bell;  
I want to run a rescue shop  
Within a yard of hell.

### **Selected Topics from Chapter 2**

- 1) Jesus on Fasting.
- 2) New Wineskins.
  - a) Jesus came with a startling new message.
  - b) One had to have an open mind.
  - c) When you reach a conclusion you're dead; unable to accept new truth and to contemplate new ways.
- 3) The Sabbath was made for man.
  - a) Disciples pluck corn on the Sabbath.
    - i) David ate of the showbread.
    - ii) Human need takes precedence over the law.
      - (1) People matter
  - b) Men and women are not to be enslaved by the Sabbath; the Sabbath exists to make their lives better.
  - c) True religion does not consist in rules and regulations.
  - d) Christianity has at all times consisted far more in doing things than in refraining from doing things.

### **Chapter 3:**

- 1) Man with withered hand.
  - a) Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day? Or to do evil? To save a life? Or to kill it?"
    - i) Another dilemma for Jews.
    - ii) They were bound to admit that it was lawful to do a good thing; Jesus was proposing a good thing.
    - iii) They were bound to admit doing evil (leaving the man in his condition) was wrong on the Sabbath.
  - b) "Stretch forth your hand!"
  - c) To the Pharisee, religion was ritual.
  - d) To Jesus, religion was service.
- 2) Jesus healed those who were suffering from the scourges of disease.
  - a) Evil spirits kept flinging themselves down before him and shouting, "You are the Son of God."
  - b) Many times Jesus would forbid spirits to make Him known.
- 3) Jesus appoints 12.
  - a) Two reasons.
    - i) That they might be with him.
    - ii) That he might send them out.
  - b) Jesus mentored these men in order for them to continue on after he left the earth.
  - c) Significant that Christianity began with a group.



- i) Christianity has to be lived out in a fellowship.
    - (1) Christianity bound men and women to their fellows.
    - (2) Presents the task of living with each other and for each other.
- d) Jesus equipped them with two things.
  - i) A message.
  - ii) Power.
- 4) A house divided against itself.
  - a) Could not deny that Jesus cast demons out.
    - i) Charged with casting out demons through the power of Beelzebub.
    - ii) A house divided against itself cannot stand.
  - b) Jesus regarded the defeat of disease as part of the conquest of Satan.
- 5) The sin against the Holy Ghost.
  - a) As many as shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
  - b) The Holy Spirit enables people to recognize God's truth when it enters their life.
    - i) If people refuse to exercise any God-given faculty they will in the end lose it.
    - ii) If you stay long enough in the dark, you will lose the ability to see.
    - iii) If you stay in bed long enough, you will lose the power to walk.
    - iv) If people refuse the guidance of God's Spirit often enough they will become in the end incapable of recognizing that truth when they see it.
- 6) Whosoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister and my mother.
  - a) True kinship lies in a common experience.
  - b) True kinship lies in a common interest.
  - c) True kinship lies in a common obedience.
  - d) True kinship lies in a common goal.

## Chapter 4

- 1) Parables.
  - a) Makes an abstract idea concrete.
    - i) People can understand.
    - ii) People will listen to what they understand.
  - b) Start from the here and now to get to the there and then.
  - c) Difference between parable and allegory.
    - i) A parable is to be heard—once and once only; allegory to be studied.
    - ii) A parable is where one great idea leaps out and shines like a flash of lightning. In an allegory, every event and person and detail has a symbolic meaning—something to be studied and examined.
- 2) A light that's to be seen.
  - a) Truth is meant to be in the open—not hidden.
  - b) Our Christianity is to be seen.
- 3) There is nothing secret that will not be brought into the open; nothing done that it should be hidden away.
  - a) Applies to truth.
    - i) Truth is indestructible.
    - ii) Some may refuse to face it; they may try to suppress it; they may try to obliterate it; they may refuse to accept it; but great is the truth and in the end it will prevail.

- b) It applies to ourselves and to our own life and conduct.
  - i) Truth has a way of emerging.
  - ii) Cannot hide the truth from ourselves.
  - iii) Those who harbor secrets are never happy—the web of deception is never a permanent concealment.
  - iv) There is nothing that will not be revealed in the presence of God.
- 4) The Kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the earth.
  - a) Essence of scripture.
    - i) He sleeps and wakes night and day—the seed sprouts—he doesn't know how it does it.
    - ii) The earth produces fruit with help from no one.
  - b) Principles.
    - i) Tells us of human helplessness.
    - ii) It tells us something about the kingdom.
      - (1) Jesus uses illustrations from the growth of nature to describe the coming of the Kingdom of God.
        - (a) Nature's growth is often imperceptible.
        - (b) Nature's growth is constant.
        - (c) Nature's growth is inevitable.
        - (d) There is a consummation (day of harvest).
- 5) The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed.
  - a) Small beginning that progresses and grows.
  - b) In the Old Testament common to describe a great empire to a tree; tributary nations within it said to be like birds finding shelter within the shadow of its branches (Ez. 17:22; Dan. 4:10, 21).
    - i) Never be daunted by small beginnings.
    - ii) Parable speaks of the empire of the Church.
      - (1) The Church is an empire in which all kinds of opinions and all kinds of theologies can find a place.
        - (a) Tend to brand anyone who thinks differently than us as heretic.
        - (b) John Wesley: "I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from mine than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair."
      - (2) The Church is an empire in which all nations meets.

## Chapter 5

- 1) The man in the tombs with unclean spirits.
  - a) When evening had come (could have been frightening for those who were fearful!)
    - i) Tortured day and night.
    - ii) What have I to do with you, son of the Most High God?
    - iii) What is your name?
      - (1) Legion, for we are many.
      - (2) Ancient belief that if knew demon's name, you had power over him.
  - b) Go back to your home and your own people and tell them all that the Lord has done for you.

- i) He went away and began to proclaim the story throughout the Decapolis of all that Jesus had done for him.
    - (1) Decapolis literally meant “ten cities,” which were inhabited largely by Greek.
    - (2) First sign of Christianity bursting the bonds of Judaism and going out to all the world.
  - ii) Why did Jesus tell the man to go and tell?
    - (1) To the Jews, Jesus said, “Hold your peace.”
    - (2) To the Gentiles, he said, “Go and tell your people.
  - iii) Why did Jesus send the man back?
    - (1) To be a witness for Christianity.
    - (2) He was to be the first seed of what in time was to become a mighty harvest; the first contact with Greek civilization was made in the Decapolis.
- 2) Jesus healed many.
- a) Jairus’ daughter.
    - i) Report of her death.
    - ii) Jesus puts all out of the room.
  - b) The widow with the issue of blood.

## Chapter 6

- 1) A prophet has honor except in his own country.
  - a) Not able to do any wonderful deeds there because of unbelief.
  - b) Laid hands on a few sick people and healed them.
- 2) Jesus calls the twelve to send them out in twos.
  - a) He gave them power over unclean spirits.
  - b) Ordered them to take nothing for the road except a staff.
    - i) Rabbinic law that when a man entered the Temple courts he must put off his staff and shoes and money girdle. All ordinary things were to be set aside on entering the sacred place.
    - ii) Perhaps Jesus was thinking that the disciples needed to see that when they entered a humble home, it was every bit as sacred as the Temple courts.
  - c) When enter house, speak blessings.
  - d) If they don’t hear, shake the dust from your feet.
- 3) Herod: “This is John whom I beheaded.”
  - a) Jesus’ fame was spread through the ministry of his disciples.
  - b) Herodias demands the head of John the Baptist.
  - c) Who was Herodias?
    - i) She was the daughter of Herod’s half-brother, Aristobulus, and therefore his niece.
    - ii) She was the wife of his half-brother Herod Philip, and therefore his sister-in-law.
- 4) The miracle of feeding the five thousand the only miracle recorded in all four gospels.
  - a) Mark’s account that of Peter’s preaching; therefore, spoken as from an eyewitness.
  - b) Some vivid and realistic details typical of eyewitness.
    - i) They sat down on the green grass (meaning that it took place either in late springtime or in mid-April.
    - ii) They sat down in sections of 100 and of 50
  - c) Two reactions.

- i) To the end of the day.
  - (1) Disciples: Send them away—let someone else worry about them.
  - (2) Jesus: You feed them.
- ii) To human resources.
  - (1) Disciples: 200 denarii (one day's wages) not enough to feed them.
  - (2) Jesus: What do you have (5 loaves and 2 fishes).

### **Nullifying the True Laws of God**

- 1) "You make an excellent job of completely nullifying the command of God in order to observe your own tradition. Moses said, "Honor your father and mother. He who speaks evil of his father or mother shall certainly die."
  - a) Many says to his father or mother, "That by which you might have been helped by me is *Corban*.
    - i) *Corban* meant God-dedicated; could not be used for any other purpose. A gift dedicated to God.
    - ii) If a man wanted to dedicate some of his money or his property to God, he declared it *Corban*; and, therefore, could never again be used for any ordinary or secular purpose.
    - iii) When a father or mother comes to the son in dire need, he might declare that he's sorry, but what he has available is dedicated to God.
      - (1) The vow was an excuse to avoid helping a parent in need.
      - (2) To break this vow would be to break the law of God.
    - iv) *Corban* became a much more generalized oath.
      - (1) When a person declared anything *Corban*, he entirely alienated it from the person to whom he was talking.
        - (a) If a man says, *Corban* that by which I might be profited by you, he bound himself never to touch, taste, have or handle anything possessed by the person so addressed.
        - (b) If he says *Corban*, that by which you might be profited by me; he bound himself never to help or to benefit the person so addressed by anything that belonged to himself.
        - (c) This passage means that if perhaps in a fit of anger or rebellion, a man had said to his parents, *Corban* anything by which you may ever be helped by me, and afterwards, even if he repented from his rash vow, the scribal legalists declared that it was unbreakable and that he might never again render his parents any assistance.
        - (d) The scribal law made it impossible to carry out the law of the Ten Commandments (honor your father and mother).
  - b) Jesus is attacking a system which put rules and regulations before the claim of human need.
- 2) Nothing that goes into a man is unclean; that which comes out.
  - a) What goes in is according to a set of rules; what comes out emanates from the heart.
  - b) Jews would rather die than to violate a law of meat.
    - i) Antiochus Epiphanes was determined to root out the Jewish faith.
      - (1) He demanded that the Jews eat pig meat (unclean).

- (2) They refused even to death.
- ii) By Jesus' statement, he wiped out with one stroke the laws for which the Jews had suffered and died; no wonder his disciples were amazed!
- 3) The Syrophenician woman pleads for her daughter.
  - a) This was in the region of Tyre and Sidon.
    - i) He was in Gentile territory.
    - ii) Ideally, these territories were part of the realm of Israel.
      - (1) When the land was being partitioned out by Joshua, the tribe of Asher was allocated the land "as far as Great Sidon...to the fortified city of Tyre (Joshua 19:28-29)
      - (2) They had never been able to subdue their territory and never entered into it.
    - iii) Where the might of arms was helpless, the conquering love of Jesus Christ was victorious.
      - (1) The earthly Israel had failed to gather in the people of Phoenicia; now the true Israel had come upon them.
      - (2) It was not a strange land into which Jesus came; it was a land which long ago God had given him for his own.
      - (3) He was not so much coming among strangers as entering into his inheritance.
  - b) "Not proper to take children's bread and give to dogs.
    - i) Dog was symbolic of dishonor
    - ii) The word "dog" was a Jewish term of contempt for the Gentiles.
    - iii) Jesus' tone of voice had to be the difference.
    - iv) The woman symbolically stands for the Gentile world which so eagerly seized on the bread of heaven which the Jews rejected and threw away.

# LESSON THREE

## Chapters 8-11

### Chapter 8

1. Feeding the 4000.
  - a) Happened in Decapolis.
  - b) Crowds could have due to:
    - i) The healing of the deaf man with a speech impediment.
    - ii) Jesus had urged the demoniac of Gadara to return home, which was Decapolis, which had a large Gentile population.
  - c) Feeding of 5000 in Mark 6 could have been Jesus bringing the bread of life to the Jews.
  - d) Feeding of 4000 in Mark 8, Jesus bringing bread of life to the Gentiles.
2. What sign do you show from heaven?
  - a) False Christs lured people into following them by promising astonishing signs.
    - i) Promised to cleave the waters of the Jordan in two and leave a pathway through it.
    - ii) They promised to make the city walls fall down.
  - b) To Jesus, the whole world was full of signs—the corn in the field, the leaven in the loaf, the scarlet anemones on the hillside all spoke to him of God.
    - i) He knew that God was already in the world for anyone who had eyes to see.
    - ii) Elizabeth Barrett Browning: (p. 215)

Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes.  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.

Another poet:

One asked a sign from God; and day by day  
The sun arose in pearl; in scarlet set;  
Each night the stars appeared in bright array;  
Each morn the thirsty grass with dew was wet;  
The corn failed not its harvest, nor the vine—  
And yet he saw no sign!

1. For anyone who has eyes to see and a heart to understand, the daily miracle of night and day and the daily splendor of all common things are sign enough from God.
2. Beware of the evil influence of the Pharisees and of the evil influence of Herod.
  - a. Why do you keep talking about the fact you have no bread?
  - b. Do you not yet see and understand?
  - c. Influence of the Pharisees—had just asked for a sign
  - d. Influence of Herod—tried to build up happiness through the gaining of power and wealth and influence and prestige.

- e. To both, the Kingdom of God was an earthly kingdom; it was based on earthly power and greatness, and on the victories that force could win.
3. Blind man healed.
    - a. Jesus spit into his eyes and laid hands on him.
    - b. “I see men as trees walking.”
    - c. Only Mark records this miracle.
  4. Who do men say that I am?
    - a. John the Baptist—Elijah—one of the prophets.
    - b. Who do you say I am?
    - c. Peter: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.”
    - d. Tell no man.
  5. Jews concept of Messiah.
    - a. Jews had been under dominion of the Medes and Persians, Greece, Rome.
    - b. Believed that Messiah would come and smash all these kingdoms. Believed that Messiah would be the most destructive conqueror in history, smashing his enemies into utter extinction.
    - c. There would follow the renovation of Jerusalem.
    - d. The Jews dispersed all over the world would be gathered into the city of the new Jerusalem.
    - e. Palestine would be the center of the world and the rest of the world subject to it.
    - f. Finally, there would come the new age of peace and goodness which would last forever.
      - i. The Jews were violent, nationalistic, destructive, vengeful people.
      - ii. They believed the end result would be the perfect reign of God, but they came to it through a bath of blood and a career of conquest.
  6. No wonder Jesus had to re-educate the disciples in the meaning of messiahship—no wonder he was crucified in the end as a heretic.
  7. Peter rebukes Jesus.
    - a. Refuted Jesus’ claim that he must suffer, be killed, and rise the third day.
    - b. “Get behind me, Satan. These are not God’s thoughts but men’s.
  8. If any man come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.
  9. What profit is it for a man to gain the whole world but lose his soul?
  10. There are some standing here who will not see death until they see the kingdom of God coming with power.

## Chapter 9

1. Mount of Transfiguration.
  - a. Overshadowed by a cloud.
    - i. Presence of God associated with cloud.
    - ii. God came to the Tabernacle in a cloud.
    - iii. Cloud filled Solomon’s Temple at the dedication.
  - b. Appearance of Moses and Elijah.
    - i. Moses the supreme lawgiver; Elijah the supreme prophet.
    - ii. They saw in Jesus the consummation of all that they had dreamed of in the past.

- iii. It meant that they saw in him all that history had longed for and hoped for and looked forward to.
  - c. For the disciples:
    - i. Cross or no cross, they had heard God's voice acknowledging Jesus as His son.
    - ii. It made them a special witness of the glory of Christ.
  - d. Needs at the foot of the mountain.
    - i. Oh faithless generation, how long will I be with you?
    - ii. Jesus rebuked the deaf and dumb spirit.
  - e. The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and, when he has been killed, after three days he will rise again.
    - i. They did not understand what he meant.
    - ii. They were afraid to ask him.
- 2. If any will be first, he must be the last of all—servant of all.
- 3. Whosoever receives this little child, receives me.
  - a. Children have no influence at all; they cannot advance a career nor enhance a person's prestige.
  - b. Children cannot give us things.
  - c. Children must have things done for them.
  - d. Whosoever welcomes the poor, ordinary people, the people who have no influence and no wealth and no power, the people who need things done for them, is welcoming me.
  - e. The child is typical of the person who needs things, and it is the society of the person who needs things that we must seek.
  - f. It is easy to cultivate the friendship of the person who can do things for us, and whose influence can be useful to us.
  - g. It is equally easy to avoid the society of the person who inconveniently needs our help.
  - h. It is easy to seek favor with the influential and the great, and to neglect the simple, humble, ordinary people.
  - i. It is easy at some function to seek the society and the notice of some distinguished person and avoid the poor relation.
  - j. Jesus is saying that we ought to seek out not those who can do things for us, but those for whom we can do things.
  - k. "As you have done it unto the least of these, you've done it unto me.
- 4. We saw a man casting out demons in your name, but he was not of our company.
  - a. There is no one who can do a work of power in the strength of my name and lightly speak evil of me.
  - b. He who is not against us is for us.
  - c. A lesson on tolerance.
    - i. We have a right to our own thoughts.
    - ii. We all have the right to think things out and to think them through until we come to our own conclusions and our own beliefs.
    - iii. Too apt to condemn what we don't understand or what does not agree with us.
  - d. Truth is always bigger than any individual's grasp of it.
  - e. The basis for tolerance is simply the realization of the magnitude of truth itself.



- i. Tolerance means reverence for all the possibilities of truth; it means acknowledgment that she dwells in divers mansions, and wears vesture of many colors, and speaks in strange tongues.
    - ii. It means frank respect for freedom of indwelling conscience against mechanical forms, official conventions, social force.
    - iii. It means the charity that is greater than faith or hope.
    - iv. Intolerance is a sign both of arrogance and ignorance, for it is a sign that people believe that there is no truth beyond the truth they see.
  - f. Any doctrine or belief must finally be judged by the kind of people it produces.
    - i. The church should be an instrument of Christian good.
    - ii. The question is not how a church is governed, but what kind of people does a Church produce?
  - g. We may hate a person's beliefs, but we must never hate the person.
- 5. Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, he will not lose his reward.
  - a. Any kindness shown, any help given, to the people of Christ will not lose its reward.
  - b. The reason for helping is that the person in need belongs to Jesus—he or she is dear to Jesus.
- 6. The salt of the Christian life.
  - a. Three different sayings to be interpreted individually.
    - i. Everyone must be salted with fire.
    - ii. Salt is good, but, if the salt has become saltless, with what will you season it?
    - iii. Have salt in yourselves, and so live at peace with each other.
  - b. "Everyone must be salted with fire."
    - i. According to Jewish law every sacrifice must be salted with salt before it was offered to God on the altar. (Lev. 2:13). "And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt."
    - ii. Before a Christian life becomes acceptable to God it must be treated with fire just as every sacrifice was treated with salt.
      - 1. Fire is connected with purification.
      - 2. Fire is connected with destruction (persecution)
    - iii. The life which is purified by discipline and has faced the danger of persecution because of its loyalty is the sacrifice which is precious to God.
  - c. "Salt is good, but if the salt has become saltless, what will you season it?"
    - i. Salt has two characteristic virtues.
      - 1. Lends flavor to things.
      - 2. The earliest of all preservatives.
        - a. To keep a thing from rotting.
        - b. Defend against corruption.
    - ii. The task of the Christian is to impart to society a new flavor and to be a preservative in a corrupt world.
  - d. "Have salt in yourselves and live at peace with each other."
    - i. Salt in the sense of purity.
    - ii. Have within yourselves the purifying influence of the Spirit of Christ.

- iii. Be purified from selfishness and self-seeking.
- iv. From bitterness and anger and grudge-bearing.
- v. Be cleansed from irritation and moodiness and self-centeredness.
- vi. Then and only then can you live in peace with your neighbors.

## Chapter 10

1. Divorce and remarriage.
  - a. Deut. 24:1. “Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable in her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house.”
    - i. School of Shammai—something objectionable was adultery and adultery alone.
    - ii. The School of Hillel—interpreted “objectionable” as widely as possible.
  - b. Because of second view, divorce became very liberal.
  - c. Jesus’ response was for the woman, because he was seeking to restore marriage to the position it ought to have been.
  - d. Jesus went back to the beginning to show that marriage was meant to be permanent and no Mosaic regulation dealing with a temporary situation could alter that.
    - i. Jesus insisted that the loose sexual morality of his day must be mended.
    - ii. Those who sought marriage only for pleasure must be reminded that marriage is also for responsibility; not only a means of gratifying physical passion but also represented a spiritual unity.
2. “Such is the Kingdom of heaven.”
  - a. Let the little children come to me—such is kingdom of God.
    - i. Jesus was recognizing the worth of a part of society that was considered as of little consequence.
    - ii. Shows the love and compassion that Jesus had for every sector of society.
  - b. Of such is the kingdom.
    - i. A child’s humility—ordinarily, a child is embarrassed by prominence and publicity.
      1. They have not yet learned to think in terms of place and pride and prestige.
      2. They have not yet learned to discover the importance of themselves.
    - ii. A child’s obedience.
      1. natural instinct is to obey.
      2. not yet learned the pride and false independence which separate us from one another and from God.
    - iii. A child’s trust.
      1. seen in the child’s acceptance of authority.
        - a. A time when children believe that their father and mother know everything and that they are always right.
        - b. Instinctively, children realize their own ignorance and their own helplessness and trust the ones who, as they think, know.
    - iv. The child has a short memory.
      1. Have not yet learned to bear grudges and nourish bitterness.

2. Forget so completely they do not even need to forgive.
3. With what difficulty is it that those who trust in money to enter the kingdom of God.
  - a. Material possessions tend to fix our hearts to this world.
  - b. If our main interest is in material possessions, it tends to make us think of everything in terms of price.
    - i. Think in terms of price—not value.
    - ii. Think in terms of what money can get, forgetting the value of things far beyond money; there are things money cannot buy.
  - c. The possession of material goods is two things.
    - i. It is an acid test of character.
      1. for every 100 who can stand adversity, only one can stand prosperity.
      2. prosperity can easily make people arrogant, proud, self-satisfied, worldly.
    - ii. It is a responsibility.
      1. Judged by two standards.
        - a. How we got our possessions
        - b. How we use them.
      2. The more we have the greater the responsibility that rests upon us.
  - d. Those who trust in themselves and their possessions can never be saved—only those who trust in the redeeming love of God.
4. Peter: “We have left all to follow you.”
  - a. None have left houses, lands, brother, sister, mother, father or children for my sake but that he received 100 fold in this present time.
  - b. But with persecutions.
5. Again, Jesus gives prophetic words concerning his death, burial, and resurrection.
6. Grant to us that in your glory, we may sit one on your right hand and one on your left.
  - a. You will drink my cup; you will experience what I am going through.
  - b. That place belongs to those for whom it has been prepared.
  - c. Son of man came not to be served, but to serve.

## Chapter 11

1. Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey.
  - a. Hosana
  - b. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David.
2. The fruitless fig tree.
3. Moneychangers and merchandisers driven out of the Temple.
  - a. Gross advantage taken of the common people.
  - b. “My house shall be called a house of prayer.”
4. Mark 11:22-26.
  - a. Have faith in God...whoever will say to this mountain...and does not doubt...has belief that you have received everything for which you pray and ask...it will be done for you.
  - b. Three rules of prayer.
    - i. Prayer of faith.
      1. Removing mountains refers to removing difficulties.

2. If we have real faith, prayer is a power which can solve any problem and make us able to deal with any difficulty.
  - a. We should be willing to take our problems and our difficulties to God.
  - b. If we do take our problems to God and are humble enough and brave enough to accept his guidance, there does come the power which can conquer the difficulties of thought and of action.
- ii. Prayer of expectation.
  1. Universal fact that anything tried in the spirit of confident expectation has a more than double chance of success.
  2. Prayer should never be a mere formality, nor a ritual without hope.
- iii. Prayer of charity.
  1. The prayers of bitter people cannot penetrate the wall of their own bitterness.
  2. If we are to speak with God there must be some bond between us and God.
  3. There can never be any intimacy between two people who have nothing in common.
  4. If the ruling principle of our hearts is bitterness, we have erected a barrier between ourselves and God.
  5. If our prayers are to be answered we must first ask God to cleanse our hearts from the bitter spirit and put into them the spirit of love.
5. By what authority do you do these things?

# LESSON FOUR

## Chapters 12-16

### Chapter 12

- 1) The seven brothers and the resurrection.
  - a. The only time in Mark's gospel that the Sadducees appear.
  - b. Demographics of Sadducees.
    1. Small party of wealthy aristocrats.
    2. Included most of the priests; the office of high priest was regularly held by a Sadducee.
  - ii. Differed from Pharisees.
    1. Accepted only the written Scriptures; attached more importance to the Pentateuch than to all the rest.
    2. Did not accept the mass of oral law and tradition, the rules and regulations so dear to the Pharisees.
    3. Did not believe in immortality, nor in spirits and angels.
  - c. The Sadducees sought to show that the teaching of the resurrection was ridiculous.
  - d. Jesus' response.
    - i. The *manner* of the resurrection.
      1. When a person rises, the old laws of physical life no longer exist.
      2. The risen are like angels; marrying and being married no longer exists.
    - ii. The *fact* of the resurrection.
      1. The Sadducees insisted on the teaching of the Pentateuch, that states in Exodus 3:6 that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
      2. God does not identify with the dead; therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive—meaning there is immortality or life beyond the grave.
  - e. The Sadducees made the mistake of creating heaven in the image of earth.
    - i. The Native Americans conceived of heaven as a happy hunting ground.
    - ii. The Vikings, who were by nature warriors, thought of a heaven where they would fight all day; at night the dead would be raised and the wounded made whole again, and they would spend the evening in banquets, drinking wine from cups made from the skulls of their conquered foes.
    - iii. The Muslims were desert people living in circumstances where luxury was unknown.
      1. They conceived of heaven as a place where life would be replete with every sensual and bodily pleasure.
    - iv. The Jews hated the sea; they envisioned heaven as a place where there was no more sea.
  - f. There has always been a tendency to create in thought a heaven to suit human desires.
- 2) Reducing the law to a short, general statement.
  - a. According to Sammai, Moses received 613 precepts on Mount Sinai.
  - b. David reduced the 613 to 11 in Psalm 15. O Lord, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy hill?
    - i. Those who walk blamelessly.
    - ii. Those who do right.

- iii. Those who speak truth from their hearts.
  - iv. Those who do not slander with their tongues.
  - v. Those who do no evil to their friends.
  - vi. Those who don't take up a reproach against their neighbors.
  - vii. Those in whose eyes the wicked are despised.
  - viii. Those who honor those who fear the Lord.
  - ix. Those who stand by their oath even to their hurt.
  - x. Those who do not lend money at interest.
  - xi. Those who do not take a bribe against the innocent.
- c. Isaiah reduced them to six (Isaiah 33:15).
- i. Those who walk righteously.
  - ii. Those who speak uprightly.
  - iii. Those who despise the gain of oppressions.
  - iv. Those who wave away a bribe instead of accepting it.
  - v. Those who stop their ears from hearing of bloodshed.
  - vi. Those who shut their eyes from looking on evil.
- d. Micah reduced the six to three (Micah 6:8). "What is good, and what does the Lord require of you?"
- i. To do justice.
  - ii. To love kindness.
  - iii. To walk humbly with your God.
- e. Isaiah reduces these to two (Isaiah 56:1).
- i. Maintain justice.
  - ii. Do what is right.
- f. Habakkuk reduced them all to one (Habakkuk 2:4). "The righteous live by their faith."
- g. Jesus stated the commandments as to love God and your neighbor.
- i. Could be narrowed to loving your neighbor (way to show that we love God, if we love as God loves).
  - ii. "Lord, this is better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."
  - iii. "You're not far from the Kingdom of God."
- 3) God's Anointed One is the Son of David?
- a. David called the anointed one "his lord."
  - b. Son of David was a common reference to the Messiah, who denotes a conquering king with military might.
- 4) Beware of the Pharisees who love prominence; greetings in the market place; desire the front seats in the synagogue; place of highest honor at meals; pray great length. These will receive a more abundant condemnation.
- a. Warns against the desire for prominence (see office in Church as privilege rather than responsibility).
  - b. Warns against the desire for deference.
    - i. Christianity ought to produce the desire to obliterate self rather than to exalt it.
    - ii. Should be servants.
  - c. Warns against the attempt to make a traffic of religion.
    - i. Using religious connections for self-gain and self-advancement.
    - ii. For those who get more out than they put in.
- 5) She has given all she has.

- a. Real giving must be sacrificial.
- b. Real giving has a certain recklessness in it.
- c. A strange and lovely thing that the person whom the New Testament and Jesus hand down to history as a pattern of generosity was a person who gave a gift of so little value in monetary terms.

## Chapter 13

- 1) Chapter 13 is one of the most Jewish chapters in the Bible.
  - a. From beginning to end, it is thinking in terms of Jewish history and Jewish ideas.
  - b. Jesus is using categories and pictures which were very familiar to the Jews of his day; may be strange to modern readers.
- 2) The Day of the Lord.
  - a. Jews never doubted they were the chosen of God; never doubted that one day they would occupy a special place in the world.
  - b. Believed that God in the end would directly intervene in history and win it for them.
  - c. The day of God's intervention was the Day of the Lord.
    - i. A time of terror and trouble when the world would be shaken to its foundations and judgment would come.
    - ii. Followed by a new world and the new age and the new glory.
    - iii. Based on bleak pessimism that the world was so utterly bad that only its complete destruction and the emergence of a new world would suffice.
    - iv. Did not look for reformation; looked for a re-creating of the entire scheme of things.
  - d. Isaiah 13:6; 9-10, 13. Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty! ...See, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the earth a desolation, and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light...Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the Lord of hosts on the day of his fierce anger.
  - e. Joel 2:1-2, 30. The day of the Lord is coming...a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness..I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.
  - f. The day of the Lord will be sudden, shattering, terrifying.
    - i. The world will reel with destruction.
    - ii. The very course of nature will be uprooted, and God, the judge, will come.
- 3) Between the Old and New Testaments, there was a time when the Jews knew no freedom; only natural that their hopes and dreams of the day of the Lord would become even more vivid.
  - a. During this time, much religious literature known as *Apocalypses* (an unveiling).
  - b. These books were dreams and visions of what would happen when the day of the Lord came and in the terrible time immediately before it.
  - c. Against this background, Jesus speaks in chapter 13 of Mark.
- 4) The essence of Chapter 13.

- a. Prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem.
- b. Warning of persecution to come.
- c. Warnings of the devastation which would come (fulfilled in 70 A.D.).

Josephus' account of 70 A.D.

Ninety-seven thousand taken captive; 1,100,000 perished by slow starvation and the sword. "then did the famine widen its progress and devoured the people by whole houses and families. The upper rooms were full of women and children dying of starvation. The lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged. The children and the young men wandered about the market places like shadows, all swelled with famine, and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them. As for burying them, those that were sick themselves were not able to do it. And those that were hearty and well were deterred by the great multitude of the dead, and the uncertainty when they would die themselves, for many died as they were burying others, and many went to their own coffins before the fatal hour. There was no lamentation made under these calamities...the famine confounded all natural passions...A deep silence and a kind of deadly night had seized upon the city."

Josephus further tells of those were driven to search the common sewers and old dunghills of cattle, and to eat the dung which they got there, and what they could not endure so much as to see, they now used for food."

Only those who took Jesus' advice were spared.

## Chapter 14

- 1) The Feast of the Passover and of Unleavened Bread was two days away.
- 2) The woman who was anointing Jesus with expensive perfume; anointing him for his burial (another reference that Jesus knew his time was near).
- 3) Judas' betrayal.
  - a. Possible betray Jesus for the money, however, when he really realized that Jesus was going to die, he went and hanged himself.
  - b. It is possible that Judas did not really want Jesus to die. He was a devout nationalist, and he had penned his hopes of a conquering King on Jesus. When it appeared that it was not happening, Judas may have felt like by turning him over to the authorities, that this would force Jesus' hand to defend himself. Perhaps this would be the occasion when Jesus would finally exert himself and demonstrate what the Jews perceived as being the purpose of the Messiah—to bring the Jews brought to prominence through conquest.
- 4) Preparation for the Passover feast.
  - a. There was the lamb, to remind them of how their houses had been protected by the blood in Egypt.
  - b. There was the *unleavened bread* to remind them of the bread they had eaten in haste when they escaped from slavery.
  - c. There was a *bowl of salt water* to remind them of the tears they had shed in Egypt and of the waters of the Red Sea.



- d. There was a collection of *bitter herbs*—horseradish, chicory, endive, lettuce, horehound—to remind them of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.
  - e. There was a paste called *charosheth*, a mixture of apples, dates, pomegranates and nuts, to remind them of the clay of which they had made bricks in Egypt.
  - f. There were four cups of wine. The cups contained a little more than half a pint of wine, but three parts of wine were mixed with two of water. The four cups, which were drunk at different stages of the meal, were to remind them of the four promises in Exodus 6:6-7.
    - i. I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them.
    - ii. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.
    - iii. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God.
    - iv. I will be your God.
- 5) Look for a man carrying an earthen pitcher of water.
- a. To carry a water pot was a woman's duty; a thing no man ever did.
  - b. Would be very easy to pick out in a crowd.
- 6) The Passover Celebration.
- a. The cup of the Kiddush (sanctification or separation).
    - i. Separated this meal from common meals.
    - ii. The head of the family took the cup and prayed over it, and then all drank of it.
  - b. The first handwashing.
    - i. Carried out only by the person who was to celebrate the feast.
    - ii. Three times he had to wash his hands in the prescribed way.
  - c. A piece of parsley or lettuce was then taken and dipped in the bowl of salt water and eaten.
    - i. Parsley stood for the hyssop with which the lintel had been smeared with blood.
    - ii. The salt stood for the tears of Egypt and the Red Sea.
  - d. The breaking of bread.
    - i. On the table were three circles of unleavened bread.
    - ii. The middle one was taken and broken.
    - iii. To remind the Jews of the bread of affliction in Egypt.
  - e. Next came the relating of the story of deliverance.
    - i. The youngest person had to ask what made this day different from all other days and why all this was being done.
    - ii. The head of the family had to tell the whole story of the history of Israel down to the great deliverance which the Passover commemorated.
  - f. Psalms 113 and 114 were sung.
  - g. The second cup was drunk. It was called *the cup of Haggadah*, which means the cup of explaining or proclaiming.
  - h. All those present now washed their hands in preparation for the meal.
    - i. A grace was said.
  - j. Some of the *bitter herbs* were placed between two pieces of unleavened bread, dipped in the *charosheth* and eaten.
    - i. This was called the sop.

- ii. It was the reminder of slavery and of the bricks that once they had been compelled to make.
  - k. Then followed the meal proper.
    - i. The whole lamb must be eaten.
    - ii. Anything left over had to be destroyed and not be used for any common meal
  - l. The hands were cleansed again.
  - m. The remainder of the unleavened bread was eaten.
  - n. There was a prayer of thanksgiving.
    - i. The third cup was drunk., called *the cup of thanksgiving*.
  - o. The second part of *the Hallel*—Psalms 115-118—was sung.
  - p. The fourth cup was drunk, and Psalm 136, known as the *great Hallel*, was sung.
  - q. Two short prayers were said.
- 7) Significance of breaking bread and drinking the cup.
- a. Just as this bread is broken, my body is broken for you.
  - b. Just as this cup of red wine is poured out, my blood is shed for you
- 8) They sang a hymn and departed.
- 9) The betrayal.
- 10) The arrest.
- a. The arresting mob came from the chief priests, the scribes and the elders.
  - b. These were the three sections of the Sanhedrin.
  - c. The Sanhedrin had certain police rights and duties in Jerusalem and had its own police force.
- 11) In the trial of Jesus, the Sanhedrin broke all its own laws.
- a. The council of 71 members sat in a semi-circle; were allowed to speak on behalf of the person on trial, but not against him.
  - b. The official meeting place of the Sanhedrin was the Hall of Hewn Stone within the Temple precincts, and decisions were not valid unless reached at a meeting in that place.
  - c. The court could not meet at night, nor could it meet at any of the great feasts.
  - d. When evidence was taken, witnesses were examined separately and their evidence had to agree in every detail.
  - e. Each individual of the court had to give his verdict separately, beginning from the youngest and going on to the eldest.
  - f. If the verdict was a verdict of death, a night must elapse before it was carried out, so that the court might have a chance to change its mind and its decision towards mercy.
  - g. When the high priest took the matter into his own hands, he asked the very kind of question that the law completely forbade. It was forbidden to ask questions by answering which the person on trial might incriminate himself.
    - i. He was bluntly asked if he was the Messiah.
    - ii. Without hesitation he answered that he was, which was a charge of blasphemy.
- 12) The Sanhedrin did not have the power to impose the death penalty.
- a. Had to be imposed by Roman governor and carried out by Roman authorities.
  - b. The Jews had charged Jesus with blasphemy, but that was not a charge the Romans would have even considered.

- c. A false charge was brought against Jesus—charged with perverting the people, forbidding them to give tribute to Caesar and calling himself a king.
  - d. They had to bring a political charge or Pilate would not have listened.
  - e. They knew the charge was a lie, and so did Pilate.
    - i. “Are you King of the Jews?”
      - 1. The interpretation that my accusers are putting on that claim is not my interpretation.
      - 2. I am no political revolutionary.
      - 3. My kingdom is a kingdom of love.
- 13) Simon of Cyrene (in Africa) was called to carry the cross.
- a. Was there to celebrate the Passover.
  - b. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus.
    - i. The people for whom the gospel was written must have been meant to recognize him by this description.
    - ii. Mark’s gospel was first written for the Church at Rome.
    - iii. In Paul’s letter to the Romans (Romans 16:13), “Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother...a mother to me also”
    - iv. Rufus was so eminent a Christian that he was chosen in the Lord.
    - v. The mother of Rufus was so dear to Paul that he could call her his own mother.
  - c. Things must have changed for Simon at Golgotha.
  - d. Acts 13:1. the list of men of Antioch who sent Paul and Barnabas out on a mission to the Gentiles includes *Simeon who was called Niger*.
    - i. Simeon a form of Simon.
    - ii. Niger was the regular name for a man of dark skin who came from Africa, and Cyrene is in Africa.
  - e. Could it be that today we are Christians because one day a Passover pilgrim from Cyrene, to his bitter resentment at the time, was pressed by a nameless Roman officer to carry his cross for Jesus?
- 14) Jeers of the Jewish leaders at the cross.
- a. “Come down from the cross and we will believe you.
  - b. William Booth of the Salvation Army said, “It is because Jesus did not come down from the cross that we believe in him.”
- 15) Jesus’ last breath.
- a. “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani” “My God! My God! Why have you abandoned me?”
    - i. Jesus had experienced failure of friends, the hatred of foes, the malice of enemies.
    - ii. He had known the most searing pain that life could offer, but he had never known the consequence of sin.
    - iii. The consequence of sin is separation from God; the moment Jesus experienced the consequence of sin, he felt that God had forsaken him.
  - b. “He calls for Elijah”
  - c. When Jesus died, the veil of the Temple was rent in two from top to bottom.
    - i. The way to God was now wide open.
    - ii. Within the Holy of Holies dwelt the very essence of God. Now with the death of Jesus the curtain which hid God was torn and he could be seen face to face.

1. No longer do we have to guess who God is.
  2. Anyone who looked at Jesus could say, "That is what God is like. God loves me like that."
  - d. A centurion: "Truly this man was the Son of God."
  - e. "It is finished."
- 16) Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, and a man who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went to ask for the body of Jesus.
- a. Could well have been from Joseph that we have the information from the trial; the disciples weren't there.
  - b. No record that Joseph ever spoke of in defense of Jesus.
    - i. When he had seen Jesus alive, he had felt his attraction but had gone no further.
    - ii. When he saw Jesus die, his heart was broken in love.

## Chapter 16

- 1) Go and tell his disciples and *Peter*.
  - a. Must have cheered Peter's heart; he must have been tortured with the memory of his disloyalty.
  - b. Jesus thought not of the wrong Peter had done him but of the remorse he was undergoing.
  - c. Jesus was far more eager to comfort the penitent sinner than to punish the sin.
  - d. "The most precious thing about Jesus is the way in which he trusts us on the field of our defeat."
- 2) Because of the resurrection:
  - a. Jesus is not a figure in a book but a living presence.
  - b. Jesus is not a memory but a presence.
  - c. The Christian life is not a matter of *knowing about* Jesus, but of *knowing* Jesus. The greatest scholar in the world who knows everything about Jesus is less than the humblest Christian who knows him.
  - d. There is an endless quality about the Christ faith.
    - i. It should never stand still.
    - ii. Because our Lord is a living Lord there are new wonders and new truths waiting to be discovered all the time.
- 3) The Great Commission and the Church.
  - a. The Church has a preaching task.
  - b. The Church has a healing task.
  - c. The Church has a source of power.
  - d. The Church is never left alone to do its work.
    - i. Always Christ works with it and in it and through it.

The Lord of the Church is still in the Church and is still the Lord of power.