

LESSON TEXT: Mark 1:1-45

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Years ago a convention met in Indianapolis to discuss “How to Reach The Masses.” One day during that convention a young man stood on a box on a street corner and began to preach. A crowd gathered, mostly working men going home to their suppers. They were electrified by the sermon. They forgot that they were tired and hungry. The crowd became so dense that it had to move. The preacher announced that he would preach again at the Academy of Music. They followed him down the street and filled the main floor of the building, sitting with their dinner buckets, while he preached again with such power that they were moved to tears. But he had only a few minutes to preach because the convention on “How to Reach The Masses” was gathering in the same auditorium. While the convention was discussing how to reach the masses, Dwight L. Moody was **doing** it!

For the next 16 weeks we will be studying the Gospel of Mark. Mark shows us a Jesus constantly **doing** a ministry. Jesus, in Mark’s record, not only preaches, but he serves. The theme of Mark’s gospel might well be summarized by Jesus’ own statement: “For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

It will do your soul good to expose it to the gospel of Christ. You will not want to miss even one precious chapter. Meeting Jesus Christ, mind to mind, heart to heart, spirit to Spirit through the inspired pen of Mark can change your whole life. SO PLAN NOW TO BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL EVERY LORD’S DAY!

Think On This: “God, I pray Thee, light these idle sticks of my life, that I may burn for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life, but a full one, like You, Lord Jesus.”

—from the diary of Jim Elliot, martyred by the Auca Indians

QUESTIONS:

- Why did God send John the Baptist ahead of Jesus baptizing people unto repentance for remission of sins? Does this mean the Christian church began with John the Baptist? 1:1-4
- What does John the Baptist’s exaltation of Jesus say about John’s character? 1:5-8
- How did the Spirit “drive” Jesus into the wilderness? 1:12-13 Did the Holy Spirit become an accomplice in Jesus’ being tempted?
- What did Jesus mean, “The kingdom of God is *at hand*?” 1:14-15
- How could fishermen just up and leave their jobs the first time they met Jesus? 1:16-20
- How could an unclean spirit confess Jesus as the “Holy One of God”? 1:21-23 What did Jesus’ exorcism of the unclean spirit prove?
- What was Jesus’ objective in healing so many of various diseases in Capernaum? 1:32-34
- Why did he immediately leave Capernaum and the crowds seeking him if it was the crowds to whom he wanted to preach? 1:35-39
- Why did the leper say to Jesus, “If you will...”? 1:40-42 Was there ever any doubt that Jesus wanted lepers cleansed?
- Why would Jesus forbid a cleansed leper to tell his good news to any one? 1:43-45 Was the leper’s disobedience a sin?

When missionary Ray Dibble and his wife left Nigeria at the beginning of World War II, they had just finished translating the New Testament into the Igala language. There were only six typewritten copies of the New Testament and a handful of Christians when they left. Returning after the war Dibble found fifty congregations. Tribesmen had made at least one hundred copies of the New Testament by hand. Some pages were torn, so some tribesmen had committed whole gospels to memory that they might not be lost. The believers were persecuted by non-believers and called “The Word of God People.” They never gave up, and they deserved the title.
—from *1000 Windows*, by Robert C. Shannon, p. 74 (our emphasis)

LESSON TEXT: Mark 2:1-28

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Most of the North American Indians had no written alphabet before they met the white man. But their language was anything but primitive. The vocabulary of many Indian nations was as large as that of their French and English exploiters, and often far more eloquent. Compare the coldness of the English word “friend” with one of the Indian phrases, which means, “friend”—“one-who-carries-my-sorrows-on-his-back.”

In Mark’s gospel, chapter 2, we will see Jesus, the “Friend” of sinners. It is one of the grandest of all themes of the New Testament that Jesus calls us “friends” (John 15:12-17). If there is anything sinners (and that is all of us) need most in this life it is a Divine Friend. We need that more than food, breath, and family.

A friend, someone has said, is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one’s heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away. A true friend doesn’t sympathize with your weaknesses—he helps summon your strengths. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) ancient Greek philosopher, when asked, “What is a friend?” replied, “One soul inhabiting two bodies.”

That is what we shall find in Jesus Christ, if we let him be our Friend. An old Nigerian proverb says, “Hold a true friend with both hands.” You will want to be in Bible school for this lesson and let Jesus be your eternal Friend.

Think About This: “Friendship is one of the sweetest joys of life. Many might have failed beneath the bitterness of their trial had they not found a friend.”

—Charles Spurgeon (A.D. 1834-1892) great English preacher

QUESTIONS:

- What “word” would Jesus preach to this crowd-packed house? 2:2
The New Testament had not yet been written—would a friend “preach the word” to you?
- How did Jesus “see” the faith of the 4 friends of the paralytic? 2:5
- When the paralytic needed healing, why did Jesus forgive his sins? 2:5 What do you need most in your life? What if Jesus doesn’t heal you?
- Does healing a paralytic prove Jesus had power to forgive sins? 2:10-12 What about some who claim to “absolve” sins on earth today?
- How could the holy Son of God fellowship with “publicans and sinners” 2:15-16 May Christians be friends with sinners today? How friendly? Where? When?
- Doesn’t Jesus want righteous people in his kingdom? 2:17 Who wants to be a member of a kingdom of sinners? If you’re a Christian are you righteous or a sinner?
- What was Jesus’ point in the illustration, “And no one puts wine into old wineskins...” 2:18-22 Should we be “fasting” since the bridegroom is away?
- How could Jesus try to justify the actions of the apostles in their violation of the Sabbath? 2:23-28 Didn’t Jesus believe in keeping the Law of Moses?
- How could God allow, and Jesus legitimize, David’s violation of the Law of Moses? 2:25-26 Can we do with NT ordinances as David did with the OT?
- What is the truth taught in Jesus’ statement, “The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.”? 2:27-28 To what would this truth apply in the Christian life?

This statement, in Latin, *Cum dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum*, was written in a letter by Augustine (A.D. 354-430), ancient theologian and Christian bishop of Hippo (Africa). Translated it means, “With love for mankind and hatred of sins.” It is often “quoted” as “Love the sinner but hate the sin.”

LESSON TEXT: Mark 3:1-35

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Many years ago, when Egyptian troops first conquered Nubia, a whole regiment of Egyptians died of thirst in the Nubian desert. A **controversy** arose between the men of the regiment and their guide. The regiment had been ordered to severe limitations on their drinking water. They suffered from extreme thirst. Deceived by the appearance of a *mirage* that exactly resembled a beautiful lake, they insisted on being taken to its banks by their Arab guide. The guide argued in vain that the lake was unreal, and he vehemently refused to lose precious time by wandering from his course. Words led to blows, and he was killed by the soldiers, whose lives depended upon his guidance. At length the delusion vanished—the alleged lake had turned into burning sand. Raging thirst and horrible despair—a pathless desert and a murdered guide! Lost! Lost! All lost! Not a man ever left the desert—they were subsequently discovered, parched and withered corpses.

Jesus was constantly embroiled in **controversy**, as the Incarnate Son of God. He and his word has been, forever after, **controversial**. That is because He is the Way, the Truth and the Life! He is the Guide who **argues** that man's traditions, sophistries, and hypocrisies are *mirages*! He is the Guide who vehemently refuses to wander from His course! He is the Guide who was killed because self-deceived men would rather believe their delusions than the Guide of all Truth.

In our lesson on Mark, ch. 3, you will see **Jesus, The Controversialist**. Truth will **always** elicit **controversy** in a world eager to be deceived by the devil's *mirages*. BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL AND LEARN HOW TO SAVE THE LOST WITH THE TRUTH!

Think About This: There is right and there is wrong; there is truth and there is falsehood; and on one side or the other, everyone must inescapably get involved in the controversy!

—Paul T. Butler

QUESTIONS:

1. Did Jesus, knowing the traditions of the Pharisees, deliberately precipitate the controversy 3:1-4 Should Christians start arguments?
2. Why were the Pharisees silent? 3:4 Why didn't Jesus just let it go at that?
3. What aroused Jesus' anger? 3:5 Should Christians ever become angry? At what?
4. Why would anyone want to kill a person who had healed another? 3:6
5. If unclean spirits fell down before Jesus and confessed their belief that he was the Son of God, why couldn't they be saved? 3:11 (Rom. 10:9-10).
6. Can you name four qualifications for being appointed as one of the Twelve? 3:13-19
7. Why did they accuse Jesus of being possessed by demons? 3:22 (be sure to read the parallel account in Matt. 12:22-37).
8. Was Jesus possessed by demons? How do you know? 3:23-27
9. Why would Jesus bring up the "eternal sin" in connection with this controversy with the Pharisees about his being demon-possessed? 3:28-30
10. Why did Jesus make a controversial reply concerning his mother and brothers when they "called" for him? 3:31-35 (see also 3:20-21)

"There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak..." Eccl. 3:7

During the mid 1970's a new atmosphere of **bluntness** appeared in the United Nations. The United States was often under discourteous and unfair attacks. As a result, U.S. ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan made several **blunt** statements. When questioned by the press, he said that his **blunt** UN speeches may be a new American style at the world body, but that this was the way "other nations normally behave." His explanation: "It has been thought perhaps, and Americans hope, that if we didn't respond to attacks upon us, maybe they wouldn't be made; it may perhaps unnerve some people that we are doing this, because it's new. What we have said is....we will respond to untrue charges against us. We will, when attacked, defend the name of this democracy. *Everybody is blunt in there.*"

—*Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, p. 274

1.

LESSON TEXT: Mark 4:1-41

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Jesus came from heaven with the pure, precious truth. He came to an evil, disinterested world. How would he protect this priceless commodity from being stolen and misused, and, at the same time, make it available for purchase by those who want it?

Jesus picked up and polished to perfection an old “truth-container” left behind by the prophets— **THE PARABLE**. He hid his treasure in this—safely for all time; simply for all ages. He stirred God’s Word in it in such a way as to make it a surprise appropriate for shepherds and kings, something to love and cherish always. Today, after almost 2000 years, what he said is still sparkling, tempting, and sacred, because of the **way** he said it.

A **parable** is a story true to this house of earth, but with a window open to heaven. The **parable** is the *shell* Jesus gave his *seed* to protect it from overexposure and disinterest. He keeps his secret in parabolic code to hide it from those who merely wish to abuse it. At the same time, the good news in story-form excites honest seekers of the truth to listen, learn and believe. Through **parables** the honest-hearted will absorb and act upon the truth almost before he realizes the truth has confronted him!

If ever you have needed encouragement to take the Word of God to your neighbors, our lesson in Mark, ch. 4, is for you! You will not want to miss Bible School for this Sunday! There are 3 fundamental elements in personal evangelism—you are responsible for only one; come learn what it is—then do it!

Think About This: “...the hopes and fears of the Christian faith focus not on the seed, for that is sure, nor on the sower, for he’s not so important, but on the uneven ground where the Good News falls.”

—David Redding

QUESTIONS:

1. Isn’t teaching adults by telling simple stories “talking down” to them? 4:1-2. Wouldn’t adults feel insulted? List some more sophisticated instructional methods available today.
2. Who are those “outside”? 4:11 Why can’t they understand these stories? Can Christians understand all the truth God has revealed?
3. Who is the main villain (and/or hero) of the first parable? 4:3-9; 4:11-20 Name three applications from this parable to personal evangelism.
4. What is “accepting” the word? 4:20
5. What does hearing have to do with giving and getting? 4:21-25
6. What is the main point of the parable of the seed and earth producing “of itself”? 4:26-29
7. Are there any applications for personal evangelism in this short parable? 4:26-29 What? Do they help you? How?
8. How is the kingdom of God like a grain of mustard seed? 4:30-32 Why did Jesus have to make such a comparison? Is this parable still needed?
9. Why were men who had seen Jesus work miracles afraid of the storm? 4:35-38
10. How could Jesus question the faith of men who had left all to follow him? 4:39-41

“The great teacher is rarely popular. He is interested in something more important than winning the affections of an unending anonymous procession of young people...I have long maintained that any college can raise its standards simply by firing annually whichever professor is voted “Best Liked” by the graduating class.” —Clifton Fadiman, from *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, p. 1426

“Robert Frost’s first assignment to a class of teachers was to read *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, by Mark Twain. When the class next assembled they were mystified; they didn’t understand what this story had to do with a course in education. Frost explained that the story was about teachers. ‘There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can’t move, and the kind that just give you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies.’”

ibid, p. 1427

www.soundbiblestudy.com @PTButler

LESSON TEXT: Mark 5:1-43

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

C. E. McCartney tells this incident: On February 26, 1844, occurred one of the major disasters in the history of our navy. *The Princeton*, the most powerful warship of that day, commanded by Capt. Stockton, was taking members of Congress and government officials down the Potomac. On board were the president of the United States, and the secretaries of state and navy. For the entertainment of the guests, the great gun on the *Princeton*, called the "Peacemaker," was fired. At the second discharge the gun burst, killing the secretary of state, the secretary of the navy, and a number of others. Just before the gun was fired, Senator Thomas Benton of Missouri was standing near it, when a friend laid a hand on his shoulder. Benton turned away to speak with him, when, much to his annoyance, the secretary of the navy, Gilmore, elbowed his way into his place. At that moment the gun was fired and Gilmore was killed. That singular providence had a great impression upon Benton. He was a man of bitter feuds and quarrels, and recently had had a fierce quarrel with Daniel Webster. But after his escape from death on the *Princeton*, Benton sought reconciliation with Webster. He said to him: "It seemed to me, Mr. Webster, as if that touch on my shoulder was the hand of the Almighty stretched down there, drawing me away from what otherwise would have been instantaneous death. That one circumstance has changed the whole current of my thought and life. I feel that I am a different man; and I want, in the first place, to be at peace with all those with whom I have been so sharply at variance."

So, how would **you** respond to providential deliverance? Have you? Some people respond like Senator Thomas Benton—others do not. Jesus deliberately ordered different responses to providential rescue. BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL—LEARN THE RIGHT RESPONSE!

Think About This: "Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some."

—Charles Dickens

QUESTIONS:

1. How would you compare this case of demon possession (5:1-20) with alleged modern demon possession?
2. How did Jesus exorcize the demon? Why didn't Jesus pray about it? 5:8
3. How many demons are a "legion"? 5:9
4. Was it ethical for Jesus to let the demons cohabit innocent swine? 5:11-13, and allow the swine to be drowned? What about ASPCA & PETA?
5. Why did the people of the area beg Jesus to depart from their neighborhood? 5:17
6. Why did Jesus send this man to tell about his miracle and forbid others? 5:19,43
7. How could healing power go forth from Jesus without his conscious permission for it to do so? 5:30 How could touching a garment heal?
8. Was Jarius' daughter dead or asleep? Was Jesus fooled or was he fooling the people? Or both? 5:35-39
9. Why did Jesus keep the crowd from seeing the miracle? 5:40
10. Why did Jesus take the child by the hand, speak to her, and tell them to feed her? 5:41-42 For whom was this done? How did the dead girl hear him?

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm" —William Cowper A.D. 1731-1800)

When David Livingstone was 12 years of age, he read an appeal for missionaries to go to China and he decided to go. His next decision was to be a medical missionary. With this in view he began to complete his medical studies. About the time he was ready to go the Opium War broke out and Englishmen could not go to China. Robert Moffat was in England at that time telling of the South African mission. Livingstone was interested in Moffat's story and said: "What is the use of waiting for the end of this abominable Opium War? I will go at once to Africa." —And the rest of the story is a history of the glorification of Christ by "spending and being spent" in humble service to those who were suffering in the deepest recesses of the "Dark Continent."

LESSON TEXT: Mark 6:1-56

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Charles Bradlaugh was the outstanding atheist in England. Down in one of the slums of London was a minister by the name of Hugh Price Hughes. All London was aware of the grace accomplished at his mission. Charles Bradlaugh challenged Mr. Hughes to debate with him the validity of the claims of Christianity. London was greatly interested. What would Mr. Hughes do? He immediately accepted the challenge and in doing so added one of his own. Hughes said, "I propose to you that we each bring some concrete evidence of the validity of our beliefs in the form of men and women who have been redeemed from the lives of sin and shame by the influence of our teaching. I will bring 100 such men and women, and I challenge you to do the same. If you cannot bring 100, Mr. Bradlaugh, to match my 100, I will be satisfied if you will bring 50 men and women who will stand and testify that they have been lifted up from lives of shame by the influence of your teachings." Mr. Hughes kept reducing the number of challenge until he finally said, "Nay, Mr. Bradlaugh, I challenge you to bring one, just one man or woman who will make such a testimony regarding the uplifting of your atheistic teachings." Again, London was stirred. What would Mr. Bradlaugh do? In answer, Charles Bradlaugh, with great discomfiture and chagrin, publicly withdrew his challenge for the debate.

In our lesson on the 6th chapter of Mark we will find a number of examples of **unbelief** and its consequences. Human beings cannot think clearly, they become tools of hatred and destruction for Satan, and they live an animal existence when they take atheism as their philosophy of life. All these characteristics are manifested in Mark 6:1-56. IS THERE A SOLUTION? YES! FIND IT IN BIBLE SCHOOL!

"They that deny...God destroy man's nobility; for certainly man is of kin to the beasts by his body; and, if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature."
—Francis Bacon, A.D. 1625, in *Essays*

QUESTIONS:

(Be sure to read John 6:1-71 in connection with this lesson)

1. Why did the people of Nazareth "take offense" at Jesus? 6:1-3
2. Why couldn't Jesus do a mighty work in Nazareth? 6:4-6
3. Why did Jesus enjoin the Twelve to show a "testimony against" those who would not receive them as preachers? 6:7-13 Are we to do the same today?
4. Why would Herod think Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead? 6:14-16
5. Why would John the Baptist's criticism of Herod's marriage be cause to have him killed? 6:17-29
6. Why did Jesus tell his disciples to feed the 5000 when he knew they did not have enough to do so? 6:30-38
7. What happened to those who participated in this great miracle (see John 6:22-71).
8. Why were the apostles "terrified" when they saw Jesus walking on the sea? 6:45-52
9. What do you suppose happened to the many sick who wanted to touch Jesus' garment but were unable to do so? 6:53-56

"It is the knowledge of necessary and eternal truths which distinguishes us from mere animals, and gives us Reason...raising us to knowledge of ourselves and of God. It is this in us which we call the rational soul or Mind."

—Gottfried Leibniz (A.D. 1646-1716, German philosopher)

"Life passes, riches fly away, popularity is fickle, the senses decay, the world changes, friends die. One alone is constant; One alone is true to us; One alone can be true; One alone can be all things to us; One alone can supply our needs; One alone can train us up to our full perfection; One alone can give a meaning to our complex and intricate nature; One alone can give us tune and harmony; One alone can form and possess us."

—John Henry Newman (A.D. 1802-1890)

LESSON TEXT: Mark 7:1-37

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

At 3:00 a.m. one cold winter morning a missionary candidate walked into an office for a scheduled interview with the examiner of a mission board. He waited until 8:00 a.m. when the examiner arrived. The examiner said, "Let us begin. First, please spell baker." "B-a-k-e-r," the young man spelled. "Very good. Now, let's see what you know about figures. How much is twice two?" "Four," replied the applicant. "Very good," the examiner said. "I'll recommend to the board tomorrow that you be appointed. You have passed the test.

At the board meeting the examiner spoke highly of the applicant and said, "He has all the qualifications of a missionary. Let me explain. First, I tested him on self-denial. I told him to be at my house at three in the morning. He left a warm bed and came out in the cold without a word of complaint. Second, I tried him out on punctuality. He appeared on time. Third, I examined him on patience. I made him wait five hours to see me, after telling him to come at three. Fourth, I tested his temper. He failed to show any sign of it; he didn't even question my delay. Fifth, I tried his humility. I asked him questions that a small child could answer, and he showed no offense. He meets the requirements and will make the missionary we need.

In Mark, chapter 7, we will learn about Jesus **testing** the people. He tests the **self-denial** of the Pharisees; he tests the **humility** of the Syro-Phoenician woman; he tests the **obedience** of the deaf and mute man and the multitudes.

BIBLE SCHOOL is the place to be on Sunday morning. There you can find out whether you pass the Lord's test or not! It is a good place for self-examination. BE THERE!

Think About This: "Meek endurance and meek obedience, the accepting of his (God's) dealings whatever complexion they are and however they may tear and desolate our hearts, without murmuring, without sulking, without rebellion or resistance, is the deepest conception of the meekness which Christ pronounced blessed."

----MacLaren

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would the disciples eat with "unwashed" hands; and why would Jesus defend it? 7:1-8
2. What was the tradition of the elders concerning eating with "unwashed" hands? 7:1-8
3. How could the Pharisees dishonor their parents by giving an offering to God? 7:9-13
4. When does tradition make void the word of God? Does it today? Which?
5. Why doesn't that which goes into a man from outside defile him? 7:14-23
6. How, or why, would a demon possess a "little daughter" (Greek, thugatrimon, diminutive noun)? 7:25
7. Why did Jesus call the mother a "dog"? 7:27
8. Why did Jesus take the deaf/mute aside from the multitude to heal him? 7:33
9. What did Jesus' putting his fingers in the man's ears have to do with healing? 7:33
10. Were they right in telling about the healing when Jesus told them not to tell? 7:36-37

"Difficulties are God's errands and trainers, and only through them can one come to the fullness of humanity."

—Henry Ward Beecher

"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles he has overcome trying to succeed."

—Booker T. Washington

LESSON TEXT: Mark 8:1-38

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* uses 20,000 words to tell about Jesus, and never hints that he did not exist. This is more words than the *Britannica* allows for Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Cicero, Julius Caesar, or Napoleon. H.G. Wells blasphemed Jesus, yet he felt compelled to discuss Jesus on ten pages in his *Outline of History* and never questioned that a man named Jesus did live.

Outside the Bible, there are several secular writers who make mention of the man Jesus Christ: Tacitus—in *Book XV, ch. 44*, writing in A.D. 114, tells us that the founder of the Christian religion, Jesus Christ, was put to death by Pontius Pilate in the reign of the Roman Emperor, Tiberius. Pliny the Younger wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan on the subject of Christ and Christians (*Book X, 96*). Josephus, the Jewish army general, Pharisee, and historian, in A.D. 90, has a short biographical note on Jesus who is called Christ in his *Antiquities, Book XVII.3.3*. The *Babylonian Talmud* makes mention of Jesus Christ.

History cannot be denied. Jesus Christ did live and die in the days of Pontius Pilate (ca. A.D. 30-33). BUT THE CRITICAL QUESTION, THE BURNING ISSUE, IS: **WHO WAS (OR IS) JESUS CHRIST?**

Jesus Christ himself put the question to his Twelve apostles, thus: “Who do men say that I am?” But even more personally, Jesus said, “Who do **YOU** say that I am?” **Jesus never asked people who they were—he always asked them to identify him!**

FOR YOU TO IDENTIFY JESUS CHRIST IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN “FINDING YOUR OWN IDENTITY!” Jesus never said, “Peter, who are you?” Jesus said, “Peter, who am I?” When Peter finally had the identity of Jesus Christ correct, Peter found out who he, himself, really was!

Think About This! *“In our search to know God...Jesus Christ should be the focus of our efforts, and our inspiration. The reality of that life and his resurrection...is the hope of mankind.”*

—Wernher Von Braun, rocket/space scientist

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus feed 4000 people so soon after he had fed 5000? 8:1-10
2. Why didn't Jesus give the Pharisees a sign when they asked for one? 8:11-13
3. What is the “leaven” of the Pharisees and Herod? Are we in danger of it? 8:14-21
4. Is the blind man, 8:22-26, one case where Jesus couldn't heal instantly?
5. Why would the Jewish people have so many ideas about the identity of Jesus? 8:27-28
6. Why did Jesus ask the apostles about what the populace thought of him? 8:29
7. What is so important about Peter being able to identify Jesus? Why didn't Jesus ask Peter, “How do I make you feel, Peter?” 8:29
8. Who do you think Jesus is? Why?
9. Why did Jesus immediately bring up the subject of his crucifixion? 8:31-33
10. Jesus said that it is imperative for us to lose our lives for his sake in order to save them—BUT HOW DO WE DO THAT? 8:34-38

“God is never at a loss to know what He's going to do in our situations. He knows perfectly well what is best for us. Our problem is, we don't know.”

—Charles Swindoll

“I believe that even our mistakes and shortcomings are turned to good account, and that it is no harder for God to deal with them than with our supposedly good deeds.”—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

LESSON TEXT: Mark 9:1-50

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Prince Otto von Bismark (A.D. 1815-1898), the “Iron Chancellor” of Prussia (later of all Germany), speaking with Andrew White, U.S. ambassador to Germany, said, “I do not doubt immortality for a moment. This life is too sad too incomplete, to satisfy our highest aspirations and desires. It is meant to be a struggle to ennoble us. Can the struggle be in vain? I think not. Final perfection—I believe in final perfection which God has in store for us.”

Dr. Wernher von Braun, well known for his part in the U.S. space program, says he has “essentially scientific” reasons for believing in life after death. He explained: “Science has found that nothing can disappear without a trace. Nature does not know extinction. All it knows is *transformation*. If God applies the fundamental principle to the most minute and insignificant parts of the universe, doesn’t it make sense to assume that He applies it to the masterpiece of His creation—the human soul? I think it does!”

These statements express the deepest longings of the human soul for hope in an ultimate *transformation* from mortality to immortality. The Christian gospel gives *certainty* to that hope. Jesus proved empirically and historically that mortality can and will be transformed into immortality. Our lesson in Mark 9 on the **transfiguration** (metamorphosis) of Jesus’ fleshly body into divine glory is visible evidence, seen by his apostles, that it shall be so. Shortly after his transfiguration Jesus was resurrected from the dead into immortal glory verifying its certainty. Paul declared such transformation will happen to all Christians (1 Cor. 15:35-57). LEARN ABOUT THE TRANSFORMATION INTO IMMORTALITY YOU WILL SHARE—BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL.

Think About This! “Adam, as soon as he saw Eve, knew what she was, not by discourse, but by divine revelation; so shall we in the life to come know one another...”
—Martin Luther

QUESTIONS:

1. What is a “transfiguration”? 9:2:3 (see Matt. 17:1-3; Lk. 9:28-32; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; 1 Cor. 15:35-57).
2. Why only Moses and Elijah, of all the OT people, appearing with Jesus? 9:4-5
3. Why were they discussing with Jesus his “exodus” 9:4-5 (see Lk. 9:31).
4. Does this event have any connection with the preceding teachings of Jesus at Caesarea Philippi? 9:9-13
5. What does the father of the epileptic child mean by, “I believe, help thou my unbelief”? 9:14-24
6. Why did Jesus repeat the prediction of his crucifixion—why were the disciples afraid to ask about it? 9:30-32
7. What precipitated Jesus’ taking a child into his arms? 9:33-34
8. How can a grown adult “turn” and become like a little child? 9:35-37 (see Matt. 18:1-6)
9. Does Jesus’ reply about the non-follower casting out demons mean we should consider all denominationalists as being for Christ? 9:38-41
10. Who is going to be “salted with fire”? 9:49 What is such “salting”?

“Let your faith in Christ be in the quiet confidence that He will every day and every moment keep you as the apple of His eye, keep you in perfect peace and in the sure experience of all the light and the strength you need.”
—Andrew Murray

“For whatever life holds for you and your family in the coming days, weave the un failing fabric of God’s Word through your heart and mind. It will hold strong, even if the rest of life unravels.”
—Gigi Graham Tchividjian

LESSON TEXT: Mark 10:1-52

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

When the kings of Siam (Thailand) wanted to ruin a man in their kingdom they would present him with a real live “white” elephant. The unfortunate man couldn’t get rid of the elephant for it was “sacred,” and it was a gift from the king—and then the expenses of keeping the useless thing soon put him in the bread line. Beware of the “white elephants” the world has to give!

Long ago, William Law warned that the world is *now* a greater enemy to the Christian than it was in apostolic times. That is because it has greater power over Christians by its favors, riches, honors, rewards, and apparent protection than it had by the fire and fury of ancient persecutors. It is a more dangerous enemy, by having lost its appearance of enmity. The outward profession of pseudo-Christianity makes it no longer considered as any enemy, and therefore the people are easily persuaded to resign themselves to tolerating a faux-Christianity.

In Mark, chapter 10, we learn how emphatic and intense Jesus was about worldliness. He told the apostles, “...**it shall not be so among you...**” (Mk. 10:43), reprimanding them for seeking superiority over one another. Jesus deals with worldliness in marriage, in money and in life’s mission. Worldliness is primarily an **attitude**. It is a **mind-set!** It is having the mind **set** on the flesh (on carnal, earthly, transitory things). It is putting all one’s “eggs” into the “basket” called “the-here-and-now.” It is trying to convince oneself that this life is the only life there is. It is the “leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians” It is **hedonism** (James 4:1-4).

All Christians are in a constant war (Rom. 7:13-25; Gal. 5:16-26; 1 Pet. 2:11) against worldly-mindedness—that included the apostles and includes you and me! YOU will need these sober warnings and encouragements which fall from the lips of Christ in our Bible School lesson. BE THERE!

Think About This! “Anything that cools my love for Christ is worldliness.”---John Wesley

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the “worldly” view of marriage? 10:2 May Christians have it?
2. Does Moses’ “bill of divorcement” mean God permits divorce? 10:3-12 When? Why?
3. What are we to do with those who sin against God’s ideal for marriage? 10:13-16 (see 1 Cor. 7).
4. Did Jesus really expect the rich young ruler to give all his possessions away? 10:17–22? What does he expect of you and me (see Luke 14:33)
5. What rewards may a Christian expect in this world? 10:30 Persecution?
6. What is Jesus teaching about rewards in the parable in Matt. 20:1-16?
7. How could the apostles be so crass as to ask about places of prominence when Jesus had just predicted his own crucifixion? 10:32-41
8. Did Jesus really mean that among Christians there are to be none exercising authority over the others? 10:32-45
9. Why did the crowd rebuke the blind beggar for wanting to have his sight restored? 10:46-48
10. So what does the healing of the blind beggar have to do with worldliness? 10:49-52

“Don’t live entirely for yourself; live for other people. Think what it means in concrete terms. Don’t get stuck inside your own ego, because it will become a prison in no time flat—and...don’t think that ‘self-realization’ will make you happy. That is the way you will end...in your own hell.”
—Barbara Ward

Seneca (ca. 4 B.C.–A.D. 65), Roman philosopher and poet wrote about earthquakes: “What can one believe quite safe if the world itself is shaken, and its most solid parts totter to their fall....and the earth lose its chief characteristic, stability.” His words have a spiritual application. All around us we see things totter and fall that seemed stable: organizations, institutions, people. We look for something dependable, stable, unchangeable. We find it by faith in the living God.

—1000 Windows, by Robert C. Shannon

LESSON TEXT: Mark 11:1-33

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

On the morning of Abraham Lincoln's death, a crowd of 50,000 people gathered before the Stock Exchange Building in New York City. Feelings ran high, natural enough in the circumstances, and there was danger of its finding expression in violence. Then a well-built man in an army officer's uniform stepped to the front of the balcony, and in a voice that rang like a trumpet call, cried: "Fellow citizens! Clouds and darkness are round about Him. His pavilion is dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies. Justice and judgment are the establishment of His throne. Mercy and truth go before His face. Fellow citizens! God reigns! And the government at Washington still lives!" Instantly the tumult was stilled, as the people grasped the import of those words. The speaker was Brig. General James A. Garfield, educator, Civil War veteran, preacher in the Christian Church, and 16 years later to become President of the United States. Tragically, he too, would be assassinated in office.

When it appeared to the God-fearing Jew that his whole world had gone to hell, Jesus Christ stepped forward declaring and demonstrating that God reigns and God's government through His Son would endure forever. That, essentially, is what Mark, chapter 11, is all about. Christ rules! He is Sovereign over all! Nothing can stand in the way of his kingdom! Those who cannot see this are self-deceived! It is written in history! God's authority was proved by Christ's powers. If you miss Bible School, you'll miss the peace of mind this lesson brings.

**Think About This! GOD WANTS THE SAME
PLACE IN OUR HEARTS THAT HE
HOLDS IN THE UNIVERSE—
DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY**

QUESTIONS:

1. How could Jesus be so bold as to "borrow" a man's donkey without even asking? 11:1-6
2. What was Jesus trying to signal to the Jews by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey colt? 11:7-10 (read all of Zechariah chs. 9-14 for background)
3. Was Jesus guilty of having a "temper fit" when he cursed the fruitless fig tree? Why vent his spleen on a helpless tree? 11:12-14
4. What is wrong with selling and buying in the building of the temple? 11:15-16 Is it wrong to sell things in the church building?
5. Why did Jesus think it necessary, right at that time, to "cleanse" the temple? 11:17-19
6. Can any believer really cast mountains into the sea simply by believing? 11:20-26
7. Was it proper for the Jewish rulers to ask Christ about his cleansing the temple? 11:27-28
8. Why did Jesus bring up the question of the baptism of John the Baptist? 11:29-30
9. Was it possible that the Jewish rulers did not know the origin of J.B.'s baptism? 11:31-33
10. Isn't it out of character for Jesus to refuse to answer the question about his authority?

This (God) is one of the names which we give to that eternal, infinite, and incomprehensible being, the creator of all things, who preserves and governs everything by his almighty power and wisdom, and who is the only object of our worship.

—Alexander Cruden (A.D. 1701-1770)
author of *Cruden's Concordance*

"Whenever I think of God I can only conceive of Him as a Being infinitely great and infinitely good. This last quality of the divine nature inspires me with such confidence and joy that I could have written even a *miserere* in *tempo allegro*."
—Franz Joseph Haydn (A.D. 1732-1809), Austrian composer

LESSON TEXT: Mark 12:1-44

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

In 1984 the simple rule of thumb went into effect for all-night parking in Boston: “On even-numbered dates park on the odd-numbered side of the street. On odd-numbered dates park on the even-numbered side of the street. If you park after midnight, the rule is reversed. Where parking is allowed on only one side, park on the side opposite the ‘No Parking Anytime’ sign.”

In a remarkable little parody on hell published some years ago, an arch-demon instructs subordinates on an ancient and effective piece of satanic strategy. “Insert yourself into the simple situations which call for plain and obvious duties,” urges this devil, “and complicate them, and complicate them again, until at last no one involved in them can make sense of the confusion.” The “simple rule of thumb” parking in Boston must have been devised by some demon! And, don’t we often wonder how many demons we may have in our federal government system devising the programs and paper-work with which we are faced every day?

That is what the Pharisees (and legalists ever since) did with the plain and obvious duties clearly delineated in God’s word. They complicated them and complicated them until they confused every one, even themselves. Mark, chapter 12, is a record of Jesus “**un-complicating**” and **clearing up** confusion about some of life’s most perplexing problems. You can’t afford to miss Bible School when this lesson is studied. You will be surprised to learn that practically all human confusion is a result of human beings wishing to be confused!

How About This! In small type at the bottom of a coffee-shop menu: “We reserve the right to serve refuse to anyone.”
—San Diego *Tribune*

“A minister wrote in his weekly column in the church newsletter that he was setting goals for the new year. One of his goals was to clean up his desk. Another of his goals was to find last year’s goals.”
1000 Windows, by Robert C. Shannon

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the “tenants” kill the Son if they knew he was the Son? To whom does the parable apply? 12:1-12
2. What belongs to “Caesar”? What belongs to God? 12:12-17; see Rom. Ch. 12-13; 1 Pet. 2:13-17. Did the Jews know what belonged to Caesar?
3. In light of Jesus’ teaching here, was the American Revolution justified? Did you know the Jewish nation was destroyed because it revolted against taxation?
4. Why did the Sadducees think they had proved there was no life after death by their hypothetical woman who had 7 husbands? 12:18-23
5. Jesus gave the Sadducees the only viable answer to the question of immortality—What is that answer? 12:24
6. There are three great fundamentals in the two commandments Jesus gave the lawyer 12:28-34 What are they?
7. In what way does the law & the prophets “depend” on these two commandments? see Matt. 22:40
8. If David, in Psa. 110:1, called the Messiah his “Lord,” how is the Messiah the son of David? 12:35-37 Is this still confusing to people? Why
9. Why did Jesus insert his warning in this particular context about the scribes? 12:38-40
10. Do you believe this widow gave everything she had between her and starvation? 12:41-44; Lk. 21:1-4 If God wanted you to do that, could you? Does he?

Actual lawyers questions, compiled by the *Massachusetts Bar Association Lawyers Journal*:

- “How many times have you committed suicide?”
- “How far apart were the cars when the collision occurred?”
- “The youngest son, the 20-year-old, how old is he again?”
- “Were you present when your picture was taken?”
- “Were you alone or by yourself?”
- “Was it you, or your younger brother, who was killed in the war?”
- “You were there until the time you left, is that true?”
- “These stairs that went down to the basement, did they go up also?”
- “So what were you doing when your baby was conceived?”
- “Did he kill you?”

LESSON TEXT: Mark 13:1-37

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The major portion of Mark, chapter 13, is about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. It is **not** about the second coming of Christ. One small portion (Mark. 13:31-37) is a reference by Jesus to his 2nd coming.

Did you know that ancient Jerusalem lies buried from 31 to 100 feet **below** the level of the present city?—that Jerusalem has been besieged 46 times?—it has been completely razed to the ground 17 times?

Did you know that Jerusalem was completely destroyed in A.D. 70 when Roman armies under Titus surrounded it, and after a 143-day siege, destroyed the city and its temple? It was said that the heat of the burning city melted the gold overlay of the temple which seeped into the unmortared joints of the building's massive stones. Roman soldiers, paid primarily by what they could plunder, took the temple apart stone by stone to get at the gold. And thus, Jesus' prophecy that "there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" was literally fulfilled.

Did you know that the USA has twice as many Jews as Israel?—that Israel today does not know how to tell who is a Jew and who is not—that immigration to Israel by Jews has decreased by more than half what it was in 1970—that most refugee Jews want to come to the USA and not Israel?

Israel as late as 1985 was a country of 3.8 million in a sea of 100 million enemies. She could count on few reliable friends in the rest of the world. Average individual income was about \$4200, but 70% was taken away by taxes. The total output of the country was about 13.5 billion, 1/3 going to defense spending. Her trade deficit approached 4 billion yearly. Israel's currency was devalued by more than 50% since 1973. Inflation was running at the rate of 45% per year. Foreign debts were soaring and had gone up to 7.8 billion, much of it held by the USA. And not much has changed in modern Israel in the last 15 years! NOT EXACTLY THE MILLENNIUM! BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL AND LEARN WHAT JESUS REALLY SAYS ABOUT THE JEWS!

Think About This! *The OT does not predict a return of the Jews to Palestine in the 21st century—it does predict the abrogation and dissolution of Judaism.* —PTB

QUESTIONS:

1. What motivated the disciples "to point out" to Jesus the buildings of the temple? 13:1
2. What is the "end" Jesus is saying "is not yet"? 13:7
3. Could all the signs predicted by Jesus in 13:5-13 have occurred before A.D. 70?
4. What is the "desolating sacrilege spoke of by the prophet Daniel?" 13:14
5. Could Mark 13:24-27 possibly refer to the fall of Jerusalem—or must it refer to the end of the world? (cf. Isa. 13:10; 145:12; Jer. 4:23-28; 15:9)
6. What is the lesson to be learned from the fig tree? 13:28-30
7. Why did Jesus pronounce such dreadful judgment upon Jerusalem? 13:1-31
8. Does the OT really predict the destruction and dissolution of Judaism? see Isa. 66:22-24; Jer. 3:15-16; Dan. 9:24-27.

"There is no such thing as a 'Biblical mandate' that the Israeli (Hebrew/Jewish) people should have the land of Palestine. Modern Israel occupies that territory today by an imperialistic, political British mandate in 1917 and a "partitioning" by the United Nations in 1947. Judaism is no more acceptable to God than Islam, Buddhism or any other form of idolatry. Isaiah 66:1-24 predicted Judaism would become idolatry after the Messiah came and Hebrews 6:1-8 declares Judaism to be an apostate system—a re-crucifixion of Christ!....In the book, *The Thirteenth Tribe*, Random House, 1976, Arthur Koestler a Jew himself, proposes that practically all East European "Jews" (Hungary, Poland, Germany, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, etc.) are not descended genetically from Israelites at all, but are Caucasians, descended from the Khazars of southern Russia." A presentation on TV's "History Channel" April 2000 confirms this. —Paul T. Butler in, *Symposium on The Middle East*, January 29, 1991, at Ozark Christian College

LESSON TEXT: Mark 14:1-72

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Virgil Hurley wrote in the *Christian Standard*, “The humanity of Jesus dreaded the cross...Jesus was a man, with a flesh and blood body, capable of fear, shock, sorrow, weariness and weakness...We tend to overlook this. We don’t want Him to have any doubts or fears about anything, or we think He might be less than deity. But there is no need to say, ‘Be perfect, like Christ,’ unless Christ and the same kind of body we have, susceptible to weaknesses and temptations; unless He lived perfectly *only* because He relied on God.”

Jesus agonized, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39), not once, not twice, but three times! He had already cringed at the cross a number of times (Lk. 12:50; Jn. 12:27). Now it is only a few hours away. It was not the physical agony but the prospect of being “made to be sin” (2 Cor. 5:21) when he had done no sin. Perfect justice demanded that he did not deserve it. It was a burden of sorrow that *almost* killed him in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:38). His sweat became like great clots (Gr. *thromboi*) of blood (Lk. 22:44). His closest human friends only intensified his agony by their selfishness and betrayal. Jesus had actually needed the help of the apostles, but in his most crucial hours those who had boasted they would fight to the death with him went to sleep!

Earlier in the week Mary had expressed her loving sympathy for his death by anointing him. Earlier, also, the Father had spoken to him audibly from heaven that he would glorify Jesus’ name (Jn. 12:27-28). But now, in Gethsemane, the decision is his alone!

And so, we see Jesus struggle with himself. He knew the right thing, he wanted to do the right thing, but he still had to fight **self** to do it! I can relate to that—can’t you? I always have to struggle to do the right thing. Sometimes I fail, miserably. But praise be to God, one Man, Very Man, **did not fail!** And by his grace, if you and I accept it through faith, and commit ourselves to his way and his word, we can be forgiven and transformed into his likeness. Bring a friend to Bible School this Sunday and let’s share this good news!

Think About This! Every person has a Gethsemane! At one time or another he must decide, all alone, whether he will do God’s will or his own—in spite of how he feels or what may seem unreasonable or unjust!

QUESTIONS:

1. How could Jesus say he would be crucified at Passover when the elders were definitely planning not to kill him at feast-time? 14:1-2
2. Did Jesus manifest a disregard for the poor by his statement in Mk. 14:7? What did he mean?
3. Lk. 22:3 and Jn. 13:2,27 say “Satan entered into Judas...” How? Mark 14:21 says Judas would better not to have been born—Why?
4. Why did Jesus institute the Lord’s Supper at the Passover Feast? 14:22-25
5. Roman Catholicism teaches that the bread and wine are actually the flesh and blood of Jesus—is that what Jesus intended? see Jn. 6:63
6. Why did the apostles flee and scatter that night when it is evident they were not afraid to die for Jesus? 14:26-31. 14:50
7. Jesus prayed for his “cup” to pass three times, using the same words; what does that teach us? 14:32-42
8. What glaring illegalities do you see in the trial of Jesus thus far? 14:53-65
9. When would the High Priest see Jesus seated with power and coming? 14:62

“The better and holier a man is, the more he feels his need of pardon, and how far he falls short of his own imperfect standard of excellence. But Jesus, with the same nature as ours and tempted as we are, never yielded to temptation; never had cause for regretting any thought, word, or action; He never needed pardon, or conversion, or reform; He never fell out of harmony with His heavenly Father. His whole life was one unbroken act of self-consecration to the glory of God and the eternal welfare of His fellow-men.”
—*History of the Christian Church*, Philip Schaff, Eerdmans, 1962, p. 107

“Fifteen million minutes of life on this earth, in the midst of a wicked and corrupt generation—every thought, every deed, every purpose, every work, privately and publicly, from the time He opened His baby eyes until He expired on the cross, were all approved of God. Never once did our Lord have to confess any sin, for He had no sin.”
—*Have You Considered Him*, Wilbur Smith, IVP, 1970, p.8,9

LESSON TEXT: Mark 15:1-47

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The 10th verse of Psalm 96, according to some ancient Christian scholars, has been corrupted. Jerome, Augustine, Tertullian and others make this charge. Justin Martyr, A. D. 100-167, stated he believed that the Jews, out of hatred for Christ, tampered with the text because it prophesies the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom by means of his death as a criminal, cursed of God. Our modern versions read: "Say unto the peoples: the Lord reigns." In the version called *Italica Antigua*, which was in use during the first centuries of the Church, and also in the *Psalterio Romano*, the verse is rendered: "Say unto the peoples: the Lord reigneth *from the tree* (or, *a ligno*, as it is in Latin).

For the Psalmist to say that the Lord God Himself—the Almighty—was to establish his government in the hearts of men by being "hanged on a tree" was something so horrifying, so unthinkable and so repulsive—well it is better to edit that out of the text! Then Isaiah 53 must be edited out also—and Daniel 9:24-27—and Zechariah chs. 11,12,13—and Psalms 22—the entire OT! The chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews" (Jn. 19:21). The cross is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. The cross as a throne for God is acceptable only by faith, for reason and emotion both renounce it!

Being hanged on a tree was not foolishness to Jesus. It was the very purpose for his coming into the world, Jn. 12:27-36, and upon that throne he proposed to draw to himself all who accept it, in faith as their death to sin. He became the **curse of God** for us when he was hanged upon that "tree" (Deut. 21:13; Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21). Yes! If you want his death for your sins, you must accept your own death to self and sin on that very "tree" where Jesus died (Gal. 2:20; 6:14; 2 Cor. 5:14-15). "If anyone serves me, he must follow me..." (Jn. 12:26). Jesus gave *himself* up in death—there we must be also!

The cross of Christ is, in a very real sense, none other than the Throne of the Living God. It is the only kind of Throne becoming a suffering God of Love as he deals with proud spirits determined to have their own way. If King Jesus is to be your ruler, you cannot have your own way. He demands full surrender of self—and he led the way. His place was on the cross; your place is in Bible School and Worship—BE THERE!

QUESTIONS:

1. After sentencing Jesus to death, why did the Jews take him to Pilate? 15:1
2. Why didn't Jesus answer the accusations of the Jews before Pilate? 15:2-5
3. How would you characterize Pilate? Are there any "Pilates" in modern life? 15:6-22
4. Why did Jesus refuse to drink the wine mingled with gall? 15:23
5. To what extent did God "forsake" Jesus at the cross? 15:33-35
6. Why was the curtain (veil) of the temple torn in two at the death of Jesus? 15:38
7. Just how much did the centurion really affirm about Jesus' identity? 15:39
8. What is the point in the gospel record of detailing so much about the certainty of Jesus' death and burial? 15:40-47
9. How do you feel about worshiping and trusting your eternal destiny to a Savior who allowed himself to be humiliated and slain?

Legend says that when Jesus was a boy at Nazareth he met a Roman lad named Fidus, who confided his desire, "I'm looking for Joseph the carpenter. From him I want to learn the arts of his craft." Jesus led Fidus to Joseph. As Fidus watched and learned from Joseph, Jesus told him of a great King who would one day be raised upon a throne so high that all the world would see. Fidus exclaimed: "Would that I might build the exalted throne of the great King!?" "Fidus," said Jesus, "you will be the one to build the throne of the great King from which he shall rule the nations—I promise you."

Years passed. Fidus when home to Jaffa and practiced his trade with honor. He happened to return to Jerusalem on a day when the Jewish capitol was in an uproar. He could hear cries of: "Crucify him! He makes himself a king!" As he passed the gate of Pilate's judgment hall in the Tower of Antonia, a Roman soldier who knew the skill of Fidus greeted him: "You are especially welcome, Fidus. Three are to be crucified today, and only two crosses are prepared."

Fidus was assigned the task. He put all his skill into its making, and viewed his finished product with pride. Later he followed the crowd outside the city and up a hill. He heard a voice, a voice he could never forget. Looking closely he saw a face, a face he could never forget. Yes, it was the "boy of Nazareth," now a man, in agony upon the "throne" Fidus had made but praying for his executioners. The "eyes" of Fidus' heart were opened, and he believed Jesus was the great King he had been hoping to see!

33 ancient predictions were fulfilled in 24 hours in the trial, death and burial of Jesus Christ—by the law of probability the chance that this should happen is 1/100,000,000,000

LESSON TEXT: Mark 16:1-20

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Hugh Schonfield, in *The Passover Plot*, declares Jesus plotted to get himself crucified, to fulfill certain OT prophecies, hoping the Jews would make him Messiah. Allegedly, one of Jesus' secret disciples gave him drugs on the cross so he would appear to be dead. They then took him down and put him in Joseph's tomb until it they could secretly remove and resuscitate him. Jesus then regained consciousness, temporarily, and told his fellow-plotters to signal his other disciples that when he was "risen from the dead" he would meet them in Galilee and afterwards "enter into glory." Mary Magdalene found the tomb empty and saw this stranger who had drugged Jesus and helped bury him. Being mentally unbalanced, she thought it was Jesus. She told her story to the apostles, they told and retold it and embellished it until it became a message of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Rudolf Bultmann, theologian, says the reality of the resurrection for the church of the 1st century is not that Jesus Christ was risen in a bodily manner but that he really rose into the preaching of the church. By this he meant that the only resurrection that occurred took place in the "faith" of the church and they preached that Jesus was risen as a result of their new found faith. In reality, what Bultmann is saying is that the resurrection of Jesus took place "in the hearts" of the Christians. To the man who accepts this theology the only place Jesus needs to live is within one's emotions. It makes no difference to him if Jesus ever came forth from the tomb, actually, bodily, or not! He believes without the facts and even in spite of the fact that Jesus did not arise bodily. We have so-called Christian songs which proclaim the same theology!

If Jesus never rose bodily from the dead, he is a liar and so are the writers of the NT. If we have no promise of eternal life, or if Jesus lives only "in our heart," we Christians are of all men most to be pitied—we are stupid fools. Faith demands that there must be a *reality* in *fact* behind it. *Fact* is necessary to *faith*. Faith is believing that which we trust is true. The Gospels are authentic documents, preserved through the centuries, written by eyewitnesses, who saw Jesus die, buried and appear alive over and over again for 40 days in the same body that died on the cross. He prayed with them, ate with them and talked with them. They saw and touched the nail prints in his hands and the spear wound in his side. **And they believed because of these facts!**

QUESTIONS:

1. How did the women know the right tomb? Is it important? What if they hadn't? 16:1-2
2. Why was there a "young man" sitting in the tomb? Who was he? 16:5
3. Did the women actually see an empty tomb? Why did they believe the "young man"? 16:6-8
4. Did anyone (Peter and other disciples) actually see Jesus after his crucifixion? How do you know? 1 Cor. 15:1-11; Matt. 28:1-20; Lk. 24:1-53; John 20:1—21:25.
5. Why were the women "afraid"? 16:8 Did they do as the "young man told them"?
6. Do you believe in the resurrection, or do you believe because of the resurrection? Is there a difference? What? Why?
7. Why is it foolish to refuse to believe in Christ unless his resurrection can be demonstrated historically? 1 Cor. 15:12-34
8. Is Mark 16:9-20 an authentic part of Mark's gospel record? What if it isn't?

"As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidence for the events of the resurrection. To me the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the High Court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling."

—Sir Edward Clarke, famous British jurist

John Singleton Copely, (1772-1863) better known as Lord Lyndhurst was recognized as one of the greatest legal minds in British history. He was the Solicitor-General of the British government in 1819, attorney-general of Great Britain in 1824, 3 times High Chancellor of England, and elected in 1846 High Steward of the University of Cambridge, thus holding in one lifetime the highest offices which a judge in Great Britain could ever have conferred upon him. When Chancellor Lyndhurst died, a document was found in his desk, among his private papers, giving an extended account of his own Christian faith, and in this precious, previously-unknown record, he wrote: "I know pretty well what evidence is; and I tell you, such evidence as that for the Resurrection has never broken down yet."