

Adult

# SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

January—March 1985



## How Christ Meets Human Needs

  
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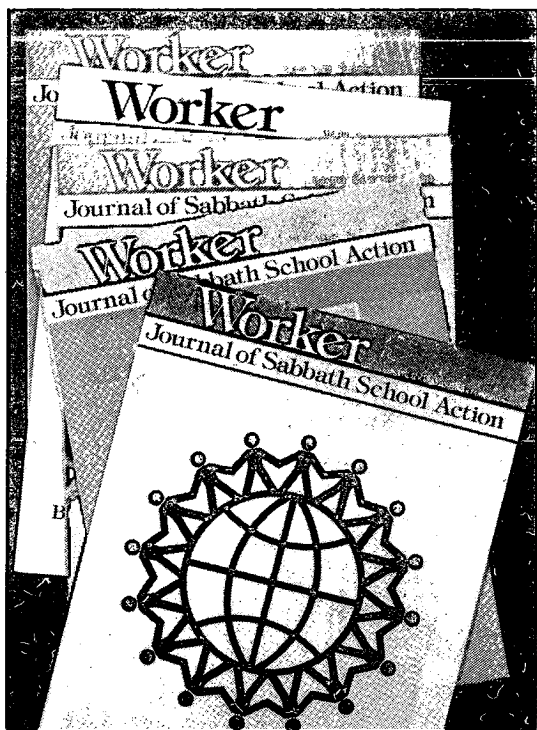
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# A FIVE-TON TRUCK CARLYSLE FROM

**T**he mission Land Rover careened across the road and flipped three times. Carlysle Walton lost consciousness with the first roll. When he awoke he knew at once that his legs were badly hurt.

"Dear God, I need your help," he prayed. Lie still and conserve your energy, came the unspoken reply. Trusting that help would come soon, he closed his eyes and waited.

"This one is dead too," a voice boomed from the blackness. Quickly Carlysle forced his eyes open.

"I'm all right," he murmured and noticed how labored his breathing had become. He wanted to ask who had died but could not form the words. Soon Bryan Stephens, the driver of the ill-fated vehicle, bent over the 20-year-old lad.

"Carlysle, Philip is dead," he choked.

The evening of June 20, 1982, had begun with special promise. Philip, a Guyana-born East Indian and a close friend of Carlysle had opened a new evangelistic campaign in the predominantly Hindu community of Enterprise, Guyana. Instead of the expected attendance of one hundred, more than six hundred people came out.

"The Lord has many honest souls," Philip exulted on the way home. And Carlysle thanked God for blessing his friend's faithful efforts.

But just then a speeding truck loomed out of the blackness. The driver of the Land Rover slowed a to a stop, as far off the road as was possible without rolling into the ditch that paralleled the roadway. But the rear of the truck had slammed it a the road out of control.

"Why this, Lord; just when Philip was making a breakthrough with the Hindus?" Carlysle wrestled with the question many times, determining with God's help not to let this accident hinder his own usefulness.

When Carlysle's injuries failed to respond to the available medical care at the mission hospital, he flew to his parents in the United States. But soon as his fever was brought under control and healing began, he returned to Guyana and his duties as assistant treasurer of the conference and spiritual leader to a congregation of 150 that he had helped raise.

Carlysle is now 23 and completed the last year of his college education at Columbia Union College. Peo-

## EVEN A FIVE-TON TRUCK COULDN'T STOP HIM FROM HIS MISSION; WHAT POSSIBLE



# COULDN'T KEEP HIS MISSION!

ask why he, a business major, would minor in religion instead of computer science. It's a matter of priorities," he says. "But job satisfaction above money." Carlysle's religion courses are prepping him to serve his Lord as a lay evangelist when he returns to his homeland. With his finely tuned sense of accountability he challenges you to become involved with missions like his friends in Guyana. This quarter **Inter-American Division** presents four needy projects, including three schools (in Surinam, Trinidad, and Colombia) and a medical clinic (for the Island of St. Lucia) to benefit from the Thirteenth Sabbath Social Projects Offering. He systematically setting aside 3 percent of personal income to the World Budget Offering, to hold up the hands of dedicated missionaries like Carlysle, not only in Guyana, but around the world.

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### KEEP CARLYSLE WOULD KEEP YOU?



# Editor's Foreword

God did not lower His standards to meet our needs, He lowered Himself. "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) in order to meet us where we are and to demonstrate the possibility of our being able to live as God wants us to live.

The lessons this quarter focus on how Christ met the needs of those to whom He ministered while He was on earth. Our study will provide us many insights into how He desires to meet our needs today.

This quarterly introduces the Bible Book curriculum that will be presented in a new study format. The new curriculum will take us through every book of the Bible in the next ten years and will concentrate on showing how each Bible book meets current human needs. The new format is designed to foster deeper Bible study. You may elect not to read all the passages listed or not to do all the exercises outlined in a lesson. But they are provided for the benefit of those who wish to do more in-depth study.

The old adage, "we are what we eat," suggests one reason why we need more in-depth Bible study. It applies not only to the physical dimension of life but also to the spiritual. If our spiritual diet is impoverished and we try to feed our souls on the husks of the commonplace and the uninspired, our minds and souls will become dwarfed and cheapened. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). All of us need regular daily Bible study as much as, if not more than, we need regular meals.

Another good reason for engaging in daily Bible study is suggested by Ellen White: "We need to search the Scriptures daily, that we may know the way of the Lord, and that we be not deceived by religious fallacies. The world is full of false theories and seductive spiritualistic ideas, which tend to destroy clear spiritual perception, and to lead away from truth and holiness. Especially at this time do we need to heed the warning, 'Let no man deceive you with vain words' (Eph. 5:6)."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 170.

The tragedy today is that, even among those Christians who without question receive the Bible "as it is in truth, the Word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13), so many neglect to follow the example of the Thessalonians and give the Word of God a chance to work effectually in them.

Undoubtedly, it will take a little while to get used to this new format. But we believe that these lessons, which are designed to lead into deeper Bible study, will help the Bible come alive for you in a way that it never has before. God's Word brings us words to live by and grow by if we will take the time to study them and apply what we learn from them in a practical way.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF MARK

# HOW CHRIST MEETS HUMAN NEEDS

Early Christian tradition holds that this shortest of the four Gospels is the work of John Mark who ministered to Paul and Barnabas. However, it sometimes is spoken of as the Gospel according to Peter, as Mark may be the "Marcus my son" of 1 Peter 5:13—a spiritual son of the leading apostle. Tradition indicates that Mark recorded Peter's sermons. This Gospel seems to have been written for Gentiles rather than Jews. Possibly it was for the special benefit of the church at Rome, which Mark knew. This action-filled Gospel tells more about what Jesus did in becoming our Saviour than about what He taught in presenting the words of eternal life. Not only is it a Gospel—one of four accounts of the good news revealed in the life of Jesus—but it represents the promised One whose life and actions confirmed the predictions of the prophets concerning Him. This quarter's lessons will focus particularly on how Jesus met and meets our human needs.

### THE GOSPEL OF MARK OUTLINED

I. Introducing Christ's Ministry	Mark 1:1-13
II. Ministry in Galilee	Mark 1:14 through 7:23
III. In Places of Retirement	Mark 7:24 through 9:50
IV. Ministry in Samaria and Peraea	Mark 10:1-52
V. The Road to Calvary	Mark 11:1 through 15:47
VI. The Resurrection and Ascension	Mark 16:1-20

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# THE GOSPEL

# OF THE HERE AND NOW

Gordon Hyde's thoughtful new book, *The Gospel of the Here and Now*, is an inspirational study of the book of Mark. From the familiar stories of the feeding of the five thousand and the raising of Jairus' daughter to the last days of Christ's life on earth, Dr. Hyde's study explores the special themes that Mark brings out in the life and teachings of Jesus.

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Review and Herald  
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# The Time Has Come

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 1:1-34.

**DAY**

**1**

**MEMORY TEXT:** "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ, the Son and Servant of God, brought the good news to sinners and did so with authority and power.

## OVERVIEW: Mark 1:1-34

1-11—Christ Introduced	12, 13—Christ Tempted	14-34—Christ Begins His Galilean Ministry
Ministry of John the Baptist (1-8) Baptism of Jesus (9-11)	Jesus in the wilderness	Beginning in Galilee (14, 15) Call of fishermen (16-20) Demon challenge in the synagogue (21-28) Home and public ministry (29-34)

**INTRODUCTION:** The Gospel according to Mark introduces us to a divine Saviour who is able to take sinners from the kingdoms of this world and make them citizens of the kingdom of God. In his Gospel, Mark establishes Christ's authority for proclaiming the kingdom by pointing to the power that He revealed in meeting the needs of mankind—one by one, or in groups. As the memory text implies, Mark adds the powerful authority of Old Testament prophecy fulfilled when Jesus began His ministry.

Passing by the quiet years of our Lord's childhood and youth, Mark plunges his readers into the dynamic action of John the Baptist at the Jordan. His mission and message lead to the introduction and baptism of Jesus. After the baptism the unction of the Holy Spirit led Christ into the wilderness of temptation where He met, in essence, every struggle of every human heart—and conquered, almost dying in the process.

With this initial triumph behind Him, even the fact of John's imprisonment did not deter Jesus from pushing ahead into His ministry. "The right time" had come (Mark. 1:15, TEV), and the Carpenter turned Teacher called four fishermen to follow Him.

But the defeated devil did not retire from the conflict for long. A desperately needy possessed man and the Sabbath day provided the focal point for a new encounter. Christ's victory in the synagogue shook the Galilean worshippers as much as the departing devil had shaken his victim.

Already more at home with His followers than with His unsympathetic brothers and sisters, the Lord healed Peter's mother-in-law, who then ministered to the little band. After sunset the crowds gathered, bringing their sick and possessed. Jesus healed the sick, released people from devil possession, and silenced the demons that wanted to identify the Healer too soon for the good of the Lord's work.

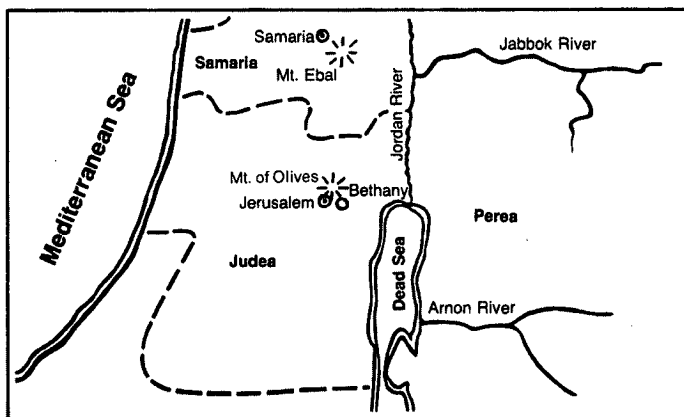
This one short lesson thrusts us into Christ's activity that did not cease until He rested briefly in Joseph's new tomb. From the grave He rose to His Father and ours. That is the compass of this quarter's lessons—Jesus in action. And all that He did, He did for us. Mark helps us understand how Jesus meets our needs today. In these lessons we meet One who can meet *our* every need.

**DAY 2** I. WILDERNESS VOICE (Mark 1:1-11). Before responding to the study questions be sure to read each Scripture portion carefully.

**1. The Ministry of John (verses 1-8).**

To introduce the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Mark reaches back briefly to the Old Testament prophets to authenticate the strange appearance of John the Baptist in the wilderness region of the Jordan.

**In verse 2 Mark quotes Malachi 3:1, and, in verse 3, he quotes what appears to be his basis for doing so. (Compare with Matthew 3:3.)**



**On the map note where the people came from to hear John. (See Mark 1:5.) What does the location of John's ministry and the phrase "in the river of Jordan" indicate about the mode of baptism?**

In what respect did the preaching of John parallel the preaching of Jesus as the good news of the kingdom was introduced? (Compare Mark 1:4, 5 with verse 15.)

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Consider how basic Jesus' and John's messages were and are to the needs of men and women such as ourselves.

**ILLUMINATION ON VERSES 6, 7:** "John's singular appearance carried the minds of his hearers back to the ancient seers. In his manner and dress he resembled the prophet Elijah. With the spirit and power of Elijah he denounced the national corruption, and rebuked the prevailing sins. His words were plain, pointed, and convincing. Many believed him to be one of the prophets risen from the dead. The whole nation was stirred. Multitudes flocked to the wilderness."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 104.

DAY  
3

### 2. The Baptism of Jesus (verses 9-11).

A favorite word that Mark uses, which perhaps reflects Peter's way of telling what happened to our Lord, is the word *straightway* (immediately). It appears about 40 times in this short Gospel.

What might Mark's use of a favorite word suggest concerning the way inspiration operates? Can inspired writers select their own words?

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How would you apply the above example of the human side of the inspirational process to this statement? "It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. . . . The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 21.

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In the light of the fact that the Spirit of God played such an important part at the baptism of Jesus, how might we give the Holy Spirit due recognition when we are baptized with water? What spiritual preparation for baptism is implied in Mark 1:5, 7, 9-11?

## II. TEMPTATION (Mark 1:12, 13). Read these verses before proceeding.

How many weeks might be well spent in study of the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness! But Mark gives only passing notice to Christ's temptation compared with the accounts written by Matthew and Luke. He omits many details of the temptation but emphasizes the points that follow:

1. The Spirit sent Jesus into the wilderness.
2. He was there forty days.
3. He was tempted by Satan.

4. Only wild beasts were there.
5. Angels ministered to His needs (at the end of the 40 days, Matt. 4:11).

Mark adds one fact not found in the other Gospel accounts—the presence of wild animals in this deserted place (verse 13).

What would we have to do to be as directly under the Holy Spirit's leading as was our Lord?

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**DAY 4** III. EARLY MINISTRY (Mark 1:14-34). Read these verses before proceeding.

**1. Beginning in Galilee (verses 14, 15).**

What enormous strength and comfort are packed into these two verses! In capsule form they represent the entire Gospel of Mark. After John was imprisoned Jesus went to Galilee to labor.

What explanations can you offer for the seeming abandonment of John by Jesus? (Compare Luke 7:17-35.)

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“The Saviour's words, ‘Blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me,’ were a gentle reproof to John. It was not lost upon him. Understanding more clearly now the nature of Christ's mission, he yielded himself to God for life or for death, as should best serve the interests of the cause he loved.

“After the messengers had departed, Jesus spoke to the people concerning John. The Saviour's heart went out in sympathy to the faithful witness now buried in Herod's dungeon. He would not leave the people to conclude that God had forsaken John, or that his faith had failed in the day of trial.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 218.

What do the words “the time is fulfilled” (Mark 1:15) suggest as you compare them with such scriptures as Matthew 3:2; Galatians 4:4; and Ephesians 1:10?

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What prophetic “time” fulfillment formed part of the basis for the authority that people sensed in the preaching and teaching of Jesus? (See Dan. 9:24-27; Luke 3:15; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 233.)

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**DAY 5** 2. The Call of the Fishermen (Mark 1:16-20).

If Peter was the prime source of Mark's record of the gospel events, we can imagine how often the writer may have heard the particular account in these verses. Do not all of us tend to go back to our first encounter with

the Lord when we want others to know of His preciousness to us? Perhaps this was Peter's "Damascus road" experience.

Interesting, is it not? A carpenter calling fishermen to follow Him—but not His vocation. They were not to give up fishing, but were to catch people instead of fish.

**In the light of Mark's brief presentation of the similarity in the messages of John the Baptist and Jesus (1:4, 5, 14, 15), what net would these new "fishermen" use to "catch" people?**

---

"The deeper lesson which the miracle [of the great catch of fish] conveyed for the disciples is a lesson for us also,—that He whose word could gather the fishes from the sea could also impress human hearts, and draw them by the cords of His love, so that His servants might become 'fishers of men.' "—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 249.

### **3. Demon Challenge in the Synagogue (verses 21-28).**

When our Lord vanquished the adversary during the wilderness temptations, it might be assumed that His defeated foe would cease his attacks. But with the challenge in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, the enemy gave further evidence that he determined to challenge Christ at every opportunity.

**Consider what it was about the teaching of Jesus that gave it "authority" (verse 22; compare Matt. 7:29). You might write several possibilities below to share at class time:**

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DAY  
**6**

Notice the emphasis that Mark gives in this chapter to Christ's power over demons. (See verses 23-27, 32, 34, 39.)

**What bearing would Christ's power over the demon at Capernaum have upon the authority of His preaching? Verses 27, 28.**

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### **4. Home and Public Ministry (verses 29-34).**

There is much to consider in the retirement of Jesus and His small and not-yet-permanent group of disciples to the home of Simon Peter and Andrew on the Sabbath afternoon. Perhaps this already was one of Christ's homes-away-from-home.

But one of the hostesses was not carrying out her usual acts of hospitality. Did Jesus miss her? Did He inquire about her?

When someone told Him of her condition He moved to her bedside,

took her by the hand, and raised her up. And "straightway" the fever that would normally be slow to subside, and would leave a person weakened, left her. Instead of taking the usual rest necessary for recovery she was up and ready to serve again.

**THINK IT THROUGH:** What sickness, fevers, tensions, and problems are there in your house that need the hand of Jesus?

The word of Christ's miracle spread from the synagogue that morning. "No wonder that at sunset, when the Sabbath was over, and it was lawful to do so, the multitude sought out the sick and maimed among their kindred and companions, and the miserable demoniacs; brought them to the house of Simon, where Jesus was staying; and entreated the compassion and the succour of the Prophet of Nazareth."—*The Pulpit Commentary*, vol. 16, p. 22. (1950 ed.)

Capernaum had never before witnessed a day like this. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 259, 260.) Jesus ministered far into the night until every sufferer who had come to Him for help had been relieved.

**DAY 7 FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Reread Mark 1:1-34.**

7

It is difficult to find any source that can compare with the beauty, balance, and spiritual application to be found in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 97-139, 244-261. You should read this entire section; but, for those who may not have this book available, here are two choice selections:

"John found in the wilderness his school and his sanctuary. Like Moses amid the mountains of Midian, he was shut in by God's presence, and surrounded by the evidences of His power. It was not his lot to dwell, as did Israel's great leader, amid the solemn majesty of the mountain solitudes; but before him were the heights of Moab, beyond Jordan, speaking of Him who had set fast the mountains, and girded them with strength. The gloomy and terrible aspect of nature in his wilderness home vividly pictured the condition of Israel. The fruitful vineyard of the Lord had become a desolate waste. But above the desert the heavens bent bright and beautiful. The clouds that gathered, dark with tempest, were arched by the rainbow of promise. So above Israel's degradation shone the promised glory of the Messiah's reign. The clouds of wrath were spanned by the rainbow of His covenant-mercy. . . .

"With awed yet exultant spirit he searched in the prophetic scrolls the revelations of the Messiah's coming,—the promised seed that should bruise the serpent's head; Shiloh, 'the peace giver,' who was to appear before a king should cease to reign on David's throne. Now the time had come. A Roman ruler sat in the palace upon Mount Zion. By the sure word of the Lord, already the Christ was born.

"Isaiah's rapt portrayals of the Messiah's glory were his study by day and by night,—the Branch from the root of Jesse; a King to reign in righteousness, judging 'with equity for the meek of the earth;' 'a covert from the tempest; . . . the shadow of a great rock in a weary land;' Israel no longer to be termed 'Forsaken,' nor her land 'Desolate,' but to be called of the Lord, 'My Delight,' and her land 'Beulah.' Isa. 11:4; 32:2; 62:4,

margin. The heart of the lonely exile was filled with the glorious vision.

“He looked upon the King in His beauty, and self was forgotten. He beheld the majesty of holiness, and felt himself to be inefficient and unworthy. He was ready to go forth as Heaven’s messenger, unawed by the human, because he had looked upon the Divine. He could stand erect and fearless in the presence of earthly monarchs, because he had bowed low before the King of kings.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 102, 103.

“Night was the only favorable time for fishing with nets in the clear waters of the lake. After toiling all night without success, it seemed hopeless to cast the net by day; but Jesus had given the command, and love for their Master moved the disciples to obey. Simon and his brother together let down the net. As they attempted to draw it in, so great was the quantity of fish enclosed that it began to break. They were obliged to summon James and John to their aid. When the catch was secured, both the boats were so heavily laden that they were in danger of sinking.

“But Peter was unmindful now of boats or lading. This miracle, above any other he had ever witnessed, was to him a manifestation of divine power. In Jesus he saw One who held all nature under His control. The presence of divinity revealed his own unholiness. Love for his Master, shame for his own unbelief, gratitude for the condescension of Christ, above all, the sense of his uncleanness in the presence of infinite purity, overwhelmed him. While his companions were securing the contents of the net, Peter fell at the Saviour’s feet, exclaiming, ‘Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 246.

**SUMMARY:** Mark’s initial verses have plunged us quickly and deeply into the heart of the ministry of Jesus. Jesus already has been revealed as the prime agent of the good news of salvation from sin and from its tragic effects upon the human family.

**APPLICATION:** We need to recognize the unity of the gospel message in several respects. As God’s means of salvation it has been one and the same since the first sin in Eden. It has been more fully developed as time has moved along, but the essence of the gospel remains—repentance and the good news that the sinless Son of God, the Son of man, lived our life, died our death, and rose as our triumph. By trusting dependence upon Him and turning away from our sins we become citizens of the kingdom of grace now and transformed candidates for the kingdom of glory when it comes.

This quarter’s study concentrates on how Jesus met human needs. One of Jesus’ first acts recorded in this Gospel was to recognize the human need for worthy goals. He challenged two disciples to raise their expectations—to become fishers of men rather than fish.

How was the focus of your life changed when Christ called you? Did it include an enlarged challenge?

# Controversy and Calling

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 1:35 to 3:19.

**DAY 1** **MEMORY TEXT:** "When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Belief in and practice of truth through Jesus Christ bring healing of body and soul—but they also bring controversy and persecution.

OVERVIEW: Mark 1:35 to 3:19	
<b>1:35-45—First Missionary Journey</b>	<b>2:1 to 3:19—Ministry in and Near Capernaum</b>
Preaching in Galilee (35-39) Healing a man with leprosy (40-45)	Healing the paralytic (2:1-12) Call of Levi Matthew (2:13-17) Questions about fasting (2:18-22) Food and the Sabbath (2:23-28) Healing on the Sabbath (3:1-6) Jesus and crowds (3:7-12) Twelve chosen men (3:13-19)

**INTRODUCTION:** Something of a pattern arises in Christ's ministry. Capernaum became one of the pivotal points of His ministry, probably because of its openness to something new. Located strategically on the northwest shore of Galilee, it came to be known as the Lord's own city. He visited it frequently.

But our Lord did not confine Himself to Capernaum. There were other cities and the general area of Galilee spreading from the Sea of Galilee to the Phoenician coast of the Great Sea (or Mediterranean). "So he traveled all over Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and driving out demons" (Mark 1:39, TEV). This was the first of the missionary journeys through Galilee.

Obviously Jesus continued to preach in Galilee the same good news that He first introduced when He opened His ministry there following the imprisonment of John the Baptist. (See Mark 1:14, 15.)

The action-packed Gospel according to Mark deals with issues as they arose over something Jesus or His disciples did. This lesson takes up the healing of a man with leprosy, a victim of what seems to be the most



dreaded disease of Bible times; the healing of a paralytic brought to Jesus by friends and lowered into His presence through a broken-up flat roof; the call of a hated tax collector to be an apostle; an issue over the differences between the fasting patterns of the followers of John and the followers of the Lord; the second Sabbath debate—this time over a few handfuls of grain plucked in harmony with Old Testament principles but not with the Pharisaic interpretation of the law; another Sabbath healing in the synagogue (compare Mark 1:21-28 with 3:1-6); problems of crowds too big to handle at evangelistic meetings; and the choosing of twelve apostles whom Mark mentions by name.

Surely there must be something for everyone in this series of real happenings that took place during the ministry of the Messiah. Surely Christ, the Sent of God, can meet the needs of “those who are sent” (which is the literal meaning of *apostle*) and likewise of each of those to whom we are sent. The underlying question is this: Are we really sent? and do we have the authority and power of the Sender resting upon us?

**DAY 2** I. FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Mark 1:35-45). Read these verses before proceeding.

**1. Preaching in Galilee (verses 35-39).**

Through His last-day messenger God has instructed His people about the benefit of regular and adequate sleep (see *Education*, p. 205), but our Lord seemed to lose a lot of it. At the door of Peter’s home the crowds kept the Healer of Israel working far into the night. And yet “very early the next morning, long before daylight” (verse 35, TEV), Jesus was up and gone from the house. Was He violating health principles? Where did He obtain the necessary strength and energy? (See *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 115; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 362, 363.)

**To what extent did the Son of God actually need to pray? What difference does it make as to where we pray? (See verse 35.)**

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It is deeply moving to think of the significance of Peter’s words to Jesus: “Everyone is looking for you” (verse 37, TEV). Would it not be wonderful if the same could be said of God’s people today?

**NOTE:** We must be careful to avoid anything like the cruel dilemma that Jewish tradition inflicted upon the sick. Sickness was thought to be God’s punishment for the sick person’s sin or for the sins of his or her ancestors. This grievous mistake was rebuked by Jesus and should lead us to be careful about our attitude toward those who are sick or have physical and mental health problems today.

**2. Healing a Man with Leprosy (verses 40-45).**

The dreaded disease called “leprosy” in the New Testament probably was used in a general sense to include diseases other than what medical science knows today as leprosy. But the dreadful scourge of leprosy drove its sufferers to find the Great Healer. In Mark 1:40-45 the Lord

instructed the man He healed to be sure to present himself as soon as possible to the priest for the Mosaic examination of one claiming to be healed of leprosy. (See verses 43, 44 and Lev. 14:1-4.) Only by doing so could he expect an impartial judgment. Because of their prejudice, the priests might refuse to certify the healing if they learned beforehand that Jesus had healed him.

**How do you account for some whom the Lord healed falling to comply with His orders for their protection and the greater effectiveness of His own mission? (See verse 45.)**

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**DAY**  
**3**

**II. MINISTRY IN AND NEAR CAPERNAUM (Mark 2:1 to 3:19). Read these verses before proceeding.**

**1. Healing the Paralytic (Mark 2:1-12).**

"The house" was Peter's home in Capernaum—the same place at which "all the city" had gathered when Jesus was last there. (See Mark 1:29, 33.) In order to savor something of the deep significance of this miracle, attempt to answer the following questions, then enlarge the scope of your answers by reading *The Desire of Ages*, pages 262-271, "Thou Canst Make Me Clean."

**1. See what you can find out about biblical houses in order to understand better how crowded the situation was when the paralytic arrived. Verses 1-4.**

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**2. Whose suggestion was it to break up someone else's roof? How could the Lord condone such an act? Verses 4, 5.**

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**3. What was behind Jesus' decision to give assurance of the forgiveness of sins to the paralytic? Verse 5.**

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**4. How did Jesus' power to read minds answer the objections of the teachers of the law? Verses 6-11.**

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**DAY**  
**4**

**2. The Call of Levi-Matthew (verses 13-17).**

The call of Levi-Matthew must have hit the people of Capernaum with terrific force. Try putting the scene into a modern setting: A public official has aroused widespread anger by corrupt use of his powers. Even worse, he is serving as an agent for a foreign power that is oppressing his

own people. What would be your reaction if that individual professed a genuine conversion?

**What attitude does the Lord expect us to show today toward those who have done us an injustice? (See Mark 2:13-17 and *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 272-280.)**

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### 3. Questions About Fasting (verses 18-22).

Some of the pious Jews in Christ's day fasted twice a week, believing that such an act earned special merit for them before God. The question brought to Jesus about fasting is one that could be applied to any area of life in which a person restrains some part of his normal life-style for religious reasons. There may have been a hidden question behind the audible one: Are You and Your disciples as pious, as holy, as dedicated, and as acceptable to God as those who fast?

#### CONSIDER:

- Why are John's disciples linked with the Pharisees in verse 18?
- What would be a proper motive for religious fasting?
- What tie-in did Jesus make to John's words about Him? (Compare verses 19 and 20 with John 3:29.)
- What is the significance of "old cloth" and "old bottles"?

"A legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion. Fasting or prayer that is actuated by a self-justifying spirit is an abomination in the sight of God. . . . Our own works can never purchase salvation."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 280.

#### NOTES:

DAY  
5

### 4. Food and the Sabbath (verses 25-28).

Picking someone else's heads of grain to satisfy immediate hunger was legal in Israel (Deut. 23:24, 25). But Christ's disciples violated man-made laws when they plucked the ripe grain on the Sabbath day and rubbed it in their hands in order to remove the husks. (See Luke 6:1.) Jesus was in

continual conflict with the Jewish leaders over the man-made laws and traditions with which they had surrounded Sabbath observance—not in conflict over which day, but over the why and how of the day.

**What do you understand to be the primary function and purpose of the Sabbath day? (Compare Matt. 12:5-7; Mark 2:27, 28; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 286.)**

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### 5. Healing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6).

In His travels around Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee Jesus made His way back to the synagogue, most likely on a different Sabbath than the one mentioned above. Then a man with a “withered hand” seemed to be in plain sight, and there was an expectation that Jesus would want to do something about it. That was all right in itself, perhaps, but would He do it on the Sabbath? That was the same old issue again. How persistent we humans are in wanting to prove right to be wrong!

**Why were the Pharisees unable to answer the questions Jesus asked about the law and doing good? Verse 4. (See also *The Desire of Ages*, p. 286.)**

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**What impressions of God’s love and concern can be found in the mixture of righteous indignation and pity felt by Jesus in this situation? Verse 5.**

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**How deeply opposed to what Jesus was doing and teaching were the Pharisees after some two years of His ministry, and what does this fact suggest as to opposition believers may expect from holding firmly to God’s truth today? Verse 6.**

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### DAY 6. Jesus and Crowds (verses 7-12).

“All these people came to Jesus because they had heard of the things he was doing” (Mark 3:8, TEV). Actions speak louder than words. People need little argument when there is evidence that can be measured by their senses. However, sometimes there are so many counterfeit “miracles” that the deeds need the verification of an unquestioning respect for and belief in the special revelation of the Word.

**THINK IT THROUGH: What can be done today to arrest the attention of the multitudes so that they will want to hear the gospel?**

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What a picture! Waves of sick people were pushing their way forward

to touch Him. The Lord moving into a boat that was handy as a means of ministering more effectively to the yearning crowds.

### 7. Twelve Chosen Men (verses 13-19).

Compile a list of the twelve disciples by comparing Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; and Acts 1:13. (If you have access to the *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, see p. 593.)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

It is hard to read this list of twelve names without developing a lump in the throat. The Lord knew so much more about the disciples than we do, and yet He chose them. How could One whose faith opened to Him all knowledge entrust the whole future of His kingdom to twelve such men? Consider that, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, these twelve men were later filled with His Spirit.

**Judas came for some wrong reasons. Should he not have been rejected? Suppose he had been. How much did Jesus do to try to save him and use him? What should we learn from this about our relationship to leaders today? (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 293-297.)**

**DAY 7 FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read *The Desire of Ages*, pages 281-297.

*He Educated the Uneducated.* "The work of Jesus was to reveal the character of the Father, and to unfold the truth which He Himself had spoken through prophets and apostles; but there was found no place for the truth in those wise and prudent men. Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, had to pass by the self-righteous Pharisees, and take His disciples from unlearned fishers and men of humble rank. These who had never been to the rabbis, who had never sat in the schools of the prophets, who had not been members of the Sanhedrin, whose hearts were not bound about with their own ideas,—these He took and educated for His own use. He could make them as new bottles for the new wine of His kingdom. These were the babes to whom the Father could reveal spiritual things; but the priests and rulers, the scribes and Pharisees, who claimed to be the depositaries of knowledge, could give no room for the principles of Christianity, afterward taught by the apostles of Christ. The chain of

truth, link after link, was given to those who realized their own ignorance, and were willing to learn of the great Teacher.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1088, 1089.

**SUMMARY:** With swift strokes Mark’s word-brush has painted for us a picture of the tireless ministry of our Lord for sinful men and women. We have seen the recurrent attacks of the evil one—through Jewish leaders and faltering colleagues—upon the innocent and loving Lamb of God. We have briefly reviewed the persistent conflict between the authority of long-held traditions and misinterpretations and the real truths portrayed in the Old Testament and taught by Jesus. We have seen the foundation laid by the Lord Himself for His church in the call of the apostles. We have studied how the Lord forgave sins and sinners—the essence of His everlasting gospel and the key to all divine healing. We have been astounded by the defensiveness of man-made Sabbath regulations by those who never saw its true meaning, and who were ready to kill its Founder for His nonobservance of what they considered to be true.

All this presents us with insights into how adequate our Saviour is in meeting our diverse needs.

**APPLICATION:** This week’s lesson pointed out that the Sabbath is not violated when we perform works of mercy. Too often we view Sabbath time as passive rather than as presenting us an opportunity to witness to the mercy and love of God. This afternoon seek someone who is not a Sabbath keeper whom you know to be in special need. Minister to that person’s need in a way that you believe will represent most effectively the loving ministry of Jesus.

**NOTES:**

# Problems and Parables

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Mark 3:20 to 4:34.**

**DAY**

**1**

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother" (Mark 3:35).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The real test of our relationship to Jesus Christ lies in the degree of surrender to God's will produced by our faith in Christ and His Word. Such surrender includes participation in sowing the gospel seed.

## OVERVIEW: Mark 3:20 to 4:34

<b>3:20-35—Problems in Capernaum</b>	<b>4:1-34—A Cluster of Parables</b>
Spirit of Beelzebub (20-30) Troubles in the family of Jesus (31-35)	The sower (1-9) The why of parables (10-12) The sower explained (13-20) Lamp placement (21-25) Growing seeds (26-29) The smallest seed (30-34)

**INTRODUCTION:** We already have seen the Lord almost overwhelmed by the demands of the throngs that came in search of Him daily in the open country around Capernaum.

Because of the throngs, a fisherman's rocking boat was needed to give the Lord security, a seat, and a pulpit. The great amount of attention being shown Jesus was perceived as a threat by the religious authorities of the day. They themselves had not enjoyed such a persistent and intense interest in their teaching of religious matters. The well-meaning crowds so desperately seeking help had no idea or intention of creating problems for the Lord. Each sensed his own need, but none calculated the cumulative demand upon the Lord's strength and time. When large segments of days went by without affording Him even with a moment to eat, His family felt that they must take action—particularly when someone voiced the superstitious idea that Jesus had gone mad.

Family people—even with the best of intentions—can be quite possessive and domineering. The children of Joseph were older than Jesus. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 86, 87.) Taking advantage of their position, they worked on Mary's natural concern, made her overanxious, and drew her along to "persuade" her Son to follow their advice.

The way Jesus responded to His family was not rude or disrespectful. But from childhood, He could not let family relationships interfere with His divine commission. (See Luke 2:49, 50.)

However, what can hurt more than to be patronized by critical members of our own family—particularly older members? Jesus understands because He experienced the same kind of problem.

When we become the Lord's, our mother, brothers, and sisters are the church (which we hope will include our family members).

Finally, Mark has to pause, as it were, in his account of Jesus' activities to record some of His teachings.

Parables come into focus here, and we shall want to see what they are and why they were given. Then we shall glean all we can from the parables about the sower, the lampstand, and the seeds—regular seeds in general, and mustard seeds in particular.

**DAY**  
**2**

**I. PROBLEMS IN CAPERNAUM (Mark 3:20-35). Read these verses before proceeding.**

**1. Spirit of God or of Beelzebub? (Verses 20-30).**

The parallel portion of Matthew's Gospel records the healing of a man possessed of an evil spirit, who had become both blind and dumb as a result of his possession. (See Matt. 12:22-32.) His healing gave evidence that Christ had power over evil spirits.

Matthew indicates that some began to ask if this was not "the Son of David"—the promised Messiah. But the Pharisees came up with an argument designed to crush any such expectations. (See Mark 3:22.) They claimed that He was in league with the spirits, denying that He was God.

**What do Jesus' words in verses 25 to 28 indicate about the incompatibility of the kingdoms of light and darkness?**

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When Abraham Lincoln delivered his famous "House Divided" speech that portrayed the cleavage of thought that would soon split his country into two warring camps, he drew upon these very words of our Lord. He said that a country cannot be half slave, half free. Neither can a human soul be split between loyalty to God and loyalty to Satan. It is all or nothing, one or the other.

**What application can be made from these words of Jesus to the multiple forces that today are wrecking marriages and breaking up families?**

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**THINK IT THROUGH:** If each partner to a marriage entered into the relationship as a covenant with God first and then with the partner, would the house not stand?

**How would you apply the illustration of the strong man and his belongings (verse 27) to the healing of the demoniac and the arguments put forward by the Pharisees?**

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Jesus moved directly from answering the Pharisees' accusations into the question of the sin that cannot be pardoned. It seems that this subject mostly concerns people who feel they have committed such a sin. If they had they would not be concerned about it. Sometimes the subject of the unpardonable sin is used to urge people to act in obedience to truths which they have heard.

But we need to stress—at least equally—the element of assurance in the Saviour's words: "I assure you that people can be forgiven all their sins and all the evil things they may say" (Mark 3:28, TEV). One who savors the peace and joy of such an assurance is not going to be prone to attribute the work of the Holy Spirit to the work of Satan and thus silence Heaven's ordained means of teaching truth, of convicting of sin, and of showing the need of repentance.

**Note how human pride—like angelic pride before it—plays a role in the slide toward the sin that cannot be forgiven:**

"The Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke this warning did not themselves believe the charge they brought against Him. There was not one of those dignitaries but had felt drawn toward the Saviour. . . . But after their rejection of Him it would be too humiliating to receive Him as the Messiah. . . . Still the convicting Spirit of God followed them, and they had to build up many barriers in order to withstand its power."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 322.

DAY  
3

## 2. Troubles in the Family of Jesus (verses 31-35).

From Mark's few words about the family of Jesus we can glean a great depth of comfort for the follower of the Lord who suffers the most painful type of reproach for Christ that there is—misunderstanding and misinterpretation of motive by relatives and friends.

In Jesus' response to the message—brought to Him in the midst of the day's work—that His mother and brothers wanted to see Him outside, we have a guide to one legitimate source of consolation in such an experience.

**How would you counter the suggestion that Christ was so tied to His mission that He was devoid of normal feelings for His family? (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 325, 326, for help with this question and those that follow.)**

**THINK IT THROUGH:** Who constitute the spiritual family of the follower of Jesus Christ?

**With what family did Jesus find the kind of love He would have cherished from His own family?**

**DAY 4** II. A CLUSTER OF PARABLES (Mark 4:1-34). Read these verses before proceeding.

**1. The Sower (verses 1-9).**

The setting for these parables already is a familiar one in Mark's Gospel. Jesus once again used a fisherman's boat as a floating pulpit. His hearers crowded the shoreline (verse 1). Mark then records that Jesus used parables in teaching the multitudes (verse 2).

It would be well to do a little preparatory study here in order to appreciate the frequent use of parables by our Lord.

The Greek word *parabolē* literally comes from a verb: "To put one thing beside another." A parable is a narrative, the primary purpose of which is to teach truth. Ordinarily it enlarges on one main truth. The meaning of a parable often is suggested by the time, place, and circumstances under which it is presented. Jesus' parables involved experiences of everyday life that were familiar to His audience. Often He used specific incidents that had occurred in recent times. Sometimes He used an incident that was taking place before His listeners' eyes.

**2. Reasons Why Jesus Taught in Parables (verses 10-12):**

1. That His hearers might learn of the unknown through the known.
2. To unite human beings with God and earth with heaven.
3. To teach His hearers how to discern God in His works.
4. To root His hearers in truth.
5. As an effective method of instruction.
6. To impart unwanted truth without arousing prejudice.
7. As one way of evading the spies who always were watching Him.
8. To create lasting impressions.
9. To appeal to a wide variety of hearers.
10. To demonstrate God and truth in every association of life.

Mark's record of the parable of the sower (verses 1-9) is followed by the Lord's interpretation of the parable (verses 13-20). In between we are given a clue as to the purpose of parables (verses 10-12).

The Lord was willing to give the candidates for the kingdom direct information regarding the nature of that kingdom. He also informed them plainly and directly what His expectations were for them. But those unable to receive His instruction would be taught in parables and most of them would not grasp the spiritual significance of what they heard.

As is true of God's attitude referred to in such "hardening of the heart" texts as Exodus 7:13 and Isaiah 63:17, Jesus was describing the condition of the unbelieving heart and mind rather than any ungracious purpose of His toward such listeners. If they were willing to believe they would understand and He would forgive, for that is His nature. (See Mark 4:12.)

**3. The Parable of the Sower Explained (Mark 4:13-20).**

Jesus gently rebuked His disciples when they appeared unable to comprehend His parable (verse 13). But before we become too critical of them we should remember how dominated the Jews had been by human

traditions that robbed the Scriptures of their simple, direct, and most obvious meaning. For Christians today, there is no real barrier to understanding the Lord's interpretation of the parable. However, it is possible, and in many cases all too true, that we may be anything but good soil hearers of the Word of God—recipients of the good seed.

**DAY** **PERSONAL APPLICATIONS:**

**5**

- How am I personally relating to the good seed of the gospel in my life today?
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- If the soil of my heart is not the right kind, how do I go about letting the Lord change the situation? (Consider Jer. 4:3.)
- 

**4. Lamp Placement (Mark 4:21-25).**

Some may be confused by the use in the King James Version of the word *candle*. Jesus was talking about the small clay oil lamps used by people of His day. The few words recorded may scarcely qualify this as a full-blown parable, but the brief word picture is an apt one. A person dependent on an oil lamp did not go to the trouble of filling it, arranging the wick properly, taking a taper to an open fire, lighting it, carrying it quickly and carefully to the lamp in order to light the wick, watching it to see that it would settle to a steady, nonsmoking flame, merely in order to put in under a bushel basket or under a bed.

The light of God's truth and love is not to be shut selfishly away from those about us but is to illuminate their souls by being shared. (See Matt. 10:27.) And those who share the light will receive greater light. Those who hold the blessing to themselves will lose much of what they have. (See 2 Cor. 9:6.)

Could verse 22 imply that before the end all questions of truth and error, light and darkness will be made plain? Think about the way in which the Sabbath issue will become universal before the end. (See Rev. 13:16-18; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 603-606.)

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**DAY** **5. Growing Seeds (Mark 4:26-29).**

**6**

Mark alone records these particular words, although the truth they teach parallels closely Christ's words to Nicodemus concerning the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:1-21). There is an element of divine mystery in the growth of a seed. The germ of life, transmitted through multiplied generations, is awakened in the seed as the needed combination of elements surrounds it. When the sower has done all in his power to prepare the environment for the seed to grow and become fruitful, he must leave the seed to God.

What implications are contained in Jesus' words concerning Christian growth, maturity, and character transformation?

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How is the seed given life? Who sustains it? Who is responsible for its fruitfulness? (Compare with John 15:1-5, which mentions the "fruit," "more fruit," and "much fruit" of the branches of the True Vine.)

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If the harvest is the end of the world, what assurance do we have that the seed of the good news will have achieved its full fruitage by the time the Lord returns? (See Mark 4:29.)

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#### 6. The Smallest Seed (verses 30-34).

A modern botanist might wish to refute the classification of the mustard as the "smallest." But who can doubt that it was considered such by Christ's hearers. Be that as it may, the size of the resulting plant was out of proportion to the expectation created by the size of the seed.

What are the implications of the parable of the mustard seed to the work of the gospel in our hearts and to the advancement of Christ's work on earth?

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**DAY 7** FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read Chapter 33, "Who Are My Brethren?" in *The Desire of Ages*.

*The Parable of the Sower.* "Throughout the parable of the sower, Christ represents the different results of the sowing as depending upon the soil. In every case the sower and the seed are the same. Thus He teaches that if the word of God fails of accomplishing its work in our hearts and lives, the reason is to be found in ourselves. But the result is not beyond our control. True, we cannot change ourselves; but the power of choice is ours, and it rests with us to determine what we will become. The wayside, the stony-ground, the thorny-ground hearers need not remain such. The Spirit of God is ever seeking to break the spell of infatuation that holds men absorbed in worldly things, and to awaken a desire for the imperishable treasure. It is by resisting the Spirit that men become inattentive to or neglectful of God's word. They are themselves responsible for the hardness of heart that prevents the good seed from taking root, and for the evil growths that check its development.

"The garden of the heart must be cultivated. The soil must be broken up by deep repentance for sin. Poisonous, Satanic plants must be uprooted. The soil once overgrown by thorns can be reclaimed only by diligent labor. So the evil tendencies of the natural heart can be overcome only by earnest effort in the name and strength of Jesus. The Lord bids us

by His prophet, 'Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.' 'Sow to yourselves in righteousness; reap in mercy.' Jer. 4:3; Hosea 10:12. This work He desires to accomplish for us, and He asks us to co-operate with Him."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 56.

*The Parable of the Mustard Seed.* "In this last generation the parable of the mustard seed is to reach a signal and triumphant fulfillment. The little seed will become a tree. The last message of warning and mercy is to go to 'every nation, and kindred, and tongue' (Rev. 14:6-14), 'to take out of them a people for His name' (Acts 15:14). And the earth shall be 'lightened with His glory.' Rev. 18:1."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 79.

**SUMMARY:** In this lesson Christ is revealed as the sympathizing Comforter and Helper available to all who are discouraged because of family problems today. He points all such to a closer family—those who love Him. In the sermon by the sea the Lord introduces parables—object lessons to immortalize His teaching concerning the kingdom. They bring us courage in the Lord. His kingdom is coming—soon.

**APPLICATION:** Your mission this week is to be a sower of the gospel seed. Select some of the fine tracts and booklets available from Adventist publishers that you think particularly appropriate for the people who live where you do. Then pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you to the right person or persons to receive what you have selected. Do not try to evaluate the reception. Just plant the seed and let the Holy Spirit be responsible for its development.

**NOTES:**

# Days of Trial, Tempest, and Triumph

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 4:35 to 5:43.

**DAY**

**1**

**MEMORY TEXT:** "He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:40).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Fear, one of the most powerful consequences of sin, whether brought on by storm, demons, sickness, or death, finds its conqueror in the Son of man.

## OVERVIEW: Mark 4:35 to 5:43

4:35-41— Power Over Tempests	5:1-20— Power Over Demons	5:25-34— Power Over Disease	5:21-23; 35-43— Power Over Death
Storm on Galilee	Demoniacs of Gadara	Sick 12 years	Ruler's dying daughter

**INTRODUCTION:** One human need that seems to be universal in every age, in every level of society, is the need for a miraculous antidote for fear. Nothing so tears at the heart, so breaks down the vital forces that sustain buoyant health and courageous action as does fear—nagging, persistent, almost omnipresent fear.

The sources and immediate causes of our fears may be almost as numerous as the people who are often helpless victims. Yet there also are great universal sources—persistent hunger, hidden malnutrition, terminal disease, dreaded holocaust, joblessness, poverty, bankruptcy, loneliness, rejection, all the phobias (very real to those who suffer them)—that bring about fear.

We think of Peter as a big, strong fisherman. Perhaps he was. But he lacked courage at times. In their hours of innermost communication did Peter convey to Mark how great those fears were? Did he explain to Mark how he had learned to overcome those fears by trust in the Man of Galilee?

Mark seems to enjoy telling us what Jesus did, and thus what He can do for us. The miracles that Mark has recorded in his Gospel up to this point have been those of healing—the demoniac in the synagogue, Peter's mother-in-law, those gathered at the door after sundown, casting out dev-

ils in Galilee, the leper, the paralytic lowered through the roof, the man with the withered hand, and the deliverance of the possessed from the power of Satan. Now the Gospel writer brings us face to face with the source of some of our wildest fears—the fear of water, wind, storm, and drowning.

However, no sooner did the Lord speak peace to the seething billows and deliver the disciples safely to shore than they found themselves terrorized once again by the enemy of God and man working through a man who lived in the tombs, a man possessed by too great a power for manacles and fetters to control. But, because the Master was in touch with Heaven, the fearful demons were forced to yield to His word.

Whole, and in his right mind, the man was once again possessed. This time by a fear of being separated from the Lord. But the Lord had a mission for him, and the fulfillment of his mission would bring mastery over his fear. "Go and tell" was and is the Master's simple formula for effective witnessing and mastery of self-distrustful fear. When the people of Decapolis—the Ten Towns—heard the message they were amazed.

Jesus and the disciples next crossed the now-quiet lake, only to be met by other human needs and fears. The fear of sickness, disease, and death knows no boundaries. It strikes rich and poor, powerful and helpless, alike.

Jesus was having His usual problem on His second missionary journey around Galilee—the throngs of people that crowded about Him every waking hour. But men in positions of authority have a way about them, and the request reached Him in person to heal a daughter who even then was dying. How that tugged at the heart that loved all children. So Jesus started off with Jairus.

But then the word came that the child was dead. Why trouble the Teacher any more? It was too late. Is it ever too late for the Lord? "Don't be afraid," He said. "Only believe!" And when He got there, He awakened the "sleeping" girl and gave her back to her grieving family.

"Don't be afraid. I am the answer to your fears. Only believe."

DAY  
2

#### I. POWER OVER TEMPESTS (Mark 4:35-41). Read these verses before proceeding.

Most of Jesus days were busy days. However, the records in the Gospels of His activity actually deal with only a few days of His ministry. But two days of busy ministry in the autumn of A.D. 29 are outlined in some detail in Mark 4 and 5. On His busy days Jesus scarcely paused for food or rest. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 333.) At the close of the first day mentioned in this section of Mark, Jesus was so tired that He determined to seek a place of rest and retirement at an uninhabited spot on the other side of the lake. He asked the disciples to take Him across in a fishing boat.

Wearily and hungry, the Master fell asleep. Almost immediately it was dark as night, and a typical Lake Galilee storm burst upon them from the mountain gorges. "The waves, lashed into fury by the howling winds, dashed fiercely over the disciples' boat, and threatened to engulf it.

Those hardy fishermen had spent their lives upon the lake, and had guided their craft safely through many a storm; but now their strength and skill availed nothing. They were helpless in the grasp of the tempest, and hope failed them as they saw that their boat was filling."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 334.

**What did Jesus indicate caused the disciples to be afraid? What example had He set them? What was the antidote to their fear? Mark 4:38-40.**

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**PERSONAL APPLICATION: Are there storms with which I am now battling that I need to turn over to the Lord asking Him to order, "Peace, be still"?**

"How often the disciples' experience is ours! When the tempests of temptation gather, and the fierce lightnings flash, and the waves sweep over us, we battle with the storm alone, forgetting that there is One who can help us. We trust to our own strength till our hope is lost, and we are ready to perish. Then we remember Jesus, and if we call upon Him to save us, we shall not cry in vain. Though He sorrowfully reproves our unbelief and self-confidence, He never fails to give us the help we need. Whether on the land or on the sea, if we have the Saviour in our hearts, there is no need of fear. Living faith in the Redeemer will smooth the sea of life, and will deliver us from danger in the way that He knows to be best."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 336.

**What new fear possessed those who had experienced the tempest? (See verse 41.)**

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**DAY 3 II. POWER OVER DEMONS (Mark 5:1-20). Read these verses before proceeding.**

This is a straightforward, simple account of how some persons behave when possessed of evil spirits and of Christ's power and authority over Satan and his agents.

**After the glorious lesson of faith conquering fear during the storm, how would you expect the disciples to behave when confronted with demon possession? (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 337.)**

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According to Matthew, who was an eyewitness, there actually were two demon-possessed men involved. (See Matt. 8:28.) We do not know why Mark mentions only one. Perhaps the one man's later experience was such that he was particularly noteworthy among early Christians.

Notice that once again the evil spirits identified the Lord and revealed what they knew their end would be. Is it not remarkable that humans



often dabble with demons but—unlike the fallen angels—refuse to acknowledge the Lord to be who He is? (See 2 Peter 2:4, 9; James 2:19.)

How might the destruction of the herd of swine—instigated by the legion of demons, and permitted by the Lord—have brought a blessing to the owners and the region? (See Mark 5:9-17; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 338-341.)

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**THINK IT THROUGH:** What comfort can you draw personally from the transformation which Christ brought to demon-possessed individuals?

**DAY** III. POWER OVER DISEASE (Mark 5:25-34). Read these verses before  
**4** proceeding.

Returning to the western shore, Jesus taught by the seaside for a time, then went to Levi-Matthew's house for a feast with some publicans. There Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, found Him and pleaded with Jesus to come and heal his dying daughter. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 342.) Immediately Jesus left the house with Jairus but found it difficult to press through the crowd that had gathered outside Matthew's house. In that crowd was a woman who had suffered from a disease that made her life a burden for twelve years. She had tried to reach Jesus at the seaside but could not get to Him because of the crowd. When He left Matthew's house she tried to reach Him again but almost had given up in despair when He turned in her direction.

To what lengths did the woman go to be healed, and what lesson of faith did Jesus draw from what she did? Verses 27-34.

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"The golden opportunity had come. She was in the presence of the Great Physician! But amid the confusion she could not speak to Him, nor catch more than a passing glimpse of His figure. Fearful of losing her one chance of relief, she pressed forward, saying to herself, 'If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.' As He was passing, she reached forward, and succeeded in barely touching the border of His garment. But in that moment she knew that she was healed. In that one touch was concentrated the faith of her life, and instantly her pain and feebleness gave place to the vigor of perfect health."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 343.

Greater than the blessing of her healing was the blessing of her witness to those present and to those down through the ages who have been inspired by her example. One lesson we can learn is that we are prone merely to touch the hem of Christ's garment and steal away satisfied when He has so much more that He wants to give us. We pray today for the outpouring of the latter rain, and we should; but we have not taken full advantage yet of the power of the Holy Spirit that already has been made available to us. Before we can expect more we must fully partake of that which already has been provided.

Mark mentions that the disciples wondered why Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" Who was the chief spokesman, and what had he failed to understand? Luke 8:45, 46.

"The Saviour could distinguish the touch of faith from the casual contact of the careless throng. Such trust should not be passed without comment. He would speak to the humble woman words of comfort that would be to her a wellspring of joy,—words that would be a blessing to His followers to the close of time."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 344.

**DAY 5** IV. POWER OVER DEATH (Mark 5:21-23, 35-43). Read these verses before proceeding.

There is much of divine love and understanding of human need in these two accounts of the healing of the woman in the crowd and the raising of Jairus' daughter. We should let our imaginations dwell on the setting until the event becomes real in our minds and hearts.

Perhaps you have watched at the bedside of a child who seemed to be near death. The long night hours drag out the agony of mingled hope and fear—prayers that too often lack the power of a long walk with the Lord.

Have you thought about the father, Jairus, in the crowd? Why did he not send his servants? He could entrust his burden to no other. He would go himself.

Imagine his frustration. Have you ever seen possible help ebb away against the crisis of passing time? Oh, what anguish, what fears! And the desperate cry of a father's heart, Please help, Lord, before my child dies!

When Jairus saw his servants coming, he knew the worst. They were not shouting and laughing with joy. Their word was, "Your daughter has died. Why bother the Teacher any longer?" (verse 35, TEV).

He who could sleep through lashing storms was not perturbed by what seemed to be bad news. "Don't be afraid, only believe," He urged. But the death was real. The mourning procedure was in full wail when the Lord arrived. "The child is not dead—she is only sleeping," He commented (Mark 5:39, TEV). That is how death appeared to Him. He was going to wake her in the same way that someday soon He will wake all our redeemed loved ones from their "sleep." Those present ridiculed Him. They *knew* the child was dead.

"Little girl," He said, "I tell you to get up!" (verse 41, TEV)—in the same way that her mother and father had done so often. How much we today need our loving Saviour to speak life to our spiritually dying children that we might gather them to us for eternity.

"Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone, and added, 'Give her something to eat' " (verse 42, TEV) as tender evidence of His thoughtful care.

**NOTES:**

DAY  
6

**FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read the parallel accounts in Matthew 8:23 to 9:26; Luke 8:22-56.

*The Hem of Christ's Garment.* "Possibly this woman had planned for some time to reach Jesus, but His absence on the Second Galilean Tour seems to have made this, for the time being, impossible. When she learned that Jesus had returned to Capernaum she hastened to the shore of the lake, where He was teaching and healing. . . . But she searched for Him in vain. Learning, eventually, that He was at the home of Matthew. . . , she made her way there in the hope of reaching Him, but again arrived too late (see DA 343). Now, with the slow progress Jesus was making in the direction of the home of Jairus, she finally overtook Him.

"But her malady had lowered the vital supply of blood in her body, and she was probably very weak physically in addition to being discouraged from the many vain attempts to secure healing at the hands of the physicians. Also, the nature of the disease itself, together with the ritual uncleanness involved, was embarrassing. It may be she felt hesitant to present her request orally to Jesus, particularly in the presence of so many strangers, lest He inquire as to the nature of her affliction, which he seems to have done sometimes (cf. ch. 10:51). . . .

"The touch that brought healing to the woman would be considered by the rabbis to have brought ritual uncleanness upon Christ. . . .

". . . Jesus was conscious of what had happened the moment the woman touched His garment. The record does not state whether Jesus knew in advance that this woman would touch Him. The will of the Father answered the unspoken plea of the woman *through* Him. It should be remembered that all Christ's miracles were 'wrought by the power of God through the ministration of the angels' (DA 143)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 607, 608.

DAY  
7

*The Touch of Faith.* "The wondering crowd that pressed close about Christ realized no accession of vital power. But when the suffering woman put forth her hand to touch Him, believing that she would be made whole, she felt the healing virtue. So in spiritual things. To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. He who waits for entire knowledge before he will exercise faith cannot receive blessing from God. It is not enough to believe *about* Christ; we must believe *in* Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.

"After healing the woman, Jesus desired her to acknowledge the blessing she had received. The gifts which the gospel offers are not to be secured by stealth or enjoyed in secret. So the Lord calls upon us for con-

fession of His goodness. 'Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.' Isa. 43:12.

"Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgements to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

**SUMMARY:** This lesson assures us that Jesus is able to meet all our needs, and particularly to cast out the demon of fear. In a special way we need to believe this assurance as the end of all things draws near. This lesson also emphasizes the full range of Christ's power and touches on His control over physical forces, devils, disease, and death.

**APPLICATION:** The power of Jesus answers human fears. People try to hide their fears with bravado, activity, and disclaimers. But to a trusted friend they will open their hearts and cry for help. Only then can help be given.

Do you know someone that seems to be weighed down by fear of some kind? This week spend some quiet time showing that person that you care. Let him or her know that you are susceptible to anxieties and how you turn to the Lord for help. Don't boast. Be tender. Uplift Jesus.

**NOTES:**

# Victory Out of Apparent Defeat

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 6:1-56.

**DAY**

**1**

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid" (Mark 6:50).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** What appeared to be the most desperate failures did not distress Jesus. Instead they became the settings for victory and triumph, although not always recognized as such by His contemporaries.

<b>OVERVIEW: Mark 6:1-56</b>
<b>Third Galilean Tour</b>
Second rejection at Nazareth (1-6) Mission of the Twelve (7-13) Martyrdom of John the Baptist (14-29) Feeding the 5000 (30-44) Jesus walks on water (45-56)

**INTRODUCTION:** In a style that we have learned to expect from Mark, he presents five action-packed events within the 56 verses of what is now designated as his sixth chapter.

One of the most distressing experiences of Jesus' ministry came when the people in His hometown rejected His Messiahship, His message, and His mission. As we apply what happened to Jesus in the light of how it enabled Him to meet human needs today there may be some encouragement here for those of us who have suffered rejection by those who should know us best. This experience also may contain a warning to us with regard to the way we treat people whom we have known during their developing years.

The sending out and the empowering of the twelve apostles to do the work they had seen Christ do is a special challenge to all who feel called to deliver God's appeal to a particular generation—in our case, the people who may live to see the second coming of Jesus to our world.

Perhaps, in part, because of the widening influence of the apostles, the Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded was shaken by the fear that the righteous forerunner of Jesus had returned from the dead and that Christ might be that resurrected man. (See Mark 6:16.) At this point Mark

gives us a flashback to the imprisonment of John and, in one of his longer accounts, traces the events leading to John's martyrdom. For a people facing the threat of the final persecution of the remnant and possible rejection and persecution by their former fellow believers, there is both challenge and consolation in John's experience. A supreme lesson in true humility pervades this tragic account.

Back to boats and the sea we go—to Peter's first love reflected in Mark. Boats, sea, and seashore provide the setting for one of the miraculous feedings of a multitude and for the Lord's walking on the water. With the aid of the parallel Gospel accounts we find that there were forces at work in these events that only are inferred in Mark's account. But again, there are vital lessons here for those upon whom the end of the world is coming. And running through all is a strong emphasis on the way that God looks at what seems failure to us. We also are given some insight into how He goes about turning failure to victory. Not that the victory is always seen to be such here and now, but eternity will show how these failures were turned into victories. And for the eternal God it is eternity *now*. He is the I AM.

**DAY** I. SECOND REJECTION AT NAZARETH (Mark 6:1-6). Read these  
**2** verses before proceeding.

Luke 4:16-30 describes Jesus' first rejection at Nazareth. That rejection also had taken place in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. When the Lord's words portrayed the people of Nazareth as less open to truth than certain among the heathen, and applied the prophecies of Isaiah to Himself as the Messiah, the infuriated townspeople would have thrown Him over a cliff. But the Lord's work was not yet done; therefore, angels conducted Him to safety. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 240.)

Toward the close of a year's ministry in and around Galilee, the Lord returned to His hometown ("his own country," verse 1) and again taught His old neighbors and His relatives in the synagogue on the Sabbath day.

**RESEARCH:** If you have access to a Bible dictionary, a Bible commentary, or a Bible encyclopedia, learn all that you can about a Jewish synagogue in Christ's day and the form of services that would have been held there on the Sabbath.

From what the Gospels tell us about this event and by reviewing Mark 3:31-35 and reading John 7:5, what picture do you get of the spiritual state of the brothers of Jesus at this point in His ministry? What change later took place? (See Acts 1:14.)

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A strange combination of attitudes was shown by the Nazarenes. They acknowledged the truth of Christ's words and the power of His miracles (verse 2), and yet their nationalism and pride kept them from accepting Jesus. As a consequence, He was not able to do as much in their behalf as He could have otherwise (verses 4-6). Does this not present us with a solemn warning in today's divisive climate?

Although grieved by the unbelief of His own townspeople, our Lord did not allow failure to deter Him. He opened a wider ministry.

DAY

3

**II. MISSION OF THE TWELVE (Mark 6:7-13). Read these verses before proceeding.**

In their attempt to harmonize the order of events presented in the Gospels some suggest that the sending of the Twelve and the third missionary journey through Galilee may have taken place before the Nazareth rejection. Such placement of events is not vital to our study. What we can learn from the sending of the Twelve is important.

It is Matthew who provides the greatest amount of information on this period of ministry. (See Matt. 9:36 to 11:1.) It would be profitable to study as much of his account as you can.

Mark's record first makes mention of the Lord's part in this missionary endeavor (verse 6) and then has the apostles going out "by two and two" (verse 7).

**What advantages do you see in the two-by-two method of evangelism? List some below in readiness for class discussion:**

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**What reasons can you see for the very light provisions that were to be carried on this mission (Mark 6:8, 9)?**

The disciples were not to expect to make a profit on their missionary work but were to expect those being benefited to support them.

**Why stay at only one hospitable home in a given place? Why not spread the blessing of apostolic presence around? (See verses 10, 11; Luke 10:7.)**

"On this first tour the disciples were to go only where Jesus had been before them, and had made friends. Their preparation for the journey was to be of the simplest kind. Nothing must be allowed to divert their minds from their great work. . . . They were not to enter into the synagogues and call the people together for public service; their efforts were to be put forth in house-to-house labor. They were not to waste time in needless salutations, or in going from house to house for entertainment."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 351.

**On what aspect of the gospel message were they to focus? Mark 6:12.**

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There is an interesting reference in this account (verse 13) to the use of anointing with oil for healing. The olive grew plentifully in the Promised Land, and the use of oil—internally and externally—for its curative value was widely practiced. But only here and in James 5:14 is its use linked with a special act of faith that often brought instant healing to the sufferer.

**DAY 4** **QUESTIONS FOR TODAY:** Do we as Seventh-day Adventists need to be reminded again of the almost inseparable elements of healing and teaching in Christ's earliest missions—both in His own and in those of His disciples? Does this biblical account apply in any way today to the kind of service that our institutions should offer to their patients and their families? What about our individual and personal witness to our neighbors and friends? Can we still combine healing of soul with healing of body?

Perhaps our answers to these questions will depend, in part, on the state of the healing arts and practices in the places where we live. There are serious legal problems that can arise today in some areas if an unqualified person is thought to be practicing medicine without a license. We may need to show our willingness to help in other ways. A good loaf of home-baked bread accompanied with a cheerful word and a prayer can still reach people for the Lord.

### III. MARTYRDOM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (Mark 6:14-29). Read these verses before proceeding.

Locating the place in the sequence of Gospel events when John actually was imprisoned and then lost his life is not easy for Bible students. We have to recognize that the Gospel accounts are sometimes difficult to harmonize on details. Does this shake our confidence in the inspiration of the various accounts? It should not. The portrayal each writer gives of Christ and His gospel fits into a particular organizing principle that the writer had in mind. The writers selected from their sources, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that which was most appropriate for their particular purpose.

There is a sordid history behind the names of Herod, Herodias, Philip, and Salome. The simple fact is that John condemned sin in high places and in low. In his age such action on the part of a common man—even though he was recognized as a prophet—could not go unchecked.

The real drama in this account is not that John was beheaded at the whim of a drunken ruler manipulated by a vengeful and bloodthirsty woman. (After all, this incident took place in the Roman Empire, in the capital of which people were entertained by gladiatorial fights to the death.) The real drama lies in the silence and nonintervention of Christ in behalf of His loyal and devoted forerunner, and in the selfless faith of John the Baptist in the surety of the kingdom he had the honor to announce.

"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Sense these words. Savor them. Meditate upon them. This is one of the most inspiring expressions of true human greatness. Of no man did Christ speak greater praise than of John. (See Luke 7:24-30, particularly verse 28.)



Read the following; then summarize why Jesus, who easily could have delivered John from Herod's dungeon, did not do so.

"Jesus did not interpose to deliver His servant. He knew that John would bear the test. Gladly would the Saviour have come to John, to brighten the dungeon gloom with His own presence. But He was not to place himself in the hands of enemies and imperil His own mission. Gladly would He have delivered His faithful servant. But for the sake of thousands who in after years must pass from prison to death, John was to drink the cup of martyrdom. As the followers of Jesus should languish in lonely cells, or perish by the sword, the rack, or the fagot, apparently forsaken by God and man, what a stay to their hearts would be the thought that John the Baptist, to whose faithfulness Christ Himself had borne witness, had passed through a similar experience!"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 224.

**Your Summary:**

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DAY  
5

IV. FEEDING THE 5000 (Mark 6:30-44). Read these verses before proceeding.

Scholars critical of the Bible have tried to make light of the Gospel accounts because of the seeming repetition of some events of healing or other miracles. A case in point is the feeding of the multitudes of people—5000 here, 4000 there. But that is no real basis for doubting the accuracy of these accounts. The contrasting details are clear and consistent.

Actually, the feeding of the 5000 (men) near Bethsaida (see Luke 9:10) is the one event between the baptism and the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem that is recorded in all four Gospels.

Jesus wanted to find a quiet spot at the northern end of the Lake of Galilee where He could be free to hear the enthusiastic reports of His returned missionaries. But this was not to be. Soon the searching multitudes caught His sympathy. He continued teaching and the day wore away swiftly. Then the predicament arose as to how the hungry multitude was to be fed (verses 35, 36).

**What was behind Jesus' instruction to the disciples in verse 37, "Give ye them to eat"?"**

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"Every command of God implies the power needed to carry out the command. From a human point of view it was absurd to think of finding bread, within walking distance and before nightfall, to satisfy the needs of such a throng."—*S.D.A Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 617.

Why should one who was about to work a miracle need the people organized before demonstrating His power?

“The orderly arrangement of so large a throng probably was necessary in order that all might witness the miracle, the better to appreciate its significance, and that all might be reached readily.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 618.

What lesson do you see in the statement in verse 43 that they picked up the surplus food?

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Why should not these grateful crowds have been allowed to crown Jesus king? (See Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:3; Luke 4:19, 21; John 6:15.)

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**DAY 6** V. JESUS WALKS ON WATER (Mark 6:45-56). Read these verses before proceeding.

When we consider the power of the Creator of the seas, there is nothing that should surprise us in what Jesus did in physically walking on water as though it were dry land. But, in spite of all else they had seen, His disciples were impressed tremendously when they saw Him do it (verse 51).

From the parallel Gospel accounts we learn that there was reason enough for Jesus to send His disciples on by boat to their appointed meeting place while He personally dismissed the grateful but rather demanding crowds.

This was not the time for His coronation as king of Israel. Prophecies of His renewed power over all nations would be fulfilled at the second, not the first, advent. Attempts to crown Him king now would tend to close up His work immediately.

What was the likely subject of Jesus' hillside prayer after He had said farewell to the crowds who had been fed? (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 379.)

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In the light of His calming of the earlier storm recorded in Mark 4:35-41, why might the Lord have permitted the storm mentioned in Mark 6:48 to develop?

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Love of honor and prestige had so blinded the minds of the disciples that unbelief was taking possession of their hearts. Why did Jesus not allow Himself to be established on the throne of Israel as they expected the Messiah to be? Could it be that the Pharisees were right about Jesus' being an impostor? “Their thoughts were stormy and unreasonable, and

the Lord gave them something else to afflict their souls and occupy their minds. God often does this when men create burdens and troubles for themselves.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 380.

DAY  
7

**FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read *The Desire of Ages*, pages 349-358.

**SUMMARY:** We have followed the acceptance and rejection of the gospel message and the mission of Christ through a variety of circumstances and situations. Yet in them all the portrayal of the loving and gracious character of God is consistently revealed. This was Christ’s purpose in coming to our world. He put failure in a new perspective—God’s perspective. God is not intimidated by the threats of human beings or demons.

When martyr’s blood is shed in triumph over ignorance, superstition, and wickedness—even in high places, God has not been defeated.

When He feeds a multitude from a small boy’s lunch, God is revealed.

Let us go forth like the Twelve to make Him known as He truly is.

**APPLICATION:** One of Jesus’ briefest commands was “Give ye them to eat” (Mark 6:37). This is a facet of discipleship we sometimes ignore. Why not this week take it as His literal command to you? Undoubtedly there is someone in your community that is in need of food. If you are not aware of anyone that is in such need, contact your Community Service Center or a public welfare agency and ask them if they know of anyone you might help in this way.

**NOTES:**

# Ministering Near and Far

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 7:1 to 8:26.

**DAY 1** **MEMORY TEXT:** "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Christ's proclamation of the gospel and His incessant activity of love had to be directed toward non-Jewish as well as Jewish hearers if His followers were to recognize that He was the Saviour of the world.

<b>OVERVIEW: Mark 7:1 to 8:26</b>		
<b>7:1-23—Human Laws Versus God's Laws</b>	<b>7:24 to 8:10—Around the Jewish Borders</b>	<b>8:11-26—The Demand for a Sign</b>
Human traditions (1-13) That which makes unclean (14-23)	To Phoenicia (7:24-30) The deaf-mute (7:31-37) Feeding 4000 (8:1-10)	Asking for a sign (11-13) The leaven of Herod and the Pharisees (14-21) A blind man healed (22-26)

**INTRODUCTION:** Spiritual pride and exclusiveness seem to be natural and universal traps for any group of human beings that enjoys a special assignment or call from God to serve Him at a particular time and in a specified way. So it was with the Jews. As the children of Abraham and the race called out of Egypt under Moses, they were the people of God's covenant—chosen, consecrated, and favored.

However, the dulling of spiritual perception by repeated disobedience to the revealed will of God through many generations led ultimately to the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. But release of a remnant—indeed, of all who were willing to return—had in it the germ of fulfilling God's original plan of a universal witness. But the post-exilic history of the Jews indicated that they had not learned what their true mission was. An intensified isolation characterized the chosen people. They turned in on themselves.

The wars of Jewish independence and the persecutions endured by the Jews during the period between the Old and New Testaments had led to

an intense nationalism that regarded all heathen as "dogs." This was the social heritage of those who would be left to carry on the work of Christ's kingdom after His return to heaven. They must know of God's love for all people and that He rejects all attempts to establish caste or to harbor bigotry and prejudice. This was the basic purpose in Christ's journey to Phoenicia, on the Mediterranean coast, and into the regions of heathenism.

In the Ten Towns (the Decapolis) dominated by Greek culture the Lord continued to reveal the international and universal intent of His mission by the healing of a deaf-mute. Even the 4000 fed miraculously were Gentiles rather than Jews, once again revealing the Lord's purpose for His disciples.

Next came a mysterious request from a group that had hounded the Saviour's footsteps ever since He began His ministry. The Pharisees came demanding to see a miracle, of their choosing, performed as a proof to them of the rightfulness of the Messianic claims of Jesus. But He did not operate on their terms or perform miracles to satisfy idle curiosity. The Lord tried to warn His disciples against the deceptive reasonings of such as the Pharisees or Herod and his supporters, but again they were slow to comprehend His words.

In a healing resembling that of the deaf-mute in Decapolis, the Lord restored sight to a blind man at Bethsaida, again in an area that was largely populated by Gentiles.

Thus we are brought near to the close of this interlude of Christ's ministry when He retired from the Jewish sections of the country and bestowed His benefits on other people than His own. In the process He left to His immediate disciples and to us a clear lesson on the unrestricted nature of God's love for mankind. This lesson is vital in a world church that lives in the midst of persistent tensions that divide people by race, nationality, sex, occupation, education, and financial standing. Thus this Gospel account again speaks to a persistent and modern human need.

DAY  
2

**I. HUMAN LAWS VERSUS GOD'S LAWS (Mark 7:1-23). Read these verses before proceeding.**

### **1. Human Traditions (verses 1-13).**

Matthew (15:1-20) joins Mark in recording this particular debate between the Pharisees and scribes and the Lord over the traditions of the Jews. From both accounts it is clear that the issue was brought up at that time because some of Christ's disciples (and possibly the Lord also) did not practice the ceremonial washings that Jewish tradition required before eating (Mark 7:3, 4).

The "tradition" was made up of the interpretations placed by the scribes or lawyers upon the civil and religious laws of the Jews. Much of it had been handed down from the time between the Jewish return from Babylon and the days of John the Baptist—a time within which Judaism felt that it was fighting for its very survival. This tradition carried the weight that the rulings of the highest judicial bodies do today. This gives the background for the bitter feelings of the scribes and Pharisees toward Christ when he failed to observe the traditional requirements.

What marked example did Jesus use to point out that Pharisaical rules were used to deny divine and moral principles (such as the fifth commandment)? (See verses 8-13.)

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**THINK IT THROUGH:** What examples can you think of in which we may be doing the same thing today because of selfishness?

**2. That Which Makes Unclean (verses 14-23).**

Because the scribes had brought charges against Christ's disciples on the matter of ceremonial cleanliness, the Lord used the occasion to instruct the people on the basis of cleanliness in the sight of God.

The importance of careful consideration of the setting of a given text or passage of Scripture is illustrated clearly here. Those who use this passage to negate teachings in the Old Testament regarding clean and unclean meats overlook the context. It is the oral traditions of the Jewish elders that are at issue here (see verse 3). "The commandments of men" have countered the commandments of God. We certainly should never accuse Jesus of doing the same thing.

**What is under discussion here? Is it kinds of food? Or is it the way the food is eaten?**

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The Greek word translated *meats* in verse 19 in the King James Version includes all food, not just flesh food. When understood in context this verse cannot be used properly to justify eating unclean meat.

**What shows that Christ is concerned with cleanliness of heart and soul rather than ceremonially with clean hands and utensils? (See verses 18-23.)**

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**What means has Heaven provided for removing the natural uncleanness of the human heart? (See Gal. 5:22, 23; John 3:5, 6, 20, 21; 2 Peter 1:4-8.)**

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**DAY** **II. AROUND THE JEWISH BORDERS (Mark 7:24 to 8:10). Read these verses before proceeding.**

**3**

**1. To Phoenicia (Mark 7:24-30).**

The journey to Syrophenicia was one of the largest that Jesus took during His ministry—certainly the farthest northward. We have no exact knowledge of where He traveled in this Gentile coastland or the location of the house in which He sought privacy (verse 24).

**On what basis could the Syrophenician woman have known that this stranger could deliver her devil-possessed daughter?**

“The people of this district were of the old Canaanite race. They were idolaters, and were despised and hated by the Jews. To this class belonged the woman who now came to Jesus. . . . There were many Jews living among the Phoenicians, and the tidings of Christ’s work had penetrated to this region. Some of the people had listened to His words and witnessed His wonderful works. This woman had heard of the prophet, who, it was reported, healed all manner of diseases. As she heard of His power, hope sprang up in her heart. Inspired by a mother’s love, she determined to present her daughter’s case to Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 399, 400.

**What could have been the purpose behind Christ’s seeming indifference to the plea of this needy soul? (See verses 27, 28.)**

It was a long way for Christ to travel for this one miracle. But He had two goals. One was to meet the woman’s need. The other was to educate His disciples concerning their duty to those deprived of a knowledge of Christ. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 402.)

DAY

4

## 2. The Deaf-mute (verses 31-37).

Apparently this afflicted man, never having heard of Christ, did not come of his own free will, but was brought by friends who were interested in helping him. Perhaps to reduce publicity in that Gentile area Jesus took the needy one aside from the throng and placed a finger in each ear, healing his deafness. Then He touched the man’s tongue, loosing it. Mark’s reference to Jesus’ sighing or groaning appears to signal His great concern over the many hearing ears that were closed to truth and the tongues that refused to proclaim the Saviour’s name. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 404.)

**Why did Jesus warn this healed man against telling those about him of Christ’s power? (See verses 36, 37.)**

“In this predominately Gentile region His chief reason for enjoining silence may have been His desire to avoid arousing the hope of the people in general that the ministry of which they had, by now, heard so much, was to be repeated here in a large way. The heathen, in general at least, were unprepared to understand and appreciate the true nature of His message.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 627.

## 3. Feeding 4000 (Mark 8:1-10).

Christ still was ministering to His “other sheep” when He performed the miracle of feeding the 4000 in the region to the north and east of the Sea of Galilee. The basic needs of heathen are no different from those of believers, and the Lord again showed that He draws no preferential barriers to His love.

In the light of the previous feeding of the 5000, why did the disciples question Jesus' ability to feed this crowd? (See verses 1-4.)

"Again the disciples revealed their unbelief. At Bethsaida they had seen how, with Christ's blessing, their little store availed for the feeding of the multitude; yet they did not now bring forward their all, trusting His power to multiply it for the hungry crowds. Moreover, those whom He had fed at Bethsaida were Jews; these were Gentiles and heathen. Jewish prejudice was still strong in the hearts of the disciples."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 405.

DAY

5

**III. THE DEMAND FOR A SIGN (Mark 8:11-26). Read these verses before proceeding.**

**1. Asking for a Sign (verses 11-13).**

It is almost unbelievable that the Pharisees (joined by the Sadducees, according to Matthew 16:1) would be asking the Lord for a sign to authenticate His claims to Messiahship and divinity. He had given such an array of signs already. But there probably was a fine point here. They may have been wanting such signs as those that were given by Samuel and Elijah (see 1 Sam. 12:17; 2 Kings 1:10)—Signs that were above the earth, as it were, and thus, perhaps, beyond the power of demons (another accusation about the source of Christ's miracles).

Mark notes that in responding Christ sighed deeply, demonstrating His deep disappointment over the unbelief of the Jewish leaders. So our Lord ever responds to human unbelief and willful spiritual blindness.

**2. The Leaven of Herod and the Pharisees (Mark 8:14-21).**

The confrontation with the Jewish teachers seemed to end abruptly, and Christ and His followers went back to the sea. They happened to take bread with them this time—although Mark has learned that they had just one loaf. And when the Lord warned them against the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod (see Matthew 16:12 for the parallel between Herod and the Sadducees), they assumed that He was referring to the lack of bread among them.

Both Matthew and Mark give us detailed accounts of the two miracles of feeding the multitudes but do not provide a direct interpretation of Christ's words. They do admit Christ's disappointment over the lack of understanding. Christ used an extreme contrast to make His point. "I have just fed multitudes—you remember the details, even to the amounts left over in each case—can I not then provide food here, if needed? But look, I am talking about the leaven of unbelief, of the sin and indifference to spiritual values shown by these Jewish leaders."

DAY

6

**3. A Blind Man Healed (Mark 8:22-26).**

Notice that the record of this miracle is found only in the Gospel of Mark.



What reason can you suggest for Jesus' two-staged approach in healing the blind man?

"This is the only recorded instance in which Jesus performed a cure in two stages. There is no apparent reason for the use of this method in this case. However, it should be noted that, as partial vision was restored to the man, his faith increased and he was ready to believe that Jesus could cure him completely."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 629.

DAY  
7

**FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read *The Desire of Ages*, pages 399-409.

**SUMMARY:** Our Lord ministered faithfully, cautiously, and lovingly for His "other sheep." In spite of our worldwide outreach, we still can learn much from Him about how to minister to those who do not know Him. Nationalism and prejudice of all kinds close the soul of the Christian. Beware such leaven!

**APPLICATION:** This lesson provides another opportunity for a type of outreach that is often neglected. Think of some way you can minister to a person of another culture or race.

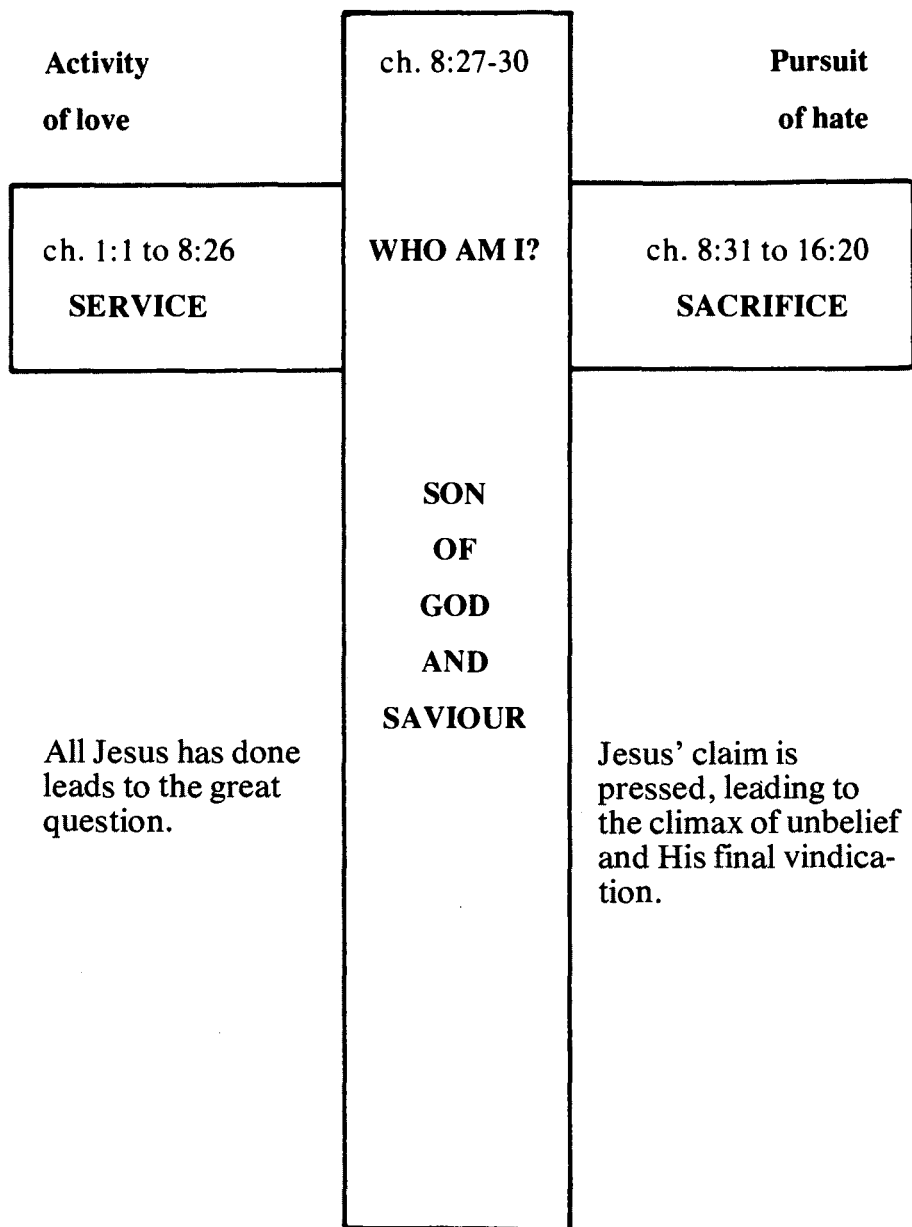
**REVIEW OF PROGRESS OF THIS QUARTER'S STUDY:** With this week's lesson we are nearing the mid-point of the Gospel according to Mark. We have been moving rapidly and intently through the days of the proclamation of the gospel, and we will be faced next week with the strategic center of the book. There Christ asks His disciples a most vital question: Who am I? It is the character of the work that Jesus has done so far that leads to that great question. It is a thrilling fact that the apostles will be open to the Spirit's leading in giving the answer.

This brief interlude in which this key question arises is part of Christ's work in places of retirement (see "Introduction to the Book of Mark," on page 7). It can be thought of as the calm before the storm.

The forces of error, superstition, tradition, and human authority have been building in opposition to the Man of Nazareth, and they begin to break out in the open against Him. The fact that they do so leads Him into His passion, or final suffering, where His incessant activity of love is rebuffed by those who hate Him.

From Lesson 7 forward we will see Jesus' Messianic claim pressed to the ultimate. That brings on both the climax of unbelief and the final vindication of the mission of our Lord.

## Diagram of Mission of Christ



# The Shadow of the Cross

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 8:27 to 9:50.

**DAY 1** **MEMORY TEXT:** "He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ who, from the time of the great confession onward, began to reveal to His disciples that He was standing under the shadow of the cross.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Reference to the diagram of the Gospel of Mark presented at the end of the last lesson will show that the emphasis on proclamation that had characterized Jesus' ministry up to this point was now to be replaced by the preparation for His passion. We open this week's study with Peter's identification of the Christ in answer to the question Who am I? The incessant activity of divine love did not slacken at that point, but it manifested itself in receiving patiently the relentless waves of hatred that were stirred to white heat by the purity of the Son of man/Son of God. Our loving Lord entered the agonizing experience of His betrayal, trial, and crucifixion. The path would lead to Gethsemane and Calvary. But it ended with the triumphant cry It is finished!

Heaven is secured to redeemed sinners. The gates will open to the touch of a little child in the faith. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children . . ." (Matt. 18:3).

## OVERVIEW: Mark 8:27 to 9:50

8:27 to 9:1—The Great Confession and Falling Shadows	9:2-50—Mountaintops and Valleys
Christ's question and Peter's answer (27-30) Peter rebuked (31-33) Challenge to self-denial (34-38) Prediction of seeing the kingdom (9:1)	The transfiguration (2-13) A demon-possessed boy (14-29) Secret journey (30-32) Humility and forgiveness (33-50)

**INTRODUCTION:** Four high peaks of interest and instruction stand out on the horizon formed by the portion of Mark's Gospel that we are studying this week:

- Peter's confession of Christ.
- Peter's rejection of the cross.
- Peter's part on the mount.
- Events at the foot of the mountain.

Some of the greatest issues of truth and error are featured here—joy and sorrow, the majestic and the mundane. Running in and through all is an ever-widening revelation of the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Surely such a Saviour as revealed in this week's lesson can meet the needs of each of us today!

DAY

2

**I. THE GREAT CONFESSION AND FALLING SHADOWS (Mark 8:27 to 9:1). Read these verses before proceeding.**

Caesarea Philippi is almost due north of the eastern shore of Galilee, and Christ led His disciples toward its villages (verse 27).

Somewhere on the way the Lord turned the conversation toward the soul-saving question, Who am I? The term *soul-saving* is used because the true answer to His question provides the foundation for Heaven's plan for our salvation. (See Acts 4:10-12.)

**What reason can you suggest as to why the Lord's question began with "men" in general before it narrowed down to the convictions of the apostles? (Compare Mark 8:27 and 29.)**

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**Compare Mark's account of this vital event with Matthew's and Luke's account in Matthew 16:13-28 and Luke 9:18-27. In the space provided below note the similarities and the differences:**

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The variations between the Gospel accounts of the same event should not shake our confidence in the inspiration of the Gospel accounts when we understand that the words of the Bible were not dictated by the Holy Spirit but that "One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind."—*The Great Controversy*, p. vi.

When we remember the several occasions on which the disciples seemed not to grasp Christ's teachings any better than the multitude, we

can well believe that Peter's confession of Christ's true identity for the group must be seen as a milestone, a turning point, perhaps, in the education of the Twelve. Yet Peter and the other disciples still were a long way from understanding Christ's mission.

**Having gained this heaven-sent declaration from the disciples, for what reasons did Christ urge them to keep this knowledge to themselves?**

"After Peter's confession, Jesus charged the disciples to tell no man that He was the Christ. This charge was given because of the determined opposition of the scribes and Pharisees. More than this, the people, and even the disciples, had so false a conception of the Messiah that a public announcement of Him would give them no true idea of His character or His work."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 414.

Right here comes the reverse side, as it were, of the great transition from proclamation to passion to which we already have called attention.

Now that the disciples have confessed the divine/human Messiah, the truth which already had been told to Nicodemus (John 3:14, 15) is to be introduced to the chosen apostles. In what possibly was one of the most dramatic moments in Christ's entire ministry, His introduction of the cross and the resurrection simply was not acceptable to His disciples. They were stunned and overwhelmed with grief and unbelief. Mark records Peter's personal reaction to the revelation—perhaps a reaction from the noble and positive experience he had just had in proclaiming the Christ.

The Greek text indicates that Peter actually took hold of the Lord. Picture it. "He laid hold upon his Master, as if to draw Him back from His impending doom, exclaiming, 'Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 415.

DAY  
3

**PERSONAL APPLICATION:** After studying this experience what lesson can you draw between sincerity, earnestness, zeal, and error?

**How could Peter, who had just made a declaration given by Heaven, become an agent of Satan in such a short time? Mark 8:33.**

"Satan was trying to discourage Jesus, and turn Him from His mission; and Peter, in his blind love, was giving voice to the temptation. The prince of evil was the author of the thought. His instigation was behind that impulsive appeal. In the wilderness, Satan had offered Christ the dominion of the world on condition of forsaking the path of humiliation and sacrifice. Now he was presenting the same temptation to the disciple of Christ. He was seeking to fix Peter's gaze upon the earthly glory, that he might not behold the cross to which Jesus desired to turn his eyes. And through Peter, Satan was again pressing the temptation upon Jesus."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 416.

Jesus now included the nearby multitude as He painted a vivid word

picture of what must be yielded to God in this life if one is to enter the kingdom (verses 34-38).

**EMPHASIS:** That accountability and judgment face every redeemed sinner, and that the judgment will climax in the return of Christ for the inaugural of His kingdom of glory is the undeniable emphasis of Mark 8:38 and its parallels in Matthew and Luke.

In each of these three Gospels this solemn and yet reassuring passage closes with the astounding announcement that some listening to Christ's words will see the kingdom of glory before they die. (See Mark 9:1.)

DAY

4

**II. MOUNTAINTOPS AND VALLEYS (Mark 9:2-50). Read these verses before proceeding.**

**1. The Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-13).**

Having recorded Christ's prediction about some seeing the kingdom of glory before dying, Mark outlines the fulfillment of that prophecy in the events of the transfiguration.

The word *transfigured* was drawn from the Greek word *metamorphoō*, meaning "to be changed into another form." There on the mountain, divinity flashed through humanity, revealing the luminous glory Jesus had in heaven before the incarnation. The description given in Matthew 17:2 and in Mark 9:3 resembles the description of Christ given in Daniel 10:5, 6 and Revelation 1:13-15.

**Why were Moses and Elijah selected for this privilege of communing with Jesus as He moved under the shadow of the cross?**

"Moses upon the mount of transfiguration was a witness to Christ's victory over sin and death. He represented those who shall come forth from the grave at the resurrection of the just. Elijah, who had been translated to heaven without seeing death, represented those who will be living upon the earth at Christ's second coming, and who will be 'changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.' . . . Upon the mount the future kingdom of glory was represented in miniature,—Christ the King, Moses a representative of the risen saints, and Elijah of the translated ones."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 421, 422.

**What impact did this event leave on the heart of Peter? 2 Peter 1:16-21.**

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**Consider and comment on the purpose and the timing of the remarkable event—the transfiguration. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 422-425.)**

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DAY  
5**2. A Demon-possessed Boy (Mark 9:14-29).**

One wonders whether inspiration has some deep reason for taking us to the heights and, within minutes, for plunging us back to the loathsome depths of human despair.

Peter's suggestion that a shrine be made for the transfiguration group was the confused expression of a man just awakened from sleep and overwhelmed by the glory of the transfiguration. He was so afraid that he did not respond rationally. But what a contrast!

**What scene met our Lord upon His descent from the mountain with the three favored disciples?**

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**Consider the feelings listed below that filled the hearts of those present at the foot of the mountain. Then ask yourself how many of them you personally are wrestling with today?**

Perplexity	Disappointment
Humiliation	Doubt
Contempt	Fear

Doubtless the evil spirits at the foot of the mountain knew that they could not withstand the presence of the Lord when He should arrive. Yet notice that they pushed their advantages to the hilt, embarrassing the nine apostles left behind and doubtless feeling left out. They used every moment of the scene to create impressions of failure in the minds of the people regarding Christ. They also were doing all possible to destroy the impact of the great confession by sowing seeds of doubt in the minds of the disciples.

But suddenly the atmosphere changed. Jesus was there. It was like when your mechanically-minded friend happened along when your car had broken down while on the road. Or when you were in a strange place and not sure of what to do or where to go, then you met an old acquaintance who knew the area well.

**How did Jesus demonstrate that He understood fully all that had been going on? Verses 14-22.**

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The key words here are those that took place between Jesus and the father of the possessed boy. And they are words upon which our eternal life depends. The father's request and explanation of the boy's needs concluded with the words: "*If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us*" (verse 22). Jesus placed the responsibility right back on him, "*If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth*" (Verse 23). (Emphasis supplied.)

The brave father could converse on abstracts and philosophies no more. His son! His child! He might die, Lord! And he cried out. The shame for a man to cry or show emotion (if it was a shame in Jesus' country) was forgotten. The healing of the boy was up to him—the father.

The father was crying, his tears were blocking his vocal chords, he choked on them. "Lord [loudly], Lord! [louder] I do believe—but not enough. Perhaps not enough to make it possible for You to heal my boy. I just don't have enough. O God, help Thou mine unbelief!"

And suddenly it was over (verses 25-27). What about us and our great needs in life? What can we do? What hope is there?

**SPECIAL PROMISE:** "Faith comes by the word of God. Then grasp His promise, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out.' John 6:37. Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, 'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.' You can never perish while you do this—never."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 429.

DAY

6

### 3. Secret Journey (verses 30-32).

Again the Lord withdrew from the crowds—insincere or sincere—in order to minister to those whom God had given Him as His followers. His major purpose at this stage in His ministry was to instruct the disciples rather than to labor for the multitudes. He was trying to prepare them for the scenes just ahead. But this was still something they would rather *not* understand.

### 4. Humility and Forgiveness (verses 33-50).

This may be one of the simplest but one of the most profound and challenging of the Lord's teachings for us to believe, accept, and practice.

In the light of the conversation of recent days among the Twelve (see verses 33, 34) why did they find Christ's words about childlikeness so utterly distasteful and unacceptable?

If our lack of faith is a primary hindrance to Christ's healing of soul or body, what need might be a close second? (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 435, 436 and Matt. 18:3, 4.)

DAY

7

**THINK IT THROUGH:** For what level of sacrifice should we cheerfully volunteer in order to reduce hindrances to our own salvation and that of those who cannot yet speak or choose for themselves—our young children?

**FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 48, "Who Is the Greatest?" pages 432-442.



**SUMMARY:** Is it unbelievable that the shadows of the cross contain some of the richest presentations of truth yet? Could it be that the focus of the cross is the focus of Heaven's richest blessings? Think on these things. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 429-431.)

**APPLICATION:** Pray that God will lead you to understand and apply these inspired words: "Any habit or practice that would lead into sin, and bring dishonor upon Christ, would better be put away, whatever the sacrifice. That which dishonors God cannot benefit the soul. The blessings of heaven cannot attend any man in violating the eternal principles of right. And one sin cherished is sufficient to work the degradation of the character, and to mislead others. If the foot or the hand would be cut off, or even the eye would be plucked out, to save the body from death, how much more earnest should we be to put away sin, that brings death to the soul!"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 439.

**NOTES:**

# Prelude to Passion

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 10:1-52; 14:1-11.

**DAY 1** **MEMORY TEXT:** "Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him" (Mark 14:10, 11).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** In the midst of loving service to people from many walks of life the Master is steadily moving toward the betrayal by Judas Iscariot.

OVERVIEW: Mark 10:1-52; 14:1-11			
<b>10:1—Galilee to Samaria</b>	<b>10:2-31—Marriage, Children, and a Young Ruler</b>	<b>10:32-45—Death and Ambition</b>	<b>10:46-52; 14:1-11—Perceptions of Jesus</b>
Leaving Galilee for Samaria and Perea	Marriage and divorce (2-12) Blessing the children (13-16) The rich young ruler (17-31)	Jesus foretells His death (32-34) Ambitions of James and John (35-45)	Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52) Simon's feast (14:3-9) Betrayal plot (14:1, 2, 10, 11)

**INTRODUCTION:** We have come to expect from Mark a series of accounts of swift-moving events that portray Jesus as the answer to the world's every need. In the midst of performing typical acts of mercy and compassion that were shared with all ages and all classes of people, our Lord tried yet again to prepare His disciples through the use of simple, direct language for the final traumatic events that awaited Him and them.

In the process, many human weaknesses which become handicaps to the gospel showed up in the disciples and are presented by Mark with biblical candor. The ultimate weaknesses recorded show up in Judas Iscariot and Peter. These two had much in common, in strengths and in weaknesses—resembling many of us. But Judas was to betray the Redeemer through a complex scheme designed cleverly to enrich himself and to force the Lord to declare Himself a conquering Messiah at the same time. Peter ended up denying his Lord and almost lost his hold on faith.

In the cases of James and John—with their mother's evident support—and the rich young ruler we see three who were too ambitious for their

own eternal good. Unless selfishness could be leached out of their hearts, they would meet spiritual tragedy.

The Lord also is reported as saying some straight things about marriage and divorce, the place of little children in the life of the church, and the danger of trusting in riches.

Tender dealings with Bartimaeus, with Mary, and with Simon (Luke 7:40-47) demonstrate how our Lord never needlessly wounded even the most spiritually crude and ignorant among those He met and how delicately He touched the sensitive, responsive soul; thereby sheltering the flame of life which His own love had kindled.

And Judas—poor, self-deceived, ambitious, and crooked Judas. How highly he esteemed his own cleverness! The world would owe the revelation of the Messiah to him, he thought. But his clever, scheming mind missed several crucial points. He saw his ambition turn to ashes. Reality and horror drove him to the end of a rope that broke—and gave us a graphic picture of the results of human scheming.

Surely it would be hard for any one of us not to find something in this lesson that will meet a real personal need.

**DAY I. GALILEE TO SAMARIA (Mark 10:1). Read before proceeding.**

**2**

**Leaving Galilee for Samaria and Peraea.**

Luke becomes the substantial source for all that happened to Jesus as He left Galilee and passed through Samaria to that part of Palestine on the eastern side of the Jordan from Judea. A future lesson quarterly will concentrate on what Luke's Gospel has to say about this period in Christ's life.

We pick up the story with Christ's final approach to Jerusalem in what is sometimes called His later Judean ministry. Jesus is confronted, typically and everywhere, by opposition, unbelief, and temptation.

**II. MARRIAGE, CHILDREN, AND A YOUNG RULER (Mark. 10:2-31).**

**Read these verses before proceeding.**

**1. Marriage and Divorce (verses 2-12).**

Some will be eager to study this portion of our lesson today; others may approach this study with great pain; still others with anguish about the future. This was a hard saying when Jesus spoke it; it is a hard saying now to those who feel they cannot live by it. But the questions that follow need to be taken into consideration concerning the Christian and marriage:

**How carefully and for how long was there a building of a foundation for marriage?**

**How much common background did the husband and the wife share—such as interests, goals, ideals, life-style, and home relationships?**

**How dedicated to building a Christian home were the partners?**

**What economic prospects did they have? Must she work? Did they want a family? Why?**

Customs and standards vary from country to country and culture to culture. In Bible times adultery was punishable by death. (See Lev. 20:10.) And the parents tended to choose the partners in a marriage.

Difficulties with Christ's teaching regarding divorce begin when one partner or both wishes to remarry without Bible grounds—where there has been no adultery.

Then there are the subtle ways of toying with the committing of adultery—but in a whitewashed way—by lustful looks, by proximity, by being at some events regularly, by unflattering comments about respective partners, by sharing confidences that should remain strictly between husband and wife, and by offered sympathy or leading flattery.

What happens is that the early courtship that led to marriage is allowed to wither and a new, exhilarating, and flattering courtship opens up.

DAY  
3

**Study the following brief list of guidelines for a solid and joyous marriage: (Based on *The Adventist Home*, pp. 105-113.)**

1. Make Christ first and last and best in everything. As your love for Him increases your love for each other will grow deeper and stronger.
2. Seek to discover the excellencies rather than the defects.
3. Cultivate patience by practicing patience.
4. Do not try to compel each other to do as you wish. Be kind in speech and gentle in action.
5. Love cannot exist long without expression in words and deeds.
6. Too many cares and burdens are brought in and too little of natural simplicity and peace and happiness is cherished. Thankful hearts and kind looks are more valuable than wealth and luxury.
7. It is the little attentions, the numerous small incidents, and simple courtesies of life that make up the sum of life's happiness.
8. Your companionship in the marriage relation should be close and tender, holy and elevated, breathing a spiritual power into your lives, that you may be everything to each other that God's word requires.

**What would you add to this list?**

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## **2. Blessing the Children (Mark 10:13-16).**

Was it just a coincidence that mothers came bringing their little ones to Jesus? "Jesus was ever a lover of children. . . .

" . . . The Saviour understood the care and burden of the mothers who were seeking to train their children according to the word of God. He had heard their prayers. He Himself had drawn them into His presence."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 511.

DAY  
4**3. The Rich Young Ruler (verses 17-31).**

There was a connection between what happened to the children and their mothers, and the young ruler's interest. The way Jesus treated them had confirmed the evidence the young ruler already had received, and now he was ready to do something about it.

It is such a truly sad account! He was the young man who had everything. His example demonstrates that those who live in favored lands or circumstances need to make sure that they know where their priorities lie. A young man just arriving on the scene of action from the Sorbonne, or Oxford, or Harvard could scarcely be more favored than was that young man.

**What was the fatal flaw, the one ill stroke, that led the rich young ruler, who had rushed to kneel at Christ's feet, to leave on leaden legs? (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 518-523.)**

**III. DEATH AND AMBITION (Mark 10:32-45). Read these verses before proceeding.****1. Jesus Foretells His Death (verses 32-34).**

We cannot be sure always where the various events described by the Gospel writers fit in the chronological sequence of Jesus' short ministry. The variables in the account do make the location and timing of some events quite difficult.

Be that as it may, the synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) picture the Lord on His final journey toward Jerusalem at first walking ahead alone, but then waiting to draw the disciples close about Him again. He made special attempts to penetrate their tradition-bound minds with the facts that were as real to Him as though they were happening already. Our merciful Lord was trying to prepare them, trying to replace the Messiah-scenario of their tradition and ambitions with the realities that were moving toward them like a storm out of a clear sky.

Christ must die. He must be cruelly tortured, mistreated, mocked, put through illegal trials—all this was but a short time away.

**How unprepared could Seventh-day Adventists today be for the close of human probation?**

DAY  
5**2. Ambitions of James and John (verses 35-45).**

If the section just completed and the portion now before us occurred in the order presented, could a person's imagination conjure up a greater incongruity? The Lord was attempting to tell of His death. Then along came two of His most devoted disciples with their mother. (See Matt. 20:20-23.) With a mother's love and ambition for her sons, she coveted

for them the most honored place in the new kingdom and joined them in requesting the two spots. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 548.)

When the other disciples heard what John and James had done, they were indignant. Each of them wanted the highest place for himself. But what displeased the disciples most was that they had not asked first! Are we indignant when we read what they did and how the other disciples responded? Perhaps our indignation reveals something about ourselves. We must not be quick to judge others, for in so doing we often reveal what we like the least about ourselves.

**What do we learn from Jesus' reaction to James and John and to the displeasure shown by the other disciples? verses 38-45.**

**IV. PERCEPTIONS OF JESUS (Mark 10:46-52; 14:1-11). Read these verses before proceeding.**

**1. Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52).**

When Bartimaeus used the term Son of David it implied some recognition of Jesus' Messiahship and some faith on the blind man's part. Jesus required Bartimaeus to testify to his need. The Lord knew already. But there was to be no hocus-pocus in Christ's miracles. Everything was done openly and aboveboard. Jesus played no favorites and took no bribes.

DAY  
**6**

**2. Simon's Feast (Mark 14:3-9).**

At this moment our Lord stood only hours away from Passion Week. Lazarus had been raised. The ten lepers had been cleansed, Zacchaeus had been converted, and Jesus had accepted Simon's invitation to attend a feast. Simon, too, was a healed leper but his soul was not yet clean.

**Listed below are the leading characters or groups at the feast. Indicate in the blanks the part they each played, and how they related to Jesus Christ: (For helpful background see *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 557-568.)**

Character	Part Played	Reaction to Jesus
Jesus		
Simon		
Lazarus		
Martha		
Mary		
Judas		

Every Mary or Simon among us can take new heart at Jesus' interest and tenderness. In a sense they represent us all.

### 3. The Betrayal Plot (Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11).

The Jewish leaders had been scheming for over two years to put Christ to death. Fear of the Romans, the common people, and God's unfailing protection of His Son had held them at bay. But their anger had been heated by frustration and they were willing to go to desperate lengths to obtain their desired end.

Judas devised what he considered to be a brilliant scheme that he anticipated would force Christ to present Himself to the Jews as the kind of Messiah that they envisioned. Despising each other, Judas and the priests made a deal. The plot was laid. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 720-722.)

**DAY 7 FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 60, "The Law of the New Kingdom," pp. 547-551.

*Rich Young Ruler:* "Jesus saw in this ruler just the help He needed if the young man would become a colaborer with Him in the work of salvation. If he would place himself under Christ's guidance, he would be a power for good. In a marked degree the ruler could have represented Christ; for he possessed qualifications, which, if he were united with the Saviour, would enable him to become a divine force among men. Christ, seeing into his character, loved him. Love for Christ was awakening in the ruler's heart; for love begets love. Jesus longed to see him a co-worker with Him. He longed to make him like Himself, a mirror in which the likeness of God would be reflected. He longed to develop the excellence of his character, and sanctify it to the Master's use. If the ruler had then given himself to Christ, he would have grown in the atmosphere of His presence. If he had made this choice, how different would have been his future!

" 'One thing thou lackest,' Jesus said, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me.' Christ read the ruler's heart. Only one thing he lacked, but that was a vital principle. He needed the love of God in the soul. This lack, unless supplied, would prove fatal to him; his whole nature would become corrupted. By indulgence, selfishness would strengthen. That he might receive the love of God, his supreme love of self must be surrendered."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 519.

**SUMMARY:** This account has all the ingredients of great drama. Truth is stranger than fiction. Christ's life and ministry was moving to its inevitable climax and our salvation was about to be sealed.

**APPLICATION:** Jesus loved children and showed an interest in them. How can you do so? Here is a suggestion: If you are not now involved in a children's division, visit one next Sabbath. See what you can do to help out. It might be telling a story, doing a bulletin board, supplying materials or furniture. But do something that will help you get involved with taking an interest in the children in your church.

# The Beginning of the End

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 11:1 to 12:17.

**DAY 1** **MEMORY TEXT:** "Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son" (Mark 12:6).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus openly called attention to those words and deeds that would seal His doom in the Jewish Sanhedrin. The lines were being more clearly drawn between Jesus and the authorities each day. Soon the people would have to choose between these two contending authorities. The consequences of such a choice might well be eternal.

OVERVIEW: Mark 11:1 to 12:17	
<b>11:1-26—Triumph and Tragedy</b>	<b>11:27 to 12:17—The Question of Authority</b>
The triumphal entry (1-11) The fruitless fig tree (12-14, 20-26) Temple cleansed again (15-19)	Jesus' authority challenged (27-33) Wicked husbandmen (12:1-12) Tribute to Caesar (13-17)

**INTRODUCTION:** This week we will be studying about the beginning of the end of the life and ministry of our beloved Lord and Saviour. The lights and shadows grew in intensity in those few remaining days before the cross. The great excitement and nationalistic feelings surrounding the triumphal ride into Jerusalem could be matched with the heavenly grief Jesus expressed in the acted parable of the fruitless fig tree. The challenge to the irresistible authority which Jesus exercised in having to cleanse the temple the second time was matched with His veiled warning to the Jewish leadership that, if heeded, might have saved them from national suicide. In the dramatic words of the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the Jewish rulers were depicted as plotting Christ's arrest, condemnation, and death. That they recognized themselves in His description is stated in Mark 12:12.

Finally, the leaders probably revealed more than they thought in asking whether it was lawful to pay taxes or tribute to Caesar. Much as they hated Caesar and all that he represented, they would gladly accuse the Christ—one of their own people—before Caesar if that were the only way to rid the world of Him.

As usual, Jesus saw through the trap they had set for Him. But in His great love He did more than sidestep the trap. He enunciated in simple



words a profound principle of truth, the full meaning and application of which still has not been exhausted.

What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus our Lord!

**DAY 2** I. **TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY (Mark 11:1-26). Read these verses before proceeding.**

**1. The Triumphal Entry (verses 1-11).**

Never did the sun arise on a more glorious morning nor on a more picturesque pageant. Fronds plucked from palm trees and outer garments laid in the dusty road hailed the Son of David as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus, veiled in His peasant's robe, sat upon an unriden ass's foal led by one raised from the dead. Praises rang out from those who had been dumb. Those who had been crippled danced about Him. He was hailed by children's voices raised in joyous hosannas. There never had been such a coronation procession. And Jesus allowed it all. Prophecy must be fulfilled and the attention of the world must now be drawn to Him and to His final march to Golgotha. Word concerning Him must be carried back wherever Jews had been dispersed.

Priests and rulers were passed by when the birth of the Lord was announced. Where were they at His triumphal entry? They were there, as we shall see, but not among those who celebrated his kingship.

From Luke 19:39-44 we learn of the climax of this day and of Christ's overwhelming grief at His rejection by the city and people whom He had come to save.

**What does Mark tell us about the concluding events of Christ's day of triumph? (Mark 11:11).**

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**2. The Fruitless Fig Tree (verses 12-14, 20-26).**

**What did leaves appearing on a fig tree indicate?**

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**Why did Christ, the Life-giver, cause a living tree to die?**

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**What lessons were the disciples to understand from the pretentious fig tree?**

"The parable of the fig tree, spoken before Christ's visit to Jerusalem, had a direct connection with the lesson He taught in cursing the fruitless tree. For the barren tree of the parable the gardener pleaded, Let it alone this year, until I shall dig about it and dress it; and if it bear fruit, well; but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. Increased care was to be given the unfruitful tree. It was to have every advantage. But if it remained fruitless, nothing could save it from destruction. In the parable

the result of the gardener's work was not foretold. It depended upon that people to whom Christ's words were spoken. They were represented by the fruitless tree, and it rested with them to decide their own destiny. Every advantage that Heaven could bestow was given them, but they did not profit by their increased blessings. By Christ's act in cursing the barren fig tree, the result was shown. They had determined their own destruction."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 584.

Mark identified Peter as the one who called the Lord's attention to the withered tree the next morning.

DAY

3

What reasons can you offer for Christ's introduction of His teaching about the power of faith and the need to exercise forgiveness at this time and in this particular context? (See verses 23-26.)

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What does it say about our heart condition when we bear "nothing but leaves" for the Lord?

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### 3. The Temple Cleansed Again (verses 15-19).

It seems human to forget even that which the Lord of heaven has told us. Near the beginning of His short ministry Christ cleansed His Father's house (John 2:13-17), exercising something of His divine authority that will be manifested on judgment day. Now, in the closing week of His ministry—during His passion—He found the temple desecrated as before. Again, He protested and drove the thieving merchants out.

Why would Jesus trouble to cleanse the temple again when the merchants forgot so soon, and Jesus would soon be gone from the earth? Consider that He accepted the role of King at the triumphal entry. How should the King act in His Father's house? (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 590.)

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What "merchandise" that desecrates the soul can be stored in the hearts of God's people today?

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DAY

4

II. THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY (Mark 11:27 to 12:17). Read these verses before proceeding.

### 1. Jesus' Authority Challenged (Mark 11:27-33).

In following Mark's narrative covering these opening days of Passion Week, we notice how many times the Lord has withdrawn Himself from the crowds so that He might have time in a secluded spot in the mountains for entire nights of prayer and contemplation. The devil was moving his forces in for the final confrontation in which everything was at stake for both Christ and Satan. The effects of this battle would be eternal.

On one of His returns to Jerusalem and the temple precincts the Lord was accosted once again by Jewish leaders. They wished to challenge the source and nature of His authority.

**Why do you suppose that Jesus declined to answer their questions directly?**

**Until this point in time the rulers had been asking for *signs* of His authority. Why did they now demand some statement as to His authority?**

“Three years before, they [the Sanhedrin] had demanded a sign of His Messiahship. Since that time He had wrought mighty works throughout the land. He had healed the sick, miraculously fed thousands of people, walked upon the waves, and spoken peace to the troubled sea. He had repeatedly read the hearts of men as an open book; He had cast out demons, and raised the dead. The rulers had before them the evidence of His Messiahship. They now decided to demand no sign of His authority, but to draw out some admission or declaration by which He might be condemned.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 593.

**NOTE the method Christ used to avoid giving a direct answer to their challenge (verse 29-33).**

The real issue was that the Jewish rulers, who had quailed before the authority of the righteously indignant Christ, were unwilling to acknowledge His divinity and Messiahship.

**PERSONAL APPLICATION: Is there anything in my life today about which I am under conviction, but that I am covering by quibbling over the authority of inspiration?**

**DAY 2. The Wicked Husbandman (Mark 12:1-12).**

**5** At this juncture in Mark's account the Lord presented a parable that illustrated Israel's failure to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Matthew alone records the parable about the two sons who went to work in the father's vineyard (Matt. 21:28-32). Because it provides something of an introduction to the parable of the wicked husbandmen—one of the few parables recorded by Mark—it would be helpful to read Matthew's parable first.

There is nothing complicated or obscure about the parable of the wicked tenants that Mark recorded. It would almost *have* to remind devout readers of the Old Testament of the song in Isaiah (5:1-7). The parallel is so close.

**Study Mark's account of the main characters and objects spoken of in the parable and then match with what you understand each to represent. After**

doing the matching exercise write a short paragraph applying the parable to both the immediate hearers and the church today. (Use a Bible commentary or *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 596-600.)

Person/object	Meaning
1. _____ Householder	A. Divine law
2. _____ Husbandman	B. Jewish nation
3. _____ Servants	C. Leaders of Israel
4. _____ Son	D. Prophets, messengers
5. _____ Vineyard	E. temple
6. _____ Hedge	F. God
7. _____ Tower	G. Christ

**Application to immediate hearers:**

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**Application to the church today:**

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In a few words of final appeal Jesus spoke of an Old Testament illustration of a discarded stone that had endured every test of the elements and of men, and proved in the long run to be the cornerstone of the first temple built by Solomon.

The prophet Isaiah had been led to write of it (8:13-15; 28:16). And Jesus used the familiar incident to represent Himself as the long-neglected Cornerstone of the Hebrew economy. But more, He is the foundation upon which the salvation of the entire world can rest if only people were willing to believe and accept.

**STRONG CONSOLATION:** "In infinite wisdom, God chose the foundation stone [see Isa. 8:13-15; 28:16], and laid it Himself. He called it 'a sure foundation.' . . . Christ is a 'tried stone.' . . . He has borne every test. He has endured the pressure of Adam's guilt, and the guilt of his posterity, and has come off more than conqueror of the powers of evil. He has borne the burdens cast upon Him by every repenting sinner. In Christ the guilty heart has found relief. He is the sure foundation. All who make Him their dependence rest in perfect security."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 598, 599.

Tragically, with reference to Jew and Gentile alike, Christ will prove to be—in Peter's words (1 Peter 2:3-8)—either a rock of salvation or a rock of offense.

Training in etiquette and deportment may help to make us graceful of manner, but without a faith/submission/repentance/obedience relationship to the Rock, Christ Jesus, none of us can ever be a living stone in the temple of the Lord. The prospect either thrills or chills, depending upon our choice. The Jewish leaders turned away.

**DAY 6** 3. Tribute to Caesar (Mark 12:13-17).

Each of the three Gospel writers records this incident of the challenge brought to Christ by the Pharisees and Herodians. It seems that in these last few days of Jesus' life His enemies sent wave upon wave of spies and scholars with questions and issues designed to lead Him to make some statement, to goad Him to a claim that could be used for His joint condemnation by Jewish and Roman rulers alike. They opened with flatteries (verse 14) designed to break down Jesus' guard.

**When those who have been our traditional enemies suddenly begin to speak well of us and actually bestow favors upon us, whose guise should we recognize? (Compare Matt. 5:10-12; Luke 6:26; and other passages.)**

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**What hypocrisy lay behind the apparent concern of these leaders for the payment of taxes to the hated Roman occupants of their fatherland?**

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**How true were the flattering words offered to Jesus? How will those words stand in the judgment day? (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 601-602.)**

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**What was Christ's simple and practical method for taking the spring out of the trap set for Him? (See Mark 12:15-17.)**

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"Christ's reply was no evasion, but a candid answer to the question. Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which were stamped the name and image of Casear, He declared that since they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as this did not conflict with a higher duty. But while peaceably subject to the laws of the land, they should at all times give their first allegiance to God.

"The Saviour's words, 'Render . . . unto God the things that are God's,' were a severe rebuke to the intriguing Jews. Had they faithfully fulfilled their obligations to God, they would not have become a broken nation, subject to a foreign power. No Roman ensign would have waved over Jerusalem, no Roman sentinel would have stood at her gates, no Roman governor would have ruled within her walls. The Jewish nation was then paying the penalty of its apostasy from God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 602.

**THINK IT THROUGH:** How should this principle of giving Caesar his due apply in the part of the world where you live?

**DAY** **FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 63, "Thy King Cometh," pages 569-579.

7

**SUMMARY:** The greater and more frequent the crisis, the more urgent and constant is the need of prayer. Our Saviour recognized this clearly, and we can only exceed Him in our need. But our tendency is to feel that we have less time for prayer in the midst of crises that we face.

Chronologically, we are well into Passion Week, which will culminate in the cross and the tomb. With amazement we follow the unfailing, calm footsteps of our Lord and listen to His final words of wisdom.

We have to go out of the Gospel of Mark to get some events and settings. But Mark seems to be always there with some little detail no one else has noted. It is action with Mark, to the end. And the end is very near. We are in the beginning of the end for our Lord. Who knows? Possibly also for ourselves.

**APPLICATION:** There is much in this lesson that demands personal application to ourselves and to our church. For instance, what lessons are to be applied from Christ's cleansing of the temple? What practices need to be expelled from our lives? Are there things going on in your particular church that are not in harmony with God's will for His sanctuary? Can you suggest improvements that would make your church services more worshipful?

**NOTES:**

# Legacy of Truth

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 12:18 to 13:37.

**DAY**

**1**

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:33).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Out of persistent theological fault-finding and accusation of the Saviour came a legacy of truth for Christ's church and to that church He gave the blueprint of the Christian ages down to the second coming of the blessed, risen Lord.

<b>OVERVIEW: Mark 12:18 to 13:37</b>	
<b>12:18-44—Truths from Bickerings; Denouncing Traditions</b>	<b>13:1-37—Preview of the Centuries</b>
Resurrection and marriage (18-27) The great commandment (28-34) Jesus and His critics (35-37) Woes on scribes and Pharisees (38-40) Wealth in a widow's mite (41-44)	What is coming? (1-4) Days of tribulation (5-20) The last generation (21-30) Reassurance (31-37)

**INTRODUCTION:** Unbelievable as it may seem, at a time when our Lord was moving under the weight of the sins of the whole world He was forced to deal with a continuing and unrelenting wave of critics. They quibbled, queried, and quarreled over His every word and movement. It would seem that He should have been sheltered among His devoted followers in the greatest comfort and freedom of movement possible. They should have been helping to build Him up for what was coming. They had been informed about what was going on.

Christ knew the work that He came to do. He knew that the hour of betrayal and arrest was imminent and that even His own Twelve were going to be shocked when it struck. By serving needy souls and dealing with fault-finding scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians in the way that He did, He left His disciples a broad model that they could safely follow when brought into similar circumstances. His closing work must be public in order to call the world's attention to the reality of His death and the more remarkable claims of the resurrection.

And so they came—the haughty and aristocratic Sadducees—to argue their pet thesis that there is no resurrection. As sometimes is true of spe-

cialists they indicated a blind side to some things that surely they should have known.

Then the Pharisees came back with a brilliant lawyer. Surely he would succeed. But his efforts were to no avail. Christ and the lawyer ended as partners rather than as antagonists. Jesus amazed the lawyer, and the man was honest about admitting it.

Jesus used every occasion to show the people their danger in slavishly following Jewish tradition and rabbinical practices. He must unshackle the people from centuries of bondage. The trouble was, they thought of themselves as free.

When Christ began to pronounce one dreadful "woe" after another upon the Pharisees and scribes, He did so in love for them and for the people under their spiritual control. Jesus' actions were not shaped by expediency nor did they spring from irritability. They sprang from truth and principle.

Perhaps the greatest human gift apart from the cross was that manifested by a widow for the misused, misapplied, preyed-upon treasury box in the temple. She gave two insignificant coins. Her gift, though small, had great significance—a significance that we should take some time to ponder.

Then came one of the most complete statements yet from the lips of the Lord on any subject. It was a follow-up on an innocent-enough question asked earlier. Within the disciples, fierce Jewish nationalism was alive and well. Because of this the disciples handed the Lord a multifaceted question about the future. In His wisdom, the Lord did not sort out the jumble they expressed, but He did answer their question. In time, under His own later instruction, followed by the Pentecostal endorsement of the Spirit of truth, they discerned what they needed to and trusted Him to care for the rest.

Little did the disciples then understand that some 2000 years would separate the first and second advents of their beloved Master. But their Lord assured them that His words were reliable.

As we live in the end times foretold by the Lord and we have the privilege of hindsight of the centuries that were yet the unknown future to the apostles, are we as trusting as they? Is the prophetic preview of the centuries still valid? Or are we beginning to say, My Lord delayeth His coming?

We must wrestle individually with these challenges this week and come together on Sabbath in our classes to share our renewed confidence.

**DAY 2** I. TRUTHS FROM BICKERINGS; DENOUNCING TRADITIONS (Mark 12:18-44). Read these verses before proceeding.

**1. Resurrection and Marriage (verses 18-27).**

As we look back on what transpired it seems as though the devil had marshaled legions of fresh troops to send in against one lone Man and His bewildered and humble band of followers. The next group to test Him was the Sadducees.



If you have a reference work or commentary available, take a few moments to study what it has to say about Sadducees. They were an interesting and unique group in the Jewish setting of Christ's day. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 209, 387, 393, 405, 537, 538, 603-606, 705.)

There was nothing complicated in the account that the Sadducees used to try to trap Jesus. Seven brothers had in turn married one woman under the levirate marriage law of Moses' day. (See Deut. 25:5, 6.) But the dilemma which the Sadducees thought beyond Christ's renowned logic and knowledge was which of the seven husbands would she be united with in the resurrection. If they had not exhibited their hatred of Christ, you might even imagine them hiding their snickers and guffaws behind their flowing robes.

One item of common knowledge that gave their question some heat and intensity was the resurrection of Lazarus.

**How did Jesus turn aside their question? Where in the Old Testament would you look for evidence to support Christ's claim? (See Mark 12:24-27.)**

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"The Sadducees are said to have prided themselves on being more exact students of the Scriptures than the Pharisees, but Jesus here asserts that in spite of all their vaunted knowledge of the Word of God, they are profoundly ignorant. Theological concepts based on speculative reasoning from incomplete information are certain to lead astray those who resort to this fanciful method of arriving at truth. Christians today should beware lest they, too 'err, not knowing the scriptures.'"—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 483.

The Lord climaxed His discussion on the resurrection (verses 26, 27) by Yahweh's declaration to Moses at the burning bush. He was Lord of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—all now dead. Only the resurrection could give this declaration true meaning. The "power of God" will be revealed in the armies of the resurrected saints of all ages and the establishment of a new world order.

The kingdom to come is not going to be just a patched up version of this present life.

## DAY 2. The Great Commandment (verses 28-34).

**3** It is as though the devil had sent in another wave of his cohorts against Christ (see Matt. 22:34), and this time a bold lawyer was chosen to be spokesman for the group. On the other hand, he was one who revealed keen discernment and seemed free from the general Pharisaical prejudice against Christ and the truths He offered.

It is worthy of note that when our Lord quoted Deuteronomy 6:4 to the lawyer He was presenting what is said to be one of the most treasured scriptures for a Jew. These words were part of the morning and evening prayer at the temple and are a regular part of synagogue worship in our day.

In the light of the strict life of obedience to God's law enjoined in both Old and New Testaments, what application can you make to our time of the words of the lawyer in Mark 12:33?

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How much do we as Seventh-day Adventists convey to other Christians our expectations and desire that the words of Jesus to the lawyer (verse 34) apply to them and that we are delighted to have it so?

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### 3. Jesus and His Critics (verses 35-37).

Mark alone tells us that Jesus still was teaching in the temple at this time. It was almost as though the Lord had to cleanse the temple of the error proclaimed from its chambers and courts in the same way that He had driven out the money changers and cattle dealers.

Mark shows us also that great crowds were waiting eagerly upon the Master's words. Was it not all part of the Lord's determination that His coming sacrifice would be known far and wide through the multitudes of common people who "heard Him gladly"?

What great basic truth about Himself was the Lord trying to teach the Pharisees and the crowds in confronting them with David's inspired words? (See Ps. 110:1.)

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The critics of the Lord were silenced. The common people had to be released from their fear of the Pharisees and rulers in order that they might dare to contemplate the glorious identity of the Man from Nazareth.



### 4. Woes on Scribes and Pharisees (Mark 12:38-40).

Jesus continued what must have been one of the most unpleasant tasks of His ministry. In the fuller presentation outlined in Matthew 23 we find the Lord declaring woe upon woe on the scribes and Pharisees.

How do you account for this seeming bursting of the dam of Jesus' vehement condemnation of the self-appointed (as opposed to called of God, like the priest or prophet) spiritual leaders of the Jewish people? (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 611-614, 619, 620.)

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### 5. Wealth in a Widow's Mites (Mark 12:41-44).

In this story Jesus comments on the attitudes that stood behind the acts of religious service that He had witnessed. One wonders if there is anything new left in this well-worn account of the widow's mites, used for centuries to stir the flagging generosity of the church in support of its ministry and outreach. Perhaps we can risk a question such as this:

If the priests were in such close financial league with the money changers and cattle dealers that Christ had to cleanse the temple twice, how wise was it for the widow to entrust all she had to the temple treasury?

Lloyd John Ogilvie offers an interesting perspective on the account of the mites: "I believe that Jesus was profoundly comforted by what He saw in the woman's gift of self. Could it be that for a moment . . . He saw the sacrificial gift of His own life? The shadow of the cross loomed over Him. . . . Would God care? . . . Would God honor His faithfulness and raise Him up and clear the air with the triumphant blast of the Resurrection?"—Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Life Without Limits* (Waco, Texas: Word, Inc., 1975), pp. 230, 231.

**DAY 5** II. PREVIEW OF THE CENTURIES (Mark 13:1-37). Read these verses before proceeding.

1. What Is Coming? (verses 1-4).

What attitude toward Judaism and its future do you see in the steps the disciples took to call Christ's personal attention to the massive stones of the temple? (They remembered Christ's words in Matthew 23:38.)

When Christ indicated to the disciples and the surrounding crowds that the huge stones that made up the wall of the temple would all be thrown down it seemed impossible to them. Later, on the Mount of Olives, they plied the Lord with a cluster of questions about His predictions.

We Seventh-day Adventists, along with our prophetic forefathers of the Christian era, have understood that the Lord covered the whole Christian era with His reply. This illustrates the principle of prophetic interpretation followed by main-stream Protestantism (including the English Puritan divines) for hundreds of years and adopted by the Millerites from the British and European advent awakening of the early nineteenth century.

**THINK IT THROUGH:** Were we to abandon the year-day principle that forms the backbone of traditional prophetic interpretation, where would that place us?

There are many dual applications to the words of Jesus here and in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, and we find help on them in L. E. Froom's *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1950), volume 1, pages 141 to 144, and in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 628 to 636. (See the additional reading suggestion at the close of this lesson.)

**DAY 6** 2. Days of Tribulation (Mark 13:5-20).

In this portion of His Olivet discourse Jesus blended a presentation of events to affect the generation then listening to Him and the generation that was to see the "time of the end."

Early Christians prayed for the continuation of pagan Rome, for they feared the mysterious "little horn" of Daniel 7:8, 19-28 and John's beast with a deadly wound "healed," more than they did the persecutions of pagan Rome. (See L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 19.)

The main point of Mark 13:20 is that the actual persecution of the nonconforming Christians by the papacy for 1260 years was cut short in God's providence in order to preserve a seed, a witness to what would become a worldwide advent awakening.

### 3. Last Generation (Mark 13:21-30).

Real significance is given to the advent signs in the heavens by their link with the period of 1260 days that bring us down to the time of the end. (See verses 24, 25.)

There will be deceptions abroad that will be so close to truth and sound so much like the long-desired revival and reformation that many will be drawn in to them and deceived.

H. M. S. Richards used to preach a sermon indicating where he saw the church in the prophetic chains of events in various scriptures. He would see the church between verses 25 and 26 of Mark 13 and this time.

As the leaves of a fig tree come on during the summer and signal the warmth of its arrival, the church is to read from all the signs given that the end is at hand.

### 4. Reassurance (verses 31-37).

Having given such strong assurances and signs of His near advent, and the infallibility of His word, the Lord now wants His church to live in a state of constant expectation of her returning Lord. He has entrusted her with the goods of salvation for all mankind. His appeal is "Watch . . . therefore"! Keep on watching!

**DAY** **FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** "Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. Coming events cast their shadows before. The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Who can read the future? Where is security? There is assurance in nothing that is human or earthly. Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win.

"The crisis is stealing gradually upon us. The sun shines in the heavens, passing over its usual round, and the heavens still declare the glory of God. Men are still eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying, and giving in marriage. Merchants are still buying and selling. Men are jostling one against another, contending for the highest place. Pleasure lovers are still crowding to the theaters, horse races, gambling halls. The highest excitement prevails, yet probation's hour is fast clos-

ing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. Satan sees that his time is short. He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced, until the day of probation shall be ended, and the door of mercy be forever shut.

“Solemnly there come to us down through the centuries the warning words of our Lord from the Mount of Olives: ‘Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.’ ‘Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 636.

*Additional Reading Suggestion:* For those interested in a solid presentation of prophetic interpretation of the passages studied in the latter part of this lesson we suggest the following:

P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977).

**SUMMARY:** With the shadows of the cross deepening about Him every hour, Jesus could look ahead to His return for His saints in glory. He laid out the journey before the church and urged her to believe in the return and to watch for it continually.

**APPLICATION:** One universal human need is our need to be appreciated. Notice in this lesson how Jesus gratified this need for the widow who gave her all. Is there someone in your church who may have little in the way of resources but is generous in sharing them? Have you expressed your appreciation to this individual? Do what you can to provide genuine affirmation.

**NOTES:**

# The Crisis of the Ages

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 14:12-72.

**DAY 1** **MEMORY TEXT:** "He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Gethsemane fitted the prophetic timetable. The choice made by Christ in eternity—to be our Redeemer—at that point became even more of a reality. The cup of our salvation and His suffering trembled in His hands. He did not *have* to drink it. But He could not save us, and rid the universe of sin, without draining the cup. The crisis of the ages had come.

## OVERVIEW: Mark 14:12-72

14:12-25—The Upper Room	14:26-52—Into Gethsemane	14:53-72—Illegal Night Trial
Preparation for Passover (12-16) The Passover supper (17, 18) The Lord's Supper (22-25) Betrayal revealed (18-21)	Retirement to the garden (26) Warnings to Peter and the ten (27-31) Gethsemane struggle (32-52)	Night trial (53-65)  Peter's denial (66-72)

**INTRODUCTION:** Mark moves us swiftly through the closing half of Passion Week. Before this week's study is over we will have followed our Lord in the institution of the Lord's Supper, the revealing of who would betray Him (already known to Jesus), the quiet walk to Gethsemane, and then to the sudden and mysterious agony of Gethsemane where the Saviour almost died for us. Finally, the series of cruel and illegal trials opened with one convened at night, while Peter—poor, bold, unflinching Peter—denied his Lord and heard the crowing of a cock. And he wept in shame for his boasting and in shame for his weakness.

**DAY 2** **I. THE UPPER ROOM (Mark 14:12-25).** Read these verses before proceeding.

**1. Preparation for Passover (verses 12-16).**

If we did not know better, we could get the impression that one charac-

teristic of Christianity is the art of borrowing—a donkey on which to ride, a house in which to stay, a room in which to hold a feast, a tomb in which to lie. Christ knew the art of graciously receiving a gift. Doing so requires more tact than giving. The king has a right to ask for tribute. There is both humility and authority in Christ's request.

**What spiritual lessons can you draw from (a) these facts of Christ's "borrowings" and (b) from the detailed directions given to Peter and John in Luke 22:8-13?**

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. The Passover Supper (Mark 14:17, 18).

There is much discussion among New Testament scholars as to the exact timing of the Passover celebration by Christ and His disciples. (Interested students might wish to begin with the *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, additional note under Matthew 26, note 1, pp. 532-537.)

We can attempt to imagine the actual setting for this last Passover that the Lord would celebrate before His suffering and death. If we examine the accounts of the other Gospel writers, we gain a helpful enrichment in detail.

We need to understand that it was the Passover feast that was being celebrated. It was almost incidental (except to the Lord) that the desired emblems were used in connection with the Passover meal and that with these He instituted the Lord's Supper or Communion service.

The significance of this dual observance should not escape us: "Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 652.

DAY  
3

## 3. The Lord's Supper (Mark 14:22-25).

**What purpose did Jesus have in instituting a new ordinance?**

"In partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer. He committed to them the new covenant, by which all who receive Him become children of God, and joint heirs with Christ. By this covenant every blessing that heaven could bestow for this life and the life to come was theirs. This covenant deed was to be ratified with the blood of Christ. And the administration of the Sacrament was to keep before the disciples the infinite sacrifice made for

each of them individually as a part of the great whole of fallen humanity."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 656-659.

**How would you relate the Lord's Supper to the rending of the temple veil (Luke 23:45) and the later destruction of the temple in A.D. 70?**

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**What strong implications of the second coming of our Lord are present in the Lord's Supper?**

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#### 4. The Betrayer Revealed (Mark 14:18-21).

How many times today those in positions of authority are troubled to determine how much of what they know about others should be revealed and when. It is fascinating to contemplate that for nearly three years Christ had known how utterly lacking in principle Judas Iscariot was.

**In relation to the Lord's Supper, how, to whom, and when did Jesus reveal that Judas had made a pact with the priests to betray his Lord? (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 653, 654, 720.)**

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**What can we learn from Christ's patient and loving treatment of Judas?**

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**How could Judas sit at the table with the Lord and the disciples when he knew what he had done to betray his Master?**

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**DAY 4 II. INTO GETHSEMANE (Mark 14:26-52). Read these verses before proceeding.**

#### 1. Retirement to the Garden (verse 26).

This verse contains the greatest lesson on Christian calmness and trust in the face of crisis and death.

From the inspired commentary we are assured that the "hymn" which the upper-room group sang at the close of the joint service of Passover and Lord's Supper was the Passover Hallel that ends with these words: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. 118:29). (See Psalms 115 through 118 and *The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.)

Then Christ's group moved from the upper room to the Mount of Olives.



**2. Warnings to Peter and the Ten (Mark 14:27-31).**

As they began the descent from the city gate toward Olivet the Lord shared some of His most profound and pertinent counsel with the Twelve—now reduced to eleven by the departure of Judas to his dreadful task. Jesus advised again as to what awaited Him and them in the next few hours (verse 27). He warned of their coming failure to endure and be loyal, but assured them of acceptance beyond their failure—after the resurrection.

**What does this say to you about the mercy of God toward His faltering children, weak in faith? (See verse 28.)**

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Peter—loving, blustering Peter—protested his greater loyalty that would permit no failure (verse 29).

**What purpose did Jesus have in telling Peter that he would deny his Lord at the time of the cock crowing? (See verses 30, 31.)**

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“Christ’s solemn warning was a call to heart searching. Peter needed to distrust himself, and to have a deeper faith in Christ. Had he in humility received the warning, he would have appealed to the Shepherd of the flock to keep His sheep.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 673.

DAY  
5

**3. Gethsemane Struggle (verses 32-52).**

There in Gethsemane the destiny of a world—if not a universe—was being settled. The kaleidoscope of human forces at work there merits careful contemplation. Mark’s crisp, clipped account gives the essentials. Much more data and background are provided by John in his Gospel, but it seems only right to await the future series of lessons when we will concentrate on his Gospel to study the details that he gives.

Christ proceeded with the disciples to the olive-clad slope of the Mount of Olives. They were asked to sit and wait—two of the most taxing and testing activities in a crisis.

**Why did Jesus take Peter, James, and John in with Him to the deeper recesses of the garden? (Consider verses 33-35.)**

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**How much of the human in Christ’s nature do you detect at this point? (See verses 33, 34.)**

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**Notice the rebuke addressed to Peter (verse 37). Was Christ more concerned with the future of the disciples or for His own coming struggle with Satan? (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 687-689.)**

**THINK IT THROUGH:** Why did Christ permit someone in the group to have a sword and to attempt to use it to protect Him?

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There has been some thought that after the rest of the disciples had fled from the garden, John Mark—being less known—was attempting to follow Jesus wherever the mob would take Him. Verses 51 and 52 would then be a report that Mark alone could offer as an eyewitness.

Let us now turn from the apostles (who finally fled) to Jesus in the Gethsemane struggle.

**What do you believe was at stake (at risk) when the Gethsemane cup was presented to Christ three times?**

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“The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. . . . Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus, ‘O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.’

“Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world’s Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 690-693.

**DAY** III. ILLEGAL NIGHT TRIAL (Mark 14:53-72). Read these verses before  
**6** proceeding.

**1. Night trial (verses 53-65).**

In our caption we have suggested that this night trial was illegal because it was just that in a number of ways. The fact that a trial was called in haste and at night was contrary to Jewish law.

Most of the men who had Christ in hand held sacred office. They knew the law better than any. They were trained teachers of the law.

**When the human mind determines on a course of sin, what happens to the knowledge of truth and reasoning powers in weighing evidence?**

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Try to explain when Jesus would and when He would not answer His accusers and why. (See verses 55-63.)

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**THINK IT THROUGH:** How would we apply the principles He followed to modern-day persecutions?

What explanation can you offer for the way Christ was treated by the highest religious officials of His day when they had condemned Him only on the strength of His own testimony? (See verses 63-65.)

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## 2. Peter's Denial (verses 66-72).

To us it seems difficult to believe that Peter would actually fulfill the Lord's prediction of betrayal. At first glance a non-Christian might assume that Peter's will had been taken from him and that robotlike he just found himself denying the Lord without any way to stop himself.

How do you account for Peter's failure, in the light of the great promises he made to the Lord earlier? (See verses 26-31.)

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What encouragement can you find in Peter's weeping when he thought back on the warnings of his Lord? (See verse 72.)

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What accounts for the difference that led Peter to recover from his denial and become a leader of the early church while Judas, after his betrayal, ended his own life in despair?

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**DAY 7** **FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** "Christ was to be tried formally before the Sanhedrin; but before Annas He was subjected to a preliminary trial. Under the Roman rule the Sanhedrin could not execute the sentence of death. They could only examine a prisoner, and pass judgment to be ratified by the Roman authorities. It was therefore necessary to bring against Christ charges that would be regarded as criminal by the Romans. An accusation must also be found which would condemn Him in the eyes of the Jews. Not a few among the priests and rulers had been convicted by Christ's teaching, and only fear of excommunication prevented them from confessing Him. The priests well remembered the question of Nicodemus, 'Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?' John 7:51. This question had for the time broken up the council, and thwarted their plans. Joseph of Arimathea

and Nicodemus were not now to be summoned, but there were others who might dare to speak in favor of justice. The trial must be so conducted as to unite the members of the Sanhedrin against Christ. There were two charges which the priests desired to maintain. If Jesus could be proved a blasphemer, He would be condemned by the Jews. If convicted of sedition, it would secure His condemnation by the Romans."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 698, 699.

**SUMMARY:** We have had to pass all too swiftly over these gloriously terrible events of Christ's passion. But there is nothing to prevent a thoughtful hour of meditation on them every day for the rest of our lives. We might start by studying what the following statement means: "Christ [in the Garden of Gethsemane] was . . . standing in a different attitude from that in which He had ever stood before"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 686.

Although the Lord's actual death awaited Calvary and the cross, His decision was made in Gethsemane, and only angel intervention prevented Him from dying in the garden.

**APPLICATION:** Judas' betrayal of Jesus was premeditated. Peter, on the other hand, was caught off guard. He was tired and found himself in a situation for which he was not prepared. Perhaps a good share of our failures are like Peter's. We resolve to be loyal. Then, almost before we are aware of danger, the temptation has come. When we fail, we are shocked and dismayed.

What procedures and spiritual resources are available to protect us against this kind of experience? Write out specific steps that you might take under the leading of the Holy Spirit to help you meet unexpected temptation.

**NOTES:**

# “Numbered With the Transgressors”

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 15:1-47.

**DAY 1** **MEMORY TEXT:** “With him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors” (Mark 15:27, 28).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus' trials demonstrated His perfect innocence and made clear that Pilate intended to use Him as a means of pleasing and satisfying the mob. But the point the Roman ruler could not grasp was that the only perfectly Innocent One was counted a transgressor for us that we might be counted saints unto God and be transformed by the indwelling of the Spirit when our hearts have been broken at the foot of the cross.

## OVERVIEW: Mark 15:1-47

1-19—Daytime Trials	20-41—Christ's Death	42-47—In the Tomb
Before the Sanhedrin (verse 1) Before Pilate (2-5) Before Pilate again (6-19)	The crucifixion (20-41)	The burial (42-47)

**INTRODUCTION:** This week we will study one of the shortest portions of Scripture that we have addressed this quarter. But because it climaxes in the cross, perhaps we can dwell on its message and significance until it performs a specific ministry in our individual hearts.

We have a wealth, too, of Spirit-indited and Spirit-directed commentary to help us sense as fully as possible the supreme moment of the cross and what it can or does mean to each of us.

In our study of Mark we have been thinking about the ways in which Christ supremely meets human needs. This event is the climax of such an approach. It is the cross that fills Christ's hands with all the goodness of God, all the gifts of the Holy Spirit that meet the needs of His church.

His gifts are proportionate to the task He has laid upon us. Should we not be expecting and prayerfully “demanding” more than we do, for His sake?

When Christ died on the cross, certain issues in the universe were settled forever. Any trace of sympathy for the fallen angel—the being who had attempted to thwart Christ's work and mission—was eradicated completely by the cross. What seemed to be Satan's greatest triumph was his most signal defeat.

The cross shows us once and for all how deadly sin is. When our beloved Redeemer became our Sin Bearer—being numbered with sinners—He became for the first time in all eternity a person unacceptable to His Father. Christ's dreadful cry—"My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?"—reveals the measure of the hatefulness of sin of every kind to Heaven.

Christ was sin's victim. Voluntarily, the innocent died for the guilt of all who take advantage of His sacrifice. As you study the details we have been given of His exquisite suffering unto death—His dying of a broken heart—can you continue to love your pet sins?

**DAY**  
**2** **I. MOCKERY OF JUSTICE (Mark 15:1-19). Read these verses before proceeding.**

**1. Before the Sanhedrin (verse 1).**

Annas, Caiaphas, and the selected members of the Sanhedrin (the ruling council) knew that their condemnation of Christ during the night was illegal. But with the coming of day they rectified that flaw in their procedure.

Mark's "straightway" once again suggests to us the urgency with which the highest Jewish council was called, presumably to legalize the vote of the night session. They had found Jesus guilty of blasphemy and therefore worthy of death. The problem for the Jews was that the Romans had no concern for the sin of blasphemy.

But when people are possessed by hatred and evil spirits there is no limit to the steps that they will take to destroy their target—no matter how sacred their official position or how innocent their victim.

There was no question of the intent of this council of religious leaders. Had they not been under the Roman yoke, they would have attempted to kill the Galilean long before they did.

**What was their apparent verdict, and why did they then have to take Jesus before Pilate?**

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Notice that Jesus was treated as a condemned criminal (bound, mocked, abused) before He had been legally condemned.

**2. Before Pilate (verses 2-5).**

Because only Rome could pass the death sentence, the Jews arranged for Christ to appear before Pilate.

Pilate was not an admirer of Jews. But, because they had made his position insecure at Rome, he could not afford to have any trouble break

out. His wife apparently was a woman of principle, with spiritual inclinations. (See Matt. 27:19.) She was not in favor of political expedencies or anything underhanded.

**What three civil charges did the Jewish rulers bring against Jesus? (See Luke 23:2.)**

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**If there are contentions in a congregation of believers or between various workers in the church, what does the example of Christ's restraint in replying to the charges brought against Him teach us about how we should relate to such contentions?**

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**DAY 3 3. Before Pilate Again (Mark 15:6-19).**

In such situations as that in which Pilate found himself there seems to be a strange instinct within a mob which tells it when it has the upper hand over some authority figure. The mob is able to play upon the fears, prejudices, and self-preservation concerns of the person in authority, who then becomes putty in their hands. And so it went with Pilate when faced by the mob at Jesus' trial.

From Luke's Gospel (23:6-12) we learn that Pilate sent Christ to Herod, on hearing that He was from Galilee. Herod, frustrated when Jesus did not cooperate in satisfying his demand for a miracle, sent Him back to Pilate.

At some point in the procedure Pilate thought of a practice that could be used to make the Jews happy—for a moment. The release of a prisoner at the Passover was intended to take the edge off the hatred of the Jews for their Roman oppressors. Pilate had some vague hope that the people might want Jesus released rather than one of the worst insurrectionists in Jewish history—Barabbas.

**What led the people to call for the release of Barabbas in preference to the release of the spotless Saviour? (See Mark 15:6-15.)**

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Undoubtedly Pilate did not know that demons were in that crowd and that the Jewish leadership was ready to lie, cheat, steal, bribe, and threaten to get rid of the Lamb of God.

**What does the mob action against Christ indicate to us about the kind of action that will be taken against God's remnant in our time?**

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**DAY 4 4. How did the Roman soldiers treat Christ once He had been condemned by Pilate? Why did they do this? (See verses 16-20.)**

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If you are interested in the history of Pilate and his wife, see *The Desire of Ages*, pages 723-740, 771-773, 782-785; *The Great Controversy*, page 667; and/or a commentary on the Gospels.

## II. CHRIST'S DEATH (Mark 15:20-41). Read these verses before proceeding.

If we have allowed our imaginations to begin to picture all that our blessed Lord had suffered before the actual crucifixion we will realize that the cross event was the keystone in the arch of Christ's suffering for us as our Sin Bearer—as though He were Himself a sinner of the greatest magnitude. But more, He bore the sins of the whole world. He paid a price that makes it possible for everyone that ever lived on the earth to be saved, providing they take advantage of His gracious provision.

But even while Christ hung on the cross, two thieves reacted to His sacrifice—the one, believing, asked to be remembered when Christ would come into His kingdom; the other, cursing the Lord and all else, thereby chose perdition. Thus Calvary, with its three crosses, serves as a small picture of the destiny of every person who ever lived upon the earth.

**DAY**  
**5** As a study in salvation and consequent human destiny, trace, where possible, what happened to those who were most involved in the trial, crucifixion, and burial of Jesus. The Gospels give us some clues, but *The Desire of Ages*, fills in many more details.

1. Annas, Caiaphas, and the entire priesthood:

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2. Pontius Pilate and his wife:

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3. Herod:

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4. The Centurion:

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5. Nicodemus:

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6. Joseph of Arimathea:

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7. Simon of Cyrene:

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8. The women of Jerusalem, weeping:

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9. Judas Iscariot:

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10. The disciples:

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11. The women who ministered to the Lord in life and in death:

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12. The guard at Jesus' tomb:

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**Think about the challenge of the Jewish leaders and their promise to accept Jesus as the Messiah if He would come down from the cross. (See verses 29-32.)**

**Could the Lord have come down? On what terms, what conditions, and with what results?**

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**DAY 6** Of what earlier temptations of Jesus does this one—come down and we will believe—remind you? Who, then, was behind it?

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**Why did the Father forsake the Son for the first time in all eternity? Why did Jesus die of a broken heart? Why did He die so quickly? (See verses 33-37.)**

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**When Jesus declared in trumpet tones "It is finished," what did His exclamation mean? (See John 19:30.)**

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### **III. IN THE TOMB (Mark 15:42-47). Read these verses before proceeding.**

There is nothing complex to explain about the burial of Jesus. It is gratifying that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, men of wealth and influence, were released from their cautious and almost covert discipleship in the Sanhedrin to open, unabashed, and lavish discipleship. They could not give enough to their Lord. He who was born in a stable was buried in a hewn rock tomb—the provision of wealth. The balms and spices provided by Nicodemus and the women were lavish.

The sun was about to set on that awful yet glorious day. The key to the devil's prisonhouse of death lay in the still hands of the Saviour in Joseph's new tomb. If Satan could, he would have piled mountain upon mountain over that tomb. But what difference would it have made?

That is the kind of omnipotent Saviour that we have. By faith in His Father nothing was impossible to Him. By faith in the Son nothing is to be impossible to us. Why, then, do we not take full advantage of all that His life and death have made possible for us? What are we waiting for?

**DAY 7** **FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** "The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured—the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father's face—speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life,—offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee. He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 755, 756.

*Sabbath a Memorial of Redemption.* "Now Jesus rested from the work of redemption; and though there was grief among those who loved Him on earth, yet there was joy in heaven. Glorious to the eyes of heavenly beings was the promise of the future. A restored creation, a redeemed race, that having conquered sin could never fall,—this, the result to flow from Christ's completed work, God and angels saw. With this scene the day upon which Jesus rested is forever linked. For 'His work is perfect;' and 'whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever.' Deut. 32:4; Eccl. 3:14. When there shall be a 'restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began' (Acts 3:21), the creation Sabbath, the day upon which Jesus lay at rest in Joseph's tomb, will still be a day of rest and rejoicing. Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as 'from one Sabbath to another' (Isa. 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 769, 770.

**SUMMARY:** What conclusions can you draw on the greatest event of the ages? Or is it the greatest? Is it greater than the resurrection? than the virgin birth? than all the miracles? All of these were and are part of the victory Jesus gained for us over sin, death, and the devil.

**APPLICATION:** This lesson on the events of the crucifixion day remind us of the value of spending time contemplating the life of Christ. Try to imagine what it would have been like to be abused and spit upon as He was. Then try to step into the experiences of those who witnessed the awful scene. What would you have done if you have been in their place? What patterns of character would have directed your actions? How might you have acted differently than they did?

# “He Is Risen”

**THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Mark 16:1-20.

**DAY 1** **MEMORY TEXT:** “He saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him” (Mark 16:6).

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** If the crucifixion was essential to salvation, the resurrection was equally so, and we need to recognize its great significance in this closing week of this quarter that has been spent studying Mark's fast-moving Gospel.

## OVERVIEW: Mark 16:1-20

1-11—Resurrection	12-18—Ministry to the Disciples	19, 20—Ascension
	On the road to Emmaus (verse 12) In the upper room (13, 14) In Galilee (15-18)	

**INTRODUCTION:** It was not much of a task for the apostolic church to convince Jew and Gentile alike that Jesus of Nazareth died on a Roman cross outside Jerusalem. What involved their risking life itself was their claim that the same Galilean was no longer in Joseph's new tomb, nor in any other tomb for that matter for “He is risen!” That was the electrifying message that the apostles and their companions had to carry to a spiritually dead Jewish world (one caught up in externals and ceremonies of religion) and to a skeptically critical and not easily persuaded Gentile world dominated by Greek logic and reasoning.

The fact of the resurrection was earthshaking enough in itself. There were so many witnesses to it and they were so frightened that they babbled the truth until paid to tell lies. But lying does not pay for long, and it soon was evident that the leaders had been involved in a cover-up.

Christ's purpose in the limited number of contacts that are reported during the few short weeks between the resurrection and the ascension can be discovered in the accounts themselves. He did all He could to implant firmly in the minds and hearts of His apostles and disciples that He was their risen Saviour who was about to return to heaven where He would continue to do everything He could to minister to their needs and

to the needs of the growing church. This quarter we have emphasized how Christ met human needs when He was here on earth. In this lesson we learn that He continues to meet every need of His people and His church.

On the basis of His death and resurrection the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit—to be awaited for in Jerusalem—was soon due, and the Saviour outlined to His disciples the kinds of things the Spirit would do for them and in them to advance the gospel to the farthest limits of the inhabited world. What He promised them He promises us.

Some of Ellen White's most powerful encouragement to the church is to be found in her comments on the verses we will study this week. In the strength of the risen Saviour the church was to concentrate on gospel outreach to a largely hostile world.

We climax the quarter with a sharing of the inevitable jab of anxiety felt by the disciples as they watched their Lord slowly ascend from among them. He, at least, would be safe from His enemies and had promised His followers every needed help. Indeed, two of the angels who had so joyously come to escort Christ to heaven returned from the ascending retinue to give the disciples, craning for a last glimpse of their Lord, assurances as to the future concern of the Saviour for His followers. "Your Lord will be back" is the essence of their encouraging message.

As the cloudy chariot of angels received Him out of their sight, the disciples began to await eagerly the time when He would return. Now, after the passing of nearly 2000 years, we still await His return just as eagerly; but, unfortunately, not as eagerly as He longs to return.

**DAY 2** I. RESURRECTION (Mark 16:1-11). Read these verses before proceeding.

In spite of His having lived the greatest life ever lived few attended whatever of a funeral was given the Saviour. At that moment in time it was not popular or safe to be associated with Him, at least as far as the authorities were concerned. But the strange and frightening events that had taken place that Passover weekend were much thought about and talked about.

**Note that His crucifixion and death had been witnessed by multitudes. Why was that necessary?**

But all that was past. Early on the morning of the first day of the week, after the Sabbath had been observed while the Lord rested in Joseph's tomb, the women who had begun to embalm His body before the Sabbath hours were back at the tomb with the first crack of dawning light. Mark tells about it in the graphic present tense—"they come" with spices for further work on the body. And while they were saying among themselves, Where are men to roll away the stone for us?—they looked up to discover that the large round stone already had been rolled back in its slot (verse 4).

They thus were able to enter the tomb, only to be further surprised by a

young man in white that seemed to flash as lightning. The women were amazed and fearful. But the young man seemed to know all that they wanted to ask, and he answered their unspoken questions. He invited them to enter what might have been an inner tomb where some of them had doubtless seen the body laid by the servants of Joseph and Nicodemus.

But He is not here! He is risen! According to John 20:1, 2, Mary Magdalene had seen that the stone had been rolled away and had run to tell Peter and John even before this.

"Another angel in human form" was there (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 789). He commissioned the women to go to the disciples and tell them that Christ had risen as He said He would. He also asked them to tell Christ's followers that He would meet them in Galilee as He had promised (Matt. 26:32). Included in the instructions was a special note for Peter—tell His disciples *and Peter*. Why Peter? Not because he was to be the first pope as some think. But because he had been the one among the Twelve who was the most outspoken in his denial of Jesus. The Lord wanted him to have the precious assurance that he was forgiven.

**Who was the first person to whom Christ appeared after the resurrection, and what was the significance of the fact that He appeared first to her and that His second appearance was to the other women who had come to the tomb? (See Mark 16:9-11; Matt. 28:9, 10.)**

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"Perhaps God chose to make these godly women messengers of the joyful news of the resurrection, rather than to give the tidings directly to the disciples themselves, because of their continuing ministry of love and devotion at a time when the disciples had practically forsaken Him."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 555.

DAY  
3

Eventually Jesus' followers were able to get all the glorious, exciting details together—each eager to contribute his or her bit to the fast-growing picture of the resurrection of the Lord.

**Study carefully the following list of Christ's appearances:**

1. To Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:15-17).
2. To the other women after they had left the tomb (Matt. 28:9, 10).
3. To Peter prior to the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).
4. To two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-32).
5. To the disciples in the upper room (Mark 16:14; John 20:19-24). But Thomas was not present.  
(Additional appearances after the resurrection day:)
6. To the eleven, Thomas being present, in the upper room a week later (John 20:26-29).
7. To seven of the disciples as they were fishing on Lake Galilee (John 21:1-3).
8. To about 500 on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16; Mark 16:7; 1 Cor. 15:6).

9. To James (1 Cor. 15:7).
10. To the eleven immediately prior to the ascension (Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:4-12).

**DAY 4** II. **MINISTRY TO THE DISCIPLES (Mark 16:12-18).** Read these verses before proceeding.

**1. On the Road to Emmaus (verse 12).**

If we had only Mark's reference concerning the appearance to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, we would have missed much of interest and significance. Read Luke 24:13-32. Then indicate below what impresses you most about this story.

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"These disciples had had no prominent place in Christ's work, but they were earnest believers in Him. They had come to the city to keep the Passover, and were greatly perplexed by the events that had recently taken place. They had heard the news of the morning in regard to the removal of Christ's body from the tomb, and also the report of the women who had seen the angels and had met Jesus. They were now returning to their homes to meditate and pray. Sadly they pursued their evening walk, talking over the scenes of the trial and the crucifixion. Never before had they been so utterly disheartened. Hopeless and faithless, they were walking in the shadow of the cross."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 795.

But, as a result of walking with Jesus, the shadow of the cross was soon lifted and replaced with the thrill of the knowledge of the risen Saviour.

**2. In the Upper Room (Mark 16:13, 14).**

There certainly seemed to be an unusual amount of unbelief that clouded the minds of those gathered in the upper room. They had been so convinced that Christ would become an earthly king that they found it difficult to accept anything else. When He let Himself be taken captive and put to death, their hopes and ambitions were dashed completely. It even was difficult for some to accept Peter's report.

From Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, Cleopas and his companion hurried back at night to the upper room. They had to give their names before they were admitted. "The travelers find all in surprised excitement. The voices of those in the room break out in thanksgiving and praise, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.' Then the two travelers, panting with the haste with which they have made their journey, tell the wondrous story of how Jesus has appeared to them. They have just ended, and some are saying that they cannot believe it, for it is too good to be true, when behold, another Person stands before them. Every eye is fastened upon the Stranger. No one has knocked for entrance. No footstep has been heard. The disciples are startled, and wonder what it means. Then they hear a voice which is no other than the voice of their Master. Clear and distinct the words fall from His lips, 'Peace be unto you.' "—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 802, 803.

**DAY 5** **THINK IT THROUGH:** Do we wonder at the disciples' level of unbelief? What about us today? Are we limited in what we are doing for the Lord because of unbelief? What evidence do we want?

### 3. In Galilee (verses 15-18).

Mark does not make it clear that there is a break in time between verse 14 and the verses that follow. Because of the parallel record in Matthew, we take it that this instruction was given in Galilee in connection with the appointment Jesus had made with His disciples prior to the closing days of Passion Week.

**What relationship between believing and doing do you find in the instruction the Lord gave at that time?**

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The destiny of those who disbelieve reminds us of the words spoken in the hearing of Nicodemus nearly three years before. (See John 3:18.)

The Lord proceeded to promise significant signs, wonders, and powers to His faithful followers. And while these gifts (somewhat reminiscent of the gifts of the Holy Spirit listed by Paul in several of his epistles, and particularly in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13) could be of value and comfort to believers anywhere, they seem to be adapted particularly to the needs of those who would be traveling in unfamiliar places, eating foods from a variety of countries, and needing to speak and understand languages of which they had no prior knowledge.

**How do you feel about your openness to such endowments of supernatural powers and gifts?**

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We must not let this portion of our lesson close without recommending earnestly to every reader the inspired counsel and commentary that we believe the Spirit has given to the proclaimers of the everlasting gospel in these last days. (See the section entitled "Further Study and Meditation.")

**DAY 6** **III. ASCENSION (Mark 16:19, 20). Read these verses before proceeding.**

The account of the ascension found in this part of Mark is quite brief. Is that because the event was insignificant? No, it is one of the pillars to the bridge of salvation, and thus absolutely essential. Christ's work was shifting. The blood He had shed was to be applied to the penitent believer who would soon come to realize that the temple at Jerusalem was not the focus for his atonement. The veil to the inner sanctuary already had been rent to show that the priestly services on earth were ended.

Matthew does not mention the ascension. Mark mentions it briefly. But Luke deals with it at some length, especially in the book of Acts.

The ascension took place somewhere near Bethany on the other side of the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem.

What emotions can you imagine surfacing in the minds and hearts of the disciples as the Lord was taken from them?

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What is the significance to us of the phrase "and sat on the right hand of God" (verse 19, last part)? Also read and meditate upon the magnificent passage found in *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 833-835.

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These last words of Mark's Gospel witness to the effectiveness of Jesus' work for the disciples and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. All that we learn about Jesus and study from the words of the Gospel have little meaning until they are put to work in the fulfillment of Christ's great commission. Is there not much food for thought in the fact that the preaching of the Word was confirmed by the signs given, rather than the reverse?

**DAY**  
**7**

**FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 86, entitled, "Go Teach All Nations," pages 818-828. Pages 821-825 deal especially with the verses from Mark, and it seems that they offer a particular mandate to those who carry the messages of the three angels to the world.

*Ascension.* "As the place of His ascension, Jesus chose the spot so often hallowed by His presence while He dwelt among men. Not Mount Zion, the place of David's city, not Mount Moriah, the temple site, was to be thus honored. There Christ had been mocked and rejected. There the waves of mercy, still returning in a stronger tide of love, had been beaten back by hearts as hard as rock. Thence Jesus, weary and heart-burdened, had gone forth to find rest in the Mount of Olives. The holy Shekinah, in departing from the first temple, had stood upon the eastern mountain, as if loath to forsake the chosen city; so Christ stood upon Olivet, with yearning heart overlooking Jerusalem. The groves and glens of the mountain had been consecrated by His prayers and tears. Its steep slopes had echoed the triumphant shouts of the multitude that proclaimed Him king. On its sloping descent He had found a home with Lazarus at Bethany. In the garden of Gethsemane at its foot He had prayed and agonized alone. From this mountain He was to ascend to heaven. Upon its summit His feet will rest when He shall come again. Not as a man of sorrows, but as a glorious and triumphant king He will stand upon Olivet, while Hebrew hallelujahs mingle with Gentile hosannas, and the voices of the redeemed as a mighty host shall swell the acclamation, Crown Him Lord of all!

"Now with the eleven disciples Jesus made His way toward the mountain. As they passed through the gate of Jerusalem, many wondering eyes looked upon the little company, led by One whom a few weeks before the rulers had condemned and crucified. The disciples knew not that this was to be their last interview with their Master. Jesus spent the time in conversation with them, repeating His former instruction. As they approached Gethsemane, He paused, that they might call to mind the lesson He had given them on the night of His great agony. Again He looked



upon the vine by which He had then represented the union of His church with Himself and His father; again He repeated the truths He had then unfolded. All around Him were reminders of His unrequited love. Even the disciples who were so dear to His heart, had, in the hour of His humiliation, reproached and forsaken Him.

"Christ had sojourned in the world for thirty-three years; He had endured its scorn, insult, and mockery; He had been rejected and crucified. Now, when about to ascend to His throne of glory,—as He reviews the ingratitude of the people He came to save,—will He not withdraw from them His sympathy and love? Will not His affections be centered upon that realm where He is appreciated, and where sinless angels wait to do His bidding? No; His promise to those loved ones whom He leaves on earth is, 'I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Matt. 28:20."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 829, 830.

**SUMMARY:** This lesson accentuates the glorious challenge Jesus left for us: "The gifts of the Spirit are promised to every believer according to his need for the Lord's work. The promise is just as strong and trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles. 'These signs shall follow them that believe.' This is the privilege of God's children, and faith should lay hold on all that it is possible to have as an indorsement [seal, sign, pledge, support] of faith."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 823.

**APPLICATION:** As you have studied the Gospel of Mark this quarter have you met in a special way the Saviour who is able to meet all your needs? As a result are you better able to share His grace and blessing with those who have similar needs? How will you go about doing so?

**PREVIEW OF NEXT QUARTER'S LESSONS:** Note the outline on the next page that introduces next quarter's lessons. When you receive your new quarterly be sure to read the Introduction and table of contents in order to be aware of the scope of the lessons being studied.

**NOTES:**

# Lessons for Second Quarter, 1985

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the second quarter of 1985 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of this series is "Christ Our Hope."

## First Lesson:

### THE FAMILY OF GOD

MEMORY TEXT: Gal. 3:28.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Tim. 1:1, 2; 4: 9-21.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Sinners, estranged from God, become members of God's universal family through being adopted in Christ. They then develop a family relationship with their brothers and sisters in Christ that is often closer than natural family ties.

#### OUTLINE:

- I. Paul's Relationship to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:1, 2).
- II. Timothy's Love and Obedience (2 Tim. 4:9-21).

## Second Lesson:

### A YOUNG MISSIONARY

MEMORY TEXT: Eccl. 12:1.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Tim. 1:1-5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The knowledge of the Scriptures is fundamental to the training of Christian character and for successful Christian living.

#### OUTLINE:

- I. Timothy's Conversion (2 Tim. 3:15).
- II. Timothy's Call and Commitment (1 Tim. 4:12-16; 6:20).
- III. Timothy's Continuing Challenge (2 Tim. 2:1-3; 3:14; 4:5).

## Lessons in Braille:

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This Could Be a Most Important

# PAGE FROM YOUR FUTURE

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1 Sunday  
January 1

"It Is Finished"

Part 1—Israel's End

"They cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate said unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar." John 19:15.

It is not important to know who was responsible for the death of Jesus Christ. (See Matt. 26:24.) For the sins of the whole world. Every Christian confesses that he or she brought Christ to Calvary. Christ was betrayed and denied by "Christian" apostles. The New Testament says that the Romans and Jews were responsible for Christ's death. But Jesus really died of a broken heart—broken by the sins of all people. Jesus came to earth to die.

When Pilate washed his hands he was innocent, what did he scream? Matt.

of the things  
ause Jesus died  
Mark 15:38;  
and (3) Matt.

unprotected

1. When Jesus said, "It is finished," a hidden hand ripped open the temple veil. "And so your Temple will be abandoned and empty" (Matt. 23:38, TEV).

2. When Christ was resurrected (returned to life), other people were resurrected (see Eph. 4:8). They called Jesus their King. The Jewish leaders were shocked and speechless. What if they were to meet the risen Christ? Never again could they sleep peacefully.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 785, paraphrased.

A.D. 70.

3. Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70.  
What happened to Israel after the cross? Rom. 11:11-26.

The cry, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15), and the death of Jesus brought the mission of Israel to an end. Since Jesus' death on the cross, the Christian church is spiritual Israel. Jews are not saved as a nation, but as individual Christians.

**A QUESTION FOR THOUGHT:**  
Why is it important to know that Israel is the church today, and not a nation?

**FURTHER STUDY:** Romans 9 and 10.

and. Since Jesus death on the the Christian church is spirital. Jews are not saved as a , but as individual Christians.

**QUESTION FOR THOUGHT:**  
s it important to know that is the church today, and not a

or more than a thousand years Christ was Israel's King, Protector, and Guide. When Israel refused to accept Jesus, they became

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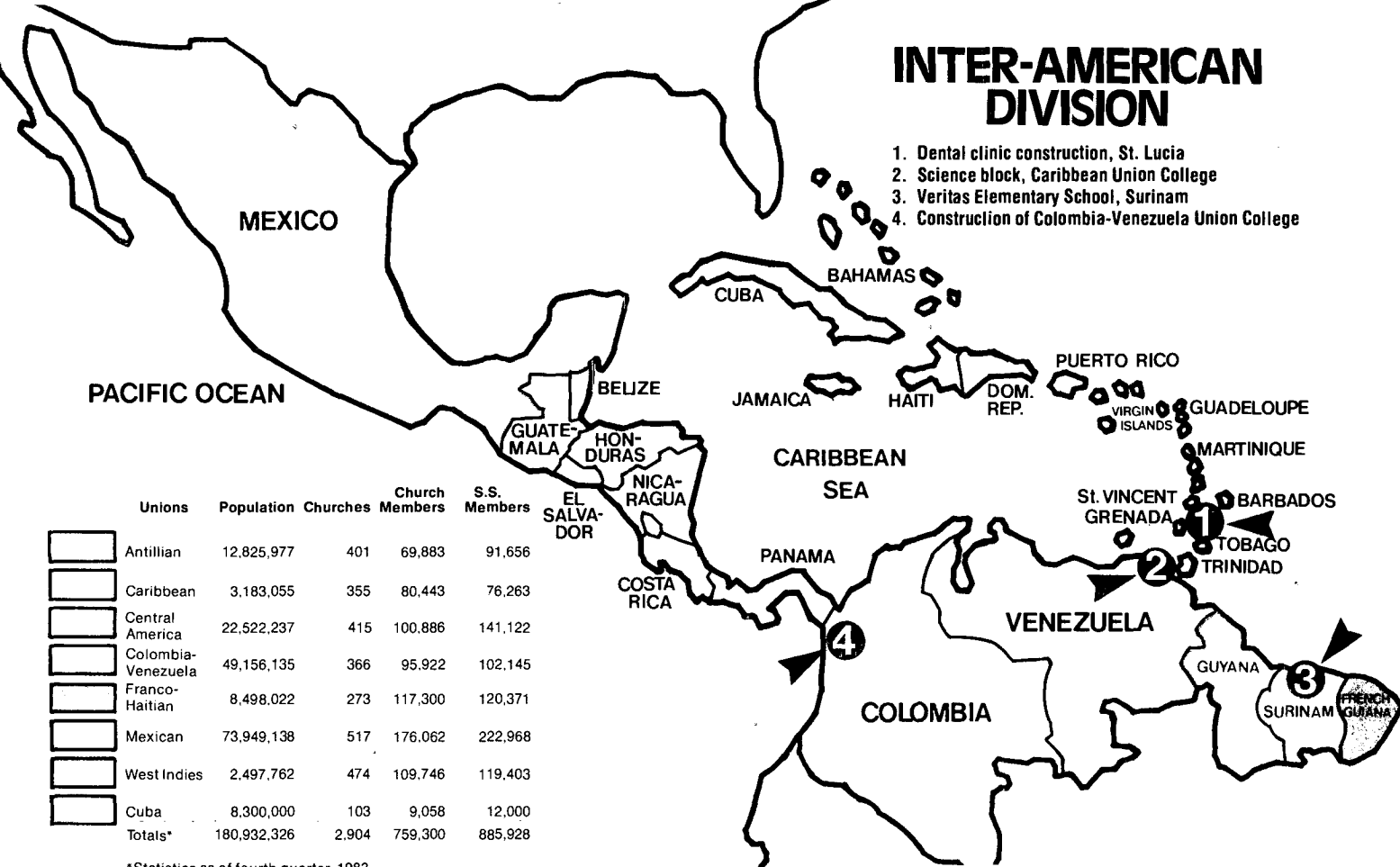
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Caribbean	3,183,055	355	80,443	76,263
Central America	22,522,237	415	100,886	141,122
Colombia-Venezuela	49,156,135	366	95,922	102,145
Franco-Haitian	8,498,022	273	117,300	120,371
Mexican	73,949,138	517	176,062	222,968
West Indies	2,497,762	474	109,746	119,403
Cuba	8,300,000	103	9,058	12,000
Totals*	180,932,326	2,904	759,300	885,928

\*Statistics as of fourth quarter, 1982