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MARK

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BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK

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# THE GOSPEL OF MARK

B. W. Johnson  
and  
Don DeWalt

- A New . . .
- Commentary
  - Workbook
  - Teaching Manual

Both the *Authorized King James Version* of 1611  
and *American Standard Translation* of 1901 are used  
in the *TEXT* of this book

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DEDICATION

To the one who teaches  
by life and word the  
Life of our Lord — Seth Wilson



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1889 B. W. Johnson (author of *People's New Testament; Vision of the Ages; The Gospel of John*) wrote a *Lesson Commentary* on 277 verses of the gospel of Mark. There are 678 verses in Mark. The editor has written *Thought Questions* for all 678 verses, as well as *Fact Questions* for the entire Gospel. The *Outline and Analysis* for the 401 verses B. W. Johnson did not discuss in his *Lesson Commentary* are also the work of the editor. The *Explanatory Notes* on the 401 verses are compiled by the editor from the following writers:

1. Lyman Abbott—*An Illustrated Commentary on the Gospel According to Mark and Luke*, New York; A. S. Barnes & Company, 1877.
2. J. A. Alexander—*Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, Grand Rapids; Zondervan Publishing House, 1955—reprint of 1864.
3. Henry Alford, *New Testament for English Readers*, 4 volumes in one, Chicago, Moody Press—reprint.
4. W. C. Allen, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, New York; Macmillan Co., 1915—Oxford Church Biblical Commentary.
5. Samuel J. Andrews, *The Life of Our Lord Upon Earth*, Grand Rapids; Zondervan Publishing House, 1954—reprint of revised edition of 1891.
6. Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament, Explanatory and Practical*, Grand Rapids; Baker Book House, 1949—reprint of 1832.
7. J. V. Bartlet, *St. Mark in the Century Bible*—Edinburgh; T. C. and E. C. Jack, 1922.
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10. David Brown, *Matthew—John* in Vol. V of *A Commentary Critical Experimental and Practical*—by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, Grand Rapids; Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948 (reprint).
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12. Madam Cecilia, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, London; Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, & Co., Ltd., 1904.
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17. Edward Hastings—*Speaker's Bible: Mark* 2 vols. Aberdeen, Scotland; 1962, Baker Book House—reprint of 1929.
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19. Alexander Maclaren—*Expositions of Holy Scriptures: St. Mark*—Grand Rapids; Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1944 (reprint).
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22. Matthew Riddle, *The Gospel According to Mark in the International Revision Commentary on the New Testament*, New York; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881.
23. J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, 4 vols., Grand Rapids; Zondervan Publishing House (reprint).
24. M. F. Sadler, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, London; George Bell & Sons, 1892.
25. Henry Barclay Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, London; MacMillan & Co., 1898.
26. E. W. Thornton and Edwin R. Errett, *Notes on the International Sunday School Lessons*, Cincinnati; Standard Publishing Co., 1918.



# GOSPEL OF MARK

## A Complete List of Authors From Which Quotations are Made in this Text

- |                        |                        |                     |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Lyman Abbott        | 36. A. R. Faussett     | 70. James Morison   |
| 2. J. A. Alexander     | 37. Thomas Fuller      | 71. Muir            |
| 3. Dean Alford         | 38. Cunningham Geikie  | 72. Peloubet        |
| 4. W. C. Allen         | 39. Godet              | 73. Petler          |
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| 8. J. V. Bartlett      | 43. H. B. Hackett      | 77. Matthew Riddle  |
| 9. Richard Baxter      | 44. Hanna              | 78. F. W. Robertson |
| 10. John Albert Bengel | 45. Edward Hastings    | 79. Robinson        |
| 11. Beza               | 46. Matthew Henry      | 80. Rose            |
| 12. E. Bickersteth     | 47. Dean Hook          | 81. J. C. Ryle      |
| 13. David Brown        | 48. Hort               | 82. M. F. Sadler    |
| 14. Bunyan             | 49. Howson             | 83. St. Gregory     |
| 15. Burckhardt         | 50. Hurlburt           | 84. Schaff          |
| 16. John Henry Burn    | 51. Jacobus            | 85. Spurgeon        |
| 17. John Calvin        | 52. Robert Jamison     | 86. Stalker         |
| 18. Madam Cecelia      | 53. Jerome             | 87. Stanley         |
| 19. G. A. Chadwick     | 54. B. W. Johnson      | 88. Stier           |
| 20. Chrysostom         | 55. Josephus           | 89. Stock           |
| 21. Adam Clark         | 56. Kitto              | 90. Swete           |
| 22. G. W. Clark        | 57. John Peter Lange   | 91. Swieton         |
| 23. W. N. Clarke       | 58. Lenski             | 92. Theophrastus    |
| 24. F. C. Cook         | 59. Lightfoot          | 93. Tholuck         |
| 25. Cumming            | 60. Lindell and Scott  | 94. Thomas          |
| 26. Dante              | 61. Luthardt           | 95. Thomson         |
| 27. Don Dewelt         | 62. Martin Luther      | 96. E. W. Thornton  |
| 28. Diodorus           | 63. George MacKenzie   | 97. Tischendorf     |
| 29. Dodd               | 64. Alexander Maclaren | 98. Trench          |
| 30. Ralph Earle        | 65. Maclear            | 99. Tristram        |
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| 34. Joseph S. Excell   | 69. G. Campbell Morgan | 103. Whedon         |
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## GOSPEL OF MARK

### SUMMARY OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Noting Places, Periods of Time and Events

— Seth Wilson —

#### *THIRTY YEARS PREPARATION*

1. Bethlehem—Birth, Lk. 2
2. Jerusalem—Presented in the Temple, Lk. 2
3. Bethlehem—Wisemen found Him, Mt. 2
4. Egypt—Fleeing from Herod's decree, Mt. 2
5. Nazareth—Boyhood home, Mt. 2
6. Jerusalem—Passover, age 12, Lk. 2
7. Nazareth—Grew up until about 30 years of age, Lk. 2
8. Jordan in Wilderness of Judea—Baptized by John, Mt. 3; Mk. 1; Lk. 3
9. Wilderness—Tempted of Satan, Mt. 4; Mk. 1; Lk. 4
10. Bethabara—Pointed out by John, obtained first disciples, Jn. 1
11. Cana of Galilee—Wedding; first miracle, Jn. 2
12. Capernaum—With family and disciples—"Abode not many days" Jn. 2

#### *FIRST YEAR OF MINISTRY*

##### EARLY JUDEAN MINISTRY (8 or 9 months)

13. Jerusalem—FIRST PASSOVER; cleansed temple; first public presentation, Jn. 2
14. Judea—Period of about 8 or 9 months, Jn. 3  
Miracles ("no man can do these things . . .")  
Preached to Nicodemus New Birth and Eternal Life, Son lifted up  
Making and baptizing more disciples than John
15. Sychar in Samaria—Women at well; all city came out; abode two days, Jn. 4 (4 months to harvest)

##### GALILEAN MINISTRY (1 year and 3 or 4 months)

16. Cana of Galilee—Spoke the word and the son at Capernaum healed, Jn. 4
17. Nazareth—Read and taught in synagogue; first rejection there, Lk. 4
18. Capernaum—Called four fishermen; healed many. Mt. 4; Mk. 1; Lk. 5
19. Galilean tour (first)—Great crowds; miracles, Mt. 4; Lk. 4; Mk. 1  
Lepers healed, Mt. 8; Mk. 1; Lk. 5. Paralytic (through roof) Mt. 9; Mk. 2; Lk. 5  
Call of Matthew, feast of publicans, Mt. 9; Mk. 2; Lk. 5  
Controversies over eating and fasting, Mt. 9; Mk. 2; Lk. 5

## GOSPEL OF MARK

### SECOND YEAR OF MINISTRY

20. Jerusalem—SECOND PASSOVER: Lame man at pool; controversy about Sabbath healing; sermon on Deity and credentials, Jn. 5
21. Galilee—Controversy over Sabbath Reaping, Mt. 12; Mk. 2; Lk. 6  
Healed withered hand on Sabbath in synagogue (Capernaum?) Mt. 12; Mk. 3; Lk. 6  
Thronging crowds from far and near, Many miracles, Mt. 12; Mk. 3; Lk. 6  
Named twelve "Apostles," Mt. 3; Lk. 6  
Sermon on the Mount, Mt. 5,6,7; Lk. 6  
Healed centurions servant (Capernaum) Mt. 8; Lk. 7
22. Nain—Raised Widow's son, Lk. 7
23. Capernaum—Question from John the Baptist; sermon on John, Mt. 11; Lk. 7  
Condemnation of unrepentant cities; the great invitation, Mt. 11 in house of Simon the Pharisee; Penitent woman forgiven, Lk. 7
24. Galilean tour (second)—Charge of league with Satan, Mt. 12; Sign sought; sign of Jonah; judgment of this generation, Mt. 12  
Mother and brethren try to interrupt, Mt. 12; Mk. 3; Lk. 8  
Sermon in parables, Mt. 13; Mk. 4; Lk. 8  
Challenge of high cost to would-be followers, Mt. 8; Lk. 9
25. On Sea of Galilee—Stilled the tempest, Mt. 8; Mk. 4; Lk. 8
26. Gergesa—Demoniacs and swine, Mt. 8; Mk. 5; Lk. 8
27. Capernaum—Healed woman with flow of blood and raised Jairus' daughter, Mt. 9; Mk. 5; Lk. 8  
Healed two blind men and a dumb demoniac, Mt. 9
28. Nazareth—Apparently last visit; unbelief; some miracles, Mt. 13; Mk. 6
29. Galilean tour (third)—Twelve sent out in pairs, Mt. 10; Mk. 6; Lk. 9  
Herod's fear of Jesus, Mt. 14; Mk. 6; Lk. 9  
(Tour ends at Capernaum; multitudes greatly aroused.)
30. Across the Sea, near Bethsaida Julias—THIRD PASSOVER NIGHT—Day of teaching; fed 5000; refused crown; night of prayer—Mt. 14; Mk. 6; Lk. 9; Jn 6

### THIRD YEAR OF MINISTRY

#### RETIREMENTS AND TRAVELS WITH THE TWELVE (6 months)

31. On the Sea—(in the night) Walked on water; stilled tempest, Mt. 14; Mk. 6; Jn 6



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32. Gennesaret—Miracles, Mt. 14; Mk. 6
33. Capernaum—Sermon on the Bread of Life, Jn. 6. Many forsake Him.  
Controversy with Pharisees about traditions (washing) Mt 15; Mk. 7
34. Phoenicia—Retirement with apostles; healed the demonized daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman, Mt. 15; Mk. 7
35. Decapolis—Healed deaf stammerer and many others, Mt. 15; Mk. 7  
Fed 4000 (Considerable public ministry implied) Mt. 15; Mk. 8
36. Magadan—Pharisees and Sadducees demand sign from heaven, Mt. 16; Mk. 8
37. On the Sea—Crossing in boat; warned disciples against influence of popular leaders and parties, Mt. 16; Mk. 8
38. Caesarea Philippi—Question of Jesus' identity; Peter's confession, Mt. 16; Mk. 8; Lk. 9  
First plain prediction of His death, Mt. 16; Mk. 8; Lk. 9
39. An exceeding high mountain (Hermon?) Transfiguration, Mt. 17; Mk. 9; Lk. 9  
Healed Demoniac boy, Mt. 17; Mk. 9; Lk. 9  
Further prediction of cross, Mt. 17; Mk. 9; Lk. 9
40. Capernaum—Peter and the temple tax, Mt. 17  
Discussion of who shall be greatest, Mt. 18; Mk. 9; Lk. 9  
The unknown worker of miracles, Mk. 9; Lk. 9  
Discussion of stumbling blocks, mistreatment, forgiveness, Mt. 18; Mk. 9  
Advice of His unbelieving brethren, Jn. 7
41. Journey through Samaria—Sons of Thunder would call down fire, Lk. 9

### LATER JUDEAN MINISTRY (about 3 months)

42. Jerusalem—FEAST OF TABERNACLES: Confused opinions about Him; Attempt to arrest Him; Water of Life, Jn. 7  
Sermon on the Light of the world; freedom; Abraham's seed, Jn. 8  
Healing the man born blind; controversy, Jn. 9  
The Good Shepherd and the Door of the Sheep, Jn. 10  
The seventy sent out; discussion on their return, Lk. 10  
A lawyer's question; parable of good Samaritan, Lk. 10
43. Bethany—Jesus and Mary and Martha, Lk. 10
44. Place of Prayer—Discourse on Prayer, Lk. 11

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45. Place Unknown—Controversy about demons and league with Satan, Lk. 11  
Signs and the judgment of this generation, Lk. 11
  46. Pharisee's house—Invited to dinner; Denounced Phariseism, Lk. 11
  47. Before a multitude of many thousands—Great evangelistic appeals; Lk. 12 & 13
    - (1) Warning against hypocrisy & fear of men
    - (2) Against covetousness: parable of rich fool
    - (3) Against anxiety for worldly needs: trust God
    - (4) Urged watchfulness and preparedness for day of account; parables of waiting servants and wise steward
    - (5) Christ the burning issue: no neutrality
    - (6) Settle with God "out of court"
    - (7) No difference, *all* must repent
    - (8) Parable of fig tree: 3 chances, one more, then cut down.
  48. In a synagogue—Woman bowed double; controversy about Sabbath healing, Lk. 13  
Parables of the kingdom: mustard and leaven, Lk. 13
  49. Temple in Jerusalem—Feast of Dedication; attempts to kill Jesus for blasphemy; Jesus' claims:—the door, the good shepherd, one with God, the Son of God. Jn. 10
- LATER PEREAN MINISTRY (about 3 months)
50. Perea—Retirement to place of His baptism, Jn. 10
  51. Cities and villages—Journeys and discussions in Perea: few saved, Herod the fox. Lk. 13
  52. Home of a Pharisee—On the Sabbath, healed dropsy and discussion; Conduct at feasts: chief seats, whom to invite; Parable of great feast, slighted invitation, excuses. Lk. 14
  53. Before a great multitude—Sermon on cost of discipleship. Lk. 14
  54. Place unknown—Parables of lost sheep, coin and son. Lk. 15  
Parable of the unjust steward, Lk. 16  
The rich man and Lazarus, Lk. 16  
Stumbling blocks; forgiveness; unprofitable servants, Lk. 17
  55. Bethany—Raising of Lazarus, Jn. 11  
Rulers in Jerusalem plot to kill Jesus, Jn. 11
  56. Ephraim (city)—"Tarried" with the disciples, Jn. 11
  57. Trip through borders of Samaria, Galilee, and Perea to Jerusalem, Lk. 17  
Healing ten lepers.

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Sermon on the time of the coming of the kingdom.

Teaching on prayer: the unjust judge; Pharisee & Publican, Lk. 18

Teaching on divorce (in Perea) Mt. 19; Mk. 10

Jesus and the little children, Lk. 18; Mt. 19; Mk. 10

Rich young ruler; peril of riches; apostles' reward, Mt. 19; Mk. 10; Lk. 18

Parable of laborers in the vineyard, Mt. 20

Plain prediction of the crucifixion, Mt. 20; Mk. 10; Lk. 18

James and John ask chief honors, Mt. 20; Mk. 10

58. Jericho—Blind men healed (Bartimaeus), Mt. 20; Mk. 10; Lk. 18  
Zacchaeus, Lk. 19

59. Road to Jerusalem—Parable of the Pounds, Lk. 19

### LAST WEEK IN JERUSALEM AREA

60. Bethany—Reception; Many anoints Jesus, Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 13:3-9; Jn. 12:1-11

61. Jerusalem—"Triumphal" entry (probably Sunday), Mt. 21; Mk. 11; Lk. 19; Jn. 12

62. Bethany—"Night's lodging, Mt. 21:17

Next day cursed fig tree on way to Jerusalem, Mt. 21; Mk. 11

63. Jerusalem—Second cleansing of the temple (Monday?), Mt. 21; Mk. 11; Lk. 19

64. "Every evening He went out of the city" (to Bethany most likely), Mk. 11:19

65. Jerusalem—(Tuesday?) Day of discussions

Question of Jesus' authority, Mt. 21; Mk. 11; Lk. 20

Parable of two sons, Mt. 21

Parable of the vineyard, Mt. 21; Mk. 12; Lk. 20

Parable of the wedding garment, Mt. 22

Question of tribute to Caesar, Mt. 22; Mk. 12; Lk. 20

Question of the resurrection, Mt. 22; Mk. 12; Lk. 20

Question of the greatest commandment, Mt. 22; Mk. 12

Question about the Son of David, Mt. 22; Mk. 12; Lk. 20

Denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees, Mt. 23; Mk. 12; Lk. 20

Widow's mite, Mk. 12; Lk. 21

Sermon on significance of life and death, Jn. 12

Predictions of end of Jerusalem and of the world; His second coming, Mt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21

On judgment: ten virgins; talents; judgment scene, Mt. 25

Prediction of Jesus' death, Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22

(Wednesday?) Judas' plot to betray Jesus, Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22

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### FOURTH PASSOVER

Thursday, 1st day of unleavened bread; made ready Passover, Mt. 26:17-19; Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-13

The Upper Room—After night (Jewish Friday) Passover meal; feet washed; disciples warned; Judas departed; Lord's supper instituted; farewell discourse with the apostles, Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22; Jn. 13,14

Out in the night—Parting instructions and predictions: parable of the vine; Holy Spirit promised, Jn. 15 & 16

Great intercessory prayer, Jn. 17

Gethsemane—Agony and prayer; angels come; betrayal and arrest, Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22; Jn. 18

Court Rooms—Trials before Annas, Caiaphas, Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, Pilate: tortures, Mt. 26 & 27; Mk. 14 & 15; Lk. 22 & 23; Jn. 18

Golgotha—Crucifixion and burial (Friday, day of preparation) Mt. 27; Mk. 15; Lk. 23; Jn. 19

### FORTY DAYS AFTER THE RESURRECTION

In a garden outside the city—(Sunday) The resurrection; appearances to Mary, other women, (Peter I Cor. 15:5) Mt. 28; Mk. 16; Lk. 24; Jn. 20

66. Trip to Emmaus—Appearance and teaching to two disciples, Lk. 24

67. Jerusalem—(same night) Appearance to the ten, Mk. 16; Lk. 24; Jn. 20

(8 days later) Appearance to the eleven, Jn. 20; (I Cor. 15:5)

68. Galilee—Appearance to seven by the sea, Jn. 21

To the disciples on a mountain; great commission, Mt. 28

To more than 500 brethren, I Cor. 15:6

69. Jerusalem—Appearance to James; to the apostles (I Cor. 15:7; Acts 1), Lk. 24

70. Near Bethany—The ascension, Mk. 16; Lk. 24; Acts 1.

## INTRODUCTION TO MARK

by J. W. McGarvey

### 1. THE AUTHORSHIP.

If we were to transcribe from our Introduction to the book of Matthew, what we have written on the subject of its authorship, almost every word would be equally appropriate to the book of Mark. There is the same uniformity in the testimony of early writers; the same absence of doubt among both ancient and modern scholars; the same improbability that the authorship could have been attributed in early times to the wrong person, and the same or even greater certainty, that if a fictitious authorship had been assumed for the book by the early Christians, it would have been attributed to some one supposed to have a higher claim to credibility and to the reverence of the disciples. It would certainly have been attributed to some one of the apostles.

### 2. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE WRITER.

Mark was not an apostle, nor is there any evidence that he was at any time a personal attendant of Jesus. He was not, then, an eye-witness of the scenes, at least of the chief part of the scenes, which he describes. In this respect he was like Luke (Luke 1:2), but unlike Matthew and John. This fact, connected with the circumstance that Mark is nowhere said in express terms, to have been an inspired man, has given prominence to the question, whether he was qualified to write an infallible account of incidents in the life of Jesus. In order to a right judgement on this question, we should consider, first, his natural opportunities for information, and second, the evidences of his inspiration:

1. John Mark was the son of a woman named Mary, who was a prominent disciple in the city of Jerusalem at the time of the death of James and the imprisonment of Peter, and whose dwelling in that city was a well known place of resort for the disciples. All of this appears from the incident recorded in Acts 12:12-17. The house was so well known as a place of resort for the brethren, that when Peter was released from prison by the angel, though it was the dead of night, he at once repaired thither to give notice of his release, and to send word to the surviving James and other leading brethren. Mary was also a sister to Barnabas (Col. 4:10); which fact would in itself render her somewhat conspicuous; for Barnabas became at a very early period one of the most noted men in the Jerusalem Church. (See Acts 4:36, 37; 9:26, 27; 11:22-24). The land which Barnabas had owned in the island of Cyprus, and which he sold for the benefit of the poor, points to the probability that his sister Mary, besides owning a residence in Jerusalem,

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was possessed of other property. The indications are that she was a widow in easy circumstances, full of hospitality, and intimately associated with the apostles and the other leaders of the Church in Jerusalem. Thus it appears that from the very beginning of the Church, if not during the life of Jesus, John Mark enjoyed the company of the apostles in his own home, where their conversations with one another and with inquiring friends, must have perfected that knowledge of Jesus which, in common with the masses of the people, he acquired by listening to their daily discourses in the temple court. Had he been, then, but an ordinary youth, with a disposition to remember facts and to record them, he might have written from what he heard the inspired witnesses relate, an account which would have been fallible only in so far as he used his own words instead of theirs.

But besides these opportunities, Mark spent some years in most intimate association with Paul and Barnabas, laboring as their "minister," or assistant (Acts 12:25, 13:5; 15:37-39); at a later period he was associated in a similar way with Peter (1 Peter 5:13); and then again with Paul (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11).

During these associations, Mark must have heard the inspired preachers, in preaching to different communities and different individuals, rehearse many hundreds of times the leading events in the life of Jesus; and he must have been an exceedingly inattentive listener, if these events, in the very language of the apostles, were not indelibly imprinted on his memory. It is impossible, then, for Mark to have enjoyed better natural opportunities than he did, except by having, in addition to these, the opportunity of witnessing for himself the events of which he writes. He could truly have said with Luke: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having obtained perfect understanding of all from the beginning, to write." (Luke 1:1-4). Those, then, who are disposed to regard the gospel narrative as nothing more than uninspired records, should abate nothing from the credibility of Mark's narrative on the ground of his want of information; for surely no uninspired writer ever had better facilities for informing himself with entire accuracy concerning events of which he had not been an eye-witness.

2. As we have intimated before, there is no express statement in the Scriptures of the fact that Mark was an inspired man; yet there are various facts which force us to the conclusion that he was. In the first place, it was a custom of the apostles to impart spiritual gifts to prominent men in the churches, and especially to their traveling companions

## GOSPEL OF MARK

and fellow-laborers. Thus Philip, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, Silas, Judas, and Timothy, enjoyed miraculous gifts (Acts 8:6; 13:1; 15:32; 2 Tim. 1:6) and individuals in the churches in Samaria, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Galatia, etc. enjoyed similar gifts. (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6; 1 Cor. 1:4-7; Rom. 15:14; Gal. 3:5). Now to assume that Mark, who was, at different times, and for many years, a companion and fellow-laborer of two apostles, was overlooked in the distribution of these gifts, would be unwarrantable and even absurd. In the second place, there are evidences that Mark was regarded as especially fitted for labors which were usually performed by men possessed of miraculous gifts. He was chosen by Paul and Barnabas as their assistant on their first tour among the Gentiles (Acts 12:25; 13:5); and although, on their second tour, Paul declined his company, Barnabas still preferred him and separated from Paul rather than separate from Mark. (15:36-39). At a later period he was sent by Paul on important missions among the churches (Col. 4:10); and he was sent for by Paul during the last imprisonment of the latter, because he was profitable to him for the ministry. (2 Tim. 4:11). Finally, if a tradition preserved by Papias, who wrote in the first half of the second century, has any foundation in fact, the apostle Peter had some connection with the labors of Mark in preparing his gospel, and it is highly improbable that he would have allowed him to undertake such a work without imparting to him the Holy Spirit if he were not already endowed with the requisite gifts. The words of Papias as quoted by Eusebius, are these: "This also the elder (John) said: Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, wrote down exactly whatever things he remembered, but yet not in the order in which Christ either spoke or did them; for he was neither a hearer nor a follower of the Lord's, but was afterward, as I (Papias) said, a follower of Peter." See Smith's Dictionary, Art. Mark; and on the value of this and some similar traditional statements see Alford's Introduction to Mark, Section II.

From these considerations we think there can be no reasonable doubt, that in addition to Mark's free and long continued access to original and infallible sources of information, he enjoyed such direct aid from the Holy Spirit as must have guarded him absolutely against errors of every kind in the composition of his narrative.

### 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NARRATIVE.

Mark's narrative is distinguished from Matthew's, which it resembles more than it does either Luke's or John's, by several striking peculiarities, of which we mention the following:

1. While Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus, intended to show that he was a son of Abraham through David, and follows this with a brief account of his childhood, Mark, omitting all the ground

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covered by the first two chapters of Matthew, announces Jesus at once as the Christ, the Son of God (1:1), hurriedly touches the ministry of John and the temptation of Jesus, and enters on his main theme with the commencement of the ministry in Galilee. He also omits other passages of the history which Matthew treats at considerable length, such as the sermon on the Mount, the denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees found in the 23rd chapter of Matthew, and the prophetic discourse found in the 25th chapter.

2. In his treatment of the material which is common to himself and Matthew, he is, on the whole, more brief, but at times is much more elaborate; and his arrangement of the matter is often widely different.

For an illustration of the difference in arrangement, we refer the reader to the note headed "Difference from Matthew," at the end of chapter first. His more elaborate treatment of some passages results from his peculiar treatment of the argument from miracles. While Matthew mentions a large number, Mark selects those which are the more striking, and describes them with greater minuteness.

3. Throughout the portions in which the matter of the two narratives is the same, there is constantly occurring an identity of thought accompanied by variety of expression, and especially by a more graphic style, showing clearly that Mark is an independent writer even in those passages which have been erroneously regarded as extracts from Matthew.

4. Another peculiarity is that of selecting from a group of persons acting in a given scene, or from a group of miracles wrought on a given occasion, a single one which is described particularly, while nothing at all is said of the others.

All of these peculiarities combine to prove what is now almost universally believed by critics, that neither is Mark's narrative an abridgement, as some have thought, of Matthew's and Luke's; nor are theirs, as others have thought, expansions of Mark's. Each evidently wrote without having seen the manuscript of either of the other two.

### 4. APPARENT DISCREPANCIES.

In many passages in which Mark treats of matter common to himself and the other historians there are various appearances of discrepancy, which have been regarded by some as irreconcilable contradictions. Each of these which is regarded as worthy of notice at all, has been treated in the body of this text, and we think it is there made to appear that in none of them is there a real contradiction. We allude to them here because of the argument which has been based on them to disprove the plenary inspiration of the writers.

It has been argued, that if the Holy Spirit guided the inspired writers not only in the thoughts which they should express, but also in their



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choice of words, there would be none of these appearances of discrepancy, but the same thought would always be expressed in about the same words. Indeed, it is argued that on this supposition we ought to find a uniform style pervading the writings of all the inspired men, seeing that it was not they but the Holy Spirit who spoke and wrote. But all such reasoning is fallacious in two particulars: first, in assuming that the Holy Spirit either would not or could not vary his style to suit the peculiar mental organization of each writer; and second, in assuming that there is not a style common to all the writers of Sacred History. Both of these assumptions are illogical, and the latter is contradicted by facts. There are characteristics of style common to all the historical writers of both the Old Testament and the New, which distinguish them from all uninspired historians, and which mark their style as that of the Holy Spirit. We can not here elaborate this proposition, but we mention first, the purely dramatic form in which they depict the characters of men, allowing them to act their respective parts without a word of comment, without an expression by the historian, of approbation or disapprobation, and utterly without those attempts at analysis of character which all other historians have found indispensable. Second, the unexampled impartiality with which they record facts, speaking with as little reserve concerning the sins and follies of their own friends, as of the most cruel deeds of their enemies—as freely, for example, of Peter's denial, as of the high-priest's malice and cruelty. Third, the imperturbable calmness, the utter freedom from passion, with which they move along the current of history, relating with as little apparent feeling the most wonderful and exciting events as those the most trivial. The final sufferings of Jesus, for example, are described with as much calmness, as the fact of his taking a seat on Peter's fishing boat to address the people. This characteristic of the inspired historians has been noticed by every appreciative reader of the sacred volume, and fixes the primary authorship unmistakably in Him,

“Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,

A hero perish, or a sparrow fall;

Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,

And now a bubble burst, and now a world.”

As it was desirable that the Bible should touch every cord in every human soul, it was needful that the presentation of truth should be characterized by very great diversities of style. While preserving, then, as it does, those characteristics which mark it as divine, God has wisely chosen, in order to secure the needed variety, that its various parts should be written by men of great diversity of mental peculiarities, and that each of these should leave the impress of his own style of thought and expression on his composition. As the light which starts from the sun in

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passing through a cathedral window takes on the many hues of the stained glass, allowing each pane to impart its own particular hue, and spreads them all in delightful harmony on the objects within, so the truth that came down from heaven was allowed to pass through the minds of many men ere it reached the written page, bearing with it the impress of each without being changed from truth to error. In this way alone can all of the peculiarities of this book of books be accounted for.

### 5. FOR WHAT READERS INTENDED.

We think that there are no conclusive evidences that Mark intended his narrative for any special class of readers. From his omission of the genealogy of Jesus, and of all references to the prophecies fulfilled in the career of Jesus, it is inferred that he did not, like Matthew, write especially for Jewish readers; but the evidences commonly relied on as proof that he wrote especially for Gentiles, are, we think, inconclusive. True, he translates into Greek, some Hebrew or Aramaic terms which he employs, but Matthew does the same almost as often, and the only apparent reason why Mark does so more frequently is because he introduces two words more which need translation than does Matthew. (Comp. Mark 5:41; 5:11, 34; 15:22, 34 with Matt. 1:23; 17:33, 46). In neither writer, however, should this be regarded as an adaptation to Gentile readers; for they were writing in the Greek language, and it is but compliance with an ordinary rule of composition, that foreign terms introduced are accompanied by a translation. Moreover, Jews as well as Gentiles, in that age, seldom read any other language than the Greek. The argument in favor of the proposition that Mark wrote especially for Gentile readers, depends, when fairly stated, on nothing more than the fact that in one instance (7:3, 4) he explains a custom which Jews, at least those who resided in Palestine, well understood. But this only shows that he was not unmindful of his Gentile readers, not that he wrote with especial reference to them. I conclude that while Matthew wrote especially for Jews, and Luke especially for the Gentiles, Mark, whose evangelical labors had been divided between the two classes, wrote without especial reference to either, but with both classes constantly before his mind.

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## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST (FROM ANDREWS)

Annunciation to Zacharias .....	October	6 B.C.
Annunciation to Mary .....	April	5 B.C.
Mary visits Elizabeth, and remains three months ..	April-June	5 B.C.
Birth of John the Baptist .....	June	5 B.C.
Jesus Born at Bethlehem .....	December	5 B.C.
The Angel and the shepherds .....	December	5 B.C.
Presentation of Jesus .....	February	4 B.C.
Coming of the Magi .....	February	4 B.C.
Flight of Jesus into Egypt .....	February	4 B.C.
Return to Nazareth and sojourn there .....	May	4 B.C.
Jesus, at twelve years of age, attends the Passover ..	April	8 A.D.
John the Baptist begins his labors .....	Summer	26 A.D.
Baptism of Jesus .....	January	27 A.D.
Jesus tempted in the Wilderness .....	January-	
Deputation of priests and Levites to the Baptist ..	February	27 A.D.
Jesus Returns to Galilee .....	February	27 A.D.
Wedding at Cana of Galilee .....	February	27 A.D.
First Passover of Jesus' ministry;		
cleansing of Temple .....	April	27 A.D.
Jesus begins to baptize (by his disciples) .....	May	27 A.D.
Jesus departs into Galilee, through Samaria .....	December	27 A.D.
A few weeks spent by Jesus in retirement .....	January-	
The Baptist Imprisoned .....	April	28 A.D.
The second Passover; healing of impotent man ..	March	28 A.D.
Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee .....	April	28 A.D.
Calling of the four disciples and healing		
at Capernaum .....	April-May	28 A.D.
First circuit in Galilee; healing of the leper ....	May	28 A.D.
Return to Capernaum, and healing of the		
paralytic .....	Summer	28 A.D.
Plucking the corn, and healing the man		
with the withered hand .....	Summer	28 A.D.
Choice of Apostles, and Sermon on the Mount ..	Summer	28 A.D.
Healing of centurion's servant at Capernaum ....	Summer	28 A.D.
Journey to Nain, and raising of the widow's son ..	Autumn	28 A.D.
Message to Jesus of the Baptist .....	Autumn	28 A.D.
Jesus anointed by the woman, a sinner .....	Autumn	28 A.D.

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Healing at Capernaum of the blind and dumb possessed; charge of the Pharisees that he cast out devils by Beelzebub . . . . .	Autumn	28 A.D.
Teaching in Parables, and stilling of the tempest .		
Healing of demoniacs in Gergesa, and return to Capernaum . . . . .	Autumn	28 A.D.
Matthew's Feast; healing of woman with issue of blood, and raising of Jairus' daughter .		
Healing of two blind men, and a dumb possessed; Pharisees blaspheme . . . . .	Autumn	28 A.D.
Second visit to Nazareth; sending of the twelve . .	Winter	29 A.D.
Death of the Baptist; Jesus returns to Capernaum . . . . .	Winter	29 A.D.
Crossing of the Sea, and feeding of the five thousand; return to Capernaum . . . . .	Spring	29 A.D.
Discourse at Capernaum respecting the bread of life . . . . .	April	29 A.D.
Jesus visits the coasts of Tyre and Sidon: heals the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman; visits the region of Decapolis; heals one with an impediment in his speech; feeds the 4,000 . . . . .	Summer	29 A.D.
Jesus returns to Capernaum; is tempted by the Pharisees; reproves their hypocrisy; again crosses the sea; heals blind man at Bethsaida . . . . .	Summer	29 A.D.
Peter's confession that he is the Christ; the transfiguration . . . . .	Summer	29 A.D.
Healing of lunatic child . . . . .	Summer	29 A.D.
Jesus journeys through Galilee, teaching the disciples; at Capernaum pays the tribute money; goes up to the feast of tabernacles . . .	Autumn	29 A.D.
He teaches in the temple; efforts to arrest him . .	October	29 A.D.
An adulteress is brought before him; attempt to stone him; healing of a man blind from birth; return to Galilee . . . . .	October	29 A.D.
Final departure from Galilee; is rejected at Samaria; sending of the seventy . . . . .	November	29 A.D.
Jesus is attended by great multitudes; parable of the good Samaritan . . . . .	November	29 A.D.

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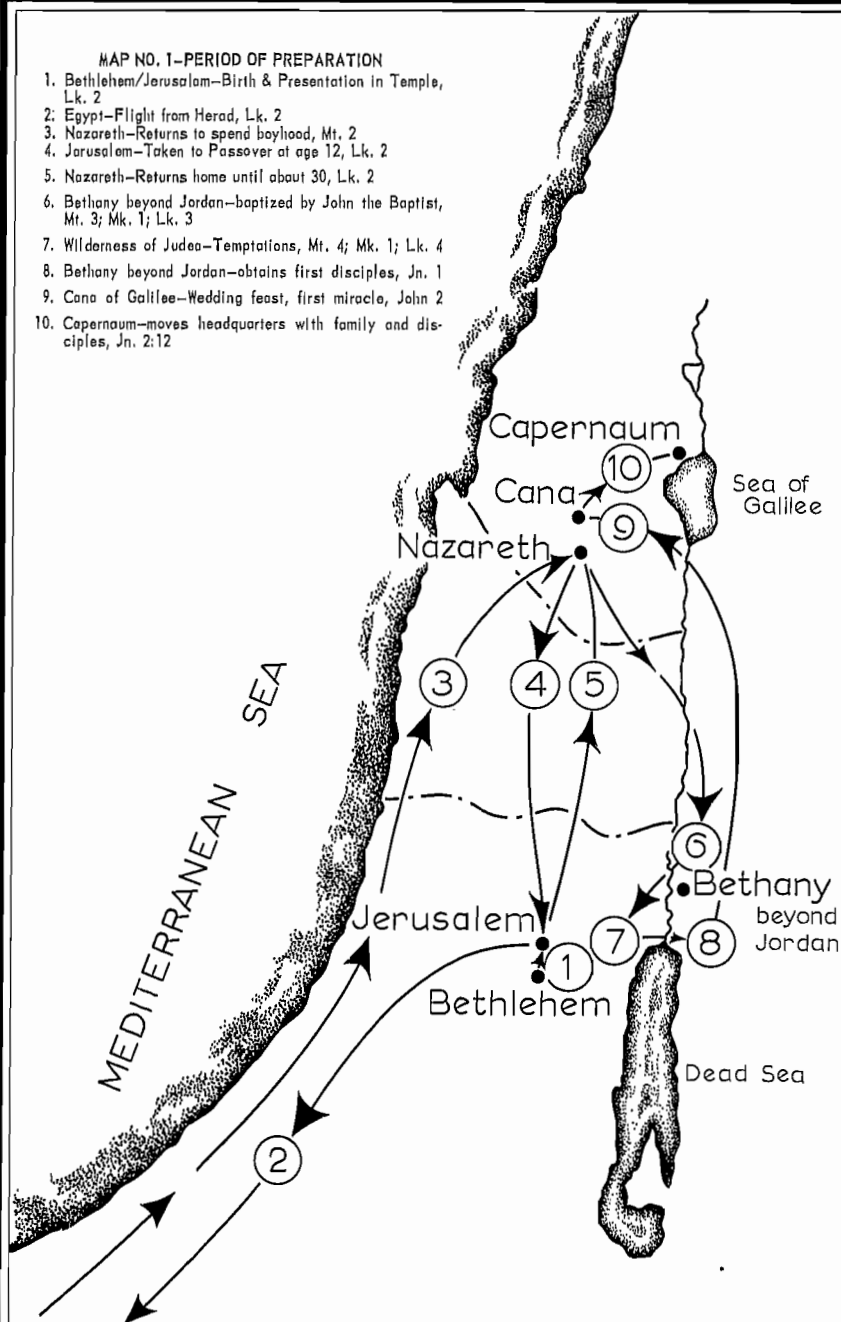
Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool . . . . .	November	29 A.D.
Jesus is told of the murder of the Galileans by Pilate; parable of the fig tree; healing of a woman eighteen years sick . . . . .	December	29 A.D.
Feast of Dedication; visit to Mary and Martha; the Jews at Jerusalem attempt to stone him; he goes beyond Jordan . . . . .	December	29 A.D.
Jesus dines with a Pharisee, and heals a man with dropsy; parables of the great supper, of the lost sheep, of the lost piece of silver, of the unjust steward, of the rich man and Lazarus . . . . .	December	29 A.D.
Resurrection of Lazarus; counsel of the Jews to put him to death; he retires to Ephraim . . .	December	29 A.D.
Sojourn in Ephraim till passover at hand; journeys on the border of Samaria and Galilee; healing of ten lepers; parables of the unjust judge, and of Pharisee and publican; teaching respecting divorce; blessing of children; the young ruler, and parable of laborers in the vineyard . . . . .	January-February	30 A.D.
Jesus again announces his death; ambition of James and John . . . . .	March	30 A.D.
Healing of blind men at Jericho; Zaccheus; parable of the pounds; departure to Bethany . .	March	30 A.D.
Supper at Bethany and anointing of Jesus by Mary . . . . .	Saturday April 1	30 A.D.
Entry into Jerusalem; visit to the temple and return to Bethany . . . . .	Sunday, April 2	30 A.D.
Cursing of the fig-tree; second purification of the temple; return to Bethany . . . . .	Monday, April 3	30 A.D.
Teaching in the temple; parables of the two sons; of the wicked husbandmen; of the king's son; attempts of his enemies to entangle him; the poor widow; the Greeks who desire to see him; a voice from heaven; departure from the temple to the Mount of		

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Olives; discourse respecting the end of the world; return to Bethany; agreement of Judas with the priests to betray him . . . . .	Tuesday, April 4	30 A.D.
Jesus seeks retirement at Bethany . . . . .	Wednesday,	
Sending of Peter and John to prepare the paschal supper . . . . .	Thursday,	
Events at paschal supper . . . . .	Thursday	
After supper Jesus foretells the denial of Peter, speaks of the coming of the Comforter, and ends with prayer . . . . .	evening April 6	30 A.D.
Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane . . . . .	Thursday evening	
Jesus is given into the hands of Judas . . . . .	Thursday midnight	
Jesus is led to the house of Annas, and thence to the palace of Caiaphas; is condemned for blasphemy . . . . .	Friday 1-5 A.M.	
Mockeries of his enemies; he is brought the second time before the council, and thence taken before Pilate . . . . .	Friday 5-6 A.M.	
Charge of sedition; Pilate attempts to release him, but is forced to scourge him, and give him up to be crucified . . . . .	Friday 6-9 A.M.	
Jesus is crucified at Golgotha . . . . .	Friday	
Upon the cross is reviled by his enemies; commends his mother to John; darkness covers the land; he dies; the earth shakes, and rocks are rent . . . . .	12 P.M. 3 P.M.	
His body taken down and given to Joseph, and laid in his sepulchre . . . . .	Friday 3-6 P.M.	
Resurrection of Jesus, and appearance to Mary Magdalene . . . . .	Sunday A.M. April 9	30 A.D.
Appearance to the two disciples at Emmaus; to Peter and to the eleven at Jerusalem . . . . .	Sunday P.M.	
Appearance to the apostles and Thomas . . . . .		
Appearance to seven disciples at Sea of Tiberias, and to 500 at mountain in Galilee . . . . .	April-May	30 A.D.
Final appearance to the disciples at Jerusalem, and ascension to heaven . . . . .	Thursday— May 18	30 A.D.

# MAP NO. 1—PERIOD OF PREPARATION

1. Bethlehem/Jerusalem—Birth & Presentation in Temple, Lk. 2
2. Egypt—Flight from Herod, Lk. 2
3. Nazareth—Returns to spend boyhood, Mt. 2
4. Jerusalem—Taken to Passover at age 12, Lk. 2
5. Nazareth—Returns home until about 30, Lk. 2
6. Bethany beyond Jordan—baptized by John the Baptist, Mt. 3; Mk. 1; Lk. 3
7. Wilderness of Judea—Temptations, Mt. 4; Mk. 1; Lk. 4
8. Bethany beyond Jordan—obtains first disciples, Jn. 1
9. Cana of Galilee—Wedding feast, first miracle, John 2
10. Capernaum—moves headquarters with family and disciples, Jn. 2:12







## I. THE PREPARATION PERIOD 1:1-13

## A. THE MISSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.— Mark 1:1-11.

*TEXT* 1:1-11

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way; The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight; John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. And there went unto him all the country of Judaea and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. And it came to pass in those day, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him; and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

*THOUGHT QUESTIONS* 1:1-11

1. In what sense are we to understand the word "beginning" as used in verse 1?
2. Why refer to the work of our Lord as "good tidings"? Please be specific.
3. In what two Old Testament references do we find the prophecy quoted in verse 2?
4. What was the primary work of John the Baptist?
5. In what way did John accomplish his work?
6. In what wilderness did John baptize? How could he do this?
7. Could you estimate the crowd who came to hear John? 1,000?, 5,000? 10,000?
8. To whom did certain confess their sins? Why do so?
9. Was John's baptism for the washing away of sins?

10. Why did John dress as he did? Why did he live where he did?
11. Why would anyone want to loose the latchet of someone else's shoe?
12. Why mention the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Please read Acts 1:5.  
Did the persons who heard John understand the promise of the Holy Spirit and baptism?
13. How far did Jesus walk to be baptized? Why?
14. Did John baptize "with" the Jordan, "in the Jordan" or "into the Jordan"?
15. What is meant by the expression—"The heavens rent asunder"? At what particular moment was this seen?
16. Why was the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove? Where did He go? i.e. the Holy Spirit?
17. At what two other occasions did God speak from heaven?

## COMMENT

TIME—John the Baptist was born about B.C. 5; Jesus was born about B.C. 5; the preaching of John the Baptist was during the summer and autumn of A.D. 26; the baptism of Jesus by John in January, A.D. 27; the temptation in the wilderness in January and February, A.D. 27.

PLACES—The preaching of John the Baptist was in the wilderness of Judea,—a wild, hilly, thinly-inhabited region (not a desert) lying west of the Dead Sea and the Lower Jordan. John's ministry extended as far north as Enon, near Salim, two-thirds of the way up the Jordan from the Dead Sea. The baptism of Jesus was, it is supposed, at the fords of the Jordan, called Bethabara, five miles northeast of Jericho. The temptation occurred probably in the northern part of the wilderness of Judea, between Jerusalem and Jericho on the west and the Jordan and the upper part of the Dead Sea on the east. Tradition places it in Mount *Quarantania*, near the Jordan, so named because Jesus is supposed to have passed his forty days fasting in one of its caves.

While tradition and general opinion place the baptism of Christ at the fords of the Jordan near Jericho, it is proper to say that all we can certainly know was that it was in the Jordan at a place called Beth-abarah, or the House of the Ford. Lieut. Conder states that there are about forty fords of the Jordan and he locates Beth-abarah farther north at Abarah (the Ford) above Bethshean and near the borders of Galilee.

CONNECTING HISTORY—Mark, passing by the accounts of the births of John and Jesus, leaps at once into the midst of events, and begins with the preaching of the great Forerunner. In the history given by the other Evangelists we have:

B.C. 6. The Annunciation to Zacharias.

B.C. 5. The Annunciation to Mary and the Births of John and Jesus.

B.C. 4. The flight to Egypt and return to Nazareth.

A.D. 8. Jesus attends the Passover at Jerusalem and converses with the Doctors.

A.D. 26. John the Baptist begins his work. We have followed the chronology of Andrews.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—The ministry of John in the wilderness (verse 1-8) is described also in Matt. 3:1-12, and Luke 3:1-18. The baptism of Jesus (verse 9-11) in Matt. 3:13-17, and Luke 3:21-23. The temptation of Jesus (verse 12, 13) in Matt. 4:1-11, and Luke 4:1-13. A view of the whole ministry of John from another standpoint is given in John 1:5-51.

OUTLINE—1. *Prophecy of the Forerunner.* 2. *John's Ministry.* 3. *The Baptism of Jesus.*

### ANALYSIS

#### I. THE PROPHECY OF THE FORERUNNER — Vs. 1-3.

1. The Prediction of the Messenger. Mark 1:2; Matt. 3:3; Isa. 40:3.
2. The Voice in the Wilderness. Mark 1:3; Matt. 3:3; Luke 3:4.

#### II. JOHN'S MINISTRY— Vs. 4-8.

1. The Preacher in the Wilderness. Mark 1:4; Matt. 3:1; Luke 3:3.
2. The Nation Moved by his Voice. Mark 1:5; Matt. 3:5.
3. The Baptism of Repentance. Mark 1:5; Matt. 3:6; Luke 3:3.
4. The Raiment of the Prophet. Mark 1:6; Matt. 3:4.
5. The Coming One. Mark 1:7; Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16.
6. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Mark 1:8; Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16.

#### III. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS— Vs. 9-11.

1. Jesus Baptized in Jordan. Mark 1:9; Matt. 3:16; Luke 3:22.
2. Anointed from On High. Mark 1:10; Matt. 3:16; Luke 3:22.
3. The Voice from Heaven. Mark 1:11; Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22.

### INTRODUCTION

At the date when John the Baptist began preaching, Tiberius Caesar, the successor of Augustus Caesar, was the emperor of the Roman Empire, and had been ruling for over twelve years. Judea was a Roman province with Pontius Pilate for governor. The Roman Empire held sway over nearly all the known world. It was a general time of peace, with slight wars only on the frontiers. Greece was subject to Rome politically, but ruled still intellectually, the school of literature and art. She was crowded with temples and statues, and her schools of philosophy and rhetoric were flourishing. It was the period of the greatest intellectual activity during the entire scope of Roman history. Horace, Virgil, Livy, Ovid, Strabo and Seneca were all living when Christ was born, and Cicero died only a few years before. It was, however, an age of extreme moral depravity.

For a hundred years not a single Roman is named, whose domestic history is known, who had not divorced his wife. The picture given in the first chapters of Romans is fully confirmed by the admissions of the Greek and Roman writers of the time. Mark does not begin his history, like Matthew and Luke, with the birth of Christ, or of John, but with the beginning of their public ministry. His object was to portray the *official* life of our Lord and he omits all that is not essential to this purpose.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE PROPHECY OF THE FORERUNNER — 1. *The beginning of the gospel.* This verse is a kind of title to the outline of the Lord's ministry Mark is about to give. The gospel begins its development with the preaching of John; it is more fully unfolded during our Lord's ministry, but not developed in its fullness until he suffers on the cross and rises from the dead. Then his apostles are commanded to preach his gospel, finished, perfect, to all nations. His gospel began with the preaching of the forerunner and his own baptism; it was fully developed when he died, was buried, and rose again. *The gospel.* Gospel means "good tidings." The best tidings the world has ever had is that we have a Savior who is able and willing to save us from sin and death. *Of Jesus Christ the Son of God.* Matthew, writing with reference to Jews, shows that Jesus is the son of David and of Abraham; Mark, writing for Gentiles, pays no attention to a matter so important to Jews, but at once declares him to be the Son of God.

2. *As it is written in the prophets.* The Revision says, "in Isaiah the prophet," which has the support of the best manuscripts, but Mark's reference is to two prophets, Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1. It is often the case that the New Testament writers quote from more than one prophet, while naming only one. Verse 2 is quoted from Malachi, and verse 3 from Isaiah. If the Revised reading is preferred, Mark names Isaiah, because he is the great prophet and the quotation from him is the essential one in this place. Let it be noted that John the Baptist as well as Christ was a subject of Old Testament prophecy. He is the only New Testament character save the Son of God of whom the prophets spoke. *Behold I send my messenger before thy face.* This passage is found in Mal. 3:1, and undoubtedly refers to the Messiah King. It was and still is a custom in oriental countries to send messengers to see that all is prepared before the king takes a journey. So John was sent to prepare the way for Christ by preaching repentance, baptism, and the coming kingdom of which Christ should be king.

3. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness.* Quoted from Isaiah 40:3. See how strangely this prediction, made seven hundred years before, was fulfilled. All other New Testament teachers, and indeed all Bible teachers, sought the towns and cities; John, the wilderness. After his birth we see him no more until the strange, startling, voice is heard in the wilderness of Judea, preaching a strange message with such power as to call all Israel to rush into the wilderness to hear him. He describes himself (John 1:23) as a Voice. He organized no body of followers, established no system, but broke up the old stagnation, aroused a ferment of thought, and filled men with the expectation of the Coming One. He is well described as a Voice in the wilderness.

II. JOHN'S MINISTRY—4. *John did baptize in the wilderness.* Mark has quoted the predictions of the prophets concerning the work of John, and he now turns to the fulfillment in John's ministry. In order to read a fuller account than Mark gives, see Matthew, chap. 3 and John, chapter 1. This John was called the *Baptist*, because he baptized those who repented under his preaching. He was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, of the priestly order, a relative of Jesus, born in the summer of B.C. 5, and consequently now (A.D. 26) about 30 or 31 years old. "The year during which John began his ministry was probably a *sabbatic year* (Exod. 23:11). If this year was now observed by the Jews, according to its original intent, it was a most appropriate time for the Baptist to begin his labors, the people having no burdensome agricultural tasks to occupy them, and being thus at liberty to attend upon his instructions." *Andrews' Life of Christ*, p. 139. *Baptize in the wilderness.* The "wilderness of Judea" was bounded on the east by the river Jordan which was the place where John baptized at this time (see verse 5). At a later period he moved farther northward to the borders of Samaria and Galilee and "baptized at Enon because there was much water there" (John 3:23). *Preach the baptism of repentance.* John preached as well as baptized. The preaching came first. There must be a moral preparation before one was a fit subject of baptism. That preparation was a repentance, or a purpose to leave off sin and lead a better life. This preparation is always a prerequisite to scriptural baptism. See Matt. 3:7, 8 and Acts 2:38. *For the remission of sins.* This declares the end or object to be sought in repentance and baptism. These are steps leading to the pardon of sins. God does not pardon sins on baptism alone, nor on repentance alone, but upon the baptism of repentance, or of a penitent subject. See Acts 2:38.

5. *Went out to him.* That which, no doubt, drew the whole population in such crowds to the desert shores of the Jordan, was the mysterious yet

distinct assertion that the "kingdom of heaven was at hand;" that kingdom of which the belief was as universal as of the personal coming of the Messiah. "The nation, was daily expecting the appearance of the wise and perfect prophet, who should restore the tribes of Israel, reprove the times, and appease the wrath of God, before it broke out in fury."—*Geikie. All the land.* The word is used in a free and easy and popular way; and yet, it must mean more than *many*, namely, the great bulk and body of the population. It included representatives of every class, Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 3:7), tax-gatherers (Luke 3:12,) soldiers (Luke 3:14,) rich and poor (Luke 3:10.) *In the river Jordan.* We hear of him at Bethabara, the fords about five miles north-east of Jericho, where Jesus was baptized, and at Enon, near Salim, some 35 miles farther north. *Confessing their sins.* From the form and expression this does not seem to have been merely "showing a contrite spirit" "confessing themselves sinners," but a particular and individual confession; not, however, made privately to John, but before the people.

6. *John was clothed with camel's hair.* He was, like his great prototype of the Old Testament, Elijah, a hairy man, garbed like an ascetic and eating the food furnished by the wilderness. His robe of camel's hair was well adapted to an open air life to protect against cold or rain, and from the fact that it did not absorb water, suited for a Baptist. This mantle was fastened around him by a leathern girdle, a style still followed by the Arabian children of the wilderness. *Did eat locusts and wild honey.* Locusts were permitted as an article of food (Lev. 11:21, 22). The common brown locust is about three inches in length, and the general form is that of a grasshopper. Thomson's *Land and Book*, states that though tolerated as an article of food, only by the very poorest people, locusts are still eaten by the Bedouin. Burckhardt mentions having seen locust-shops at Medina and Tayf. After being dried in the sun, the locusts are eaten with butter and honey. Sometimes they are sprinkled with salt and either broiled or roasted. Sometimes they are ground and pounded, and then mixed with flour and water, and made into cakes. Thomson adds that *wild honey*, i. e., honey made by wild bees, is still gathered from trees in the wilderness and from rocks in the wadies.

7. *Preached, saying.* Mark omits the details of John's preaching given by Matthew, but gives the great central thought, the announcement of the coming Christ. To *preach* is to proclaim like a herald. He was the King's herald. *Cometh one mightier than I.* Like all true preachers of Christ, John points away from himself to the Lord. He hides behind the Master. The preacher who exalts himself is not worthy of Christ. *The latchet of whose shoes.* The shoe latchet was a shoe lace or thong that bound the sandal on

the foot. To bear, to fasten or to loose the sandals of a great personage was the work of a menial slave. John uses this comparison to show how far he was below Christ. His language shows how exalted were his ideas of the dignity of Christ.

8. *I indeed have baptized you with water.* It should read *in* water, and so the American revisers of the Revised Version rendered it. The Greek preposition is *en*, from whence the Latin and English *in*. He describes the baptism he had administered in Jordan. *He shall baptize you with (in) the Holy Ghost.* This higher baptism of the soul neither John, nor an apostle, or any other human being could administer. Such a baptism was a proof of divinity. John's words are equivalent to the saying that the Coming One is divine. When the first baptism of the Holy Spirit, the one on the day of Pentecost took place, Peter declared that the crucified Christ "had shed forth the things you do see and hear."

III. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS—9. *In those days.* While John was preaching and baptizing in the Jordan. It is supposed that he had been preaching about six months when Jesus came to him, as he was six months older than Christ, who was baptized when he was thirty years old, and in accordance with Jewish customs, John would be likely to begin his work when he was thirty. *Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee.* This mountain town had been his home ever since the return from Egypt. It was about 70 miles north of Jerusalem and probably 80 from where John was baptizing, situated on one of the foot hills of the Lebanon range. It is not named in the Old Testament, was a considerable village in the time of Christ, having a synagogue, and now has about 6,000 population. It lies just north of Samaria and overlooks the valley of Esdraelon. *And was baptized of John in Jordan.* These words plainly show how Christ was baptized, but if the *eis* of the Greek, here rendered in, had been properly rendered *into*, which is its primary meaning, it would have been still plainer. Matthew tells of John's reluctance to baptize one so much higher and purer, of the demand of Jesus, of his declaration that it thus became them to fulfill all righteousness. Our Lord came to set us a perfect example, hence it was needful for him, having taken the form of a man and a servant, to set us an example of obedience. He was baptized, not unto repentance, for he had no sins, but to fulfill all righteousness, and thus to show us how every disciple ought to do.

10. *Straightway coming up out of the water.* As the eunuch and Philip in Acts 8:38, so Jesus and John went down into the Jordan, John baptized him and then Jesus "came up out of the water." We learn from Luke 3:21 that our Lord came up praying. *He saw.* Behold a marvel! John saw

the heavens rolled back, and then the Holy Spirit descending in a visible form, like a dove, and resting upon Jesus where it disappeared within him. Like the gentle, harmless dove it descended, not like a consuming fire. Christ came to save, not to destroy.

11. *A voice from heaven.* It is noteworthy that the great event of the Lord's baptism was emphasized by the presence of three Divine persons. The Son was the subject; the Holy Spirit descended upon him, and the Father from heaven spoke in acknowledgment of Jesus as his Son. It is also noteworthy that the three Divine persons are present in the baptismal formula of every person baptized. They are baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and God acknowledges baptized penitents as children by sending his Spirit into their hearts. See Acts 2:38 and Rom. 8:14, 15. *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* This is the first formal acknowledgment of Christ as the Son. It follows his act of obedience, and has therefore a special significance. If the Father was pleased with the Son when he thus obeyed, is he not also pleased when men yield their wills to his and humbly obey? Three times during Christ's ministry is the Divine voice heard; first at the baptism; second at the Transfiguration; thirdly in the temple during the Savior's last week on earth. (John 12:28).

### FACT QUESTIONS 1:1-11

1. Give the approximate date of the birth of both Jesus and John.
2. When did John preach? Year and months?
3. When was Jesus baptized? Year and month? When was Jesus tempted by Satan? Year and month?
4. Locate on the map the place where John preached—how far north did he go in his preaching? Locate.
5. At what place on the Jordan River was Jesus baptized?
6. According to tradition where was Jesus during the forty day fast?
7. List the five events Mark leaves out of his narrative.
8. Where do we find the parallel accounts of the events of Mark 1:1-11?
9. Who was the emperor when John started preaching? Who was the governor?
10. Who ruled the world of intellectualism and art?
11. Name three great artists, poets or philosophers of this period.
12. Show indications of how intellectualism, poetry or art fail to make man moral.
13. What chapter in the New Testament well describes the moral conditions when Christ was born?



14. What was the object of Mark's gospel?
15. When was the gospel developed in its fullness? Cf. I Cor. 15:1-4.
16. What two prophets are cited as speaking of John the Baptist?
17. In what sense was John a messenger?
18. Why was the place of John's preaching strange?
19. Why did men rush out to hear John?
20. Why called John "the Baptist"? Does this mean there could only be one?
21. What was said of the "sabbatic year" and the work of John the Baptist?
22. Why preach repentance? What connections does repentance have to baptism?
23. Could sins be remitted without the blood of Jesus? Explain.
24. What was the "kingdom of God" as it related to the Messiah?
25. Name three classes represented in the audience to whom John spoke.
26. How did they prepare the locusts for eating?
27. What proof of divinity was indicated by John?
28. How long had John been preaching when Jesus came to be baptized?
29. Does the text show us *how* Christ was baptized? Explain.
30. Why was Jesus baptized?
31. What happened to the dove after it descended from heaven?
32. In what sense are the three divine persons (The Trinity) present at the time every person is baptized?

### SIDE-LIGHTS

1. Jesus was *anointed* by the Holy Spirit at his baptism and thus became the Lord's Anointed or the Christ. So too the Lord promises us the gift of the Holy Spirit at baptism (Acts 2:38), or that we shall receive the unction of the Spirit.

2. John's preaching. — Everything was new, startling, impressive — the wilderness, the stream, the solemn hills. A prophet appearing after more than five hundred years; his words, his baptismal symbol, the kingdom he preached; the Messiah whom he announced as at hand, the very multitudes assembled, the visible emotion, the evident good effected, the contrition of the most sunken classes—the publicans and harlots—all showed that the whole nation believed in him.—Geikie.

### LESSONS

1. The true man of God, whether preacher or teacher, should be a Voice, always hiding behind the Cross, and pointing to the Master.
2. Every preacher of Christ should seek to prepare the way of the Lord. If he can make the rough ways smooth and the crooked ways straight, lead

men to repentance, honesty of heart, and submission, then the Lord will enter.

3. All true repentance is accompanied by a confession of sin. Scriptural baptism, a burial into the death of Christ is a humble confession of sin.

4. Christ is the WAY, our perfect example; he says "Follow me" and he does not command us to do anything where he has not shown the way. Hence, he submitted to the baptismal rite, though he had no sin. Let all humbly follow the Lord.

### POINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Note that this lesson treats of preparation for Christ. Let every teacher be a John the Baptist in this respect. Notice that his first message was *Repent*. Let it be a chief end to prepare for Christ by leading to repentance. 2. John was a preacher, but not a dull preacher. His audiences listened. So too you are preachers. Be like him in dead earnest, but not prolix or prosy. "Would you urge the scholars to come to Jesus with every lesson?" asked a teacher at a convention. "Not by saying over 'Come to Jesus,' with every lesson," was the sensible reply. "The best way of preaching," said an old and successful preacher, "is to preach every way." See to it that you are no more monotonous in your preaching than was John the Baptist. He was a model preacher in his day. 3. Impress upon your pupils that the way of the Lord in their hearts is prepared, not by repentance alone, but by confession and obedience. These will relieve the life of crookedness and make the crooked paths straight. 4. Note the example of John, his place of preaching, his life, his devotion, his baptism, its significance. 5. Note the coming of Jesus, where, what for, why he was baptized, the incidents, the dignity given to his baptism. 6. Note how, in our baptism, the three Divine persons are present, as in Christ's. Note that the lesson divides into four branches. (1) *The command to prepare* (vers. 1-3) as expressed in these two prophets. (2) *Preparation by Repentance* (vers. 4-6). John and his preaching; how repentance prepares for Christ; why confession as well as repentance. (3) *Preparation by pointing to Christ* (verse 7, 8). Note the two ways in which John shows the superiority of Christ. (4) *Christ's preparation for his work*. This again divides into three: (1) *by his baptism*, profession of religion; (2) *by receiving the Holy Spirit*; (3) *by being tempted*, and gaining the victory.

### B. THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS 1:12, 13

#### TEXT 1:12, 13

And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:12, 13

18. "Straightway" after what? Why is it important that we notice the time of our Lord's temptation?
19. Are we to conclude the Holy Spirit led Jesus into temptation? Explain.
20. What does the word "driveth" mean to you?
21. Was Jesus tempted during the entire forty days? Cf. Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13.
22. Are we to understand there were actual animals with Jesus in the wilderness? Discuss.
23. Just what was the ministry of the angels to Jesus?

## COMMENT

TIME—January and February, A.D. 27.

PLACE—In the northern part of the wilderness of Judea, between Jerusalem and Jericho on the west, and the upper part of the Dead Sea on the east. Tradition places it in Mount *Quarantania*, near the Jordan—Jesus is supposed to have passed forty days fasting in one of its caves.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Read Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13.

- OUTLINE—1. Driven by the Spirit into the wilderness.  
 2. The duration of the temptation.  
 3. Associates in the temptation.

## ANALYSIS

- I. DRIVEN BY THE SPIRIT INTO THE WILDERNESS. Vs. 12
  1. Immediately after His baptism.
  2. "Cast out" or "thrust out" by the Holy Spirit.
  3. The wilderness—a wild, barren, desolate place.
- II. THE DURATION OF THE TEMPTATION. Vs. 13
  1. Only Mark indicates that He was tempted during the entire period.
  2. Tempted by an outside force—not purely subjective but objective.
  3. Satan the great "adversary"—Luke and Matthew use "devil"—accuser but not Mark.
- III. THE ASSOCIATES IN THE TEMPTATION.
  1. Wild beasts—panther, bear, wolf, hyena, lion.
  2. Angels—Cf. Matt. 4:11; Luke 4:10.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

- I. DRIVEN BY THE SPIRIT INTO THE WILDERNESS.—12

*And straightway*—The next event after the baptism was the temptation. What a strange thought it is to read of the Holy Spirit anointing Jesus and filling Jesus and then immediately driving Him into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan. This is to teach us that God's ways are not our ways.

*The Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.* The Holy Spirit did not lead Jesus into temptation, "The strong urge of the Spirit met the consent of Jesus." The Spirit thrust Him out into the wilderness where Satan tempted Him.

## II. THE DURATION OF THE TEMPTATION. Vs. 13.

. . . *forty days tempted of Satan*; Mark says nothing of the fasting mentioned by the other writers. Mark is the only one to indicate the temptation extended over the whole forty day period "Satan alone caused this continuous temptation. None of it arose from the thoughts and desires in Jesus heart about either his Sonship or his Messiahship." (Lenski)

*He was with wild beasts*; Mentioned only in this gospel. This seems to suggest the desolation and danger of the temptation period. The very thought of suggesting that the beasts were friendly to Jesus and here we have Paradise reproduced is so out of context with the temptation scene as to scarcely be worthy of mention.

*The angels ministered unto him.* Matthew 4:11 also mentions this blessed aid of these ministering spirits. Of just what this ministering consisted we are not told—it must have indeed been a source of comfort and strength to our Lord in his need. Every Christian is promised such comfort and help; and from the same source. Cf. Heb. 1:14.

## SUMMARY OF 1:1-13

(by J. W. McGarvey)

In this section Mark has set forth three facts which have an important bearing on his proposition that Jesus is the Son of God: First, that the prophet John, with direct allusion to him, announced the speedy appearance of one so much more exalted than himself that he was not worthy to stoop and loosen his shoe; second, that when Jesus was baptized, God himself, in an audible voice, proclaimed him his Son; and third, that immediately after this proclamation, Satan commenced against Him such a warfare as we would naturally expect him to wage against God's Son in human flesh.

## FACT QUESTIONS 1:12, 13

33. At what time of the year did this temptation probably take place? What year?
34. How long did the temptation last? When were the three offers of Satan made?
35. What part did the Holy Spirit have in the temptation of Jesus?
36. Did Jesus ever doubt or question His purpose or mission?
37. Why mention wild beasts? What did they do?
38. Why mention angels? What did they do?

## II. THE GALILEAN MINISTRY 1:14—9:50

## A. THE FIRST PERIOD 1:14—3:12

## 1. THE BEGINNING OF HIS MINISTRY 1:14, 15

*TEXT* 1:14, 15

Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the gospel.

*THOUGHT QUESTIONS* 1:14, 15

24. What events occurred between the temptation in the wilderness and the imprisonment of John the Baptist? Cf. John chapters two through five.
25. Into what particular part of Galilee did Jesus come?
26. In what sense did Jesus preach the gospel? i.e. What was the good news He preached?
27. Why repentance before faith?
28. What time was fulfilled?
29. What is the Kingdom of God?

*COMMENT*

*TIME*—April, A. D. 28. We shall consider the incidents in detail in a later section. Suffice to say here that there was a year and one half lapse of time between the temptation of Jesus and the imprisonment of John the Baptist.

*PLACE*—Probably Nazareth and Capernaum. Cf. Luke 4:14; also Luke 4:16-32; Matt. 4:12-17.

*PARALLEL ACCOUNTS*—Read Matt. 4:12-17; Luke 4:14, 15; John 4:1-3, 43-45.

*OUTLINE*—1. Jesus preaches. 2. His message.

*ANALYSIS*

- I. JESUS PREACHES, vs. 14A
  1. The time of His preaching.
  2. The place of His preaching.
- II. HIS MESSAGE, 14B, 15
  1. Gospel of God.
  2. Time fulfilled.
  3. Kingdom of God is at hand.
  4. Repent and believe.

*EXPLANATORY NOTES*

## I. JESUS PREACHES—14A

Mark omits the marriage at Cana—our Lord's first Passover— his dis-

course with Nicodemus and John's testimonies of him,—passing promptly to our Lord's public, official ministry.

Do not fail to note that Christ begins to preach when John ceases.

*Galilee.* The light of his gospel was to spring up upon the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. See Matt. 4:13. He would also go out of the jurisdiction of Herod, who had imprisoned John. Galilee was the northern division of Palestine, and was divided into Upper and Lower Galilee—the former called also "Galilee of the Gentiles."

*Preaching the gospel, etc.* How beautifully Mark here describes our Lord's first preaching, as distinct from John's, which was under the law, and a mere heralding of something better to come. The substance of this discourse was the good tidings of the kingdom having come, as spoken of by Daniel, 2:44. And this is the very message which Isaiah sees the messenger publishing, as he comes with beautiful (or timely) feet upon the mountains, (Isa. 52:7) viz. the advent of the kingdom of God. Christ preached the "good news" of his kingdom of grace—the new dispensation in which he was to reign. They had other ideas of his kingdom, that it was temporal and consisted in earthly power and show.

15. *The time, etc.* The period mentioned by the prophets when Christ was to appear. The nation had expectations of the Messiah about this time. The seventy weeks of Daniel (or 490 years) were now accomplished. The time and place of our Lord's birth agreed with the interpretations of prophecy common among the Jews.

*Repent ye, etc.* John preached repentance. So did Christ, but not without the gospel as the burden of his preaching. He preached repentance and faith. They were commanded to turn from sin and from all their false views, and to embrace the gospel.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 1:14, 15

39. At what approximate date did the preaching of Jesus occur?
40. What was the time lapse between the temptation of Jesus and His preaching in Galilee?
41. In what towns of Galilee did He preach?
42. What prophecy was fulfilled in His preaching in Galilee? Cf. Matt. 4:13.
43. How did Daniel 2:44 and Isa. 52:7 relate to the message of Jesus?
44. What is repentance? How did it relate to the persons who heard Christ's message? i.e. of what did they repent?

#### 2. THE CALL OF THE FISHERMEN. 1:16-20

##### TEXT 1:16-20

And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew

the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they left the nets, and followed him. And going on a little further, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:16-20

30. Was this the first time Jesus had seen Simon and Andrew? Cf. John 1:25-35.
31. In what specific manner did Jesus keep His promise to make fishers of men? i.e. what elements were involved in the process?
32. Compare Luke 5:1-11 and tell why these two were so willing to immediately leave their nets and follow him.
33. Please notice the type of men called by Jesus to be his followers, and later his apostles. Does this give hope to us?
34. Why did these men leave their business to follow one who offered them no money?

### COMMENT 1:16-20

TIME—April, A. D. 28

PLACE—Along the sea of Galilee near Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Read Matt. 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11

OUTLINE—1. The place and persons of the call of the master vs. 16.  
2. The call to man-fishing vs. 17. 3. The immediate response vs. 18.  
4. Two more to answer the call. vs. 19. 5. They left the nets to others and they went after him. vs. 20.

### ANALYSIS

- I. THE PLACE AND PERSONS OF THE CALL. VS. 16.
  1. By the shore of the sea of Galilee.
  2. Simon and Andrew—fishermen.
- II. THE CALL TO MAN-FISHING, VS. 17.
  1. From Jesus personally.
  2. Obtain by following Him.
- III. THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE, VS. 18.
  1. Left nets.
  2. Followed Him.
- IV. TWO MORE TO ANSWER THE CALL, VS. 19.
  1. Just a little way from where He called Simon and Andrew.
  2. Not fishing but mending nets.
- V. NETS LEFT TO OTHERS—THEY WENT AFTER HIM, VS. 20.
  1. Immediate answer to an immediate (urgent) call.
  2. Left father and work (and money) to follow Him.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

Observe the Harmony. The fact of our Lord's first gaining disciples when John first points him out to two of his followers, is recorded in John 1:25-35. Simon and Andrew were then first made acquainted with Christ, and this explains their prompt compliance here. After their first call, they had continued in their worldly business. This is the further call to attend upon Christ in his ministry, leaving all and following him wheresoever he went. There is still a further call to the Apostleship, with ordination, ch. 3:14. The accounts in Matthew and Mark are almost in the same words. Luke is more full, and gives us the narrative of a miracle which Christ wrought at this time; which throws light upon Mark's more brief statement here. It is worthy of note, that this miracle, so full of meaning, was twice wrought by our Lord; both now, when he called them to their work, and at the last, when he was about to leave them. John 21:6. And in both cases, he would show by it how he could and would make their work successful. See Eze. 47:10; Jer. 16:16. He who could make them from *fishermen* to become *fishers of men*, could make them catch men in their new work as easily and abundantly as now he could make them catch fish. So our Lord uses the figure of a net. Matt. 13:41.

20. *Hired servants*. This would intimate that they were not of the poorest class.

## FACT QUESTIONS 1:16-20

45. When and where did the calling of the four occur?
46. Read carefully Matt. 4:18-22 and Luke 5:1-11 and see if these are indeed parallel accounts—some feel they are not—what do *you* believe?
47. Read John 1:25-35 and show how it relates to this incident.
48. State the *three* calls of Christ to these men.
49. Why the miracle of the draught of fish? Why given twice? Cf. John 21:6.
50. Why mention the hired servants as in vs. 20?

## 3. A SABBATH IN THE LIFE OF JESUS 1:21-34

## TEXT 1:21-34

And they go into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes. And straightway there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, what have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? Art thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, tearing him



and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! With authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him. And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about.

And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and straightway they tell him of her and he came and took her by the hand, and raised her up; and the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with demons. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons; and he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:21-34

35. Who went into Capernaum?
36. Why use the word "straightway" in vs. 21?
37. How did Jesus have such ready access to teaching in the synagogue?
38. From what did Jesus teach?
39. Didn't everyone teach from the same source of authority? Why then the astonishment?
40. How did the scribes teach without authority?
41. When did the possessed man cry out? i.e. How soon?
42. Why did the demon cry out?
43. In what sense was the evil spirit "unclean"?
44. In what sense could Jesus destroy the evil spirit? Aren't they immortal?
45. Why did Jesus rebuke the evil Spirit? Wasn't the testimony of the demon true?
46. What is meant by the expression "tearing him"?
47. Who cried with a loud voice, the demon or the man?
48. Why refer to casting out of the evil spirit as a teaching?
49. Upon what basis was the popularity of Jesus built?
50. Did Jesus have a home in Capernaum? Why go to the house of Simon and Andrew?
51. Please note the miraculous elements in the raising of Peter's mother-in-law. List them.
52. Why wait until the setting of the sun to bring the sick?
53. What percent were healed?
54. Why not let the demons speak?

## COMMENT

**TIME**—The incidents of this lesson are assigned by the best authorities to May A.D. 28, in the second year of the Lord's ministry. Mark does not adhere to the chronological order.

**PLACE**—At Capernaum, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, a city of about 30,000 inhabitants, called the Lord's "own city," because he made his earthly home there. It has disappeared so completely that even its site is unknown, some identifying it with the ruins of Tel Hum on the north, and others at Khan Minyeh on the west of the sea.

**CONNECTING HISTORY**—According to Andrews the interval in the ministry of Christ between the Baptism and the present section contains the following events:

January, A.D. 27. The fast in the wilderness and the temptation.

February, A.D. 27. Jesus returns from the wilderness of temptation to Bethabara, where John bears testimony to him (John 1:15-37).

February, A.D. 27. Here Jesus gains his first disciples, Philip, Andrew, and Peter, who belonged in Bethsaida of Galilee, and all return to Galilee (John 1:38-51).

March, A.D. 27. Jesus performs his first miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11).

March, A.D. 27. Goes to Capernaum for a few days (John 2:12, 13).

April 11-18, A.D. 27. Goes to Jerusalem to the first passover of his public ministry.

April, A.D. 27. Drives the money-changers from the temple (John 2:14-35).

April, A.D. 27. Conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21).

May to September, A.D. 27. Preaching and baptizing in Judea (John 4:2).

Autumn, A.D. 27. Driven from Judea by Pharisees, he leaves for Galilee (John 4:1-3).

December, A.D. 27. Going through Samaria, he talks with the woman by Jacob's well (John 4:4-42.) Heals nobleman's son (John 4:46-54).

January to March, A.D. 28. Period of retirement in Galilee. John the Baptist imprisoned (Matt. 4:12).

March 30 to April 5, A.D. 28. Attends Passover at Jerusalem. Cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5).

April, A.D. 28. Returns to Galilee (Luke 4:14, Matt. 4:12); preaches at Nazareth, his early home; but being rejected there (Luke 4:16-32), he goes to Capernaum, where he makes his home (Matt. 4:12-17). Then follows the incident of our present study.

**PARALLEL ACCOUNTS**—The general view of Christ's ministry given (vers. 14, 15) is related also in Matt. 4:17, and Luke 4:14, 15. Then come in the accounts of his Galilean ministry found in John 4:46-54, followed

by Luke 4:16-31. Vers. 16-20 are reported in Matt. 4:18-22, Luke 5:1-11; and vers. 21-28 in Luke 4:31-37.

OUTLINE—1. *Teaching in the Synagogue*. 2. *The Unclean Spirit Cast Out*. 3. *The Great Healer at Work*.

### ANALYSIS

- I. TEACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUE, VS. 21, 22.
  1. The Great Teacher in the Synagogue. Mark 1:21; Luke 4:33.
  2. Astonished at His Doctrine. Mark 1:22.
- II. THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT CAST OUT, VS. 23-28.
  1. The Man with the Unclean Spirit. Mark 1:23; Luke 4:34, 35.
  2. The Demon Obeys His Voice. Mark 1:26, 27; Luke 4:35.
  3. The People Amazed. Mark 1:27, 28; Luke 4:36, 37.
- III. THE GREAT HEALER AT WORK, VS. 29-34
  1. Heals in Peter's House. Mark 1:29-31; Matt. 8:14, 15; Luke 4:38.
  2. The Multitudes Healed. Mark 1:32-34; Matt. 8:16, 17; Luke 4:40.

### INTRODUCTION

After a year's preparatory teaching, the Savior began the selection of the disciples who were to become his apostles, calling Simon and Andrew from their nets (verse 16), also James and John from the same calling (verse 17) and Matthew from his place at the receipt of custom in Capernaum. Following these incidents we have an account of how the Lord passed Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, in that city. Indeed, by comparing the other accounts we seem to have a full account of one day's ministry in the life of our Lord, and as there were no doubt many other days like it, it gives us a vivid picture of his work on earth.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. TEACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUE—21. *And they went into Capernaum*. Christ was now attended by the disciples whom he had just called from their nets and boats upon the sea of Galilee. (Henceforth, as long as his earthly ministry continues, they attend his footsteps. They were called upon a week day, while at work, and probably all came on Friday into Capernaum, in order to attend the synagogue service upon the Sabbath. It is well to keep in mind that the Lord, during his Galilean ministry, made Capernaum his home, as far as he had one on earth. Its position on the northwest coast of the sea enabled him to reach easily all the populous towns on its shores and all parts of Galilee. Brought up in Galilee, this was always his favorite portion of Palestine, and all his apostles but Judas, the traitor, were Galileans. *Straightway on the Sabbath*. On Saturday, the Jewish day of rest and worship. Our Lord "born under the Law," kept the law of Moses blamelessly, was even circumcised, attended the feasts and observed the Jewish Sabbath,

but at the same time proclaimed himself Lord of the Sabbath day. *Entered the synagogue.* This was our Lord's usual custom on the Sabbath and the apostle Paul in his missionary labors followed the same custom. It gave an opportunity to teach a Jewish audience. *The synagogue.* There is no mention of synagogues in the law of Moses, or in the prophets. They are supposed to have been introduced during the Captivity, on account of the need of special teaching, and to have been continued ever afterwards wherever Jews were found. As we sometimes use the word *church* to denote the congregation, and sometimes the building, so the word *synagogue* was sometimes used in this double sense. The arrangements of a Jewish congregation, as well as the construction of the synagogue, seem to have resembled those of a modern Christian church. The people in the front part of the building sat facing the pulpit or desk on a platform which was occupied by the reader or speaker. Behind the pulpit were ranged high seats of honor, "chief seats," where the scribes and Pharisees loved to sit facing the people. A chest or ark was near the pulpit, in which the Scriptures of the Old Testament were deposited. From the pulpit the Scriptures were read; and the reader, or some other person, expounded, taught, or preached. Prayers were also offered; and at the close a solemn benediction was pronounced, and the people responded Amen, and dispersed. These exercises took place every (Saturday) *Sabbath. And taught.* It was the custom in the synagogue to invite members of the congregation or visitors of note to make remarks. It is obvious that in the synagogues of Palestine this was the safety-valve, the open sphere, the golden opportunity for any fresh teaching to arise—*Stanley*. Christ preached in many synagogues, for there was always opportunity given to a distinguished Jewish teacher. Only once in the synagogue at Nazareth, Luke 4:16, is he represented as reading the Scriptural lesson. The reason of this is that the lesson was never read by a stranger but always by a member of the synagogue.

22. *They were astonished at his doctrine.* Never had such a teacher stood before them. There was no lifeless droning over dry traditions or idle ceremonies, but his teaching was fresh as the morning, original, going to the root of things, authoritative, and burning with Divine fire. It is not strange that the great Teacher whose doctrines have revolutionized the earth, astonished the audiences who listened to him in Judea and Galilee. Taught as one who had authority. He taught with the authority of one who knows all the facts and all their bearings. Being Divine he knew all about heaven and hell and the way there, all about God and the truths he had revealed to the Jews, and all his plans and purposes for his kingdom in the future. It was this perfect knowledge that gave him the authority with which he spoke, and gives superiority to the

Bible over all philosophical systems and attempts at religious systems. He never was in doubt, nor had he ever to lean on the authority of others, because he knew all things. *And not as the scribes.* The scribes were the learned men of the Jewish nation, the men who had to do with *letters*. Almost all the writing that was required in the nation would be done by them; most of the reading, too. The transcribing of the Scriptures would devolve on them. Hence the interpretation of the Law and Prophets, in the synagogues, would devolve chiefly on them. They also engaged in idle discussion and differed among themselves.

II. THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT CAST OUT—23. *A man with an unclean spirit.* The address of the great Teacher was interrupted by a piteous cry of a demoniac. In the audience was a man with an unclean spirit. He had evidently remained silent until Jesus was nearly done, and then his cry arose. *An unclean spirit.* Some have held that the possession of unclean spirits and of demons was only a way of described epilepsy or lunacy. *Abbot* well says: "That there is described here, not a case of physical and mental disease, but rather a real and actual possession of the soul by a fallen spirit is, I think, clear, both from the tenor of the narrative here, and from parallel passages in the New Testament. How could a lunatic know Christ to be the Holy One of God, when as yet he was unknown even to his disciples? How could he fear that Christ would destroy him, who came to heal the sufferer, but to destroy the Devil? How could lunacy be said to come out of him, or to cry with a loud voice?" In order that I may add as much light as space will permit upon a difficult and controverted subject, I quote from *Dean Alford* and *Dr. Clark*. "What was this demoniacal possession? But we may gather from the Gospel narrative some important ingredients for our description. The demoniac was one whose being was strangely interpenetrated by one or more of those fallen spirits, who are constantly asserted in Scripture (under the name of demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits, their chief being the Devil, or Satan) to be the enemies and tempters of the souls of men. He stood in a totally different position from the abandoned wicked man, who morally is given over to the Devil. This latter would be a subject for punishment, but the demoniac for deepest compassion. There appears to have been in him a double will and double consciousness—sometimes the cruel spirit thinking and speaking in him, sometimes his poor crushed self crying out to the Savior of men for mercy; a terrible advantage taken, and a personal realization, by the malignant powers of evil, of the fierce struggle between sense and conscience in the man of morally divided life. It has been not improbably supposed that some of these demoniacs may have arrived at their dreadful state through various progressive degrees of guilt and sensual abandon-

ment. Lavish sin, and especially indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing, as it would often, a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial bond between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness.—*Alford*. To the frequent inquiry, How comes it that similar possessions do not occur at the present day? it may be answered: (1) It cannot be proved that they do not sometimes occur even now. It cannot be said that in many cases of insanity, and in some cases of spiritualism, the malady may not be traced to the direct agency of demons. (2) But, admitting that such possessions are not common, yet there was a reason in our Savior's day for the external manifestation of Satan's power. The crisis of the moral history of the world was at hand. The Devil was allowed to exercise unusual power in temptation on the souls and bodies of men, in order that Christ might meet him openly, and manifest his power in his victory over him. When God was manifested in the flesh, then demons may have been permitted to manifest themselves specially among men.—*Clark*.

24. *What have we to do with thee?* The Savior had not, so far as appears, been formally interfering by any specific action; but his very presence on the scene was felt to be interference. There emanated from him, round about, an influence that went in upon men blissfully, counter-working all evil influences. The unclean spirit felt the power, and resented it as an interference,—an interference, not with itself in particular, but with the entire circle of kindred spirits. "What hast thou to do with us?" *Art thou come to destroy us?* Note the *us*,—*Camest thou to destroy us?* *Is it the intent of thy mission to put down all demonic power?* Note the word *destroy*. It has no reference to the annihilation of being. *I know thee*. Not as an acquaintance, but by fame and report. Earth has not recognized her King, has not seen him through his disguise; but heaven and hell alike bear witness unto him. *The Holy One of God*. Such is Christ, both morally and officially. This term expresses the character in which this being recognized his deadly enemy. Christ is the exact opposite of the unclean spirits, being holy, and producing holiness in others.

25. *And Jesus rebuked*. The original word is very peculiar, and strictly means *rated*. Our Savior *chides* the evil spirit. He never on any occasion gave any quarter to anything demonic. *Hold thy peace*. The word translated *Hold thy peace* is exceedingly graphic. *Be muzzled*. It is a word for a beast. He silences the devils, even when they spake the truth, lest he should seem to approve of witnesses who were liars by nature. It was to bring the truth itself into suspicion and discredit, when it was borne witness to by the spirit of lies. *Come out of him*. Two distinct person-

alities are here recognized. The demon is treated as a person as much as the man. The one was just as much a disease or a principle as the other, no more, and no less.

26. *The unclean spirit had torn him.* Thrown him into convulsions. *Cried with a loud voice.* The evil spirit seems to have resisted to the last obedience to the Master's command.

27. *Amazed . . . questioned.* Each turned to his neighbor in astonishment, to ask his opinion, Saying, What is this? New teaching with authority! And he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they obey him! Such is, apparently, the correct reading and rendering of the abrupt remarks which the astonished people made to one another.—*Morison.* *Doctrine* is, as elsewhere, the teaching taken as a whole, including manner as well as substance.—*Ellicott.* *With authority.* The authority with which he taught found its guaranty in the authority backed by power with which he forced the devils themselves to render obedience. Christ's cures differed from the pretences of the exorcists, just as his teaching did from that of the scribes.—*Godet.*

28. *His fame.* Literally, the *report* of him. *Spread abroad.* Flew, as it were, on the wings of the wind, into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

III. THE GREAT HEALER AT WORK.—29. *And forthwith.* The day's work was not nearly ended. As soon as they left the synagogue, the Lord comes in contact with a case of suffering. *Entered the house of Simon Peter.* Peter and Andrew now lived in Capernaum, though their former home had been at Bethsaida.

30. *Simon Peter's wife's mother.* Peter, though the Romanists claim him as the first of the Popes, was a married man. Many years after this, Paul (1 Cor. 9:3) speaks of Peter as then having a wife and traveling with him. *Lay sick of a fever.* Malarious fevers of a malignant type are common in the vicinity of Capernaum. In the very imperfect medical language of that day, fevers were simply divided into little and great fevers. Luke, who was a physician, characterizes this as a "great fever." That she was entirely prostrated by it, is evident by the language here, "laid and sick of a fever."—*Abbott.* The quantity of marshy land in the neighborhood, especially at the entrance of the Jordan into the lake, has made fever of a very malignant type at times the characteristic of the locality.—*Geikie.*

31. *He came.* Observe all the graphic touches in this verse: the Lord (1) *went to the sufferer*, (2) *took her by the hand*, (3) *lifted her up*, and (4) *the fever*, rebuked by the Lord of life (Luke 4:39), *left her* and (5) she began to *minister unto them*.

32. *And at Even, when the sun did set*, i. e., the close of the sabbath, which, amongst the Jews, ended with the setting sun. There are two reasons why the time should be thus specified. (1) It was natural that the sick should be brought in the cool of the evening, rather than in the scorching heat of the afternoon. (2) It was the sabbath, and the feeling which made the Pharisees question the lawfulness of a man's carrying the bed on which he had been lying (John 5:10) on the sabbath, would probably have deterred the friends of the sick from bringing them as long as it lasted. *They brought to him*. The news that he was in the city, and of his healing power had not time to spread. *All that were diseased*. The term *diseased* in its current modern acceptation, is perhaps a trifle too strong to represent the import of the original expression; but when looked at etymologically, *dis-eased*, that is *sundered from ease*, or *ill at ease*, and thus *unwell*, it is all that could be desired. *Possessed with devils*. With demons or evil spirits. It is no doubt a correct enough description; but the word *devil* or *devils* is never used in the original, when demoniacs are spoken of. It is always the word *demon* or *demons*, or the generic term *spirit* or *spirits*.

33. *All the city*. The effect was to rouse and gather the entire population of the city, to obtain healing for themselves or friends, or at least to see and hear the new teacher. *At the door*, of Peter's house where Jesus was.

34. *He healed many . . . cast out many devils*. Jesus came as the great Healer. Disease is the result, the outgrowth, the representative, of sin; and Christ's healing of the maladies of the body is an exhibition of his power and willingness to heal the maladies of the soul.—Dean Howson. Matthew says (8:17) that here was fulfilled the prophecy "which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Isa. 53:4, 5). How did he bear the infirmities of the sick? Not literally. He removed them from others, but did not become diseased himself. Neither in removing sins from others does he become stricken with sin himself. *Suffered not the devils to speak*. The reasons for this prohibition are suggested in the comments on verse 25.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 1:21-34

51. What advantage was there in making Capernaum His headquarters during His Galilean ministry?
52. Why attend the synagogue?
53. When did the synagogue originate? In what two senses is the word synagogue used? How does this relate to the word church?
54. Why didn't Christ read the lesson in the synagogues?



55. Did the manner or the content astonish those in the synagogue?
56. Was the man with the unclean spirit in the assembly or did he run in from the outside?
57. Is demon possession just another way of describing insanity? Explain.
58. Give one thought each from Clark and Abbott as quoted here.
59. Why was the evil spirit so unhappy with Christ?
60. Why did Christ rebuke the evil spirit?
61. Is there some difference in the amazement here and that spoken of in vs. 21?
62. How could Peter be the first Pope and yet have a wife?
63. What type of fever is here mentioned?
64. How did so many folk know of the whereabouts of Jesus?
65. Read Isa. 53:4, 5 and show its fulfillment here.

### SIDELIGHTS

1. *Teaching with authority.* Whoever *knows* any subject can teach it with *authority*. Some men are authorities on science, some on literature, some on medicine: because they know more about these subjects than others do. But Christ is the only one who has ever been into the other world, and returned to this; and therefore he is *authority* upon the future life. He *knows* the final result of sin, and the glory of heaven, and the way to it. And because he is *divine*, and knows all things, there can be no mistake about what he says: he speaks with perfect authority.—P.

2. *Synagogue worship.* I attended the Jewish worship at Jerusalem, and was struck with the accordance of the ceremonies with those mentioned in the New Testament. The sacred roll was brought from the chest or closet where it was kept; it was handed by an attendant to the reader; a portion of it was rehearsed; the congregation rose and stood while it was read, whereas the speaker, and all others present, sat during the delivery of the address which formed a part of the service.—H. B. Hackett.

3. *Devils Bearing Witness.*—They were ready to speak *because* they knew his nature and work. The mere belief of the facts and doctrines of Christianity will never save our souls. "The devils believe, and tremble." Let us take heed that ours is a faith of the *heart* as well as of the head. "The life of Christianity," says Luther, "consists in possessive pronouns." It is one thing to say, *Christ is a Savior*, it is quite another to say, *Christ is my Savior and my Lord*. The devil can say the first: the true Christian alone can say the second.—Ryle.

### LESSONS

1. The true way to keep God's holy day is to follow Christ to church; to rest from labors and to worship in the sanctuary.

2. We should have such an experience of religion that we may be able to speak to men with authority.

3. We can trust Christ perfectly, because all he says is with the authority of one who knows.

4. It is safe to follow one who has power over the principalities and powers of evil.

5. Every disciple of Christ should be a helper and a healer. He should minister to the afflicted, whether in body or mind. He should cast out unclean spirits by the power of the love of Christ.

### POINTS FOR TEACHERS

There are two great thoughts in this lesson, and both concentrate in Christ. First, *Christ, the Great Teacher*, and second, Christ, the Great Healer. Note 1. How he teaches by example; he is in the house of worship on God's holy day; 2. he leads his disciples there; 3. Observe him teaching, (1) in solid earnest, (2) no idle speculation, (3) he teaches what he knows. 4. Hence he teaches with authority. What we know we can teach with authority. His was the authority of absolute knowledge; we can teach with the authority of faith. He next appears as the Great Physician who heals not only sicknesses but sins. Observe (1) He healed a dear friend of his disciples (verse 29-31), as he is glad to heal those we love, if we bring them to him. (2) Then he healed great multitudes (verse 32-34), showing the nature of his religion to heal and to help. We should note also that Christ refused the aid, testimony or any compromise with devils, and we should learn by his example (1) never to compromise with sin, (2) to decline all aid tendered by the devil, or in his name, (3) seek to overcome the devil and all his works.

### 4. HEALING OF THE LEPER—1:35-45

#### TEXT 1:35-45

And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and they found him; and say unto him, All are seeking thee. And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth. And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out devils. And there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And being moved with compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean. And he strictly charged him, and straightway sent him out, and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but

go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he went out, and began to publish abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

*THOUGHT QUESTIONS: 1:35-45*

55. Are we to understand that this incident occurred after the busy sabbath of 1:21-34?
56. Did Jesus have a particular reason for prayers? If so, what was it?
57. Why get up so early?
58. Why not pray in his room?
59. What needs did Jesus have that could be satisfied in prayer?
60. Why did Simon follow Jesus? Who was seeking Jesus? For what reason?
61. Did Jesus come to heal or to preach? Does Jesus say in vs. 38 that He was sent from heaven to preach?
62. How did Jesus have such ready access to the synagogues?
63. Was there a crowd about Jesus when the leper came to Him? Cf. Matt. and Luke.
64. Give three characteristics of the leper.
65. Do our physical and emotional infirmities "move with compassion" our Savior? Cf. Heb. 4:14, 15.
66. Why touch the leper?
67. Why didn't Jesus inquire of the Father's will in the healing?
68. How long did it take to effect a complete cure of the leprosy?
69. Why be so stern when He has just been so tender?
70. Why go to the priest? To whom was "the testimony" (vs. 44) to be given?
71. Why did the leper disobey Jesus?

*COMMENT 1:35-45*

**TIME**—April-June, A.D. 28. The healing of Peter's wife's mother occurred immediately after the same sabbath on which Jesus' teaching in the synagogue was interrupted by the demoniac. After this he began his first missionary tour of Galilee. The healing of the leper was toward the latter part of the tour, in May or June. This was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate was now Governor of Judea and Herod Antipas Tetrarch of Galilee.

**PLACES**—Capernaum, and the towns and cities of Galilee. This was Jesus' first missionary circuit of Galilee. The sea, or lake of Galilee, was 13 miles long, from 4 to 6 miles wide, was 165 feet deep in the deepest part, and lay 700 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea. Its western and

northern shores were at this date densely inhabited, and five populous cities, Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, Magdala and Tiberias, stood upon or near its bank. It was on the direct route between the great city of Damascus and the Mediterranean, and was hence an appropriate center for the Lord's missionary labors. Its shores are now desolate, and the boats that once covered its surface have almost entirely disappeared. The rule of the Turks, the lawlessness, and the raids of the Bedouin, have desolated one of the fairest spots on the earth.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—The healing of Peter's wife's mother and others (vers. 29-34) is recorded also in Matt. 8:14-17, and Luke 4:38-41. The first circuit of Galilee (vers. 35-39), also in Luke 4:42, 44 followed by Matt. 4:23-25. The healing of the leper (vers. 40-45), also in Matt. 8:2-4, and Luke 5:12-16.

OUTLINE—1. *The Lonely Prayer.* 2. *Seeking to Save the Lost.* 3. *Healing the Leper.*

### ANALYSIS

- I. THE LONELY PRAYER. VS. 35-37.
  1. Prayer in the Secret Place. Mark 1:35; Luke 4:42.
  2. Sought by the Disciples. Mark 1:36, 37; Luke 4:42.
- II. SEEKING TO SAVE THE LOST. VS. 38, 39.
  1. The First Missionary Tour. Mark 1:38; Matt. 4:23; Luke 4:43.
  2. Preaching in the Synagogues. Mark 1:39; Matt. 4:23; Luke 4:44.
- III. HEALING THE LEPER. VS. 40-45.
  1. The Leper's Appeal. Mark 1:40; Matt. 8:2; Luke 5:12.
  2. The Lord Hears and Heals. Mark 1:41, 42; Matt. 8:3; Luke 5:13.
  3. Leper spreads Abroad the Story. Mark 1:45; Luke 4:15.

### INTRODUCTION

The Sabbath service in the synagogue had been interrupted by the outcry of the demoniac while Jesus was preaching. After his cure, and the close of the public services, Jesus with his four disciples retires to the modest home of Peter and Andrew, where he works a miracle, the beginning of a series which leads to the height of his fame and popularity and success through Galilee. The leper was healed on the first missionary circuit of Galilee, not long after the preaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE LONELY PRAYER.—35. *And in the morning.* On Sunday morning, immediately after the busy Sabbath day, Mark graphically brings the scene before our eyes. The previous day had been a long day of conflict with and victory over the kingdom of sin and death. He now retires to refresh himself in the haven of prayer, in communion with

his Father. He prepares himself in the desert for a second great mission of love, this time accompanied by his first four disciples. *A great while before day*. Our Lord always prepared himself for special work or for trial by solitary prayer. See Matt. 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 22:41. It is possible that his night was sleepless because of his anxiety for others; and he arose from his sleepless couch to pray for strength. We may learn from his example (1) that when we are restless and anxious the best relief is found in prayer; (2) the prayer most efficacious, when we have a special burden, is solitary prayer, the prayer of the closet. Christ was wont to seek *solitude* for special occasions of prayer. *Solitary place*. Not merely *solitary*, for a garden might be solitary, but *desert, desolate*, as the word in all other places is rendered. "A remarkable feature of the lake of Gennesaret was that it was closely surrounded with desert solitudes. These "desert places" thus close at hand on the table lands or in the ravines of the eastern and western ranges, gave opportunities of retirement for rest or prayer. 'Rising up early in the morning while it was yet dark,' or 'passing over to the other side in a boat,' he sought these solitudes, sometimes alone, sometimes with his disciples. The lake in this double aspect is thus a reflex of that union of energy and rest, of active labor and deep emotion which is the essence of Christianity, as it was of the life of Him in whom that union was first taught and shown."—*Stanley's Sinai and Palestine. And there prayed*. The original word does not simply denote asking. Prayer, says Petter, is a holy conference with God. Prayer gave him power. The gate to heaven is prayer. No man is strong enough or spiritual enough to be able to neglect it. By daily food the body lives and is able to perform its functions. By daily prayer the soul lives, and only by prayer performs its work of grace. Christ communed in the wilderness with his own soul and with the Father for forty days before he began his ministry, and here he waits before the Lord before beginning his special work in Galilee.

36. *Simon, and they were with him*. The Simon here named is Simon Peter, the apostle, to whose house the Lord had gone after the discourse at the synagogue on the day before. The others with him were probably Andrew his brother, and James and John, who had now left their secular business to attend the Savior. Peter, impetuous, abrupt, impulsive, did not hesitate to intrude himself on the Lord's retirement. 'He is always the same, wherever he appears in the four gospels; self-confident, generous, bold, often making mistakes from his impulsiveness, and always ready to correct them. On this occasion he, no doubt, acted as the leader in the search after the praying Savior. *Morison* says: "When they awoke in the morning, and found him gone, they seemed to have got alarmed

lest he should have left them, betaking himself to some other sphere of labor. So, too, the inhabitants of the little city in general seem to have felt. Hence the haste and eagerness of Simon and his companions (Andrew, James and John, see vers. 29), as indicated by the strong verb employed: they pursued him, as if he were fleeing from them. Peter was the leader of the pursuing party, thus giving early indication of the impulsive ardor of his nature."

37. *And they found him.* Search and uncertainty is implied, since he had retired to an unfrequented spot. *They said unto him.* Peter said this to induce him to return and the crowd besought him to stay. The will of the multitude did not govern him, as they supposed, hence the reply in the next verse. *All seek thee.* That is, though indefinitely, all the people (in Capernaum.) The people in general had no sooner risen in the morning than they thought of the wonderful preacher and healer and demon-expeller. (Luke 4:42). They wanted still to hear more, and to see more; and hence they came, one after another to the house where he had been lodging in quest of him. The emphasis is on the word *seek*.

II. SEEKING TO SAVE THE LOST.—38. *Let us go into the next towns.* The disciples had pressed the Lord to return to Capernaum, because all men there were seeking for him, but he replies by a request for them to attend him to other cities. In Luke (4:43) he says. "I must preach the kingdom of God in other cities also." *Towns.* The word so translated means village cities, country towns, imperfectly enclosed towns, and unenclosed villages. Josephus says, concerning the two Galilees, Upper and Lower, "The cities lie thick; and the multitude of villages are everywhere full of people, in consequence of the richness of the soil, so that the very least of them contains about 15,000 inhabitants" (War, 3:3, 2). "Christ had no ambition to be a metropolitan preacher. Having awakened spiritual desires in the people of Capernaum, he went elsewhere that he might awaken them in others also."—*Abbott.* *For therefore came I forth.* To preach. He wrought miracles, but these were mainly to arrest attention and to induce people to give a ready ear to his preaching. *Preached.* The form of Jesus' preaching was essentially Jewish. It was concise, epigrammatic, oracular, so pointed as to stick in the mind like an arrow. It swarmed with figures of speech. He thought in images, pictures. The qualities of the preacher were (1) authority; (2) boldness; (3) power; (4) graciousness.—*Stalker's Life of Our Lord.* The places of preaching were the synagogues in each city, and the times, the Sabbath days. Besides, he was constantly teaching and healing during the week. *Throughout all Galilee.* Throughout the whole region, as well as the nearest towns (Matt. 4:23). Josephus says that in his day "there were

240 towns and villages in Galilee" (Life, 45). Galilee, the northernmost province of Judea, was the scene of Christ's most abundant labors; all the apostles except Judas Iscariot were Galileans; its inhabitants were simple-minded and comparatively free from the control of the priestly class, which ruled in Judea, and from the bigotry and intolerance of the Jews who dwelt about Jerusalem. The greater part of Mark's Gospel is confined to our Lord's ministry in Galilee. *Cast out devils*. Referred to again and again as the most remarkable exhibition of his power, being utterly incurable and unmanageable by men; and as the best type of his whole work on earth, casting out all evil, all that mars this world, and fitting the world for the kingdom of heaven. For a discussion of devils or demons and demoniacs, see the preceding section. The Lord not only cast out demons and thus delivered men from their power, but he came to destroy the power of the devil.

III. HEALING THE LEPER—40. *There came a leper to him*. This account is also given in Matthew 8:2-4, and in Luke 5:12, 13. Matthew places it after the Sermon on the Mount, but he does not aim to follow the chronological order closely, and we are only to infer that it came soon after the descent from the mountain, after he entered "a certain city" and before his return to Capernaum. Luke says that the leper was healed at a "certain city" but does not say what one. Luke says, "A man full of leprosy" (Luke 5:12). This disease is nothing short of a foul decay, arising from the total corruption of the blood. It was a living death, as indicated by bare head, rent clothes, and covered lip. In the middle ages, a man siezed with leprosy was "clothed in a shroud, and the masses of the dead sung over him." In its horrible repulsiveness it is the gospel type of sin.—*Farrar*. Leprosy began with little specks on the eyelids and on the palms of the hands, and gradually spread over different parts of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swellings and sores. From the skin it slowly ate its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints, and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, and the eyes, were attacked in turn, till at last consumption or dropsy brought welcome death. The dread of infection kept men aloof from the sufferer; and the law proscribed him as above all men unclean. The disease was hereditary to the fourth generation.—*Geikie*. *The leprosy*. We find that nearly everywhere the disease is most common on the seashore, and that, when it spreads inland, it generally occurs on the shores of lakes or along the course of large rivers.—*Medical Press*. Is the leprosy contagious? A review of the evidence led the speaker to the conclusion that this disease was not contagious by ordinary contact; but it may be transmitted by the blood and

secretions. It is a well-established fact that when leprosy has once gained for itself a foothold in any locality; it is apt to remain there and spread. Being the worst form of disease, leprosy was fixed upon by God to be the especial type of sin; and the injunctions regarding it had reference to its typical character. It was accompanied by the emblems of death. (Lev. 13:45, comp. with Num. 6:9. Ezek. 24:17). It involved ceremonial uncleanness (see Num. 19:13. Ezek. 45:25); and the exclusion of the leper from the congregation (Lev. 13:44-46. Num. 5:1-3; 12:14, 15. 2 Chron. 24:19-21) strikingly typified the separation of the sinner from God's presence. *Kneeling down.* Not an act of worship, but a gesture of entreaty. There is no contrivance of our body but some good man in Scripture hath hallowed it with prayer. The publican standing, Job sitting, (Job. 2:8,) Hezekiah lying on his bed, (2 Kings 20:2,) Elijah with his face between his legs, (1 Kings 18:42.) But of all postures give me St. Paul's: "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. 3:12; Acts 7:60.—*Thomas Fuller. If thou wilt, thou canst.* If thou art willing, thou art able. The leper had faith in the miraculous power of Jesus, but had a doubt about his willingness to exercise it on such an object as him, on one so unclean. Here was (1) a thorough consciousness of his own misery and helplessness; (2) he knew it was not too bad for Christ's power. It has been well said that the language of faith always is, not if thou canst, but if thou wilt. He is willing to leave the whole matter in Christ's hands. (3) Let us pause on this little word IF. "If" embodies doubt; and faith, in its earlier stages, almost always involves doubt, but, when the soul can use "if," it has made great progress in faith. *Cleanse me.* He felt the impurity of his disease, not merely ceremonial, but actual,—as we should feel the impurity of sin, and pray not merely, forgive, but cleanse.

41. *Moved with compassion.* Jesus felt for the leper what he and his Father feel for all sinners, an unutterable compassion and love. *Touched him*—To have touched him was, in the eyes of a Jew, to have made himself unclean, but he had come to break through the deadly externalism that had taken the place of true religion, and could have shown no more strikingly how he looked on mere rabbinical precepts than by making a touch, which, till then, had entailed the worst uncleanness, the means of cleansing. Slight though it seemed, the touch of the leper was the proclamation that Judaism was abrogated henceforth.—*Geikie.* His hand became not unclean from the leprosy, but the leprous body was made clean by his holy hand.—*Chrysostom.*

42. *The leprosy departed.* At the touch and command, the leprosy immediately departed and the man was well.

43. *Straitly charged him.* Strictly and positively charged him.



44. *Say nothing to any man.* Our Lord almost uniformly repressed the fame of his miracles, for the reason given in Matt. 12:15-21, that, in accordance with prophetic truth, he might be known as the Messiah, not by wonder-working power, but by the great result of his work upon earth. See chap. 12:16-19. Thus the apostles always refer primarily to the resurrection, and only incidentally, if at all, to the wonders and signs. Another reason, perhaps, was that the Lord wished him to obtain the legal certificate of cleanness from the priest before too much was said. It might be refused through prejudice. *Show thyself to the priest.* At Jerusalem. *Those things which Moses commanded.* Viz., (1) two birds, "alive and clean" (Lev. 14:4); (2) cedar wood, (3) scarlet, (4) hyssop; this was for the preliminary ceremony (Lev. 14:4-7). On the eighth day further offerings were to be made—(1) two he-lambs without blemish, (2) one ewe-lamb, (3) three tenth deals of fine flour, (4) one log of oil. If the leper was poor, he was permitted to offer one lamb and two doves or pigeons, with one-tenth deal of fine flour. The law was still in force and the Lord strictly enjoins that it be observed.

45. *Began to publish.* Where men ought to publish Christ, alas! how silent are they. Here, when the great Savior commanded silence, this man will publish the cure. Thus our Lord's work was hindered. How many from ill-timed zeal prevent much good! *Could no more openly enter into the city.* Not the city of Capernaum, but any city or town. He was compelled to go into the desert places. He was unable, because, the moment that his presence was recognized in a town, he was liable to be surrounded and hemmed in by a surging crowd of ignorant, and ignorantly expectant, gazers, wonderers and volunteer followers. One sees now how wise it was to tell the leper to hold his tongue. *And they came to him from every quarter.* The people kept coming to him, notwithstanding the difficulty of reaching him, and the inconvenience connected with a sojourn, even for a very limited period, in an unpopulated district.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 1:35-45

66. Give the time for this section—i.e. date, the name of the emperor, governor and tetrarch.
67. State three places involved in these verses—i.e. 1:35-45.
68. What is the condition of Capernaum today?
69. Please read Matt. 8:14-17; Luke 4:38-41 for a parallel account of part of the record in Mark. Read Luke 4:42-44; Matt. 4:23-25; also Matt. 8:2-4 and Luke 5:12-16 for the rest of the account.

70. Mention again the purpose of prayer in the life of Jesus. Read Matt. 14:23; Luke 5:16; 6:12.
71. What one lesson can we learn from the praying of Jesus?
72. What is meant by the word "solitary" in reference to the place of prayer?
73. What more than mere petition was involved in the praying of Jesus?
74. Why did Peter so urgently, eagerly seek for Jesus?
75. Why did the multitude of Capernaum seek Jesus? Why didn't He return?
76. What was the possibility for preaching in Galilee—i. e. how many towns, how many people?
77. Mention two qualities of the preaching of Jesus.
78. Why especially mention casting out demons?
79. Where and when in the ministry of our Lord was the leper healed?
80. How serious was the leprosy of the one healed?
81. Why did the leper kneel to Jesus?
82. Why the question of "If thou wilt"?
83. Did the leper doubt the power of Christ?
84. How deeply was Jesus moved with the need of the leper? Why touch him?
85. Why go to the priest if he was already healed?

#### SUMMARY 1:14-45

In this section Mark has furnished a striking exhibition of both the divine authority and the divine power of Jesus. Such was the authority which he could exercise over men, that when he commanded the four fishermen to follow him, they left all they had on earth, without a question or a moment's delay, and followed him. And such was the authority with which he commanded demons, that although these wicked spirits were not willingly obedient, they instantly departed from their victims at his bidding. Such, too, was his power, that at his touch the malignant fever, the incurable leprosy, and all the maladies which afflict the body, were instantly healed. Such, finally, was his unexampled meekness, that amid these displays of divine authority and power, when popular applause ran high, he retired by night to pray, or wandered away into desert places. His meekness was as high above the capacity of a merely human being, as were his miracles. *McGarvey*.

#### DIFFERENCE FROM MATTHEW

One of the characteristic differences between Mark and Matthew, their

difference in regard to arrangement, is conspicuous in their modes of treating the subject-matter of the preceding section. Mark uses almost the same material with Matthew, but how differently he arranges it! They both begin with the removal of Jesus to Galilee, after the imprisonment of John, and follow this with the call of the four fishermen; but Matthew next introduces the general statement of the preaching throughout Galilee (iv. 23-25), which Mark reserves until after the cures at Simon's house (i. 39); he next devotes considerable space to the sermon on the mount, which Mark omits; then he introduces as his first mentioned miracle the cure of the leper (viii. 1-4), which is the third miracle mentioned by Mark (i. 40-45); his second miracle is the cure of the centurion's servant (viii. 5-13), of which Mark says nothing; his third is that of Simon's mother-in-law, which is the second with Mark; and finally, they unite in following this last miracle with the cures at Simon's door. This difference alone is sufficient proof that Mark's narrative is not an abridgement of Matthew's.—*McGarvey*

#### SIDE-LIGHTS

1. *The Leprosy*.—Wandering a little way outside the walls of the city we came upon the dwellings of the lepers. The place is separated from all other human habitations, and consists of a rude court or enclosure, containing about twenty huts or kennels. At the sound of our voices and footsteps the lepers came out into the sunlight, clamoring with most unearthly sounds for charity. Death was visibly eating them away. Some were of a liver color, others white as snow—all deformed. Handless arms were held out to us; half-consumed limbs obtruded; countenances woefully defaced and eyeless were turned up to us, and cries came out from palateless mouths that were wildly imploring and inhuman. The old law which prohibited the leper from touching or drawing near to a clean person, was scrupulously regarded by them, so that, even when they begged, they stretched out to us little iron cups into which we might drop our alms.—*Thompson*.

2. *Leprosy as a Type*.—Thus sin affects the soul, rendering it unclean, separating it from God, producing spiritual death; unfitting it forever for heaven and the company of the holy, and insuring its eternal banishment, as polluted and abominable. Some, as they look on infancy, reject with horror the thought that sin exists within. But so might any one say who looked upon the beautiful babe in the arms of a leprous mother. But time brings forth the fearful malady. New-born babes of leprous parents are often as pretty and as healthy in appearance as any; but by and by its presence and workings become visible in some of the signs described in the 13th chapter of Leviticus.—*Land and Book*, 11:519.

3. How to be Healed.—(1) We must see Jesus, inquire after him, acquaint ourselves with him. (2) We must humble ourselves before him, as this leper, seeing Christ, fell on his face; we must be ashamed of our pollution, and, in the sense of it, blush to lift up our faces before the holy Jesus. (3) We must earnestly desire to be cleansed from the defilement and cured of the disease of sin, which renders us unfit for communion with God. (4) We must firmly believe in Christ's ability and sufficiency to cleanse us. Lord, thou canst make me clean, though I be full of leprosy. No doubt is to be made of the merit and grace of Christ. (5) We must be importunate for pardon and grace: He fell on his face and besought him. They that would be cleansed must reckon it a favor worth wrestling for. (6) We must refer ourselves to the good will of Christ: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst.—*M. Henry.*

### LESSONS

1. We cannot save sinners, but we can bring them to Christ, the Savior.
2. Every one, like Christ, needs seasons of retirement and prayer. Spiritual growth comes from activity in Christian work, and seasons of restful communion with God.
3. The hardest work in the world is casting out the devils of sin. Building cities and ruling empires are nothing in comparison.
4. Sin is like leprosy—incurable, loathsome, contagious, hereditary, painful, all-pervasive, from small beginnings; shameful, separating from others.
5. Learn from the leper how the sinner should come to Jesus and be saved. He felt his disease; despaired of human help; believed in the power of Jesus; he came with his leprosy and submitted to the will of Jesus.—*Clark.*
6. In the services we are called to render one another, we fail far oftener from want of will than want of power. We fail to use many opportunities, not because we cannot, but because we will not, use them.—*Howson.*
7. The healed by Christ are his living witnesses that he can save men. Even enemies must acknowledge the change. Every transformed sinner is a living witness of Christ's power to save.

### POINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Review the Sabbath day's work, the wonderful discourse, the admiring multitude, the demoniac healed, all Capernaum stirred, the woman healed, the throngs that gather at the house of Peter, the multitude of miracles.
2. Observe the Savior at rest in the darkness of night, rising to pray before the dawn, possibly praying to be saved from popularity, in lonely prayer in the morning twilight.
3. Note the eager search led by

Peter, their triumphant assurance of his popularity, all men seeking for him, his rejection of the popular breeze, and determination to go elsewhere. 4. Observe his missionary circuit and his work: (1) Preaching in the synagogues, (2) teaching daily, (3) healing the distressed and diseased or sin-laden. 5. Note the healing of the leper, his awful disease, a type of sin, unclean, banished from men. 6. Observe *how* he is healed: (1) He wants to be healed, (2) believes that Christ can heal him, (3) comes to Christ, (4) falls before him and implores mercy, (5) the Lord has compassion, (6) touches and heals. Thus every sinner by faith and coming to Christ can be healed of his sins. The lesson sets forth Christ as the great Healer. (1) He prepared for his great labors by solitary prayer (v. 35), as we need the more to commune with God, and get strength from heaven, the more we have to do. (2) He made his first missionary tour through Galilee (vs. 36-39); and on this tour (3) he healed a leper—the type of sin and its cure (vs. 40-45,) a most helpful illustration of the evil of sin, and of the way of salvation by going to Christ to be saved.

#### 5. FORGIVENESS AND HEALING—2:1-12

##### TEXT 2:1-12

And when he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was noised that he was in the house. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto him. And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay. And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son thy sins are forgiven. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God? And straightway Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

##### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 2:1-12

72. What had occurred between the healing of the leper and entering

back into Capernaum?

73. In which house in Capernaum was Jesus staying?
74. Why so much interest in the words of Jesus?
75. Was Jesus preaching to the people or merely conversing with them?
76. Why bring the palsied man to Jesus—why not just tell Jesus about him and let His power operate over the distance?
77. Wasn't it wrong to destroy property to see Jesus? Why didn't Jesus rebuke them?
78. Was there some connection between the sickness of the palsied man and sin in his past life? What?
79. Just what was involved in "speaking blasphemy"?
80. Why didn't Jesus heal the sickness first and then forgive sins?
81. This was the first step of our Lord toward Calvary—show how this was true.

### COMMENT

TIME—May-June, A. D. 28. The paralytic was cured some days after the healing of the leper on Jesus' return from his first tour of Galilee. The calling of Matthew was not very long after. But Matthew's feast was probably several weeks later, in the autumn, A.D. 28, following Mark 5:21. See *Andrew's Life of Christ*, pp. 277-283.

PLACE—The paralytic was cured at Capernaum. Matthew's place for the receipt of custom was at Capernaum, probably, upon the Damascus road near its entrance into the city. The road from Damascus to the cities along the coast passed by "Jacob's Bridge" over the Jordan, and thence along the shore of the lake—*Andrews*. The feast of Matthew was also at Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—The healing of the paralytic (Matt. 9:2-8; Luke 5:17-26).

LESSON OUTLINE—1. *Coming to Christ in Faith*. 2. *The Accusation of the Scribes*. 3. *The Power of the Son of Man*.

### LESSON ANALYSIS

#### I. COMING TO CHRIST IN FAITH. Vs. 1-4.

1. The Lord Preaching in Capernaum. Mark 2:2; Luke 5:17.
2. The Palsied Man Brought. Mark 2:3; Matt. 9:2; Luke 5:18.
3. Faith Overcomes Difficulties. Mark 2:4; Luke 5:19.

#### II. THE ACCUSATION OF THE SCRIBES. Vs. 5-9.

1. Sins Forgiven. Mark 2:5; Matt. 9:2; Luke 5:20.
2. The Charge of Blasphemy. Mark 2:7; Matt. 9:3; Luke 5:21.
3. The Lord's Reply. Mark 2:8, 9; Matt. 9:4, 5; Luke 5:22, 23.

## III. THE POWER OF THE SON OF MAN. Vs. 10-12.

1. Power to Forgive Sins Asserted, Mark 2:10; Matt. 9:6; Luke 5:24.
2. The Power to Forgive Sins Demonstrated, Mark 2:11, 12; Matt. 9:6; Luke 5:25.

## INTRODUCTION

The return to Capernaum and the healing of the paralytic followed, after a short period, the history of which is not recorded, the healing of the leper. The incident narrated in this text occurred at the close of our Lord's first missionary circuit of Galilee. His labors were now devoted to this northern district of Palestine, where prejudices and bigotry were not so intense as in Judea. He was now at the most popular period of his earthly ministry. He had shown his divine power by many miracles, healing the nobleman's son at Capernaum, bringing myriads of fish to the disciples' net on the Sea of Tiberias, and restoring the demoniac in the synagogue. Though rejected at Nazareth, he was received with honor at Capernaum. His teachings, whether on the hill top, or beside the lake, or in the house of worship, were heard by wondering throngs, and his steps throughout Galilee were attended by multitudes, drawn by the fame of his miracles and the fascination of his words. The Pharisees and leaders, though suspicious, were not yet openly his enemies, and the unthinking masses followed him with blind expectation of a new Judean kingdom which was to transform the Romans at once from masters to slaves, and bend the world in homage. Just at this hour occurred two significant miracles: the one silently asserting Jesus as superior to all ceremonial regulations, the other calmly claiming for him the divine prerogative of forgiving sin.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. COMING TO CHRIST IN FAITH—1. *Again he entered Capernaum.* Matthew says, "he entered his own city," the city he made his home, in which some have supposed that his mother now dwelt. It was "after days," some time having been occupied in his teaching and healing tour of Galilee. The excitement that followed his displays of divine power, and especially the healing of the leper, had rendered seclusion necessary until it should subside and he had remained "without in desert places" for a time. He evidently entered Capernaum quietly, but the tidings soon spread that he was in the house, probably either the home occupied by his mother and brethren, or the home of Peter, where we recently found him. His own house, as far as he had one, was now in Capernaum (Matt. 4:13).

2. *Many were gathered together.* Luke (5:17) says, there were present Pharisees and doctors of the law from Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem.

They had evidently gathered by a concerted arrangement to examine into the claims of a teacher who was creating so profound a sensation, and were moved by hostile purposes. This is the first time the antagonism of these classes shows itself. Hence, as he taught the throng that crowded the house, they sat by as spectators, censors, and spies, to pick up something on which to ground a reproach or accusation. How many are there in the midst of our assemblies where the gospel is preached that do not *sit under* the word, but *sit by*! It is to them as a tale that is told them, not as a message that is sent them; they are willing that we should preach before them, not that we should preach to them. *And he* preached the word to them. The simple language of Mark outlines the picture so that we can almost see the eager throngs filling the house, crowding around the door on the outside until there was no more entrance, stretching their heads over each other in order to see and hear, and the Lord, without any formality, declaring the word of the kingdom. *Preached*. It is not the same Greek word that is found in Mark 1:39. That means to announce as a herald; thus simply to speak, as rendered in the Revision. The Savior was in a private house, and sat *talking* to the people. Such is the import of the term. It is almost always rendered *speak* in the Common Version, sometimes *talk* (or *say* or *utter*); never *preach*, except here and in four or five places in the Acts of the Apostles, and in all of these it would be better to render it *speak*.

3. *They come . . . bringing one sick of the palsy*. Four persons bear the invalid, who was perfectly helpless, to the house while Christ was engaged in teaching. Albert Barnes, in his notes (Matt. 4:24), classifies the infirmities which, in the New Testament, are included under the general name of palsy: (1) The paralytic shock affecting the whole body; (2) a stroke affecting only one side, or a part of the body; (3) paraplegy, affecting all the system below the neck; (4) catalepsy, caused by a contraction of the muscles in the whole or a part of the body (5) the cramps, a fearful and common malady. The disease, in its worst forms, was incurable. *Borne of four*. Borne on his pallet or bed, with one person at each corner.

4. *Could not come nigh unto him for the press*. The crowd. Here, then, we have a reason, as one has observed, why it was "expedient that our Lord should depart," and that "the Comforter should come." The throng of multitudes crowding after the bodily presence of Christ was a hindrance to the gospel; while many could not "get at him by reason of the press," and even some, for a season, might go "empty away." His body was necessarily limited by space, but the spirit of the Lord is in all places. *Uncovered the roof*. Unable to enter the house, they climbed to its roof, either by an outside staircase, a ladder, or from the roof of an adjoining



house. The following from *Thompson* will make the account easily understood: "The houses of Capernaum, as is evident from the ruins, were like those of modern villages in this same region, very low, with flat roofs reached by a stairway from the yard or court. The roof is only a few feet high, and by stooping down and holding the corner of the couch, merely a thickly-padded quilt, as at present in this region, they could let down the sick man without any apparatus of ropes or cords to assist them. I have often seen it done, and done it myself, to houses in Lebanon, but there is always more dust than is agreeable. The materials now employed for roofs are beams about three feet apart, across which short sticks are arranged close together and covered with thickly-matted thorn-bush, called *bellan*. Over this is spread a coat of stiff mortar, and then comes the marl, or earth, which makes the roof. Now, it is easy to remove any part of this without injuring the rest. No objection, therefore, would be made on this account by the owners of the house. They had merely to scrape back the earth from a portion of the roof over the *lewan*, take up the thorns and short sticks, and let down the couch between the beams at the very feet of Jesus. The end achieved, they could easily restore the roof as it was before." *The bed*. This was a small, low couch or bed of the commonest description, such as was used by poor people, having a mere network of cords stretched over the frame to support the mattress. Sometimes merely a sheepskin, used for the service of the sick, or as a camp-bed.

II. THE ACCUSATION OF THE SCRIBES—5. *When Jesus saw their faith*. Their faith was shown by their action. A living faith is always a power that moves. It is not a strong conviction of any doctrine *about* Christ, but a strong trust *in* Christ. These men had no theories about Jesus, but had confidence in him as the great Healer and sought to come to him *Matthew Henry* quaintly says: "When the centurion and the woman of Canaan were in no care at all to bring the patients they interceded for into Christ's presence, but believed that he could cure them at a distance, he commended their faith. But though in these there seemed to be a different notion of the thing, and an apprehension that it was requisite the patient should be brought into his presence, yet he did not censure and condemn their weakness, did not ask them, 'Why do you give this disturbance to the assembly? Are you indeed under such a degree of infidelity as to think I could not have cured him though he had had been out of doors?' But he made the best of it; and even in this he saw their faith. It is a comfort to us that we serve a Master that is willing to make the best of us." The palsied man had faith as well as his bearers, for they would not bring him against his will. *Thy sins be forgiven thee*. Matthew says, "Be of good cheer," etc. The Jews held that

all disease was a punishment for sin (John 9:2), and in a deeper sense, all evil of every kind is the fruit of sin. Nor is it unlikely that in this case the paralysis was really the punishment of his special sins (probably of sensuality). Accordingly, he first of all promises forgiveness, as being the moral condition necessary to the healing of the body; and then, having by forgiveness removed the hinderance, he proceeds to impart that healing itself by an exercise of his supernatural power.

6. *Certain of the scribes.* The doctors of the law that Luke says had come from Judea and Jerusalem. They had come to criticise and condemn, and hence had eyes and ears open to discover a fault. Not long before Jesus had startled the theologians at Jerusalem when he attended the passover, and hearing of his wonderful popularity in Galilee they had come to scent out heresy. *Reasoning in their hearts.* Matthew says, "within themselves". They did not speak out, but Christ read their hearts.

7. *Why doth this man thus speak?* Another reading adopted by the revisers and the critical editors. *Tischendorf, Hort and Westcott* is even more forcible: "Why doth this man speak thus? He blasphemeth." *Speak blasphemies.* "Blasphemy", says George Mackenzie, in his *Laws and Customs of Scotland in Matters Criminal* (Tit. iii., 1), "is called in law, *divine lese majesty or treason*; and it is committed either (1) by denying that of God which belongs to him as one of his attributes, or (2) by attributing to him that which is absurd and inconsistent with his divine nature," or, as it may be added (3), by assuming one's self, or ascribing to others, what is an incommunicable property or prerogative of God. It is with a reference to this third form of the offense that the word is used in the passage before us. *Who can forgive sins but God only?* Christ had not yet said that he forgave sins; only that his sins were forgiven. Nor could he claim to forgive sins, were he only a man, without blasphemy, and when he asserts the power to forgive sins he declares that he is the Son of God. Says *Geikie*: "His claim of this divine power was the turning point in the life of Christ, for the accusation of blasphemy, muttered in the hearts of the rabbis present, was the beginning of a process that ended after a time on Calvary, and he knew it."

9. *Whether is it easier to say, . . . Thy sins be forgiven thee.* To say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," was easy, for no visible result could test the saying. To say, "Take up thy bed and walk," was not apparently so easy, for failure would cover with confusion. He said the last, leaving the inference—If I can do the most difficult, then, of course, I can do the easier. Here we have the true character of a miracle; it is the outward manifestation of the power of God, in order that we may believe in the power of God in things that are invisible.—*F. W. Robertson.* As much as

the soul excels the body does the forgiveness of sin rise above the cure of bodily sickness. But Christ adapts his mode of speech to their capacities, who in their carnal minds felt more influence by outward signs than by the whole putting forth of his spiritual power as availing to eternal life.

—*Calvin*.

III. THE POWER OF THE SON OF MAN.—10. *That ye may know*. By doing that which is capable of being put to proof, I will vindicate my right and power to do that which in its very nature is incapable of being proved. By these visible tides of God's grace I will give you to know in what direction the great under-currents of his love are setting, and that both are obedient to my word. *The Son of man* cannot simply mean a man, or a mere man, for this would be untrue in fact, since the powers in question do not belong to men as such, nor could any reason be assigned for this circuitous expression of so simple an idea. The true sense is determined by Daniel 7:13, where the phrase is confessedly applied to the Messiah, as a partaker of our nature, a description which itself implies a higher nature, or, in other words, that he is called the Son of man because he is the Son of God. This official application of the term accounts for the remarkable and interesting fact that it is never used by any other person in the gospel, nor of Christ by any but himself. *Hath power on earth to forgive sins*. "Authority" is a better rendering than "power," and it is so given by the American Revision Committee. He had "authority" from the Father who had sent him, and who had committed judgment to his hands on earth. Not merely authority while on the earth to forgive sins, nor authority to forgive sins committed on the earth, but authority to exercise the function of forgiveness of sins upon the earth; that is, that ye may know that this is the Messiah's earthly mission. Bengel finely remarks: "This saying savors of heavenly origin." The Son of man, as God manifest in man's flesh, has on man's earth that power which in its fountain and essence belongs to God in heaven.—*Alford*. Sins are against God, and therefore only God can forgive them; for in the nature of things only he can forgive against whom the offense has been committed.

11. *Arise, take up thy bed*. A light mattress. Other men brought him on the bed; he can now carry himself away, bed and all. Christ's argument here affords a fair test of all priestly claims to absolve from sin. If the priest has power to remit the eternal punishment of sin, he should be able, certainly, to remit the physical and temporal punishment of sin. This Christ did; this the priest does not, and cannot do. Any popish priest can say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and the credulous may believe that a miracle of pardon is performed; but it is not quite so easy to perform the bodily miracle.

12. *Insomuch that they were all amazed.* Amazed at the high claims of Jesus and at the demonstration that his claims were well founded. The scribes had whispered in their hearts the charge of blasphemy, but the people saw a manifestation of divine power and glorified God, because, as Luke says, "God had given such power to men." They looked upon Jesus, not as Divine, but as the commissioned agent of the Divine will.

IV. POWER TO FORGIVE SINS.—This whole incident illustrates: (1) The difference between the spiritual authority of Christ and that of his apostles, none of whom assumed to forgive sins. See Acts 8:22-24. (2) It affords a test for all claims of priests or bishops to pardon sin, or to officially pronounce the absolution of sin. If they possessed the power to absolve from sin they should be able, like Christ, to relieve from the temporal consequences of sin. Romish priests claim a prerogative that was never claimed by Peter or the other apostles, which belongs to the Lord alone, and which it is not only presumption but blasphemy for any man or set of men to claim who cannot manifest divine credentials to confirm their claims.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 2:1-12

86. When did the healing of the paralytic occur?
87. What was the incident immediately before this? The one soon after?
88. Where was this incident in relation to His first circuit of Galilee?
89. Mention two miracles which promoted the popularity of Jesus. Where had He been rejected?
90. What evidence do we have that the mother of Jesus and His brothers lived in Capernaum?
91. Who came to the house from Judea and Jerusalem? Cf. Luke 5:17. Why were they there?
92. Mark 1:39 and 2:2 both speak of the preaching of Jesus but they use two different words—what are they?
93. Name three infirmities classified under the general heading of palsy.
94. Explain the reason why the crowd suggested the need for the comforter.
95. Discuss the procedure used in uncovering the roof. Was this necessarily destructive?
96. How did Jesus "see" their faith?
97. Show how Jesus "made the best" out of the failure of the four.
98. In what way were the words of Jesus concerning the forgiveness of sins appropriate to the belief of the Jews? Cf. John 9:2.

99. Did Jesus intend to teach His deity by His actions and words with the palsied man? Why didn't the scribes believe Him?
100. Why use the word "easier" in reference to the forgiveness of sins?
101. Explain the true character of a miracle?
102. Read Daniel 7:13 and show its application in this connection.
103. "In the nature of things only he can forgive against whom the offense has been committed,"—how had the palsied man sinned against Jesus?
104. What proof have we of the failure of present day priests to forgive sins?
105. Who was amazed? Who were incensed? Why?
106. This incident shows the difference between the spiritual authority of Christ and that of his apostles—in what manner?

### SIDELIGHTS

MORAL PARALYSIS—In one of our city hospitals a young woman of beautiful face and form had lain motionless for many months. Except for the brightness of her face, and the action of the hands, her body was apparently dead. Yet she spoke with great confidence of her restoration to health at some future time, and was enthusiastic in planning good works then to be executed. A physician remarked that it was the saddest case he had ever witnessed. It was a paralysis, not of the flesh, but of the mind: it was a *moral paralysis*. The will itself had lost its power of action. She could plan for the future, but not *will* anything at the present moment. After a few months the inactivity bred fatal disorder and she passed away. This is a picture of the moral paralysis of many. They mean to be Christians at some time; they do not determine to do it *now*.—Anon.

### LESSONS

1. Sin is like paralysis—a weakness and torpor of the conscience, and the will to do good.
2. It is our privilege to bring those to Christ who cannot or will not come of themselves.
3. Difficulties are in the way of the sinner's cure, to prove and strengthen faith. Faith will find or make a way to come to Christ.
4. Christ forgives and saves only on condition of faith; for the faith that loves and chooses God is the beginning of heavenly life in the soul. It is useless to forgive those who immediately plunge into sin again.
5. The first need of the soul is forgiveness; then follows the healing of the soul from its sinful nature.
6. Christ knows our inmost thoughts and motives—a terror to the bad, but a comfort to the good.

7. THE LESSON.—This may be regarded as an enacted parable of sin and redemption. The paralytic typifies the sinner by his original helplessness (Isaiah 40:30; John 6:44; 15:5), faith, by his earnestness to come to Christ in spite of obstacle (Ps. 25:15; 86:2, 7), a common Christian experience, by the delay he suffers between his repentance and faith, and his cure (James 5:7, 8) and the power of divine grace, in the ability to obey Christ's command, received in the very attempt to comply with it (Phil. 4:13).—*Abbott*.

#### POINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Consider Christ's return, from whence, and to what place and how received. 2. Note the evidences of strong faith in the palsied man and his bearers. 3. Bring out the circumstances; Christ teaching in a house, crowds around, no way to reach him, the palsied man, helpless, brought on a couch by four men, no other way and they open the flat roof and let the sick man down to Christ. 4. Observe the language of Christ, the complaint of the scribes, and the answer of Christ. 5. Consider who forgives sins, blasphemy for a man to make such a claim, why Christ had power. 6. Point out how he demonstrated his power, as no pope or priest ever does. 7. Observe that we have in this lesson an "ENACTED PARABLE OF SIN AND REDEMPTION," together with Christ's example in dealing with sinners. (1) The paralytic—a type of sinners (vs. 1-3). (2) He is brought to Christ (vs. 3, 4), as we must bring sinners by our labors and our prayers. (3) He comes in faith and finds forgiveness (v. 5). (4) Forgiveness is proved and followed by healing (vs. 6-12), as renewed lives follow and prove the forgiveness of our sins. (5) Then sinners, even of the worst class, are called to be the disciples of Christ.

#### 6. THE CALL OF MATTHEW AND HIS FEAST 2:13-17

##### TEXT 2:13-17

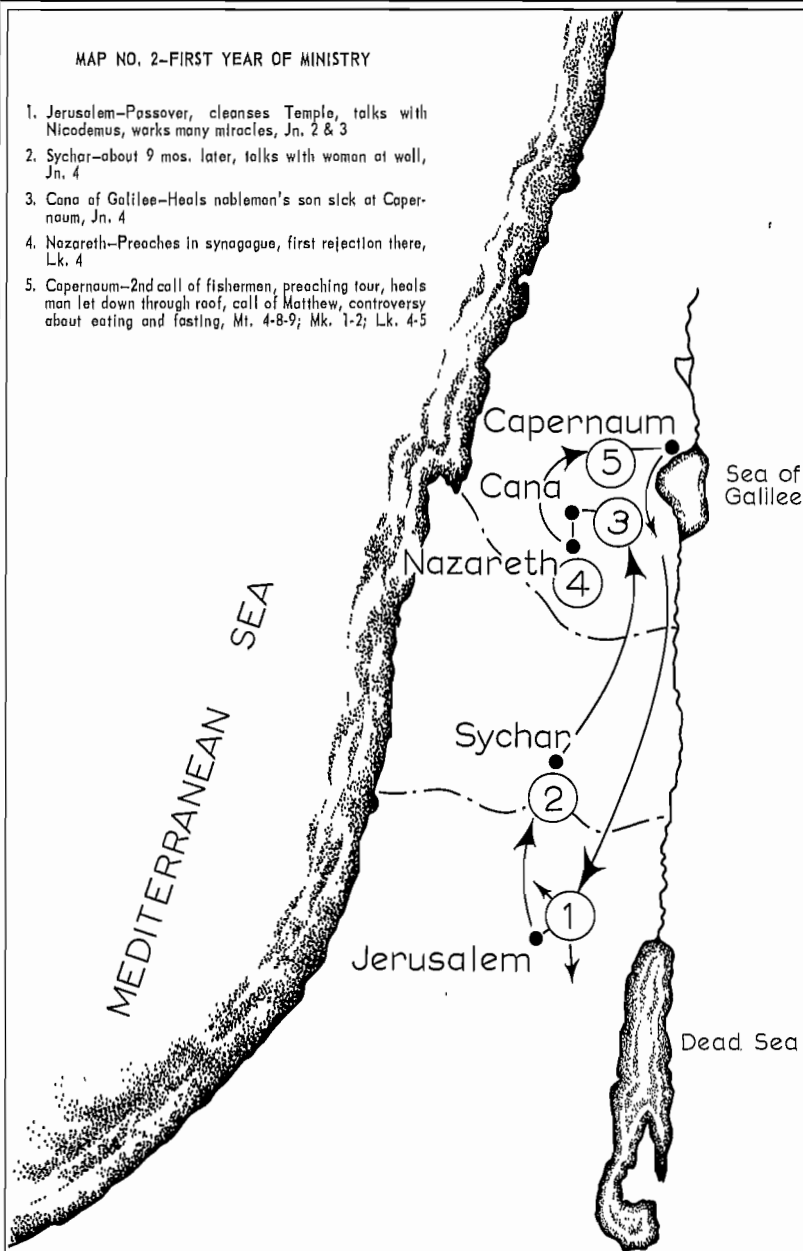
And he went forth again by the seaside; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the place of toll, and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass, that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners. And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

##### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 2:13-17

82. Why did Jesus do most of His teaching outside?

MAP NO. 2—FIRST YEAR OF MINISTRY

1. Jerusalem—Passover, cleanses Temple, talks with Nicodemus, works many miracles, Jn. 2 & 3
2. Sychar—about 9 mos. later, talks with woman at well, Jn. 4
3. Cana of Galilee—Heals nobleman's son sick at Capernaum, Jn. 4
4. Nazareth—Preaches in synagogue, first rejection there, Lk. 4
5. Capernaum—2nd call of fishermen, preaching tour, heals man let down through roof, call of Matthew, controversy about eating and fasting, Mt. 4-8-9; Mk. 1-2; Lk. 4-5







83. Isn't it rather strange to read of a tax collector working by the Sea of Galilee? Explain.
84. Was this the first meeting of Jesus with Matthew? How account for the immediate response?
85. Why did Jesus go to eat at the home of Matthew? Be specific.
86. Are we to conclude that the publicans and sinners were at the feast only because they followed Jesus?; or did they come by invitation?
87. What was wrong with eating and drinking with publicans and sinners?
88. Why ask the disciples—why not ask Jesus?
89. In the answer of Jesus was He being ironical in His reference to the well and the sick?

## COMMENT 2:13-17

TIME—Early Summer A.D. 28.

PLACE—Near the northern shore of Galilee—on the road from Damascus as it entered Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 9:9; Luke 5:27, 28.

OUTLINE—1. Teaching the multitude by the seaside, vs. 13. 2. Matthew called from his work to follow Jesus, vs. 14. 3. The feast in the home of Levi, v. 15. 4. The criticism of eating with sinners; the answer of Jesus, v. 16, 17.

## ANALYSIS

- I. TEACHING THE MULTITUDE BY THE SEASIDE, v. 13.
  1. The place where He had taught before.
  2. A great crowd present because of previous miracles.
- II. MATTHEW CALLED FROM HIS WORK TO FOLLOW JESUS. vs 14-17
  1. The place of toll was noticed by our Lord.
  2. Immediate response.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

- I. TEACHING THE MULTITUDES BY THE SEASIDE, v. 13.

13. *By the seaside.* Our Lord often is found in the open air preaching to the multitudes—especially was this true beside the Sea of Galilee. There were many villages from which came the many people to hear Him.

- II. MATTHEW CALLED FROM HIS WORK TO FOLLOW JESUS. vs. 14-17

14. *He saw Levi*—There were many who fished in the lake—There were many more who came in and out of the city—from all of these would Levi collect taxes. Jesus had already healed one leper—he is about to heal another—a social leper of the society of His day. Here was a Jew hired to collect taxes of his own people for the despised Romans. If such tax collectors were paid a common wage for their work it would have been scorned as an occupation—but when all knew they assessed beyond

the amount prescribed and kept the overcharge for themselves it became a position of utter contempt. "By Mark alone is he called the son of Alphaeus. There is no reason to suppose that this was any other Alphaeus than the one referred to in all the lists of the apostles where we have "James, the son of Alphaeus." In three of the lists he stands next to Matthew and Thomas. Matthew and James are thus presumably brothers; and if, as is almost certain, Thomas was the twin brother of Matthew, Alphaeus was the father of three of the twelve. If the word "brother" is rightly supplied before "of James" in Luke 6:16 ("Judas the brother of James"), he may have been the father of four."

We have no record of a previous acquaintance of Jesus on the part of Levi. We can assume the following: (1) He could have heard the preaching of vs. 13. (2) One of his brothers could have introduced Jesus to him. (3) He could have been among the other publicans who were baptized by John (Luke 3:12, 13: 7:29). (4) Peter said the apostles were followers of Jesus from the baptism—or baptizing of John (Acts 1:21,22).

We must conclude that when the words of Jesus *Follow Me* fell on his heart it was one prepared to receive them. Here was a hungry soul in the most unlikely of circumstances—but then our Lord found several of these—we think immediately of the woman at the well (John 4:7-38).

15. *Jesus (he) sat at meat in his house*—Luke tells us the feast was prepared by Matthew for Jesus (Luke 5:29). We are not to conclude this event happened immediately after the calling of Levi—no time element is indicated. We ought to mark the difference in the readings of the King James Version and the American Standard. The name "Jesus" is supplied by the translators—it is much more natural to refer this to Levi—who here in his own house is reclining at the table in the presence of Jesus and many others. Evidently Matthew wanted all publicans to hear and see what he had heard and seen. The publicans were at the feast by invitation as were undoubtedly the disciples of Jesus.

16. *The scribes and Pharisees*—a better translation would read "the scribes of the Pharisees." "This is the first mention of the Pharisees in Mark's Gospel. They were a sect of separatists. The group began in the Maccabean period, in the second century before Christ. The Pharisees were trying to withstand the rising tide of Hellenism in Palestine. They stood strongly for close adherence to the law, including strict observance of all the ceremonial requirements. But like all such groups, the sect became more and more legalistic in its emphasis." (Earle) These scribes stood outside the house to ask this question of the disciples.

17. *They that are whole* (strong). This was used ironically by Jesus to describe the Pharisees' attitude about himself—since he felt self suffi-

cient—he need not concern himself over the work of the great physician.

*They that are sick*—surely even at the risk of contagion the physician must minister to the sick. If the Pharisees felt these publicans and sinners so much in need they could not object if someone attempted to help them.

*not to call the righteous but sinners.* Jesus plainly states His purpose—His work, His concern would be among sinners—His call—His healing would be for them—if this offended the Pharisees so be it!

#### FACT QUESTIONS 2:13-17

107. Who would hear Jesus by the Sea of Galilee i. e. besides a few fishermen?
108. Why did Levi have his place of toll by the Seaside? Why was he hated?
109. Who were the brothers of Matthew?
110. What are the possibilities of previous contact of Matthew with Jesus?
111. Why was Levi so ready to follow?
112. Who prepared the feast—in whose house?
113. Why did the Pharisees criticize Him?
114. How did Jesus attempt to show the Pharisees their sin?
115. Did Jesus infer there were some men who could not be helped?

#### 7. DISPUTE ABOUT FASTING 2:18-22.

##### TEXT: 2:18-22

And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they come and say unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day. No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment: else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old and a worse rent is made. And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins: else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins: but they put new wine into fresh wineskins."

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 2:18-22

90. Was there something wrong about the fasting of John's disciples or of the fasting of the Pharisees? Why did they fast?
91. Was Jesus saying that He and His disciples were as happy as a bridal party? If not what did He say in vs. 19?
92. Are we living in the day when the bridegroom has been taken away? If so are we to fast? If so why do we fail to do it? Cf. Acts 13:1, 2.
93. What is represented by the undressed cloth in the figure of speech Jesus used? What was the old garment?

94. What worse rent would be made? What was the point of the parable?  
 95. Was the point the same in the figure of new and old wine skins?

## COMMENT

TIME—(Same as the call of Levi—Early Summer A.D. 28.)

PLACE—Many feel this conversation took place around the table in Matthew's house.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 9:14-17; Luke 5:33-39.

OUTLINE—1. The question of John's disciples, v. 18. 2. The answer of the bridegroom, vs. 19, 20. 3. The answer of the garment, v. 21. 4. The answer of the wine skins, v. 22.

## ANALYSIS

- I. THE QUESTION OF JOHN'S DISCIPLES, 18.
  1. Asked during a fast by John's disciples and the Pharisees.
  2. Why do John's disciples fast and the disciples of Christ fail to fast?
- II. THE ANSWER OF THE BRIDEGROOM, 19, 20.
  1. The joy of the bridal party prevents fasting.
  2. When the bridegroom is gone there will be fasting.
- III. THE ANSWER OF THE GARMENT, 21
  1. New cloth cannot patch old clothes.
  2. The results prevent such action.
- IV. THE ANSWER OF THE WINE SKINS, 22.
  1. New wine cannot go in old skins.
  2. Results prevent such action.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## I. THE QUESTION OF JOHN'S DISCIPLES, 18.

18. *John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting.* Perhaps they chose the very time of the feast for a fast. This would indeed produce a contrast and conflict. We believe John's disciples were sincere in their questions and offered no criticism. We could not say the same of the disciples of the Pharisees. The law of God prescribed only one fast—the great Day of atonement—(Lev. 23:27). During the captivity of the Jewish nation fasting was practiced by many. Fasting undoubtedly was associated with the repentance John preached.

## II. THE ANSWER OF THE BRIDEGROOM, 19, 20.

19. *Sons of the bride-chamber.* What a beautiful way to describe the attitude of our Lord for His work! Jesus was as happy as a bridegroom—His disciples shared His joy. How could they be sad or fast when they had just made the greatest discovery in time and eternity? It was time to rejoice, they had found the Messiah!

20. *Then they will fast in that day.* We now live in that day. We look for the coming of the bridegroom for His bride—there are many oc-

casions when we need to fast. The church in Antioch fasted (Cf. Acts 13:1, 2). This is not a legal requirement but it can be a wonderful spiritual exercise. There are mental, emotional, physical and spiritual benefits for the sons of the bride-chamber who will commit themselves to a period of prayer and fasting. The immediate reference here is probably to His crucifixion and the sorrow felt at that time. It can have a more far-reaching application as we have indicated.

### III. THE ANSWER OF THE GARMENT, VS. 21

21. . . . *a piece of undressed cloth or an old garment.* This is an answer to question about fasting. Jesus is saying His mission is entirely new. It will not be added to that of the law as reflected so poorly through the Pharisees, nor even a part of the work of John—which was only a preparation for the new kingdom. The Messiah was not sent to patch up the old but to offer an entirely new garment. "The garment of praise for the worn-out garment of law."

### IV. THE ANSWER OF THE WINE SKINS, VS. 22

22. *New wine in old wine-skins*—This is a Hebrewistic manner of presenting parables—two with the same point for emphasis. "The point in the use of the 'parables' is that the using of the ill-chosen patch and the unsuitable bottles defeats the purpose of him who resorts to it, and the purpose is defeated because of an unwise uniting of the new with the old. The new is the living, expanding, divinely-vigorous kingdom of Christ; the old is that which pertains to the Jewish dispensation, which was decaying and ready to vanish away (Heb. 8:13)" (W. N. Clarke)

### FACT QUESTIONS 2:18-22

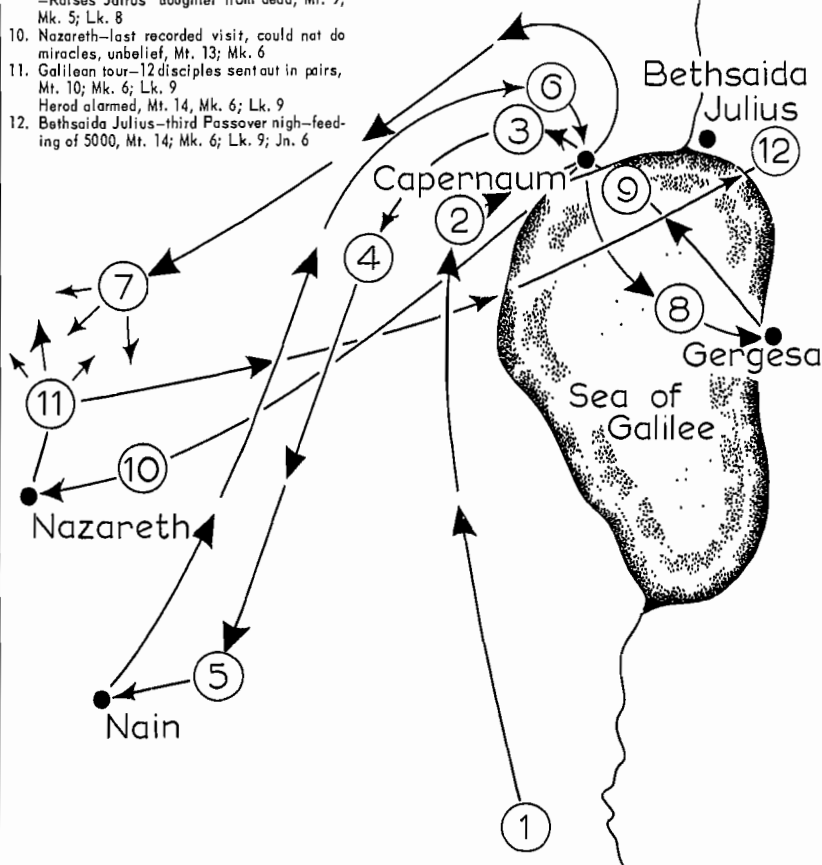
116. At what time and place did this question of fasting occur?
117. What was the probable motive behind the question?
118. Why call the disciples of Jesus "sons of the bride-chamber?"
119. In what day did Jesus promise that His followers would fast?
120. What is represented by the piece of undressed cloth? What is the garment?
121. What is represented by the new wine?

### SIDELIGHTS

"Vers. 13-22.—Levi's feast: the moral questions it occasioned, 1. Vers. 13-17. *Eating with publicans and sinners.* In calling Matthew (Levi) from the receipt of custom, our Saviour made him relinquish all his old pursuits and companions, and conferred upon him an unexpected honour. The feast given by him was, therefore, partly a farewell, partly a celebration. In overstepping the boundary line of Jewish religious and social etiquette, the Lord performed an act of great significance, which was sure to call forth remark.

# MAP NO. 3—SECOND YEAR OF MINISTRY

1. Jerusalem—Second Passover, lame man healed at pool, Jn. 5
2. Near Capernaum—plucking grain on Sabbath—heals withered arm in Synagogue on Sabbath, controversy, Mt. 12; Mk. 2-3; Lk. 6
3. Near Capernaum—names 12 disciples, Mk. 3; Lk. 6
4. Unknown Mountain—Sermon on the Mount, Mt. 5-6-7; Lk. 6; heals centurion's servant, Mt. 8; Lk. 7
5. Nain—Raises widow's dead son, Lk. 7
6. Capernaum—Question from John the Baptist—forgives sinful woman in house of Pharisee, Mt. 11; Lk. 7
7. Galilean tour—Charge of league with Satan—sign of Jonah given—Mather anxious for him—sermon in parables—high cost of discipleship, Mt. 12-13; Mk. 3-4; Lk. 8-9
8. Sea of Galilee—stills tempest, Mt. 8; Mk. 4; Lk. 8
9. Gergesa—Casts demons into swine, Mt. 8; Mk. 5; Lk. 8
10. Capernaum—Heals woman with issue of blood—Raises Jairus' daughter from dead, Mt. 9; Mk. 5; Lk. 8
11. Nazareth—last recorded visit, could not do miracles, unbelief, Mt. 13; Mk. 6
12. Bethsaida Julius—12 disciples sent out in pairs, Mt. 10; Mk. 6; Lk. 9
13. Herod alarmed, Mt. 14, Mk. 6; Lk. 9
14. Bethsaida Julius—third Passover night—feeding of 5000, Mt. 14; Mk. 6; Lk. 9; Jn. 6





I. *Superficial knowledge, when linked with malice, will put the worst construction upon the best actions.* Conventional morality was invoked to condemn Christ in mingling with the publicans. No trouble was taken to ascertain the true character of the feast. By their criticism the Pharisees exposed their own hollowness and unspirituality. They condemned themselves in seeking to condemn Christ. For such judgements men are responsible. The greatest care and most spiritual view should be taken ere judgement is passed upon the actions of others, especially when their character is known to be good.

II. *It is the motive which is the true key to the nature of actions.*  
 1. This applies absolutely in the case of actions in themselves indifferent, or only conventionally forbidden; but in all actions it is an indispensable canon of ultimate judgment. Even where the external nature of an action is unmistakable, the utmost care should be taken in forming an opinion. Absolute and unqualified judgment is for God alone. 2. When challenged for our conduct it is well to explain the principle upon which we act. Christ at once makes known his motives, and with no anger. Yet in so doing he judged his accusers. They pretended to be whole, and so could not object to him doing good to those who required his aid. Why were they dissatisfied, if not from secret disquietude with their own condition and attitude? Irony proceeding from deepest spiritual discernment!

III. *The holiest sought out and companied with sinners that He might make them holy.* "It is only by sympathy, and by appeals to their highest nature, that sinful men can be won to God."—(Muir)

### LESSONS

1. Jesus was first, last, and always a teacher. No occasion went by unimproved for teaching.
2. If we do not speak to all we meet about Christ how shall we discover the hungry hearts like Levi?
3. Could we have dinners for sinners and introduce Jesus to them at the meal? It has been done with good success.
4. We should not be surprised at criticism—much of it unfounded—this is part of the price of progress.
5. How glad we should be to take the particular prescription the Great physician gives for us.
6. We should be as happy in our labors for Christ as a bride and groom on their honeymoon.



## POINTS FOR TEACHERS

*The Calling of Matthew*

(A wonderful lesson for every teacher—)

We know three things about him;

- (1) He was a Hebrew.
  - a. Justifiable pride.
  - b. Understandable narrowness.
- (2) He was a publican.
  - a. A consciousness of an authority under which he served.
  - b. Responsible for accuracy in keeping of records.
- (3) A profoundly religious man.
  - a. His remarkable familiarity with the Scriptures of the Hebrew people. No less than 99 references in his gospel.
  - b. He applied his knowledge.

How our Lord dealt with this man:

1. Found him in the *midst of work*.
  - a. "All the brooding of his mind lay behind the outward activity of the tax collector."
  - b. Perhaps he knew very much about Jesus since his place of work was at Capernaum.
  - c. The decisive moment—the command of Jesus.
2. Jesus asked for *submission*.
3. He promised *fellowship*.
4. He called Matthew into an *enterprise*.

The results are self-evident in the gospel he wrote. (G. Campbell Morgan)

## 8. THE SABBATH DISPUTE 2:23—3:6

- a. Eating on the Sabbath. 2:23-28

## TEXT 2:23-28

And it came to pass, that he was going on the Sabbath day through the cornfields; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need and was an hungered, he and they that were with him? How he entered into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and did eat the shew-bread, which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests, and gave also to them that were with him? And he said unto them. The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath."

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 2:23-28

96. To where were Jesus and His disciples going as they went through the grain fields?
97. Why were his disciples plucking the ears of grain? Wasn't this stealing?
98. Of what did the Pharisees accuse the disciples?
99. How could Jesus use the example of David when David lied to the priest in getting the shewbread?
100. In what sense was the sabbath made for man?
101. Is Jesus saying the Sabbath law was subject to man not man to the Sabbath law? Explain.
102. In what sense is the Son of man Lord of the Sabbath?
103. Wouldn't this arouse anger in the hearts of the Pharisees and therefore be wrong?

## COMMENT 2:23-28

TIME—Early summer of A.D. 28.

PLACE—In a grain field near Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5.

OUTLINE—1. Walking on the sabbath, 23. 2. The criticism of the Pharisees, 24. 3. Jesus' answer, 25, 26. 4. The application, 27, 28.

## ANALYSIS 2:23-28

## I. WALKING ON THE SABBATH 23

1. Through the grain-fields with His disciples.
2. As they went the disciples plucked the grain and ate it.

## II. THE CRITICISM OF THE PHARISEES. 24.

1. Careful to watch for mistakes.
2. Objected to harvesting grain on the sabbath.

## III. JESUS' ANSWER. 25, 26.

1. They were unaware of the record and meaning of the scripture.
2. David's exception would surely allow for theirs.

## IV. THE APPLICATION. 27, 28.

1. The true purpose of the sabbath.
2. The claim to Divine prerogative.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## I. WALKING ON THE SABBATH. 23.

23. . . . *on the sabbath . . . his disciples began to pluck the ears.* Matthew mentions the hunger of the disciples as the cause for plucking the grain. Both Jesus and His disciples had been so pressed with work that they had not time for eating. Deut. 23:25 makes provision for the poor and permits eating a few ears from the neighbor's field. We do not know if this was a wheat field or a barley field.

## II. THE CRITICISM OF THE PHARISEES, 24.

24. . . . *why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?* The Pharisees were accusing the disciples of working on the sabbath—actually of harvesting on the sabbath. The law was Exodus 20:10. The infraction of the law was a matter of legalistic interpretation.

## III. JESUS' ANSWER, 25, 26.

25, 26. "The reply, as given by all three evangelists, cites a violation on the ground of necessity, and one in which the necessity, as now, is that of hunger. The sanctity is not that of the Sabbath alone, but also that of the shew-bread in the tabernacle. The reference is to 1 Sam. 21:1-6; "In the days of Abiathar, the high priest;" the mention of the name is peculiar to Mark, and is not without difficulty. The high priest who is mentioned in the original narrative is not Abiathar, but Ahimelech, his father. Abiathar succeeded his father in office not long after, and was high priest during David's reign; so that his name is constantly associated with that of David in the history. Various attempts have been made to reconcile the difference, some supposing that Abiathar was already assistant to his father at the time of David's visit and was present when he came, although this can be nothing but conjecture; others, that our Lord or Mark was content with mentioning the name of the chief high priest of David's time, and the one that was chiefly associated with David's name, which is the same as to say that absolute accuracy was not aimed at; others, that the name of Abiathar stands in the text of Mark as the result of a copyist's error. The law of the shew-bread is given at Lev. 24:5-9. Our Lord's argument is again, as so often, an *argumentum ad hominem*—an appeal to the Pharisees on their own ground. The visit of David to the tabernacle was on the Sabbath, for the previous week's shew-bread was just being changed for the fresh, and this was done on the Sabbath (1 Sam. 21:6 with Lev. 24:8). So David violated the sanctity of the Sabbath (if the Pharisees were right), and at the same time the law that gave the sacred bread to the priests alone. Here was a double violation on the ground of necessity, and the Scriptures nowhere condemned it; nor would the Pharisees really condemn it. David was no Sabbath-breaker, as they all knew; neither were his disciples Sabbath-breakers for gathering and eating the ears of grain. In Matthew a second illustration is added—of the priests laboring in the temple on the Sabbath without sin; also a second citation of the Scripture quoted in verse 13—"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice"—as appropriate to this case also. The principle throughout is that higher requirements subordinate lower; the application of the principle, that necessity and mercy are of higher rank than any ceremonial or formal duties. The requirement of "mercy" was a rebuke to the spirit of the fault finders, who

were very tender of the Sabbath, but cared nothing for the supplying of the needs of their fellow-men. The principle of Paul, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10), was to them utterly unknown.—

#### IV. THE APPLICATION. 27, 28

27, 28. "*sabbath was made for man.*"—These verses contain an argument not reported by either Matthew or Luke. That the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, implies that when the welfare of man conflicts with the observance of the Sabbath, the latter must give way. But of this, man himself is not to judge, because he can not judge with impartiality his own interests. No one is competent to judge in the case who does not know all that pertains to the welfare of man, and this is known only by the Lord. For this reason Jesus adds, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath;" that is, as the Son of man came to provide for man's welfare, and as the Sabbath law might need modification or even abrogation for the highest good of man, therefore lordship over the Sabbath was given to the Son of man. The passage teaches, then, not that man might violate the law of the Sabbath when their welfare seemed to them to demand it, but that Jesus could set it aside, as he afterward did, when his own judgment of man's welfare required him to do so. He made it clear on this occasion that said law was not to be so construed as to prevent men from providing necessary food on the Sabbath-day." (J. W. McGarvey)

#### FACT QUESTIONS 2:23-28

122. Why did the disciples eat the grain?
123. Why go through the field? Why not use the road?
124. Was it wrong to eat the grain? What law provides for this?
125. What law did the Pharisees imagine the disciples had violated?
126. Please explain the difficulty in referring to Abiathar as the high-priest—what explanation seems best?
127. What principle was involved in the action of David which was also a part of the action of the disciples?
128. In what sense was the sabbath made for man? When?
129. Explain the point in saying the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath.

#### b. Healing On The Sabbath 3:1-6

##### TEXT 3:1-6

And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had his hand withered. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man that had his hand withered, Stand forth. And he saith unto

them, Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored. And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:1-6

104. On what sabbath did this event occur? Please read Luke 6:6 before answering.
105. Just what is meant by "a withered hand"?
106. Who was watching Jesus to accuse Him?
107. Why call the man to stand forth in the midst?
108. Was the question of Jesus in vs. 4 based on scripture? Why ask the question?
109. In what sense was Jesus angry with the Pharisees?
110. Please explain in your own words the heart action described in vs. 5.
111. Did the willingness of the cripple relate to the healing? If so, how?
112. Why the decision to kill Him? Why made at this particular time?
113. Who were the Herodians?

### COMMENT

TIME—Early Summer A.D. 28—although on a different sabbath than the one on which the disciples plucked the grain yet in the same summer.  
PLACE—Capernaum—in the synagogue of this city.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11.

OUTLINE—1. The place of the healing, vs. 1. 2. The critics of the healing, vs. 2. 3. The man to be healed, vs. 3. 4. The question of the purpose of healing and the sabbath, vs. 4. 5. The attitude of Jesus and the healing, vs. 5. 6. The sad reaction of the healing on those who refused to learn, vs. 6.

### ANALYSIS

- I. THE PLACE OF THE HEALING, VS. 1.
  1. At Capernaum in the synagogue.
  2. In the midst of the Jewish worshippers in the synagogue.
- II. THE CRITICS OF THE HEALING, VS. 2.
  1. The Pharisees and perhaps the Herodians.
  2. They were there to spy not to worship or learn.
- III. THE MAN TO BE HEALED, VS. 3.
  1. An adult with a hand which was "dried up."
  2. He was asked to arise so he could be seen by all in the service.

## IV. THE QUESTION OF THE PURPOSE OF HEALING AND THE SABBATH, V. 4.

1. Some were worried about the purpose of the sabbath—Jesus asked if they really knew what should or should not be done on this day?
2. They refused to answer the obvious question.

## V. THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS AND THE HEALING, VS. 5.

1. Searching the faces and hearts Jesus was grieved at what He saw.
2. In the face of opposition and danger Jesus "does good" on the sabbath by healing.

## VI. THE SAD REACTION OF THE HEALING ON THOSE WHO REFUSED TO LEARN, VS. 6.

1. Left with their minds made up.
2. Immediately agreed with their enemies to destroy Jesus.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## I. THE PLACE OF HEALING, VS. 1.

1. "*And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.*"

Mark records another charge of Sabbath-breaking, probably to show how various were the outward occasions of such opposition; to illustrate the variety of Christ's defenses; and mark the first concerted plan for his destruction. *Again*, that is, on a different occasion from the one referred to in 2:21. The *synagogue*, most probably the one there mentioned, which was in Capernaum. Here, as in 2:23, the absence of any more specific note of time shows that exact chronological order was of small importance to the author's object. There is somewhat more precision as to this point in the parallel accounts of Luke (6:11) and Matthew (12:9). There is no ground in the text of either gospel for the conjecture of some writers, that the presence of this sufferer had been contrived in order to entrap Christ. The constant application for his healing aid precludes the necessity of such supposition, and indeed suggests that this was only one of many miracles performed at this time, and is recorded in detail on account of its important bearing on the progress of Christ's ministry. *Withered*, literally, *dried* or *dried up*, elsewhere applied to liquids (5:29. Rev. 16:12), and to plants (4:6. 11:20. James 1:11), but also to the pining away of the human body. The passive participle adds to the meaning of the adjective (dry) employed by Matthew and Luke, the idea that it was not a congenital infirmity, but the effect of disease or accident, the more calamitous because it was the right hand that was thus disabled (Luke 6:6). A similar affliction, preternaturally caused, was that of Jeroboam (1 Kings 13:4-6)."

## II. THE CRITICS OF THE HEALING, VS. 2.

2. "*And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath-day; that they might accuse him.*"

We have here a striking indication that the opposition to our Saviour was becoming more inveterate and settled, so that his enemies not only censured what he did, but watched for some occasion to find fault with him. *Watched*, i. e. closely or intently, as suggested by the compound form of the Greek verb, both here and in Acts 9:24. *Whether he would*, literally, *if he will*, a form of speech which represented the scene as actually passing. The motive of their watching was not simply curiosity, but a deliberate desire to entrap him. *That they might accuse him*, not in conversation merely, but before the local judges, who were probably identical with the elders or rulers of the synagogue, or at all events present at the stated time and place of public worship. The subject of the verb is not expressed by Mark and Matthew, although easily supplied from the foregoing context (2:24. Matt. 12:2), and from the parallel account in Luke (6:7), where the scribes and Pharisees are expressly mentioned."

## III. THE MAN TO BE HEALED, VS. 3.

3. "*And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth!*"

This direction to the patient is placed by Matthew (12:13) after the address to his accusers, but without asserting that it was not given sooner, as would seem to be the case from the accounts of Mark and Luke, who represent it as a sort of preparation for the subsequent discourse, which would be rendered more impressive by the sight of the man standing *in the midst*, i.e. among them, and no doubt in a conspicuous position, but not necessarily in the exact center of the house or assembly. This phrase is omitted in our version, or included in the phrase *stand forth*. The Greek verb is the same with that in 1:31. 2:9. 11:12, and strictly means to rouse another or one's self, especially from sleep. (Compare Matt. 8:25. Luke 8:24.)"

## IV. THE QUESTION OF THE PURPOSE OF HEALING AND THE SABBATH, VS. 4.

4. "*And he saith unto them. Is it unlawful to do good on the sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? but they held their peace.*"

Before proceeding to perform the miracle, he appeals to them as to the question of its lawfulness, retorting the same question which they had already put to him (Matt. 12:10), as if he had said, 'answer your own question; I will leave it to yourselves, and will abide by your decision, not however as expressed in words alone, but in your actions' (Matt. 12:11,

12). *Is it lawful*, not right in itself, but consistent with the law of Moses, and with your acknowledged obligation to obey it. *To do good* and *to do evil* may, according to etymology and usage, mean *to do right* and *to do wrong* in the general (1 Pet. 3:16, 17. 3 John 11), or *to do good* and *to injure* in particular (Acts 14:17). On the former supposition the meaning of the sentence is, 'You will surely admit that it is lawful to do right in preference to wrong on the Sabbath, as on any other day.' But as this is little more than an identical proposition, or at least an undisputed truism (namely) that what is right is lawful), most interpreters prefer the other explanation, according to which our Lord is not asserting a mere truism, which his hearers were as ready to acknowledge as himself, but pointing out their obvious mistake as to the nature of the action which they had condemned beforehand. Stripped of its interrogative form, the sentence contains two distinct but consecutive propositions. The first is that it must be lawful, even on the Sabbath, to confer a favor or to do a kindness, when the choice lies between that and the doing of an injury. Even if not absolutely lawful, it would certainly become so in the case of such an alternative. The next proposition is that this rule, which is true in general, is emphatically true when the alternative is that of life and death. To this may be added, as a tacit influence, not formally deduced, but left to be drawn by the hearers for themselves, that such a case was that before them, in which to refuse help was virtually to destroy. This is not to be strictly understood as meaning that unless the withered hand were healed at once the man would die, but as exemplifying that peculiar method of presenting extreme cases, which is one of the most marked characteristics of our Saviour's teaching. As in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere, he instructs us what we must be prepared to do in an extreme case, thus providing for all others; so here he exhibits the conclusion, to which their reasoning naturally tended, as a proof that it must be erroneous. If the rest of the Sabbath was not only a divine requisition, but an intrinsic, absolute necessity, to which all human interests must yield, this could be no less true in an extreme case than in any other, so that life itself must be sacrificed to it. This revolting conclusion could be avoided only by admitting that the obligation of the Sabbath rested on authority, and might by that authority be abrogated or suspended. This implies that such authority belonged to him, that he was not acting as a mere man, or a prophet, but as the Son of man, and as such lord of the Sabbath; so that, although his answer upon this occasion is in form quite different from that before recorded, it amounts to the same thing, and proceeds upon the same essential principle. Thus understood, the sentence may be paraphrased as follows: 'You consider me a breaker of the law, because I heal upon



the Sabbath; but you must admit that where the choice is between doing good and evil, for example, between saving life and killing upon that day, we are bound to choose the former. There is therefore some limit or exception to the obligation which you urge upon yourselves and others, not indeed to be decided by your own discretion or caprice, but by the same authority which first imposed it. Now that authority I claim to exercise, a claim abundantly attested by the very miracles on which your charge is founded, for no man can do such things unless God be with him.' (Compare John 3:2.)"

V. THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS AND THE HEALING, VS. 5.

5. *And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched (it) out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*

We have here an instance of what some regard as characteristic of this gospel, and ascribe to Peter's influence upon it, to wit, the occasional description of our Saviour's feelings, looks and gestures, most of which details we owe exclusively to Mark. Three such particulars are here recorded, one external, two internal. *Looking round upon* (or at) *them* is an act mentioned by Luke also (6:10), with the addition of the strong word *all*. But Mark tells what feelings were expressed by this act, or at least accompanied it. One was *anger*, a passion belonging to our original constitution, and as such not sinful in itself, and therefore shared by the humanity of Christ, in whom it was a holy indignation or intense displeasure at what really deserves it, unalloyed by that excess or that malignity which renders human anger almost always sinful. The absence of the quality last named in this case is apparent from the other feeling mentioned, that of grief or sorrow. *Grieved with* is in Greek a compound verb, admitting of two explanations, one of which makes the particle in composition refer to the anger previously mentioned, *being grieved* (in conjunction or at the same time) with that anger. But the classical usage of such writers as Plato, Theophrastus, Diodorus, is in favour of referring the particle in question, not to the anger, but to those who caused it, so as to express a sympathetic sorrow. Looking round with anger and yet grieving (sympathizing) with them. In the very act of condemning their sin, he pitied the miserable state to which it had reduced them. The specific object of this sympathetic grief or pity was the *hardness of their heart*, including intellectual stupidity and insensibility of feeling. The first Greek word is less exactly rendered *blindness* in the margin of our Bible, and in the text of Rom. 11:25. Eph. 4:18. But the figure, although not suggested by the Greek word, is expressive of two things which it denotes, a state of mental and spiritual apathy

or insensibility. There is here no mention of external contact (as in 1:31, 41), nor of any other order or command than that to stretch out the hand, which could only be obeyed when the miracle was wrought, and is therefore not required as a previous condition. This is often and justly used to illustrate the act of faith, which is performed in obedience to divine command and by the aid of the same power which requires it. *Whole* (or sound) *as the other*, though expunged in this place by the critics as a mere assimilation to Matt. 12:13 (compare Luke 6:10), may be used to illustrate Mark's laconic phrase, in which it is really implied."

VI. THE SAD REACTION OF THE HEALING ON THOSE WHO REFUSED TO LEARN, VS. 6.

6. "*And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.*"

One of the most important circumstances of this case, for the sake of which it was perhaps recorded (see v. 1), is the effect which it produced upon the Pharisees or High-Church Jewish party, whose religious tenets brought them into constant opposition to the Sadducees or latitudinarians, as their political or national exclusiveness arrayed them against the Herodians or followers of Herod, and as such defenders of the Roman domination, of which the Herods were the instruments and agents. Herod the Great, created king by the Romans, and enabled by their aid to take possession of his kingdom, was devoted to their service both from interest and inclination; and although upon his death his dominions were divided, and his eldest son Archelaus had been superseded in Judea by Roman procurators, two other sons of Herod were still reigning (Luke 3:1), Antipas in Galilee, Samaria, and Perea, and Philip in Trachonitis and Iturea. Even in Judea, the Herodian interest and party still existed, as the most extreme political antithesis to that of the Pharisees. It is therefore a clear proof of growing hatred to our Saviour, that these opposite extremes should now begin to coalesce for his destruction, an alliance which appears to have continued till its object was accomplished. *Going out* (from the synagogue) *immediately*, as soon as the miracle was wrought, and therefore in full view of the proof which it afforded of our Lord's divine legation; a conclusive confirmation of that hardness and judicial blindness which had excited his own grief and anger. *Took counsel* is a phrase peculiar to Matthew (12:14. 22:15. 27:1. 28:12), Mark's equivalent to which is *made counsel*, i.e. consultation. *How they might destroy him*, not for any past offenses, but how they might take advantage of his words or acts to rid them of so dangerous an enemy. The motives of this concerted opposition were no doubt various, religious, political, and personal, in different degrees and cases.

That it should have been deliberately organized, at this time, out of such discordant elements and in the face of such conclusive evidence, can only be ascribed to the infatuation under which they acted (Luke 6:11)." (J. A. Alexander)

*FACT QUESTIONS 3:1-6.*

130. What possible purposes were there in the record of Mark of the Sabbath healing?
131. Was the cripple "planted" there to entrap Christ? Prove your answer.
132. How did the man come to have a withered hand?
133. In what manner and in what attitude did the Pharisees watch Jesus?
134. How would the accusations of the enemies of Jesus be carried out?
135. At what particular time in the action did Jesus ask the man to stand forth? What is meant by "Stand forth"?
136. Why did Jesus ask the question of vs. 4? Cf. Matt. 12:10.
137. Was our Lord stating a truism?
138. If this was not a truism what two propositions were involved in the statement?
139. In what reference do some see the influence of Peter upon the writer Mark?
140. How could Jesus look upon certain persons with anger and yet not sin?
141. With whom was Jesus grieved? I thought He was angry with them? Explain.
142. What was included in the expression "hardness of heart"?
143. Was there any act of faith on the part of the man healed? Explain.
144. How does vs. 6 indicate the purpose for verses 1-6?
145. Who were the Herodians? Why did the Pharisees want their help?

*SIDELIGHTS*

2:23-28

"We see from these verses, what extravagant importance is attached to trifles by those who are mere formalists in religion.

The Pharisees were mere formalists, if there ever were any in the world. They seem to have thought exclusively of the outward part, the husk, the shell, and the ceremonial of religion. They even added to these externals by traditions of their own. Their godliness was made up of washings and fastings and peculiarities in dress and will-worship, while repentance and faith and holiness were comparatively overlooked.

The Pharisees would probably have found no fault if the disciples had been guilty of some offense against the moral law. They would have winked at covetousness, or perjury, or extortions, or excess, because they were sins to which they themselves were inclined.

We see, in the second place, from these verses, the value of a knowledge of Holy Scripture.

Our Lord replies to the accusation of the Pharisees by a reference to Holy Scripture. He reminds His enemies of the conduct of David, when "he had need and was an hungered." "Have ye never read what David did?" They could not deny that the writer of the book of Psalms, and the man after God's own heart, was not likely to set a bad example.

Let us observe in these verses, how our Lord Jesus Christ was watched by His enemies. We read that "they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath Day, that they might accuse Him."

What a melancholy proof we have here of the wickedness of human nature! It was the Sabbath Day when these things happened. It was in the synagogue, where men were assembled to hear the Word and worship God. Yet even on the day of God, and at the time of worshipping God, these wretched formalists were plotting mischief against our Lord. The very men who pretended to such strictness and sanctity in little things, were full of malicious and angry thoughts in the midst of the congregation. (Prov. 5:14).

Let us observe, in the last place, the *feelings which the conduct of our Lord's enemies called forth in His heart*. We are told that "He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts."

This expression is very remarkable, and demands special attention. It is meant to remind us that our Lord Jesus Christ was a man like ourselves in all things, sin only excepted. Whatever sinless feelings belong to the constitution of man, our Lord partook of, and knew by experience. We read that He "marvelled," that He "rejoiced," that He "wept," that He "loved," and here we read that He felt "anger."

It is plain from these words that there is an "anger" which is lawful, right, and not sinful. There is an indignation which is justifiable, and on some occasions may be properly manifested. The words of Solomon and St. Paul both seem to teach the same lesson. "The north wind driveth away rain, so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue." "Be ye angry and sin not." (Prov. 25:23; Eph. 4:26). (J. C. Ryle)

### LESSONS

1. Jesus did not remove Himself or His disciples from the ordinary

course of life—it was in the grain field and the synagogue He taught His lessons.

2. Jesus never ate the grain—whereas He defended the actions of His disciples He was above reproach—so should the teacher be.
3. The sabbath was indeed made for man—for the Jewish man in Palestine—there are numerous persons who could not observe it because of the length of the day in the area where they live—most of all because God commanded no one but the Jews to observe it. Cf. Deut. 5:15.
4. How many withered hands do we have in the church today? Jesus is commanding them to stand forth and be healed.
5. We can expect some people to intentionally misunderstand and misinterpret all the good we do. A servant is not above His Master:

#### POINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. How many of the Ten Commandments are reproduced in the New Testament? Give references.
2. Is there any commandment in the New Testament to observe the Lord's Day? Why do we observe it?
3. Make a contrast between the sabbath and the Lord's Day.
4. Name some things we should do on Sunday.
5. Is it right to keep drug stores and other stores open on Sunday?
6. If a man works all day on Sunday and gives what he earns on that day to the Lord's work, does that excuse him for working?
7. What are some of the things causing the American people to misuse the Lord's Day?
8. Show how the forces of evil today are united.
9. Show how the forces of good are divided.
10. What is the unpardonable sin?

#### 9. THE FAME OF JESUS 3:7-12

##### TEXT 3:7-12

"And Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed: and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and beyond Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him: for he had healed many; insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him. And the unclean spirits, whensoever they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he charged them much that they should not make him known."

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:7-12

114. Did the opposition of the Pharisees prompt the move to the beach of Galilee?
115. Where was Idumaea? What is meant by "beyond the Jordan"?
116. What number is estimated in the expression "a great multitude"?
117. Why were the crowds so interested?
118. What was Jesus going to do with "the little boat"?
119. What was physically wrong with the persons with "plagues"?
120. Did Jesus have any "failures" in healing? Specify.
121. Why the testimony of the demons?
122. Why so urgently caution the demons?

## COMMENT 3:7-12

TIME—Midsummer—A.D. 28.

PLACE—The beach of the sea of Galilee, not far from Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 12:15-21.

OUTLINE—1. Jesus withdraws to the Sea, vs. 7. 2. A multitude follows, vs. 8. 3. The little boat requested, vs. 9. 4. Healing and casting out demons, vs. 10-11.

## ANALYSIS

- I. JESUS WITHDRAWS TO THE SEA. VS. 7.
  1. His disciples are with Him.
  2. He is accompanied by a great multitude.
- II. A MULTITUDE FOLLOWS. VS. 8.
  1. From Jerusalem and Judea.
  2. From Idumaea and beyond Jordan.
  3. From round about Tyre and Sidon.
- III. A LITTLE BOAT REQUESTED. VS. 9.
  1. Asked disciples for the boat.
  2. Feared lest He be thronged.
- IV. HEALING AND CASTING OUT DEMONS. VS. 10-12.
  1. So many were healed others pressed toward Him for just a touch.
  2. Unclean spirits cast out and caused to acknowledge His divinity.
  3. Jesus wanted no testimony from an evil source—and most especially when it was given before He wanted it known.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

- I. JESUS WITHDRAWS TO THE SEA. VS. 7.

*"But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea."* "His hour was not yet come; so He went with His disciples to the borders of the lake of Galilee, where, if pursued, He could the more easily take ship, and escape to some other part, out of the reach of His persecutors.

## II. A MULTITUDE FOLLOWS. VS. 8.

*"And a great multitude from Galilee followed him,"* We should put a full stop after "followed him," and read the two verses thus: "And a great multitude from Galilee followed him, And a great multitude from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, hearing what great things He did, came unto Him." The multitude from the neighbouring Galilee, in which He had been preaching and healing, *followed* Him; the multitude from Judea, and Jerusalem, and from all the regions bordering on the Holy Land, attracted by the fame of His miracles, "came" to Him. Notice how, though He is rejected by the leaders both in Church and State, the people from all parts seem to accept Him. I say "seem," for the Evangelist is careful to inform us that they were attracted, not by His preaching, but by His miracles.

Let the reader notice how here, as before, this Evangelist loves to dwell upon the widespread popularity of the Lord."

## III. A LITTLE BOAT REQUESTED. VS. 9.

*"And he spake to the disciples, that a small ship should wait on him,"* The word "wait" does not give the full meaning of the original, which is the same word as that used in the Apostolic precept, "continue instant in prayer," of Romans 12:12. It means that the ship should be always at His beck and call, so that, by escaping the pressure of the multitude, He should not be unduly hindered in the exercise of His ministry."

## IV. HEALING AND CASTING OUT DEMONS. VS. 10-12.

*"For he had healed many: insomuch that they pressed upon him,"* "Pressed upon him" should rather be rendered "*fell upon him*," as if there was a rush towards Him of all who had plagues—plagues (literally "scourges") describing the painfulness and distress of disease, as if it were a scourging inflicted on man as a punishment for his sin.

*"To touch him."* It was the Lord's will most frequently to heal men by contact with His body. He makes communication with His body the means by which virtue flows from Himself to those whom He wills to benefit. The reader will understand.

*"And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him."* The uniformity of action on the part of all evil spirits in the presence of the Lord, in that they should fall down and confess Him, is exceedingly remarkable (Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:23, 24). These fallen beings seem to be under a law that they should thus acknowledge the Son of God. I cannot think that this is to be explained, as so many attempt to do, on the ground of diabolical cunning. It seems as if they were compelled to fall down,

and confess their Maker, even though they had made it the one object of their existence to oppose and thwart Him.

*"And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known."* On this Bede remarks, "A sinner is forbidden to preach the Lord, lest any one listening to his preaching should follow him in his error, for the devil is an evil master, who always mingles false things with true, that the semblance of truth may cover the witness of fraud. But not only devils, but persons healed by Christ and even Apostles (Mark 8:9) are ordered to be silent concerning Him before the Passion, lest by the preaching of the majesty of His Divinity, the economy of His Passion should be retarded." (M. F. Sadler)

#### FACT QUESTIONS 3:7-12

146. Why did Jesus withdraw to the borders of the lake of Galilee?
147. Who *followed* Jesus and who *came* to Him?
148. What is meant by the word "wait" in reference to the boat?
149. What would be a better translation of "pressed upon him"?
150. Why did the sick want to touch him?
151. Why did the demons seem compelled to fall down before Jesus?
152. If demons told the truth why not accept it?

#### B. THE SECOND PERIOD 3:13-7:23

##### 1. Friends and Foes 3:13-35

##### a. The appointment of the twelve 3:13-19

#### TEXT 3:13-19

"And he goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto him whom he himself would: and they went unto him. And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out devils: and Simon he surnamed Peter; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and them he surnamed Boanerges, which is, Sons of thunder: and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him."

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:13-19

123. Please read Matt. 10:1-4 and Luke 2:12-16 as parallel accounts of this important event.
124. What did Jesus do before He went into the mountain to choose the twelve?
125. What mountain?; is it the mount of the sermon on the mount?
126. Why were the disciples so willing to go after Him?
127. What was the two-fold purpose of appointing the twelve?
128. Why the authority to cast out demons?
129. Why the surname for Peter and the two sons of Zebedee?



130. Read the list in Matthew and Luke and explain the use of the name Thaddaeus.
131. Is the term "Cananaean" the same as "Zealot"—compare accounts. (Acts 1:13)

## COMMENT 3:13-19

TIME—Midsummer, A.D. 28.

PLACE—On a mount at no great distance from Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 10:1-4; Luke 6:12-16.

OUTLINE—1. The place where He called the twelve, 13a. 2. The actual call of the twelve, 13b. 3. Their appointment, 14. 4. Sent with authority, 15. 5. The names, 16-19.

## ANALYSIS

- I. THE PLACE WHERE HE CALLED THE TWELVE, 13a.
  1. Near Capernaum and the sea of Galilee.
  2. A place of prayer—probably the mount from which we have the sermon on the mount. Cf. Matt. 10:1-4; Luke 6:12-16.
- II. THE ACTUAL CALL OF THE TWELVE, 13b.
  1. From among the multitude.
  2. Made by the power of Jesus' will.
  3. They left all to follow Him.
- III. THEIR APPOINTMENT, v. 14.
  1. The word appoint sometimes translated "ordained."
  2. That they might be with Him.
  3. That He might send them out to preach.
- IV. SENT WITH AUTHORITY, v. 15.
  1. Over demons.
  2. With His message.
- V. THE NAMES, 16-19.
  1. The first four—Peter, James, John and Andrew.
  2. The second four—Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas.
  3. The third four—James, Thaddaeus, Simon, Judas.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

- I. THE PLACE WHERE HE CALLED THE TWELVE, 13a.

*"The Chosen Twelve* (vs. 13-19a).—It is evident that the bitter opposition and plots of the rulers must, in no long time, put an end to Jesus' earthly work. He can not hope to do more than start the work, to break the ground and commence scattering the seed. Jesus had summoned to his side a few of the Baptist's disciples (John 1:35-51). Later, by the seaside, he had attached four of these more distinctly to him, to travel with him. But there was yet to be formed a compact, organized body of disciples commissioned to teach his doctrines.

But ere he did it, he withdrew into the mountain, doubtless the "Horns of Hattin," and there spent an entire night in prayer (Luke 6:12).

## II. THE ACTUAL CALLING OF THE TWELVE. 13b

When dawn came, he called out of the disciples about him twelve whom he ordained (1) to "be with him"—that is, especially and continuously with him; (2) to be sent forth to preach as his special apostles, and (3) to have power to exercise his authority over demons. These, Luke informs us, he named apostles. "Apostle" means "one sent," and is very close in meaning to our words "ambassador" and "missionary." It was a necessary condition of this apostleship that the apostles should have been with Jesus, and so be qualified to tell of his words and actions, particularly of the resurrection (Acts 1:8, 21, 22; 1 Cor. 9:1; Acts 22:14, 15). The apostles can therefore have no successors.

## III. THEIR APPOINTMENT, v. 14

The number twelve was evidently with purpose, for they were to be tribal judges of the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:30), and were, according to Paul, ministers to the twelve tribes, or to the circumcision, rather than to Gentiles (Gal. 2:7-9).

The lists in the four gospels are different, but the first four names, the second four and the last four in each are the same in all groups. The first name in each four is the same, and the traitor, Judas Iscariot, is always last. This seems to signify that the apostles were so banded as groups of four, each with a leader.

## V. THE NAMES, 16-19.

Because he was first to publicly confess Christ, and because the Lord saw in him peculiar gifts of bold, aggressive leadership, Peter was given the right to open the doors of the kingdom of heaven. But after he had done this in the two sermons to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:14-41; 10:34-48), there is no evidence of Peter's having any authority above that of the other apostles. Christ never so stated; Peter never so claimed; the Apostles never so owned. Jesus, on the other hand, specifically placed them on a level, with himself as their only Master (Matt. 23: 8-11). Peter claims only equal position with other officers in the church (1 Pet. 5:1, 4). Paul names James first (Gal. 2:9, 11-14). See Matt. 18:18; 19:27, 28; 20:25-27; John 20:21; Acts 1:8. Peter was but one of the apostles, one of the "pillars" of the church (Gal. 2:9).

Jesus had prophesied that Simon should be called Peter when Simon was first brought to him by Andrew (John 1:41, 42). The name signifies a piece of stone broken from mother-rock, and indicates Jesus' prophetic insight into his character. Probably because of their vigor and zealous, stormy dispositions (Luke 9: 51-56; Mark 9:38), James and

John were surnamed "Sons of thunder." James' vigorous character probably led to Herod's slaying him, and John's vigor sustained him to a ripe old age—between ninety and one-hundred. John's writings, too, reveal this vigor; he denounces sin in strong terms, such as "liar," "antichrist," "deceiver," "children of the devil" and "murderer" (1 John 1:6; 2:4, 22; 3:15; 2 John 3-11). James and John were sons of Zebedee and Salome (Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40) and perhaps cousins of Jesus (cf. John 19:25).

Philip, like the four preceding disciples, was a native of Bethsaida, and became allied to Jesus on the latter's return from temptation to Galilee (John 1:43, 44). He brought to Jesus Nathanael, who is generally identified with the Bartholomew here named, because John always names Philip and Nathanael together, while the Synoptists name Philip and Bartholomew. Philip seems to have been of practical turn of mind (John 6:5-9). Nathanael was "the Israelite in whom is no guile" (John 1:47).

Matthew is Levi, and alone of all the Synoptists, describes himself in the list of apostles as "the publican," as if recalling the depth from which grace had raised him (Mark 2:14).

Thomas is also called Didymus (John 11:16). Both words mean "twin," the first being Aramaic and the second Greek. His attachment to Jesus was deep (John 11:16), but a tendency to misgiving and despondency probably accounts for his doubting the news of Christ's resurrection, until the sight of his beloved Master brought that explosion of affection, "My Lord and my God!"

James called "son of Alphaeus" and "James the Less" (Mark 15: 40), to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, must not be confused with James the Lord's brother, who became a leader in the Jerusalem church (Gal. 1:19; 2:9-12; 1 Cor. 15:5-7; Acts 15: 6-9; 21:18), and wrote the Epistle of James.

Thaddaeus is called Judas, son of James, in the two later Gospels—Luke and John. He may have been known as Thaddaeus in the early days to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot. He is not the author of the epistle of Jude, written by the Lord's brother.

The cognomen "Cananaean" means "the Zealot" (used by Luke and John).

Judas, famed for his infamy, is called Iscariot, from his native city Kerioth, in Judea; he was the only one of the twelve not from Galilee. He was treasurer of the group. Much speculation has been wasted upon the reason for his choice as an apostle; suffice it to note that Jesus called "whom he himself would."

It is a strikingly human group, possessed in varying degrees of fear,

ambition, rivalry, impetuosity, vows, weakening faith, yet real loyalty—a group of men, and not supermen, with common virtues and common faults, to do an uncommon work with divine power and under divine guidance.” (*Standard Bible Lesson Quarterly*, Jan., Feb., March 1918.)

### FACT QUESTIONS 3:13-19

153. What was the purpose in the appointment of the twelve?
154. Who were the first disciples to follow Jesus? (Cf. John 1:35-51).
155. Why spend the whole night in prayer?—please think on this question.
156. In what sense were the twelve to be “with Him”—in what special sense were they to represent Him?
157. What is the meaning of the word “apostle”?
158. What were the necessary conditions of apostleship? Why twelve apostles?
159. Why in three groups of four?
160. What right did Jesus give Peter?
161. Give three lines of evidence to indicate Peter was on a level with the other apostles. Give the meaning of the name “Peter.”
162. State indications that James and John had “stormy dispositions.”
163. Give two historical facts about each of the following: (1) Philip (2) Matthew (3) Thomas (4) James, son of Alphaeus (5) Thad-daeus (6 Judas)

### B. OPPOSITION 3:20-27

#### (1) From Friends 3:20,21

#### TEXT 3:20-21

“And he cometh into a house. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.”

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:20-21

132. In whose house did this incident occur?
133. Why such a large crowd? Is Mark complaining about the inability to eat?
134. Who were the friends making this complaint?
135. What particular circumstances seemed to disturb His friends? What did they want to do?
136. Were they accusing Jesus of being insane?

## (2) From enemies 3:22-27

*TEXT* 3:22-27

"And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and, By the prince of the devils casteth he out the devils. And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan hath risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. But no one can enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house."

*THOUGHT QUESTIONS* 3:22-27

137. What authority had the scribes to pass judgment on the miracles of Jesus?
138. Who was Beelzebub?
139. Jesus did not evade opposition i.e. on this occasion—show indications this is true.
140. What is meant by the expression "said unto them in parables"?
141. Knowing something of the deceitfulness of Satan why wouldn't Satan on some occasions "cast out Satan?"
142. Did Jesus infer there was an evil kingdom over which Satan rules? In what sense would this kingdom be divided?
143. Who is the head of the house? In what sense divided? Is there a lesson in this parable for us?
144. What is meant by the expression "hath an end" in vs. 26?
145. Who is "the house"? who "the strong man"? What are the goods "to be spoiled"?—who is the one stronger than the strong man?

*COMMENT* 3:20-27

TIME—Midsummer and Autumn, A.D. 28.

PLACE—In the house of Jesus in the city of Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS:—Matt. 12:22-30.

OUTLINE—1. Opposition from friends, 20, 21. 2. Opposition from enemies, 22-27.

*ANALYSIS* 3:20-27

## I. OPPOSITION FROM FRIENDS, 20, 21.

1. This occurred at home in Capernaum.
2. The occasion of opposition was the inability to eat.
3. The form of the opposition was to bodily remove Him from His labors.
4. The reason—they feared for His sanity.

## II. OPPOSITION FROM ENEMIES, 22-27.

1. Jesus is accused of being in league with Satan.
2. Jesus answers in parables:
  - (1) A kingdom divided cannot stand.
  - (2) A house divided cannot stand.
  - (3) Satan casting out himself is defeating himself—this would end in his own complete loss.
  - (4) There must be someone stronger than Satan to cast out Satan.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## I. OPPOSITION FROM FRIENDS, 20, 21.

"20. As soon as he had returned the crowd was about him again.—the vivid description is peculiar to Mark. *So that they could not so much as eat bread.* So at chap. 6:31. The activity on our Lord's own part is left to be inferred, but it must have been an intense activity of teaching and healing, continued we know not how long.

21. *His friends* of verse 21 are "his mother and his brethren" of verse 31. Their coming and calling for him is narrated by Matthew and Luke as well as by Mark, but Mark alone tells of their setting out in search of him and of their motive. Considerably later his brethren did not believe on him (John 7:5), and probably they persuaded his mother on this occasion, playing, perhaps, upon the anxiety of maternal love. These "brethren" appear to be the "James and Joses and Juda and Simon" of Mark 6:3. The question, What was their relation to Jesus? will probably never be settled with unanimous consent. The data being insufficient to furnish a positive decision, temperament and feeling, as well as theological prepossessions, will always be elements in the formation of opinions on the subject. The theories are: (1) That they were children of Joseph and Mary, younger than Jesus; (2) That they were children of Joseph by a former marriage; (3) That they were cousins, probably orphaned, and in some way adopted into the family. The first is rejected by all Roman Catholic interpreters, by all who share their feeling as to the superior holiness of virginity, and by some besides who feel that reverence is best satisfied by regarding the Only-begotten of God as also the only offspring of his mother. Yet the scriptural argument for it is very strong (see it stated at length by Alford, on Matt. 13:55), and its adherents claim—probably correctly—that no other view would ever have been thought of but for unscriptural ideas of our Lord's mother. If the first theory is rejected, there is no choice between the second and the third.—His friends heard of *it*—of the great throng that was about him and of the busy life he was living—and *went out* from their home in Nazareth, where they were all living, mother, brothers, and sisters, a little later,

when Jesus visited the place (chap. 6:1-6). The news reached them there, and brought them down to Capernaum, a distance of perhaps twenty miles. They came *to lay hold on him*—i. e. by force, as one who was not fit to take care of himself. They said, *He is beside himself*, insane—a conclusion from the excited life that he seemed to them to be living; perhaps the more plausible from the quietness and placidity of the years that he spent with them at Nazareth. Strangers misapprehended him thus (John 10:20), but so did his nearest friends. Unbelief will misapprehend whether its opportunities be small or great. Even the "mother and brethren" cannot know Jesus except they be true "mother and brethren."

## II. OPPOSITION FROM ENEMIES, 22-27.

22. Mark omits the occasion of this conversation, which is carefully given by Matthew and Luke—namely; the healing of the blind and dumb demoniac (Matt. 12:22), which caused many to inquire, "Is not this the Son of David?"—i.e. the Messiah. The scene is still "at home," and most probably in the house of Peter. "Pharisees" are present (Matthew), and so (Mark) are *the scribes which came down from Jerusalem*. This language distinctly indicates an embassy, men who had come on purpose to watch and harm him. It is not to be assumed that they were the same as the men mentioned at Luke 5:17, for some time had elapsed and meanwhile Jesus had been absent from Capernaum. But, whether the same or not, these were spies.—Indignant at the suggestion that this was the Christ, they were ready with their explanation of his mighty works, the reality of which they thus explicitly admitted. *He hath Beelzebub*, or, as the best manuscripts agree, "Beelzebub." The name has been variously interpreted. The name from which it came was Baalzebub, "lord of flies," the god of the Philistines worshipped at Ekron (2 Kings 1:2) and consulted as an oracle. The god was named, doubtless, from his supposed control over the swarms of flies and similar insects that torment the East. After a time the Jews, thinking all heathen deities to be evil spirits, adopted this name as a title of the chief of evil spirits, but changed it by one letter, making Beelzebub into Beelzebub. Some think that in this change they intentionally degraded and insulted it, even as a word, by turning it into a name which meant "lord of dung" or "of the dunghill." But others, apparently with better reason, make it mean "lord of the mansion" or "of the dwelling"—i.e. lord of the place in which evil spirits dwell, or, substantially, "head of the family of evil spirits," he who rules them as a man rules his household. This sense best corresponds to the form of the word (Meyer) and best suits the allusions in the New Testament. So here: "He hath Beelzebub" means "he is possessed by the spirit who is lord of all the rest, and who orders them in and out at his

pleasure, as a man commands his servants."—Thus the second clause of their charge is the application of the first. *By the prince of the devils casteth he out devils*, or demons. In the Greek the use of the recitative *boti* ("that") before each of these clauses seems to indicate that two separate remarks are quoted. One says, "that he hath Beelzebul." Another, "that by the prince of the demons casteth he out demons." Luke adds that others, tempting him, asked of him a sign from heaven.

23-26. The whole twenty-third verse is peculiar to Mark. He *called them*—the scribes from Jerusalem—bespeaking their attention and bringing them face to face with himself and their own words. The wonderful calmness and self-control of this reply cannot be too distinctly noticed in connection with the fearful charge that had just been brought against him. No more terrible accusation than this was possible; it was the direct charge of a positive and practical league with infernal powers. But he, "when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not" (1 Pet. 2:23).—*He said unto them in parables*. In illustrative comparisons. The word does not require a narrative, such as we often associate with it. The point lies in the fact of a comparison. But here the fact to be confirmed is given in the first question (verse 23); it is then confirmed and illustrated by two comparisons, of the kingdom and the household, in verses 24, 25 and it is restated directly in verse 26.—*How can Satan cast out Satan?* The principle is that no intelligent power works against itself and defeats its own purposes. Observe what is here assumed: it is assumed that the dominion of Satan is an intelligent dominion, with character and purposes; that the kingdom of evil is one intelligent kingdom, managed by one mind who knows what he is doing. The individual spirits that torment men are not identified personally with Satan, but they are identified morally with him; so that their presence is his presence, and when they are cast out he is cast out. Now, it is said that in a kingdom there must be unity of counsel, illustrated first by the case of a kingdom among men. It is notorious that divided counsels, going into action, are the ruin of a state; divided counsels or, more exactly, contradictory counsels—not between rulers and subjects, but in the government itself. How, then, if the kingdom of "the prince of the demons" be thus divided against itself and act against its own purposes? Illustrated next by the case of a household, regarded, not as made up of individuals, who may disagree, but as under the rule of a "householder," "goodman of the house," "lord of the mansion." If it acts against the character and counsels that govern it, it will be a failure. How, then, if the "lord of the mansion" be thus divided against himself, acting for the defeat of his own work? And now is made the application. If Satan were casting out demons, he would be rising up against himself. His sole purpose is to injure men. If



he brings in health, calmness, purity, reason, godly gratitude, piety, to the souls of men, and if he sets them free from the bondage by which they are held away from these blessings, he will be acting directly against his own nature. Such a work as that of Jesus cannot possibly be attributed to him, any more than demoniacal possession can be attributed to God. Judge a work by its moral affinities. If it is good, it is not of the devil, for he never delivers men from evil. If such a rising up of Satan against himself as the work of Christ would be were proved real, there would be more than danger to his kingdom. *He cannot stand, but hath an end*, would be the true word. A kingdom so broken would be no kingdom at all.

27. More than this does Christ's work mean. The verse should begin with "but"—But *no man can enter*, etc. Not only does Christ's merciful and holy work prove him to be no ally of Satan, but if Satan's kingdom is being taken away from him, the fact proves the presence of Satan's conqueror. No one can plunder the property of a strong "lord of the mansion" until he has bound the "lord of the mansion" himself; so, if Jesus is doing a great triumphant work of mercy in setting men free from the inferior agents of Satan's kingdom, he must already be master over Satan himself. The defeat of the Lord precedes the defeat of the servants; if the master were at liberty and had the power, he would not suffer his goods to be spoiled.—Perhaps there is a special touch of triumph in the closing words. *And then he will spoil his house*; as if Jesus were regarding the end as absolutely sure and the work as actually begun. Compare John 12:31: "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Here speaks, in Jesus, the consciousness that he is absolutely the conqueror and destroyer of Satan's kingdom. Here, as a transition to the solemn words that Mark adds immediately, Matthew and Luke insert, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." There are only two sides in this conflict, and they are the side of the "strong man armed" and the side of the "stronger than he." Not to be with the conqueror of Satan is to be with Satan." (*W. N. Clarke*)

#### FACT QUESTIONS 3:20-27

164. In whose house was Jesus living at this time?
165. What were Jesus and His disciples doing instead of eating?
166. Just who was involved in the effort to restrain Him?
167. Why would those who knew Him best think Him fanatical in His work?
168. How could it be said the scribes came "down" from Jerusalem when they traveled north?

169. Why did Jesus call the scribes to Him to deliver His answer to their criticism?
170. Does the use of the term "parable" here fit your previous use of the form? Explain its use here. How many parables are used?
171. Discuss the king, dominion, subjects, and expansion of Satan's kingdom.
172. In what sense does Satan have a house?
173. Jesus said Satan was divided—explain.
174. I thought Satan was an immortal being—in what sense has he an "end"?
175. What glorious victory is indicated in vs. 27?

### C. THE UNPARDONABLE SIN 3:28-30

#### TEXT 3:28-30

"Verily I say unto you, All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:28-30

146. What is meant by the word "blaspheme"?
147. Why use the expression "verily I say unto you"? What does it mean?
148. Is Jesus saying the sins of men *will* be forgiven them or *could* be forgiven?
149. When Jesus warned concerning it, had anyone committed the eternal sin?
150. Why is it impossible to forgive this sin? (Please attempt an answer of *your own*).

#### COMMENT

TIME—Autumn of 28 A.D.

PLACE—At home in Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 12:31-37.

OUTLINE—1. Forgiveness promised, vs. 28. 2. One exception, vs. 29. 3. The cause of such a severe warning, vs. 30.

#### ANALYSIS 3:28-30

- I. FORGIVENESS PROMISED, VS. 28.
  1. Promised with great certainty.
  2. To all the sons of men.
  3. All sins and blasphemies.

## II. ONE EXCEPTION, VS. 29.

1. Applies to all.
2. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
3. An eternal sin with no forgiveness.

## III. THE CAUSE OF SUCH A SEVERE WARNING, VS. 30.

1. The Pharisees and scribes involved.
2. The words, "He hath an unclean spirit" caused the warning.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## I. FORGIVENESS PROMISED, VS. 28.

"28,29,30. "I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven . . . He hath an unclean spirit." We learn clearly from this place in what this fearful sin consists; the only one of all the evils which the sons of men commit which will not be forgiven. Those with whom the Lord was now remonstrating were in danger of committing it, "*because* they said, He hath an unclean spirit." This was, in point of fact, almost equivalent to their calling the Lord an Incarnation of Satan.

## II. ONE EXCEPTION, VS. 29.

In order to see something of the wickedness of this sin we must realize that all our Lord's teaching was on the side of God and goodness, and all His miracles, especially that of the expulsion of evil spirits, were done to enforce such teaching, and to set forth the character of God—the God Who sent Him, as at once a holy and benevolent God, desirous to free men from the yoke of all moral and spiritual as well as of all physical evil. To call the Spirit of such an One as our Lord an evil spirit was the extremest form of that wickedness denounced by the prophet when he said: "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness" (Is. 5:20). For a man to have a mind which could deliberately ascribe such a spirit to the Saviour is, as far as man can, to cut himself off from redemption—to make the acceptance of redemption impossible to him. This will be more clearly seen if we remember certain words said on this occasion by the Lord, which are only given in St. Matthew, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him." A man might, through prejudice, speak against the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah. He might not be the Messiah whom he expected. He might be led away by false hopes of an earthly temporal Messiah, to reject the true one. Such an one might continue in infidelity, but the door of repentance and faith would be open to him, because, as Saul of Tarsus, what he did in rejecting Christ he did ignorantly and in unbelief. But if such an one had an opportunity of observing the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of goodness and love displayed in all His character and discourses, and enforced by His mighty deeds,

all on the side of benevolence and holiness, and yet deliberately called such a Spirit the Spirit of Evil, then there was nothing left in him for Redemption to take hold of. He was reprobate in the deepest sense of the word. He had first given himself over, and then he was given over by God, to a reprobate mind—that is, to his own evil, absolutely evil, self. But if a person thus ascribed the works of Christ to the power of evil, would that not be blaspheming against the Son of Man—not against the Holy Spirit? No, we are told that both the teaching and the mighty works of Christ were done by the Spirit (Acts 1:2; Matt. 12:28). Christ taught very emphatically that He did nothing of Himself. He must, consequently, act by some spiritual power not His own. Was that power Divine or diabolical? Of God, or of God's enemy? If a man deliberately said it was from God's enemy he displayed an intensity of perverse and malicious wickedness almost incredible.

### III. THE CAUSE OF SUCH A SEVERE WARNING, VS. 30.

Some of the most acute observations on this difficult subject are to be found in Calvin's "Commentary on the Synoptics." "Shall any unbeliever curse God? It is as if a blind man were dashing against a wall. But no man curses the Spirit, who is not enlightened by Him, and conscious of ungodly rebellion against Him; for it is not a superfluous distinction, that all other blasphemies shall be forgiven, except that one blasphemy which is directed against the Spirit. If a man shall simply blaspheme against God, he is not declared to be beyond the hope of pardon, but of those who have offered outrage to the Spirit it is said that God will never forgive them. Why is this but because those only are *blasphemers* against the Spirit, who slander His gifts and power contrary to the conviction of their own mind?"

Two observations on all this may not be out of place:

1. It is clear that no one can have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost who desires the influence of the Holy Ghost to deliver him from sin, and make him love God, for such an one must believe that the power exhibited in Christ was on the side of God and goodness. He must believe that Christ was actuated and impelled by a holy and good spirit, which must be from God.

2. Looked at in the light of this one exception to the forgiving power of God, how exceedingly broad and large is the promise implied in the 28th verse, "Verily, I say unto you, **ALL** sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men." The one exception proves the universality of the rule. If any sinner has a mind to lay hold on the Divine mercy, no memory of past sin need deter him; and the state of mind which he has towards sin, and his desire of deliverance, forbids the idea that he has committed the one unpardonable sin." (*M. F. Sadler*).

*FACT QUESTIONS 3:28-30*

176. What was meant by saying of the Lord, "He hath an unclean spirit"?
177. What helps us to realize something of the wickedness of this sin?
178. Show how the man who would attribute the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan is "reprobate in the deepest sense of the word."
179. Would not speaking against the works of Christ be speaking "against the Son of Man" instead of against the Holy Spirit? Explain.
180. What did Calvin's comments add to your understanding of this subject?
181. When can one know he has not committed this sin? Could the sinner know he had committed this sin? Explain.

*D. THE HOUSEHOLD OF CHRIST 3:31-35**TEXT 3:31-35*

"And there come his mother and his brethren; and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him. And a multitude was sitting about him; and they say unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, and saith, Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on them which sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

*THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:31-35*

151. Are we to associate this incident with the one in 3:21? If so how?
152. How many half-brothers did Jesus have? (Cf. Matt. 13:56; Mark 6:3)
153. Why had His mother and brothers come?
154. Did Mary or the brothers speak to Jesus personally?
155. What was the purpose behind the reply of Jesus?
156. Did Jesus ignore the request of His mother? What impression did this make upon the multitude?; upon His mother?; upon His brothers?

*COMMENT*

TIME—Autumn A.D. 28.

PLACE—At home in Capernaum or on hill outside the city.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21.

OUTLINE—1. The arrival from Nazareth of His mother and brothers, vs. 31. 2. The message relayed to Jesus, vs. 32. 3. The response of Jesus to the visit, vs. 33-35.

## ANALYSIS 3:31-35

- I. THE ARRIVAL FROM NAZARETH OF HIS MOTHER AND BROTHERS, VS. 31.
  1. They stood without the door of the house.
  2. They requested an audience with Him.
- II. THE MESSAGE RELAYED TO JESUS, VS. 32.
  1. Word sent in to the house from the family to the multitude.
  2. Someone told Jesus—probably one of His apostles.
- III. THE RESPONSE OF JESUS TO THE VISIT, VS. 33-35.
  1. Answered with a question.
  2. He was now speaking with His family.
  3. Their needs were met in doing the will of God.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES 3:31-35

- I. THE ARRIVAL FROM NAZARETH OF HIS MOTHER AND BROTHERS, VS. 31.

"31, 32. They had come "to take him." (See note on verse 21). Mark has meanwhile described the scene in which they found him and the conversation in which he was engaged. He graphically shows them coming, standing without, and sending their message in through the crowd which they could not penetrate.

- II. THE MESSAGE RELAYED TO JESUS, VS. 32.

*A multitude sat about him.* Not "the multitude." Some manuscripts (and Tischendorf, not the revisers) read, "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren and thy sisters without are seeking thee." The sisters are mentioned at Mark 6:3, but we know nothing of their names or history. His mother, coming as his mother, would doubtless have been welcomed; but an intrusive coming of his kindred to interfere with his work was quite another matter. Now that he was fully "about his Father's business," it was even more necessary than at the beginning of his work (John 2:4) that his mother should leave him to his Father's guidance. The moment, too, was a solemn one; he had just been speaking of the deadly opposition between the two kingdoms, and was in a frame of mind to prize most highly those who were "with him" and were not "scattering abroad." Any attempt to "scatter abroad," to weaken his work, would then be especially painful to his soul, and the more if it came from those who ought to know him well. Yet in their coming, (at least, we may be sure, in his mother's) there was kindness, but kindness how ignorant and mistaken! With what faults of friends he had to bear, as well as with evil in enemies! Not without pain, however, can he have given to his mother this rebuff. It was necessary; but he was a genuine son, and had a son's grateful and loyal heart toward his mother. His dying act of care for her (John 19:26) was a more congenial act to his heart.

## III. THE RESPONSE OF JESUS TO THE VISIT, VS. 33-35.

33-35. *Who is my mother, or my brethren?* As if he did not know any from without who might appeal to him in that name.—*He looked round about on them which sat about him.* Literally, "in a circle about him." A graphic touch of Mark, to which Matthew adds another "Stretching out his hand toward his disciples." The gesture impressed one beholder, the look another. Very full of tenderness and solemnity must the look have been, accompanying such words, for here is the adoption of the obedient.—*Behold (these are) my mother, and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother.* In Luke, "My mother and my brethren are these, who hear and do the word of God." Compare "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them" (Matt. 7:24). The center of his true kindred is not the mother, the brother, or the sisters, but the Father. This, he says, is the *only* center; there is no true unity with him except through spiritual harmony with the will of God: "Whoever would be a brother to me must be a child to him." Without this even natural kinship is as nothing. This, he also says, is the *real* center—the center of an actual unity; whoever is doing the will of God is united to Jesus by a tie stronger than any tie of flesh and blood: "Whoever is my Father's own is my own, one of my true kindred, in the closest bonds." Does he not even imply that the relation is as close and tender on one side as on the other?—toward the true brother, sister, and mother as toward the Heavenly Father? Do not God and they that do the will of God thus come into one family for Jesus, in which one and the same love reaches out in both directions? He said elsewhere, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you;" and this is almost saying, "As I love my Father, so do I love you." Does this passage make God (or the doing of the will of God) the way to Christ, rather than Christ the way to God? Yes, in a sense. Whoever comes to Christ does the will of God in doing so, and it is in (not by the merit of) the doing of what God appoints that Christ accepts him. In all this Jesus did not disown the ties of kindred or put any slight upon them; rather did he show how highly he esteemed them. What must the natural relations be to him if he can make them the illustration of his relations both to God who sent him and to the people whom he saves?—Notice that the two mis-statements respecting Jesus, "He is beside himself" and "He hath Beelzebub," are morally very far apart. One was a misunderstanding of his work—an ignorant, mistaken misrepresentation in which there was at least room for the anxiety of affection, and in which he was regarded as unfortunate. It implied spiritual ignorance, but not malignity. The other was a malignant refusal to see good in him, and a spontaneous judgment that his highest good was highest evil. The one corresponds to "speaking

a word against the Son of man;" while the other at least approaches the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.—It is a satisfaction to find that after the resurrection of Jesus, Mary, the mother of the Lord, and his brethren were with the apostles in the upper room, where they waited for the fulfillment of Jesus' promise (Acts 1:14)." (W. N. Clarke)

### FACT QUESTIONS 3:31-35

182. Who probably instigated the visit of the family?
183. Read Mark 6:3 and John 19:26 and notice the expression "son of Mary" as in contrast to the way the brothers are mentioned.
184. Why did Jesus commit the care of his mother to John if He had brothers?
185. Is there any contradiction in the accounts concerning the message of Mary and His brothers—Cf. Matt. 12:47; Luke 8:20; Mark 3:31.
186. What type of rebuke did Jesus give to His relatives? Show how this was needed.
187. Why "look round about Him" and "stretch forth His hand"?
188. Please explain how doing the will of God makes us brothers and sisters to Christ.

### SUMMARY

#### 2:1—3:35

There are three facts set forth in the preceding section, which have an important bearing on the claims of Jesus. The first is the fact that he had authority to forgive sins. This was demonstrated in the case of the paralytic (ii. 1-12), and it is the one fact which proves Jesus adapted to the highest demands of human salvation. Sins being forgiven, all other blessings follow as a consequence.

In the second place, it is shown that his conduct as a man was irreproachable. He was attacked in reference to the company he kept (ii. 13-17); in reference to his neglect of fasting (ii. 18-22); and in reference to Sabbath-keeping (ii. 23-28; iii. 1-6); but in all these matters he vindicated his conduct, and put his accusers to shame. That they made no more serious attacks on his conduct, proves that they could not, and that in morals he was irreproachable.

In the third place, it was demonstrated by his discussion with the Jerusalem scribes, that the power by which he cast out demons, and, *a fortiori*, the power by which his other miracles were wrought, was not, as they alleged, satanic, but divine. Finally, his answer to the people, in reference to the call of his mother and his brothers, is in perfect keeping with the character and position which the text assigns him. It is a singular infatuation which has led the Roman Catholic Church to attribute to Jesus



even in heaven, a subserviency to his mother which he so expressly repudiated while on earth. (J. W. McGarvey).

## 2. THE PARABLES OF JESUS 4:1-34

### a. The parable of the sower 4:1-9

#### TEXT 4:1-9

"And again he began to teach by the sea side. And there is gathered unto him a very great multitude, so that he entered into a boat, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude were by the sea on the land. And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching, Hearken: Behold, the sower went forth to sow: and it came to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it. And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirty-fold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. And he said, Who hath ears, let him hear."

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:1-9

157. At what other time in Mark's account had Jesus taught by the sea-side?
158. When did this teaching take place? Cf. Matt. 13.1.
159. How far out do you imagine the boat was from the shore?
160. How many in a great multitude? 10,000? 20,000? 36,000?
161. Why teach in parables?
162. What was the method of sowing to which Jesus referred? Why was the sower sowing?
163. Why was there a path in the midst of the field?
164. Why spring up soon in the rocky ground? What does this indicate about the fields of Palestine?
165. Why were there thorns in a field plowed for sowing?
166. Notice the plural word "others" in vs. 8 as contrasted with "other" in vs. 5 and vs. 7.—why?
167. What is meant by thirty-fold—sixty-fold—hundred-fold?

#### COMMENT

TIME—On the same day of the visit of the relatives of Jesus. Autumn A.D. 28.

PLACE—At the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 12:1-9; Luke 8:4-8.

OUTLINE—1. The place and the people for teaching, vs. 1. 2. The type of teaching, vs. 2. 3. The parable of the sower, vs. 3-9.

- I. THE PLACE AND PEOPLE FOR TEACHING, VS. 1.
  - 1. By the seaside.
  - 2. A very great multitude.
- II. THE TYPE OF TEACHING, VS. 2.
  - 1. In parables.
  - 2. They must give close attention to understand.
- III. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, VS. 3-9.
  - 1. Some seed by the wayside, its fate.
  - 2. Some seed on rocky ground, its fate.
  - 3. Others in good soil, its fate.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### I. THE PLACE AND PEOPLE FOR TEACHING, VS. 1.

"1. Like Luke (8:4) and Matthew (13:1), Mark records, as a sort of epoch or important juncture in his history, the beginning of our Saviour's parabolical instructions, as a part of the preparatory process by which he contributed to the reorganization of the Church, although he did not actually make the change during his personal presence upon earth, because, as we have seen, it was to rest upon his death and resurrection as its corner-stone. The other part of his preparatory work consisted in the choice and education of the men by whom the change was to be afterwards effected. *Began*, as in 1:45, 2:23, is not superfluous, but indicates the opening of some new series or process, which was to be afterwards continued. *Again*, on the other hand, suggests that this was not the commencement of his teaching ministry, but only of one form of it. He had already taught the people publicly with great effect, but now began to teach them in a peculiar manner, with a special purpose to elucidate the nature of his kingdom, for the benefit of those who were to be his subjects, but without a too explicit and precipitate disclosure of his claim to the Messiahship. *By the sea-side*, or *along the sea*, i.e. the lake of Tiberias or Galilee, not only near it, but upon the very shore. *Was gathered*, or, according to the oldest text, *is gathered* (or *assembled*), a more graphic form, exhibiting the scene as actually passing. Another emendation by the latest critics is the change of the positive (*great*) to the superlative (*greatest*), either in reference to all former gatherings, or absolutely in the sense of the *very great*. *Multitude*, or *crowd*, the Greek word indicating not mere numbers, but promiscuous assemblage. The situation is like that described in 3:9, where we read that he directed a small vessel to be ready, if the crowd should be so great as to prevent his standing on the shore with safety or convenience. Here we find him actually *entering into* (or *embarking in*) the boat, no doubt the one already mentioned as in readiness, and *sitting in the sea*, i.e. upon the sur-

face of the lake, while his vast audience was *on the land* (but) *at* (or *close to*) the sea, a stronger expression of proximity than that in the first clause. The scene thus presented must have been highly impressive to the eye, and still affords a striking subject for the pencil.

## II. THE TYPE OF TEACHING, VS. 2.

2. *Taught* is in the imperfect tense, and according to Greek usage properly denotes continued or habitual action, *he was teaching* or *he used to teach*. This yields a good sense, as the writer is undoubtedly describing one of our Lord's favorite and constant modes of teaching. But the use of the aorist by Matthew (13:3) and Luke (8:4), and the specific reference by Mark himself (in v. 1) to a particular occasion, seem to forbid the wider meaning, unless it be supposed that he made use of the imperfect (as of the verb *began*) to intimate that, although this was the first instance of such teaching, it was not the last. *Many things*, of which only samples are preserved, even by Matthew, and still fewer in the book before us, showing that the writer's aim was not to furnish an exhaustive history, but to illustrate by examples the ministry of Christ. In *parables*, i.e. in the form and in the use of them. Parable is a slight modification of a Greek noun, the verbal root of which has two principal meanings, to propound (throw out or put forth), and to *compare* (throw together or lay side by side.) The sense of the noun derived from the former usage, that of any thing propounded, is too vague to be distinctive, comprehending as it does all kinds of instruction, which, from its very nature, must be put forth or imparted from one mind to another. The more specific sense of comparison, resemblance, is not only sanctioned by the usage of the best Greek writers (such as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates), but recommended, not to say required, by the employment of a corresponding Hebrew word in precisely the same way. In its widest sense, a *parable* is any illustration from analogy, including the simile and metaphor as rhetorical figures, the allegory, apologue, fable, and some forms of proverbial expression. In a more restricted sense, the word denotes an illustration of moral or religious truth derived from the analogy of human experience. In this respect it differs from the fable, which accomplishes the same end by employing the supposed acts of inferior animals, or even those ascribed to inanimate objects, to illustrate human character and conduct. The only fables found in Scripture, those of Jotham (Judg. 9, 8-15) and Joash (2 Kings 14, 9), are given on human, not divine authority. The parable, in its more restricted sense, as just explained, is not necessarily narrative in form, much less fictitious, although this is commonly assumed in modern definitions of the term. There is good reason to believe that all the parables of Christ are founded in fact, if not entirely composed of real incidents. They are all drawn from familiar forms

of human experience, and with one exception from the present life. This creates a strong presumption that the facts are true, unless there be some positive reason for supposing them fictitious. Now the necessity of fiction to illustrate moral truth arises, not from the deficiency of real facts adapted to the purpose, but from the writer's limited acquaintance with them, and his consequent incapacity to frame the necessary combination, without calling in the aid of his imagination. But no such necessity can exist in the case of an inspired, much less of an omniscient teacher. To resort to fiction, therefore, even admitting its lawfulness on moral grounds, when real life affords in such abundance the required analogies, would be a gratuitous preference, if not of the false to the true, at least of the imaginary to the real, which seems unworthy of our Lord, or which, to say the least, we have no right to assume without necessity. In expounding the parables, interpreters have gone to very opposite extremes, but most to that of making everything significant, or giving a specific sense to every minute point of the analogy presented. This error is happily exposed by Augustine, when he says, that the whole plough is needed in the act of ploughing, though the ploughshare alone makes the furrow, and the whole frame of an instrument is useful, though the strings alone produce the music. The other extreme, that of overlooking or denying the significance of some things really significant, is much less common than the first, and for the most part found in writers of severer taste and judgment. The true mean is difficult but not impossible to find, upon the principle now commonly assumed as true, at least in theory, that the main analogy intended, like the center of a circle, must determine the position of all points in the circumference. It may also be observed, that as the same illustration may legitimately mean more to one man than to another, in proportion to the strength of their imaginative faculties, it is highly important that, in attempting to determine the essential meaning of our Saviour's parables, we should not confound what they may possibly be made to mean, with what they must mean to attain their purpose. In addition to these principles, arising from the nature of the parable itself, we have the unspeakable advantage of our Saviour's own example as a self-interpreter. *In his doctrine*, i.e. in the act of teaching, or perhaps the meaning here may be, in this peculiar mode of teaching.

### III. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, VS. 3-9.

#### 3. *Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow.*

Mark has preserved one introductory ejaculation, not in Luke, and one neither in Luke nor Matthew. *Hear!* implying the power and intention to communicate something particularly worthy of attention. This word, perhaps a part of Peter's vivid recollection, may be said to introduce the

whole succession of our Saviour's parables. *Behold!* (Matt. 13:3), *lo*, see, in one or two specific cases, but intended, no doubt, as a model and a guide in others, both in Hebrew and Hellenistic usage introduces something unexpected and surprising. Some take it even in its primary and strict sense, look! see there! implying that the object indicated was in sight or actually visible; in other words, that Christ was led to use this illustration by the casual appearance of a sower in a neighboring field; and this is often represented as the usual occasion of his parabolic teachings. It seems, however, to regard them as too purely accidental, and too little the result of a deliberate predetermination, such as we cannot but assume in the practice of a divine teacher. A safer form of the same proposition is the one already stated in a different connection (see above, on v. 1), namely, that our Saviour's parables, though not invariably suggested by immediate sights or passing scenes, are all derived from the analogy of human experience, and in most instances of common life. Thus the three here given by Mark are designed not only to exhibit different aspects of the same great subject, the Messiah's kingdom, but to exhibit them by means of images derived from one mode of life or occupation, that of husbandry, with which his auditors were all familiar, and in which, most probably, the greater part of them were constantly engaged. But besides these objections to the general supposition that our Saviour's parables were all suggested casually, such an assumption is forbidden in the case before us by the form of expression used by all these evangelists with striking uniformity. It is not as it naturally would be on the supposition now in question, *See, a sower goes (or going) out*, but with the article, and in the aorist or past tense, *lo, the sower went out. The sower*, like the *Fox* and the *Lion* in a fable, is generic, meaning the whole class, or an ideal individual who represents it. *Went out*, as we say in colloquial narrative, once upon a time, the precise date being an ideal one because the act is one of constant occurrence. As if he had said, 'a sower went out to sow, as you have often done and seen your neighbor do.' To *sow*, distinguishes his going out for this specific purpose from his going out on other errands. The sower went out as such, as a sower, to perform the function which the name denotes.

4. *And it came to pass as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.*

*It came to pass*, or something happened, implying something not indeed uncommon, but yet not belonging as of course to the process of sowing in seed. *As he sowed*, literally, *in the (act of) sowing*, and therefore in the field, not merely on the way to it. *By the way* must therefore mean *along the path* trodden by the sower himself and hardened by his footsteps, not along the highway leading to his place of labor. This idea is

distinctly expressed by Luke (8,5), *and it was trodden down*, i.e. it fell upon the path where he was walking. *Some* is understood by every reader to mean some of the seed which he was sowing, the noun, although not previously mentioned as it is in Luke (8, 4), being necessarily suggested by the kindred verb, *to sow, in sowing*. The principal circumstance in this part of the parable is not the treading of the seed, which Luke only adds to specify the place, but its lying exposed upon the trodden path, and there devoured by the birds. *Fowl*, now confined to certain species of domesticated birds, is co-extensive in Old English with *bird* itself. *Of the air*, literally *of heaven*, a Hebrew idiom, according to which *heaven* (or *heavens*, see above on 1, 10), is applied, not only to the whole material universe, except the earth (Gen. 1, 1) and especially to that part of it regarded as the more immediate residence of God (Gen. 19, 24), but also to the visible expanse or firmament (Gen. 1, 14), and to our atmosphere, or rather to the whole space between us and the heavenly bodies (Gen. 1,20). The version, therefore, is substantially correct, supposing these words to be genuine; but the latest critics have expunged them as a probable assimilation to the text of Luke (8,5): Nothing more is here intended by the phrase than *birds* in general, or *the birds* which his hearers well know were accustomed to commit such depredations. The familiarity of this occurrence and of those which follow, must have brought the illustration home to the business and bosoms of the humblest hearers, and, at the same time, necessarily precludes the idea of a fiction, when real facts were so abundant and accessible. It is idle to object that this particular sower never did go forth, when the opposite assertion can as easily be made, and when the terms employed, as we have seen, may designate the whole class of sowers, including multitudes of individuals, or any of these whom any one of the hearers might select as particularly meant, perhaps himself, perhaps some neighboring husbandman. Such a use of language, when applied to incidents of every-day occurrence, is as far as possible remote from fiction.

5. *And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:*

*Another* (seed, or portion of the seed sown) fell upon the *stony* (or rocky soil), collective singulars equivalent to Matthew's plurals (13, 5.) The reference is not to loose or scattered stones (see below, on 5, 5), but to a thin soil overspreading a stratum or layer of concealed rock. *Immediately*, here used by Matthew also, is emphatic, the rapid germination being a material circumstance, and seemingly ascribed to the shallowness of the soil, allowing the seed no room to strike deep root, but only to spring upwards. The same idea is suggested by the verb itself, a double compound meaning to *spring up and forth*. The cause assigned by Luke

(8, 6), is not that of the speedy germination, but of the premature decay that followed it, as Mark describes more fully in the next verse.

6. *But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.*

*When the sun was up* (or *risen*), is the literal translation of the text adopted by the latest critics, while the common or received text, though the same in meaning, has a different construction, *the sun having risen*. There is a peculiar beauty in the Greek here, which cannot be retained in a translation, arising from the use of the same verb (but in a less emphatic form) to signify the rising of the plant and of the sun, as both are said in English to be *up*, when one is above the surface of the earth and the other above the horizon. *Scorched* (or *burnt*) and *withered* (or *dried*, see above on 3:1) are different effects ascribed to different causes. The first is the evaporation of the vital sap or vegetable juices by the solar heat; the other their spontaneous failure from the want of a tenacious root. Together they describe, in a manner at once accurate and simple, the natural and necessary fate of a plant without sufficient depth of soil, however quick and even premature its vegetation.

7. *And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.*

*Another*, as in v. 5. *Into the thorns*, or in the midst of them, as it is more fully expressed by Luke (8, 7). *The thorns*, which happened to be growing there, or which are usually found in such situations. *Came up*, appeared above the surface, an expression constantly employed in English to denote the same thing. *Choked*, stifled, or deprived of life by pressure. This word though strictly applicable only to the suffocation of animal or human subjects (Luke 8:42), is here by a natural and lively figure transferred to the fatal influence on vegetable life of too close contact with a different and especially a ranker growth. Matthew (13: 7) uses a still more emphatic compound of the same verb, corresponding to our own familiar phrase *choked off*. And *fruit did not give*, though implied in all, is expressed only in Mark's account, which throughout this parable exhibits no appearance of abridgment.

8. *And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up, and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.*

*Another*, as in vs. 5. 7. It is a minute but striking proof that the evangelists wrote independently of each other, and that their coincidence of language arose not from mutual imitation, but from sameness of original material, that in these three verses Matthew always says *upon*, Mark *into* or *among*. *Good ground*, in Greek, *the earth, the good, earth or soil*

properly so called in distinction from the beaten, rocky, thorny places before mentioned. *Gave fruit coming up and growing*, the fruit or ripe grain being represented as passing through the changes which are really experienced in the earlier stages of the vegetable process. *Bore*, the same idea that was before expressed by *gave*, the latter having more explicit reference to the use and wants of men, the former to production in itself considered. What the seed bore, whether reaped or not, it *yielded* only on the former supposition. *One*, i.e. one seed, the proportion stated being that of the seed sown to the ripe grain harvested. As the Greek numeral here rendered *one* is distinguished from the preposition *in* by nothing but its accent and its aspiration, which are not given in the oldest copies, one distinguished modern critic substitutes the latter, *in thirty*, and *in sixty*, i.e. in this ratio or proportion, and another gives as the most ancient text a different preposition, meaning *to* (i.e. to the amount of) *thirty*, *sixty*, and *a hundred*. The productiveness ascribed to the nutritious grains in this place is by no means unexampled either in ancient or in modern times. It is indeed a moderate and modest estimate compared with some recorded by Herodotus, in which the rate of increase was double or quadruple even the highest of the three here mentioned, and the recent harvest in our western states affords examples of increase still greater.

9. *And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

This idiomatic and proverbial formula, like many others of perpetual occurrence in our Lord's discourses, is never simply pleonastic or unmeaning, as the repetition often tempts us to imagine. On the contrary, such phrases are invariably solemn and emphatic warnings that the things in question are of the most momentous import, and entitled to most serious attention. They appear to have been framed or adopted by the Saviour, to be used on various occasions and in the pauses of his different discourses. There is something eminently simple and expressive in the one before us, which involves rebuke as well as exhortation. 'Why should you have the sense of hearing, if you do not use it now? To what advantage can you ever listen, if you turn a deaf ear to these admonitions? Now, now, if ever, he who can hear must hear, or incur the penalty of inattention!' But besides the importance of the subject and the juncture, it is here suggested that the very form of the communication calls for close attention, in default of which it can impart no knowledge and confer no benefit. This may be understood as having reference to the parabolic method of instruction which our Saviour now began and afterwards continued to employ so freely." (Alexander)

#### FACT QUESTIONS 4:1-9

189. What was the pulpit and the auditorium for Jesus' teaching in parables?



190. Did Jesus give these parables in rapid succession? If not, how were they given (Cf. 4:11).
191. If this is the first parable of Jesus what are we to say of 3:23?
192. Show how this parable reveals the method of farming in Jesus' day—There are several intimations—please find them.
193. Does Mark suggest there were three groups of seeds growing by making reference to the 30, 60 and 100 yields? Explain.

#### B. THE EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

4:10-20

*TEXT* 4:10-20

"And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parables. And he said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them. And he saith unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how shall ye know all the parables? The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; and when they have heard, straightway cometh Satan, and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them. And these in like manner are they that are sown upon the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, straightway receive it with joy; and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway they stumble. And others are they that are sown among the thorns; these are they that have heard the word, and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And those are they that were sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, thirty-fold, and sixty-fold, and a hundred-fold."

#### *THOUGHT QUESTIONS* 4:10-20

168. Why wait until there were but twelve before He told the meaning of the parable?
169. What is meant by the expression "mystery of 'the kingdom'"?
170. Please explain in your own words vs. 12.
171. Why the rebuke in vs. 13?
172. Are we to understand that Satan can actually remove the word of God from the heart? How?
173. How can we have "root in ourselves"? Cf. vs. 17.
174. Please notice that those with shallow hearts stumble "because of the word." Please explain.

175. Have the thorns of choking changed? What shall we do with them?  
 176. Why do some bear only 30 while others yield 100-fold for the Master?

*COMMENT 4:10-20*

## LESSON ANALYSIS

- I. SPEAKING IN PARABLES, VS. 10-13.
  1. Disciples Ask an Explanation. Mark 4:10; Matt. 13:10; Luke 8:9.
  2. The Reason for Parables. Mark 4:11, 12; Matt. 13:11-17; Luke 8:10.
- II. WAYSIDE AND STONY GROUND, VS. 14-17.
  1. The Good Seed. Mark 4:14; Luke 8:11.
  2. Wayside Hearers. Mark 4:15; Matt. 13:19; Luke 8:12.
  3. Stony Ground Hearers. Mark 4:16, 17; Matt. 13:20; Luke 8:13.
- III. THORNS AND GOOD GROUND, VS. 18-20.
  1. The Seed Choked Out. Mark 4:18, 19; Matt. 13:22; Luke 8:14.
  2. Good Seed in Good Ground. Mark 4:20; Matt. 13:23; Luke 8:15.

## INTRODUCTION

He privately retired to the margin of the lake, desiring probably to "rest awhile;" but no sooner had he taken his seat beside the cool, still water, than he was again surrounded by the anxious crowd. At once, to escape the pressure and to command the audience better when he should again begin to speak, he stepped into one of the fishing-boats that floated at ease close by the beach, on the margin of that tideless inland sea. From the water's edge, stretching away upward on the natural gallery formed by the sloping bank, the great congregation, with every face fixed in an attitude of eager expectancy, presented to the Preacher's eye the appearance of a plowed field ready to receive the seed. As he opened his lips and cast the word of life freely abroad among them, he saw, he felt, the parallel between the sowing of Nature and the sowing of Grace. Into that word accordingly he threw the lesson of saving truth.—W. Arnot.

OUTLINE OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER—It will aid in understanding the lesson to have a clear outline in the mind of the application. This is the first parable the Saviour spoke as far as we have record. He spoke the parable to a vast audience in whose minds the story was lodged and left for reflection without an explanation of its meaning. He had sowed, in this illustrative way, the seed of the kingdom broadcast, and in many a heart it would live until it burst forth, full of meaning, to bear fruit. His apostles, not accustomed to this mode of teaching, come to him privately and ask the meaning. In order to understand the parable we must go with the other disciples and listen to the explanation given in verses 10-20. Christ is the great Sower, and all whom he sends

forth to preach are sowers under him. The seed sown is his Word, the Gospel of the Kingdom. The soil where the seed is cast is human hearts. Four kinds of human hearts are described: 1. The *wayside* hearer; the light flippant, indifferent hearer upon whom no impression is produced. 2. The *stony* hearer; the heart that exhibits an evanescent feeling at the appeal of the gospel, but upon whom no permanent impression is made. 3. The *thorny* soil; the heart that takes in the Word, but is so full of worldly cares that these presently gain the mastery. This describes the world-serving hearing. 4. The *good* soil; the good and honest heart; the heart that receives and retains the truth. In such a heart the seed will grow and the new life will be manifest. Three things, then, are needful: 1. A Sower. 2. Good Seed; the pure word of God. 3. A good and honest heart. A dishonest man cannot be converted until he casts out his dishonesty. He who cavils at and deceitfully entreats the word of God will not be profited.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. SPEAKING IN PARABLES.—10. *When he was done*. This may have occurred after the public labors of the day were over and the multitude had been dismissed. By comparing with Matthew we learn that the Lord spoke seven parables in succession, and it seems to me more probable that the explanations were given in the quiet when surrounded only by the twelve and "they that were about him with the twelve," a number of his friends and disciples. *Asked of him the parables*. This language shows that the Lord had spoken more than once before the explanation was asked for or given. Though the parable was new to his disciples it was not a new method of instruction. A number occur in the Old Testament, and it was frequently adopted by the Jewish rabbis. It differs from an allegory or fable in that its characters are real and it does not violate possibilities. It is an imaginary illustration of real truth. In this instance the Saviour stated some facts familiar to all the farming population of Palestine and made them the vehicle to carry spiritual truth. Perhaps from where the multitude was gathered a sower on the plain of Gennesaret was visible at work and pointed to by the Lord.

11. *Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom*. A "mystery" is not something obscure, but something plain to those initiated, but a secret to those without. The Greeks had what were called the "Eleusinian mysteries," unknown to all without, but fully explained to all who were initiated. The Saviour says no more than that there are matters that my disciples shall know that those without can never understand. When one makes Jesus the Master and himself a pupil (disciple), of course he has the vantage ground and will be admitted to spiritual knowledge that he could never obtain had he not entered the school of Christ. The Eng-

lish alphabet is a mystery to the savage, but is no mystery to even little children who have learned it. *To them that are without . . . parables.* The method of instruction by parables was peculiarly adapted to their state. It was interesting, and would excite attention, and many of the similes would be long remembered, and their true meaning would insensibly break forth upon their minds. It would lead them to some correct views before they were aware. At the same time the truths thus delivered were covered by a thin veil, and were not immediately apprehended; thus, while instant rejection might be the result of presenting the naked truth, attention to the truth was secured by the interesting covering under which it was couched. He spake only in parables to these Jewish cavillers, in order to take from them the means of knowing truths which they would merely abuse. He would not cast pearls before swine.

12. *That seeing they may see, and not perceive.* Did he speak in parables because he did not wish them to *know and to enjoy*? Everything shows the reverse. But he was aware, that, in consequence of the inveteracy of their prejudice, they could not, in the first instance, see "the secret of the kingdom" without being repelled in spirit, and confirmed in their dissent and dislike. He wished, therefore, that they should not "see." But, at the same time, he graciously wished that they should "look," and keep "looking," so that they might, if possible, get such a glimpse of the inner glory as might fascinate their interest and attention, and by and by disarm their prejudices, so that they might with safety be permitted to "see".—*Morison*. Though they see the truth intellectually, they shall not appreciate it spiritually; they see it as the horse sees the same prospect with his rider, without appreciation.—*Abbott*. But their position was according to their own choice. Christ forbade none; and the disciples in this case were not merely the twelve chosen by him, but all who would come. Moral inability always is the fruit of moral unwillingness. Those who cannot see, were in the first place unwilling to see. *Lest . . . they should be converted.* His meaning is not, "These things are done in parables, lest they should be converted," but, "Their eyes they closed, etc., lest at any time they should be converted." That is, men willfully close their hearts to the truth, lest they should be led to repentance and reformation. *They will not, therefore they cannot.*

13. *Know ye not this parable?* It is not a reproof, but means, "You find you cannot understand this without assistance." The next question, *and how then will ye know all parables?* extends the thought to all parables, but intimates further: "The first parable of the kingdom is the basis of all the rest. If they understand not this, they could not understand any that followed. If they had the explanation of this, they had the key for the understanding of all others." Hence our Lord gives, not rules of inter-

pretation, but examples, one of which is here preserved to be our guide in interpretation.

II. **WAYSIDE AND STONY GROUND.**—14. *The sower soweth the word.* The great Sower is Christ; the seed sown is the Word of God, the Gospel, whether spoken by Christ, his apostles, preachers, Sunday-school teachers, any disciple, or written in the New Testament, or upon the printed page of the book, tract or newspaper. All spiritual life depends on a divine seed sown in the heart by the divine Sower. The life of the seed depends on, first, receiving it; second, rooting it; third, cultivating it.

15. *These are they by the wayside.* The fields of Palestine were not fenced and lay in the open country while the population lived in hamlets. The roads or paths were through the fields. Thomson, in the *Land and the Book*, says: "There are neither roads, nor thorns, nor stony places in such lots. They go forth into the open country, where the path passes through the cultivated land, where there are no fences, where thorns grow in clumps all around, where rocks peep out in places through the scanty soil, and hard by are patches extremely fertile." Some of the seed fell on the hard-beaten paths where it would lie until picked up by the birds. This, said the Savior, represents the hardened, worldly hearts that never allow the seed of the kingdom to enter at all. These never allow the word to get under the surface of their thoughts. The way is the heart, beaten and dried by the passage of evil thoughts. Sin has so hardened the heart, worldliness has so deadened the feelings, sinful pleasures and desires have so dulled the conscience that God's truth makes no impression, more than a passing dream, or a pleasant song, to be heard and forgotten. *Satan . . . taketh away the word that was sown.* The object of the preaching of the word is to save souls; the aim of Satan is to destroy souls. The word lies there ready for him. It has not pierced the soil of the heart. It has found no entrance. It is all on the surface. It lies quite naked and exposed. The word has been heard, and that is all. It is snatched away at once. Guthrie says: "Wherever there is a preacher in the pulpit, there is a devil among the pews, busy watching the words that fall from the preacher's lips to catch them away." Every preacher is familiar with this class. Upon their hard, flinty hearts the most searching appeals fail to make any impression. They come out of idle curiosity, or to cavil and to scoff and go away as they came.

16. *They which are sown on stony ground.* Under the figure of the stony ground, he depicts that lively but shallow susceptibility of spirit which grasps the truth eagerly, but receives no deep impressions, and yields as quickly to the reaction of worldly temptations as it had yielded to the divine word. Those whose feelings are touched, but not their

conscience or their will. *Immediately.* The seed in such case "springs up"—all the quicker from the shallowness of the soil—"because it has no depth of earth." *Receive it with gladness.* The hearer described has not counted the cost; whatever was fair and beautiful in Christianity, as it first presents itself, had attracted him—its sweet and comfortable promises, the moral loveliness of its doctrines, but not its answer to the deepest needs of the human heart; as neither, when he received the word with gladness, had he contemplated the having to endure hardness in his warfare with sin and Satan and the world.—*Trench.*

17. *Have no root in themselves.* They make profession and begin, but do not hold out, because the good seed has not rooted deeply. These are they who are moved by emotion, not by a deep sense of conviction. *When affliction or persecution.* As the heat scorches the blade which has no deepness of earth, so the troubles and afflictions, which would have strengthened a true faith, cause a faith which was merely temporary to fail. The image has a peculiar fitness and beauty, for as the roots of a tree are out of sight, yet from them it derives its firmness and stability; so upon the hidden life of the Christian his firmness and stability depend.—*Trench.* A sneer from some leading spirit in a literary society, or a laugh raised by some gay circle of pleasure-seekers in a fashionable drawing-room, or the rude jests of scoffing artisans in a workshop, may do as much as the fagot and the stake to make a fair but false disciple deny his Lord.

III. THORNS AND GOOD GROUND.—18. *Sown among thorns.* The seed which takes root, but is stifled by the thorns that shoot up with it, figures the mind in which the elements of worldly desire develop themselves along with the higher life, and at last become strong enough to crush it, so that the received truth is utterly lost. The evil here is neither a hard nor a shallow soil—there is *softness* enough, and *depth* enough; but it is the existence in it of what draws all the moisture and richness of the soil away to itself, and so *starves the plant.*

19. *Cares of this world.* What are these thorns? First, the cares of this world—anxious, unrelaxing attention to the business of his present life; second, the deceitfulness of riches—of those riches which are the fruit of this worldly care; third, the pleasures of this life—the enjoyments, in themselves it may be innocent, in which worldly prosperity enables one to indulge. These "choke" or "smother" the word; drawing off so much of one's attention, absorbing so much of one's interest, and using up so much of one's time, that only the dregs of these remain for spiritual things, and a fagged, hurried and heartless formalism is at length all the religion of such persons.—*J. F. and B.* Our Savior here places riches in the midst

between cares and pleasures; for cares generally precede the gaining of riches, and, when gained, they draw men into pleasures and indulgence.—*Dodd.*

20. *Sown on good ground, etc.* A heart soft and tender, stirred to its depths on the great things of eternity, and jealously guarded from worldly engrossments, such only is the "honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15), which "keeps," i. e., "retains" the seed of the word, and bears fruit just in proportion as it is such a heart. Such "bring forth fruit with patience" (v. 15), or continuance, "enduring to the end;" in contrast with those in whom the word is "choked," and brings no fruit to perfection. The "thirty-fold" is designed to express the lowest degree of fruitfulness; the "hundred-fold," the highest, and the "sixty-fold" the intermediate degrees of fruitfulness. As a "hundred-fold," though not unexampled (Gen. 26: 12), is a rare return in the natural husbandry, so the highest degrees of spiritual fruitfulness are, too, seldom witnessed.—*J.F. and B. Some thirty-fold, some sixty and some a hundred.* Thirty-fold is now a first-rate crop, even for such plains as Esdraelon, just below Nazareth. But in the time of Christ there might be realized, in favorable circumstances, a hundred-fold. Intelligent gentlemen (in the plain of Esdraelon) maintain that they have themselves reaped more than an hundred-fold. Moreover, the different kinds of fertility may be ascribed to different kinds of grain: Barley yields more than wheat; and white maize, sown in the neighborhood, often yields several hundred-fold. An extraordinary number of stalks do actually spring from a single root. Here, on this plain of Sidon, I have seen more than a hundred, and each with a head bowing gracefully beneath the load of well-formed grains. The yield was more than a thousand-fold.—*Land and Book.* Observe the four kinds of seed: The first did not spring up at all; the second sprang up, but soon withered away; the third sprang up and grew, but yielded no fruit; the fourth sprang up, grew, and brought forth fruit. And as there are three causes of unfaithfulness, so there are three *degrees* of fruitfulness, but only one *cause* of fruitfulness.—*Maclear.*

#### FACT QUESTIONS 4:10-20

194. Show how the parable of the sower was appropriate to the time and place where it was given.
195. Describe briefly the four types of soils.
196. Did Jesus speak more than one parable upon this occasion? How many?
197. Was this a new method of instruction? Show the difference in a parable and an allegory.

198. Explain the expression "mystery of the kingdom."
199. Show how appropriate the use of parables was to "those without."
200. Please explain: "that seeing they may see, and not perceive."—"lest they be converted."
201. What seems to be "the key" to all the parables?
202. In what way can the seed be sown?
203. Where was "the wayside" in the fields of Palestine?
204. Why are wayside hearers so indifferent?
205. Explain how Satan takes away the word or the seed?
206. What causes such a joyful acceptance on the part of some—only to be lost later?
207. Show the difference between emotion and conviction.
208. Discuss carefully the three types of thorns and their interrelation.
209. Show the three causes of unfaithfulness, the three degrees of fruitfulness and the one cause of fruitfulness.

### C. THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP 4:21-23

#### TEXT 4:21-23

"And he said unto them, Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand? For there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light. If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear."

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:21-23

177. When was this parable given? before or after the explanation of the parable of the sower?
178. Who is represented by the lamp?
179. Isn't there something humorous about the location of the lamp? Why use it?
180. Jesus states a strange purpose for hiding something—explain.
181. What is the main point of this parable?

#### COMMENT

TIME—Autumn A.D. 28. At the same time as the first parable.

PLACE—In a boat in the Sea of Galilee, the crowd on the shore.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT—Luke 8:16, 17.

OUTLINE—1. The purpose of the lamp, v. 21. 2. Items are hidden for the purpose of later being revealed, vs. 22, a. 3. Secrets are made to be told, vs. 22b. 4. Those who can should understand, vs. 23.



## ANALYSIS

- I. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAMP, VS. 21,
  1. Not under the bushel.
  2. Not under the bed.
  3. On the stand.
- II. ITEMS ARE HIDDEN TO BE REVEALED. 22A.
- III. SECRETS ARE MADE TO BE TOLD. 22B.
- IV. THOSE WHO CAN SHOULD UNDERSTAND. VS. 23.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## I. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAMP, VS. 21.

21. "*And he said unto them, Is a (or the) candle brought to be put under, etc.*"

22. *For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested*" (or, save that it should be manifested).

These verses must be taken together, and their meaning seems to be something of this sort. The Lord had for certain wise, and, we believe, merciful reasons, adopted a new role of teaching, in which He veiled His meaning from the multitude under parables, but this was not because He intended their meaning to be permanently hidden from the world, but because He intended that it might be the better known to the world when the fitting time was come. To his end He made known the interpretation to His Apostles, not for themselves, but for the world. His truth—the truth of the Gospel—was the lamp; this lamp of truth He intended not for a corner of the world, or for a select few, but for all men of all nations, who would turn their faces towards it and receive it, and so He gave it now to the Apostles, who, after Pentecost, were to make it known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

## II. ITEMS ARE HIDDEN TO BE REVEALED. 22A.

God does not conceal any mystery, any religious truth, merely for the sake of concealing it. If He conceals any truth it is that He may ultimately make it better known. This very parable is an illustration of this. If any truth ever shone forth upon the lamp-stand of the Church it is that which is taught us by this parable, that the word of the Gospel is efficacious or not, according to the state of heart of the recipients; so that men must in very deed "take heed" as to "how" they hear and "what" they hear. This meaning is still more clearly enforced by the true reading of the first clause of verse 22. There is nothing hidden, save that it should be manifested. So we have this parable given in full in three out of the four Gospels, and we may safely say that, with the exception of that of the returning prodigal, there is none which has been more expounded and enforced by preachers in all ages. The meaning, however, of verse 21,

is much obscured by deficiency of translation. We lose much of the significance if we think of the modern candle and candlestick carried about in the hand. On the contrary, it is the lamp of the house put upon the lamp-stand, or candelabrum, which is so elevated that any lamp upon it can lighten up all the interior.

### III. SECRETS ARE MADE TO BE TOLD. VS. 22B.

The reader will notice that the Lord uses this aphorism here with quite a different significance to that which He gives to it in Matt. 10:26.

### IV. THOSE WHO CAN SHOULD UNDERSTAND. VS. 23

23. If any man have ears to hear, etc. If this was said not in the hearing of the multitude, but to the Apostles, or to those select ones to whom He had just expounded the parable, then it implies that there are still deeper mysteries of grace which require, for their apprehension, a more effectual opening of the soul's ears, and a deeper preparation of heart. Men have ears to hear certain fundamental, or practical truths, who still have not as yet ears to hear certain deep mysteries." (M. F. Sadler).

#### FACT QUESTIONS 4:21-23

210. Why interpret verses 21 and 22 together?
211. What is "the lamp" of the parable?
212. When was the lamp hidden? Why?
213. When was it put on "the stand"?
214. Show how this parable relates to the parable of the sower.
215. What deficiency in translation has hindered our understanding?
216. If Jesus spoke vs. 23 to the apostles, what does it mean?

### D. A WARNING FOR HEARERS. 4:24, 25

#### TEXT 4:24, 25

"And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you: and more shall be given unto you. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath."

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:24, 25

182. Please associate these verses with what has been said—what is "the measure" and "measuring."
183. Who would measure to the apostles?
184. How does this principle apply to today?
185. Isn't it unfair to give to the one who has and take from the one who has not?
186. Please explain in your own words the principle involved.

#### COMMENT

The four parables of Mark were all given at the same time and place. The parallel accounts are in Matt. 13:18-32 and Luke 8:11-19.

19. This *warning for the hearers* is also found in Luke 8:18.

OUTLINE—1. Measure determines measuring, 24a. 2. He who has, 25a. 3. He who has not, 25b.

### ANALYSIS

#### I. MEASURE DETERMINES MEASURING, VS. 24.

1. What amount are you giving of what I have given to you?
2. What you have given determines what you shall receive.

#### II. HE WHO HAS, VS. 25A.

1. The one or ones to whom Jesus has given.
2. If this one gives of what he has received he shall receive more.

#### III. HE WHO HAS NOT, VS. 25B.

1. He refuses to give what he has.
2. What he had is lost.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### I. MEASURE DETERMINES MEASURING, VS. 24.

24, 25. Thus far the duty of using the truth as light has been grounded in the nature of truth and the purpose of the Teacher; now it is grounded in the law of human life itself. The words, *And he saith unto them*, repeated here, probably indicate, not a new beginning with a change of time and place, but rather the narrator's remembrance of the special emphasis with which all this was spoken, very likely after a solemn pause.—*Take heed what ye hear*. Luke, "how ye hear." Not, "Be careful what you listen to," as if he would warn against dangerous teachers, but, "Carefully consider what you are hearing; observe how important it is; remember how necessary that you make the right use of it." It is almost, "Take heed to what you hear." The reason assigned for this caution is that, according to the universal law, what one does will return to him.—The words *that hear* are to be omitted, and the omission considerably changes the structure of the sentence: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you, and added to you."—This saying, *With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you*, proverbial in form, is applied in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:2) to the retribution that must come upon uncharitableness and self-willed judgment. Here our Lord gives it a quite different application; it is a law of life, and may be applied in many ways. In this case its lesson is, "You will be dealt with, as to truth, as you deal with others. Hide it, and it will be hidden from you; impart it, and it will be imparted to you." How many souls, in dealing with trust as God has given it to them, have found it even so—that concealment was loss, while giving was gain! If the apostles had kept their truth as a private trust, how their souls would have shrivelled!—*Shall more be given* is a promise of a return, which shall be not merely as the gift, but greater. So Luke 6:38. (Compare 2 Cor. 9:8-14).

## II. HE WHO HAS, VS. 25A.

Verse 25 contains what was evidently more or less a proverbial saying with our Lord. *He that hath, to him shall be given*, etc. (See Matt. 25:29; Luke 19:26.) Here it fits the connection far otherwise than as in the passages referred to—another illustration of our Lord's various use of single important sayings. Here, by a very striking turn of thought, *he that hath* is identified with him who imparts his trust of truth to others, the free giver, the true apostle, messenger of grace and truth; while *he that hath not* is identified with him who keeps his trust of truth to himself, content to be ever a disciple without becoming an apostle. The giver *hath*, the miser *hath not*. How true a description of men, and how true an interpretation of the law of life!—And now it is declared that for these two classes there shall be retribution. *He that hath, to him shall be given*. So Luke 6:38—a passage that may serve as a link between this and Matt. 7:2: "Give, and it shall be given unto you." (See also Luke 12:48).

## III. HE WHO HAS NOT, VS. 25B.

*And he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath*. How is this? He "hath not," and yet he "hath," something that he can lose. Yes; the spiritual miser possesses much in his own esteem; much truth has been entrusted to him; but if he is not a giver of truth, and so a possessor, his possession shall become no possession: what he hath shall be worthless to him. Such instruction may well have made the apostles careful what use they made of the parables. Partly to this, perhaps, it is due that they were so faithful in putting the lamp on the lampstand, not only by preaching, but also by making record of his words, especially such words as these." (W. N. Clarke).

## FACT QUESTIONS 4:24, 25

217. Read Matt. 7:2 and Luke 6:38 and show the difference in the use of the same principle here.
218. Is this a warning or an encouragement? Discuss.
219. Who is the one to whom much was given?
220. How does the attitude of hearing and heeding the words of Jesus relate to this?

## E. THE PARABLE OF SECRET GROWTH. 4:26-29

## TEXT 4:26-29

"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the

ear. But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come."

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:26-29

187. Please settle in your mind a clear definition of "the kingdom of heaven." We believe it refers in every referenc to the church Jesus establishd—either in the temporal or eternal sense. Do you agree?
188. What is the seed cast upon the earth?
189. Who casts the seed?
190. Who sleeps?
191. Why mention "knoweth not how" in vs. 27b?
192. How can we tell when the grain is ripe? What is the sickle?
193. What is the main point of this parable?

### COMMENT

All four parables of Jesus as recorded in Mark were given at the same time and place. Only this parable is not mentioned either by Matthew or Luke.

OUTLINE—*A picture of the kingdom of God.* (1) A man who sows seed, vs. 26. (2) He waits for the growth, vs. 27. (3) The visible growth, vs. 28. (4) The harvest, vs. 29.

### ANALYSIS

#### *A Picture Of the Kingdom of God*

- I. A MAN WHO SOWS THE SEED, vs. 26.
  1. The seed must be broadcast.
  2. The seed must go into the earth.
- II. HE WAITS FOR THE GROWTH, vs. 27.
  1. In the ordinary course of living.
  2. The growth occurs he knows not how.
- III. THE VISIBLE GROWTH, vs. 28.
  1. First the blade of grass.
  2. Then the ear.
  3. Then the grain in the ear.
- IV. THE HARVEST, vs. 29.
  1. When the grain is ripe.
  2. Sickle thrust in for the reaping.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

- I. THE MAN WHO SOWS THE SEED, vs. 26.

"26, 27. *he knoweth not how.*—To some extent he knoweth how; it is by the process described in the next verse: "the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

- II. HE WAITS FOR THE GROWTH, vs. 27.

He may know still further, that it grows by the chemical action of light,

warmth, and moisture; but still there is a part of the process that he does not know.

### III. THE VISIBLE GROWTH, VS. 28.

28, 29. *But when the fruit.*—Although the sower knows not how the seed grows, and remains not to see its growth, still it grows. From sowing time till harvest the man has nothing to do: no intermediate cultivation is required. This is true of the "corn" (wheat and barley) referred to, though not of our Indian corn.

### IV. THE HARVEST, VS. 29.

The kingdom of heaven is like this (verse 26), in that the seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God, when sown in a community, even though the sower go away and neglect it, will spring up of itself and bear fruit, and will be ready at a future day for the harvest. This is often exemplified in the labors of the evangelist. He preaches in a community faithfully, and apparently without success, for a length of time, and then, after a lapse of months or years, returns to the same place, and with comparatively little exertion reaps an abundant harvest. The parable teaches what observation abundantly confirms, that such an adaptation exists between the human soul and the word of God, that when the latter is once implanted a future harvest will usually be the result." (*J. W. McGarvey*).

### FACT QUESTIONS 4:26-29

221. Does this parable relate to the fourth type of hearers in the production of fruit?
222. Who is the sower?
223. Why mention the period of time in this parable?
224. Why describe the growth of the grain?
225. Are ministers of the word also reapers? Please discuss.

### F. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED. 4:30-32.

#### TEXT 4:30-32

"An he said, How shall we liken the kingdom of God? or in what parable shall we set it forth? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown upon the earth, though it be less than all the seeds upon the earth, yet when it is sown, groweth up, and becometh greater than all the herbs, and putteth out great branches; so that the birds of the heaven can lodge under the shadow thereof."

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:30-32

194. Once again settle in your mind just what is represented by the expression "kingdom of God." Can you see the fulfillment of this expression in the church? We refer to the church described in the book of Acts.

195. Why select the mustard seed for comparison? Is it the smallest seed on the earth?  
 196. Who are the birds and what are the branches?  
 197. What is the principle point of this parable?

## COMMENT

This is the fourth and last parable here recorded by Mark. Like the previous three it was given in the autumn of A.D. 28 while Jesus sat in a little boat in the Sea of Galilee.

*A Picture of the Kingdom*

OUTLINE—1. Like a grain of mustard seed, vs. 30, 31. 2. When grown is greater than all the herbs, vs. 32a. 3. A place for the birds of the heaven, vs. 32b.

## ANALYSIS

- I. A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED, VS. 30, 31.  
 1. Just like the kingdom of God.  
 2. Sown upon the earth.  
 3. Less than all the seeds.  
 II. WHEN IT IS GROWN, 32A.  
 1. Greater than all the herbs.  
 2. Putteth out branches.  
 III. A PLACE FOR BIRDS, 32B.  
 1. In branches.  
 2. Under the shadow.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

- I. A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED, VS. 30, 31.

*Whereunto* (or how) *shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison* (or parable) *shall we compare it?* In using the plural, *we*, our Lord seems to conceive of his disciples as deliberating with him in the choice of a comparison; not that he was in doubt as to how the gospel could be illustrated—comparisons thronged upon him—but because he would have them also watch for comparisons. The world was full of them, and they, the teachers of men in higher things, must learn, as well as their Master, to find them. Yet possibly he may sometimes, like any one of them, have had to feel after an illustration in nature that was suited to his thought.—*A grain of mustard-seed*. There seems to be no good reason for looking elsewhere than to the ordinary mustard of the East. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*) has seen it as high as a horse and rider. (See also the beautiful incident in Dr. Hackett's *Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 124.—A.H.) This is the *Sinapis nigra*; but some have thought that the *Salvadora Persica* was more probably the herb that Jesus had in mind. The former, however, meets all the real requirements of the case, and was the more familiar plant to his hearers. "It (the *Sinapis nigra*) is a

small grain producing a large result; the least of the husbandman's seeds, becoming the greatest of the husbandman's herbs. This is the point of the parable, and gives the only sense in which the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard-seed" (*The Bible Educator*, 1. 121).—*Less than* and *greater than* are not to be pressed to the point of minute precision. There may be smaller seeds in existence without giving us reason to stumble at our Saviour's words. The mustard-seed was commonly spoken of as the smallest of seeds, and that is enough.

## II. WHEN IT IS GROWN, VS. 32 A.

*Becometh greater than all the herbs.* Matthew, "is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree"—i. e., of course, a tree in appearance, not botanically. The *great branches* are such as one would think impossible upon an herb that sprang from so small a seed.—The comparison calls for very little explanation, the lesson—small beginnings and great results—being very plain. Such is the kingdom, begun obscurely, with no human prospect of greatness, no seeming possibility of success. It began among the Jews, a disappointed people chafing under foreign masters; it was the smallest of sects among them; it contradicted their ideas, and was rejected by them; it seemed to be powerless at home, and without opportunities abroad; and its founder died on the cross. Even after the day of Pentecost it seemed but a feeble sect. Yet compare the strong language of Paul in Rom. 16:26; Col. 1:23 as to the wide extension of the gospel within the apostolic times.

## III. A PLACE FOR BIRDS, VS. 32 B.

Consider also the power of the name and principles of Jesus in the world today, and the ever-widening circle of Christian influence. The kingdom has grown out of all resemblance to its humble beginning. Such is the kingdom; and the same rule is to be observed in its agencies. They are often obscure and yet mighty. A single act of a quiet person often seems possessed of a germinant power of usefulness that brings most unexpected fruit to the glory of God. Christian history is full of illustrations. Notice that this comparison does not set forth the greatness of the kingdom absolutely, as destined to fill the earth, but only relatively, in contrast with the insignificance of its apparent promise." (W. N. Clarke).

## FACT QUESTIONS 4:30-32

226. Who does the planting of the mustard seed? Where?
227. Does it help us in our work for Christ to know the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds? How?
228. When was the seed of mustard first planted?
229. Show how this parable has been fulfilled—is being fulfilled and can be fulfilled.



## G. LAST WORDS ON PARABLES 4:33-34

TEXT 4:33, 34

"And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it: and without a parable spake he not unto them: but privately to his own disciples he expounded all things."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:33, 34

198. How many parables did Jesus use? Ans. "The total number of parables is a matter of difference of opinion. Fahling, in his *Harmony*, lists 56: *A. T. Robertson*, 52. *Trench*, 30." (Earle).  
 199. What is meant by the expression "as they were able to hear"?  
 200. Is it indeed true that "without a parable He spoke not unto them"? Explain.  
 201. At this time who were "His own disciples"?

COMMENT

At the conclusion of the record of the parables we have these concluding words of the writer Mark. No outline or analysis is needed here. PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 13:34, 35.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

"33. *And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear* (it.)

These are mere samples of the parables by which our Lord elucidated or disguised the doctrine of his kingdom to the different classes of his hearers in proportion to their previous knowledge and their present receptivity of such instruction. *As they were able to hear*, i.e. as some understand it, to hear intelligently or with patience. It may however have the stricter and more simple sense, as they had opportunity and leisure to attend on his instructions.

34. *But without a parable spake he not unto them; and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.*

This cannot mean that he never taught them in any other form, which would be contradicted by the whole course of the history, but only that whatever he did teach in parables he did not also teach in other forms, but, as the last clause more explicitly asserts, reserved the explanation for a private interview with his disciples. This closes Mark's account of our Lord's parables, including, as we have now seen, a full report of one with its author's own interpretation (vs. 1-20), an explanation of his purpose in employing this mode of instruction and direction to his followers how to profit by it (21-25); two additional parables, without a formal explanation (26-32); and a general statement of his practice in relation to this matter (33-34.)" (J. A. Alexander)

FACT QUESTIONS 4:33, 34

230. Please explain: "as they were able to hear."

231. Please explain: "without a parable He spake not unto them."

### 3. THE FIRST WITHDRAWAL 4:35—5:20

#### a. The Stilling of the Tempest

4:35-41

#### TEXT 4:35-41

"And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side. And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him. And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling. And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:35-41

202. On what day (or night) did this incident occur?
203. What is meant by the expression "unto the other side"? Where was it? vs. 35.
204. Explain the expression "even as He was." vs. 36.
205. How far was it "to the other side"?
206. Describe in your own words "the storm."
207. Why was Jesus asleep?
208. What did the disciples imagine Jesus could do about the storm? Did they lack faith?
209. Could this power here exercised by Jesus be compared with the creation of the world? How?
210. There are two uses of the word fear: vs. 40, 41. Explain each.

#### COMMENT

TIME—Immediately after the telling of the last parable—on the same day—sometime in the autumn of A.D. 28.

PLACE—In the midst of the Sea of Galilee somewhere between Capernaum and Gerasa.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25.

OUTLINE—1. The day of the miracle, vs. 35. 2. The voyage to the other side, vs. 36. 3. The storm, vs. 37. 4. Jesus asleep, the fear of the disciples, vs. 38. 5. Jesus stills the storm, vs. 39. 6. The calm of Jesus—the reverence of the disciples, vs. 40, 41.

#### ANALYSIS

##### I. THE DAY OF THE MIRACLE, vs. 35.

1. The same day as the parables.
2. At eventide.
- II. THE VOYAGE TO THE OTHER SIDE, VS. 36.
  1. Left multitude.
  2. Jesus taken in the little boat from which He taught the parables.
- III. THE STORM, VS. 37.
  1. The great wind.
  2. Waves into the boat.
  3. Boat filling up.
- IV. JESUS SLEEPS, THE DISCIPLES FEAR, V. 38.
  1. Jesus in the stern on a cushion.
  2. Awaked and asked for help.
- V. JESUS STILLS THE STORM, VS. 39.
  1. Rebuked the wind.
  2. Stilled the sea.
- VI. THE CALM OF JESUS—THE REVERENCE OF THE DISCIPLES, VS. 40, 41.
  1. No need of fear when there is faith.
  2. What manner of man is this?

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### I. THE DAY OF THE MIRACLE, VS. 35.

"These verses describe a storm on the Sea of Galilee, when our Lord and His disciples were crossing it, and a miracle performed by our Lord in calming the storm in a moment. Few miracles recorded in the Gospel were so likely to strike the minds of the disciples as this. Four of them at least were fishermen. Peter, Andrew, James and John, had probably known the Sea of Galilee, and its storms, from their youth. Few events in our Lord's journeyings to and fro upon earth, contain more rich instruction than the one related in this passage.

#### II. THE VOYAGE TO THE OTHER SIDE, VS. 36.

Let us learn, in the first place, that *Christ's service does not exempt His servants from storms*. Here were the twelve disciples in the path of duty. They were obediently following Jesus, wherever He went. They were daily attending on His ministry, and hearkening to His word. They were daily testifying to the world, that, whatever Scribes and Pharisees might think, they believed on Jesus, loved Jesus, and were not ashamed to give up all for His sake. Yet here we see these men in trouble, tossed up and down by a tempest, and in danger of being drowned.

## III. THE STORM, VS. 37.

Let us mark well this lesson. If we are true Christians, we must not expect everything smooth in our journey to heaven. We must count it no strange thing, if we have to endure sicknesses, losses, bereavements, and disappointments, just like other men. Free pardon and full forgiveness, grace by the way, and glory at the end,—all this our Saviour has promised to give. But He has never promised that we shall have no afflictions. He loves us too well to promise that. By affliction He teaches us many precious lessons, which without we should never learn. By affliction He shows us our emptiness and weakness, draws us to the throne of grace, purifies our affections, weans us from the world, makes us long for heaven. In the resurrection morning we shall all say, "It is good for me that I was afflicted." We shall thank God for every storm.

## IV. JESUS SLEEPS, THE DISCIPLES FEAR, V. 38.

Let us learn, in the second place, *that our Lord Jesus Christ was really and truly man*. We are told in these verses, that when the storm began, and the waves beat over the ship, he was in the hinder part "asleep." He had a body exactly like our own,—a body that could hunger, and thirst, and feel pain, and be weary, and need rest. No wonder that His body needed repose at this time. He had been diligent in His Father's business all the day. He had been preaching to a great multitude in the open air. No wonder that "when the even was come," and His work finished, He fell "asleep."

Let us mark this lesson also attentively. The Saviour in whom we are bid to trust, is as really man as He is God. He knows the trials of a man, for He has experienced them. He knows the bodily infirmities of a man for He has felt them. He can well understand what we mean, when we cry to Him for help in this world of need. He is just the very Saviour that men and women, with weary frames and aching heads, in a weary world, require for their comfort every morning and night. "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." (Heb. 4:15.)

## V. JESUS STILLS THE STORM, VS. 39.

Let us learn, in the third place, *that our Lord Jesus Christ as God, has almighty power*. We see Him in these verses doing that which is proverbially impossible. He speaks to the winds, and they obey Him. He speaks to the waves, and they submit to His command. He turns the raging storm into a calm with a few words,—*"Peace, be still."* Those words were the words of Him who first created all things. The elements knew the voice of their Master, and like obedient servants, were quiet at once.

Let us mark this lesson also, and lay it up in our minds. With the Lord Jesus Christ nothing is impossible. No stormy passions are so strong but He can tame them. No temper is so rough and violent but He can change it. No conscience is so disquieted, but He can speak peace to it, and make it calm. No man ever need despair, if he will only bow down his pride, and come as a humbled sinner to Christ. Christ can do miracles upon his heart.—No man ever need despair of reaching his journey's end, if he has once committed his soul to Christ's keeping. Christ will carry him through every danger. Christ will make him conqueror over every foe.—What though our relations oppose us? What though our neighbors laugh us to scorn? What though our place be hard? What though our temptations be great? It is all nothing, if Christ is on our side, and we are in the ship with Him. Greater is He that is for us, than all they that are against us.

VI. THE CALM OF JESUS—THE REVERENCE OF THE DISCIPLES, vs. 40, 41.

Finally, we learn from this passage, *that our Lord Jesus Christ is exceedingly patient and pitiful in dealing with His own people*. We see the disciples on this occasion showing great want of faith, and giving way to most unseemly fears. They forgot their Master's miracles and care for them in days gone by. They thought of nothing but their present peril. They awoke our Lord hastily, and cried, "Carest thou not that we perish?" We see our Lord dealing most gently and tenderly with them. He gives them no sharp reproof. He makes no threat of casting them off, because of their unbelief. He simply asks the touching question, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"

Let us mark well this lesson. The Lord Jesus is very pitiful and of tender mercy. "As a father pitieth his children, even so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." (Psalm 103:13). He does not deal with believers according to their sins, nor reward them according to their iniquities. He sees their weakness. He is aware of their short-comings. He knows all the defects of their faith, and hope, and love, and courage. And yet He will not cast them off. He bears with them continually. He loves them even to the end. He raises them when they fall. He restores them when they err. His patience, like His love, is a patience that passeth knowledge. When he sees a heart right, it is His glory to pass over many a short-coming.

Let us leave these verses with the comfortable recollection that Jesus is not changed. His heart is still the same that it was when He crossed the sea of Galilee and stilled the storm. High in heaven at the right hand of God, Jesus is still sympathizing—still almighty,—still pitiful and patient towards His people.—Let us be more charitable and patient towards our brethren in the faith. They may err in many things, but if

Jesus has received them and can bear with them, surely we may bear with them too.—Let us be more hopeful about ourselves. We may be very weak, and frail, and unstable; but if we can truly say that we do come to Christ and believe on Him, we may take comfort. The question for conscience to answer is not, "Are we like the angels? are we perfect as we shall be in heaven?" The question is, "Are we real and true in our approaches to Christ? Do we truly repent and believe?" (*J. C. Ryle*)

*FACT QUESTIONS* 4:35-41

232. Who shared in this storm and calm? Cf. 4:36.
233. Try to approximate the activity of Jesus during the day to understand how weary He was at the close of the day.
234. Be specific in the reason for the rebuke of Jesus in vs. 40.
235. Do you believe this storm was planned?
236. What is the greatest lesson in the incident?

*SUMMARY*

4:1-34

In the parables of this section, especially in those of the sower, the seed and the mustard seed, the prophetic power of Jesus is clearly exhibited. Without superhuman foresight he could not have so accurately traced out the manner in which different classes of men throughout all time would deal with the word of God, as he describes it in the parable of the sower; nor could he have known in advance of experiment, that the seed of the kingdom would grow from its planting until the time for harvest, as described in the next parable; nor that, as declared in the third, the kingdom would ever attain to the prodigious growth which our eyes have witnessed. His divinity is attested by his unfailing foresight into the distant future.—*J. W. McGarvey*.

B. THE FIERCE DEMONIAK. 5:1-20.

*TEXT* 5:1-20

"And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. And when he was come out of the boat, straightway there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs: and no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been rent, asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: and no man had strength to tame him. And always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones. And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him; and crying out with a loud voice, he saith, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, tor-

ment me not, For he said unto him, Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he saith unto him, My name is Legion; for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding. And they besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And he gave them leave. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered into the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep into the sea, in number about two thousand; and they were choked in the sea. And they that fed them fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they came to see what it was that had come to pass. And they come to Jesus, and behold him that was possessed with devils sitting, clothed and in his right mind, even him that had the legion: and they were afraid. And they that saw it declared unto them how it befell him that was possessed with devils, and concerning the swine. And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders. And as he was entering into the boat, he that had been possessed with devils besought him that he might be with him. And he suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he had mercy on thee. And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel."

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:1-20

211. Please locate on a map the "country of Gerasenes."
212. It would seem the demons would run from Jesus—not to Him—explain.
213. What is a demon? Why are they called "unclean."
214. State five facts about the demoniac?
215. What distinction is there in fetters and chains.
216. Was there more than one demon in the man? How many?
217. Why ask his name?
218. What torment did the demon expect from Jesus?
219. Why did not the demon wish to leave the country?
220. Why would demons wish to enter swine?
221. Wasn't it wrong to destroy the property of another?
222. Why ask Jesus to depart?
223. Why did the man who was healed wish to be with Jesus? Why did Jesus refuse?
224. Give two facts added by Matthew and Luke.

#### COMMENT

TIME—Autumn, A.D. 28. The morning after the stilling of the tempest on the Sea of Galilee, which followed the parables.

PLACE—The country of the Gadarenes, on the southeastern shores of the Sea of Galilee. It was in the country of the Gergesenes (so named from Gergesa, the modern Gersa, directly across the lake from Tiberias), which was a portion of the larger region of the Gadarenes (so named from their capital, Gadara, a large city seven or eight miles southwest of the southern point of the lake). The demoniac may have belonged to Gadara, but have met Jesus in the vicinity of Gergesa. Gadara was one of the ten confederated Gentile cities which, with the district in which they were located, were called Decapolis (The Ten Cities). Though they were located in Palestine, yet in the time of Christ they had a Gentile instead of Jewish population. Matthew speaks in the parallel passage of the Gergesenes. The Gadarenes and Gergesenes were simply two different names for the same people. Gadara and Gergesa were in the same district. Mark and Luke, in this account, speak of the Gadarenes, while Matthew calls the people the Gergesenes. This difference for a long time caused a difficulty to biblical students and caused rationalists to throw a doubt over the whole narrative. Gadara is three hours' journey south of the lake and it is not likely that the miracle was wrought there. The discovery of Gergesa, now called Gersa, on the eastern shore of the lake and on the borders of the district of Gadara, has made all plain. This discovery, made by Dr. Thompson (*Land and Book*, Vol. II, pp. 34, 35), reconciles every difficulty. Two of the writers, writing for Gentiles, mention Gadara, one of the best known Gentile cities of Palestine, in the territories of which it occurred, while Matthew, a tax-gatherer on the shores of the lake and familiar with every locality upon its borders, mentions the obscure village, right on the shores, where it took place. The modern Gersa, or Chersa, is within a few rods of the shore. A mountain rises immediately above it, so near the shore that the swine rushing madly down could not stop, but would be inevitably driven into the sea and drowned; the ruins of ancient tombs are still found on this mountain side, and Capernaum was in full view "over against it" (Luke 8:26) on the other side. See map of Sea of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 8:28-33; Luke 8:26-39.

OUTLINE—1. The Gadarene Demoniac. 2. The Legion and the Swine. 3. Christ and the Gadarenes.

### ANALYSIS

#### I. THE GADARENE DEMONIAIC. VS. 1-8.

1. The Lord Crosses to Gergesa. Mark 5:1; Matt. 8:30; Luke 8:26.
2. The Fierce Demoniacs. Mark 5:2-5; Matt. 8:30; Luke 8:27.
3. Runs and Appeals to Christ. Mark 5:6, 7; Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:28.



## II. THE LEGION AND THE SWINE, VS. 9-13.

1. The Name Legion. Mark 5:9; Luke 8:30.
2. The Appeal of the Demons. Mark 5:10, 11; Matt. 8:31; Luke 8:32.
3. The Maddened Swine. Mark 5:13; Matt. 8:32; Luke 8:33.

## III. CHRIST AND THE GADARENES, VS. 14-20.

1. The Gadarenes Hear and See. Mark 5:14-16; Matt. 8:33; Luke 8:35.
2. Desire Christ to Depart. Mark 5:17; Matt. 8:34; Luke 8:37.
3. A Home Missionary. Mark 5:20; Luke 8:39.

## INTRODUCTION

After the discourse in parables, in the evening the Savior with his apostles embarked to the other side of the lake. On the way a great storm arose, which filled the disciples with terror, but was quieted at the voice of the Lord. Crossing over to the southeastern shore of the lake they disembarked in the country of the Gadarenes. On the voyage the Lord quelled the storm of winds and waves; across the sea he quelled a fiercer storm in a human soul. There is something very striking in the connection in which this miracle stands with that other which went immediately before. Our Lord has just shown himself as the pacifier of the tumults and the discords in the outward world. But there is something wilder and more fearful than the winds and the waves in their fiercest moods—even the spirit of man, when it has broken loose from all restraints, and yielded itself to be the organ, not of God, but of him who brings uttermost confusion wheresoever his dominion reaches. And Christ will do here a mightier work than that which he accomplished there: he will speak, and at his potent word this madder strife, this blinder rage, which is in the heart of man, will allay itself; and here also there shall be a great calm.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE GADARENE DEMONIAIC.—1. *In the country of the Gadarenes.* See remarks above on the PLACES. Gadara was a great city which gave name to all the people in the district, while Gergesa was a small village on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

2. *There met him out of the tombs.* Matthew mentions two demoniacs, while Mark and Luke speak only of one, probably the fiercer of the two. When the Savior and his disciples landed, the demoniac, with his companion, starting from the tombs, which were their ordinary dwelling-place, rushed down to encounter the intruders that had dared to set foot

on their domain. Or it may have been that they were at once drawn to Christ by the secret instinctive feeling that he was their helper, and driven from him by the sense of the awful gulf that divided them from him, the Holy One of God. The tombs were caves formed by nature, or cut in the rocks, with cells at the sides for the reception of the dead. They were ceremonially unclean (Num. 19:11, 16; Matt. 23:27; Luke 11:44), and dwelling in them was of itself a sign of degradation. *With an unclean spirit.* A demon; called unclean because it produced uncleanness of body and of soul; the exact opposite of pure. It is not easy to answer the question, What was this demoniacal possession? But we may gather from the gospel narrative some important ingredients for our description. The demoniac was one whose being was strangely interpenetrated by one or more of those fallen spirits, who are constantly asserted in Scripture (under the name of demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits, their chief being the devil, or Satan) to be the enemies and tempters of the souls of men. He stood in a totally different position from the abandoned, wicked man, who morally is given over to the devil. This latter would be a subject for punishment, but the demoniac for deepest compassion. There appears to have been in him a double will and double consciousness—sometimes the cruel spirit thinking and speaking in him, sometimes his poor crushed self crying out to the Savior of men for mercy; a terrible advantage taken, and a personal realization, by the malignant powers of evil, of the fierce struggle between sense and conscience in the man of morally divided life. It has been not improbably supposed that some of these demoniacs may have arrived at their dreadful state through various progressive degrees of guilt and sensual abandonment. Lavish sin, and especially indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing, as it would often, a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial bond between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness.—*Alford.* To the frequent inquiry, How comes it that similar possessions do not occur at the present day? it may be answered: (1) It cannot be proved that they do not sometimes occur even now. It cannot be said that in many cases of insanity, and in some cases of spiritualism, the malady may not be traced to the direct agency of demons. (2) But, admitting that such possessions are not common, yet there was a reason in our Savior's day for the external manifestation of Satan's power. The crisis of the moral history of the world was at hand. The devil was allowed to exercise unusual power in temptation on the souls and bodies of men, in order that Christ might meet him openly and manifest his power in his victory over him. When God was manifested in the flesh, then demons may have been permitted to manifest themselves specially among men.—*Clark.*

3. *Had his dwelling among the tombs.* This implies habitual residence, and long absence from the homes of the living. Evil or unclean spirits are generally represented as haunting waste, desolate places and tombs. The tombs are not infrequently used in Palestine by certain of the poorer classes as dwelling-places. Their character (caves cut in the rock) makes them a perfect shelter. *No man could bind him.* The better MSS. give, "no man could any longer bind him." The attempt had been so often made and baffled that it had been given up in despair.

4. *Bound with fetters and chains.* The case was probably one of long standing, and repeated efforts had been made to confine him (Luke 8:29). Fetters were for the feet, chains for any other part of the body.—*Schaff.* Luke says (8:29), that "oftentimes it (the unclean spirit) had caught him;" and, after mentioning how they had vainly tried to bind him with chains and fetters, because "he brake the bands," he adds, "and was driven of the devil (or demon) into the wilderness." The dark tyrant-power by which he was held clothed him with superhuman strength, and made him scorn restraint. Matthew (8:28) says he was "exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way." He was the terror of the whole locality.—*J. F. and B.* *Chains had been plucked asunder.* This is nowise incredible; for there are still some forms of mania in which the sufferer, notwithstanding the constant exhaustion of mind and body, gains a daily increase of muscular strength, and is able to break the strongest bonds and even chains.—*Kitto.*

5. *Night and day . . . in the tombs.* It is a sad story that is told of the unfortunate. He wandered about night and day in the solitudes, like a spectre, but crying aloud like a ravenous beast. *Cutting himself with stones.* There is sometimes a strong propensity in maniacs to wound and even maim themselves. V. Swieten says that he himself "saw a maniac who lacerated all the integuments of his body, and who, during the inclemency of a severe winter, lay naked on straw for weeks, in a place rough with stones."

6. *Ran and worshipped him.* Probably when he saw him land he ran from his lurking place among the tombs on the mountain side. There seems to be a kind of double life in the man; one his own, and the other the overpowering influence of the spirit that possessed him. *Olshausen* refers the act of going to Jesus, and bowing down before him, to the *man* in contradistinction to the *demon*. The man wanted help, and sought it in Jesus; and the will of the demon trying to overpower him made the terrible paroxysms of conflict. *Godet* says: "He felt himself at once attracted and repelled by Jesus; this led to a violent crisis in him, which revealed itself first of all in a cry. Then, like some ferocious beast submitting to the power of his subduer, he runs and kneels, pro-

testing all the time, in the name of the spirit of which he is still the organ, against the power which is exerted over him."

7. *Cried with a loud voice.* It was the man's voice that cried out, but it was the controlling spirit that dictated the words. He had not the control of his own organs, just as I have seen those under hypnotic influence who could not control their words or thoughts. It is no uncommon thing in our time for a person to be absolutely under the influence of another will. *What have I to do with thee?* What have we in common? Why interferest thou with us? Why wilt thou not let us alone? *Son of the most high God.* The spirits, who had possession of the poor man's body, wielded his organism of speech as if it were their own. These demons knew the Lord and confessed him. "The demons believe and tremble." *I adjure thee by God.* To adjure is to entreat solemnly, as if under oath, or the penalty of a curse. This is the language of the demon, not of the man; not a mere blasphemy, but a plausible argument. Nothing is more common than swearing by God, on the part of the ungodly, the infidel, and even the atheistic. *Torment me not.* In Matthew, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" i.e.; we implore thee to deal with us as God himself does; not to precipitate our final doom, but to prolong the respite we now enjoy.—*Alexander.*

8. *Come out of the man.* Leave him; no more control him.

II. THE LEGION AND THE SWINE.—9. *What is thy name?* The Lord asks this question of the afflicted man. For what purpose? There is nothing so suitable as a calm and simple question to bring a madman to himself. There is no more natural way of awakening in a man who is beside himself the consciousness of his own personality than to make him tell his own name. A man's name becomes the expression of his character, and a summary of the history of his life. The first condition of any cure of this afflicted man was a return to the distinct feeling of his own personality. *And he answered.* The man was asked, but the demon answered, showing his entire mastery over him. *My name is Legion,* the unclean spirit answers. The Roman legion consisted of about six thousand. The word had come to signify any large number, with the ideas of order and subordination. It is about equivalent to *host*, and explained by the unclean spirit himself: *For we are many.* One chief, superior one, with inferior ones under him.

10. *He besought him . . . not send them out of the country.* "He" is used in the singular because the man speaks, but he speaks under the influence of the spirits, and pleads for them. The petition of the devils may be regarded as equivalent to, "Send us anywhere, anywhere but to perdition; send us to the most shattered man; send us to the lowest creature, into man or beast, bird or reptile, anywhere but to hell!" The

demons knew well that Christ had come to destroy the power of the devil, and had already (v. 7) implored, "Torment me not."

11. *There was there nigh unto the mountains.* The Revision says: "Now there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding." The mountain rises a short distance from the lake. *A great herd of swine feeding.* They were the property either of Gentiles, or of Jews engaged in a traffic which was unclean according to the Mosaic law.

12. *The devils besought him . . . Send us,* etc. How could there it is asked, be such a desire on the part of the demons? Why should there not? we would answer. The wish might, on their part, be a mere outburst of wantonness. Or there might be eagerness for anything on which to wreak their evil energy. They might be wishing, as *Richard Baxter* has it, "to play a small game, rather than none." Or there might be cunning malice in their intent—malice toward Christ and toward all the other parties concerned.—*Morison.* They aimed at this, that they might move the owners of the herd, and the rest of the people of the country, to be discontented at our Savior.—*Petter.*

13. *Forthwith Jesus gave them leave.* The fact is stated, but why he should have granted their request is in part conjecture. The following reasons have been suggested: (1) To show the disciples Christ's control over the movements of the spirits. (2) To test the Gergesenes. (3) To make the miracle more notorious, and thus to enhance the effect of the cured demoniac's preaching. (4) The owners, if Jews, drove an illegal trade; if heathens, they insulted the national religion; in either case the permission was just. *Ran violently down a steep place.* Not a cliff, but a steep beach. The declivity at the base of the mountain at Gersa is said to be almost perpendicular. "The bluff behind is so steep, and the shore so narrow, that a herd of swine, rushing frantically down, must certainly have been overwhelmed in the sea before they could recover themselves." *Tristram's Land of Israel. About two thousand.* Immense herds of swine were kept in many provinces of the Roman Empire specially for the provisionment of the Army. A heavy loss was certainly recognized by the people of the city.—*Cook.* Why should they have destroyed the herd of swine, and so deprived themselves, so to speak, of a terrestrial abode? Perhaps the act of the swine was the result of panic, and in spite of the evil spirits. It is the very nature of evil thus to outwit itself.

III. CHRIST AND THE GADARENES.—14. *They that fed the swine.* The herdsmen, fled affrighted, in consternation at the loss and the marvel, to the city, to Gergesa or Gadara.

15. *They come to Jesus.* Matthew says (8:34), "Behold, the whole

city came out to meet Jesus." Note the present *come*. The Evangelist begins to depict the scene as if he and we were present in the midst of it and looking on. *See him that was possessed*. "And (they) behold the demoniac sitting clothed and in sound mind." Note the word *behold*. It is more than *see*. They gaze upon the man. *Sitting and clothed*. There is a fine harmony between the statement that the demoniac was now *clothed*, and the statement in Luke that formerly he "ware no clothes" (8:27). The contrast of the man's former condition sets off to advantage the marvel of his present state. *They were afraid*. They felt in the presence of a power which inspired them with awe and alarm. It might, for aught that they could comprehend, be something weird or "uncanny." There was, moreover, the terror of a guilty conscience.

16. *And also concerning the swine*. A notable climax. The people who had witnessed the transaction tell the citizens what had been done for the demoniac and about the swine—their swine: that settled their minds. They cared far more for the swine, than for the man who had been healed. They would rather have swine than Christ.

17. *They began to pray him to depart*. Jesus had overcome the rage of the storm that met him when approaching their coast. He had cast out the legion of devils that opposed his entrance into their country. The only thing which could effectually turn away the Savior was the will of man. Christ appears never to have visited the country of the Gadarenes again. He does not abide where he is not wanted.

18. *Prayed . . . that he might be with him*. Was it that he feared, lest in the absence of his deliverer the powers of hell should regain their dominion over him, and only felt safe in immediate nearness to him? or merely that out of the depth of his gratitude he desired henceforth to be a follower of him to whom he owed this mighty benefit?—*Trench*.

19. *Jesus suffered him not*. To be a missionary for Christ, in the region where he was so well known and so long dreaded, was a far nobler calling than to follow him where nobody had ever heard of him, and where other trophies, not less illustrious, could be raised by the same power and grace. *Go home to thy friends*. The first act God requires of a convert is, "Be fruitful." The good man's goodness lies not hidden in himself alone: he is still strengthening his weaker brother. All are not called on to be foreign missionaries. The Lord called upon this man to become a home missionary.

20. *In Decapolis* (ten cities). The region (of ten cities east of the Jordan) of which this immediate district formed a part. The healed man became a preacher, not only where Christ had been rejected, but where he had not gone. His message was his own experience. How much his

preaching effected history does not record, but we know that near forty years later this district of Decapolis became the refuge of the church of Jerusalem when that city was destroyed.

*FACT QUESTIONS 5:1-20*

237. "Gadara was a great ——— . . . while Gergesa was a small ——— on the shores of the Sea of Galilee."
238. Was there only one demoniac? Explain the reference in Matthew to two.
239. Why dwell in the tombs?
240. Why call a demon an "unclean spirit"?
241. In what sense did a demon possessed man stand in totally different position from the abandoned, wicked man, who morally is given over to the devil?
242. How have some imagined that men became demon possessed?
243. Give two answers to the question, "do we have demon possession today"?
244. What had been done to bind this wild one?
245. Isn't it incredible that this one would have such superhuman strength?
246. Why did he cut himself?
247. Show how the man was both attracted and repelled by Jesus.
248. What is meant by "I adjure thee by God"?
249. Why ask the man his name?
250. What is meant by the name "Legion"?
251. What is the thought of "send us not out of the country"?
252. Why ask to go into the swine?
253. Show three possible answers as to why Jesus gave permission for the demons to enter the swine.
254. Show how the traffic in swine was wrong i.e. the raising and selling swine was wrong for both Gentiles and Jews.
255. Just where did they enter the Sea?
256. What caused the whole city to come out to see Jesus?
257. What was the response of the crowd when they saw the former demon possessed man?
258. What is the only thing that can effectually turn the Savior away?
259. What was the "far nobler calling" of the man who was healed?
260. Where and what was Decapolis?

## 4. THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER 5:21-43.

## a. The urgent request of Jairus. 5:21-24

## TEXT 5:21-24

"And when Jesus had crossed over again in the boat unto the other side, a great multitude was gathered unto him; and he was by the sea. And there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he falleth at his feet, and beseecheth him much, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death: I pray thee, that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole, and live. And he went with him; and a great multitude followed him, and they thronged him."

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:21-24

225. Where did the boat land in which Jesus crossed the Sea? Who was there to meet Him?
226. What is meant by the expression "rulers of the synagogue."
227. Show the humility and sincerity of Jairus.
228. Why call his daughter "My little daughter"?
229. Why was the multitude so interested?

## COMMENT

TIME—Autumn, A.D. 28. Probably in the afternoon of the same day He healed the demoniac.

PLACE—Capernaum—at the house of Matthew.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 9:18, 19; Luke 8:40-42.

OUTLINE—1. Jesus comes back to Capernaum, vs. 21. 2. Jairus—his need—his request, vs. 22, 23. 3. Jesus goes with him, vs. 24.

## ANALYSIS

Since this is but the beginning of the incident we will offer an analysis in the later section.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

"21. The miracle on the eastern side of the lake took place in the early morning, and later in the day Jesus and his company were back on the western side, but not in the town of Capernaum. *He was nigh unto the sea*, and there the crowd gathered to him, having been waiting (Luke) for his return. Possibly the change in his mode of teaching and the introduction of parables had for the time quickened the popular curiosity.

22-24. *One of the rulers of the synagogue*. Presumably the synagogue in Capernaum, though nothing positively determines the place.—The name



*Jairus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew "Jair;" it is the name of one who was a great man at the conquest of Canaan (Deut. 3:14), and later of one of the Judges of Israel (Judges 10:3-5). Of *Jairus* nothing is known except what is recorded here. If, as is probably the case, he was a ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum, he would naturally be one of those who were sent by the centurion who had "built a synagogue" to intercede for him when his servant was sick (Luke 7:3). In that case he would be no stranger to the healing power of Jesus, and his confidence would be fully explained.—His eagerness appears in his falling down at Jesus' feet and his entreating him *greatly*, "much"—i.e. earnestly and persistently.—*My little daughter lieth at the point of death.* The phrase *eschatos echei*, paraphrased *at the point of death*, is late Greek, and is said to have been condemned by the grammarians as bad Greek. Luke says that "he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying," not "lay a dying." Thus Mark and Luke agree perfectly in their statement; but, in Matthew, *Jairus* says, "My daughter just now died." The Greek verb is in the aorist, and "is even now dead" is not a good translation of it: that she has died already is distinctly affirmed. But the discrepancy is much less than one might think. Matthew tells the story compendiously; he omits all reference to the subsequent message from the house, in which the tidings of her death are brought; and he groups the two communications in one, making *Jairus* tell the whole in a single sentence. He gathers into this first request all the information about the case that was brought to Jesus before he reached the house. In Luke the request is only that he will come to the house; in Mark and Matthew the request is added that he will lay his hands upon her, with the full expression of confidence that that will be the means of restoration—according to the story as it is in Mark, of restoration from the verge of death; according to Matthew, of restoration from death itself. A beautiful example of confident resorting to the grace and power of the Saviour. It was not in vain; no refusal awaited such an appeal. The request was brought to the lake-shore, where Jesus arrived in the boat. What he was doing we are not told; perhaps he had not had time to begin; or *Jairus* may even have been among those who were "waiting for him" when he came.—The crowd heard the request, and *followed*, as *Jesus went with him*, up from the lakeside into the town. He let them follow for a part of the way, not turning them back until his own time had come. He was not helpless in the matter; he did escape from the crowd when he was ready to insist upon it. Both in Mark and in Luke the words that describe the pressure of the throng are very strong words; in Luke, "crowd to suffocation" well represents it. Not much rest for our Saviour after the overpowering weariness of the previous evening—only the sleep on the boat. The healing and the repulse

across the lake, a crowd waiting for him on his return, and now a call to go and give life to a dying child! But his compassion never failed, and he never considered himself. We have no reason to imagine that any consideration of himself ever held him back from a deed of love. He was the one perfectly unselfish Being, never false to this divine character. God is the unselfish One, and Christ is the manifestation of God." (*W. N. Clarke*).

### FACT QUESTIONS 5:21-24

261. Are we to understand that Jesus came back on the same day He delivered the two demoniacs? Did He use the same boat?
262. Please read Matt. 9:18, 19 and get the connection of the feast of Matthew. Just when did Jairus come to Jesus?
263. Why did Jairus fall at Jesus feet? There could have been at least two reasons; discover them.
264. Why ask Jesus to place His hands upon the girl?
265. If she was "made whole" wouldn't she live? Why the two expressions?
266. Why mention the press of the crowd?

### b. THE TIMID WOMAN'S TOUCH 5:25-34

#### TEXT 5:25-34

"And a woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, having heard the things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I touch but his garments, I shall be made whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her plague. And straightway Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power proceeding from him had gone forth, turned him about in the crowd, and said, Who touched my garments? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done to her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:25-34

230. What is "an issue of blood"?
231. Why mention the fact she had suffered from the physicians?
232. What had it cost this woman to find out she could not be helped?

233. What had she heard about Jesus?
234. Show the determination and faith of this woman.
235. What was it that healed the woman?
236. How can we explain the perception of Jesus in this case?—; was this true everytime He healed someone?
237. Did Jesus know who touched Him before He asked the question?
238. Hadn't others touched Him?; why no effect?
239. Did Jesus see the woman when He looked about the crowd?
240. Why did the woman make the confession she did?
241. Why refer to the woman as "daughter"?
242. How is the word "whole" or "saved" used in this connection?

## COMMENT

TIME—Autumn, A. D. 28. Probably in the afternoon of the same day that Christ healed the demoniac of Gadara, or on a day or two after.

PLACE.—Capernaum. At the house of Matthew; on the way to the house of Jairus; at the house of Jairus—all within or near the city. A comparison of the three accounts makes it probable that the Lord was at the house of Matthew, at a feast, when Jairus sent for him to save the life of his daughter, and that the woman was healed while he was on the way.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 9:18-26; Luke 8:41-56. See also Matt. 9:10-17, for intervening incidents.

OUTLINE.—1. The Woman's Faith. 2. The Woman Healed. 3. The Woman's Confession.

## ANALYSIS

## I. THE WOMAN'S FAITH. VS. 25-28.

1. The Suffering Woman. Mark 5:25, 26; Matt. 9:20; Luke 8:43.
2. She Touches Christ. Mark 5:27; Matt. 9:20; Luke 8:44.
3. Moved by Faith, Mark 5:28; Matt. 9:21.

## II. THE WOMAN HEALED. VS. 29-31.

1. Saved by Faith. Mark 5:29; Matt. 9:22; Luke 8:44.
2. The Secret Made Manifest. Mark 5:30; Luke 8:46.

## III. THE WOMAN'S CONFESSION. VS. 32-34.

1. The Woman at the Feet of Christ. Mark 5:33; Luke 8:47.
2. The Sympathy of Christ. Mark 5:34; Matt. 9:22; Luke 8:48.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Having been besought by the Gadarenes to leave their country, Christ passes over the lake again to the western side, to Capernaum, where he was immediately surrounded by the multitude, who had been waiting for him. Being invited by Matthew to a

feast at his house, he there held conversation with some Pharisees, and afterwards with some disciples of John (Matt. 9:10-17). While yet speaking with them, Jairus, a ruler of the Capernaum synagogue, came to him, praying him to heal his daughter. While on his way the woman with the issue of blood, timidly pressed through the throng, touched him and was healed.

#### INTRODUCTION

The following from Farrar's *Life of Christ* gives a bird's eye view of the whole incident and its meaning. Among the throng there was one who had not been attracted by curiosity to witness what would be done for the ruler of the synagogue. It was a woman who had suffered for twelve years from a distressing malady, which unfitted her for all of the relationships of life, and which was peculiarly afflicting, because, in the popular mind it was the direct result of sinful habits. In vain had she wasted her substance, and done fresh injury to her health in the direct effort to procure relief from many different physicians, and now, as a last desperate resource, she would try what could be gained without money and without price from the great Physician. Perhaps, in her ignorance, it was because she no longer had any reward to offer; perhaps because she was ashamed in her feminine modesty to reveal the malady from which she was suffering; but from whatever cause, she determined, as it were, to steal from him, unknown, the blessing for which she longed. And so, with the strength and pertinacity of despair, she struggled in that dense throng until she was near enough to touch him; and then, perhaps all the more violently from her extreme nervousness, she grasped the white fringe of his robe. It was probably the tassel that she touched, and then feeling instantly that she had gained her desire and was healed, she shrank back unnoticed into the throng. Unnoticed by others but not Christ, who stopped and asked, "Who touched me? \* \* \* She perceiving that she erred in trying to filch a blessing that would have been graciously bestowed, came forward fearing and trembling, and, flinging herself at his feet, told him all the truth. All her feminine shame and fear were forgotten in her desire to atone for her fault. Doubtless she dreaded his anger, for the law expressly ordained that the touch of one afflicted as she was, caused ceremonial uncleanness until the evening. But his touch had cleansed her, not hers polluted him.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE WOMAN'S FAITH.—25. *And a certain woman.* Like many of the New Testament characters this woman appears once and then disappears to be seen no more. Tradition has been busy weaving a fiction to supply the lack of facts. *Eusebius* records a tradition that she was a Gen-

tile, a resident of Cesarea Philippi (or Banias). It is reported that she caused to be erected in front of her residence a bronze monument in commemoration of her cure. It consisted of two statues, one representing herself in the attitude of supplication; the other, her Deliverer. Elsewhere she appears under the name Veronica, who, in the presence of Pilate, proclaimed the innocence of Jesus, and on the way to Golgotha wiped his face with her handkerchief. Dismissing these fables the suggestion of *Dr. W. Thompson* is more to the point: "I think the circumstances of the New Testament narrative render the inference almost certain that this account was meant for the consolation of those multitudes of stricken women in all ages who seem to be afflicted with sorrows in very unequal measure, compared with the stronger, and so generally, also, the more depraved sex." *An issue of blood*. A hemorrhage either from the bowels or the womb, probably the latter. The precise nature of the malady is of no importance. Instead of dwelling upon this point the evangelists direct attention to its long continuance and hopeless state. Perhaps the reason she turned to Jesus was that she had spent all and had nothing left to tempt the cupidity of the quack doctors. Had they not secured all she had, they would still have some way to excite her hopes. It is when our earthly resources are at an end, and human helps are powerless, that we are ready to go to the great Physician with the ailments of the soul. How sad her condition! Impoverished, sick, growing worse, helpless!

27. *When she had heard of Jesus*. She had never met him, did not it is probable live at Capernaum, but she had heard of the wonderful teacher, and of his divine power over disease. She had, it would appear, made herself acquainted with his character and conduct, with the facts of his career, and had thence come to believe that he was full of a divine and gracious energy. *Came in the press behind and touched his garment* (Matthew and Luke give it, "hem or border of his garment"); or rather, "approaching from behind, touched the tassel of his outer robe." The word which we translate by "the hem of the garment" denotes one of the four tassels or tufts of woollen cord attached to the four corners of the outer robe. The ordinary outer Jewish garment was a square or oblong piece of cloth (worn something like an Indian blanket, or with a hole in the center for the neck) with tassels at each corner, and a fringe along the two edges. A conspicuous deep blue thread was required to be in the tassels (Num. 15:38-40. Deut. 22:12). One of the four tassels hung over the shoulder at the back, and this was the one which the woman touched.

28. *For she said*. Matthew says, "within herself;" but it is possible that she may have murmured it again and again as she tried to get through the crowd.—*Schaff*. *If I may touch but his clothes*. She was timid, not doubtful. It is implied that she wished only to touch some part of his clothes,

no matter which. She may have looked for some magical influence, but twelve years in the hands of physicians in those days would certainly excuse such a thought. *If I but touch his clothes.* This woman's faith was real, notwithstanding many errors. *Trench* says; it would appear as though she imagined a certain magical influence and virtue diffused through his person and round about him, with which if she could put herself in relation, she would obtain that which she desired. And it is probable that she touched the hem of his garment, not merely as the extremest part most easily reached, but attributing to it a peculiar virtue. "The error of her view was overborne, and her weakness of apprehension of truth covered, by the strength of her faith. And this is a most encouraging miracle for us to recollect when we are disposed to think despondingly of the ignorance or superstition of much of the Christian world: that He who accepted this woman for her faith, even in error and weakness, may accept them.—*Alford.*"

II. THE WOMAN HEALED.—29. *She felt in her body that she was healed.* Literally, "knew (i.e., by feeling) in the body." The first clause tells of the cessation of the ordinary symptom of her disease: this points to a new sense of health. The cure was effected by an exercise of Jesus' will, which responds to the woman's faith in his miraculous power, not through the mere touching of the garment. The result was instantaneous and complete. Sharing the superstition, and imagining that Christ healed by a sort of magic, this woman touched it in hope of cure. An ordinary teacher would have rebuked her superstition; Christ used it to teach her better, but Christ, full of compassion, overlooking the errors of her ignorance, put forth his power and healed her. She had faith, even if not intelligent and clear. She believed that she was to *receive* something, a real blessing from Christ. This was that in her which was not in the crowd around her. They all traveled on in the highway together, talked about Christ, were interested in him in various ways, discussed his origin and nature, hoped that some good would come of him to the nation. But the woman believed that she should personally receive new life from him.

30. *Knowing . . . that virtue* (healing power) *had gone out of him.* Within that nature there was the inherent power to cure diseases, and a knowledge of all that was going on. He permitted power to go forth for the healing of the woman when her faith was properly exercised.—*George W. Clark.* His healing was an overflow, not an effort—a work so unconscious and so utterly passive that it seems like a miracle spilt over from the fullness of his divine life, rather than a miracle put forth.—*Gordon.* *Who touched my clothes?* Not because he was ignorant, for his searching glance showed to the woman that she was not hid from him (Luke 8:47), but to draw out her confession of her faith. For illustration

of similar questions, see Gen. 3:9; 4:9; 2 Kings 5:25; Luke; Luke 24:19. —*Abbott*, If she had been allowed to carry away her blessing in secret as she purposed, it would not have been at all the blessing to her, and to her whole after spiritual life, that it now was, when she was obliged by this repeated question of the Lord to own that she had come to seek, and had found health from him.—*Trench*, Christ demands that every soul that is healed should openly confess him. He will not permit that men claim him in secret who refuse to acknowledge him.

31. *And his disciples said*. "Peter and they that were with him" (Luke 8:45). It was much like Peter thus to speak, both for himself and as spokesman for the disciples. But Jesus affirmed that someone had touched him, implying a touch of intention and faith, and not a mere thoughtless and accidental pressing of the multitude.—*George W. Clark*.

III. THE WOMAN'S CONFESSION.—32. *He looked round to see her*. He required no one to point out the one who had pressed upon him the touch of faith, for it cannot be doubted that he was conscious all the time of what was in the woman's heart. His glance, therefore, at once singled her out in the crowd, and fell upon her with a searching glance that showed that all was known.

33. *But the woman fearing and trembling*. The timid woman felt that she had stolen a cure, was amazed at the sudden change wrought within her and knowing little of the tender compassion of Christ was filled with dread of the wonderful being who had wrought her cure. Perhaps, too, she expected to be rebuked for touching him without his permission; perhaps, also, the woman feared Christ's anger and his rebuke for polluting him by her touch; or, possibly, the indignation of others in the crowd, in which she had joined without in any way indicating her uncleanness. *Knowing what was done in her*. A sense of her cure brought her forward to testify to and for Christ. So, always, the sense of pardon and acceptance will lead the trembling believer to full confession and to an open testimony for Christ. It will embolden the timid to speak of the gospel, even before crowds. *Told him all the truth*. This, though it tried the modesty of the believing woman, was just what Christ wanted, her public testimony to the facts of her case—the disease with her abortive efforts at a cure, and the instantaneous and perfect relief which her touching the great Healer had brought her.

34. *And he said unto her, Daughter*. A term of affection, but, no doubt, as employed by our Savior, implying all that was spiritually distinctive in her character had been derived from himself. *Thy faith hath made thee whole*. Literally, *thy faith hath saved thee*. In the higher and in the lower sense, soul and body. Her faith, of course, had not been the efficient cause of her cure. Christ's power had been that. And behind his

power was his person, the real healer. But her faith was the condition on her part, that rendered it fitting on his part to put forth his curative efficiency. Hence it might be represented as having in a certain subordinate respect "made her whole."—*Morison*. The student should observe that hers was not a passive faith, but it led to action. A passive faith is a dead faith. The cure was effected by an exercise of Jesus' will, which responds to the woman's faith in his miraculous power, not through the mere touching of the garment. The result was instantaneous and complete.—*Meyer*.

### FACT QUESTIONS 5:25-34

261. What social as well as physical difficulty did this woman suffer because of her illness?
262. Wasn't the woman rather superstitious in her approach to healing? Explain why, and why excusable.
263. What has tradition said about this woman—give three traditional facts.
264. How is she a grand example for us today?
265. Discuss the portion of the robe of Christ touched by the woman.
266. To whom had she said "If I may touch but His clothes . . ." ? When?
267. Did Jesus accept the woman's error and weakness?—what did He accept?
268. How did the woman know she was healed—who told her? Was it complete, final and unchangeable? How does this compare with some present day healings?
269. Attempt an explanation of how Jesus could heal almost accidentally through someone else's desire and faith and yet be aware of it?
270. Who answered the question of Jesus?
271. What evidence do we have that Jesus knew what was in the heart of the woman even before she touched Him?
272. What filled the woman with fear and trembling?
273. Did Jesus want a public confession from this woman? Explain.
274. In what sense was the woman a daughter?
275. Please discuss the wonderful "wholeness" of this woman.

### c. THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER 5:35-43

#### TEXT 5:35-43

"While he yet spake, they come from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? But Jesus, not heeding the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of



the synagogue, Fear not, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue; and he beholdeth a tumult, and many weeping and wailing greatly. And when he was entered in, he saith unto them, Why make ye a tumult, and weep? the child is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But he, having put them all forth, taketh the father of the child and her mother and them that were with him, and goeth in where the child was. And taking the child by the hand, he saith unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise. And straightway the damsel rose up, and walked; for she was twelve years old. And they were amazed straightway with a great amazement. And he charged them much that no man should know this: and he commanded that something should be given her to eat."

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:35-43

243. What was the attitude of Jairus while Jesus stopped to speak to the woman who touched?
244. In what tone of voice do you imagine the message of the death of the daughter was given?
245. In what sense did they feel they were troubling Jesus?
246. What was Jairus to believe? Cf. vs. 36.
247. Why send the crowd away?
248. On what other occasions did Peter, James & John accompany Jesus?
249. What was the point in the demonstration of grief?
250. Did Jesus know some would misunderstand his words about sleeping? Why mention it?
251. In what sense was the girl asleep?
252. Upon what was the laugh of scorn based?
253. Try to understand the feelings of the mother as Jesus spoke to the girl. What were they?
254. Why mention that she was twelve years old?
255. Why ask that she be fed?

### COMMENT

TIME—Just a few minutes after the preceding incident of the timid woman.

PLACE—In the home of Jairus—probably in the city of Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 9:23-26; Luke 8:49-56.

OUTLINE—1. The Message of death, vs. 35, 36. 2. To the house of Jairus,

vs. 37, 38. 3. The place of death, vs. 39, 40. 4. The resurrection, vs. 41-43.

### ANALYSIS

- I. THE MESSAGE OF DEATH, vs. 35, 36.
  1. Given while Jesus yet spoke to the woman.
  2. No need to try further, your daughter is dead.
  3. Jesus heard man but believed God—this He wanted Jairus to do.
- II. TO THE HOUSE OF JAIRUS, vs. 37, 38.
  1. Just Peter, James and John were to accompany Him.
  2. A great tumult of weeping.
- III. THE PLACE OF DEATH, vs. 39, 40.
  1. No need to weep—she sleeps.
  2. Scorn—all are asked to leave except the parents.
- IV. THE RESURRECTION, vs. 41-43.
  1. He taketh her by the hand and calls her by name.—“arise”
  2. She immediately arose from the dead.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

“35. *“While he yet spake, there came . . . why troublest thou the Master any further?”* Hitherto He had not shown His power over death, and so there may be an excuse for the message, but surely there might be some consolation in the words of such a Master! His presence need not be out of place in the house of mourning. There is a curtness and abruptness in this message which savors of unbelief.

36. *“As soon as Jesus heard (or not heeding) the word . . . Be not afraid, only believe.”* Jesus, perceiving the mischief which the message might work, at once put in a comforting and hope-inspiring word, “Be not afraid, only believe.”

Belief is in one sense the only thing needful, because it is the one condition on which we can receive salvation and grace from the Lord. But what does the Lord here mean by “only believe?” Only believe what? Why, evidently, that “I have power after death, that My might reaches beyond the grave.” If the man believed that his daughter was dead, and the Lord bid him “fear not,” it must mean “fear not, but that I will give her to you again.” If He added to this “fear not” the words “only believe,” it must mean, “Believe that I am life to the dead. You may not know how, but let not your faith in Me fail, and you shall see.”

If it be said that this was too much to require of this ruler, we can only answer that the Lord thought otherwise. The man had known of the healing of the centurion’s servant, and of the woman with the issue, most

probably also of the casting out of the devils out of the Gergesenes; and we know not how many more mighty works performed in Capernaum, and around the borders of the lake, and now he was asked to go one step further in the same road, i.e., to believe that death was not the termination of the Lord's power.

37. "*And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John,*" etc. The three who were to be witnesses of His Transfiguration, and of His agony.

38. "*And he cometh to the house . . . wept and wailed greatly.*" From the parallel words in St. Matthew, "Saw the minstrels and the people making a noise," there is no doubt that these were hired mourners, such as are described in Jeremiah 9:17, 18: "Consider ye, and call for the mourning women that they may come; and send for cunning women, that they may come, and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters."

Dr. Thomson, in "*The Land and the Book*", says: "Every particular here alluded to is observed on funeral occasions at the present day. There are in every city and community women exceedingly cunning in this business. These are always sent for and kept in readiness. When a fresh company of sympathizers comes in, these women 'make haste' to take up a wailing, that the newly come may the more easily unite their tears with the mourners. They know the domestic history of every person, and immediately strike up an impromptu lamentation, in which they introduce the names of their relations who have recently died, touching some tender chord of every heart, and thus each weeps for his own dead."

39. "*And when he was come in, he saith . . . sleepeth.*" There can be little doubt but that the Saviour here employs the same way of speaking as when He says, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep;" and immediately afterwards He told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead." Some have said that the maiden had fallen into the death-like swoon which often precedes, and then passes into actual death; but those watching her must have been conscious that so far as the help of man was concerned, all was over, or they would not have sent the message to the ruler which they did.

40. "*And they laughed him to scorn.*" This ridicule would be stimulated by their interests, for their wages as mourners depended on the death having actually taken place.

"Them that were with him." Only Peter, James and John.

41, 42. "*And he took the damsel by the hand . . . Talitha cumi . . . astonishment.*" The very Syriac or Aramaic words which the Lord used

are here preserved by the Evangelist, doubtless from the recollection of St. Peter. The words properly translated are, "Girl, arise." *Quesnel's* remarks on this are well worth reproducing: "The sacred Humanity is, as it were, the hand and instrument of the Divinity, to which it is united in the person of the Word. It is from this Humanity that our life proceeds, because it was in this that Christ died and rose again, and completed His Sacrifice. He is man, since He takes the dead person by the hand; He is God since He commands her to live, and to arise, and is immediately obeyed."

43. "*And he charged them straitly . . . given her to eat.*" It is to be noticed that in the case of the Gergesene demoniac, after healing He bade him make known what God had done for Him, and He Himself compelled the woman, in the last miracle, to confess her healing before the crowd. How is it that here He forbids the parents to make it known? Very probably He foresees how in some cases the fame of some mighty deed might be an hindrance to, as in other cases it might forward His real work.

Or in each He might have had regard to the spiritual temperament of those whom He charged. *Canon Farrar* has a good remark: "If He added His customary warning, that they should not speak of what had happened, it was not evidently in the intention that the entire fact should remain unknown, for that would have been impossible, when all the circumstances had been witnessed by so many, but because those who had received from God's hand unbounded mercy are more likely to reverence that mercy with adoring gratitude, if it be kept like a hidden treasure in the inmost heart."

"*And commanded that something should be given her to eat.*" There must be some reason why this is specifically mentioned. It may have been to show the completeness of the recovery, in that one, a short time before so utterly prostrated and weak, should be able to take ordinary nourishment. It may be mentioned for a mystical significance, that those to whom God has given spiritual life, require spiritual food for its continuance." (M. F. Sadler) *FACT QUESTIONS* 5:35-43

276. Who do you suppose brought the news to Jairus of the death of his daughter?
277. Why ask the question, "Why dost thou trouble the teacher further"?
278. Please read Isa. 42:3 and show how it is fulfilled in the dealing of Jesus with Jairus.
279. Why send the crowd away?
280. Why take the three?

281. What do Matthew and Luke add to the description of the mourning?
282. Why did Jesus say the girl was only asleep?
283. Just what did Jesus say to the little girl?
284. How do we know for certainty the girl was dead?
285. Besides the physical restoration what was the purpose of this miracle? Was it accomplished?

## SUMMARY

4:34—5:43

The argument of this section is the same as that of the corresponding section in Matthew. (See Matt. viii. 1-ix. 35.) It proves the divine power of Jesus by showing that he could control by a word the winds and the waves of the sea; could direct and compel the movements of demons; could by his touch remove incurable diseases; and could instantly raise the dead. In other words, it proves the sufficiency of his power to save to the uttermost all who come to him, by proving that all the dangers to which we are exposed, whether from the forces of the physical world, the malice of evil spirits, the power of disease, or the hand of death, may be averted at his command, and that they will be in behalf of all who put themselves under his protection.

A very marked distinction is observable between Mark's treatment of this argument, and that adopted by Matthew. The latter presents an array of ten miracles without much elaboration of any one of them; the former selects four out of the ten, and devotes almost as much space to these as Matthew does to the ten. The one writer depends more on the number of miracles reported, and the other on the character of those selected and on the minuteness with which they are described. Each mode of treatment has its advantages, and the wisdom of God is displayed in giving us both.  
—*McGarvey*.

## 5. THE GREAT TEACHER AND THE TWELVE. 6:1-13

TEXT 6:1-13

"And he went out from thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his disciples follow him. And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him. And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is

not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching. And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits; and he charged them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse; but to go shod with sandals: and, said he, put not on two coats. And he said unto them, Wheresoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence. And whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."

### *THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:1-13*

256. "He went out from thence;"—from the house of Jairus or the city of Capernaum or the Lake of Galilee or what?
257. How shall we designate or name "His own country"?
258. Why enter the synagogue in Nazareth if He was once rejected? Cf. Luke 4:14-29.
259. Specify just what caused the astonishment of those who heard Jesus.
260. Was Jesus a carpenter or the son of a carpenter?
261. How many children did the mother of Jesus bear?
262. Show how unreasonable was the offence of those in Nazareth.
263. Why did Jesus quote the familiar proverb?
264. Why was Jesus unable to do any mighty works in Nazareth?
265. What caused Jesus to marvel? Why?
266. At what place did Jesus call His apostles and send them out?
267. Why send them out "two by two"?
268. Was the Holy Spirit involved in the authority exercised by the twelve? Prove your answer.
269. Why the instructions concerning the physical needs of the journey?
270. Why the instructions in vs. 10?
271. What was the message of the twelve?
272. Why anoint with oil?

*COMMENT*

**TIME.**—Autumn of A.D. 28, and early winter of A.D. 29. This second rejection of Christ at Nazareth (vs. 1-5) was soon after the healing of Jairus' daughter, autumn, A.D. 28. The sending out of the twelve followed very soon, and their labors extended through several weeks of the autumn of 28, and early winter of 29.

**PLACES.**—From Capernaum the Savior went to "his own country," to Nazareth, where he had been reared, not far from twenty miles to the southwest of Capernaum. Being there rejected a second time, he went into the villages "round about" in the vicinity of Nazareth, teaching. From one of these, what one is unknown, he sent the apostles out on their mission.

**PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.**—Jesus at Nazareth (vs. 1-5) with Matt. 13:54-58, and Luke 4:16-30. Sending out of the disciples (vs. 6-13) with Matt. 9:35-38; 10:1-42; 11:1; Luke 9:1-6.

**LESSON OUTLINE.**—1. Christ Rejected again at Nazareth. 2. The Apostles Sent Forth.

*ANALYSIS***I. CHRIST REJECTED AGAIN AT NAZARETH. VS. 1-6.**

1. Comes to Nazareth. Mark 6:1; Matt. 13:54; Luke 4:16.
2. Teaches on the Sabbath. Mark 6:2; Matt. 13:54; Luke 4:17.
3. The People Offended. Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:57; Luke 4:28.
4. A Prophet Not Honored at Home. Mark 6:4; Matt. 13:57; Luke 4:24.
5. Their Unbelief. Isa. 53:1; Mark 6:5,6; Matt. 13:58.

**II. THE APOSTLES SENT FORTH. VS. 7-13.**

1. The Twelve Called. Mark 3:14-19; Matt. 10:1-4; Luke 6:13-16.
2. The Twelve Sent Forth. Mark 6:7; Matt. 10:5-15; Luke 9:1-5.
3. The Twelve Charged. Mark 6:8-11; Matt. 10:5-15; Luke 9:1-5.
4. The Twelve on Their Mission. Mark 6:12, 13; Luke 9:6.

*INTRODUCTION*

After the healing of the woman, the Lord raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus, the account of which is given in Mark 5:35-43. Immediately after this, on his return home (Capernaum) from the house of Jairus, Christ heals two blind men and a dumb possessed, giving the Pharisees new occasion to say that he cast out devils, through Satan. Matthew alone (9:27-34) mentions these incidents. Jesus, then, accompanied

by his disciples, goes into Lower Galilee, again visiting Nazareth, where he is the second time rejected, the account given in Luke 4:14-29, being held to describe an earlier incident of the Lord's ministry. If that be correct, the Savior gave them a second opportunity to accept the gospel after his fame as a great Teacher had been established, and when they rejected him a second time he returned no more.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. CHRIST REJECTED AGAIN AT NAZARETH.—1. *And he went out from thence.* From Capernaum, where he made his home. *Came to his own country.* To Nazareth, the town where he had been reared from childhood and had lived until he was thirty years of age. Whether his mother still lived in Nazareth is a matter of conjecture. *Cook* says: "The works wrought in the interval (since his first rejection, nine months before, April, A.D. 28), the effects of his personal influence, the progress made in spite of all opposition, might be expected to work upon the minds of the Nazarenes so far as to prepare them for listening to him, notwithstanding their former rejection. Natural sympathy would draw him thither. His sisters, probably married to Nazarenes still dwelt there." *His disciples follow Him.* The twelve apostles are meant. They now constantly attended his footsteps. The presence of the Lord and his companions at Nazareth would, no doubt, produce a strong effect. His fame had extended over all Israel.

2. *When the sabbath day was come.* The seventh day of the week, Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, always observed by the Savior as a part of the Jewish law which remained in force until he died upon the cross. The language implies that one day or more elapsed between his arrival and his public teaching. It had been the practice of Jesus, from early childhood, to attend all the synagogue services; and he was still suffered to do so, in spite of the opposition he had excited. When Sabbath came, therefore, he went to morning worship. *He began to teach in the synagogue.* The synagogues of the Jews were the town and village churches, where they worshipped in their various quarters for ordinary occasions when they need not go up to Jerusalem. Most probably there would be only one in so small a place. But in all the Jewish synagogues there was a freedom of speech allowed; and there would be no objection, therefore, to one like Jesus, who had already achieved for himself a name as a remarkable rabbi, addressing the assembled congregation. *Many hearing, were astonished.* The usual effect upon those who heard the wonderful Teacher was produced. The sentiments which follow were probably expressed while he was teaching. A Jewish audience was not as decorous as the modern congregation in the United States or Great Britain. Some



uttered one thing and some another. *From whence hath this man these things?* The things, namely, that he was saying. The simple people marvelled at his facility and power of utterance, and at the weighty character of the thoughts that were conveyed by the utterances. *What wisdom is this?* They admitted the existence of great intellectual and rhetorical superiority; but they stood in doubt in reference to the origin of such superiority; was it from above, or from beneath? *Such mighty works.* As the evangelist notes in verse 5, that no mighty work had been done in Nazareth, these must refer to what had been reported there. They do not venture to deny his wisdom or his miracles, but, by wondering at them, really bear witness to them. This admission left them inexcusable, both intellectually and morally, for not receiving Jesus as the true Messiah.

3. *Is not this the carpenter?* This, and the Jewish custom which required every father to teach his son a trade, whatever pursuit in life he might eventually follow, indicate that Christ worked in his earlier years at the carpenter's trade with his father. St. Mark's is the only gospel which gives this name as applied to our Lord himself. In Matt. 13:55, it is said that they called him the "carpenter's son." There is no contradiction; some called him one, some the other name. The word translated *carpenter* here is of wider meaning than our word "carpenter." It includes all workers in wood, our cabinet-maker as well as carpenter. *Son of Mary.* Though neither of the evangelists speak of Joseph's death, yet it may be plainly inferred that Christ was now called "the son of Mary" (Mark 6:3), because of her being a widow. See Luke 8:19; John 2:12, and 19:25-27. *Brother of James, etc., . . . sisters here with us.* These four were either (1) own brothers and sisters of Jesus, children of Joseph and Mary; or (2) children of Joseph by a former marriage; or, (3) cousins (brothers taken in the wider sense of near relatives), children of Clopas and Mary, sister of Mary the mother of Jesus (John 19:25, with Mark 15:40). The weight of Protestant authority, on the whole, favors the idea that they were own brothers of Jesus. For a discussion of this subject, see my *Commentary on John*, pp. 48, 49. Of the four brethren here named, James came to have authority hardly, if any, less than that of an apostle, as the leading figure in the church at Jerusalem. He was called by early writers "James the Just," and wrote the Epistle of James. He must not be confounded with the apostle James, who was the brother of John. Of Joses and Simon nothing more is known. Judas was probably the author of the Epistle of Jude. *They were offended.* That is, they stumbled, and fell into error. That Jesus was a carpenter, had grown up in their midst, and that they knew all about his family, proved to them that he could not be the Messiah, whom they expected to be a temporal prince surrounded with earthly splendor. His pure life for thirty years in their

midst, his surpassing wisdom and mighty works counted nothing with them.

4. *A prophet is not without honor.* This was a common proverb that Christ applied to his case, showing that he was rejected on these natural principles, not because they had not evidence in his works, but because they had prejudice against his lowly origin among men. The proverb is founded on human experience. There is a kind of natural jealousy among the companions and neighbors of a man who rises from their level until he is far above them.

5. *And he could there do no mighty work.* His power was not changed. His miracles were not feats of magic, but required two conditions to call them forth—an opportunity, and a sufficient moral purpose. "Unbelief" prevented both. The unbelieving would not come for healing; to heal such would be contrary to his purpose in the miracles, the demonstration of his spiritual power. Hence he "could not." When men do not believe, they do not give him the opportunity to save them, and to save the unbelieving is contrary to his purpose, and impossible.—*Schaff.* He "could not," not from a lack of power, but because the conditions that he always required before he would exercise his power were absent. Those who expect his blessing must come for it in faith.

6. *He marvelled.* Our Lord does not marvel at other human things generally; but he does marvel, on the one hand, at faith, when, as in the case of the centurion, it overcomes in its grandeur all human hindrances, and, on the other, all unbelief, when it can, in the face of numerous divine manifestations, harden itself into a willful rejection on himself. See Matt. 8:10. *And he went.* He now seems to have left Nazareth, never to return to it, or preach in its synagogue, or revisit the home where he had so long toiled as the village carpenter. *Went round about the villages.* On the evening of the day of his rejection at Nazareth, or more probably on the morrow, our Lord appears to have commenced a short circuit in Galilee, in the direction of Capernaum.

II. THE APOSTLES SENT FORTH.—7. *And he called unto him the twelve.* The apostles. After long wanderings and continuous trials, the twelve were now, in their Master's opinion, in a measure prepared to work by themselves in spreading the new kingdom. Matthew gives a touching reason for the mission of the twelve. It was because he pitied the multitude, who were like harassed panting sheep without a shepherd, and like a harvest left unreaped for want of laborers (Matt. 9:36-38). Another reason was that the Master wished to train them for their great work under his direction. *Two by two.* They were sent out in pairs that they might counsel, help and encourage one another, an example that might still be followed with profit. *Gave them power over unclean spirits.* Their