



# THE GOSPEL of MARK



# *suffering* SERVANT

Evangel Temple (January 2024)

# Introduction

## Introduction

Many biblical scholars have affectionately referred to the Gospel of Mark as Peter's Gospel. Well established church tradition, closely linked Mark with the Apostle Peter. Mark was first introduced in the Acts of the Apostles and was also a colossal failure, who divided the ministry of Paul and Barnabas. John Mark, as he was commonly called at the time, deserted his brothers, and quit, during a long and difficult missionary journey. It took Paul many years to completely forgive Mark for his initial failure. On the other hand, Barnabas immediately gave him another opportunity and encouraged the young John Mark to press on, to discover his calling in the Kingdom.

*<sup>36</sup> After some time Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing." <sup>37</sup> Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. <sup>38</sup> But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work. <sup>39</sup> Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus. <sup>40</sup> Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord's gracious care. (Acts 15)*



Eventually, Mark teamed up with Peter and the two shared a strong bond of friendship and discipleship. Peter was extremely fond of Mark and spoke affectionately of him many times. He also referred to Mark as his spiritual son, in the same way Paul referred to Timothy.

*<sup>13</sup> Your sister church here in Babylon sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark. <sup>14</sup> Greet each other with a kiss of love. (1 Peter 5)*

It's understandable why Peter and Mark would share such a close father-son relationship. They were both failures at the beginning of their perspective ministries. Peter denied ever knowing Christ and Mark quit on his missionary debut. Both Peter and Mark shared a similar story of redemption and restoration, that reinforced their close emotional bond. In Mark's Gospel, we can feel the eyewitness presence of Peter as he closely followed Yahshua from one event to another in a hectic, three-year, roller-coaster ride. His apostolic fingerprints are all over Mark's reflections.

# Introduction

Mark's Gospel throbs with life and bristles with vivid details. We see with Peter's eyes and catch almost the very look and gesture of Jesus as he moved among men in his work of healing men's bodies and saving men's souls<sup>1</sup>

## The Gentile Gospel



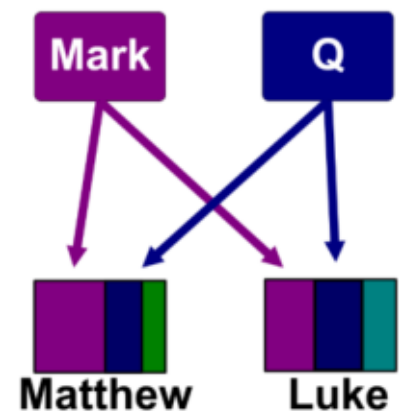
Most biblical scholars contend that the Gospel of Mark was the first written account of Christ's ministry, from which Luke and Matthew both used as their foundational resource. Roman culture was very practical and did not enjoy wasting precious time. The Roman audience wanted the author to get to the point without excessive detail.

*For this reason, the Gospel of Mark is a "busy" book. In*

*this Gospel, Jesus seems the busiest, quickly moving from one event to another. One of the key words in the Gospel is **immediately**, occurring more than 40 times in Mark. We see Jesus as a servant — busy meeting needs and busy being God's Messiah.<sup>2</sup>*

Mark's account was always moving and did not take time to record long dialogues in the tradition of the Gospel of John. He was all about action and exclusively focused on what Yahshua did. He communicated with as few words as possible and quickly moved from one event to another. An additional indication that the Gospel of Mark was written for a Roman audience was revealed in his use of many Latin words, which was the official language of the Roman Empire. While other Gospel writers employed a more polished version of classical Greek, Mark was somewhat crude in his writing style and took some time to explain

Two-source Hypothesis



<sup>1</sup> Robertson, Archibald T. "The Gospel According to Mark: Word Pictures of the New Testament" Volume I (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930)

<sup>2</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 1.

# PREPARE THE WAY

Jewish rituals and customs, that a Hebrew audience would have obviously understood.

*When Bible translators go to a people who have never had the Scriptures in their own language, they usually begin by translating the Gospel of Mark. Mark is the most translated book in the entire world. One reason is that it is the shortest Gospel, but the other reason is that this Gospel was written for people unfamiliar with first century Judaism. Mark wrote it for the Romans.<sup>3</sup>*

## John the Baptist Prepares the Way



### **1 This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.**

The Gospel is the history of Yahshua. The ancient Greek word for Gospel means "good news". The "good news" is not a system of morality, but the story of a man, who is the central focus of the entire creation. For Mark, the true glory of Yahweh was not found in His attributes, but in His inconceivable grace. God's crowning glory was the humility of Christ, demonstrated by His sacrificial death on the cross.

The major theme of Mark's Gospel focused on the suffering servant. The servanthood of Yahweh was a remarkable blend of strength and submission, that achieved glorious victory through His apparent defeat. The Messiah of Mark's Gospel grasped the highest honor in the universe, through His humble journey downwards, as He carried His cross towards death. Upward mobility in the Kingdom of God, is achieved by radically embracing downward mobility in this life.

GOOD NEWS OF THE  
**KINGDOM**

<sup>3</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 1.



# The Gospel of Mark



<sup>5</sup> You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. <sup>6</sup> Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. <sup>7</sup> Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, <sup>8</sup> he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. (Philippians 2)

This is why Mark's Gospel began with the testimony of another suffering and despised servant of Yahweh. He was a wilderness preacher called John the Baptist who aggressively announced the coming of the Kingdom of God.

**It began <sup>2</sup> just as the prophet Isaiah had written:**

For approximately 300 years, Yahweh was silent, and the prophetic voice was absent in Israel. Suddenly, the prophetic voice reemerged in the wilderness with the power and passion of Elijah. Mark did not dedicate any time to describe a birth narrative for Yahshua. His main point was that the Messiah had finally arrived. As predicted in the writing of Isaiah, the messenger shouting in the wilderness foretold of His imminent revelation.

**"Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way."**

Roman society was very skilled in building roads. To build a magnificent Roman road, the architect needed to fill in valleys, cut down trees and sometimes remove mountains. The idea of making the way communicated the soon arrival of the Messiah and the preparation of the people for His coming. The hearts of the Israelite people needed to be prepared for their Messiah. The twisted parts of the heart needed to be **straightened**, holes needed to be **filled in**, and obstacles needed to be **"knocked down"** and **"destroyed"**.

*We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. <sup>5</sup> We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10)*



# REPENT OR PERISH

**<sup>3</sup> He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the LORD's (YHWH) coming! Clear the road for him!'"**

Mark's announcement of the Messiah's arrival was clearly confirmed by the prophetic Word of God. He quoted the prophet Isaiah as he established the fact that Yahshua was the promised Messiah. He was also the physical incarnation of Yahweh Almighty.

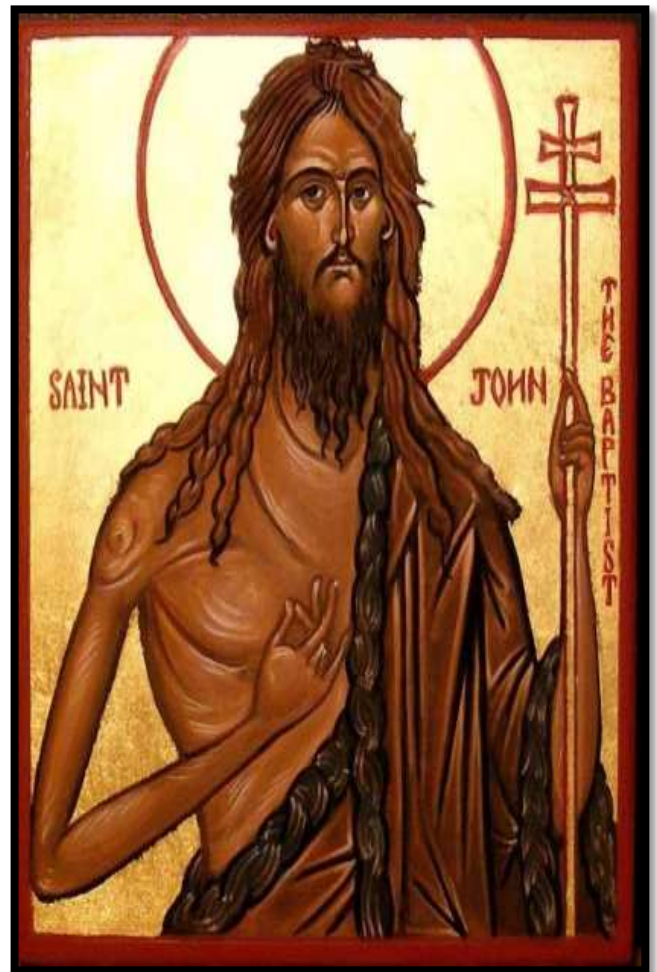
**<sup>3</sup> Listen! It's the voice of someone shouting, "Clear the way through the wilderness for the Lord! Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God!"**

**<sup>4</sup> Fill in the valleys, and level the mountains and hills. Straighten the curves, and smooth out the rough places.**

**<sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The Lord has spoken!" (Isaiah 40)**

**<sup>4</sup> This messenger was John the Baptist.**

The messenger Yahweh sent to declare the coming of the Messiah was John. He was the one Israel was waiting for to announce the arrival of the Son of David, who would sit on the throne of Israel forever. Something amazing was just about to happen. Everything will change with the coming of the Christ. The greatest moment in human history, was just about to take place!



**<sup>3</sup> "Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. (Malachi 3)**

**He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven.**

# water baptism?

*Baptism simply means to "immerse or overwhelm." John didn't sprinkle when he came baptizing. As was the custom in some other Jewish ceremonial washings, John completely immersed those he baptized.<sup>4</sup>*

The image of baptism was already established in Jewish culture as a symbol of death and rebirth. A Gentile sinner was baptized and then reemerged from the water as one who accepted the Law of Moses.



*Baptism was already practiced in the Jewish community in the form of ceremonial immersions but typically it was only among Gentiles who wished to become Jews. For a Jew in John's day to submit to baptism was essentially to say, "I confess that I am as far away from God as a Gentile and I need to get right with Him." This was a real work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup>*

Under the Old Covenant, the Jewish people wrongfully assumed they could be made righteous by keeping the Law of Moses. This was not the message of the Baptist. He preached the baptism of repentance as one prepared for the coming of the Messiah. Baptism represented a change of heart in the Jewish people as they waited for the manifestation of their promised Messiah. With the coming of the Christ, the Jewish people would no longer place their faith in rituals, rules, or regulations, but they would place their faith exclusively in the Messiah. John preached a message which directed the faithful away from the shallow and corrupt Temple-based system of legalism. He redirected them towards a personal, intimate relationship with Yahweh Himself, through the coming of the Christ.



<sup>4</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 1.

# WHAT IS BAPTISM?

## THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

### The meaning of Baptism

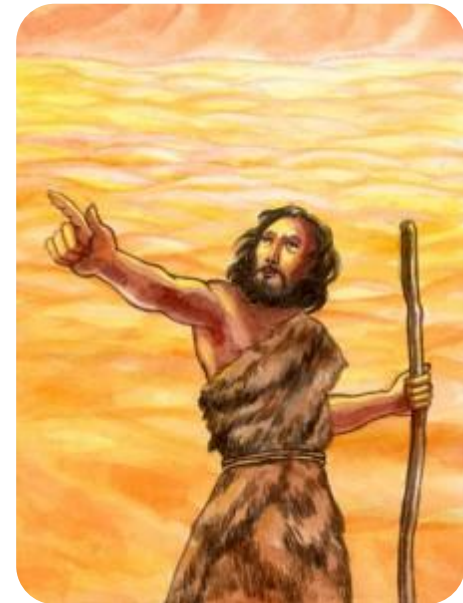
The meaning of the word "baptism" was connected to immersion in water. 500 years before Christ, the term was used to describe the process of dyeing clothing in colored water. A fabric entered into the water with one color and later emerged with another color. The dyer was called the "Baptist" because he changed the appearance and thus the identity of the clothing. Likewise,

John's baptism pointed to the coming of the New Creation. It was an outward symbol of an inward transformation. Like the fabric, believers are baptized into the death of Christ on the way down and resurrected into the life of Christ on the way up. We go into the water as sinners separated from God and re-emerge as Children of God, united in Christ.

**<sup>5</sup> All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.**

The Jordan river was a 20 mile walk from the city of Jerusalem. The people came to hear an unrecognized and unqualified street preacher, speaking about the forgiveness of sins, apart from the sacrificial system prescribed by the Mosaic Law. So many people came to John for baptism that it disrupted the business of the Temple, to the point where the Jewish religious leaders had to make a 20-mile trip out to the Jordan to see what was going on for themselves.

The preaching style of John was so compelling that many saw their need to repent of their sinful lifestyle and immediately prepare for the arrival of the Messiah. John's message was not only focused on their spiritual problems. He did not preach "**you are just a dirty sinner**"! This is the function of man-made religion. It has the power to condemn, but no ability to save a sinner. John, instead, focused on the solution. The Messiah was coming to forever solve the sin problem and Israel needed to be ready for His imminent arrival.



# WHAT IS BAPTISM?



**<sup>6</sup> His clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey.**

John was extremely offensive to the established Jewish religious system. He was not formally educated, although he was from a priestly family. He reminded the people of the Prophet Elijah, who was also a Nazarite and lived in the wilderness wearing a hairy garment supported by a leather belt. Like Elijah, John fearlessly spoke out against the corruption of the political and religious leaders, causing the religious institution to violently oppose him and the political establishment to eventually murder him.

In his message, style and personality, John embodied the “spirit” of Elijah. His boldness of speech and the bravery in which he attacked the established power structures, reminded the people of Elijah’s stance against the corrupt political leadership of King Ahab and the septic spiritual influence of Jezebel. For John, the leadership of King Herod represented the lawlessness of Ahab and the scheming, self serving, nature of Herod’s wife Herodias, was a perfect illustration of the wicked Queen Jezebel.

**<sup>7</sup> John announced: “Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not even worthy to stoop down like a slave and untie the straps of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!”**

John announced that he was an inferior messenger, declaring that his baptism was inferior to the one who would soon come. The promised Messiah would come with a superior message and an exponentially greater baptism. To emphasize His greatness, John indicated that He would not even be worthy to be the slave of the coming King.

According to Jewish culture, a Rabbi could ask anything of his students, except to take off his sandals. This was seen as being too much to ask of anyone. John told the crowd that the one who was about to be revealed was much greater than anyone who ever came before Him. The Rabbi that John was expecting was the promised Messiah, the Son of God.

**I AM NOT WORTHY TO UNTIE HIS SANDAL STRAP**



**...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**



# THE TEMPTATION

## The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus

<sup>9</sup> One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River.

### Why was Yahshua baptized?

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NOTE...

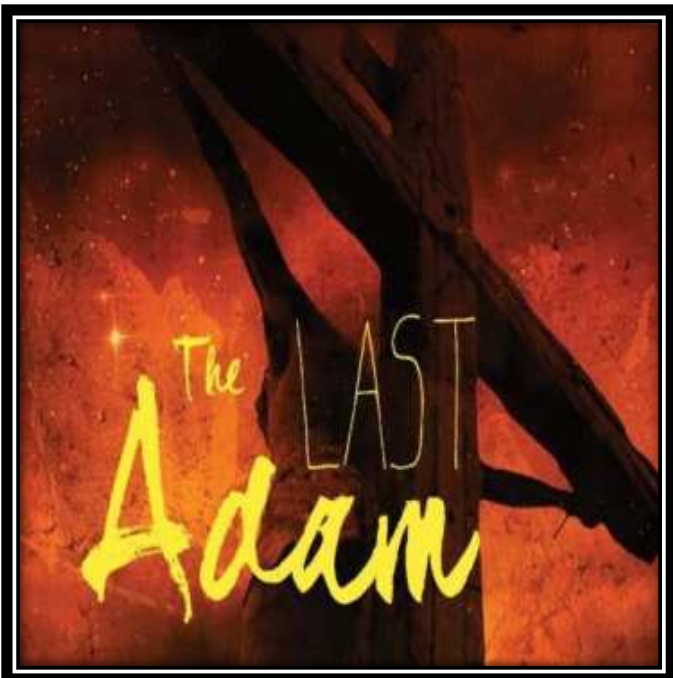
Just as sinners are baptized into Christ, Christ was baptized into sinners. He identified with sinful humanity but remained sinless is entire life. Yahweh became a man subject to the trials and struggles of ordinary life.

<sup>4</sup> But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. <sup>5</sup> God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. (Galatians 4)

He became like a mere human to represent us in spiritual warfare in place of the first Adam. Christ came as the second Adam. He would completely pass the test Adam failed and redeem humanity back to Himself by sacrificially offering His human body on the cross, in place of all who believe in Him.

<sup>45</sup> The Scriptures tell us, "The first man, Adam, became a living person." But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. <sup>46</sup> What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. <sup>47</sup> Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. (1 Corinthians 15)

Yahshua was not baptized because He needed cleansing from His own personal sin; He was sinless and needed no redemption. Instead, He was baptized in keeping with His entire mission on earth, to identify with common sinners, so He could take the place of transgressors on the cross. Christ came to do the will of the Father and to present Himself as the new Adam, who would succeed where the first Adam failed.





**10 As Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove.**

In Jewish literature, there was a long-established image of the Spirit of Yahweh being represented by a dove. First appearing in the creation narrative in Genesis, the Spirit is pictured hovering like a dove,

over the surface of the water which represented darkness and chaos. In Genesis, the coming of the Spirit brought order to disorder and light into darkness. Moreover, the Spirit which rested on Yahshua showed that He and the Spirit are one, just as the Father and Son are one.


It's important to understand the theological symbolism connected to the illustration of the dove. The Holy Spirit is far from a mere bird. Nevertheless, the gentle nature of a dove was precisely reflected by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. With all the power of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit came in the most non-threatening way, to authentically communicate the loving nature of Yah the Father.

**11 And a voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy."**

Mark's Gospel account moved very quickly. When Yahshua was revealed to John as the Messiah of Israel, the promised Lamb of God, He was immediately baptized. After resurrecting Yahshua from the water, the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and permanently rested upon Him. To further authenticate the identity of the Messiah, Yah the Father spoke in an audible voice, to confirm the assumption that Yahshua was truly the Son of Yah. This is one of the familiar passages of the New Testament that simultaneously showed the Trinity in action. Yah the Son is baptized, Yah the Father spoke from heaven, and Yah the Holy Spirit descended like a dove.

The term "dearly loved" or "beloved Son" is the Greek term *agapetos*. In its singular form, the word means "one and only" and was especially used to describe an only child who does not share the love of their parents with anyone else. The connection was similarly made to Abraham and his one and only son Isaac.





I believe in one Lord  
Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten  
Son of God,

In a class by Himself

PLEASE  
NOTE...

<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him." <sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus with them. (Mark 9)

The second time this exact Greek word *agapetos* was used was during the transfiguration. When the voice came from the Father to confirm the identity of the Son, Moses and Elijah immediately disappeared and Yahshua stood alone, as the only begotten Son of Yah.

<sup>35</sup> Then a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him." <sup>36</sup> When the voice finished, Jesus was there alone. They didn't tell anyone at that time what they had seen. (Luke 9)

This concept was theologically important to the early church and firmly established in the Nicene Creed. The concept of "begotten" implied that the Son was not a creation of God like Adam, but had always shared the same eternal nature of Yahweh. Yahshua was the eternally pre-existent Son who was sent from heaven into the world by the Father. He was not only **with** God, but **was** Almighty God, from the very beginning. He willingly decided to die for the sins of the world before the world was even created.

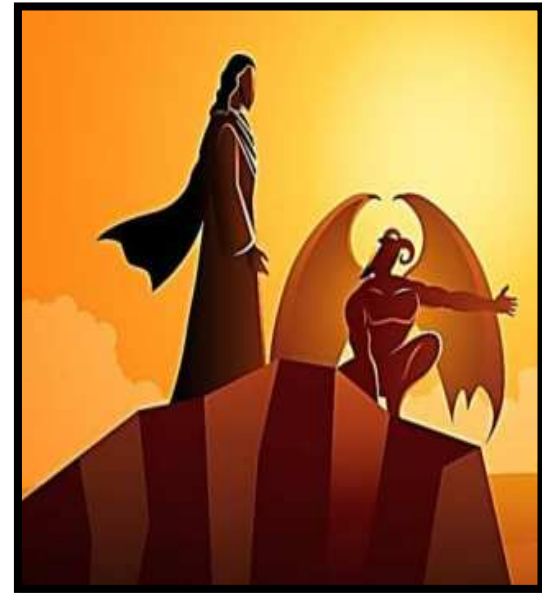
<sup>8</sup> And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered before the world was made. (Revelation 13)



**IMMEDIATELY**  
The Gospel  
of Mark

**12 The Spirit then compelled Jesus to go into the wilderness, <sup>13</sup> where he was tempted by Satan for forty days.**

Immediately, the Spirit compelled Yahshua into the wilderness. The word Mark used for **compelled** has an interesting meaning. Similar to the word **drove**, Mark asserted that the Spirit had an urgency in the mission of the Messiah. Ironically, Mark used this exact same word when Yahshua drove out demons by the power of the Spirit. Many scholars see an intentional connection between Yahshua's journey into the wilderness and the upcoming spiritual warfare which loomed on the horizon.



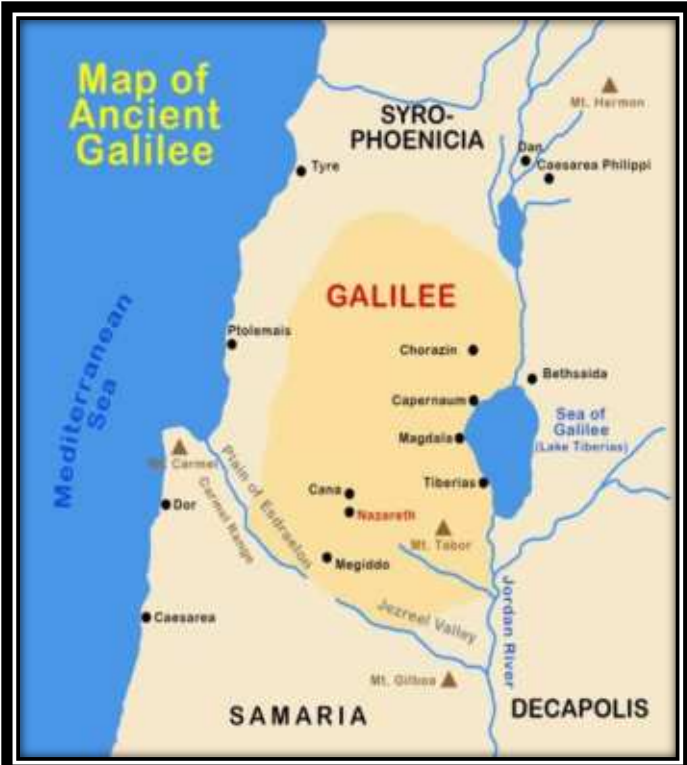
After being identified with sinners in His baptism, now Yahshua must also be subjected to the temptations common to all humanity. For 40-days, Yahshua was subjected to constant spiritual warfare. While Matthew and Luke specifically described the nature of the 3 temptations, Mark does not expand on what specifically happened in the wilderness. For Mark, the emphasis was placed on spiritual warfare and Yahshua's ability to defeat Satan on an open battlefield.

As a result of defeating the Devil, the new Joshua (Yahshua) would emerge from the wilderness to lead all people into the Promised Land of "salvation". During His time in the wilderness, He completely defeated the devil in spiritual combat. Yahshua completed in 40 days, what took Israel 40 years to accomplish in their own wilderness journey.

**He was out among the wild animals, and angels took care of him.**

Some biblical scholars see a connection between the wild animals and the demonic forces who tormented Yahshua during His time of testing. Others see the animals as symbols of Yahshua expressing His authority since they were unable to harm Him. Like Daniel in the lion's den, even the wild beasts are subject to the authority of Yahweh. Furthermore, the appearance of the angels who ministered to Christ after His temptation, presented Yahshua as the Lord of Creation and the angels as His faithful servants.





**14 Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News.**

Mark jumped forward approximately 1 year to mention the imprisonment of John the Baptist. John publicly opposed King Herod, who divorced his legal wife. Herod then lawlessly married his brother's wife Herodias.

After His baptism, Yahshua began ministering primarily in the region of Galilee where He announced the coming of the Kingdom of God with signs and wonders following His preaching. *Galilee was not a*

*small backwater region. According to the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, Galilee was an area of about 60 by 30 miles and had 204 villages, with none less than 15,000 people. This means there were more than 3 million people in the extended region.*<sup>6</sup>

**15 "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced.**

John preached about the coming of the Messiah. Yahshua however, preached about the arrival of the Kingdom. The time had finally come, and the people needed to respond immediately or they would miss their opportunity.

*There are two ancient Greek words that can be translated time. One is chronos, meaning simple chronological time. The other is kairos, meaning "the strategic opportunity, the decisive time." Jesus used this second word when He said, "the time is fulfilled." His idea was, "The strategic time for the kingdom of God is now. Now is your time of opportunity. Don't let it pass you by."*<sup>7</sup>

MARK 1:15



<sup>6</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 1.

<sup>7</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 1.

# Discussion



- (1) For Mark, God's crowning glory was the humility of Christ and His sacrificial death on the cross. How was the brutal suffering of Christ connected to the glory He received from the Father?
- (2) Mark constantly compared our human desire for *upward mobility* in this life, with Christ's *downward* journey to the cross. What does this mean to you personally as a follower of Christ? Should we all expect suffering and self-denial to be part of our Christian experience as well?
- (3) John the Baptist was a social outcast, who was also the chosen messenger who announced the coming of the Davidic Kingdom. How and why did John completely offend the religious expectations of the Jewish leaders?
- (4) True repentance means *a change of thinking resulting in a change of lifestyle*. Repentance is far more than moral reformation, but a complete overhaul of our entire way of thinking. What does this kind of repentance mean to you personally?



# The Kingdom of God Is Now At Hand

The Kingdom of God was "here" because the King had finally arrived. The Kingdom is the dominion of the King. The Kingdom came with Yahshua, and it was near to the people of Israel. How could the Kingdom be "here" and "near" at the same time? To most people it was "near" because they were hearing the message of salvation. To a select few, it was really "here" because they believed the message of the Messiah and changed their way of thinking. Right believing always leads to right thinking. The ancient Greek word that Mark used for believing *pisteuo*, meant much more than "knowledge" or "agreement in the mind". To believe, spoke of an intimate relationship based on trust and dependence.

## The Kingdom is now

PLEASE  
NOTE...

The image of the coming Kingdom that Mark presented was connected to the military invasion of a foreign territory. At one time, the entire creation was subjected to the will of Yahweh, but Adam willingly gave Satan, his God given authority. With the coming of the Messiah, the earth was officially invaded with the manifest presence of Yahweh. Yahshua was once again walking on the earth similar to the way He walked with Adam in the

Garden of Eden. The King and the Kingdom must come at the exact same time. Nevertheless, the invasion of the Kingdom of God was met with vicious opposition from the established kingdom of darkness. Yahshua, therefore, aggressively engaged the existing demonic powers in spiritual warfare. He cast out demons, healed the sick, and preached the good news of salvation to all who would believe.

Casting  
out  
demons





# "Come, Follow Me"

The backdrop of spiritual warfare is essential to understanding why Mark pointed out deliverance ministry, as the primary sign that the Kingdom of God had really come. There were many examples of preaching repentance and healing the sick in the Old Testament, but there was not one biblical example of a successful exorcism outlined in Scripture until the coming of Yahshua. The authority to cast out demons was the supernatural ability that set Yahshua apart from all other Hebrew prophets and dramatically pointed to the fact that the Christ had come, because Yahshua is Yahweh.

## The First Disciples

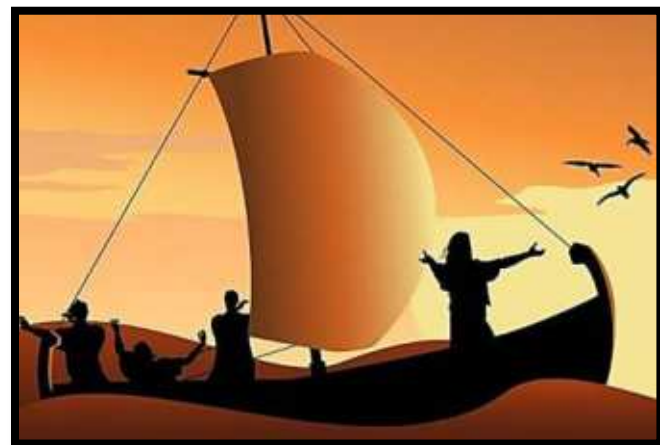
Come  
Follow  
Me



**<sup>16</sup> One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living.**

Mark highlighted the fact that Yahshua called ordinary hardworking men to follow Him. He personally selected His own disciples with careful consideration. He did not look for educated or gifted individuals, but normal people like everyone else. Like King David, Yahshua looked for men who were willing to be discipled, and thus, they were transformed as they sat under His ministry. Like King David, Yahshua discipled ordinary men and transformed them into mighty men of God.

*Surely the good qualities of successful fishermen would make for success in the difficult ministry of winning lost souls: courage, the ability to work together, patience, energy, stamina, faith, and tenacity. Professional fishermen simply could not afford to be quitters or complainers!<sup>8</sup>*



<sup>8</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)

# "Come, Follow Me"

**<sup>17</sup> Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" <sup>18</sup> And they left their nets at once and followed him.**

This meeting with Simon and Andrew was their initial call to discipleship, but not to faith. It's obvious that they interacted with Yahshua before they willingly left everything and followed Him to their death. Yahshua found them doing something of temporary significance and told them He would teach them to do something of eternal consequence. Fishing for food is here today and gone tomorrow, but fishing for eternal souls has eternal rewards that will last forever.

The concept of following the Messiah was much more than a theological system of right believing. It involved immediate and decisive action. Something was instantaneously demanded of the fishermen, and they needed to respond in the moment or be left behind. A Rabbi-disciple relationship was being offered to these humble fishermen and they needed to follow their teacher wherever He went. They could not just believe and remain as fishermen. To believe, demanded leaving their past life behind and following their Master to learn a new trade.

**<sup>19</sup> A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. <sup>20</sup> He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.**

The first followers of Christ were not just poor, low-class fishermen, they had established fishing businesses with employees and servants. They were relatively successful in their chosen profession and immediately walked away from a substantial investment, to become the disciples of an unknown Rabbi from Nazareth.



Mark precisely notes that the disciples always responded immediately to the invitation of Christ without hesitation. Leaving the family business, and walking away from their fathers, carried a shocking cultural message to the original audience.

It was considered disrespectful in Jewish culture to do anything without the blessing of your physical father. Furthermore, to leave your family business to follow an unknown Rabbi was an extremely irresponsible act, because your commitment to provide for your family always came first and foremost.

### **Jesus Casts Out an Evil Spirit**

**21 Jesus and his companions went to the town of Capernaum. When the Sabbath day came, he went into the synagogue and began to teach.**

Mark was not overly focused on words but actions. He was keenly focused on what Yahshua did. At this point in His ministry, Yahshua was no longer living in Nazareth but had set up His ministry headquarters in Capernaum and was still primarily speaking only to the Jewish people. He had a traveling ministry and would go from village to village, from one synagogue to another, powerfully announcing the Gospel of the Kingdom and doing great miracles. Yahshua's reputation as a traveling Rabbi was obviously growing because He was always invited to teach on the Sabbath day wherever He went.

**22 The people were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike the teachers of religious law.**

The Rabbinic tradition was famous for quoting other famous Rabbis as they commented on the Scripture. A more inexperienced Rabbi gained his authority from quoting another prominent, more established teacher, to validate their doctrines. Christ did not teach like anyone else. He did not talk about God. He talked as if **He was God**. He had no need to quote anyone but spoke in the first person and said, "**this is what I say**".

**23 Suddenly, a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out,**

The authority of a Jewish Rabbi depended on meticulously following the instructions of Moses and keeping the endless, man-made traditions of their complicated culture. Yahshua did not need to depend on the Law of Moses or the established religious traditions in His teaching style, because He superseded both and He knew it. Moreover, His authority to command demons placed Him in a class by Himself. No teacher in the history of Israel ever demonstrated the authority to cast out demons on command. This was absolutely astonishing to His original audience.



Possessed is a loaded term which made a poor use of the Greek word, *daimonizomai*. The Greek means

“to have a demon”, in the same way a house can have a mouse. Similarly, the mouse does not control the house, but the influence and power of the mouse will be increased by inviting an infestation of mice to occupy the space. A single demon could likely go unnoticed for years, but an infestation of many demons will obviously and drastically affect the behaviour and lifestyle of the host.

● **Daimonizomai** = demonize

● **Essential meaning: “to subject to demonic influence”**

The individual in Mark’s account was not a sinful heathen living in a graveyard. He was a moral, law-abiding Jew, who attended synagogue to observe the Sabbath. He likely did not even know he had a demon living in his body until the preaching of Yahshua forced the mouse out of the house.



**24 “Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”**



Building on the amazing authority of Christ, Mark described a demonic manifestation to prove his point. The powerless teaching of the contemporary Rabbis was incapable of disturbing demons. On the other hand, the power of Yahshua’s words pierced the human heart and drove demons out into the open. The message of the coming Kingdom terrified the demons living in the religious man and forced them to manifest. They could not resist the power of His teaching and the anointing of the Spirit.

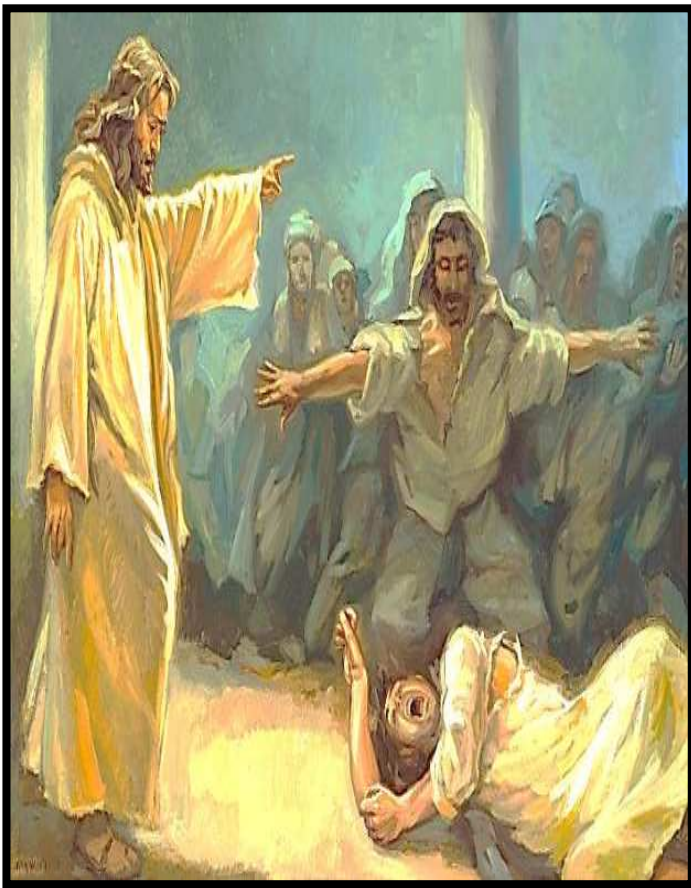
It’s significant that the demons know who Yahshua is and what His mission will accomplish. He is the Son of God who came to destroy their kingdom. The fact that Mark specifically selected an exorcism story as the first demonstration of Christ’s power, perhaps indicates that he believed exorcisms to be the greatest sign of Yahshua’s authority.

The fact that the demons speak in the plural, referring to themselves as “us” communicates that there were many different spirits speaking as one. Demons were known to the ancient Jewish people, and they had developed many unsuccessful methods to drive them out. However, with a single authoritative command, Yahshua spoke, and the demons obeyed.

**25 But Jesus reprimanded him. “Be quiet! Come out of the man,” he ordered. 26 At that, the evil spirit screamed, threw the man into a convulsion, and then came out of him.**



**DEMONS TREMBLE**  
**MARK 1:21 -28**



The Greek word *phimoo* translated, "be quiet" means "be muzzled" in the original language. This is a term used for muzzling a dangerous animal or a master speaking with a dog. Yahshua did not need the testimony of demons to validate His authority, but Mark saw the remarkable significance of their account.

*There were other exorcists in Jesus' day. He was not the only one who tried to cast out demons. But there was a huge difference between Jesus and other exorcists. They used long, fancy, elaborate, superstitious ceremonies and they often failed. Jesus never failed to cast out a demon, and He never used an elaborate ceremony.<sup>9</sup>*

*The writing of a Jewish historian called Josephus recorded the rituals used in Hebrew exorcism. He mentioned they used the name of Solomon, recited incantations and used specific kinds of roots. These religious exorcisms often failed because the power of demons was beyond the authority of the exorcist. This never happened with Yahshua. The people were accustomed to the use of magical formulae by the Jewish exorcists, but here was something utterly different.<sup>10</sup>*



**<sup>27</sup> Amazement gripped the audience, and they began to discuss what had happened. "What sort of new teaching is this?" they asked excitedly. "It has such authority! Even evil spirits obey his orders!"**

Physical healing was not uncommon in the Old Testament, but there was not one single exorcism recorded in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

<sup>9</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 1.

<sup>10</sup> Robertson, Archibald T. "The Gospel According to Mark: Word Pictures of the New Testament" Volume I (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930)



In the Old Testament, to drive evil spirits out of the land, you needed to kill the people who housed them and destroy their gods. Yahshua did not have to kill the host to drive out the demon. He simply spoke the Word and the demon was forced to obey by the weight of His astonishing authority.

**<sup>28</sup> The news about Jesus spread quickly throughout the entire region of Galilee.**

Yahshua preached the Gospel, cast out demons and healed the sick everywhere He went. His fame grew quickly as these stories spread all over the region.

### **Jesus Heals Many People**

**<sup>29</sup> After Jesus left the synagogue with James and John, they went to Simon and Andrew's home. <sup>30</sup> Now Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. They told Jesus about her right away. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and helped her sit up. Then the fever left her, and she prepared a meal for them.**

Immediately after casting out the demon in the synagogue, Yahshua entered into Peter's house and found his mother-in-law sick with a fever. Mark noted that He touched her hand and the sickness departed. Luke on the other hand recorded that Christ also "rebuked" the fever and commanded it to depart. Luke used the same terminology involved in "casting out" a demon, when

describing the same event. The connection between the healing power of Christ and His deliverance ministry, was intentionally established by Mark in the first chapter of his Gospel. Mark presented Yahshua as the King, exercising dominion in His Kingdom.

**<sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door to watch.**





After Yahshua ministered in the synagogues during the day, the crowds gathered around at night. Crowds are always mentioned in the Gospel of Mark, as they pressed in on all sides to be healed and delivered.

**<sup>34</sup> So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and he cast out many demons. But because the demons knew who he was, he did not allow them to speak.**

As noted, the healing and deliverance ministry of Yahshua was evidence that the Kingdom of God was invading the earth and taking over the kingdom of darkness. In yet another account, the demons know who Yahshua is and what He has come to accomplish. Nevertheless, He would not allow the demons to testify publicly because He did not want publicity from the occult world. Christ muzzled the barking demons so they could not testify on His behalf.



### **Jesus Preaches in Galilee**

**<sup>35</sup> Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray.**

After an amazing day of successful ministry, which ended late in the night, Christ was up before the sunrise praying and seeking the Father about His next move. It's sobering that even the Son of God needed to spend time with the Father to know His perfect will everyday. Christ did not need to continually pray because He was spiritually weak, He prayed because His source of strength was Yah the Father and He enjoyed being alone with Him.

Mark will often highlight the tension between Christ and the crowds. He ministered among the people, but intermittently removed Himself to find an isolated place to be alone. The crowds constantly and aggressively pulled from the anointing of the Messiah. At times, He needed to be alone with the Father and the Spirit to recenter His mind and recharge His physical body.





**<sup>36</sup> Later Simon and the others went out to find him. <sup>37</sup> When they found him, they said, “Everyone is looking for you.”**

Christ was not looking for people, they were constantly looking for Him. He needed to spend time alone with His Father as His primary directive. He was not motivated by the gathering crowds or His growing influence. He needed to spend time with Father Yah to hear His voice and obey His will.

The disciples were excited over the success of Yahshua’s ministry. In their minds, it was time for the Messiah to build on His success and organize the people into a social and political revolution. However, Yahshua was primarily focused on spiritual transformation, not maintaining popularity among the people.

**<sup>38</sup> But Jesus replied, “We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came.” <sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons.**

The will of the Father kept Yahshua moving from one place to another. He could not stay in one region to bask in His newly found popularity. The Kingdom needed to be preached in all the towns of Israel as a witness to the Jewish people before His mission was accomplished on the cross. Christ was not looking to gather crowds to Himself, but He desired to complete the mission the Father had given Him. To accomplish this task, He needed to heal the sick and cast out demons, in all of Israel, so the entire nation would see the manifest presence of Yahweh in the flesh.

### **Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy**



**<sup>40</sup> A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. “If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean,” he said.**

As the fame of Yahshua spread all over the region, even dreaded lepers came to Him for healing. In the Old Testament, leprosy, and leaven (yeast) were both metaphors for sin.

**LEPROSY**



# HE TOUCHED THE LEPER!



Lepers were considered "untouchable" in that day, because once you touched a leper according to the Law of Moses, you became ritualistically unclean. Healing a leper with a spoken word was one thing, but physically touching a leper with your own hands, was a blasphemous act for a Jewish Rabbi.

The faith of the marginalized leper is astonishing. He knew Yahshua had the power to heal Him and is absolutely convinced of this fact. He is, however, unsure if Yahshua will want to heal

him. After all, he is nothing more than a socially despised, spiritually worthless leper.

## The social significance of leprosy

PLEASE  
NOTE...

The social stigma of leprosy made it much greater than a dreaded disease. Having leprosy was viewed as the righteous judgment of God on a sinful individual. There was absolutely no sympathy for anyone with leprosy. They were treated like disease-filled dogs spreading their covid-

like sickness to the good people of the society. Accordingly, anyone with this dreaded disease was forced to live outside the camp of Israel and were not allowed to come within 6 feet of anyone, including their own family.

*The Lord gave these instructions to Moses: <sup>2</sup> "Command the people of Israel to remove from the camp anyone who has a skin disease or a discharge, or who has become ceremonially unclean by touching a dead person. <sup>3</sup> This command applies to men and women alike. Remove them so they will not defile the camp in which I live among them." <sup>4</sup> So the Israelites did as the Lord had commanded Moses and removed such people from the camp. (Numbers 5)*

*The people of Jesus' day went further than the Old Testament told them to. Back then, they thought two things about a leper: you are the walking dead and you deserve this because this is the punishment of God against*

### Cure of Leprosy – Type of Salvation

The Leper	The Sinner
Must come to Jesus	Must come to Jesus
Had heard of Jesus	Must hear of Jesus
Conscious of his disease	Conscious of sins
Had faith in Jesus	Faith Jesus can save
Humbled himself	Humbled – repent and obey
Jesus had compassion	Jesus has compassion

# HE TOUCHED THE LEPER!

*you. Jewish custom said that you should not even greet a leper. Custom said you had to stay six feet (two meters) from a leper. One Rabbi bragged that he would not even buy an egg on a street where he saw a leper, and another boasted that he threw rocks at lepers to keep them far from him.<sup>11</sup>*

Because lepers were seen as evil, worthless individuals, the religious, self-righteous people enjoyed treating them harshly. The fact that these self-righteous people did not have this dreaded disease, proved that they were morally superior to the wicked lepers and thus, had a God given right to abuse them.

**<sup>41</sup> Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him.**

Mark noted the overwhelming compassion of Yahshua in a context where compassion was the last thing on the mind of the society. Physically touching a leper made people extremely angry, because anyone who dared touch a leper was not protecting the rest of society. Similar to the fear that spread during the Covid-19 pandemic, the mere mention of leprosy made the crowds tremble in fear. While the crowds wanted to beat this man with a stick, Yahshua demonstrated the heart of Yah the Father and showed him love and compassion, instead of fear and rejection.

For Mark, the act of touching the leper was instrumental in how Yahshua healed. Although He had the ability to heal on command with simply His word, the intimacy of physical touch demonstrated His love and compassion towards human suffering.



*Moved with pity, He stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "Be clean." Mark 1:41*

## HE TOUCHED A LEPER!



<sup>11</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 1.

# HE TOUCHED THE LEPER!

HE TOUCHED THE LEPER!

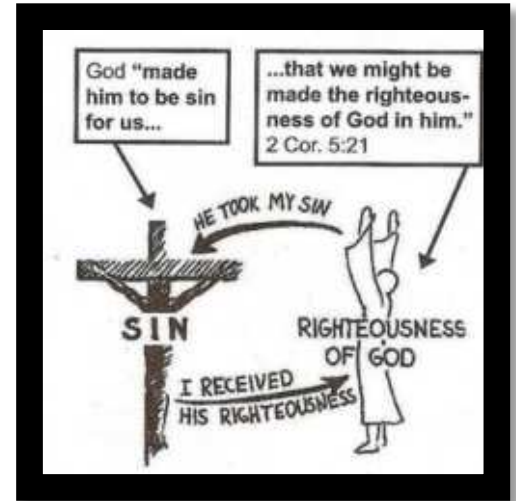
## Did Christ break the religious law?

PLEASE  
NOTE...

While the religious law strictly forbid anyone from ever touching a leper, unless they were a qualified priest, Yahshua did not break the sacred law. The moment He touched the leprous man, the man no longer had leprosy! In the Old Testament, the Law of Moses was given to protect

the Nation of Israel from the power of sin. Sin is the most infectious disease known to humanity. If left untreated, it would spread everywhere and leave everyone unredeemable and worthy of complete extermination. Yahweh needed to protect Israel from the corruption of sin, so they could bring forth the Messiah to fulfill their prophetic destiny. In the Old Testament, sin had the power to make righteous people unclean.

Now that the Messiah finally arrived, He had the power to touch unclean people and make them righteous. The grace of Yahshua was much more powerful than the influence of sin, sickness, and demons. Sin could not make Yahshua unclean, because the power of His **righteousness** was much greater.



**"I am willing," he said. "Be healed!"**

The sick man possibly assumed that he did something to deserve his sickness. He knew Christ had the power to heal, but he needed to know if He also had the desire to heal. Christ answered this question immediately by saying "it is My will to heal you". Sickness is not the result of God's will and His personal desire for humanity. Christ is the manifest example of the will of Yahweh on earth and He desired to heal the suffering leper. Compassion is the driving nature of Christ and He desired to heal and deliver everyone He encountered to demonstrate the power of the Kingdom of God.

**42 Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed. 43 Then Jesus sent him on his way with a stern warning: 44 "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed."**

At this time, Christ was acting within the confines of the Jewish Law. According to Moses, there was a procedure for people to be cured of leprosy. If the priesthood actually practiced the procedure outlined in the Law, the healing of a leper would not be viewed as an extraordinary miracle, because the Word of God cannot fail. The fact that lepers were not regularly healed, proved that the religious system did not have faith in the Word of God. Nevertheless, Christ wanted to honor the Mosaic Law and the role of the priesthood in His early ministry to the Jews. He wanted to reach them with the Gospel of the Kingdom and hoped that these miraculous signs would lead them to faith.

Yahshua intended the healing of the leper to be a testimony to the religious establishment that the prophet who Moses spoke about, had finally come. Surely if a man had the ability to heal sickness and cast out demons, the educated religious elite would investigate to determine if this mysterious man was actually the Messiah whom Moses promised would come. The fact that they remained so unresponsive to Yahshua's ministry, proved that they did not actually believe in the writings of Moses, but simply enjoyed their comfortable jobs at the church.

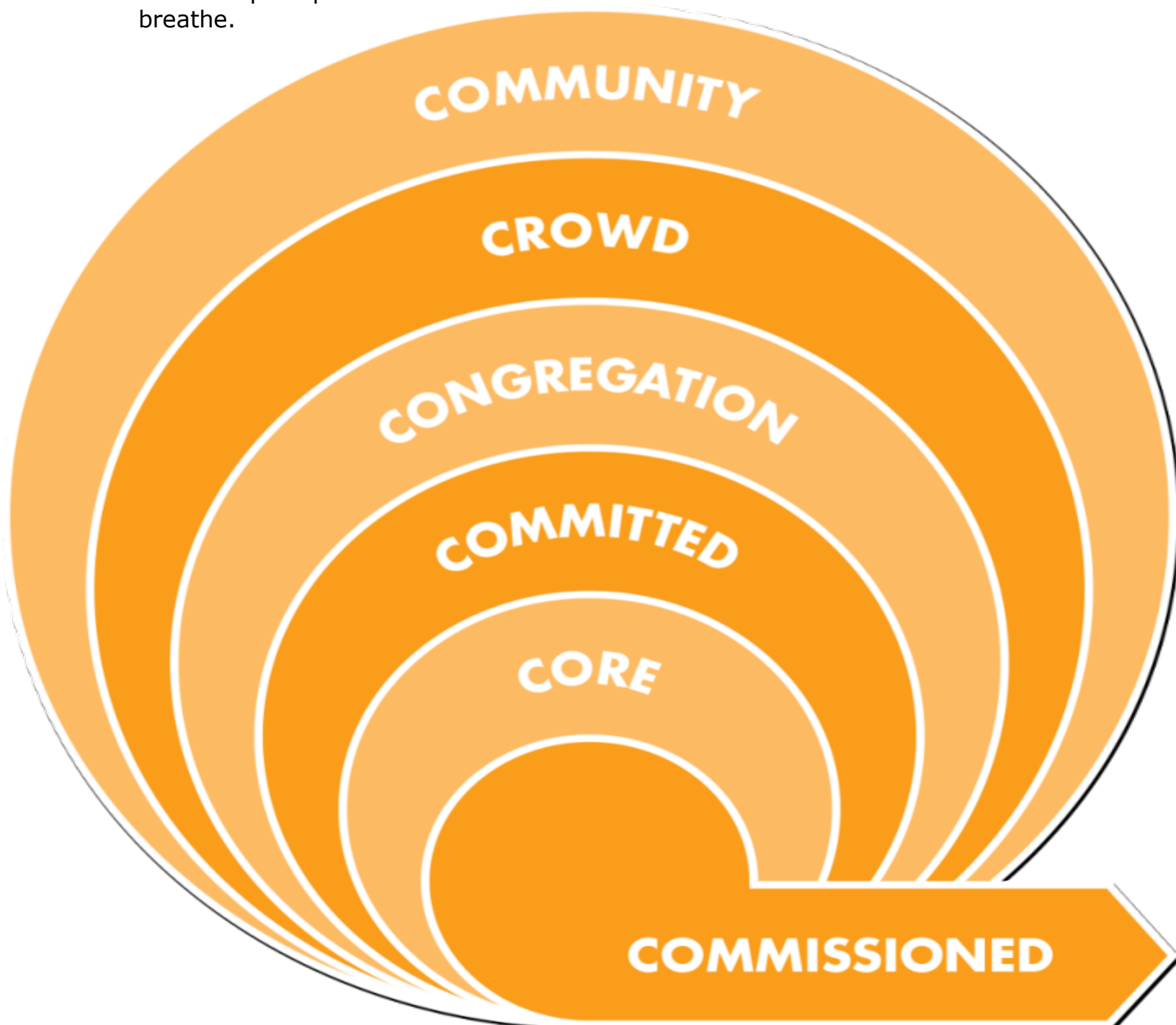
**15 Moses continued, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. 16 For this is what you yourselves requested of the Lord your God when you were assembled at Mount Sinai. You said, 'Don't let us hear the voice of the Lord our God anymore or see this blazing fire, for we will die.'**

**17 "Then the Lord said to me, 'What they have said is right. 18 I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him. 19 I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf. (Deuteronomy 18)**

**45 But the man went and spread the word, proclaiming to everyone what had happened. As a result, large crowds soon surrounded Jesus, and he couldn't publicly enter a town anywhere. He had to stay out in the secluded places, but people from everywhere kept coming to him.**



Initially, Christ tried to manage the crowds to make His ministry possible in the synagogue. However, as His fame grew, the multitudes “**pressed**” Him and He could no longer minister in the city. He was forced to go out into the wilderness to avoid the aggressive masses. As the healed leper told everyone about the miracle he received, his disobedience actually made Yahshua’s ministry more difficult. The press of the crowd became dangerous for everyone involved. It would be tragic if people were trampled in the narrow streets of Jerusalem trying to reach Yahshua. So, Christ retreated into the open space of the wilderness where the crowds would have room to breathe.



# Discussion



- (1) The coming of the Davidic King indicated the arrival of the Davidic Kingdom. How was the ministry of Yahshua similar to the rule of King David when he exorcised the land of Israel of the dreaded giant clans?**
- (2) For Mark, the casting out of demons was the most obvious sign that the Kingdom of God had finally arrived. Discuss the connection between the ministry of exorcism and the casting down of Satan's kingdom upon the earth.**
- (3) The disciples immediately left everything behind and followed Yahshua exclusively, after they were called. Are we all called to follow the Messiah with the same level of dedication today? Was this type of calling just for them and not for us?**
- (4) Christ's ability to cast out demons by His spoken Word was never seen before in Israel. How was this a validation of His unsurpassed authority and a revelation of who He really was?**



# unreasonable faith



## **Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man**

**2 When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home.**

As mentioned, Capernaum became the ministry headquarters, from where Christ traveled on His missionary journeys until He returned home. After being away for several days, the news reached the community that He was back in town resting, after His action-packed missionary journey. The gossip concerning His amazing exploits in the surrounding regions, eventually reached back to Capernaum. This created great interest among the crowds and many wanted to touch Him so they could be healed.

**2 Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door.**

Mark always talked about the crowds that constantly pressed Yahshua. The vast multitudes were often difficult to control and could be very dangerous when they all pressed in at once. At this moment, the crowds were so tightly packed, there was absolutely no room for any movement towards Yahshua.

**While he was preaching God's word to them,**

The Word of God that Christ preached was the Gospel of the Kingdom. It was the same Kingdom promised to King David.



were central to the message of the Gospel. Healing and deliverance were the **fruit** of the message, while the Kingdom was the **root** of the message. Mark constantly highlighted, in the midst of all His miracles, that Yahshua's central purpose was to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.

*It is clear that he was avoiding the streets because they had been turned into a healing campaign. Everywhere he went people besieged him with requests for healing and the casting out of demons, so that he was unable to do what he had come to do primarily, which was to preach the Word.<sup>12</sup>*

The ministry of Christ fulfilled the prophetic promises of the Old Testament about the coming time of restoration. According to Luke, Yahshua quoted from the Book of Isaiah to summarise His mission statement and mandate.

***<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free,<sup>19</sup> and that the time of the Lord's favor has come. (Luke 4)***

In an environment where physical healing and demonic deliverance were presented as evidence to the fact that the Kingdom had indeed come, sick and demonized people pressed Christ on all sides to cash in on the benefits of the Kingdom, being made available by faith.

***<sup>3</sup> four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. <sup>4</sup> They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head.***

Mark is the Gospel of action. The four men are on a mission to reach Yahshua to see their friend healed of his dreaded sickness. There were many towering obstacles preventing them from reaching the Messiah, that needed to be overcome by a combination of faith and drastic action.

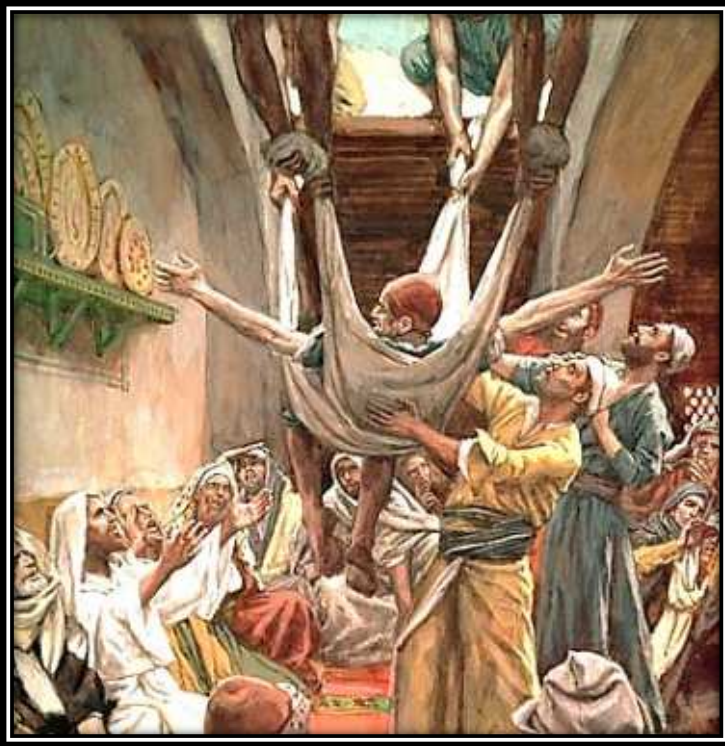
***<sup>14</sup> What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? (James 2)***

The men had faith, which was demonstrated by actions, which resulted in bringing their friend to Christ. However, they also needed more

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<sup>12</sup> Stedman, Ray "The Servant Who Rules: Exploring the Gospel of Mark" Volume 1 (Mark 1-8) (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1976)





determination than anyone else in the crowd to actually reach their desired goal. It took faith to bring the man to Yahshua in the first place. It took great faith and much more determination to lift the crippled man unto the roof. It took even more faith and extreme determination to destroy the property of the homeowner and break through the roof. Finally, it took an extraordinary level of faith to lower the man into the crowded room so Yahshua could heal him.

As mentioned, crowds are dangerous in their nature. When the collective force

of a crowd is unleashed, innocent people are often suffocated and trampled by the sheer force of the press. In this case, the falling debris of the shattered roof likely scattered the crowd surrounding Yahshua. Peter the owner of the house cursed, with great vengeance. This was the type of radical and dangerous faith that scared the average religious people. We all have needs, but very few are willing to risk life and limb to touch Yahshua like the woman with the continual bleeding. Faith demonstrated by action, is often very inconvenient, extremely unconventional, and sometimes plain hazardous.

**Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Seeing their faith,**

It is commonly understood that faith is a mystical substance that exists in the invisible realm of the spirit. Nevertheless, the faith of these 4 friends was clearly "seen" and discerned by Yahshua.

*Jesus looked up at the four men struggling with crude ropes tied to each corner of the stretcher with a paralytic on it. He looked at them and saw their faith. Their faith could be seen. Their bold, determined action to bring their friend to Jesus proved they had real faith.<sup>13</sup>*

Obedience is the only reality. It is faith visible, faith acting, and faith manifest. It is the test of real discipleship among the Lord's people.

<sup>13</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 2.

# ALL YOUR SINS

Seeing their faith pleased the Messiah and He responded positively to their outrageous act of vandalism and destruction of private property. If the destruction of a roof was necessary to get the attention of the Messiah, roofs were easily replaceable, but attaining the attention of Yahshua was a once in a lifetime occurrence.

**Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."**

The Jews always understood the theological connection between sickness and sin. Yahweh promised to remove sickness from the people of Israel if they faithfully kept the law and followed His instructions. The presence of sickness and disease in Israel proved that they were either unable or unwilling to keep the Law of Moses to the satisfaction of Yahshua.

***<sup>12</sup> "If you listen to these regulations and faithfully obey them, the Lord your God will keep his covenant of unending love with you, as he promised with an oath to your ancestors. <sup>13</sup> He will love you and bless you, and he will give you many children. He will give fertility to your land and your animals. When you arrive in the land he swore to give your ancestors, you will have large harvests of grain, new wine, and olive oil, and great herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. <sup>14</sup> You will be blessed above all the nations of the earth. None of your men or women will be childless, and all your livestock will bear young. <sup>15</sup> And the Lord will protect you from all sickness. He will not let you suffer from the terrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all your enemies! (Deuteronomy 7)***

It was certainly understood that when God forgave sin, healing from physical sickness would normally occur. This was clearly established by the principles of the blessing and the curses outlined under the Law of Moses. Believing in physical healing was not a theological problem to the Jewish people!

The theological problem occurred when Yahshua forgave the man's sins, from the first-person perspective. He did not even say Yahweh forgives your sin, as if He was speaking on behalf of God. The sentence structure clearly demonstrated that Yahshua personally forgave the man, the debt he owed to Yahweh! This was blasphemy according to the religious leaders.



# FORGIVEN

# THE SIN VIRUS

## Who Will Survive?

### Sin is more deadly than sickness

PLEASE  
NOTE...

When we are sick and suffering, feeling better seems to be the most important thing in life. Suffering from sickness is horrific and is definitely not the perfect will of Yahweh for our lives.

Nevertheless, spiritual sickness is much worse and should be feared on another level altogether. The crippled man's friends believed the

greatest need in his life was to be healed. On the other hand, Yahshua understood his tragic situation from an eternal perspective and knew his greatest need was actually salvation.

*Yet, Jesus knew what the man's real need was and what his greatest need was. What good was it if the man had two whole legs and walked right into hell with them. Whenever there is a problem, almost always, sin is the real problem. Jesus got right to the problem.<sup>14</sup>*

The crowds were constantly amazed with the miracle working power of Yahshua, but many walked away with the healing of their sickness, without being saved from their sin. *Forgiveness is the greatest miracle that Jesus ever performs. It meets the greatest need; it costs the greatest price; and it brings the greatest blessing and the most lasting results<sup>15</sup>*

Sin is the  
Disease  
Christ is  
the Cure.

**<sup>6</sup> But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves, <sup>7</sup> "What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!"**

The religious people in the crowd were absolutely correct in their logic. Sin is a personal matter between man and God. A mere man cannot forgive a debt

<sup>14</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 2.

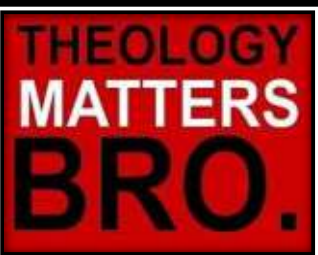
<sup>15</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)

owed to God. Only Yahweh Himself had the authority to forgive the sin of men. So how could Yahshua claim to have the authority to forgive sin without also claiming to be Yahweh in human flesh?

**<sup>8</sup> Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts?"**

The second part of this verse is insightful. Yahshua responds to what they were thinking, not what they were saying. The religious leaders were silently looking on while reasoning in their own hearts. Yahshua addressed the intention of their hearts and spoke directly into their consciences, rebuking them for their faulty conclusion. Their assertion was completely true. Either Yahshua was a blasphemer, or He was Yahweh in flesh. They had the right question but came to the wrong conclusion because of the hardness of their hearts and their religious pride.

## Could you be right and wrong at the same time?



The religious leaders and the biblical scholars are struggling to understand exactly what had just transpired. They saw an amazing demonstration of miracle working power, but they don't understand who Yahshua really is. They are now spiritually perplexed, because they rightly understand that only Yahweh has the right to forgive sin. It's impossible to forgive a debt that is not directly owed you! The first part of their conclusion is correct. Only Yahweh could legally forgive sin because we primarily sin against God, but what gave this man the right to speak like He is Yahweh? As they struggle with the right question, they remarkably come to the wrong conclusion.

*The words suggest a gradual intensification of the fault-finding mood: first a general sense of surprise, then a feeling of impropriety, then a final advance to the thought: why, this is blasphemy!<sup>16</sup>*

Once you reject Christ's claim to be Yahweh, you must then logically conclude He must be a blasphemer. His power is undeniable, but His authority can still be questioned. *Again and again during the life of Christ the*

<sup>16</sup> Bruce, Alexander Balmain "The Synoptic Gospels: The Expositor's Greek Testament" Volume 1, Section 1 (Matthew-Luke) (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897)

*same dilemma was to re-appear. If he were not divine, then he was indeed a blasphemer; there could be no third way out.<sup>17</sup>*

Sadly, the religious elite could not overcome their prideful jealousy to accept what was demonstrated right before their eyes. They could not believe this ordinary, uneducated man from the grimy ghetto of Nazareth, was Almighty God.

**<sup>9</sup> Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk'? <sup>10</sup> So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins."**

The tension at this moment is quite significant. The religious leaders saw the miracle-working power of Yahshua. They also understood He had the uncanny ability to read their minds. Should they not at this point have enough evidence to conclude that He really is Yahweh the Messiah?

*Imagine the tension in this scene. The scribes were tense because Jesus challenged them and said He would demonstrate He was the Son of God. The paralyzed man was tense because he wondered if Jesus really would heal him. The crowd was tense because they sensed the tension of everyone else. The owner of the house was tense because he wondered how much it would cost to repair his roof. And the four friends were tense because they were getting tired by now.<sup>18</sup>*

Now Yahshua pushed them off the edge, by openly claiming to be the Son of Man. Anyone with any biblical training understood what the Prophet Daniel wrote about the Son of Man.

### **The Son of Man**

***<sup>13</sup> As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. <sup>14</sup> He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language***



<sup>17</sup> Cole, R. Alan "The Gospel According to Mark" (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1988)

<sup>18</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 2.



*would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7)*

While the uneducated people in the audience did not understand the significance of what Yahshua said when He indicated that He was indeed the prophesied Son of Man, the religious leaders certainly understood the implication. The religious leaders constantly questioned Christ's authority to speak like Yahweh. In response, Yahshua claimed to be the prophesied Messiah who emerged from the presence of Yahweh, who was given all authority and dominion over all creation.

This was essentially a take-it-or-leave-it situation. If the religious leaders accepted His Word and the demonstration of His power, they were forced to conclude Yahshua was Yahweh. If they rejected His word, they still needed to explain the source of His power. They were stuck between a rock and a hard place.

**Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, <sup>11</sup> "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"**

Christ was not upset about their questions. He was either a blasphemer, or He Yahweh; the religious leaders had to make a choice. What angered Him was the prideful nature of their sceptical investigation. They had already concluded that He must be a blasphemer without even considering the other possible conclusion. They were too prideful and overly committed to their blind religious traditions to consider any other alternative options that challenged their preconceived beliefs.

Yahshua rubbed salt in their wounds by raising the stakes in their internal dialogue. If they assumed He was a blasphemer for saying "your sins are forgiven", would He also be a blasphemer if He commanded a crippled man to be healed? Who else but Yahweh could command sickness to depart as a result of forgiving a lame man of his sins? Who else but Yahweh could command a lame man to walk?

To aggressively confront their sinful doubt and hardhearted unbelief, Yahshua claimed that He would prove He had the authority to forgive sin, because He also had the supernatural ability to rebuke sickness. Directly and unapologetically, the logic of this undeniable argument forcefully presented Yahshua's claim to be Yahweh in the flesh.



**12 And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!"**

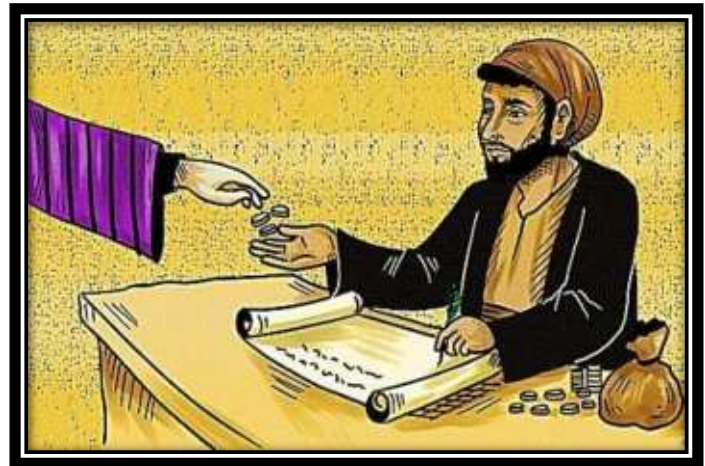
While the religious leaders were devastated by what they just witnessed with their own eyes, the uneducated people were joyfully worshipping God because they all witnessed a genuine miracle. The common people recognized Yahshua's amazing authority, while the Scribes and Scholars attributed the source of His authority to the occult.

This was an "all in" moment for the Messiah. If He failed in His attempt to heal the crippled man, the religious leaders would logically conclude He was a heretic and blasphemer. The man who arose from the mat recognized Yahshua to be Yahweh and openly believed the Gospel. On the other hand, they position of the religious leaders was set in stone. They had evaluated all the evidence and concluded Yahshua was a liar.

### **Jesus Calls Levi (Matthew)**

**13 Then Jesus went out to the lakeshore again and taught the crowds that were coming to him.**

As noted previously, Yahshua went about preaching and teaching all who were willing to listen. As He spoke on the seashore, His life-giving Words entered the ears of a despised tax collector called Mathew, who made his living exploiting the hard-working fishermen. There was definitely something contradictory about this emerging situation. Matthew earned a generous living because he exploited the backbreakingly hard work of the other disciples, who were already following Yahshua.



**14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector's booth.**

Levi, also known as Matthew, was a tax collector who set up a booth to tax the fish that the fishermen caught. Ironically, the majority of the disciples were fishermen, who already personally despised him. A Jewish tax collector was not simply considered an ethical outlaw, they were social scum.



# "Come, Follow Me"



Culturally, they were far more despised than mere sinners. They were seen as race traitors, who sold their soul to the Roman oppressors for their own personal gain. They exploited the suffering of their own people to serve the needs of the foreign tyrants, and for their own selfish advantage. In Jewish society, there was no redemption for such a low-down character.

Come  
Follow  
Me

*When a Jew entered the customs service he was regarded as an outcast from society: he was disqualified as a judge or a witness in a*

*court session, was excommunicated from the synagogue, and in the eyes of the community his disgrace extended to his family.<sup>19</sup>*

**"Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him.**

By calling Levi to become one of His disciples, Yahshua risked destroying the unity of His established group unless they were capable of radical forgiveness. Yahshua intentionally invited the most hated person possible into His inner circle, to test the flexibility of His disciples. The disciples were constantly forced to evolve in their worldview or become offended and leave the company of the Messiah. It's interesting how the ministry of the Messiah introduced a state of crisis to everyone who listened to His teaching and followed His example.

**So Levi got up and followed him.**

Stunningly, the most despised man on the seashore, did exactly what all the other disciples did in response to the call of Christ. He immediately closed up his successful business, instantly changed his profession and followed his new Rabbi. There was no turning back after walking away from a profitable occupation like tax collecting. Like the rest of the disciples, Levi burned his bridges and walked away from everything.

*In one way, this was more than a sacrifice than some of the other disciples made. Peter, James, and John could more easily go back to their fishing*

<sup>19</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)

Come,  
Follow  
Me

# "Come, Follow Me"



*business, but it would be hard for Levi to go back to tax collecting. "Tax collector jobs were greatly sought after as a sure way to get rich quickly."<sup>20</sup>*

**15 Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.)**

Mark clearly mentioned that many culturally and socially undesirable people not only associated with Yahshua but followed Him as their Rabbi. Tax collectors, prostitutes, social rejects, and deviants of all kinds were included in this group. This mixed multitude made even low-class fishermen uncomfortable, not to mention the educated, religious elite of Jewish society.

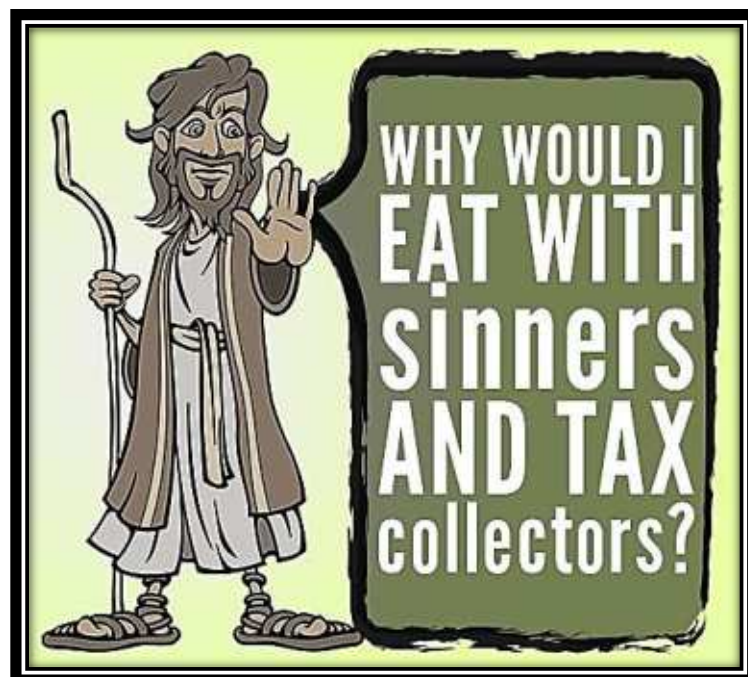
### **What was so special about eating with sinners?**

**PLEASE  
NOTE...**

Levi was leaving his profession and wanted to throw a goodbye party for all his friends and associates. He planned a huge celebration and invited all his old associates to meet Yahshua and his new family of brothers. All cultures have social expressions of fondness and friendliness. For the Jewish people, eating with someone was an ethnic expression of acceptance. When Yahshua had a meal with sinners, He was

extending friendship to them in a way they could easily respond to.

The people you enjoyed a meal with, were naturally included in your social circle. Those you refused to eat with, were excluded from your social circle. The name Pharisee meant "separated ones". Their understanding of holiness hinged on the fact that they could touch nothing unholy, or they would become unholy themselves. For them, eating with sinners and touching a leper was essentially the same. They would become ritualistically unclean and have



<sup>20</sup> Wessel, Walter W. "Mark: The Expositor's Bible Commentary" Volume 8 (Matthew-Luke) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984)

# JESUS PARTIES WITH SINNERS

to isolate themselves until they were purified.

When Yahshua ate with sinners, He became unclean in the eyes of the Pharisees and automatically separated Himself from the company of good people. Yahshua was excluding the morally good, in His effort to include the morally bad. This was not how proper religion was supposed to work. Respectable Jewish religion was supposed to reward the good people and reject the bad people.

**16 But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?"**



As mentioned, eating with someone indicated a certain level of intimacy and acceptance. The fact that Yahshua ate and drank wine with such people, placed Him outside of the comfort zone of the religious establishment. Because they could not participate in the meal, the "good people" were socially excluded and isolated. Ironically, they were being treated the same way they treated sinners, and they did not like it.

The religious authorities expected Yahshua to desperately desire their approval. They were the good guys in Jewish society, and everyone was expected to look up to them. Instead, they were cast aside and barred from close contact with Yahshua because of their own judgmental traditions and exclusionary customs. This made them feel rejected, jealous, and outraged at how they were being treated by a prominent Jewish Rabbi.

The religious Jews assumed that men of God were sent for their specific benefit. They were not supposed to spend time with sinners, while ignoring the faithful flock. Their basic understanding about the nature of the Messiah prevented them from embracing His mission. The Messiah came to call

# JESUS PARTIES WITH SINNERS

# Jesus Came to Call

sinners to repentance as announced by John the Baptist. People who pridefully assumed that they were already righteous were automatically excluded from the ministry of the Messiah because He was only sent to those who recognized their own brokenness.

**17 When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do."**

Only sick people will seek out the skills of a doctor because they recognize the need to be made well. If you don't know you are sick, you will not seek medical attention, because you assume you are healthy. Likewise, people who don't understand that they are sinners in need of a Saviour, will never come to the Messiah because of their religious pride.

## Jesus Came to Call Sinners to Repentance

**I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."**


The ministry of Yahshua will intentionally ignore the proud, self-righteous people who take the moral high ground and look down on the sinfulness of others. Such people will automatically resist the message of the Messiah because we must first approach Yahweh with humility, to recognize our own sinfulness and personal need.

### **A Discussion about Fasting**

**18 Once when John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, some people came to Jesus and asked, "Why don't your disciples fast like John's disciples and the Pharisees do?"**

The ethic of all religious people is that they must do specific things to maintain the blessing of God in their life. Your blessings must be maintained by following specific rules and keeping detailed regulations that both please and appease your god. This is the foundation of all religious legalism. It is a system of pious, works-based, righteousness that leaves the worshipper perpetually striving and endlessly tired.

## Sinners to Repentance



Fasting was an essential part of Jewish works-based religion. Both John's disciples and the Pharisees took great pride in their ability to deprive themselves of food. Furthermore, they judgmentally looked down on those who did not fast. Fasting was intended for a believer to focus on God in a time dedicated to prayer and meditation. On the other hand, there was no significant spiritual benefit for just starving yourself so others could notice.

The disciples of John saw the liberty and joy of the disciples of Yahshua and could not understand their freedom from the slavery of religious legalism. Eventually, they were compelled to ask Yahshua directly.

**19 Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. They can't fast while the groom is with them."**

In answering the question, Yahshua appealed to the established religious tradition taught by the Rabbis. In rabbinic Judaism, there were certain exceptions to the Law, if one law contradicted another. In such a case, the greater law, was allowed to supersede the authority of the lesser.

*In the days of Jesus some Rabbis declared that if the observance of any law came in the way of having a good time during a wedding, you didn't have to keep the law. You could just go and have a good time. "Marriage feasts were times of extraordinary festivity, and even of riot, among several people of the east."<sup>21</sup>*

The coming of the Messiah was a season of celebration and delightful devotion. Like a wedding, it was the beginning of something new and joyful. The New Covenant was a new way of achieving righteousness. It was surely a cause for celebration because righteousness would be achieved by faith. Like Abraham, when he believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. He was justified by faith, and not by works according to the Law of Moses. The arrival of the Messiah would restore faith-based righteousness back to Israel. That was a cause for great celebration!

**20 But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.**

Christ followers will eventually be called to times of prayer and fasting under the New Covenant, but it will not be motivated by a relentless sense of guilt or the desire to earn your salvation. New Covenant worship will be motivated by love and expressed by an intimate desire to discipline the flesh

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<sup>21</sup> Clarke, Adam "Clarke's Commentary: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments with a Commentary and Critical Notes" Volume 5 (Matthew-Acts) (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1832)

# NEW WINE

in order to edify the soul. Yahshua fasted many times during His ministry. Yet, it was not motivated by religious legalism, but a genuine desire to draw close to Yahweh and hear from the voice of the Spirit.

**21 "Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before.**

Yahshua came to introduce the New Covenant, not patch up the old one. The Old Covenant was like a worn-out garment, which was just about to be discarded. You can't fix something old and obsolete with something new and different. The new way of relationship with God through faith, would completely destroy the old method of religious legalism. The different systems contradicted one another and could not coexist together.

## **The New and the Old Covenant**

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**

The Old Covenant was destined to disappear and be replaced by something better. It was given to the Jewish people to educate them and protect them until the Messiah finally arrived. The law successfully protected the Jewish people from complete corruption and preserved a form of morality within their culture. However, the law had no ability to save the Jewish people from their sins, but simply let them know that they were sinful. The law was a guardian, which was intended to protect the children of Israel, until the Messiah came to redeem them.

**23 Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed. 24 Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. 25 And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian. (Galatians 3)**

The redemption of the Messiah was irrevocably linked to the promise of the New Covenant. Yahweh persistently promised that the New Covenant would supersede the Old Covenant, by fulfilling its purpose.

**31 "The day is coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. 32 This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought**

# NEW WINESKINS

# Never mix law and grace

*them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife," says the Lord.*

The coming of the Messiah fulfilled the purpose of the Old Covenant similarly to how a tree fulfills the purpose of a seed. The seed is always destroyed as the tree begins to grow roots and sprout up. The fullness of the tree was always concealed in the seed, but the seed needed time to mature under the right conditions.

*Jesus came to introduce something new, not to patch up something old. This is what salvation is all about. In doing this, Jesus doesn't destroy the old (the law), but He fulfills it, just as an acorn is fulfilled when it grows into an oak tree. There is a sense in which the acorn is gone, but its purpose is fulfilled in greatness.<sup>22</sup>*

<sup>33</sup> *"But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days," says the Lord. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>34</sup> And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the Lord.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already," says the Lord. "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins." (Jeremiah 31)*



The new way of being made right with God will replace the old way. Grace will overpower legalism and the two can never be mixed. When you attempt to make a man-made hybrid of both grace and legalism, you destroy both in the process.

**<sup>22</sup> "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both be lost. New wine calls for new wineskins."**

<sup>22</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 2.

# Never mix law and grace

Old wineskins that have become dry and hard can never be made soft and flexible again. To place the power of the Holy Spirit into a stiff religious heart would cause the self righteousness nature of the old heart to burst. The heart problem can only be fixed with the removal of the old, stubborn heart of stone and replacing it with a newly created, mouldable, heart of flesh.

## **Replaced, not healed**

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**

***<sup>17</sup> This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5)***

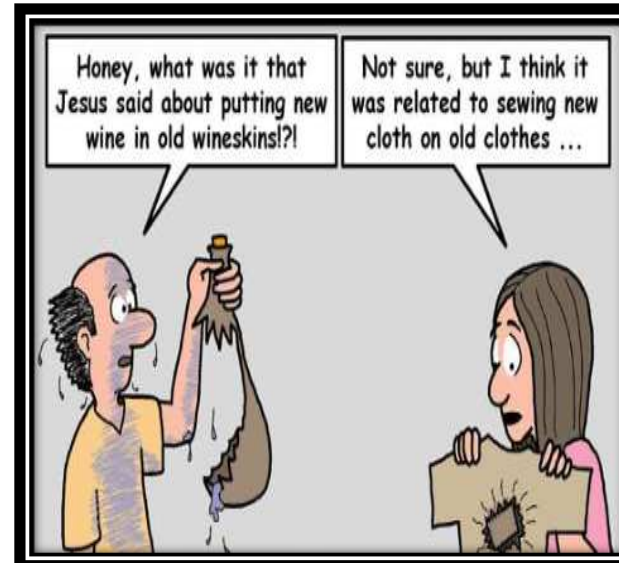
The human heart is broken beyond repair and must be replaced. The power of the Holy Spirit will need a radically new container that has been recreated into the righteous image of Christ. For the Spirit of Yah to dwell in the heart of the New Creation

believer, the heart of that individual must be made 100% sinless. This could only be achieved by faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lamb of God on the cross.

Moreover, we can't maintain dead religious traditions when we have come to know radical new spiritual truth. Our dead religious works, hinder the development of our faith and the freedom Christ intended for the New Creation believer.

***<sup>6</sup> So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. <sup>2</sup> You don't need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding. (Hebrew 6)***

As believers we are called to grow in our faith and push beyond the basic teaching of our faith. It would be insulting for a grown individual to still be functioning on a primary level in school. This would indicate something is seriously wrong with the individual or the school system. Likewise, when



# A DISCUSSION ABOUT

people have been believers in Christ for many years but show very little spiritual maturity and growth, something is desperately wrong with the people or the church they are attending.

## **A Discussion about the Sabbath**

Mark gets directly to the point. The religious leaders were offended at the ministry of Yahshua and were deliberately seeking to charge Him as a law breaker. They carefully observed the behaviour of the disciples to find fault in them, which would give them reason to accuse Yahshua of being a false teacher.

**<sup>23</sup> One Sabbath day as Jesus was walking through some grainfields, his disciples began breaking off heads of grain to eat.**

It's important to note that according to the Law of Moses, the disciples were completely justified when eating grain picked by their own hands. They were certainly not harvesting crops by any means. This was an obvious exaggeration of what actually happened.

**<sup>24</sup> "When you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, but you must not carry any away in a basket. <sup>25</sup> And when you enter your neighbor's field of grain, you may pluck the heads of grain with your hand, but you must not harvest it with a sickle. (Deuteronomy 23)**

### **The problem with the Sabbath**

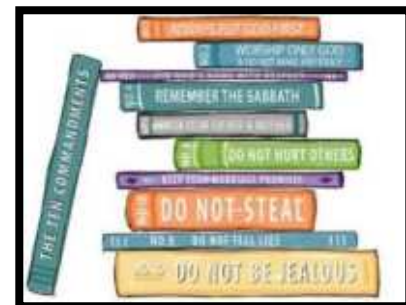
Obviously, Yahshua was healing and casting out demons 7 days a week. However, the Jewish elite recognized an opportunity to accuse Him of breaking the Law of Moses, because He refused to obey their traditional understanding of the Sabbath, and their legalistic understanding of the law.

### **What's so hard about keeping 10 commandments?**

During the time of Christ, the 10 commandments grew to approximately 613 rules that supported the original 10. There

**PLEASE  
NOTE...**





were also the additional religious traditions to be considered which were not covered in the 613 regulations.

The Pharisees were the religious police of the day. They were constantly observing the people to make sure they were following the rules. Some of their religious rules were outright foolishness, but because they came from their respected Rabbis, the rules could not be questioned.

*At this time, Rabbis filled Judaism with elaborate rituals related to the Sabbath and the observance of other laws. Ancient Rabbis taught that on the Sabbath, a man could not carry something in his right hand or in his left hand, across his chest or on his shoulder. But you could carry something with the back of your hand, with your foot, with your elbow, or in your ear, your hair, or the hem of your shirt, or your shoe or your sandal. Or on the Sabbath, you were forbidden to tie a knot — except a woman could tie a knot in her girdle. So, if a bucket of water had to be raised from a well, you could not tie a rope to the bucket, but a woman could tie her girdle to the bucket.<sup>23</sup>*

**24 But the Pharisees said to Jesus, “Look, why are they breaking the law by harvesting grain on the Sabbath?”**

First of all, the disciples were not harvesting. This accusation was made to make this trivial charge sound more serious. In regard to their legalistic interpretation of the Sabbath, Yahshua directly challenged them with a quick bible study reflecting on the life of King David.

**25 Jesus said to them, “Haven’t you ever read in the Scriptures what David did when he and his companions were hungry? <sup>26</sup> He went into the house of God (during the days when Abiathar was high priest) and broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that only the priests are allowed to eat. He also gave some to his companions.”**

When David was hungry, the Priest was able to be a little flexible because feeding a hungry soldier was more important than keeping a rigid interpretation of the law. In essence, human need comes before rigid legalism. The greater purpose of the law was about loving God and loving humanity. There were always certain exceptions that could be made to the law, when a human life was at risk, or when people are starving.

<sup>23</sup> David Guzik “Blue Letter Bible Commentaries” (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 2.



# HOW IS JESUS

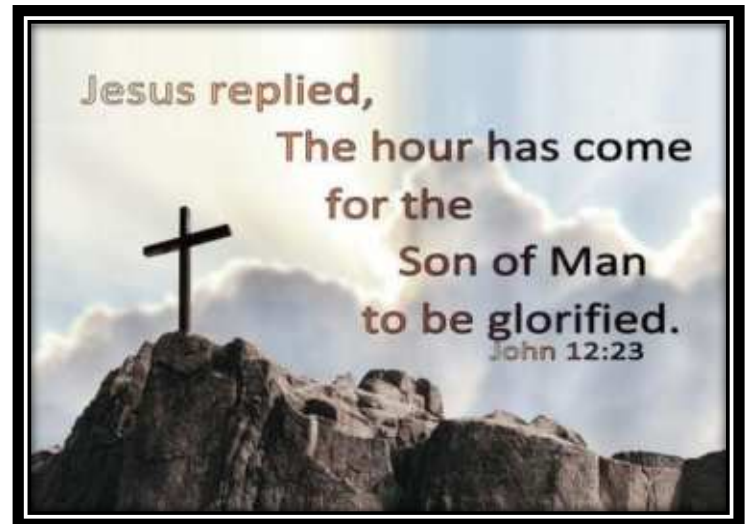
**27 Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath."**

The Sabbath was intended to be a blessing to all humanity because people were supposed to rest on that day to honor God and enjoy life. The religious legalism of the Jews turned it into a burdensome day. It became filled with endless rules and obligations that undermined the day of rest. Any set of rules and regulations that worked against the benefit of humanity, undercut the purpose of the Sabbath, which was intended to bless people.

**28 So the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!"**

To end the entire discussion, Yahshua poured gas on the burning anger of the Pharisees. It was Yahweh who authored the Law of Moses, not Moses. Yahweh is infinitely greater than Moses because the law came from Him in the first place. Therefore, the law giver is not subject to His own law because the author of the law is greater than the law itself. Yahweh, as the author of the law, is not bound to His own laws concerning rituals, rules, and regulations. The Law of Moses was meant for man, but not for God. If Yahweh rested on the Sabbath, the sun would not shine, and the planets would fall out of orbit. Therefore, Yahshua was not bound by the law He created.

By calling Himself the Son of Man once again, Yahshua directly appealed to His authority as Yahweh, to justify His ability to interpret the law and even supersede it if He desired. Moreover, Yahweh gave us the Law of Gravity to govern over His created order. All of humanity is subject to the law of gravity because this law was given for the benefit of humanity. Gravity prevents us from floating away in space. However, Yahshua was only subject to the law of gravity when He wanted to be. As Yahweh, the creator of gravity, He could easily supersede the laws of His own creation at will. Yahshua walked on water, passed through a solid brick wall, and floated in the air, when He wanted to. As Yahweh, He is the Lord of all things. He has the right to make or break His own rules as He desires.



# THE SON OF MAN?

# Discussion



- (1) The crowds were constantly mentioned in the Gospel of Mark because they were unruly and often dangerous. They were also a tremendous obstacle to those who authentically wanted to “touch” Yahshua. Is this still true today?**
- (2) It took great faith to overcome the resistance of the crowd and destroy the roof of the house to get the man on the mat to Yahshua. Discuss the relationship between great faith and aggressive action in bringing the crippled man to Yahshua. Was their kind of faith socially acceptable?**
- (3) Many people assume faith is often mystical and resides in the realm of the unseen. However, Christ saw the faith of the men who brought their friend to Him. Is your faith visible to the people around you by the countercultural lifestyle you live?**
- (4) By forgiving the crippled man of his sins and calling Himself the Lord of the Sabbath, Christ greatly offended the religious leaders. What was He saying about Himself? Why is this significant?**



# MIRACLES OF JESUS:

## HEALING ON THE SABBATH

### Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

**3 Jesus went into the synagogue again and noticed a man with a deformed hand. <sup>2</sup> Since it was the Sabbath, Jesus' enemies watched him closely.**

Building on the previous chapters, the tension between Yahshua and the religious leaders gradually grows as He continues to heal the sick and cast out demons all week long. Yahshua healed and delivered people all the time. The controversy centred around the interpretation of what "**resting on the Sabbath**" actually meant. To honor their own interpretation of the law, the religious leaders exercised their authority and completely forbid Yahshua from doing any miracles on the Sabbath day. However, Yahshua did not recognize their authority, because He is Yahweh. According to Yahshua, the servants in the house of God have no legal authority over the master of the house. As Yahweh, He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

**If he healed the man's hand, they planned to accuse him of working on the Sabbath.**

The religious leaders purposefully planted this man in the synagogue, knowing that Yahshua would obviously heal Him. They wanted to have documented evidence that Yahshua was indeed a law breaker, so He could be found guilty under the Law of Moses.

**<sup>3</sup> Jesus said to the man with the deformed hand, "Come and stand in front of everyone."**

Christ clearly understood this was a test of His authority. So, He intentionally brought the man to the front of the congregation and publicly healed him for all to see. Yahshua had no intention to deescalate the growing hostility between Himself, and the religious leaders. In fact, He intentionally escalated it with this bold demonstration of phenomenal power.



**<sup>4</sup> Then he turned to his critics and asked, "Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?" But they wouldn't answer him.**

The Jewish elite had a very legalistic understanding of the Law of Moses which

# The Pride of the Self-righteous

## The Pride of the Self-righteous

undermined the entire intention of the law. The law was about loving God above all else and loving your neighbour as yourself. Healing the sick was good because it destroyed the consequences of sin on the earth. How could performing a supernatural wonder on the Sabbath be considered evil, when the miracle was a demonstration of the power of God? Their twisted, legalistic reasoning bewildered Yahshua.

*According to their Sabbath traditions, if you cut your finger, you could stop the bleeding — but you could not put ointment on the cut. You could stop it from getting worse, but you weren't allowed to make it better.<sup>24</sup>*

This is the third time Yahshua intentionally healed on the Sabbath, which violated their religious traditions. He deliberately used this opportunity to prove to the Pharisees that Yahweh not only wanted His people to enjoy freedom from sickness and demonic oppression, but also wanted to deliver them from religious legalism as well.

**<sup>5</sup> He looked around at them angrily and was deeply saddened by their hard hearts.**

Mark took the time to record Yahshua's expressions as He responded with anger toward the prideful, religious blindness of the Jewish spiritual leaders. They were so committed to their man-made Rabbinic traditions that it distorted their reasoning were unable to see the manifestation of Yahweh in the flesh. Eventually, His anger gave way to pity because they were so deceived by their own pathetic sense of self-righteousness. They were so prideful, it made them blind to any spiritual reality. He desperately wanted them to see, but they could not!

*Jesus was angry because this was a perfect opportunity for these critics of His to change their minds about Him and their traditions. But they refused to change their minds and rejected Jesus instead. In this we can see that Jesus deliberately used this occasion to provoke a response.*

*Jesus could have done this the next day.*

*Jesus could have done it privately. But He chose to do it at this time and place.<sup>25</sup>*

**Then he said to the man, "Hold out your hand." So the man held out his hand, and it was restored! <sup>6</sup> At**



<sup>24</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 3.

<sup>25</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 3.

## The Pride of the Self-righteous

# The Pride of the Self-righteous

# LET HIS BLOOD BE ON US

**once the Pharisees went away and met with the supporters of Herod to plot how to kill Jesus.**

When Yahshua performed this amazing healing, the authority of the Pharisees was completely undermined, and they were publicly shamed in their own synagogue. Knowing they could not deny the authenticity of the miracles or win an intellectual argument, they immediately opted to murder Yahshua, so that they could protect their prominent position in their society.

The Pharisees were the religious conservatives of their time. The supporters of Herod represented the Jewish liberals who accepted the Hellenistic paganism of the Greek culture. Interestingly, Yahshua was so hated, He united the religious right and the political left into a unified coalition. The two groups usually hated one another but both were similarly alarmed by the growing popularity of Yahshua among the common people. The miracle working power of the carpenter's son from Nazareth, was a threat to both sides of the political spectrum. Both wanted Him eliminated as soon as possible. It's important to understand that snakes like to remain hidden in the grass. The powerful Jewish officials wanted to murder the Messiah but did not have the courage to do it publicly. They were terrified of both the crowds who loved Yahshua and the Romans who wanted to maintain peace in the region. Moreover, the jealous Jewish leaders could not murder Him on a public holiday. This would draw the attention of both the crowds and the Romans, to their underhanded plot.

## ***Could the Jewish leadership murder their Messiah?***

***<sup>26</sup> "After this period of sixty-two sets of seven, the Anointed One will be killed, appearing to have accomplished nothing, and a ruler will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple. (Daniel 9)***

How could the same people who were responsible for teaching the Word of God not know it? The Scribes could recite the Book of Daniel by heart, so how could they miss the passage that

predicted that the Messiah will be killed? Additionally, how could they be the ones responsible for His murder? The example of the religious scholars stands as a reminder to anyone who thinks they understand the Scripture. Without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, our understanding of the Bible is pointless, and we can easily deceive ourselves if our heart is filled with prideful assumptions.

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**



# LET HIS BLOOD BE ON US

<sup>8</sup> Unjustly condemned,  
he was led away.  
No one cared that he died without  
descendants, that his life was cut  
short in midstream.  
But he was struck down  
for the rebellion of my people.  
<sup>9</sup> He had done no wrong  
and had never deceived  
anyone. But he was buried like a  
criminal; he was put in a rich  
man's grave.



<sup>10</sup> But it was the Lord's good plan  
to crush him and cause him grief.  
Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants.  
He will enjoy a long life, and the Lord's good plan will prosper in his hands.  
(Isaiah 53)

The religious scholars debated about how the Servant of Yahweh could be killed and prosper at the same time? How could he die without descendants and have many descendants simultaneously? How could this man die young and have a long life? Why would Yahweh choose to crush a righteous man for doing good? They debated such things endlessly, but little did they know, they would be the ones to murder their Messiah.

<sup>22</sup> Pilate responded, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!" <sup>23</sup> "Why?" Pilate demanded. "What crime has he committed?" But the mob roared even louder, "Crucify him!" <sup>24</sup> Pilate saw that he wasn't getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood. The responsibility is yours!" <sup>25</sup> And all the people yelled back, "We will take responsibility for his death—we and our children!" (Matthew 27)

## Crowds Follow Jesus

<sup>7</sup> Jesus went out to the lake with his disciples, and a large crowd followed him. They came from all over Galilee, Judea, <sup>8</sup> Jerusalem,



**Idumea, from east of the Jordan River, and even from as far north as Tyre and Sidon. The news about his miracles had spread far and wide, and vast numbers of people came to see him.**

As both the political and religious leaders openly plotted to murder the Messiah, His popularity with the common people exploded. Vast crowds followed Him everywhere He went. They wanted to be healed of their sickness and delivered of their demons. The geographical locations mentioned by Mark represented the entire land of Israel, from the far north to the deep south.

**<sup>9</sup> Jesus instructed his disciples to have a boat ready so the crowd would not crush him. <sup>10</sup> He had healed many people that day, so all the sick people eagerly pushed forward to touch him.**

A large part of what the disciples did for Yahshua was to protect Him physically from the aggressive crowds. When Christ healed the sick and delivered the demonized, the crowds forcefully pressed in to touch Him. Often, the crowds became so unruly that Yahshua had to escape into a boat and launch out into the sea. The disciples always needed to prepare a way of escape so that Yahshua would not be trampled by the passion of the pressing multitudes.

**<sup>11</sup> And whenever those possessed by evil spirits caught sight of him, the spirits would throw them to the ground in front of him shrieking, "You are the Son of God!" <sup>12</sup> But Jesus sternly commanded the spirits not to reveal who he was.**

The demons who were being cast out knew exactly who Yahshua was and spoke openly about His true identity. They recognized Him as Yahweh Almighty and screamed out in fear. His undisputed authority openly challenged the established order of the spiritual world. Yahshua publicly preached the invasion of the Kingdom of God upon the earth. He demonstrated the Kingdom by casting out the unseen servants of Satan, who lived in the suffering demonized people.

Yahshua wanted the people of Israel to recognize who He really was, but He did not tolerate any publicity from the demons. When the demons announced who He was, he quickly silenced them and commanded them to "come out".





Demons are extremely deceptive and anyone who receives spiritual insight from devils, will be deceived. Even if the evil spirits speak about Christ, they will present the "doctrine of demons", which will be poisoned by religious deception. Demons don't care if you are outwardly religious. Religious spirits are just as dangerous as physical sickness. The Messiah came to destroy all kinds of demonic oppression, whether it manifested in physical sickness, demonic oppression, or religious legalism.

### **Jesus Chooses the Twelve Apostles**

**13** Afterward Jesus went up on a mountain and called out the ones he wanted to go with him. And they came to him.

Another Gospel writer mentioned that Yahshua spent the entire night on the mountain top in prayer. After receiving direction from the Spirit, Yahshua selected the specific members of His followers to become His disciples. There were many who followed Yahshua, but out of the crowd, He called a few to be exclusively committed to be with Him until he died on the cross. *A disciple was a student, but not in a classroom and lecture sense. A disciple learned by being with and hearing from his master. A disciple was an apprentice and learned from the master firsthand.*<sup>26</sup>

**14** Then he appointed twelve of them and called them his apostles.

The number 12 is a familiar number in Jewish texts. It is a specific number which speaks of the Kingdom of God. Jacob had 12 sons which became the 12 Tribes of Israel. The High Priest had 12 stones in his breastplate, one stone for each tribe. Likewise, it was only fitting that Yahshua appointed 12 disciples to establish the government of the coming Kingdom. In the Book of Revelation, Israel is pictured as a woman with 12 stars above her head, about to give birth to the Messiah.

**12** Then I witnessed in heaven an event of great significance. I saw a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. <sup>2</sup> She was pregnant, and she cried out because of her labor pains and the agony of giving birth. (Revelation 12)

Furthermore, The Book of Revelation also mentions the direct connection between the number of the Tribes of Israel and the number of the disciples represented by the gates and pillars of the New Jerusalem.

<sup>26</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 3



**12** The city wall was broad and high, with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels. And the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates. **13** There were three gates on each side—east, north, south, and west. **14** The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Revelation 21)

**They were to accompany him, and he would send them out to preach, 15 giving them authority to cast out demons. 16 These are the twelve he chose:**

The word Apostle means “sent one”. Up to this point, Yahshua was the only one sent by Yahweh to heal and cast out demons. However, when the 12 apostles were selected, they were sent out with the authority of the Messiah to do the work of the Kingdom of God. Its interesting that Mark includes the fact that they were given the power to cast out demons, rather than to heal the sick. While the disciples both healed the sick and casted out demons, as they preached, the **primary sign** that the Kingdom had indeed come, was the expulsion of the demonic.

**Simon (whom he named Peter), 17 James and John (the sons of Zebedee, but Jesus nicknamed them “Sons of Thunder”), 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon (the zealot), 19 Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).**



In the strictest sense, there were only 12 apostles who were legitimately selected and directed by Yahshua to preach the Gospel to the Jews. The Apostle Paul was a special case, who was specifically selected to preach the Kingdom to the Gentiles, not the Jews. Also, the original 12 were selected before the resurrection, while Paul was selected afterwards.



# AUTHORITY

While the word "Apostle" is used by others in the New Testament, the title does not carry the same meaning applied to the original 12. There are no modern-day apostles, who were personally selected by Yahshua, in a similar manner to His first 12 disciples.

## Jesus and the Prince of Demons

**<sup>20</sup> One time Jesus entered a house, and the crowds began to gather again. Soon he and his disciples couldn't even find time to eat. <sup>21</sup> When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him away. "He's out of his mind," they said.**

The ministry of Yahshua had grown to the point where the crowds were completely unmanageable. He was so pressed, everywhere He went, that He was even unable to sit down publicly and have a meal. Eventually, this will draw the attention of the Romans and Yahshua will find Himself in deep trouble. In light of His exploding popularity, His family decided to take matters into their own hands and planned a private intervention. For His own safety, they intended to take Yahshua back home. Ironically, even His own family members assumed He was suffering from a psychological problem. Prior to the resurrection, His own brothers did not believe He was the Son of God.

His family saw what was obvious to everyone involved. Something bad was going to happen to Yahshua because He was becoming too popular, and therefore, too powerful for both the Jewish religious leaders and the Roman political establishment to control. They tried to protect Him from being killed by those who could not tolerate the people's adoration for Him.

**<sup>22</sup> But the teachers of religious law who had arrived from Jerusalem said,**

As mentioned, Mark recognized the primary sign of Kingdom authority was the power to cast out demons. The religious leaders were more concerned about Christ's authority to command demons to depart with the spoken word, than His ability to command sickness to depart in the same way. Many Jewish prophets in the past demonstrated the power to heal the sick, but nobody in the history of all humanity ever commanded a demon to depart with the spoken word. Jewish exorcism often failed and involved many rituals and repetitive incantations, but the authority Yahshua continually

# OVER DEMONS



demonstrated was an overwhelming problem for the religious leaders who governed the Temple in Jerusalem.

As Mark's Gospel progresses, we see that Yahshua is now a national problem to the Jewish leadership. At first, He challenged regional authorities in the local synagogues when

He refused to stop working miracles on the Sabbath. Now, His fame had spread to Jerusalem gaining the attention of the religious "top dogs". They traveled all the way from headquarters to confront Him.

It's entirely possible that this official delegation of religious experts were sent to Capernaum directly from Jerusalem under the direction of the Sanhedrin. Their mission was to condemn the ministry of Yahshua. Before they arrived, they already did their research and came to the most logical conclusion they could. Yahshua was a powerful miracle worker, but according to their evaluation, He could not be the Jewish Messiah, because He did not respect their traditions or their authority. Therefore, He must be demonically empowered and a false teacher.

**"He's possessed by Satan, the prince of demons. That's where he gets the power to cast out demons."**

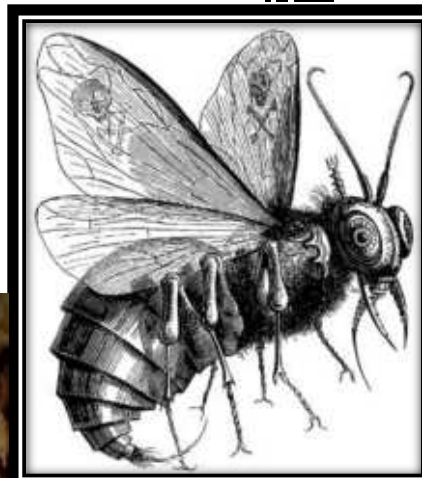
It was not enough to simply say that Yahshua had a demon. They came with the greatest accusation possible and determined that He was completely inhabited by Satan himself.

### Who was Beelzebub?

They called Yahshua the "prince of demons" which was a specific Hebrew term which meant the "lord of flies". The Latin name was Beelzebub, which was also translated, the "Lord of the Flies". The Egyptians worshipped flies because they appeared on dung immediately as the fly eggs within the dung hatched. They assumed flies had the ability to supernaturally appear, and therefore were powerful gods with

the ability to create spontaneous life.

PLEASE  
NOTE...



# BEELZEBUB



Beelzebub was another Canaanite manifestation of the nasty Egyptian religion. Beelzebub was worshipped among the pagan tribes that lived in the land before the arrival of the Hebrews. *It is supposed that this idol was the same with Baalzebub, the god fly, worshipped at Ekron... who had his name changed afterwards by the Jews to Baal zebul, the dung god, a title of utmost contempt.*<sup>27</sup> This name referenced the god of the fly that was worshiped to obtain deliverance from the injuries of that insect. Some biblical scholars believe Beelzebub was also known as the "god of filth," which later became a name of bitter scorn and a blistering insult used by the Pharisees. As a result, Beelzebub was a particularly despicable deity, and his name was used by the Jews a nickname for Satan.

The reference to the Messiah being "the dung god" was extremely insulting to Yahshua and demonstrated their venomous hatred towards Him. It was a very graphic and offensive way of expressing their professional opinion, to say that Yahshua was Satan personified.

**23 Jesus called them over and responded with an illustration. "How can Satan cast out Satan?" he asked.**

Yahshua responded with a logical argument that completely undermined the assertion of the religious leaders. Why in the world would Satan fight against his own kingdom? Why would Beelzebub empower Yahshua with the authority to do good and not evil? This made no logical sense!

**24 "A kingdom divided by civil war will collapse. 25 Similarly, a family splintered by feuding will fall apart. 26 And if Satan is divided and fights against himself, how can he stand? He would never survive.**

The kingdom of Satan could never survive if it destroyed itself. Demons would never cast out other demons, who support their own authority and influence. This reasoning was deeply flawed! They desperately tried to explain away the astonishing authority of Yahshua with this foolish argument.

1. <sup>27</sup> Clarke, Adam "Clarke's Commentary: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments with a Commentary and Critical Notes" Volume 5 (Matthew-Acts) (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1832)



## THE STRONG MAN BOUND



**27 Let me illustrate this further. Who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.**

Yahshua's explanation was all

about spiritual warfare. Mark frequently highlighted the unseen realm, and Christ's illustration of "binding the strong man, perfectly highlights Mark's worldview. Every exorcism was a liberation of a captive. Yahshua proved to the crowds that He was much stronger than Satan by His ability to cast him out. With every deliverance and healing, Satan's influence over the Promised Land was weakened, and the Kingdom of God grew in power and influence.

To rob a strong man of his possessions, a stronger man must first overpower him and then forcefully take what belongs to him. Satan assumed the children of Adam belonged to him and therefore his demons infiltrated humanity to help Satan govern over them. Yahshua, identified Himself as the stronger man, who came to overpower Satan, cast out his demons and forcefully take back the children of Adam from his diabolical dominion of demons.

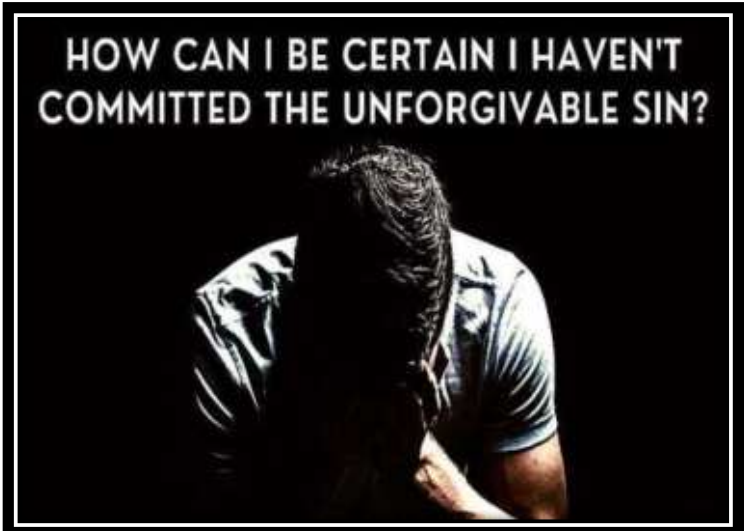
This was Yahshua's personal explanation of how the Kingdom of God was forcefully invading the kingdom of Satan. Yahshua was the stronger one! He was on the earth destroying the power of demons and winning souls back to the Father.

**28 "I tell you the truth, all sin and blasphemy can be forgiven,**

Words of any kind can be forgiven, even words spoken against Yahshua. The Holy Spirit is not greater than the Father or the Son. Therefore, the unforgivable sin is far more than just speaking careless words.

The sin against the Holy Spirit  
**The sin against the Holy Spirit**

**HOW CAN I BE CERTAIN I HAVEN'T  
COMMITTED THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN?**



# Do not grieve the Holy Spirit

## **So what is the only sin that can never be forgiven?**

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There is only one sin that can never be forgiven, and it is the rejection of Yahshua as Saviour. Because it is the mission of the Holy Spirit to convict people, that Yahshua is Yahweh the Messiah, if an individual rejects the message of the Gospel, they are also rejecting the conviction of the Spirit.

The religious leaders constantly rejected the preaching and the miracles of Yahshua, even ascribing them to the power of Satan. If they persisted in their blasphemy and died, they would be lost forever. Hence, dying without accepting the sacrifice of Yahshua is the sin that can never be forgiven.

*Notice that these men had not yet committed the unpardonable sin... Otherwise Jesus would never have warned them. By his own words, there is no use warning a man who has committed the unpardonable sin; he is beyond help.<sup>28</sup>*

Many people fear they have committed some sin that God cannot or will not forgive, and they feel there is no hope for them, no matter what they do. Satan would like nothing more than to keep people in bondage under this wicked misconception. The truth is, if an individual is still alive, they still have the ability to repent of their sins and turn to Christ for forgiveness. However, once that individual is dead, repentance is no longer possible, and that person's sins will never be forgiven.

### The Unforgivable Sin:

➤ It is the willful, ongoing, continual rejection of the witness of the Holy Spirit to the divinity and humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, resulting in a hardened heart towards Christ's redemptive work on our behalf.

**<sup>29</sup> but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.**

The religious leaders who should have known the Scriptures, directly resisted the miracles of the Holy Spirit which were intended to reveal that

<sup>28</sup> Stedman, Ray "The Servant Who Rules: Exploring the Gospel of Mark" Volume 1 (Mark 1-8) (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1976)

# THIS IS WHY STUBBORNNESS IS SO DANGEROUS SPIRITUALLY

Yahshua was the promised Messiah. By rejecting Yahshua as the Messiah, they also rejected the only way to salvation. Anyone who has rejected the Messiah, has committed the unpardonable sin, because forgiveness of sin can only be accomplished by the shedding of His sacrificial blood. By rejecting the shed blood of the Lamb of God, the religious leaders trampled on the blood of the sacrificial atonement and forfeited the fulfillment of the Law of Moses.

This was the same sin mentioned in the Book of Hebrews about the Jewish people who reject their faith in the Messiah.

***28 For anyone who refused to obey the law of Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Just think how much worse the punishment will be for those who have trampled on the Son of God, and have treated the blood of the covenant, which made us holy, as if it were common and unholy, and have insulted and disdained the Holy Spirit who brings God's mercy to us. 30 For we know the one who said,***

***"I will take revenge.  
I will pay them back."***

***He also said, "The Lord will judge his own people." 31 It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrew 10)***

***This is a sin with eternal consequences." 30 He told them this because they were saying, "He's possessed by an evil spirit."***



The leadership of Israel saw the miracles of Yahshua and intentionally opposed the ministry of the Spirit by refusing to believe in the only Son of God. They had a great responsibility because they knew the Word of God. This was not about saying mere words or thinking blasphemous thoughts, it was about the intentional hardening of the heart out of religious pride. It is therefore absolutely impossible for a "believer" to commit the unpardonable sin because a believer believes in the Messiah, and is therefore saved by faith.

*These words were never intended to torment anxious souls honestly desiring to know Christ, but they stand out as a blazing beacon warning of the danger of persisting in the rejection of*



*the Spirit's testimony of Christ, until the seared conscience no longer responds to the gospel message.<sup>29</sup>*

## **The True Family of Jesus**

**<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him.**

This text states plainly that Mary was the mother of the brothers who came to speak with Yahshua. Yahweh was the heavenly Father of Yahshua, while Joseph was the earthly father of Mary's other sons. Regardless of the specifics, in Hebrew culture, it was unthinkable to show your own family such disrespect and not come immediately when they called for you.

**They stood outside and sent word for him to come out and talk with them. <sup>32</sup> There was a crowd sitting around Jesus, and someone said, "Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you."**

When someone told Yahshua that His mother and family were waiting for Him outside, culturally, it was expected that He leave immediately what He was doing and put His family first. Yahshua used this situation to teach, that in the Kingdom, the ministry of the Gospel must take priority over everything, even your commitment to your biological family.

**<sup>37</sup> "If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine. <sup>38</sup> If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. <sup>39</sup> If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it. (Matthew 10)**

**<sup>33</sup> Jesus replied, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"**

This was another shocking revelation to a culture that placed family above all else. We might have expected that Yahshua's family would have enjoyed special privileges, that placed them before the work of the Kingdom. It shouldn't surprise us that they did not. Kingdom work is eternal, earthly relationships are temporary. Yahshua wanted His disciples to understand their priorities.

Christ asserted unapologetically that a believer was supposed to be more connected to their spiritual family, than their physical family. Flesh and

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<sup>29</sup> Ironside, H. A. "Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark" (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1979)

# God. Family. Work. in that order.

blood family is only a temporary relationship, which in itself has no lasting eternal significance. On the other hand, spiritual family will endure forever because we are a New Creation in Christ. In the Scripture, the **unseen things** are more real than the **seen things** because the spiritual world will endure forever, while the physical world will be forgotten, burnt up, and destroyed.

**<sup>34</sup> Then he looked at those around him and said, "Look, these are my mother and brothers. <sup>35</sup> Anyone who does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."**

The family of Yahshua are those who are born again and believe in Him. He was not being overly disrespectful to His mother. She was already a believer because she believed the Word of the angel concerning His birth. However, His biological brothers openly disbelieved His claim to be the Son of God because they had not yet come to faith. This object lesson was mainly about explaining the necessity of the "new birth" and our duty as believers to place spiritual things, far above physical things.

Mary was indeed the most blessed woman of all time because she was personally selected above all women to carry Yahweh in her womb. Although, Yahweh was the fruit of her womb, she still needed to place faith in Christ to be saved of her sin. Mary was not sinless and still needed to believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Yahshua just like the rest of us.

**Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,  
blessed art thou amongst women  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.**

Whoever does  
**God's** will  
is my  
**brother** and  
**sister**  
and **Mother.**



# Discussion



- (1) Was Yahshua being rebellious to the authority of the religious leaders by healing on the Sabbath day even when He was specifically forbidden to do so?**
- (2) The religious leaders of the day pridefully assumed they fully understood the Word of God but were also responsible for rejecting their Messiah. Could we also be deceived in our contemporary understanding of the Scripture, and what can we do to prevent such deception in our own time?**
- (3) The religious leaders could not explain Yahshua's authority to cast out demons, so they attributed His power to Satan. Discuss Christ's claim to be the stronger man, who binds the power of the strongman, and steals his possessions. Who is the strongman and what does he possess?**
- (4) What exactly is blaspheming the Holy Spirit and how does it relate to the unforgivable sin? Can a believer be guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit by having impure thoughts?**



# THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS

-  **SEEDS**  
The Word of God
-  **SOIL**  
Hearts of People
-  **BIRDS**  
the devil
-  **ROCKS**  
temptation
-  **THORNS**  
worries, riches and pleasures of this life
-  **FRUIT**  
obedience, good works, faithfulness



## Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed

**4** Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore.



# WHY PARABLES?

When Mark first presented Yahshua, He was preaching in the synagogue, but now He is preaching from a boat. This section indicates that His ministry in the synagogue was over. He would no longer be welcomed as a traveling Rabbi. Christ was officially condemned as a false teacher and even called Satan incarnate. It's safe to say, Yahshua's civil interaction with the Jewish religious leaders had come to a tragic end.

Preaching from a boat was especially useful to amplify His voice over a great distance, but it also made hands-on ministry impossible. At this point, the crowds had grown so large, that they could no longer be effectively managed by the 12 disciples.

**<sup>2</sup> He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:**

## Why Parables?

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**

Some people wrongly assumed Yahshua employed parables because they were an effective way to teach people about spiritual truth. The opposite is actually true. Teaching in parables made understanding divine truth harder for those who were not humble and open to spiritual revelation. Matthew explained the purpose of parables in his Gospel account written for the Jewish believers.

**<sup>10</sup> His disciples came and asked him, "Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?" <sup>11</sup> He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secrets<sup>[a]</sup> of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. <sup>12</sup> To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. <sup>13</sup> That is why I use these parables,**

**For they look, but they don't really see.  
They hear, but they don't really listen or understand.**

**<sup>14</sup> This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says,**

**'When you hear what I say,  
you will not understand.  
When you see what I do,  
you will not comprehend.'**

## *Why did Jesus Speak in Parables?*

**1. Jesus taught in parables because of the hardness of many hearts; thus, many truths of the kingdom were concealed from them.**

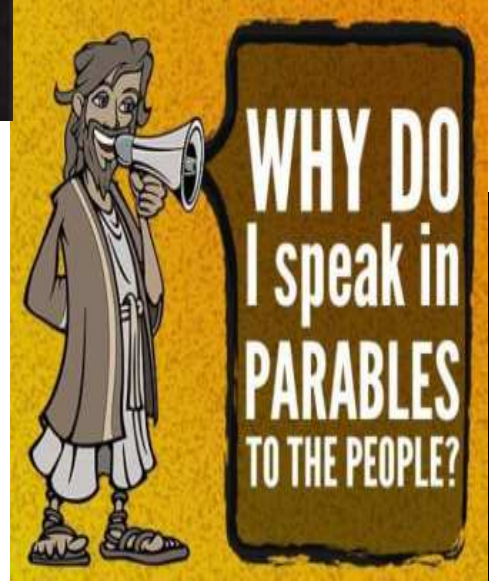
*(Matthew 13:13-15)*

**2. Jesus taught in parables because of the willingness of some to hear and obey; thus, many truths of the kingdom were revealed to them.**

*(Matthew 13:34-35)*

# THE FOUR SOILS

**15** For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes—so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.’ (Matthew 13)

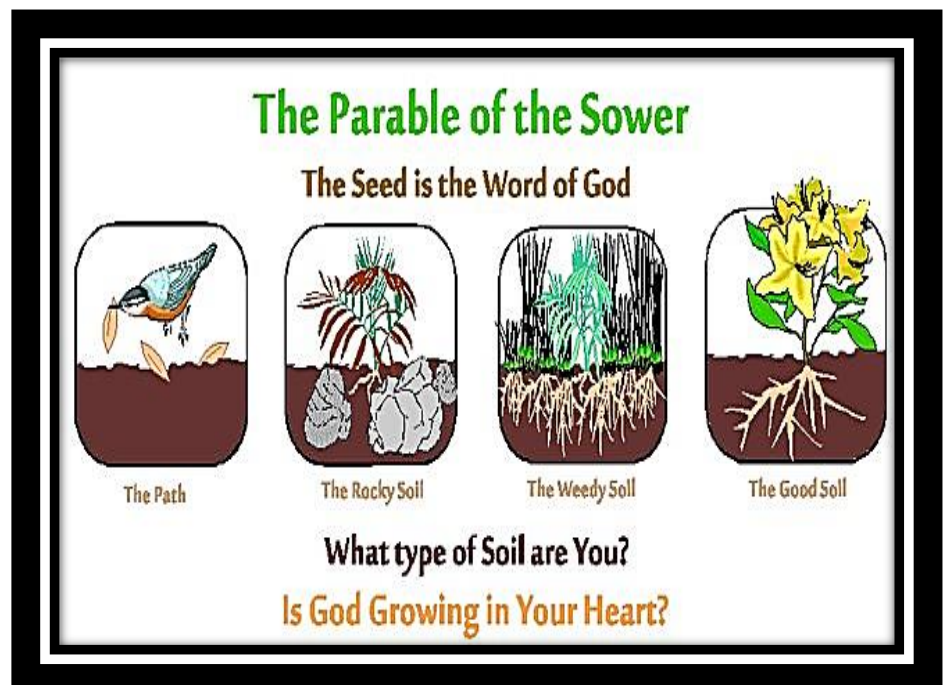


## Parable of Sowing

**3** “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed.

Modern teaching takes simple things and makes them complicated. Yahshua, took simple examples and kept them simple. The crowds were all familiar with these straightforward illustrations, such as people going fishing or farmers planting seeds. Yahshua was no longer teaching for the rigorously educated elite but reaching out to the common people.

Yahshua pointed out later, that the soil represented different kinds of hearts, which also represented the different types of responses His preaching received from the people in the crowd. *Though this is commonly called the parable of the sower, it should really be called the parable of the soils. The difference is never the seed, but on the kind of soil it falls on.*<sup>30</sup>



<sup>30</sup> David Guzik “Blue Letter Bible Commentaries” (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 4

### **Hard heart**

**<sup>4</sup> As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it.**

The farmer was not careless about where the seed was sown. Nevertheless, the seed scattered in the wind and was driven to diverse places. Some seed naturally fell on the pathway, where it could not find root and was exposed to the birds.

### **Shallow Heart**

**<sup>5</sup> Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn't have deep roots, it died.**

The seed that fell on the shallow soil was also not the fault of the farmer. What was hidden under the soil was only revealed in time. The rocks were hidden beneath the surface, but the soil still looked fertile. Plants cannot last without roots. The shallow soil illustrated the emotional hearer who began to build but did not count the cost. A shallow believer like this will not endure to the end.

### **The Crowded heart**

**<sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain.**

In this section of the field, the seed was planted on good soil. The farmer had no idea where the weeds would grow. This soil represented individuals who did not reach the point of spiritual maturity. Because they failed to aggressively remove the worldly cares of this life and were distracted by the lust for physical things, they never produced a worthwhile harvest. These plants never die, but also never produce anything of lasting value.

### **The Fruitful Heart**

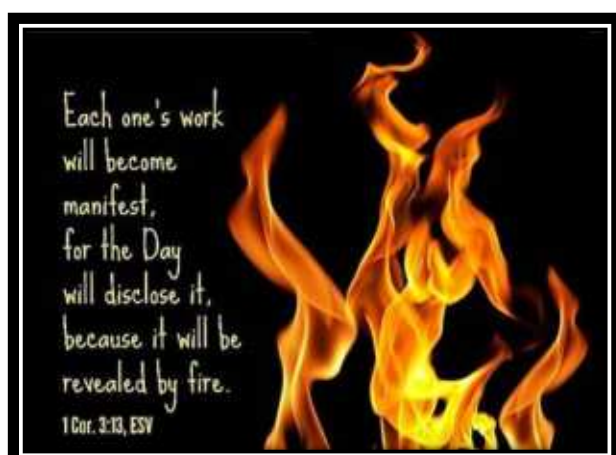
**<sup>8</sup> Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"**

The fruitful heart is a representation of an authentic believer who has the evidence of a changed life. However, all believers are not the same. The believer who produced more fruit, demonstrated more desire than the believer who produced less fruit.

Salvation is a work of undeserved favor, but rewards are deserved. Those who desire Kingdom rewards will place the work of God first in their life at the expense of other things. Eternal rewards are not given to lazy, distracted, and unmotivated believers.

***10 Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.***

***12 Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. 13 But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. 14 If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. 15 But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames. (1 Corinthians 3)***



***9 Then he said, "Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."***

The majority of people in the audience had physical ears. Having physical ears does not necessarily mean one has spiritual discernment as well. Divine revelation can only come by the power of the Holy Spirit.

***10 Later, when Jesus was alone with the twelve disciples and with the others who were gathered around, they asked him what the parables meant.***

The disciples were given special revelation because they were able to ask Christ direct questions, and He would explain things to them. Others would listen to Yahshua speak all day long and understand nothing at the end of the day.







**11** He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secret of the Kingdom of God. But I use parables for everything I say to outsiders, **12** so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled:

**'When they see what I do, they will learn nothing. When they hear what I say, they will not understand. Otherwise, they will turn to me and be forgiven.'**"


*By quoting this passage from Isaiah 6:9, Jesus explained why He used parables. In teaching by parables, Jesus offered His hearers the opportunity to dig deep and find the truth, or to turn a blind eye to an interesting story. They might therefore avoid a greater condemnation for having rejected a clearly understood truth.<sup>31</sup>*

### Parable of the Sower Heart Types


			
<b>Blind Heart</b>	<b>Rocky Heart</b>	<b>Rebellious Heart</b>	<b>Remaining Heart</b>
Heart's disposition blinds hearer from grasping God's Message.	Enthusiastic at first to God's Word, Rocky Heart shallow & lacks will to strengthen initial gift.	Heart partially commits to Christ, leaving disastrous vulnerability to worldly desires & concerns.	Heart fully dedicated to Jesus is firmly established, reaping fruit of righteousness plentifully.

**9** And he said, "Yes, go, and say to this people, 'Listen carefully, but do not understand. Watch closely, but learn nothing.'  
**10** Harden the hearts of these people. Plug their ears and shut their eyes. That way, they will not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their hearts and turn to me for healing." (Isaiah 6)

**HE SAID, "GO, AND TELL THIS PEOPLE..."**



**Keep on listening, but do not perceive**



**Keep on looking, but do not understand.**

Yahshua did not use parables to blind people, but to help them see. If you take the time to dig for the meaning hidden under the surface, you will find it. If you are too casual with spiritual truth or too lazy to seek it out, you will find nothing of value and you will not understand. It's all up to the hearer/heart, not the seed.

**Whoever has ears to hear ...**

**18** "Listen, you who are deaf!  
Look and see, you blind!  
**19** Who is as blind as my own people, my servant?"

<sup>31</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 4

**Let him hear!**

Who is as deaf as my messenger?  
Who is as blind as my chosen people,  
the servant of the Lord?  
<sup>20</sup> You see and recognize what is right  
but refuse to act on it.  
You hear with your ears,  
but you don't really listen." (Isiah 42)



# Pay Attention

## The Master Parable

**<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "If you can't understand the meaning of this parable, how will you understand all the other parables?"**

Mark highlighted something very important about this specific parable. He said this parable was a key to understanding all the other parables that Yahshua presented. Mark's emphasis tells his reader to pay close attention to what comes next.

**<sup>14</sup> The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others.**

According to Yahshua's own interpretation, He is the farmer, and the Word is the seed that is sown or preached to the crowds. The seed is good, but even good seed can't grow in bad soil. The seed has everything it will ever need to produce a harvest, the rest depended on the condition of the ground.

### The hard heart



**<sup>15</sup> The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away.**

In the first version of the parable, birds immediately came and consumed the Word before anything could take root. Yahshua pointed out that the birds in the first illustration, were a symbolic representation of demonic spirits, that are submitted to the kingdom of darkness. Spiritual darkness immediately removed the Word from the heart of the individual who remained deceived. They were demonically deceived and unable to hear or see spiritual truth. This is the classic explanation of what happened to the



# a Double-minded man is

Pharisees. They were blinded by prideful, religious spirits that stole the Word of God from their heart before it could germinate and bloom.

It is possible for a hardhearted person to be saved, but it is a traumatic process. *Hard hearts must be 'plowed up' before they can receive the seed, and this can be a painful experience.*<sup>32</sup> When God breaks the soil of a hard heart, it is often like a Saul-to-Paul experience, where Yahweh smashes your old life with a hammer.

## The shallow heart

## From Saul to Paul

**<sup>16</sup> The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup> But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.**



Spiritual darkness immediately devoured the first group of seeds. The next group will also be devoured, but not immediately. Remember, this parable is all about spiritual warfare. In this next group, Satan could not successfully steal the Word of God instantly, but over time, would influence the individual to renounce their faith through persecution or tribulation.

This group believed intellectually or emotionally, but their shallow faith never manifested in authentic transformation resulting in a genuine "born-again" experience. Such people may have become religious, but still remained lost.

With the enemy's use of a slow process of persecution and tribulation, shallow believers eventually become offended and eventually renounce the faith, they never really received in the first place. They feel their life was better off before they believed in Christ and end up going back to their old lifestyle, to avoid suffering for the Kingdom.

## The Crowded heart

**<sup>18</sup> The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, <sup>19</sup> but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the**

**A double minded man  
is unstable in all his ways.**

James 1:8



<sup>32</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)

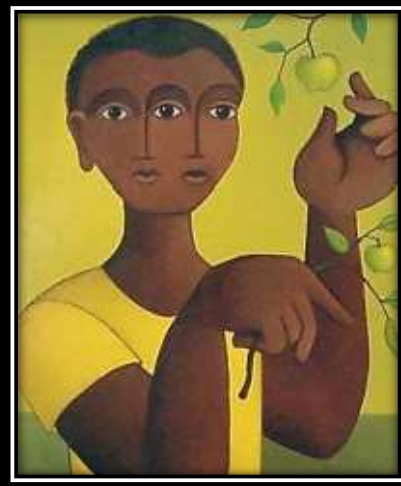
# Unstable in all his ways



worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.

With two groups of the seed destroyed, the next group respond favorably to the Word and believe,

but never produce anything of eternal value. Sadly, this group loved other things, along with God. *We might say this ground is too fertile. The word of God grows there, but so does everything else. And everything else soon begins to crowd out the word of God.*<sup>33</sup> The love for money, family, career, and the pleasures of this world, never allow such people to fully give themselves to the Kingdom of God.



The concept of "desire" is tremendously important in this group. They desire other things and are therefore "double minded" or have "double vision" because their "eye" is not focused on one thing. This is consistent with Matthew's instruction concerning the love of money and God coexisting in the same heart.

***19 "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. 21 Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. 22 "Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. 23 But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is! 24 "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money. (Matthew 6)***

**20 And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"**

The enemies of the Word are threefold, the devil, the flesh, and the world. These three factors are all involved in fighting against the Word of God producing fruit in your life.



<sup>33</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 4

1. The devil **steals** the Word so that it cannot produce faith.
2. The flesh **abandons** the Word because it will not endure suffering.
3. The world **chokes** the Word with the desire for other things.



In the context of the parable, Christ is the Sower, and the Word is the seed. From the perspective of the kingdom, Christ has sent us into the world to preach the Word of God and we will be rewarded for our service to the King.

*<sup>6</sup> Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. <sup>7</sup> You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." <sup>8</sup> And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. <sup>9</sup> As the Scriptures say,*

*"They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever."*

*<sup>10</sup> For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. (2 Corinthians 9)*

Regardless of the opposition, those who really love Yahweh will press through the obstacles and take the Kingdom of God by force. Their love for God will manifest in their obedience to His Word. They will produce different amounts of fruit, depending on how much they really loved God, as opposed to loving themselves.

### **Parable of the lamp**

*<sup>21</sup> Then Jesus asked them, "Would anyone light a lamp and then put it under a basket or under a bed? Of course not! A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light will shine."*

**"How we respond when God asks us to sow is in direct proportion to whether you are going to receive the 30, 60, or 100 fold."**

# DO NOT BE COWARDLY

## PARABLE OF THE LAMP



MARK 4:21-25

The purpose of a lamp is to give off light. A lamp cannot fulfill its God-given purpose if it is ashamed of its light. The lamp that shines publicly, is unashamed of its light and will accomplish its created purpose. Still, the text implies that not every lamp will serve a purpose, because some lamps will intentionally hide their light.



*We must not hide this light. If you have the truth of God, you have a solemn responsibility to spread that truth in whatever way God gives you opportunity. It is just as someone who has the cure for a life-threatening disease*

*has the moral responsibility to spread that cure. God didn't light your lamp so that it would remain hidden.<sup>34</sup>*

***<sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. (John 1)***

According to the Gospel of John, the darkness hates the light, but is powerless to overcome it. In respect to the previous parable, there will be persecution and suffering for the believer who shines publicly. This is the consequence of standing on a lampstand. The unashamed believer will draw the attention of the darkness because the darkness is irritated by the presence of the light.

***<sup>22</sup> For everything that is hidden will eventually be brought into the open, and every secret will be brought to light.***

The hearts of those who intentionally refuse to shine by hiding the truth will be evaluated in judgment. Our inward motives and true intentions will be publicly exposed in the coming judgment. Cowards will be ashamed of their cowardice when they stand before Christ, and everything hidden becomes completely exposed.

***<sup>23</sup> Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."***

This is another mention of the connection between spiritual ears and revelation knowledge. Revelation knowledge is spiritually discerned and can

<sup>34</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 4



never come from human reasoning. Revelation comes from the inner man of the heart and is slowly revealed to the rational mind over time.

**24 Then he added, "Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given—and you will receive even more."**

Those who cherish spiritual understanding will be given more revelation because they use what they have and bear fruit. Truth must be received into the heart, just like the seed is received by the soil. However, the purpose of the seed is to produce fruit unto harvest. Revelation knowledge is given for the purpose of shining in the dark. We do not receive spiritual revelation to keep it to ourselves or hide it under a bed. It is selfish to keep learning more and more without taking on the responsibility to share what we know.

Israel is located near two different kinds of seas. The Sea of Galilee flows into the Jordan River which gives life to the valley below. Eventually, the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea, where everything in it is completely dead. Living water, must flow in and out of a body of water to maintain life. Dead water flows in and has nowhere else to go. The same is true for spiritual revelation. What we receive, we must actively share with others like a light-giving lamp.

**25 To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them."**

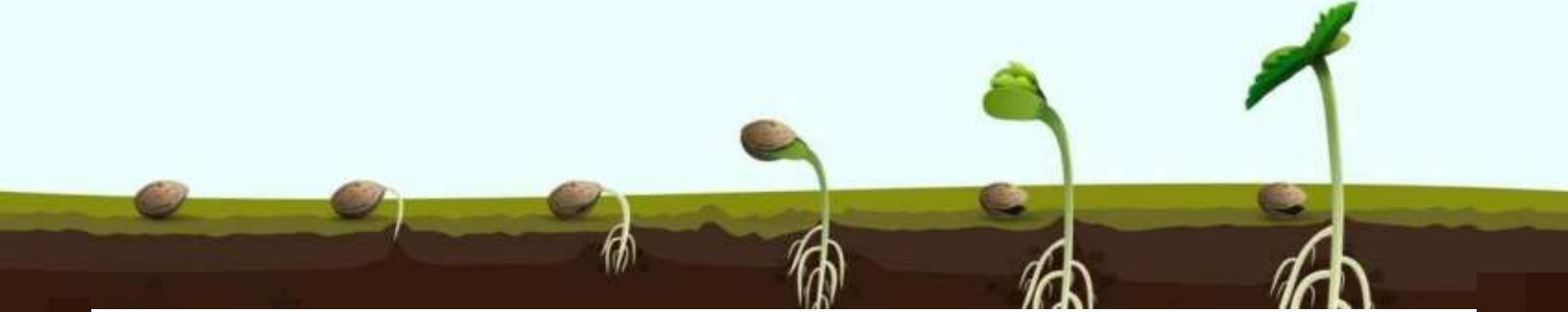
Spiritual growth is about desire and momentum. The more we desire revelation, is the more spiritual understanding we will receive. The more spiritual understanding we have, is the more we desire greater revelation.

The judgment of not desiring spiritual understanding, is the judgment of greater and increasing darkness. The Word of God will never return void. It will accomplish its intended purpose. To some, the Word will minister life, and to others, it will minister death. This is up to the heart of the hearer.

### **Parable of the Growing Seed**

**26 Jesus also said, "The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters seed on the ground. 27 Night and day, while he's asleep or awake,**





**the seed sprouts and grows, but he does not understand how it happens.**

Kingdom people are responsible for sowing the seed of God's Word into the hearts of others. We have no ability to make the seed grow and the seed has the ability in itself to spring forth, we are powerless to make anything happen. Moreover, we don't even understand how the seed comes to life in the human heart. This is a spiritual mystery that is known only to the Triune God. He knows all things and already knows who will believe and who will reject the Word of God. *The secret of growth is in the seed, not in the soil nor in the weather nor in the cultivating. These all help, but the seed spontaneously works according to its own nature.*<sup>35</sup>

**<sup>28</sup> The earth produces the crops on its own. First a leaf blade pushes through, then the heads of wheat are formed, and finally the grain ripens.**

Spiritual growth happens at its own pace and in its own time. Sometimes it will occur so slowly that we can't see anything happening. Stunningly, at the right moment, with time, we see a seed that we planted many years ago take root and the individual shows willingness to accept the Gospel of the Kingdom.

**<sup>29</sup> And as soon as the grain is ready, the farmer comes and harvests it with a sickle, for the harvest time has come."**

At this moment, we must be ready to harvest that seed through baptism and fertilize the new plant with genuine discipleship. When the harvest comes in, it can't be missed. It will be visible for all to see. This is the mystery of the Kingdom of God. It is the manifestation of the invisible into the visible, the intangible into the tangible.

### **Parable of the Mustard Seed**

**<sup>30</sup> Jesus said, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a mustard seed planted in the**

<sup>35</sup> Robertson, Archibald T. "The Gospel According to Mark: Word Pictures of the New Testament" Volume I (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930)





ground. It is the smallest of all seeds,<sup>32</sup> but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade."

### Will Kingdom change the world?

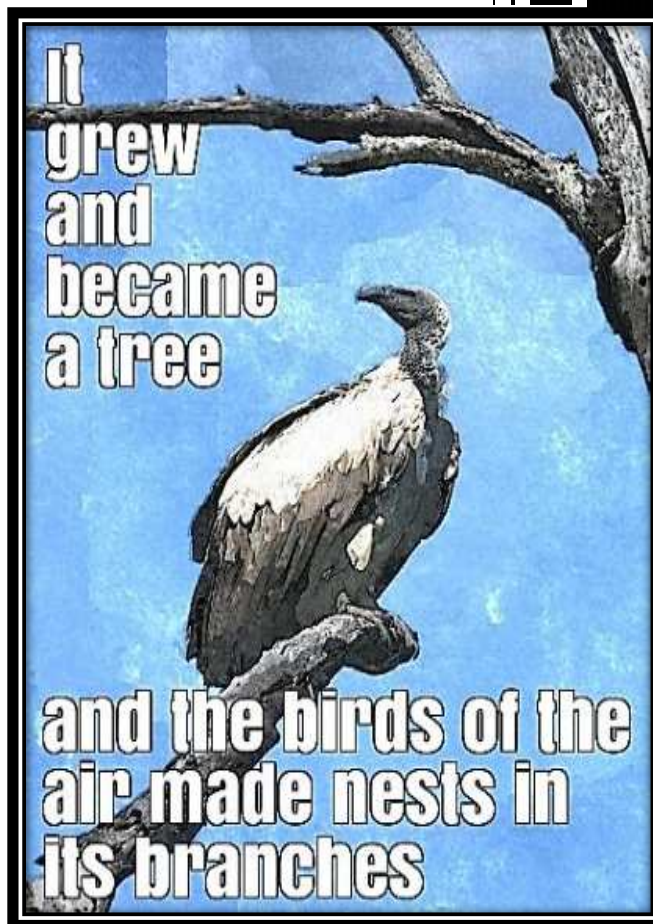
**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**

This parable might be interpreted as an encouraging prediction that the Kingdom of God will start small, but eventually make the world a better place in the end. The opposite is actually true if you take the time to read it carefully.

In this parable, a mysterious mustard seed, will produce a tree, that will provide shelter for the birds. First of all, a mustard seed is supposed to produce a bush, not an oversized, disfigured tree. Secondly, birds according to the previous "Parable of the Sower" are demonic in nature and come to destroy the influence of the Word. Demonic birds should not find a home in the Kingdom of God.

This parable is about the existence of a counterfeit dominion that parallels the authentic Kingdom. Satan will counterattack with a massive deception and will create a corrupt version of Christianity that will produce no transformation at all. *The growth of the kingdom will not result in the conversion of the world. In fact, some of the growth will give opportunity for Satan to get in and go to work!*<sup>36</sup>

In the counterfeit version of faith, the institutionalized church will save the world and over time the influence of the church will make the world better and better. In reality, the influence of the world, the flesh and devil will not only corrupt the earth but will greatly influence the authentic church as well. As



<sup>36</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)



# MYSTERY BABYLON

we get closer to the end, the authentic church will become pure and holy, while the counterfeit church will promote the doctrines of demons, and support the antichrist in murdering authentic believers.

This parable is expanded upon greatly in Matthew 13 but is first mentioned in the Gospel of Mark. The basic point of this brief parable is that not everything which grows in the heart, is rooted in the Word of God. There will be counterfeit seed that produces nothing of eternal value in the end. Matthew indicated that an enemy of Yahweh plants corrupt seed to contradict the good seed of the Kingdom.

***24 Here is another story Jesus told: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. 25 But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. 26 When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. 27 "The farmer's workers went to him and said, 'Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?' 28 ""An enemy has done this!" the farmer exclaimed. "Should we pull out the weeds?" they asked. 29 ""No," he replied, 'you'll uproot the wheat if you do. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.'" (Matthew 13)***

The true bride of Christ will always be accompanied by a counterfeit organization that will grow along with the good seed. Towards the end of the age, there will be two different representations of the church on the earth. The authentic church will be the bride of Christ; she will be ready and waiting for her husband without spot or wrinkle. The inauthentic church will be the whore of Babylon. She will persecute the authentic bride of Christ as she rides the beast's system.

***"The waters where the prostitute is ruling represent masses of people of every nation and language. 16 The scarlet beast and his ten horns all hate the prostitute. They will strip her naked, eat her flesh, and burn her remains with fire. 17 For God has put a plan into their minds, a plan that will carry out his purposes. They will agree to give their authority to the scarlet beast, and so the words of God will be fulfilled. 18 And this woman you saw in your vision represents the great city that rules over the kings of the world." (Revelation 17)***



Mystery  
Babylon

In the end, the counterfeit religious system called, “mystery Babylon”, according to some translations, will be consumed by the antichrist and the whore will die a horrible death.

**<sup>33</sup> Jesus used many similar stories and illustrations to teach the people as much as they could understand. <sup>34</sup> In fact, in his public ministry he never taught without using parables; but afterward, when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them.**

This section of Mark ends with the same account of why Yahshua used parables to teach the crowds. After the Pharisees accused Him of casting out demons with the power of Satan, Yahshua no longer spoke openly to the religious Jews in the synagogues. After this insulting accusation, Yahshua shifted the focus of His ministry exclusively to the crowds, and only spoke to them with parables in the open fields.

### **Jesus Calms the Storm**

**<sup>35</sup> As evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s cross to the other side of the lake.” <sup>36</sup> So they took Jesus in the boat and started out, leaving the crowds behind (although other boats followed).**

As this story unfolded, Yahshua commanded His disciples to take a boat to the other side of the lake. On the way, He took the opportunity to get some much-needed rest. It’s clearly outlined by the text, that the disciples knew Yahshua was with them in the boat. Regardless of whether Yahshua was aware of the coming storm, or not, the fact remained, when Yahweh Almighty is in the boat, the boat cannot sink.

### **The unseen resistance**

**PLEASE  
NOTE...**

The backdrop of the unseen world is never far from the mindset of Mark. By going to the other side, Christ was entering into a place where the Gospel was never preached before. This dark land was occupied by diabolical forces in opposition to the Kingdom of God. The demonic forces established in the region would therefore do anything they could to stop the Kingdom of God from overthrowing their generational stronghold on the land. Subsequently, many biblical scholars have correctly

Blessed be the Lord, my rock,  
who trains my hands for war,  
and my fingers for battle;



assumed that this storm was not caused by natural forces, but was supernaturally conjured up by unseen entities.

This was a graphic illustration of the persecution and tribulation that resisted the spread of the Gospel of the Kingdom. Yahshua promised His disciples that they would encounter diabolical pushback because of the Word of God. This is further intensified by preaching the Word in a region not yet reached for the Kingdom. *Jonah ended up in a storm because of his disobedience, but the disciples got into a storm because of their obedience to the Lord.*<sup>37</sup> We should never assume all spiritual resistance is the result of disobedience. Demonic resistance is often the greatest indicator that we are on the right track, following Yahshua closely.

**<sup>37</sup> But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water.**

The Sea of Galilee was known for sudden and horrific storms, as hot air from the desert suddenly mixed with cold air resting above the water. The majority of the disciples were all experienced fishermen who knew this lake better than anyone else, however, the ferocity of this storm caught them by surprise. Before they knew it, the boat was sinking, and they were filled with a supernatural feeling of dread and certain doom. This was a very unusual situation. How is it that men of faith and power, who previously exercised authority over demons, were so suddenly overcome with doom and desperation? The context of this story reveals that this was not a natural storm at all. It was a dangerously supernatural storm, intended to stop Yahshua from reaching the other side of the lake, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom.



**<sup>38</sup> Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, "Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?"**

<sup>37</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)

# "Peace Be Still"



At this point, the disciples were no longer trying to navigate the boat. They were completely given over to a spirit of fear and they ridiculously concluded death would be the only possible outcome in this horrific situation. At this point, their faith had completely collapsed. They were at the mercy of their unseen demonic enemies. They woke up Yahshua in utter desperation, accusing Him of not caring about their well-being. Their initial fear had turned to overwhelming frustration. The disciples were angry at Yahshua for getting them into this situation in the first place. They were even more aggravated because He was sleeping peacefully while they were all about to die!

**<sup>39</sup> When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Silence! Be still!"**

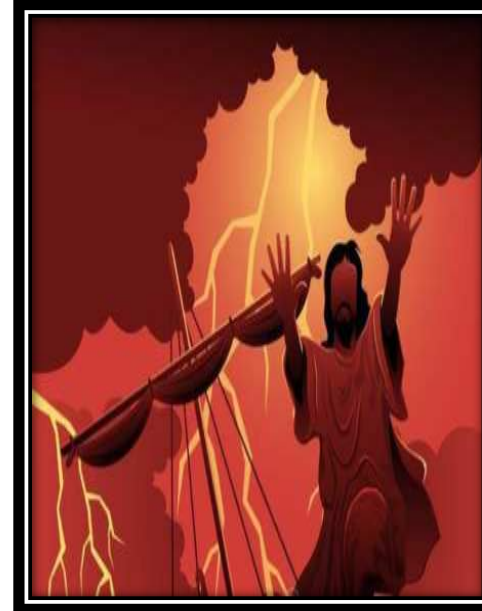
The words used by Yahshua were common to the text. At many points in the narrative thus far, He commanded demons to be quiet and no longer speak. In the exact manner, Yahshua also commanded the storm to be "muzzled" and be silent. The disciples had personally witnessed Yahshua command numerous demons to be still and be quiet, many times before. However, they never saw Him command a violently raging storm to be muzzled and see it immediately obey.

*Rebuked... "Peace, be still!" The same terminology was used when Jesus rebuked and silenced demons. This was a spiritual battle as much as a weather crisis. "Jesus addressed the raging storm as a 'force' threatening him and his disciples. The force of the sea was muzzled as Jesus subdued it with his sovereign word of authority."<sup>38</sup>*


**Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> Then he asked them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"**

If this was a test, the disciples failed miserably. At this point in their training, Christ expected far more from His chosen few. They were already given all the authority they needed. They also had experience in casting out demons. However, this level of aggressive spiritual warfare, caught them by

<sup>38</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)



# "Peace Be Still"

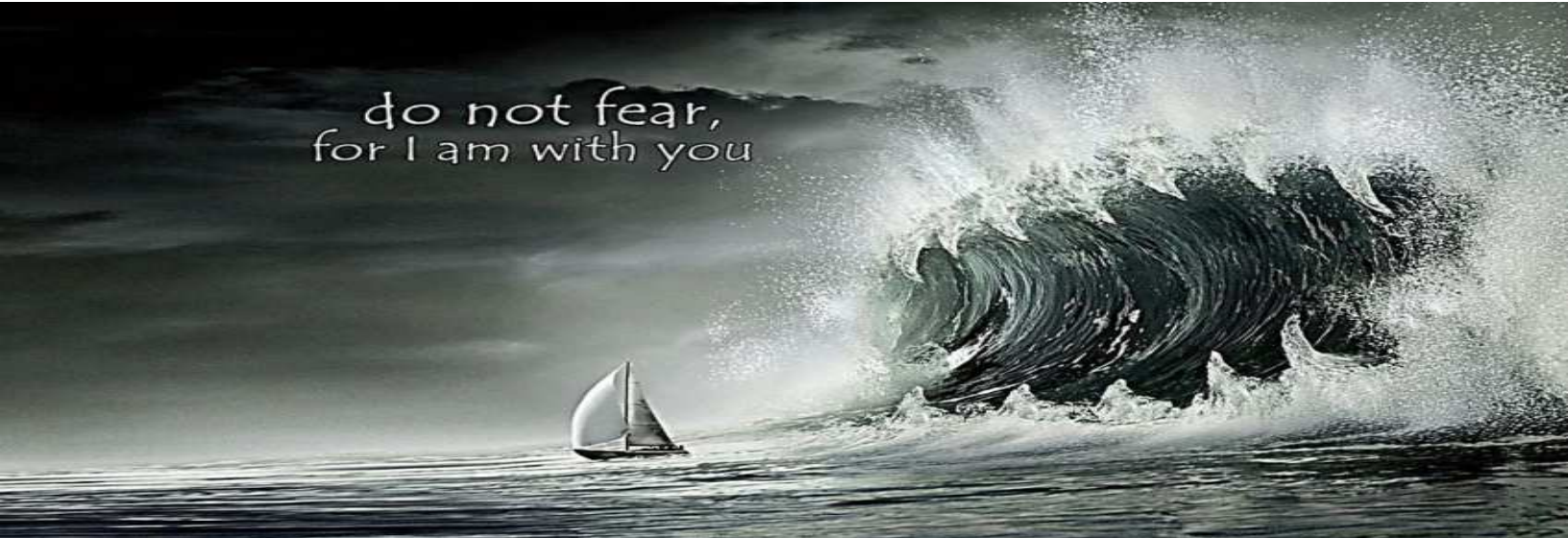


surprise. Up to now, they understood demons had the ability to live in people and could manifest in many different ways. They were accustomed to people screaming, falling, foaming, and even appearing to be dead, but this was the first time they ever encountered a demonic presence powerful enough to manipulate the weather and attack the disciples' boat with a vicious storm.

*Jesus could say they had no faith because they forgot the big picture. The disciples should have known that God would not allow the Messiah to perish in a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee. Could the story of Jesus possibly end with Him drowning in a boat accident on the Sea of Galilee? "Our fears are often intensely silly, and when we get over them, and ourselves look back upon them, we are full of shame that we should have been so foolish. Our Lord kindly censured their unbelief because it was unreasonable."<sup>39</sup>*

**<sup>41</sup> The disciples were absolutely terrified. "Who is this man?" they asked each other. "Even the wind and waves obey him!"**

It's fascinating how one form of fear gave way to another. At first, the disciples were terrified by the diabolical demonic power that conjured up the storm. Now, they were equally terrified at the amazing authority demonstrated by Yahshua as He rebuked the demonic power behind the raging sea. Slowly, the disciples are growing in revelation knowledge and gradually coming to understand the totality of who Yahshua really is. He is the God who parted the Red Sea before Moses. He is the same person who spoke over the chaos of the churning sea in Genesis and commanded it to be still. He is God, Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.



do not fear,  
for I am with you

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<sup>39</sup> Spurgeon, Charles Haddon "The New Park Street Pulpit" Volumes 1-6 and "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" Volumes 7-63 (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1990)

# Discussion



- (1) The Parable of the Soil illustrates the unseen nature of spiritual warfare and how Satan attempts to stop the Word of God from producing fruit in the life the believer. Do you see yourself in the illustrations of the different kinds of soil? Are you good soil? If not, what do you plan to do about it?**
- (2) According to the Parable of the Mustard Seed, as we get closer to the coming of Christ, the church will no longer influence the world, but the world will greatly influence the church. How can we apply this warning to our life as we see the signs of His coming intensify?**
- (3) As mentioned, Satan is constantly attacking the Word of God and infiltrating the church with false teachers. What does this say about your own personal study of the Scriptures and the urgency to know the Bible for yourself?**
- (4) The disciples were under severe spiritual attack during the demonically empowered storm. Why would they encounter such a tremendous storm when they were simply being obedient to the Word of Yahshua? Should we always expect blessings in response to our obedience?**



# DANGER



## Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Man

**5** So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasene's.

This region was on the eastern side of the Jordan River where 10 cities were located. This region had a mixed population of both Jews and Gentiles. The presence of so many pig farms indicated that the region was deeply rooted in paganism and void of spiritual light.





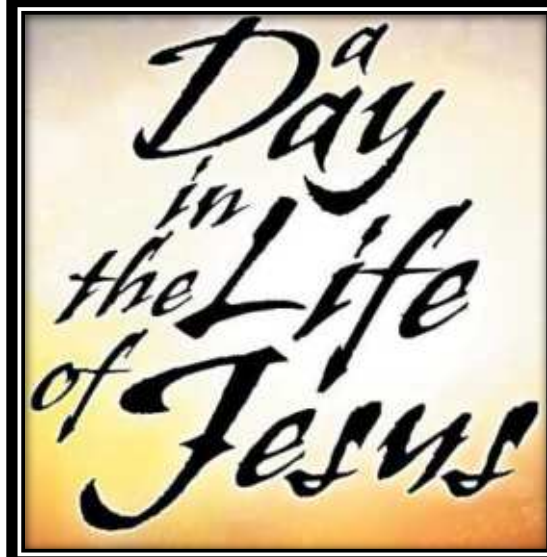
### Just a normal day's work

PLEASE  
NOTE...

This chapter is filled with the actions of 3 desperate individuals. The first story is about a desperate man who is filled with countless demons. The second story is about a desperate father with a dying daughter. The last story, focused on a desperate woman who was willing to risk her life to touch Yahshua. Perhaps this

was just a regular day's work for the Messiah, who destroyed the power of Satan everywhere He went.

This day, however, was super intense. Imagine encountering a life-threatening storm in the evening, only to be greeted on the other side of the lake with a wildly demonized man. Then, the disciples witnessed thousands of pigs commit suicide for some unknown reason. Finally, the people of the region kicked them out. Yet this was just another day in the life of the disciples.



**<sup>2</sup> When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from the tombs to meet him.**



The immediate nature of this event is lost in this simplified translation. The original Greek repetitively used the word "immediately" in the Gospel of Mark to illustrate that events happened quickly, one after the other. As soon as Yahshua put His foot on the land, He was approached by a desperate man in a desperate situation. He was so demonized that he lived among the dead. He likely chose this location because it was a great place to pick up other demons, as evil spirits accompanied the bodies of the deceased to their graves.

**<sup>3</sup> This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a**



**chain. <sup>4</sup> Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him.**

According to Mark’s description, this tragic individual, was living among the dead. He seemed like a character from a zombie movie. He demonstrated supernatural strength, far beyond the capacity of a normal human being. The ability to snap chains was evidence

that demons empowered him to escape from the local authorities and their unsuccessful effort to incarcerate him.

*At one time this man lived among others in the village. But his own irrational, wild behavior convinced the villagers that he was demon possessed, or at least insane. They bound him with chains to keep him from hurting others, but he broke the chains time and again. Finally, they drove him out of town and he lived in the village cemetery, a madman among the tombs, hurting the only person he could — himself.<sup>40</sup>*

**<sup>5</sup> Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones.**

This man was an obvious menace to his society because he constantly disturbed their peace. Furthermore, he offered up his blood to the demons that occupied him as their stronghold.

**<sup>6</sup> When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him.**

There was apparently some kind of unseen struggle occurring at this specific moment. If the man was completely under the control of the demons, why would he be running towards Yahshua and not away from Him? Secondly, why would the man “bow down” in a position of



<sup>40</sup> David Guzik “Blue Letter Bible Commentaries” (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 5



# What Is Your Name

worship, as stated in the original Greek language? Demons never worshipped Yahshua before, but were terrified by His presence. From these specific clues, we can speculate there was an invisible struggle between the will of the tormented man, against the will of his diabolic tormentors.



**<sup>7</sup> With a shriek, he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don't torture me!"**

At this exact moment, the consciousness of the suffering man was repressed, and the collective voice of the indwelling demon spirits spoke out in one accord. They begged Yahshua not to torment them before their appointed time. The knowledge of the demons was theologically accurate. They knew who Yahshua really was and what their eternal destiny would be.

The demons were also terrified with the thought of being exorcised from this man and expelled out of their home. These mysterious

creatures usually seek to express themselves in human bodies but will also live in animals and within geographical regions. All of this insightful information was revealed in this single encounter.

**<sup>8</sup> For Jesus had already said to the spirit, "Come out of the man, you evil spirit."**

The text did not specifically indicate when Yahshua commanded the demons to come out of the man. Perhaps, He instructed them to come out when He was still on the sea and commanded them to be muzzled. Regardless, the fact that they were being exorcised out of the man, left them in a state of fear and confusion. The Greek word for "come out" was written in a repetitive tense, which indicated that Yahshua said it more than once and the demons were willfully resisting.

**<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus demanded, "What is your name?"**

According to Jewish culture, when an exorcist knows a demon's name, they have authority over it. Perhaps, Christ demanded to know the name of the demonic infestation, to better understand their nature.

**And he replied, "My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man."**

This question gives the reader some important information concerning the desperate condition of this pitiful individual. He was the home of thousands of demonic spirits, who lived in him like a rooming house. Possibly, the name "Legion" was also intended to generate fear and communicate their immense power. A Roman legion was the most lethal fighting force in their time.

**<sup>10</sup> Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place.**

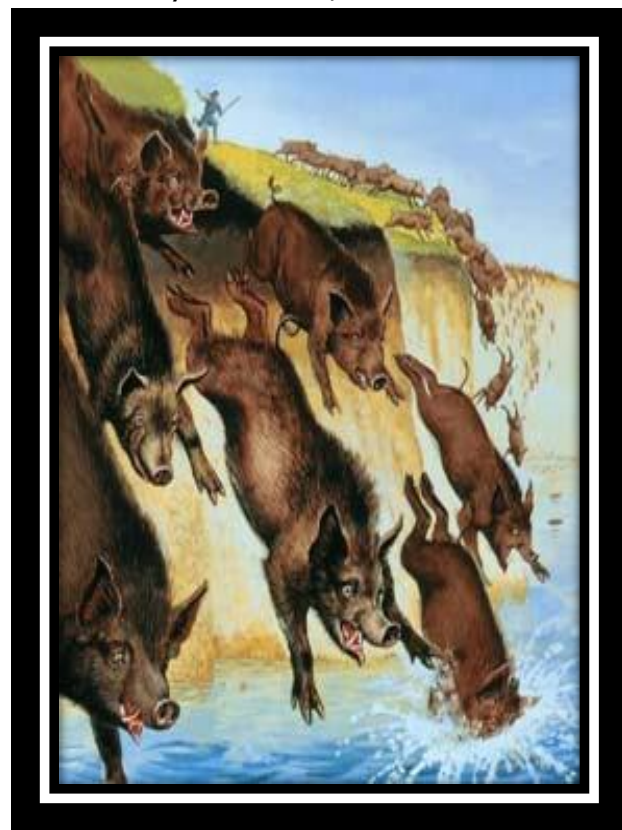
There is a geographical element to this narrative as well. The demons were connected to the region where they lived. They didn't want to be sent to a distant place. Without going too far beyond the text, the demons called this man their home and this specific region their neighbourhood. It's clear that they don't want to leave.

**<sup>11</sup> There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. <sup>12</sup> "Send us into those pigs," the spirits begged. "Let us enter them."**

The fact that so many pigs occupied this town illustrates the unclean nature of this entire region. As stated, the territory was inhabited by Gentiles, who purchased the pigs for meat. Raising pigs in the Land of Israel spiritually polluted the land and opened the door for demonic infestation. The Law of Moses was being trampled within the land given to Jewish people as their inheritance.

Their request to enter into the pigs was likely connected to their desire to stay in the land, near the graveyard. Moreover, this request indicated that demons would rather live in an animal if they could not occupy the body of a human host.

**<sup>13</sup> So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.**





Scholars are deeply divided over exactly what happened to the pigs and why the herd collectively decided to commit suicide rather than hosting thousands of demons. What we know for sure is that demons are real and not just metaphors for psychological disorders or

the existence of cosmic evil. A mental illness will not simultaneously cause thousands of pigs to run off a cliff in a single moment.

*This shows another reason why Jesus allowed the demons to enter the pigs — because He wanted everyone to know what the real intention of these demons was. They wanted to destroy the man just as they destroyed the pigs. Because men are made in the image of God, they could not have their way as easily with the man, but their intention was just the same: to completely destroy him.<sup>41</sup>*

**14 The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. 15 A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. 16 Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. 17 And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.**

The crowds were amazed at the authority of Yahshua, and the demonstration of power involved in the deliverance of this person, who was known by the entire region. On the other hand, the financial loss of thousands of pigs was a huge blow to the economy of this region, and they were afraid Yahshua would further disrupt their lifestyle with His preaching. Astonishingly, the people of this region rejected the Kingdom and demanded that Yahshua depart from their shores before more pigs were killed. It's amazing that these people were more concerned with their pigs, than the healing and deliverance of suffering people.

**18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. 19 But Jesus said, "No, go home to**

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<sup>41</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 5

**your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been.”**

The man who had been delivered of the demons begged Yahshua to allow him to become one of His disciples. Yet, He denied the man's request, and instead, instructed him to go home and show himself to his family. The man had every right to be disappointed and perhaps a little bitter; however, the news of his deliverance was too much to keep to himself. From that moment on, he became a powerful evangelist, telling everyone in the region about the great miracle he received at the hands of Yahshua.

**<sup>20</sup> So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.**

The man began an evangelistic tour that took him to all the 10 towns in the region. Near the Jordan river, on its east side, were 10 particularly wicked cities, because of the Greek influence in the area. The evangelistic effort of this man was quite impactful. The next time Yahshua returned to this region, He was greeted with thousands of desperate people, who were looking for a similar miracle.


### **Jesus Heals in Response to Faith**

**<sup>21</sup> Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore.**

The crowds were a huge part of Mark's narrative. They expressed the desperation of the people, and the struggle Yahshua and His disciples always had, even to have an uninterrupted moment of peace to themselves. The crowds were far from orderly. They became very aggressive at times and presented a real danger to Yahshua and also to others.

**<sup>22</sup> Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, <sup>23</sup> pleading fervently with him.**

Mark's Gospel progresses at a fast pace. The two miraculous stories act as bookends to one another. In the previous story, the most demonized man in the entire region pleaded at the feet of Yahshua for deliverance. In the next story, one of the most self-righteous men in the region, also pleaded at the feet of Yahshua for healing.



For Jairus, to publicly approach Yahshua and ask Him for His help, took earthshattering humility. By publicly coming to Yahshua, his reputation as a Pharisee and especially as an esteemed synagogue leader, was destroyed. *As synagogue-ruler he was a lay official responsible for supervision of the building and arranging the service.*<sup>42</sup> Like a modern-day mega-church pastor, being the leader of a synagogue was a prestigious position in the community that afforded Jairus a comfortable living. Meanwhile, the religious leaders from denominational head office, had officially excommunicated Yahshua from the synagogue system. There were to be absolutely no exceptions to their judgment. Nevertheless, as a desperate father, all Jairus cared about was the life of his beloved daughter. He loved her more than his comfortable career.

**"My little daughter is dying," he said. "Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live." <sup>24</sup> Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him.**

Without hesitation, Yahshua immediately departed with the synagogue leader to heal his sick daughter. The crowds also followed behind to see for themselves what would happen next. The crowds in the Gospel, represented the people who were always following, but never learning. As the aggravated multitude surrounded Yahshua on all sides, the procession aggressively pushed through the narrow streets, on the way to Jairus' house. The ever-present pressure caused by the desperate crowds was often unbearable, because so many people tried to touch Yahshua with their hands to receive the miracle they desired.

**<sup>25</sup> A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding.**

Mark introduced a nameless woman in this overflowing crowd, who suffered greatly from a chronic disease. This disease made her constantly "unclean" according to Jewish Law.

*By the very law of her people, she was divorced from her husband, and could not live in her home; she was ostracized from all society and must not come into contact with her old friends; she was excommunicated from the services of the synagogue, and thus shut out from the women's courts in the temple.*<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)

<sup>43</sup> Morgan, G. Campbell "The Gospel According to Mark" (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1927)

What made this situation so dangerous was that she also made Yahshua ritually unclean by touching Him, according to the Jewish Law. This made it impossible for Him to enter into the house of Jairus to heal his sick daughter.

**26 She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse.**

The constant bleeding was a destructive plague. This was the meaning of the Greek word *mastix*, which was used to describe her affliction. The word means, "the constant striking of a whip, used to torment a helpless prisoner". Like the demonically tormented man in the previous story, this woman was desperate to receive her healing, even if she was trampled in the crowd and died that day.

**27 She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe.**

*Because this woman's condition was embarrassing and because she was ceremonially unclean and would be condemned for touching Jesus or even being in a pressing crowd, she wanted to do this secretly.<sup>44</sup>*

The word used for "hem" was the Greek word *kraspedon*, which meant, the bottom edge of the skirt, which was an indication of personal authority in Jewish society. Similar, to when David cut off the hem of Saul's skirt and stripped him of his royal authority as the king, the hem had great meaning in Jewish culture.

**28 For she thought to herself, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed."**

Notice, she needed a personal encounter with Yahshua to be healed. Likewise, we all need a personal encounter with Yahshua to be saved. Being in a religious crowd is not enough. We must touch Him and be touched by Him, to be healed and transformed.



<sup>44</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 5



# WHO TOUCHED ME?

*There was no magic in the garments of Jesus. Perhaps there was superstition in the woman's mind, but Jesus honoured her darkened faith as in the case of Peter's shadow and Paul's handkerchief.<sup>45</sup>*

**<sup>29</sup> Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition. <sup>30</sup> Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my robe?"**

The moment she touched the hem of Christ's robe, she was **immediately** healed. As noted, this is Mark's favorite word in his Gospel account. The woman intended to touch Yahshua privately because she was ceremonially unclean and should not have been in the crowd in the first place. According to Jewish Law, if Yahshua was an ordinary Rabbi, the woman would have made Him unclean. He would then have to go home and remain isolated until he was purified. No wonder the poor woman was terrified of Yahshua and tried to hide in the great sea of people.

As mentioned, under the Law of Moses, sin was greater than the righteousness of the law. By the power of the Spirit who ministered through Yahshua, righteousness was greater than sin. The diseased woman could not make Yahshua unclean, because sin had no power to touch Him. In fact, His righteousness expelled or cast out the presence of sin, sickness, and demons from suffering people. She could not infect Yahshua with her infirmity. It was His righteousness that cast out her infirmity and made her well!

**<sup>31</sup> His disciples said to him, "Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?'" <sup>32</sup> But he kept on looking around to see who had done it.**

Mysteriously, Yahshua knew someone touched Him with faith. He felt the power leave His body. He didn't know who the person was, but continued to search for them until they were found. This strange situation demonstrated that it was actually the Holy Spirit who healed the people, as He rested upon Yahshua. This was always according to the will of the Father.

This healing was unlike any other in the Gospel. Mark suggested Yahshua noticed a surge of power that went out of His body. Yahshua had no intention to heal this woman, but the Father and the Spirit saw her great faith. Mark clearly connected the power of the Holy Spirit, with the healing and deliverance ministry of Yahshua. The Messiah was a man filled with the

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<sup>45</sup> Robertson, Archibald T. "The Gospel According to Mark: Word Pictures of the New Testament" Volume I (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930)

# WHO TOUCHED ME?

WHO TOUCHED ME?

WHO TOUCHED ME?





# Your Faith Has

overflowing power of the Holy Spirit. It was the presence of the Spirit, ministering through the human body of Yahshua, that touched the people in desperate need.

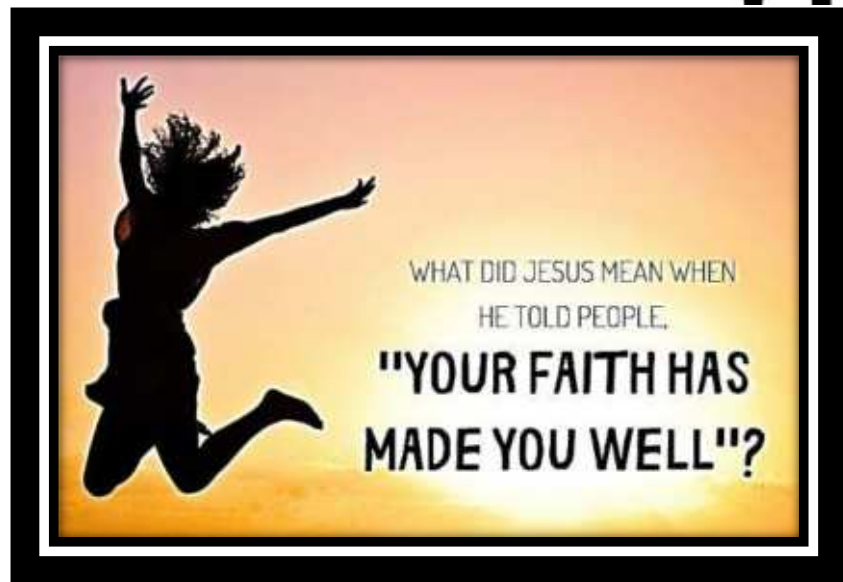
The determined woman did not touch Yahshua at all. She touched the hem of His clothing. Even so, her extended faith touched the heart of the Father, and the Spirit responded immediately to her need. The disciples were frustrated with the ridiculous nature of Yahshua asking "who touched Me?" Perhaps Yahshua should have said "who touched the Spirit" resting upon Me instead? *Augustine long ago said of this story, 'Flesh presses, faith touches.'... He can always distinguish between the jostle of a curious mob, and the agonized touch of a needy soul.*<sup>46</sup> Regardless, the slow-moving parade to Jairus' house was put on hold until this mystery was resolved.

**<sup>33</sup> Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done.**

Scholars are divided theologically over the idea that Yahshua did not know the woman's identity. Some say He knew all along but stopped for her sake. Others contend He needed time to understand exactly what had just happened. Questions like these are best reserved for eternity. What's noteworthy is that this woman was terrified. She wrongfully assumed she wrecked the parade to heal Jairus' daughter.

**<sup>34</sup> And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."**

Yahshua was on the way to heal the young daughter of a famous religious leader. On the way, He stopped to heal an old and despised woman, who would soon become a daughter of Yahweh. The fact that Yahshua took the time to personally speak to this woman, illustrated that everyone is important to the Father.



<sup>46</sup> Morgan, G. Campbell "The Gospel According to Mark" (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1927)

We are all broken people in need of a healing touch, regardless of who we are and where we come from.

The crowds followed Yahshua because the 12-year-old daughter of a rich and prominent man was dying. In the press, there was an old, despised woman who was also dying from a 12-year-old disease that constantly whipped her like a plague. In the eyes of the heavenly Father, both the little girl and the old woman were equally valuable.

**<sup>35</sup> While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, "Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now."**

**<sup>36</sup> But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just have faith."**



Just as the procession began to move once again, news came from Jairus', house, that his sick daughter was already dead. She was probably already dead, long before Yahshua stopped to speak to the bleeding woman. As Jairus's heart sank under the weight of this crushing news, Yahshua touched him and told him not to be afraid. The desperate old woman had "great faith" against all odds and received her miracle, would Jairus have the courage to also believe, when the situation seemed hopeless?

### **Faith over Fear**

PLEASE  
NOTE...

*Do not be afraid; only believe: Jesus told Jairus to do two things. First, to stop being afraid. It sounds almost cruel for Jesus to say this to a man who just lost his daughter, but Jesus knew that fear and faith don't go together. Before Jairus could really trust Jesus, he had to decide to put away fear. Second, Jesus told Jairus to only believe. Don't try to believe and be afraid at the same time. Don't try to believe and figure it all out. Don't try to believe and make sense of the delay. Instead, only believe.<sup>47</sup>*

<sup>47</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 5

# UN (BELIEF)

This is the test of faith that all disciples of Yahshua must endure, as we grow in our dedication to the Lord. We will all experience news that shatters our trust in God and ignites fear in our heart. At such a moment, we need to fight fear and hold onto faith. When the disciples were in the boat at the beginning of this long day, they were overwhelmed by the evidence that indicated they were all going to sink. What they failed to realize, as they evaluated all the negative evidence, was that Yahweh was with them in the boat. Just because He was silent at the moment, did not mean He was far away or had abandoned them. The teacher is always silent during a test. At times like this, we all need to resist fear and stand in faith. This was the spiritual warfare surfacing in Jairus' mind. Would he believe the report of the messenger, or would he stand on the Word of Yahshua?

**<sup>37</sup> Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James). <sup>38</sup> When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing. <sup>39</sup> He went inside and asked, "Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn't dead; she's only asleep."**

This was not just "faith talk", that brushed away the reality of the situation. Yahshua knew the child was physically dead, but physical death is just a minor inconvenience to Yahweh Almighty God. Next, He intentionally "excluded" those who were filled with doubtful curiosity, and "included" those who would stand with Him in faith. Even Yahshua needed to "kick out" the doubters!

**DOUBT**

**<sup>40</sup> The crowd laughed at him.**

The crowd had every logical reason to mock Yahshua. By now, the professional mourners had already arrived, and the doctors officially declared the child to be dead. The tearful lamenting had already begun, and the band was already playing funeral music.

*Since even the poorest man was required by common custom to hire a minimum of two fluteplayers and one professional mourner in the event of his wife's death, it is probable that one who held the rank of synagogue-ruler would be expected to hire a large number of professional mourners.<sup>48</sup>*

<sup>48</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)

Immediately, as Mark liked to say, Yahshua halted the solemn celebration and told everyone it was all unnecessary. The crowds thought to themselves, "who does this man think He is"? What right does He have to interrupt a grave occasion like a funeral?

**But he made them all leave, and he took the girl's father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying.**

It was pointless to have mockers and doubters occupy the precious space in the small bedroom. They would only discourage the dead girl's parents from believing, at this critical moment.

**<sup>41</sup> Holding her hand, he said to her, "Talitha koum," which means "Little girl, get up!" <sup>42</sup> And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed. <sup>43</sup> Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone what had happened, and then he told them to give her something to eat.**



This was an incredibly chaotic day in the life of Yahshua. A young girl who gave her parents 12 years of joy was resurrected from the dead, while a woman who experienced 12 years of suffering was resurrected from her torment. Jairus' daughter was socially significant and a valuable member of the community, while the old woman was insignificant, and a despised member of her community. Regardless, both were significant and valuable to our loving Father.

Faith



VS.

Fear

# Discussion



- (1) For the Jewish people, the presence of so many pigs in their land indicated something ominous about the nature of the region. What was the possible connection between the presence of thousands of pigs and the *legion* of thousands of demons?**
- (2) According to Mark, there is a cost associated with following Yahshua. For Jairus, his faith would cost him his job as the synagogue leader. For the woman, she risked her life in the crowd to simply touch the Messiah. Has there been a genuine cost in your decision to follow Yahshua? If not, should there be?**
- (3) If Yahshua is Yahweh and Yahweh knows everything (omniscient), why does Christ ask the disciples, "Who touched Me"? Did He truly not know who touched Him?**
- (4) Jairus had to confront his greatest fear by standing in faith after his daughter died. Discuss a time in your life where you needed to stand in faith in a time of personal crisis.**



# Jesus nearly thrown off a cliff

## Nazareth

### Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

**6** Jesus left that part of the country and returned with his disciples to Nazareth, his hometown.



Mark previously indicated that Yahshua moved His ministry headquarters to the town of Capernaum. In this chapter, Christ has returned home after being away for an extended period of time. Surely the inhabitants of Nazareth all heard stories about their hometown boy, who became a famous Rabbi, in the big city.

**<sup>2</sup> The next Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.**

Because Nazareth was such a small town, perhaps their local leaders were not aware that Yahshua was no longer welcomed in the synagogues, in the larger towns. At first, Yahshua was welcomed like a hometown hero, but the scepticism lingered in the crowd. Because His family had such a scandalous reputation in their small community, many doubted He could really be the Messiah.

**They asked, "Where did he get all this wisdom and the power to perform such miracles?"**

During His stay in Nazareth, Yahshua demonstrated both His wisdom and miracle working power. There was clearly a demonstration of signs and wonders to validate the message of the Kingdom. These signs were not on the same level as when He raised the dead in Capernaum. It seemed there was an underlying resistance to His message and a subtle feeling of doubt and unbelief lingering in His hometown. Regardless of the signs that followed, the people of Nazareth rejected His claim to be the Messiah.

**<sup>3</sup> Then they scoffed, "He's just a carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters live right here among us." They were deeply offended and refused to believe in him.**

Mark mentions that they said, "He is just a carpenter". Yahshua was probably a skilled builder. As the oldest son, it was His responsibility to replace Joseph when he died, as the next head of the family business. A carpenter was a builder in Jewish society who worked with both wood and stone. It was backbreaking work, surely beneath the social significance of an honored Rabbi. Furthermore, if Yahshua was such a miracle worker, why would He wait until now to demonstrate His power? If He could, why did He not raise Joseph from the dead? Where was His miracle working power when His family struggled?

Another insight into their collective rejection was rooted in Yahshua mockingly being called the "son of Mary" and not the "son of Joseph". Many





Biblical scholars view this as an insult, which was intended to remind Him that He was not the legitimate biological son of Joseph.

*The additional phrase 'the son of Mary' is probably disparaging. It was contrary to Jewish usage to describe a man as the son of his mother, even when she was a widow, except in insulting terms. Rumors to the effect that Jesus was illegitimate appear to have circulated in his own lifetime and may lie behind this reference as well.*<sup>49</sup>



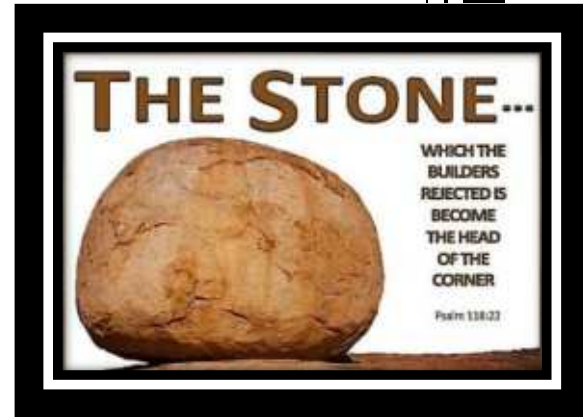
### ***Who could believe the message?***

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The idea that the crowds in Nazareth became offended was literally translated as they "**stumbled**". The Greek word Mark used was *skandalizo*, from which we get the English word scandalize. In essence, Yahshua's claim was a scandal in the little town of Nazareth. The Message of the Gospel was particularly hard to be received by the people who knew Yahshua the best. Until the Holy Spirit rested upon Him, He did nothing supernatural for approximately 30 years. Then, He suddenly closed His carpenter's shop and went into the wilderness to be baptized by John. This all happened very suddenly, and the people had no time to adjust. The next thing the people of Nazareth heard was that their hometown boy was casting out demons, healing the sick, and raising the dead. This was too much for them to believe, so they "stumbled" into unbelief.

*But to Israel and Judah  
he will be a stone that makes people stumble,  
a rock that makes them fall.  
And for the people of Jerusalem  
he will be a trap and a snare.  
Many will stumble and fall,  
never to rise again. (Isaiah 8:14-15)*

The story of a small-town boy from a ghetto like Nazareth, who made it big as a famous Rabbi, was more than the common "country folks" could accept. Things like this did not happen in Nazareth.



<sup>49</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)



# “CAN ANYTHING GOOD COME OUT OF NAZARETH?”

Even an honest man like Nathanael had his doubts when he heard that the Messiah came from Nazareth.

***45 Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, “We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.” 46 “Nazareth!” exclaimed Nathanael. “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” “Come and see for yourself,” Philip replied. (John 1)***

Who could believe such a story? Yahshua was not overly attractive, like King David was, not was He an outstanding warrior who promised to kill all the enemies of Israel. He was just a humble Rabbi who told the nation that He was their promised Messiah.

***Who has believed our message?***

***To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm? 2 My servant grew up in the Lord’s presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.3 He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. (Isaiah 53)***

For the people of His hometown, the message of the Gospel pushed them too far and they could not believe. They already assumed they knew everything they needed to know about Yahshua and His scandalous family. Their familiarity with Him, made it very difficult for them to come to faith in Christ, as the Messiah.

**WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR  
MESSAGE? AND TO WHOM  
HAS THE ARM OF THE  
LORD BEEN REVEALED?**

**- ISAIAH 53:1**



**4 Then Jesus told them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his relatives and his own family.”**

Familiarity implied a sense of close or intimate knowledge about a person. The people of Nazareth, especially the family members of Yahshua, assumed they knew Him so well, He could not possibly be the “man” He claimed to be. As for the others, they doubted that the Messiah could ever come from a low-class place, like Nazareth.

# “CAN ANYTHING GOOD COME OUT OF NAZARETH?”

# Unbelief?

Yahshua traveled to distant villages where He casted out demons, healed the sick, and preached the Kingdom of God. In these distant communities, He was immediately accepted and respected. However, in His hometown, He was rejected. Many people had become so familiar with Yahshua, they were unable to listen to Him with an open mind and thoughtfully evaluate the message He preached.

In our contemporary culture, we suffer with the same familiarity that the people of Nazareth were plagued with. The Western world has heard about Christ so much, our culture's familiarity with who they think Yahshua really is, has turned out to be a stumbling block preventing people from really believing and authentically being saved. Many people think they already know who Yahshua is, and this has prevented them from genuinely knowing who He really is.

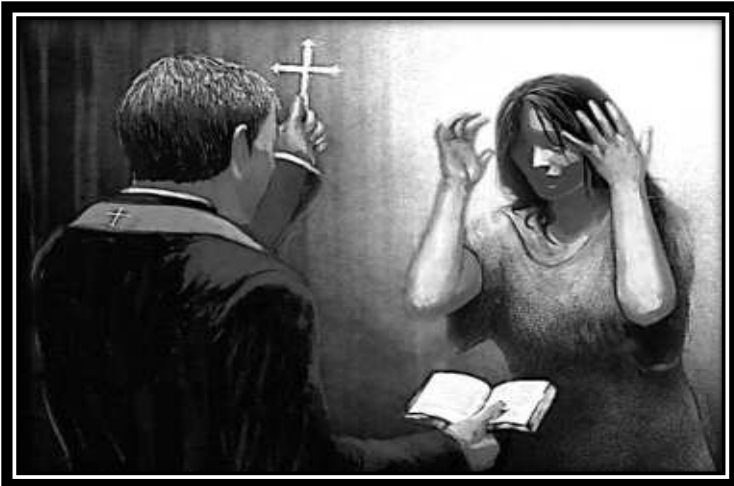
**<sup>5</sup> And because of their unbelief, he couldn't do any miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them. <sup>6</sup> And he was amazed at their unbelief.**

Their unbelief did not hinder the power of Yahshua or lessen His ability to do anything. It was their unwillingness to receive that stifled the desire of the Spirit to manifest the Kingdom among them, in a significant way. Holy Spirit will not force Himself upon anyone against their will. Demonic spirits force themselves upon people, but the Holy Spirit will not operate in such a manner.

Unbelief is not the same as having "no faith". When people have no faith it's a statement of indifference, when they just don't know what to believe. The people of Nazareth were essentially like the Pharisees. They evaluated the evidence and concluded that Yahshua was not the Messiah. Their unbelief actually worked in the opposite direction of belief. Interestingly, they placed their faith in doubt, and came to the firm conclusion that His message was not true. Holy Spirit will not work with such people. He will not undermine their God-given right to choose between good and evil.

At this point, Yahshua was amazed because He saw something He did not see before. The unbelief of the people of Nazareth was shocking because they had already made up their minds concerning the Gospel, and nothing would ever change it.

**Faith!**  
**Unbelief?**



According to the Scriptures, there were two things that made Yahshua marvel, great faith, and great unbelief. These were equally astonishing because it took great faith to believe the Word of God, and it took great determination to doubt the power of His miracles.

## **Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Disciples**

**Then Jesus went from village to village, teaching the people. <sup>7</sup> And he called his twelve disciples together and began sending them out two by two, giving them authority to cast out evil spirits.**

Notice, the first sign mentioned in the Gospel of Mark as a validation of the Kingdom of God, was the authority to cast out demons. The Greek word for being "sent out" is *apostello* which means "sent one". The 12 disciples were personally selected and sent out to do the work of the Kingdom of God.

According to the Law of Moses, to establish a truth there needed to be two witnesses who were willing to testify. The testimony of the two witnesses as they cast out demons was a clear indication that the Gospel of the Kingdom was gaining ground, because the Messiah had finally arrived.

***<sup>15</sup> "You must not convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of only one witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. (Deuteronomy 19)***

**<sup>8</sup> He told them to take nothing for their journey except a walking stick—no food, no traveler's bag, no money. <sup>9</sup> He allowed them to wear sandals but not to take a change of clothes.**

In their initial training, the disciples had to learn to live by faith and depended exclusively on the provision of the Father as they ventured off into ministry. He taught them to pray, ask and believe. Now they had the perfect opportunity to practice what they learned, in the real world.

**COME OUT  
IN JESUS NAME**

**He gave them  
authority to  
cast out  
demons**

# SHAKE THE DUST

**10 "Wherever you go," he said, "stay in the same house until you leave town.**

When on the mission field, they were instructed to stay where they were welcomed and not to seek better accommodations if a better option became available. They were supposed to be soldiers on a mission and not travel with the mindset of pampered tourists.

**11 But if any place refuses to welcome you or listen to you, shake its dust from your feet as you leave to show that you have abandoned those people to their fate."**

The demonstration of shaking dust off of your feet, illustrated that horrific judgment would come to a town for rejecting the message of the Kingdom. The approaching punishment would be so awful, you would not even want the dust from such a despicable place, on the bottom of your shoes. This was already a long-established practice in Jewish society.

*In that day, if Jewish people had to go in or through a Gentile city, as they left they would shake the dust off their feet. It was a gesture that said, "We don't want to take anything from this Gentile city with us." Essentially, Jesus told them to regard a Jewish city that rejects their message as if it were a Gentile city.<sup>50</sup>*

The Gospel of the Kingdom made both Jews and Gentiles into a New Creation. Formally, only the Jews viewed themselves as the people of Yahweh. Now that the Christ had arrived, the new people of God included anyone who responded openly to the message of the Messiah. Those who rejected the Gospel, both Jews and Gentiles, were now outside of the New Covenant and stood under the looming shadow of coming judgment.

**12 So the disciples went out, telling everyone they met to repent of their sins and turn to God. 13 And they cast out many demons and healed many sick people, anointing them with olive oil.**

The disciples went off on their mission doing exactly what Yahshua had instructed them to do. Notice the order of operation. First, they preached repentance to everyone because the Kingdom had come. Then, they cast out demons and healed the sick, to prove the authority of the message.

Their ministry validated their message. Notice, the disciples were not sent out to convince, seduce or manipulate the masses. They were just sent out

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<sup>50</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 6

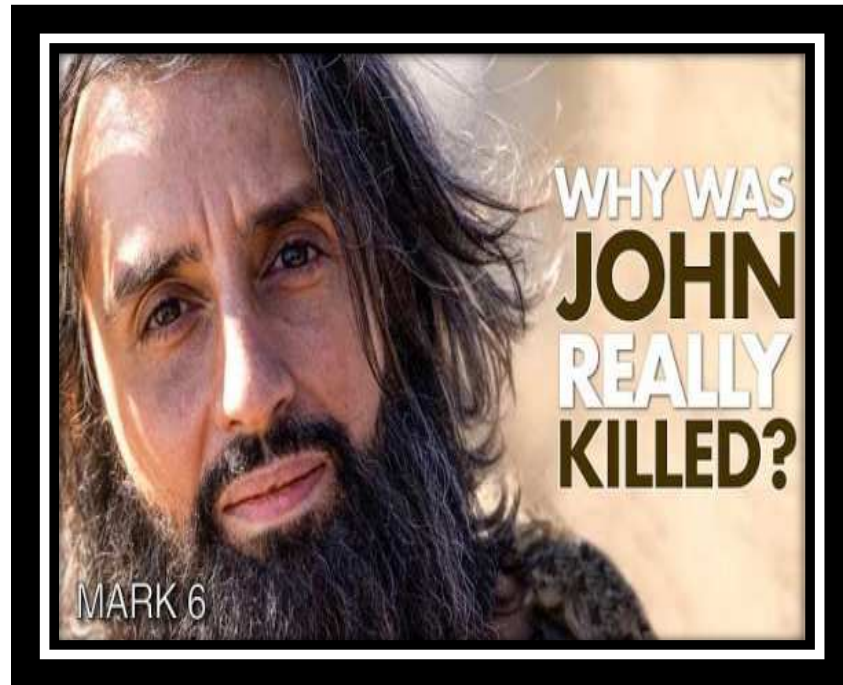
# OFF YOUR FEET

to preach the message. How people responded was up to them. The messenger was only responsible for delivering the message correctly.

## **The Death of John the Baptist**

**<sup>14</sup> Herod Antipas, the king, soon heard about Jesus, because everyone was talking about him.**

Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great who was famous for expanding the Temple complex in Jerusalem. After the death of Herod the Great, his kingdom was divided into 3 sections among his 3 sons. Herod Antipas was made the ruler of the region of Galilee. He was a contemptible individual who was particularly despised by John the Baptist, because Antipas divorced his legal wife unlawfully and married his own brother's wife.



Soon, news of the ministry of Yahshua reached the highest places in Jewish society. Herod Antipas was particularly interested in this traveling Rabbi from Nazareth. He was fearful that John the Baptist had returned to haunt him.

**Some were saying, "This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead. That is why he can do such miracles." <sup>15</sup> Others said, "He's the prophet Elijah." Still others said, "He's a prophet like the other great prophets of the past." <sup>16</sup> When Herod heard about Jesus, he said, "John, the man I beheaded, has come back from the dead."**

Herod was terrified that Yahshua was a reincarnation of John the Baptist who he had killed as a reward for a dancing girl's erotic performance. Mark will use this opportunity to tell his audience exactly what happened to John and how he died.

**<sup>17</sup> For Herod had sent soldiers to arrest and imprison John as a favor to Herodias. She had been his brother Philip's wife, but Herod had**

**married her. <sup>18</sup> John had been telling Herod, "It is against God's law for you to marry your brother's wife."**

John the Baptist spoke out against Herod's unlawful marriage, and this enraged his wife who demanded that John be arrested for his moral condemnation of their ruler. However, Herod had a strange fascination with John and treated him with a certain level of respect.

**<sup>19</sup> So Herodias bore a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But without Herod's approval she was powerless, <sup>20</sup> for Herod respected John; and knowing that he was a good and holy man, he protected him. Herod was greatly disturbed whenever he talked with John, but even so, he liked to listen to him.**

This section of the story was quite fascinating. Herod refused to execute John but still had him arrested. He would intermittently go to John to listen to him in prison. He was always greatly disturbed by what John said about him. The text indicates that Herod respected John and knew he was a holy man, but he still did not repent of his sin. He simply remained disturbed about his sin, but did nothing to change his situation.

*More weak than cruel, Herod listened to John with an undeniable fascination. John's word left him perplexed, and in anguish. Yet he found a strange pleasure in the authoritative preaching of this holy man, whose stringent life gave added power to his probing word. Too weak to follow John's counsel, he nevertheless had to listen.<sup>51</sup>*

**<sup>21</sup> Herodias's chance finally came on Herod's birthday. He gave a party for his high government officials, army officers, and the leading citizens of Galilee. <sup>22</sup> Then his daughter, also named Herodias, came in and performed a dance that greatly pleased Herod and his guests. "Ask me for anything you like," the king said to the girl, "and I will give it to you." <sup>23</sup> He even vowed, "I will give you whatever you ask, up to half my kingdom!"**

**<sup>24</sup> She went out and asked her mother, "What should I ask for?"**

John preached a message of repentance that included everyone, even the politically powerful. He spoke against sin regardless of who they were or how much power they had. Publicly calling the king a sinner, which undermined the legality of his marriage, made John the enemy of the queen. This battle was undoubtedly connected to the well-known struggle between Queen

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<sup>51</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)

Jezebel and Elijah. When you speak out against the rich and powerful, you should be ready to die. This was a useful life-lesson for the disciples to embrace.

**Her mother told her, "Ask for the head of John the Baptist!"<sup>25</sup> So the girl hurried back to the king and told him, "I want the head of John the Baptist, right now, on a tray!"**

Herod respected and feared John the Baptist, but at the same time, he did not fear Yahweh. When pressed, he was more intimidated by the opinion of his guests, than the judgment of God.

**<sup>26</sup> Then the king deeply regretted what he had said; but because of the vows he had made in front of his guests, he couldn't refuse her.**

*The depth of distress experienced by Herod at Salome's request for the head of John the Baptist is expressed graphically by the Greek word **perilypos**, 'greatly distressed'. This is the same word used to describe Jesus' agony in Gethsemane.<sup>52</sup>*

**<sup>27</sup> So he immediately sent an executioner to the prison to cut off John's head and bring it to him. The soldier beheaded John in the prison, <sup>28</sup> brought his head on a tray, and gave it to the girl, who took it to her mother. <sup>29</sup> When John's disciples heard what had happened, they came to get his body and buried it in a tomb.**

*Interestingly, Herod and Herodias received their just reward for their crime against John. In order to take his brother's wife Herodias, Herod put away his first wife, a princess from a neighboring kingdom to the east. Her father was offended, and came against Herod with an army, defeating him in battle. Then his brother Agrippa accused him of treason against Rome, and he was banished into the distant Roman province of Gaul, where Herod and Herodias committed suicide.<sup>53</sup>*

## **Jesus Feeds Five Thousand**

**<sup>30</sup> The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because**

<sup>52</sup> Wessel, Walter W. "Mark: The Expositor's Bible Commentary" Volume 8 (Matthew-Luke) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984)

<sup>53</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 6





**there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. <sup>32</sup> So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone.**

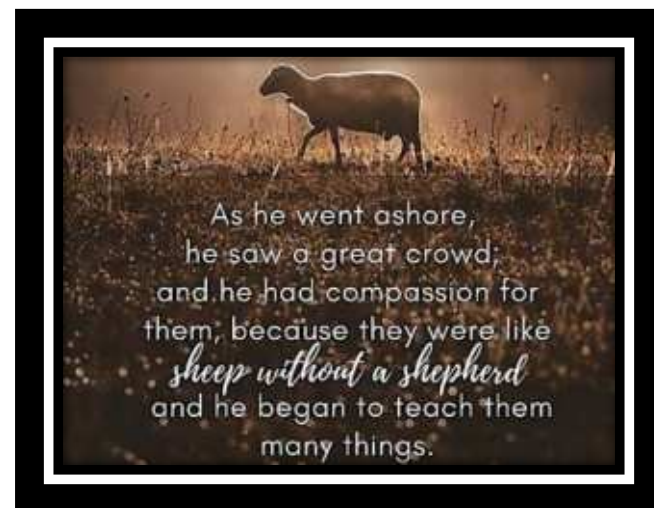
When the apostles came home, after being "sent out" on their mission trip, they returned with amazing stories to share with Yahshua. They needed to rest and recuperate for a season, so they all departed on a boat to get away from the crowds. The fact that the disciples could not even eat together illustrated how demanding their lifestyle had become. While Yahshua often showed compassion to the crowds, there were times when He needed to protect the mental and spiritual health of His disciples.

**<sup>33</sup> But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup> Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.**

The anticipation of the crowds was so great that they ran ahead of the boat and reached to the other side of the lake before they landed. The grace and compassion of Yahshua overwhelmed Him and He was compelled to minister to the spiritually hungry multitude.

"Sheep without a shepherd" was a common term used many times in the Old Testament. The prophet Zachariah blamed the religious leaders for the lost condition of the sheep of Israel.

**So my people are wandering like lost sheep; they are attacked because they have no shepherd.<sup>3</sup> "My anger burns against your shepherds, and I will punish these leaders. For the Lord of Heaven's Armies has arrived to look after Judah, his flock. He will make them strong and glorious, like a proud warhorse in battle. (Zechariah 10)**



Because the people were not being protected by the religious system, they were vulnerable



to the attack of spiritual wolves. Instead of protecting the sheep, the religious system actually abused and exploited them.

*Then this message came to me from the Lord: <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? <sup>3</sup> You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. <sup>4</sup> You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with harshness and cruelty. <sup>5</sup> So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd, and they are easy prey for any wild animal. <sup>6</sup> They have wandered through all the mountains and all the hills, across the face of the earth, yet no one has gone to search for them. (Ezekiel 34)*

**So he began teaching them many things.**

The people pressed Yahshua for physical healing and deliverance. However, Yahshua saw a more pressing need than that. What the people needed was the Word of God. They were blind and needed sight. Without spiritual vision, they were destined to eternally perish, even if they were physically healed and delivered.

**<sup>35</sup> Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. <sup>36</sup> Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something to eat."**

Notice, that this crowd had run around the lake to meet Yahshua earlier, and now spent the entire day with Him being ministered to. They were motivated by spiritual hunger to listen to the Gospel of the Kingdom. On the other hand, the disciples recognized that this multitude could not last very long without food and would soon become too weak to return home.

### **Feeding the people in the wilderness**

There was a unique historically Jewish undertone to what was happening as the crowds followed Yahshua into the wilderness. It should have reminded them of when Israel followed Moses out of Egypt. The Messiah was far greater than Moses, because Moses told the people that another prophet would come.

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He would speak to them with the voice of Yahweh. He would give them the Word of Yahweh. In fact, **He would be Yahweh.**

***15** Moses continued, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. **16** For this is what you yourselves requested of the Lord your God when you were assembled at Mount Sinai. You said, 'Don't let us hear the voice of the Lord our God anymore or see this blazing fire, for we will die.'*

The people were unable to hear the voice of God in the wilderness because His unapproachable glory caused them to hide like Adam did in Eden. Yahweh needed to speak with His people in a way they could understand. So, Yahweh became a man, and manifested Himself in the person of Yahshua.

***17** "Then the Lord said to me, 'What they have said is right. **18** I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him. **19** I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf. (Deuteronomy 18)*

Yahshua wanted the people of Israel to realize that He was the Messiah whom Moses pointed to. As the Messiah, He was exponentially superior. Moses was like a god to the Israelite people, because of the mighty miracles attributed to his ministry. He was most famous because he fed the people manna in the wilderness and parted the Red Sea. Moses didn't actually do these miracles; it was Yahweh all along. Nevertheless, the people wrongly attributed these signs and wonders to Moses when the glory should have gone exclusively to Yahweh. To reveal to the people exactly who He was, Yahshua did much greater miracles than Moses, so that everyone paying attention would clearly see that **Yahshua is Yahweh** the Messiah.



**"With what?" they asked. "We'd have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people!"**

The disciples were concerned about the welfare of the crowds. They sat under Yahshua's teaching all day long.

Scholars estimated it would have taken approximately a full year's wages of a Roman soldier, to pay for enough bread to feed a crowd of this size. The disciples did not have that kind of money lying around. Even if they did, there was no place to buy food in the wilderness.

How could the disciples feed the multitudes in the wilderness? Did Yahshua think they were Moses? Perhaps they were frustrated by the ridiculous nature of this request.

**<sup>38</sup> "How much bread do you have?" he asked. "Go and find out." They came back and reported, "We have five loaves of bread and two fish."**

Yahshua expected the disciples to begin with what they had. They just had a tiny lunch, but a little goes a long way when faith is involved.

**<sup>39</sup> Then Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup> So they sat down in groups of fifty or a hundred.**

The crowds represented the lifestyle of "sheep without a shepherd". They were consumed with chaos. In the beginning, Yahweh spoke order into the creation which was also in the midst of chaos. This is essentially what the Gospel does in the life of the believer. It brings order into chaos and calms the raging storms of uncontrolled human desires.

*The ancient Greek word for groups "is a very pictorial word. It is the normal Greek word for the rows of vegetables in the vegetable garden. When you looked at the little groups, as they sat there in their orderly rows, they looked for all the world like the rows*



*of vegetables in a series of garden plots.<sup>54</sup>*

**41 Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. He also divided the fish for everyone to share. 42 They all ate as much as they wanted, 43 and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. 44 A total of 5,000 men and their families were fed.**



When Moses led the children of Israel into the wilderness, Yahweh provided bread from heaven. Yahshua was the bread that came down from heaven, according to John. Moreover, Yahshua is Yahweh and therefore has the ability to supernaturally feed the multitudes Himself. As He broke the bread, it continually multiplied. The more He broke it, the more bread miraculously appeared. This was a sure sign that the one greater than Moses had really arrived.

The 12 baskets of food remaining, which were actually huge harvesting style containers, demonstrated the sufficiency of God. He provided for their needs and made room for more. Some scholars see the 12 baskets as a subtle connection to the 12 tribes of Israel. This may yet be another clue which pointed to the wilderness experience of Israel. Mark highlighted this connection, because Yahshua expected the crowd to connect the dots.

### **Jesus Walks on Water**

**45 Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home. 46 After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray.**

Repeatedly, Mark used the word "immediately" to emphasise the intentionality of Yahshua. Yahweh is always working; therefore, Christ was always on the move. He had no time to squander. He needed to be alone with the Father to pray and the disciples needed time away from the crowds.

<sup>54</sup> Barclay, William "The Gospel of Mark" (The New Daily Study Bible) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975)



Yahshua finally ended the day by sending His disciples away alone as He distracted the crowds.

**<sup>47</sup> Late that night, the disciples were in their boat in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on land. <sup>48</sup> He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves.**

This is the second story in Mark's Gospel involving a storm. In the first storm, Yahshua was with the disciples in the boat, but in the second storm He is watching from a distance. Christ intended to develop the faith of His disciples and allowed them to struggle against the deadly storm alone, for many hours straight.

**About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. He intended to go past them, <sup>49</sup> but when they saw him walking on the water, they cried out in terror, thinking he was a ghost.**

Mark clearly mentions that Christ intended to walk straight past the disciples, which allowed them the opportunity to figure out the situation for themselves. Authentic discipleship is not about taking care of everyone's problems. Real discipleship must give space for people to grow in their responsibility, capacity, maturity, and faith.

The fact that they believed Yahshua was a ghost showed their lingering immaturity. They saw the miracles He performed, but still did not have the spiritual capacity to understand who He was. Seeing Him walking on the water, was still another clue, to who this man really was.

**<sup>50</sup> They were all terrified when they saw him. But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage! I am here!" <sup>51</sup> Then he climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped.**

Moses parted the Red Sea, but Yahshua walked on water. The prophet greater than Moses had arrived. This miracle pointed to another, greater, Exodus that was about to occur.

# CHRIST WALKS ON THE WATER



# CHRIST WALKS ON THE WATER

## Yahshua walked on water

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For the Jewish people, the parting of the Red Sea was the most significant demonstration of God's power in their deliverance from Egypt. This mighty miracle forever connected them to the amazing power of Yahweh and His ability to deliver His people from the most tragic circumstances.

Over time, Jewish superstition wrongfully attributed this great miracle to Moses. In a strange way, they

believed it was the power of Moses that actually parted the Red Sea. By failing to give God the glory He deserved, Moses was improperly elevated to a "demigod" in their eyes. Christ intended to prove to His disciples that He was the predicted prophet, who was greater than Moses.

Moses was a faithful servant in the house of Yahweh. **Yahshua is Yahweh** and should never be compared to a mere servant.



The Jewish people were right in concluding that only God could part the Red Sea. But there was a demonstration of power even greater than parting the water. During the Exodus, the people of Isreal crossed over the Red Sea on dry land. Yahshua did something even more spectacular. He had the ability to supersede the laws of nature, and walked on top of the water. This was yet another sign, which visibly demonstrated who He was. The Creator established the laws of nature during the creation. Nevertheless, Yahweh is not subject to His own laws, because the Creator is infinitely greater than the creation. Anytime Yahweh wanted to supersede the laws of His own creation, He did. Only He had the power to do this. Walking on the water was yet another demonstration of who He was. Yahshua intended for the disciples to eventually understand the point of this demonstration.

The image of the Messiah walking on water pointed to a deeper understanding of the Exodus narrative. The ministry of the Christ represented a greater "exodus" than the children of Israel leaving Egypt. Christ brought deliverance for the people of God from the power of sin. He was much greater than Moses and was doing something far more significant for the people of God. Sadly, the children of Israel did not understand the purpose of the Messiah and therefore missed their opportunity for true spiritual deliverance. They were



**EXODUS**



still seeking worldly deliverance, from visible political powers, when Yahshua offered them divine deliverance from their unseen spiritual masters.

**They were totally amazed, <sup>52</sup> for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in.**

After everything they witnessed, the disciples still missed the point. If they fully understood that **Yahshua was Yahweh** Almighty, they would no longer be astonished at His power, but their hearts were slow to fully believe.

*We also know that it was on this occasion that Peter got out of the boat, walking on the water to Jesus (Matthew 14:28-31). There is reason — from history and subtle clues, not explicitly from the Scriptures — to believe that Peter was the main source for Mark's gospel. If this was the case, Peter may have left out the story because he didn't want to be exalted for walking on the water — or to be humbled for sinking.<sup>55</sup>*

**<sup>53</sup> After they had crossed the lake, they landed at Gennesaret. They brought the boat to shore <sup>54</sup> and climbed out. The people recognized Jesus at once, <sup>55</sup> and they ran throughout the whole area, carrying sick people on mats to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup> Wherever he went—in villages, cities, or the countryside—they brought the sick out to the marketplaces. They begged him to let the sick touch at least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed.**

The chapter began with the press of the crowds, that constantly surrounded Yahshua. It ended with the press of the crowds, who continue to constantly surround Him. This snapshot was an example of an ordinary day in the life of the Messiah and His tired crew. *With this description of the healing ministry of Jesus, Mark concludes a brief section where we see the power of Jesus over the laws of nature. Normally, five thousand are not fed by one small lunch. Normally, men don't walk on water. Normally, the sick are not instantly healed. None of this is normal, except by the power of God.<sup>56</sup>*

The crowds pressed in by faith. Stunningly, the woman with the bleeding started a trend that picked up momentum. As the people placed their faith in

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<sup>55</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 6

<sup>56</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 6







His clothing, miracle working power flowed out of Him and touched the hungry people.

### **Faith does not save us?**

**PLEASE  
NOTE...**

When we go to a doctor for surgery, we place our faith in the knowledge and skill of the doctor. Were you made well because you had great faith in the doctor? No, it wasn't your great faith that saved you, the skill of the doctor did. What saved you was the "object of your faith". You are not saved by your faith alone, but the person who you placed your faith in. Our faith must be placed in God who is the object of our faith.

Moreover, a person could have great faith in God, but not believe in Yahshua. Misguided faith will not save anyone. Our faith must be rooted and grounded in an object bigger than ourselves. Many people develop faith in faith as its own object. They believe that if they have enough faith, they can learn to operate it to make their dreams come true. This is Christian witchcraft! We can't learn to operate faith any more than we can learn to operate God. Our faith must be grounded in the will of God for our life. We can have faith in accomplishing the will of God and nothing more. Our faith is not to be used for making our day better and our life easier. This is a manipulation of spiritual principles, motivated by our selfish desires for comfort and success.

CHRIST:  
THE OBJECT OF  
OUR FAITH

# Discussion



- (1) What did Mark mean when he said that, "Yahshua could do no great miracles in Nazareth because of their unbelief"? Does the unbelief of mere men have the power to limit the supernatural ability of God?**
- (2) John the Baptist, according to Yahshua, was the greatest of all the prophets and was completely faithful to his God-given mission. Why was he so brutally murdered in return for his faithfulness? Where was the blessing of God in his life promised by our modern version of the prosperity Gospel?**
- (3) By personally feeding the people in the wilderness with his own hands and walking on the raging sea, Yahshua intentionally pointed to the two greatest miracles of Moses. How and why were these miraculous signs connected to Moses and what was Yahshua hoping the people would understand?**
- (4) Following the example of the woman with the continuous bleeding, many people were now healed by just touching Yahshua's robe. Did they have faith in Yahshua or the power of His robe? What is the difference between having faith in faith, compared to authentically having faith in Christ?**



# TRUTH VS *tradition*

You leave the  
commandment of God  
and hold to  
the tradition of men.

A person wearing a black t-shirt and a black hat stands on a rocky shore, looking out at a stormy sea with dark, swirling waves and a grey, overcast sky. Bare, dark branches are visible in the foreground on the left.

## **Jesus Teaches about Inner Purity**

**7** One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus.

This is the second time the religious mafia from Jerusalem arrived to discredit the ministry of Yahshua. They traveled a long way to find fault in His ministry and definitely came with some well-planned accusations.



The first time they arrived, they accused the disciples of harvesting on the Sabbath day. This accusation was bogus because the law allowed for picking grain with the hand. The disciples could not be harvesting without a basket. The discussion then moved to another pointless debate about the nature of the Sabbath. Yahshua ended the discussion abruptly with His famous declaration that He was the "Lord of the Sabbath".

**<sup>2</sup> They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. <sup>3</sup> (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions. <sup>4</sup> Similarly, they don't eat anything from the market until they immerse their hands in water. This is but one of many traditions they have clung to—such as their ceremonial washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.)**

This was a debate about the oral traditions, which all Jews believed to be sacred at that time. The record of these oral traditions was formally collected in a book called the "Mishnah", which was written around 200 AD. Religious Jews often elevated their customs and traditions, to a point where they became holy unto themselves. These practices were originally intended to help the Jewish people keep the Law of Moses, but over time, the oral customs overshadowed the Word of God in many respects.

The Pharisees were committed to ritual purity, and this made them very self-righteous. When you become a "rule keeper", you must pride yourself on your ability to "keep the rules". Eventually, you begin to despise those who don't follow the same religious rules you do. Ultimately, legalism evolves into a rule following competition where one player tries to out do the other player.



### **The debate about hand washing**

The Word of God stated that the priests must wash their hands as they made themselves ready for spiritual service.

**<sup>17</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, <sup>18</sup> "Make a bronze washbasin with a bronze stand. Place it between the Tabernacle and the altar, and fill it with water. <sup>19</sup> Aaron and his sons will wash their hands**

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**





and feet there. <sup>20</sup> They must wash with water whenever they go into the Tabernacle to appear before the Lord and when they approach the altar to burn up their special gifts to the Lord—or they will die! <sup>21</sup> They must always wash their hands and feet, or they will die. This is a permanent law for Aaron and his descendants, to be observed from generation to generation.” (Exodus 30)



The hand washing described here was purely ceremonial. It wasn't enough to properly clean your hands if they were very dirty. You would have to first wash your hands to make them clean, and then perform the ritual to make them spiritually clean. They even had an accompanying prayer to be said during the ritual washing: "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, King of the universe, who sanctified us by the laws and commanded us to wash the hands."<sup>57</sup>

The idea of religious purity rested on the belief that a righteous person is made unclean by touching or eating unclean things. Therefore, you did not want even the dust of the unrighteous person to touch your hand or even worse, get into your mouth. A religious Jew would never return from the market without washing everything because they feared they could be contaminated with sin.

**<sup>5</sup> So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, "Why don't your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony."**

As mentioned, the Pharisees practiced a ceremony for hand-washing that went far beyond just soap and water. They firmly believed it was morally wrong to eat without the ceremonial washing of hands. At the time, the oral teaching of the religious leaders, became even more prominent than the written Word of God.

*Rabbi Eleazer said, 'He who expounds the Scriptures in opposition to the tradition has no share in the world to come'... The Mishna, a collection of Jewish traditions in the Talmud, records, 'It is a greater offense to teach*

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<sup>57</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)



*anything contrary to the voice of the Rabbis than to contradict Scripture itself.*<sup>58</sup>

Corresponding to their twisted adoration of tradition, some prominent Rabbis gained even more authority than the Scripture itself. They could also reveal “hidden revelations” the Scripture did not teach at all. They would take a given law from the Law of Moses and add their own interpretations to expand on the assumed meaning of the Scripture. Over time, the personal opinions of the famous teachers became more influential than the writings of Scripture. Minor things like the command of Moses for priests to wash their hands before handling the sacrifice, became inflated to include all Jews in all situations. This even included eating a grape in the marketplace!

*A really strict Jew would do this not only before the meal, but also between each course. And the rabbis were deadly serious about this. They said that bread eaten with unwashed hands was no better than excrement. One rabbi who once failed to perform the ritual washing was excommunicated. Another rabbi was imprisoned by the Romans, and he used his ration of water for ceremonial cleansing instead of drinking, nearly dying of thirst. He was regarded as a great hero for this sacrifice.*<sup>59</sup>

**<sup>6</sup> Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,**

**‘These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.**

**<sup>7</sup> Their worship is a farce,  
for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’**

By quoting from the Book of Isaiah, Yahshua highlighted how easily man-made traditions can take on a life of their own, even when the Scripture say nothing about it. All religious people have a certain culture, they want everyone else to follow. Some people like a specific style of music or dress in a specific way. Legalism always emerges when we teach man-made rules and church traditions, on the same level as the Word of God.

The Pharisees believed that the teachings of their respected Rabbis had more authority than even the Books of Moses. This allowed the religious leaders to speak with great authority about what they assumed pleased Yahweh.

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<sup>58</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)

<sup>59</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 7

# God Hates

**<sup>8</sup> For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition."**

**<sup>9</sup> Then he said, "You skillfully sidestep God's law in order to hold on to your own tradition."**

In an effort to circumvent the spiritual intention of the Jewish Law, some of their oral traditions actually contradicted the heart of what God desired. The Law of Moses was intended to teach the Jewish people about justice, mercy and loving the poor. On the other hand, their oral law offered them loopholes and special exceptions, to sidestep what God desired.

This was the danger of Jewish legalism. It not only added more rules to the existing law, but it also made those man-made rules more important than the intentions of God. Eventually, the spiritual meaning of the Word of God became lost, and the people worshipped their pointless traditions, as if they actually came from God.

*To the spiritual mind, it is a question of unceasing wonder that men should be so ready to follow and even fearlessly contend for the authority of human traditions, while they are just as ready to ignore the plain teachings of the Word of God.<sup>60</sup>*

**<sup>10</sup> For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.' <sup>11</sup> But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.' <sup>12</sup> In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents. <sup>13</sup> And so you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. And this is only one example among many others."**

Those who try to justify themselves by keeping rules will often modify their rulebooks to suit themselves. In this situation, the Law of Moses commanded that children should provide for the needs of their aged parents. However, the Rabbis taught that it was perfectly fine to deny your parents the help they needed, if you vowed to give your money to God instead. Some wicked

<sup>60</sup> Ironside, H. A. "Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark" (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1979)



God Hates

Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy

people took advantage of this loophole in the law to avoid helping their aged parents. They said they vowed to give their money to God and therefore, could not help with the support of their needy parents. This was an example of using the letter of the law to undermine the heart of the law.

**14 Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. "All of you listen," he said, "and try to understand. 15 It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart."**

Yahshua did not even take the time to argue with the Pharisees, but instead turned to the crowd and said, "don't listen to these guys". Their understanding of purity and impurity had become so twisted, that they saw sin as something you caught like a cold. They wrongfully assumed that sin entered the human body by the food they consumed and by not washing their hands. However, Yahshua said that we sin far more with the thoughtless words that come out of our mouth, than any food we eat. This new teaching came as a stunning revelation to a society caught up with outward ritualistic purification and obsessed with clean and unclean foods.

**17 Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowd, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the parable he had just used. 18 "Don't you understand either?" he asked. "Can't you see that the food you put into your body cannot defile you? 19 Food doesn't go into your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer." (By saying this, he declared that every kind of food is acceptable in God's eyes.)**

What you eat can make you sick, but it will not make you sinful. Food does not have the ability to pollute the heart. Food is physical and the "heart" that is being spoken of is the "spiritual nature" of humanity. The food we eat does not enter our spirit, it only enters our stomach.

**20 And then he added, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you. 21 For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. 23 All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you."**

Evil desires are not caused by the foods we eat but come from the pollution of our heart.





Even if we eat all the right foods and exercise daily, this will do nothing to change our spiritual nature. God is far more concerned with what comes out of our mouth, than what goes into it.

This revelation will eventually come to Peter after the Holy Spirit instructed him to eat unclean foods, that were previously considered polluted by the Jewish people. Christ completed and fulfilled the Law of Moses. Therefore, the dietary aspects of the Jewish law no longer apply to the New Creation believer.

### **The Faith of a Gentile Woman**

**24 Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre. He didn't want anyone to know which house he was staying in, but he couldn't keep it a secret.**

The region of Tyre was in the far north of Israel, located on the coast. Yahshua's location indicated that He hoped to take a little vacation, because He did not make His whereabouts publicly known. The fact that He was even in this pagan region was quite rare, considering how Jewish people viewed their association with sinful Gentiles.

*The previous incident shows Jesus wiping out the distinction between clean and unclean foods. Can it be that here, in symbol, we have him wiping out the difference between clean and unclean people? Just as a Jew would never soil his lips with forbidden foods, so he would never soil his life by contact with the unclean Gentile.<sup>61</sup>*



**25 Right away a woman who had heard about him came and fell at his feet. Her little girl was possessed by an evil spirit,<sup>26</sup> and she begged him to cast out the demon from her daughter.**

Evidently, His whereabouts quickly became known and immediately the people who heard about His mighty miracles began to seek Him. This was the only recorded occasion where Yahshua left Israel to seek privacy. Tyre was approximately 40 miles north of Capernaum. Yahshua previously cast

<sup>61</sup> Barclay, William "The Gospel of Mark" (The New Daily Study Bible) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975)



out demons from thousands of Jewish women, but this woman was noteworthy to Mark, because she was a Gentile.

**Since she was a Gentile, born in Syrian Phoenicia, <sup>27</sup> Jesus told her, "First I should feed the children—my own family, the Jews. It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs."**

The woman was a Syrian by birth and Greek by culture. Yahshua's ministry was specifically focused on preaching the Kingdom to the Jewish people, but He was only having limited success. This is why He reminded the woman that He was not called to minister to the Gentiles, especially in a pagan country outside the boundaries of the Promised Land. According to the Pharisaical standards of clean and unclean people, a Rabbi had no business even talking to a mere woman, much less a despised Gentile female, with a demonized daughter.

*In that day, Jews often called Gentiles "dogs" in a very derogatory way. "To the Greek, the word **kuon** meant a shameless and audacious woman; it was used exactly with the connotation that we use the word bitch to-day. To the Jews it was equally a term of contempt.<sup>62</sup>*

Yahshua did not use the harsh Greek word to describe the woman. The word He used for dogs was **kunarion** which meant a household pet. Scholars make this point to prove that Yahshua only called this woman a dog in an indirect manner. As a Gentile, she was considered unclean and therefore outside of the Mosaic covenant, and Yahshua wanted her to understand it.

In the woman's mind, she pictured a kitchen table with children eating lunch, surrounded by the pleading household dogs. As the family pets begged under the table, the satisfied children of the household offered the dogs the scraps of bread they did not want.

**<sup>28</sup> She replied, "That's true, Lord, but even the dogs under the table are allowed to eat the scraps from the children's plates."**

This woman brilliantly saw a glimmer of hope in Yahshua's statement because she refused to become offended at being called a dog. Moreover, she embraced the connection. She identified herself as a dog, to further her argument. She said, even if I am a dog, when the children are filled, they often throw away what they do not want to the hungry dogs under the table. Her answer was stunningly brilliant in its insightfulness and humility. She

<sup>62</sup> Barclay, William "The Gospel of Mark" (The New Daily Study Bible) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975)



alluded to the fact that the Jewish people have been relatively ungrateful for the privilege of the Kingdom. Many have also rejected Christ's miracles and even attributed them to Satan. If the people of Israel didn't want the bread of healing and deliverance, they could cast it to the dogs who were extremely hungry. The Gentile dogs would gratefully appreciate even the spiritual crumbs, that the Jews didn't want.

**29 "Good answer!" he said.**

This extraordinary woman listened carefully to Yahshua's exact words and refused to allow herself to become offended by the truth of His statement. Nevertheless, she persistently and passionately pursued her desire, in a way that did not contradict what Christ had said. She turned Yahshua's statement around as she presented herself as a noble dog, waiting under the table of the privileged Jewish children, who were thoughtlessly wasting the bread of life.

**"Now go home, for the demon has left your daughter." 30 And when she arrived home, she found her little girl lying quietly in bed, and the demon was gone.**

### **Jesus Heals a Deaf Man**

**31 Jesus left Tyre and went up to Sidon before going back to the Sea of Galilee and the region of the Ten Towns.**

This town was on the same side of the Jordan River where the deranged man with the legion of demons once lived. Since then, he told everyone he met about Yahshua and his extraordinary deliverance. Now, the people came out to look for the Messiah, because of the testimony of the man formerly known as Legion.

**32 A deaf man with a speech impediment was brought to him, and the people begged Jesus to lay his hands on the man to heal him.**

**33 Jesus led him away from the crowd so they could be alone. He put his fingers into the man's ears. Then, spitting on his own fingers, he touched the man's tongue. 34 Looking up to heaven, he sighed and said, "Ephphatha," which means, "Be opened!" 35 Instantly the man could hear**

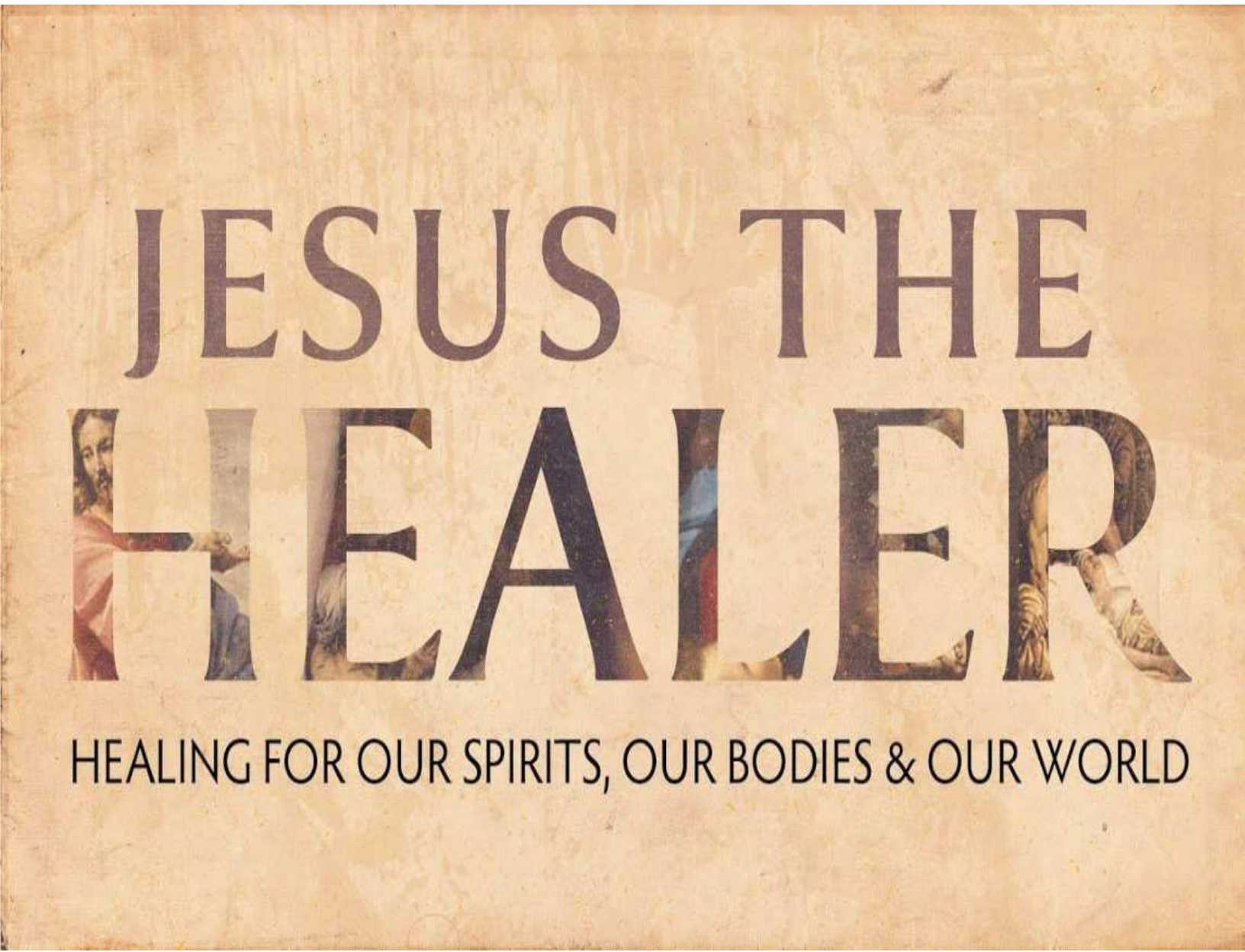




**perfectly, and his tongue was freed so he could speak plainly!**

Yahshua healed this man in a very particular manner. Perhaps He received direct revelation from the Holy Spirit concerning this situation. He placed His fingers in the man's ears, and they were instantly opened. Then, He put spit on the man's tongue, and it was instantly cured.

**<sup>36</sup> Jesus told the crowd not to tell anyone, but the more he told them not to, the more they spread the news. <sup>37</sup> They were completely amazed and said again and again, "Everything he does is wonderful. He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who cannot speak."**



# JESUS THE HEALER

HEALING FOR OUR SPIRITS, OUR BODIES & OUR WORLD

# Discussion



- (1) The Jewish leadership were obsessed with hand washing and wrongly assumed their man-made traditions were of equal importance with the Word of God. Do we have similar cultural beliefs and traditions that we have incorporated with the Word of God? What are some of our modern traditions?**
- (2) Yahshua said, "You ignore God's Word and hold onto your own traditions". Every generation understands the Gospel in light of its own culture and values. How has our modern version of the Gospel been influenced by our North American aspirations for success, comfort, power, and wealth?**
- (3) Regardless of the exact wording, Yahshua still called the Gentile woman a dog. How was her unoffendable nature connected to her great faith? What can we learn from her example and the power of an unoffendable spirit?**
- (4) In the last section of Chapter 7, Yahshua healed a deaf mute as prophesied by Isaiah (35:5-6). Have you ever experienced the healing power of Yahshua or seen someone miraculously healed? How did it influence your faith?**





## Jesus Feeds Four Thousand

**8** About this time another large crowd had gathered, and the people ran out of food again. Jesus called his disciples and told them, <sup>2</sup>“I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. <sup>3</sup>If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way. For some of them have come a long distance.”

The exact location of this second feeding was not stated by Mark, but the healing of the deaf man happened in the region of the Ten Towns, known as Decapolis. There are many differences between the first and second feeding stories. In this story, Yahshua was ministering for about 3 days and the crowd ran out of food. In the first feeding, the crowd was there for only one day and they did not bring any food at all. The first feeding was on the west side of the Jordan, and His audience was made up of Jews. The second feeding was on the east side of the Jordan and His audience was mixed, which included many Gentiles.

**4** His disciples replied, “How are we supposed to find enough food to feed them out here in the wilderness?”



It's hard to believe that the disciples would ask the same question twice. They should have simply gathered what they had and brought it to Yahshua. Some scholars argue, this specific miracle never happened.



*They claim that this was merely a retelling of the feeding of the 5,000. Their main argument is, "how could the disciples forget Jesus' previous work so quickly?" Yet even mature Christians, having experienced God's power and provision, sometimes go on to act in unbelief. This wasn't so surprising after all.<sup>63</sup>*



**<sup>5</sup> Jesus asked, "How much bread do you have?"**

**"Seven loaves," they replied. <sup>6</sup> So Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to his disciples, who distributed the bread to the crowd. <sup>7</sup> A few small fish were found, too, so Jesus also blessed these and told the disciples to distribute them.**



The order of operation is slightly different in the second feeding. First, Yahshua multiplied the bread and only afterwards, He multiplied the fish. For some reason, the fish were discovered after the bread was already multiplied.

**<sup>8</sup> They ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food. <sup>9</sup> There were about 4,000 men in the crowd that day, and Jesus sent them home after they had eaten.**

Perhaps Mark is foreshadowing the inclusion of the Gentiles into the union of the Body of Christ. As the bread of life, Yahshua came for all of humanity starting first, with the Jewish people, then secondly, the Samaritans and finally, the Gentiles. Writing to a Roman audience, it was critical for Mark to present the inclusive nature of the ministry of Christ. His ministry among the pagans started with the need of one single Gentile woman, and ended with Yahshua feeding the multitudes, in a predominantly Gentile region.

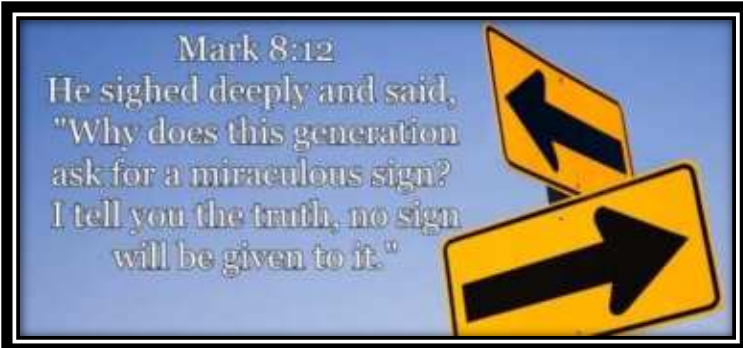


### **Pharisees Demand a Miraculous Sign**

**<sup>10</sup> Immediately after this, he got into a boat with his disciples and crossed over to the region of Dalmanutha. <sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had arrived, they came and started to argue with him. Testing him, they demanded that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to prove his authority.**

<sup>63</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 8





As Yahshua crossed over to the west side of the Jordan, He returned to the Jewish side of the river and was immediately confronted by a group of unbelieving Pharisees. Notice the contrast of the two illustrations; in the Gentile region, Yahshua is overwhelmingly welcomed and received with great enthusiasm because the people are hungry. This is even more surprising because this was the area where the pigs committed suicide and as a result, Yahshua was asked to leave. In the Jewish region, Yahshua is rejected and received with great suspicion by the doubtful religious leaders. This is still another example of Mark foreshadowing the inclusion of the Gentiles and the exclusion of the Jews as he wrote to a predominantly Roman audience.

The demand of the religious leaders for a sign was historically grounded. They wanted something similar to the demonstration given by Elijah, when he called fire down from heaven to consume a wet sacrifice. After thousands of miracles, the religious leaders still needed more signs and wonders, to be convinced. The nature of doubt can never be satisfied. Even if Christ was willing to call fire down from heaven, his critics would just conclude it was demonic fire anyway.

**12 When he heard this, he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why do these people keep demanding a miraculous sign?"**

The mention of a "deep sigh" was an indication of Christ's frustration. The original Greek suggested Yahshua was irritated because the Jewish people kept demanding more and more signs. He had already done numerous signs and wonders in the synagogues, yet most of the religious leaders still refused to believe.

**I tell you the truth, I will not give this generation any such sign." 13 So he got back into the boat and left them, and he crossed to the other side of the lake.**

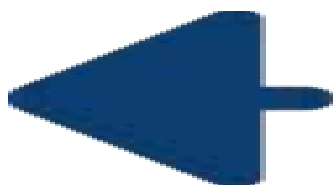
Miracles were useful in demonstrating the power of God to those who didn't know Him. However, they are not very useful in winning over hardhearted, stubborn, religious people. People who absolutely refuse to believe in Yahshua have blasphemed the Holy Spirit. They can never be saved as long as they remain in stubborn unbelief. Ironically, Yahshua left the Jewish region and once again returned to the fruitful Gentile region, where the Gospel of the Kingdom was welcomed.

**Jews ask for a sign**



**Greeks seek for wisdom**

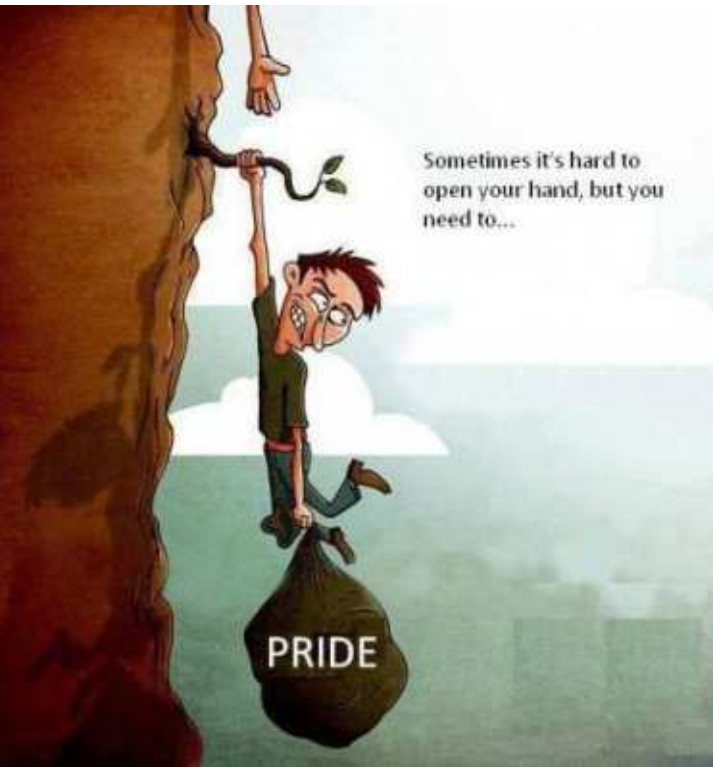
1 Corinthians 1:22





# THE DESTRUCTIVE

## Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod



**14 But the disciples had forgotten to bring any food. They had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat. 15 As they were crossing the lake, Jesus warned them, "Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod."**

There were two specific groups mentioned that the disciples of Christ should avoid. The first group is religious people, and their yeast is their prideful self-righteousness. The second group is the politicians, and their yeast is power and worldly pride.

Yeast was never a positive symbol in the New Testament. It always represented pride, which distorted the original message of humility and self-sacrifice. Yeast in the

parables represented false teaching which caused the bread to rise and become puffed up with pride.



## Parable of the Yeast

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**

**33 Jesus also used this illustration: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough." (Matthew 13)**

The bread in this parable is the source of life, characterized by the Gospel of the Kingdom. The yeast is false teaching, which is introduced to make the bread more

**"Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."**



MARK 8:15

# SIN OF PRIDE

# pride destroys.

pleasing to the taste of the crowds. In the end, as the church tried to please the unsaved members of society, the whole thing became distorted, and the entire church was affected by embracing unconverted members.

The Pharisees expected the Kingdom of God to bring them spiritual power. The supporters of Herod were looking for political power. Both were pridefully deceived by the nature of worldly influence. Whenever people try to use the teaching of Christ to exercise spiritual or political power, the message of the Gospel becomes corrupt, and deception will arise as a result.

**<sup>16</sup> At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn't brought any bread. <sup>17</sup> Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, "Why are you arguing about having no bread? Don't you know or understand even yet? Are your hearts too hard to take it in? <sup>18</sup> 'You have eyes—can't you see? You have ears—can't you hear?' Don't you remember anything at all? <sup>19</sup> When I fed the 5,000 with five loaves of bread, how many baskets of leftovers did you pick up afterward?"**

**"Twelve," they said.**

**<sup>20</sup> "And when I fed the 4,000 with seven loaves, how many large baskets of leftovers did you pick up?"**

**"Seven," they said.**

**<sup>21</sup> "Don't you understand yet?" he asked them.**

The spiritual development of the disciples was of great concern to Yahshua. Based on their question, we can definitely conclude He was disheartened by their lack of understanding. After everything they had experienced and what they learned about depending on God for provision, it was sad that they were still concerned about having enough bread for their trip.

# pride destroys.

**PRIDE**

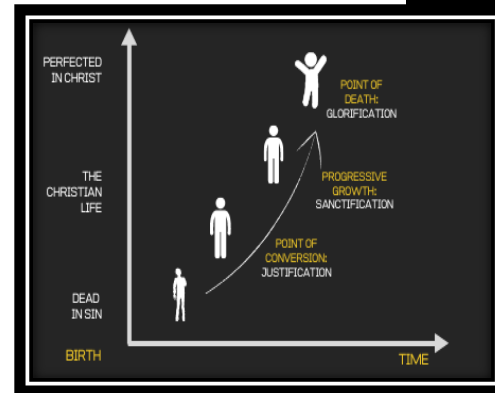
**IT'S A  
SIN**

## Jesus Heals a Blind Man

**22** When they arrived at Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus, and they begged him to touch the man and heal him. **23** Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then, spitting on the man's eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked, "Can you see anything now?"

It's noteworthy that Yahshua led the blind man out of the town before He healed him of his blindness. Perhaps this is connected with the future rejection He will suffer in Bethsaida.

In this miracle, the man is healed, but he only received partial sight. He can see more than before, but the fullness of his healing is gradual. It's possible Mark used this illustration to connect to the spiritual blindness of the disciples in the previous story. Spiritual development is often a painfully slow process. For many, it happens progressively, over a long period of time.



**24** The man looked around. "Yes," he said, "I see people, but I can't see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around."

**25** Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly. **26** Jesus sent him away, saying, "Don't go back into the village on your way home."

The healing of the blind man was a gradual process. Likewise, there is an ongoing aspect of our salvation, where the believer grows in revelation and maturity,

called sanctification.

In the next story, Peter will reveal his own spiritual growth with the revelation that Yahshua is Yahweh. Like the blind man, the disciples are slowly growing in their spiritual ability to understand who Yahshua really is. Peter will be the first disciple to publicly declare that Yahshua is the Messiah and also the first to openly deny Him as well.

## Peter's Declaration about Jesus

**27 Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"**

Yahshua headed to the northern part of Israel to ask an important question. He did not ask this question because He was confused about His identity. He wanted to know if the disciples were still spiritually blind or if they had really received Divine revelation about His mission as the Messiah.

**28 "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets."**

Many people knew about Yahshua, but did not know who He really was. This is similar to modern day religion. Many people know specific facts about "Jesus", but don't know Him personally.

**29 Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah."**

Messiah meant the "Anointed One" in Hebrew. It was not important what other people thought about Christ, but His disciples needed to be fully convinced. According to Mark, this was a great moment of revelation for the disciples.

He asked them,  
"But  
who  
do you  
say  
that I  
am?"

Mark 8:29, NRSV

## Messiah (Hebrew) & Christ (Greek)

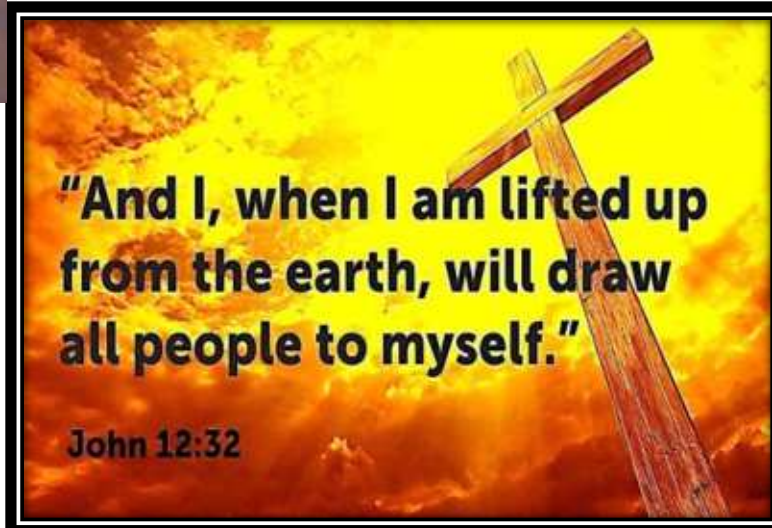
*Calling Jesus the Messiah was right on the mark but easily misunderstood. In the thinking of most people in Jesus' day, the Messiah was a political and national superman. "Toward the close of the OT period, the word 'anointed' assumed a special meaning. It denoted the ideal king anointed and empowered by God to deliver his people and establish his righteous kingdom."<sup>64</sup>*

Messiah  
מָשִׁיחַ  
(meshiakh)

Christ  
Χριστός  
(christos)

<sup>64</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)

Peter and the other disciples clearly understood that Yahshua was the Messiah, but they did not yet understand His mission. They expected the Messiah to be lifted up in Jerusalem so that the whole world will see His glory. They were right and wrong at the same time.



**30 But Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.**

The word in Greek for “warned” is *epitimao* which means “a strong rebuke”. Yahshua used this same word when commanding demons to be muzzled and not tell people who He was. Yahshua wanted the disciples to undoubtedly understand the full meaning of the Gospel, before they told the world about Him.

## **Jesus Predicts His Death**

**31 Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead.**

After the disciples received the revelation that Yahshua was indeed Yahweh, the promised Messiah, He quickly began to teach them about the mission of the Christ. He was destined to die in Jerusalem to fulfill the prophetic Scriptures. This sudden revelation was more than the disciples could handle. It suddenly destroyed all their future aspirations about their place in the coming Kingdom of God.

The disciples were expecting superman; they thought Yahshua would eventually go to Jerusalem and challenge the power of the Roman Empire to a dramatic showdown and that He would use His miracle-working power to defeat all the enemies of Israel in order to establish the Throne of King David forever.

*Sometimes the Messiah was thought of as a king of David's line, but more often he was thought of as a great, super-human figure crashing into history to remake the world and in the end to vindicate God's people... The Messiah*

# JESUS

*will be the most destructive conqueror in history, smashing his enemies into utter extinction.*<sup>65</sup>

**<sup>32</sup> As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.**

As noted previously, Peter was the one gifted with the revelation of "**Who**" Yahshua is, but not "Why" He came to earth. Building on his prophetic insight, Peter now took it upon himself to rebuke Yahweh, God Almighty, about speaking negatively about His future. Apparently, Peter believed in the

power of positive confession and did not like what Yahshua was saying about His destiny.



**<sup>33</sup> Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."**

Peter had good intentions and wanted to protect Yahshua from suffering and pain. Nevertheless, he was speaking out of a place of flawed human emotion. Unintentionally, he was speaking demonically inspired words and Yahshua would not tolerate it!

Peter apparently believed Yahshua was the promised Davidic King, who would reestablish the throne of Israel, but he had no understanding about the need for the Messiah to suffer and die for the sins of the world. He desperately wanted to follow the victorious Messiah destined for the throne of Israel. He did not want to be associated with the suffering, Messiah destined for death on the despised Roman cross.

Satan was speaking through the "flesh" of Peter because like the rest of us, he did not want to suffer and die. He hoped that his faith in the Messiah would help him escape suffering and tribulation, not lead him into it. Peter could not accept a suffering Christ because if the Messiah suffered, the disciples would be forced to suffer with Him as well.

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<sup>65</sup> Barclay, William "The Gospel of Mark" (The New Daily Study Bible) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975)

# Sharing in Christ's Suffering

Every man  
shall bear  
his own  
burden

Galatians 6:5

**<sup>34</sup> Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me."**

After it became public knowledge that Yahshua was the Messiah, He began to immediately speak about the need to follow Him in His personal journey to the cross. Up to this day, following Yahshua also involves the suffering and sacrifice of all His authentic disciples.

Yahshua did not promise His disciples a means of escape. As followers of Christ, they would also follow Him into their own personal experience with the cross. To live a crucified life meant that they would also live a surrendered lifestyle. The cross was an uncompromising call to radical discipleship, regardless of the individual cost.

**<sup>35</sup> If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.**

Still again, Yahshua left no wiggle room. If the disciples were unwilling to suffer for the Kingdom, they were not worthy of their calling. They had to be willing to die for the Messiah as a prerequisite to live for the Kingdom. Death was viewed as a means of transformation, where something greater would manifest in the end. A seed must die if it is to be multiplied.

**<sup>36</sup> And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? <sup>37</sup> Is anything worth more than your soul? <sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."**

*Most people think of following Jesus as conforming to the establishment. Actually, Jesus called us to rebel against the established order of this world. We are called to rebel against the tyranny of the flesh, against the fear and conformity of the world, against the traditions of man. Jesus encourages a slave rebellion, where the slaves of sin, Satan, and the world rebel against their masters.<sup>66</sup>*



**SONSEED**

**FOLLOW ME!**

<sup>66</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 8

Ashamed of Christ

Sharing in Christ's Suffering

Ashamed of Christ

# Discussion



- 1. The first feeding of the 5000 was specifically for the Jews. However, the feeding of the 4000 included a mixed multitude which involved many Gentiles. After the Jews rejected Yahshua, the Bread of Life, He offered Himself to the Gentiles. How does this relate to the Gentile woman and her understanding of the dogs under the table begging for bread?**
- 2. The Jews demanded another miraculous sign to prove Yahshua was the Messiah. Would another miracle finally convince them? Can you ever convince unbelief with more evidence?**
- 3. Yahshua healed a blind man who gained his sight gradually. It took him some time to fully receive his sight. Likewise, the disciples are slowly beginning to see who Yahshua really is, culminating in Peter's bold declaration. How is your faith both instantaneous and gradual at the same time?**
- 4. Why did Yahshua call Peter Satan for trying to save his life? If you love someone, why would you not want them to avoid pain, suffering and death? What did Yahshua mean when He said that Peter was only seeing from a mere human point of view?**





# TRANSFIGURATION



**9** Jesus went on to say, "I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power!"

After teaching openly about the glory of the Son of Man being revealed, Yahshua promised that some who were with Him that very day, would not die without seeing the Kingdom manifest in its fullness. Surely, the disciples were completely unaware of exactly what Christ was talking about, but they would find out in the following week.

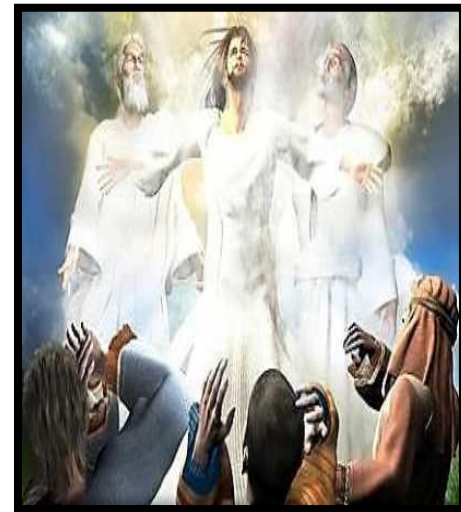
## **The Transfiguration**

**2** Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone.

Based on the location of the previous dialogue, the disciples were close to Mount Hermon. This is where most Biblical scholars assume Yahshua's transfiguration took place.

**As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed, <sup>3</sup> and his clothes became dazzling white, far whiter than any earthly bleach could ever make them.**

The Greek word for transformed is *metamorphoo* which means, "to change into another form". It is a complete change like a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. The idea of His clothing appearing whiter than humanly possible, indicated that Yahshua glowed with a white light that was undeniably supernatural.



## **The transfiguration of Yahshua**

Mark previously noted, in the beginning of the chapter, that those who were listening to Christ speak, would see the Kingdom of God for themselves. The time had finally arrived! Yahshua manifested Himself, as He really was, to His inner circle of

PLEASE  
NOTE...

  
**CHRIST ALONE**



disciples. When they saw Him, with their spiritual eyes open, they saw the manifestation of Yahweh in His glorious heavenly appearance. The Kingdom is manifested with the appearance of the King. Wherever the glory of the King is seen, the Kingdom is also present.

*If we're not careful, we think of the transfiguration as just a bright light shined on Jesus. But this wasn't a light coming on Jesus from the outside. "The word transfigured describes a change on the outside that comes from the inside. It is the opposite of 'masquerade,' which is an outward change that does not come from within."<sup>67</sup>*

**4 Then Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus.**



Yahshua mentioned that He did not come to destroy the work of the law or prophets but came to fulfill them. Moses, as the representative of the law, and Elijah, as the representative of the prophets, were both there to witness the manifestation of Christ, in His former glory. Additionally, Moses and Elijah are also the most likely candidates for the 2 witnesses, mentioned in the Book of Revelation, but this is yet to be determined.

The Greek tense of the word "talking", indicated that it was a long discussion. The conversation probably focused on the finished work of the cross, as Yahshua was now focused on the completion of His mission.

**5 Peter exclaimed, "Rabbi, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 6 He said this because he didn't really know what else to say, for they were all terrified.**

<sup>67</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)

**JESUS**  
**YOU ALONE**

# Only Jesus.

Peter foolishly suggested that 3 shelters be constructed in honor of the 3 special guests. His suggestion indirectly implied that Christ, Moses and Elijah were all on the same level of importance to the Jewish people. Nothing could be further from the truth.

*Peter was openhearted, bold, enthusiastic. To my mind, there is something very lovable about Peter; and, in my opinion, we need more Peters in the church of the present day. Though they are rash and impulsive, yet there is fire in them, and there is steam in them, so that they keep us going.<sup>68</sup>*

**<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him." <sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus with them.**

The voice of Father Yah interrupted Peter's suggestion and shifted the focus directly onto Yahshua. He identified Him as His Son and commanded the disciples to listen exclusively to Him. The fact that Elijah and Moses instantly disappeared showed that Yahshua can never share the stage with any mere human, because Yahweh is incomparable in every way.

The Word of Yahshua is the only revelation of **absolute truth** given to humanity. He was the prophet, Moses predicted would come. His Word is Truth because He is the personification of the whole Truth.

**<sup>9</sup> As they went back down the mountain, he told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So they kept it to themselves, but they often asked each other what he meant by "rising from the dead."**

The disciples mentally recorded these experiences and pondered their meaning. At this time, they did not fully understand anything about the



<sup>68</sup> Spurgeon, Charles Haddon "The New Park Street Pulpit" Volumes 1-6 and "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" Volumes 7-63 (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1990)

# Only Jesus.

Only Jesus.

cross or the resurrection of the dead. This was still hidden from their eyes and would not be fully revealed, until the day they encountered the resurrected Christ physically.

**11 Then they asked him, "Why do the teachers of religious law insist that Elijah must return before the Messiah comes?"**

The Rabbis taught the people that Elijah must appear before the Messiah arrived to prepare the people for salvation.

***5 "Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. 6 His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse." (Malachi 4)***

A prophet in the "power of Elijah" came in the ministry of John the Baptist, but he was not personally Elijah. However, Elijah **did** appear with Yahshua to prepare Him for the cross and the suffering that would come. Elijah would also reappear just before the Second coming of the Messiah to judge the nations.

**12 Jesus responded, "Elijah is indeed coming first to get everything ready. Yet why do the Scriptures say that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be treated with utter contempt? 13 But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they chose to abuse him, just as the Scriptures predicted."**

***4 These two prophets are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of all the earth. 5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire flashes from their mouths and consumes their enemies. This is how anyone who tries to harm them must die. 6 They have power to shut the sky so that no rain will fall for as long as they prophesy. And they have the power to turn the rivers and oceans into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they wish. (Revelation 11)***



The identity of the two prophets may be connected to the miracles depicted in their description. Elijah was known for calling fire down from heaven and causing the rain to stop in Israel. Moses was most famous for turning water into blood and causing plagues in Egypt. Hence, many Biblical scholars suggest that the two end-time prophets will be Moses and Elijah, who will appear before the second coming of Christ.

THE  
**TWO WITNESSES**  
*in the Tribulation*

## Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy

**14 When they returned to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd surrounding them, and some teachers of religious law were arguing with them. 15 When the crowd saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with awe, and they ran to greet him. 16 "What is all this arguing about?" Jesus asked.**

From a mountain top experience, Yahshua descended into complete chaos. As His glory was being revealed to His disciples, the demonic realm launched a counterattack on the other disciples who remained behind.

Peter, James, and John had just experienced the presence of perfect peace, but now they descended into the perfect storm. The spiritual wind was blowing in the opposite direction, and the atmosphere was filled with a demonic energy.

**17 One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, "Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won't let him talk. 18 And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn't do it."**

According to the ancient understanding of exorcism, a demon who made its host unable to speak could not be cast out because it was impossible to know its name. Moreover, this specific demon was more powerful than the other demons that the disciples encountered before. Perhaps the demons drew strength from the land and the historic evil that was committed in this region.

**19 Jesus said to them, "You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."**



The teachers of the law were arguing with Yahshua's disciples about some unknown topic. They were likely overjoyed with the failure of the disciples to cast out the demon, because this kind was known to be impossible to exorcise.

Yahshua was noticeably upset with His disciples because of their inability to deal with this situation by



themselves. He understood His time with them was short, and He would not be with them personally much longer.

**<sup>20</sup> So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and**

**foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup> "How long has this been happening?" Jesus asked the boy's father.**

The fact that Yahshua inquired about the boy's history, indicated that this was indeed a very powerful demonic infestation.

**He replied, "Since he was a little boy. <sup>22</sup> The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him.**

As mentioned, the demon would eventually succeed in killing the boy unless something was done immediately to remove it.

**Have mercy on us and help us, if you can."**

The terrified father was quite open about his doubts. He was desperate and very emotional in this moment, but this does not equal faith.

**<sup>23</sup> "What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes."**

Sadly, this is one of the most abused and misused text in the whole Bible. It has been hijacked to promote the idea that our faith can be used to attain our personal wishes. Corrupt faith-teaching borders on heresy when human faith is marketed as a way to control God. When "faith" becomes the object of our faith, instead of Christ, we have ventured into man-centered religion, which eventually becomes blasphemous.

Our faith must always be grounded in an object greater than ourselves. If we are truly convinced that it's God's divine will to grant our request, we can place faith in His will to bring it to pass. Nevertheless, there are situations when the will of God moves in a mysterious direction and our personal faith cannot contradict His sovereignty.

**<sup>24</sup> The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"**

**I BELIEVE**

# HELP MY UNBELIEF

# Help my unbelief.

The father was involved in a desperate battle within himself. As the spiritual warfare raged inside the boy, his father was desperately fighting against doubt and unbelief. He did believe in Yahshua, or he would not have brought the boy to Him. However, the failure of the disciples has strengthened his unbelief, and increased his confusion. The poor man

was in the middle of a mental tug-of-war between faith and doubt.

**25 When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. "Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak," he said. "I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!"**

As mentioned, a demon who prevented its victim from both hearing and speaking was extremely difficult to cast out. The evil spirit completely locked up the victim, so they could not participate in their own deliverance in any way. The miraculous deliverance of this boy was completely an act of God. Yahshua commanded the rebellious spirit to depart, and it left immediately.

**26 Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy appeared to be dead.**

Even the authority and power of Yahshua did not deliver this boy peacefully. On the way out, the demon violently tossed the boy around. The exorcism was so violent, the bystanders assumed that the child must have died in the process.

**A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, "He's dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up. 28 Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, "Why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit?" 29 Jesus replied, "This kind can be cast out only by prayer."**

Faith must be cultivated and matured over time. There was something more the disciples needed to do to increase their faith. They needed to spend extended periods of time in prayer.

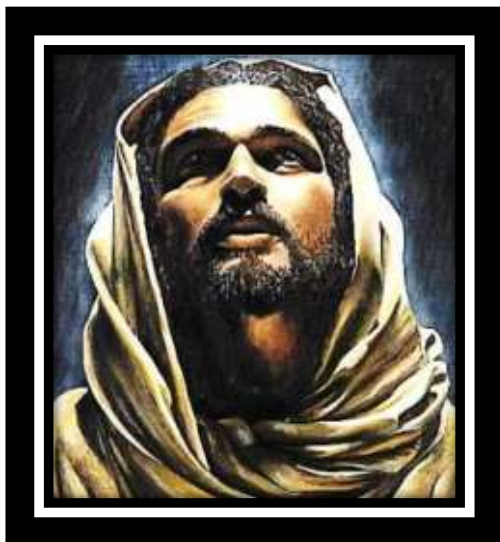


Help my unbelief.

Help my unbelief.

*Jesus already gave them the authority to cast out demons. Yet, "The authority that Jesus had given them was effective only if exercised by faith, but faith must be cultivated through spiritual discipline and devotion."<sup>69</sup>*

### Jesus Again Predicts His Death



**<sup>30</sup> Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus didn't want anyone to know he was there, <sup>31</sup> for he wanted to spend more time with his disciples and teach them.**

After the previous encounter with an extremely powerful demon, Yahshua understood the disciples were not quite ready to be left alone. Knowing His time left on earth was short, He was determined to focus on them exclusively so they would be prepared for the spiritual storm to come.

**He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead."<sup>32</sup> They didn't understand what he was saying, however, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.**

This was the opportunity for the disciples to ask any question they wanted; however, they were all too prideful to admit publicly that they did not understand what Christ was talking about. They simply could not believe that the Messiah would die, and also were too afraid of a truthful answer to ask any further questions.

### The Greatest in the Kingdom

**<sup>33</sup> After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, "What were you discussing out on the road?" <sup>34</sup> But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest.**

<sup>69</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)





The disciples did not understand that Yahshua was just about to die on the cross. They were still jockeying for the best positions in the coming Kingdom of God. Perhaps, the other disciples were annoyed that Yahshua had taken only 3 of them to witness the mountain top experience, leaving the others to be embarrassed by a powerful demon. Regardless of the exact discussion, the disciples wanted to establish an order of importance based on a worldly ranking system.

The fact that they were still debating over who would hold the highest positions in the coming government, proved they still did not understand the mission of the Messiah, and what would transpire in Jerusalem over the next few weeks.

**<sup>35</sup> He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."**

*This was important because by sitting down, Jesus showed that he was going to teach. "When a Rabbi was teaching as a Rabbi, as a master teaches his scholars and disciples, when he was really making a pronouncement, he sat to teach. Jesus deliberately took up the position of a Rabbi teaching his pupils before he spoke."<sup>70</sup>*

**The greatest will serve.**

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**

Yahshua had something important for the disciples to understand. They needed to comprehend that the definition of greatness in the Kingdom of God, was radically different from the perspective of the world. Mark's central focus was to present Yahshua as the suffering servant of Yahweh. Greatness in the Kingdom of

God depended on downward mobility, not upward movement. To be the greatest in the Kingdom, demanded a higher level of service than anyone else.

*Jesus challenges us to be the **servant of all**. In the worldly idea of power, a great man is distinguished by*

Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not to be served  
Mark 10:45

<sup>70</sup> Barclay, William "The Gospel of Mark" (The New Daily Study Bible) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975)



*how many people serve him. In ancient China, it was fashionable for wealthy men to grow their fingernails so long that their hands were unusable for basic tasks. This demonstrated that they did not need to do anything for themselves; a servant was always there to wait on them. The world may think of this as greatness, but God does not. Jesus declared that true greatness is shown not by how many serve you, but by how many you serve.<sup>71</sup>*

Yahshua did not desire for His disciples to have no ambition in life. However, the ambition He wanted for them, was that they desire to out serve one another. This is healthy Kingdom competition. It was not wrong to aim to be the greatest in the Kingdom; this was a good ambition. The race, however, was not to the top, but to the bottom. In the Kingdom, the greatest will be the least, and the least will be the greatest.

**<sup>36</sup> Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me."**

Children were the symbol of powerlessness and simplicity. Yahshua indicated that when you welcome the powerless and simple people of the world, you are welcoming Him. On the other hand, when you despise the poor, the marginalized, and the weak, you are rejecting Him.

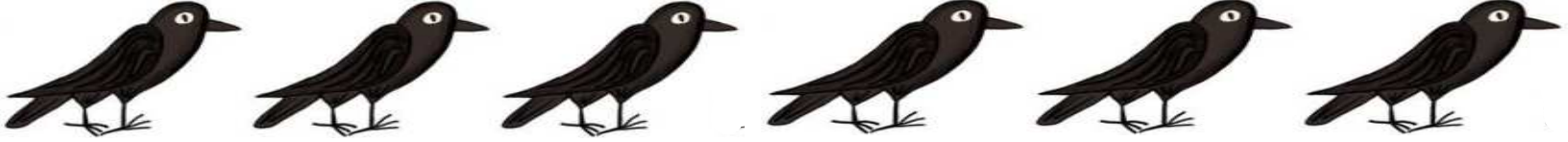


### **Using the Name of Jesus**

**<sup>38</sup> John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he wasn't in our group."**

The exclusive attitude of the disciples was connected to their prideful assumption that they would be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. In their minds, they were still holding out for the prominent positions they would

<sup>71</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 9



receive for faithfully following Yahshua. They wanted to protect their position in the ministry and did not want any external competition.

**39 "Don't stop him!" Jesus said. "No one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me."**

Yahshua was not afraid of external competition but viewed it as cooperation. If His name was being glorified, why would He want to stop it? The fact that others were using the name of Yahshua with positive results proved that the ministry was growing, and that other believers were preaching the Kingdom, as well as the disciples.

**40 Anyone who is not against us is for us. 41 If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I tell you the truth, that person will surely be rewarded.**

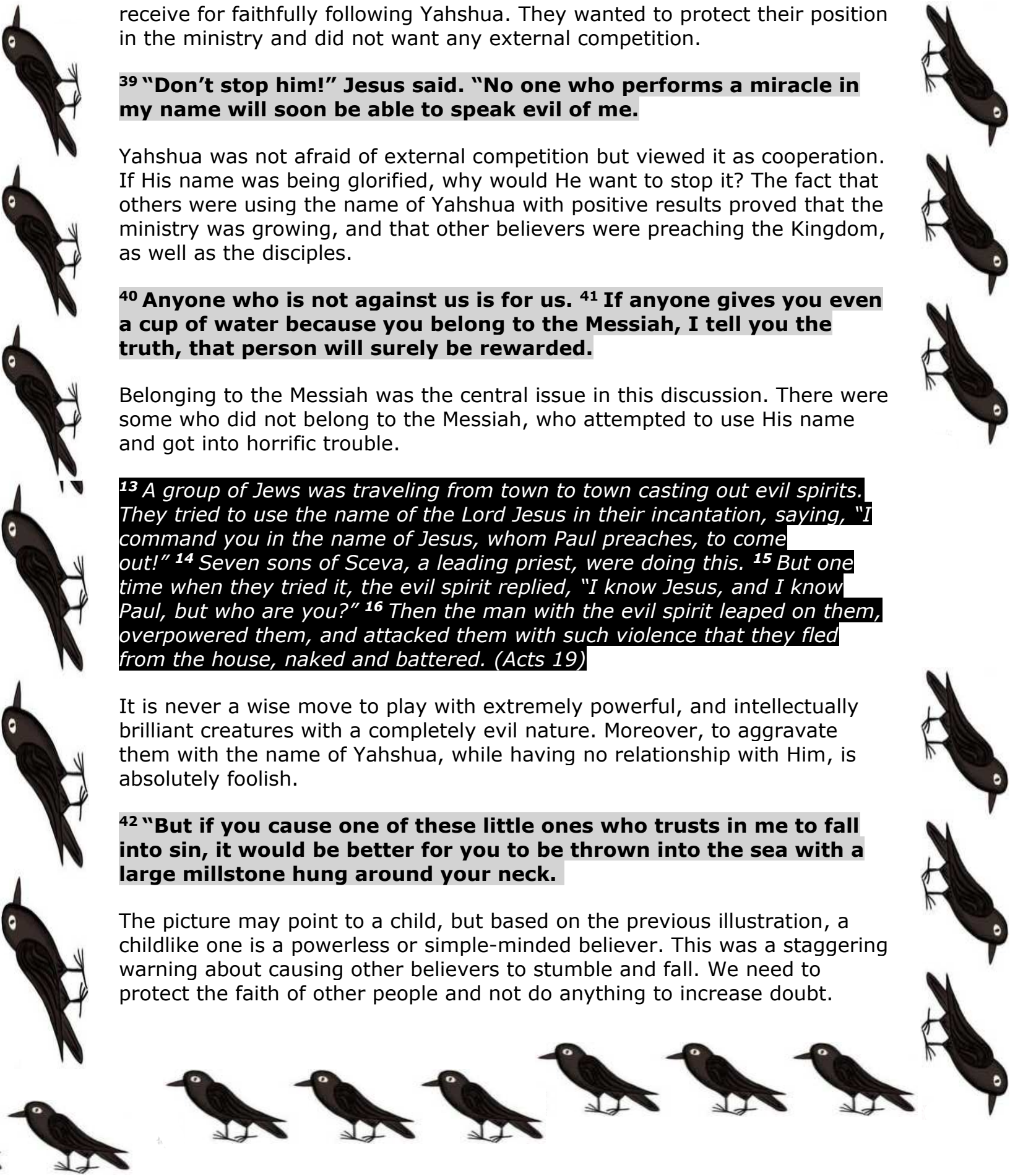
Belonging to the Messiah was the central issue in this discussion. There were some who did not belong to the Messiah, who attempted to use His name and got into horrific trouble.

**13 A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!" 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this. 15 But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?" 16 Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered. (Acts 19)**

It is never a wise move to play with extremely powerful, and intellectually brilliant creatures with a completely evil nature. Moreover, to aggravate them with the name of Yahshua, while having no relationship with Him, is absolutely foolish.

**42 "But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone hung around your neck."**

The picture may point to a child, but based on the previous illustration, a childlike one is a powerless or simple-minded believer. This was a staggering warning about causing other believers to stumble and fall. We need to protect the faith of other people and not do anything to increase doubt.



# GEHENNA

**43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better to enter eternal life with only one hand than to go into the unquenchable fires of hell with two hands.**

"Hell" is the word used for the Hebrew phrase *Gehenna*, which was the location of an actual valley outside of Jerusalem where pagan tribes offered child sacrifices to the despicable god, Molech. It was ultimately turned into a massive garbage dump, where the fires would never go out and the worms would not die.

**45 If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better to enter eternal life with only one foot than to be thrown into hell with two feet. 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. It's better to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 'where the maggots never die and the fire never goes out.'**

This was a drastic call to deal with sin, by any means necessary. Compared to the cost of dealing with sin, the consequences of ignoring sin are exponentially worse.

**49 "For everyone will be tested with fire. 50 Salt is good for seasoning.**

Salt speaks of purity, taste, and preservation. It was common at the time for salt to lose its saltiness. Spoiled salt was good for nothing. Fire and salt were closely connected in this illustration. Salt was necessary for seasoning, and fire was necessary for refining. Accordingly, the faithful believers will be seasoned by suffering and refined by tribulations in the process of sanctification.

Both types of fire involve suffering. Good suffering results in a purified life demonstrated by sacrificial living. The negative type of suffering is a consequence for a lifestyle of sin. It's a good thing to have refining suffering because it has the ability to deliver the sinner from eternal damnation.

Some scholars connect the fire of the Spirit to the refinement process. The Baptism of fire teaches us to live like a sacrifice, and embrace the cross as our daily demonstration of faithfulness.

**But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other."**



# GEHENNA

# Discussion



- 1. The transfiguration of Christ was still another step towards the full revelation of the Messiah to the disciples. The disciples were familiar with Yahshua as a man, but they needed to fully understand Him as the Almighty Yahweh. Do we at times become overly familiar with Yahshua's humanity and overlook his divinity?**
- 2. Peter foolishly wanted to build 3 memorials, but the Father said, "This is My dearly loved son". What does this teach us about comparing Yahshua to anyone and anything else?**
- 3. As the disciples begin to see that Yahshua is Yahweh, He began to speak more openly about His approaching death. The disciples were afraid to ask Him what He meant. Why was it so hard for them to accept the fact that the Messiah was destined to suffer and die? What would a suffering Messiah mean to them personally as they followed Him?**
- 4. Even at this point in His ministry, the disciples were still arguing over who was the greatest among them. Sadly, the disciples were still following Christ for their own personal interests. Are we much different than the disciples currently? Do we at times follow Yahshua for what we can get in this life, instead of who He is?**



# DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

## Discussion about Divorce and Marriage

**10** Then Jesus left Capernaum and went down to the region of Judea and into the area east of the Jordan River. Once again crowds gathered around him, and as usual he was teaching them.

This region was under the control of Herod Antipas. He murdered John the Baptist for speaking out against his illegal marriage to his brother's wife. Perhaps the Pharisees were hoping Yahshua would say something they could use against Him, to accuse Him before King Herod.



**2** Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question:

Apparently, the Pharisees took an extended period of time coming up with exactly the right question to trap Yahshua. When they finally came up with their "trick question", they assumed it was foolproof.

**"Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife?"**

Divorce was a very controversial subject for the Jewish people. The Rabbis were deeply divided over what was a valid ground for the separation of a marriage.

*24 "Suppose a man marries a woman but she does not please him. Having discovered something wrong with her, he writes a document of divorce, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house. <sup>2</sup> When she leaves his house, she is free to marry another man. (Deuteronomy 24)"*

**Jesus answers  
a tricky question  
about divorce**

Some liberal schools of Jewish theology interpreted this passage to mean that anything the wife did to displease her husband, like talking too loudly or burning the food, was a legal ground for divorce.

*They said that it could mean if the wife spoiled a dish of food, if she spun in the streets, if she talked to a strange man, if she spoke disrespectfully of her husband's relations in his hearing, if she was a brawling woman (who was defined as a woman whose voice could be heard in the next house). Rabbi Akiba even went the length of saying that it meant if a man found a woman who was fairer in his eyes than his wife was.<sup>72</sup>*

On the other hand, the conservative school of theology believed the woman had to do something very substantial to "displease" her husband, like adultery or fornication before marriage.

Regardless of what side of the argument Yahshua took, He would displease some people in the crowds. This was the underhanded intention of the religious leaders in asking this question.

**<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered them with a question: "What did Moses say in the law about divorce?"**

Everyone involved in this discussion knew what Moses had written in the law about divorce. Still, they were uncertain of the everyday application of the law.

**<sup>4</sup> "Well, he permitted it," they replied. "He said a man can give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away." <sup>5</sup> But Jesus responded, "He wrote this commandment only as a concession to your hard hearts.**

Moses permitted divorce, but that did not mean Yahweh was pleased with it. There were some things allowed by the Law of Moses that Yahweh did not encourage. God was not allowing divorce because He thought it was a good thing. Divorce was caused by the hard hearts of people, who were either unwilling to forgive a wrong or treated their spouse wrongly.

**<sup>6</sup> But 'God made them male and female' from the beginning of creation. <sup>7</sup> 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, <sup>8</sup> and the two are united into one.' Since**

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<sup>72</sup> Barclay, William "The Gospel of Mark" (The New Daily Study Bible) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975)



**they are no longer two but one, <sup>9</sup> let no one split apart what God has joined together.”**



Why  
God  
Hates  
Divorce

Marriage was established by God in the beginning. Because Yahweh instituted marriage, He also has the ability to determine the rules and regulations concerning divorce. If people understood that marriage was a holy institution, divorce would not be a major problem, but because people take marriage so lightly, divorce is the natural outcome.

**<sup>10</sup> Later, when he was alone with his disciples in the house, they brought up the subject again. <sup>11</sup> He told them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery against her. <sup>12</sup> And if a woman divorces her husband and marries someone else, she commits adultery.”**

While the Pharisees were deeply concerned with religious laws and their traditions, Yahshua was concerned about the original intention of God. Regardless of what Moses allowed, Yahweh never intended people to get divorced because it has the power to destroy society.

### **Jesus Blesses the Children**

**<sup>13</sup> One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him.**

**<sup>14</sup> When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them!**

It was a Jewish custom for the people to bring their children to the Rabbis for a blessing. While the disciples were probably trying to protect Yahshua from an unnecessary obligation, Christ was angered by what they were doing. Previously, Yahshua warned His disciples never to cause children to stumble or lose their faith. After teaching His disciples on the value of childlike faith, they still did not see the eternal value of these little children.

**For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. <sup>15</sup> I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” <sup>16</sup> Then he took the**



**children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.**

Children have an amazing ability to simply believe. They have not yet been damaged and disappointed by life. Children actually have to learn how to doubt or disbelieve. Doubt and unbelief are byproducts of our experiences. We learn to be skeptical because we have been hurt over and over again by people who fail to keep their word. Children are excellent examples of Kingdom minded people because they simply believe and receive without questioning.

Adults can learn much from the example of children. They are humble and depend on others for their existence. They accept themselves and their position in life. They don't need to understand how things work or why things happen. This is why Yahshua celebrated the faith of a child.

### **The Rich Man**

**17 As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"**



Of all the people in the Gospel of Mark who ever came to Yahshua, this is the only man who went away with nothing. Although he approached Yahshua with religious flattery and spoke openly about his desire to have eternal life, Yahshua was sceptical about his true motives.

As a religious Jew, his understanding of salvation needed to be corrected. Under the New

Covenant, salvation is not earned or achieved as a result of doing things. Salvation is received by faith in Yahshua alone.

**18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good.**

First of all, Yahshua discerned that the young man had no idea who He really was. The young man assumed he was speaking to a mere Rabbi but did not understand that he was actually speaking to Yahweh, Almighty.

**19 But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and mother.'**

The self-righteous young man needed a Saviour but first, needed to acknowledge the fact that he was actually a sinner. If you are not aware of your own personal sin, you will never desire to be saved. Christ directed the young man to examine the Law of Moses. The purpose of the law was to point out the sinfulness of humanity.

The Law of Moses was intended to act like a mirror, so the Jewish people could see themselves in relation to the sinless nature of Yahweh and be convicted. However, the law has no ability to save a sinner. It was only intended to point the guilty sinner to the sacrifice.

**20 "Teacher," the man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young."**

This prideful young man was so consumed with his own self-righteousness, that he actually told Yahweh that he has kept the law since he was a child. This must have been the most superficial, watered-down, set of laws ever. Anyone who is honest with themselves will quickly conclude, that no human being is able to truly keep the 10 Commandments.

**21 Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him.**

The young man is loved by Yahshua because he is genuinely trying to please everyone. He was a rule follower, who wanted to please his parents, his society, and his God. It was the religious system of his day that turned him into the self-righteous, prideful person he was. In a way, he was as sick as the lepers who came to Yahshua for healing. However, he was worse off than a leper, because he did not even know he was diseased.

**"There is still one thing you haven't done," he told him. "Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."**





The man who claimed he kept the 10 commandments all his life, was now confronted by the first of the commandments. He was supposed to have no other "gods" but Yahweh. Now God, gave the man a direct command. He was instructed to sell all his possessions and become Yahshua's disciple.

*He also did not choose to love God more than his wealth, even though Jesus*

*specifically promised him treasure in heaven. The man was more interested in the earthly treasure of men than in God's heavenly treasures. This man was essentially an idolater. Wealth was his god instead of the true God of the Bible. He put money first.<sup>73</sup>*

**<sup>22</sup> At this the man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.**

His reaction to Yahshua's command proved two major points. First, he still did not understand that Yahshua was Yahweh because he walked away from the Word of God in the flesh. Second, his love for his money proved he was, in fact, an idol worshipper at heart, who loved his wealth more than his God.

By failing the test, the man was condemned by the entire Law of Moses which is 10 subsections of 1 law. Therefore, he had never kept the law, nor would he ever be able to keep it.

**<sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!" <sup>24</sup> This amazed them. But Jesus said again, "Dear children, it is very hard to enter the Kingdom of God. <sup>25</sup> In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!"**

*The camel was the largest animal found on Palestinian soil. The violent contrast between the largest animal and the smallest opening expresses what, humanly speaking, is impossible or absurd.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, with the power of God, even a rich person could be saved. It would just be more difficult for such a person to see their need for salvation.*

<sup>73</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 10

<sup>74</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)

The Jews assumed that wealth and prosperity was an obvious sign of the blessing of God upon their life. On the other hand, Yahshua taught that temporary prosperity was a hinderance to the Kingdom of God, if it caused idolatry in the life of a believer. To seek the Kingdom, you must want it more than anything else in the world. Your wealth, your family and even your own life, must all come second to the King. Hence, worldly wealth can easily become a stumbling block to seeking the eternal riches of the Kingdom, because it is a distraction to what is truly of eternal value.

**26 The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked. 27 Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God."**

The disciples were troubled by this teaching because many of them left businesses and were financially well off, according to the standards of their society. It was extremely difficult to understand how, what seemed like a blessing could, in fact, turn out to be a curse.

**28 Then Peter began to speak up. "We've given up everything to follow you," he said.**

In response to Yahshua's teachings, Peter spoke up and said that they had given away everything to follow Him. What would they receive as a reward?

**29 "Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, 30 will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution.**



The answer to Peter's question must be understood from God's eternal perspective. Yahweh lives outside of space and time, but we live within the limits of time, so we live with the tension of the "now" and the "not yet". First, to follow Yahshua will demand that you give up idolizing many things. This list may include family, children, and property for the sake of Christ. Secondly, there will be limited rewards on this earthly side of the Kingdom. We will have a new family in Christ, and the blessing of God will follow us, as

# JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH AGAIN

we wholeheartedly follow Christ. Thirdly, on this side of eternity, we will endure persecution because of our faith. In this present age, we will be resisted by the principalities and powers that rule this dark period of time.

**And in the world to come that person will have eternal life.**

The world to come will include the 1000-year reign of Christ upon the throne of David in Jerusalem. This period will gloriously end with the coming of the New Jerusalem from heaven. During this time, the rewards for following Christ will be made manifest. Those who faithfully and wholeheartedly followed Christ, will be rewarded generously in eternally.

**<sup>31</sup> But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then."**

There are things that seem important in this life, that will turn out to be purposeless in eternity. On the other hand, there are things that seem purposeless in this life, that will be priceless in eternity. Christ encouraged us to give up the purposeless things in life, that have no eternal value, and seek out the priceless things, that can never be lost.

## **Jesus Again Predicts His Death**

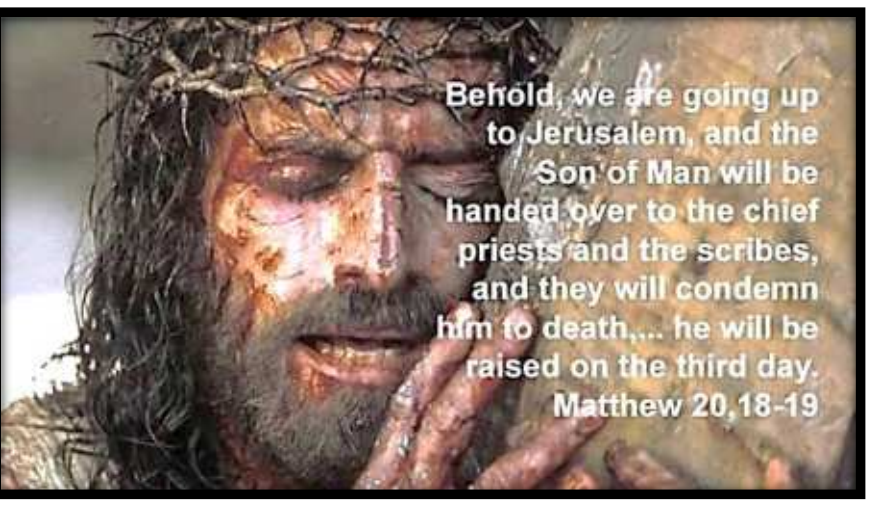
**<sup>32</sup> They were now on the way up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them.**

Mark's intention was clear, as the Gospel draws closer to the climax. Yahshua was headed to Jerusalem to complete the mission. He was deliberately walking towards the place where He would pick up His cross and die. Interestingly, Mark specifically mentioned that Yahshua walked alone, ahead of the rest. The word in the Greek implies that He did this for an extended period of time, as if He was in a hurry to accomplish a particular task.

**The disciples were filled with awe, and the people following behind were overwhelmed with fear.**

This passage is mysterious because it does not tell us precisely why the disciples were afraid. The passage indicates that the disciples were separated from Christ as they walked. In essence, they did not enjoy the close fellowship they always experienced with Yahshua, possibly because His thoughts were elsewhere. His emotional absence coupled with his mental

# JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH AGAIN



Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death,... he will be raised on the third day.  
Matthew 20, 18-19

distraction, made them anxious because they perceived something harmful was about to happen in Jerusalem.

**Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus once more began to describe everything that**

**was about to happen to him.** <sup>33</sup> "Listen," he said, "we're going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die and hand him over to the Romans. <sup>34</sup> They will mock him, spit on him, flog him with a whip, and kill him, but after three days he will rise again."

Previously, Yahshua told His disciples He was going to die. But at this point, He gives them more details. He would be betrayed by someone close to Him. He would be mocked by the religious leaders and murdered by the Romans.

*Delivery to the Gentiles reveals that Jesus will be held in contempt by his own countrymen, for the Gentiles are the last people to whom the Messiah of the people of God should be handed over.*<sup>75</sup> Then, He will rise again after being dead for 3 days.

### **Jesus Teaches about Serving Others**

<sup>35</sup> Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over and spoke to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do us a favor."

<sup>36</sup> "What is your request?" he asked.

<sup>37</sup> They replied, "When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left."

This next discussion illustrated the cluelessness of the disciples, as Christ headed to the cross. While Yahshua repeatedly gave details about His coming death, the oblivious disciples are still actively planning their future

<sup>75</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)



careers in the coming Kingdom. The disciples have always argued about who would be the greatest among them when the Kingdom of God was finally revealed. Now James and John directly requested Yahshua for the second and third most important positions in His new government.

They knew something spectacular was just about to happen in Jerusalem, but their minds would not allow them to understand what Yahshua was telling them. Perhaps, they were still in shock or denial.

**38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking!"**

James and John were looking to be promoted to high positions with great social prestige. Ironically, Yahshua was heading to the cross, which was a place of humiliation and social isolation. To be the greatest in the Kingdom means following closely to the example of Christ, picking up your own personal cross, and dying to your selfish desires. This was not what the disciples had in mind.

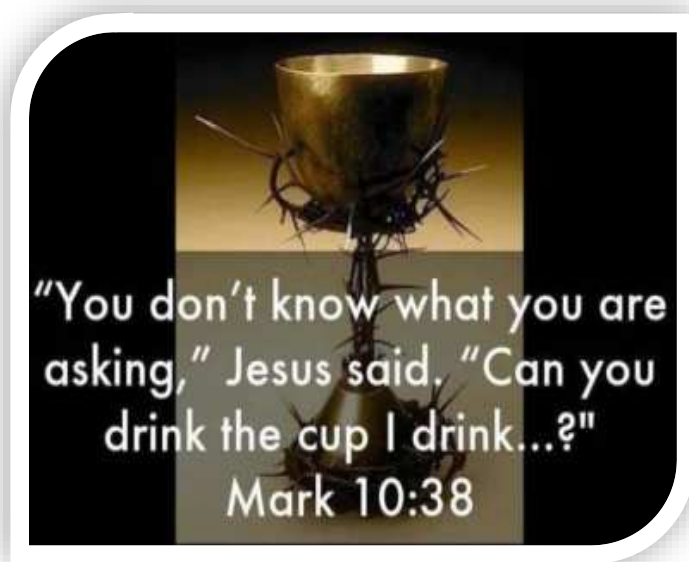


**Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?"**

As the disciples fantasized about being baptized in glory, while being handed a cup of fine wine by one of their many servants, Yahshua knew He would drink of a cup of wrath served from His Father's hand. He would be submerged in death, by a baptism of painful suffering and rejection. Were James and John willing to suffer with Christ for their eternal place in the Kingdom?

**39 "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" Then Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup and be baptized with my baptism of suffering."**

What James and John said was true. Nevertheless, they did not understand the implication of their confession. In the future, James would be murdered by Herod Agrippa to please the Jewish leaders. John would be the only disciple to live to an old age after being boiled in oil and imprisoned on



the Island of Patmos where he received the Book of Revelation directly from Yahshua.

**40 But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. God has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen.”**

It was a good thing to aspire for heavenly rewards, but Yahshua explained that the highest positions in the Kingdom, would only be handed out by the Father, when the Kingdom had fully come.

**41 When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant.**

The other disciples were aggravated because James and John sidestepped the rest of them and had the nerve to ask Yahshua for the highest positions in the Kingdom. Peter must have been especially upset considering he was the one who first realized Yahshua was Yahweh before the others.

**42 So Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them.**

The disciples were still confused about how authority worked in the Kingdom of God. For a second time, Yahshua explained that the greatest in the Kingdom will be the one who served the most. In the world, the leaders are served by the followers. In the Kingdom however, the leaders will serve the followers, like a shepherd serves the interest of the sheep.

**43 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

In the Kingdom humility will lead to promotion and pride will lead to demotion. Following the Messiah meant living like Yahshua, who came to serve and not be served. This specific emphasis was especially important to Mark. *Real ministry is done for the benefit of those ministered to, not for the benefit of the minister. Many people are in the ministry for what they can receive (either materially or emotionally) from their people instead of for what they can give.*<sup>76</sup>

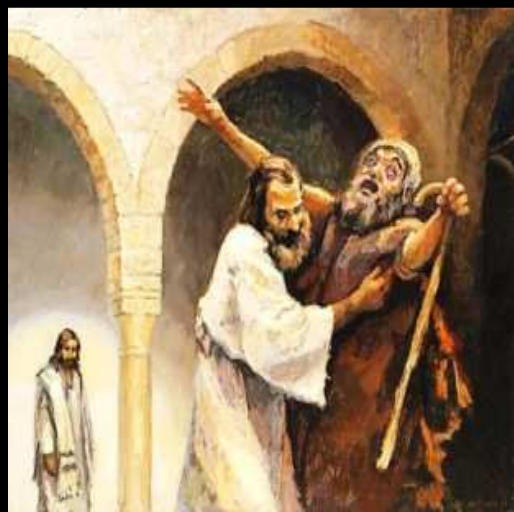
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<sup>76</sup> David Guzik “Blue Letter Bible Commentaries” (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 10





## Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus



**<sup>46</sup> Then they reached Jericho, and as Jesus and his disciples left town, a large crowd followed him. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting beside the road. <sup>47</sup> When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was nearby, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"**

Bartimaeus was a rude and tactless man. He was aggressive in his ambition to encounter Yahshua. Customarily, these were negative traits, but in the Kingdom of God, such qualities were rewarded greatly.

**<sup>48</sup> "Be quiet!" many of the people yelled at him. But he only shouted louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>49</sup> When Jesus heard him, he stopped and said, "Tell him to come here." So they called the blind man. "Cheer up," they said. "Come on, he's calling you!" <sup>50</sup> Bartimaeus threw aside his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup> "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked. "My Rabbi," the blind man said, "I want to see!"**



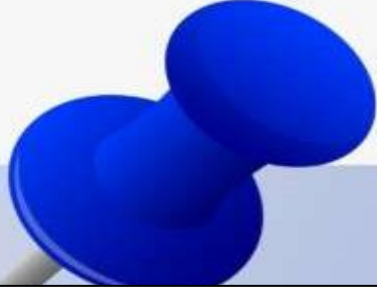
Bartimaeus was a violent man when it came to faith. He would not take no for an answer. He was passionate about his pursuit of God and received the reward he desired for his extraordinary effort.

**<sup>52</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Go, for your faith has healed you." Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus down the road.**

This is the last recorded miracle according to the Gospel of Mark. From this point onward, Yahshua headed to Jerusalem for Passover and then on to the suffering of the cross. Yahshua told Bartimaeus he was free to go his way. In response, he followed Him on His way to Jerusalem. Perhaps this was Mark's way of saying that Bartimaeus became a dedicated disciple for the rest of his life.



# Discussion

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- 1. Yahweh allowed for both divorce and men having multiple wives according to the Law of Moses. Yahshua said, "He allowed divorce because of the hardness of the human heart". Nevertheless, divorce was never the will of Yahweh for His people. How could God allow something in the Old Testament, that did not reflect His will for humanity?**
  - 2. The rich young man did not understand that his love for money was a clear expression of his inner idolatry. Therefore, he could not worship Yahshua and his money at the same time. Is money, wealth, and the security it provides an idol in your life?**
  - 3. When Yahshua said, "It's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle", was He saying it's harder for rich people to be saved, compared to poor people? If so, is it a blessing to be rich?**
  - 4. James and John both wanted to sit next to Yahshua in the coming Kingdom. Yahshua said, "You don't know what you are really asking for", because their request involved great suffering. How is being the greatest in the Kingdom of God radically different from being the greatest in our present society? Would you also want to be great in the Kingdom of God if it involved much temporary suffering?**



# The Triumphal Entry

## Jesus' Triumphant Entry

**11** As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. <sup>2</sup> "Go into that village over there," he told them. "As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>3</sup> If anyone asks, 'What are you doing?' just say, 'The Lord needs it and will return it soon.'"

### Same Messiah with different comings

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**

*The Rabbis of Jesus' day had several different theories regarding how the Messiah would come to Jerusalem. Based on (Daniel 7:13), some thought the Messiah would come as a majestic conqueror. Based on (Zechariah 9:9), some thought that the Messiah would come in a lowly and humble way, riding on a colt.<sup>77</sup>*

The problem with the Rabbis' theological assessment of the prophetic material was that they were both right. The predictions about the humble Messiah and the triumphant Messiah were both true, but they happened at 2 different occurrences. The suffering Messiah would first come like a humble lamb to be slaughtered, before He returned as the warrior lion to slaughter the enemies of Yahweh.

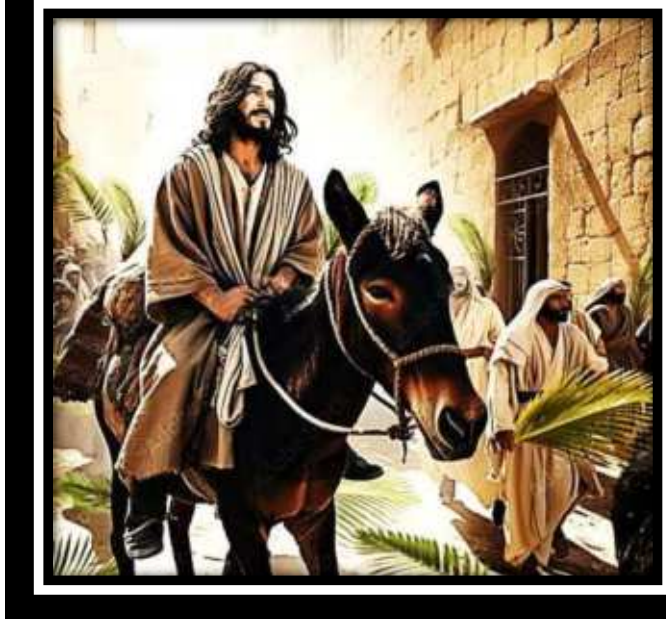
When Yahshua appeared in Jerusalem the first time, they were expecting a political deliverance from the power of the Roman Empire. What they could not realize was that they first needed redemption from the power of sin and death. The Messiah who appeared on the donkey, that day, came to deliver Israel from their sin. This was the first revelation of the suffering Messiah, otherwise called the "first coming" of Yahshua. The "second coming" of Christ, will reveal the conquering king whom Israel was expecting.

# The Triumphal Entry

<sup>77</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 11

# The Triumphal Entry

***<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Behold, your king is coming to you;  
righteous and having salvation is he,  
humble and mounted on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah  
9)***



Presently, all believers are waiting for the promised return of Yahshua, when He will fulfill the second part of the prophetic narrative. He will return in the near future, as the "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah", to destroy all the nations of the world and set up the Kingdom of God on the earth forever.

***<sup>13</sup> As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. (Daniel)***

In His first coming, the Messiah rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as a symbol of humility and peace. The donkey was a culturally established symbol of a king who came in peace. In His second coming, the Messiah will victoriously ride into Jerusalem on a white war horse. This is recorded in the Book of Revelation, because it speaks of the visible revelation of Yahshua.

***<sup>11</sup> Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. <sup>13</sup> He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. <sup>14</sup> The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. <sup>16</sup> On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords. (Revelation 19)***

**<sup>4</sup> The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the street, tied outside the front door. <sup>5</sup> As they were untying it, some bystanders demanded, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" <sup>6</sup> They said what Jesus had told them to say, and they were permitted to take**

**it. <sup>7</sup> Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it.**

The fancy garments that were placed on the colt indicated that it was being prepared for the arrival of Yahshua into Jerusalem. The colourful clothing placed on the animal indicated a royal king was entering the city.

**<sup>8</sup> Many in the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others spread leafy branches they had cut in the fields.**

The palm branch was the national symbol for Israel. Publicly waving a palm branch, signified the defiant resistance to the Roman occupation. It was also the symbol of the Maccabean revolt, that drove the Greek armies out of Israel 150 years earlier. This celebration had a powerful political flavor, as Yahshua entered Jerusalem with garments being cast before His colt.

There were over 1 million people in Jerusalem, gathered to celebrate the Passover. During religious festivals, the Romans were on extreme alert against the looming possibility of another rebellion. Into the tense atmosphere surrounding the yearly Passover, Yahshua deliberately rode into the city as the people declared Him to be their Messiah and King. This aggravated both the Romans and Jewish leaders, as the popularity of Yahshua threatened the established religious and political order.

**<sup>9</sup> Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting,**

The Greek indicated a repeated declaration, as if the crowds followed alongside Yahshua and chanted the slogan as He entered Jerusalem.

**"Praise God!**

**Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!**

**<sup>10</sup> Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David!**

**Praise God in highest heaven!"**

Throughout the Gospel of Mark, Yahshua constantly discouraged the crowds and even demonic spirits from declaring that He was indeed the Messiah. At this moment, He encouraged them to shout it from the rooftops. The Messiah had finally arrived and publicly presented Himself to the people of Israel. The coming of the King, to sit on the throne of David, established the Messianic expectation of the excited crowd. The people believed the Son of David had arrived. They presumed the Kingdom of Yahweh was about to be revealed, as Yahshua would publicly announce Himself to be the promised Messiah and destroy the occupying presence of the Roman legions.



If the religious leaders were open-mindedly investigating the Scriptures, instead of defending their man-made traditions, they would have recognized and received their Messiah.

**11 So Jesus came to Jerusalem and went into the Temple.**

We know from the other Gospel writers that the religious leaders were shocked by the crowds' reaction as Yahshua entered the city. He completely undermined the significance of the Passover celebration and disturbed the peace of Jerusalem, which made the Roman overseers very nervous.



Yahshua entered the Temple on the prophetically appointed day, declaring to be the promised Messiah, looking to receive praise and repentance from the Jewish people. According to the parable of the vineyard, the Master sent His Son to receive the honor He rightfully deserved.

*Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. (Malachi 3)*

**After looking around carefully at everything, he left because it was late in the afternoon. Then he returned to Bethany with the twelve disciples.**



Mark wrote Yahshua looked around carefully. The idea of the Messiah looking around in the Temple, carried the notion of Yahshua inspecting everything very thoroughly. Christ inspected the Temple with great care, to judge what He found. He was like a "fruit inspector" who came to examine the faith of the people and their level of genuine repentance. Did they believe the message of John the Baptist and make way for the coming of the Messiah? Were they found to be faithful on the day of their visitation?

**DON'T MISS  
YOUR VISITATION**

## Jesus Curses the Fig Tree



**<sup>12</sup> The next morning as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. <sup>13</sup> He noticed a fig tree in full leaf a little way off, so he went over to see if he could find any figs.**

The fig tree was a representation of the Nation of Israel. Previously, Yahshua had carefully inspected the Temple. He now inspected the fig tree to determine if it produced any fruit. From a distance, the tree

looked healthy and fruitful. However, after a careful inspection, the tree was found to be barren and fruitless. The fig tree failed to fulfill its purpose when the Messiah demanded something to eat.

Up to this moment, Yahshua ministered healing and deliverance all over the nation of Israel. This was the first example of judgment in His entire ministry. This single prophetic act foreshadowed that a great judgment would come on the nation of Israel, for not recognizing their day of visitation.

**But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus said to the tree, "May no one ever eat your fruit again!" And the disciples heard him say it.**

The tree was filled with leaves which gave the illusion of plentiful fruit, but upon careful inspection, there was nothing of value on the tree. This was what Yahshua found in Jerusalem. The city was filled with empty religion and polluted with the artificial traditions of the Rabbis. Sadly, Yahshua found no evidence of mass repentance and faith in the Word of God.

## Jesus Clears the Temple

**<sup>15</sup> When they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and**



"May no one  
eat fruit from  
you again."

JESUS CURSES THE FIG TREE



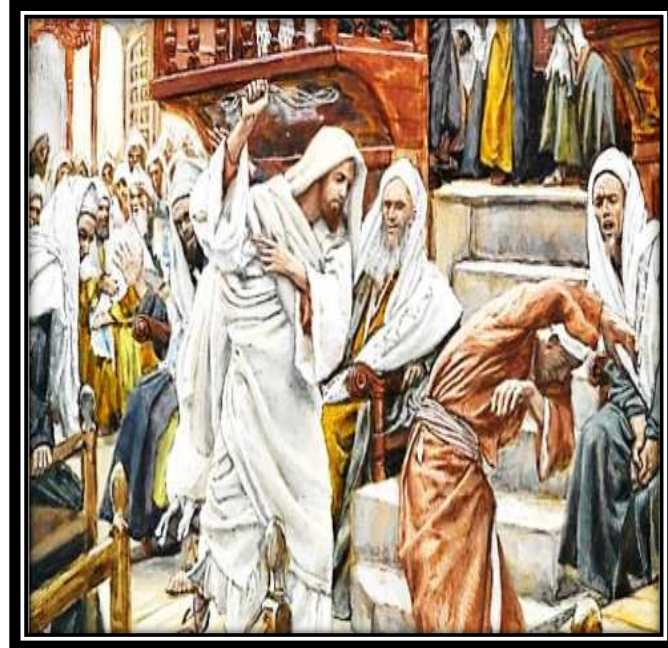
the chairs of those selling doves,<sup>16</sup> and he stopped everyone from using the Temple as a marketplace.<sup>17</sup> He said to them, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves."

The animal hustle belonged exclusively to the Priests. They owned the animals that were sold in Jerusalem and retailed them at extremely exaggerated prices. Secondly, there was also a lucrative side hustle when it came to changing money. The visitors brought coins from all over the Roman world to be exchanged for Temple currency, which was used exclusively at the feast. The religious leaders had the currency exchange business on lock as well; because they determined the exorbitant rates of exchange as they cheated the worshippers on both sides of the transaction.

The Priests not only controlled the buying and selling of sacrificial animals, but they also had their hand in the collection of the Temple tax.

*Every Jewish male had to pay a yearly temple tax — an amount equaling about two days' pay. It had to be paid in the currency of the temple, and the money exchangers made the exchange into temple money at outrageous rates.<sup>78</sup>*

When Yahshua attacked the business of religion at the Jerusalem Temple, He officially pushed the religious leaders too far. They could tolerate anything except having their money disrupted, and their businesses threatened.



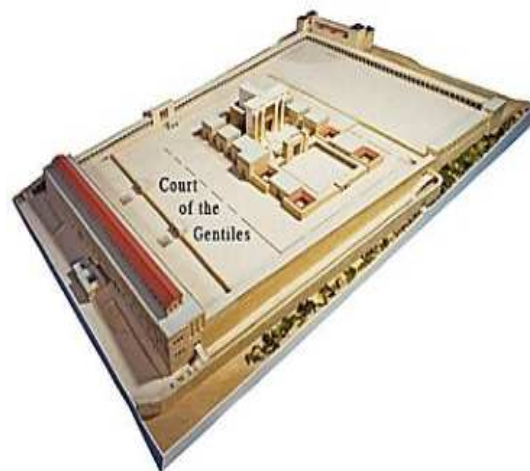
### **The court of the Gentiles**

There was supposed to be a place in the Temple for foreigners to worship the God of Israel. The purpose of Israel was to spread the knowledge of Yahweh among the nations. The place where the Jewish leadership set up their "crookish" marketplace, was in the court of the Gentiles. Consequently,

<sup>78</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 11

the Gentiles were excommunicated from the spiritual life of Israel, for the religious leaders to make more money. This was absolutely outrageous to Yahshua, and it angered Him greatly.

***6 "And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—  
7 these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isaiah 56)***



Foreigners had no place to pray in the Temple because they were forced out by the stalls selling sacrifices and exchanging money. The religious leaders were the thieves in the den, who exploited the authentic worshippers of Yahweh.

**18 When the leading priests and teachers of religious law heard what Jesus had done, they began planning how to kill him. But they were afraid of him because the people were so amazed at his teaching.**

The destruction of their family business was the final straw for the religious leaders in Jerusalem. They were insulted and undermined by Yahshua many times in the past, and did nothing significant to respond, but when He disrupted their "cartel like" exploitation of the Jewish religious celebrations, they were forced to murder Him. Nobody messed with the money of the Priests and got away with it.

**19 That evening Jesus and the disciples left the city. 20 The next morning as they passed by the fig tree he had cursed, the disciples noticed it had withered from the roots up. 21 Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the tree on the previous day and exclaimed, "Look, Rabbi! The fig tree you cursed has withered and died!"**

It's interesting that the disciples were still so easily impressed by the power of Yahshua. After seeing Him calm the raging sea, cast demons into pigs, and raise Lazarus from the dead, killing a tree should not have been so astonishing.

# Have faith

Mark 11:22

**22 Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. 23 I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen.**

The emphasis in this scripture should never be placed on the mountain. It was simply a common Jewish expression that means "doing hard things". There was never anyone in the Bible who cast a mountain into the sea. This would be a pointless demonstration of personal power, which would lead people into idolatry. Anyone with enough power to command a mountain to be cast into the sea would be dangerously tempted by personal pride.

**But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart.**

Faith is not a mystical power that we can produce in ourselves. We can't learn to operate our faith, because faith does not actually belong to us. The power of faith does not reside in us or in faith itself. The power of faith always resides in the will of Yahweh. Our faith must be aligned with the **Word of God**, which is a perfect reflection of the **will of God**. When we have faith in faith alone, it becomes very close to witchcraft, because we can end up leaving God out of it.

**24 I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours.**

Notice how prayer and faith is connected. Prayer is always subject to the will of God and our answer to prayer will be granted according to the purpose of God in our life, at that specific time. Prayer is about seeking the will of God and asking according to His purposes. The purpose of prayer is not to get our will accomplished, but to see His will be done and His Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Prayer is God's way of allowing His human family to cooperate with Him in what He is doing on the earth.

## **Can I really pray for anything?**

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**

The disciples were about to embark on a mission to change the world. They would heal the sick and cast out demons, to illustrate that the Kingdom of God had actually arrived. They were instructed to pray and believe that everything they needed to complete their mission would be given to them. This however, was not an open invitation to pray selfish prayers for their own benefit.

# in God



*This promise of God's answer to the prayer made in faith was made to disciples, not to the multitude. "Nor should we interpret (Mark 11:24) to mean, 'If you pray hard enough and really believe, God is obligated to answer your prayer no matter what you ask.' That kind of faith is not faith in God; rather it is nothing but faith in faith, or faith in feelings."<sup>79</sup>*

All of the disciples, except John, died horrific deaths in the service of Christ. If they had the absolute ability to pray for anything they wanted, why did they not pray to be delivered from martyrdom? Why did they not pray for worldly blessings for themselves and their families? Why would they leave their relatives behind, only to die horrific deaths in heathen lands, if they had an open ticket to getting all their prayers answered?

**<sup>25</sup> But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."**

When you fail to forgive another person, your salvation as a believer is not nullified. Your salvation happened at the moment of your **justification**. After justification you are now in the process of **sanctification**, until the time of your **glorification**. When a believer willingly embraces unforgiveness as their right, this decision will hinder their intimacy with Yahweh because it is an emotional decision based in the belief that you are morally superior to the person who trespassed against you. This wrong belief system will hinder your spiritual growth and destroy the open fellowship that was possible if you were in a place of humility and intimacy with God. Prayer involves both forgiveness and faith to be effective. We must be in intimate fellowship with both our heavenly Father and our church family upon the earth.

## **The Authority of Jesus Challenged**

**<sup>27</sup> Again they entered Jerusalem. As Jesus was walking through the Temple area, the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders came up to him. <sup>28</sup> They demanded, "By what authority are you doing all these things? Who gave you the right to do them?"**

<sup>79</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. "Be Diligent (Mark): Serving Others as You Walk with the Master Servant" (The BE Series Commentary) (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 1987)





Their question about authority was previously concerning the Jewish Sabbath and hand washing, but this time, it centred on one specific incident. What gave Yahshua the authority to shut down the Temple? This discussion was all about money. The religious gangsters were outraged that their hustle was disrupted. When Christ openly claimed to be the Lord of the Sabbath everyone understood that the Lord of the Sabbath was Yahweh. So, as Yahweh, the Temple was His house, and He had the rightful authority to do whatever He wanted. The religious leaders were just servants in the house.

**<sup>29</sup> "I'll tell you by what authority I do these things if you answer one question," Jesus replied. <sup>30</sup> "Did John's authority to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human? Answer me!"**

The Priests demanded that other people should speak with absolute honesty when they asked a direct question. So, Yahshua applied their own standard back to them. In asking their opinion about the baptism of John, Yahshua knew, the Jewish leaders had rejected John's authority to baptize. On the other hand, He also knew they were a crowd of spineless politicians who pandered to the approval of the crowds. They could never answer this direct question honestly because they were usually dishonest in their motives.

**<sup>31</sup> They talked it over among themselves. "If we say it was from heaven, he will ask why we didn't believe John. <sup>32</sup> But do we dare say it was merely human?" For they were afraid of what the people would do, because everyone believed that John was a prophet. <sup>33</sup> So they finally replied, "We don't know."**

Notice, Yahshua did not outrightly refuse to answer their question. He made it conditional on their honest response. If they refused to honestly answer Yahshua's question, He would be justified in not answering their question. By highlighting the dishonest political hypocrisy of the religious leaders, Christ proved that they were deceitful in their motivation. They were not seeking the truth, but only wanted to trap Him with their crafty questions.

**And Jesus responded, "Then I won't tell you by what authority I do these things."**

The religious leaders previously rejected the message of John and because they rejected John, they would also reject Yahshua. They had already made up their minds to murder Yahshua, therefore, their questions were pointless.



# Discussion



- 1. The religious leaders should have known that the Messiah entered the city because they had the prophetic Word of God memorized. It was their responsibility to know the Word and discern the times. Do you feel that you know the Bible well enough to rightly discern our times? If not, what do you intend to do about it?**
- 2. Israel missed their appointed time to receive their Messiah and Christ cursed the fig tree as an illustration of Israel's missed opportunity. What can we learn from the failure of Israel? How can we make the most of the opportunity we have been given to make disciples, in the few remaining years of our time on earth?**
- 3. When Yahshua made a whip and cleared out the money changers from the Temple, do you think He actually beat people with the whip? Why or why not?**
- 4. The religious leaders turned the Temple into a family business. Yahshua said they turned His Father's house into a den of thieves. How have we turned preaching the Gospel into a money-making business in our generation and what can we do change it?**





## Parable of the Evil Farmers

**12** Then Jesus began teaching them with stories: "A man planted a vineyard. He built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the grape juice, and built a lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenant farmers and moved to another country.

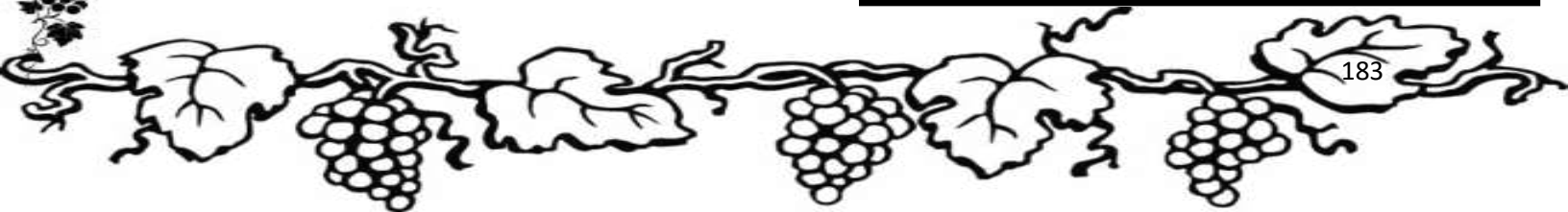
Everyone in the audience understood that there was a connection between Israel, and especially the Temple in Jerusalem, and the illustration of the vineyard. Pictures of fruitful vines were commonly displayed in the artwork of the Temple and carved into the stone walls. Moreover, Yahshua's parable was a direct reference to the picture of the vineyard, given by the prophet Isaiah.

**5** Let me sing for my beloved  
my love song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.

**2** He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
and he looked for it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes. **5** And now I  
will tell you what I will do to my  
vineyard.

I will remove its hedge,  
and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall,  
and it shall be trampled down.

**6** I will make it a waste;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and briers and thorns shall grow up;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.





*7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry! (Isaiah 5)*

All of the previous chapters concerning Yahshua's entry into Jerusalem pointed to the story of the vineyard. The Messiah approached the Temple and after careful inspection, found corruption instead of worship. He also approached a fig tree, which was another image of Israel, inspected it and found no fruit. In cursing the fig tree, Yahshua was foreshadowing the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple.

Like the story from Isaiah, Yahshua's parable said the master who built the vineyard, left it in the care of His workers and went away for an extended period of time. Many years later, he would come back to inspect the vineyard. In Isaiah's parable, when he returned, the Master only found bitter grapes that were useless for wine. Accordingly, the vineyard would be completely destroyed for having no fruit, similar to how the Romans completely destroyed the Jewish Temple.

### **The return of the Master**

**PLEASE  
NOTE...**

Yahshua's parable focused on a type of farming that was very common during the time. Rich landowners would lease out their estates to tenant workers, who would give them a percentage of the harvest in return. *In a day when title was sometimes uncertain, anyone who had had the use of land for three years was presumed to own it in the absence of an alternative claim.*<sup>80</sup> As mentioned, the tenant farmers did not own the land, plant the grapes, nor build the vineyard. They were simply given the

responsibility of stewarding the property until the owner returned from his extended trip to a foreign land.

This parable is a picture of the church's mission. Yahshua is presently in heaven with the Father waiting to return. He has left us in charge of our own personal vineyard. He will suddenly return one day to inspect the quality of

<sup>80</sup> Morris, Leon L. "Luke: An Introduction and Commentary" (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988)







our work. The parable has a “now and not yet” fulfillment. Israel was unprepared for their day of visitation and was judged harshly for their careless stewardship. When Christ returns for the second

time, He will judge the church for our faithfulness during His absence. As believers, the unfaithfulness of Israel should stand as a loud example for us. Israel was unprepared for the first coming of Christ and missed their opportunity for salvation. In light of this, all believers should live as if Yahshua could come at any moment and be ready to open the door for His arrival.

**<sup>2</sup> At the time of the grape harvest, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the crop.**

After an extended period of time, which allowed the vineyard enough time to mature and produce good fruit. The master demanded what was rightfully His and sent for His share of the harvest.

*<sup>6</sup> And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ <sup>8</sup> And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. <sup>9</sup> Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.” (Luke 13)*

**<sup>3</sup> But the farmers grabbed the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed. <sup>4</sup> The owner then sent another servant, but they insulted him and beat him over the head. <sup>5</sup> The next servant he sent was killed. Others he sent were either beaten or killed, <sup>6</sup> until there was only one left—his son whom he loved dearly. The owner finally sent him, thinking, ‘Surely they will respect my son.’**

In the parable, the tenant farmers have illegally revolted against the landowner and now operate the vineyard as their own property. To increase the severity of their crime, they were willing to murder the faithful servants of the true master to maintain the financial benefits of controlling the land.

Historically, Israel has always persecuted and murdered the prophets of Yahweh that warned them of their rebellion and treachery. Elijah was persecuted and rejected. Isaiah was sawed in half, according to Jewish

tradition. Zechariah was stoned to death in the Temple and more recently John the Baptist was beheaded for speaking the truth.

**7 "But the tenant farmers said to one another, 'Here comes the heir to this estate. Let's kill him and get the estate for ourselves!' 8 So they grabbed him and murdered him and threw his body out of the vineyard.**



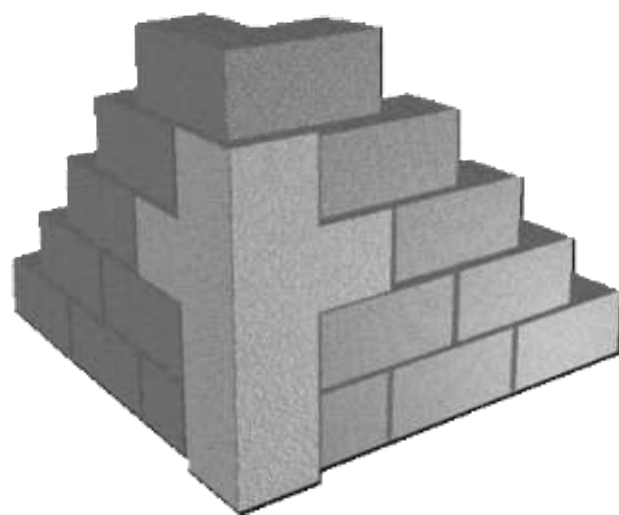
The story told by Yahshua expanded slightly on Isaiah's parable. In His parable, the Master sends His own Son as His representative. How could these wicked men be so lawless to murder the only Son of the owner of the vineyard? Could such a horrific crime ever take place among the people of God? Yahweh sent many prophets to instruct Israel, but they rejected most and murdered some. Finally, at the appointed time, Yahweh sent Yahshua, His only Son to speak directly to the people. The religious leaders rejected Yahshua as their Messiah because they had turned the Jewish religion into their family business. By murdering the Christ, they were hoping to maintain control of the vineyard indefinitely.

While the crowds were outraged by what was being described in the illustration, the religious leaders were burning with anger because they absolutely understood what Yahshua was saying. He was speaking about their plot to murder Him, because He disrupted their business in the Temple.

**9 "What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do?" Jesus asked. "I'll tell you—he will come and kill those farmers and lease the vineyard to others. 10 Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures?**

**'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.**

**11 This is the LORD's doing, and it is wonderful to see."**



When the Messiah presented Himself to Israel, at the appointed time as predicted by Daniel, He found no fruit in the Temple. Additionally, after presenting Himself as their King, the religious leaders rejected Him and plotted to murder Him. Yahshua was rejected by Israel, but was made the cornerstone of the church that He would build.



This specific prophecy occurred in 70 A.D. when the Roman legions under the command of Titus destroyed Jerusalem in order to crush another revolt of the Jewish rebels who were trying to reestablish the autonomy of Israel.

In still another unfolding of the prophetic word of God, the Jewish people collectively rejected faith in the Messiah. The Gentiles however, who destroyed the Jewish Temple, oddly accepted faith in the Jewish Messiah.

*<sup>43</sup> Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. <sup>44</sup> And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” (Matthew 21) ESV*

**<sup>12</sup> The religious leaders wanted to arrest Jesus because they realized he was telling the story against them—they were the wicked farmers. But they were afraid of the crowd, so they left him and went away.**

The chapter began with Yahshua revealing the cowardly nature of the religious leaders as they continually appeased the crowds. Even though they were enraged and filled with murderous thoughts, like all good religious people, they bottled up their true feelings until nobody was watching. They were not morally against murder; they just didn't want anyone to know that they were the actual murderers of the Messiah.

### **Taxes for Caesar**

**<sup>13</sup> Later the leaders sent some Pharisees and supporters of Herod to trap Jesus into saying something for which he could be arrested.**

In the previous chapter, Mark noted the leading priests, teachers of religious law and the Pharisees had all united to confront Yahshua about what He did in the Temple. Surprisingly, the supporters of King Herod had now joined the club. This was astonishing because the supporters of Herod were Hellenistic Jews, who had rejected their religion and worshipped Greek gods instead. They were the political enemies of the Pharisees. It seems, when you have a



common enemy, you automatically become friends. The supporters of Herod were afraid Yahshua would declare Himself to be the Messiah and start a revolt against the Romans, thus removing King Herod from power.

It's interesting that the religious conservatives who were the ultra legalists, united with the extremely liberal, Yahweh haters of the day, because they both despised Christ. The religious legalists disliked Him because they were filled with pride, while the lawless liberals detested Him, because they were filled with rebellion.

**14 "Teacher," they said, "we know how honest you are. You are impartial and don't play favorites. You teach the way of God truthfully.**

This was complete rubbish. Yahshua had just proved that the religious leaders were dishonest and extremely partial to the desires of the crowds. They taught the Word of God with hypocrisy, rooted in their own self-interest. These words dripped with the venom of a poisonous snake.

**Now tell us—is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? 15 Should we pay them, or shouldn't we?"**

As noted, the religious leaders were politicians and were governed by public opinion. They desperately wanted to arrest Yahshua but were afraid of the reaction of the crowds. They needed either the Romans to do their dirty work, or turn the adoring crowds against Yahshua, so they could carry out their underhanded plan.

This question was their secret weapon. They assumed it was foolproof, because Yahshua would be trapped regardless of His answer. If He said they should not pay taxes, they would report Him as a traitor to the Romans and have Him crucified for treason. If He said "yes", they would report Him to the zealots who would murder Him for supporting the Roman occupation. This was a perfect trick question!



### **Should we pay tax to Rome?**

PLEASE  
NOTE...

The Roman government forced the Jewish people to pay taxes directly to the Roman treasury. A few Jewish rebels refused to pay taxes to Caesar, because they refused to recognize him as their king. They were waiting for the Messiah to arrive, who would lead their rebellion against their oppressors.

The Jewish people were taxed on the crops they produced and the fish they caught. They were also forced to pay another overall income tax once a year. The tax burden was excessive and made worse by the dishonest nature of the tax collectors. They exploited the people far beyond they demands of the Roman government.

**Jesus saw through their hypocrisy and said, "Why are you trying to trap me? Show me a Roman coin, and I'll tell you." <sup>16</sup> When they handed it to him, he asked, "Whose picture and title are stamped on it?"**

The Roman coin had an image of Caesar stamped in its face. While the hypocrites were discussing money, Yahshua referred to the image. The coin had the image of Ceasar and therefore belonged to the Roman government.

On the other hand, Ceasar was only a man, created from the dust of the ground. The image He also referred to goes back to the Genesis account, when Yahweh created man in His own image.

**"Caesar's," they replied. <sup>17</sup> "Well, then," Jesus said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar,**

Money does not belong to us, it actually belongs to the government that printed it. Because Caesar's image was on the coin, Yahshua said give Caesar the coin that belongs to him. In principle, Christ indicated that life was far more valuable than mere money. The Greek word used for "give" is *apodidomito* which means "pay back a debt". If you owe Rome a debt, then you should pay it back.

WHAT  
IS  
CAESAR'S?



WHAT  
IS  
GOD'S?

**and give to God what belongs to God.”**

The second part of the answer is absolutely stunning. On a higher level, all humanity is created in the image of God. Therefore, because we are all made in His image, we must also give to God what belongs to Him. In conclusion, Yahshua suggested that they should pay tax to Rome, if they owe Rome taxes and they should give their lives entirely to Yahweh, because they belong to Him, and bear His image.

**His reply completely amazed them.**

### **Discussion about Resurrection**

**<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus was approached by some Sadducees—religious leaders who say there is no resurrection from the dead. They posed this question: <sup>19</sup> “Teacher, Moses gave us a law that if a man dies, leaving a wife without children, his brother should marry the widow and have a child who will carry on the brother’s name.**

*<sup>5</sup> “If two brothers are living together on the same property and one of them dies without a son, his widow may not be married to anyone from outside the family. Instead, her husband’s brother should marry her and have intercourse with her to fulfill the duties of a brother-in-law. <sup>6</sup> The first son she bears to him will be considered the son of the dead brother, so that his name will not be forgotten in Israel. (Deuteronomy 25)*

**<sup>20</sup> Well, suppose there were seven brothers. The oldest one married and then died without children. <sup>21</sup> So the second brother married the widow, but he also died without children. Then the third brother married her. <sup>22</sup> This continued with all seven of them, and still there were no children. Last of all, the woman also died. <sup>23</sup> So tell us, whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven were married to her.”**

*The Sadducees were well educated, sophisticated, influential and wealthy. They did not believe in immortality, spirits, or angels. The purpose of their question was to make the idea of resurrection seem absurd.<sup>81</sup> The conservative, aristocratic, high-priestly party, worldly minded and very*

*You Belong To God*

<sup>81</sup> David Guzik “Blue Letter Bible Commentaries” (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 11





# WILL THERE BE SEX in heaven?

ready to cooperate with the Romans, which, of course, enabled them to maintain their privileged position.<sup>82</sup>

The prideful Sadducees assumed they had Yahshua trapped in a logical contradiction they found in the Scriptures. If the woman was resurrected, she would be legally married to all 7 brothers, and this would also be against the Law of Moses. Therefore, by strictly following the Law of Moses, you would also be breaking the Law of Moses.

**24 Jesus replied, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God."**

Remember, the Sadducees did not believe in a literal interpretation of the Scripture. They did not understand the Word of God, because they doubted the power of God.

**25 For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven.**

Marriage is a temporary relationship that will be concluded at the moment of death. Marital bonds will not exist in eternity because there will be no need for procreation. It was only made to contain sexual intercourse, which will also not occur in eternity. *From everything we know, angels don't have babies. Angels are made directly by God. In the resurrection, we won't have babies any more. In that respect, we will be just like the angels. "Marriage ceases to have any sexual significance in heaven."*<sup>83</sup>

Angels in heaven were not given the right to marry, because they were not allowed procreate. That privilege was only given to the children of Adam. They were instructed to fill the earth with the image of God. When the human family of Yahweh is fully redeemed, we will be similar to the angelic host in respect to our sexuality. Marriage will be a unnecessary institution, if nobody is having sex in eternity.

**26 "But now, as to whether the dead will be raised—haven't you ever read about this in the writings of Moses, in the story of the burning bush? Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said to Moses, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of**

<sup>82</sup> Morris, Leon L. "Luke: An Introduction and Commentary" (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988)

<sup>83</sup> Cole, R. Alan "The Gospel According to Mark" (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1988)

**Jacob.’ <sup>27</sup> So he is the God of the living, not the dead. You have made a serious error.”**

The Sadducees were the Jewish rationalists of the day and did not have enough faith to believe in the supernatural world. Their perspective was utterly worldly. Why would they even quote the Bible, if they did not believe in the power of Yahweh to raise the dead? Yahshua stated according to Scripture, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all alive, but they were in a different dimension called paradise, waiting for the arrival of the Messiah.

### **The Most Important Commandment**

**<sup>28</sup> One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”**

One of the scribes who listened to the ongoing debate was totally amazed at how easily Yahshua dismantled all their loaded arguments. He asked Yahshua an honest question because his mindset was changing. He was not trying to trap anyone, but simply wanted to learn the truth. According to their religious tradition, there were **365 things** the law commanded Israel “to do” and **248 things** the law commanded them “not to do”. This meant, according to the Pharisaical interpretation, there were 613 commandments that supported the first 12. One of their greatest sources of debate was which one of the 613 commandments, was the most important.

**<sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. <sup>30</sup> And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ <sup>31</sup> The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”**

Instantly, Yahshua ended the ongoing debate with one quick sentence. He summarized the entirety of the 613 commandments with one word. The law is based on love. If one loves God holistically and also loves others, everything the law intended would be naturally fulfilled.

**<sup>32</sup> The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. <sup>33</sup> And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor**



Love is the fulfillment of the law  
Do you love enough?



**as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law."**

## LAW OF LOVE

Law of Moses

Law of Christ

The irony of this answer is marvelous. If the Law of Moses was all about showing love to both God and man, the religious leaders were breaking the entire law, in their effort to use it to find a loophole to murder Yahshua. In their jealous madness, they were acting violently to both God and man at the same time. The defenders of Moses were actually the ultimate law breakers of all time.

It was easy for the religious leaders to think that loving God involved following the rules. They showed their love of God, by keeping up with the tiresome bondage of endless religious ceremonies. In contrast, Yahshua reminded them that religious devotion, without love as its foundation, is a meaningless expression of hypocrisy.

**<sup>34</sup> Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God."**

Yahshua understood that there was a change in this man's heart, and he was actually listening with spiritually open ears. As they questioned Yahshua, the man began to question himself. Slowly, he was coming to faith in Christ as the Messiah, but was not quite there yet.

How many people are almost in the Kingdom, but not yet? They know a lot about God and the Bible, but have not yet connected all the dots. Perhaps they have gone to church for years, been baptized and take communion, but are still just "close to the Kingdom". Sadly, many people are religious, but are still lost. They still fail to "see" who Yahshua really is.

**And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.**

## Whose Son Is the Messiah?

**<sup>35</sup> Later, as Jesus was teaching the people in the Temple, he asked, "Why do the teachers of religious law claim that the Messiah is the son of David? <sup>36</sup> For David himself, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said,**



**'The LORD said to my Lord,  
Sit in the place of honor at my right hand  
until I humble your enemies beneath your feet.'**

**<sup>37</sup> Since David himself called the Messiah 'my Lord,' how can the Messiah be his son?" The large crowd listened to him with great delight.**

Other Gospel writers indicated that Yahshua asked the religious leaders this question directly, because they refused to believe that Yahshua was Yahweh. They did, however, believe that the Messiah whom Israel was waiting for was the Son of King David, who would be their eternal King. Appealing to the Scriptures, Yahshua quoted a verse where King David called the Messiah His Lord. In the Scripture, the word Lord means Yahweh. How could the son of David, also be the God of David, unless the promised Messiah was also God in the flesh? Yahshua gave them this example because the Jewish leadership wanted to kill Him for saying that He was Himself Yahweh.

**<sup>38</sup> Jesus also taught: "Beware of these teachers of religious law! For they like to parade around in flowing robes**

The first accusation against the religious leaders was their adoration of a leisurely lifestyle. They loved to wear expensive clothing, which identified them as holy men, and they pridefully stood far above regular, working-class people because of their elevated social status.

**and receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces.**

Their status as holy men in their society gave them a high level of adoration and respect everywhere they went. What was spiritually dangerous was how much they loved being honored in public and how they enjoyed the praise of the common people.

**<sup>39</sup> And how they love the seats of honor in the synagogues and the head table at banquets.**

Yahshua's objection against the religious leaders was how much they loved the prestige that came with their religious service. They enjoyed being noticed when they paraded around in public.

**<sup>40</sup> Yet they shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public. Because of this, they will be more severely punished."**





On the one hand, they presented themselves like caring and compassionate people, while on the other hand, they used their influence to pressure widows to give their inheritance to the Temple, so they can take the money for themselves.

They were only rich because they made great money off of their "religious side hustle". Exchanging money and selling sacrifices allowed them the finances they needed to wear the best clothing and afford the prestigious seats, when they went out into the society.

### **The Widow's Offering**

**<sup>41</sup> Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money.**

The next illustration flowed directly from the previous discussion. Giving money to support the Temple was commanded by God, but what's more important was the attitude in how that money was given. Yahshua noticed that some people used the occasion to draw attention to themselves. Like the religious leaders, some rich people liked having other people know how charitable they were.

**Many rich people put in large amounts. <sup>42</sup> Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins.**

As Yahshua was still discussing how the religious leaders loved to make money off of their religious service, He sat down near the area where the offering was collected and watched as the money was being collected. As the rich people gave large amounts of money to the Temple, Yahshua noticed the giving of a poor, old widow, and was amazed. The Greek used to describe the offering was *lepton* which means "a tiny thing". She only had two tiny coins and gave them both.

**<sup>43</sup> Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. <sup>44</sup> For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on."**

For Yahshua, the **amount** you give was not important, it was the **amount of sacrifice** your giving demanded that was of value to God. Yahweh





did not need their money, but they were given the privilege of giving. If God needed money, the amount would be important. Instead, God is honored when we demonstrate faith by **how** we give, not **how much** we give. The poor woman gave a little amount by faith, while the rich people gave a lot, but it required no faith at all.

In the Kingdom of God, giving is measured in **proportion**, not **portions**. Some people are rich enough to give large amounts of money, which involves absolutely no sacrifice at all. If you have a billion dollars, giving away a million dollars is easy and relatively painless. People in our society are bewildered by the amount of money rich people can give away. But Yahshua was astonished by the faith of this poor, old widow, because she gave with more generosity than all the rich people put together. The widow had nothing and gave everything. She trusted that Yahweh would provide for her needs. Her copper coins were not worth much, but it was all she had to her name. Therefore, her giving was sacrificial and demanded faith. Without sacrifice, which demands faith, our giving is quite unimpressive in the eyes of God.

***6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. (Hebrew 11)***

To give with faith, it must be an amount that actually challenges you. If you can give it easily, there is no faith involved. The amount that is "costly" will cause you to push through some resistance, because it will go against your natural reasoning and your innate desire to benefit self.

***22 "Take it, my lord the king, and use it as you wish," Araunah said to David. "Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and you can use the threshing boards and ox yokes for wood to build a fire on the altar. 23 I will give it all to you, Your Majesty, and may the Lord your God accept your sacrifice." 24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on buying it, for I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing." So David paid him fifty pieces of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen. (2 Samuel 24)***

When King David was simply given everything he needed to offer a sacrifice for free, he realized that it would not be a sacrifice at all. There was no personal sacrifice unless it cost him something. Yahweh does not desire animal sacrifices but is pleased with the personal sacrifice of His people. David understood that if he offered up animals that didn't cost him anything, it would be an impersonal sacrifice that expressed no real worship. When we understand how Yahweh is clearly worth far more than our mere money, we will give in extraordinary ways.



**"I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."**

2 Samuel 24:24



# Discussion



**1. Who do each of the characters in this parable represent? How do we know?**

- The owner of the vineyard
- The vineyard itself
- The tenants
- The servants
- The beloved son

**2. Yahshua said the son of King David would also be the God of King David. How can this be possible?**

**3. The widow's offering was significant because she gave everything she had by faith. Is it easier for poor people to be radically generous compared to rich people? Why?**

**4. In the Kingdom of God, generous giving is measured in proportions, not portions. Is this statement fair to both the rich and the poor?**



## Jesus Speaks about the Future

**13** As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said, "Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the impressive stones in the walls."

The Jewish Temple was amazing. It was a breathtaking compound that was comparable with any of the recognized structures of the ancient world. The people of Israel were very proud of their worldclass Temple.

*The beauty of the ancient temple is well documented. The Jewish historian Josephus says that the temple was covered on the outside with gold plates that were so brilliant that when the sun shone it was blinding. Where there wasn't gold, there were blocks of marble of such a pure white that from a distance, strangers thought there was snow on the temple.<sup>84</sup>*



Yahshua previously prophesied that the Temple would be destroyed as a result of the religious leaders murdering the Messiah. Strangely, the disciples were still very impressed with the magnificent building that was destined to be destroyed. It was as if they were not listening carefully to what Yahshua was saying.

**2** Jesus replied, "Yes, look at these great buildings. But they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!"

To make it clear, Yahshua bluntly said that not one stone from the Temple will remain standing after the judgment of Yahweh comes upon the building.

*Today, tourists can see some of these massive stones, at least the ones used to build merely the retaining wall for the temple compound. These cut, quarried blocks of limestone are so big — some 50 feet wide, 25 feet high,*

<sup>84</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 13

and 15 feet deep — that most modern construction cranes could not lift them.<sup>85</sup>

*It is said that at the fall of Jerusalem, the last surviving Jews of the city fled to the temple because it was the strongest and most secure building remaining. Roman soldiers surrounded it, and one drunken soldier started a fire that soon engulfed the whole building. Ornate gold detail work in the roof melted down in the cracks between the stone walls of the temple. To retrieve the gold, the Roman commander ordered that the temple be dismantled stone by stone. The destruction was so complete that today researchers have some difficulty learning exactly where the temple was.<sup>86</sup>*

**<sup>3</sup> Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives across the valley from the Temple. Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him privately and asked him, <sup>4</sup>“Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will show us that these things are about to be fulfilled?”**

The question that the disciples asked Yahshua was, “when will the Temple be destroyed like you predicted?” The last time the Temple was destroyed was by the Babylonians. Afterwards, the Jewish people were exiled from the land for approximately 70 years. The answer Yahshua gave pointed to the distant “not yet”, instead of the immediate “now”.

**<sup>5</sup> Jesus replied, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, <sup>6</sup> for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive many.**

The first sign of Christ’s return will be that many counterfeit Messiahs will falsely claim to be Yahshua. The false Messiahs will come with the intention of deceiving the devoted followers of Yahshua. Therefore, the first major indication that the time of the end is beginning, will be global deception. This coming deception will result in the twisting of what we now call Christianity.



<sup>85</sup> David Guzik “Blue Letter Bible Commentaries” (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 13

<sup>86</sup> David Guzik “Blue Letter Bible Commentaries” (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 13

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

**<sup>7</sup> And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. <sup>8</sup> Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many parts of the world, as well as famines. But this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.**



The second sign of Christ's soon return will be multiple wars which occur simultaneously. These wars will be accompanied by earthquakes and famines. The second set of signs will indicate that the labour pains have started, but the birth will not happen immediately.

**<sup>9</sup> "When these things begin to happen, watch out! You will be handed over to the local councils and beaten in the synagogues. You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me. <sup>10</sup> For the Good News must first be preached to all nations.**

Notice, Yahshua declared the Gospel will be preached to all the nations of the world. This could not have happened if He was only talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This is evidently an end time prediction. The Gospel is still being preached at this present moment and it has not reached all the nations of the world as yet. This could not have possibly occurred before the Romans destroyed the Temple.

Just before the return of Yahshua, there will be a mass persecution of all believers because of their faith. It will become illegal to be a Christ follower. Your close friends and family will turn believers over to government authorities to be executed. Even when faced with death, the end time believers will continue to share the Gospel until the mission is completed.

**<sup>11</sup> But when you are arrested and stand trial, don't worry in advance about what to say. Just say what God tells you at that time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit.**

Expanding on the previous statement, after believers are arrested, they will be placed on trial and given the opportunity to deny Christ to save their lives. This will be a golden opportunity to testify for







The church is not a cruise ship where a handful of people serve everyone else who is relaxing.

No, the church is a battleship where it's "all hands on deck" and everyone serves the mission.



Yahshua, even at the cost of your head. Yahshua promised His followers that they would receive inspired words from the Spirit, when confronted with persecution resulting in execution.

**12 "A brother will betray his brother to death, a father will betray his own child, and children will rebel against their parents and cause them to be killed. 13 And everyone**

**will hate you because you are my followers.**

This will be a horrific time in history. Persecution will happen on an international scale, and families will be divided over their faith in Yahshua. Believing in Christ will be viewed as morally evil. People who kill believers will think they are doing something in the best interest of society. This will be a trying time for all Christ-followers, because they must remain faithful to Yahshua during the persecution until their death or His return.

Yahshua reminded all believers in this chapter, that following Him is not a quick sprint, but a lifelong marathon. We are called to live on a battleship, not a cruise ship. Those who are unprepared for the suffering that comes with following Yahshua will have difficulty enduring life's tribulations, since they will not be mentally or spiritually prepared.

**But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**

"Endures" is the Greek word *hupomeno* which means "to remain under". Christ warned that there will be a generation of believers that will have to "remain under fire" until the end. The end will be the termination of their physical lives or His eminent return. Regardless, there will be no escape for this last generation. They will be forced to pass through the fire to reach to the other side of glory.

**14 "The day is coming when you will see the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing where he should not be." (Reader, pay attention!)**

The Jewishness of this specific word can not be understated. The sacrilegious object was previously mentioned 3 separate times by the prophet Daniel. Something similar happened in the history of Jerusalem when a Greek ruler called Antiochus Epiphanies set up an image of Zeus and defiled the altar in the Temple with pigs' blood. Nevertheless, Yahshua clearly indicated that the

*Do Not Grow Weary*

"He that endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).



events He described would occur in the future. The phrase "when you see" means that it has not happened as yet, so we need to be on the lookout.

***27 The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him." (Daniel 9)***

Daniel predicted that an evil ruler will make a peace treaty with Israel for 7 years but will break it after 3.5 years. He will then set up a blasphemous image of himself in the Jewish Temple and declare himself to be god.

***31 "His army will take over the Temple fortress, pollute the sanctuary, put a stop to the daily sacrifices, and set up the sacrilegious object that causes desecration. (Daniel 11)***

*This wicked leader will stop the Jewish worship of Yahweh and demand that the sacrilegious image be worshipped instead of God. The abomination of desolation is "the object of religious nausea and loathing who has to do with desolation."<sup>87</sup> The Semitic expression used in Daniel describes an abomination so detestable it causes the Temple to be abandoned by the people of God and provokes desolation.<sup>88</sup>*

This final act of blasphemy will start the Great Tribulation, when Yahweh will pour out His vengeful wrath on all the nations of the world. The final 3.5 years of wrath will end when Yahshua returns to destroy the attacking armies gathered around Jerusalem.

***11 "From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the sacrilegious object that causes desecration is set up to be worshiped, there will be 1,290 days. (Daniel 12)***

The exact duration of this blasphemy will be 3.5 years until the object is removed and the wicked leader is killed.

<sup>87</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. "The New Testament: An Expanded Translation" (Mark 13:14-23) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1961)

<sup>88</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)

# THE GREAT TRIBULATION



**“Then those in Judea must flee to the hills.**

Once again, the prophetic warning is directed to the people who are living in the land of Israel at the time of this great tribulation. The urgency of the moment can't be understated. This will be a time to run for the hills and hide.

**<sup>15</sup> A person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack. <sup>16</sup> A person out in the field must not return even to get a coat. <sup>17</sup> How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. <sup>18</sup> And pray that your flight will not be in winter. <sup>19</sup> For there will be greater anguish in those days than at any time since God created the world. And it will never be so great again. <sup>20</sup> In fact, unless the Lord shortens that time of calamity, not a single person will survive. But for the sake of his chosen ones he has shortened those days.**

It will be the greatest time of human suffering that will ever occur on the planet. This must also be an end time prediction because it clearly indicated that there could never be a worst time in all human history combined, like this specific moment.

**<sup>21</sup> “Then if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah,’ or ‘There he is,’ don’t believe it. <sup>22</sup> For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God’s chosen ones. <sup>23</sup> Watch out! I have warned you about this ahead of time!**

At the height of the tribulation, there will be great deception and many false Messiahs demonstrating lying signs intended to test the faith of those who endure to the end. The coming of Yahshua will be a visible, world changing event, that will result in His literal return and the observable destruction of all the rebellious nations, according to the Book of Revelation.

**<sup>24</sup> “At that time, after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened,  
the moon will give no light,  
<sup>25</sup> the stars will fall from the sky,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.**



This must also be a future sign, because if the stars had fallen and the sun refused to shine, we would have historical records recounting this horrific event. Nothing as gruesome as this has ever occurred in human history.

**<sup>26</sup> Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> And he will send out his angels to gather his chosen ones from all over the world—from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.**

The coming of the Messiah will be visible to everyone on the earth, simultaneously. This will be the greatest media event of all time. At the moment of His return, all faithful believers still living on the earth will be gathered to meet Christ in the air.

**<sup>28</sup> “Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup> In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that his return is very near, right at the door. <sup>30</sup> I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene before all these things take place. <sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.**

*This was the perfect illustration at this time and place. Jesus taught this on the Mount of Olives, and “The Mount of Olives was famous for its fig trees, which sometimes attained a height of 20 or 30 feet.” It was also the perfect time, because Jesus taught this right before Passover, when fig trees were in the condition described in the parable — branches tender, leaves sprouting.<sup>89</sup>*

The best way to understand this prediction is to firmly connect the text to the context. Yahshua just finished speaking about signs of the end times. Then, He pointed to a budding tree, which indicated that the season of Passover was nearby. Therefore, the generation that sees all the previously mentioned signs being fulfilled at once, will not die until they see the Messiah coming in the clouds with the saints.

**<sup>32</sup> “However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. <sup>33</sup> And since you don’t know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert!**

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<sup>89</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)

We don't know the exact time when the Messiah will return, but we can determine the season if we are watching and waiting. Yahshua commanded us to stay awake and not fall asleep. This means, we are not to be overtaken with the cares of this present era. We must live with the anticipation that we can depart at any moment and maintain our readiness to be with Christ.

**<sup>34</sup> "The coming of the Son of Man can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. When he left home, he gave each of his slaves instructions about the work they were to do, and he told the gatekeeper to watch for his return. <sup>35</sup> You, too, must keep watch! For you don't know when the master of the household will return—in the evening, at midnight, before dawn, or at daybreak. <sup>36</sup> Don't let him find you sleeping when he arrives without warning. <sup>37</sup> I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for him!"**

If we are not living as if Christ could return at any moment, we will become unfaithful to the task we have been given. The cares of life, money and family will become the focus of our lives, if we are not intentionally focusing on the return of Yahshua. While we need to live in the world, we are not citizens of this world. We must always be ready for our sudden Exodus, when the Messiah returns to take us.



# Discussion



- 1. Yahshua prepared his disciples to expect great suffering and persecution as a normal part of their Christian experience. Have you been prepared to also face suffering and persecution as a normal part of your Christian experience? If no, why not?**
- 2. Christ promised that there would be numerous false, miracle-working Messiahs who would come to deceive many. However, He also promised there would be one undeniable sign of His return. What is that sign?**
- 3. Yahshua promised His coming would be sudden and unexpected. Do you live as if Christ can really return at any given moment? If no, why not?**
- 4. We don't know the time, but we can know the season of Christ's return. Do you personally think we are close to the return of Christ?**





### **Jesus Anointed at Bethany**

**14** It was now two days before Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The leading priests and the teachers of religious law were still looking for an opportunity to capture Jesus secretly and kill him. <sup>2</sup> "But not during the Passover celebration," they agreed, "or the people may riot."

For the second time, Mark writes that the religious leaders did not want to murder Yahshua on a feast day, because they wanted to do it away from the crowds. Yahshua forced them to do what they did not want to do. The last thing they needed was for Yahshua to fulfill any more Messianic prophecies

***How can Jesus be  
the Son of David?***



after He presented Himself as the Son of King David. They intended to murder Him quietly and blame the zelotes or the Romans for His death. They certainly did not want the Passover celebration to be interrupted by riots over the arrest of Yahshua.

*From (John 11:57) it seems that the religious leaders originally intended to seize Jesus during the feast. When they saw the popularity of Jesus at the triumphal entry and His authority on the temple mount, they changed their minds and decided to do it after the feast. Their plan changed again when Judas volunteered to arrange a private, quiet arrest.<sup>90</sup>*



**<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume over his head.**

In the house of a man who was healed of leprosy, a woman entered and anointed Yahshua with extremely expensive perfume. The woman did this prophetic act to prepare Yahshua for burial, but she did not know it at the time. She was simply offering Yahshua a sacrifice that cost her greatly.

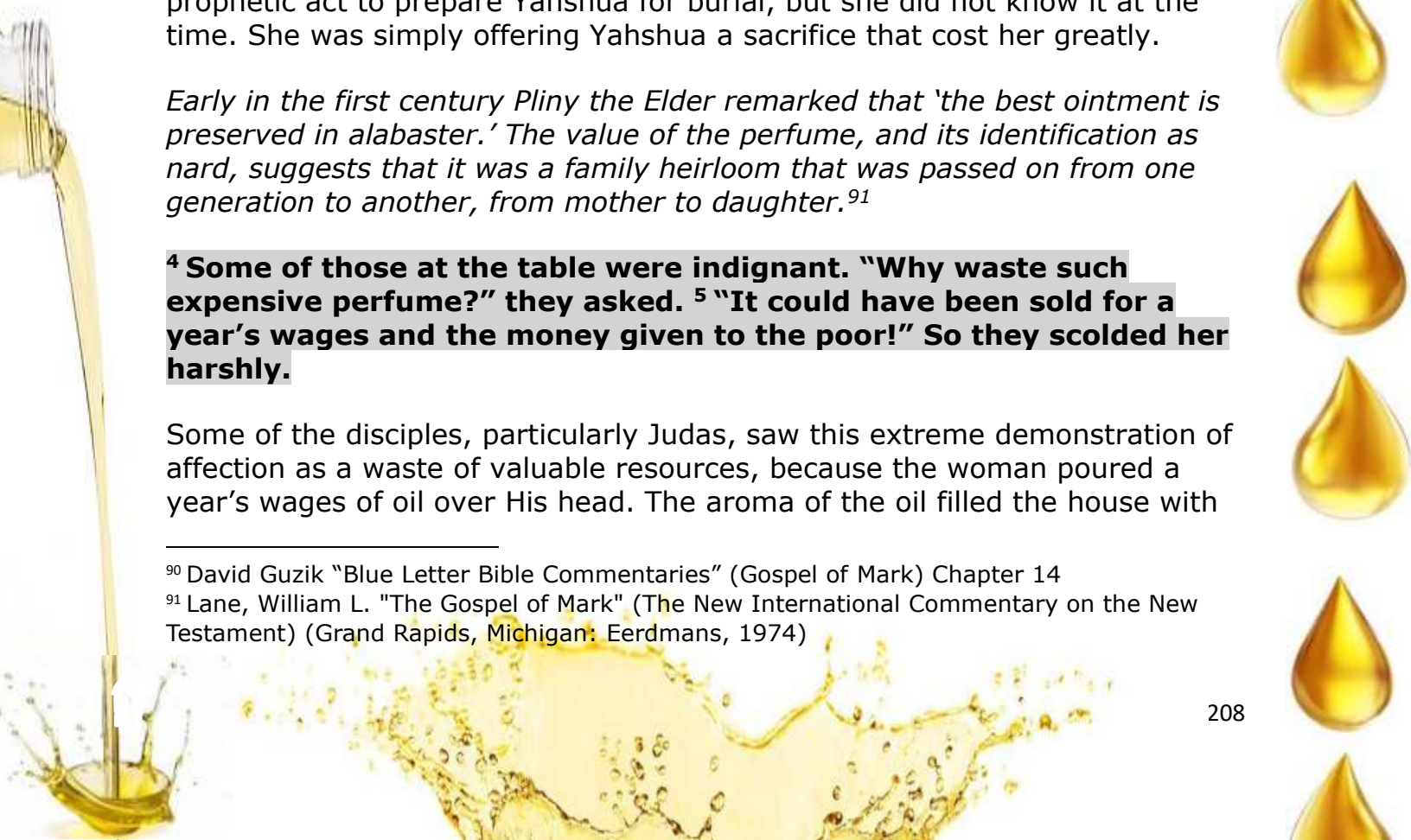
*Early in the first century Pliny the Elder remarked that 'the best ointment is preserved in alabaster.' The value of the perfume, and its identification as nard, suggests that it was a family heirloom that was passed on from one generation to another, from mother to daughter.<sup>91</sup>*

**<sup>4</sup> Some of those at the table were indignant. "Why waste such expensive perfume?" they asked. <sup>5</sup> "It could have been sold for a year's wages and the money given to the poor!" So they scolded her harshly.**

Some of the disciples, particularly Judas, saw this extreme demonstration of affection as a waste of valuable resources, because the woman poured a year's wages of oil over His head. The aroma of the oil filled the house with

<sup>90</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 14

<sup>91</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)





# DO NOT BE COWARDLY

fragrance, reminding them of the preparation of a corpse for burial. The men at the table were still blind to the events that would quickly unfold. Stuningly, this woman had more spiritual insight than even the great disciples, who followed Yahshua for 3 years.

## Cowards always criticize

PLEASE  
NOTE...

Cowards will always criticize those who make radical choices to live for Christ which involve sacrificial giving. They are made uncomfortable with the extreme giving and extreme living of those who love Yahshua more than they do. All believers love Yahshua, but some love Him more than others and demonstrate this in their lifestyle and priorities. For this woman to make such an expensive offering, convicted others who would never do such a thing. Many cowardly believers appeal to "wisdom", when the

condemn those who are radical in their affection for Yahshua. Wisdom is always a word that justifies worldly thinking but covers it under the whitewash of hypocritical spirituality. There will always be things in life we need and so, we need to apply true wisdom. However, this must not be a justification for lukewarm living and indifferent giving.

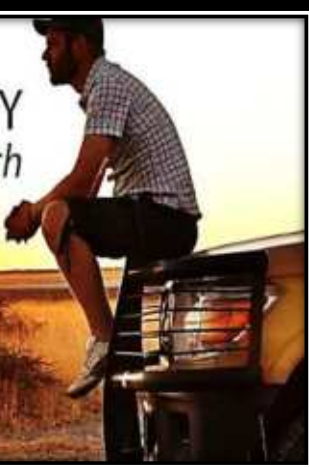
*This particular alabaster flask seems to have been worth more than a year's wages for a laborer. "I shall always feel obliged to Judas for figuring up the price of that box of costly nard. He did it to blame her, but we will let his figures stand, and think the more of her the more he put down to the account of waste. I should never have known what it cost, nor would you either, if Judas had not marked down in his pocket-book."<sup>92</sup>*

While we may easily focus on Judah the thief, Mark indicated that others who sat around the table were also irritated with the actions of this woman. She possibly revealed the self-serving motives of the disciples who were still following Yahshua for what they can get, instead of what they had to give.



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT  
**COWARDICE?**

LIVING FOR ETERNITY  
*while on earth*



**<sup>6</sup> But Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? <sup>7</sup> You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me.**

The discussion about giving money to the poor was a side issue. John revealed that Judas was already planning his exit from the group. He was probably stealing money to make this possible. The point is, we are all presently committing our life to what we will be remembered for in all eternity. Its pitiful when lukewarm believers criticize passionate followers of Christ who are willing to count the cost, pay the price and live the life, because they are too compromised to do the same.

**<sup>8</sup> She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. <sup>9</sup> I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and discussed."**


Because Mark did not intentionally include the name of this woman, we can assume that he did not see it of great importance. What he found of greater value was the fact that the disciples were still clueless, while this woman clearly understood that Yahshua was about to die.

While we still discuss the great sacrifice of this woman presently. In eternity, we will all know who she is and what she did in her lifetime to serve Yahshua. In eternity, we will wear our service to the Messiah as our heavenly rewards that will last forever. Yahshua said, even a cup of cold water will carry its eternal reward. If a cup of water is rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ, how much more will the reward for the radical sacrifice of this woman, follow her for eternity? In eternity, her name will be eternally famous.

### **Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus**

**<sup>10</sup> Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests to arrange to betray Jesus to them. <sup>11</sup> They were delighted when they heard why he had come, and they promised to give him money. So he began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.**






Things are not going very well for Judas. He saw the writing on the wall. Yahshua will be killed. At this point, he made his exit plan and looked to make some quick money on his way out. It's interesting that right after the woman made such a lavish demonstration of radical love for Yahshua, one of His own disciples sold Him out for a few pieces of silver. Judas loved money and the woman loved Yahshua.

## **The Last Supper**


**<sup>12</sup> On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go to prepare the Passover meal for you?"**

**<sup>13</sup> So Jesus sent two of them into Jerusalem with these instructions: "As you go into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. <sup>14</sup> At the house he enters, say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' <sup>15</sup> He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." <sup>16</sup> So the two disciples went into the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.**



Yahshua was overjoyed to commemorate the Passover with His disciples before He was slaughtered for the sins of the world. During this Passover celebration the disciples were still clueless about the significance of what was happening before their eyes. The celebration focused on a lamb, and it was appropriate for the meal to include a cooked lamb to remember the Exodus. At this exact moment, the prophet greater than Moses, presented Himself as the Lamb of God. He would lead the people of God in an Exodus from sin and death.


**<sup>17</sup> In the evening Jesus arrived with the Twelve. <sup>18</sup> As they were at the table eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, one of you eating with me here will betray me."**



Mark noted that the Priests had no intention to murder Yahshua during a feast day. Judas was still in the process of planning the perfect time to hand Him over, so He could be murdered quietly. All of a sudden, Yahshua openly spoke about the super secret plot, forcing Judas to act immediately, before he was ready. In ancient Near Eastern culture, eating was something you did with close friends. It was a demonstration of intimacy and acceptance.

# **Do This**

# **In Remembrance of Me**



To betray a friend, after eating the Passover meal, was the worst kind of human treachery imaginable.

**<sup>19</sup> Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, “Am I the one?” <sup>20</sup> He replied, “It is one of you twelve who is eating from this bowl with me. <sup>21</sup> For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!”**

Mark is very straight to the point. Yahshua would be betrayed but it would happen quickly, and He would control exactly when it would happen, not Judas or the religious leaders. Everything needed to be immediately implemented with no planning. That is why everything was done on the same night, while the Passover lambs were being slaughtered.

**<sup>22</sup> As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take it, for this is my body.”**

*Everything eaten at the Passover meal had a symbolic meaning. The bitter herbs recalled the bitterness of slavery; the salt water remembered the tears shed under Egypt’s oppression. The main course of the meal — a lamb freshly sacrificed for that particular household — did not symbolize anything connected to the agonies of Egypt. It was the sin-bearing sacrifice that allowed the judgment of God to pass over the household that believed.<sup>93</sup>*

The Passover was about to be fulfilled with the coming of the New Covenant. Yahshua would offer up His own flesh to be broken, just as the bread was broken and consumed that night. Like the sacrificial lambs, that were being slaughtered that very day beginning at sundown, Yahshua will also be slaughtered for the sins of the entire world before the day ended.

In the former observance of the Passover, the lamb was central to the meal. In the new tradition, the body of Christ is consumed as the Passover sacrifice. His body and blood would be the foundation of the future exodus from sin and death.



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<sup>93</sup> David Guzik “Blue Letter Bible Commentaries” (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 14

**23 And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And he said to them, "This is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many.**

The Old Covenant was established with the sprinkling of blood to make it legally binding. Similarly, The New Covenant, which was predicted by the prophets, would also be ratified by the shedding of blood. Animal blood was used to seal the old and inferior covenant, while the blood of Yahweh was necessary to authorize the better, unbreakable, and eternal covenant.

**25 I tell you the truth, I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."**

This would be the last time Yahshua drank wine with His disciples, until they celebrate again at another table, in the Kingdom of God. At the wedding feast of the Lamb, there will be a great celebration to commemorate the eternal unity of Christ and His church. Presently, Yahshua is waiting for His bride to be gathered unto Himself, to celebrate the wedding supper of the Lamb.

**26 Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.**

## **Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial**

**27 On the way, Jesus told them, "All of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say,**

**'God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'**

**28 But after I am raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there." 29 Peter said to him, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will."**

**7 "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, the man who is my partner," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. "Strike down the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn against the lambs. (Zachariah 13)**



# WOULD YOU DIE FOR JESUS?



Perhaps Peter was really willing to die for Yahshua. John mentioned it was Peter that drew the swords and attacked the slave of the High Priest. Dying for Christ is easy compared to suffering for Him. Many believers would accept a quick and painless death for the cause of Christ. But how many would remain faithful while facing an extended period of suffering and self-denial? *It is sometimes easier to bear a*

*great load for Christ than a small one. Some of us could be martyrs at the stake more easily than confessors among sneering neighbors.*<sup>94</sup>

**<sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me."**

**<sup>31</sup> "No!" Peter declared emphatically. "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!" And all the others vowed the same.**

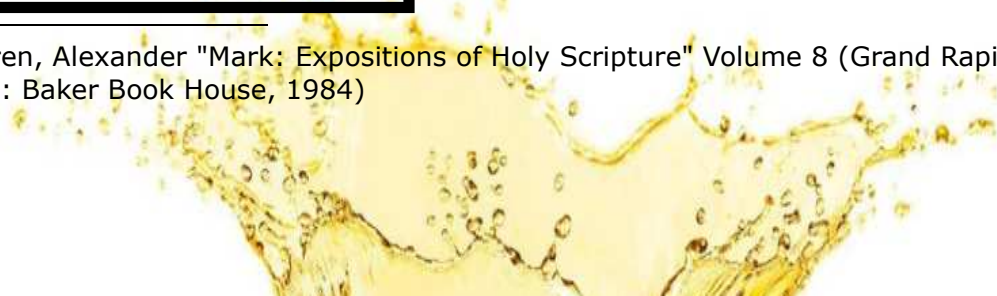
Peter was not the only one who promised to never abandon Yahshua. All the other disciples made this promise simultaneously. But the Greek communicates a strong verb that means "vehemently". Peter forcefully denied that he would ever do such a thing. Perhaps this is recorded in Mark's Gospel because he is directly recording the recollection of Peter about that lifechanging night.

## Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

**<sup>32</sup> They went to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said, "Sit here while I go and pray." <sup>33</sup> He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he became deeply troubled and distressed.**

As usual, Yahshua separated His inner circle from the rest of the remaining disciples. He wanted His cherished disciples to be especially close to Him, in

<sup>94</sup> Maclaren, Alexander "Mark: Expositions of Holy Scripture" Volume 8 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984)



# Gethsemane

His hour of greatest need. Gethsemane is the Hebrew word for "oil press". Yahshua will be pressed in the coming moments and wanted the support of His closest friends.

**<sup>34</sup> He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."**

We have no real understanding of what Christ was going through at this very moment. Yahshua was not only facing the horror of a Roman cross, but that was the least of His worries. He was about to become the sin bearer, which meant, for the first time in all eternity, He would be mysteriously separated from His Father and would descend into hell as the scapegoat.

***<sup>21</sup> He made the one who did not know sin to be sin on our behalf, in order that we could become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5) LEB***

***<sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree," <sup>14</sup> in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3)***

*His holy soul shrank from the awfulness of being made sin upon the tree. It was not death, but the divine anger against sin, the imputation to Him of all our iniquities that filled His soul with horror. There was no conflict of wills.<sup>95</sup>*

**<sup>35</sup> He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. <sup>36</sup> "Abba, Father," he cried out, "everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."**

It's interesting that Yahshua asked the Father if there was yet another way to accomplish the task of the redemption. If there was another way, the Father would have answered. Notice, Yahshua did not tell the Father what to do or attempt to apply His own faith, to serve His own best interest.

**<sup>37</sup> Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? <sup>38</sup> Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak."**

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<sup>95</sup> Ironside, H. A. "Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark" (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1979)

# Temptation



Yahshua needed the support of His closest disciples, but they failed Him. Even when it came to watching and waiting, they were found asleep. They were about to face the greatest spiritual storm of their lives, but slept in the midst of the coming darkness.

**<sup>39</sup> Then Jesus left them again and prayed the same prayer as before. <sup>40</sup> When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn't keep their eyes open. And they didn't know what to say.**

**<sup>41</sup> When he returned to them the third time, he said, "Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest."**

Yahshua checked on His disciples 3 times and found them sleeping when they were told to pray. Ironically, Peter would end up denying Yahshua 3 times, in the near future. Perhaps, Yahshua allowed Peter 3 occasions to pray, for the 3 times he denied Him.

**But no—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup> Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!"**

The disciples missed their opportunity to stand with the Messiah in prayer shortly before the greatest event of the entire creation. This was a once in a lifetime moment, and they missed it because they were tired. Yahshua did not need the disciples to pray for Him. He wanted them to pray for themselves, and about the temptation they were going to face.



## Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested

**<sup>43</sup> And immediately, even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders. <sup>44</sup> The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: "You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss. Then you can take him away under guard." <sup>45</sup> As soon as they**



**"The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!"**



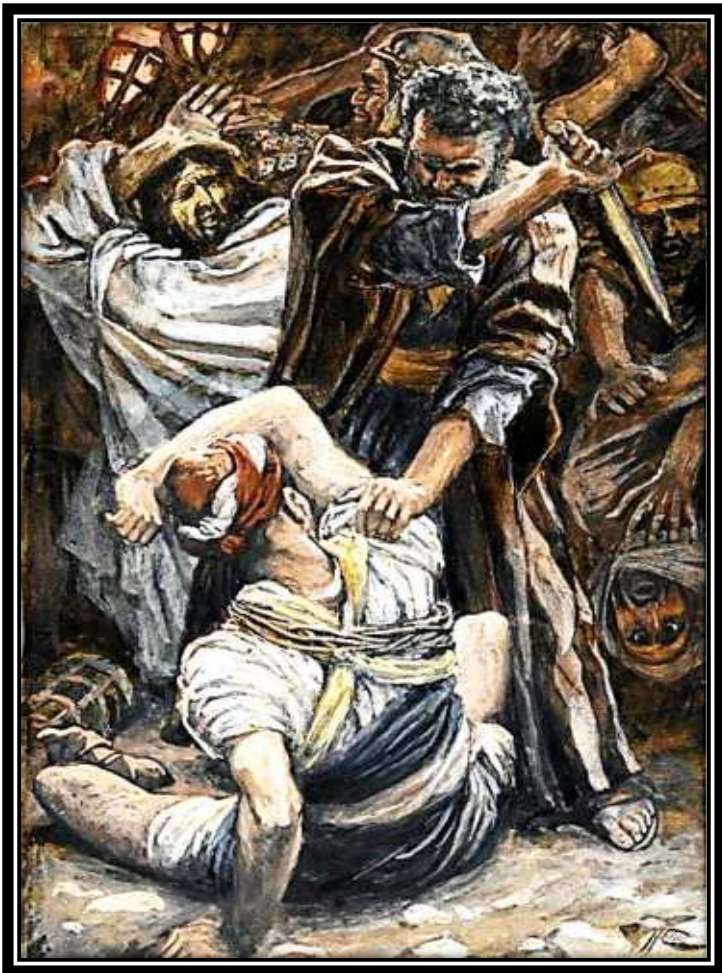


**arrived, Judas walked up to Jesus. "Rabbi!" he exclaimed, and gave him the kiss.**

This was the lowest point of Judas' life to betray His master with a kiss. He could have pointed Him out in the crowd, but to hide his true intentions, he hugged and kissed Yahshua as he pretended to grieve.



**46 Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him. 47 But one of the men with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest's slave, slashing off his ear.**



John tells us it was Peter who cut off the ear of the high priest's slave. If Yahshua did not heal the servant instantly, Peter would have been arrested as well and possibly crucified for treason against Rome.

*Luke tells us that Jesus healed the damage done by Peter (Luke 22:51). It isn't the last time Jesus has had to leave behind a mess left by one of His followers. "Had Jesus not healed Malchus, Peter would have been arrested as well; and there might have been four crosses at Calvary."<sup>96</sup>*

**48 Jesus asked them, "Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? 49 Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there among you teaching every day. But these things are happening to fulfill what the Scriptures say about me."**

**50 Then all his disciples deserted him and ran away. 51 One young man following behind was clothed only in a long linen shirt. When**



<sup>96</sup> Barclay, William "The Gospel of Mark" (The New Daily Study Bible) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975)





# The Young Man Who Flew Naked

the mob tried to grab him, <sup>52</sup> he slipped out of his shirt and ran away naked.

Many scholars suspect that this is Mark. He is the only author that recorded this specific detail. *Jesus was forsaken even by a young follower, who in the confusion fled naked. Since the earliest days of the church, commentators have supposed this young man to be Mark himself. It was his humble way of saying, "I was there."*<sup>97</sup>

## Jesus before the Council

<sup>53</sup> They took Jesus to the high priest's home where the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law had gathered. <sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, Peter followed him at a distance and went right into the high priest's courtyard. There he sat with the guards, warming himself by the fire.

Mark did not mention the first trial with Annas, the High Priest, because he probably didn't see value in the story. He picked up the scene as Peter followed hesitantly in the courtyard.

<sup>55</sup> Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find evidence against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But they couldn't find any. <sup>56</sup> Many false witnesses spoke against him, but they contradicted each other. <sup>57</sup> Finally, some men stood up and gave this false testimony: <sup>58</sup> "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this Temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another, made without human hands.'" <sup>59</sup> But even then they didn't get their stories straight!

The trial of Yahshua was completely illegal for many reasons. First a capital trial could never be held at night without the entire council of elders present. Second, their witnesses could not agree and even contradicted one another. Finally, they settled on the false accusation that Yahshua threatened to destroy the Jewish Temple. *The accusation was utterly serious, for throughout the Graeco-Roman world the destruction or desecration of places*

<sup>97</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 14

# The Temple Rebuilt in Three Days

Again the high priest asked him "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" **"I AM,"** said Jesus. **"And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."**



Mark 14:61-62



I am the bread of life (John 6:35)

I am the light of the world (John 8:12)

I am the door of the sheep (John 10:7)

I am the good shepherd (John 10:11)

I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)

I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6)

I am the true vine (John 15:1)

of worship was regarded as a capital offense.<sup>98</sup> In this statement, Yahshua was speaking of His bodily resurrection. Nevertheless, they remembered His words and twisted the true meaning to present a false charge.

*This is the most diabolical form of untruth, because it is an untruth in which there is an element of truth. We remember Tennyson's words: 'A lie that is all a lie, may be met and fought outright; But a lie that is partly the truth, is a harder matter to fight.'*<sup>99</sup>

**60 Then the high priest stood up before the others and asked Jesus, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?" 61 But Jesus was silent and made no reply. Then the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"**

**62 Jesus said, "I AM.**



When asked directly by the High Priest if He was the Son of God? Yahshua answered truthfully. He could not deny who He really was. His time to be lifted up and glorified by the Father, had finally come.

**14 God replied to Moses, "I AM who I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you." (Exodus 3)**

**I, yes I, am the Lord, and there is no other Savior. First I predicted your rescue, then I saved you and proclaimed it to the world. No foreign god has ever done this. You are witnesses that I am the only God," says the Lord. (Isaiah 43:11-12)**

**And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven."**

<sup>98</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)

<sup>99</sup> Morgan, G. Campbell "The Gospel According to Mark" (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1927)



***13 As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7)***

**63 Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, "Why do we need other witnesses? 64 You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?"**

In the last 2 statements, Yahshua claimed to be both Yahweh and the Messiah. His claim was heard by the High Priest, and rejected as blasphemy. This was yet another example of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, where the High Priest stubbornly refused to believe Yahweh stood before him.

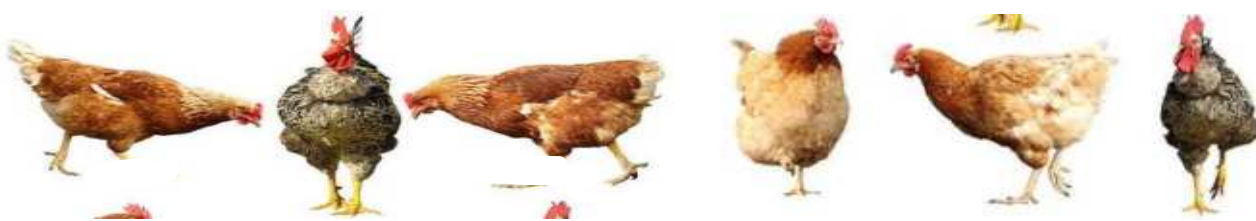
***3 "Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. 2 "But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? (Malachi 3)***

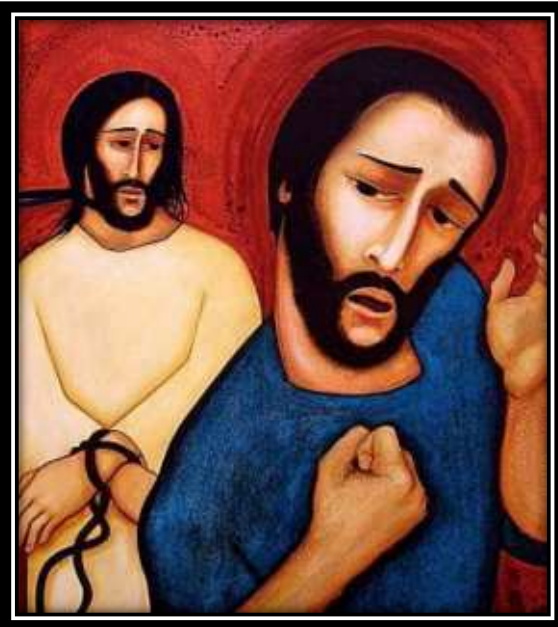
**"Guilty!" they all cried. "He deserves to die!" 65 Then some of them began to spit at him, and they blindfolded him and beat him with their fists. "Prophecy to us," they jeered. And the guards slapped him as they took him away.**

Yahshua was a thorn in the side of the religious leaders for 3 years. He openly insulted them and undermined their authority before the crowds. However, in this hidden place, under the cover of darkness, they vented their frustration on Him without restraint. The religious leaders beat Yahshua mercilessly as they vented their pent-up rage towards Him. The irony of this situation was undeniable. The tenants to who the vineyard was leased, took the opportunity to pummel the disfigured face of Yahweh Almighty before sending Him off to be executed.

## **Peter Denies Jesus**

**66 Meanwhile, Peter was in the courtyard below. One of the servant girls who worked for the high priest came by 67 and noticed Peter**





warming himself at the fire. She looked at him closely and said, "You were one of those with Jesus of Nazareth."

**68** But Peter denied it. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said, and he went out into the entryway. Just then, a rooster crowed.

**69** When the servant girl saw him standing there, she began telling the others, "This man is definitely one of them!" **70** But Peter denied it again.

A little later some of the other bystanders confronted Peter and said, "You must be one of them, because you are a Galilean."

**71** Peter swore, "A curse on me if I'm lying—I don't know this man you're talking about!" **72** And immediately the rooster crowed the second time.

According to Mark, as Yahshua was being beaten beyond recognition, Peter has folded under the weight of a servant girl's accusation. This is the strength of human pride. Peter assumed He was far more devoted to Christ than he actually was. He only saw his true devotion when placed under the pressure of the olive press.

**Suddenly, Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me." And he broke down and wept.**



The death of Yahshua was not a tragedy, but a carefully planned event orchestrated in the mind of the Trinity, before the creation of the physical world.

***8*** And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered before the world was made. (Revelation 13)

Yahshua was predestined to redeem the creation and return it back to the Father after Satan's rebellion was defeated.



# Discussion



- 1. The woman's offering of expensive perfume from the alabaster jar offended some of the disciples. What were they really offended at? Were they really concerned for the poor? Can we as believers be offended by another believer's love for Christ?**
- 2. What do you think was going on in the heart and mind of Judas when he finally decided to betray Yahshua? In what way was he offended? How was he disappointed? Where did things go wrong?**
- 3. Peter boldly declared that he would never betray Yahshua because he was pridefully confident in his own personal devotion to Christ. Have you ever failed in a similar way to Peter and how were you restored again?**
- 4. When Yahshua said, "This is My body...this is My blood of the covenant poured out for many..." what was He saying here? How did He understand His death? What do these phrases mean?**



## Jesus' Trial before Pilate

**15** Very early in the morning the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law—the entire high council—met to discuss their next step. They bound Jesus, led him away, and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor.

To get Yahshua on the cross, they needed to act quickly. Pilate began his day at sunrise, and held his trials early in the morning. The council of elders needed to present a legal case about their “illegal trial”, to make it look justified.

*The Jewish leaders had reason to expect a favorable result when they sent Jesus to Pilate. Secular history shows us he was a cruel, ruthless man, and completely insensitive to the moral feelings of others — surely, they thought, Pilate will put this Jesus to death.<sup>100</sup>*

**2** Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus replied, “You have said it.”


**3** Then the leading priests kept accusing him of many crimes, **4** and Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer them? What about all these charges they are bringing against you?” **5** But Jesus said nothing, much to Pilate’s surprise.

The Jewish leaders did not accuse Yahshua of blasphemy before Pilate. Claiming to be a god was not a crime under Roman law because they had many gods. Claiming to be a king, on the other hand, was grounds for execution, especially during the Passover festival because Rome officially only recognized the authority of Ceasar as their king.



The fact that Yahshua did not defend Himself was confusing, especially since Pilate recognized the jealousy of the religious leaders. The dignity of this

<sup>100</sup> David Guzik “Blue Letter Bible Commentaries” (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 15



man impressed the Roman Governor. He sentenced many men to death before, but none died with such honor.

**6 Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner—anyone the people requested. 7 One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, a revolutionary who had committed murder in an uprising. 8 The crowd went to Pilate and asked him to release a prisoner as usual.**

**9 "Would you like me to release to you this 'King of the Jews'?" Pilate asked. 10 (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of envy.) 11 But at this point the leading priests stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. 12 Pilate asked them, "Then what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?"**

The supporters of Yahshua who welcomed Him into the city were sound asleep in their beds. They did not know that He was being placed on trial at sunrise. The religious leaders took this opportunity to sway the crowd in their favor and demand for His crucifixion.

**13 They shouted back, "Crucify him!"**

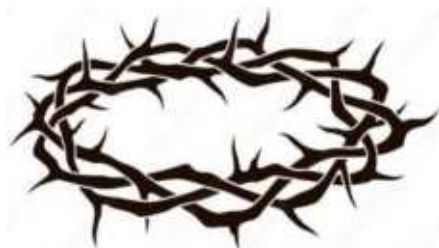
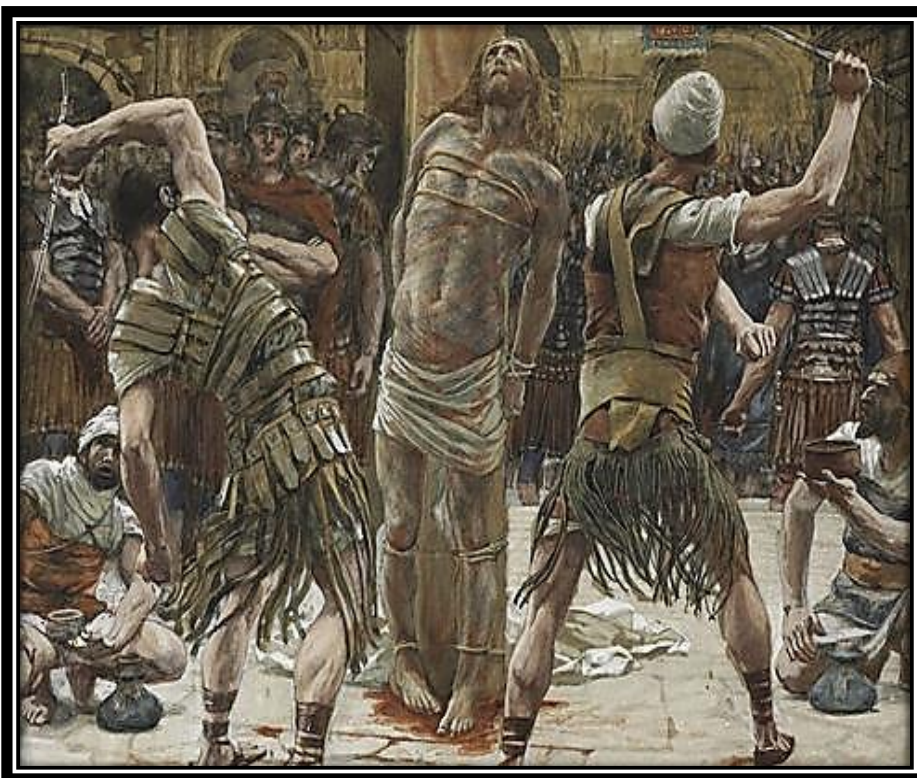
**14 "Why?" Pilate demanded. "What crime has he committed?"**

**But the mob roared even louder, "Crucify him!"**

Pilate expected the Jewish crowds to demand for their king to be released. Why would the people insist that the man they recently welcomed as the

King of Jews be crucified? This made absolutely no sense. Pilate did not realize he was set up by the religious leaders to murder Yahshua despite his better judgment.

**15 So to pacify the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.**





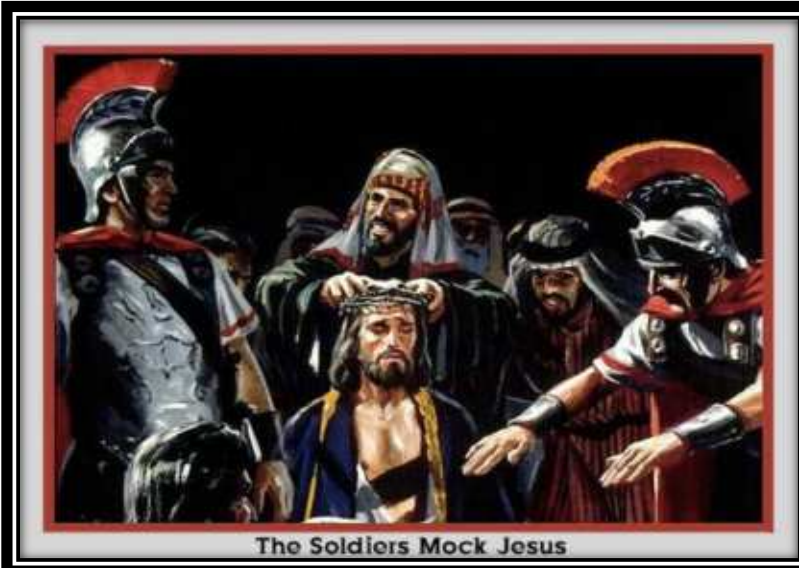


To avoid a riot on the Passover, Pilate gave into the demands of the crowds and did what he did not want to do. They released a murderer made in the image of their father Satan and demanded that the Son of God be put to death.

*As the Roman soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions, and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and subcutaneous tissues. Then, as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss generally set the stage for circulatory shock. The extent of blood loss may well have determined how long the victim would survive the cross.<sup>101</sup>*

### **The Soldiers Mock Jesus**

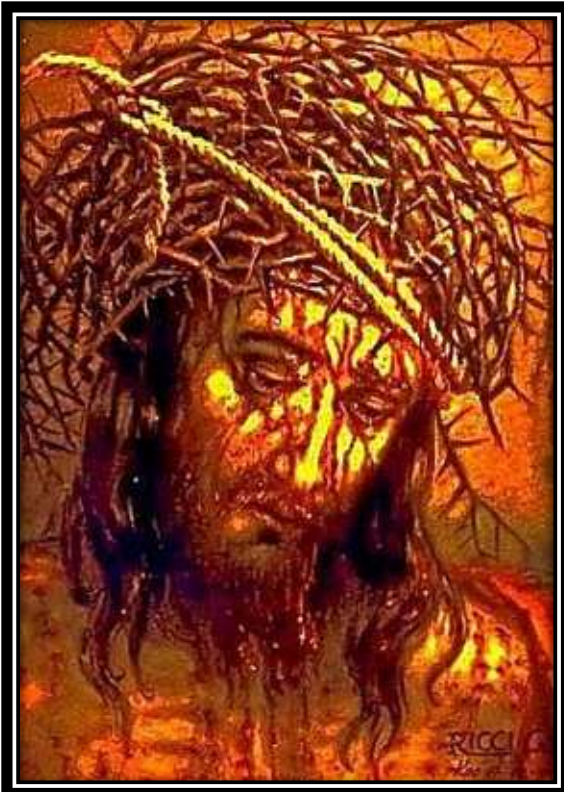
**<sup>16</sup> The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the governor's headquarters (called the Praetorium) and called out the entire regiment. <sup>17</sup> They dressed him in a purple robe, and they wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head. <sup>18</sup> Then they saluted him and taunted, "Hail! King of the Jews!"**



The Soldiers Mock Jesus

The Roman soldiers hated being posted in Judea, where they faced the constant rebellion of the Jewish people. The Jews despised the Romans, and they in return, despised the Jews. To mock this Jewish Rabbi who dared to tell the Roman governor that He was a king, gave these men an escape from the difficulties of their duty. For a while, they took great pleasure in brutally abusing Yahshua as a sadistic form of entertainment.

<sup>101</sup> Edwards, Dr. William "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ" from the Journal of the American Medical Association, 3/21/86

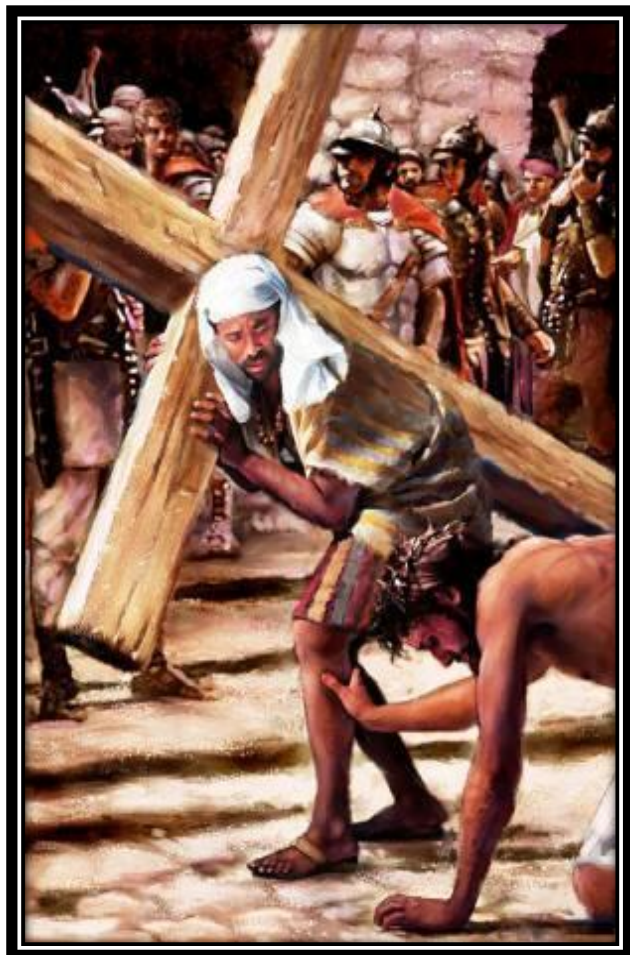


**19 And they struck him on the head with a reed stick, spit on him, and dropped to their knees in mock worship. 20 When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.**

We can assume that the Romans had a personal issue with Yahshua, but this was not true. It was the demons that inhabited them who took the opportunity to vent their pent-up hatred of Yahweh on His Son. Knowing that their time was short, they grasped this once in a lifetime opportunity to avenge themselves and get even with God. The hatred directed towards Yahshua was undeserved. He did nothing to aggravate the Roman authorities.

Their overwhelming hatred was demonically aroused by Satan himself as they attempted to crush the Son of God. The Greek word indicated that they **kept** hitting and spitting on Him. This was a long and horrible ordeal for the Messiah to endure.

### **The Crucifixion**



**21 A passerby named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. (Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.) 22 And they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means "Place of the Skull").**

While Simon the disciple was fishing, another Simon helped Yahshua carry His cross. The crossbar weighed approximately 100 pounds and Yahshua was too weak from enduring hours of violent beatings, to carry it alone.

Simon was from North Africa, specifically, born in Libya. He was obviously a Jew who came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He had no desire to get blood on his clothing as he carried



the bloody cross. But, just like Yahshua, he was chosen by God for a specific task.

**<sup>23</sup> They offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he refused it.**

*According to an old tradition, respected women of Jerusalem provided a narcotic drink to those condemned to*

*death in order to decrease their sensitivity to the excruciating pain... This humane practice was begun in response to the biblical injunction of (Proverbs 31:6-7): 'Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more.'<sup>102</sup>*

Previously, James and John asked Yahshua if they could occupy the greatest places in the Kingdom of God, seated next to Him. Yahshua asked them a strange question about drinking from a cup. They assumed it was a cup of royal wine handed to them by a servant.

**<sup>22</sup> But Jesus answered by saying to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?" "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" <sup>23</sup> Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup. (Matthew 20)**

In reality, it was a bitter cup of wine concocted to dull the pain of the crucifixion. Yahshua could not drink for the cup at this moment until he fully swallowed the entire cup of wrath poured out upon Him by the Father. Yahshua needed to receive the entire judgment of sin and could not dull the pain and suffering with the use of tranquilizers.

**<sup>24</sup> Then the soldiers nailed him to the cross. They divided his clothes and threw dice to decide who would get each piece. <sup>25</sup> It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup> A sign announced the charge against him. It read, "The King of the Jews." <sup>27</sup> Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.**



<sup>102</sup> Lane, William L. "The Gospel of Mark" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974)



Although the Romans did not invent crucifixion, they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering.<sup>103</sup>

It was a slow death caused by suffocation, blood loss and excruciating pain. Also, hanging naked in public view involved absolute humiliation. The cross was the worst instrument of human cruelty ever invented.

Not uncommonly, insects would light upon or burrow into the open wounds or the eyes, ears, and nose of the dying and helpless victim, and birds of prey would tear at these sites. Moreover, it was customary to leave the corpse on the cross to be devoured by predatory animals.<sup>104</sup>



### **What happened on the cross?**

**THEOLOGY  
MATTERS  
BRO.**

Much of the information we have about the crucifixion of Yahshua actually comes from the prophetic writings and not the Gospel accounts. This added to the validity of the Scriptures because Yahweh writes history before it happens. In 587 BC, Psalm 22 was written as if the author was an eyewitness to the crucifixion of the Messiah. The Psalmist speaks about His mocking, His thirst, the nails driven into His hands and feet,

along with the dividing of His clothing. How could anyone write such detailed history, before it actually occurs?

***1 My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help?***

***2 Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.***

***3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.***

***4 Our ancestors trusted in you, and you rescued them.***



<sup>103</sup> Edwards, Dr. William "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ" from the Journal of the American Medical Association, 3/21/86

<sup>104</sup> Edwards, Dr. William "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ" from the Journal of the American Medical Association, 3/21/86

*5 They cried out to you and were saved.  
They trusted in you and were never disgraced.  
6 But I am a worm and not a man.  
I am scorned and despised by all!  
7 Everyone who sees me mocks me.  
They sneer and shake their heads, saying,  
8 "Is this the one who relies on the Lord?  
Then let the Lord save him!  
If the Lord loves him so much,  
let the Lord rescue him!"  
9 Yet you brought me safely from my mother's womb  
and led me to trust you at my mother's breast.  
10 I was thrust into your arms at my birth.  
You have been my God from the moment I was  
born.  
11 Do not stay so far from me,  
for trouble is near,  
and no one else can help me.  
12 My enemies surround me like a herd of bulls;  
fierce bulls of Bashan have hemmed me in!  
13 Like lions they open their jaws against me,  
roaring and tearing into their prey.  
14 My life is poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.  
My heart is like wax,  
melting within me.  
15 My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay.  
My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.  
You have laid me in the dust and left me for dead.  
16 My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs;  
an evil gang closes in on me.  
They have pierced my hands and feet.  
17 I can count all my bones.  
My enemies stare at me and gloat.  
18 They divide my garments among themselves  
and throw dice for my clothing.  
19 O Lord, do not stay far away!  
You are my strength; come quickly to my aid!  
20 Save me from the sword;  
spare my precious life from these dogs.  
21 Snatch me from the lion's jaws  
and from the horns of these wild oxen.*



*22 I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters.<sup>[c]</sup>  
I will praise you among your assembled people.*

*23 Praise the Lord, all you who fear him!  
Honor him, all you descendants of Jacob!  
Show him reverence, all you descendants of Israel!*

*24 For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy.  
He has not turned his back on them,  
but has listened to their cries for help. (Psalm 22)*

In 740 BC, the prophet Isaiah recorded an amazing prophecy about the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. The story was so unbelievable that the author starts off the text by saying "who will believe the message?"

*53 Who has believed our message?  
To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?*

*2 My servant grew up in the Lord's presence like a tender green shoot,  
like a root in dry ground.*

*There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance,  
nothing to attract us to him.*

*3 He was despised and rejected—  
a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.  
We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.*

*He was despised, and we did not care.*

*4 Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;  
it was our sorrows that weighed him down.  
And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,  
a punishment for his own sins!*

*5 But he was pierced for our rebellion,  
crushed for our sins.  
He was beaten so we could be whole.  
He was whipped so we could be healed.*

*6 All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.  
We have left God's paths to follow our own.  
Yet the Lord laid on him  
the sins of us all.*

*7 He was oppressed and treated harshly,  
yet he never said a word.  
He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.  
And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,  
he did not open his mouth.*

*8 Unjustly condemned,  
he was led away.*

No one cared that he died without descendants,  
that his life was cut short in midstream

But he was struck down  
for the rebellion of my people.

<sup>9</sup> He had done no wrong  
and had never deceived anyone.

But he was buried like a criminal;  
he was put in a rich man's grave.

<sup>10</sup> But it was the Lord's good plan to crush him  
and cause him grief.

Yet when his life is made an offering for sin,  
he will have many descendants.

He will enjoy a long life,  
and the Lord's good plan will prosper  
in his hands.

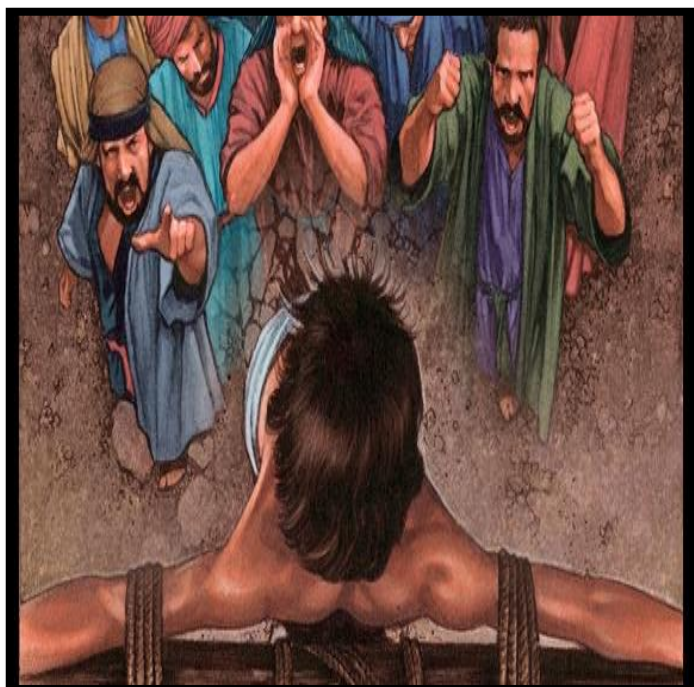
<sup>11</sup> When he sees all that is accomplished  
by his anguish,  
he will be satisfied.

And because of his experience,  
my righteous servant will make it possible  
for many to be counted righteous,  
for he will bear all their sins.

<sup>12</sup> I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier,  
because he exposed himself to death.

He was counted among the rebels.

He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels. (Isaiah 53)



<sup>29</sup> The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. "Ha! Look at you now!" they yelled at him. "You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. <sup>30</sup> Well then, save yourself and come down from the cross!"

The adoration of the crowds ended quickly when Yahshua failed to use His miracle-working power to destroy the Romans. Their version of the Jewish Messiah was a

warrior like King David. He was supposed to destroy the Roman occupiers and reestablish the Kingdom of Israel forever. The crowds gathered around the cross and hostilely mocked Yahshua because He failed to live up to their Messianic expectations.



**<sup>31</sup> The leading priests and teachers of religious law also mocked Jesus. "He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't save himself! <sup>32</sup> Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe him!" Even the men who were crucified with Jesus ridiculed him.**

For the religious leaders, the crucifixion of Yahshua vindicated their belief that He was a false Messiah. After all, the real Messiah would rule as the King of Israel forever. The humiliating way this imposter died proved to all the doubters that He was, in fact, empowered by Beelzebub to deceive the low-class, uneducated people.

The religious leaders utterly enjoyed this moment. It was their crowning accomplishment. Yahshua made them feel silly and humiliated so many times in the past. Now it was their opportunity to get even. *Acting like silly children who love to mock one another.* "It was bad enough that the Son of God came to earth and man murdered Him in the most tortured way possible. Worst of all, sinful men enjoyed doing it."<sup>105</sup>

## **The Death of Jesus**

**<sup>33</sup> At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock.**

The supernatural presence of darkness was astonishing, especially because many continued to mock Yahshua anyway. Evil things are always done in the dark. This awesome sign was yet another indication that ***Yahshua is Yahweh***. Most Biblical scholars assume this was a supernatural eclipse, but nobody knows for sure.

<sup>105</sup> Robertson, Archibald T. "The Gospel According to Mark: Word Pictures of the New Testament" Volume I (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930)



**GOD  
MADE HIM WHO  
HAD NO  
SIN  
TO BE SIN  
FOR  
US  
SO THAT IN HIM  
WE MIGHT BECOME  
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF  
GOD**

2 Corinthians 5:21

**<sup>34</sup> Then at three o'clock Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"**

Sin needed to be removed from the presence of Yahweh and confined eternally. As the sin bearer, Yahshua took all of human sin into himself and carried it away into death and hell. He not only carried our sin, but He also **became** sin. He was, therefore, separated from the Father. This is still a theological mystery which may need to be understood on the other side of eternity.

*This happened in the sense that God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus not only endured the withdrawal of the Father's fellowship, but also the actual outpouring of the Father's wrath upon Him as a substitute for sinful humanity.<sup>106</sup>*

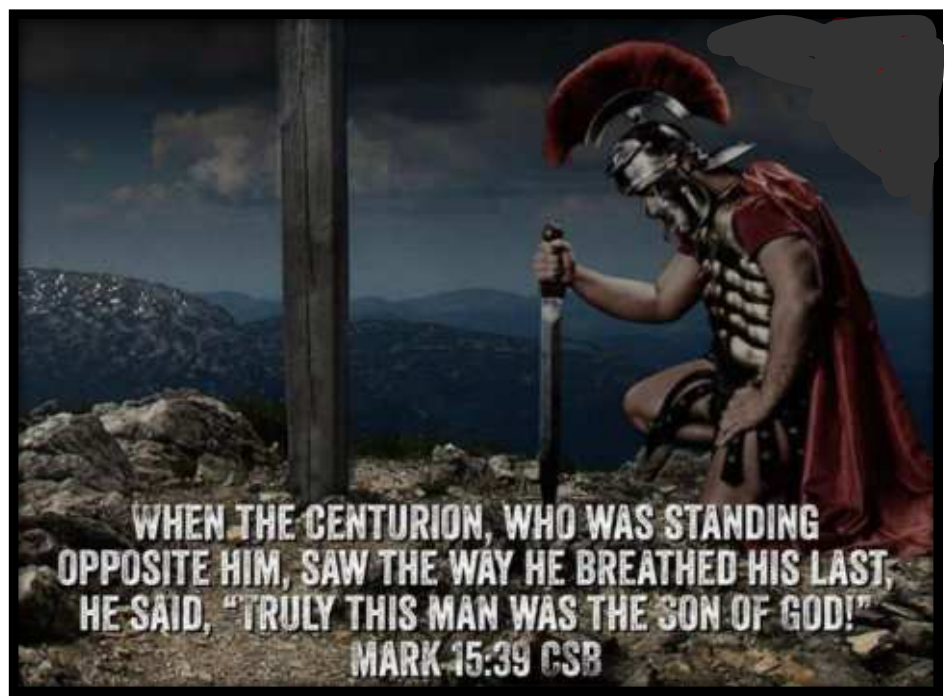
**<sup>35</sup> Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. <sup>36</sup> One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink.**

The final symbolic act of Yahshua drinking the bitter wine fulfilled the prophetic narrative. This was not like the first wine laced with drugs to dull the pain. Christ had fully endured the weight of all human sin as it entered into His body. Now, as the scapegoat, He would take the sin out of the camp and into the wilderness, forever removing it from the people. As His divine mission was nearing completion, He took a sip of the bitter cup, to prove that it was finally finished.

**"Wait!" he said. "Let's see whether Elijah comes to take him down!"**

The mocking continued until His last breath. As Christ reached the moment of His demise, the crowds continued to mock about Elijah descending on a cloud to rescue Him from death.

<sup>106</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 15



*Reader! one drop of this cup would bear down thy soul to endless ruin; and these agonies would annihilate the universe. He suffered alone: for the people there was none with him; because his sufferings were to make an atonement for the sins of the world: and in the work of redemption he had no helper.<sup>107</sup>*

**37 Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last. 38 And the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.**

With the death of the Messiah, the barrier of sin that separated God and man was forever removed. Through faith in Christ, mankind was justified, “just as if we never sinned”. The tearing of the thick curtain represented the arrival of the New Covenant, which is based on the finished work of Christ’s single and eternal sacrifice.

**39 When the Roman officer who stood facing him saw how he had died, he exclaimed, “This man truly was the Son of God!”**

While many celebrated joyfully over the death of Yahshua, others came to faith in what they just experienced. In another demonstration of stunning irony, while the Jewish religious leaders celebrated over the death of their Christ, Roman pagans were coming to faith in the Jewish Messiah.

**40 Some women were there, watching from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the younger and of Joseph), and Salome. 41 They had been followers of Jesus and had cared for him while he was in Galilee. Many other women who had come with him to Jerusalem were also there.**

Mark found it noteworthy to mention that the women stayed by the side of Yahshua throughout the entire ordeal. They were the firsthand eyewitnesses

<sup>107</sup> Clarke, Adam "Clarke's Commentary: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments with a Commentary and Critical Notes" Volume 5 (Matthew-Acts) (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1832)



who verified everything that happened. The absence of Peter at the crucifixion made it impossible for him to tell the story with any detail.

*In the hours of crisis, it is often the Peters who have sworn loyalty to Jesus with big gestures and fullness of self-confidence, that disappoint, and it is the secret and quiet followers of the Master (like Joseph, Nicodemus and the women) that do not hesitate to serve Him in love — at whatever the cost.<sup>108</sup>*

## **The Burial of Jesus**

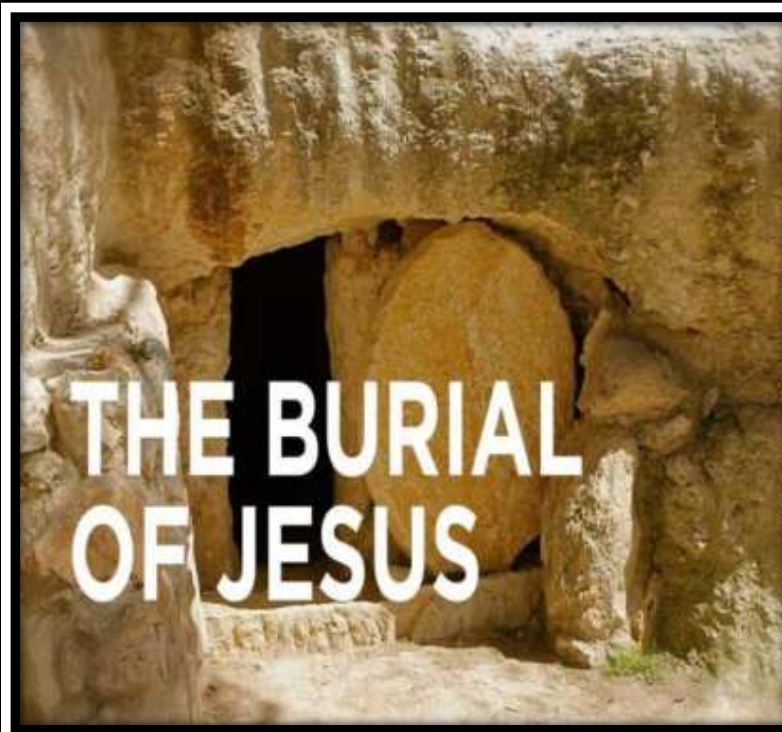
**42 This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath. As evening approached, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea took a risk and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. (Joseph was an honored member of the high council, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come.)**

If Yahshua's body was eaten by the vultures, the resurrection would be impossible because the prophetic Word of God would have been broken. The fact that the Jewish leaders needed the bodies to be removed from the roadside before the Passover Celebration, protected the body of Yahshua from the scavengers. The Jewish authorities expected the Romans to throw the body of Yahshua into the garbage dump called Gehenna, where the fire always burns, and the worms never die. If Yahshua's corpse was tossed in the dump it would have been consumed by dogs and vultures.

Just as Yahshua was fully discredited as the Jewish Messiah by the religious leaders, one of their own people stepped up and did the unthinkable. The

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<sup>108</sup> Geldenhuys, Norval "The Gospel of Luke" (The New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1971)



prophecy from Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would be buried in a fancy Jewish burial chamber. But where was Yahshua supposed to get a burial chamber on such short notice?

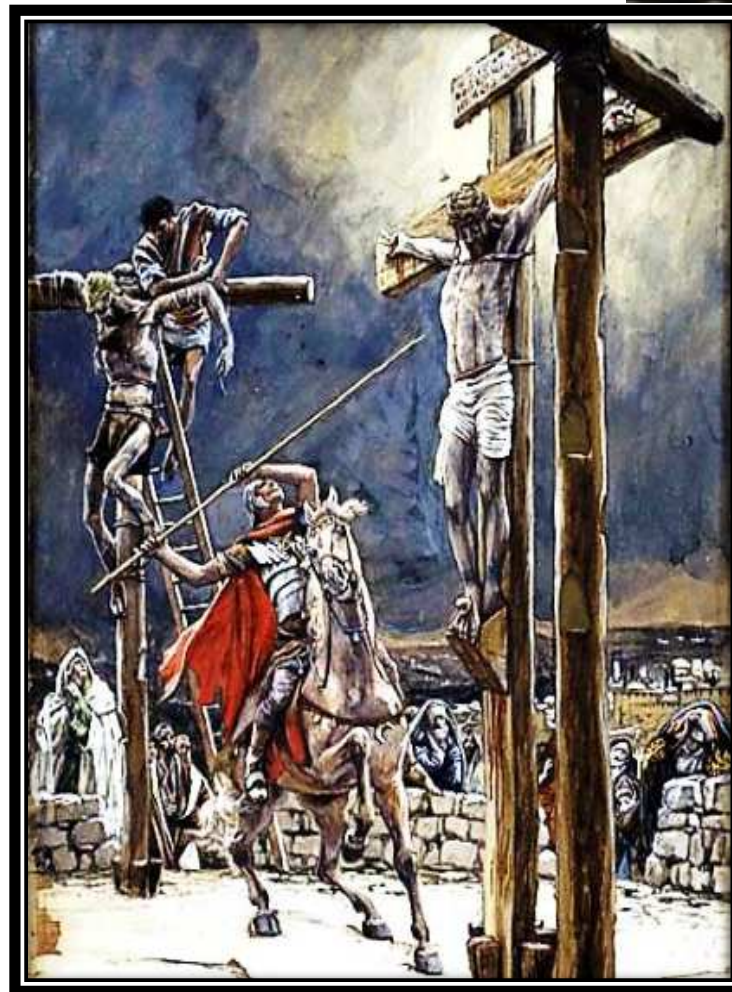
***He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave. (Isaiah 53)***

At the perfect time, Joseph got permission from Pilate to take Yahshua's body for an honorable burial. Pilate was resentful about how he was manipulated and bullied by the religious leaders during the trial of Yahshua. Therefore, he retaliated by giving the man they hated, an honorable Jewish burial fit for a king.

**44 Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer and asked if he had died yet. 45 The officer confirmed that Jesus was dead, so Pilate told Joseph he could have the body.**

Mark wanted his audience to know that Pilate personally investigated to determine if Yahshua was really dead. The proof of death was the spear that pierced His heart and punctured His lungs.

**46 Joseph bought a long sheet of linen cloth. Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body was laid.**



The burial of Yahshua in a rich man's grave caused great panic among the religious leaders. Against their will, Yahshua fulfilled another Messianic prophecy in His death. Joseph betrayed them by lending Yahshua his grave, and they fearfully remembered His promise to rise from the dead in 3 days. This is why the Jewish authorities demanded that a Roman guard be placed around the grave, and an official Roman seal be placed on the stone that covered the entrance.

# Discussion



- 1. Why was it important to the religious leaders to capture Yahshua in the night and bring Him before Pilate at sunrise? What were they trying to hide?**
- 2. Mockers shouted to Yahshua to come down from the cross and prove Himself to be the Messiah. Could He come down if He wanted? What was keeping Him on the cross?**
- 3. According to Mark, while the Jewish leaders orchestrated the crucifixion of Christ, a Roman soldier believed He truly was the Son of God. What is Mark communicating by this amazing contrast?**
- 4. What would have happened if Joseph did not offer his tomb for the burial of Yahshua? How did this decision impact Joseph's future as a religious leader?**



# He is Risen

## The Resurrection



**16** Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body. <sup>2</sup> Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup> On the way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" <sup>4</sup> But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside.

The Sabbath was over on Saturday night, so they went to the market to get all the materials they needed to properly wrap the body of Yahshua. They did a rushed job on the Friday because they needed to get Him in the grave before sundown. Now, they wanted to return to finish the burial properly to their satisfaction.

**<sup>5</sup> When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, <sup>6</sup> but the angel said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. <sup>7</sup> Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died." <sup>8</sup> The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing to anyone because they were too frightened.**

It's interesting how the angelic being specifically mentioned that Yahshua was from Nazareth. Coming from Nazareth was not something most people

were proud of, but what was once used to insult Yahshua, was now the glorified title of the resurrected Saviour. Also, the angel was very detailed in the way he said Yahshua "**was**" crucified, but now "**is**" risen. "**Was**" referred to the past tense, while "**is**" speaks of the present tense. Yahshua still "**is**" resurrected from the dead today and forever.

*The resurrection proves that though it looked like Jesus died on the cross like a common criminal He actually died as a sinless man, out of love and self-sacrifice to bear the guilt of our sin. The death of Jesus on the cross was the payment, but the resurrection was the receipt, showing that the payment was perfect in the sight of God the Father.<sup>109</sup>*

### **[Shorter Ending of Mark]**

**Then they briefly reported all this to Peter and his companions. Afterward Jesus himself sent them out from east to west with the sacred and unfailing message of salvation that gives eternal life. Amen.**

### **[Longer Ending of Mark]**


**<sup>9</sup> After Jesus rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, the first person who saw him was Mary Magdalene, the woman from whom he had cast out seven demons. <sup>10</sup> She went to the disciples, who were grieving and weeping, and told them what had happened. <sup>11</sup> But when she told them that Jesus was alive and she had seen him, they didn't believe her.**

Once again, Mark presented the women as people of great faith and the disciples as doubtful cowards. Perhaps, Peter is still being hard on himself because he denied the Messiah so vehemently.

**<sup>12</sup> Afterward he appeared in a different form to two of his followers who were walking from Jerusalem into the country. <sup>13</sup> They rushed back to tell the others, but no one believed them. <sup>14</sup> Still later he appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating together. He rebuked them for their stubborn unbelief because they refused to believe those who had seen him after he had been raised from the dead.**

Mark does not spend too much time discussing the details about the resurrection of Christ. He specifically mentioned that the disciples were

<sup>109</sup> David Guzik "Blue Letter Bible Commentaries" (Gospel of Mark) Chapter 16



rebuked because of their lack of faith. Then he moved on to the main point of the chapter. The disciples were commanded to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the nations of the world.

**15 And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone."**

*This was a command, not a suggestion. "Interest in missions is not an elective in God's university of grace. It is something in which every disciple is expected to major."<sup>110</sup> The idea of going into the unclean Gentile world was unthinkable for a Jew before the resurrection of Yahshua. The Jewish people were commanded to remain isolated and inaccessible by their tiresome laws and traditions. They needed to be separated until the coming of the Messiah. Now, after the resurrection of the Christ, they were commanded to "go" to every pagan nation and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.*

**16 Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.**

Baptism is a response to belief. Therefore, you don't need to believe and be baptized to be saved. But you do need to do both, to be obedient to the Word of God. Believing is absolutely necessary for salvation, while baptism is an outward expression of faith lived out with actions.

**17 These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages. 18 They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed."**

In the process of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the nations, all believers who believe in the power of the Spirit, will be given supernatural abilities to demonstrate the Kingdom. These abilities will be given by the Holy Spirit and will not belong to the individual. Depending on the task, the Spirit will give the believer what they need to complete the mission. Sadly, all Christians believe in Christ for salvation, but few believe in the promise of the power that comes with the "infilling" of the Holy Spirit.

**19 When the Lord Jesus had finished talking with them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand. 20 And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the**

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<sup>110</sup> Ironside, H. A. "Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark" (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1979)



**Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs.**

The Gospel of Mark ended with a subtle reminder about the order of operation. The preaching of the Gospel always comes before signs and wonders. Signs and wonders are supposed to follow believers, not believers following signs and wonders. The believer was sent out into the world for the benefit of the unbeliever, so they could come to faith. This was the purpose of signs and wonders, to bring unbelievers into the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, believers should not gather together seeking signs and wonders for themselves. They have better things to do, in a world where billions are lost, and need to hear the Gospel of the Kingdom.

*The End*

Have a  
passion for  
missions?

**GO**

