


THE LEGEND OF MARK

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The numerous instances of "Immediately" (Greek **ευθως**) suggests a man in a hurry. The exact opposite is the case. Jesus has all the time in the world for people but the "immediacy" with which He attends need is the special witness Peter delivers to the reader.

Peter saw the immediate action of the Lord in respect of His mother, in respect of the widow of Nain's son during the funeral. He watched the Lord stop His retinue to listen to the need of a beggar or interrupt his discourse to heal a man in great pain. Jesus is never too tired or too preoccupied to stop and act in response to need..... Peter saw the blind, the lame, the deaf, the sick, the demonised and the dead and nature itself instantly responsive to the "man" who is the Christ.

What we are being treated to in this gospel is a quiet revolution-we are shown over and over again how quickly Jesus made changes wherever He went. When he touched lives immediately they were different. It was just like *a new kingdom* had come among men. He will change everything immediately. Lions will not take 10 years to lie with lambs or men 100 years to beat swords to ploughshares. The world will change and be reconstituted. In a microcosmic sense the ministry of Jesus changed Galilee.

It is this element of instantaneous change that is conveyed by Peter's writing. This is his intent. By this means Peter annotates the actions of the Christ whose word spoke life and new creation as really as during the 6 days when the world and the universe that surrounds it were created by the edicts of His mouth.

We have within this gospel at least 40 instances catalogued of such "changes". The Greek words used for things "occurring quickly" are **ευθως ευθεως** (which express our "straight away") Greek **εξαιφνης** ("without warning" Mark 13.36) (Greek **εξαυτης**) (Mark 6.25 "asap") (Greek **παραχρημα**) ("soon" not in Mark).

It is beyond doubt that Peter is speaking of a busy ministry but without His divine touch Jesus could never have accomplished so much in 3 short years. So the accomplishments of Jesus by word alone in this time shouts in that era and to its people, "This is very Christ"

In my "Stories from Mark for Children" I present the 40 of the events recorded by Mark from the lips of Peter which show the revolutionary effect of the loving and sympathetic ministry of the LORD in Israel..

Dedication

John Mark penned the reflections of Peter according to Eusebius Clement and Papias on the request of Peter's hearers in Rome for his teaching to be available to read. Preachers who set before the people the contents of this gospel will succeed to "feed the sheep and nurture the lambs" and to that specific purpose I commend this plain little work to the public.

The last 12 verses of chapter 16 were in place since Eusebius who produced multiple copies of the gospel. They originate in the first miracle drenched era of divine grace. It is impossible that Mark ever ended with "and they feared" but Sinaiticus and Vaticanus both show a scribal hand inserted the last 16 verses.

As for the author it is Peter. The scribe is Mark. Mark 1.29 reads "They entered the house of Simon & Andrew with James & John". In Peter's style that would read "We entered our house with James and John". In 14.51 we read of a young man "with a sindian cloth thrown around his body" who escaped naked. I subscribe the tradition that makes this Mark's authenticating signature as the writer corroborated by three independent first and early second century fathers of the church. The text of Mark is rich in eye-witness detail.

Dr George Salmon of FCD said Mark was earliest spoken but latest written of the 3 gospels.

Robert J A Coffey December 2008

CHAPTER ONE

The prophesied Righteousness is come, the time fulfilled, the kingdom is at hand (Exodus 23.20, Malachi 3.1, Isaiah 40.3 2, Kings 1.8 & Zechariah 13.4) Deeper scrutiny, greater service, stronger crying and tears, and the glorious substitute of God. A dozen times the Greek word for "immediately" bestrewn this first chapter-spelling out the effectiveness of Christ's ministry in every place based on a "scrutiny" of human need uniquely divine and offering an absolute "change" of life to person after person. At the heart of this chapter is the voice from heaven fulfilling prophecies in Genesis 22.2, Psalm 2.7 & Isaiah 42.1.

A "HIGHWAY" IN THE DESERT

The ministry of Christ is set against a desert background. We are very unfamiliar with desert and it is not surprising if we should be unfamiliar with the four principles taught here. The **streams** that refresh the desert speak of righteousness, the scorpions and savage beasts & the angels speak of two kingdoms The **silence** and separation of the desert speaks of prayer & the **scapegoat** of the desert speaks of transferring our burdens and guilt: they demand the Christ of Calvary (vv.4, 12,35,45) Christ – Our Righteousness, Lord, Intercessor and our Redeemer. Such is the ministry of which we shall read in the pages of this gospel. There is also the **straightness** of desert paths – unhindered ways forward. Prophecy and John in especial has travelled by just such a route – God’s truth marches on changing & converting – **THE BASIS OF CHANGE IS IDENTIFIED** as heavenly – that of the “Word of God” in prophecy – Christ speaking through messengers.

THE DESERT ALLIES HIM WITH JOHN & THE MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE 1-8

The gospel begins in the era of the shaggy prophet – living on honey and locusts. John's life was set within a day's journey from Qumran where such natural fare was routine. The camel hair and the leather that clothed John together with the foodstuffs speak of a life of faith.

Now consider God's scrutiny in this chapter: There is no area from which Righteousness can be excluded He sees the nation in its sin v3; He sees the power of Satan as needing curbed v.12; he scrutinizes our work & wants to give new vision; our relationships(vv18&20) and desires new priorities; our religion and wants new power within it; our problems and time at home and wants to improve our home life(29-31); our physical and spiritual separation from Himself and has the only solution – the cross (vv42&45) Think of the delight of God in Christ verse 11 proclaimed 600years before in *Isa.40.3-11* – an eternally happy relationship which is at the base of God's provision for us. "He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd"

AGENTS OF CHANGE 1ST AND 2ND CHANGES 9-12

Don't miss the relevance of these few verses. They are prologue and preface to the whole theme of the gospel. (1) The heavens open – who institutes that glorious demonstration and unlocking of the way to Glory and eternal life God the father of course! (2) Jesus is thrust out into spiritual warfare! Who initiated that? The Spirit of God of course! The triune God is the source of change from the days the Spirit moved on the Waters and God said “Let there be light”.

WHOLESHALE CHANGE 3RD AND 4TH CHANGES 16-20

Never did two sets of fishermen matter so much in all history. Both Andrew and Peter and James and John left their enterprise-their catch-their nets-their family on the day of their call. Oh yes they would come back in the evening-but more and more and far and wide they would travel with Jesus whose prior claim on their lives was never in doubt from that moment. The founder of Christianity in the Peloponnese, the father of the faith in the Roman empire, the leader of Jerusalem Christians and one of the earliest of its Martyr band along with John, “the” teacher of the early Church and Revelator in being changed, changed the world.

RELIGION HAD TO CHANGE REVIVAL OF THE OLD PROPHETIC FIRE!

Jesus didn't go to synagogue to regale the audience with a monologue. His authority just had to be recognised wherever He set foot. His compassion on a man on whom Satan has a strangle-hold sent a message from Capernaum throughout Galilee and to the world that the authority of Satan was in a radical contest. The man was instantly delivered and the country immediately alerted. **5th & 6th CHANGE.**

IN THE DESERT HE COMPANIONS CREATION – PEERLESS UNDER PRESSURE

The second great theme is "service". It is when we look at the short passage on the temptation in Mark we realise the massive task of the *Kingdom of God*. There in the desert were the scorpions and the snakes and the wild beasts. Jesus was there for 40 days and as Matthew tells us 40 nights. The strength of this kingdom shows the grandeur of Christ beneath whose feet and under whose command the animal creation submits axiomatically. The angels who appear in this short section show the heavenly nature of the ministry upon which the LORD is embarking. They are "fellowshipping" in this instance even as later in the Garden they are come to strengthen and then joyfully they appear at the Tomb "announcing" victory. Think of the delight of these angels to serve – "standing on tiptoe to volunteer" This power is seen in Jesus "marching (*πορευομαι*) into Capernaum" in the style of a spiritual victor coming to His possession. **Immediately** we see the submission of the evil spirit – whose prescience does the gospel no service. **Service** and rebellion do not mix, then in *v18* we have non-committal service of faceless ones who just pass on famous news, and service of the disobedient in *v45* where the leper who was **instantly** cleansed is scaremongering not obeying. The spontaneous obedience of the disciples and the mother-in-law of Peter whose deadly viral and perhaps mosquito type illness was speedily reversed (**7th & 8th CHANGE**) contrasts effectively with these. Christ is seen at Simon's house of an evening in the midst of illness of every hue healing all and healing **immediately** (*How many immediately's should we add if we knew each case?*). Jesus power had speedily become known (*v.30*) and felt *vv32-34*. Simon's mother translated her joyous healed life into one of service to Christ. Like Mary Magdalene she would be a devotee of the Saviour while she lived. She is one of millions who used pots and pans to serve the Lord of all and who could speak and sing of Him as she worked **9th CHANGE.**

THE DESERT REVEALS AN INTERCESSOR VOWING TO FULFIL HIS PLAN IN AND FOR US 35-39

The kingdom seemed to be on its way. But there was more. There was the total commitment of ones soul-the all on the altar part. That is why we move to *vv35-39* to the desert and solitary place where Christ can cry aloud in testimony to the larger purpose – dedicate himself in daily vows to that purpose Father and Son equally subscribe and draw his followers onward. Catch the enthusiasm of Christ making his vows to the Father for the day and re-vitalise your prayer life. The disciples follow his footsteps to where he prays; they are magnetised by His zeal; they learned to go there to see him praying – to see Rome wasn't built in a day. There were the villages and more preaching and more teaching and more healing... In one of these the Leper came and Jesus touched him. Suddenly the question of unpopularity surfaced. Sin showed up in a life quite careless to obey.

THE DESERT HINTS JESUS' SUBSTITUTIONARY MINISTRY UNDER THE PICTURE OF THE SCAPE-GOAT 40-45

Jesus' compassion will touch the leper with **instant change** and renewal at its fingertips. A life changed to the view of man but no matching willingness to deal with matters of his own heart or tongue! No desire for the spiritual direction of life. Jesus seldom sent men away but this one needed to **learn fast** that "substitution" means sacrifice and sacrifice and compassion go together. **10th AND 11th CHANGES** What was the answer now? Again the desert! Christ took the position the leper left. The former went to town and Jesus went to commune with the Father. Early in the ministry of Christ rejection and opposition were casting their shadow ahead. The one now outside the village – would suffer outside the gate as His

people's scapegoat on the Cross of Calvary. Sinners in all their need compel His deeper compassion and so He retires to pray. Even now our LORD knows there is no crown without a cross the problem of the heart of man is harder to solve than preparing heaven to reward the good and hell to contain the rebellious – it demanded a cross to guide mankind to God's love and redeem from sin. Subsequently we will see that nothing drew men like the sympathising Jesus, the one who bore the cross v45. He called for us; He came to us; He cried with tears for us and He suffered for us; should not we love Him more? This is the Highway to the *everlasting kingdom*.

CHAPTER TWO

Here we have four incidents-which focus our relationship to Christ as our High Priest. The incidents link through the proclamation of "forgiveness-the Levite's call-the bridegroom or High Priest of the Church and the Abiathar incident.

PRIESTLY FORGIVENESS 1-12

Jesus home is *immediately* swamped with mulling crowds (2.1). (**12TH CHANGE**). The *Mr. Formalists* of the Jewish religious scene are there – sceptics engaged by curiosity. What is different is that **Jesus reads hearts** like books as well as **healing with profound unprecedented alacrity** and thoroughness. (**13TH & 14TH CHANGES**). This incident of **the man who was paralyzed** on one side is remarkable for the commendation of the faith of four who deliver him to the Master's feet. Here is a picture of the evangelist believing in the power of Christ. The Old Testament passages *Psalms 103.3 & Isa. 43.25* speak of God alone as possessed of the prerogative of forgiveness. GOD alone it is "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" He says "I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins".

The remark "**Which is easier**" draws attention both to the equal healing and redeeming power of Christ – but in the latter there is the death of the cross – the need for sacrifice. We bless the Lord with David for such Grace.

PRIESTLY RESTORATION 13-17

The Levite Son of Alphaeus historically is seen as a ship cargo tax officer. His life had been gripped with the mammon desire of the world around him – although from a religious family. He brought to his house many of his colleagues to hear Jesus. The incident was watched by scribes and Pharisees who pronounced Jesus guilty by association. Christ replied to the charge of breach of law by showing that he **was not now come to call the righteous ones to heaven but come to call the unrighteous ones to forgiveness**. Christ is come as a soul-physician not as the King to reign. He speaks of implementing the gospel era.

THE BRIDEGROOMS PRESENCE 18-22

A Rabbi would leave off teaching were there a **wedding** in the offing. The Scribes would have believed in the wedding feast of Messiah – but for the moment they would make no connection between this wedding and Messiah nor the joy and provision as a prelude to the ministry of the Christ of the prophets or the choice of a people from the Jews. While Christ's ministry did involve fasting yet He did not call for regular public fasts. The old priestly order is likened to an **old garment & old wineskins**. There was new righteousness and new joy on offer in the ministry of Christ. Christ's attendant apostles were not being required to follow the precepts of a fading tradition. Indeed the call that **the Bridegroom is coming** was soon to be borne to the ends of the earth. Meantime our High priest intercedes for us and we exercise that priestly ministry which He provided as a means of enabling his servants.

PLUCKING GRAIN 23-28

The law provided *Deut 23.25* food of a neighbour from the field. It also provided for showbread from which the priests ate and technically as in *1 Sam 21 1-6* the people could fellowship with God at table of the tabernacle.

At this time Zadok was a priest (2Samuel 15.35) and whilst Doeg had slaughtered many priests Zadok (Seer and man of valour – 2Samuel 15.27, 1 Chronicles 12.28) escaped along with Abiathar who fled. Now Ahimelech was Abiathar's father and Abimelech and Jonathan his sons. Our Lord Jesus had studied the house of Ahitub (*Brother of goodness*) thoroughly and his word on it is that not without Abiathar was the bread given. He may have had charge of the table. We bow to the authority of scripture.

The younger priest was named "Father of Plenty" (*Geseñius*) and shared in the responsibility of priesthood with his Father Ahimelech (*slain shortly afterward*) – is not given the title "High priest" by our LORD. We have a superior High priest who is the son of David and a Melchisadekian priest in control of creation and able to distribute the fruits of His creation at His pleasure.

Again we must bow to the authority of Christ. He is Lord not just of a table or of scripture but LORD of all. Of the days he gives us to enjoy Him here below. We also see how the action of Christ in coming to the temple brought like demand on the priests to take their stand for him or against him. So it is still. We must recognise the demand of grace to cleave to Jesus as Abiathar did to David. He is Lord.

CHAPTER THREE

A chapter of crowds-battalions and camp-followers-yet the focus of Peter is on the LORD who is evidently in command of on moving events. Jesus is quietly arresting other forces who would deflect or curtail the advance of His kingdom's way. We become keenly aware of the LORD'S sovereignty-the driving force of history-the emergence of a four point plan of our sovereign Lord.

THE COMMANDING POWER OF THE EYE OF MAN-DISCERNED BY JESUS 1-6

There can be no doubt that Peter understood the gaze of Jesus more than most-"**Jesus turned & looked on Peter**". In the synagogue was a man with what Luke describes as an ineffective right arm. We would suspect a stroke or a paralysis reaching deep into the brain. The Pharisees watched for the healing that would cut clean through their idea of Sabbath law. The Lord scanned the congregation and said "**Lawful to do well or kill today?**" His flashing eyes were looking deep into hearts hard as iron. He was angry and grieved with their callused hearts. Jesus ministry had mushroomed to meet clamant and universal need but it was far from gaining the credit it deserved from the political and religious elite. Pharisees and Herodians called a Counsel in those early days to devise a method of silencing Jesus for ever. On the one hand how gross and on the other how puerile! This was the King of Kings – the lover of our souls – yet self interested men – then well-known but now long forgotten – strutted like princes in their little world and set themselves to fight against God. The prophets knew the ire of man – now the Son of God stands in no doubt about it and as the reminder of the gospel shows it is deadly serious. **(15TH CHANGE)**

THE COMMANDING POWER OF CHRIST 10-19

Devils fall silent at His command and the **12 men of His desire or inclination** ($\epsilon\theta\epsilon\lambda\omega$) (His disciples) from whom he would commission in their world wide role as apostles at His resurrection – jumped to his calling. and were empowered for their mission in the nation. These twelve He wanted to be "with Him" where He went. We do not ever read that any failed on that duty although at times a smaller number accompanied him when duties to family detained the others.

THE COMMANDING POWER OF LEGAL CHARGE AND RIDICULE 20-29

The friends sought to extract Jesus from an impossible workload – he could not have a meal. The scribes from Jerusalem said he had a pact with the devil and this accounted for his power over demons.

Christ set the truth out plainly.

What happens when a kingdom divides? It falls

What happens when a house cracks? It falls!

What happens when Satan acts against his own? – He has an end!

Then the Lord explained that He was entering the strong places of Satan to spoil his agencies.

His caution was "**Don't blaspheme the Holy Ghost**" – i.e. when I am crucified and the Spirit convinces of the truth if you persist you are doomed.

THE COMMANDING ACTION OF FAMILY AMBASSADORS 31

Six battalions from Galilee Judea Jerusalem Idumea beyond Jordan Tyre & Sidon were there to see Him meet him and be healed. The Lord commissioned a boat to be rowed along the shore & obviously withdrew after the proclamation of the demons of His "Son ship" determined to call men to proclaim that message from hearts moved by obedience and love – hence the apostles.

THE COMMANDING POWER OF CHRIST AMONG HIS DISCIPLES 34-35

The call by the Lord's family to deflect Him from ministry was answered by a look of recognition and approval to his disciples "**Whoever does the will of my Father is brother sister mother to me**" This illuminating the statement of Mary from those earlier days when her faith rose to say, "**Whatever he saith to you do it**".

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PARABLE OF THE "LOGOS" the word of God

(Isaiah 6 .9-10) – You hear but don't understand; you see and don't perceive; if you understood in heart you would convert and be healed – Jesus says "be forgiven".

THE OPEN SECRET OF THE "LOGOS" of the CROSS 1-12

Here there are 4 soils – the cross is in view, her is the life of Jesus Sown in death.

The wayside – note *immediately* Satan rakes seed away Behind this whole parable the great disaster to which Jesus refers is the single exposure one off chance of so very many when God's word comes. The sower has **the hard thorny man-trampled earth** against him and a burst of light and warmth like revelation and concern that might develop the seed can do nothing to counter its death. The soul of man is hard-very hard-and only self-sacrificial love can arrest and change the hard heart. **16th CHANGE**

The stony ground – note *immediately* springing & death – no depth of understanding couldn't cope with pressure & affliction

The thorns – *while listening* – cares riches and lusts

The good ground – fruit of forgiveness

Response □ obeying is to look & listen, to grasp the content (Thirty Sixty and One hundred fold measure) When this parable was expounded the **immediate action of Satan** in stealing the word from the heart is noted. The **immediate joy** in the hearer is thus snuffed out and the would-be believer **is straightway tripped up** and is in the snare of Satan before any deep commitment and fruit in character and discipleship take hold. There is conviction of the Spirit and there is hope set before the mind and heart but there is no entertainment of the Holy Spirit with which the soul is sealed. **17th 18th & 19th CHANGES**

THE PARABLE OF THE "LUCHNOS" – the lamp of testimony

"The" lamp does not come to be put under a measuring basket or a reclining chair. It is not to be hidden or to give occasion for sleep and lack of industry. Then taking up the idea of the "measuring vessel" the LORD states that His harvest is proportioned to our sowing.

THE PARABLE OF THE "SPOROS", the seed ""rim mighty power within 26-29

An OT reference to *Joel 3.13* is found in v29. At the first Pentecost (2.28) multitudes appear in the valley of decision as again in the latter days of judgement. **The sower aims (βαλλω) the seed at the whole earth, He sleeps – rising day and night** – There is here no contradiction as "sleeping" refers to the death of Christ and the "rising" refers to the Risen LORD *keeping watch through Christian history*. **Growth is**

automatic as the seed is quickened by the Holy Spirit in the heart! He **swiftly** puts in the sickle for the fruit “given over generations” (*Literal transliteration*). Our Lord gives a powerful indication of the **suddenness of the coming harvest** and reaping time. Christ will come “in a moment” and history will then be changed world over and the fruitful and the fearful severed for ever. (4.29) **20th CHANGE.**

THE PARABLE OF THE "KOKKOS" –mini kernel – small but potentially great 30-34

OT reference – vv30-34 and v32 Ezekiel 17.23 & Dan4.12

Every nation comes under its shadow – Gods kingdom is like a Cedar.

The mustard seed is a type of the faith worldwide cf. faith and mustard seed *Matthew17.20*

There is the garden – the place where it began, Israel, Calvary, the Garden tomb. There are the branches – all over the world great churches arise. There are the birds of the air – *Acts 10* from all nations of men come to faith.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST 35-41

The voyage across the Galilee signals Jesus power to keep us who cross over to eternity.

The great storm raged while Jesus slept – signals the cross – His atoning death.

The great calm signals the peace that was beyond a serene Galilee – peace in God's kingdom.

The great fear – signals the awe of God that mirrors judgement – but faith in Jesus death deals with guilty fear.

Only one question matters – “Why have you no faith?”

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

Each healing is instantaneous; each is enabled by the command of Jesus and each is a classic. The first is dismissive in attitude, the second secretive and the third plaintive.

THE MAN POSSESSED OF DEMONS: FAITH MUST GO STEP BY STEP (HUPAGO)

Immediately the “man in the circle of a legion of demons” faces up to Jesus. This time they will not be able to wrestle a soul from the maker. 21st CHANGE The man is crying out for help but the demons are spoiling for a row. The passage delivers another surprising change – the horde of demons switch to be rid of Jesus authority and the fear of the depths of hell and are content to control swine and gain release by their sacrifice so that they can wander a little in “dry unfruitful places” until they might hope to regain their power in the life of Legion. Jesus’ **"What is your name?"** was enough to put the fear of God into them. The game was up – “Jesus did more than traditional exorcists – “He renewed godly life. Peter left us one of his classic saying when he spoke of this man as “sitting, clothed and in his right mind” (v.15).

Two thousand (2000) swine perished that day and something like 6000 demons were exorcised – leaving the whole Decapolis open to the gospel from the lips of a changed man who knew the power of God. (NB a Legion is 6000) that Satan can concentrate such evil in one person is awesome – but look then what Christ did with the same man. He had clothed himself and seated himself (with the permanence of a Cathedral) with Christ. He was learning self-control and discretion at Jesus feet. Then there comes the plea to go with Jesus – Jesus presence was the loveliest thing he had every known – his spirit said to him. **22nd CHANGE**

More, more about Jesus, more, more about Jesus

More of His saving fullness see, more of His love who (died) for me.

But the Lord said – “go up (home) in union” with me! Family needed him and the bulging populace of 10 great Greek cities called Decapolis needed to meet a man who knew and was changed by Jesus.

THE WOMAN WITH THE SCOURGE

She said to herself “If I also touch the hem of His garment I will be saved”! cf. 4.1 where the crowds by the sea touched Him – she missed the evening healing in 1.32 at the home of Peter. She had faith. Christ knew **(23rd CHANGE)** someone touched His robe of peace – thrown over the right shoulder or his outer garment. She was spotted by the all knowing redeemer and told of the 12 years – cf. divine government and of the doctors and worsening condition. She said “If I touch the prayer hem – the tasselled fringe of his cloak “I will be saved” and the long and short of it is that she did and she was saved and her course of life altered therewith. **(24th CHANGE)**

Dear dying lamb! Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.

"Go", said the Lord "into the union of peace" and be whole. She was united with Him to serve.

THE RABBI'S DAUGHTER 21-4 & 35-43

No sooner had Jesus turned than his ears were greeted by words of the death of a little girl who might have benefited had he not been sorely delayed. Naturally her father wanted his daughter **to be saved from death** and live through happy youth to have a home of her own – but now it was all over. Men on horses arrived shouting “Jairus – give up!” “Don’t flay the master”. Jesus changed the mood with utter dynamism in his compassionate powerful word “Fear not, only believe”. Can you hear Him still say that to you today, dear reader? That word is an acute agent of change. Now we read of how Jesus met the universal need we call “despair”. **25TH INSTANT CHANGE** Myriads receive news they cannot handle that drives them to the depths of depression. We read “Jesus immediately listened” – that is good news for despairing and praying people. For those who despair and have heard dreadful words or live in the shadowy cave of despair this word “Fear not, only believe” is manna from heaven. Then we further read, “The girl was **immediately** restored” (**26th CHANGE**) – that is more than healing – it is the power of the resurrection at work in Jesus' word. Oh what a word is “Talitha Coumi”! Where ever Jesus went new life and resurrection was in the air. These were lessons from all He said and did. This maiden was a message every day thereafter where’re she walked. All of Peter’s stories in Mark aim at “feeding the lambs” in the young church. This one gives good encouragement to young believers.

The Lord introduced the truth of "Sleeping" Now this girl may well have been a great friend of Jesus – cf. "Daughter". He walked in where the girl was laid and said "Little maid or girl" arise. And Jesus commanded many times that they the parents should not make it known the message of the resurrection was not to be preached by the Rabbi but was to be preached by the apostles. Peter after the resurrection made this known. The way to Christ is not religion – but as in *verse36* it is faith – command "give her to eat" – PHAGO, which is the aorist of ESTHIO so she “tastes” of Jesus and his doctrine only satisfies.

CHAPTER 6

The comments in this chapter integrate sermon material from New Year 2000 and were completed 2005-02-25 on a snowy Friday in February of that year.

Comments represent a stage in my ongoing appreciation of the significance of the Greek term εὐθεως which was yet to develop over three further years. Here I have come to realise that it is not the simple “haste” or speed of Jesus work that moves Peter but the wonderful immediacy of God in Christ Jesus acting upon human need . I was yet to refine that as the Spirit of God led my studies so that the

full-orbed "change" or conversion of human life to the template of the divine design is recognised as the true inspiration behind the usage.

THE PROPHET WITHOUT HONOUR 1-6

When Peter says Jesus “went out” (εξερχομαι meaning that it “**exceeded all bounds**” that is, went on apace. This tremendous development was first noted at Nazareth. His disciples were “learners”. The Greek term is μαθηται which means "counters" or spiritual "mathematicians". Counting begins with an abacus and eventually reaches the stars in astronomy – its supreme application) the disciples were among the first who counted the cost of following Jesus. They were also "followers" (*The Greek word used here is ακολουθουσιν meaning literally “without track” – so without Him they have no way-the root Greek is κελλω-“to call out the time to the rowers”-so the disciples were being led and urged by Jesus to be in concert and in step with Him as we also should be*). The translation continues “**He began to teach**” – better read, **(a) “He premiered His "teaching" in Nazareth.** He was the Prima Donna of all teachers. His words showed “how to begin to believe; to battle; to aim with firm purpose; to outride and discipline wild nature; to face the phases of life’s drama and how to praise God”-these being the main applications of the Greek term "to teach" (διδασκω).

Many who listened in the Nazareth synagogue seemed “**smitten as by lightning**” or “**deep emotion**” (εξεπλησσουντο). The earthy origins but poorly explained His wisdom. The Greek word σοφια was more than "joiner’s skill" – it is correctly called here a gift – **the gift of God.** The hands that made the ploughs and tables had another power – the Cana miracle and the news of the healing of the Gergesene would be in mind.

The reference to Jesus as a τεκτων means He was a “worker in wood and stone” and to Mary along with James Joseph Jude and Simon and his sisters signifies His large responsibility and earlier care. This was humanly understood His fatherland, these His family and this house one He could call his own – possibly built by his hands. His lovely parting act was healings which afforded a full working life with strength to boot for those who would otherwise have continued disabled. **That other gift – rejection,** of faith in Him, astonished our LORD.

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE 7-12

Jesus himself began his village teaching and sent out the apostles two-by-two. For such reason Paul called his partner Barnabas an apostle.

(b) This is another “Premier”. This is the largest commission of all history – continuing even today as couples reach out for God abroad. They were committed to battle – so Jesus gave εξουσια, οπλα, κελευσις for “resources or arms against evil spirits and a watchword “No grasping at staffs of office; at money purses; just an extra undergarment or change of clothing. Stay in a welcoming house (*Jews had a 3-day hospitality rule*) and if rejected ‘march off’ or ‘cross the water’ shaking off the dust of your feet. The meaning is “rest and tidy up yourselves as a testimony against those that refused to wash your feet” Judgement day will be harder for them than for Sodom. Their task was holistic – the whole man was lifted. They preached “renewal of mind (soul); they cast out demons (spirit); and anointed the disabled for healing and work (body).

JOHN IS BEHEADED 14-29

Herod heard of the now famous Jesus and feared he was possessed or energised by the spirit of John which had come up from the dead. Others thought he was the end-times prophet Elijah or one of these. Herod, **having listened** said “This is the very same John whom I beheaded, it’s he himself – raised from the dead”. This act of Herod Peter reminds us stemmed from his illicit marriage to his brother Philip’s wife – challenged by John. Herod’s inner wrath would have enabled the deed but he feared John’s just and holy life. He watched him closely, listened to him, made many offerings or was inspired to action, and was well disposed and pleased to hear him. But, at his annual dinner for the great ones; tribunes and Galilean leaders Herodias daughter danced. In a weak moment he offered anything to half the kingdom and was bound by

oath to behead John. Peter shows us the express but terrible ministry of the girl dancer in his story of change **27th CHANGE** εὐθεως (v25). One little dancing girl doing the bidding of her jealous mother at a stroke deprived a nation of its mighty prophet. Her mother said “You need to say “this very moment” (εξαυτης v25.) Herod ruefully but unwilling to fail of his oath commanded the fell deed and the man to whom Jesus never spoke sinned away his day of grace **28th CHANGE** εὐθεως before the banqueting crowd (27) . [The significance of the Greek term εὐθεως is not just “expedition” but an act that changes or revolutionises everything. So these two actions brought terrible change to Israel at this time counter to the quiet but telling change that Jesus was effecting.] The head was publicly presented and became the terrible trophy of Herodias. Meantime John’s disciples took and entombed his fallen corpse. Herod “deeply grieved” v26 but did not repent – indeed he went on to betray the Christ.

There comes a time we know not when-a place we know not where
That seals the destiny of man for triumph or despair.

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND 30-44

The apostles return and report things done and taught. Jesus responded, “Come apart to a desert place and rest a little while”. As in Nazareth, as in the commission, so here he considers our frame in great love! Many people were coming to talk with them and leading them by degrees under their burdens so they had no opportunity to eat. They left by boat and watched the crowds following. Many recognised where they headed and ran on foot from the cities and got there first. Jesus landed and looked compassionately on the shepherd-less crowd. **(c) “He premiered” his mixed multitude teaching that day.** He taught all day till late. The disciples reminded him of the time and asked that the people go to the villages for food. Jesus said, “You feed them” They said, “Two hundred day’s wages would not do it”. Jesus said, “How many loaves have you got?” They knew (*being hungry*) and said, “Five and two fish”. He commanded that they sit group by group (*συμποσιοι*—convivial parties often marked by song) on the green grass—a sign of spring.

This became one vast happy grass area of friendly groups of 100s and 50s – lets say 50 groups. After the blessing “*Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who createst ...*” The Lord broke the loaves and the apostles distributed whilst he carried the fish and broke them – visiting and chatting with each of the 50 or more groups. At 2 minutes per group that would take one and three quarter hours. Clearly the disciples would converse a lot – and enjoy it a lot too.

They had 12 fish baskets full of broken pieces and also fish left over. About 5000 were fed. And there was more in Jesus for the whole nation – hence the 12 baskets over.

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER 45-56

Thereupon Jesus compelled the disciples by argument εὐθεως **29th CHANGE** to head for home – not His home – theirs – always putting others first and kindly but firmly dismissed the crowd. It is wonderful to have Jesus with us – but He has planned it otherwise – that we walk like Abraham the lonely path of faith – that we sail sometimes without Him but not without Him seeing all. Two marathons were ahead – a marathon of prayer on the mountain and a marathon of tacking and rowing on the sea. The disciples were to head for Bethsaida. Jesus went up a mountain to pray. The boat was mid-lake. **He watched** (*aorist participle*) as the disciples had been straining to row against the wind – so he was “watching” and “praying”. In the fourth watch – 3am Jesus intervened. Nine hours – **He could see them in the moonlight.** The task was becoming too much even for brawny men – and their wives were doubtless frantically anxious. It changes everything to know Jesus is watching. He must later have told them he was watching over them like a shepherd for this to be related by Peter. The other side of the coin of our caring Lord is that He will have us wake Him by our prayers because we think he comes somewhat late upon scenes of utmost gravity.

See the stricken boat as it tossed upon the sea

Hear the fearful cries that wake the man from Galilee
 He stand before the raging, speaks peace and harmony
 He's the man who calmed the sea.

(Stuart Townend and Gary Sadler 2011)

“He came walking on the water”. It changes everything when Your Lord walks on water. They were terrified at his approach and probably shouting and rowing in the opposite direction. He immediately ministered to their fear **ευθεως 30th CHANGE**, “Be of good cheer I AM (*that is a statement calling for courage and a classic if unrecognised statement of His deity*). He came up to them in the boat and the wind died as if killed or chopped off, they were tremendously ecstatic and wondered. They came to Gennesaret – not Bethsaida – and anchored. It was early but once recognised the people from the surrounding countryside ran carrying their sick on litters to where they knew He was. And in village city or field even into the markets where they laid sick that they might touch the hem of his garment – and as many as touched were healed **Change 31st CHANGE**. The poor diseased and feeble lived again. The area near Chorazin was “exalted to heaven.” This area of Gennesaret I stammer to name aright. Could it be “garden of sawing” – where wood was available? Some think it was an ancient Garden of Spices in the ownership of Solomon. It was certainly the place where these multitudes met their “Beloved whose banner over them was love”.

CHAPTER 7

TOUCHING MEN AND TOUCHING GOD

From the sublime to the ridiculous – in two events we watch the saving touch of the master and its sequel the touch of the leper which ritually disqualified Jesus from society. Jesus treats ritual washing as hypocrisy, adds a critique of the CORBAN law and teaches about the true root of sin or stain. Two healings follow – one where the Syro-Phoenician touches and the other where He touches the deaf mute man.

CORRUPTION IS FROM WITHIN 1-19

Pharisees gathered **συναγονται** to Jesus – maybe as many as a dozen to make a religious quorum. Scribes with precise bible knowledge were there too. They had travelled over 150 kilometres. They found the disciples in breach of a Jewish tradition on hand washing before eating. They imputed blame **μεμφομαι** – censure – even branded Jesus.

Peter explains three practices: no eating without arm washing; eating after shopping requires a full wash **βαπτίζω**; the washing of pottery ironware for boiling copperware for cooking and couches where they sit to eat. In v2 the hands are termed **κοινος** – a word used for “consulting another god” or “making common purpose with others” or “having sexual relationships” *Origen* following **ΚΛΧΘΠ** has **πυγμα** “washing from elbow to knuckle” 21.5 inches

The Lord quotes *Isaiah 29.13* commenting “Isaiah prophesied beautifully concerning you play actors, as it is written, “ This people honour me with the rims of their jars or lips **χειλοι**, but their heart has gone far from me, they reverence me in vain, teaching human commands as rehearsed instruction (*oral doctrine*). For leaving the command you hold as sovereign the traditions of men – ***the baptism of boiling pots and clay cups***” (*which may relate to zealous believers and vessels for Christ to use*). The phrase underlined is in **ΚΧΠΠ** “And”, said the lord, “you continue to set aside the command of God beautifully to establish your tradition- for Moses said, ‘Honour your father and mother ‘ and ‘he who speaks against them let him die the death’ but you say ‘If a man say to his father ‘it is a case of me being dedicated to the temple’ that is to say, ‘a gift to God’ i.e. “whatever (*otherwise*) might have been your benefit from me’ After that you allow him to do nothing for his father or mother.

Dissolving the sovereignty **ακυρουντες** of God’s word by the tradition you are developing **παραδιδομι** – many things nearly equal to this you are currently creating.

Jesus called the entire crowd to him and said “Hear me all of you and understand there is nothing outside of a man which marches into him that can make him unclean but those things which march out of him those continually make him unclean. If anyone has hearing ears let him hear”.

When he entered the house his disciples enquired of the parable. He said “So you also are unwise” (*Peter was to prove so later at Antioch after the time of the first council*) Do you not understand that anything outside marching in cannot soil since it does not march into the heart – but the stomach – and marches out again in the draught and evacuation cleanses the whole body.

THIRTEEN BATTALIONS OF SIN 20-23

Evil reasoning or balancing of accounts (*re- communication and finance; adulteries or dalliances; prostitution or promiscuous relations – in earlier times elated to “bought” slaves to; murders bloodshed; fraud (as Judas practiced); overbearing temper or grasping for self;*
Evil that hurts or cowardice; treachery or deception of righteous ones; rudeness or insolence (*as often used of women*); a wicked eye; speaking against God or ruining a good name or invoking evil; arrogance or contempt; thoughtlessness re the soul or lack of practical help.

THE SYRO-PHEONICIAN WOMAN, THE FIRST TRADING PEOPLE SLAVERS KIDNAPPERS 24-30

Jesus arose and went to the frontiers of Tyre & Sidon. (*“cheese-market” and “pomegranates”- Numb13.23&27*)

The Lord had gone to a point right between these cities – where their borders met. He entered the house **οικια** “rented” or “originating in a family”. He wanted no-one to know – and it was not able to be kept secret or slip attention or be unnoticed. For a woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit came and fell at His feet in worship. The woman was a Greek, born in Syro-Pheonician. She asked Jesus to cast out the demon from her daughter. Jesus said, **“The children must first be fed (χορταζω)** applicable to filling with the Spirit) **It is not nice to take the children's' bread and throw it to the pets (κυναριοις)** – speaking of those who like the woman at His feet were in God's affections.

She replied “Yes Lord – for the **pets** also eat under the **table τραπεξα** meal table (*hinting “privately”*) from the morsels of the children”. He spoke epically to her “Through this word go up in union” i.e. you are one with us. The devil left her daughter and she went away to her home, found the devil had gone and her daughter had thrown herself on the couch – a richly embroidered recliner often with ivory legs. It is hard to resist that Christ's omniscience encompassed her pets and furniture too

THE HEALING OF THE DEAF AND MUTE MAN 31-37

And He left once more the borders of Tyre & Sidon, going to the Sea of Galilee on the high road that runs between the borders of Decapolis. They are carrying to Him a man who was inarticulate (*its 2nd meaning is “deaf” or “blind”*) He had “toil” or “pain” in making even a whispered sound **μογεω-λαλια**. Jesus was called to where the man was (this happens often – *1.40; 5.10;5.12;5.23;6.56;7.32;8.22*) that He might touch him, taking him away from the crowd privately. He put his fingers into his ears, spat and touched his tongue and looked to heaven and groaned **στεναζω** “sighing deeply or **frequently**” and said to him “Ephphatha” – “be thoroughly opened”. This is the **32nd** “IMMEDIATELY” of the gospel demonstrating the sort of change that Jesus brought. The man's ears were opened and the string of his tongue loosed and he spoke as he'd never done before – How's that for a big difference! Jesus commanded them to make no heroics of it to anyone. However strenuously He commanded them they the onlookers – not the man necessarily – did herald it the more. They were exceedingly overtaken by desire saying “he has done everything beautifully”. He has made the deaf hear and the dumb to speak or “to sing” (**λαλεω**).

CHAPTER EIGHT

The underlying theme is the cross. Christ shows compassion for those from afar-His comprehension of the antipathy of Sadducee & Pharisee is evident. His far-reaching plan for a "confessing" community of faith that would spread over the world is unveiled.

THE NEED FOR COMPASSION (cf. Multitudes) 1-11

We read here "Jesus had compassion on the multitude". The word used speaks of "parts of the sacrifice especially sacred". The Lord's wish was deeper than just to feed a hungry crowd. He wanted his fishermen friends learn to value and to seek the lost of the world and in His great love He mystically demonstrated that brokenness would bring life to myriads of men and women who afterwards would **follow "from afar" v3. 33RD CHANGE**

The fact of remainders in these miracles is significant. The DEATH of Christ is followed by His resurrection and that message must be later carried round the world in the travelling apostles' "wicker baskets" (*σπυριδας*) v8 – which besides describing a bread basket describes the travelling man's vide-mecum or "hold-all."

THE NEED FOR COMMUNION (GROANING) 12-21

There is in *Sophocles* a similar use of the Greek word *αναστεναξω* – "to complain to a Father" or "to express longings upwards". This is most instructive. Study how David did this as he expressed his concerns upwards in Psalm 2 "Why do the heathen rage?" In Psalm 3 Lord how are troubleers grown! Then in Psalm 6 he said "My soul is vexed – how long until I am delivered?" and in Psalm 7 "Save me lest he tear my soul" and in Psalm 10 "Why stand afar off, O Lord in my troubles?" and finally for the purposes of this illustration in Psalm 13 where he says "How long will you forget me O Lord?". The **principle** is found in Psalm 5.3 "I will direct my prayer to thee & look up ". *This Dalmanutha incident shows spiritual adultery of the religious parties* The Lord directs attention to the "remainder" in the previous miracle. It is hardness that does not understand that Calvary and the resurrection is the only answer. The Jews sought a Sign – *Talmud Sabbat* "when King Messiah comes the Great War between Gog & Magog begins signs from heaven appear we are not to expect Him till a rainbow has spanned the world & filled it with light" *Sohar Genesis*. They thought of the "daughter or echo" of "the voice of God". cf. 9.8 The true QOL ELOHENU (Hebrew).

THE NEED FOR CONVERSION The blind man 22-26

Peter shows us how the people ran to the radiant Christ, then he shows us Jesus changing the future of a stricken hopeless life of which his father despaired.

The two stage healing shows that Christ in spitting into the eyes of the man shows a spurned relationship-or lacking faith – and this results in a healing that shows men arguing – as "trees in dispute " – cf. Jotham's parable (cf.v17) and the dispute among the disciples with antagonistic and dogmatic argument. Christ's hands and his work on Calvary alone can cause the private relationship to God that brings revelation clear as the Sun from heaven – only grace can restore man to his true shape and obedient relationship to the Father through the Son.

THE NEED FOR CONFESSION Caesarea Philippi 27-38

"Thou art the Christ". Then the powerful statement "The Son of man must be killed and rise on the third day". Peter – Jesus spoke with such free flow as was echoed in the Jordan running nearby. The rebuke (*επιτιμω*) raises the value of the matter-"there is higher!" He (*Peter*) opposed. Jesus called the crowds because discipleship was to be opened to faith world-wide on these heads: –

1. A man must utterly deny Himself – say "No" to sin.
2. And freely lift his cross – take the way of costly service.
3. Follow me – walk with God in Christ like demeanour.

This is the fundamental principle of the gospel. What will a man exchange for his soul – this is the

ultimate goal. Who is ashamed of me – this is sin & guilt. When the Son comes this is judgement Many stand here – this is Pentecost and the spreading flame.

CHAPTER NINE

THE TRANSFIGURATION 1-10

The Lord was transfigured before his three disciples Peter James and John. His face became radiant –His garments whiter than white. The One who changes others assumed the glory that belonged to His deity. It happened after 6 days. (cf. 8.31). Moses and Elijah also appeared with Him as representatives of the Law and the Prophets – and the Shekinah or Glory Cloud was all around. This was not just "beauty"(καλος) it was that indeed – it was an awesome experience and brought very deep reverence with it, and Moses and Elijah were speaking of a completely **new Exodus** of liberation that entailed the death of Jesus Himself as the lamb of God – *Luke9.31*. Above all there was a mighty word for the three enforcing the momentous importance of matter at issue and of Jesus who would offer His life for their (*and ours*). "This is my beloved Son, hear him" the voice thundered. The divinely planned atonement was heavens master plan – and it was taking the very highest profile. The rebuttal of Peter who continued to think lesser thoughts and who would go backwards to the failed tabernacles of the wilderness is not glossed over v7. The disciples return to lower ground to be greeted by a ding-dong argument probably involving the power to heal a demon possessed boy who could not speak. If ever Jesus brought change it was to that scene of dispute and venom. The boy might be speechless but the arguments over him were ferocious. The sight of Jesus in all His radiance evaporated the debate and drew a surge of awesome wonder if not worship. What a change! **34TH CHANGE**

THE QUESTION SCRIBES HAD SETTLED –DEBATE DURING DESCENT 11-13

The scribes said that Elijah would come before Messiah. Jesus spoke agreeably – Elijah’s return would mark the restoration as in Malachi – when men would give thought to their children and children to the fathers – **because the end of the age had come**. But Jesus spoke again of His destiny – and of the interpretation that directed attention through John toward His death cf. *9.31and 10.33*. John in the prophetic guise of the desert Elijah was the herald of His death. In the latter day indeed God would send the prophet in the days of Israel’s extremity.

MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL & A NEW TYPE OF PRAYING 14-29

They had descended hastily from the mount – a man “answered” – Peter **is probably saying that the Father answered the question about what was going on – why all the hot air?** “It’s about my son” he said. My poor boy is being cast into fire and waters it is serious. **Have compassion** **σπλαγγνιζω** (v.23) – The term the father used means “offer your bowels of affection” (*indicative of such organs of the offered sacrifice as represent compassion. This man was demanding all that Christ could give – and indeed our sin and sicknesses demanded his love poured out in life and at the cross*) Jesus first response to the difficulty of apparent powerlessness among his other disciples was to call for the boy. The presence of Jesus sent the demon within the child into orbit. The devil was trying desperately to endure the presence of Christ but it was plainly impossible. Jesus presence changes satanic powers. If ever the axiom “Satan to Jesus must bow” was demonstrated it was proven in this incident. **35TH CHANGE** The boy was convulsed or vomiting – he was rolling on the ground and foaming at the mouth in a classic epilepsy style fit.

The Lord asks “How long?” had the condition persisted. The Father replied “Since he could first serve and obey as a child!” The Father pleads for compassing and, for His part, Jesus asks for faith – the vital response of love that reaches His heart and quickly draws response. Change **36TH CHANGE**. Straightway the Father believes for family renewal (v.24). *Here is a father who has a Son and a Father and Son who could never forget their life-changing meeting with the Son of God.*

Peter tells us that the Lord explained why the boy presented a task too great for the disciples. Jesus explained that only by living in a daily relationship of vow and prayer and putting heaven’s plans before one’s very food and drink could “hold over” such power be assured.

Jesus was reflecting on the source of “power with God” With Moses and Elijah and numerous of His saints our Lord was marked for “strong crying and tears”. All this lay at the heart of the early morning and late night desert relationship with the Father that Jesus maintained even in face of other glaring challenges. The six days before the transfiguration doubtless fell into this category as He once more prepared for the very great events ahead. **Prayer changes and transforms** – that is the message and without it any ministry is weakened and cannot be “ever ready” nor can it maintain that glow of love, compassion and humility except in the presence of the Lord. The size of the challenge every Christian who would minister Christ is daunting and requires as a first priority a close walk with God.

O for a closer walk with God, a calm and heavenly frame
A light that shine upon the road that leads me to the Lamb.

MINISTRY OF THE CROSS & THE SECRET JOURNEY 30-32

Why did Jesus take such a trip through all Galilee? Because He desired to bond with His apostles in his mission and highlight the Cross as right at the centre of their future ministry and even to underscore perhaps the future importance of reaching all the Gentiles. ‘Let's spend time together in the light of what's coming’ seemed to be his objective. ‘Every one of you should take this seriously’ seemed to be what He was saying. It was the profile of the cross He was emphasising. This message – this transforming message which they did not yet grasp was to them a terror and an end of all – but to Him it was an Exodus and would bring salvation to many nations.

MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL & CHILD IN THE MIDST 33-37

The disciples had been arguing about poll position as if among the disciples there was a hierarchy The Lord took a child and placed it among them. The child ran to Him and he lifted it up in His arms They were not gathering the young – they had no magnetism – what was wrong? They were arguing as to who was the greatest. The transfigured life must be magnetic and must be natural and open and humble enough to admit a child – not exclusive and self-regarding.

MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL & A NEW ATITUDE 28-29

The gospel makes vast demands. The priority is prayer – the priority is heralding the kingdom – the priority the glory of His name. Here is a strange phenomenon – they could not perform a miracle – now a man turns up using Jesus name and is blessed. We must live for others – to include true believers – and cup of water people who seem so simple in kindness but whose hearts are right with God.

MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL & A NEW FLAVOUR 49-50

Salt was used with all ancient covenants. The one who in Lord; supper painting who knocked over the salt was Judas. There is a need for salt. The world knows salt where it sees it. It is holiness – the flavour of all Gods covenants is holiness. That holiness that yields all our members to God-and they are cut off from any hindering service. There is the fact that all will eventually face the judgement of fire. There is nothing that transforms like a holy life.

NB If we have such an exercise of heart as to be praying and preaching and being careful in fellowship, also to be aware that others are effective – maybe far more so praise God than I am! And that God wants a Holy people-we shall be the transformed people God seeks.

CHAPTER TEN

In this chapter we have the living centre of Ministry – "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to Minister and give His life a ransom for many. There are 5 sorts of Humiliation in the chapter. Each is instructive and casts essential light on Christ's servant-hood.

THE HUMILIATION OF DIVORCE 1-12

Here we join the Lord on Gentile territory beyond Jordan. The Pharisees who "compass sea and land" are there with a question. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" Now Herod had taken his Brother Philip's wife – and this divorce had drawn attention to the topic. Now divorce is a very humbling and sad experience. It undermines self-worth and happiness and financial stability and children's security. Jesus said God never intended its (vv8-9). He did show that Moses in *Deut. 24:1-3*) afforded a bill because of "hardness of heart" and this allowed a woman a new future. Jesus came to secure the future of mankind – to remedy matters of hardness. To buy & keep His bride!

THE HUMILIATION OF CHILDREN 13-16

They brought children to Jesus. Why? Well back in Chapter 9 we read one child was held by Jesus and this massively popular Rabbi really excited youth. They all wanted to be With Him. But the disciples censured – the idea is to say – His time is too valuable to be bothered.

The Lord rebuked the apostles and then he spoke warmly of "teachable children" and allowed them in and as in 9.36 took them up in His arms and then gave each His words of blessing. The simplicity and obedience of faith that a child represents is of first importance in entering the kingdom.

THE HUMILIATION OF THE RICH 17 -33

An enthusiast came running. He was wealthy – and he addressed Jesus "**Good master**" said he "**What good thing shall I do to get into the Kingdom?**" Jesus set forth the man-ward section of Moses' law. "OK I'm in" he said. Jesus responded – one other thing – there's the God-ward side: "**Leave all – take up the cross – follow me**".

The reference to the cross here shows the equivalent position of Christ – "He who was rich yet for our sakes became poor". The story of the camel and the needle eye gate was given and then Peter wanted to know what reward he and others could expect from leaving fishing. Jesus said "Fellowship – my world-wide family and persecutions and afterward Eternal Life". Christ also testified "**Many that are first will be last**".

THE HUMILIATION OF JAMES & JOHN 34-45

Here once more Jesus explains to the fearful disciples the cross and the resurrection and its imminence. Still convinced that the kingdom would appear almost instantaneously after resurrection, James and John present a blank cheque of request "**That they should be one on the right and one on the left in the kingdom**". Jesus redirects to His baptism and His cup and they say they are ready. The 10 were displeased with this currying of favour and the Lord settled that dispute with His words "**Whoever will be greatest should be servant of all**" – referring for a third time to His death under the phrase "**Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to give His life a ransom for many**".

THE HUMILIATION OF BARTIMAEUS 46-52 – Bartimaeus is up and away with Jesus

Cries of "**Jesus thou son of David have mercy on me**" rang out at Jericho. Here the disciples do well– "**Be of good comfort He calls for you**". This man had nothing to lose but an old garment that he used for gifts given – and that he threw away "**What wilt thou?**" Here was a sore rebuke to the disciples. "**Lord that I might receive my sight**" "Go thy way" said Jesus. This is another glorious change – in the city once cursed. Bar-Timaeus instant choice was not in the home of a well-placed father. His patronymic suggests wealth and position. But his way was to be Jesus' way. He chose to "Follow Jesus in the way".

He is a picture of mankind – in the place of "the curse" – Jericho – fallen from our original estate – begging – needing Jesus. Furthermore he is a picture of true discipleship and **radical change** of a sort with that of the fishermen (*including himself*) with whom Peter begins his gospel story. (**37th CHANGE**) Had the Ministry of Christ not been on offer there were no hope for Marriage – for Children – of Economy and Church, for mankind through the Family of God – no Kingdom to come – no mighty health effects and most important of all no glorious Salvation from Sin. 'He who will not bear a cross can't wear a crown'.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

What we call the triumphal entry often begins & ends with Palm Sunday enthusiasm. However we are looking at the nature of holiness. Each day the Lord penetrates to the temple area. Each day he adds one more lesson. In Changes NO.38-39 history is changed as Jesus fulfils Daniel's prophecy and moves towards Calvary which has changed us all!

DAY ONE – THE CROSS – THE LORD'S DESIRE FOR MERCY 1-18

The doctrine we are to learn on this first great day is found in *Psalms 118*. The best known refrain from it is "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

1. The obedient colt was ready – its tell tale position "where two ways meet. That little animal shines a beautiful light on the change Jesus effects. (38TH CHANGE) The sinner like the colt stands naturally where two ways meet – the broad and narrow way. The sinner yields to the mastery of Jesus whatever else came before. The disciple shows no rebellion. The disciple is clothed with the garments of the disciple. The disciple obeys Christ's every motion. On that day the Master had need of that colt. This dumb animal had absolutely no awareness of the mission of the cross but as every schoolboy knows the donkey carries a mark on its back and that is a white mark in the form of a cross.

The direction to the disciples as to what they should say was specific. The place they would see the colt was specific. The understanding of the reaction of others is specific. **The apostles came to understand that it changes everything when Jesus' will is involved.** (39TH CHANGE) Doors open, things fall into place, the heavens smile on obedience. This context teaches us that we can entrust our lives and our eternity to the very promises and directions of Jesus. His words are at the heart of every changed life.

2. The people greeted a hero

The forerunners and crowds seemed ready for "**Salvation**".

There's something uncanny about it. What is it? Are they ready? Let's look closer. Jesus comes along through the eastern gate and into the city. What does He do? *v11 He looks around upon everything.*

The gaze of Christ was more than curiosity it was desire (*περιβλεπω*). What did he desire?

Let's take ourselves back to *Psalms 118*.

There are the gates – speaking of one beautiful way of righteousness – there is the capstone speaking of the one the nation didn't recognise-and there Christ goes on to the horns "Up to the horns of the altar" *1 Kings 2.28* There old Joab who killed two good men (*Amasa & Abner*) sought mercy. At its equivalent the cross those whose sins put to death a good man – nay the good Son of God – find mercy.

DAY TWO – THE CHURCH – CHRIST'S APPETITE FOR SOULS 12-18

Our whole gaze is taken by the Lord's early morning act – **being hungry – pining or craving for early fruit from Israel – He finds none** cf. Fig tree *Song 2.14* speaking of the Church. Again in the temple Jesus finds it a veritable *agora* – full of money-men and the pigeon sales-persons. He began to teach and his passages were *Isaiah 56 (7) and Jeremiah 7(11)*.

The teachers of the law were there but his prophetic message captivated the hearer. Hearers had a passion for what He was saying. The old prophet spoke about God rising early – and how the voice of mirth and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride would be cut off from Jerusalem.

Christ would be crucified – Israel would not seal her union and the nation & place would be destroyed but *Isaiah 56.7* prophesied: –

a. The eunuch will take hold of the covenant – cf. Ethiopian

b. The sons of the stranger will join themselves to the Lord and take hold of the covenant

c. **Mine house will be a house of prayer for all nations** – I will gather daily (till 70 AD)

The evening of that gospel day would herald a great rapture – march out of the city *v19*.

DAY THREE-THE MOUNTAIN IN THE SEA-THE WRATH OF THE LAMB 19-26

Here the commentators struggle. Another rabbinic symbolic mountain says *Cole*. The mountain of the Lord's kingdom will be world-wide in the time of Messiah's return. Meantime as *Matthew Henry* has it

the mountain of our guilt shall be cast into the depths.

To believe that this gospel and kingdom will rule the world one day is not vain talk. The need is to pray – to vow yourself to God – and to live by the truth of *forgiveness – forgiving others*. Halcyon days are ahead – but beyond the Anti-Christ is the Christ whose rule will be for a millennium.

And so we come to the heart of this truth – as the High priests and teachers and elders confront Jesus.

He asks **from whence Johns baptism?**

"We don't know". Why upset the old economy, on what Authority? Jesus had one reply – **Johns baptism and message about the Lamb. They knew he was asking why they did not believe.** One day the world which now defers an answer must decide man by man or each will face what these priests and teachers would face – the "wrath of the lamb".

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE VINEYARD PARABLE 1-11

Christ here states his right of inheritance – with the effective text from *Psalms 118.10-11* “this is the stone which the builders rejected”. This vineyard has a fence – the law and a tower – prophecy a winepress – a place for Gods wrath. That latter detail relates specifically to the ultimate act – sequel to the beating and wounding of servants – namely the death of the Son. So are the High priests and elders advised directly of their impending shame. The glory of the cross is at the heart of the vineyard. Its sacrificial blood is Christ's and the Father is the one who cuts off the unfruitful branches.

THE LEGEND OF THE COIN 12-17

This time Pharisees (purists) – and Herodians (politicians) who backed Herod – *the man whose 46 year scheme to build the house of God was materially unfinished and spiritually disastrous -as it was cropped with business fraud and licence.* A lawyer sought to harvest Christ like a fish of the sea. Some fish! This was the maker of sea and sky. **“You are truth itself”** snapped the purists – **“you teach ‘up to the height of the way of truth’** – i.e. the highest teaching. The challenge of Christ this time came by a reference to *Deuteronomy 6.16* – when the people said “Is the lord among us or not”? Christ followed this with a second challenge – to give glory worship and obedience to God – they only yielded **“wonder”** v17.

THE WOMAN WITH SEVEN HUSBANDS IN ETERNITY 18-27

Christ set at rest all philosophy as to the eternal state when He said “You shall be as the angels” He spoke of the definitive nature of “resurrection” referring to *Exodus 3 vv 2, 6, 15-16*. The statement “I am the God of Abraham Isaac & Jacob” has the significance simply that God is the God of those who are in a “new springtime” of life – and indeed if the text be pursued to its ground as one of the earliest doctrines Moses learned from the Lord's lips it means “God is the God of *“Ardens sed Virens”* – life despite death”; God is God of eternal being – and the one whom to see in His glory means death. People must live the “spring-like life, the newborn life” – not just be biological items. Christ was emphatic about mans relationship to God as prior and above the human and sexual. The “power “of God is revealed in new birth not in human relationships and birth in its greatness. “Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit” – and “which were born not of the flesh, or of the will of man but of God” are the texts that show the quest for continuance of life is answered by faith in Christ – our kinsman and not in Levirate marriage.

THE QUERY ON THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT-WHOLENESS AND LOVE 28-34

Dt6 4-5 & Lev19.18

The word “whole” in the Greek is derived from the Ionic OULOS “unhurt, actual, and continuous”. In the Hebrew it is CALIL – used of the offering of a “broken spirit” – which the Lord will not despise. The “burnt-offering” *Exodus 29.42* was to be “continual” – as in *Ezra 3.4*. The Lord emphasised that love should be daily fresh towards God and one's neighbour. The query of the single scribe was carefully and kindly dealt with. He had come close to understanding the commitment of *Psalms 51* – by comparing the offerings with the heart – both the Lord and He were alluding to David's analysis. The commendatory word

NOUVECHOS means “direction of mind and intention”. So this man came with intent to be rid of the tyranny of sin and this left little option but submission to the Kingdom or rule of God in Christ – and so Jesus goes directly to David whose writings are in mind and puts His unerring case here equally beautifully (*cf.v.28*) as that on RESURRECTION. The word used at the end of this explanation is “sweet” – it was “doctrine taught with absolute relish-nothing could be added to make it more palatable.

THE LORD’S QUERY -WHO WAS IN CONTROL OF DAVID’S LIFE? 35-37

This great question out of *Psalms 110* brings home the truth of commitment to Jesus as King. The Lord drives the scribe to the virgin birth. How is the “Lord Almighty” the “son” of David besides being called “His Lord”? The inescapable answer is that THE LORD must come to earth as man in the line of David and have a true claim to be King of kings beside and deserve the worship of David. This is the reply to the query in v29 and it extends because the scribe had come to see the deep need to “stand committed daily” to the Lord. He could not of course foresee as yet the “humiliation of the cross and the ascension to the right hand” that were here in the mind of Christ – but as Christ indicated the Holy Spirit revealed who Christ was to David and here and now this scribe was under the very same conviction – v35. This tremendous debate which Mark registers has probably never been rummaged sufficiently. It so impressed the early followers of Christ that **25 references to this great Psalm are made in the NT** and of these a dozen are used by the writer to the Hebrews-so convincing is this area of scripture and its exposition.

THE TEST OF TRUE RELIGION 38-44

Here we have the lord standing over against the treasury. This was a set of 13 trumpets of metal construction. Moneys gifted in the court of the women where they stood would resonate. Jesus “sat” over against or in front of these receptacles. The aorist usage here suggests he has never ceased to sit not to criticise – but to advise and to commend giving. The deeper problem the Lord had studied during his whole ministry was “building the house of God”. In *2Kings 12.9* under Jehoash, Jehoiada the priest had to make a treasury because the priests were siphoning off the gifts of the people for themselves. In those days 23 years elapsed and the house was not refurbished under Jehoash. Now as reported by John it had been 46 years in process of completion – but still – owing to the same process of self-aggrandisement on the priestly part it ran way beyond any normal building schedule. This is a very special sign of malaise and a reason for the second “clearing of traders” and the anger of the Lord. However – one beautiful shaft of light shines from this incident. A little lady gave 1/60th of a day’s wages – an infinitesimal amount – built on the idea of a DENARIUS wage. But let us assume that this is a widow’s pension – about £70 and that it is one sixtieth of £10 – just over 16 p in our currency. It would be less than the cost of a cheap paper or postage stamp – but it was all the lady had. Here is the commitment the Lord respects. Here is the heroine of the “building scheme” – who can be an example to all. Here is the most touching case ever put for Christian liberality. Away with walking in stoles while gifting is negligible – away with the markets and profiting from stalls (*which the priests did*) – away with sitting in the place of teachers when they have not learned – away with dinners in their honour that live in shame-away with long vows of commitment to God. In this little lady’s life was the music of true loyalty to God – she had the care of Christ.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The return of Christ excites interest & the very idea draws criticism. When the 4 fishermen were leaving the temple they stressed the permanent look. “See these great stones!” they said. Suleiman set a few up to modem view although the Tyropoean skirting wall left by Titus & the Fortress alone remains. This establishes the words of Christ Mark13.1. So the question-“When will the walls come down and what is the sign of the kingdoms permanence?”

THE BEGINNING OF TRAVAIL 5-8 Don't be frightened

The messianic age would be associated with painful world changes. The Lord forecast that some who professed to follow Him would be deceived. He predicted false cults who would in the latter day be led by men claiming to be messiah; He said that there would be many wars – don't be frightened – they don't bring

the end-don't (θροεω) be frightened – this is not How the end comes – just part of the process. Gentile nations shall rise against others and hereditary monarchs too. Earthquakes in certain flaw lines (τοποι) and famines and civil uprisings. This is the turmoil of history in the latter days.

THE EVANGELISATION OF THE EARTH 9-11 Endure in the purpose

First persecution would be Jewish – then Gentile. Believers were to be utterly dependent on the Holy Spirit. The final phase of persecution will be terrible families will divide over Christ-and all nations will hate the Christians. Amid all this history and change the NAME OF CHRIST & SALVATION are rocklike & sure! The Holy Spirit's continuance till he be taken away-hints the church's rapture.

THE ABOMINATION THAT DESOLATES 14-23 Daniel 9 26-27

There are verses in *Daniel 9.27, 11.31, 12.1&11* which point to a period of "common use of the temple area – a time of neglect – and then the gift of this object or house of worship – in the vein of the old Shaqatz or Idol Milcom(*1 Kings 11.5*). This brings silence to the Holy Place where the praises of Jehovah used to ring out. This desert silence and thing that is abhorrent in Gods nose (*meaning of abomination*) Once in Roman times the Christians fled Jerusalem to Jamnia. Again in this great tribulation (*v19*) unprecedented – un-repeated Jews would flee. God would shorten the days by grace (*v20*). Christ turns the later disciples from falsehood to the WORD *v23* there would be a threat to humanity in the last days – if God did not intervene to shorten days. Mothers would be especially vulnerable *v17*.

THE NEXT GREAT GEO-PHYSICAL UPHEAVAL 24-27

God has a "but" in v 24 – it goes "with" the tribulation. **The sun will be darkened, the moon as blood, the stars fall** – *Isaiah 13.10, 34.4, Joe 12.10 & 31 and 3.15(nations gather at Armageddon)*. **The heavens shall shunt about like a ship at anchor**. Christ will come in glory and power at that time – no more darkness – all cleared for the amazing sight of the ages. **"They will see** – i.e. a future generation this will be accompanied by the gathering of all the Jews who will have spread worldwide again with the gospel.

THE FIG TREE .28-37 Unfulfilled Prophecy

The delicate branch or democracy of the Jewish state puts forth its branches and leaves. It has councils worldwide and is ready to bear fruit. **The 1948 generation that sees the fig fruit in the 1960s would not pass away till the whole purpose is accomplished**. Christ tells the parable of the man who goes away from home and leaves servants and the doorkeeper. Here "day by day" watching even "sleepless night" watching is recommended. The doorman is the secret of this parable-it is everyman. The return of Christ is presented as at the doors. All of this warns us to watch for we are to be caught up and taken away 1 Thess 4.17 (αρπαγη) -in the day of the "thief" *Matt 24.43 – Luke 12.39 – 1 Thess 4.*

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

They began to spit on Jesus-they covered His face and smote him and said to Him-prophecy and the servants smote Him with rods 14.65

WITH THE GOSPEL GOES BROKENESS – PROPHECY NO.1 1-10

The little lady in Simon's house anointed the Saviour. It was from a broken alabaster jar she anointed His head worth 300 denarii. Before the invention of writing remembered poetry conveyed facts. The Greeks called the goddess of poetry MEMNOSUNE – this is the very word used of this woman. Ancient poets recited from memory – this lady did something that would likewise be recited. Ancient poets acted under the muse – this woman acted under the prompting of the Spirit of God. This woman gave her all and the gospel demands the same fragrant yielding of everything to Christ – 2000 years on. The call of the gospel is "all for Jesus"! This glorious story affirms the momentous significance of the death of Christ.

THE ONE WHO DIPS IN THE BOWL WILL BETRAY ME-PROPHECY NO.2 11-21

The prophecy is as ancient as *Psalm 41.9*. In *Mk14.18* we have a most solemn statement re-Judas – “Better had he not been born”. There is a terrible solemnity about hypocrisy concerning Christ. This man embraced and kissed the Lord over & over but his love was fickle. David's Lord gave the word to King David 1000 years before and here it took place. This is a mighty and solemn word. This tells us Jesus loves every sinner.

I WILL NOT EAT OF THIS FRUIT OF THE VINE TILL GOD'S KINGDOM PROPHECY NO.3 22-26

Christ appeared over 40 days and ate with them – yes in *Luke24.43* Jesus ate with them. He ate honey – no record of wine since then. He promised to drink wine in the future. So deeply he desired the conversion of the Jew and of the whole world. What will the in-grafting of them be – life from the dead! This great prophecy tells us the Jews will be saved.

BEFORE THE ROOSTER CROWS TWICE YOU WILL DENY ME THRICE PROPHECY NO.4 27-31 & 66-72

This is written about a rooster. Now it is not so much about a rooster but about how the Lord Jesus knows the human heart, indeed the heart of a bird and beyond that the heart of time itself – and the web of events that would take place in the early morning. Well might Peter himself later say "Lord you know all things – you know I love you". He learned from the rooster.

We must learn about our fickle hearts and we must shed some tears if we are to get anywhere near Jesus – conversion – “when you are converted!" said the Lord to Peter. This tells us Jesus knows about every conversion – He foreknows. Study the self-anthematising *v71* and deep sorrow of Peter *v72*.

THE SCRIPTURE MUST BE FULFILLED Zech13.7 "STRIKE THE SHEPHERD" PROPHECY NO.5 27&48 Changes NO.40-41

Strike the Shepherd and the flock will be scattered – POTZ. This spoke about – the world-wide spread of the gospel through the apostles – it was something then begun – but was precursor to a far greater dispersion. Here we are at Gethsemane – where grapes were pressed – and never was there such pressure as the Lord endured. The request that the hour "**pass from Him**" is a request not for sleep but for the forgetting of it all. That it would go away unheeded again by the Father was not granted – for an angel came and ministered!

Judas arrived to hear Jesus words **“Let us arise, let us go: behold he who betrays me has come near.”** Jesus was awaking the disciples to the reality of the cross. He was to be led away as a sheep to her shearers. He invited the others to continue in His company as far as man could go in the circumstances. Instead they forsook Him and fled leaving Judas in there beside him. Oh yes, Peter thrust himself into action in violation of the Master's call putting up a fight with his puny sword. He tells the story like it is in *v.47* and with admirable candour. This psychological moment of change was the last effort of Peter in the flesh to play the man but it was a destructive lunge. That ear was so wonderfully repaired but the devastation and desolation in the heart of Peter would not be repaired till he spoke again with his Lord. The confidence and self-assurance that could dispute the way of the cross broke at this point and Peter ran for his life. That moment in Gethsemane was an essential point of no return for Peter. He could not go back to the man he was – he needed change big time. (40TH CHANGE) It was heart conversion or nothing. We all need the Gethsemane verdict on our lives. We cannot go it alone – we dare not do it my way.

The way of the cross leads home
The way of the cross leads home
And this I know as I onward go
That the way of the cross leads home.

Meantime the betrayer stood closest to Jesus. He brought his repeated loveless kisses (*κατεφιλησεν*) and pronounced to the echo among the old olive trees “Rabbi, rabbi” for all to hear – but the thought of 30

pieces of silver was swimming in his mind. Empty words, empty kisses and a heart filled by Satan's devices! It seems **Peter makes this his pen-ultimate lesson in change**. At that point he could hardly credit that a man so trusted could be so subtle an enemy and a sworn foe. Peter is urging his reader to look deeply at the implications of Jesus teaching on the cross; to look deeply at who Jesus is; to face the radical demands of Jesus whose love and longsuffering. Jesus is the one who changes lives and the obvious ways Peter has demonstrated this is made possible in the gospel include (1) the work of the Holy Spirit, (2) living by faith in obedience to the Father, (3) prayer, (4) fellowship with Jesus (5) intercession (Gethsemane) To these Peter now adds truly understanding the Rabbi above all rabbis and (6) His teaching on the cross. **(41ST CHANGE)**

JOHN MARK 50-52

It has always been assumed that the young man that fled naked from the scene at Gethsemane was John Mark – the writer of this gospel. One wonders if there was a little discussion with Peter when it came to describing the end of the Gethsemane story. One can imagine Mark saying “Can I put my bit in?” “What would you say?” Peter might reply. “I’ll just say exactly what happened”. Peter who always warned to plain facts was pleased and responded “Very well Mark you do that!” The gospel was written very early in the first century. It may well have been on hand when Paul visited Peter – or could the apostle to the Gentiles have prompted Peter to get it written down? Speculation aside the glorious joy is we have a scintillating account of a changed and changing world during the telling ministry of our gracious Lord-of whom it was said “The whole world is gone after Him”(John12.19)

YOU WILL SEE THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MIGHTY ONE & COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN – PROPHECY NO.6 53-65

Peter takes us to Caiaphas' judgment hall and (a) to the false testimonies and (b) to their error in understanding the Lord's words about the temple, and (c) to Jesus single statement that He was Himself the future glorious judge of all – under which the high priest arraigned Him on a blasphemy charge. Only then (d) does Peter mention the firelight denials of his Lord over and over and over. He speaks of that “rooster crowing” and of his bitter tears. It is just then Jesus is bound and Peter begins to feel his abysmal failure. As they led Jesus away something he does not record happens – “Jesus looked on Peter”. Dr. Luke in 22.61 gives us that record. From that I glean that Paul discovered this as he spoke with Peter. Perhaps he was willing to confide and even weep in the presence of Paul later when other things he like Mary treasured in his heart came to public attention when he was ready to fill in the gaps. If I am correct the Gospel itself could have been written within 10 years of Jesus death. What we should derive from the last **NOTICE OF CHANGE** εὐθὺς of the Gospel in 15.1 is that it connects with 14.72 for in the original there were no chapters. It tells us that Peter now understood the Judge who took his judgment. He felt the eyes that knew him and loved him penetrating to his deepest soul and with the coming days all that had contributed to making a “fisher of men” would come together – but with difficulty until that walk by Galilee fully restored the big Fisherman to Christ and gave him a work to do to show he loved Jesus. There is nothing in the entire world that changes a life more than love. And there is no love like the love of Jesus. Oh yes! There is a judgment to come. The unrepentant of earlier times see the right hand & see the Son coming with the clouds of heaven. The rapture for them is "seen" (οραω) as *Blind Homer* saw.

MARK FIFTEEN – THE CHALLENGE OF THE KING

This chapter presents us with the effect of the death of Christ on five men. To which of them can you relate best? **CHANGE** NO.42 The Sanhedrin decide “one man is to die for the nation” but **in the distant dawn of world redemption** God chose to give His Son for a world undone and as Peter goes on to show Joseph of Arimathea was changed at this time – Mary of Magdala was changed – all the women were changed – and best of all Peter himself was converted – so converted that the commission he states in 16.15 – 18 was undertaken in earnest over the years till God called him home.

PONTIUS PILATE 1-5 with 16-20

Are you the king of the Jews? asked Pilate. Jesus said "You calculate". Then the accusations flowed – but the Lord answered nothing. There was not even under the 39 stripes a way to get a guilty verdict. The vilification represented by the King's Game and the spiteful spitting were grotesque. Not even a Roman lawyer could proceed justly. He needed the lynch mob to solve his dilemma. The world stood against Christ – it always does – will you? Will you do a Pilate publicly and really reject Him but privately admire & distance yourself consoling yourself that it doesn't matter – remember Pilate's wife.

BARABBAS 6-15

He was an insurrectionist. He was a chained man – v7 he had committed murder.

His name meant "son of a father". Some dad – maybe now long dead brought this boy into the world. The scholar *Origen* on Matthew 27 tells us that he was actually called Jesus Son of the Father.

The crowd had a faction who had him for its national hero. How awful. The fickle crowd is easily bought. There is no other son of God than Jesus. He came to reconcile not stir a rebellion. Christ atoned – it saved Barabbas – but did he go on to despise the Christ who died in his guilty room & stead. One of the thieves or malefactors *Luke 23.32* did – one did not. What of you?

SIMON THE CYRENIAN 21-22 with the "Game of Kings" 16-20

We know he was coming in from the country-probably carrying produce to market. We know he had two sons. He was compelled to bear Christ's cross *Samuel Rutherford* whom John studied in detail – a great Scots preacher and man of the covenant spoke of "Christ's light cross" which we carry after Jesus Simon became from that day a "cross-bearer". His sons Alexander and Rufus are mentioned here In Romans 16 *Rufus* is recorded as living in Rome with his worthy mother. She is mentioned as having helped Paul (Rom16) maybe in Antioch. This means that Simon became head of a truly Christian African family. The soldiers saluted Jesus – "clinging fondly to him" with embraces – mocking – not so Simon – which are you – playacting Christianity or taking up the cross.

THE CENTURION 33-41

In v32 Jesus, Israel's King was treated to reviling "**Let the King of Israel come down from the cross**". The by-passers reviled Him, the Chief Priests reviled Him, and the Thieves reviled Him. Someone (v36) **ran with a sponge** and an anodyne; this nameless person fulfilling *Ps69.21* offering vinegar and myrrh to help him over the last suffering.

All through this one stood by – a centurion. He was facing Jesus. He saw the immense feat of discipline. He heard the cries – **Today... Father forgive...Son behold Eloi...I thirst...it is finished...into thy hands.**

"This IS" said he "the Son of God." (*Luke 23.47*) (*ην..ονως*.A "was and is" usage similar to "he was and is to come") He broke his silence – "**He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life**".

Luke "**Continuing to exist, this man was righteous in this life**". (*This is not good grammar but it is good thinking on the part of the centurion*). God showed the centurion something of the life that continues after death – and he accepted Jesus as God's Son!

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA 42-47

A prominent council member – friend of Nicodemus of John 3 fame – the duo did not consent to the counsel of the Sanhedrin. He waited on the Kingdom of God. He courageously asked for the body. He fulfilled *Isaiah 53.9* EUSCHEMOS (Greek) "with determination" or "dignified grace" and TOLMEO (Greek) "he dared" bravely to go to Pilate whatever that entailed.

AITEO (Greek) "he asked **for himself** the body of Christ" and obtained one of Pilate's rare favours. This man missed the Passover by this act – it was a very bold act. **It has been conjectured** that he was the "Master" of the "upper room" spread with carpets where the Lord shared the Passover before He suffered.

Joseph may have missed the Jewish feast – but he chose in accordance with his conscience and his affection for Christ. Joseph's principle might be "**take the world but Give me Jesus**" in the words of a solo piece I

can never forget – rendered 50 years ago by a country singer called John Hayes at an afternoon service in Co. Tyrone, Ireland. The principle of life in Christ is fully subscribed in this lovely song.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Quite distinctive impressions of the resurrection of Christ are set down by Mark, namely the *theoretic*, the *theatric* and the *panoramic* impressions – cf. *Ch16 4, 7 & 11* respectively. To feel these mighty impressions of the living Christ on the heart after he rose from the dead greatly moved the early disciples consolidating all Jesus had previously taught. This is the way knowledge of God is communicated. Christ would lift us up also with His disciples far above fear and sorrow.

THE THEORETIC EXPERIENCE 1-8 FEAR VERSUS FAITH (Jesus first dealt with fear – cf. exorcising demons at the inception of ministry)

Here we enter the strange world of the mind. The young man in white directed the trio to tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus was going before them to Galilee. Remember the word to Mary was **"Tell them I go to my Father & your Father"**. The future centre of gravity was the **"Gentiles"** (*Hence Galilee*)

1. The mighty angel **"Fear not, He goes before to Galilee – there you will see him"**

2. The Lord **"Fear not – announce to my brethren – in Galilee they will see me"**

3. The young man **"Don't be astonished tell the brethren & Peter they will see Jesus in Galilee"** Mark tells us they were **shaking and ecstatic** (*meaning that they could not add it up for very frenzy – in time they put words to it!*) (16.14)

Fear clouds facts – the facts were the TOMB WAS EMPTY – the GRAVE CLOTHES were most strangely evacuated – the angel had given a valid MESSAGE for the **"Lord was risen indeed"** – the EVENTS were a real if stupefying sequence of miracles.

Norman Vincent Peale – "the word *"worry"* is derived from the concept *"to choke"*. It chokes the facts. Fear is 1st of the 4 life motives: fear; hope; faith; love. It is negative and does not bring *"New life"*. That lovely Easter morning fear *"choked off"* belief and even rendered plain facts an unthinkable enigma for the cowering disillusioned disciples who expected the kingdom to appear – not the king to disappear.

THE THEATRIC EXPERIENCE 9-11 SORROW VERSUS FAITH (We see it with the force of drama)

Mary Magdalene first looked as if in a theatre when the LORD appeared to her. Peter is careful to show that she faithfully went to carry the news. She *"marched"* with purpose in her stride; she reported the *"victory"* of Jesus to those who were **weeping out of great sadness**. Both entered a period of mourning and bemoaning themselves. Now Jesus appeared in the form of a gardener to console their sad hearts. I call this theatrical.

The Lord uses one whose sorrow he has resolved to bring comfort to others.

As we read in the fuller account by John – He comforts Mary as she weeps (**κλαιω**) This is the first thing to notice – Christ and His resurrection message affords the world its greatest comfort

Beverly Sills – famed songstress whose first child was born deaf & second mentally retarded – *The first question you ask is "why me?" – the second is "Why them?" That's how she learned to cope.*

Dr. Truett – whose gun went off by accident shot & fatally wounded chief of police. Told his wife *"I can preach no more"*

After these things Peter, the reporter of all the facts we have accessed in the gospel was given three visions when the Lord re-commissioned him in Galilee. He was given both vision and love for youth; vision and love for wandering men and women whom he would lead to Jesus and what might have seemed to him unlikely love and vision for teaching Christ's doctrine for the rest of his life. He was in fact assuring him, *"Have no fear from now on you are my man"*. The earliest calling revived *"Follow me; I will make you fishers of men"*. The Master had said *"When you are converted you will strengthen your brothers"*. The force of Jesus life was change – the call of the sea diminished and the vision of the body of Christ filled

Peter's soul. The immediate change that he saw all around him for over three years penetrated his great heart and soul and like a wave swept him far out to sea in his search for the souls of men. He had faith enough to walk on the promises of Jesus as if he were walking on water. His great story that he rehearsed to Mark was about the first book Christians ever penned to tell of the revolution of love Jesus brought into the world. Even Paul came with enthusiasm to learn the facts of Christ's life-changing ministry after his own conversion.

THE PANORAMIC EXPERIENCE 12-20 DOUBT VERSUS FAITH

(Jesus deals with the corpus of believers)"There shall you see Him" v7 this meeting full of joyful anticipation and hope was the greatest confirmation of the 40 days. It was to Galilee that Matthew says Jesus arranged "to draw up soldiers" Matt. 28.16 (τασσω) Jesus came right in among them and told the **whole church** to campaign to the end of the age. They doubted it was truly Jesus (δισταζω) but Jesus came in close as to say "I am the captain" and I have the authority and the means through all the ages to enable you". Cf. *Wellington's answer to the doubting young missionary to India "What are your instructions?"*. So the LORD fittingly appeared as a "stranger" v12 – because He had something else in mind. As to the powers in question the reason for what's called the longer ending of Mark is to show the powers that were given –

No.1 Linguistic capability

No.2 Health insurance

No.3 Empowerment and enrichment of disabled lives

There is a Congolese saying that runs "Lord you be the needle, I'll be the thread...Every apostle went abroad. The view of Christ we have in Matt28 & Rev 1 is of the Lord who wants us to evangelise to a finish. Robert Athlington said "Gladly would I make the floor my bed, a box my chair, a box my table rather than that men should perish".

FINIS

EPILOGUE

This 41st commentary in the Westgate Series majors on the "changes" Jesus made in Galilee, in the temple and Jerusalem, in a myriad of homes not least that of Peter himself. It is issued along with Peter's epistles and a children's Mark called "Tell me the story of Jesus" for which I have commissioned art work – but meantime in this second set in the NT series the Children's "Mark" is a little extra for the purchaser. A children's "Matthew" accompanies the first set also. I hope to expand the children's series this year.

I do trust you enjoy the commentaries on Peter's memoirs and pastoral letters. The Big Fisherman has exercised quite some influence on my thinking ever since as a boy I read Lloyd Douglas' gripping historical novel "The Robe" where the Big Fisherman plays a central role. Peter's Second Epistle is fundamental to our understanding of the end of the world. Peter's history retailed to Mark is vital to our appreciation of the altogether revolutionary changes Christ made within 3 years in the lives of the Jews of His day – ongoing change continues through the still outstretched arm that saved Peter ending his career in the depths of Galilee.

The prophet speaks of God in Christ revealing a "mighty work and a wonder". The cross and the resurrection are just that. Peter took up the cross and died on a cross. He founded his life on the "Rock of Ages". As *Eugene Peterson* puts it in *1 Peter 2.24* "Welcome to the living stone, the source of life". To you who trust Him he's a stone to be proud of". That's the Peter I'm talking about and if you ask if he grew into such a man I would remind you that the Lord met him in Galilee and re-commissioned him. I would

have you recall Jesus own word, “When you are converted you will strengthen your brothers”. As you read the Gospel of Mark and the Letters Peter wrote you too will be stirred and inspired.

Bless the Lord who can turn ships around and Hurrah for the Big Fisherman who knew the worth of his unerring Pilot!

Bob Coffey ABC CLASSICS, January 2012.