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Portraits of Jesus

A Study of the Gospel of Mark

by Gary Fisher

Instructions:

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If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** - not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (*1*, *2*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

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Final Teachings of Jesus

Lesson 9

Jesus Warns of Coming Events

>>> **Read Mark 13:1-13.** <<<

As they left the temple area, one of the disciples pointed to the magnificent buildings and commented on their splendor. Jesus replied that they all would be torn down. This remark astonished the disciples and they asked when this would happen and what sign there would be of the temple's impending destruction. Jesus began answering by telling about some things that would happen before the temple was destroyed. He warned of false Christs, wars, natural disasters and great persecution. These events would be unsettling for the Christians, but Jesus assured them that they were not signs of the overthrow of the temple. It is remarkable that some people have taken these things that Jesus said were not signs of the destruction of the temple and used them to try to predict the date of the return of Christ.

1 According to v1-4, what subject was Jesus discussing in these verses? Answer: The destruction of the _____ in Jerusalem.

2 Instead of saying that the events of these verses were signs of the immediate end, what did Jesus say in v7? Answer: The end is _____.

The Destruction of the Temple

>>> **Read Mark 13:14-30.** <<<

This paragraph is one of the most difficult in the gospel of Mark. Several things should be carefully observed: 1) Jesus said that all of these things were going to occur within that generation (13:30). 2) We know that Jerusalem and the temple within it were destroyed by Roman armies in the year 70 A.D. Contemporary reports chronicle Jerusalem's horrible siege and tell that thousands (possibly more than a million) died in the conflict. 3) Jesus warned the Christians to flee to the mountains. History records that the disciples fled to a mountain fortress near the Dead Sea. As far as we know, no Christians perished in that war. It always pays to listen to Jesus.

3 What did Jesus tell the disciples in Judea to do when they saw the evil thing in the temple (v14)? Answer: They should _____ to the mountains.

4 When did Jesus say all the things in 13:1-30 would occur? a) when He returns for the final judgment; b) within that generation; c) no one knows; d) 2000 years later. Answer: _____.

Jesus Warns of His Return

>>> **Read Mark 13:31-37.** <<<

In verse 30 Jesus said that the destruction of the temple would occur within that generation. But in verse 32, He spoke of an event that would occur at a totally unknown time. He was referring to His own return and the destruction of the world. Not even Jesus Himself knew when that would occur. So, He exhorted everyone to be alert and constantly prepared His return.

Note -- Practical lessons: 1) *We should not believe anyone who claims to be able to predict the date of the Lord's return. If Jesus didn't know, surely no mere man does. Anyone who claims to be able to discern the time of Jesus' return by a careful study of prophetic texts is claiming to know more than the Lord Himself and should not be taken seriously.* 2) *Since we don't know when the Lord will come back, we should always be ready. If you knew for sure that the Lord would come back today, would you change some things in your life? Then why not just assume that He is returning today (for He might), and make the changes immediately. It is utterly foolish to procrastinate in our repentance.*

5 Who knows when Jesus will return (cf. 1 Thess. 5:1,2)? a) those who study prophecies; b) the angels; c) Christians; d) only the Father. Answer: _____.

Anointing of Jesus

>>> **Read Mark 14:1-11.** <<<

What contrasting attitudes toward Jesus! The chief priests and scribes searched for a way to kill Him. Judas offered to betray Him. But a single woman spent 300 days' wages for perfume which she poured over His head. The disciples criticized her for this extravagant act of love. They viewed it as a waste of money, and thought it would have been better to have sold the perfume and given the money to the poor. But Jesus defended her saying that she had anointed His body for burial and that in all the world people would tell of her deed.

6 What did the woman pour over Jesus' head? Answer: She poured out a flask of expensive _____ made from nard (spikenard).

7 What did the disciples think should have been done with the perfume? Answer: They thought it should be sold and the money given to the _____.

The Last Supper

>>> **Read Mark 14:12-26.** <<<

Passover was an annual feast commemorating God's sparing the Jews in the tenth plague on Egypt (see Exodus 11-12). Jesus sent the disciples to prepare the feast, then He ate it with them. During the meal, Jesus warned that one of them would betray Him. He was trying to prepare the apostles for the traumatic night to follow. The Lord also took some of the bread and grape juice of the Passover and said that it was His body and blood. In this way, He initiated the observance of the Lord's Supper, a feast that was continued by the early Christians (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

***Note -- Is it I?** It is interesting to observe the disciples' reaction to Jesus' prediction that one of them would betray Him. Each asked: Is it I? They were thinking of the possibility of their own fall. Unfortunately, this moment of introspection soon vanished and in the next paragraph they return to brash overconfidence. Surprisingly, they did not ask: Is it Judas? Apparently they had not observed anything in Judas' behavior during the months they had spent together that signaled that he was disloyal. When we read Jesus' warnings in the Bible, we also should ask: Is it I?*

8 When Jesus predicted that one of the disciples would betray Him, what did they ask? Answer: They asked, "_____?"

9&10 In the Lord's supper, what do the bread and fruit of the vine remind us of? Answer: The bread reminds us of Jesus' _____, and the fruit of the vine reminds us of His _____.

Jesus Predicts the Flight of the Disciples

>>> **Read Mark 14:27-31.** <<<

Jesus told the disciples that they would all fall away. Peter retorted that though the others might, he would never abandon Him. Christ replied that he would deny Him three times that very night. Again Peter denied it saying that he would even be willing to die with Him. Perhaps Peter's overconfidence was one reason he fulfilled this very prophecy a few hours later.

11 What did Jesus predict Peter would do that very night? Answer: Peter would _____ Jesus three times.

12 How did Peter respond to this prediction? Answer: He said he would rather _____ than deny Jesus.

Jesus Prays in the Garden

>>> **Read Mark 14:32-42.** <<<

Jesus took His disciples into a garden and asked them to watch and pray. He told them that He was deeply distressed. He went a little farther and prayed that God would take the cup of suffering away from Him. Jesus knew how terrible His death would be. He

asked, however, that God's will be done above all. Each time He returned to His disciples, they had fallen asleep. Jesus wrestled with His griefs and fears alone, without human support.

Note -- The true suffering of Jesus: *This paragraph reveals Jesus' deep grief as He thought about what He was going to suffer. He knew exactly what was about to happen and He dreaded it. Was He thinking only of physical pain? Crucifixion certainly was an agonizing experience--the victim slowly suffocated as he grew gradually weaker and finally unable to pull his body up against the nails to breathe. But others have suffered similar executions with less dread than Jesus. There must be something Jesus feared besides pain. Several passages teach that Jesus bore the sins of the world on the cross (Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21). He suffered the punishment for man's sin, which was spiritual death, separation from God. His greatest agony was being cut off from His Father on the cross (study Mark 15:34). Because He suffered this punishment of utter separation from God, His faithful followers will never have to.*

13 What did Jesus pray for in the garden? Answer: He asked for the _____ to pass from Him.

14 Whose will did Jesus say should be done? (a) His own will, (b) His Father's will, (c) the will of the Jewish leaders, (d) all of the preceding. Answer: _____.

Jesus Is Arrested

>>> **Read Mark 14:43-52.** <<<

Judas had bargained with the chief priests to betray his Master. He had promised to lead them to the place where He spent the night, away from the crowds. Although Jesus knew the plan, He went again to the usual spot where He knew Judas could easily find Him. A troop of soldiers with the traitor leading the way interrupted the calm of the night. Judas kissed Jesus, a signal that it was safe to arrest Him. One disciple tried to defend Jesus by sword, severing the ear of a man in the arrest party in the process (see Luke 22:50-51; John 18:10-11 for more details). But then the disciples lost their nerve and fled. Jesus remained alone with His captors and Judas.

15 Who betrayed Jesus for money (cf. v10,11)? Answer: Jesus was betrayed by _____.

16 What sign did he use to identify Jesus for the captors? Answer: He betrayed Jesus with a _____.

Jewish Trial of Jesus

>>> **Read Mark 14:53-65.** <<<

Though it was very late at night, Jesus was brought before the Jewish supreme court and tried. They bribed false witnesses who told contradictory stories about Him. For a time, it appeared that the court would be unable to find consistent testimony by which to convict Jesus. Finally, the high priest asked Him if He were the Christ. When Jesus said, "Yes," they used this statement as evidence of blasphemy and convicted Him. Then they spat on Him, mocked Him and beat Him.

17 Why was the Jewish court unable to convict Jesus on the basis of the testimony of the false witnesses? a) their testimony was inconsistent; b) the witnesses refused to testify; c) they could not allow false witnesses to testify in their court; d) Jesus refuted what they said. Answer: _____.

18 What was finally used to convict Jesus in the Jewish trial? Answer: He admitted that He was the _____, the Son of the Blessed One.

Peter Denies Jesus

>>> **Read Mark 14:66-72.** <<<

Peter had slipped into the courtyard to watch the trial. Various people began to recognize him. A servant-girl asked him if she hadn't seen him with Jesus. Peter claimed not to understand what she was talking about. Then she began to tell others that he was a disciple and he flatly denied it. Finally, others noticed his Galilean accent and accused him of following Jesus. With this, Peter panicked, vehemently denying Jesus, even asking God to curse him if He knew the man. The cock crew and Peter remembered Jesus' warning. He came to himself with a sickening awareness of the horrible deed he had done. He rushed out and began weeping in despair.

Note -- Failure of the disciples: *The disciples failed Jesus miserably in His hour of greatest need. They fled. Peter denied Him. Why? They had been such loyal supporters. Think back upon contributing factors in their failure: 1) They hadn't listened when Jesus had frequently warned them of His impending suffering. They had been too eager to argue about who would be the greatest in the kingdom. 2) They were overconfident. Earlier that evening, Jesus warned them that they would flee, but they didn't believe it. 3) They didn't watch and pray in the garden as He instructed. Thus, they were not mentally prepared to face the challenge. We could fail in the hour of temptation for these same reasons.*

19 How many times did Peter deny Jesus during the Jewish trial? Answer (give a number): _____.

20 How did he react when he realized that he had denied Jesus? a) killed himself; b) apologized to Jesus; c) gave up being an apostle; d) fled away and began to cry. Answer: _____.

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