

## The Gospel According to Mark

### Lesson 8

#### *Mark 9:2 – Mark 10:52*

The Lord is with His disciples in the area of Caesarea Philippi, past the northern boundary of Israel. His Galilean ministry is over and He now plans to spend time teaching them about the future. Six days after arriving in the area, Jesus takes Peter, James and John to Mount Hermon for the most miraculous scene they will ever see on earth.

#### **The transfiguration**

**Mark 9:** <sup>2</sup>And six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; <sup>3</sup>and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. <sup>4</sup>And Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup>And Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup>For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified. <sup>7</sup>Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!" <sup>8</sup>And all at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

Mark uses the word "transfigured" to describe the Lord's appearance. It is a pagan Greek word translated in other literature as "metamorphosis." The Lord's appearance was transformed into a brilliant raiment that could not be achieved by human effort.

Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus on the mount that day. The original demise of both Moses and Elijah is shrouded in mystery. Moses had said goodbye to his family and followers on the bank of the Jordan River and then made his way up Mount Nebo to be buried by God. Elijah had stepped into a chariot and was taken into the heavens, dropping his mantle for Elisha to use. Jewish prophesy stated that both Moses and Elijah would one day return to this earth, and it came true at this moment on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses represented Jewish Law and Elijah represented Jewish prophecy, but Jesus represented the grace of God which would fulfill all the expectation of the law and the prophets.

The feast of Tabernacles would be soon be upon them and Peter impetuously asked if they should prepare a tabernacle for each of them. Reacting impetuously was normal for Peter and will become evident in the events of the next few weeks.

The whole scene was covered by a cloud and Peter, James and John heard the voice of God the Father. It is possible that this was the second time they had audibly heard His voice. All three were disciples of John the Baptist and they could have been present at Jesus' baptism. If they were there, the sound of the Father's voice was not unfamiliar to them.

When the cloud lifted, the metamorphosis departed and the Lord returned to His normal appearance.

**Mark 9:** <sup>9</sup>And as they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man should rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>And they seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead might mean. <sup>11</sup>And they asked Him, saying, "Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" <sup>12</sup>And He said to them, "Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?" <sup>13</sup>"But I say to you, that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him."

Later the transfiguration will be useful for the knowledge of all future believers, but for now it was just a special event in the hearts and minds of Peter, James and John. The Lord asked them not to reveal what they had seen until His resurrection. They seized that moment to discuss what He meant by His resurrection. We can only wonder if they had completely missed the Lord's words to them six days before.

**Mark 8:31** And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

The second topic they seized upon was the prophecy concerning the return of Elijah. The Old Testament prophecy is below.

**Malachi 4:** <sup>4</sup>"Remember the law of Moses My servant, *even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.* <sup>5</sup>"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>"And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to *their* children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."

Several problems arise if Elijah's appearance at the transfiguration is considered the fulfillment of the Malachi prophecy. First, he appeared on the mount after the appearance of Jesus and not before. Second, Elijah was with the Lord and Moses for only a few minutes. And third, he did not have time to fulfill the prophecy of restoring the hearts of the fathers to their children. Perhaps the Matthew testimony of this event can shed further light about when Elijah will appear to fulfill the Scripture.

**Matthew 17:10-13** And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" <sup>11</sup>And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; <sup>12</sup>but I say to you, that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." <sup>13</sup>Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

Verse 13 of the Matthew passage reveals that John the Baptist fulfilled the Malachi prophecy concerning Elijah's return. First, He came and began his ministry six months before Jesus began His. Second, his ministry continued for several years. And third, his message to repent and believe turned the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, fulfilling the prophecy. In reference to John the Baptist, Jesus' words "**they did to him whatever they wished**" were also fulfilled. They beheaded him on the whim of a scornful wife by the trickery of a seducing young step-daughter.

### **The return from the Mount of Transfiguration**

**Mark 9:** <sup>14</sup>And when they came *back* to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and *some* scribes arguing with them.

The tactics of the Sanhedrin had changed. No longer did they just attack the Lord; they also attacked His followers. After coming down from Mount Hermon, a full crowd was engaged in a theological argument which centered on the problem that the disciples could not cast a demon from the body of a boy. They had cast out demons before, but this demon would not respond to them.

### **The demon-possessed boy**

**Mark 9:** <sup>15</sup>And immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed, and *began* running up to greet Him. <sup>16</sup>And He asked them, "**What are you discussing with them?**" <sup>17</sup>And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; <sup>18</sup>and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him *to the ground* and he foams *at the mouth*, and grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. And I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not *do it*." <sup>19</sup>And He answered them and said, "**O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!**" <sup>20</sup>And they brought the boy to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he *began* rolling about and foaming *at the mouth*. <sup>21</sup>And He asked his father, "**How long has this been happening to him?**" And he said, "From childhood. <sup>22</sup>"And it has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" <sup>23</sup>And Jesus said to him, "**'If You can!' All things are possible to him who believes.**" <sup>24</sup>Immediately the boy's father cried out and *began* saying, "I do believe; help my unbelief." <sup>25</sup>And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "**You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.**" <sup>26</sup>And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and *the boy* became so much like a corpse that most of *them* said, "He is dead!" <sup>27</sup>But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.

The professional scribes and Pharisees seized the opportunity to rail at the failure of the nine apostles to remove the demon from the boy. We can only speculate about why the scribes and Pharisees were spurring on this argument. Jesus' appearance

brought an end to the argument and the crowd ran to Him when they saw Him coming. Jesus noticed the countenance of the nine disciples and questioned them. The father of the boy stepped forward to explain the situation. He had asked the nine disciples to cast the demon out of his son, but they did not have the power to do so. Jesus saw the pitiful state that the boy was living in and asked that he be brought to Him. The crowd rushed toward the Lord to see the miracle that was about to take place. The Lord did not disappoint them. He released the boy's body from the power of the demon forever.

### **Why would the demon not respond to the disciples?**

**Mark 9:** <sup>28</sup>And when He had come into *the* house, His disciples *began* questioning Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" <sup>29</sup>And He said to them, "**This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.**"

At the house where Jesus and the disciples were staying, the apostles asked Him why they did not have the power to remove the demon. They had cast out demons many times in the past. The Lord had appointed them as apostles for that reason and they were stunned that the demon did not respond to their combined efforts. Jesus' words revealed the problem; they had forgotten to pray. They had tried to remove the demons with their own power. Along the way, they began to believe that they had been bestowed with some magical power that would always be at their fingertips. They failed to realize that God was the one who removed the demons, not man. Conversation with God was needed to accomplish the task of demon removal. They needed to pray. They had become powerless because they were prayerless.

### **Back to the region of Galilee**

**Mark 9:** <sup>30</sup>And from there they went out and *began* to go through Galilee, and He was unwilling for anyone to know *about it*. <sup>31</sup>For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "**The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.**" <sup>32</sup>But they did not understand *this* statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.

The training of the apostles became the focus of Jesus' ministry because His public ministry in Galilee was over. His men needed to understand the details of the next few weeks completely. He again instructed them plainly about His death and resurrection, but they could not comprehend the magnitude of His words.

### **The apostles' discussion at Peter's house in Capernaum**

**Mark 9:** <sup>33</sup>And they came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He *began* to question them, "**What were you discussing on the way?**" <sup>34</sup>But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which *of them* was the greatest. <sup>35</sup>And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "**If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.**" <sup>36</sup>And taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them,

**37**"Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."

No doubt, the apostles were ashamed when they realized that Jesus had overheard their petty dispute. They were expecting a political kingdom to be established by the Lord and they were arguing over their respective positions of power in this new government. Jesus called out the twelve to rebuke them in a most interesting way; He picked up a child, perhaps Peter's. With the child in His arms, Jesus made His point clear; to have a place in the Lord's government, they would have to become servants to all the children of God.

### **The final lessons at Peter's house**

**Mark 9:** **38** John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to hinder him because he was not following us." **39** But Jesus said, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. **40**"For he who is not against us is for us. **41**"For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as *followers* of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward. **42**"And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea. **43**"And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, **44**~~[where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]~~ **45**"And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than having your two feet, to be cast into hell, **46**~~[where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]~~ **47**"And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell, **48**~~where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.~~ **49**"For everyone will be salted with fire. **50**"Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty *again*? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

John was in the cross-hairs of Jesus' rebuke because it centered on him and his brother James. Embarrassed, John attempted to change the subject, seeking approval of the Lord by pointing out the heresy of others casting out demons in the name of Jesus without His approval. The tactic backfired on John. The wording is interesting in this passage. John said he saw a man casting out a "demon" rather than an "unclean spirit," the term used throughout the gospel of Mark. Why did John use the word "demon" instead of the words "unclean spirit?" Perhaps the story was not true; perhaps it was only hypothetical in John's mind. Calling them demons or unclean spirit makes no difference at all; neither of them can be removed by the works of man. They can be removed only by God, the precise point Jesus is making in His reply to John. If a man can pray for the removal of a demon and God answers that prayer, then the man is clearly a child of God. Children of God come in all sizes, shapes, and colors. In addition, God can use the wicked to achieve His divine purpose. If God can use Cyrus, the unbelieving king of the Medo-Persian Empire, to return His people to Israel after their seventy years of exile, He can use a stranger to give a cup of water to help a believer along life's journey. The believer should not, in

turn, berate the one who gave him the cup of water because of his beliefs. We have all been guilty of this action at some time in our lives. We see it when Baptists say something bad about Catholics, and, in turn, Catholics fire their shots at Baptists. The Methodist Church criticizes the Church of Christ, and the Church of Christ criticizes the Methodist Church. Every brand of Christian church is guilty of this indignation; not one of them is without sin. What's worse, we do it openly in the sight of unbelievers. The unbelievers see the dissention and run from all Christians. They never get the opportunity to know Christ because the Christ-followers have placed stumbling stones in their way. The Lord is not happy with His followers who stand at odds with other believers in ungodly ways, and in doing so, hamper the witness of the gospel to unbelievers. Christ wants all bickering to stop and He wants all His followers to live in peace with each other. Theological differences should be handled privately, behind closed doors, never in public view and never within the ear-shot of unbelievers. Man's purpose on earth is to become a believer in the Lord and to share his belief with others who need the Lord. Arguing in the presence of unbelievers can never accomplish this goal set forth by the Lord.

### **Jesus leaves Galilee and travels to Judea**

**Mark 10:** <sup>1</sup>And rising up, He went from there to the region of Judea, and beyond the Jordan; and crowds gathered around Him again, and, according to His custom, He once more *began* to teach them.

Jesus had been away from Judea for more than a year. He had left Judea just before John the Baptist was taken into custody by Herod. In Galilee, the crowds which grew into the thousands had finally diminished to the hundreds. In Judea, the crowds would once again gather around Him, but not without the ever present Pharisees armed with their petty arguments.

### **Is it lawful to divorce a wife?**

**Mark 10:** <sup>2</sup>And *some* Pharisees came up to Him, testing Him, and *began* to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. <sup>3</sup>And He answered and said to them, "**What did Moses command you?**" <sup>4</sup>And they said, "Moses permitted *a man* TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY." <sup>5</sup>But Jesus said to them, "**Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.**" <sup>6</sup>"But from the beginning of creation, **God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.**" <sup>7</sup>"FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, <sup>8</sup>**AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh.**" <sup>9</sup>"What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

When questioned by the Pharisees, Jesus immediately turned their attention to the Law of Moses to disarm them.

**Deut. 24:1-4** "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts *it* in her hand and sends her out from his house, <sup>2</sup>and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's *wife*, <sup>3</sup>and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts *it* in her hand and sends her out of

his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, <sup>4</sup>then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

The English translator's use of the word "indecent" is tragic. It should be translated "blemish" or "defect." It has nothing to do with her moral character; rather, it deals with her beauty, ability, or personality. The certificate of divorce was permitted by Moses as a legal announcement to all men that this woman was morally pure and available. This law was man's law, not God's. It also announced that the husband had become tired of her for some non-moral reason. If this wife had had a moral problem, she would not have received a certificate of divorce under the Law of Moses; she and the man she was unfaithful with would have been stoned to death.

**Leviticus 20:10** 'If *there is* a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Having disarmed the Pharisees with the Law of Moses, Jesus quickly took the intent of God back to the beginning of creation.

**Genesis 2:24** For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Moses had allowed the divorce because the hearts of the husband had "dried up" or hardened toward both the wife and the Lord. It wasn't supposed to be that way from the beginning. The man was supposed to cleave to his wife because they were one unit, one flesh, one body after the consummation of the marriage. The man whose heart was tender toward God would always be tender toward his wife. A hardened, "dried up" heart toward God is always present in the person who seeks a divorce.

### **Alone with Jesus the disciples ask about divorce**

**Mark 10: 10** And in the house the disciples *began* questioning Him about this again. <sup>11</sup>And He said to them, "**Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; <sup>12</sup>and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.**"

Privately Jesus explained that the guilt of the divorce, in God's eyes, lay squarely on the one who sought the divorce. Claiming to be a Christian, continuing with the divorce, and ignoring God's law are clear indications of a hardened or dried up heart toward God. Often the anger toward the partner negates all consideration of God's law. When that person sues for the divorce and marries another, at the consummation of that marriage, that person is guilty of committing adultery against the first spouse. A mere formal divorce does not break the original consummated covenant of a marriage.



The unwilling partner must obtain the help of a lawyer for protection. Under this circumstance, that person is not guilty of sin in God's eyes and is free to marry whom he or she wishes. At the consummation of that new marriage, he or she is not guilty of adultery in God eyes. Jesus' words in Mark 10 line up exactly with the intent of His words in Deuteronomy 24 and Genesis 2.

### **The little children who belong to the kingdom of God**

**Mark 10:** <sup>13</sup>And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup>But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "**Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.**" <sup>15</sup>"Truly I say to you, **whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all.**" <sup>16</sup>And He took them in His arms and *began* blessing them, laying His hands upon them.

It is a joy to see children come to Jesus. Not to allow them this privilege is a crime. Many parents, as well as other adults, will have to answer to the Lord one day because they hindered a child in coming to Jesus. The kingdom of God belongs to those who come to Jesus like the little child; it is how we must all come to Jesus, regardless of our age.

### **The would be follower**

**Mark 10:** <sup>17</sup>And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and *began* asking Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>18</sup>And Jesus said to him, "**Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.**" <sup>19</sup>"You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.' " <sup>20</sup>And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." <sup>21</sup>And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, "**One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.**" <sup>22</sup>But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property. <sup>23</sup>And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, "**How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!**" <sup>24</sup>And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "**Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup>It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.**"

The Lord loved the young man who came to be a "would be" follower, but there was a problem. The young man was wealthy and he was not willing to sell all that he had and give the proceedings to the poor. He kept all the external attributes of the Law of God, but internally, he secretly found his security in his wealth. He wasn't willing to give away that which gave him security, and Jesus knew his heart. Had his heart been fixed on the Lord, Jesus would never have asked him to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. If his wealth had just been a tool to use for God, Jesus would



have allowed him to keep it, but his wealth was his god and Jesus knew his heart. The young man was not ready at that moment to give up his security. Some say that the Lord's mention of the eye of the needle in this passage refers to a gate of a city, too small for a camel to pass through. That speculation is put to rest with Luke's record. Luke uses the Greek word that should be translated as a "surgical needle." Surely it is impossible for a camel to pass through the eye of a surgical needle in the physical world, but Jesus makes the point that that would be easier than a wealthy man's being willing to give up all he had to enter the kingdom of God. Wealth does not stop a person from entering the kingdom of God; it is the person's love of wealth that hinders his entrance into that glorious kingdom.

### **The astonishment of the twelve**

**Mark 10:** <sup>26</sup>And they were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?" <sup>27</sup>Looking upon them, Jesus said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." <sup>28</sup>Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." <sup>29</sup>Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, <sup>30</sup>but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. <sup>31</sup>"But many *who are* first, will be last; and the last, first."

The impetuous Peter proclaims their innocence in leaving all they had to follow the Lord. He was trying to elevate his position in the eyes of the Lord at that moment. It is true that Peter had left his nets and the boat to follow Jesus, but we must not forget that his house in Capernaum became Jesus' home during the Galilean ministry. James and John had left their nets and boat with their father to follow Jesus, but they were near home for most of their time with the Lord, so their faithfulness to Him might be in question. When Jesus needed boats on the Sea of Galilee, the boats of Peter, James and John were probably retrieved for the use of the ministry. But Jesus takes the conversation in a different direction. Yes, those who left what they had for the sake of the gospel will be blessed one hundred times over both in this life and in eternity. Notice that there will be one hundred times the houses, relatives and farms. Do not overlook the word "persecutions." The good times and bad times were part of picking up their crosses and following the Lord. There was one exception to what they could leave behind - their wives. The Lord does not allow them to divorce or abandon their wives. Neither does He allow or promise one hundred times the number of wives. There is to be one wife for one man consummated into one flesh and they are responsible for each other until one of them dies.

Peter did not leave his wife to follow the Lord. He kept the house in Capernaum where his family lived, including his mother-in-law. Peter did not become a follower of the Lord until Jesus called him at the Sea of Galilee, near his home. The Lord was with Peter in his home for the last year. Only now, a few weeks before the Lord's crucifixion, do we find Peter leaving his home in Capernaum. Most likely, his wife is

with him on this journey too. Wives can never be abandoned for the cause of Christ; it is never His will to do so.

### **On the road to Jerusalem**

**Mark 10:** <sup>32</sup>And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, <sup>33</sup>saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles. <sup>34</sup>"And they will mock Him and spit upon Him, and scourge Him, and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again."

The days were passing fast as the apostles spent time under the intimate instruction of the Lord. Jesus again told them the details of what would happen to Him once they reached Jerusalem.

### **One thing the Lord can not give the disciple**

**Mark 10:** <sup>35</sup>And James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Him, saying to Him, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You." <sup>36</sup>And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" <sup>37</sup>And they said to Him, "Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right, and one on Your left." <sup>38</sup>But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" <sup>39</sup>And they said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. <sup>40</sup>"But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

The Lord's followers did not fully comprehend what He was telling them. Incredibly, they were not concerned about the Lord's fate as much as they were their own. Once again they were concerned with "who will be the greatest in the kingdom of God." This time it is presented as "who will sit in the important positions of power on His right and left hand." They really did not understand the magnitude of what they were asking. Jesus knew their hearts, and He knew their capabilities, even in future events. At this moment they were not ready to drink what He was about to drink, nor were they ready to be baptized with the baptism He was about to endure. The right and left hand seats at the throne of the Lord were not His to give away. They had been prepared long ago for those who were worthy to sit there. On one side would be God the Father. On the other would be God the Holy Spirit. Jesus could not give these seats to James or John.

### **The indignant ten**

**Mark 10:** <sup>41</sup>And hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John. <sup>42</sup>And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those

who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup>"But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; <sup>44</sup>and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The other ten apostles had heard the discussion of James, John, and the Lord. They failed to truly listen to the words of Jesus; instead, they focused on the desires of two. Instead of finding peace in the words of the Lord, they became indignant at the words of their two fellow apostles. Jesus had overruled any request by James and John, but the others wanted to make sure they were not left out. Jesus used their indignation as an opportunity to refocus their attention on what was truly the most important purpose of His life and ministry – service, even to the point of death - as He became the final, eternal sacrifice for sin. The twelve apostles could not give their lives for the sins of mankind; it was Jesus' responsibility. However, they could become the servants of the living God in order to bring people into a marvelous relationship with the Lord - the purpose of every Christian's life.

### **Blind Bartimaeus healed outside of Jericho**

**Mark 10:** <sup>46</sup>And they came to Jericho. And as He was going out from Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, a blind beggar *named* Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. <sup>47</sup>And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>48</sup>And many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>49</sup>And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him *here*." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, arise! He is calling for you." <sup>50</sup>And casting aside his cloak, he jumped up, and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup>And answering him, Jesus said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And the blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, *I want* to regain my sight!" <sup>52</sup>And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he regained his sight and *began* following Him on the road.

The days and months had slipped away quickly in Mark's record of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was now within two weeks of His crucifixion in Jerusalem. Jesus passed through Jericho on His way to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Just outside the city of Jericho, blind Bartimaeus heard Jesus coming and loudly begged Him to heal his eyes. Jesus stopped for Bartimaeus who asked Him to restore his sight. Jesus granted the wish. Bartimaeus did not return home, but followed Jesus on to Jerusalem. Even on the road to His death, Jesus had time to give sight to the blind. He became a servant of man for Bartimaeus who needed His service. Jesus was not so busy being the Savior of the world that He did not have time to be the Savior of a blind man along the way. Within in a few days, the restored eyes of Bartimaeus would allow him to see the death of the One who had healed him.