

Chapter Eight

This chapter opens with “in those days” which has a way of preparing the reader for the presentation of a story. As for that story, it’s the occasion when Jesus fed some four thousand people, a kind of repeat of 6.30-44. A footnote in the **RSV** puts it well where this incident contains “details of which we can no longer determine.” As noted in other places, we have here yet another occasion of the terse way Mark presents his Gospel, shorthand, if you will. This makes it more challenging to expand the text for the purpose of doing *lectio divina*.

A great crowd (*ochlos* +) found itself with nothing to eat, the occasion not given but presumed to following Jesus. This prompted him to call his disciples (*proskaleo* +) implying that they may have been dispersed among the people, some of whom they must have known. He expressed compassion literally upon (*epi*) the crowd, *splagchnizo* + more like being moved in one’s bowels, of having deep feelings within oneself. The major difference with this gathering is that the people had been with Jesus a total of three days while most likely he was both curing and teaching them. In fact, quite a few came from some distance and should they start returning home, there was the danger of fainting on the way, *ekluo* (vs. 3, *kai* #204-1). The verbal root *luo* means to loosen and here is prefaced with the preposition *ek-* or from. Thus the text shows how far and wide Jesus’ reputation had spread.

In vs. 4 (*kai* #205-2) Jesus’ disciples asked...and rightly so...how could he feed an *ochlos* in the desert, *eremia*? This, of course, is reminiscent of when the Israelites murmured for not being provided with food (cf. Ex 16.2+). Actually the text contains a barely disguised tone of anger the way the disciples responded to him. Nevertheless, Jesus asked how many loaves of bread they had (vs. 5, *kai* #206-3)...a total of seven...after which he bade everyone to sit down on the grass (vs. 6, *kai* #207-4). The act of multiplying these seven loaves is outlined as follows along with seven small fish (vs. 7, *kai* #208-5):

- commanded the crowd to sit down
- took the seven loaves
- having given thanks
- broke the seven loaves
- gave them to his disciples
- disciples set the bread before the people

- blessed* a few small fish
- commanded* that fish be set before the crowd
- the crowd *ate* and *were satisfied*
- took up* broken pieces left over

The reason for this outline, similar to the events of Chapter Six, is that it's difficult to recount a miracle where we have a limited amount of information. Nevertheless, words relative to the multiplication of bread are italicized to help narrow down the details of this miracle. As soon as everyone had eaten and were satisfied, in vs. 8 the leftovers were taken up in seven baskets (*kai* #209-6). It seems that no one had questioned the source of this abundance of food. And so Jesus dismissed the crowd in vs. 10 (*kai* #210-7), got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha. A footnote in the **RSV** says this place is unknown.

Vs. 11 (it begins with *kai* but isn't translated, #211-8) has the Pharisees having come and began arguing with Jesus. How they got wind of this is secondary. Mark is more interested in moving from one significant event to the next while not providing as much details as we'd like. However, that's our problem, and we need to adapt to his style.

As for the Pharisees, their intent is to seek a sign from heaven as well as to test Jesus, the two verbs *zeteo* and *peirazo* + being pretty much the same. As for the former, *semeion* or sign is for these men a kind of slap in the face, they wanting to see something spectacular. Even if Jesus had produced it, almost certainly they wouldn't be impressed but would continue to seek his demise as they did from the beginning. No small wonder that Jesus' response in vs. 12 (*kai* #212-9) was to sigh deeply in his spirit or *pneuma* + where the preposition *ana-* on or upon prefaced to the root *stenazo* intensifies the meaning.

In vs. 12 Jesus exclaims aloud as to why this generation seeks a sign. His disciples must have felt that frustration even more deeply by reason of their association with him. They were basically in the same situation as the Pharisees with one major exception. They were open to being corrected and shown the truth. They may have balked but nevertheless stood fast. And so Jesus said outrightly that the current generation will not receive a sign. In vs. 13 (*kai* #213-10) Jesus at once gets back in the boat impatiently awaiting his disciples to follow which they did. Although the Pharisees had suffered a severe rebuke, they felt vindicated at having made Jesus leave their presence seemingly afraid

to engage in conversation with them.

Vs. 14 begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as “now” (#214-11) where action shifts to inside the boat, the disciples finding themselves with just one loaf of bread. This prompted Jesus to caution them which loosely ties in with the recent multiplication of bread. He uses two verbs relative to sight, *horao* and *blepo* (both +) as noted in 4.12, here rendered as to take heed and beware of. Both pertain to the leaven of the Pharisees. Once this leaven gets inside a person, it will rise...better, swell...and bloat him or her instead of fostering growth. The same applies to the wickedness of Herod, a Jewish client of Rome who was responsible for the recent beheading of John the Baptist.

In vs. 16 (*kai* #215-13) we get a response from the disciples which is both astonishing as well as embarrassing. While they discussed among each other what Jesus had said to them (*dialogizomai* + with *pros*, direction towards-which), their response must have been enough almost to make him get out of the boat and walk away on the water. Unfortunately he could both see and hear clearly what was going on by reason of the confined space of the boat. That means right away (vs. 17, *kai* #216-14), Jesus knew the disciples were focused on not having bread. It made him throw out at them in rapid fire eight pointed rhetorical questions:

- ginosko* + or Jesus knowing about the discussion
- dialogizomai* + or discussing in earnest not having bread
- both lacking *noeo* and *sunimi* + or not perceiving and not understanding
- the single *kardia* + or heart belonging to the plural disciples which was hardened, *poroo* +
- eyes and ears: *not seeing* and *not hearing*. This is in light of Jer 5.21: “Hear this, O foolish and senseless people who have eyes but see not, who have ears but hear not.”
- lack of *mnemoneuo* or remembering
- Jesus ask how many baskets of leftovers remained
- sunimi* + or lack of understanding, *kai* #217-15, vs. 21

After Jesus hit them with the above eight questions, everyone was reduced to silence, hoping the wind would continue to prevail so they'd arrive at their destination as quickly as possible. Finally in vs. 22 (*kai* #218-16) they arrived by boat at Bethsaida which must have been the longest trip ever for both Jesus and the disciples.

As soon as Jesus and his disciples disembarked some people brought a blind man that he may touch him. The verb is *haptō* + which infers that Jesus would restore the man's sight by this simple gesture. They must have heard plenty occasions when Jesus touched people and were cured at once. In vs. 23 (*kai* #219-17) Jesus felt the need to deal with this man privately which is why he led him outside the village after which he spat on his eyes and laid his hands upon him. It was up to the disciples to keep everyone else back which they managed to accomplish. And so Jesus leading the blind man away must have puzzled everyone because it seemed so unusual. Naturally everyone waited with baited breath to see what would happen.

The restoration of the blind man's sight was done in two parts. Vs. 24 (*kai* #220-18) has him responding to a question by Jesus, that is, whether or not he could see anything. The man answered that people resembled trees. This prompted Jesus to lay his hands upon the blind man's eyes—a more direct contact, if you will—after which we have the three following steps:

- He looked intently or *diablepo*, the verbal root *blepo* prefaced with the preposition *dia*- or through.

- His eyesight was restored, *apokathistemi* consisting of *histemi* or to stand, to place prefaced with two prepositions, *apo*- and *kata*- or from and according to.

- He saw everything clearly or *enblepo* prefaced with the preposition *en*- or in; the adverb is *telaugos* also as plainly.

And so this cure ended in a rather strange fashion, that is, in vs. 26 (*kai* #221-19) Jesus forbade the man to return home and not even think of entering the village. End of story. That, it seems, is a request next to impossible to carry out. Let's say the man agreed to do this. Everyone would wonder what had happened and rush to seek him out. After all, in the first place they were generous enough to bring him to Jesus. Now the man faced a genuinely uncertain future. Who knows. Perhaps he decided to follow Jesus along with that band chiefly comprised of women who ministered to him

In typical fashion Jesus moved on with his disciples, this time to Caesarea Philippi (vs. 27, *kai* #222-20). En route he asked those of that place whom people claim him to be. This evoked three responses, all as expected from devout Jews: John the Baptist, Elijah and one of the prophets. Elijah was mentioned in 6.15 as also referring to Jesus. Part of this identity can be traced to the fact of Elijah

being taken into heaven and thus having escaped death (cf. 2Kg 2.11). In other words, this account had a deep resonance in Jewish spirituality. Jesus could tell by the look on the disciples' faces that they were uncertain as to his identity even after being with him for three years.

Then Jesus decided to put the same question to Peter (vs. 29, *kai* #223-21) who apparently had remained silent during this exchange. Without missing a beat Peter said simply that Jesus was the Christ or the anointed one. In vs. 30 (*kai* #224-22) Jesus was prompted to bring this interchange to an abrupt close with no further discussion. More specifically, the disciples are not to tell anyone about him, *epitimaō* +, the preposition *epi-* or upon inferring a more serious injunction.

In vs. 31 (*kai* #225-23) Jesus figures that what he had just said needs to be fleshed out more clearly for the disciples' common understanding. He realized they had been with him for a while now, wavered here and there, yet despite all this, remained with him. Time indeed for more information as to his mission. And so Jesus teaches (*didaskō* +) them by speaking of himself as another person, that is, as Son of man. Perhaps this way will mitigate the hard reality they're about to hear which can be broken into four parts:

- suffer many things, *pascho* also as to experience
- be rejected *apodokimazo* also to be regarded as unfit, this with regard to the religious authorities
- to be killed or *apokteino*: second verb with the preposition *apo-* or from prefaced to it
- to rise or *anistemi*

Vs. 32 which begins with *kai* #226-24 comes off with a genuine understatement: "And he said this (*logos* +) plainly." The adverb in Greek is a noun, *parresia* which means the ability to speak freely and without recrimination as in a public forum. Such was the privilege of those belonging to a city state in ancient Greece. In the same verse Peter responds with equal *parresia*, if you will, by taking Jesus or *proslambano* where *pros-* as direction towards-which. This intimates directness followed by *epitimaō* + or letting him have it for speaking so forcefully and by predicting his end. It had absolutely no effect on Jesus who first turns and looks at the disciples before rebuking Peter.

The *epistrephō* + or turning upon (*epi-*) by Jesus is deliberate. He wants to give a

clear and unmistakable example by calling Peter Satan who is not on God's side but man's. Here the verb *phroneo* or to think, to understand is used in the negative sense. That is to say, Jesus is telling Peter that his *phroneo* is on the side of men, not of God. Peter is not just clueless as to Jesus' mission (after all the other disciples are in the same boat) but has the gumption to rebuke the master. Despite the shocking identity with Satan, what saves Peter, of course, is that his impulsiveness is done out of love for Jesus. No doubt this sharp but decisive encounter remained with the disciples for a long time.

In vs. 34 (*kai* #227-25) Jesus summons (*proskaleo*) not just his disciples but the crowd or *ochlos* (both +), the latter always hovering close by, and speaks of himself in shocking, even revolting terms. Should anyone wish to come after him, he must deny himself and take up his cross. No problem with the first part, but the second? Reference to the Roman method of public execution must have sent shock waves through all present, especially his disciples and Peter after their recent less than desirable encounter. As for crosses, there must have been plenty just outside Jerusalem where the Romans regularly crucified people thereby giving a lasting impression not to mess with their authority.

Jesus continues without mentioning the Roman cross though inferring it. One saves his or her life by losing it and losing life for his sake as saving it. The noun for life is *psuche* also rendered as soul which has the same value as the Gospel or *euaggelion* +. In other words, we have an interplay between *sozo* and *apollumi* (both +). Note that the second part adds "for my sake" whereas the first doesn't have it.

Jesus doesn't mitigate his message in the least. Instead, he continues in the next two verses by throwing out two rhetorical questions. The first concerns gaining the whole world at the price of forfeiting one's life, the two contrasting verbs being *kerdaino* and *zemioo* to make a profit and to confiscate. The second rhetorical question concerns asking what a person can give in return for his life. At issue is *antallagma* or something given in exchange.

Jesus brings these dramatic words to a conclusion by speaking of shame, *epaischunomai* intensified by the preposition *epi-* or upon prefaced to the verbal root. The shame with regard to Jesus is balanced by the shame the Son of man shows towards those persons who had dished it out. Thus we have Jesus speaking of himself and as Son of man. Note that the first shame also pertains to his words or *logos* + which refers to his message as well as his mission. The

first shame pales in comparison with the second when the Son of man comes in his Father's glory (*doxa*) along with his holy angels or messengers, *aggelos* +. No small wonder that the disciples continued to remain with Jesus after all this. As for the multitude mentioned in vs. 34, we can assume that most if not all melted away. The only thing that kept the rest from leaving was the hope of Jesus doing some more curing and healing.

Chapter Eight has a total of twenty-five verses beginning with the conjunctive *kai*.

Chapter Nine

This new chapter begins as though it were part of the previous one with the conjunctive *kai* rendered as "and" (#228-1). Jesus continues speaking with the multitude or *ochlos* + noted in 8.34 beginning with *amen* + rendered as truly. It's a way of getting attention with regard to something he's about to expound which, in a word, is remarkable. Jesus says of some persons right before him that they will not taste death before seeing the kingdom of God having come with power. *Geuomai* is the verb to taste and involves experiencing to the full by absorbing food and making it part of yourself. Those hearing such words, wonderful as they are, must have found them completely beyond comprehension.

As for seeing (*horao* +) the kingdom of God, this phrase is first mentioned in 4.11 prefaced with *musterion* or mystery which pertains to what is secret and not generally known. Jesus says outrightly that this kingdom or *basileia* + has already made its appearance not in and by itself but with power or *dunamis* +. *Dunamis* implies strength or force as well as the ability to function in a given way. As for the crowd—and such people are essentially illiterate peasants—they barely understood what Jesus was saying and most likely took his words in a very concrete way. Chances are the people identified the kingdom of God with its power coming to overthrow the dreaded Roman occupation. With this in mind, you'd think Jesus would have used better language with the *ochlos*.

Vs. 2 (*kai* #229-2) seems to be a good a start for this chapter compared with vs. 1 which comes across as a part of Chapter Eight. Anyway, we have an interlude of six days during which Jesus must have done a lot of explaining about the kingdom of God and the power associated with it. This applies not only to the

multitude but to his disciple who themselves barely understood what he meant even after living with him. Jesus figures it's time to clarify not just this but pretty much everything to date he had been presenting to his disciples. If he didn't, a real possibility exists some if not all would leave him and his mission would end as a failure. The way he goes about this is to reveal his true nature not to all twelve but to three of his disciples Peter, James and John. If he did this to all twelve, it could be too overwhelming and some might leave. As vs. 9 says, everything will become clear when he rises from the dead.

And so Jesus leads the three up a high mountain, the choice of the three rendered as "apart by themselves" (*kat' idian*). He doesn't bother explaining why he left the nine disciples behind which obviously must have bothered them. An incident like this is yet another test of the disciples' patience, the three going up the mountain and the nine left behind. Jesus knew it was time to offer some encouragement by revealing his divine nature in order to sustain all the disciples in future trials. Besides, Jesus doesn't offer any explanation for what is about to happen. They were free simply to accept what comes or walk away and return to their former ways of life. Most if not all must have considered that possibility. However, they were at a point in their lives that to do such a thing was no longer an option. They realized by now that they stuck with Jesus and each other for the long haul. An impetus that kept them going was the possibility of some personal glory awaiting them if they persevered being for a bit longer.

Vs. 2 says plainly that Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James and John, the verb being *metamorpho* or to change in a manner visible to everyone. It consists of the verbal root *morphao* or to shape, to fashion from which derives *morphe* or form. The verb is prefaced with the preposition *meta-* or after which suggests something present after or transcending the visible form at hand. In other words, a reality deeper than the form of Jesus' humanity becomes manifest. His human *morphe* would not be left behind or lost but remain there right with him while another part of him became visible. This, of course, is putting it awkwardly. A manifestation which accompanies this consists of Jesus' garments (vs. 3, *kai* #230-3). They became glistening and intensely white, *stilbo* or to cast rays of light and the adverb *lian* + or exceedingly.

Vs. 4 (*kai* #231-4) has Elijah and Moses making an appearance and speaking with Jesus, *horao* + and *sullaleo*, the latter also as to confer. As for Elijah, refer to Mal 4.5-6: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and

terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers lest I come and smite them with a curse.” These verses are significant in that they are the last ones of the Hebrew Scriptures. As for Moses, he’s the lawgiver and author of the first five books of the Bible. Though we don’t know what all three were discussing, we can be certain it was a treasured conversation between three close friends. We can be sure that Moses and Elijah continued talking after this incident with the knowledge that Jesus would be joining them shortly.

In vs. 5 (*kai* #232-5) Peter blurts out his great delight at being present to witness such an event calling it *kalos* +, fundamentally as beautiful, and addressing him *Rabbi* or literally in Hebrew “my teacher.” In essence Peter reflects the desire of James and John who remain silent, all three wishing to remain on the mountain top as long as possible by making booths or *skene* often rendered as tent. Vs. 6 notes that Peter didn’t know what he was saying and was speaking offhand out of great fear demonstrated by the preposition *ek*- or from prefaced to *phobos*, *ekphobos*.

Shortly after this exhibition of spontaneous enthusiasm coupled with outright terror, in vs. 7 (*kai* #233-6) a cloud came over all six men, *episkiazo* followed by a voice or *phone* + calling Jesus beloved or *agapetos* +, the one worthy of *agape*. The three disciples as well as Moses and Elijah are bidden to listen to him, *akouo* + also to hear. This puts the hearing relative to Jesus not just on the same plane as the two patriarchs but to him as superior to both. Vs. 8 (*kai* #234-7) brings this drama to a close as suddenly as it began, *exapina* also as unexpectedly. As for Peter, James and John they were left standing there looking at Jesus in utter amazement and not daring to ask him anything.

Vs. 9 (*kai* #235-8) has Jesus descending the mountain with Peter, James and John. They were still quite afraid despite being full of questions and wondered how to relate what they had just experienced to their fellow disciples. Jesus interrupted them by charging them not to disclose what they had seen, *diastello* + being the verb where the preposition *dia*- or through implies the seriousness of his words. *Diastello* counters the tendency to spread news about what had just happened as represented by the verb *diegeomai* also as to narrate and here infers blabbing on endlessly. So the three were enjoined with a next-to-impossible task. They are to remain silent until the Son of man rises from the dead. If what the three had witnessed was beyond their comprehension, Jesus hits them with talk about rising from the dead, a subject simply beyond their

comprehension.

Vs. 10 begins with the conjunctive *kai* rendered as “so” (#236-9) and says that the three kept the matter to themselves, *krateo* to hold *logos* + or literally to hold this word in a forceful manner. Not only that, they were completely at a loss as to what Jesus meant by the resurrection from the dead. It is to their credit that they were able to restrain themselves when questioned by their associates which must have been unrelenting. We can be certain that Peter, James and John discreetly sought opportunities to share among themselves their experience of having been on the mountain. Despite their best efforts this of course did not escape notice by their fellow disciples. Clearly the three were privy to something that wasn’t communicated to the others.

While coming down from the mountain the three asked Jesus (vs. 11, *kai* #237-10) why the scribes maintain that Elijah must come first, this hearkening back to Mal 4.5-6 quoted above in vs. 4. Jesus agrees with what they tell him, that Elijah is to restore all things, the verb being *apokathistemi* implying a change to an earlier good state or condition. The verbal root is *histemi* or to stand prefaced with two prepositions, *apo-* and *kata-* or from and according to. Jesus adds to this something the three didn’t know as associated with Malachi’s words with regard to Elijah, namely, that the Son of Man is to suffer and be treated with contempt, *pascho* + and *exoudeneo*. As for the latter verb, we have the root *oudeis* or nothing prefaced with the preposition *ex-* or from...from nothing.

Jesus then counters Peter, James and John along with the tradition held by the scribes who are mentioned in vs. 11. This maintains that Elijah indeed has come and was treated miserably, a fact which had been recorded as common knowledge. The **RSV** gives two references in this regard from First Kings, Chapter Nineteen, vss 2 and 10 respectively: “Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying, ‘So may the gods do to me and more also if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this tomorrow.’”¹ “I (Elijah) have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars and slain your prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”

Vs. 14 (*kai* #238-11) has Jesus, Peter, James and John coming to the nine disciples as well as running into a great crowd or *ochlos* + assembled with scribes. Most likely this happened not far from the base of the mountain. The ever present

¹ This in reference to Elijah having slain the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

crowd was with the disciples and scribes who tagged along to keep an eye on Jesus. All were engaged in some kind of argument, the verb being *suzeteo* consisting of the root *zeteo* prefaced with the preposition *su-* or *sum-*, with. Indeed, this was a stark contrast with the *sullaleo* of vs. 4 which involved Jesus, Elijah and Moses conversing. Mark gives no explanation as to why these people, scribes included, were there. Apparently they had been following Jesus and keeping track on his activity which by now had become part of his retinue. However, they momentarily lost sight of Jesus and his three companions when they ascended the mountain. That means the nine disciples were left behind without their master and were pressed continuously as to explain Jesus' absence.

At once (*euthus* and *kai* #239-12) the crowd was amazed upon seeing Jesus, *ekthambeo* consisting of the verbal root *thameo* and intensified by the preposition *ek-* or from prefaced to it. Perhaps this was due to some traces left over, if you will, from the recent transfiguration. And so everyone rushed up to him, the directness of *pros-* prefaced to *prostrecho*, and greeted Jesus. The verb *aspazomai* suggests a mood different from other such gatherings when people simply wanted to be in his presence, nothing more. Peter, James and John understood this and didn't try to push anyone away though the nine disciples who earlier had been engaged with the crowd must have felt left behind and not privy as to what had happened on the mountaintop. They would remain in the dark, for as Jesus strongly told the three in vs. 9, they were not to discuss what they had witnessed. One can't help wonder how latter in life the disciples processed all these events and considered their perseverance let alone their abandonment of Jesus which will happen shortly. Indeed, they must have had endless conversations about it.

In vs. 16 (*kai* #240-13) Jesus asked the crowd what they were discussing with the nine disciples who earlier had enjoyed success in their mission back in Chapter Three. Jesus simply wishes to get to the issue at hand and take it from there. Many had been fortunate to receive healing through their ministry plus on other occasions which aren't recorded.

After Jesus had established a reasonable calmness to a situation which remained somewhat tense, someone in the crowd (vs. 17, *kai* #241-14) addressed him respectfully as Teacher or *Didaskalos*. This man went into detail with regard to his son having a "dumb spirit" or a *pneuma* + described as *alalos*. There now follows an extended account full of strong verbs revealing the power of this

spirit and the amount of force required to get rid of it (vs. 18, *kai* #242-15). None of the nine disciples were able to cure the boy which must have caused considerable embarrassment not just for them but for all who were expecting a miracle. As for the son, he was nearby, most likely undergoing one of his convulsions of foaming at the mouth followed by becoming rigid as a corpse.

To everyone's surprise and consternation, in vs. 19 Jesus comes off with two rhetorical questions that astounded all present. A footnote in the **NIV** observed that probably such words were directed toward the disciples...all twelve, not just the three who had been with him on the mountain. Although it hit them hard, they took courage in knowing that they had survived rebukes beforehand and would do the same now. As for the crowd, at this juncture Jesus had learned not to expect too much from them. Most were impoverished and subject to both religious and secular authorities who often didn't have their welfare in mind. Nevertheless Jesus called them a faithless generation, that is, one which is *apistos*. How long, he wondered, is he to be with (*pros*, direction towards-which) them. Hopefully by calling them as such they will wake up and realize all is not lost.

Jesus' second rhetorical question is similar to the first, that is, how long is he to bear with the current generation, *anecho* or to endure, to tolerate. Right afterwards and not expecting an answer Jesus asked that the son suffering from convulsions be brought to him (vs. 20, *kai* #243-16). Indeed, they did but with some hesitation after these two rebukes. As soon as they did this the *pneuma* + or spirit described as dumb at once (*euthus*) sent the boy into further convulsions, *sparasso*. This verse also means to agitate in a violent manner which was the only way it could communicate. Not only that, this spirit flung the boy on the ground where it continued to foam at the mouth.

In vs. 21 (*kai* #244-17) Jesus asked the father how long his son had been suffering from this condition, the response being since childhood. Furthermore (vs. 22 *kai* #245-18), the spirit cast the boy into fire and water in an attempt to destroy him (*apollumi* +) but failed to do so. This gives the clear impression that the spirit enjoyed tormenting the boy and would continue to do so indefinitely. No small wonder that the father asked Jesus to have pity, *splagchnizo* +, that is, he poured out his innermost self for help.

Jesus responds at once saying that all things are possible provided one believes, *pisteuo* +. To this the father responds with equal immediacy (*euthus*) that he

believes and asks Jesus to help his unbelief, *apistia* +. The verb at hand is *krazo* or to cry out which is equal in intensity to the *susparasso* or his son's convulsions. Naturally his unbelief is colored by having to care for his son under difficult circumstances.

Apparently the conversation between Jesus and the father was taking place off to the side or apart from the ever present throng. Nevertheless, as noted in vs. 25, Jesus saw a crowd (*ochlos* +) running towards him wanting to see him perform a miracle. The verbal root is *trecho* prefaced with two prepositions, *epi-* and *sun-* or upon and with, which suggests that the crowd came at Jesus with full force. This must have roused the *pneuma* + now described as *akathartos* or unclean instead of *alalos* as in vs. 18. Jesus knew he was in a tough spot with all eyes upon him. Thus he decided to rebuke the spirit, *epitasso* also as to command with authority as intimated by the preposition *epi-*, upon. Following *epitasso* we have Jesus ordering the spirit to come out of the boy and never enter him again.

In vs. 26 (*kai* #246-19) the unclean spirit threw the boy into terrible convulsions, *sparasso* + as in vs. 20, a sight which must have terrified everyone nearby, until he stopped and resembled a corpse. However, Jesus grabbed him by the hand and brought him into the house to get away from the startled crowd (vs. 28, *kai* #247-20). No mention is made of the father, let alone mother. The disciples followed Jesus and instead of expressing wonder for such a cure, they wanted to know why they couldn't perform such a miracle. Everyone was asking them for this yet they were unable to produce one. To this Jesus responded in vs. 29 (*kai* #248-21) that only prayer can effect a cure as with regard to the case at hand. The noun for prayer is *proseuche* or petition consisting of the root *euche* prefaced with the preposition *pros-* indicated of direction towards-which.

After the dramatic incident just described, Jesus and his disciples pass through Galilee, the preposition *para-* or beside, near prefaced to *poreuomai* suggesting they didn't stop but moved on. This fits in well with the second sentence of this verse (30), namely, that Jesus didn't want anyone to know of their passage. The reason? Vs. 31 says that he was teaching (*didasko* +) his disciples about his eventual fate. He speaks of himself as the Son of man, words which they heard before, yet this title remains a mystery to them. Who, after all is this person? It seems nobody dare ask Jesus.

Things get even more tense when Jesus says this Son of man will be handed

over to men who will kill him. However, after three days he will rise. Again, who are these “men?” No small wonder that the disciples didn’t understand what he was saying. *Rhema* is used to express this word in the sense of a saying or something uttered compared with *logos*, word as expression. In addition to not understanding such a *rhema* (*agnoeo*, to be ignorant), the disciples were naturally afraid (*phobeo* +) to ask Jesus.

Next stop on their journey (vs. 33, *kai* #249-22) is Capernaum last mentioned in Chapter Two, this being the center of Jesus’ missionary activity after he moved there from Nazareth. Upon arrival, Jesus asked his disciples what they had been discussing along the way. He couldn’t help but notice two or three here or there walking together apart from the others all the while speaking in a subdued voice. Jesus was in a way not happy with this, by now knowing these men fairly well. Vs. 34 says they fell silent (*siopao* +) out of embarrassment made all the more obviously by the look on their faces.

The same verse says that the disciples were discussing who was the greatest. The context isn’t specified but most likely referring to their band and those closest to Jesus. Obviously Peter, James and John were top candidates, for they were on the mountaintop with the master. As for Jesus, he caught bits and pieces of the conversation along the road and knew it was something he had to address right away. Such a topic stands in sharp contrast with Jesus’ words earlier about the inevitable fate awaiting him. In other words, despite the disciples showing some fear and astonishment, in essence it blew right past them.

Vs. 35 (*kai* #250-23) begins somewhat ominously for the disciples when they see Jesus first sitting down which means that he’s about to summon them. They knew they were in for another drubbing, by this time having had a number of such experiences under their collective belts. Jesus wastes no time and gets right to the point. If a person wants to be first, he must be the servant of all, *diakonos* or one who serves as a kind of intermediary and not a *doulos* or outright slave. Notice how Jesus phrases his words so as not to make the disciples feel uneasy while at the same time making sure they get the point.

It so happened in vs. 36 (*kai* #251-24) a child was nearby. Jesus asked permission from the parents and then placed him in the very midst (*en meso* implies the very center) of the disciples. Obviously the parent were delighted. After standing there without a clue as to what was going on, Jesus embraced the child

saying that whoever receives such a one receives him. Right away he expands on these words, namely, that the person who receives Jesus doesn't receive him but the one who had sent him, the verb being *dechomai* also as to accept. Thus the pattern is from the child to Jesus to his Sender, the verb being *apostello* +.

The way Mark presents his Gospel through frequent use of the conjunctive *kai* and *euthus* (immediately) blurs the passage of time and events. Thus it's difficult to see if what now follows in vs. 38 took place right after Jesus used the child to set an example or somewhat later and in a different place. Such matters are secondary for Mark. He's more interested in getting word out about Jesus' mission and for people to believe in him. Details can be filled in later.

In vs. 38 John brings something to Jesus' attention that had really galled him. The disciples had been discussing who is the greatest among them. Despite being with Jesus and observing how he comports himself, they harbored less than desirable urges which needed to be addressed at once. Actually this manifestation of their humanness is an encouraging sign for anyone reading the Gospel not to lose heart and become discouraged. In this verse we have a sudden switch to a different issue, that is, jealousy. John just saw a man casting out demons in Jesus' name. John, along with the other disciples, forbade him, *koluo*. Then John adds a lame excuse, that is, the man doing this wasn't following us, that is, the disciples. Clearly they were putting themselves ahead of Jesus. Right away Jesus tells John hands off. He saw right through their jealousy and sternly ordered that the man be left alone.

This must have been a particularly sore rebuke for the disciples because they saw a man doing something of which they were incapable. At this point you can't help but wonder how many more such incidents will take place before those with Jesus become true disciples. Judging from Mark's Gospel as well as the other three, the outlook is bleak. Nevertheless, any real change will have to wait until Pentecost, that thankfully not being far off.

In vs. 40 Jesus sums up the lesson learned from this example. It's simple. Anyone not against him is in essence for us, Jesus using the first person plural which applies to the disciples. Jesus spells this out further by saying that a person who gives his disciples water to drink won't lose his reward, *misthos* also as pay or wages. The reason for this small but meaningful gesture is that the disciples bear Jesus' name, that is, Christ which means the anointed one. This is an important association to keep in mind because the disciples have aligned

themselves with their master who essentially is divine. Although the disciples hear this as plain as could be, it pretty much escapes them.

From vs. 42 (*kai*, #252-25) through vs. 47 we have four examples of the consequences of sin, three of which are presented in terms of “if.” The adjective *kalos* + or beautiful is associated with each of the better choices. The first pertains to causing scandal (*skandalizo*+ or to stumble) with regard to one of the little ones as noted in vs. 36 and is representative of simple, God-fearing adults. If they are scandalized, better for the person responsible for it to have a millstone² fastened around his neck and cast into the sea. Jesus, of course, leaves this example up to the imagination of those present.

The second “if” in vs. 43 (*kai* #253-26) pertains to cutting off one’s hand which is far better than to go to hell and the unquenchable fire with two hands. This verse has three examples of the preposition *eis* or into: prefaced to *erchomai* or *eiserchomai* along with *eis*, hell and fire.³

The third “if” is vs. 45 (*kai* #254-27), a second example of *skandalizo* + here as to stumble. It’s better to stumble with a foot cut off than to enter hell with two feet.

The fourth “if” is vs. 47 (*kai* #255-28) with regard to a third example of *skandalizo* + as it pertains to one’s eye. In other words, better to remove one eye than to be cast into hell with two eyes where the worm does not die nor is the fire quenched. In sum, if a person enters there, he will be eaten alive along with being burned alive. Here or in vs. 48 Jesus alludes to the last verse from the prophet Isaiah (66.24) which reads in full as “And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” *Dera’on* is the noun for abhorrence, the only use of this word in the Bible.

In vs. 49 Jesus ominously predicts that everyone who listens to him will be salted with fire, the image suggesting that fire will be rubbed into that person in a thorough manner. It also brings to mind the image of preparing a piece of meat for grilling or better, preservation for a long period of time. Then Jesus

² A footnote in the **RSV** says that such a millstone was turned by a donkey.

³ Another footnote in the **RSV** says that vss. 44 and 46 are identical with vs. 48 and are omitted by the best ancient authorities.

says that salt is good (*kalos* +) but is useless if it has lost its saltiness. This is an image that hit home with everyone because salt was an important way to preserve food. And so this chapter concludes on an upbeat note, that is, to have salt within oneself enables peace to be established with one other, *eireneuo*.

The free absorption of salt, if you will, is far better than the words of vs. 49 where everyone is salted with fire. So if you look at the two options just presented, in a way Jesus lets off relatively lightly those willing to follow him provided they do not violate any of the little ones noted in vs. 42.

Chapter Nine has a total of twenty-eight verses beginning with the conjunctive *kai*.

Chapter Ten

This chapter opens with *kai* (#256-1) typically rendered as “and” showing that Jesus had left Capernaum as noted in 9.33. His destination? The region of Judea and beyond the Jordan River where once more crowds (*ochlos* +; the plural suggests a very large multitude) gathered, the verb being the root *poreuomai* + prefaced with the preposition *sum-* or with. It also has the preposition *pros*, indicative of directness, constancy of presence, which is a good way of presenting how these people followed Jesus’ every move.

Mark doesn’t give any reason why Jesus goes to Judea and beyond the Jordan River. For him that’s secondary. What counts is that Jesus is actively spreading the Gospel. As vs. 1 puts it in typical fashion, he engaged in teaching or *didasko* in accord with his custom or habit, *eiothei*. Not only is Jesus teaching these people, the disciples are also present listening in. By now they’ve grown accustomed to hearing the same message preached over again. As we know from their behavior, they barely grasped their master’s message. With that in mind, extend that out to the crowds at hand. As for them following Jesus, most likely they did so in the hope for cures and miracles, perfectly understandable given their hard-scrabbled way of life.

Vs. 2 (*kai* #257-2) has the Pharisees tagging along with the crowds. Their goal is to test Jesus, *eperotao* being the verb with the root *erotao* prefaced with the preposition *epi-* or upon for emphasis. The verb to test is *peirazo* +. The Pharisees want to know if Jesus agreed with Moses concerning the issue of

divorce. Most likely they asked this in the presence of a vast number of people in order to trick Jesus and hopefully discourage those present no longer to follow him. After all, the issue of divorce is something that affects a lot of people. Their question was obvious and straight-forward. It had to do with whether or not a man could divorce his wife, *apoluo* literally as to loosen from (*apo-*).

Without missing a beat, Jesus fires back at the Pharisees as to what Moses had commanded (*entello*). They in turn responded that Moses allowed a certificate of divorce which runs in full as follows (Dt 24.1 & 3): "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house." "And the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill 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."

Jesus responses to the Pharisees who stick to the letter of the Law or *Torah* that Moses decreed as he did due to the people's hardness of heart. Note that he uses the second person plural for a directness that must have made the Pharisees squirm uncomfortably. The force of this noun is divided into two parts: *kardia* + or heart prefaced with *skleros* which connotes rigidity. It's emphasized further with the preposition *pros* which connotes directness.

In order to show his fidelity to *Torah*, Jesus quotes directly from Genesis, three parts if you will, where they are quoted in full:

-Vs. 6 has 1.27 which reads "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

-Vs. 7 has 2.24 which reads "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."

-Vs. 8 (*kai* #258-3) has part of 2.24, that is, "and the two become one flesh." ⁴

Note that vs. 8 quotes 2.24 in part. To this Jesus adds the distinction between the two sexes in 1.27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of

⁴ Here the number two is mentioned. It's lacking in the Hebrew text but is in the Septuagint.

God he created him; male and female he created them.”⁵

You could say that in vs. 9 Jesus adds for emphasis to the Genesis text, that is, what God has joined together cannot be sundered by a man: *suneugnumi* vs. *chorizo*. Though Jesus is speaking of a marital union between a man and a woman which was an issue related to the Pharisees testing Jesus, he infers not so much the distinction between sexes but the reality of the divine image which supersedes both. Failure to focus upon this primary element of human nature is where the real hardness of heart applies as noted in vs. 5.

Vs. 10 (*kai* #259-4) has Jesus and his disciples in a house after they had heard him contending with the Pharisees. Now they want him to clarify the subject of divorce privately, that is, away from the throng which we can assume was hanging around just outside the door. Jesus responds (vs. 11, *kai* #260-5) on his own authority. That is to say, whoever divorces his wife and marries again, that man is committing adultery, *moichao*. The same applies to a woman in vs. 12, *kai* #261-6).

Vs. 13 (*kai* #262-7) shifts attention to people bringing children to Jesus in order that he may touch them, *hapto* +. This comes from a natural parental desire to offer them as much protection as possible in the process of growing up. *Hapto* also could involve healing if and when needed. All in all we have a delightful scene which you'd think would thrill the disciples. Instead it had the opposite effect. They were angry and rebuked the parents (*epitimao* +) for interrupting their time with Jesus. In other words, they demonstrate both a protectiveness of their own turf yet not having any understanding of what their master is about which must have scandalized the parents.

Jesus got wind of this and naturally was upset, *aganakateo* which in plain English can be rendered as being pissed off. *Agan* is an adverb prefaced to the verbal root meaning very much. It was quite embarrassing, for the disciples supposedly represented Jesus who by now had been with him for some time. If that's how they behaved, it'd come as no surprise that few would be inclined to follow Jesus. What made the situation made worse was that many present knew the background of the disciples and their families.

Jesus attempted to counter this by publicly and sternly telling the disciples not to hinder any children coming to him, *koluo* + also as to forbid. The reason is

⁵ A similar verse is cited in Gn 5.2 with regard to the two sexes.

obvious. To such belongs the kingdom of God, the reason for Jesus' ministry. This, of course, must have given great relief to the parents while the disciples looked on in disgrace. Chances are that some if not all these children recalled having been touched by Jesus which had a life long effect on them. Perhaps some even joined the newly established church and met up with the disciples in their old age. Indeed, that would have been quite an encounter, joyful yet somewhat bitter.

Vs. 15 begins with *amen* + rendered as truly and reflects how serious Jesus is about those receiving (*dechomai* +) the kingdom of God. Such receiving is the number one condition of entering it, unforgettable words which put the disciples in their place. The verb to enter is *eiserchomai* + along with *eis*; i.e., two examples of the same preposition. To show that he means business, in vs. 16 (*kai* #263-8) Jesus takes the children in his arms, blesses them and puts his hands upon them. As for the first verb *enagkalizo*, it also means to hug; the second verb is *kateulogeo* or to bless with the preposition *kata-* (with its sense of being in accord with) prefaced to the verbal root for emphasis. At this point we can see the disciples squirming and facing down the stares from the parents of the children. Truly this is a lesson they will never forget during their future ministry.

In vs. 17 (*kai* #264-9) Jesus sets out on a journey—the destination not specified—words suggestive of going some place afar off or distant from the region of Judea as vs. 1 puts it. The preposition *ek-* or from prefaced to the root *poreuomai* (*ekporeumai*) and coupled with *eis* or literally into the road or path (*hodos* +) backs up this sense. One gets the impression to date from Mark's Gospel that such observations are secondary, a kind of backdrop. It's another example where Mark gives in a concise as possible way what Jesus is teaching.

Out of the clear blue an unidentified man runs up to Jesus, the *pros-* or *prostrecho* + indicative of urgency. This fellow seemed to be in no need of healing nor anything else. He knelt before Jesus, calling him not just Teacher or *Didaskalos* but one who is good or *agathos* (both +). As for the disciples, they had learned their lesson the hard way with the children so they didn't dare hinder this man from approaching Jesus. All he wanted to know was what he had to do to inherit eternal life. The verb is *kleronomeo* also as to gain possession. Implied is that eternal life was his birthright and showed no hint of gratitude for such a gift.

At once in vs. 18 Jesus picked up on this man's motives and put him on notice by responding somewhat harshly that only God is good. Jesus then reminds the man of the commands which he as well as many other people know, namely, the basics as presented in Ex 20.12-16. Here are most of the Ten Commandments, the verses at hand reading in full as: "'Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

To this the man responded in vs. 20 with a false confidence that from his birth he had observed the commandments Jesus had just laid out, *phulasso* also as to guard or to protect. Nevertheless, Jesus saw some potential in this young man which is why vs. 21 says that he loved him, *agapao* +. Now for the test. Right away Jesus bids him to sell his possessions, give them to the poor and follow him. Hard words indeed, for it revealed that despite his good intentions, his possessions held him back, *ktema* also applicable to property. Surely the disciples were witness to this. It must have made each one consider how he had felt when leaving his possessions as well as family to follow Jesus. In other words, Jesus is presenting a make or break situation.

In vs. 23 (*kai* #265-10) Jesus looks around (*periblepo* +) which implies that he slowly turned his head this way and that so as to make eye contact with each of his disciples. We can assume that by now the young man had slinked away. Jesus responded with some disappointment that it will be hard or *duskolos* (adverb) for anyone with riches or *chrema* (also money) to enter the kingdom of God, *eiserchomai* + along with *eis*; i.e., two "intos." The response is somewhat surprising, given the disciples' association with Jesus. That is to say, they were astonished, *thaumazo* + *epi* or upon his words or *logos* +. Since there's such a discrepancy between the kingdom of God and material possessions, Jesus repeated his words, *duskolos* this time being an adjective (omicron instead of an omega). However, he added some comforting words...not much, really...by addressing the disciples as children.

In vs. 25 Jesus uses the famous example of a camel which will find it easier to go through the eye of a needle. In other words, something extremely large is trying to enter something extremely small. The adjective *eukopos* (easier) consists of the root *kopos* or toil, trouble prefaced with the adverbial form of *agathos* or good, *eu-*. Instead of the verb *thaumazo* as in vs. 24, here in vs. 26 we have the verb *ekplesso* +, the root *plesso* or to strike with the preposition *ek-* or

from prefaced for emphasis. Also this verse contains the adverb *perissos* or exceedingly. Naturally the disciples exclaimed “Who can be saved (*sozo* +)?”

To the question just posed in vs. 27 Jesus looked at the disciples, *emblepo* more like staring them right in the face and responded that men cannot effect this saving, only God. In order to remove any fear of despair, right away Jesus adds that all things are possible with God, *dunatos* also as strong, mighty.

This astonishing incident brought on by the man who had run up to Jesus asking to inherit eternal life prompted Peter to say what was on his mind as well as that of the other disciples. He reminds Jesus that they had left everything to follow him, *aphiemi* + also as to let go. He saw in the man an image of his own response which could falter at any time. Jesus doesn't give Peter much consolation but responds by putting his question in a more universal context. Anyone who has left family or possessions not just because of him but also the Gospel will receive far more in this age and in the one to come. Note the noun *aion* which usually refers to a particular time along with the adjective *aionios* + modifying *zoe* or life which the **RSV** renders as eternal. *Aionios* also can refer to lasting for a particular period of time. Jesus concludes by saying that those who are first will be last and visa versa, *protos* vs. *eschatos*. Again, he has in mind the example of the man who recently had approached him.

Vs. 32 signals a major shift in Mark's Gospel. The **RSV** has it begin with the conjunctive “and” which is not in the Greek text. As for the shift, note the four parts of the first half of this verse: on (*en* or *in*) the road (*hodos* +), going up (*anabaino*), into or *eis* Jerusalem and Jesus walking ahead of them, *proago* +. The *pro-* or before intimates that despite Jesus being with his disciples, they are behind him. In sum, Jesus has made a necessary separation from the disciples in order to prepare them for his sacrifice on the cross followed by his resurrection. They didn't know it but at the same time suspected something ominous was about to happen.

This same verse has the disciples and others who followed Jesus respectively as being amazed as well as fearful, *thaumazo* and *phobeo* (both +). We could say that those with Jesus en route to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover were amazed whereas those following him were fearful. Thus he was situated in between the two. Though everyone knew this, each disciple had an unidentified sense of impending doom they simply could not shake. What Jesus is about to say

indeed gave voice to their foreboding.

In the second whole sentence of vs. 32 Jesus decided it was time to inform his disciples why they were going to Jerusalem. He began by taking them aside (*paralambano*) to inform them what was about to happen. Presumably they thought (and rightly so) that they were headed to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. To their surprise Jesus informed the twelve apart from others in their company what was going to happen to him. He used the now familiar phrase Son of man as referring to himself. Jesus was to be handed over to the chief priests, condemned to death by delivering him to the Gentiles or Roman authorities. As part of this ordeal (vs. 34, *kai* #266-11) he'll be mocked, scourged and executed followed by rising from the dead in three days. We have no response from either the disciples or others in their company.

In vs. 35 (*kai* #267-12) we have a complete shift where James and John approach Jesus addressing him as Teacher or *Didaskalos* +. They made a request which comes across not as bold but as downright impudent. What makes it as such is that Jesus' words about his impending fate went right over their heads. Both asked that Jesus follow through on a request they are about to make. He listened to them with great patience while having a pretty good idea of what they want. Both James and John asked to sit with Jesus in his glory (*doxa* +), one at his right hand and the other on the left. To this Jesus comes off with one of the greatest understatements of the Gospel, "You do not know what you are asking." Though Mark presents the facts in a bland, matter-of-fact way, at this stage of Jesus' ministry he must have been appalled. Not only that, he even may have been tempted to despair at having chosen not just James and John but the whole lot of them, the other ten certainly not different...and one of course being a traitor which Mark hasn't mentioned.

In vs. 38 Jesus puts forth a rhetorical question to the two disciples in terms of drinking from the same cup and being baptized in the same manner that would happen to him shortly. Both images which involve total immersion, if you will, is way beyond the capacity of James, John and the others to grasp. Then Jesus puts this in perspective by saying that sitting at his right or left hand is not his to grant. He puts this indirectly by saying that it's up to someone else to grant it. In other words, such a privilege has been prepared (*hetoimazo* also to get ready) by the heavenly Father who is inferred, not mentioned. Again, the disciples missed the whole point. All this would be resolved once Pentecost comes, making the disciples feel embarrassed at having proposed such a request.

Note too how the stupid boldness—an apt phrase for the situation at hand—of James and John spreads to the other disciples or perhaps better, is already present but awakened. Vs. 41 (*kai* #268-13) has the ten being indignant at James and John, *aganakateo* also to be aroused or angered. Now that all twelve were infected, Jesus knew he had to step in at this critical juncture else he'd be all alone facing the authorities in Jerusalem. In fact, that's precisely what is about to happen.

Without hesitation in vs. 42 (*kai* #269-14) Jesus summoned all twelve who by the tone of his voice knew they were in for another drubbing. He starts off with an observation familiar not just to them but to all Israelites, namely, those responsible for ruling the Gentiles lord it over them. Not only that, their great men exercise authority over them. It's not difficult for the disciples to make the association with the Romans currently in control. Note the verbs relative to power: *archo*, *katakuriuo* and *katexousiazō*. The second and third are prefaced with the preposition *kata*- which here infers down in the sense of being oppressive.

Jesus sternly warns the disciples that they are to have nothing to do with this type of governance which is purely political. Whoever wishes to be great must be a servant to all, *diakonos* + or one who serves as a kind of intermediary (vs. 44, *kai* #270-15). He then uses the noun *doulos* + which is a slave in contrast to wanting to be first. To make sure all twelve grasped his words, Jesus refers to himself as the Son of man. It is way of saying that he came to serve, not to be served, *diakoneo* +. Not only that, he's to give his life as a ransom for many, *lutron* (*kai* #271-16, cf. vs. 45). Such words make sense in conjunction with vss. 33-34 with regard to Jesus about to be handed over and put to death. And so we have yet another example of something the disciples are incapable of grasping.

Vs. 46 (*kai* #272-17) has Jesus, the disciples and others in attendance approaching Jericho some forty-three miles to Jerusalem. As for the others, Mark calls them a great multitude or *ochlos* +. It so happened that a blind beggar was doing his thing by the road. His name is given as Bartimaeus suggesting that he had made considerable impression so as to be remembered. He must have heard increased chatter that Jesus was coming by (vs. 47, *kai* #273-18) as people moved along the road. This prompted him to cry out for mercy (*eleeo*) using the title Son of David, a messianic title used here for the only time in Mark's Gospel. It infers that the blind man had some information about Jesus,

that he just might be the longed for successor to King David. Someone blind is more sensitive to hearing which means he had picked up information here and there over the years. His position on a road from Jericho to Jerusalem also was advantageous because he could hear bits and pieces of conversations from pilgrims going to and from the capital.

A substantial number of people on the road rebuked Bartimaeus (vs. 48, *kai* #274-19) at once simply because he was so annoying, the verb being *epitimao* +. Most likely this wasn't the first time they had done so. It had absolutely no effect on the man. He cried out all the more. His cries were so loud they rose above the conversations on the road. This prompted Jesus to ask those nearby to bring Bartimaeus to him which they did (vs. 49, *kai* #275-20). These people encouraged the man to take heart, *tharseo* also to be resolute because Jesus is calling him. They did this in deference to Jesus.

Without hesitation the blind man cast off his mantle and sprang up on his feet running to Jesus. He had no need for guidance, for the desire for Jesus to cure him was more than sufficient for a guide. In other words, he acted as though already he had been cured. In vs. 51 (*kai* #276-21) Jesus asks what Bartimaeus wanted from him. Obviously he knew, such words being a way to ease the relationship between the two. After Bartimaeus asked for the ability to see, Jesus didn't make any physical contact but simply told him to go his way. Though blind, his faith which was stronger than any physical sight, had saved him, *pistis* and *sozo*, both + (cf. vs. 52, *kai* #277-22).

Instead of the actions associated with a cure, it was the man's faith that made him see. And so Chapter Ten concludes with Bartimaeus being one of those few persons specifically mentioned as following Jesus on the way to Jerusalem. One can't but wonder his reaction to what would soon happen to Jesus. It had even greater impact by reason of his ability to actually see these events unfold. Indeed, Bartimaeus almost certainly became a noted member of the newly established church.

Chapter Ten has a total of twenty-two verses beginning with the conjunctive *kai*.

Chapter Eleven

With Chapter Eleven we get a sense that the speed or tempo of the Gospel is picking up. This is evident by Mark's oft noted style of presenting one fact after another in rapid succession. Indeed, more often than not this approach does not allow for room to expand upon the text. The fast paced tempo coming before and during the account of Jesus' passion and death will continue right through the rest of the Gospel. As has been pointed out often in this document, the conjunctive *kai* plays an important role in shepherding the action along. Only now it becomes more noticeable.

This new chapter begins with the second stage of Jesus' passage to Jerusalem, the first one having been noted in 10.32. With regard to the situation at hand, the conjunctive *kai* (#278-1) plays a role in signifying this as Jesus and those with him approached Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives. The distance covered is some forty plus miles. Though the journey seems to have been uneventful, most likely the road from Jericho to Jerusalem was thronging with pilgrims headed there to celebrate the Paschal feast. Everyone was more focused upon the Passover which must have made Jesus feel somewhat lost in the crowd. His sacrifice would be incidental compared with the activity swirling about him. Jesus must have thought as he did shortly in the garden of Gethsemane was it worth it.

In vs. 2 (*kai* #279-2) Jesus sends two of his disciples to a nearby village for the purpose of bringing back a colt on which no one had never sat. They did as told, figuring that at the end of their ascent from Jericho Jesus was worn out. Should anyone object, the response is simply that the Lord (*Kurios* +) has need of it (cf. vs. 3, *kai* #280-3) and will return it at once, *euthus*. And so the two unnamed disciples set off as noted in vs. 4 (*kai* #281-4) understandably somewhat fearful of what would happen. Jesus was right. Those to whom the colt belonged let it go at once (vs. 5, *kai* #282-5). Most likely Mark included this incident to show the indirect but decisive influence Jesus had over events, notably those which tie into his coming passion, death and resurrection.

Upon bringing the colt to Jesus (vs. 7, *kai* #283-6), the two disciples and perhaps some if not all the others put their garments on it, *himation* usually translated as a cloak. In addition to this people (most likely those who are entering Jerusalem for the Passover) imitated this gesture by casting their garments on the ground along with leafy branches or *stibas* cut in haste (vs. 8, *kai* #284-7). Word got out quickly that it was Jesus who was entering Jerusalem, his fame by now having become well known. Even pilgrims from far off joined in at the chance to see

this famous man. There's a sense that such a gesture was purely transitory. Once Jesus entered Jerusalem, everyone return to their own business of preparing for the Passover.

And so Jesus made his entry into Jerusalem riding upon these garments and branches with both those going both before as well as after him. In vs. 9 (*kai* #285-8) they cried out Hosanna, the first words in abbreviated form from Ps 118.25-26. These two verses read in full as "Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success! Blessed be he who enters in the name of the Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!" As for the verb "beseech" which occurs twice, the Hebrew uses the interjection '*ana*' reading something like "ah" or "I pray." It comes first in the verse followed by the two verbs *yashah* and *tslach*, to save and to give success.

In vs. 26 the psalmist wishes blessings upon the person who enters in the Lord's name or *shem*, the temple implied. The first person plural is used with regard to blessing this person from the Lord's house (*byth*) as though those involved had filled the temple's huge courtyard. Right after this vs. 11 (*kai* #286-9) makes a somewhat odd observation. Jesus enters Jerusalem proper and heads directly for the temple as so many had done during this sacred time. There he looks around to assess the situation and heads for Bethany with the twelve disciples. It was late which means that sacrifices for the day had been finished and the place was pretty much empty. Mark gives no reason for going to Bethany though we know from St John's Gospel it was the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. For him, such an addition would be considered as too burdensome and unnecessary.

Vs. 12 begins with *kai* (#287-10) which goes untranslated and has Jesus and his disciples leaving Bethany. He was hungry and from far off (vs. 13, *kai* #288-11) saw a fig tree which seemed promising for some fruit. One reason could have been that Jesus knew his passion was close at hand and was unable to eat a proper breakfast. And so this hunger soured his attitude, making him curse the tree not because it was unproductive but because it wasn't the season for producing figs. Vs. 14 (*kai* #289-12) notes that the disciples heard this and said nothing further, leaving the rest up to the reader's imagination. Obviously things were a bit tense from then on. They knew it was time to back off.

In a way, the *kai* of vs. 15 (#290-13) rendered as "and" serves to relieve the tension at hand as Jesus and those with him made their way to Jerusalem two miles or so away, easily within sight from Bethany. Fortunately for those with

him the distance is short though in a way it was long due to the sullen attitude they could pick up from Jesus. This is the first recorded instance of such an event, significant in that Mark saw it fit to include in his Gospel account.

Jesus made his way directly to the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold there, causing quite a commotion. However, it was localized because the temple area is enormous. Thus Jesus' activity was limited to a small corner and didn't attract that much attention. Besides, the crowds preparing for Passover added to the noise and confusion and must have drowned out any commotion coming from Jesus. Obviously he was very upset at seeing such blatant commercial activity, the vendors taking advantage of the most holy celebration of the entire year. In fact, from their point of view Passover promised a boon like no other holiday.

Not only did Jesus make a commotion, vs. 16 (*kai* #291-14) has him going one step further. He forbids carrying anything through the temple. A footnote in the **NIV** gives a reason for this. "Apparently the temple area was being used as a shortcut between the city and the Mount of Olives." Chances are those who had been with Jesus saw his action as a kind of spill-over from his experience of not having figs on a tree. Just as that tree was cursed, so is the temple and doomed to be overturned in the not distant future.

The conjunctive *kai* (#292-15) beginning vs. 17 serves to contrast the somewhat violent action of the previous two verses as a preparation, if you will, for Jesus to take over the temple—at least a corner of it—and begin teaching, *didasko* +. Note that *hieron* is the noun for temple as well as its precincts which is what's intended here. Because Jesus was divine as the one doing the teaching, we can say that it reached all the way to the inner sanctuary or Holy of Holies. That's why he favored the first person singular in the following verse (Is 56.6-7 ⁶) as cited in full: "And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord and to be his servants, every one who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." What's outstanding in these two verses is that when taken as a unit, they apply to foreigners, not Israelites. This is clearly carried over into the text cited by Mark.

⁶ Vs. 6 is included because it and vs. 7 form an extended sentence.

Next Jesus adds as a part of vs. 17 a few words from Jer 7.11 which is cited in full here: “Has this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, says the Lord.” In the context hand, worship of Baal is implied (cf. vs. 8). We could say that this verse applies to the Israelites compared with the foreigners in the last paragraph. In other words, they transformed the temple or *hieron* into literally a cave which functions as a hide-out, *spelaion*.

Vs. 18 (*kai* #293-16) comes off with an expected response from the chief priests and scribes. They heard what Jesus had just said using the two verses from Isaiah and Jeremiah, not directly but by agents most likely they had appointed to keep an eye on Jesus. Without a doubt, these authorities had sanctioned the vendors in the temple area because it was excellent business despite having little or no respect for the temple itself. In fact, this was the best time of the entire year with Passover at hand. Not only that, the chief priests and scribes would get a handsome cut of the profits. And so with Jesus intervening, it was a golden opportunity for them to go ahead with plans to destroy him, *apollumi* +.

This same verse (18) continues as giving the reason for this plot against Jesus. Not just the multitude or *ochlos* + but all the multitude were astonished at Jesus’ teaching, *explesso* with regard to *didache* +. Judging by the preposition *ek-* or from prefaced to the verbal root, the verb connotes being struck or smitten. So it seemed that everyone was allied against the chief priests and scribes, but nothing came of it. This confrontation lasted the bulk of the day until evening when Jesus and those accompanying him retreated to nearby Bethany and the company of Martha, Mary and Lazarus who once more are not named (cf. vs. 19, *kai* #294-17).

Vs. 20 (*kai* #295-18) has Jesus and those accompanying him pass by the fig tree which he had cursed. Obviously it had the desired effect because it was withered right down to its roots. Peter drew Jesus’ attention to it in vs. 21 (*kai* #296-19) and responded by using the tree as an occasion for teaching. Jesus starts off by simply saying it’s necessary to have faith (*pistis* +; vs. 22, *kai* #297-20) in God. He uses the example of ordering a mountain to be cast into the sea, this being backed up by saying *amen* +, an expression of emphasis. Such a dramatic statement requires having no doubt in one’s heart, *diakrino* and *kardia* +, the verb also meaning to differentiate (*krino*, to judge) by separating (*dia-* as

through).

Note that Jesus says that what one desires will come about in a passive sort of way. That is to say, it will be done (*ginetai*) to the person who had made the request. Hence Jesus avoids an anthropomorphic image of God where a person comes along and casts the mountain into the sea, repeating it over and over again. Rather, he intimates that the Father will be the one responsible for effecting that which seems impossible.

In vs. 24 Jesus expands on his words by saying that when a person asks for anything in prayer, he's to believe that already he has received it. Such faith is so strong that it will fulfill one's request. In this instance we have the following verbs working in harmony: *proseuchomai* + -> *aiteo* -> *pisteuo* + -> *lambano* + -> *esti* (pray -> ask -> believe -> receive -> will be [done for him]).

Jesus continues in vs. 25 (*kai* #298-21) being more specific about prayer. He adds the verb *histemi* + or to stand which suggests he's thinking of prayer in a public or liturgical context. Such prayer is intimately tied in with the need to forgive anything a person may have done, *aphiemi* +. What's key here is *hina* or "so that." Jesus is referring to "your" Father in heaven who may forgive you any trespass you may have committed. Thus *aphiemi* is tied in with *paraptoma*, literally a falling beside (*para-*). In sum, Jesus is showing the way to live freely and not be bogged down by carrying around useless baggage.

Vs. 27 (*kai* #299-22) had Jesus and those with him returning to Jerusalem from Bethany though that place isn't mentioned specifically. He headed for the temple where the chief priests and scribes again encountered him, having him in their sites. Nothing is said of the vendors Jesus drove out. It'd come as no surprise that they simply relocated, the Passover being too lucrative a time to miss.

These religious authorities were less concerned with the fate of the vendors and more to the point, the authority or *exousia* + Jesus supposedly has to drive them from the temple area (cf. vs. 28, *kai* #300-23). His response? Jesus wants the chief priests and scribes to respond to a question he's about to pose to them. Then and only then he'll tell them by what authority he had acted as he had done. Jesus brought up the baptism of John. Was it from heaven or from men?

In vs. 31 (*kai* #301-24) the chief priests and scribes started arguing with one another, something which must have both dismayed and amused Jesus. After a while they approached him and in vs. 33 (*kai* #302-25) admitted they did not know whether John's baptism was from heaven or from men. Instead of taking delight in their ignorance—perhaps the only time they admitted they were wrong—Jesus said that he won't tell them the source of his authority. And so ends Chapter Eleven. Jesus was victorious in this regard, but the religious authorities slithered away galvanized all the more to do him in.

Chapter Eleven has a total of twenty-five verses beginning with the conjunctive *kai*.

Chapter Twelve

This chapter begins with the conjunctive *kai* (#303-1) where we suddenly find Jesus presumably in the temple area. Mark presents him as speaking in parables, a manner of instruction which uses the format of a story to teach as many people as possible. The parable at hand is lengthy and easy to grasp. It deals with a vineyard based upon Is 5.1-2 which is quoted here in full: "Let me sing for my beloved a love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes."

Central to this passage are choice vines or *soreq* which are cultivated to yield a high quality wine. Note the way the beloved (i.e., Isaiah singing of the Lord) takes such pains to protect these vines: dig, clear, plant and watchtower being the primary elements. Compare with the verbs in the Gospel text: plant, hedge, pit and tower. This care is to be contrasted with what comes next in Isaiah or vs. 5 where the beloved will in a word, make the vineyard a waste noted in vs. 6. There the text reads literally that the beloved will set or place the vineyard containing *soreq* a *batah* or something that has been cut off from its source.

In the verse at hand Jesus adds that the man responsible for such a valuable piece of property entrusted it to tenants before heading off to another country, *apodemeo* literally to leave one's home. The Greek text lacks "another country," the verb at hand being sufficient to get the point across that the owner is no

longer present. The very fact of entrusting a vineyard to unknown and untested tenants (*georgos*, one involved in agriculture) is a hint where this parable is going. The first impression is that the owner didn't know a thing about hiring the right people; he comes across as naive, trusting and perhaps more to the point, in a hurry to be off on his journey. Surely the peasants listening to him had no trouble grasping all this. The flip side, of course, is that the tenants represent the religious authorities who most certainly were listening in, and Jesus was fully aware of their presence. In fact, he could see the dismay and shame on their countenances growing more intense.

Vs. 2 begins with the conjunctive *kai* (#304-2) which is rendered as "when." Here the vineyard's owner is presented as working remotely as we'd say today, off in another country. Everything seemed to be going well until as vs. 2 puts it, the *kairos* + or time came. Use of this word intimates an occasion or in the context of the parable, harvest. To fulfill his wish the owner sent a servant (*doulos* +) to return with some of the vineyard's produce. This is the first of four dispatches, each one progressively worse than the other. Upon his arrival in vs. 3 (*kai* #305-3) the tenants beat him, *dero* also as to whip after which they sent him back empty-handed or *kenos*. Nothing is said of the report given, but all the owner had to do was look at the physical condition of his servant and see what he was dealing with.

The second attempt at coming to terms with these tenants is in vs. 4 (*kai* #306-4) when the owner dispatched a second *doulos* +. Surely he was aware of what had happened to the first one and was reluctant to go but being a *doulos*, he had no choice in the matter. We can just imagine the dread he felt while approaching the vineyard and seeing the tenants far off who also caught sight of him with hatred in their eyes. Vs. 4 says these hirelings wounded him in the head (*kephalaioo*) and treated him shamefully, *atimazo* also as to dishonor. Unlike the first *doulos*, there's no mention of the second one returning home which infers that either the tenants had killed him or he had died of injuries on the way back.

Vs. 5 (*kai* #307-5) briefly recounts the third *doulos* though that noun isn't mentioned. This time the tenants kill him; included in this verse are others who were sent and who met the same fate. By now the owner of the vineyard knew it was time to take some radical steps, given what happened to all those whom he had dispatched.

Vs. 6 begins somewhat ominously with the words, “He had still one other.” This implies a continued forbearance in the light of three tragic attempts to get through to the tenants. By now the owner knew they had taken the vineyard as their own and would have time to come up with a plan to deal with anyone else who’d be sent. He thought somewhat naively that these ruthless hirelings would respect his son, *entrepo* literally to turn in or to show deference. Vs. 6 presents this decision as the owner of the vineyard either thinking aloud or addressing those who had come with him on an extended journey. As for those with whom he was associating in that far off land, it’d come as no surprise they were now doubtful of entering any business relationship with him. They had watched the situation grow worse until it got out of hand.

Vs. 7 has the inevitable response, one the owner knew would come to pass. Because the son is heir to the vineyard, the tenants couldn’t resist the temptation to do away with him and thus get his inheritance, *kleronomia*. Accordingly in vs. 8 (*kai* #308-6) they killed him and cast his body outside the vineyard, a final insult to the owner. To this Jesus adds a rhetorical question, so obvious as to what the owner will do. He just won’t kill them but bring them to utter destruction, *apollumi* +. As for the vineyard, the owner will give it to others implying that the religious leaders will forfeit any right to ownership. Instead, the Gentiles will take the vineyard as their very own possession.

To back up what Jesus had just said, in vss. 10 and 11 he quotes from Ps 118.22-23 which runs as follows: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” Given the parable and location where he uttered it, easily it can apply to the tremendous effort that had gone into constructing the temple. While great delight was taken in the builders’ accomplishment, not unlike those who raised the tower of Babel, they failed to account for the most important stone required to hold the entire structure together, that is, the cornerstone. The psalm verse says that the Lord takes direct responsibility which reads literally “from the Lord this became” and intimates direct involvement. Hence according to the Hebrew it’s *pala*’, connoting something extraordinary as a miracle.

No small wonder in vs. 12 (*kai* #309-7) that the religious authorities attempted to arrest Jesus, *krateo* + connoting a laying hands on ⁷. Rightly they perceived

⁷ Vs. 12 uses “they” referring to the chief priests, scribes and elders last noted in 11.27.

(*ginosko* +) that Jesus was directing the parable to (*pros*, direction towards which) them. And so this tense situation ends with the authorities leaving Jesus, albeit temporarily, because they feared the multitude, *phobeo* and *ochlos*, both +.

The *kai* (#310-8) beginning vs. 13 shows that the chief priests, scribes and elders wasted no time in their relentless pursuit to trap Jesus. Their ploy was to dispatch some Pharisees and Herodians ⁸ to entrap him in his *logos* + which here is rendered as talk. The verb is *agreuo* or to catch unawares. Since *logos* is involved with all it signifies, catching Jesus unawares would be an impossible task. Those who came near had an inkling of this, having heard stories from others who had attempted the same trick. So in vs. 14 (*kai* #311-9) they tried a softer approach calling Jesus by the respectable title Teacher or *Didaskalos* +. The Pharisees and Herodians acknowledged that they knew he is true, *alethes* also as honest as well as righteous. Not only that, Jesus doesn't care for any man, *meti* as it is of concern. We can catch a glimpse of their self-confidence not so much to ingratiate themselves to Jesus but to put him off guard with regard to the question they're about to ask.

Not only is Jesus not bothered by what others think, he doesn't regard any position humanly speaking, this rendered by *prospopn*, face or countenance with the preposition *eis*, into. The real kicker is that the Pharisees and Herodians acknowledge that Jesus teaches the way or *hodos* + of God. While these words are completely insincere, they speak as such so as to trip him up. They ask whether it's lawful (*exesti*) or not to pay taxes to Caesar. This must have galled them to no end as they mentioned the archenemy of Israel without cursing him. Then in vs. 15 they present the same question, whether or not they should pay such taxes.

In vs. 15 Jesus is fully aware of the hypocrisy, *hupokrisis* also as pretense, outward show of the Pharisees and Herodians which is why he came off with a sharp response as to why they are putting him to the test, *peirazo* +. After having first bade them to bring forth a coin, he then asked them whose image was on it to which they responded Caesar's. There follows the famous words of rendering to Caesar what belongs to him and on the other hand, rendering to God what belongs to him. The response was immediate. All were amazed, the verb *thaumazo* intensified by the preposition *ex-* or from prefaced to it. Thus we

⁸ Herodians: supporters of the Roman rule by the Herods.

have another encounter between religious authorities and Jesus, all too familiar to anyone who reads the Gospel accounts. At the same time it brings up a question. One wonders if any—even one of them—was persuaded by Jesus and joined him. The impression is a clear-cut no, for the two are presented in irreconcilable camps. Reality, however, must have been different.

Vs. 18 (*kai* #312-10) has another group approaching Jesus, this time the Sadducees who claim there is no resurrection. They ask him an outrageous question, one that must have made him smile and marvel at the stupidity of these representatives of the Jewish religion. They draw near confidently armed with a decree written by Moses which runs in full as “If brothers dwell together and one of them died and has no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married outside the family to a stranger; her husband’s brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her” [Dt 25.5]. At issue are children as those to carry on the family name, this the Sadducees complicate beyond all telling by seven brothers. Each married the wife of man’s brother who had died, all being childless (vss. 21 and 22: *kai* #313-11 and #314-12 respectively).

Though vs. 18 clearly says that the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection, the example they just presented to Jesus was a clear manifestation of their distorted position. Momentarily they subscribed to the resurrection simply to trip him up. That is to say, they wanted to know to which of the seven brothers will this woman be in the resurrection.

In vs. 24 Jesus lets the Sadducees have it...no holds bar...calling them wrong or *planao*, to go astray in the sense of wandering about. This fits in with the contortions they presented Jesus regarding the seven brothers and one woman. He puts it in the form of a rhetorical question which they cannot answer, they being ignorant (*oida* +) of both the scriptures as well as God’s power (*dunamis* +). Jesus then goes ahead with a statement which as already noted, the Sadducees reject or what happens at the resurrection of the dead. Marriage then has no place; people resemble angels in heaven, *hos* being an adverb.

In vs. 26 Jesus continues to defend his position by quoting from Moses. Compare this with how the Sadducees did the same but in a perverted way to back up their position. With regard to the dead being raised, Jesus poses yet another rhetorical question about God’s revelation to Moses in Ex 3.6. It runs in

full as “And he said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.” Both the verse Jesus quotes and the one at hand mention the three patriarchs, taking care to associate God with each one. Note the second sentence, one the Sadducees would rather let go as unnoticed. There Moses showed respect for God by hiding his face. That’s behind Jesus’ concluding words about God being God of the living and not of the dead. Straight out he adds that the Sadducees are wrong, another use of *planao* + as in vs. 24.

Vs. 28 (*kai* #315-13) has an individual scribe being drawn to the dispute going on between Jesus and the Sadducees, *suzeteo* +. Most likely he wasn’t alone in the crowded temple plaza, various people dropping in and dropping out. The scribe observed that Jesus answered well (*kalos* +, adverb). Because he heard two interpretations of Moses and favored Jesus’ position, he was moved to ask not so much out of curiosity or a desire to trip up Jesus. He had a genuine desire to know the truth, that is, what above all is the first commandment.

To the scribe’s question in vs. 29 Jesus answered unhesitatingly with a quote from Dt 6.4-5 which reads in full as “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and (vs. 30, *kai* #316-14) you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” In that instance Israel had recently and dramatically escaped four hundred years of oppression in Egypt. It can be paralleled with the current state of affairs, Israel being subjected to Rome. Mark’s text has the verb *agapao* + which is the translation of ‘*ahav*’ connoting a longing or breathing after. Compare the use of prepositions: the Greek has *ex* or from regarding heart, soul and might whereas the Hebrew has *b-* or in with regard to the same three.

Jesus continues in vs. 31 with the second commandment from Lev 19.18 which reads in full as “You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.” To this Jesus concludes that no other commandment surpasses this. Chances are the scribe didn’t take into consideration that this commandment referred to members of their own community, “the sons of your own people.” Most likely that’s the reality Jesus wished to convey.

In vs. 32 (*kai* #317-15) the scribe responds that Jesus’ words are *kalos* +, the adverb meaning beautifully which is the only proper response in the case at hand, one

which is deferential to Jesus as a *Didaskalos* + or Teacher. Note how in this verse and in the next (vs. 33, *kai* #318-16) the scribe repeats the words from Deuteronomy and Leviticus as quoted by Jesus. It's the only way he's capable of responding and feels proud of being able to do so convincingly. Then in vs. 34 (*kai* #319-17) Jesus acknowledges the scribe, that he had answered wisely or *nounechos* also as thoughtfully. He tells him that he's not far from the kingdom of God followed by the observation that no one dared to ask Jesus any question. In other words, Jesus politely but firmly shut down the scribe without him even knowing it. We can assume that he woke up to the fact that he had been caught and vigorously supported the crucifixion of Jesus.

The *kai* of vs. 35 (#320-18) makes a shift from the incident of the scribe to Jesus who's still in the temple. That is to say, he hasn't moved but during these last few days of his life he's remaining as close to that sacred place as humanly possible. Now he's teaching (*didasko* +) to any and all willing to listen. He speaks of the scribes (one of whom he had just dealt with deftly) asking aloud how they can say that the Christ is the son of David. He answers his own question by quoting from David directly, that is, Ps 110.1. Here we have the two versions with a slight difference, first from the text at and then from the Psalm itself. First note that vs. 36 has David as inspired by the Holy Spirit or more accurately, "said." *Pneuma* + of course is the noun for Spirit:

"The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand till I put your enemies under your feet.'" The first Lord uses the past tense, "said."

"The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.'" The first Lord uses the present tense, "says."

It seems that the first Lord represents the Father and the second, the Son or Jesus Christ. Both passages have the first Lord giving the command to the second Lord, namely, to sit at his right hand for a specific duration or until he subjects the enemies of the second Lord. The duration isn't specified but given the fact that Jesus utters this verse a few days before his passion and death, it could refer to that intervening time including right up to his death when there's no need to speak of temporal duration for the subjection of enemies. Also this subjection can extend indefinitely into the future with regard to those who follow Jesus.

In vs. 37 Jesus offers his own thoughts on this psalm verse through a rhetorical

question. If David uses the title Lord, how then can he be his son? This is designed not to give an explanation but to make people think. Within this context, if you will, people have time to hopefully come to the right interpretation. Note the response by those listening to Jesus which shows that essentially they grasp what he says albeit imperfectly. We have a throng or *ochlos* + described as great, *polus* also as much, which heard him gladly, *hedeos* also as pleasantly. I.e., this represents one of those rare occasions where the teaching of Jesus rings true in the hearts of people. However, it will be short lived because some if not all of the same *ochlos* will be demanding Jesus' death at the instigation of the religious authorities.

The *kai* of vs. 38 (#321-19 and vs. 39, #322-20) serves to connect Jesus and the scribes noted in vs. 28 with a tendency to be showy in public by that religious group. At the same time they devour the houses of widows, the preposition *kata-* in the sense of down serving to intensify the verb *kaesthio* alternately to consume. For this Jesus assures his listeners, some of whom must have fallen victim to these same scribes, saying that they will receive a greater condemnation, *krima* also pertaining to any legal action.

In vs. 41 (*kai* #323-21) Jesus remains in the temple area, having moved to a place opposite the treasury where he watched (*theoreo* connotes sustained attention) the throng or *ochlos* + depositing donations. This, of course, was Passover, the most profitable time of the year. What caught his attention was the contrast between many rich people and a poor widow (vs. 42, *kai* #324-22) who donated a measly sum. Right away Jesus saw an opportunity to show his disciples a valuable lesson from this contrast. He noted in vs. 43 (*kai* #325-23) that the widow put more in the donation box of the treasury because she did so out of her poverty. Not only that, the two copper coins and a penny was the equivalent of her entire living, *bios* also as life and here implying anything associated with it.

Chapter Twelve has a total of twenty-three verses beginning with the conjunctive *kai*.

Chapter Thirteen

As expected, this new chapter begins with the conjunctive *kai* (#326-1) rendered

as “and” with regard to Jesus coming out of the temple. Note the verb *ekporeuomai* prefaced with the preposition *ek-* along with the same *ek* as free standing; i.e., two “froms.” Here *hieros* most likely refers to the large plaza before the actual temple itself. Once Jesus and his disciples got some distance from Jerusalem as on the Mount of Olives noted in vs. 3, they were in a position to catch a spectacular view of the temple gleaming in the intense sunlight. No small wonder that one of the disciples uttered an exclamation as to the building’s beauty. Such was the sight that caught pilgrims coming up from Jericho, the road currently crowded with people coming for the Passover.

The *kai* (#327-2) of vs. 2 introduces Jesus’ quick response to the just observation just made from the unnamed disciple. First he proposes a rhetorical question asking the disciple to look at the temple followed by the stunning remark that nothing will remain. Each of its stones will be torn down. The time for this isn’t given, but with the hindsight of history, Jesus is referring to the impending Roman siege of Jerusalem in the next generation or two. It wouldn’t be surprising that the disciples along with many others felt something ominous was about to happen. Signs of unrest were already present with regard to Roman rule and were starting to bubble up more to the surface.

Vs. 3 (*kai* #328-3) has Jesus sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite Jerusalem. Note the adverb *katenanti* which suggests a distinction between Jesus on one side and the temple on the other. That is to say, we have the full expression of Jewish worship in the temple and Jesus opposite it who is destined to supersede it. Imagine, then, for a moment if you could, be in between the two.

After the disciple noted the temple’s beauty, Peter, James, John and Andrew...four of the twelve...were struck by the way Jesus too was captivated by the view. However, they could tell by the expression on his face that something profound was bothering him. Then he prophesied that Jerusalem will not be just destroyed but completely leveled. Naturally this prompted Peter, James, John and Andrew to take him aside (*kat’ idian* +, by himself or privately) and ask when this horrendous event will occur. Naturally they hoped for a sign or *semeion* + if not from Jesus then perhaps some kind of physical manifestation as in the heavens.

In vs. 5 Jesus begins a lengthy discourse on “the end of the age” as a footnote in the **RSV** puts it. These words have a lot to do with his mission and as the

apostles could sense without knowing the details, that Jesus was not just talking about the temple's destruction but his own demise. And so he continues to speak in the same vein all the way through the end of this chapter. Jesus starts off by counseling his disciples to take heed, the common verb *blepo* or to look followed by *planao* or (not) to wander or to stray. Chances are that he's warning them that the religious authorities who had been hounding him from the start could in large part be responsible for the tragedy about to unfold. Such is the first of many warnings which will be listed below.

In vs. 6 Jesus comes off with a second warning⁹, that is, many will come in (*epi*, upon) Jesus' name claiming to be "I am he," the element of "I am" suggestive of a pseudo-divine nature. Unfortunately that will lead many people astray, *planao* + as noted a second time (cf. vs. 5 where it pertains to the disciples).

The third warning in vs. 7 pertains to wars and rumors of wars which should be no cause for alarm, *threo* also to be disturbed, frightened. They must take place before the end or *telos* + also as completion. It's a theme familiar to Jews which now has become loaded with political overtones by reason of the Roman occupation. Perhaps the benefit for such rumors running rife is to prepare the population for a time of testing.

In vs. 8 Jesus expands upon what he had just said with a fourth warning. The just mentioned conflict will expand further from a local crisis to a worldwide conflagration: nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes and famines. Despite the horrendous events to take place—Jesus is careful not to put a time-line on all this except with the implied coming Roman onslaught—he cautions that it is just the beginning. Nevertheless, there is hope because these events are birth pangs which mean some new world order is on the threshold of coming into existence.

In vs. 9 Jesus gets more personal with a fifth warning. That is to say, he warns his disciples to be on guard, *blepo* + which is the verb to see as used in vs. 5. They are to be handed over to councils after which they'll be beaten in synagogues as well as suffering a similar fate at the hands of secular rulers, all for Jesus' sake. At the same time Jesus counsels that it's a time to give witness, *marturion* + prefaced with the preposition *eis* or into.

⁹ The first warning is in vs. 5 with regard to not being led astray.

Despite what looks like an overwhelming tragedy, in vs. 10 (*kai* #329-4) Jesus makes sure his disciples get the point that the Gospel is to be preached to all nations, *kerusso* +. By reason of the Gospel so contrary to the ways of the world, it will share in some of the sufferings soon to come yet at the same time transcend them.

With this important insertion having been made, Jesus continues with a sixth warning in vs. 11 (*kai* #330-5). When the disciples are to be brought to trial, they aren't to be anxious beforehand. The verbal root *merimnao* or to worry prefaced with the preposition *pro-* or before enhances the intense uncertainty at hand, *promerimnao*. Such anxiety pertains to the specific time of "that hour." Instead of the disciples speaking, they are to have confidence that the Holy Spirit (*Pneuma* +) will do the speaking both for and through them.

The seventh warning in vs. 12 (*kai* #331-6) again pertains to what happens when the Gospel is preached: brother against brother, father against child, children against parents. Such a conflict involving family members will result in all members attempting to kill each other. Not only that, vs. 13 (*kai* #332-7) continues with an eighth warning based on what Jesus just said, namely, that the disciples will be hated (*miseo* also to despise) because they represent his name or *onoma*, they being representatives of him. Hopefully by killing Jesus' followers they will be killing him. And so vs. 13 continues with a second sentence or when Jesus encourages the disciples to endure to the end and thus be saved, *sozo* +. The verb *hupomeno* or literally to remain under connotes continued steadfastness along with *telos* + also as completion prefaced with the preposition *eis*, into.

The ninth warning in vs. 14 concerns the "desolating sacrilege" or *bdelugma* which stands for something that's loathsome and modified by *eremos*, a state of being made inhabitable. The latter is related to *eremos* or deserted place first noted in 1.30. Jesus lifts this phrase from Dn 9.27 ¹⁰: "And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator." The person involved is "the people's prince who is to come" of the preceding verse. ¹¹

¹⁰ There are two other references: 11.31 and 12.11.

¹¹ A footnote in the **RSV** says this refers to Antiochus who made a covenant with the

As for this verse from Daniel, note the following borrowed from **Expansions on the Book of Daniel**, also on this homepage:

“The prince who is causing such havoc will make a covenant (*beryth*) which is strong, this being the verb *gabar* suggestive of prevailing and not usually associated with a covenant made by the Lord because force is involved. The time of one week is not determined, most likely at the end of the extended span of time consisting of nine-hundred and twenty-four years noted in vs. 25. If true, both sacrifice and offering (*zevach*; only use of this term in Daniel and *minchah*) will continue despite dreadful circumstances. How this will come about is unspecified, but certainly force is involved. The symbol of wings intimates the swiftness and suddenness of the one who makes desolate which consists of the verb *shamem* (cf. vs. 26; compare with ‘desolator’ or the same verb) and the noun *shaquts* which pertains to contamination as well as loathing.”

Vs. 14 continues as one sentence running through vs. 16 (*kai* #333-8). It has several warnings in rapid succession starting with those living in Judea whom Jesus bids to flee to the mountains, something which actually happened when the Romans invaded not long afterwards (tenth warning).

As for vss. 15 and 16 (eleventh and twelfth warnings), those engaged in everyday tasks are to drop them at once. There’s a sense of urgency here that continues into vs. 17 (thirteenth warning) where Jesus speaks of those unfortunate to be pregnant. Inferred is that they will not come to birth. As vs. 18 has Jesus puts it (fourteenth warning), it’d be best if this doesn’t happen in winter. Then in vs. 19 Jesus says the tribulation or *thlipsis* (fifteenth warning; also as oppression, affliction) to come will have no precedent. He employs the most dramatic form he could muster: not from the beginning and never will be.

Despite vs. 20 (*kai* #334-9) containing a sixteenth warning, it signals an occasion of much needed relief after the frightful words Jesus had just communicated to his disciples. Fortunately the Lord had decided to shorten the days in order to save people, *sozo* + and *sarx*, the latter as flesh which connotes humanity as a generic whole. Jesus then adds that this shortening was done not just for everyone but for the elect or *eklektos*.

Hellenizing Jews.

Jesus doesn't both to fill out what this means which must have been somewhat enigmatic to the disciples. However, he continues in vs. 21 (*kai* #335-10) with a seventeenth warning which ought to suffice for them. Should anyone point out the Christ, they are not to believe it because false Christs and prophets will come on the scene (cf. vs. 22, eighteenth warning). They will use signs and wonders, *semeion* + and *teras*, the latter as something that astounds. Hopefully—the text puts it this way with *ei dunaton* or “if possible”—with regard to the elect.

Jesus concludes this part of his lengthy warning (number nineteen) in vs. 23 telling the disciples to take heed or *blepo* +, again, to be on the lookout. After all, he had told them these words before they take place, *prolego*. Fortunately for the disciples they are hearing this shortly before Jesus' death and resurrection or more specifically, before the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost which will ratify Jesus' words.

In vs. 24 Jesus continues with warning number twenty concerning “those days” which are indeterminate and within the lifetime of the disciples which turned out to be true as applied to the impending Roman invasion. He quotes Is 13.10 and 34.4. The two versions run as follows:

Vss. 24-25: “But in those days after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light and (*kai* #336-11) the stars will be falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.”

Is 13.10 & 34.4: “For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising and the moon will not shed its light.” “All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree.”

The prophecy does not concern Israel but as Is 3.1 states, is in reference to Babylon. Note that the Gospel quote mentions tribulation or *thlipsis* + as in vs. 19. The cosmic events will take place after this which suggests that *thlipsis* will primarily be a human event.

And so the *thlipsis* and inescapable cosmic signs are two stages of preparation which come next or better, for what comes last, the twenty-first warning. Thus in vs. 26 (*kai* #337-12) they precede the Son of man coming in clouds with great

power and glory, *dunamis* and *doxa* (both +). More precisely, everyone will see him coming because his manifestation will be the only one in the heavens. The sun, moon, stars and even the skies will be no more. That means the Son of man will fill every bit of the heavens.

This total and absolute manifestation is followed in vs. 27 (*kai* #338-13) by the Son of man sending out angels to gather his elect (*eklektos* +) from every corner of the earth. Implied is that at the time those deemed as elect will have multiplied enough to have reached every corner of the earth. Surely the disciples must have wondered among themselves who these people might be. To them it certainly includes non-Jews which must have astonished them.

In vs. 28 Jesus gives the twenty-second warning through the example of a fig tree. When it puts forth leaves this is a sign that summer is near. Surely Jesus must have thought of his experience recounted back in 11.20 when he cursed a fig tree for not yet having produced figs. The example is a clear sign that the Son of man is at hand (*eggus* also as near), right outside the city gates.

Jesus continues to warn his disciples, vs. 29 being the twenty-third example. He gets more specific in that all these events are not far off but will be witnessed by the current generation. This can be taken as another indication of the impending Roman invasion. As noted earlier, everyone knew something ominous is going to happen. They're simply waiting for an event to trigger it. Even though heaven and earth will pass away as Jesus foretold by his prophecy tied in with the prophet Isaiah, his words or *logoi* (*logos* +) will not pass away, *parerchomai* suggesting a movement which does not cease being beside or *para-*, if you will. In sum, these *logoi* are unstoppable.

In vs. 32 Jesus makes it clear that all he had just said remains unknown not just to humans but to angels or messengers. He includes himself as Son. Only the Father knows. Compare this with what Jesus had said in vs. 29 regarding the nearness of the Son. Even though there's a certain ambiguity in what he says, it's overridden by Jesus' *logoi* not passing away.

The twenty-fourth warning consists of the familiar *blepo* + or to be on the lookout along with *agrupneo*, to be vigilant with regard to an impending threat. The reason is clear. Nobody knows the time when this will take place, *kairos* + more along the lines of an event. In the next verse Jesus fleshes this out with

the example of a man going on a journey. The twenty-fifth warning consists of him putting his servants (*doulos* +) in charge and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch, *gregoreo* implying to be constantly awake and on alert.

Jesus can't seem to give enough warning, he being acquainted with human weakness and seeing it first hand among his chosen disciples. That's why towards the end of this chapter or in vs. 35 he comes off with the last warning, number twenty-six. In other words, a second mention of *gregoreo* + because the arrival of the master is completely unknown. Note that those who are commanded to be on guard in the example just given are slaves, *doulos*. The same can apply to those to whom Jesus' words apply. A slave must be attentive or risk severe penalty. Actually the very last word of Chapter Thirteen is *gregoreo* +. It's emphasized by not knowing the various times when the master will come home. In other words, these times are leave us in a state of expectation in order to emphasize watchfulness.

Chapter Thirteen has a total of thirteen verses beginning with the conjunctive *kai*.

Chapter Fourteen

This is the longest chapter in Mark's Gospel, seventy-two verses. As noted elsewhere, his Gospel leaves little wiggle room for expanding the text. In the case at hand, Mark is more focused upon presenting details about the passion and death of Jesus which, like so many verses in his Gospel are connected by the conjunctive *kai* often rendered as and. From this point on to the end of the Gospel, Mark's rapid-fire account indeed speeds up. You get the impression that he wants to reach a conclusion as quickly as possible. Once that's done, he has achieved the goal of having provided fundamental information for catechesis within the early church. Those responsible for this catechesis can thus use his Gospel as a reference point for deepening points about what Jesus had said and done. It's almost an outline but obviously more substantive than that.

The opening verse of the chapter at hand consists of two distinct sentences which convey the same sense of impending doom. First we have the time frame of two days before the Passover followed by the chief priests and scribes

seeking to arrest Jesus stealthily and then kill him. A threat of some kind of uprising is ever present which they take care to avoid. The noun *dolos* is used for the **RSV**'s stealth, also as deceit and the verb to kill is *apokteino* + where the preposition *apo-* or from prefaced to the latter serves to intensify it.

Note the word *pos* or "how." It suggests the conspirators hadn't decided upon a definitive plan of action but are working towards it. A major reason for their delay is to avoid causing a tumult from the people assembled for the Passover, *thorubos* also as a state of confusion. Though not explicit, the real reason is not to rouse the Roman authorities who will come down hard. Already they had taken great pains to have their eyes and ears on high alert during the Passover.

While this intense plotting was going on, vs. 3 (*kai* #339-1) finds Jesus at nearby Bethany at the home not of Martha, Mary and Lazarus who are not mentioned in Mark's Gospel but instead at the home of Simon the leper. Surely all must have known each other. Most likely this man was one whom Jesus had cured. Actually he's the only recorded person in the Gospels whom Jesus had healed and has struck up a lasting relationship with him.

Someone like Simon seemed to have had attracted a wide variety of friends, possibly many who also had been cured by Jesus. That means the religious authorities decided to keep a close eye on him, easy to do since he lived in nearby Bethany. The very fact of having been cured of an incurable disease was a constant thorn in their side. Thus up to this point Simon has proved himself an effective evangelist, more than the twelve disciples only to be superseded by an unidentified woman about to burst in on the scene. Though she appears suddenly, chances are she may have been associated with Simon and perhaps Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Seeing the acquaintance as an opportunity, she approached Jesus with a jar of very costly nard, *poluteles* also as very expensive.

With the same suddenness as having made her entry, this woman broke the flask and poured it directly onto the head of Jesus. Jesus took it all in stride—we can assume the same with Simon the leper—in contrast with those at table with him. We have no identity about these guests, but some must have been disciples of Jesus. A few made remarks with considerable indignation, *aganakteo* also to be aroused, to be angry. They exclaimed that such an expensive ointment was wasted, *apoleia* being a noun connoting destruction. In their view such nard could have been sold with the proceeds given to the poor. And so this

woman was the object of reproach, *embrimaomai* also as sternly warned.

The anointing of Jesus' head must have continued for some time. Given the way this woman had come on the scene so unexpectedly, she gives the impression of someone who doesn't back down easily. Jesus sensed this and in vs. 6 sharply tells everyone to leave her alone and asks rhetorically why they should trouble her. The verb is *parecho* or literally to have beside along with the noun *kopos* + or toil, that which is wearisome. In sum, it's an accurate description. To everyone's surprise (minus Simon the leper, of course), Jesus exclaims that the woman has done a beautiful thing to him, *ergon* or work modified by the adjective *kalos* +. In fact, she comes across as the only person present who had insight into what will happen to Jesus and the reason for his death.

Jesus continues in vs. 7 much to the embarrassment of all in the house. Looking at those present he says that they will have the poor with them not just at all times (*pantote*, also as always) but "whenever they will," *hotan* and *thelo* + which means there's plenty of time to serve them. This is in sharp contrast to not having Jesus, a strong intimation that something ominous will happen to him in the near future. Jesus makes this clear by saying that the woman had done her dramatic gesture to the best of her ability, that is, she has anointed him for burial. In other words, she seems like some kind of prophetess. No small wonder she was drawn not just to Jesus but to Simon the leper. Surely she and Simon must have retained contact after the events of the coming days, Pentecost included.

Vs. 9 wraps up this significant event by Jesus solemnly telling those present by use of *amen* + rendered as truly that they should pay close attention to what had just happened. He speaks of the Gospel being preached throughout the whole world which will include an account of this woman's deed. Note the phrase with the noun *mnemosunon* or memorial prefaced with the preposition *eis* or into.

Vs. 10 begins with the conjunctive *kai* (340-2) which the **RSV** renders as "then" implying that Judas Iscariot had been present at the home of Simon the leper and witnessed the woman pour nard on Jesus' head. That supposed waste of money could have been the motive...the final straw...which pushed him to betray his master. So Judas left and went to the chief priests to discuss details as how and when to hand him over, *paradidomai* +. As soon as these authorities got

wind of Judas' willingness to do this, they were delighted (*chairo* and promised to give him money. At the same time they must have been disgusted with someone willing to hand over their beloved master. With this agreement solidified, Judas sought an opportunity to betray Jesus, *eukairos* being an adverb with *eu-* or well prefaced to *kairos*, "o" as omega, not omicron as with the noun.

Vs. 12 (*kai* #341-3) moves ahead a bit to the day before Passover, the first day of Unleavened Bread when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. This, of course, was the first part of most important feast of the entire year, so the temple area must have been more than overflowing. Jesus' disciples asked where he intends to celebrate Passover, a pressing question insofar as Jerusalem was jam-packed with pilgrims meaning every available place had been taken. This request was made outside Jerusalem because Jesus bade two disciples to go there (vs. 13, *kai* #342-4) and follow a man carrying a jar of water. That man will go to someone's home whom the disciples will request a guest room for the Passover (vss. 14, 15 and 16 *kai* #343-5, #344-6 and #345-7).

And so off went the two disciples who found everything just as Jesus had told them. Accomplishment of their goal amounted pretty much to a miracle considering all the narrow streets and alleys being so crowded that one could hardly move. Thus these two anonymous men played an important role though it seemed they hadn't a clue as to what was involved. Perhaps later they discovered what had transpired and even became members of the church. Actually such instances as these are absolutely fascinating, leaving the outcome up to our imagination. As for the two disciples, surely they were relieved at having accomplished their mission. In a way, this wasn't something unusual for them. There were familiar with past celebrations of Passover and the throngs cramming Jerusalem.

In vs. 17 (*kai* #346-8) Jesus and his disciples gathered to celebrate the Passover, presumably accompanied with Judas whose plan with the religious authorities was about to fall into place. Jesus was fully aware of all this and in vs. 18 (*kai* #347-9) said outrightly that one of those present will betray him. This verse contains part of a quote from Ps 41.9 which reads in full as "Even my bosom friend in whom I trust, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me." The Hebrew for bosom friend reads literally "man of my peace" or *shalom* which makes the sense of impending betrayal all the more scandalous.

These words stung each of the disciples to the heart, especially Judas, but it did nothing to change his mind. Although nothing is said of him, we can assume that everyone present sensed it was he by reason of the expression on his face when Jesus spoke of his betrayer. The big question, of course, was why. It goes unanswered down to the present. The verb in vs. 19 captures the overall sentiment, *lupeo* meaning to experience sadness or distress. The first response by the disciples was to say one after the other, “Is it I?” They got these words out of their mouths as quickly as possible to prove their innocence. Jesus didn’t let on what he knew except by saying that indeed it was one of the twelve dipping bread into the dish. The added words “with me” make the sense of betrayal all the more poignant, adjectives at this point failing to adequately describe what everyone felt.

In vs. 21 Jesus sees the distress of his disciples which compels him to offer some explanation about what in truth is beyond explanation. Again, he refers to himself objectively as Son of man, more precisely, what is written of him. There’s no direct source to this though a footnote in the NIV suggests Chapter Fifty-Three of the prophet Isaiah, the so-called suffering servant. That chapter begins with two rhetorical questions certainly applicable to the situation at hand. “Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” While Isaiah details the suffering of this mysterious servant, Jesus says that the person about to betray him will fare far worse. In fact, it would be better if he had never been born. The adjective *kalos* + for “better” makes the situation even more portentous.

The conjunctive *kai* (#348-10) of vs. 22 serves as a much needed break between Jesus’ words concerning his betrayal and what soon will become known as the institution of the Eucharist. Details follow through vs. 25. Jesus and the twelve are eating the Passover meal when suddenly he stops and adds something completely new and unexpected yet with hindsight fits in perfectly with the celebration’s significance. First he blesses and breaks the bread which he hands over to the disciples calling it his body or *soma* +. He does the same in vs. 23 (*kai* #349-11) with the cup (of wine) and in vs. 24 (*kai* #350-12) calls it the blood of the covenant (*diatheke* also as last will and testament) which is poured out for many (*pollon*).

Then in vs. 25 Jesus begins with truly or *amen* +, a way to grab the disciples’ attention for something of great importance. Jesus won’t drink the fruit of the

vine until that day when he will drink it new or *kainos* in the kingdom of God. And so the Eucharist is over and done pretty much in a flash. The speed with which this is accomplished is little appreciated and needs closer attention. Jesus seems to want his disciples repeat this variant of the Passover in a quick but by no means hasty manner. It's to be as such not to get it over with but in imitation of the original Passover.

As for the speed just noted, consider the language of the first Passover where emphasis is put upon hastiness: "In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste" [Ex 12.11]. The noun *chaphazon* for haste is derived from the verbal root *chaphaz* meaning to leap or to spring up basically as in fright. Once done, the haste just described is to be put at the service for proclaiming the Gospel, something the disciples wouldn't grasp fully until Pentecost.

Vs. 26 (*kai* #351-13) concludes the section commonly known as the Last Supper on a positive note, that is, with Jesus and his disciples having sung a Passover hymn. It seems the disciples were ignorant of Judas' machinations though they must have wondered why he slinked off from the group. Now they headed for the Mount of Olives directly opposite the temple, the time being after sunset and most likely in complete darkness. Perhaps the disciples thought Jesus brought them there to see the breath-taking sight of the temple illumined with countless points of light from Passover pilgrims. In this way they'd appreciate better the celebration they just concluded.

Instead of relaxing after the Passover meal, in vs. 27 (*kai* #352-14) Jesus surprises his disciples by getting right down to business. He tells them bluntly that they will all fall away, *skandalizo* + more along the lines of being tripped up. In a way, they weren't responsible because Jesus cites Zech 13.7 which foretold what was about to happen. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," says the Lord of hosts. "Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones." Putting this verse into perspective, it's preceded by the Lord removing idols and false prophets and concludes with the people acknowledging the Lord as their God.

In vs. 28 Jesus gives his disciples reassuring words that he will be raised up and go before them to Galilee. Small comfort, for they hadn't a clue as to what he meant. Peter spontaneously protested, that he will remain loyal even if

everyone else falls away. This is followed (vs. 30, *kai* #353-15) with Jesus foretelling his denial three times. It didn't even register with Peter who continued in vs. 31 with his protestation. The other ten (assuming again Judas being mysteriously absent) listened to Peter. In reality they suddenly found themselves on the spot and spontaneously concurred without knowing what they were saying.

Once this had taken place, in vs. 32 (*kai* #354-16) Jesus and the disciples moved to a place called Gethsemane where he bade them to remain while he went off to pray, *proseuchomai* + fundamentally to make petition. Jesus didn't go on his own but took Peter, James and John, the same disciples whom he took to witness his transfiguration (cf. vs 33, *kai* #355-17). This must have caused some resentment among the eight left behind in the darkness, again with Judas presumably absent.

While with these three men, Jesus couldn't help conceal his inner disquiet represented by the two verbs *ekthambeo* and *ademoneo* or to be in an extreme emotional state and to be troubled. This led him to say to Peter, James and John in vs. 34 (*kai* #356-18) what they could see on his face, that his soul is very sorrowful. The preposition *peri-* or around prefaced to *lupos* (from *lupeo*, to grieve) makes the adjective *perilupos* all the more intense. Naturally Jesus asked them to remain and be watchful, *meno* and *gregoreo* +. This must have spurred the three to ask why, another instance where they and the other disciples seem to be clueless as to what's going on.

In vs. 35 (*kai* #357-19) Jesus withdraws and falls to the ground. Note the double *epi*: one prefaced to the verb *pipto* + and the other free standing, both indicative of his intense anguish. From that flat-out position where Jesus is barely distinguishable from the ground itself he asks if it's possible that the hour or *hora* pass, this being a more specific time than *kairos*. Then in the next verse (*kai* #358-20) he addresses the Father with the intimate *Abba* for whom everything is possible, asking him that the *hora-as-cup...hora-as-poterion...pass* from him. Immediately there follows the all important *alla* + rendered here as "yet." Upon that small word Jesus hands over his will to that of the Father. Without this *alla*, our redemption would not have taken place.

Vs. 37 (*kai* #359-21) conveys a new direction, albeit in a subtle manner, when Jesus finishes his prayer flat-out on the ground and finds Peter, James and John

sleeping or not remaining and being watchful as in vs. 34, *meno* and *gregoreo*. He addresses Peter with two embarrassing rhetorical questions followed in vs. 38 by another use of *gregoreo* along with *proseuchomai* (both +). Both are necessary so as not to enter temptation or *peirasmos* also as enticement. He then adds that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, *prothumos* vs. *asthenes*. With these words all three disciples must have been profoundly embarrassed but unfortunately not changed.

In vs. 39 (*kai* #360-22) Jesus returned to the same spot to continue his prayer, that is, a second *epi-pipto* and *epi* as in two paragraphs above. Yet again (vs. 40, *kai* #361-23) he found all three disciples once more asleep. As with the first instance, they were at a loss as how to respond, *apokrinomai* also to reply. Unfortunately it happened a third time (vs. 41, *kai* #362-24). Jesus figured another rebuke would be a waste of time. He got right to the point as to why he brought them to Gethsemane. The hour (*hora* +) has come. Already the Son of man has been betrayed or handed over (*paradidomai* +) into the hands of sinners which to the disciples was totally unexpected. Now he bade them to rise and get going which in this instance implies waiting for Judas to come with those he had informed in order to arrest him.

Vs. 43 (*kai* #363-25) followed by *euthus* or immediately has the arrival of Judas and a fully armed group from the chief priests, scribes and elders. Mark puts this crowd or *ochlos* + along with Judas on the same level as the three groups of religious leaders. In other words, there's no difference between the two. As for Judas, in vs. 44 he's designated not by his proper name—almost too revolting to mention—but as the betrayer, the participle of *paradidomai* +.

Judas-the-betrayer had given those with him a sign. The one whom he will kiss is the person to arrest. And so he did in vs. 45 (*kai* #364-26), addressing Jesus as Rabbi, a proper name which made the betrayal all the more repulsive. Obviously the question down the ages is why. However, that goes unanswered despite all the theories. At the same time, without Judas' betrayal, we have no redemption.

In vs. 48 (*kai* #365-27) Jesus looks Judas straight in the eye asking him why he had come out with an armed group of men. Chances are these men were recruited at the last minute and hadn't the slightest idea of what was going on. Jesus said there were plenty of occasions to arrest him while he was teaching in

the temple. Next he put this difficult to grasp betrayal in proper context. It is to fulfill the scriptures, *pleroo* +. There's no direct reference to a verse or passage but most likely it infers the suffering servant of Isaiah Chapter Fifty-Three as well as Zech 13.7. The latter is partially quoted in vs. 27 and is presented again here in full: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," says the Lord of hosts. 'Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.'" Obviously this verse needs to be put into perspective. It's preceded by the Lord removing idols and false prophets and concluded with the people acknowledging the Lord as their God.

The conjunctive *kai* of vs. 50 (#366-28) renders this short verse in a concise yet poignant way by saying that all (that is, the disciples) forsook Jesus and fled, the two verbs *aphiemi* + and *pheugo* being pretty much the same.

Vss. 51 (*kai* #367-29) and 52 mentions an unidentified young man who had followed Jesus. When the *ochlos* associated with Judas attempted to seize him, this youth fled completely naked, leaving behind a linen cloth. The piece of clothing is a hint that he was from a wealthy family. Footnotes in both the **RSV** and **NIV** suggest it was Mark himself. Though not certain, it's a good possibility because the details of Jesus' betrayal, arrest and what follows are given in considerable detail as from an eyewitness or someone who had direct access to those who were present.

The conjunctive *kai* (#368-30) of vs. 53 serves to kick the narrative into high gear with Jesus being arrested and led to the high priest along with the chief priests, elders and scribes. In other words, we have the whole religious establishment arrayed against one man whom they knew was a thorn in their side despite his innocence. Of all the disciples who had deserted Jesus, Peter feels some remorse at having dozed off three times with the other two and decides to follow Jesus but does so from afar, *apo makrothen* (cf. vs. 54, *kai* #369-31).

The entire assembly now found themselves to be in a quandary. They sought testimony (*marturia* also as evidence) to put Jesus to death but were at a complete loss. It seems they had assembled many to bear false witness against him, *pseudomartureo*. Actually having bought these witnesses might be a better way of putting it. Vs. 57 (*kai* #370-32) essentially says the same thing which continues into the next verse where they heard Jesus claiming how he would

destroy the Jerusalem temple and build it in three days (cf. 13.2). And so (vs. 59, *kai* #371-33) they couldn't even agree to this testimony which turned out to be hearsay.

In vs. 60 (*kai* #372-34) we have Jesus maintaining silence while the high priest questioned him which must have infuriated most present but made others quietly question why a big fuss over an apparently innocent man. Note that the text says that the high priest did this "in the midst" (*eis meson*) of all assembled which means for the moment he was the absolute center of attention and loving it. However, Jesus did not remain silent when asked if he were the Christ, the Son of the Blessed (*Eulogetos*: *logos* prefaced with *eu-*, adverbial form of *agathos* or good). A footnote in the **NIV** says this phrase is a way of referring to God without pronouncing his name. To this Jesus wasted no words and responded directly "I am."

Jesus continues by saying that those present will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power and coming in the clouds of heaven, *Dunamis* most likely another word for the Lord. Here he's really digging a hole for himself as far as these religious authorities are concerned. What makes it worse is that he quotes directly from Ps 110.1 which runs in full as "The Lord says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.'" ¹² Note the presence of two lords, *YHWH* and that of the psalmist, 'Adony or the king of Israel. This verse is frequently quoted in the New Testament as referring to Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Implied in the psalm is that the king is newly established and will take his place at God's right hand. This sitting extends for a period or until (God is speaking now) he subdues the king's enemies and makes them a footstool, *hadom*. "I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and for the footstool of our God" [1 Chron 28.2].

Jesus' quote from the psalm as applicable to himself made the high priest tear his garments who exclaimed there's no need for witnesses. After this he asked those present for their decision, the verb *phaino* being used which means to appear. The inevitable conclusion? All condemned Jesus as guilty or *enochos* to death, *katakrino* also as to decide against.

Now events take on a life of their own where in vs. 65 some of the chief priests,

¹² Cf. 12.35 for Jesus using the same psalm verse.

elders and scribes spat on Jesus (*kai* #373-35). This verse intimates a transition from the assembly of the religious authorities to the Romans without going into details about the transfer. Note, however, that most, not all, condemned Jesus. Perhaps they had their doubts but were afraid to speak up. Consider Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council who later buried Jesus. However, we have no testimony that he was present. In addition to this, some of the guards joined in by striking Jesus, *rhapisma* also a blow as well as a slap. To this they added the demand to prophesy. They must have said this multiple times to which Jesus remained silent inciting the guards all the more. As for the guards acting as such, most likely they were bored and with Passover, had few if any prisoners to take out their frustrations.

Starting with vs. 66 (*kai* 374-36) we have a vivid account of Peter's denial. The details are significant...as from a first-hand account...which Mark may have gotten from Peter himself; also John is a possibility since he had connections with the high priest. We have a brief but memorable contact between the impetuous Peter and a lowly maid (cf. vs. 67, *kai* #375-37). Right away the maid recognized Peter as having been with Jesus which he promptly denied. Not only did Peter deny Jesus, he questioned her testimony, figuring that quickly he could put down a woman of insignificant rank (cf. vs. 68, *kai* #376-38). The maid fearlessly stood her ground and told those nearby that indeed Peter was associated with Jesus (cf. vs. 69, *kai* #377-39).

Peter, still reeling from his first encounter with this woman and being at a loss as how to respond, denied Jesus yet again, this time in front of bystanders. Vs. 71 says that he invoked a curse on himself, *anathemazo* being quite strong but given the circumstances and knowing Peter's character, was done spontaneously and without reflection. In other words, Jesus denied any association with Jesus...end of story, he hoped...but with consequences afterwards. Vs. 72 (*kai* #378-40) with *euthus* or immediately has the cock crowing which signals that dawn was close at hand. The concluding words of this lengthy chapter are significant and sum up the whole story at hand: "And he (Peter) broke down and wept," *epiballos* being the verb for the former which literally means to put upon and thus signifies the intensity of Peter's remorse.

Despite the account framed in dramatic terms, the speed with which Mark presents his account intimates that all is not lost. Yes, Peter blatantly denied Jesus but quickly repented. This quickness also manifested as impulsiveness

reveals that Peter can get himself in a difficult bind but has the means of pulling himself out of it. In fact, we can feel Peter eagerly awaiting meeting Jesus after his death and resurrection, somehow knowing that not only will he be restored but be given a place of honor in the church to be established.

Chapter Fourteen has a total of forty verses beginning with the conjunctive *kai*.

Chapter Fifteen

The verses of this chapter and the next—the latter being the last of Mark’s Gospel—consist of a rapid fire presentation of facts and events related to the arrest, passion and death of Jesus Christ. This makes the text pretty much impervious to notations as has been the customary practice with the Gospels thus far as well as other biblical books. Because of this, I present a handful of remarks. Actually this paucity makes any presentation come across awkward and not pleasant to read as is the case with the document at hand. Admittedly the task to date has been difficult and trying on the reader. Again, keep in mind that such notations are a kind of aide to read the Gospel in the spirit of *lectio divina*.

As for notations, vs. 23 has the first of five verses (in part or whole) from the Hebrew scriptures. Notations will be made from that point on to the conclusion of Chapter Fifteen. At first I thought this approach was a cop-out, of being unwilling to go through the verses of both chapters, especially since they recount details of our very redemption. Then again, if I opted for that, the result would be what I like to call observations on the run. Better to choose a plan resting on a solid foundation, namely, the Hebrew scriptures which was an essential part of our redemption.

The impending doom of this new chapter is doubled, if you will, by both *kai* (#379-1) and *euthus* or immediately which follows it. Thus we have the two rendered “as soon as.” The entire religious establishment is gathered—chief priests, elders, scribes and council—for a consultation or *sumboulion* +. We have no record with regard to this consultation but do know the result. They bound Jesus and led him to Pilate. Being responsible for order throughout Israel, Pilate was most interested in Jesus’ identity which is why he asked if he was king of the Jews (vs. 2, *kai* #380-2). If so, that would be an immediate threat to Roman

rule. Despite Pilate making known to Jesus the charges against him, Jesus gives no response which caused the governor to wonder, *thaumazo* +. As for these charges, they were fabricated by the chief priests as noted in vs. 3, *kai* #381-3, the verb being *kategoreo* +. Thus at once Pilate was caught between a rock and a hard place.

It was customary at the Passover to release a prisoner, a way to relieve any tension between the crowd (*ochlos* of vs. 8, *kai* #382-4), Pilate and the religious authorities. As for the third group, they were quite anxious throughout all this, not wishing the situation at hand to flare up to a full scale rebellion against Rome. Tensions were already high, and with Passover at hand, the threat was even more real. As for the crowd, the chief priests took care to stir up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead of Jesus. Pilate caved in, wishing to satisfy the crowd, the verb *poieo* + to do, to make along with the adjective *hikanos* commonly as fit or appropriate.

Next follows the scourging and crowning of thorns after which the Roman soldiers led Jesus out to be crucified. Note this is the second time Jesus was maltreated. For the first, see 15.64. Jesus must have made a pleasing sight to the religious authorities, virtually unrecognizable after the entire battalion had a go at him (cf. vs. 16). Vss. 17 through 24 begin with the conjunctive *kai*: #383-5, #384-6, #385-7, #386-8, #387-9, #388-10, #389-11 and #390-12.

As for vs. 23, it contains the first of six scriptural verses from the Hebrew Bible, that is, Ps 69.21 which runs here in full:

“They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” This is the same psalm verse quoted in vs. 36. In the context at hand, the verse makes better sense in light of the one which follows immediately: “Let their own table before them become a snare; let their sacrificial feasts be a trap.” As for sacrificial feasts, the noun is *shalom* usually rendered as peace but rendered as “for security” in the **RSV** and “fellowship” in the **NIV**. Thus the two verses make fuller sense in light of the Passover about to be celebrated.

Vs. 24 contains the second of six scriptural verses, that is, Ps 22.18 ^{13 14}:

¹³ Vs. 17 is included since it and the verse which follows form one whole sentence.

¹⁴ Vss. 26, 27 and 29 contain the following references to the conjunctive *kai*: #391-13, #392-14 and #393-15. A footnote in the **RSV** notes that “Other ancient authorities insert

“I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.” The counting of bones suggests that the psalmist had suffered starvation, voluntarily or involuntarily. This, of course, is an occasion for his persecutors to both stare and gloat, *navat* and *ra’ah*. The former almost means to look in the sense of behold and the latter is the common verb to see intensified by the preposition *b-* or in, “look in me.” Along with this staring and gloating comes a game of lots where those afflicting the psalmist vie for his clothing.

Vs. 29 contains the third of six scriptural verses, that is, Ps 22.7-8:

“All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads; He committed his cause to the Lord; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, for he delights in him!” These words are from the same psalm as vs. 1 is quoted a bit later in vs. 34. In the Psalm verse note three aspects of disgrace, that is, with regard to vs. 7:

- 1) *Lahad* or to mock which implies speaking in a barbarous fashion.
- 2) *Patar* in reference to mouths in the sense of spitting and alternately to open (as the womb). It implies greater contempt, coming, as it were, from deep inside the person who does the *patar*. The Hebrew of this verse reads graphically, “shoot out of the lip.”
- 3) To wag the head (singular) or *nuah* which also can apply to drunkenness.

With regard to vs. 8, the verb to commit derives from the verbal root *galal* meaning to roll, so these words may read, “He rolled to (‘el) the Lord.” The act of rolling takes place downhill, so the psalmist can be seen as gradually rolling down a slope into divine hands ready to receive him. *Palat* as to deliver is the first of two taunts directed towards the psalmist, the second one being *natsal* (to deliver) which also means to draw out as well as to deprive; usually it is associated with exiting. *Chaphats*, to delight with its sense of bending (down) aptly fits in this verse as God were stooping over to pluck the psalmist from danger.

Vs. 33 (*kai* #394-16) contains the fourth of six scriptural verses, that is, Am 8.9:

vs. 28, ‘And the scripture was fulfilled which says, “He was reckoned with the transgressors.”’”

“And on that day,’ says the Lord, ‘I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.’” Reference is to the indictment of Israel which begins Chapter Eight.

Vs. 34 (*kai* #395-17) contains the fifth of six scriptural verses, that is, Ps 22.1:

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?” Two rhetorical questions start off this psalm. *Hazav* is the verb to forsake as well as having a sense of letting go. The psalmist uttering these words posits a sharp distinction between help and distance, *yeshuah* and *rachok*, this latter term augmenting the notion of remoteness by the prefix *m-* (from) to *yeshuah*; God also is *rachok* from groaning *sha’ag* being the verbal root which connotes roaring as of a lion.

Vs. 36 contains the sixth and last of scriptural verses, that is, Ps 69.21:¹⁵

“They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” This is the same psalm verse quoted in vs. 23.

The next *kai* reference is vs. 38 (#397-19) followed with vs. 42, #398-20. *Kai* also is in vss. 45 (#399-21) and 46 (#400-22).

Note that in vs. 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, sought to bury the body of Jesus and thus approached Pilate for permission to do so. He’s tied in with these verses as pertaining to the Hebrew scriptures by reason of looking for the kingdom of God, *prosdechomai*, the preposition *pros-* or direction towards-which intimating expectation. In a very real way, this came true for Joseph. One can’t help but wonder how he comported himself during the trial of Jesus and what happened to him later. It’s simply left without resolution. Nevertheless, Joseph put his seal, if you will, on Jesus’ tomb by having rolled a stone before the door. And so Chapter Fifteen concludes with Mary Magdalene and Mary, mother of Jesus, seeing where Jesus was laid. Both are mentioned in vs. 40. The former noted as the first person who saw the risen Jesus and the second, of course, as the mother of Jesus.

¹⁵ Vs. 35 contains *kai* #396-18.

Chapter Fifteen has a total of twenty-two verses beginning with the conjunctive *kai*.

Chapter Sixteen

For information with regard to the conclusion of Mark's Gospel, the **RSV** has an extended footnote saying that "Nothing is certainly known either about how this Gospel originally ended or about the origin of vss. 9-20 which cannot have been part of the original text of Mark." Regardless, notations are made here in accord with reading Chapter Sixteen ¹⁶ through the lens of *lectio divina*.

Chapter Sixteen typically begins with the conjunctive *kai* (#401-1) translated as "and." Both Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, bring spices to anoint the body of Jesus. However, they have to wait until the conclusion of Passover, Israel's most sacred holiday. No question about it. This had been a Passover like no other not only for these two women but for Jesus' mother and the disciples. As for any celebration, it must have been a complete blur. In fact, all barely noticed the throng that filled Jerusalem. Things got even worse once everyone started to make their way home. The reason? Suddenly Jerusalem was a ghost town. With the absence not just of the crowds but especially Jesus, you could hear a pin drop. This must have made them feel more isolated and exposed as time went on. As for Mary Magdalene, along with Jesus' mother, somehow they knew all was not lost and would be compensated upon coming to the tomb.

Lian proi + or "exceedingly early" in the morning (vs. 2, *kai* #402-2) the two women headed for the tomb and wondered who would roll away the stone. Should they contact Joseph of Arimathea who was responsible for putting it there (cf. vs. 3 for *kai* #403-3)? However, the possibility of going there in vain didn't deter the two from going to the tomb. Something deep within them said that the stone would be removed which turned out to be the case. Vs. 4 (*kai* 404-4) makes it a point to say this stone was very large.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were completely fearless and walked right inside the tomb (vs. 5, *kai* #405-5) where they found a young man dressed in a white robe which naturally amazed them. The verb *exthambeomai* is prefaced

¹⁶ That is to say, the Greek critical edition.

with the preposition *ex-* or from which intensifies the situation. The young man simply sat there as if he were expecting the two women. He bade them to tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus had gone to Galilee. This way of phrasing it intimates that while Peter is a disciple, he has a role distinct from the others. Actually he's to remind his fellow disciples through the two women that Jesus had spoken of going there earlier (cf. 14.28). Galilee was familiar territory, so it wouldn't be difficult to find Jesus. This is the last mention of Galilee in Mark's Gospel. The other appearances of Jesus don't seem to have any direct connection with them in that place.

Vs. 8 (*kai* #406-6) has Mary Magdalene and the other Mary leaving the tomb in a way very different from having entered it. That is to say, they fled (*pheugo*) having been gripped with trembling and astonishment. The two nouns are *tromos* and *ekstatis*, the latter defined as a state of being in which consciousness is wholly or partially suspended and frequently associated with divine action. And so the two decided to keep what they had witnessed to themselves, a hard thing to do but with no other choice available for the moment. Still, they were faced with the prospect of informing the disciples and of being ridiculed by them. Mark says nothing in this regard.

Vs. 9 begins with what the critical Greek text says is "the longer ending of Mark."

In vs. 9 Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, *phaino* + suggesting a presence which is not corporeal. Note that this verse says that Jesus had cast out seven demons from her, such words being inserted to show that Mary was not a naturally pure or saintly person but one whom Jesus nevertheless favored. It was only natural for Mary to rush and tell the disciples this, but they did not believe her. They as well as many others knew of her reputation and thus were hesitant to believe anything she said. Still, there was something genuine about the way she spoke of Jesus being present to her.

A bit later Jesus appeared to "two of them," that is, most likely disciples, but as with the case of Mary Magdalene, their report was rejected. The verb is *phaneroo* + fundamentally to make clear, to appear in a public fashion. Note that it's used with the noun *morphe* or form described as another, *heteros*. That is to say, *morphe* is implied with *phaino* of vs. 9 more along the lines of becoming visible. As for the former, it seems that while Jesus was fully present, he wasn't

accepted as such but suffered rejection.

Finally in vs. 14 Jesus decides to take more decisive action. He appeared (*phaneroo* +) to the eleven while they were at table. Most likely after some time the disciples felt confident enough to gather together and have a common meal. Could it have been a kind of prelude to a Eucharistic celebration? Right away Jesus upbraided them for both their lack of belief and hardness of heart (*apistia* and *sklerokardia* ¹⁷) the verb being *oneidizo* being somewhat strong as to reproach and even insult. Interestingly Jesus directs this not as towards himself but towards those who saw him after he rose from the dead. Though names are not given, that of course means Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

On the other hand, Jesus understood the weakness of the disciples as well as their essential goodness and desire to pick up the pieces and move forward. Thus in vs. 15 (*kai* #407-7) he gives them a commission which defines their role not so much as disciples but as apostles. They are to go into (*poreuomai* + with *eis*) all the world which implies everywhere in creation and preach (*kerusso* +) the gospel not just to humans but to all creation, *ktisis* meaning animate as well as inanimate beings.

A consequence of this preaching is baptism by those who believe (*pisteuo* +), an action which effects salvation, the verb *sozo* + being used here. Anyone who doesn't believe will be condemned, *katakrino* +. Thus the sequence is *poreuomai* → *kerusso* → *pisteuo* → *sozo* ¹⁸ or go → preach → believe → save/condemned. Those who believe will be given signs (*semeion* +) or better, will be accompanied by them, the verb being *parakoleutheo* or to follow beside (*para*-). That is to say, believers won't be left as orphans but will have a kind of indirect accompaniment in the following form: cast out demons, speak in new tongues, pick up serpents, not harmed by any deadly drink and lay hands on the sick. These don't apply to the presence of a being but the ability to function or follow (*akoloutho*) with Jesus beside (*para*-) them. Perhaps the Holy Spirit is implied but is omitted since Mark doesn't speak of it here.

Vs. 19 gives a terse account of the ascension of Jesus. Once in heaven, he takes his seat at God's right hand meaning that he is equally divine. True to Jesus' injunction, the eleven went forth and preached (*exerchomai* and *kerusso*, both +).

¹⁷ *Skleros* prefaced to *kardia* is a strong adjective meaning harsh, unyielding.

¹⁸ Step number five, if you will, can go one or two ways: *sozo* as noted or *katakrino*.

They did this everywhere or *pantachou* + also in all directions. They didn't do it on their own initiative but had the Lord who worked with them and confirmed the message by signs that attended it. The two verbs are *sunergeo* also means to work with or *sun-* and *bebaioo* also as to strengthen which pertains to the *logos* + or word-as-expression which here can be taken as the Gospel. Note that such strengthening wasn't done in isolation but with signs (*semeion* +) that literally followed upon it, that is, the *epi-* prefaced to *akoloutheo*.

The critical Greek text adds what it calls “a shorter ending of Mark” which is included here followed by a few notations on the Greek text. The English text as found in a footnote of the **RSV** runs as follows: “But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.”

The verb *paraggello* means to make a brief announcement about (*para-*) something to both Peter and those with him as to what they've been told. What stands out here is recognition of Peter's role among the apostles, that he is the person now responsible for the other eleven and the work they are about to do. It seems that Jesus in his resurrected state sent out in all directions through these eleven the proclamation or *kerugma* of eternal salvation, *soteria*. As for this *kerugma*, it's modified by the two adjectives *hieros* + and *aphthartos*, sacred and imperishable. And so concludes Mark's Gospel with a close association of the eleven apostles, the *kerugma* and Peter, all dependent upon Jesus Christ who is even more active and far-reaching than when alive physically.

Chapter Sixteen has a total of seven verses beginning with the conjunctive *kai*.

To the best of my ability, the Gospel according to Mark has a grand total of four hundred and seven references to the conjunctive *kai*. Regardless, that's quite a large number for a relatively short Gospel and is a fact that cannot be overlooked.

Upon completion of this document I felt a certain sense of disappointment. It centered around the difficulty of presenting notations in a less than desirable format compared with other biblical texts on this homepage. And so I went through the text four times in an attempt to make it more acceptable. As a

result, the text came across not as smooth flowing as I would have liked. At the same time I took some comfort in knowing that I had done the best I could.

Finally, I take some consolation in the fact that as noted in the Introduction, the document isn't to be read as a text. Rather, it's more as a companion to praying Mark's Gospel, if you will, in the spirit of *lectio divina*. That's the only redeeming quality. If it helps just one reader in this regard, the project was not in vain.

+