

**v.9:1** *And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.*

*In all probability the first verse of chapter nine is a continuation of the discourse at the end of chapter eight. This is because of the time reference given in verse two. "After six days," that is, six days after He had called the people together with His disciples and taught them. (v.8:34)*

- a) *Jesus tells the crowd that some of them that now stood there with him would not experience death until they had witnessed the coming kingdom of God of which he had so often preached come into power or be ushered in with power.*
- b) *No doubt Jesus spoke of the beginning of this kingdom and not its culmination, which will be at the second coming. He speaks of His resurrection, the coming or the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the church. (v.1:15)*
- c) *In about six to eight months he would be risen from the dead. Shortly after, the Spirit would be poured out upon believers. Within 70 years of this discourse the world would be "turned upside down" as great churches would be established in gentile cities and Jerusalem would fall. So some of them would not die until they had experienced the power of the kingdom of God and its establishment on the earth.*

**v.9:2-8** *And after six days Jesus taketh [with him] Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.*

*Jesus takes Peter, James and John, the so-called inner circle of His apostles, who would represent three credible witnesses, into a high mountain. The place is not identified, but located someplace between Caesarea Philippi and Capernaum which is the next specific place mentioned.*

- a) *Mark simply tells us that Jesus was transfigured before them. The Greek word used is the word from which we get metamorphosis, that means to change from one form into another. In this particular instance it is Luke that provides much more detail as to how this event transpired. (Luke 9:28-36)*

- b) So Jesus took these men into the mountain to pray as he had done many times. These three close companions of Jesus, as they had done many times, fall fast asleep. The transfiguration occurs while they are yet sleeping!
- c) Matthew tells us "His face shone as the sun." Luke tells us "the fashion of His countenance was altered." Mark concentrates on the whiteness of His clothing. The idea seems to be that His glory was such that it shone through His clothing. He was light that was still able to be distinguished as a form.
- d) Moses and Elias appeared and were speaking with Jesus. They spoke of His coming death. Of all the great Old Testament figures, why these two men? Although we are not told we know that Moses and Elias were representative of the law and the prophets respectively. It was the law and the prophets that Jesus had come to fulfill linking the dispensations of law and grace; the fulfillment of which was the topic of their conversation.
- e) These men also "appeared in glory." Was it their own glory or did the glory of Jesus engulf them just as the apparent glory of the moon is the result of the brilliance of the sun? Did they come from glory by some special privilege of God or did they reside in what was called "Abraham's bosom" awaiting their glorified Saviour to lead them into eternity?
- f) It seems that it was this brilliant light and the sound of conversation that awoke the apostles. They wake-up to the described sight of the transfiguration! How long did this last? How did the apostles know it was Moses and Elias? Did they take part in the conversation? It says, "Peter answered." Was it in response to a question or something being said?
- g) At any rate, Peter, as Moses and Elias are departing, suggests the construction of three tents. The gospels tell us he did not know what to say and that he didn't realize what he had said. No doubt he was both startled and afraid.
- h) As Peter was speaking a cloud overshadows them or engulfs them. The glory of Jesus must have lit up the entire cloud enveloping the apostles in light. The voice of the Father is then heard declaring Jesus to be the beloved Son and instructing them to obey Him.
- i) Calling Jesus son affirmed that He shared in the divine nature of the Father. He was beloved, that is, bound to the Father in divine love. The Father was pleased (Matthew), that is, in complete agreement and approval of all Jesus said and did. Lastly, they were to obey Him, as being in obedience to Jesus was being in obedience to the Father.
- j) The apostles fell on their faces in fear. (Matt. 17:1-6) Daring not to move or to look up, it is the touch of Jesus and his words of comfort that put them at ease. When they do look up Jesus is alone with them in a familiar form. (Matt. 17:7-8)

**v.9:9-10** *And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.*

*After this great manifestation of His glory, the topic of Jesus' death comes up once again. In view of what they had just experienced, talk of His death confused them even more.*

- a) *Jesus had just been speaking to Moses and Elijah! He had been transformed into a being so powerful and glorious that they couldn't look upon Him. He was the Messiah and the prophecies as they understood them with the appearance of Elijah were coming true. These men must have been more convinced than ever that no one, not even Rome, could stand in His way. He could usher in the kingdom whenever He desired.*
- b) *Death and rising from the dead must refer to something else according to the apostles perspective. What did it mean or represent? Jesus often spoke in parables and employed allegory. What was the particular meaning of the death and resurrection of which He now spoke?*
- c) *Jesus instructed them to tell no one what they had seen and they kept this charge. If the three would have spoken of it there may have been a movement to force Jesus' hand to come into power. If they had spoken of it the other apostles and disciples would have been all the more confused and their faith even more shaken with His suffering and death.*
- d) *By these three faithful witnesses testifying of what they had seen, but after His resurrection, the fact that He went to the cross as a partaker of the divine nature, that is, that He went to the cross as God and did not become a partaker in this nature, the result of His act was clearly established. He went to the cross of His own will. He held the power and the means within Himself to stop it.*

**v.9:11** *And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?*

*These three privileged apostles had just seen Elijah who was, according to their understanding, to be the forerunner of the Messiah. However, he had just appeared and left. Was the teaching they had received and believed inaccurate or faulty? Trying to put this whole experience together and to come to a right understanding of the Messianic prophecies, they consult with Jesus.*

- a) *The teaching of the Jews was based on Malachi 4:4-6. They believed that Elijah would return in the flesh to prepare the way for the Messiah. One of the first questions put to John the Baptist was if he was Elijah. (John 1:21) Some believed Jesus was Elijah. (v.8:28) Some Jews are still looking for the coming of Elijah to this very day! So, believing Jesus to be the Messiah, how could they reconcile this faith to the scriptures and to the teaching of the scribes?*

- b) *Some modern day scholars believe that this prophecy in Malachi had a dual meaning. John MacArthur states, "In the last days, the Lord will send still another Elijah, and the Messiah himself will return, this time to establish His eternal kingdom in power, righteousness, and glory."*

**v.9:12-13** *And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.*

*Jesus affirms both the scripture and the teaching stating that Elijah would come and restore all things. He then adds that the scripture says that the Messiah would suffer and be killed. Jesus tells them that these two issues that perplexed them, namely, the coming of Elijah and the suffering Messiah were explained or predicted in the scriptures.*

- a) *He goes on to tell them that the first step had been completed. Elijah did come and the leaders had their way with him. He spoke of John the Baptist, the prophecy of Malachi being explained to Zacharias by the angel of the Lord. (Luke 1:15-17) Matthew adds that the three apostles understood the prophecy by Jesus instruction. (Matt. 17:13)*
- b) *To restore means to make something as it once was; to put back into a former condition or situation. John the Baptist exposed the hypocrisy of the leaders and turned the people's hearts back to God. His baptism of repentance was a denouncing of the current way of thinking and the turning to a previous God-centered attitude.*

*"Here it means that Elijah would put things in a proper state; be the instrument of reforming the people; of restoring them, in some measure, to proper notions about the Messiah, and preparing them for his coming. Before the coming of John, their views were erroneous, their expectations worldly, and their conduct exceedingly depraved. He corrected many of the notions about the Messiah, and was the instrument of an extensive reformation; and thus restored them, in some degree, to correct notions of their own economy and of the Messiah, and to a preparation for his advent." Albert Barnes*

- c) *Jesus does not point out or explain the scriptures of the suffering Messiah to them for they had not yet been fulfilled, but the truth of the Messiah was nevertheless present in their scriptures. (Ps 22; Ps 69; Isaiah 53)*

**v.9:14-16** *And when he came to [his] disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to [him] saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?*

*How long Jesus, alone with Peter, James and John were in the mountain we do not know. However, while they were gone a crowd had gathered along with some scribes who argued with the apostles who were left behind. The presence of the scribes shows that they had entered the Jewish region.*

- a) *The crowd sees Jesus and they run to him, excitedly offering their greetings. Remember that Jesus had been gone for approximately eight months. In that time period there were probably many rumors and theories as to where He had gone or what may have happened to Him. They see He is alive and well and are greatly amazed, that is, relieved and excited that He had returned.*
- b) *Some say that the fact that the crowd was “greatly amazed” suggests that Jesus may have retained some of the glory as did Moses when he met God in the mount. That this was the case cannot be proven by the text. In all probability it was simply their natural reaction to seeing Him after so long of a time. They first came upon nine apostles in the wilderness and probably think the worst before they see Him. Another possibility is that His mere presence produced a sense of amazement.*
- c) *Jesus comes to the rescue of the apostles as he walks directly up to the scribes and asks them over what they are contending with the apostles. In other words, “What is the problem here?”*

***v.9:17-18 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.***

*The scribes, who are also probably taken aback by Jesus’ sudden appearance do not readily answer, but a man in the crowd steps forward to explain. The man has brought his possessed son to the apostles asking them to cast out the demon.*

- a) *The man/boy could not speak and when the demon took hold of him he would have fits going into convulsions. He would lose all motor control, grind his teeth and foam at the mouth. The nine apostles had failed to cast out the demon.*
- b) *Jesus had given power to the twelve to cast out demons and to heal the sick. They had used this power successfully up to this point, but now could not cast out this particular demon. (v.6:7, 13) No doubt this argument with the scribes centered around their inability to heal the boy.*

**v.9:19** *He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.*

*Jesus, literally surrounded by faithlessness, rebukes not an individual or even a group, but the entire generation. The mindset of the world, specifically His own people, that He had now lived with and experienced for thirty plus years grieves Him as He asks out loud how long He must put up with it.*

- a) *Jesus had just, as a man, tasted of the glory He once enjoyed with the Father. As He came down from the mountain it appeared that three of His apostles were beginning to understand. As a man He was on a spiritual mountain, but is now suddenly thrust into the mindset of the valley dwellers.*
- b) *The scribes, the religious leaders of the people, rejoiced in the fact that the apostles had failed. The apostles couldn't answer the taunts and accusations of the scribes, themselves not able to understand their lack of success. The crowd was probably more disappointed in the fact that they didn't witness a miracle than in the fact that the boy was still possessed. Finally, the father stood before Him with a hope not based in faith.*
- c) *This tremendous high now confronted by this tremendous low seems to trigger the frustration present in the comment of Jesus. His longing to again be with His Father in glory is growing. After rebuking the faithlessness of the generation, He commands that the possessed individual be brought before Him.*

**v.9:20-22** *And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.*

*The moment the demon possessed son of the man is brought into the presence of Jesus the demon takes hold of him in the manner in which the father had described. He was thrown into a fit and was shaking uncontrollably, foaming at the mouth at the feet of Jesus demonstrating the control he has on the son.*

- a) *Jesus chooses to deal with the boy's father, to first deal with his issues and needs before turning His attention to the man's son. Jesus is in total control, unmoved by the antics of the demon as he questions the boy's father.*
- b) *In answer to Jesus' question the father states that the demon has possessed his son since childhood. Many times it had tried to destroy him by throwing him into fire or into water.*

*The father begs Jesus to have compassion upon him and upon his son. He asks Jesus to help them.*

- c) *The man prefaces his plea for help with the words, "If you can." The man had no doubt heard of Jesus. His hope was high when he came before Jesus' apostles, but his faith was obviously shaken when these nine men had failed. After all, didn't they invoke the name of Jesus upon this demon and yet fail. Did they cast out other demons in the presence of this man? With the apostles' failure he was filled with fear and despair. Was Jesus another dead-end? Was his son beyond help?*

**v.9:23-24** *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things [are] possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*

*Jesus turns the tables, so to speak, on the man. He could and would help the man, but faith or belief was the prerequisite that he demanded. "It's not whether I can help you, but whether you can believe," or "I will help you, if you believe."*

- a) *The man's faith is immediately restored. Hope is breathed into his soul. Was it the mere presence of Jesus? Was it His confidence? Was it the power, honesty and purity that he perceived in the eyes of the God of the universe? "Not only this problem which you deem as insurmountable, but anything is possible for those who believe in Me!"*
- b) *The man fears that this brilliant flash of faith may suddenly fade, and so, adds to his cry an appeal to help his unbelief, that is, the thoughts and logic that would trample the seed of faith that the presence of Jesus had planted within him.*

**v.9:25-27** *When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, [Thou] dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And [the spirit] cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.*

*The people seem to give the scribes and Pharisees some space. All this has been taking place in the company of Jesus, his apostles, and the Jewish leadership. Sensing something was about to take place, the crowd rushes together surrounding those mentioned above.*

- a) *Jesus answers the man's prayer concerning his faith. In helping his son, Jesus would take care of any doubt or unbelief that would come against the man's faith in this instance. It is the man's request to help his unbelief that is answered! In dealing with the father the son is cured.*

- b) *Jesus commands the demon to depart and not return. In one last act of defiance the demon convulses the man's son with as much violence as it can muster. The son of the man now lays on the ground motionless. The contrast is so sudden and so great that most in the crowd believe he is dead. Jesus grabs his hand and pulls him up.*

**v.9:28-29** *And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*

*Jesus and the apostles return to the house. This is probably His residence in Capernaum. His journey into the gentile lands had come to a close. The apostles probably talked among themselves along the way perplexed as to why they could not cast out the demon. In the privacy of the house they bring their concern to Jesus.*

- a) *It is apparent that since given the power the apostles must have regularly cast out demons or else they would not be so surprised by their failure to do so in this instance. I believe Jesus' answer was to demonstrate to them that rebuking a spirit in His name was not some magical formula. Possibly they were putting faith in the physical and ignoring the spiritual.*
- b) *Prayer and fasting represented close communion with God. It is in their relationship with the Father and in His will that their power lie. They could not take the power given them for granted, but had to cultivate their own faith and understanding.*
- c) *In addition, Jesus refers to the demon as "this kind," and so, distinguishes it from others that they had dealt with. It was different in that it did not address Jesus in any way or verbally protest His presence. It seemed to have the power to come and go and didn't seem to fear the prospect of coming out of the individual for it had tried several times to destroy him. We are given very little insight into the demonic world in the scriptures.*

**v.9:30-32** *And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know [it] For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.*

*Jesus and the apostles are in the region of Galilee where most of His ministry, up to this point, had taken place. He had been gone for eight months and rumors of His return had no doubt been circulating, so He continues to be on the move.*

- a) *How long He traveled about in this region before being discovered or allowing himself to be discovered is not known. Once again, the reason given for not appearing openly is that He desired to teach the apostles; to spend time with them without distraction.*

- b) Specifically, Jesus teaches them of his true mission as the Messiah. This is at least the second time that He plainly instructs them as to His death and resurrection. (v.8:31) Here He adds that He will be delivered or betrayed into the hands of the chief priests and scribes.
- c) Technically, the tense used, indicates that “He is being delivered.” This probably means that the forces were presently at work. Everything for His demise was being put into place. Alliances were forming, plots being made, and opinions being formed.
- d) This teaching greatly bothered the apostles. Matthew says it made them “exceeding sorry.” They didn’t want to hear it for it contradicted everything they believed as to the Messiah. It was a saying that taken literally dashed all their hopes and dreams. Mark tells us they didn’t understand, while Luke adds they couldn’t understand for it was hid from them. (Luke 9:44-45) So, this prediction remained a mystery to them that filled them with sorrow, frustration and fear.
- e) They were afraid to ask Him probably because of what happened to Peter when he objected to the saying. (v.8:33) On the other hand, they probably didn’t want to know, the thought of His death being so offensive to them.

**v.9:33-35** *And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who [should be] the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, [the same] shall be last of all, and servant of all.*

Mark’s narrative continues with Jesus and the apostles in the house at Capernaum. “The house” mentioned throughout this gospel was His place of residence or His base of operations. For all but the last six months of His ministry, when He was not traveling, He was usually at or near “the house.”

- a) Along the way to Capernaum the apostles argued as to who among them was the greatest. The apostles are taken aback by the question of Jesus as to what they were arguing about, so, the dispute must not have taken place openly. Possibly it was the custom for Jesus to walk ahead entertaining and ministering to individuals or small groups as He walked, while the disciples brought up the rear.
- b) At any rate, the apostles believed that Jesus had no knowledge of their dispute and are now embarrassed by the question. None of them would dare respond, so Jesus calls the twelve together to teach them.

- c) *The lengthy teaching Jesus gives had little affect on this group of men as the topic of who was the greatest among them would continue to rear its ugly head from time to time. Unbelievably it would become a topic at the last supper.*
- d) *Jesus instructs them in humility and being a servant. If a man truly desires to be first in the eyes of God, he must constantly put himself last by being a servant to others. This was not a new teaching, but one that was ignored. (Prov. 16:18, 29:23)*

**v.9:36-37** *And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.*

*To illustrate His teaching to them, Jesus takes a child and sets the child in the middle of the group of apostles that were gathered around Him. The word used refers to a very young child, most likely a toddler in this instance.*

- a) *In Matthew's gospel, Jesus first tells them that they must become as a child before God to be accepted into the kingdom. (Matt. 18:3-4) They must stand helpless before God as this child now stood in the middle of a group of grown hardened men. They must trust in God and be totally dependent upon Him for all of their needs just as this child was dependent on those around him.*
- b) *Such humility was in turn a pre-requisite to being a servant. A lesson in relational Christianity then began as Jesus took the child in his arms. They were to receive the lowly ones in the name of Jesus, and in so doing, would reflect the love of Jesus and of the Father.*

*The Jewish leaders ruled over the people. They considered themselves the learned and the elite. They thought of themselves very highly, believing themselves to be blessed of God and worthy of all sorts of privileges. They viewed the people as ignorant, as sinners, and even as cursed. The apostles following the example of leadership within the Jewish system, now argued as to who was the greatest! They sometimes thought badly of Jesus when He spoke to women or to gentiles. They became easily frustrated with the crowds and their demands. In one recorded instance they thought Jesus as to important to entertain children. This teaching is meant to show them their error. They must humble themselves before God and then would be fit to lead. They must accept all of the children of God into their arms and be servants and shepherds to them.*

**v.9:38-41** *And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of*

*me. For he that is not against us is on our part.. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verify I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.*

*In response to this teaching, John brings up an incident of a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus. Wasn't this man infringing upon the apostles territory or did he have a right to do this?*

- a) *John must have believed that the apostles were in the elite group, afforded special powers and privileges by the Master. In his question, or possibly even in his objection, he mentions twice for emphasis that the man casting out demons was not a part of their group. Although the man obviously met with success they forbid him to continue to so minister in the name of Jesus.*
- b) *Jesus instructs them that they did not have a monopoly on Christian ministry as did the scribes and the Pharisees within Judaism. This man which they spoke of was a fellow minister even though he walked outside the group of apostles.*
- c) *Jesus reasoned with his apostles that one who would invoke His name, possessing the faith in Jesus to cast out a demon, would not soon speak evil of Jesus. Again, invoking the name of Jesus showed that the individual was not against them, but on their side. He adds that, in turn, anyone who would minister to them, because they belong to Jesus, would surely be rewarded. (Num. 11:26-29)*

*This lesson is against the idea of elitism and exclusivism among believers. All believers would share in the gifts and privileges of the Holy Ghost. All would minister and in turn be ministered to. He is not speaking of the false teachers, that is, those who would invoke the name of Jesus according to false doctrine or in pretense to gain personal advantage.*

**v.9:42** *And whosoever shall offend one of [these] little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.*

*Jesus Christ is connected to and identifies with his people, described here as "one of his little ones." Whatever affects believers, in turn, affects him. Whosoever receives a believer in Christ's name or because of Christ, receives Christ. Conversely, those who offend or hurt a believer offends Christ.*

- a) *Probably implied is that if they offend a believer in Christ's name or because of Christ. This then would specify persecutors of Christians and false teachers. It would be those who "in Jesus name" would seek to be lord over them, take advantage of them, and/or promote false doctrine.*
- b) *It would be better for them to endure the most horrible death imaginable then to offend His children in this way. The reason being, which is explained in the following verses, is that those who persist in hurting His children are spiritually lost. The most hideous of physical*

consequences would be profitable to the eternal spiritual consequences such behavior would bring upon them

- c) *These verses, although now general teaching, were still meant to get the apostles attention. Arguing or seeking for greatness would offend many and cause division. If this was the course they were going to take the horrible death described would be preferable.*

***v.9:43-48 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.***

*This set of verses is again meant to get their attention. They point out the seriousness of sin and the importance of the spiritual over the physical, of the eternal over the temporary.*

- a) *In Matthew's gospel this teaching began, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." I believe these verses refer back to that statement concerning conversion.*
- b) *It is better to live this life without a hand, a foot or an eye but converted to Jesus, then to experience the eternal spiritual consequences of hell. If a hand, a foot or an eye is keeping one from conversion to Jesus then no step is too radical considering the consequence.*
- c) *These verses are not to be taken literally. It is not hand, foot or eye that is the problem, but the heart that controls them. This is where the conversion or the change must take place. As Hendrickson states, "The lesson is this: sin, being a very destructive force, must not be pampered. It must be put to death. Temptation should be flung aside immediately and decisively."*
- d) *Hell is in these verses promoted as a sobering reality by Jesus. The fire represents the eternal torment, while the worm is the internal torment. He stresses three times that this is a never ending state.*

***v.9:49-50 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt [is] good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.***

*The idea of being salted with fire probably refers to going through trials. "Everyone" could refer to all of His followers and disciples or more exclusively to every one of the twelve whom He now addressed.*

- a) *The idea of God's people being salted or refined by trials appears in both the old and new testaments. (Mal. 3:2-3; 1 Peter 1:6-7; James 1:2-3) Specifically, Jesus probably had in mind the trial of his death, which would test the faith of all of his followers and especially the twelve.*
- b) *In the Old Testament economy every acceptable sacrifice was roasted and salted. In the same way those who made it through the trial(s) would be deemed acceptable and seasoned for the work of the kingdom.*
- c) *Salt is good as a seasoning and as a preservative. Such believers would be as seasoning to the world making it more palatable. They would act as preservatives preserving the world from the wrath of God.*
- d) *Jesus closes by issuing a final warning to them. They were to be seasoners or preservers, but discord among them would render them ineffective. They would lose their saltiness or the qualities that God had developed within them. They would become worthless as leaders just as were their Jewish counterparts had become, and so, the injunction to peace with one another.*

**v.10:1** *And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.*

How long Jesus stayed in the regions of Galilee and especially Capernaum after the completion of the “retirement ministry” is not known. Chapter 10 begins by simply stating that he left this area and traveled to Judea.

- a) The “farther side” of the Jordan would be the eastern side. Although now in Judea, He was on the outskirts, and so, still out of the range of the Jewish leadership.
- b) The use of the word “again” seems to indicate that His private time with the apostles had come to an end and all was back to normal. The crowds followed Him and He openly taught them.

**v.10:2** *And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away [his] wife? tempting him.*

At some point the Pharisees pass through the crowd and approach Jesus with a question. These Jewish leaders were jealous of Jesus and in competition with him for the hearts of the people. They were constantly trying to discredit Him and the powers that be among them were already plotting His death.

- a) One gets the impression that the Pharisees who were very concerned about their reputation and circle of influence sought Jesus out to see if they could get the better of him. This particular question was designed to tempt Him, that is, to trick Him or to trip Him up.
- b) The question, “Was it lawful for a man to put away his wife?” If the answer was straight forward or the matter black and white they would never have asked it. It was a trick question with strong feelings for both sides of the issue. They believed that however He answered, He would lose part of His following.
- c) These were not honest questions that they asked. They were not seeking the knowledge and insight of Jesus. They really didn’t care how He answered, but simply were out to discredit Him among the people.
- d) Matthew’s gospel adds the phrase “for every cause” which is important in understanding the trick nature of the question. (Matt. 19:3)

**v.10:3-4** *And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put [her] away.*

*As was so often the case Jesus answers their question with a question of his own. His question, "What did Moses command you?" gets right to the heart of the controversy letting them know that He was on to them, while at the same time putting His antagonists on the defensive.*

- a) *It was Moses' command that a bill of divorce must be written that caused division among the Jews. (Deut. 24:1-2) The word "uncleanness" was the center of the controversy for the general nature of the Hebrew word opened it up to interpretation.*
- b) *"A scandalous thing," "some indecency," "something improper," "improper behavior," "something offensive," or "a shameful thing" were some interpretations. One school of thought insisted it pertained to unchastity or adultery, while another school of thought took a very liberal view of "for every cause."*
- c) *It seems that a majority of the people, especially the leadership, took the liberal view, obviously, for their own convenience. Once again, it was in reality a matter of the heart. They had the wrong view of marriage from the start, focusing on their right and ability to get out of the marriage, instead of on God's intent of marriage. This liberal view was repressive to women who had no recourse. So, the Pharisees simply replied that a law permitting divorce did exist and left the interpretation up to Jesus.*

***v.10:5-9 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.***

*Jesus does not dispute that the law allowed divorce, but places the reason for its existence upon their sin. Divorce, never being forbidden, had become a fact of life, and so, had to be regulated to protect the innocent.*

- a) *The bill of divorce was proof that a woman was no longer married and that another could take her as a wife. It was a safeguard against adultery.*
- b) *Jesus then continues to quote Moses, going back to the beginning of creation to show the perfect will and intent of God as to the marriage bond. (Gen. 1:27, 2:23-25) God made them male and female, that is, He gave them the desire for union and intimacy, and in fact differentiated them for this very cause.*
- c) *It was a bond stronger than that between parent and child. It was a bond that was to be perfect in that in the eyes of God the two would become one. It was to be one man with one woman for life.*

*"It was God who made this union possible; God also who issued the command, "Be fruitful . . ." It was He, again, who said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help fit for him.' It was also God that brought Eve to Adam, to be the latter's wife. Indeed, from every angle, it was God who established marriage as a divine institution. Marriage is therefore indeed 'an honorable estate.' Therefore, let not man separate what God has joined together." William Hendriksen*

- d) *Sin, entering into the picture, corrupted the perfect union God had intended between the man and the woman. Part of the cause was that the harmony that was to exist between the man and the woman would be disrupted. (Gen. 3:16) Sinful creatures cannot create a perfect union. Sin corrupted God's paradise and the institution of marriage was not spared. The concessions in the law are proof.*
- e) *Jesus does not say, "Whom therefore God hath joined together," but says, "What God hath joined together." He is probably referring to the scriptures quoted, that is, in general terms speaking of the male and female, and the marriage bond. Man is not to pervert this institution to the point that God's intent is all but lost.*

*"Jesus spoke of 'What' God has joined together by instituting marriage at the beginning – not necessarily 'Whom,' as though each couple that marries is individually joined by God. Does God join together a couple when the marriage is based on fraud or hypocrisy? What about a woman who marries a man who did not tell her he has serious mental problems? What about a man who does not tell his wife-to-be that he has AIDS? What about a woman who marries a man only because he has a lot of money? Is this loveless arrangement honored by God?" Ralph Woodrow*

- f) *Jesus never really answers their question, but shows them their hypocrisy and their ignorance in the things of God. They were certain they knew what Moses had instructed them to do, but Jesus masterfully shows them through the writings of Moses that in their sin; in the hardness of their hearts; they had ignored and all but forgotten the will and intent of God concerning marriage.*
- g) *Jesus takes them to the scriptures. To their shame He contrasts the bill of divorce that they had put their faith in to the perfect will and intent of God concern marriage which they willfully ignored. In the gospel of Matthew, He concludes by exposing their practices as an attempt to legalize adultery.*

**v.10:10-12** *And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same [matter]. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

*As so often happened, the apostles, either troubled by or not fully understanding Jesus' teaching bring up the matter again in private. Most likely recorded here is only a small part of the*

conversation. Jesus' response appears to be an answer to a question concerning the practices of the day and subsequent re-marriage.

- a) The divorce "for every cause" that was in practice at the time amounted to an attempt to legalize adultery. Jesus points out to them that God sees through their vain interpretations of the law and generally speaking holds them guilty of adultery.
- b) Matthew, in his gospel, includes an exception to this statement, that being, fornication which is interpreted as sexual sin. Matthew also gives insight as to how the apostles may have viewed marriage before this teaching (Matt. 19:9-11)

**v.10:13. And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and [his] disciples rebuked those that brought [them].**

With no indication that Jesus had moved on, this event probably takes place east of the Jordan in a region called Perea which bordered Judea. Parents were bringing children to Jesus seeking his blessing. The word used means infants and toddlers.

- a) The practice was by no means uncommon. The Jews, following the teachings of their Talmud, would take their children to respected rabbi's for blessing and for prayer. The parents sought the blessing and the prayers of Jesus for their children. He was highly respected by the people as a teacher and as a healer.
- b) The gospel of Luke states "... but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them." This gives the impression that the disciples did not notice right away that people were bringing children to Jesus. So, Jesus was probably healing or counseling individuals and periodically a parent would come forward with a child seeking a blessing.
- c) The apostles began to rebuke these parents turning them away or discouraging them in some way from approaching Jesus. The nature of the rebuke or the reason behind it is not given.
- d) This cannot be the first time that children were brought to Jesus for this purpose. The disciples could not have been ignorant as to Jesus' feelings toward children especially in view of the lesson He had recently taught them about leadership in which He used a child as an example, and, in fact, took that particular child into his arms. (v. 9:36-37)
- e) It had to simply be some selfish reason on the part of the apostles. Were there a lot of people to see Jesus? Was it late in the day? Were they tired and hungry? Did they want Jesus to themselves? Whatever the reason, in this particular instance, they saw the children as unimportant or as not being a priority.

**v.10:14-15** *But when Jesus saw [it], he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

The impression given is that Jesus was not at first aware of what the apostles were doing for it says "... when Jesus saw it." When He noticed what was going on He put an immediate stop to it. (Luke 18:15)

- a) "He was much displeased" is very strong language. It simply means that He became very angry with His apostles. His rebuke to them was immediate, severe and public. "Don't forbid them!" "Let them come!" Reminding them of the lesson He had recently taught them, He tells them that the children are representative of those who will make up His kingdom
- b) The simple, humble and trusting nature of a child is what He sought in His followers. A child has no problem graciously and thankfully receiving a gift. As Hendriksen put it, "Receiving the kingdom of God as a little child means to accept it with genuine trustful simplicity, with unassuming humility." Receiving the gospel as a child is a prerequisite to entering into salvation.

**v.10:16** *And he took them up in his arms, put [his] hands upon them, and blessed them.*

Hearing the words of Jesus, probably all who had been turned away now come forward. Now He is probably surrounded by children, taking them into His arms one at a time and pronouncing a blessing upon them.

- a) The reaction of the apostles is not given. They were obviously embarrassed by the public rebuke. Hopefully they were sorry for their selfishness and took to heart the lesson they had so quickly forgotten.

**v.10:17.** *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

The word "and" connects this verse to the previous story, so after Jesus had finished with the crowd, and especially the children, he and his disciples began walking on the road. Probably on their way back to where they had been staying they are interrupted by a man who kneels before Jesus.

- a) The man came running. He must have heard where Jesus was teaching, but upon his arrival Jesus had already departed. He runs after Jesus and catching-up to him seeks an audience. One gets the impression that the man is religious, has heard about Jesus and has desired to see him for some time. He now gets his chance.

- b) *Matthew describes the man as young, while Luke says he is a ruler, that is, some sort of official. The three gospels that record this story all say that he is rich. The rich young ruler asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life.*
- c) *The man was greatly concerned about the destiny of his soul and desired assurance that he would partake in the resurrection of the dead; in the inheritance described in Daniel. (Dan. 12:2-3) In other words, he is basically asking Jesus what he must do to be saved.*

**v.10:18** *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God.*

*Jesus' response, which is effect a rebuke, must be understood in the fact that Jesus knew the man's heart. He dealt with each individual differently in accordance with their needs. He will masterfully take this man to the obstacle in his life that kept him from the very life he sought.*

- a) *The man had a superficial understanding of goodness. The man did not believe Jesus to be God, but a teacher. He ascribed goodness to keeping the commandments and performing great works. Jesus desires him to understand that God's standard of goodness is perfection, and so, only God is good. As MacArthur points out, "He lacked the sense of his own sinfulness and Jesus had to point that out." Matthew adds that the man was looking for a work he could do to assure him eternal life. (Matt. 19:16)*

**v.10:19-20** *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.*

*Jesus, knowing his heart, proceeds to tell the rich young ruler to keep the commandments. This was not new information to the man, but what he had been taught from his youth. The man becomes somewhat perplexed by Jesus' initial reaction and now his advice. This is again clearer in the account given in Matthew. (Matt. 19-17-19)*

- a) *The man viewed Jesus as a great teacher and longed for an audience with him to tap into his great wisdom. Now, the advice of Jesus is simply to keep the commandments? Thinking he may have missed something the man asks, "Which?"*
- b) *Jesus assures the man that he hadn't missed anything. He confirms to the man that he was speaking of the same commandments the man knew so well. So as not to be any mistake, Jesus summarizes them concentrating on those concerning one's relationship with others.*
- c) *The rich young ruler replies that all of these commandments he has kept from his youth or he has kept them as long as he can remember. From this answer, many think that the man was a*

young Pharisee, perhaps the ruler of a local synagogue. According to his understanding, he believed that he perfectly kept the law.

**v.10:21** *Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

The language, "Jesus beholding him loved him," indicates that the individual was sincere in his response. Like Nicodemus, and unlike most of the Jewish leadership, he was seeking after the truth. In his youth he was not yet confronted by his hypocrisy, but believed he satisfactorily kept the law.

- a) He had come to the point, however, where he knew there was something more than the law. Even in his righteousness he wasn't satisfied; he was not filled. (What do I still lack?) He longed for something that would fill his inner need for peace for assurance. This "something" is what he believed Jesus could provide.
- b) Jesus could have quickly ended the man's delusions of righteousness or could have easily pointed out his hypocrisy, but instead, chose to take a positive route in this instance. He tells the man that God wants it all and extends an invitation to the man to follow Him.
- c) Jesus tells him he must sacrifice the physical for the spiritual and the temporal for the everlasting. As requested, Jesus tells him of the path that will give him peace and assurance. The path that will fill him, that is, the way of the cross.

**v.10:22** *And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

The man immediately becomes sad and goes away grieved. He had looked forward to, with great anticipation, a meeting with Jesus. He was hopeful he could obtain some wisdom that would change his life and now these hopes had been dashed and in the cruelest sort of way, for the wisdom was given to him, but he was not willing to accept it.

- a) He would probably carry this conviction with him for the rest of his life. Whenever he partook of his riches in some manner the words of Jesus would come to mind and he would feel even emptier than before.
- b) He quickly considered the cost and walked away. (Luke 14:26-33) He had many possessions. Were not the Jewish leaders, the scribes, Pharisees and priests wealthy? In his heart one can guess that he knew the truth. The invitation of Jesus to follow Him was not revoked with his departure. One can only hope he later responded to the call of the Savior.

**v.10:23-25** *And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

*After the departure of the rich young ruler Jesus looks around as if to point out to the apostles that they, along with Jesus, were the only ones that remained. Their number had not been increased even though the invitation had been given.*

- a) *His statement, namely, that it will be difficult for those with wealth to enter into the kingdom of God, which is synonymous with salvation, greatly surprised the apostles, in fact, a good reading would be that they were startled by His words. He answers their initial surprise with a similar statement concerning what He had said.*
- b) *Those who put their trust in riches, that is, think they are favored by God because they have wealth are sorely mistaken. In fact, He tells them it is impossible for a wealthy man to be saved, proven by the illustration of a camel passing through the eye of a needle.*
- c) *The Jews had always attributed prosperity to their relationship with God based on certain covenants and promises. (Deut. 28:1-7) Riches, honor, power and might came from God. (1 Chron. 29:12) Over time, people attributed individual wealth and prosperity as proof that one was living righteously. The Jewish leaders were not looked upon as being wealthy because they were swindling the people, but because they were religious before God.*
- d) *On the other hand, misfortune of any kind was attributed to sin. (Luke 13:1-5) The disciples bought into this philosophy. (John 9:1-3) So rich and healthy amounted to holiness, while poor and sickly amounted to sin. When Jesus said it was impossible for the rich to be saved it went against everything they believed to be true. (The parable of the rich man and Lazarus combats these ideas. Luke 16:19-25)*

**v.10:26-27** *And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men [it is] impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*

*The apostles were now “astonished out of measure,” that is, totally shocked, taken aback, or blown away by His saying. In their amazement they asked each other who could then possibly be saved. They obviously came to the conclusion that they wouldn’t make the cut.*

- a) *Such was the connection between riches and righteousness in their minds. After all it was the rich who had the resources to do good. They could buy the best sacrifice and give the most alms. They could build local synagogues and contribute the most to the temple. Even those*

who were not rich aspired to obtain wealth. Everyone desired material wealth and a life of ease.

- b) Jesus, knowing their astonishment and fear, concludes that for a man to gain salvation is impossible. Rich or poor there is nothing a man can offer to God for his sin. Jesus then reassures them that with God all things are possible. They didn't realize that God's answer to the impossible stood before them.

**v.10:28** *Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.*

The apostles are currently "astonished out of measure." In their minds Jesus had just made salvation an unobtainable thing. They couldn't fully understand all of the implications of His last statement, except maybe, that their destiny resided solely in the hands of God.

- a) Their understanding, again being shaken, the apostles desired to know where they stood. With their still material mindset, the fact that Jesus promised the rich young ruler "treasure in heaven" if he forsook all his current wealth to follow Jesus, probably aroused their curiosity.
- b) Peter, the spokesman of the group, reminds Jesus that the apostles had in deed left all and had followed Him. Matthew's account turns Peter's statement into a question with the addition of the phrase, "what shall we have therefore."
- c) In other words, "We did what you requested of the rich young ruler. Maybe we didn't have as much, but we left all and are following you. Does this mean that we have heavenly treasure? Salvation? Exactly what are we going to get?"

**v.10:29-30** *And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*

That the question was asked in earnest becomes apparent in Jesus' reply, He answers them softly giving them the assurances they seek and strengthening their faith. Peter asked the question out of genuine concern.

- a) Jesus answers them that He is aware of their sacrifice. All who leave behind or forsake the things that are dear to them in this world for is sake, and so, because of the gospel message will be rewarded both in this life and in the world to come.

- b) *Not only these apostles, but anyone, who, if need be, sacrifice their dearest relationships as represented by father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife and children, or their wealth as represented by house and lands, will be rewarded.*
- c) *A hundred fold is basically a way of saying that they will be amply rewarded or that it will be well worth the sacrifice. He will be rewarded in this life, as Matthew Henry puts it, "not in specie, but that which is equivalent." Obviously one is not here promised one hundred houses, not to mention one hundred mothers, brothers ... etc.*
- d) *It means that such a one will have an abundant life. He will live with the peace and comfort of his Savior. He will have the resources of the body of Christ and enjoy relationships with those to whom he is bonded in the Holy Spirit.*
- e) *It is interesting to note that Jesus tempers all of the above with the phrase "with persecutions." These blessings of God in this life will bring with them the contempt of the world. The world in its ignorance will be jealous and envy the peace, comfort and relationships evident in the believer's life. In their wisdom they will think the believer to be a fool. And finally, they will have eternal life.*

**v.10:31 *But many [that are] first shall be last; and the last first.***

*Jesus seems to be issuing to the apostles a statement of caution. In Matthew's gospel, in response to Peter's question, "What shall we have therefore?", Jesus goes on to tell them that they will judge the twelve tribes of Israel before making the more general statement of reward, covered above. (Matt. 19:27-30)*

- a) *The apostles were still looking for a physical kingdom. Jesus, in effect, told them that they would serve as rulers and judges in His kingdom. The fact that the kingdom of which he spoke was in reality spiritual and that the Jewish remnant would be but a small part of this kingdom prompts this caution by Jesus.*
- b) *The apostles believed they were first, but a vast number of gentiles were about to enter in. Many great saints would be added. The Jewish nation would take a "back seat" in the coming age of the gentiles. God's decrees and system of reward is not the same as man's. In Matthew's gospel this saying is followed by the parable of the vineyard owner. (Matt. 20:1-16)*

**v.10:32. *And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,***

*Leaving the region of Perea on the east side of the Jordan river, Jesus and his apostles have now entered Judea and are making their way to Jerusalem. Jesus walks ahead of the group which gives the impression that He walks with confidence, His steps resolute and determined.*

- a) *His apostles are described as being amazed and then as being afraid. The reason why is not readily apparent from this gospel according to Mark, but from John's gospel we find that much had taken place from the time Jesus and the apostles returned from the gentile lands back to Capernaum and is ministry in Perea. (v. 9:33, 10:1)*
- b) *During the period between the two verses in Mark referenced above, Jesus had taken at least two trips into Jerusalem. He attended the Feast of the Tabernacles and also the Feast of Dedication. On each occasion He had several major confrontations with the Jewish leadership. (John 7:28-30; John 8:58-59; John 10:30-31; John 10:38-39)*
- c) *So over the course of the last several months Jesus had repeatedly embarrassed the Jewish leadership and in their own stronghold. His raising of Lazarus solidified His position with the people. As a result there was an open warrant issued for His arrest. (John 11:57)*
- d) *In view of the above, the apostles were amazed that He would head back to Jerusalem, especially after such a relatively short period of time. They were afraid not only for Him, but in fear of their own lives.*
- e) *Probably in response to the open fear that they displayed, Jesus called the apostles together to explain to them the events that were to take place on what would be His final trip to Jerusalem. The word "again" indicates that this is not the first time they were told these things. (v.8:31, 9:12, 9:31-32)*

***v.10:33-34 [Saying], Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.***

*This latest prediction is definitely the most detailed. The fact that He would be handed over to gentiles who would mock him, spit upon him, and scourge him is new information. So Jesus gives the apostles a chronological sequence of events all of which came to pass.*

- a) *The reaction of the apostles to His words is not given. How this could have provided them comfort or eased their fears is not known. Not able to understand maybe they believed He was speaking in a parable or an allegory. They chose to focus on thoughts of the kingdom they believed He would usher in. This, along with the confidence and steadfastness of Jesus, probably eased their fears and enabled them to go on. (Luke 18:31-34)*

**v.10:35** *And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire.*

The next incident recorded by Mark further proves that the apostles had no comprehension of Jesus' teachings of his fast approaching death. They had no idea that the kingdom that He spoke of so often pertained to the spiritual and not the physical. In fact, as remarkable as it seems, this request by James and John had to occur shortly after Jesus spoke openly to them about His death.

- a) On their way to Jerusalem, sometime before they reached the city of Jericho, James and John, two members of the so-called inner circle of apostles, approach Jesus with a request. In the gospel of Matthew we are told that they approached Jesus with their mother. (Matt. 20:20)
- b) Whether it was a mother's ambition for her sons or the two apostles that sought out the intercession of their mother is not easy to distinguish. It was, however, a plan agreed upon by the mother and her sons.
- c) The scriptures make a strong case that the mother of James and John was named Salome. She was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and one of the women who ministered to Him. Being, in effect, Jesus' aunt and her sons Jesus' cousins it appears they were attempting to use this family relationship to gain favorable positions.
- d) The trio comes before Jesus and bowing down show the proper respect. Such an action would indicate that they came seeking a special favor or request. Addressing Him as Master, they ask Him if he would grant to them anything they ask.
- e) Kings prided themselves on having the resources to grant any favor or request (remember Herod), so asking Jesus for a "blank check," so to speak, coupled with bowing down before Him was, in effect, giving Him the royal treatment. They were treating Him like the king they believed He would soon be. If they were the first to acknowledge this kingship, maybe they would be rewarded with what they asked.

**v.10:36-37** *And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.*

Obviously, Jesus is not motivated by pride, so He is not about to make any blind promises to these apostles or to their mother. Making no commitment, He asks them what it was they wanted Him to do for them.

- a) The two apostles, in effect, ask for the chief seats, that is, the two places next to Jesus. They have their eyes fixed upon an earthly kingdom. After all, didn't He tell the group that they

would sit upon thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel? (Matt. 19:28) Someone had to occupy the seats next to Jesus, so why not them?

- b) If anything, this was a power play against Peter who along with these two brothers formed the innermost circle of apostles. All of these men were ambitious, arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest among them. These two apostles see a chance to further their ambitions and take it.
- c) They show their ignorance as to the nature of the kingdom. They have not taken the lessons on servanthood delivered by Jesus to heart. They missed the meaning of His teachings on the need to have the faith of a child and on His decree that the last shall be first.

**v.10:38** *But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask; can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*

In one of the greatest understatements in the scriptures, Jesus first replies to them that they didn't know what they were asking for. They hadn't the slightest idea of what Jesus would go through, the magnitude of what He would accomplish, or the position to which He would be elevated. God the Father would occupy the position to the left of Jesus who in turn be sitting at the right had of the Father!

- a) It is probably because of their ignorance that His response to them is relatively gentle. However, Jesus continues asking them if they can drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism. Both expressions, that is, drinking the cup and being baptized mean to fully undergo an experience. Could they take the sin of the world upon their shoulders? Could they take the physical, emotional and spiritual suffering and agony He would soon endure? Could they drink the cup that even He would ask to forgo if at all possible? (Matt. 26:39)

**v.10:39-40** *And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but [it shall be given to them] for whom it is prepared.*

Not knowing what they were asking, now they have no idea what they are saying. In complete and total ignorance they express to Jesus that they can drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism. "We can!"

- a) The two apostles are loyal, bold and confident in the presence of their Lord. No doubt, they speak or make their boast with sincerity. Peter is often given a "bad rap" for promising not to forsake his Lord and then denying Him, but the claim made by these apostles that they could

*drink the cup of their Lord is far greater a boast than Peter ever made. When they were actually faced with the choice, they fled with the rest of the apostles. (Matt. 26:56)*

- b) *Jesus does nothing to injure the faith and the spirits of these two beloved apostles. He assures them that they will drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism. Is He referring to their identification with His death, burial and resurrection or was He referring to the suffering that both these men would endure in the future for the sake of Christ?*
- c) *James would become the first to be martyred. (Acts 12:2), while John would be imprisoned on the island of Patmos. (Rev. 1:9)*
- d) *Jesus tells them that the specific places of honor which they sought had already been filled in the sovereign will of God. This was a decision determined within the Godhead and not a decision Jesus would make on His own. Jesus, as a man, had no knowledge to whom these positions belonged. (Matt. 24:36)*

**v.10:41** *And when the ten heard [it], they began to be much displeased with James and John.*

*The other ten apostles become aware of the request that had been made of Jesus by James, John and their mother. The impression given is that it was a private audience with Jesus, so how the others found out is not known. Did someone overhear? Did the women start talking? Were James and John bragging that Jesus told them they would drink of His cup?*

- a) *At any rate, the other apostles were angry with the two brothers. The adjective “much” put before the word “displeased” again brings out the strength in the original. They all shared the same ambition arguing often as to who was the greatest or who would occupy the chief seats in the kingdom, but this attempted “end-around” by James and John, and especially employing their mother, no doubt created strong feelings of betrayal and resentment between them.*

**v.10:42-44** *But Jesus called them [to him], and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.*

*Jesus steps in immediately, like a father between arguing siblings. The bond between these men must be forged in love and it is time once again to call them together and to instruct them.*

- a) *The tone of these words spoken by Jesus is not readily apparent. We know that He has in the past expressed His frustration and even His anger with them. This is not the first time He has confronted their egos and their attitudes, so I believe these words were delivered with*

*sternness, for it was essential that this lesson of humility and servanthood be learned and incorporated into their lives.*

- b) *Jesus calls their attention to the gentile rulers who are representative of the world or the worldly way of doing things. The phrase “accounted to rule” can be translated “so-called rulers,” so Jesus seems to be referring to the Roman rulers who ruled over Israel. No one considered them to be their true rulers, but they held their positions by force. The world was controlled by people who had the ambition to rule over others, and then oppressed those people to hold onto their power.*
- c) *“Rule over,” “exercise authority” and “exercise lordship” is the way of the world. In other words, those who gain the top position seek to be served and are anxious to let their subjects know who is in charge.*
- d) *Jesus does not say that it shouldn’t be this way with you, but states emphatically that it will not be so among you! This was not their way as He had told them before. (v. 9:34-35) They were not of the world. The true leader among them would gain the respect of the others through service and ministering.*

*“It is the inverted pyramid, the believer being at the bottom – being the servant, the humble attendant of all – that symbolizes the position of the Christian as, with simple trust in God and love for all men, he continues on his way to the mansions of glory.” William Hendriksen*

*“God’s great men are not sitting on top of lesser men, but bearing lesser men on their backs.” R.C.H. Lenski*

- e) *These were difficult concepts for the apostles to understand. Not only was it not the way of the world in which they lived, but also the opposite of what was being practiced in their religion. The word translated “minister” referred to the lowest level of hired help. It was one who cleaned the house or waited the tables. If they wanted to be great in God’s eyes they would be as one of these servants in their attitude towards the others.*
- f) *The word translated “servant” means slave. A person who was not free, but belonged to someone else. Jesus told them that if they aspired to be the greatest, then they would be as a slave in their attitude towards the others.*

***v.10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.***

*Jesus set himself before them as the example or pattern of true greatness. He is in himself the very definition of greatness in the eyes of God. Jesus again predicts His death, but for the first time presents to the apostles the reason why He must be delivered unto the chief priests, condemned to*

death, delivered unto the gentiles, mocked, scourged, spit upon and killed only to rise on the third day. (v. 10:33-34)

- a) *The Son of Man, the One who was with God, the One who was God and the One through whom all things were made, came. This was the first humiliation, that the Creator became the creature. He further humbled Himself in that he came not to be served, but to serve and to minister. Finally, He would suffer the ultimate humiliation, that is, to give His life on the cross. (Phil. 2:6-11)*
- b) *The phrase "for even" presents the reason why they as followers of Jesus should live lives of ministry and servanthood. His example is to be their motivation. The phrase sets up a comparison that is meant to shut every mouth. His example negates all complaint and renders any and every excuse absurd. It is the example that prompted Paul to call presenting ones body a living sacrifice, a reasonable service.*
- c) *His ultimate service was to "give his life a ransom for many." This gives purpose to His example. In other words, He did not come to be an example, ut came to redeem His people thus becoming an example of humility and servanthood.*
- d) *The word translated "ransom" was a common word for the price paid to release a slave. His life was the price paid to release many from the bondage of sin and death. (1 Cor. 6:20) His life, in the place of or in exchange for the lives of all who would believe. He was our substitute, taking upon Himself the wrath of God for our sins. (Is. 53:4-5)*
- e) *Again, at this point, these things were beyond the apostles understanding. They witnessed His greatness and His power, they knew of His ministry, but thought this would all lead to Him taking His rightful place on the throne in Jerusalem.*

**v.10:46. And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.**

*Jesus and his apostles arrive at Jericho which was a city located about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem. He is being followed by a great number of people. Many were going to Jerusalem from all of the surrounding areas to celebrate the Passover. Jesus was traveling openly on the main road, and so, the crowd traveling with Him was growing larger and larger.*

- a) *As they pass through the city, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus sat by the road seeking pity from those that passed by. Matthew informs us that there were two blind men, but fails to give their names. Possibly Bartimaeus and/or his father Timaeus became well known in the early church, and so, receive greater exposure in Mark's account (Matt. 20:29-30)*

**v.10:47-48** *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, [thou] Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, [Thou] Son of David, have mercy on me.*

*When Bartimaeus discovered that it was Jesus who was passing by, he began to cry out. A better word choice would be that he screamed. He needed to be heard above the noise of the crowd and held nothing back. The original Greek word was used in referring to the cries of the insane or the cries of women during childbirth.*

- a) *Bartimaeus, no doubt, had heard of Jesus. He obviously believed that Jesus could heal him if he could only get His attention. Even more interesting is that he calls Jesus by the messianic title "son of David." He evidently knew much about Jesus and had come to the conclusion that He was the Messiah.*
- b) *His cry is for mercy, and the crowd scolds him telling him to be quiet. This is curious behavior on the part of the crowd for the crowds mentioned throughout this gospel usually went out of their way to find someone who they could literally drag to Jesus so they could witness a healing. So the question becomes, "Why were they telling him to be quiet?"*
- c) *They were on their way to Jerusalem, the crowd was growing, anticipation filled the air, so maybe they just didn't want to get slowed down, but to the best answer is that they took exception to the title "son of David." They were in Judea and calling Jesus the Messiah openly probably was not a good idea. Bartimaeus knew what he believed. He knew what he wanted, and so, would not give in to the rebuke of those around him. He would not miss this opportunity. "He cried the more a great deal."*

**v.10:49-50** *And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.*

*Jesus heard the screams of Bartimaeus and stopped walking. It says He stood still and commanded that the blind man be brought to Him. The mood of those in the crowd seems to change as their rebukes turn to words of encouragement now that Jesus had called for the man.*

- a) *So, some go to Bartimaeus with excitement and in anticipation of a miracle. They tell him that Jesus desires to see him and urge him to get up and stand before Jesus with courage. Bartimaeus needed no encouragement for as soon as he hears that Jesus will see him casts away his cloak and rises to his feet. He had been heard. Salvation was at hand.*

**v.10:51-52** *And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go*

*thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.*

*Jesus asks Bartimaeus what it is he desires and Bartimaeus, in turn, asks Jesus to restore his sight. In all probability he was not blind from birth, but had somehow lost his sight through disease or accident.*

- a) *In Matthew's account, Jesus touches their eyes while Mark includes just the declaration that their faith had healed them. He called Jesus the "son of David," addressed Him as Lord, would not give into the pressure of the crowd, and humbly asked for a healing. He was a man of demonstrated faith.*
- b) *His sight was restored immediately. He was blind, but now with the touch of Jesus he could see. He followed Jesus out of the city of Jericho. Bartimaeus was going to the Passover in Jerusalem this year!*