THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH NIGERIA
LAWNA TERRITORY,

SUNDAY SCHOOL MANUAL

JESUS CHRIST, THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR

(MARK'S GOSPEL, PART B)

A STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK
CHAPTERS 9-16
(Lessons suitable for Sunday School or Bible Study)

(STUDY MANUAL)

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FOREWORD

In year 2023, our study of the first eight chapters of the Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Mark centered on **JESUS CHRIST, THE SERVANT FROM HEAVEN (Phil. 2:7).** This year, by the special grace of God, we are going to continue the study of the remaining eight chapters of the book by looking at **JESUS CHRIST, THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR,** as predicted in Isa. 53:1-12 and fulfilled in the New Testament, that the LORD would be despised, rejected and wounded for our transgressions; that he would be bruised for our iniquities, oppressed, afflicted, brought as a lamb to the slaughter, judged and cut off out of the land of the living; that he would pour out his soul unto death and numbered with transgressors.

Although Jesus was born to save His people from their sin (Matt 1:21; Jn.1:29), Jews misunderstood Him, thinking that He was the expected Messiah who would deliver them from Roman political dominion. Their hostility against Jesus increased when they heard Him say that His Kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36).

In this study, we are going to learn how Jesus Christ worked outside the region of Galilee, his teaching, healing and deliverance miracles. We shall also learn about the several attempts of His enemies to entrap Him with various questions and false allegations and how He overcame them through the use of counter-questions and sometimes by being passive instead of reacting.

Also, we will read about how His enemies plotted to arrest and kill Him and how He was betrayed by Judas, arrested by the chief priests and the scribes (Mk. 14:43-49), forsaken by His disciples (Mk 14:51) and denied by Peter (Mk. 14: 66-72). He stood trials before the Council or Sanhedrim (Mk. 14:53-65), before Annas (John 18:12-14), before Caiaphas the High Priest (John 18:19-24), before Herod (Lk. 23:7-11) and finally before Pontius Pilate, who scourged (flogged) Him and delivered Him to His enemies to be crucified (Mk. 15:2-15).

He was mocked and dragged to the place of His execution by Roman soldiers (Mk. 15:16-32), where He was crucified on the cross (Mk.15:33-41). In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ suffered the most horrible and disgraceful type of punishment ever known on earth, to accomplish His mission of saving the world from sin and its consequence.

Therefore, that Jesus Christ suffered to accomplish His goal of saving the world should teach us that being a Christian could sometimes lead to suffering

with Christ. The so-called prosperity gospel has captured the imagination of many people today. However, any preaching of the gospel that denies that Jesus Christ's disciples will suffer is totally deficient.

Finally, in this year's lessons, we shall see how Mark presented Jesus Christ to us as a suffering Messiah, the Messiah who suffered from the repeated assaults of Satan, from the hatred and unbelief of His own people, and from the persecution of His enemies. His suffering was a consecrated suffering, increasing in severity as He approached the end of His life; and at the end of it all, He died for our sin, so that those who believe in Him might be justified, sanctified and saved from eternal condemnation.

We acknowledge the useful materials gained from commentaries of Matthew Henry, Albert Barnes, Adam Clarke, John Gill, Alexander Maclaren and some others, as well as many reference Bibles.

We also acknowledge the incisive review of:

1. Pastor E D Uranta (Retired Pastor, Ikotun Area)
2. Eld. Dr. T. A Banji (Retired Lecturer)
3. Eld. Tunde Adebisi (Editor of the LAWNA News)
4. Members of Sunday School Department.

We commend you to the grace of God as you use this book.

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GUIDE NOTES ON SUNDAY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

1. Participation

All members of the church (CHILDREN AND ADULTS) should be encouraged to attend Sunday school.

2. Teachers

For each assembly, teachers should be appointed from among born-again and Spirit-filled members. There should be a teacher for each class.

3. Class Division

Students should be divided into classes, first on the basis of age; then on the basis of language and gender but based on the number of teachers available. The classes should be available in every assembly for at least three age groups (Children, Intermediate, Adult). The children class can be sub-grouped by age into more classes, for effectiveness, provided there are teachers for the classes.

4. Officers

4.1 It is mandatory to have the following four officers at each level of administration (Assembly, District and Area): Leader, Assistant Leader, Secretary and Treasurer.

4.2 At the Area level, at least one of these offices should be held by a full-time Minister.

5. Management meetings

5.1 Assembly Teachers should meet every week or as frequently as practicable.

5.2 District Management meetings, attended by Assembly Leaders (Officers), should hold quarterly.

5.3 Area Management meetings, attended by District Leaders (Officers), should hold at least twice a year.

5.4 Territorial Management meeting, attended by Area Leaders (Officers), should hold twice a year (April and August).

6. Progress Report

6.1 Progress reports from Districts must be submitted to Area headquarters quarterly.

6.2 Progress reports from Areas must be submitted to LAWNA twice a year (May and Sept).

PROGRAMME FOR THE YEAR

Month	Sunday	Lesson No.	Month	Sunday	Lesson No.
January	1st Sunday	45	July	1st Sunday	69
	2nd Sunday	46		2nd Sunday	70
	3rd Sunday	47		3rd Sunday	71
	4th Sunday	48		4th Sunday	72
February	1st Sunday	49	August	1st Sunday	Convention
	2nd Sunday	50		2nd Sunday	73
	3rd Sunday	51		3rd Sunday	74
	4th Sunday	52		4th Sunday	75
March	1st Sunday	53	September	1st Sunday	76
	2nd Sunday	54		2nd Sunday	77
	3rd Sunday	55		3rd Sunday	78
	4th Sunday	56		4th Sunday	79
April	1st Sunday	57	October	1st Sunday	80
	2nd Sunday	58		2nd Sunday	81
	3rd Sunday	59		3rd Sunday	82
	4th Sunday	60		4th Sunday	**83**
May	1st Sunday	61	November	1st Sunday	**84**
	2nd Sunday	**62**		2nd Sunday	**85**
	3rd Sunday	63		3rd Sunday	**86**
	4th Sunday	64		4th Sunday	**87**
June	1st Sunday	65	December	1st Sunday	**88**
	2nd Sunday	66		2nd Sunday	**Area Rally**
	3rd Sunday	67		3rd Sunday	**Revision**
	4th Sunday	68		4th Sunday	**Revision**

The third or fifth Sunday in each month in the year should be used for Mid-year Examination.

LESSON 45: THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

Text: Mk. 9:1-13

a) Objective: To show the glory of Jesus Christ and to prove that He is the Son of God.

b) Memory Verse: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 190

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Transfiguration means transformation or alteration to be exceedingly better in the appearance of a person. It is a change that brings more glory in the form and appearance of a person.

ii. Transfiguration was one of the very important experiences in the life of Jesus Christ, as recorded in Matt. 17:1-13 and Lk 9:28-36.

iii. Six days after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus was Christ (Mk. 8:27-30), the Lord Jesus Christ took Peter, James and John to a high mountain.

iv. In the Old Testament, a mountain was often associated with closeness to God and readiness to receive His words. God had appeared to both Moses (Ex. 24:12-18) and Elijah (1 Kgs 19:8-18) on Mount Horeb and Mount Carmel, respectively.

v. Luke, in his own account, added that Jesus led the disciples to the mountain to pray. (Lk. 9:28-29)

vi. As Jesus was on the mountain with His disciples, the appearance of His face changed; and His clothes became as white as snow that could not be compared to anything on earth (Mk. 9:2-3).

vii. Luke's account reveals that the subject of discussion was the impending crucifixion of Jesus Christ, signifying the importance of the event. (Luke 9:38)

viii. Then, two men, Moses and Elias (Elijah), appeared with Jesus, talking with Him(Mk.9:4).Moses and Elias' appearance was symbolic.

ix. Moses' appearance represented the Old Testament Covenant of Law, and the promise of Salvation which was soon to be fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

x. Elijah's appearance represented the Prophets as the foretellers of Jesus, the appointed Restorer of all things. They talked about Jesus Christ's forthcoming death in Jerusalem.

xi. The transfiguration gives the glimpse of the glory of heaven which led to the spontaneous desire not to leave the scene. Even today, the picture of glory and of heaven should spur us to desire to live in that heavenly atmosphere.

xii. As Moses and Elias were still talking with Jesus, Peter 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." (Mk. 9:5)**

xiii. The cloud and the voice in verse 7 confirmed the glory and divine nature of Jesus and His Messiahship.

xiv. **Tabernacles'** or **'booths'** in this context would be temporary structures probably that were meant to prolong the visit of the three important persons that appeared in the scene – the Lawgiver, the Prophet and the Messiah, because Jesus Christ is the final Fulfillment of the Old Testament Law and Prophets. Moreover, the voice from the cloud which is the voice of God confirmed Jesus as the Son of God and enjoined believers to pay attention to Him (Jesus).

xv. While Peter was still speaking, the Bible says in verses 7-8 of the passage that a voice came from the cloud and said, **"This is my beloved Son: hear him."**

xvi. The disappearance of Moses and Elias leaving Jesus alone after the transfiguration shows the passing away of the Laws and the Prophets. Jesus, the Saviour, was left alone because He is the only One who can save, not the Law nor the Prophets.

xvii. When the three disciples lifted up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus and themselves (Mk. 9:8). Then, as they were coming down from the mountain, the Lord Jesus Christ charged His disciples not to tell anyone about the vision until He, the Son of man, had risen from the dead.

xviii. The appearance of Moses and Elias is a confirmation that there will be life after death. This should help to strengthen the faith of all Christians and disciples of Jesus Christ today, that after death, there is eternal life and glory.

xix. Furthermore, in verses 10-11, the disciples asked Him why the Scribes said that, first, Elias must come. He replied that Elias had already come, but they did not know him and they did to him whatever pleased them, just as the Son of man too would suffer in their hands (verses 12-13). here, the reference by Jesus Christe was to John the Baptist, who had come in fulfillment of the prophecy of being His forerunner, as stated in the following references: Mal. 4:5-6; Matt. 11:12-14; Luke 1: 13-17.

xx. The confession of John in John 1:19-21 that he was not the Christ may be out of demonstration of humility or a desire that others should testify of him and not him testifying of himself.

Personal Assessment Questions

1. Have you ever had a vision of heaven, either in a dream or revelation?
   How important do you consider the death of Christ to the plan of your salvation?

LESSON 46: JESUS HEALS A BOY WITH AN EVIL SPIRIT

Text: MK. 9:14-32

a) Objective: To demonstrate that faith in Christ is strengthened, and prayer and fasting is required for one to prevail in all difficult situations.

b) Memory Verse: (Acts 3:16) And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 732

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. This passage is about the encounter between Christ's disciples and an evil spirit. A boy with an evil spirit was brought to them by his father; but they were unable to cast out the evil spirit.

ii. In Mk 6:13, it is stated that they cast out evil spirits while on their mission to villages. Does that mean that they had special authority only for that trip, or perhaps their faith was faltering at this time?

iii. One immediate observation is the need not to rest on our oars, thinking that once victorious, always victorious.

iv. Mark tells this story to show that the battle with Satan is a difficult and an ongoing struggle. Victory over sin and temptation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not through our own human efforts.

v. What Jesus said in verse 23 does not mean that we can automatically obtain anything we want if we just think positively. Jesus meant that anything is possible if we believe, because nothing is too difficult for God if what we ask for is according to His will (I Jh. 5:14).

vi. In Mk. 9:24, the father of the child cried out and said in tears, **"Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief".** The attitude of trust and confidence that Hebrews 11: 1 and 6 calls belief or faith is not something we can obtain without divine help.

vii. Faith is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9). No matter how much faith we have, we can never reach the point of being self-sufficient. Faith is not stored away like money in the bank. Growing in faith is a constant process of daily renewal of our trust in Jesus. This implies constantly reading the word of God; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, as stated in Romans 10:17.

viii. Also, we can learn from the attitude of the father of the boy in this story that, even those who believe can still be nagged by doubt and hopelessness. However, the man took the correct course by appealing to Jesus for help in verse 24.

ix. Mk 9:25-27 informs us that Jesus healed the boy by commanding the evil spirit to get out of him: **"Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come**

out of him, and enter no more into him" (vs. 25). Dumb and deaf spirits have ears to hear the command of Christ.

x. Later, in response to the disciples' question about why they could not cast the evil spirit out of the boy (vs. 28), the Lord Jesus Christ told them in verse 29 that they could not do so except by prayer and fasting: **"This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting".** In dealing with demon possession, there may be the need to know the nature and degree of demon possession.

xi. Again, Jesus spoke plainly about His imminent death and resurrection; but His disciples did not understand what He was telling them. (verse 32). It is sad that the disciples were ignorant of Christ's mission, a situation which made them ask him about restoring the government to Israel, while He was urging them to wait for the Holy Spirit after His resurrection (Acts 1:4-8). If the condition of the disciples was like that then, what about now?

xii. The Church today is more guilty of this ignorance and diversion of attention to irrelevant issues.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Are we over- or under-playing demon possession today?
2. Can God use you to cast out demons?
3. How regularly do you pray and fast to sharpen your faith in Christ?

LESSON 47: CHRIST'S DISCIPLES WANT TO KNOW WHO IS THE GREATEST AMONG THEM

Text: Mk. 9:33-37

a) Objective: To show how the feeling of self-importance can cause God's people to lose focus on the most essential issue.

b) Memory Verse: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 579

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk 9:33: **"And he came to Capernaum and being in the house he asked them, what was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way."** A good leader should make an effort to know the concerns of his subordinates.

ii. Mk. 9:34: **"But they held their peace; for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest".** (Lk. 22:24)

iii. Mk. 9:35: And he sat down, and called the twelve, and said unto them, **"If any man desire to be first, the same shall be the last of all"** (Matt. 18:4; 20:26; Mk. 10:43; Lk 22:26).

iv. Here, human pride and the ambition to be greater are more evident in certain people than they are in others. Many people want to lead, but very few want to follow or serve.

v. It is not wrong for believers in Christ to be industrious and ambitious, but when ambition pushes aside obedience and service, it becomes sin.

vi. Many are like these disciples when it comes to pride, self-importance and ambition. Pride and insecurity can cause us to overvalue our position and prestige. But, in God's kingdom, such motives are destructive.

vii. The only safe ambition is the one that is directed toward Christ's kingdom, not toward our own selfish advancement. We must renounce pride and status-seeking; they are Satan's tools, not Christ's.

viii. In verse 35, Jesus Christ made His disciples realize that serving others is real leadership. He described leaders from a new perspective – instead of using people or lording it over them, we must serve them. Jesus' mission was to serve others and to give His life away. (Luke 22:27)

ix. Jesus was saying here that a real leader should have a servant's heart. Servant leaders appreciate the worth of others and realize that they themselves are not above any assignment or job.

x. In Mk. 9:36-37, to help the disciples understand what He was saying, Jesus resorted to an object lesson. He took a child and put him in their midst. Then, when He had carried the boy 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."**

xi. By this object lesson, the Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to welcome children. This is a new approach in a society where children are usually treated or regarded as second-class citizens. Children must be taught about Jesus. Children ministry should not be regarded as less important than those for adults.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Do you have the heart of a servant?
2. Do you know the price of leadership?
3. Do you seek position as of right or by the grace of God?

LESSON 48: JESUS REBUKES HIS DISCIPLES FOR THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHERS WHO PERFORM MIRACLES IN HIS NAME.

Text: MK. 9:38-41

a) **Objective:** To show that Jesus Christ does not limit His work of salvation and miracles to any particular class of people or denomination; and that He always manifests Himself wherever people show faith in Him.

b) **Memory Verse:** "Then, Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

c) **Relevant Hymns:** RH 144

d) **Lesson Exposition:**

i. Mk. 9:38: **"And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, because he followeth us not."**

ii. It may not have been clear to the disciples if the man that was seen casting out devils in Jesus name ever knew Jesus or whether he was just a common exorcist using the name of Jesus to work miracles. Whatever the case might be, it is proper to imagine that the man might have come across Jesus somewhere and believed in Him.

iii. Jesus Christ said in Mk. 9:39 **"Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me."** This confirms our assumption about the man, that he was another disciples of Jesus Christ. Here, Jesus confirms that the man was with Him. However, scriptures speak of those who falsely perform miracles in the name of Christ; their fate awaits the time of judgment where Christ himself will sort them out, with the following remark: "I never knew you". (Rev. 16:13-14; Matt. 7:23)

iv. Also, in verse 40, Jesus went further to say: **"For he that is not against us is on our part."**
Therefore, the disciples should not have stopped him but rather should have sought to know him more. The next step for them would have been to strengthen him the more, as Aquila and Priscilla empowered Apollos in Corinth, (Acts 18:25-26).

v. People who are on the side of Jesus, regardless of their denominations, should have the same goal of building up the kingdom of God.

vi. There is a parallel case to this story in Num. 11:26-29 in which it is said that the Spirit of the Lord rested upon Eldad and Medad, and they prophesied in the camp.

vii. As the two men mentioned above prophesied in the camp, Joshua, the servant of Moses, said, **"My Lord Moses, forbid them."** but Moses refused to do so; and Moses said, in Num. 11:29: "…Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"

viii. Where the principle of "who is not against me is with me" does not hold, the principle of "he that is not with me is against me" holds; and only for those cases that we may oppose as Peter opposed Simon of Samaria's request to buy the power of God with money. (Acts 8:9-24)

ix. Even, where we see negative motives, we should leave the matter for divine intervention. An example of this is in Philippians 1:15-18, where Paul referred to the case of those who were preaching Christ for envy in order to hurt Him.

x. Those who share a common faith in Christ should cooperate, but avoid compromising on essential articles of faith.

xi. In John 10:16, Jesus spoke of other sheep not of the present fold which he would bring, that there will be one fold and one shepherd. We must understand here that the aim of Jesus Christ is unity; that is one fold and one Shepherd; and He is the One who would speak to these other sheep to hear Him and they will come to Him in the fold. Therefore, those who know the truth must pray to God that God would use them to propagate the truth in love to erring brethren.

e. Personal Assessment Questions

1. Do you appreciate preachers who are not members of your Church?
2. What are the doctrines you must not compromise on?

LESSON 49: JESUS EXPLAINS THINGS THAT CAUSE PEOPLE TO SIN.

Text: MK. 9:42-50

a) Objective: To teach the need for working against actions, attitudes, relationships and life-styles that can affect our faith adversely

b) Memory Verse: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16).

c) Relevant Hymn: RH 414

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. In Mk 9:42, Jesus Christ used offences against little ones and its consequence to stress the seriousness of causing stumbling blocks for others.

ii. These **'little ones'** could literally mean little children or those whose faith in Christ is still weak or those who are still baby-Christians.

iii. The **'millstone'** that is referred to by Jesus in the passage is a heavy stone that is used to grind grains, pepper, and others for meal. Jesus uses the concept (or imagery) here to refer to the inescapable nature of the punishment that would be meted out to those who cause others to sin.

iv. In essence, our teachings, actions and life-styles should be in conformity with the word of God if we do not want to cause others to err in faith and

consequently suffer the penalty for it.

v. From verses 43-48, Jesus Christ referred to hands, feet and eyes as potential agents of sin. He knew that these three parts of the human body can lead one to sin.

vi. For example, Gen. 3:6 says concerning Eve **"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food… she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat."** Also, we are told of what David did with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah after he had seen the beauty of the woman from the roof of his palace (2Sam. 11:1-4). Note that the common denominator in both cases was the "eyes"; the eyes of Eve and David led them to lust and commit sin.

vii. It is not only the hands, feet and eyes that can cause one to sin; Jesus only mentioned just these few.

viii. The expressions **"cut it off"** and **"pluck it out"** as used by Jesus Christ in verses 43-45 and 47 should be taken figuratively to mean **"to take whatever drastic actions that are necessary to avoid sin."**

ix. Furthermore, cutting off the hand and the foot and plucking out the eye as said above are not meant to promote self-mutilation; rather, it emphasizes the importance of cutting sin out of our lives. (Col. 3:5-7)

x. Painful self-discipline is required of all true believers in Christ. For example, giving up a relationship, job or habit that is against the will of God may seem just as painful as cutting off one's hand; but Christ is worthy of any possible loss or discomfort.

xi. Nothing should stand in the way of faith. We must be ruthless in removing sin from our lives now, to avoid suffering for eternity.

xii. In Mk. 9:49, Jesus Christ is probably referring to the trials and tests that will take place in the last days, which God will use to purify the children of the kingdom.

xiii. It can be deduced that salt may lose its savour or taste and still retain its physical appearance. For example, Saul still reigned as the king of Israel for many years, even after the Spirit of God had departed from him (1Sam. 16:14).

xiv. Christians are the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13), but it is possible to lose one's saltiness and still appear to be on the right course. As salt changes meat's flavor, we too should preserve the world from getting morally decayed.

xv. To **"have salt in yourselves"** as expressed in vs 50 is a charge to Christians to live up to their calling and to serve as worthy examples **(or "preservatives")** in this sinful world.

xvi. The rivalry among the disciples earlier noted in Mk. 9:33-34 could threaten their salt-like character; hence, Jesus commanded them in verse 50 to live

at peace with one another.

xvii. The positive quality of life among believers in Christ should serve as a hope or **"salt"** for the world. Factions or divisions among believers in Christ have a destructive effect upon their testimony and goals.

e. Personal Assessment Questions

1. What difficult sacrifice have you made for Christ in your life?
2. Is your life making an impact on your environment?

LESSON 50: JESUS STATES THE GODLY PRINCIPLES FOR MARRIAGE WHEN HE WAS CONFRONTED BY THE PHARISEES.

Text: Mark 10:1-12

a) Objective: To explain God's principles for marriage and to demonstrate Jesus's ability to outwit the Pharisees who had come to tempt Him with their questions.

b) Memory Verse: *"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" (Mk. 10:8-9).*

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 723

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Jesus Christ had spent some time at Capernaum teaching His disciples (Mk. 9:33-50), and had now come into the coasts of Judea by the side of Jordan. Then, in His usual practice, He taught the crowds that came to meet Him there.

ii. The expression "as he was wont, he taught them again", as used in Mk 10:1 has two aspects. First, "as he was wont" explains that teaching was a habitual practice for Jesus. Second, "he taught them again," implies that the people that were taught in this passage had been taught by Jesus Christ before.

iii. The people must have enjoyed the teaching of Jesus Christ previously; hence, they sought Him for another opportunity to be taught, signifying that our teaching of God's word must attract people and encourage them to desire more.

iv. Then, in Mk. 10:2, the Pharisees questioned Jesus Christ on the issue of divorce, but they were not sincere as their question was deliberately designed to tempt Jesus.

v. The Pharisees' question was meant to find a fault against Jesus, thinking that He would say something contrary to the Law of Moses (Deut. 24:1-4).

vi. Other aims of these Pharisees were to deliberately obstruct Jesus Christ's ministry and to indict Him by His word.

vii. The Pharisees might have thought that they were wise, but Jesus Christ was able to outwit them by a question that counteracted them.

viii. Mk. 10:3: Then, Jesus said unto the Pharisees, "What did Moses command you?" This question shows that Jesus Christ was aware of the law of Moses concerning marriage and divorce. This is a challenge to all ministers of the Gospel, they should have a good knowledge and understanding of the Scripture.

ix. Mk. 10:4: What the Pharisees said to Jesus Christ in this verse, that Moses suffered them to write a bill of divorcement, and to put away their wives is in reference to Deut. 24:1-4.

x. Possibly, Jesus Christ knew that the Pharisees were not sincere; still, but He used the opportunity to explain the principles of God for marriage, as presented in Mk. 10:5-11.

xi. In Mk 10:5, Jesus told the Pharisees that Moses permitted them to put away their wives because of the hardness of their heart. Probably, He meant that the purpose of Deut. 24:1-4 was not to make divorce legal or acceptable, but to reduce the hardship of its consequences.

xii. In Mk. 10:6, Jesus explained to the Pharisees how, from the beginning of creation, God made human beings male and female.

xiii. Also, in Mk. 10:7-8, Jesus Christ referred to Gen. 2:24 that says:"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother; and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." See Eph. 5:31, also.

xiv. Although the Pharisees used Deut. 24:1-4 as an excuse to sanction divorce, Jesus explained to them that divorce was not God's idea. Rather, God wants married people to consider their marriage permanent.

xv. Mk. 10:9: The expression in this verse, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" indicates that marriage, as a permanent union between husband and wife, was instituted by God; hence, no one should separate them.

xvi. Jesus did not cancel the law of Moses concerning marriage and divorce. However, for possible exceptions, see Matt. 5:32 and 19:9, where He (Jesus) permitted divorce when the spouse had been unfaithful; and I Cor. 7:14, where Paul recognized divorce when the unbelieving partner leaves the marriage; but with the condition that neither of them should remarry. Also, see I Cor 7:10-11.

xvii. Divorce is wrong, as it severs a holy union. Thus, Jesus high view of marriage surely requires that divorce should be a last resort, to avoid greater disaster.

xviii. In the past, some societies often treated women as property. In that case, marriage and divorce were regarded as transactions, like buying and selling of land. But Jesus condemned the attitude, clarifying God's

original intention- that marriage brings oneness (Gen. 2:24). Jesus held up God's ideal for marriage and told His followers to live by that ideal.

xix. Mk. 10:10-12: At home, Jesus explained further to His disciples that any person that puts away his or her partner and be married to another person has committed adultery against his or her partner (See Rom. 7:3; I Cor. 7:10-11).

e) Personal Assessment Question

1. In the present-day situation, do you believe that divorce is wrong?
2. Do you agree that fornication and adultery can send one to hell?

LESSON 51: RECEIVING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS LITTLE CHILDREN

Text: Mark 10:13-16

a) Objective: To show that childlike attitudes are necessary to enter the kingdom of God.

b) Memory Verse: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." (Mark 10:15)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH426

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. In this lesson, we shall see Jesus, using little children as object lessons to teach the kind of attitudes that are necessary to enter the kingdom of God.

ii. Some have said it was customary among the ancient Jewish mothers to bring their children to the rabbi for blessing.

iii. Thus, in Mk. 10:13, some parents brought their children to Jesus that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those that brought the children.

iv. Probably, the disciples had a partial understanding of Jesus Christ's earthly ministry which definitely included the salvation of children.

v. Jesus Christ was displeased with His disciples and told them not to forbid the little children from coming unto Him. He said the kingdom of God belongs to them.

vi. The disciples might have considered it a distraction to bring children to their master at that time. Probably, they were unaware that children also have their own portion in the kingdom of God.

vii. Today, there are some who still make the mistake of thinking that children should not be allowed to disturb adult services; but the views of such people obviously do not represent the purpose of God for children.

viii. The expression "for such is the kingdom of God" in Mk. 10:14 does not mean that heaven is only for little children. Rather, it means that people

need childlike attitudes to be qualified for the Kingdom of God. This is expanded further below.

ix. Mk. 10:15, "… whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" is one of the conditions of discipleship like the ones that were discussed in lessons 41-44 of part 'A' of this teaching series in the previous year.

x. Naturally, children exhibit sincerity, eagerness, a trusting attitude, and total dependence on their parents, nurses and teachers. Thus, to enter the kingdom of God, one must become as humble, sincere, eager, trusting and dependent upon the Lord, like little children.

xi. The intention here is not that we should become childish, as that may mean lack of spiritual growth, but to be childlike. This implies that we should recognize our helpless and dependent situation and our need for Christ and salvation through Him.

xii. Mk. 10:16: The narrative (story) concludes with Jesus Christ taking the children up in His arms, putting His hands upon them and blessing them. The New Testament records certain instances where Jesus laid His hand upon people and healed them. (Mk. 1:41; 7:33) But, in this case, the laying of His hand upon the children was to bless them.

xiii. This example that was shown by Jesus Christ is an important lesson for us today, especially in cultures where it is believed that children should only be seen but not be heard.

xiv. Also, Jesus Christ's statements and actions underline the importance of children's ministry in the contemporary church, such as the one administered by the Child Evangelism Unit (CEU) of The Apostolic Church.

e) Personal Assessment Question

1. What are those childlike characteristics that will get one to heaven?
2. Would you love to work among children in the church?

LESSON 52: JESUS TEACHES THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THOSE WHO TRUST IN THEIR RICHES TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Text: MK. 10:17-31

a) Objective: To teach that trusting in earthly riches would hinder people from entering the kingdom of God.

b) Memory Verse: Labour not to be rich. Cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven. Prov. 23:4-5

c) Relevant Hymns: App 50

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 10:17: In this story, a rich young ruler, also mentioned in Matt. 19:20 and Lk. 18:1,8 ran to Jesus Christ and knelt before Him. The man asked Jesus Christ what he should do to enter eternal life.

ii. Mk. 10:18: Jesus Christ's expression, "God is the only one that is good", implies that He did not only want to be flattered by any man, but also would not want to usurp the glory that was meant for His Father.

iii. Mk. 10:19: However, in response to the man's request, Jesus referred him to part of the Old Testament commandments (Ex. 20:12-16, Deut. 5:16-21) to which the man responded that he had observed that, even from his youth.

iv. Mk. 10:20-21: Jesus knew that the man still lacked something essential. Therefore, Jesus told him to sell all his possessions, give the money to the poor, come back, take up his cross and follow Him.

v. Verse 22 says the young man was sad at what Jesus said to him, and therefore went away grieved, because he had great possessions.

vi. Mk. 10:23: After the man had gone away sorrowfully, the Lord Jesus Christ used the opportunity to teach His disciples on how difficult it is for those who put their trust in earthly riches to enter the kingdom of God.

vii. Mk.10: 24-25: In these two verses, the Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples that it would be easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

viii. By the above statement, the Lord Jesus Christ did not condemn riches; rather, he condemned putting one's trust in it. In other words, Jesus did not say every one that is rich cannot enter eternal life. Rather, He meant that giving priority to money or any other worldly thing above God is a hindrance to gaining eternal life. The main emphasis here is that nothing should take the place of God in our heart and life.

ix. Mk. 10:26-27: These verses reveal that the disciples were still confused; hence, they asked the question, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus told them in verse 27 that what they thought was impossible with human beings was possible with God.

x. The lesson from verse 27 is that Jesus wants us to know that no one can be saved by his or her own human efforts, but by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. We must have faith in the saving power of Jesus Christ and allow Him to help us through the power of the Holy Spirit and His word.

xi. Mk. 10:28: We notice in this verse that the disciples might have thought that if salvation could not be earned by good work, what then would be their fate, having left everything to follow Jesus: "Then Peter began to say unto him, lo, we have left all, and have followed thee." Also, see Matt 4:19.

xii. Mk. 10:29-30: Reacting to Peter's fear and question, Jesus taught His disciples about the present and future rewards of forsaking one's family,

friends or occupation for His sake.

xiii. The rewards of those who have given up something valuable to serve God on earth here would be a hundred times over in this life, sometimes with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.

xiv. The reference to persecution is to help believers in Christ know that the life of discipleship is a combination of promises and persecutions, blessings and sufferings.

xv. Mk. 10:31: Christ's statement that "many that are first shall be last; and the last first" is a warning against pride and complacency. The statement suggests that, in the world to come, the values of this present world will be reversed. Those who are seeking status and self-importance here would have nothing in heaven, while those who are humble here would be great in heaven.

e. Personal Assessment Question

1. Do we have the courage to tell highly placed people what they lack spiritually?
2. How can we reach highly placed people with the gospel?

LESSON 53: JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH THE THIRD TIME.

Text: MK. 10:32-34

A. Objective: To show the consciousness of Christ of the certainty of His death.

a) Memory Verse: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, (Mat 20:18)

b) Relevant Hymns: RH200

c) Lesson Exposition:

i. To "predict" is to say that something will happen in the future.

ii. In Mk. 10; 32-34: Jesus revealed, for the third time, His imminent death and resurrection. He made this third prediction while they were walking on their way to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. What He said previously on this same subject are recorded in Mk. 8:31-34 and Mk. 9:30-32.

iii. Mk. 10:33: Here, Jesus said to His disciples, "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."

iv. The disciples, like most Jews of that time, had the wrong idea of the Messiah's kingdom as predicted by the Old Testament Prophets. They

thought that Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom that would free Israel from the Roman oppressive rule. Therefore, they could not understand how a conquering Messiah would become a suffering victim in the hands of the Gentiles.

v. In verse 34, Jesus explained how He would be mocked, scourged, spat upon, killed; and would rise again, on the third day. Since Jesus often spoke in parables, what He said in this passage was not fully understood by His disciples, until after His resurrection.

vi. The only thing Jesus revealed to His disciples during His first two predictions was His death and resurrection. However, in His third prediction, He made known to His disciples, for the first time, what would be the manner of His death – crucifixion.

vii. Though the word "crucifixion" does not occur in any of the passion predictions of Jesus Christ in the Gospel according to Mark, the statement that the son of man (Jesus) would be killed by the Gentiles suggests "crucifixion", since "crucifixion" was the usual means of Roman execution of non-Roman citizens in those days.

viii. There is a parallel between what Jesus predicted about Himself in this passage and what He said earlier in Mk. 10:31 concerning the persecutions that would accompany the earthly rewards of those who have left everything behind for His sake.

ix. Crucifixion would not terminate the purpose of Jesus Christ. It would only lead to the fulfillment of His purpose, that is, to die for the sin of the world as the Lamb of God (John 1:29; 18:14).

x. Therefore, believers in Christ should appreciate Jesus Christ's passion, death and resurrection which had paved the way for their salvation. Also, they should recognise that it is impossible for all true disciples of Jesus Christ to follow Him without being hated and persecuted by unbelievers.

xi. The statement of Christ here is a piece of evidence of His consciousness of His main assignment on earth, that is, to become a man who would give life as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of man; hence, he constantly reminded people, especially His disciples who expected a messiah to deliver Israel from Roman colonization.

e. Personal Assessment Question

1. Are you conscious of your mission in the Church as Christ was conscious of His mission on earth?
2. If this entails suffering, will you still pursue it tenaciously?

LESSON 54: JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES THE MEANING OF TRUE GREATNESS IN RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST BY JAMES AND JOHN.

Text: Mark 10:35-45

a) Objective: To teach that true greatness is in serving others.

b) Memory Verse: And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me (Lk 22:29)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 579

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Most people, including Christians, often desire positions of greatness, honour and prestige; this is why we often see people attaching various titles to their names.

ii. We observe in Mk 10:35 that, shortly after Jesus had predicted His death and resurrection the third time, two of His disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him with a special request. They requested Jesus Christ to do for them whatsoever they desired.

iii. Mk.10:36: Then, Jesus Christ asked them, "What would ye that I should do for you?" Christian leaders should emulate Jesus Christ's leadership style. They should always make themselves accessible or approachable to their subordinates or disciples.

iv. Mk 10:37: What these two sons of Zebedee wanted for themselves was definitely a position of honour. They asked Jesus to grant them the privilege to sit beside Him, one on His right hand and the other on His left hand in His glory. Matt.20:20 provides additional information, that the mother of these two sons of Zebedee also made the same request to Jesus on behalf of her sons. However, it is not very clear whether Matthew and Mark are referring to the same event or two separate events.

v. What James and John requested here could be interpreted in two ways: firstly, they could have thought that Jesus would soon establish an earthly kingdom that would give them a jurisdiction to rule. Secondly, some believe that they could be speaking about Christ's heavenly kingdom that was yet to come. In this respect, either of the two ways or both are possible.

vi. Mk.10:38: Jesus Christ's expression, "To drink the cup that I drink" was a Jewish expression that meant to share someone's fate. We are told that, in the Old Testament days, a cup of wine was a common metaphor for the wrath of God against human, sin and rebellion (Ps.75:8; Isa.51:17-23; Jer.25:15-28; 49:12; 51:7

vii. Therefore, the cup which Jesus had to drink refers to the divine punishment of sins that He bore in the place of the sinful mankind (see Mk.10:45; 14:36).

viii. Also,the baptism that Jesus meant here symbolically referred to His

suffering and death. See Lk.12:50 and Rom.6:3-4 for more explanation on this baptism.

ix. Mk.10:39: Without understanding the cost of their request, James and John told Jesus that they were ready to drink the cup with Jesus and be baptized with him.

x. However, Jesus told the two disciples, in verse 40, that it was not His responsibility to determine those who would sit on His right hand and His left hand, but His Father's. Some writers believe that Jesus said this, in order not to usurp His Father's authority.

xi. James and John said they were willing to face any trial for Christ and both suffered later. James suffered as a martyr in the hand of Herod Agrippa (Acts12:1-3), and John was forced to live in exile on the island of Patmos (Rev.1:9).

xii. It is easy to promise to suffer for Christ; but many of us often complain because of minor trials of our faith in the course of serving Him.

xiii. Mk 10:41: According to some Bible scholars, the other disciples were possibly displeased with James and John, because they too desired the positions of prestige and power for themselves.

xiv. Mk 10:42-44: James and John wanted the highest position in Christ's kingdom. But Jesus taught them that true greatness comes from serving others. Later, Peter, one of the disciples who had heard this teaching of Jesus expanded the thought in 1Peter 5:1-4

xv. In the secular world, greatness is often measured by personal achievement. But in Christ's kingdom, service is the way to get ahead. In that case, the desire to be on top of others will hinder, and not help one. Therefore, as believers in Christ, rather than seeking to have our desires met, we should find how we can minister to the needs of others.

xvi. Mk 10:45: Some Bible Scholars believe that this is a key verse in the Gospel written by Mark. It shows Jesus as the One who came to the world to serve, the Servant who suffered and died for our redemption, as Isaiah clearly predicted (Isa 52:13-53:12) Jesus made Himself a Ransom for us. A 'ransom' is the price paid to release a slave. Jesus gave His life as Ransom to release us from the bondage of sin and penalty of death. Therefore, one should not be surprised at Paul's declaration in Romans 5:8, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

e. Personal Assessment Question

1. Can you easily separate your desire to improve yourself from seeking greatness and honour?
2. What do you think is the difference between working to achieve greatness and honour?
3. As a Christian leader, are you willing and able to calmly react to unwholesome request from your subordinate?

LESSON 55: THE BLIND BARTIMAEUS RECEIVES HIS SIGHT.

Text: Mark 10:46-52

a) Objective: To show that persistent faith in Jesus Christ is necessary for divine healing.

b) Memory Verse: "I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth" (Luke 11:8)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 565

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. The event in this passage also appears in Matt. 20:28-34 and Lk. 18:35-43; it took place in Jericho while Jesus Christ and His disciples were going to Jerusalem together with some other people who were perhaps going on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

ii. The story centres on one blind beggar called Bartimaeus, the Son of Timaeus who was healed by Jesus Christ as a result of his persistent faith.

iii. Mk. 10:46 states that, as Jesus went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, a blind man called Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus sat by the highway side begging.

iv. However, when the blind Bartimaeus heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth that was passing, he began to cry out, saying, **"thou son of David, have mercy on me,"** (Mk. 10:47)

v. There was no indication that this blind man had ever met Jesus Christ before, but we believe, in view of his earnest action, that he might have heard about the fame of Jesus. The man knew the birth-place and the title of Jesus Christ and also recognized Him as a healer.

vi. The expression **"Thou Son of David"** alludes to Isa. 11:1-3; Jer. 23: 5-6; Eze. 34:23-24 and Matt. 1:1; 9:27 where the same expression is used to refer to the Messianic Title of Jesus Christ.

vii. Mk. 10:48: **"And many charged him to hold his peace …"** To the crowd around Jesus, the problem of the blind Bartimaeus was less important than what should attract the attention of Jesus Christ. So, they tried to stop the blind man from disturbing Jesus.

viii. Conversely, we are told in that same verse 48 that the more the crowd tried to stop the blind man from crying unto Jesus, the more the man cried, repeating the same statement as before.

ix. Though Jesus Christ had set His eyes on going to Jerusalem, where He would accomplish His ministry of dying for the sin of mankind, He still had time to show concern for a single helpless roadside beggar, as we shown in verse forty-nine.

x. In verse 49, it is written that Jesus Christ stood still and commanded people to call the blind man for Him. Those who went to call the man encouraged him to be of good comfort. This could mean that they had the assurance that

the blind man would have his problem solved that day as Jesus had called for him. Today, those who are sent to others by Jesus Christ must have faith in Jesus and present His message in a way that would attract people to come unto Him.

xi. Mk. 10:50 is probably telling us that the blind man knew what could hinder him from moving fast to Jesus Christ. The verse says the man cast away his garment and came to Jesus.

xii. Like Bartimaeus, we also have our hindering garments to cast away, to be able to come to Jesus. One hindering garment that the Psalmist recognized is **"iniquity".** The psalmist says: **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"** (Ps. 66:18).

xiii. Mk. 10:51: Being an omniscient Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ knew the need of the man, but He still wanted him to personally state what he wanted, and He asked, **"What will thou that I should do unto thee?"** Note that this man had earlier cried in verse 48, asking Jesus to have mercy on him. But Jesus wanted him to state in what specific area he would want to be shown mercy. This persistence in making his request is commendable; he did not allow prevailing circumstances of the crowd to prevent him from making his request. Believers should be conscious of those who may want to hinder people to come Jesus; we should not be among the people who discourage people from coming to Jesus; we should encourage and allow people to come to Jesus.

xiv. Believers and evangelists in particular should seek to bring all to Christ, irrespective of probable inconvenient circumstances which such people might be in.

xv. We are told in that same verse that Bartimaeus answered Jesus Christ and said **"Lord, that I might receive my sight."** We should not cry unto God or approach Him without having a specific purpose in mind.

xvi. The climax of this story is that Jesus Christ healed the blind Bartimaeus. He said in verse 52, **"Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."** Here, we can see once again how our faith in the saving power of Jesus is essential to our divine healing. The verse says the man received his sight immediately and followed Jesus in His way.

xvii. However, there is no further Biblical evidence that Bartimaeus continued to stay permanently with Jesus after receiving his sight. It should be noted that, after being healed by Jesus Christ, it is the will of God that we maintain a permanent relationship with Him, so that we can be healed spiritually also; and be constantly cleansed by His Word and Spirit.

a) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Do you discriminate among those you witness to?
2. Do you persist in your request before God, unfavourable circumstances notwithstanding?

LESSON 56: JESUS TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Text: Mark 11:1-11

a) Objective: To show how Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy concerning His last entry into Jerusalem where He would die for the sin of man.

b) Memory Verse: And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: (Mark 11:9)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 155

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Shortly before the Jewish Passover feast in Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus Christ rode on a colt into the city, Jerusalem, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah (Zech. 9:9).

ii. This triumphal entry into Jerusalem is also recorded in Matt. 21:1-11; Lk 19:28-40; John 12:12-19; and has been termed by some as the triumph of Christ over Satan and the kingdom of darkness.

iii. Mk. 11:1-2: As Jesus Christ and his disciples were about to get to Jerusalem after they had left Jericho, they got to a place known as Bethphage and Bethany which were at the Mount of Olives. From that point, the Lord Jesus Christ sent two of His disciples to the village that was just ahead of them.

iv. The two disciples were sent by Jesus Christ to go and untie a particular colt that was tied down in the village, upon which no man had sat before. They were to bring the colt to Jesus Christ, after loosing it from the stake.

v. Here, one can see how Jesus demonstrated His compliance with the Old Testament rules and regulations of using only unyoked animals for a sacred purpose. A colt which had been used for a domestic or agricultural purpose could not be used for a religious purpose.

vi. Mk. 11:3: Jesus knew what would happen at the scene of the event; therefore, He said to the two disciples, **"And if any man say to you, "Why do ye this? Say ye that the Lord hath need of him; straightway he will send him hither."** The latter part of this verse suggests the temporary engagement of the colt by Jesus.

vii. We can see the omniscient power of Jesus Christ demonstrated here. He knew exactly the location and condition of the colt and He knew that the two disciples would be queried when they would be loosing the colt.

viii. Mk. 11:4: This verse tells us that the two disciples went away to the village and found the colt tied at the door outside, in a place where two ways met, and loosed it.

ix. Mk. 11:5-6 says that, while the colt was being loosed, those who stood

nearby queried the two disciples, saying, **"What do ye, loosing the colt?"** But the two disciples told the people exactly what Jesus had commanded them to say "the Lord hath need of him." See verse 3.

x. As believers in Christ, there is always success whenever we work in obedience to the word of God. This reminds us of what Simon Peter said in Lk. 5:5, **"Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word, I will let down the net."** In the same vein, the mother of Jesus said unto the servants in John 2:5, **"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."**

xi. Mk. 11:7: This verse says they brought the colt to Jesus Christ, and cast their garments on him (the colt), and Jesus sat upon the colt. What the disciples did here suggests that they were probably familiar with the Jewish custom of decorating donkeys, asses or colts for the use of kings during special ceremonies.

xii. Also, Mk. 11:8 tells us that some people spread their garments and branches of the trees on the way for Jesus to pass. Of the four gospels, only John 12:13 mentions **"palm branches"** instead of **"garments"** and **"tree branches".**

xiii. Mk. 11:9: The people who were shouting **"Hosanna"; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord…"** in this verse were apparently making use of Psalm 118:26 where the same slogan was used to hail the coming king of the family of David who would restore the kingdom of Israel to its former glory.

xiv. Hitherto, the Jews had been expecting a political and nationalist leader, perhaps a violent social reformer who would liberate them from the harsh rule of Rome.

xv. Mk. 11:10: The expression "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David …" in this verse talks about the Messianic kingdom that was promised to David's Son in 2Sam. 7:11-14.

xvi. Also, the term **"Hosanna"** is an Hebrew word that means **'Save now.'** The people were asking Jesus to save them, even without recognizing how Jesus would soon fulfill the prophecy that had been written in Zech. 9:9 and referred to in Psalm 24:7-10 and 118:26.

xvii. Mk. 11:11: Now, when Jesus entered Jerusalem, he went straight into the temple, looking around at the things there. In other words, he was inspecting the temple. From that point, Jesus went out to Bethany where he spent the night with his disciples before his passion week.

e) Personal Assessment Question

1. Does this event justify the celebration of Palm Sunday?
2. What do you think was the reason the crowd shouted Hosanna?

LESSON 57: JESUS CURSES THE FRUITLESS FIG TREE.

Text: Mark 11:12-14

a) Objective: To show that God will judge Christians who fail to bear fruits as exemplified by the judgment of the unfruitful fig tree in this passage.

b) Memory Verse: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 570, App 106

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 11:12: According to John 11:1, Bethany was the hometown of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, the friends of Jesus. Also, one other source says that the town was not far from Jerusalem; this suggests that Jesus with His disciples; and probably spent His nights at Bethany for a few days during His last public appearance, before He finally rode to the city of Jerusalem where He was arrested, tried and crucified.

ii. Jesus' condition of hunger that is mentioned in this passage reveals His human aspect; He was made flesh and dwelt among men (Jn.1:14). As it is the nature of human beings to feel hungry, Jesus Christ, also being in human flesh, was hungry at that particular time.

iii. This episode shows that Jesus did not use His supernatural power to command food for Himself, which He could have done if He so desired. Believers in Christ must learn how not to use their God-given power, authority or position for self-gratification like Satan suggested to Jesus Christ while the latter was being tempted. See Matt. 4:3-4.

iv. Mk. 11:13: On their way from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus saw a fig tree that was full of leaves afar off; and desired to eat some of its fruits; the Scripture says the fig-tree had no fruits.

v. Some extra-biblical sources state that, in Palestine, some fig trees could have leaves when other trees have shed their leaves. In such cases, however, there would be fruits. If this information is correct, it means that the leafy appearance of this fig tree was a sign that there were fruits on it; but, unfortunately, it was not so.

vi. Mk. 11:14: Here, the Lord Jesus Christ's pronouncement that no man would eat out of the fig tree forever should not be misinterpreted as a malicious act as Peter would make us think later in verse 21. Rather, it was a judgment against that fruitless fig tree; and it had a spiritual significance which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

vii. The fig-tree mentioned in this passage was used symbolically by Jesus Christ to refer to the people of God and especially the nation of Israel who appeared outwardly or physically blossoming but failed to produce spiritual fruits.

viii. The story exposed the hypocrisy of the nation of Israel in the days of Jesus

Christ. Israel appeared very religious outwardly; but was far away from God in their inward state.

ix. This story is also a warning to those in the habit of running from one church to another church without knowing the differences. A particular church may look very promising and attractive physically or in appearance but be spiritually barren and have nothing to offer.

x. Jesus' pronouncement against this fig tree: "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever" (vs.14) had a lasting effect. This suggests that many of those who are fruitless today could probably have been cursed sometime in the past. However, the good news is that, if such individuals repent and ask for forgiveness, the Lord will forgive them and revoke the curse that is causing their affliction.

xi. Also, what happened to the fig tree studied in this passage should challenge believers in Christ to always aspire to be fruit-bearing as the Lord Jesus may come at any time to demand from them the fruits of their faith. The lesson should also teach believers that God will judge every unfruitful hypocritical believer in Christ as He had judged this fig tree by His word.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Are you convinced that you are living a fruitful Christian life?
2. Do you have constant experience of winning souls for Christ?

LESSON 58: JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE.

Text: Mark 11:15-19

a) Objective: To teach what God intends for His earthly Temple.

b) Memory Verse: "Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever" (Psalm 93:5).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 715

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. The temple in Jerusalem was the place of this event according to Mk. 11:15: "And they came into Jerusalem and Jesus went into the temple' Matt. 21:12 mentions **"temple"** but omits the word "Jerusalem".

ii. The time Jesus entered the temple was the time of passover, a Jewish religious event that usually brought many Jewish and gentile worshippers to the city of Jerusalem.

iii. It was also an occasion that provided opportunity often for merchants to bring sacrificial animals and other articles for sale in the Temple. Also, money changers were always present there to help foreigners change their monies to the currencies of the host country.

iv. Mk. 11:15-16: When Jesus Christ entered into the Temple and saw how the place was bustling with commercial activities just as we normally see during the time of our annual conventions, he was very angry.

v. It was told in the story that Jesus drove away from the Temple all the merchants and their customers, and threw out the tables of the money changers.

vi. Often, the inflated exchange rates enriched the money changers, and the exorbitant prices of the sacrificial animals made the merchants wealthy. These twin-businesses transacted in the court of the gentiles would not allow the non-Jews to participate in the Temple worship against what Isaiah 56: 6-7 says.

vii. Here, Jesus became angry, but he did not sin. There is a place for righteous indignation. Christians are right to be upset about sin and injustice and to take a stand against them. Unfortunately, believers are often positive about these important issues, but get angry over personal issues.

viii. By purging the Temple of defilement, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy in Mal. 3:1-3 and demonstrated His Messianic authority to reform the Jewish sacrifi cial system that gave room to fraudulence. Mal. 3:1-3 foretold what the coming Messiah would do in the Temple.

ix. Jesus justified his action from the Scriptures, as he taught the crowd that God had intended the Temple to be a house of prayer for all nations (Isa. 56:7). See also Ps. 69:9.

x. By accusing the people of turning the Temple into a den of thieves (Mk. 11:17), the Lord Jesus Christ was referring to Jeremiah 7:11 where God condemned the people's hypocritical worship which had lost sight of its purpose.

xi. Mk. 11:18: We notice in this verse that the action of Jesus Christ did not go well with the Jewish religious establishment. The scribes and the chief priests felt that Jesus was disturbing their 'status quo'; therefore, they were looking for an opportunity to kill him.

xii. Verse 19 tells us that when it was already evening, the Lord Jesus Christ went out of the city, that is, the city of Jerusalem, perhaps, back to Bethany, which they had chosen as their tentative residence, as said earlier in the first paragraph of this lesson.

xiii. Unfortunately, this lesson is still relevant today; some practices that were originally meant to help worshippers can become corrupted and lose their meanings.

xiv. Note: If Jesus Christ could act like this to the old earthly temple, how will he act towards the new Temple that is His body, the Christian Church and the individual believers' hearts?

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. How much do you comply with the Rules of Conduct of TAC No 8, which says “Enter reverently, pray fervently listen attentively, give praise from a grateful heart and worship God in the beauty of holiness?”

2. Can you think of the ways in which the Temple of God can be defiled?

LESSON 59: THE WITHERING OF THE FIG-TREE

Text: Mark 11:20-26

a) Objective: To show the quickness of the effects of the curse of Christ on the erring fig tree.

b) Memory Verse: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" ((Hebrews 10:31).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 737

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. This passage is the second part of the story of the fig tree that was cursed by Jesus Christ in Mk. 11:12-14; this event took place the next day after the clearing of the temple by Jesus Christ.

ii. Mk. 11:20: We are told in this verse that, in the morning, while Jesus and his disciples were passing by as usual, they noticed that the fig-tree that had been cursed by Jesus Christ in verse 14 had dried up from its roots.

iii. Mk. 11:21: To the disciples, the withering away of the fig tree was an amazement. Therefore, Peter called the attention of Jesus Christ, their master, to the condition of the fig tree.

iv. Peter saw Jesus' action as a curse against the fig tree, but Jesus taught them to show that the curse was not directed at the fig tree but at the hypocritical nation of Israel who appeared outwardly religious but spiritually barren. The withering was a judgment against the unfruitful Israel (Jer. 8:13).

v. Probably, Jesus chose a fig tree to make his point, because in the Old Testament, a fig tree was sometimes used to symbolize the nation of Israel. (See Mic. 7:1 and Jer. 8:13). However, the incident here was about the inner or spiritual decay of Israel.

vi. Mk. 11:22-26: Here, the Lord Jesus used the withering away of the fig tree to teach about the judgment of fruitless Christians, the power of faith in God and also forgiveness as a condition to answered prayer; this will be explained further, below.

- **a) Judgment:** The withering away of the fig-tree indicates the judgment awaiting any Christian that pretends to be worshipping God without producing any spiritual fruit, as such fruitless Christians shall be cut off (Lk. 13:6-9). Our outward appearance should match reality.
- **b) Faith in God:** Jesus used the withered fig tree to show the results of praying in faith. However, our prayer can only move the mountains that God wants removed, which invariably means that our prayer must always be according to the will of God. (I John 5:14)
- **c) Forgiveness:** Jesus also taught forgiveness as a condition for effectual or answered prayer. As Christians, we must be ready to forgive others as God Himself forgives us. This teaching may be alluding to the Lord Jesus Christ's teaching in Lk. 11:2-4.

a) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Are you conscious of the fierceness of God's judgement?
2. Do you find it easy to forgive?

LESSON 60: THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST IS CHALLENGED BY JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

Text: Mark 11:27-33

a) Objective: To show that Jesus received His authority from God and also to demonstrate His ability to outwit His enemies.

b) Memory Verse: "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 158

d) Lesson Exposition:

I. Mk. 11:27: Definitely, the expression **"… they come again to Jerusalem"** refers to Jesus Christ and His disciples. The expression probably means they came from Bethany, which was their temporary base that time.

ii. The latter part of verse 27 says the chief priests, the scribes and the elders came to Jesus Christ while He was walking in the temple. We need to be reminded that it was this same group of men that were looking for how to destroy Jesus Christ in verse 18.

iii. Mk. 11:28: The questions **"By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority to do these things?"** probably refer to verses 15-17 where Jesus drove out traders from the temple and taught the crowd about the intentions of God for His earthy temple.

iv. Mk. 11:29-30: In return, the Lord Jesus Christ asked these Jewish religious leaders to tell Him where the baptism of John came from. Was it from heaven or from men?

v. By the baptism of John, the Lord Jesus Christ apparently meant the authority of the ministry of John the Baptist. Did his ministry have a divine approval or a human approval?

vi. Mk. 11:3:. These Jewish religious leaders were in a dilemma. They understood Jesus Christ's counter-question and realized that whatever answer they gave would entrap them.

vii. They knew John as a Prophet from God and they knew that he (John) received his authority for his baptism from God. If they said that John's baptism was from God, that would mean that they had to accept Jesus as the Messiah that had been announced by the same John.

viii. Mk. 11:32: But, if on the other hand they said John's baptism was from men, they would lose the favour of the people who believed that John was a true prophet of God. (See Mat. 11:9).

ix. Mk. 11:33: Perhaps, to save themselves from the conflict which they had created for themselves, the chief priests, the scribes and the elders told Jesus that they did not know the answers to His question.

x. The expression **"we cannot tell"** in this verse 33 was a dishonest reply. We can see from this episode that hatred against the Son of God had led these evil men to commit the sin of lying.

xi. We can also see that the desire to win human favour may cause us to lose the favour of God, as these people knew the answer to Christ's counter-question but chose to be insincere.

xii. Jesus said in the latter part of verse 33 that He too would not tell them by what authority He did these things that they saw. Here, we see that wasting our time debating with people who cannot accept the truth is needless.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Do you expect criticism of your ministry as Jesus did?
2. Are you confident of confronting challengers as Jesus was?

LESSON 61: THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD AND THE HUSBANDMEN

Text: Mark 12:1-12

a) Objective: To show that God will judge those who revolt against Him.

b) Memory Verse: "For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry" (Isaiah 5:7).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 430

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. In those days among the Israelites, large estates were often owned by wealthy landlords and lent out to tenant farmers. Thus, Jesus used the parable in this story to expose the planned attempt on His life as well as God's judgment on the plotters.

ii. Mk. 12:1: **"A certain man planted a vineyard…"** The description that is given in this verse reflects the language of Isaiah 5:1-2 where the vineyard clearly symbolizes the nation of Israel.

iii. The man who planted the vineyard built a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, built a tower there, rented it out, and went on a journey (Mk. 12:1).

iv. Mk. 12:2-3: At the harvest time, the man sent a servant to receive some fruits from the husbandmen; but the husbandmen beat the servant and sent him away empty-handed.

v. Mk. 12:4: Then, the second time, the lord of the vineyard sent another servant; but the servant was also stoned and wounded by the same husbandmen.

vi. Mk. 12:5: Here, the man sent other servants; but these wicked tenants maltreated some of them and even killed others.

vii. Mk. 12:7-8: After three attempts, the owner of the vineyard sent his own

son whom he expected the husbandmen to respect; but he was also killed by the men.

viii. The husbandmen agreed to kill the son of the landlord, so that they could inherit the vineyard. In those days, the Jewish law provided that a piece of landed property unclaimed by the heir could be declared "ownerless" and claimed by anyone.

ix. Mk. 12:9: The parable concluded with a description of how the furious landlord would return, destroy the husbandmen and lend the vineyard to others.

x. Here, the lord of the vineyard refers to God; the vineyard represents the nation of Israel; the husbandmen are Israel's religious leaders; the servants are the Old Testament Prophets, while the son apparently refers to Jesus Christ.

xi. Also, the "others" to whom the vineyard would be given is a reference to the gentiles. Paul referred to these gentiles in Acts 13:46; 18:6. Then, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its temple in A.D. 70, the rule of the sacred city fell into the hands of the Gentiles.

xii. Mk. 12:10: Here, Jesus was referring to Himself as the stone rejected by the builders. He would be rejected by the Jewish leaders, but would become the cornerstone of a new building, which is the Church. (Isa. 28:16; Acts 4:11-12) This Church contains both the Jews and Gentiles.

xiii. That wonderful design could only have been the work of God and this is why Mk. 12:11 says, **"This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."**

xiv. Mk. 12:12: These religious leaders recognized that Jesus had told the parable against them. Therefore, they began to plot his arrest. However, their plot could not be carried out immediately, because they feared the crowd's reaction.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Do you appreciate the wisdom of God in His plan of salvation?
2. Do you remember unpleasant events which God had turned to a blessing in disguise?

LESSON 62: THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS PLOT TO ENTRAP JESUS BY HIS WORDS.

Text: Mark 12:13-17

a) Objective: To show how Jesus thwarted the efforts of those who plotted to catch Him through His words.

b) **Memory Verse:** (Mark 14:56) "For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together" (Mark 14:56).

c) **Relevant Hymns :**RH 370

d) **Lesson Exposition:**

i. Mk. 12:13: 'And they sent unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.' The Herodians are mentioned in the New Testament three times, all in collaboration with the Pharisees (see Mk. 3:16; Matt. 22:16).

ii. The Herodians were supporters of the Herod dynasty in its collaboration with the Roman government. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were a Jewish religious movement who exalted the law of Moses and oral tradition above love and mercy. The Pharisees lived a separated life, thinking that they could be defiled by others.

iii. As supporters of Rome, the Herodians were opposed to the Pharisees but their common hatred of Jesus at that time was great enough that both of them had to join forces against Him (Jesus).

iv. Mk. 12:14: **"Master, we know that thou art true, and careth for no man …"** was intended to be compliment, but theirs was a mere flattery. Followers of Christ must beware of people who flatter others with an evil intention.

v. These Pharisees and Herodians were sent, according to verse 13; and they asked Jesus whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not (vs. 14). A 'YES' answer would offend the Jews who opposed the idea of being under the Roman rule, while a 'NO' answer could be taken as treason against the Roman government.

vi. Mk. 12:15: The question **"Why tempt ye me?"** indicates that Jesus Himself knew that the people had come to tempt Him. But in His supernatural wisdom, He asked them to give him a penny (a denarius), which He would use against them as discussed below.

vii. Mk. 12:16: As they brought the money to Jesus, he said unto them: "Whose is this image and superscription? And they replied, **"Caesar's."**

viii. The image and inscription on the coin belonged to Caesar. We learnt from extra-biblical literature that Julius Caesar was the first emperor to cause his image to be struck on Roman coins. But Tiberus Caesar who reigned from A.D. 14-37 was the emperor of Rome at the time of this incident.

ix. In those days, various taxes, including annual tax, were paid by every Jewish adult to the Roman government. The Jews despised paying these taxes to the Romans whom they regarded as their oppressors. They also regarded their agents – the Jewish tax-collectors as traitors.

x. Mk. 12:17: In responding to His opponents, Jesus Christ told them to render to Caesar the things that were Caesar's and to God the things that were God's.

xi. Jesus avoided the tricky question by showing that believers have dual citizenship. (1 Pet. 2:17). Our citizenship in our country requires that we obey the law of the land, as long as it is not sinful to do so (Rom. 13:1-7; 1Pet. 2:13-17).

xii. Our citizenship in the kingdom of heaven requires that we are obedient and committed to God. See Acts 4:18-19; 5:29.

xiii. As believers in Christ, we have legitimate obligations to both God and the government of our land. But when the two authorities conflict, our duty to God must be given priority.

xiv. The coin bearing the emperor's image should be given to the emperor. Then, our lives bearing the image of God must be given to God.

e. Personal Assessment Questions

1. Are you giving to God what rightfully belongs to Him?
2. Do you believe that God wants you to obey civil laws such as paying taxes, obeying traffic laws etc?

LESSON 63: THE SADDUCEES QUESTION JESUS ABOUT MARRIAGE IN HEAVEN.

Text: Mark 12:18-27

a) Objective: To correct the erroneous notion that the current earthly system will continue in heaven.

b) Memory Verse: "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her? Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Mat.22:28-29).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH505

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. After the Pharisees and Herodians had tried and failed to entrap Jesus with their tax question, the Sadducees came with their own question on marriage after resurrection.

ii. The Sadducees were an elite group of religious leaders in Israel. They were influential members of the Judicial Council in Israel (the Sanhedrin) and were also represented among priests.

iii. The Sadducees denied the resurrection as well as the existence of angels and spirit, a situation which placed them in opposition tothe Pharisees and the common Jewish piety (Acts 23:8).

iv. These Sadducees recognized the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch) as the only authoritative literature and rejected the Jewish oral tradition.

v. Mk. 12:18-19: The case stated by the Sadducees here is based on Deut.

25:5-10. Their question was in relation to whether there was life after death or not; but it was a deliberate attempt to ridicule the doctrine of resurrection which many of the Jews believed.

vi. The Sadducees outlined a situation that could arise from the application of the levirate law given in Deut. 25:5-6. They said a woman survived seven brothers, each of whom had been married to her in succession. Then the question was "Whose wife would she be after resurrection?"

vii. According to the Old Testament law, when a man died without a child, his brother had to marry the widow and produce children, so that the family line could continue. But the first child of that levirate marriage was considered the heir of the dead man (Deut. 25:5-6).

viii. Mk. 12:24: Jesus saw the people's ignorance and used the opportunity to teach them the truth about the question as follows:

a) Mk. 12:24-25: There would be resurrection after death.

b) Also, Jesus affirmed in Mk. 12:26-27 that there would be no marriage in the resurrection.

ix. Mk 12:24: Here, Jesus' first response was to point out the Sadducees' ignorance of the scriptures and the power of God. Jesus classified His earlier teaching on marriage that marriage is indissoluble (Mk. 10:9), but now He pointed out that marriage is dissolved at death and does not exist after death.

x. In Mk. 12:25: Jesus explained that, after resurrection, the saints would be like the angels who do not marry.

xi. Mk. 12:26: In this verse, Jesus referred to Exodus 3:6 where God revealed Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Jesus made this reference to prove that there is life after death.

xii. Mk. 12:26: What God said in Ex. 3:6 means that, even though Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had died, their souls were still alive after death and their bodies would be raised anew at resurrection.

xiii. Jesus said in verse 27 that God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living and concluded that the position of the Sadducees was badly flawed and greatly erroneous.

xiv. The lesson here is that it is erroneous to think of heaven in terms of the earth. Life in heaven will not be an extension of this present temporal existence. The power of God will provide new and greater relationships that exist beyond the physical relationship of the present order.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. What lesson does a man learn from this incidence, about his life on earth?
2. What lesson does a woman learn from this incidence, about her life here on earth?

LESSON 64: JESUS TEACHES LOVE AS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT.

Text: Mark 12:28-34

a) Objective: To teach that loving God and one's neighbour is more important than burnt offerings and sacrifices.

b) Memory Verse: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom.13:10).

c) Relevant Hymns: App. 301

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 12:28: An unidentified teacher of the law (a scribe) had probably listened to previous debates between Jesus and the Sadducees.

ii. The scribe was apparently satisfied with the way Jesus answered the question posed to Him; so, he asked his own question. He wanted to know which was the most important out of all the commandments.

iii. Mk. 12:29-30: Jesus, citing Deut. 6:5, said that loving the Lord God with one's soul, mind and strength was the first commandment. scribe

iv. Then, in Mk. 12:31, the Lord Jesus Christ taught the that loving one's neighbour as oneself was the second most important commandment after the commandment to love God.

v. Mk. 12:32-33: The scribe then agreed with Jesus Christ that the importance of obeying these two commandments surpassed the importance of performing any other religious duties.

vi. Because of the scribe's understanding and sincerity, the Lord Jesus Christ rated him as not far from the Kingdom of God.

vii. Mk. 12:34: When Jesus saw that the scribe answered wisely, he rated him as not far from the kingdom of God.

viii. Though the man had demonstrated a keen insight into the true place of religious duties. he was still outside the kingdom of God, because his understanding was only at the intellectual level. He still needed to surrender his will to the Master (the Lord).

ix. Mark records in the latter part of verse 34 that that was the last time Jesus Christ's opponents attempted to ask Him any question.

x. As believers in Christ, we know, from this passage, that God's laws are not burdensome. They can be reduced to two simple principles: love your God and love others (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18); this is the fulfillment of the Old Testament laws.

xi. We do not know if this scribe ever became a disciple of Christ after this episode. Salvation cannot rest on intellectual knowledge alone. But the unbeliever must repent first, follow Christ, and be made a new person in Him by the Holy Spirit and by hearing the word of God which is able to build one up.

xii. We should not be content with being close to the kingdom of God. Rather, we should take the step and make the commitment to be within the Kingdom.

a) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Can you love your neighbour without loving God?
2. Can you love God without loving your neighbour?

LESSON 65: THE QUESTION ABOUT CHRIST'S IDENTITY

Text: Mark 12:35-37

a) Objective: To show that Christ was more than mere Son of David but that He was his Lord.

b) Memory Verse: "Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" (John 7:42)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 642

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. The fact that the story in this passage is also recorded in Matt. 22:41-46 and Lk. 20:41-44 helps to confirm the historical validity of the event.

ii. In Mk. 12:35, we learn that, while Jesus was teaching in the temple, he asked a question, "How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?"

iii. The question was probably asked to enable Jesus to correct some people's views, especially the scribes, concerning the identity of the Messiah.

iv. It had been prophesied in Jer. 23:5-6 that the Messiah (Christ) would come from the royal lineage of David; and the prophecy was fulfilled in Matt. 1:1-17.

v. The Jewish perception of the Messiah that was promised in the prophecies was wrong, as they were expecting a Messiah, a king of David's line who would restore the earthly kingdom to Israel. See Acts 1:6.

vi. That Jesus was the son of David was constantly affirmed by Matthew, Mark and Luke in their Gospels; and people had hailed Christ as the Son of David. (Matt.9:27; 12:23; 21: 9-15; Mk. 10:47; Lk 18:38-39)

vii. The point of Jesus' question was neither to deny nor reaffirm His sonship of David, but to show that He was greater than David.

viii. In Mk 12:36, Jesus quoted what David spoke prophetically in Psalm 110:1 "The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

ix. In Mk. 12:37, Jesus Christ's standpoint was that, if David himself, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, could call Christ his Lord, how then could that Christ still be his son?

x. The titles LORD and Lord used in Ps. 110:1 and cited in Mk.12:36 refer to the Hebrew words 'Yahweh' and 'Master' respectively.

xi. The term 'Yahweh' is the personal name of God that was revealed to Israel in Ex. 3:14 **"I AM THAT I AM"** Christ is not only greater than David, but also greater than the temple (Matt. 12:6), greater than Jonah (Matt. 12:41), and greater than Solomon (Matt. 12:42).

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Can you identify who Jesus Christ is?
2. Do you share the Scribes' view that Jesus Christ was the son of David?

LESSON 66: JESUS WARNS HIS AUDIENCE AGAINST THE HYPOCRISY OF THE SCRIBES.

Text: Mark 12:38-40

a) Objective: To teach that all hypocrites, especially in the Church of God, will be judged.

b) Memory Verse: "For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery" (Job 15:34).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 412

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. While Jesus was still teaching in the temple, he told his audience to beware of the scribes, and he gave six reasons why they should beware of them (vs.38).

ii. Mk. 12:38: The first reason Jesus gave was that the Scribes usually loved to go out in long clothing. In Num.15:37-40, God commanded the Israelites to make fringes upon their garments; the fringes were to remind them of the commandments of God. However, the pharisees and scribes usually made their own fringes larger than what was normally worn by other people, probably to show that they were more religious than others.

iii. Mk. 12:38: Another vice of the Scribes was their love of salutation in market places. The word "salutations" as used in this context meant more than mere or casual greeting; it was a respectful form of salutation that was usually given to high ranking people or very important personalities; in this case, the rabbi (or teacher of the law). See Lk. 11:43. Mk. 12:39 also.

iv. They loved the chief seats in the synagogues. The seats in this context refer to a row of special seats in front of the synagogue, facing the congregation. This was probably where Jesus was allowed to sit in Lk. 4:20.

v. Four, Mk. 12:39: The scribes also loved the uppermost rooms at feasts. This means the best place reserved for special guests at banquets. Jesus

rebuked the Pharisees in Lk. 11:43, for loving the uppermost seats in the synagogues.

vi. Mk. 12:40: Another thing against them was their habit of devouring widows' houses. The scribes were teachers of the law. They did not receive any pay for their service; therefore, they had to depend on people's gifts..

vii. Usually, some of these scribes, used the custom to exploit t poor widows who helped to supply their needs.

viii. We shall find later, in Mk. 12:41-44, that some of these poor widows, by contrast, worshipped God out of deep humility and genuine devotion.

ix. Six: Mk. 12:40: For a pretense, these scribes loved to say long prayers. This statement should not be taken to mean that Jesus is against long prayer. Afterwards, He himself prayed for 40 days and 40 nights (Matt. 4:2) and went on to a mountain to pray all the night (Lk. 6:12). However, he was against long prayers that were hypocritical.

x. Concluding the teaching, the Lord Jesus Christ said in verse 40 that the scribes would receive greater damnation. That is they would be severely punished for their hypocrisy.

xi. We have seen in this passage how Jesus exposed and warned against the impurity and hypocrisy of the scribes.

xii. As Christians, reading the Bible, praying, fasting, bringing offerings and paying tithes, as well as engaging in other church activities can become mere rituals and phony, if the motive for doing them is to be noticed and praised.

xiii. Also, our actions should be consistent with our belief; and we should live for Christ, even when no one is looking at us.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. As there was in the time of Jesus Christ, do you think there is hypocrisy in the church today?
2. What do you think should be done to eradicate impurity and hypocrisy in the church today?

LESSON 67: JESUS COMMENDS THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE POOR WIDOW.

Text: Mark 12:41-44

a) Objective: To show that God honours those who serve Him faithfully with their possessions, irrespective of their status.

b) Memory Verse: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"(Luke 14:33).

c) Relevant Hymns: R.H. 600

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Different containers are used today to collect different types of offerings in the church. Modern technology has even made it possible for individuals to pay offerings, tithes and other contributions to church accounts, through electronic means.

ii. In the Old Testament days, improvised local materials were also used to collect offerings and voluntary donations for the work of God. We can see some examples of this in 2Kings 12:9; 2Chr. 24:8-11; and Jer. 35:4 where "chests" were used for collecting offerings.

iii. However, in Mk. 12:41 and Lk. 21:1, mention is made of the word "treasury" instead of "chest" Both objects may be different in their design, size or quality, but they are used for the same purpose.

iv. Thus, in this story, we are told that Jesus was in the temple, sitting close to the treasury. He watched how the people were dropping offerings into the treasury. The reaction of Jesus at that point could sound funny or strange, but He had a reason for doing so.

v. The latter part of verse 41 tells us that many among those who were rich dropped large amounts of money. We notice here that Jesus did not make any comment when the rich people dropped large amounts of money.

vi. However, Mk. 12:43 says a certain poor widow came and cast into the treasury only two mites, which was a farthing.

vii. At the time referred to in this story, a mite was probably the smallest denomination in Israel. The passage says the poor woman cast two mites.

viii. Jesus remarked in verses 43-44 that it was all that she had (two mites) that she put in as offering; this was an extremely poor woman teaching us that poverty should not hinder us from giving to God. .

ix. Mk. 12:43: In terms of quantity, the poor widow's offering was the smallest; but in terms of quality or value, the Lord Jesus said the widow had done more than all the others .

x. Giving His reasons for rating the poor widow as the best giver, the Lord Jesus said in verses 43-44 that the widow cast all that she had in life into the treasury, whereas the rich ones cast in out of their abundance.

xi. Here, we find the omniscience of Jesus Christ displayed; without being told by anyone, without any investigation, he knew the widow's financial status. This should be a lesson to us, that God sees and understands our situations. (Ps. 139:7-12)

xii. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ knew that the rich people that brought their own offerings had brought only a token of the abundance which they had.

xiii. Many often think today that it is not easy or even possible for the rich to

serve or worship God, because of their riches. This view is in line with one of Jesus Christ's teachings in Mk. 10:23-25; Matt. 19:23-24 and Lk 18:4-25.

xiv. Jesus did not mean in His teaching that those who are rich cannot follow Him, but such people would need to be faithful and put Christ and His kingdom over and above their wealth and position, to follow Jesus.

xv. As believers in Christ, our regular attendance or presence in the church today will not amount to anything, unless we remove the garments of unfaithfulness and hypocrisy from our lives.

xvi. Jesus might have purposely used this experience to teach His disciples and our present generation about the need to continue to serve Him faithfully, irrespective of our position or socio-economic status. Human beings may fail to appreciate our service, but God will not.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. To you, which is the greater hindrance to giving to God: poverty or riches?
2. Do you always give to God willingly or grudgingly?

LESSON 68: JESUS FORETELLS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.

Text: Mark 13:1-2

a) Objective: To show that God will judge even the house built in His name, if it is not used to glorify Him.

b) Memory Verse: "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel" (Jer.7:12).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 262

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Moses led the people of Israel to build a tabernacle for God in the wilderness (Ex. 25-40). The tabernacle was the central place of worship for the Israelites. (Lev. 17:1-9)

ii. The first temple, which took seven years to complete (1kgs 6:38), was built by king Solomon, in the city of Jerusalem. (I Kings 5-6; 2Chr. 3:1-14)

iii. Because of the sin of the Israelites, the first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians during the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. (2 Kgs 25:12-17)

iv. There was no biblical evidence of any temple worship while the Jews were in exile, but there were pieces of evidence which showed that some of them still prayed to their God in their captivity (Dan. 2:17-19; 3:16-17; 6:10).

v. The second temple in Jerusalem was built by Zerubbabel, the Governor of Judah, in 516 BC, at the command of Cyrus, the king of Persia; and with the encouragement by prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 6:14).

vi. According to Bible historians, the building of the third temple, which was also the last temple in Jerusalem before the Roman invasion, was started by Herod the Great, the Idumean king; but was completed by his son, Herod Antipas, in 19BC.

vii. This third temple, referred to above, was a rebuilding of the one built by Zerubbabel, which took forty-six years to be completed, according to John's record in John 2:20.

viii. According to Bible historians, Herod the Great and his son built the third Temple to win the favour of the people, not necessarily to glorify God.

ix. Thus, it was this third temple that was in existence in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus Christ. The Jews had a very great respect for the temple, as they saw it as a sacred place where the God of Israel was worshipped.

x. Jesus also had a great respect for the temple. For example, He visited it at the age of twelve. (Lk. 2:41-45); and attended the Jewish feast there. Also, He taught and healed there. He cleansed and called it the house of God. (Matt. 12:4; John 2:16)

xi. However, Jesus was opposed to the way the temple was being abused by the Jewish religious leaders and many other people.

xii. Thus, one day, during His passion week, as Jesus Christ and His disciples came out of the temple, one of the disciples who admired the magnificence of the temple drew the attention of Jesus to the massive stones with which the temple was built (Mk. 13:1).

xiii. But Jesus was not impressed by the magnificence of the temple. Rather, he predicted that its stones would be thrown down (Mk. 13:2) in judgment. Here, Jesus foretold the destruction that would come upon the temple, a prediction that came into fulfilment in AD 70.

xiv. The temple was destroyed by Rome in AD 70, barely six years after its completion.

xv. The destruction of the temple brought an end to Jerusalem as the religious capital of the Jewish world, and to the function and income of the priests and to the prestige of pharisees.

xvi. We are told by some Bible historians that, today, two mosques and one Muslim museum are on the very site of the destroyed temple, to confirm that judgment will start from the house of God, as stated by Peter in 1Pet. 4:17.

xvii. This should teach us a lesson to keep the house of God holy, lest God should abandon it; and it goes oblivion. (Psalm 93:5; I Kings 9:6-7)

e. Personal Assessment Questions:

1. How do we use the church of God today?
2. Do we see evidence of the presence of God in our churches today?

LESSON 69: JESUS PREDICTS THE TRIBULATION THAT WOULD CHARACTERIZE THE END TIME.

Text: Mark 13:3-23

a) Objective: To show the events that will characterize the end time.

b) Memory Verse: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. "(Rev.1:7)

c) Relevant Hymns: App 117

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 13:3-4: Earlier, Jesus had predicted in verses 1-2 of this chapter, as has been discussed in Lesson 66, that the temple in Jerusalem would be demolished. Thus, while Jesus was sitting upon the mount of Olives, opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked Him privately, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?"

ii. Mk. 13:5-6: Jesus began His response to the disciples' question with a warning. He told them to beware of impostors who would claim that they were Christ and deceive people.

iii. Mk. 13:7-8: Jesus said there would be wars and rumours of wars, because nations would rise against nations and kingdoms against kingdoms. Also, He said there would be natural disasters and famines, marking the beginning of sorrows.

iv. In verses 9-11, Jesus spoke of how the disciples would be arrested and persecuted, because of the gospel which must be preached to all nations. But He promised that the Holy Ghost would assist them, whenever they stood to defend themselves before their prosecutors.

v. Mk. 13:12-13: Also, Jesus said there would be division and hatred within the family and hatred against His followers, by their opponents. However, He assured them that they would be saved at the end, through their endurance. It has been suggested that Jesus might be talking about eternal salvation here, rather than freedom from earthly persecution.

vi. Mk. 13:14: The abomination of desolation in Dan. 9:27, referred to here, was pointing to the future desolation of Jerusalem and the temple by the heathen Roman soldiers who invaded the city, later; and desecrated the temple by their heathen practices, an event that took place in AD70, as stated by Bible historians.

vii. Mk. 13:15-17: Those on the housetop and in the field, nursing mothers and pregnant ones were warned to take heed, as they might not be able to escape the calamity of the time.

viii. Mk. 13:18-19: The Jews need to pray that the events would not take place in the winter when the weather would make it difficult for them to escape,

as the calamity would be an unprecedented one.

ix. Mk. 13:20: According to this verse, the only succor that the people had was that the Lord could shorten the number of days that the calamity would take place, because of the elect.

x. This special favour to be enjoyed by the elect should be an encouragement for all Christians, knowing that the death of saints is a precious thing in the sight of the Lord. (Ps. 116:15)

xi. Mk. 13:21-23: Here, Jesus reaffirmed what He had said earlier in verse 6, concerning the deceitfulness by false christs and prophets. Therefore, He warned the elect to beware of these deceivers.

e) Personal Assessment Questions:

1. Are you watching out for the manifestation of the end time events?
2. Do you believe that the end time is now?

LESSON 70: JESUS PREDICTS THE POST-TRIBULATION EVENTS.

Text: Mark 13: 24-31

a) Objective: To show the judgment of God that would come soon and the one that would come later.

b) Memory Verse: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom.13:11).

c) Relevant Hymns: App 17

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. In our previous lesson on Mk. 13:3-23, we dealt with the first part of this long prediction of Jesus Christ concerning the end time events. Readers are advised to note that some of these events predicted by Jesus Christ were things that would happen shortly after His death, and others which would take place later, even in times that cannot be determined by any human being.

ii. In this lesson, we shall be looking at the second part of the prediction, as recorded in Mk. 13:24-31.

iii. Mk. 13:24-25: The expression "But in those days" apparently refers to the days of the tribulation, predicted by Jesus. What Jesus said would happen to the sun, the moon and the stars is similar to what Joel prophesied in Joel 2:30-31, concerning the terrible day of the Lord.

iv. Mk. 13:26: Jesus said the Son of man would come in the clouds with great power and glory and that all eyes would see Him. (See Dan. 7:13; Matt. 16:27 and Rev. 1:7).

v. Mk. 13:27: The Son of man, Jesus, according to Mk. 13:26, will send His angels to gather all the elect from different parts of the world, even to its uttermost part. (Zec. 2:6)

vi. The elect, mentioned in verse 27, refers to God's people, both Jews and Gentiles that would gloriously begin Christ's reign. (See Deut. 30:1-6; Isa. 11:11-12; 43:5-6 and Jer. 16:14).

vii. Mk. 13:28-29: Here, Jesus used the parable of the fig tree to illustrate what would be the sign of His return. Branches of fig trees normally become tender; then, they produce leaves. In the same way, we will know that the end is coming by the time we see the manifestation of all the signs that Jesus predicted in this passage.

viii. Mk. 13:30: The statement that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done could be referring to the fulfillment of those aspects of the prediction that would take place shortly after Jesus' death, the events which some Bible scholars have attributed to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by Rome. The expression could also indicate a particular era (period) in which people would be till the end time events would be experienced.

ix. Also, the phrase "all these things" in verse 30 could imply the presence of the antichrist, tribulation; and most importantly, the appearance of Christ in glory.

x. Mk.13:31: What Jesus said here, that heaven and earth would pass away; but that His words would not pass away implies the certainty of His words. His words are more certain than the existence of the universe.

xi. Also, God spoke in Isaiah 55:10-11 concerning His word. He said His word shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish its purpose. This passage also reminds us of what prophet Isaiah said in Isa. 40:8. He said, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

xii. Mk. 13:32-33: Because the day and hour that these events foretold by Jesus would take place, even including the destruction of the temple were not known, the disciples were warned to be watchful and prayerful.

xiii. Mk. 13:34-35: Here, Jesus likened His sudden appearance to a traveler who gave authority to his servant, and to others he gave work and then commanded the porter to watch.

xiv. The paragraph above alludes historically to Jesus Christ Himself and His disciples. When He was about to ascend to heaven, He commanded His servants (disciples) to be faithful and watchful, for they did not know when the Master would return.

xv. Mk. 13:36: The expression "lest he finds you sleeping" means spiritual

slumbering, weariness and slackness in doing the assignment which the Lord had given unto His disciples, most importantly the preaching and teaching of His word (Matt. 28:19-20).

xvi. The servants and porter referred to here are workers who handle various aspects of keeping the fold. (See John 15:15-17 and Acts 20:28).

xvii. Mk. 13:37: The Lord's concluding statement in this verse indicates that Jesus was speaking for the benefit of all who would learn about the prophecy or prediction, believe and obey the instructions therein.

e) Personal Assessment Questions:

1. Are you preparing for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Are you like the five foolish virgins who were not adequately prepared for the coming of the Bridegroom?

LESSON 71: THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE SCRIBES PLOT TO KILL JESUS.

Text: Mark 14: 1-2

a) Objective: To show how the chief priests and the scribes attempted to arrest Jesus Christ craftily and kill Him.

b) Memory Verse: "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham" (John 8:40).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 165

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Among the Jews, the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread were celebrated in the month of Nisan (March-April) of every year, to commemorate how God delivered them from Egypt.

ii. The Feast was instituted in Exodus 12:1-29 in the night before the Israelites escaped from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, the servant of God; and celebrated thereafter, even till the time of Jesus Christ.

iii. Two days before the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread that was recorded here (Mk. 14:1-2), the chief priests and the scribes planned to arrest Jesus craftily and take him away from the crowd, to kill Him.

iv. During this Feast, the population of Jerusalem always expanded greatly, as zealous worshippers normally converged on the city as commanded in Deut. 16:16.

v. Some Bible scholars state that many of those who admired Jesus Christ also attended the ceremony. So, the chief priests and the scribes wanted to defer the arrest, to avoid likely conflicts between them and those who admired Jesus.

vi. Also, it has been suggested that some of these religious leaders might have feared a Roman reprisal, should there be a civil disturbance resulting from the arrest of Jesus Christ,an example of which is found in Acts. 19:40.

vii. Some of these chief priests and scribes were members of the Jewish Council (the Sanhedrin) at the time of Jesus. They hated Jesus Christ, because of His teachings and parables which were often to oppose their tradition and personal lifestyle. (See Matt. 7:29).

viii. These same groups of people took part in the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, as well as in the persecution of the early church (Acts 4:15; 6:12).

ix. Even though the above groups were opposed to Christ Jesus, some of the scribes believed in His teaching, as stated in Matt. 8:19.

x. At first, it was the duty of the priests to teach and interpret the law, as Ezra did in Neh.8:9. However, in the time of Jesus, the scribes were laymen, and not priests; but they worked together with the priests; and that gave them an opportunity to conspire with the priests against Jesus Christ as recorded in Matt. 16:21; 26:1; Lk 22:66 and Acts 4:13.

xi. Opposition to the Gospel to the point of taking life is still here with us today. Therefore, we should be prepared for this. Jesus Christ Himself predicted this in Matt. 24:9; Luke 21:16-18 and John 16:2

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. How do you react to persecution for Gospel's sake?
2. Will you be ready to lay down your life for the sake of the gospel?

LESSON 72: JESUS IS ANOINTED AT BETHANY BY A WOMAN.

Text: Mark 14: 3-9

a) Objective: To symbolize the preparation for Jesus Christ's death and burial.

b) Memory Verse: "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity" (Titus 2:7).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 524

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 14:3: A woman anointed Jesus' head, while He was being hosted by Simon the Leper at Bethany. Bethany had been the base of Jesus since He came to Jerusalem. (Matt. 26:6 and Mark 11:1,11-12).

ii. Mk. 1:40-42, Matt. 8:1-4 and Lk 5:12-13 also record one leper that was healed by Jesus, but there has been no evidence to link this leper to Simon the leper that is mentioned in Mk 14:3.

iii. Mk. 14:3: Simon the leper was likely to be a wealthy man, to be able to have his own house and entertain his guests with feasts.

iv. Mk. 14:3: The phrase "as he sat to eat" in this verse reveals Jesus Christ's nature of associating with all people. His attitude towards people like Simon the leper shows that He was not discriminating; He moved freely with all, their stigmas notwithstanding.

v. Simon had a physical leprosy. But sin is a spiritual leprosy. Before it is removed and after it has been removed, we should be free to relate with the victims, praying for their healing, restoration and rehabilitation rather than neglecting them.

vi. Mk. 14:3: While Jesus was being entertained by Simon the leper, a woman came in and poured ointment on His head, an action which consequently became a bone of contention among the disciples.

vii. Mk. 14:4-5: Some of the disciples argued that the ointment that was wasted by the woman should have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor.

viii. Mk. 14:6: Jesus did not agree with those disciples. Rather, He told them to leave the woman alone; and added that she had done a good work on Him.

ix. Mk. 14:7: The expression "For ye have the poor with you always …" should not be interpreted to mean that Jesus was not concerned about the poor as evidenced by His teaching and healing ministry.

x. Also, Jesus was aware of the commandment relating to the poor in Duet. 15:7-11. Jesus had not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17). However, he wanted people to be allowed to give unto God what belongs to God; and to do it willingly.

xi. Also, in verse 7, Jesus said the poor would always be with the people, while He would not. This statement does not imply Christ's total separation from His followers, but referred to the specific period of time when He would not be physically present in the world.

xii. Mk. 14:8: Here, although the woman that anointed Jesus might not understand the spiritual implication of what she had done, Jesus commended her; and saw her action as a preparation for His burial.

xiii. Mk. 14:9: Here, Jesus remarked that what the woman had done would be published wherever the Gospel would be preached throughout the world for a memorial of her.

xiv. This account of what the woman did and the reaction of Jesus shows that actions which may have no value in human's estimation may be highly cherished by the Lord. This should encourage us as Christians to honour the Lord with our resources. (See Prov.3:9).

xv. Nothing can be too costly to offer in worship or service for God, remembering that He sacrificed His best to secure our salvation.

e) Personal Assessment Questions:

1. What have you been doing for the furtherance of the Gospel?
2. Is there anything in your life that is too costly to give for Gospel's sake? What would you like to be remembered for in the service of God?

LESSON 73: JUDAS PLANS TO BETRAY JESUS

Text: Mark 14: 10-11

a) Objective: To show the possibility of compromising with evil doers because of the lust for money and materialism.

b) Memory Verse: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom.8:35)

c) Relevant Hymns: App. 40; App. 65

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 14:10: And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve ,went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. Judas was one of the 12 disciples chosen by Jesus Christ at the beginning of His ministry (Mk. 3:3-19; Matt. 10:1-5; Lk 6:12-16).

ii. We understand, from the account in John 6:71; 12:4, that Judas Iscariot was the son of Simon. He was probably the team's treasurer, as indicated in John 13:29.

iii. A tradition says that Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, was the only one among the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ who was not a native of Galilee. However, apart from helping us to know the identity of Judas, this information may not be of much relevance to our discussion in this lesson.

iv. While Peter was speaking in Acts 1:16-20, he made reference to what happened to Judas Iscariot at the end of his life, and his replacement with another person, as a fulfillment of what was prophesied in Psalm 69:25.

v. His conspiracy with the chief priests to betray Jesus is also recorded in Matt. 26:14-16 and Lk. 22:3-6; this confirms that the story is authentic.

vi. The activities of the chief priests during the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, as well as in the early church, were mentioned several times in the four gospels and the Acts.

vii. In the days of Jesus Christ, as well as in the time of the early church, the chief priests were members of the Judicial Council in Jerusalem, also known as the "Sanhedrin' (Acts 4:6). The council was responsible for judging both civil and criminal cases; but had no power over capital cases, as such cases were expected to be referred to Pilate who was the Roman Governor in Judea at that time. (See Acts 4 to 5).

viii. The singular "high priest" usually referred to the President of the

Sanhedrin, for example, Caiaphas the high priest, in Matt. 26:57; John 18:13; Annas the high priest, in Lk. 3:2; Jn 18:24; Acts 4:6; and Ananias, the high priest in Acts 23:2; 24:1.

ix. We have no evidence to prove that the high priests had any conflict with Jesus Christ at the initial stage of His ministry, but the opposition against Jesus started when His claims and mission became clear to the high priests.

x. For example, the way Jesus challenged the Jewish Sabbath legislation (Matt. 12:1-7; Mk. 2:23-27; Lk. 6:1-5) and His parables against the Jewish religious leaders (Matt. 21:45-46) were part of the issues that irritated the high priests.

xi. The death of Jesus Christ by the chief priests was anticipated immediately after Peter's confession of Jesus as Christ, the Son of the living God at Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:16-21; Mk 8:31; Lk. 9:22).

xii. The conflict between the high priests and Jesus was intensified at the latter's triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the subsequent cleansing of the temple (Matt. 21:15, 23, 45-46; Mk. 11:27; Lk. 19:47-48; 20:1).

xiii. The conflict culminated in the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ by the chief priests (Mat. 26-27).

e) Personal Assessment Questions:

1. Will money or worldly materials make you deny your faith in Christ?
2. Have you had experience in refusing to compromise your faith?

LESSON 74: JESUS EATS THE PASSOVER WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

Text: Mark 14: 12-21

a) Objective: To show that Jesus demonstrated His acceptance of the institution of the Jewish Passover by participating in it.

b) Memory Verse: "… For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." (1 Cor.5:7b)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 704

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 14:12: The feast of the Unleavened Bread and the Passover was one of the annual events celebrated among the Jews. (Ex. 12:1-11; Deut 16:1-14)

ii. The participation of Jesus Christ in the Passover is an indication that He Himself respected the law of Moses regarding the observance of the Passover, an act which confirms His statement in Matt. 5:17 that He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.

iii. Mk. 14:13-14: In response to the disciples' question in verse 12, Jesus

asked two of them to go into the city ahead of them, where they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water. Jesus told them to follow the man, and ask him to show them where he wanted them to eat the Passover.

iv. Mk. 14:15: What Jesus said in this verse reveals His omniscience. He knew that the man would agree to provide them with the guest chamber; and He knew exactly the location and the description of the chamber, an upper room that was well furnished.

v. Mk. 14:16: As the two disciples got to the city, they saw that everything that their Master had said came to pass, and they made ready the Passover.

vi. The disciples' question in verse 12 and their preparation of the feast in verse 16 suggests that it was probably not their first experience of eating the Passover with their Master.

vii. Mk. 14:17: We note here that the feast was held in the evening. This choice of evening might be to comply with the original tradition (Ex. 12:11) and also to secure privacy, as very usual with the Lord Jesus Christ, in those days.

viii. Mk. 14:18-19: At this moment, the story changed as Jesus predicted that one of the disciples would betray Him. This prediction created sorrow in the hearts of the disciples, each of whom was anxious to know from their Master who the betrayer would be.

ix. Mk. 14:20: Then, in response to the disciples' questions, the Lord Jesus Christ said it was one of the twelve that ate together with Him in the dish that would betray Him. We shall see later in another lesson who the betrayer was.

x. John, the writer of the fourth Gospel has put it like this "I speak not of you all I know whom I have chosen; but that the scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me" (John 13:18).

xi. What Jesus said in John 13:18 could be the reason He said to His disciples in John 13:10 that they were clean, but not all.

xii. What the whole episode above means is that the one to betray Jesus was not at all clean, the word which the Lord had been speaking to them notwithstanding (John 15:3).

xiii. Those who cannot be made clean by God's word can never be made clean again by any other means.

xiv. Jesus' final remarks in Mk. 14:21 was an allusion to what had been predicted concerning His death (Is. 53:1-12). But His latter pronouncement of 'woe' to the one who would betray Him revealed the calamity that would befall the betrayer.

xv. This and other incidents reveal the facts that, through the Old Testament institution, God was teaching New Testament realities. For example,

physical circumcision of the Old Testament pointed to the circumcision of the heart at conversion in the New Testament. Similarly, the Passover was replaced by breaking of bread, in remembrance of Jesus Christ's sacrifice as Passover Lamb at the Cross of Calvary.

e) Personal Assessment Questions:

1. What is the justification for having the Right-Hand of Fellowship before breaking of bread?
2. When last did you take the Holy Communion as a communicant?

LESSON 75: JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Text: Mark 14: 22-26

a) Objective: To demonstrate how Jesus symbolically established the New Covenant in His Body and Blood.

b) Memory Verse: "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." (I Cor. 11:24)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 699, RH169

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 14:22: The institution of the Lord's Supper started in a very dramatic manner. As Jesus was still eating the Passover with His disciples, He took bread, and broke it, after He had blessed it; and gave to his disciples to eat. He called the bread His Body.

ii. Mk. 14:23-24: He also took a cup of wine, gave thanks, and gave to all his disciples to drink, saying that it was His blood of the New Covenant, which was shed for many. (See also Matt. 26:28; I Cor. 10:16).

iii. The expression **"which is shed for many"** explains the universal focus of Christ's work of Salvation. His blood was not shed for just a few people nor a particular race or culture, but for as many as would believe in Him and accept His work of salvation.

iv. Christ's blood became a New Testament indeed, because the Old Testament that required the blood of animals for atonement had failed to take away sin as a result of human inability to fulfill its legal requirements. (Heb. 10:4)

v. The blood of Jesus Christ became the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sin (Heb. 9:26; 6:23; Gal. 3:13). He redeemed us (Eph. 1:7) by paying the price that set us free (1Cor. 6:20; Gal. 5:1) and therefore made a New Covenant (Heb. 9:15).

vi. Mk. 14:25: Jesus Christ's statement in this verse denotes that He already

knew that He would die shortly after taking the supper with His disciples.

vii. The **"fruit of the vine"** which Jesus referred to here was definitely the "wine" that was used as the **"Emblem"** of His blood at that table at that particular service.

viii. The statement "… until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (v. 25) could mean during His millennial reign upon the earth or in heaven or possibly both. But Rev. 19:9 speaks of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

ix. Mk. 14:26: And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. The mount of Olives had always been a favourite place for Christ to stay with His disciples, since the beginning of His last week's journey before His death. (See also Matt. 21:1).

x. That they sang a song at the Lord's Supper indicates that Jesus and His disciples also recognized songs as part of the requirements for praising God.

xi. If Jesus could sing hymns with His disciples, it means we can also sing; but our songs should always edify the saints and glorify God.

xii. Finally, we also see the imperative nature of our participation in the Lord's Supper here, as we do it in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ (Lk. 22:19)

xiii. It is noteworthy that this is the only institution that Jesus Christ commanded to be carried out in remembrance of Him.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Do you rate breaking of bread service more important than Christmas?
2. What do you think are the benefits of breaking of bread for believers?

LESSON 76: JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL OF HIM.

Text: Mark 14: 27-31

a) Objective: To show that our faith cannot be sustained without divine assistance.

b) Memory Verse: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor.3:5)

c) Relevant Hymns: App. 89; App. 87

d) Lesson Exposition

i. This prediction of Peter's denial of Jesus is recorded in Matt 26:31-35; Mk. 14:27-31; Lk 22:31-34 and John 13:26-38.

ii. Mark 14:27: At a certain place, not named by Mark, nor by any other Gospel writer, the Lord Jesus Christ foretold how His disciples would fall away from Him and be scattered that same night.

iii. Jesus Christ's statement was based on what prophet Zechariah had earlier prophesied several years in the past, that the shepherd would be smitten and the sheep would be scattered (Zech. 13:7)

iv. Mk. 14:28: Jesus said, "But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee …" This promise links with what the angel said in Mk. 16:7 later: "But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee …"

v. We note that this was Jesus Christ's final prediction of His death. To remove sorrow from the hearts of His disciples, He promised that He would go before them into Galilee after His resurrection; and we note in Matt. 28:16 how this promise was later fulfilled.

vi. Mk. 14:29: Because Jesus had said that all His disciples would be offended and be scattered because of Him that night, Peter boldly said he would not leave Jesus, even if others did so. "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I."

vii. Here, Peter's proud and 'holier than thou' attitude is clearly revealed. He thought that, even if others fell away, he alone would not, forgetting that he was also as human as others.

viii. Mk. 14:30: However, Jesus knew what Peter did not know. So, He declared unto Peter the certainty of what He had said, that before the cock crew twice, he would deny Him thrice.

ix. Some Bible commentators said Peter, at that point, should have asked for God's grace that would keep him from denying his Master; but he did not, because he was self-confident.

x. We shall find later in Mk.14:66-72; Lk.22:34; John 13:38 how the prediction came to pass.

xi. Mk. 14:31: The Bible says here that Peter still insisted that he would not deny Jesus, even if it meant dying with Him.

xii. Also, we notice in verse 31 that the other disciples also said they would not deny their Master. "Likewise also said they all."

xiii. As Christians, we must mind the way we talk or react to situations, so that we will not mislead others by our speech or action or both.

xiv. We notice a similar event in John 21:3 where this same Simon Peter said he was going afishing after their Master had been taken away from them and how the other disciples said they would also go with him.

xv. The most important lesson in this story is the lesson of pride and self-confidence. Let us admit or realize that our sufficiency is not in ourselves but in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor. 3:5)

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. How often do you experience failure as a result of human frailty, as in Peter's case here?
2. Do you always remember to ask for God's strength in your endeavours?

LESSON 77: JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE. (1)

Text: Mark 14: 32-36

a) Objective: To show that Jesus Christ had an agonizing experience while praying in Gethsemane, but rose up triumphantly from the prayer because of His submission to the will of God.

b) Memory Verse: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isaiah 43:2).

c) Relevant Hymns: R.H. 538, 264, App. 83

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 14:32: As they came to a place named Gethsemane, the Lord Jesus Christ asked His disciples to sit somewhere, while He Himself went to pray.

ii. According to the Bible dictionary, "Gethsemane" which means **"Oil Press"** was the name of a garden located on some part of mount Olivet, where Jesus often spent His time with His disciples.

iii. It was in this garden of Gethsemane that Jesus was in a great agony that could be symbolically interpreted to the drinking of the cup of wrath because of our sin.

iv. Also, it was in Gethsemane that Jesus was betrayed by Judas with a kiss; and then arrested by His opponents. (Matt. 26:36; Mk. 14:32; Lk 22:39; Jn 23:1-2).

v. It is also recorded in Luke 22:43 that an angel came and ministered to Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. **When we choose to do God's will, which may be painful sometimes, we shall receive divine assistance to carry it out.**

vi. In Mk.14:33-34, we notice that Jesus might have intended to spend the night in Gethsemane instead of returning to Bethany, for He knew that that was not the night for Him to be asleep.

vii. With Peter, James and John staying somewhere watching, the Lord Jesus, who was filled with great sorrow and heaviness of heart, prayed alone all the night.

viii. Mk. 14:35: Jesus fell on the ground and prayed. The experience was so painful that Jesus Christ had to ask His Father to let the hour pass from Him, if possible.

ix. Mk. 14:36: Here, Jesus said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for thee; take away this cup from me." The cup that Jesus was referring to here is not to be given a literal meaning or interpretation. It was a cup of agony that He had to drink for our sin. The word, "Abba", is used by Hebrew children to address their father. See Rom. 8:15

x. Jesus was undoubtedly referring to this cup of agony when He asked two of His disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee who had asked Him to allow them to sit with Him in His glory, whether they were ready to drink the same cup with Him. (Mk.10:35-40).

xi. The humanity of Jesus Christ is revealed in the way He prayed His Father to take away the cup from Him. Though divine, through his human nature, He was able to feel pains the same way as ordinary human beings would feel them. It was probably this ability to feel pains as we do that enabled Him to empathize with us.

xii. Mk. 14:36: "… nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." Here, we see how quickly Jesus overcame the flesh. He did not allow the demands of the flesh to take away His focus. As a Saviour, he recognized his mission and allowed the will of God to be done.

xiii. Many of us today want to serve and worship God in our own way and not as God wants. We want our own will and desire to prevail over the will of God for us; that should not be so. We must emulate Jesus Christ who surrendered His own will to that of His Father, to accomplish the work of our salvation.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Does this story encourage you to face difficult assignments?
2. How often do you pray, when you find yourself in difficult situations?

LESSON 78: THE DISCIPLES CANNOT WATCH AS JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE. (1I)

Text: Mark 14: 37-42

a) Objective: To show how the disciples demonstrated their physical and spiritual weaknesses when they were supposed to be praying; and how this led to their inability to stand in the time of temptation that followed.

b) Memory Verse: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." (Rom 13:11)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 322, App. 65, App. 71

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 14:37: We have seen, in the previous lesson, how Jesus Christ, while in the garden of Gethsemane, allowed the will of His Father to prevail over His own will. But, in this passage, Jesus came out from where He had been praying; and found the three disciples sleeping. Because the disciples were sleeping when they were supposed to be vigilant, Jesus asked Peter why they could not watch for one hour.

ii. Then, in verse 38, Jesus charged the disciples to watch and pray, so that they would not enter into temptation. This statement may not mean that being watchful and prayerful would shut the door against temptation. But it would help us to overcome temptations as the knowledge of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit would give us power to stand in the midst of temptations. (Eph. 6:4)

iii. Mk. 14:39: Here, Jesus went back to pray as before, but when He came back to the disciples, he found them all asleep. The passage says the eyes of the disciples were heavy, and they did not know how to respond to their Master's question again. This failure to pray was soon shown in their inability to stand while Jesus was being arrested.

iv. Mk. 14:41: When Jesus came back to His disciples the third time, He told them to sleep and take their rest. He said this, because He understood the nature of His sheep.

v. He told them that the hour had already come, and that the son of man had already been betrayed into the hands of sinners. This revelation showed Jesus Christ's ability to see things even before their actual occurrence.

vi. Mk. 14:42: Declaring that His betrayer was already at hand, the Lord Jesus Christ told the disciples to rise up, so that they could go.

vii. A Bible commentator has said that the Calvary or the Cross was not an easy choice for the Lord, as His prayer reveals in this passage.Also, this was evident in His statement in Lk. 12:50, where he spoke of the painful experience that was before Him.

viii. The three disciples could not pray but were sleeping. Therefore, it was not surprising that they yielded to temptation, later. As Christians, no spiritual fall is really unexpected or sudden, but God can help us if we pray and obey His word.

e) Personal Assessment Questions.

1. How regularly do you pray effectual prayer?
2. Are you prepared to face temptations, even if it is fatal?

LESSON 79: JESUS IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED.

Text: Mark 14: 43-52

a) Objective: To show how Jesus Christ's earlier prediction that He would be betrayed and arrested came into fulfillment.

b) Memory Verse: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. (Zec. 13:7)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 146

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. We have discussed earlier how Jesus foretold to His disciples that He would be betrayed by one of them; and arrested by His enemies. The way this betrayal and arrest was executed in the garden of Gethsemane will be discussed in this lesson.

ii. Mk. 14:43: Jesus was still in Gethsemane when He was arrested. The multitude who arrested Him comprised the chief priests, the scribes and the elders; and they were led by Judas Iscariot.

iii. The aforementioned religious leaders had often been offended by Jesus Christ's teaching, a teaching which they believed was opposed to their Jewish religious tradition.

iv. Another reason they hated Jesus was that, initially, they saw Him as the one who would set them free from the rule of Rome, but they later heard Him declaring that His kingdom was not of this world. (John 18:36)

v. Mk. 14:44: This verse says Judas Iscariot had earlier given the arresters a sign that would enable them to identify Jesus Christ. Judas had promised them that he would kiss Jesus Christ, to show that He was the very person they were looking for.

vi. Kissing is a common from of salutation or greeting among the Jews, as a sign of affection between relatives (Gen. 29:11; 33:4) or a token of homage (I Sam. 10:1). Holy kiss is mentioned in Rom. 16:16; 1Cor.16:20; I Pet. 5:14.

vii. Mk.14:45: As previously arranged between Judas and the arresters, the betrayer approached Jesus, addressed Him as Master two times, and kissed Him.

viii. Note that if kissing is truly a token of love, affection or homage, then the action of Judas in this scene was very treacherous. Kissing and betrayal are two contrasting acts. Therefore, it was not surprising that Jesus said to him "Judas, betrayeth thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Lk 22: 48)

ix. Judas was really a son of perdition (John 17:12). Jesus knew that Judas would never repent; therefore, He said, concerning him in Mk 14:21, that it would have been good for him not to have been born.

x. Don't we have, among Christians today, those who are still betraying their Lord or their brethren with a kiss, as Judas did to his Master? The Scripture says "For among my people are found wicked men" (Jer. 5:26).

xi. Mk. 14:46: The expression, "And they laid their hands on him, and took him" could be another way of saying that the people drew out Jesus Christ from among His disciples; and arrested him.

xii. Mk. 14:47: We are told in this verse that one of the people who stood by cut off the ear of a servant of the chief priest. Mark does not tell us the name of person who cut the servant's ear nor the name of the servant whose ear was cut. But we learn in John 18:10 that it was Peter that cut the ear and that the victim was Malchus, the servant of the high priest. (John 18:10-11)

xiii. Mk. 14:48-49: What Jesus said in these two verses could imply that His opponents could not have been able to arrest Him if it was not the time to lay down His life. So, what the people had come to do was simply a fulfillment of what had been prophesied concerning His death.

xiv. Mk.14:50: And they all forsook him, and fled. Jesus had earlier foretold His disciples, in Mark 14:27, that they would forsake Him and be scattered by the time He, the Shepherd, would be smitten as a fulfillment of what was prophesied in Zechariah 13:7.

xv. Mk. 14:51-52: The strange and unidentified young man that followed Jesus in this scene showed that the servant feared he might lose his life if he was arrested with Jesus Christ.

xvi. At the end of this passage, we find that the disciples deserted their Master, as predicted by Zechariah the prophet. (Zec 13:7). This situation may have been the result of the failure of the disciples to pray while Jesus was praying. This failure to stand in the time of temptation might not be unconnected with their failure to pray. Christ Himself had observed this, when He told them to pray in order not to enter into temptation. Disciples of today should also learn to pray instead of wishing that temptation should not come.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Can you rejoice in tribulation?
2. How will you react if you are persecuted for the sake of the Gospel?

LESSON 80: JESUS IS PRESENTED BEFORE THE JEWISH COUNCIL.

Text: Mark 14: 53-65

a) Objective: To explain how Jesus was presented before the Jewish Council for trial.

b) Memory Verse: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor"(Exo.20:16).

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 580

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. The composition, functions and powers of this Jewish Council, also known as the "Sanhedrin", had been explained in one of our previous lessons.

ii. Mk 14:53-54: This Council which consisted of chief priests, elders and scribes and the high priest met together, because of Jesus Christ.

iii. It is stated in verse 54 that Peter was there with them, but sat with the high priest's servants, warming himself at the fire.

iv. Mk. 14:55-56:According to Jewish law, a minimum of two witnesses was required to convict an accused person (Deut. 17:6); but none could be found to witness against Jesus..

v. Jesus said in John 14:30 that the prince of this world came and had nothing in Him. No one was able to witness against Jesus, becausethey could not find any fault in Him. However, verse 56 says many bore false witness against Him; but their witnesses contradicted one another.

vi. Mk. 14:57-58: Again, a group of men rose up to bear false witness against Jesus, saying that they heard Him promising to destroy their temple and build another one not made with hands, within three days. (See John 2:19).

vii. Mk. 14:59-60: However, it is stated here, that these false witnesses failed to agree. And Jesus did not respond to what the witnesses had said. Therefore, it is stated in verse 60 that the high priest asked Jesus to explain why he did not react to what the witnesses had said against Him.

viii. Mk. 14:61: As Jesus kept his peace and said nothing, the high priest asked Him if He was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed; Jesus answered that He was.

ix. Jesus stated further that they would see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

x. God's time for Jesus had now come; there was no need concealing or hiding His identity anymore. Therefore, He affirmed the claim that He was the Christ. The chief priest was alarmed by the affirmation.

xi. Mk. 14:63: Ceremonially, the high priest tore his garments, in reaction to what he considered a blasphemous statement.

xii. Mk. 14:64: Apparently, the high priest could not take a unilateral decision. Thus, he sought the views of other members of his council who then agreed with him to sentence Jesus to death.

xiii. Mk. 14:65: Here, Jesus was mocked by the Jews, which invariably indicated that Israel rejected her king.

xiv. The trial of Jesus was a mockery; the accusations were being collated after the arrest; witnesses also could not be justifiably and certainly presented before the court. Seeing that Jesus went through all these for our sake, how precious must our salvation be to us.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. Are you prepared for such a mockery without resentment?
2. How will you react to people giving false witness against you?

LESSON 81: PETER DENIES JESUS, AS PREDICTED.

Text: Mark 14: 66-72

a) Objective: To show how Peter denied Jesus Christ as was predicted.

b) Memory Verse: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor.3:5)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 600

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 14:66-68: As Jesus was still in the court of the Jewish Council, a maiden recognized Peter as one of the disciples of Jesus; but Peter denied the claim.

ii. Mk. 14:69-70: Again, another maid who recognized Peter by his Galilean language said Peter was one of Jesus' followers; but Peter denied this too.

iii. Mk. 14:71: Here, we see Peter going to the extent of cursing himself to make his accusers believe that he was not one of the disciples of Jesus Christ. In Matt.5: 33-37, the Lord Jesus Christ teaches us never to swear at all. Rather than swearing, he said we should let our yes be simply yes, and our no be simply no.

iv. Mk. 14:72: The Bible says here that the cock crew the second time; and Peter remembered the words that Jesus had spoken to him before, that he would deny Him three times before the cock crew two times.

v. Jesus knew the weakness of man; therefore, He predicted the denial by Peter.

vi. Mk. 14:72: "And when he thought thereon, he wept". Here, Peter, who had earlier thought he was a strong man broke down, dejected. He burst into tears as he recalled how Jesus Christ had foretold that he would deny Him.

vii. The aim of this lesson is not to criticize or blame Peter. We all are human beings, and we have our individual weaknesses and limitations. What usually makes us able is the grace upon us and the Spirit of the Lord in our lives; that is why the Scripture says in John 15:5 that without Christ, we cannot do anything.

viii. Peter was sincere in his promise not to deny Christ, and he was a true follower of Jesus Christ; but the best of men will succumb under Satan's temptation, if unaided by power from above. God said to Paul in 2Cor 12:9 and to us today, that His grace is sufficient for us

ix. We need the grace of God to help us whenever we are tempted, and to restore us any time we are found erring. That same grace that was sufficient for Paul is what we need today to overcome our challenges and temptations (2 Cor. 12:9).

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. How self-confident are you?
2. Have you ever had experience of failure, like Peter?

LESSON 82: JESUS IS TRIED BEFORE PILATE.

Text: Mark 15: 1-15

a) Objective: To explain how Jesus Christ was unfairly or unjustly tried before Pilate; and yet, He did not protest.

b) Memory Verse: I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.(I Tim. 6:13)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 158

d) Lesson Exposition:

We have seen in our previous lesson how Peter denied Jesus Christ three times, before the cock crew twice in the night. In this lesson, we are going to examine how Jesus was taken to Pilate's court for trial.

i. The following morning after the Council (the Sanhedrin) had kept Jesus in the court (palace) of the high priest, the Council regrouped and reached a decision by framing charges that might be admissible under Roman law, since the charge of blasphemy would not have meant anything before Pilate.

ii. Mk. 15:2-4: It is clear here from Pilate's questions to Jesus that the Council's false charge against Him was political.

iii. It is evident in verse 2 that Jesus would have been accused of being seditious by claiming to be the King of the Jews.

iv. To Pilate's question, Jesus did not deny His kingship, as He said **"Thou sayest it;"** but it is clear from the account in John 18:36-37 that His kingship was not to be understood in worldly terms (Mk. 15:2). This was the confession that Paul later alluded to in I Timothy 6:13.

v. In Mk. 15:3, the chief priest accused Jesus of many things. It is also recorded in Lk. 23:2 that Jesus was charged with subversion. He was alleged to have opposed the payment of taxes to Caesar, the Roman emperor; and that He claimed to be Christ, a king.

vi. We note here how the religious charge was craftily recast as a political one. This is one of the ways evil people usually distort the actions of innocent people, to carry out their evil intentions.

vii. Under the Roman law, an accused person was given the opportunity to defend himself; but Jesus did not defend Himself (Mk. 15:5), even when Pilate urged Him to defend Himself (Mk. 15:4). Peter later alluded to this in 1Pet. 2:23.

viii. Mk. 15:6-8: In those days, there was a custom of granting imperial amnesty at festive times, just as today, when a head of state may release political prisoners on national days. So, a group of nationalist Jews came to ask Pilate to observe the custom.

ix. However, the prisoner they wanted Pilate to release was an insurrectionist named Barabbas, who was said to have committed murder (Mk. 15:7).

x. Mk. 15:9-10: Knowing that Jesus was innocent and had been charged out of envy, the Roman Governor taunted the crowd, for the difficulty that they had put him in.

xi. We see that Pilate was looking for how he would escape from the awkward situation; but the crowd saw it as a chance to get their hero back, because Barabbas was their hero; and the chief priests had no interest in Barabbas but in the death of Jesus Christ.

xii. Mk. 15:11: The chief priests prevailed on the crowd to ask for the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus.

xiii. Mk. 15:12-13; In another attempt to shift the responsibility to condemn Jesus onto the crowd, Pilate asked them to decide what should be done, but he received same reply – **"Crucify him."**

xiv. Mk. 15:15: Pilate wanted to please the crowd; so, he released Barabbas unto them. Then, after flogging Jesus Christ, the Governor released Him to the crowd, so that they could crucify Him.

xv. Roman flogging used to be a terrible ordeal, for it was done with leather thongs into which pieces of bone or lead were plaited.

xvi. Here, we see that Pilate was morally weak. He knew very well, that Jesus was innocent; and he knew the right thing to be done, but he failed to act accordingly, because he wanted to please the crowd, even if it would cost an innocent life.

xvii. It is also ironic here that the crowd was moved to ask for the release of Barabbas. Despite the injustice, Jesus Christ did not protest or react negatively against Pilate's decision not to release Jesus Christ, a spiritual Liberator who would set the people free from the bondage of sin.

e) Personal Assessment Questions:

1. What kind of judge do you think Pilate was?
2. Won't you appeal to a higher court, if you feel you are unfairly judged for the sake of Christ?

LESSON 83: THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS.

Text: Mark 15: 16-20

a) Objective: To demonstrate how Jesus Christ was humiliated by the Roman soldiers who arrested Him.

b) Memory Verse: "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy." (2 Chro. 36:16)

c) Relevant Hymns: App 36

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 15:16: The event discussed in the previous lesson took place outside Pilate's court. But after Pilate had finished with Jesus Christ, he delivered Him to the Roman soldiers who led Him away into the hall called praetorium.

ii. The cruel mockery of the high priest's court was repeated by Pilate's soldiers. A purple robe was put on Jesus, and a crown of thorns on His head, signifying royalty (Mk. 15:17).

iii. The soldiers mockingly hailed Jesus as a king, calling Him the king of the Jews (Mk. 15:18), as Pilate had earlier demonstrated in his questioning of Jesus (Mk. 15:2).

iv. A king would have carried a staff as a symbol of his authority; so, the soldiers beat Jesus on the head with a reed, spat on Him, and bowed down to 'worship' Him. (Mk. 15:19)

v. When the soldiers had done mocking Jesus, they took off the purple clothe from Him; and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to where He would be crucified. (Mk. 15:20)

vi. The mockery of Jesus Christ by these Roman soldiers showed their brutality and recklessness in those days. What gave them the power to maltreat Jesus Christ was their belief that they were representing the Roman government, but their action was an abuse of power.

vii. Therefore, it was not surprising that John the Baptist warned the soldiers who came to him at River Jordan not to be violent to anyone: "And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, and what shall we do? And he said unto them. Do violence to no man …" (Lk.3:14).

viii. Also, it appears from the episode that there was no legal provision to checkmate the lawlessness of the Roman soldiers in those days. Those who work as security agents today must understand that they also need the salvation that is provided by Christ.

ix. However, it should not be taken as if the Roman soldiers had absolute power over Jesus Christ; they did not. But it all happened because Jesus Himself allowed it to happen, so that the work of our salvation might be accomplished through His suffering and atoning death.

x. God, who sent just one angel to destroy 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (2 kgs19:35) also had the power to send twelve legions (72,000 soldiers) from heaven to defend Jesus Christ against the wicked Roman soldiers. (Matt. 26:53)

xi. Jesus chose not to defend himself, so that he could be humiliated and crucified for the atonement of our sin.

e) Personal Assessment: Questions

1. 1. What is your assessment of the behavior of the soldiers in this lesson?
2. How would you treat your subordinates in such a way that you would not abuse your office or power?

LESSON 84: JESUS CHRIST IS CRUCIFIED BY THE ROMAN SOLDIERS.

Text: Mark 15: 21-32

a) Objective: To show how Jesus Christ was brutally crucified by His enemies in fulfillment of His earlier predictions.

b) Memory Verse: "And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people." (Lk. 23:13)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 177

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. As Jesus was being taken from Pilate's court to the place of His crucifixion, He must have been too tired to carry the cross, because of the flogging; therefore, a man who was returning to the city was accosted and forced to carry the cross. (Mk. 15:21)

ii. Simon was the name of the man that was forced to carry the cross . The man came from Cyrene, which is now a sea-port in Libya in North Africa. The man must have been well known to Mark's Roman readers, for the names of his two sons (Alexander and Rufus) are also mentioned. (Mk. 15:21)

iii. And they brought him unto the place 'Golgotha' (Mk. 15:22): The site of the crucifixion was known as 'Golgotha' which in Aramaic language means 'skull' It was probably a hill shaped like a skull, rather than a name for a place of execution.

iv. The Latin word for **'skull'** is **'calvaria'** which is probably the reason for calling the place **'Calvary'.**

v. And they gave him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh (Mk. 15:23). Before criminals were executed, they were usually offered a narcotic substance usually made of wine that was mixed with myrrh to deaden the pain of their crucifixion.

vi. "… but he received it not (Mk. 15:23). Jesus refused to drink the wine, perhaps to keep his mind alert to face the death.

vii. And when they had crucified Him, they parted his garments (Mk. 15:24) No further details of the crucifixion was given. Then, in keeping with the Roman law, and in fulfillment of Psalm 22:18, the executors took possession of Jesus Christ's clothes; and shared them by casting lots to determine who was to get what.

viii. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him (Mk. 15:25). Mark gave the time of the execution as being the third hour, which would be about nine o'clock in the morning (in our own local time)..

ix. And the superscription of his accusation was written: THE KING OF THE JEWS (Mk. 15:26). In those days, a written notice stating the crime for which someone was being executed was usually posted at the top of the person's cross.

x. For Jesus, this notice showed that he was accused of being the king of the Jews, a position that would make the Jews reject the rule of Caesar, the Roman emperor.

xi. And with Him they crucified two thieves (Mk 15:27). The two thieves who were crucified with Jesus further illustrated how much He (Jesus) had been misrepresented, misjudged and unjustly condemned.

xii. And the scripture was fulfilled, which says He was numbered with the transgressors (Mk. 15:28). The death of Jesus Christ with the criminals was a fulfillment of what Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 53:12, that He was numbered with the transgressors.

xiii. Mk. 15:29-30: Jesus was mocked by those who were passing by (vv 29-30), including the chief priests and the scribes, as well as those who were crucified with him (vv. 31-32).

xiv. Jesus was mocked while He was still hanging on the cross, to fulfill the scripture in Psalm 22:7-8 that says "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip and they shake the head, saying "He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." (Ps. 22:8)

xv. Those who mocked Jesus addressed Him as Christ the king of Israel in verse 32, to deliberately ridicule his Kingship.

xvi. What Jesus experienced while on the cross would help us to appreciate the kind of ordeal that he passed through in the hands of enemies, to save the sinners.

xvii. If Jesus had saved himself at that moment as demanded by his mockers (v. 30), it would have been impossible for Him to save sinners.

e) Personal Assessment Questions

1. What do you understand by the word "CRUCIFIXION?"
2. Why do you think that Jesus was crucified by the Roman soldiers?
   All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying.

LESSON 85: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS.

Text: Mark 15: 33-41

a) Objective: To show us how Jesus died on the cross of Calvary after passing through a period of agony in the hands of his enemies.

b) Memory Verse: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 176, RH178

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 15:33: And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land …" This darkness was a supernatural darkening of the skies.

ii. Darkness in the afternoon symbolizes the judgment of God (Amos 8:9). The darkness did not only picture God's wrath against those who had rejected the Saviour, but also the sin of the world which Jesus was bearing at that particular moment. Jesus became our sin-offering.

iii. Mark translates the Aramaic words "Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?" as "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mk. 15:34)

iv. The cry of Jesus shows how terrible our sin is, as nothing else could have caused a separation between Jesus Christ and His loving Father. (See Mk. 1:11; Matt. 3:17; Isa. 59:1-2)

v. Mk. 15:35: Some of the by-standers misinterpreted Jesus Christ's cry as a call to Elijah, who, according to a Jewish legend, would save them in the time of great danger.

vi. Mk. 15:36: While the mockery of Jesus was still going on, one of the mockers ran and filled a spunge full of vinegar, put it on a reed; and gave Jesus to drink.

vii. Jesus had refused the wine mixed with myrrh in verse 23, but he accepted this second drink to quench his thirst, as John 19:28-30 reveals.

viii. Mk. 15:37: And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. This expression means that Jesus died, after a loud cry. According to John's gospel, the Lord Jesus final words were 'It is finished' (John 19:30).

ix. Mk. 15:38: "And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" The significance of this supernatural tearing of the veil of the temple is that access to God is now open to all.

x. Our access to God is no longer through priests and the blood of animals, but through the torn veil, which also symbolizes Jesus Christ's broken and torn body on the Cross. (Heb. 10:20)

xi. The expression "from the top to the bottom" (v.58) reminds us that God Himself removed the barrier.`

xii. Mk. 15:39: When the centurion, the Roman captain who supervised the execution of Jesus Christ, saw how Jesus had cried aloud and died, he made a confessional statement that, truly, Jesus was the Son of God. Can unbelievers also see us as sons and daughters of God, today?

xiii. Mark did not record the earthquake that is mentioned in Matthew nor the earthquake that introduced Jesus' resurrection (see Matt.27: 51-54); but he mentioned one of its results.

xiv. The great woven curtain of the temple, shutting off the holiest place from the gaze of worshippers, was torn into two. Access to God was now open to all, Gentiles as well as Jews, lay persons as well as priests.

xv. Mk. 15:40-41: Here, a group of faithful women, who had been Christ's

disciples and His ministry supporters, watched the crucifixion from a distance. These women included Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James the younger and of Joses and Salome.

xvi. In a male-dominated society, the Holy Spirit inspired Mark to appreciate the prominent role of women as authentic witnesses to the Gospel (See ICor. 15:3-4). They were eye-witnesses to Christ's death (Mk. 15:40-41), to His burial (Mk. 15:47), and to His resurrection (Mk. 16:18).

e) Personal Assessment Questions:

1. Today's lesson says Jesus died. Why must Jesus die at all?
2. Do you not think that Jesus could have prevented the soldiers from crucifying Him?

LESSON 86: JESUS IS BURIED IN THE TOMB OF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA'S.

Text: Mark 15: 42-47

a) Objective: To confirm that Jesus was truly buried after His crucifixion and how he was given an honourable burial by Joseph of Arimathaea.

b) Memory Verse: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. (Isa. 53:9)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 186

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. The burial of Jesus took place, a day before the Sabbath when evening had come. It was the preparation day preceding the Sabbath (Mk. 15:42; see also Matt 27:62; John 19:31).

ii. According to Deut. 21:22-23, when a man is executed, he must be buried before the dusk, to avoid desecrating the approaching Sabbath which would normally start from 6.00p.m.

iii. MK. 15:43: Before the Roman authorities could do anything about the dead body of Jesus, a man named Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, who himself had been waiting for the kingdom of God, came and asked Pilate for permission to bury Jesus.

iv. The bold move by Joseph of Arimathaea's can only be explained by the fact that he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Like Nicodemus (John 3:1-2), Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus (John 19:38) who finally translated his faith into a bold public action.

v. Lk. 23:51 tells us more about Joseph of Arimathaea, that he was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, and that he had not consented to the Council's decision against Jesus.

vi. Mk. 15:44: Pilate was surprised that Jesus had died so soon, for death by crucifixions was usually a slow process. However, if there was a need to hasten death, this could be done by breaking the victim's legs, so that they would not be able to support the victims weight (John 19:31-33).

vii. Mk. 15:45: Pilate first confirmed with the centurion, possibly the Roman captain of the army who supervised the execution, that Jesus was dead, before releasing the body to Joseph.

viii. Mk. 15:46: In preparation for the burial, the body of Jesus was tightly wrapped in strips of linen cloth, just like that of Lazarus (See John 11:44), before it was laid in a tomb that was made of rock.

ix. As it was customary, a great stone was rolled to cover the tomb (Mk. 15:46) probably to protect the body from tomb-robbers or flesh-eating animals.

x. It is noticed in John 19:39 that Joseph of Arimathaea was assisted by another silent disciple, Nicodemus, who brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes the weight of which was about one hundred pounds, to preserve the body from decay and the environment from the stench of a decaying body. John 19:40 notes that this was the Jewish custom of burial.

xi. Mk. 15:47: Also, we are told here that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were eye-witnesses to the burial. The two women noted the exact location of the tomb where Jesus was buried.

xii. We learn from this event that God will always have the right man or woman to accomplish His purpose. Because He would not allow the dead body of His Son to be insulted by the Roman soldiers and the Jews, He raised up Joseph of Arimathaea and others, to give Christ a befitting burial. Can we also play the role of Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus today, if there is a need for it?

e) Personal Assessment Questions:

1. What is your assessment of the actions of Joseph of Arimathaea, as discussed in this lesson?
2. Is there anything you are doing now to honour the name of Christ?

LESSON 87: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Text: Mark 16: 1-8

a) Objective: To help us to understand the description of Jesus Christ's resurrection.

b) Memory Verse: "Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." (Lk. 24:34)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 180

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 16:1-2: The Jewish Sabbath day is our present-day Saturday. The next day is the first day of the week, that is, Sunday.

ii. The spices that were brought by the three women in this passage would conceal the stench or odour of the decay. While the women's action was symbolic of the care and concern that they had for Jesus, it also proved that they did not believe that Jesus would resurrect, as He had told them before.

iii. Mk. 16:3-4: The three women thought about who would roll away the stone at the tomb for them, not knowing that it had been removed already.

iv. Mk. 16:5-6: As the women entered the tomb, they saw a young man in a long white garment sitting on the right side; and they were afraid.

v. Mk. 16:6: Mark does not identify the young man mentioned in verse 5, but the young man spoke to allay the fear of the women. He told them that Jesus of Nazareth had risen, and even encouraged them to inspect the place where He (Jesus) had been laid.

vi. Mk. 16:7: Chosen by God as the first human witnesses, these three women were instructed by the young man to go and tell the other disciples and Peter that Jesus had gone before them into Galilee, as He had told them before. (Mk. 14:28)

vii. The special mention of Peter in this command is an indication that Jesus Christ still accepted him, even though he had denied the Lord three times. (Mk. 15:66-72)

viii. Mk. 16:88: At this initial stage, as the women went out of the tomb quickly, fear did not let them tell anyone about what the young man at the tomb had told them. It should be noted here that fear could hinder the spread of the Gospel.

ix. Mk. 16:9: Although the women had been commissioned to tell of Jesus Christ's resurrection (vs. 7), they had not actually seen Jesus. But He appeared to Mary Magdalene here.

x. Only Mk. 16:9 and Lk 8:2 mention that Jesus cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene, the miracle deliverance which would explain her devotion to Christ.

xi. Mk. 16:10-11: Unlike before, when the women were afraid to tcll anyone about Christ's resurrection (vs. 8), Mary Magdalene, after seeing Jesus, went to tell other disciples, who were mourning and weeping, that she had seen Jesus; but they did not believe.

xii. Mk. 16:12-13: Later, Jesus appeared in another form to two disciples, as they were going into the country. Appearing in another form could mean

that Jesus appeared to the two disciples on the road different from how He had appeared to the others before.

xiii. The identity of these two disciples is not entirely stated, but Lk.24:18 mentions one of them as Cleopas.

e. Personal Assessment Questions:

1. Do you also believe that Jesus Christ resurrected?
2. How are you preparing to be resurrected with Christ when the trumpet shall sound?

LESSON 88: JESUS APPEARS TO ELEVEN DISCIPLES AND COMMISSIONS THEM TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

Text: Mark 16: 14-20

a) Objective: To show how Jesus made His last appearance to His eleven disciples and commanded them to preach the Gospel, shortly before His ascension into heaven.

b) Memory Verse: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. 28:19)

c) Relevant Hymns: RH 745

d) Lesson Exposition:

i. Mk. 16:14: Here, Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples where they were eating; and rebuked them for their unbelief. They were rebuked for not believing, even when they had been told that Jesus was alive.

ii. Such collective rebuke of the disciples is also found in John 20: 26-29 and Lk. 24:36-44. The aim of including this third narrative is to warn those whose doubts arise from lack of faith and stubborn refusal to believe.

iii. The lesson is that God provides sufficient evidence to arouse faith in us, but evidence on its own does not automatically generate faith.

iv. Mk. 16:15-18: Immediately after Jesus had rebuked the eleven disciples for their unbelief in His resurrection, He commanded them to go out to preach the Gospel.

v. This assignment of the Great Commission to His disciples is also recorded in Matt. 28:19-20; Lk. 24:47-48.

vi. The command is a commission to go with the Good News of Jesus Christ to all the world and to every creature (Mk. 16:15). This Great Commission to preach the Gospel is given to the eleven disciples and to all others who believe in Jesus.

vii. The Good News is central to the Great Commission today, as it was central to Jesus Christ's mission on earth. The disciples were to take the Good News to all nations without any exception.

viii. Mk. 16:16: The Gospel would have different effects on two classes of people – believers and unbelievers (Mk. 16:16). Those who believe would be saved from their sin, while those who disbelieve would be condemned.

ix. The importance of being baptized with Christ is also emphasized in this passage (Mk 16:16). There is baptism by immersion in water as well as baptism of the Holy Spirit. Both are essential for all believers in Christ'

x. Water baptism is a sacrament, an physical action which represent an inward reality. Someone who has confessed his or her sins and accepted the sacrifice of Christ as a means of reconciliation with God is saved and has received eternal life. He or she is dead to sin and alive in the spirit. The water baptism is doe to demonstrate this death to sin by buried in water while he or she is brought out out of the water to signify resurrection with Christ to a new life.

xi. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is enduement with divine supernatural power, the power of the Holy Spirit, for all believers to live the Christian life; for without this power, no person can, by self-effort, live the Christian life.

xii. Mk. 16:17-18: The signs that are listed here were evident in the early Church. Casting out demons demonstrated victory over Satan (Acts 2:16:18). Speaking in new tongues began at Pentecost (Acts 2: 4-11). Healing the sick occurred in several instances, including as stated in Acts 28:8.

xiii. Taking up serpents occurred in Paul's encounter with a poisonous snake which had ill effects (Acts 28:1-6); however, the New Testament did not record Christians drinking anything deadly without harm, but there have been testimonies in the church that such things do happen.

xiv. As believers in Christ, the most important lesson to note is not the specific signs but the fact that the Gospel is proclaimed with the authority in the Name of Jesus Christ.

xv. The signs that accompany the ministry of the Gospel is not the focus, but Christ Jesus. Thus, in the process of confirming the ministry with signs and miracles, the messenger must not supplant the message, which is Christ Himself.

xvi. Mk. 16:19: The final sign that Jesus was the Son of God was that He was received up into heaven, to be seated at the right hand of God - the position of the authority and the power of God. Lk. 24:50-51 also gives this account of Christ's ascension. See Acts. 1:9-11, also.

xvii. Mk.16:20: In obedience to Christ's commandments, the disciples went out and preached everywhere; and the Lord accompanied their ministry with signs and wonders.

xviii. If Christ worked with the disciples in the early church as they preached His word, He will also work with us today; and confirm our ministry with signs and wonders, if we engage ourselves in the preaching of the Gospel.

e) Personal Assessment Questions:

1. Are you involved in the execution of the Great Commission, today?
2. Have you ever had the joy of leading a soul to Christ?