

Mark 6

In this chapter, Jesus gets rejected by His hometown (6:1-6; cf. 3:21, 31-35), but He multiplies His effectiveness by sending out the twelve (6:7-13). The murder of John the immersing one (alluded to at 1:14) is given more detail (6:14-29). Jesus tries to segregate Himself for peace and prayer (6:30-32), but He then feeds 5,000 men (6:33-44). He stills a storm (6:45-52; another storm; see 4:35-41). This chapter concludes with a note of summary of Jesus' good works (6:53-56).

TRANSLATION - 6:1-6:

1 And He came from there and goes into His hometown, and there follows Him His disciples. **2** And it being the Sabbath, He began to teach in the synagogue, and many, after hearing, were being amazed, saying, "From whence [are] these things, and this wisdom being given, and such powers being through His hands? **3** Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of Jacob and Joseph and Judah and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him.

4 And Jesus was saying to them that "A prophet is not dishonored except in his hometown and among His relatives and in His house." **5** And He was being unable there to do any powers except a few ill, after laying the hands, He healed. **6** And He was astonished because of their unbelief. And He was going around the villages around, teaching.

GREEK WORDS:

"Hometown" (ver. 1) is used 8 times, twice in each of Matthew (13:54, 57), Mark (6:1, 4), and Luke (4:23-24), once in John (4:44) and in Hebrew (11:14). "To follow" is used earlier at 1:18. "Disciple" is used earlier at 2:15-16. "Sabbath" (ver. 2) was used earlier at 1:21. "To teach" was used earlier at 1:21. "Synagogue" was used earlier at 1:21. "To be amazed" was used earlier at 1:22. It will also be used in Mark at 7:37; 10:26; 11:18. "Wisdom" is used only here in Mark. The noun is used 51 times in the NT, 17 times in 1 Corinthians. "Power" is the word typically translated "miracle;" it connotes the power of God. The word is used 119 times in the NT. It was used earlier at 5:30. Mark uses the word ten times. "Carpenter" (ver. 3) is used twice, in Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3. This is the first use of "Mary" in Mark's gospel account; the name is used 27 times in the NT. "Brother" was used earlier at 1:16. "Jacob" or "James" was used earlier at 1:19. "Joseph" is used in Mark three times (6:3; 15:40, 47) and this spelling is not used elsewhere. "Judah" is used earlier at 3:19. "Simon" is used earlier at 1:16. "Sister" is used 26 times in the NT, earlier in Mark at 3:32, 35. "To be offended" gives us the word "scandal;" it was used earlier at 4:17.

"Prophet" (ver. 5) was used earlier at 1:2. "Dishonored" is used four times: Matthew 13:57; Mark 6:4; 1 Corinthians 4:10; 12:23. In its form, is the word "worthy" with the negative particle ("a") in front of it: "not worthy." "Relatives" is used eleven times in the NT; only here in Mark. "Ill" (ver. 5) is used five times, three times in Mark's gospel (6:5, 13; 16:18). "To heal" was used earlier at 1:34. "To be astonished" (ver. 6) was used earlier at 5:20. "Unbelief" is used eleven times in the NT, in Mark at: 6:6; 9:24; 16:14. As with "dishonored," the form of this word is the word "belief" with the negative particle ("a") in front of it: "not belief." "Village" is used 27 times in the NT, in Mark seven times, three in this context (6:6, 36, 56). "Teaching" was used in verse 2.

GREEK GRAMMAR:

The expected answers to the questions given in verses 2-3 are "yes."

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The text does not quote or allude to the OT, but there were prophets who were rejected by the Israelite people: 2 Chronicles 24:19; 36:15-16; Neh. 9:26. See also Acts 7:51-53.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

Nazareth is not mentioned anywhere outside of the NT (not even in the OT). It might have had a population of 500 at this time. Jesus is the one who put Nazareth on the map. Josephus records the martyrdom of James, Jesus' brother, at the hands of a high priest named Ananus (*Antiquities* 20.9.1).

PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Matthew 13:53-58 and Luke 4:16-30 for their parallel accounts.

COMMENTS:

After healing the daughter of the synagogue official (5:35-43), Jesus leaves for His hometown (6:1). On the Sabbath day, as was the custom in the synagogues, Jewish teachers were invited to speak, so Jesus began teaching (6:2). More of His teaching is given in Luke 4:14-30. The attendees listened to Him in astonishment. He had grown up among them, but now they ask themselves about the origin of His wisdom and His teaching, as well as the miracles which He was performing. Mark uses the word "power" to denote miracles five times: 5:30; 6:2, 5, 14; 9:39.

Nazareth was the town in which Jesus grew up (Matt. 2:23). These people know Him. He is the "carpenter" (ver. 3), the "carpenter's son" (Matt. 13:55). The term "carpenter" referred to one who worked with different medium as well, wood, stone, etc. He and his father Joseph might have worked on the houses around Nazareth, both inside (furniture) and outside. Isn't He the "son of Mary"? This is the only place where this designation is used of Jesus. Isn't He the "son of Joseph" (see Luke 3:23; John 1:45; 6:42)? The absence of a reference to Joseph in Mark's account suggests that perhaps Joseph was already dead. Some suggest the townspeople are casting dispersion on Jesus' legitimate birth, but that is speculation as well. The townspeople know Jesus' brothers, all four of them, and His sisters. James ("Jacob" in Hebrew) is named for one of the patriarchs as well as "Joseph." James and Judah ("Judah"), according to early church tradition and there is no reason to doubt it, were authors of the letters in the NT which bear their names.

Because the townspeople felt like they knew Jesus and His origin, they were offended (ver. 3) at His teaching. Again, see Luke's account (4:14-30) to see more of His teaching that offended them. But Jesus responded (ver. 4) by saying that a prophet is always respected, except among His own people. "Hometown," then "relatives," then "family" narrows the focus from general to more specific and closer relationships. Perhaps it was the disbelief of His family (see John 7:5) that motivated many of the townspeople to reject Jesus' claims as well. In this and many other contexts, Jesus proved to be a "stone of stumbling" (see Isa. 8:14; Rom. 9:32-33; 1 Peter 2:8), as He still is today (1 Cor. 1:18-25).

Although the townspeople know of His miracles (ver. 2), He could not do too many miracles among them (ver. 5) because they would not believe what He was teaching (ver. 6). Miracles do not *create* faith; the word creates faith (Rom. 10:17). Miracles *validate* the faith that is produced by the message (see John 20:30-31). But despite His teaching, the people would not believe what He had to say. Consequently, Jesus healed only a few sick people. He was "astonished" at their refusal to believe; in Matthew 8:10 Jesus was astonished at the *belief* of a non-Jew!

Jesus then continued His teaching in other, surrounding, villages.

APPLICATION:

Our faith needs to be in the message from Jesus Christ. The miracles in the Bible were recorded for us, to substantiate our conviction that the message is true (see John 20:30-31). We need to train our minds and our hearts to believe that message found in God's book, the Bible (Luke 16:31), every word.

Contrary to Catholic and Orthodox teachings, there is no evidence these men and women were siblings of Jesus by a different mother. The *Orthodox Study Bible* (page 97), in

order to support the teaching of the perpetual virginity of Mary, states: “There is no NT evidence that Mary had other children besides Jesus.” They accurately state that these were “half-brothers” or “half-sisters” of Jesus, but the implication is that Joseph had a different wife! The only reason to deny the normal definition of the words is to support a doctrine that the Orthodox want to believe, based on tradition. The doctrine that Mary continued a virgin after Jesus was born has no basis in Scripture and is far too new to be biblical.

The response of Nazareth to Jesus illustrates the principle of *epistemic distance* - the idea that God has revealed Himself to the exact degree that respects human freedom. That is, He does not hide Himself so that man cannot reason properly to the point he believes in God’s existence. Nor does God reveal Himself to such a degree that He overwhelms man so that man must believe in Him and cannot choose not to believe in Him. Jesus had revealed Himself to the Nazarenes (ver. 2) to the perfect degree that they *could* have believed in Him, but He allowed them to choose not to believe.

James, the brother of Jesus, is mentioned in Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19; 2:9, 12. Although he did not believe in Jesus’ messiahship before the resurrection, later he became a strong leader of the church in Jerusalem.

TRANSLATION - 6:7-13:

7 And He is calling the twelve and began them to send out two by two and He was giving them authority over the unclean spirits. **8** And He ordered them that nothing they would take on the way except only a staff, not bread nor a traveler’s bag, nor in the belt money, **9** but after putting on sandals, and do not wear two tunics.

10 And He was saying to them, “Wherever you may enter into a house, there remain until whenever you may go out from there. **11** And whatever place may not receive you nor listen to you, going out from there, shake the dust from under your feet for a testimony to them.” **12** And after going out, they preached that they must repent, **13** and many demons they were casting out, and they were anointing with oil many ill and they were healing.

GREEK WORDS:

“To call” (ver. 7) or “to summon” was used earlier at 3:13. “Twelve” refers to the apostles, used earlier at 3:14, 16. “To send” is the verbal form of the noun “apostle.” It was used earlier at 1:2. “Authority” was used earlier at 1:22. “Spirit” was used earlier at 1:8. “Unclean” was used earlier at 1:23. “To order” (ver. 8) or “to command” is used 32 times in the NT, three times in Mark: 6:8; 8:6; 16:8. “Staff” is used only here in Mark, out of 12 uses. “Traveler’s bag” is used six times, only here in Mark. “Belt” was used earlier at 1:6 relative to John the baptizer. “Money” refers to metal, either brass, bronze, or copper. Here, it refers to money or coins. It is used here in Mark and 12:41, out of five uses. “To put on” (ver. 9) is used only here in Mark, and only in Acts 12:8; Eph. 6:15. “Sandals” is used here and Acts 12:8. “To wear” or “to put on” was used earlier at 1:6. “Tunic” is used here and 14:63 in Mark, out of eleven uses.

“To remain” (ver. 10) is used here and 14:34, out of 118 uses in the NT. “To receive” (ver. 11) is used 56 times in the NT; six times in Mark: 6:11; 9:37; 10:15. “To hear” or “to listen to” is used 428 times in the NT, first in Mark at 2:1. “To shake off” is used four times: Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11; Acts 13:51; 18:6. “Dust” is used only here and Revelation 18:19. “Foot” is used 93 times, earlier in Mark at 5:22. “Testimony” or “witness” is used 19 times in the NT, first in Mark at 1:44. It will be used again in Mark only in 13:9. “To preach” (ver. 12) was used earlier at 1:4. “To repent” was used earlier at 1:15. This is Mark’s last use of the verb. “Demons” (ver. 13) is used earlier at 1:34. “To cast out” was used earlier at 1:12. “To anoint” is used nine times in the NT, twice in Mark: 6:13; 16:1. “Olive oil” is used eleven times, only here in Mark.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

A “tunic” (ver. 9) was short-sleeved but knee-length. It was worn under a “cloak.” Olive oil was used for food, anointing, sacrifices, fuel for lamps, and medicine.

PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Luke 9:1-6 as well as Matthew 9:35-10:16 and Luke 10:1-12 for further parallels to this text.

COMMENTS:

Jesus intended to multiply the work He was doing, both in doing good and in teaching. He will later send out 70 disciples to teach the kingdom of heaven was near (Luke 10). At this point, Jesus sends out the “twelve” (“apostles”) who were chosen and empowered in 3:13-19. He sent them out in pairs (ver. 7) for strength, for encouragement, and to fulfill the Mosaic requirement that there should be two or three witnesses to substantiate a message (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1). Mark specifically mentions that Jesus gave them power over demons which Mark specifically mentioned back in 3:15. It is clear from Matthew 12:28 that exorcisms were closely connected with the coming of the Messianic kingdom.

Because the responsibility was urgent and Jesus wanted His apostles to trust the Father for their needs, He commands them to keep their luggage simple (ver. 8-9). They should take a staff (but not two, Matt. 10:9-10 - Jesus tells His apostles not to “acquire” another staff) but no food, no traveler’s bag to keep extra belongings, nor money. They could wear sandals, but they should not take two pair (Matt. 10:10). Nor should they take two tunics (ver. 9). When they entered a city and stayed in a home, they should be hospitable and stay in the same home (compare 3 John 5-8) until they leave that city (ver. 10). However, if a city or even a house would not listen to their message of repentance (ver. 11), they were to treat that city or house as the Jews use to treat pagan lands: shake the dust off their feet. This action would be a testimony to that city or house that they have, in fact, rejected the messengers of God. Paul did this very thing in Acts 13:51.

The apostles went out and did as Jesus had instructed them (ver. 12), preaching that the Jews needed to repent. This effectively showed that the Jews were not God’s chosen people anymore, unless they believed the message of the Gospel. Along with casting out demons (ver. 13), they also anointed with olive oil those who were sick and healing them. Oil was used for various purposes, including for medical purposes (see Luke 10:34; James 5:14). It should be noted that Jesus never used olive oil (or anything else, except His own spit or mud; see Mark 8:22-26 and John 9:6-7) for healing purposes.

APPLICATION:

Christians are to share the gospel of Christ throughout their whole walk of life (Matt. 28:19-20). Some Christians give their whole lives to sharing the gospel of Christ. While Jesus does not call Christians to take a “vow of poverty,” He does call us to live and give as if we were in a spiritual battle for the souls of men (see 2 Timothy 2:3-4). Jesus continued to send out His followers in pairs (Luke 10:1), including in the book of Acts: 3:1-11; 8:14; 11:30; 13:1-2; 15:22, 39-40; see also 2 Cor. 12:18.

As long as someone is listening to our message, we might spend more time with them. But if someone refuses to hear the message and turn their heart away from that message, there is no reason for Christians to waste their time. They should move on to more fruitful hearts (Mark 4:20). Along with preaching the gospel, doing good is another area of service in which Christians ought to be busy (see Galatians 6:10).

Jesus will later teach that His preachers ought to be supported as they preach the gospel: Matthew 10:10; 1 Corinthians 9:14; Romans 15:27.

TRANSLATION - 4:14-29:

14 And King Herod heard, for known His name became, and they were saying that John the immersing one had been raised from the dead and on account of this, the powers are working in Him. **15** But others were saying that Elijah He is; but others were saying that a

prophet as one of the prophets. **16** And after hearing, Herod was saying, “John, whom I beheaded, this one has risen.”

17 For this Herod after sending seized John and bound him in prison on account of Herodias the wife of Philip his brother, because her he married. **18** For John was saying to Herod that “It is not authorized for you to have the wife of your brother.” **19** And Herodias bore ill will toward him and desired to kill him, and was not being able. **20** For Herod was fearing John, being convinced him [to be] a righteous and holy man, and he was defending him, and after listening to him much he was undecided, and he listened to him gladly.

21 And after coming a suitable day when Herod for his birthday made a banquet for his officials and military commanders and leading men of Galilee, **22** and after entering his daughter Herodias and after dancing she pleased Herod and those sitting together. The king said to the young girl, “Ask me whatever you may desire, and I will give to you.”

23 And he swore to her [much], “If whatever me you may ask, I will give to you until half of my kingdom.” **24** And after going out she said to her mother, “What will I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the immersing one.” **25** And after entering immediately with speed to the king, she asked saying, “I desire that at once you may give to me on a platter, the head of John the immersing one.”

26 And deeply grieved being, the king on account of the oaths and those sitting he did not desire to deny her. **27** And immediately after sending, the King ordered the executioner to bring his head. And after leaving he beheaded him in the prison. **28** And he brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. **29** And after hearing, his disciples came and took his corpse and buried in in a tomb.

GREEK WORDS:

“King” (ver. 14) is used 115 times in the NT, twelve times in Mark. “Known” or “evident” was used earlier at 3:12. “Name,” used here in the sense of “reputation,” is used 230 times, first in Mark at 3:16-17. “John” the “immersing one” was introduced by Mark at 1:4. “To rise” is used 144 times, used earlier at 1:31. “Dead” is used 128 times in the NT, seven times in Mark. “To work” is used 21 times, only here in Mark. “Elijah” (ver. 15) is found nine times in Mark. This spelling is not found in the rest of the NT. “Prophet” was found earlier at 1:2. “To behead” (ver. 16) is used at Matthew 14:10; Mark 6:16, 27; Luke 9:9.

“To seize” (ver. 17) was used earlier at 1:31. “To bind” was used earlier at 3:27. “Prison” is found 47 times in the NT, only in this context (6:17, 27, 48) in Mark. “Wife” is used 215 times in the NT, used earlier at 5:25. “Philip” is used 36 times in the NT; one of the apostles is so named in 3:18. “To marry” is used 28 times in the NT, four times in Mark: 6:17; 10:11-12; 12:25. “To be authorized” (ver. 18) is used 31 times, first in 2:24. “To bear ill will” (ver. 19) is used in Mark 6:19; Luke 11:53; Galatians 5:1. “To desire” is used earlier at 1:40-41. “To kill” was used earlier at 3:4. “To fear” (ver. 20) was used earlier at 4:41. “Righteous” was used earlier at 2:17. “Holy” was used earlier at 1:8. “To defend” or “to protect” is used at Matthew 9:17; Mark 6:20; Luke 2:19. “To be undecided, perplexed, or uncertain” is used six times, only here in Mark. “Gladly” is used five times, in Mark at 6:20; 12:37.

“Suitable day” (ver. 21) is used here and Hebrews 4:16. “Birthday” is used only at Matthew 14:6 and here. “Banquet” is used sixteen times, in Mark at 6:21; 12:39. “Officials” is used here, Revelation 6:15; 18:23. “Military commanders” is used only here in Mark, out of 21 times, especially in Acts (17 times). “Leading men” is used 155 times, first at 3:27. “Daughter” (ver. 22) is used 28 times, first in 5:34. “To dance” is used at Matthew 11:17; 14:6; Mark 6:22; Luke 7:32. “To please” is used 17 times, only here in Mark. “To sit together” is used earlier at 2:15. “Young girl” was used earlier at 5:41-42. “Ask” is used 70 times, nine times in Mark. “To desire” was used earlier at 1:40-41.

“To swear” (ver. 23) is used 26 times, only twice in Mark: 6:23; 14:71. “Half” is used only here in Mark, out of five uses. “Kingdom” was used earlier at 1:15. “Head” (ver. 24) is used 75 times, eight in Mark. “Haste” or “speed” (ver. 25) is only used here in Mark, out of twelve times.

“At once” is used only here in Mark, out of six uses. “Platter” is used five times, only in this context of Mark (6:25, 28).

“Deeply grieved” (ver. 26) is used five times, in Mark at 6:26; 14:34. “Oath” is used only here in Mark, out of ten uses. The word here is plural. “To sit” or “to recline” is used here, 14:18; 16:14 in Mark, out of 14 times. “To reject” or “to deny” is used here and 7:9 in Mark, out of sixteen times. “Executioner” (ver. 27) is only found here in the NT. “To order, command” is used ten times, earlier in Mark at 1:27. “To bring” was used at 1:32. “Corpse” (ver. 29) is used seven times, in Mark at 6:29; 15:45. “To bury” is the verb “to place.” It was used earlier at 4:21. “Tomb” is used 40 times in the NT, first at 5:2.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

The Law of Moses forbid incestuous relationships as Herod is practicing at this point: Leviticus 18:16; 20:21.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

“Herod” (ver. 14) is mentioned 43 times in the NT, eight times in Mark. Herod was not, officially, a “king;” he was a “tetrarch” (a leader over one-fourth of a political area). But the people commonly called him “king,” a title which he desperately wanted from the Roman Emperor, who constantly refused to give it. Matthew calls him both a “tetrarch” (14:1) and “king” (14:9).

Herod the Great reigned from 37-4 BC. He was married ten times. Four of his wives are significant for NT studies: Miriamne I, Miriamne II, Malthace, and Cleopatra of Jerusalem.

Miriamne I had Aristobulus, who was the father of Herod Agrippa I (37-44 AD; see Acts 12:1-24), who was then the father of Herod Agrippa II (49-92 AD; see Acts 25:13-26:32). Aristobulus was also the father of Herodias, the wife of Philip who then married Herod Antipas (Mark 6:17).

Miriamne II had Herod Philip (Mark 6:17), who was the father of Salome (her name is given by Josephus in *Antiquities* 18.5.4), the daughter of Herodias (Mark 6:21-29).

Malthace was the mother of both Herod Antipas (4 BC - 39 AD, who ruled Galilee and Perea) and Archelaus (4 BC - 6 AD, who ruled Judea and Samaria). Archelaus was replaced by the Roman Emperor with governors: Pilate, Felix, Festus (who are all found in the NT), and others.

Cleopatra had Herod Philip (4 BC - 34 AD, who ruled the areas north and west of Galilee; Luke 3:1).

“Herodias” (ver. 17) is used in Matthew (14:3, 6), Mark (6:17, 19, 22), and Luke (3:19). “Galilee” (ver. 21) was used earlier at 1:9.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, writes that John was imprisoned in the fortress of Machaerus, at the northeast corner of the Dead Sea (*Antiquities* 18.2). “Officials” (ver. 21) were advisors in Herod’s government. “Military commanders” (*chiliarch*) were leaders over a thousand men in the Roman military. “Leading men” were other politicians or civic leaders. The “executioner” (*speculator*, one of Mark’s Latin words he preserved) was a type of police serving the leader.

Herod’s wife, before Herodias, was Phasaelis. She was the daughter of King Aretas IV of Arabia. Eventually, Aretas would attack Herod and defeat him in battle. Later, Herod will be exiled by Emperor Caligula to Gaul in 39 AD. Herodias would join him willfully.

PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

See Matthew 14:1-12 and Luke 9:7-9 for their parallel accounts.

COMMENTS:

At this point, Mark introduces to the reader the account of John’s murder at the hands of King Herod (ver. 14). Herod had heard about the miracles Jesus, and perhaps His disciples, were performing. “Name” in this verse refers to Christ’s reputation. Some people were saying

that Jesus was, in fact, John the immersing one risen from the dead. This was the reason Jesus could perform miracles. What relationship, in their minds, there was between one risen from the dead and the ability to work miracles we do not know. We know that John did not perform miracles (see John 10:41). When Jesus asks His apostles who people think that He is, they will answer that some believed He was John, risen from the dead (8:28).

Still others were saying Jesus was Elijah, returned to earth (ver. 15). Elijah did not die, but he went immediately to heaven (2 Kings 2:9-14). Malachi predicted that Elijah would return (3:1; 4:5), whom Jesus (Matt. 11:14) and Luke (1:17) inform us was John the immersing one. Again, the apostles inform Jesus that some believed He was Elijah returned to earth (Mark 8:28). A third option believed by some about Jesus was that He was a prophet "like one of the prophets of old" (6:15; see also 8:28). This might have been an allusion to Moses' promise of a prophet in Deuteronom 18:15-17. Clearly, having a high opinion of Jesus was not the same as accepting His claims! Out of those options, King Herod believed (he "kept saying;" ver. 16) that Jesus was John risen from the dead. King Herod had beheaded John. How did that happen?

Mark gives the details now of the imprisonment (see 1:14) and the murder of Jesus' forerunner, a foreshadowing of what will happen to Jesus Himself. King Herod has John arrested (ver. 17) because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip because Herod had married Herodias. John, in his preaching had continued to preach that it was not authorized by God for Herod to marry Herodias (ver. 18), because Philip was still alive.

Herodias held a grudge against John for telling her how to live (ver. 19) and she wanted to kill John. She was not able to put the messenger to death because her husband, King Herod, was afraid of John (ver. 20). He believed John was a prophet, to some extent; that he was righteous and holy. So, King Herod kept John safe from the wrath of his wife. The imprisonment, then, might have been as much to protect John from Herodias as it was to intimidate John to change his message. When Herod heard John preaching, he was perplexed, probably over how to get himself out of this predicament. Yet, Herod listened to John gladly.

A perfect day came, from the perspective of Herodias (ver. 21), when Herod had his birthday and invited a number of leaders, civic and military, to join him in his celebration. Herodias's daughter danced before the men (ver. 22) and her actions pleased King Herod enough that he swore an oath, multiply times, to give her half his kingdom as payment. Whether the daughter's dancing was sensuous and erotic or not, the text does not say. It is easy to assume it was, but commenting on her dancing is not the purpose of the text.

To emphasize the public nature of the oath, in verse 23 Mark repeats the fact that Herod made his oath, to give the girl half his kingdom. The girl left the party (ver. 24) and asked Herodias what she should ask. Herodias responded that she should ask for the head of John the immersing one. The girl quickly returned to the birthday party (ver. 25) with her request. In the original language, she leaves the object of the verb to the end of the sentence, saying literally, "I desire that immediately you will give to me on a platter - the head of John the immersing one."

Because of his respect for John the immersing one, King Herod was very sorry for her request and for the fact that he had made his oath multiple times (ver. 26). Note in verse 26 that "oaths" is in the plural. He had made this oath in front of his dinner guests so he did not feel like he could refuse her. Therefore, the king sent immediately an executioner (ver. 27) and commanded him to bring the head of John the immersing one to him. The executioner beheaded the "righteous" and "holy" man (see verse 20) and he brought the head on the platter (ver. 28) and gave it to the girl, who gave it to her mother. King Herod becomes the first man to murder a prophet of God in over four centuries (see Jeremiah 26:21-23). He will not be the last.

John's students learned about this tragedy (ver. 29), so they came and took away the corpse and buried it.

APPLICATION:

Later, Herod Antipas will ask to see Jesus perform miracles while He is on trial (Luke 23:6-12).

The Jewish people had multiple false ideas about the person of Jesus Christ (ver. 14-16). These false expectations will lead them to crucify Him. We should not be surprised today when people reject Jesus or Christianity because they do not understand either His nature or the nature of His religion. If we want to have a proper understanding of Christianity, we have to allow the New Testament to inform us, and nothing else.

There are wicked people in the world, like Herodias, and there are weak people, like Herod, in the world who cannot confront wicked people. He acknowledged John was “righteous” and “holy,” but this did not stop him from appeasing his wicked wife. His weakness led him to commit a wicked act. Note that John was beheaded, not because he was wicked, but because he was righteous. His righteousness, of course, led him to preach the truth, as Stephen does in Acts 7, which directly leads to his murder. The Holy Spirit was behind both actions. The gospel must be preached!

Furthermore, God has a strict law on marriage and subsequent divorces, which Mark will detail in Mark 10:10-12. Death of a spouse frees one to remarry (Rom. 7:3-4) and the fornication by one’s spouse frees the innocent person to remarry (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). Otherwise, subsequent marriages are forbidden by Jesus Christ. If one cannot remain married to his or her spouse and they have not committed sexual immorality, then the person must remain unmarried or be reconciled to the spouse (1 Cor. 7:13-14).

Contrary to the assertions of those who believe in premillennialism, there is no further promise of “Elijah” coming to earth. John the immersing one fulfilled that metaphor.

TRANSLATION - 6:30-44:

30 And the apostles came together to Jesus and announced to Him all which they did and which they taught. **31** And He says to them, “Come you all alone into a deserted place and rest a little.” For many were coming and going, and neither did they have opportunity to eat. **32** And they went away in the boat into a desert place alone. **33** And they saw them leaving and many recognized and on foot from all the cities they ran together there and went ahead of them. **34** And after disembarking He saw a great crowd and had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and He began to teach many of them.

35 And already a late hour coming after coming to Him, His disciples were saying to Him that, “A desert is the place and already a late hour. **36** Send them away, in order that after leaving into the nearby field and village they might buy for themselves something they may eat.”

37 And after answering He said to them, “Give to them, yourselves, to eat.” And they say to Him, “After going, may we buy two hundred denarii of bread and will we give to them to eat?” **38** And He says to them, “How many [loaves of] bread do you have? Go. See.” And after knowing, they say, “Five, and two fish.” **39** And He ordered them to sit all in group by group on the green grass. **40** And they sat row by row according to one hundred and according to fifty.

41 And after taking the five loaves and the two fish, after looking up into the heavens He blessed and He broke the bread and gave to the disciples in order to distribute to them, and the two fish He divided to all. **42** And all ate and were satisfied, **43** and they took away twelve baskets of leftovers and from the fish. **44** And they were, those eating [the bread] five thousand males.

GREEK WORDS:

“To come together” (ver. 30) is used 59 times, first in Mark at 2:2. “Apostles” was used earlier at 3:14. “To announce” was used earlier at 5:14. “To rest” (ver. 31) is used twelve times, twice in Mark: 6:31; 14:41. “A little” is used earlier at 1:19. “To eat” is used earlier at 1:6. “To have an opportunity” is used three times: here; Acts 17:21; 1 Corinthians 16:12. “To recognize” (ver. 33) is used 44 times, earlier at 2:8. “Cities” was used earlier at 1:33. “To run together” is used three times: Mark 6:33; Acts 3:11; 1 Peter 4:4. “To go ahead” is used nine times, in Mark at 6:33; 14:35. “To disembark” (ver. 34) was used earlier at 1:25. “To have compassion” was

used earlier at 1:41. “Sheep” is used here and 14:27 in Mark, out of 39 uses. “Shepherd” is used in the same contexts as “sheep,” out of 18 uses. “To teach” was used earlier at verse 2.

“To come to” (ver. 35) is used earlier at 1:31. “To buy” (ver. 36) is used 30 times in the NT, in Mark at 6:36-37; 11:15; 15:46; 16:1. Its root word is “market” (*agora*). “Denarius” (ver. 37) is a day’s salary in the first century, used 16 times in the NT, used in Mark at: 6:37; 12:15; 14:5. “Two hundred” is used only here in Mark, out of eight uses. “Fish” (ver. 38) is used 20 times, only here in Mark: 6:38, 41, 43. “To order” or “to command” (ver. 39) was used earlier at verse 27. “To sit” is used only here in Mark, out of six uses. “Groups” is used twice in the NT, both in this verse. “Green” is used here and Revelation 6:8; 8:7; 9:4. “Grass” is used 15 times, earlier at 4:28. “In rows” (ver. 40) is defined as “a garden bed.” It connotes the idea of rows.

“To look up” (ver. 41) is used 25 times in the NT, six times in Mark. “To bless” gives us the word *eulogy*. It is used 41 times, in Mark at 6:41; 8:7; 11:9-10; 14:22. “To break” is used here and Luke 9:16. “To distribute” is used 19 times, four times in Mark: 6:41; 8:6-7. “To divide” is used 14 times, first at 3:24-26. “To be satisfied” (ver. 42) is used sixteen times, four times in Mark: 6:42; 7:27; 8:4, 8. “Leftovers” or “fragments” is used nine times, in Mark at 6:43; 8:8, 19-20. “Basket” is used six times, in Mark at 6:43; 8:19. “Full” is used 17 times, earlier in Mark at 2:21. “Five thousand” (ver. 44) is used six times, in Mark at 6:44; 8:19. “Male” is the word for male, not the generic word for “men” or “humans” which is *anthropos*. This word is used 216 times, in Mark at 6:20, 44; 10:2, 12.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Elijah (1 Kings 17:8-16) and Elisha fed some Israelites miraculously in 2 Kings 4:42-44. A more appropriate background, however, might be the miraculous feedings of Israel by God in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11. The idea of a “sheep without a shepherd” might be taken by Jesus from Numbers 27:17; see also 1 Kings 22:17; 2 Chron. 18:16; Ezekiel 34:1-16. The Messiah would be from David’s family and would be *the* shepherd over God’s flock: Jeremiah 23:1-6; Ezekiel 34:22-23; Micah 5:2-4; Zechariah 13:7.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

The “basket” (ver. 43) was carried by nearly every Jew as a part of their daily belongings. It held a small lunch and other odds and ends. The surrounding villages of Capernaum and Bethsaida are estimated to have only had about 2-3,000 people each (some estimates are as low as 200-600), so a crowd of 5,000 (men) would be very large!

The bread would have been small, round, and flat, perhaps 8” in diameter and 1” thick. The fish would have been either smoked or dried.

PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

This miracle is the only miracle (besides Jesus’ resurrection) which is recorded in all four gospel accounts: Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14.

COMMENTS:

The apostles return to Jesus, after their preaching tour (6:12-13) and report to Him all they had done and taught (ver. 30). Likely with the burden of John’s murder on His heart and the excitement of the apostles, Jesus encourages them to segregate themselves and “rest a while” (ver. 31). There were many people coming to Jesus to be healed and He was busy teaching them, to the extent that they did not have time to eat. So, they all separated themselves by boat, to a secluded place (ver. 32).

However, the crowds anticipated where Jesus would land in His boat and they came to Him, from area cities, and arrived ahead of Him (ver. 33). This was a distance of about 15-20 miles. Jesus disembarked and saw them, feeling compassion on them because they were spiritually in need of a leader. They were like sheep without a shepherd (ver. 34). So, He began to teach them for that was the reason He came (see 1:38). For further references to Jesus’ compassion, see: Matthew 14:14; 15:32; Mark 8:2; Matthew 18:27; Luke 10:33; 15:20.

The day progressed and it became quite late (ver. 35) and His disciples now ask Jesus to send the crowds away so they might find something to eat (ver. 36). Jesus had other plans (ver. 37). First, He challenged His apostles to give the crowd something to eat. They respond that a budget equal to 200 days of work would not be sufficient to feed this large crowd. Secondly, Jesus challenged them to see what they had among the crowd: "Go, look!" (ver. 38). John tells us that Andrew found a young boy who had a lunch with five loaves of bread and two small fish (6:8-9).

Subsequently, Jesus commanded the crowd to sit by groups on the "green" grass, denoting probably spring time (ver. 39). The crowd responded by sitting in orderly rows, in groups of 100 and of 50 (ver. 40). Jesus took the boy's lunch, five loaves of bread and two small fish, and looking up to heaven (in one of many postures of prayer), He blessed the food, broke it, and continued giving the food to the disciples to distribute to the crowd (ver. 41). The miracle surely took place in the hands of Jesus, as He broke the bread and divided the fish, it continued to multiply to suit the needs of the Son of God.

Verses 42-44 highlight the miraculous nature of the event. First, the crowd did not just eat, but they were "satisfied" (ver. 42). Secondly, the apostles picked up twelve baskets (perhaps one per apostle) of the fragments of bread and fish. This shows that what was left over was actually more than what they had when they started. Thirdly, the number of men (the word in Greek is "males") was 5,000. Matthew explicitly tells us this number did not include women and children (14:21).

APPLICATION:

Jesus believes that His followers need to rest at times (6:31). He does not call on His followers to be busy every hour of every day. See 1:35; 6:46; 7:24; 9:2; 14:35.

All people are sheep in need of a shepherd. Jesus is the "Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 2:25) and He has set men, elders known as "shepherds / pastors" in His church to shepherd the church of God (Acts 20:28). This shepherding should be done out of compassion, as Jesus does here. The primary means of "shepherding" as Jesus shows is that of teaching. Men and women need to be taught the word of God. If they are taught properly, they can live properly.

Jesus does not call on us to miraculously feed other people. But He does call on us to use what it is we have in our hands! Rather than lamenting what we do not have, let us put into His service what we do have! And He'll use it to His benefit (1 Peter 4:10-11).

Jesus had the crowds to sit in orderly rows in groups, showing to us that Jesus does things decently and in order, which He calls on Christians to do as well, specifically in the context of worship: 1 Corinthians 14:40.

The ability of Jesus to multiply the loaves and fish show us that Jesus is able to do far more exceedingly beyond all that we ask or think; see Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:19. Let us trust Him and obey His commandments.

In John's account, Jesus used this miracle to draw attention of His audience to a sermon on Him as the "bread of life" (John 6:22ff).

"Apostle" normally refers to the "Twelve" plus Paul (Rom. 1:1). However, it can also refer to Jesus (Heb. 3:1), as one "sent" from heaven or to missionaries as ones sent by the church: Acts 14:14; Gal. 1:19; Rom. 16:7). The "Twelve" were sent out by Christ and their teachings had His authority behind them.

TRANSLATION - 6:45-52:

45 And immediately He forced His disciples to embark into the boat and to go ahead unto the other side, to Bethsaida, until He sent away the crowd. **46** And after bidding farewell to them He went away into the mountain to pray.

47 And evening coming the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He alone on the land. **48** And seeing them, after being harassed in rowing, for the wind was contrary to them, around the fourth watch of the night, He comes to them walking on the sea and He desired to pass by. **49** And those seeing Him on the sea walking supposed that a phantom He is, and

they cried out. **50** For all Him they saw and they were frightened. And immediately He spoke with them and He says to them, “Be courageous; I am. Do not fear.” **51** And He went up to them in the boat and the wind ceased, and exceedingly [out of abundance] among themselves they were being astounded. **52** For they did not understand about the bread, but it was, their heart having been hardened.

GREEK WORDS:

“To compel, force” (ver. 45) is used nine times, only here in Mark. “To embark” is used earlier at 4:1. “To send away” or “to dismiss” is found 66 times, 12 times in Mark. “To bid farewell” (ver. 46) is used six times, only here in Mark. “To pray” was used earlier at 1:35. “Evening” (ver. 47) is used 15 times, first at 1:32. “To be harassed” (ver. 48) was used earlier at 5:7. “Wind” was used earlier at 4:37. “Contrary” is used here and Mark 15:39 out of eight uses. “Fourth” is used ten times, only here in Mark. “Watch” is used 47 times, first at verse 17, translated “prison.” “To pass by” is used 29 times, five times in Mark: 6:48; 13:30-31; 14:35. “To think or suppose” (ver. 49) is used in 6:49; 10:42 out of 62 times. “Phantom” is used also in Matthew 14:26. “To cry out” is used earlier at 1:23. “To be terrified” (ver. 50) is used 17 times, only here in Mark. “To be courageous” is used 7 times, in Mark at 6:50; 10:49. “To fear” is used earlier at 4:41. “To cease” (ver. 51) is used three times: Matthew 14:32; Mark 4:39; 6:51. “To be astonished” is used 17 times, earlier at 2:12. “To understand” (ver. 52) is used earlier at 4:12. “Heart” was used earlier at 2:6. “To be hard” is used here; 8:17; John 12:40; Rom. 11:7; 2 Cor. 3:14.

GREEK GRAMMAR:

The verb “to be hardened” in verse 52 is the perfect tense, which connotes a settled state; their hearts “had been hardened and continued in that state.”

ARCHAEOLOGY:

“Bethsaida” (ver. 45) is found 7 times in the NT, in Mark here and 8:22. It was located 3 miles northeast of Capernaum. Moses, of course, walked across the Red Sea on dry land (Exodus 14); but Jesus is greater than Moses! He walked *on top of the water!* This was an action that the OT recognizes only Jehovah God could do: Job 9:8; see also Psalm 77:19-20; Isaiah 43:16; 51:10. Therefore, Jesus is Jehovah God in the flesh!

PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

This miracle is also found in Matthew 14:22-33 (where Matthew records that Peter walked on water) and John 6:15-21.

COMMENTS:

Mark shows that Jesus continued His work by noting He “immediately” compelled His disciples to get into a boat and go to the other side of the sea (ver. 45), toward Bethsaida. While Mark does not tell us why Jesus felt this sense of urgency, John tells us that the crowd wanted to make Jesus king (6:14-15), whom they identified also as the “prophet who was to come into the world.” Perhaps to keep the apostles from being engulfed in false ideas and false expectations, Jesus compels the apostles to leave that area. Jesus sent the crowd away, not only to send them home, but also to diffuse the situation. When they were gone, He went into the mountains to pray (ver. 46).

That evening, while the boat with the apostles in it was in the middle of the Sea of Galilee (ver. 47), Jesus being on land, He saw the apostles (miraculously?) being tormented (literally) in their rowing (ver. 48). It was the fourth watch, between three and six in the morning, which means it was likely dark, especially with a storm brewing. Jesus went to them, walking on top of the water, He intended to “pass them by,” which is an expression that connotes a revelation of God’s presence (see Exodus 33:19-34:7; 1 Kings 19:11-12).

However, when the apostles saw Him (ver. 49), they thought He was a ghost, a phantom, an apparition. They cried out, from fear. Verse 50 specifically notes that they saw Jesus and were terrified. So Jesus spoke to them immediately (obviously He was close enough for them to hear and understand Him), saying “Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.” The verb “it is I” could also be translated “I am,” which would associate Jesus with the self-identification of God in Exodus 3:14. It’s not clear that is how Jesus intended the statement *in this context*. However, Mark’s readers would certainly interpret it that way in the overall context of his gospel. See John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7; 11:25; 14:6; 18:5-6. The expression is found twice more in Mark: 13:6; 14:62. “Take courage” is found seven times in the NT: Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; 10:49; John 16:33; Acts 23:11. The expression “do not be afraid” is found seventeen times.

Jesus immediately got into their boat (ver. 51) and the wind stopped immediately. The apostles then were completely astonished, despite the fact that He had done this before (4:35-41)! Mark notes that they were astonished, despite the fact that Jesus had multiplied the loaves (ver. 52). Rather, their hearts were hardened (see Isaiah 6:10) to the miraculous ability of Jesus. If He could perform a miracle in one incident, if He could control nature in one incident, could He not control nature in other contexts? The apostles had not yet drawn that conclusion. The apostles will be accused of hardheartedness again in 8:17. “Astonishment” is a theme throughout the book of Acts: 1:22, 27; 2:12; 5:15, 20; 5:42; 6:51; 12:17.

APPLICATION:

Mark notes only three times Jesus prayed: 1:35; 6:45; 14:35-39.

As we have indicated above, Jesus sent His apostles away so they would not be influenced by false expectations about the Messiah. He warns us, too, to be careful “what we hear” (Mark 4:24). There are individuals who try to distort the message of the gospel of whom we need to be aware and avoid: Romans 16:17-18; 1 John 4:1.

TRANSLATION - 6:53-56:

53 And after crossing over unto the land, they came into Gennesaret and they entered the harbor. **54** And after their disembarking from the boat, immediately after recognizing Him, **55** they ran around, all of that region and began on the beds those having an illness to bring where they were hearing that He is. **56** And wherever He entered into the village or into the city or into the field, in the marketplace they set those being weak and they encouraged Him that if the border of His garment they might touch; and whoever touched Him they were delivered.

GREEK WORDS:

“To enter the harbor” (ver. 53) is used only here. “To recognize” or “to know” is used 44 times, earlier in Mark at 2:8. “Bed” (ver. 55) is used earlier at 2:4, 9, 11, 12. “To bring” is used three times: Mark 6:55; 2 Cor. 4:10; Eph. 4:14. “Market place” (ver. 56) is used here; 7:4; 12:38 out of eleven uses. “To be weak” connotes here someone who is sick; it is used 33 times, only here in Mark. “To encourage” was used earlier at 1:40. “Border” or “tassel” is used five times: Matthew 9:20; 14:36; 23:5; Mark 6:56; Luke 8:44. “Garment” was used earlier at 2:21. “To touch” was used earlier at 1:41. “To deliver” is the verb “to save,” if it is in the context of deliverance from sins. Here, it connotes being healed. It was used earlier at 3:4.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

“Gennesaret” (ver. 53) is used in Matthew 14:34; Mark 6:53; Luke 5:1. It was located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee (which was also called the “Sea of Gennesaret” in Luke 5:1). It was located between Capernaum and Magdala.

PARALLELS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS:

This paragraph is also found in Matthew 14:34-36.

COMMENTS:

Returning to the other side of the sea (ver. 53), yet another crowd met Him at the shore (ver. 54). They also run here and there gathering up all the sick they could find, to bring them to Jesus (ver. 55). Perhaps having learned from the woman's behavior in 5:25-34, many people simply desired to touch the border of His garment. Mark tells us that whoever touched the border of Jesus' cloak were healed (ver. 56). This paragraph is one of the statements of summary of Jesus' miracles.

APPLICATION:

If a Christian seeks to help those in need, there will indeed be no end to the people seeking help! The world is in a bad place and there are many people hurting. Jesus did not give Christians the ability to heal miraculously as He did His apostles. He did give every Christian the command to teach the gospel, which is far more important (Mark 16:16). However, Christians still have the command to love their neighbors (Matt. 22:38-39) and to serve those in need (James 2:15-17; 2 John 3:16-18).