

I. Jesus Brings Liberation | Mark 1:1—3:6

The Creator's First Word | Mark 1:1-13

^{1,1} This is the beginning of the Gospel, which is about Jesus, who is the Christ, the Lord of all creation and the true image and Child of the Creator.

² As it was written in Exodus 23, Malachi 3, and Isaiah 40:

“Be ready! I am sending my messenger to lead you. He will prepare you for my coming. ³ He will be a voice, not from Civilization, but from the wilderness. He will declare, ‘Prepare your lives for the arrival of the Lord! Clear the obstacles out of your lives that prevent you from listening and obeying!’”

⁴ A man named John the Baptist appeared out in the wilderness. He was baptizing people and calling them to change their ways of thinking so they would be forgiven and set free from their selfishness. ⁵ Crowds from all over the southern part of the land of Israel, including the capital city of Jerusalem, were coming out to see John the Baptist. They were renouncing their old selfish ways of living and were being baptized in the Jordan River—the river that symbolized the people's entrance into the promised land. ⁶ Like the prophet Elijah before him, John the Baptist was being sustained by the Creator's creation and not by Civilization. He was clothed in camel's hair and a leather belt. He was eating insects and wild honey. ⁷ There in the wilderness, John the Baptist was proclaiming,

“One more powerful than me is coming! I am not even worthy to bow down in front of him and touch his feet! ⁸ I have baptized and washed you clean in water. But he will baptize and wash you clean in the Creator's Spirit. This Spirit will set you apart from the Way of Civilization!”

⁹ In those days, Jesus came out from the small town of Nazareth in Galilee, the northern region of the land of Israel. Jesus joined John the Baptist's movement and was baptized in the Jordan River. ¹⁰ Suddenly, while Jesus was coming up out of the water, he was filled with the Creator's Spirit. The Spirit took the form of a dove, signaling the arrival of peace and new creation. ¹¹ The Creator then declared to Jesus,

“You are my Child, I love you and I am pleased with you!”

¹² Immediately, the Creator's Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness for forty days, detoxing from the Way of Civilization. During this time, Jesus was tempted by the satanic spirit of Civilization. But Jesus faithfully lived in harmony with the animals while the Creator took care of his every need.

Jesus's Rescue Ministry | Mark 1:14-39

¹⁴ After John the Baptist was arrested by the authorities for his preaching, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the Creator's Gospel. ¹⁵ Jesus was saying,

“The time is here! The Creator's Kingdom is all around you! Therefore, change your ways of thinking and live by faith in the Creator's provision and protection!”

¹⁶ As Jesus walked alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two fishermen. Simon and his brother Andrew were casting their nets into the sea. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them,

“Drop everything and follow me! As foretold by the prophets Ezekiel and Amos, I will make you fishers of men! The Creator is tearing the powerful and wealthy off their thrones of oppression and he is saving people from the chaotic sea of Civilization!”

¹⁸ Dropping everything, they immediately left their old lives behind and attached themselves to Jesus. ¹⁹ A little further along the coast, Jesus saw Jacob the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were mending their nets in a boat. ²⁰ Jesus called to them. Immediately, they dropped everything and followed Jesus. They left their father Zebedee in the boat with his hired workers.

²¹ Then Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus began teaching in their synagogue, which was the sacred gathering place of worship. He did this on the Sabbath, which was the sacred day set aside so servants, animals, and land could rest. ²² The people were amazed by Jesus's teaching. He was teaching them with the Creator's authority and not in the tradition of their Biblical scholars. ²³ Hearing Jesus's teachings, a man under the control of Israel's Civilization cried out,

²⁴ *“What are you trying to do to us, Jesus of Nazareth?! Have you come to destroy everything important to us?! Get in your rightful place, we are the ones in control here!”*

²⁵ Jesus rebuked him,

“Be silent! And be set free!”

²⁶ After a great struggle, the spirit of Israel's Civilization came out of the man. ²⁷ The people were all astonished at this. They said to each other,

“What is this?! A new teaching with the Creator's authority? How is it possible that this man even has power over the spirits of Civilization?!”

²⁸ A report about Jesus and what he was doing immediately spread everywhere into the surrounding area of Galilee.

²⁹ After leaving the synagogue, Jesus and his disciples immediately went into the house of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ The conditions of Civilization had driven Simon's mother-in-law into bed with a high fever. The family immediately told Jesus about her situation. ³¹ Jesus went in to see her. As soon as he lifted her up by the hand, she was set free from her physical slavery. She was restored to humanity's place within the Creator's creation and so she began serving and taking care of them. ³² After dark and while they were less likely to be seen by the authorities, the people started coming to Jesus. They brought to Jesus all those who were oppressed and controlled by the spirits of Civilization. ³³ Almost the whole city was eventually gathered at the door of the house. ³⁴ Jesus healed and saved many from the physical and spiritual afflictions of Civilization. He silenced all those who were trying to control and manipulate him. ³⁵ After rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus left the group. He went away from the city into the wilderness to pray to the Creator, his heavenly Father. ³⁶ Simon and the others went looking for Jesus. ³⁷ They found him and said,

“Everyone is wondering where you went!”

³⁸ Jesus said to them,

“Let us go into the surrounding towns, so I can preach the Creator's Kingdom there as well. This is why I am here.”

³⁹ Jesus then went around preaching in the synagogues throughout Galilee and rescuing people from the spirits of Civilization.

⁴⁰ One day a man with diseased skin came to Jesus. He was an outcast who could not touch or be around others. His body was slowly being eaten up by the Way of Civilization. The man begged Jesus,

“If you desire it, I know you are able to save me from my physical and social oppression!”

⁴¹ Jesus had compassion on the man. He reached out and broke the letter of the law by touching this diseased man. Jesus said to him,

“I want to. You are freed and cleansed from your physical and social slavery.”

⁴² Immediately, the man was healed and set free. ⁴³ Angered at Civilization’s oppression of this man, Jesus again broke the letter of the law. Instead of waiting for the priest to come out to inspect the man, Jesus sent him into the city. ⁴⁴ Jesus said to him,

“Do not say a word to anyone. Go into the city and show your healed condition to the priest. Then, just as Moses commanded, offer the gift for your healing as a witness against Civilization’s oppressive and unloving ways!”

⁴⁵ But after he left, the healed man began to spread the news of his healing and liberation. The authorities were so angry with Jesus that he could no longer openly enter a city. Jesus was forced to live outside in wilderness areas. But people from all over continued to come out to the wilderness to see Jesus.

^{2.1} After some time passed, Jesus snuck into Capernaum and the people discovered the house where he was staying. ² So many gathered to see Jesus that they could not all fit within the house. Jesus was proclaiming the Creator’s word to them. ³ During this time, a group brought their friend, who was being carried by four of them, to see Jesus. Their friend had been completely paralyzed by the Way of Civilization. ⁴ Because of the influence of the crowd, they were unable to get to Jesus. So they removed part of the roof and lowered down their paralyzed friend into the house. ⁵ After observing the man’s friends and their love and trust in the Creator, Jesus said to the paralyzed man,

“Child, you have been forgiven and set free from the selfishness of Civilization.”

⁶ The Biblical scholars in the house began saying in their hearts,

⁷ “Who does this man think he is?! He is breaking the law and insulting our society and its institutions! No one is able to forgive a person apart from our Temple and its sacrificial and priestly system!”

⁸ As soon as Jesus noticed that they were upset with him, he said to them,

“Why are you upset about this?! ⁹ Do you think it is easier to forgive spiritual and social debts or to heal physical paralysis? ¹⁰ Watch. I will prove to you that the Creator’s People have the authority to bring spiritual and social freedom to all creation.”

Jesus then said to the man who was paralyzed,

¹¹ “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk with the Creator.”

¹² Listening to Jesus’s command, the man obeyed. He stood up, picked up his mat, and walked out. All the people were utterly astonished. They began wondering if the Creator was at work among them, saying,

“We have never seen anything like this!”

¹³ Jesus again left the city to be near the sea. A great crowd came to him and he was teaching them. ¹⁴ While Jesus was walking along the shore, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax office. As a tax collector, Levi was powerful, wealthy, and very hated. Jesus said to him,

“Drop everything and follow me!”

Getting up, Levi left everything behind and followed Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus then went to Levi’s house to eat. Many other tax collectors and those living in the selfishness of Civilization joined them. ¹⁶ The Biblical scholars of the political party of the Pharisees saw this. They said to Jesus’s disciples,

“Why does Jesus break our laws by eating with tax collectors and those living in selfishness?!”

¹⁷ After hearing this, Jesus said to these scholars,

“Those who are healthy do not need a doctor. Those who are sick need a doctor. I am not here to free those who live in a healthy and right relationship with the Creator and his creation. I am here to free those enslaved to the selfish sickness of Civilization.”

¹⁸ John the Baptist’s disciples and the Pharisees were keeping the letter of the law by practicing society’s patterns of self-denial. Some came and asked Jesus,

“What is the reason that John the Baptist’s disciples and the Pharisees practice self-denial, but your disciples do not?!”

¹⁹ Jesus said,

“The guests of a wedding are not able to practice self-denial while they are celebrating with the groom. As long as they have the groom with them, the party must go on. ²⁰ But the days will come when I, the groom, will be taken away from my disciples. Then they will have reason to grieve and practice self-denial. ²¹ No one sews a new piece of unshrunk cloth onto an old piece of clothing. Otherwise, the new patch will shrink and tear away from the old cloth—making things even worse than before. ²² Likewise, no one pours new wine into old and already stretched wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the old and brittle wineskins. The wine and the wineskins will both be destroyed. Old and new cannot be mixed! A new teaching and Way of life cannot be patched onto old structures, institutions, and practices. When the new Way comes there must be a completely new start to everything!”

²³ On the Sabbath, which was the sacred day of rest, Jesus was passing through some grainfields. His hungry and poor disciples were breaking the letter of the law by picking and eating grain on the Sabbath. ²⁴ Some of the members of the political party of the Pharisees began saying to Jesus,

“Look! Why do your disciples do what is illegal on the Sabbath?!”

²⁵ Jesus said to them,

“Have you never read what David, your most beloved ruler, did when he and those with him were hungry and in need?! ²⁶ He entered into your sacred Temple in the time of Abiathar. David ate the sacred bread, which is illegal to eat unless you are a priest. He even shared it with those with him!”

²⁷ Jesus began saying to them,

“The Sabbath was made to serve the good of humans, animals, and land. Humans were not made to serve the Sabbath. ²⁸ Therefore, the Creator’s People are in charge of practicing the Sabbath for the good of all creation.”

^{3.1} Jesus again entered into the synagogue. There was a man with a shriveled and unusable hand. Because of the Way of Civilization, he was unable to practice healthy giving and receiving. ² The authorities were watching Jesus to see if he would do work on the Sabbath by healing this man. They were looking for evidence to arrest and kill Jesus. ³ Jesus said to the man with the withered hand,

“Stand up in the middle, so everyone can see you.”

⁴ Then Jesus said to the authorities,

“Is it legal and right on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?! Is the purpose of the Sabbath to rescue the creation or to destroy it?!”

They were silent and would not answer. ⁵ Jesus looked around at them with anger. He was frustrated at their hard hearts that cared more about the

letter of the law than life itself. Then Jesus said to the man,
“Stretch out your hand!”

The man stretched out his hand. When he obeyed the command of Jesus, his hand was immediately restored to wholeness.⁶ The members of the political party of the Pharisees were furious. They immediately started making plans with their enemies, the Roman rulers of Herod the Great’s family, about how to destroy Jesus.

II. A New Reality | Mark 3:7—5:20

Jesus Creates New Family | Mark 3:7-35

⁷ Jesus went back to the Sea of Galilee with his disciples. A great crowd from all over Israel and even from foreign lands followed him.⁸ When people heard all that Jesus was doing, they came to him. They wanted to see it and hear it for themselves.⁹ Jesus told his disciples to find a boat so he could avoid being surrounded by the influence of the crowd.¹⁰ Jesus had healed so many people that all who were in need pressed against him, trying to touch him.¹¹ Whenever those possessed by the spirits of Civilization recognized Jesus, they would try to use their knowledge to manipulate and control him.¹² But Jesus repeatedly silenced them.¹³ Responding to his recent rejection by Israel’s authorities, Jesus went up on a mountain. There, like Moses had done before him, Jesus began to create and establish a new faithful people for the Creator.¹⁴ Jesus appointed twelve men, representing the twelve sons of Israel, to be the beginning of this new community. He then sent them out to preach the arrival of the Creator’s Kingdom.¹⁵ He also gave them the Creator’s authority over the spirits of Civilization.¹⁶ These are the twelve he chose: Peter (the name he gave to Simon),¹⁷ Boanerges (which means “sons of thunder”; the name he gave to Jacob and John, the sons of Zebedee),¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, Jacob the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the member of the nationalistic party of the Zealots,¹⁹ and Judah the member of the revolutionary assassins called the Daggernmen (Judah is the one who later betrayed Jesus to the authorities).²⁰ After this, Jesus returned to Nazareth. The crowd that gathered was so large and oppressive that his disciples were not able to focus on his teachings.²¹ When Jesus’s family heard that he was creating a new Israel, they began to search for him. They tried to take control of him, saying,

“Jesus has gone insane!”

²² The Biblical scholars from Jerusalem heard of this and came to see Jesus. They said,

“Jesus is being controlled by the spirit of death and decay! He is doing his work with satanic powers opposed to the Creator!”

²³ Jesus called for the scholars and spoke to them in analogies,

“Is the spirit of Civilization destroying itself?²⁴ If a government is divided against itself, then that government will fall.²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, then that house will fall.²⁶ Indeed, the spirit of Civilization has risen up against itself and is divided. Civilization has begun to fall and is coming to an end.²⁷ But no one can walk in and free prisoners that are being watched by a powerful guard. The powerful guard must first be tied up. I am defeating the powerful guard protecting Civilization so the Creator’s people can be free.²⁸ Any person can be forgiven and freed from their selfish slavery in Civilization.²⁹ But whoever resists being changed by the Creator’s Spirit will never be free. Such a person is imprisoned in the eternal selfishness of Civilization.”

³⁰ Jesus said this as a warning to them. By rejecting his life and teachings, they were resisting the work of the Creator’s Spirit.³¹ Then Jesus’s mother and brothers showed up. They stood outside and demanded that Jesus come to them.³² A group was sitting around Jesus. They said to him,

“Look! Your mother and brothers are outside trying to find you.”

³³ Jesus said to them,

“Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?”

³⁴ After looking around at those who were listening to his teachings, Jesus said,

“Look! You are my mother and my brothers.³⁵ Whoever obediently does the will of the Creator is my brother, sister, and mother.”

Jesus Teaches About the Creator’s Kingdom | Mark 4:1-34

^{4.1} Jesus again began to teach beside the sea. The gathering crowd was trying to surround him, so he entered a boat. This gave him space from the influence of the crowd that was pressing against the shoreline.² Jesus began teaching them in many analogies. He was saying to them,

³ “Listen! Look! A gardener was scattering seeds.⁴ Some of the seeds fell on the hardened path and the birds ate them.⁵ Other seeds fell among the rocks. They sprouted immediately because the earth was shallow.⁶ But when the sun came out, they dried up because they did not have deep roots.⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns. The thorns quickly grew and prevented the plants from producing fruit.⁸ Finally, other seeds fell into good earth. They grew and thrived, producing thirty, sixty, and a hundred times more fruit.”

⁹ Jesus was saying,

“If anyone has the spiritual ears to hear what I am saying, then listen!”

¹⁰ When Jesus was alone, his closest followers questioned him about the analogies.¹¹ Jesus said to them,

“The mystery of the Creator’s Kingdom is being revealed to those of you who have left everything behind to follow me. But to those who are still holding on to their lives and refusing to change, everything comes in the mystery of metaphors and analogies.¹² This is to fulfill the words of Isaiah 6, ‘They will see, but they will not perceive. They will hear, but they will not understand. Without a change of mind and heart, they will not turn back to me and be set free.’”

¹³ Jesus said to them,

“Have you not understood this analogy? If you do not, then you will not understand any of my analogies.¹⁴ The gardener is the one who scatters the Creator’s word.¹⁵ When those with hearts fully hardened by Civilization hear the Creator’s word, they immediately dismiss the word as irresponsible and impractical nonsense.¹⁶ When those with hearts partially hardened by Civilization hear the Creator’s word, they initially receive it with joy.¹⁷ But, because their hearts are hardened deep down, the word is not able to take root within them. As soon as following the Creator’s word becomes difficult, they go back to their old selfish ways.¹⁸ When those with hearts cluttered by the influences of Civilization hear the Creator’s word, they try to embrace it.¹⁹ But the word is choked out by the growing anxieties and responsibilities of Civilization, the seduction of wealth and power, and the desire for things other than the Creator. In the end, their busy lives are left unchanged.²⁰ But when those with receptive and uncluttered hearts hear the Creator’s word, they embrace it into every part of their lives. The Creator’s word then produces an overflow of faithful growth and obedience in everything they do.”

²¹ Jesus said to them,

“Is a lamp brought into a home to be hidden under a basket? Or is it placed on a lampstand to shine light for all to see?²² The Creator is

bringing everything hidden by Civilization into the light. He is revealing all secrets. ²³ If anyone has the spiritual ears to hear what I am saying, then listen!”

²⁴ Jesus said to them,

“Pay careful attention to what you listen to and how you listen! How you treat others is how you will be treated. You will eventually receive what you give to others. ²⁵ Whoever is faithful to the Creator, will receive everything he needs. Whoever is not faithful to the Creator, will lose everything he thinks he has.”

²⁶ Jesus said,

“The Creator’s Kingdom arrives like a person scattering the seeds of the Creator’s word upon the earth. ²⁷ After the seed is scattered, it sprouts and grows on its own. But how? The gardener does not know and does not control it. ²⁸ The earth grows the plant and produces the fruit, apart from any human power. The growth is a process—first the stalk, then the head, and finally the grain. ²⁹ But then, when the fruit of obedience is finally produced, the gardener immediately brings the harvest into the Creator’s community.”

³⁰ Jesus said,

“How might we imagine the Creator’s Kingdom? Or with what analogy might we present it? ³¹ It starts very small and humble, like the tiniest, unwanted seed. ³² But, after it falls into the earth, it grows and becomes larger than all the other plants. It becomes a tree that takes over the garden and produces great branches. The creatures of the earth can then find protection and provision in its presence.”

³³ Because of their inability to truly listen to the Creator’s word, Jesus spoke to the crowds with many similar analogies. ³⁴ He did not speak to the crowds without analogies. But in private he was explaining his teachings to those who had left everything behind to follow him.

Jesus Challenges the Authorities of Rome | Mark 4:35—5:20

³⁵ On that day, after evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples,

“Let us cross over to the other side, to the enemy and hostile side of the Sea of Galilee.”

³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, Jesus and his disciples entered into their boats. ³⁷ While they were crossing the sea, representing the chaos and violence of Civilization’s nations, there was a great storm. The raging waters began to fill the boat. ³⁸ Meanwhile, Jesus was sleeping in the back of the boat, totally at peace through his trust in the Creator. The disciples woke him up in a panic and said,

“Teacher, do you not care that we are about to die?!”

³⁹ After Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea,

“Relax! Be still.”

The wind stopped and Jesus’s words created a great calm and peace. ⁴⁰ Jesus said to them,

“Why are you afraid?! Do you still not trust the Creator to protect you and provide for you?”

⁴¹ The disciples were overwhelmed with fear. They began saying to each other,

“Who is this Jesus?! Even the wind and the sea will listen to and obey his word!”

^{5.1} After this, they came to the other side, to the enemy and Roman region of Gerasa on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. ² As soon as Jesus got out of the boat, a man occupied by the spirit of Civilization confronted him. ³ This man was possessed by death and violence. No one was powerful enough to control him. ⁴ Many had tried to bind him with chains. But he had broken off every restraint. Nothing and no one was powerful enough to defeat him. ⁵ He was constantly consumed with the memories of the dead. His attempts to control everything were hurting and destroying himself. ⁶ When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran up and fell down before him. ⁷ Crying out with a loud voice, the man said,

“What are you doing here Jesus?! I know you are the Creator’s Child! The Creator would want you to leave me alone!”

⁸ Jesus had been saying to him,

“Spirit of Civilization, come out from the man!”

⁹ Jesus then asked him,

“What is your name?”

He replied,

“My name is Legion, for the Roman army is many and we will always overwhelm you.”

¹⁰ This spirit of Roman Civilization began begging Jesus to not be thrown out of the region. ¹¹ There was a large company of pigs grazing on the hillside. The pig was the symbol of the Tenth Legion of the Roman army that controlled this region. ¹² Legion pleaded with Jesus saying,

“Send us into the pigs!”

¹³ Jesus dismissed Legion as a military officer would. Then the spirit of Roman Civilization left the man and entered the pigs. The company of two thousand pigs, symbolizing soldiers of the Roman Legion, charged down the steep bank like they were going to war. They fell into the sea and drowned, just like Egypt’s army in the time of Moses. ¹⁴ The keepers of the pigs fled and reported this in the city and fields. Many came out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ They saw the man, who had been controlled by the spirit of Roman Civilization, learning at Jesus’s feet. The man was fully restored to health in mind, body, and soul. The people were deeply afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen the incident described what had happened to the man controlled by the spirit of Roman Civilization and to the pigs which symbolized the Tenth Roman Legion. ¹⁷ The people began to beg Jesus to leave their region. They feared that the Roman Empire and its Tenth Legion would retaliate as soon as the news spread. ¹⁸ While Jesus was climbing into the boat, the man who had been under the control of Roman Civilization begged to go with him. ¹⁹ But Jesus did not allow him and said to him,

“Get moving and go back to your own people. Report all that the true Lord—not the Roman Emperor who thinks he is Lord—has done for you. The true Lord has shown you mercy by rescuing you from the grip of Roman Civilization.”

²⁰ The man departed and began to proclaim in the Roman region of the Ten Cities all that Jesus had done for him. Everyone was amazed that Jesus was strong enough to stand up against the military power of Roman Civilization.

III. The Bread of the Creator’s Provision | Mark 5:21—8:26

Living by Trust Not Fear | Mark 5:21—6:29

²¹ When Jesus returned from the other side, a great crowd came to him beside the sea. ²² A synagogue ruler named Jairus arrived and fell at Jesus’s feet. ²³ Jairus began intensely begging Jesus,

“My little girl is dying! Come place your hands on her so she might live!”

²⁴ So Jesus went with him. A large crowd was following Jesus and pressing in around him. ²⁵ In the crowd there was an infertile woman who had

suffered a constant menstrual flow of blood for twelve years. She represented the outcast members of the Creator's people who lived in a constant state of social rejection.²⁶ She had greatly suffered at the hands of Civilization's doctors. After spending everything she had on their empty promises, she was no better. In fact, the doctors had made her condition worse.²⁷ After hearing about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd. Because of her condition, she was socially forbidden from touching another person, especially a man. But she reached out and secretly touched Jesus's clothes.²⁸ She was saying to herself,

"If I can just touch his clothes, I will be healed and rescued!"

²⁹ Immediately, when she touched his clothes, her flow of blood stopped. She could feel in her body that she had been rescued from her affliction.³⁰ Jesus immediately felt the healing energy come out from him. He quickly turned around in the crowd saying,

"Who touched my clothes?!"

³¹ Jesus's disciples began saying to him,

"Everyone in the crowd is pressing all around you! How can you ask who touched you?! We need to get moving to save Jairus's daughter! He is an important man!"

³² But Jesus refused to move on. His priority was to find out who had touched him.³³ The woman was scared, but she eventually came forward and fell down before Jesus. She explained to everyone how she had been dead in Civilization until she had touched Jesus.³⁴ After patiently listening to her whole story, Jesus said,

"You are the Creator's daughter. Your courageous trust in the Creator's power and provision has rescued you from being dead in Civilization. Live in peace and be whole. You are free from your affliction."

³⁵ While Jesus was still talking with her, Jairus's servants arrived. They said to the synagogue ruler,

"Your daughter has died. There is no reason to keep waiting on Jesus."

³⁶ But Jesus ignored the report of her death. He said to the ruler of the synagogue,

"Do not let fear control you. Trust in the Creator's power and provision."

³⁷ Jesus then continued his journey to the girl. He did not permit anyone to follow him except Peter, Jacob Zebedee, and John Zebedee.³⁸ When they came to the synagogue ruler's house, the people were weeping and screaming over the girl's death.³⁹ After entering the house, Jesus said to them,

"Why are you so upset and weeping so loudly?! The child has not died. She is only asleep."

⁴⁰ They began ridiculing and mocking Jesus. So he threw all of them out of the house. He then took the father and mother of the child and those with him and entered the child's room.⁴¹ He held the child's hand. Then he said to her,

"*Talitha kum,*" which means, "Young lady, arise."

⁴² Immediately, the girl stood up and began walking around. Everyone was in complete shock. She was twelve years old and entering peak fertility. She represented the privileged members of the Creator's people. It was only by first dying to her privilege that she could be raised to new life.⁴³ To avoid the attention of the authorities, Jesus ordered them to tell no one about what had happened. He also told them to feed and nourish the girl with the Creator's word.

^{6.1} Jesus left and returned with his disciples to his hometown of Nazareth.² On the Sabbath, Jesus began to teach in the synagogue. When the people heard his teachings, many were shocked. They said,

"What is the source of his teachings and these powers he has?!³ Is this not the same Jesus who grew up as a builder in our town? Is he not Mary's shameful son, born outside of marriage? Is he not the brother of Jacob, Joses, Judah, and Simon? Are his sisters not here with us?"

They were offended by Jesus and his teachings.⁴ Jesus said to them,

"A prophet who speaks the Creator's truth is never trusted in his homeland, among his relatives, or in his own house."

⁵ Because of their lack of trust, Jesus was not able to free them from Civilization. Only a few powerless people were healed and embraced by Jesus as his followers.⁶ Jesus was amazed at the unfaithfulness of those in Nazareth. He left them so he could teach in the surrounding villages.⁷ Jesus then summoned the twelve men he had appointed to represent the new people of Israel. He sent them out in pairs to participate in the Creator's mission of rescuing all creation. Jesus gave his disciples authority over the spirits of Civilization which controlled the people.⁸ Jesus commanded his disciples to embody his Way of trust in the Creator. They were to take nothing with them except a staff, like Moses did as a sign of the Creator's protection and presence. They were to take no bread, no pack, and no money, as a sign of the Creator's daily provision.⁹ They were allowed to wear sandals, but they could not even take an extra shirt.¹⁰ Jesus instructed them,

"Whenever you are welcomed to stay in a home, stay there until you leave town to show that you have no interest in making money.¹¹ If a place does not welcome you or listen to my teachings, then walk away and shake the dust off your feet as a warning to them. Let them know that the Creator's judgment is coming against Civilization."

¹² So the twelve representatives went out and proclaimed that all people must change their minds and lives to follow Jesus's Way.¹³ They began rescuing people from the spirits of Civilization and healing many powerless people.

¹⁴ The Roman-appointed ruler of Galilee, Herod Antipas, was deeply disturbed when he heard about this mission and message. Jesus's name had become well-known. Some were saying that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead with new powers.¹⁵ Others were saying that Jesus was the prophet Elijah. Still others were saying Jesus was a prophet like the prophets of old.¹⁶ When Herod Antipas heard about all that was happening around Jesus, he said,

"I beheaded John the Baptist and now he has been raised from the dead!"

¹⁷ As a favor to his wife Herodias, Herod Antipas had arrested John the Baptist and locked him in prison. Herod Antipas had stolen Herodias from his brother Philip to gain more wealth and power.¹⁸ John the Baptist had publicly rebuked Herod Antipas,

"It is not right for you to take the wife of your brother! Your marriage, power, and wealth are all illegitimate and invalid!"

¹⁹ Therefore, Herodias had been holding a grudge against John the Baptist. She wanted him dead, but she had not been able to make it happen.²⁰ Herod Antipas had been unwilling to kill John the Baptist because he was afraid of him. He knew that John the Baptist was a good man, distinctly different from the Way of Civilization, and possibly the Creator's prophet. He was intrigued by John the Baptist's words, even though they haunted him and made him anxiously doubt everything about his life.²¹ But, on one of Herod Antipas's birthdays, Herodias finally found an opportunity to kill John the Baptist. Herod Antipas had a big party and invited the wealthy and powerful people and military officers in Galilee.²² Herodias's daughter from a previous marriage entered the party and danced seductively. Her dancing was so pleasing to Herod Antipas and his guests that he drunkenly said to the young woman,

"Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you!"

²³ He swore to her,

"I will give you whatever you ask! I will even marry you and give you up to half of my wealth and power!"

²⁴ So she left and asked her mother Herodias,

“What should I ask for?”

Herodias said,

“The head of John the Baptist.”

²⁵ So she quickly returned to Herod Antipas and said,

“I want you to give me, right now, the head of John the Baptist on a plate.”

²⁶ Herod Antipas was deeply distressed. He did not want to shame himself by breaking his oath in front of all the powerful and important people of the region. ²⁷ So Herod Antipas called the executioner and commanded him to immediately bring him John the Baptist’s head. The executioner went and beheaded John the Baptist in prison. ²⁸ Then he brought his head on a plate and gave it to the young woman. Then she gave it to her mother. ²⁹ John the Baptist’s disciples then came and placed his dead body in a grave.

Sharing the Bread | Mark 6:30—7:30

³⁰ After completing their mission and journey, the twelve representatives came to Jesus and reported everything they did and taught. ³¹ Jesus said to them,

“Let’s escape by ourselves into the wilderness and rest for a while.”

The crowds of people coming to see Jesus and his disciples were so large and oppressive that there were no opportunities to relax and feed on the Creator’s word. ³² So they left in a boat by themselves to go into the wilderness. ³³ But many saw them leaving and ran around the Sea of Galilee to where they were headed. ³⁴ When they arrived, Jesus saw a large crowd. He had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Like Ezekiel 34, their rulers had not guided them in the Creator’s Way and had selfishly made themselves rich and powerful. So Jesus began to teach them many things. ³⁵ After hours of teaching, it was very late in the day. Jesus’s disciples said to him,

“We are in the wilderness and it is already late. ³⁶ Send the people away so they can go into the surrounding farms and villages and buy something to eat.”

³⁷ But Jesus said,

“You give them something to eat.”

They said to him,

“So you want us to head into town, buy almost a year’s wages worth of bread with money we do not have, carry it all the way back here, and then give it away to them so they can eat?”

³⁸ But Jesus said to them,

“How much bread do you already have? Go look.”

After finding out, they said,

“Five loaves of bread and two fish.”

³⁹ Jesus then directed the crowds, which were listening to his teachings, to gather into food-sharing groups on the Creator’s fertile land. ⁴⁰ So they gathered into communities between fifty and one hundred people to share all their resources with each other. ⁴¹ Receiving the five loaves of bread and two fish, Jesus trusted the Creator to provide. Jesus said a blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples. They shared the bread with all the people who were gathered to listen to Jesus’s teachings. Jesus also distributed the two fish for everyone to share. ⁴² Through trust in the Father’s provision and the act of sharing their resources, everyone ate and was filled. ⁴³ There was such an abundance that they gathered twelve full baskets of leftover bread and fish. ⁴⁴ Five thousand people ate and shared food that day.

⁴⁵ Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side—to the eastern and enemy side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus then sent the crowds away. ⁴⁶ After saying goodbye to the crowds, Jesus went up on a mountain to pray and be alone with his heavenly Father.

⁴⁷ When evening came, the disciples’ boat was in the middle of the sea and Jesus was alone on the mountain. ⁴⁸ Jesus saw that they were struggling to row into a strong, opposing wind. So Jesus went down to them during the last few hours before sunrise. He calmly walked out upon the chaos of the sea, above the turmoil and opposition of the nations. Jesus was planning to reveal the Creator’s enduring presence even in the midst of Civilization’s chaos. ⁴⁹ But when they saw Jesus walking on the sea, the disciples thought he was a ghost and they cried out. ⁵⁰ Staring at him, they were all shaking in distress. Jesus said to them,

“Be at peace! I am present with you. Do not be controlled by fear and anxiety over your safety.”

⁵¹ Jesus then got into the boat with them and the wind ceased—a deep peace and calm came over everything. But the disciples were greatly confused.

⁵² They still did not understand about the Creator’s bread and his provision and protection for those who live by trust. Their hearts were still hardened by the Way of Civilization.

⁵³ When they arrived on the other side of the sea, they once again entered enemy land. ⁵⁴ When they got out of the boat, the foreigners immediately recognized Jesus, even though his own disciples had not recognized him. ⁵⁵ The foreigners spread news of Jesus throughout the whole region. They carried and brought those who were injured to Jesus. ⁵⁶ Wherever Jesus went, whether villages, cities, or fields, they brought out those who were broken and weakened by life in Civilization. Any that touched Jesus and trusted in the Creator’s provision were rescued. ^{7.1} Some members of the political party of the Pharisees and Biblical scholars came all the way from Jerusalem to see what Jesus was doing in this enemy land. They gathered around to watch him. ² They saw some of Jesus’s disciples eating bread without going through the proper rituals of cleansing demanded by their culture’s law. ³ All the Pharisees and those devoted to the Temple in Jerusalem followed the tradition of not eating until they had been properly cleansed from contact with foreigners. ⁴ When they returned from a public place, they would ritually wash themselves and their cups, jugs, and pots before eating. ⁵ So the Pharisees and Biblical scholars questioned Jesus,

“For what reason are your disciples not living according to the law and tradition of our leaders?! Why are they eating bread without first cleansing themselves?!”

⁶ Jesus said to them,

“The prophet Isaiah spoke the Creator’s truth about you hypocrites and pretenders. As it is written in Isaiah 29, ‘*This people honors me with their words, but their hearts are far away from me.*’ ⁷ *Their worship of me is empty, because they teach and live by commands that are man-made.*’ ⁸ You ignore the Creator’s commands and then turn around and cling to man-made traditions!”

⁹ Jesus said to them,

“You cleverly rebel against the Creator’s commands so you can maintain your man-made traditions! ¹⁰ Moses said in Exodus 20 and 21, ‘*Honor and take care of your father and your mother,*’ and ‘*The one who neglects his father or mother has chosen the path of death.*’ ¹¹ But you allow a man to say to his father or mother, ‘The resources I might have used to take care of you are now promised for the Creator at a later time.’ ¹² Through this you give a person permission to no longer take care of his father or mother in old age! ¹³ By doing this you are

making the Creator's word pointless and irrelevant compared to your man-made traditions! And this is just one example of many!"

¹⁴ After gathering a crowd to listen, Jesus said to them,

"All of you, listen to me! Understand what I am saying. ¹⁵ Nothing coming from outside a person can separate him from the Creator. It is what comes out of the heart, mind, and body of a person that can separate him from the Creator."

¹⁷ Jesus entered a house away from the crowd. Then his disciples asked him about his analogy. ¹⁸ Jesus said to them,

"Are you not able to understand what I am saying? Do you not understand that everything coming from outside a person is unable to separate him from the Creator? ¹⁹ External and physical things cannot contaminate the heart. They can only touch the skin or stomach. This is why all foods are clean in the Creator's eyes."

²⁰ Jesus then said,

"The thoughts, words, and actions of a person are what can separate him from the Creator. ²¹ All selfish and destructive thoughts, words, and actions come from within the heart and mind of a person. This leads to extramarital sex, taking more than you need, killing, ²² breaking marriage vows, building up wealth, twisting the truth, self-indulging, desiring more, ruining the Creator's name, being self-centered, and being inconsiderate of others. ²³ All these things are destructive to the Creator's creation and they come from within a person's mind and heart. They are what separate a person from the Creator."

²⁴ Jesus then went to the seacoast region of Tyre, one of the wealthiest port cities in the Roman Empire. Wanting no one to know he was there, he entered a house. But he was not able to hide. ²⁵ A woman, whose daughter was occupied by a spirit of Civilization, heard where Jesus was. She immediately came and fell down at his feet. ²⁶ She was a Greek woman who had been born in this wealthy region. She begged Jesus to save her daughter from a spirit of Civilization. ²⁷ Jesus said to her,

"You must allow the Creator's children to be fed first. It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the Creator's enemies."

²⁸ But she persisted in humility and responded,

"But Lord, the Creator's bread for his children is so abundant that it even overflows to his enemies!"

²⁹ Jesus said to her,

"You are absolutely right about the Creator's overflowing goodness even to his enemies. Because of your trust in the Creator, you are truly alive. The spirit of Civilization is no longer controlling your daughter."

³⁰ When she got home, the Greek woman found her child lying upon the bed, no longer controlled by the spirit of Civilization.

Deaf & Blind to the Creator's Kingdom | Mark 7:31—8:26

³¹ After leaving the wealthy region of Tyre, Jesus went through its partner city of Sidon. Then he went back around the Sea of Galilee and into the Roman region of the Ten Cities. ³² In this region there was a man, who was unable to hear the Creator's word or speak his truth. The people begged Jesus to place a hand on the deaf man to open his ears. ³³ Jesus took the deaf man away from the crowd and the influence of Civilization's Way. Jesus then put his example and teachings into the man's ears and mouth. ³⁴ While looking to the Creator in trust, Jesus sighed and said,

"*Ephphatha!*" which means, "Be open!"

³⁵ Immediately, the man's ears and mouth were opened to hear and speak the Creator's truth. ³⁶ Jesus told the people to tell no one. But the more he told them not to speak, the more they were proclaiming what he had done. ³⁷ They were completely amazed, saying,

"Everything that Jesus does is beautiful! He even opens ears and mouths to the Creator's word!"

^{8.1} While Jesus was still in the Roman region of the Ten Cities, a large crowd gathered to listen to him teach. As the days went by, they had nothing to eat. So Jesus said to his disciples,

² "I have compassion for these foreigners. For three days they have stayed and listened to my teachings. And now they have nothing to eat.

³ If I send them away while they are still hungry, they may not make it home. Some of them have come from very far away to be with us."

⁴ The disciples replied to Jesus,

"How would anyone be able to find enough bread to feed all these people out here in the wilderness?!"

⁵ Jesus began asking them,

"How much bread do you have?"

They said,

"Seven loaves."

⁶ Jesus commanded the crowd to sit on the ground. He took the seven loaves of bread and gave thanks to the Creator for the provision of his creation. He then broke the bread into pieces and gave them to his disciples. The disciples then shared the bread with everyone there. ⁷ The disciples also had a few fish. Jesus honored the fish for their sacrifice and then they were shared with everyone as well. ⁸ Everyone ate their fill and there were seven baskets of leftovers. ⁹ Jesus then sent the four thousand people, representing all the nations from the four corners of the earth, back to their homes. ¹⁰ After he got into the boat with his disciples, he returned to the western and Israelite side of the Sea of Galilee. ¹¹ Some members of the political party of the Pharisees arrived and approached Jesus. They demanded that he prove he was from the Creator by giving them a divine sign. ¹² After sighing deeply, Jesus said,

"Why does this culture born of Civilization seek after a sign to confirm the Creator's presence and work?! The truth is that no sign, no matter how miraculous, will satisfy you!"

¹³ Jesus left them and again crossed back to the other side of the sea. ¹⁴ Jesus's disciples forgot to bring extra bread with them. They only had one loaf of bread with them in the boat. ¹⁵ So Jesus taught them,

"Pay attention! Watch out for the fear, anxiety, and worry that infects all of Civilization. Every group within Civilization worries about provision and protection."

¹⁶ The disciples responded by discussing how they had no bread for their journey. ¹⁷ Frustrated, Jesus said to them,

"Why are you worrying about having no bread?! Do you not yet understand the Creator's care and provision for his faithful children?! Are your hearts still hardened to his word?! ¹⁸ Like Jeremiah 5 and Ezekiel 12, do you have '*eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear*'? Do you not remember the Creator's provision for you? ¹⁹ Do you not remember when I shared five loaves of bread among the five thousand Israelites? How many baskets full of leftovers did you gather?"

They said to him,

"Twelve."

Jesus said,

²⁰ "Do you not remember the seven loaves of bread shared with the four thousand foreigners? How many baskets full of leftovers did you

gather?”

They said,

“Seven.”

²¹ Jesus said to them,

“How can you still not understand?!”

²² They arrived on the north side of the Sea of Galilee. The crowds brought Jesus a blind man, who represented those who do not have the eyes to see the Creator’s work. They begged Jesus to touch him and heal his sight. ²³ Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the city, which had blinded him with the Way of Civilization. Jesus then put his example and teachings into the man’s eyes. Jesus asked him,

“Do you see anything?”

²⁴ Having begun his journey of healing, the blind man said,

“I now see people for the first time. But I see them as objects to be used for my own interests.”

²⁵ Jesus again touched the man with his example. The man’s journey to sight was then complete. He began clearly seeing everything in creation with the Creator’s eyes of love. ²⁶ Jesus sent him home, saying,

“Do not return to your old ways in the city or you will once again be blinded by the Way of Civilization!”

IV. The Way of the Cross | Mark 8:27—10:52

Listen & Lose Your Life | Mark 8:27—9:29

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples then went into the villages in the region north of the Sea of Galilee and south of Mount Hermon. On their journey, Jesus asked his disciples,

“Who do the people say that I am?”

²⁸ They replied to him,

“Some say John the Baptist. Others say the prophet Elijah. Still others say one of the other ancient prophets.”

²⁹ Then Jesus asked them,

“But what do you say? Who am I?”

Peter answered,

“You are the Christ, the Creator’s Chosen Ruler that we have been waiting on for centuries!”

³⁰ But Jesus commanded them to tell no one he was the Christ. He did not want anyone to think he was going to be a violent revolutionary like David.

³¹ Then Jesus began to teach them,

“It is necessary for the Creator’s People to greatly suffer, to be rejected by Civilization, to be killed, and after three days to be resurrected to new life.”

³² Jesus said this openly and confidently. But Peter took hold of Jesus and rebuked him for teaching this. ³³ All of Jesus’s disciples were watching this. Jesus then rebuked Peter,

“Stop following after me if you are going to be controlled by the spirit of Civilization! You are not focusing on what the Creator values, but on what Civilization values!”

³⁴ Jesus called his disciples and the crowd to gather around. Then Jesus said to them,

“If anyone wants to walk the Creator’s Way to freedom, then he must say ‘no’ to the voices of self, family, and nation. He must pick up his cross and willingly embrace the loss and death of everything he is attached to. He must follow me by listening to my teachings and imitating my example. ³⁵ If a person tries to be in control through the Way of Civilization, then he will end up destroying his life. But if a person destroys the Way of Civilization in his life, then his life will be rescued. ³⁶ What does it benefit a person to gain all the power, wealth, and privilege of Civilization and to lose his life in the process? ³⁷ No amount of power, wealth, or privilege can be used to save one’s life. ³⁸ If anyone is dismissive of me and my teachings in favor of listening to any other voice, then he will be dismissed by the Creator’s People when the Creator judges Civilization and renews his creation.”

^{9.1} Jesus then said to them,

“It is certain that some standing here will see the Creator’s Kingdom arrive in its power before they die!”

² Six days later, Jesus took Peter, Jacob Zebedee, and John Zebedee up a high mountain by themselves. On the mountain, Jesus was changed in front of them. ³ His true appearance was revealed. They saw that he had already been resurrected from death and that the new creation had begun within him. ⁴ Moses, representing the law, and Elijah, representing the prophets, appeared and began speaking to Jesus. ⁵ Peter responded by saying to Jesus,

“Teacher, this is good! Let us contain and preserve all three of your voices!”

⁶ But in his fear, Peter did not know what he was saying. ⁷ Suddenly, the Creator’s presence covered them and spoke to the disciples,

“This one is my beloved Child. Listen to him above all else!”

⁸ Looking around, the disciples no longer saw Moses or Elijah. Jesus was the only one to be listened to now. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them to tell no one of what they saw until the Creator’s People began to be resurrected from the dead. ¹⁰ They kept this experience to themselves, wondering what Jesus meant by being resurrected from the dead. ¹¹ Then they asked Jesus,

“So why do the Biblical scholars say that the prophet Elijah must return before the new creation comes?”

¹² Jesus said to them,

“It is true that Elijah must first return before the Creator restores all things. But how does it happen? It is written that the Creator’s People must greatly suffer at the hands of the authorities and be despised by Civilization. ¹³ Pay attention! Elijah has already returned through John the Baptist. He suffered and was killed by Civilization, just as it was foretold.”

¹⁴ They came to the bottom of the mountain. Like Moses coming down from Mount Sinai, Jesus found the rest of his disciples having gone astray. Jesus saw his disciples with the Biblical scholars and a large crowd surrounding them. ¹⁵ When the crowd saw Jesus, they were immediately filled with fear. ¹⁶ Jesus asked his disciples,

“What are you talking about with the Biblical scholars? Why are you listening to them and being influenced by the crowd?!”

¹⁷ A man from the crowd responded,

“Teacher, I brought my son to you because he is controlled by the spirit of Civilization. It prevents him from listening to the Creator’s word. ¹⁸ When it overtakes him he becomes completely powerless and bound under its control. He is unable to live his life for the Creator. I asked your disciples to rescue him, but they were not powerful enough!”

¹⁹ Jesus replied to them,
 “You are all faithless children of Civilization! How much more faithlessness will I put up with? How much longer will I be patient with you? Bring the boy to me.”

²⁰ They took the boy out of the crowd and its influence and brought him to Jesus. When the spirit of Civilization recognized Jesus, it took control of the boy and made him resistant to Jesus. ²¹ Jesus asked the boy’s father,
 “How long has he been like this?”

He said,
 “Throughout his whole childhood. ²² He has been so consumed by the spirit of Civilization that he has done many self-destructive and hurtful things. If you are able to do anything to save us from the madness of Civilization, then have compassion on us!”

²³ Jesus said to him,
 “If you are able? All things are possible for the one who faithfully relies on the Creator!”

²⁴ The father of the boy cried out,
 “I do trust the Creator! But help me! I am still addicted to the Way of Civilization!”

²⁵ Jesus saw that the crowd and its influence was now rushing toward them. So Jesus quickly rebuked the spirit of Civilization that was preventing the boy from listening to the Creator. He said,
 “Spirit of Civilization! I command you to come out of him and never enter him again!”

²⁶ The spirit of Civilization did all it could to resist, but the word of Jesus overpowered it. It violently came out of the boy and left him so changed that many said,
 “He is dead! He cannot live without the spirit of Civilization!”

²⁷ But Jesus took the boy’s hand and helped him to stand firm in the Creator’s word. ²⁸ After entering a house, Jesus’s disciples asked him privately,
 “Why were we not able to save the boy from the spirit of Civilization?”

²⁹ Jesus said to them,
 “Prayer is the only way to overcome the spirits of Civilization. You must completely surrender to the Creator in humility and let go of relying on anything else.”

Becoming a Child of the Creator | Mark 9:30—10:31

³⁰ After leaving the mountain, Jesus and his disciples began passing through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know he was there. ³¹ He was openly teaching his disciples a controversial message. He was saying to them,
 “The Creator’s People will be attacked and killed by Civilization. But then three days later they will be resurrected from the dead.”

³² His disciples did not understand what this meant. But, because they were afraid to expose their ignorance and learn the truth, they did not ask Jesus to explain. ³³ They returned to the house in Capernaum. Jesus then asked his disciples,
 “What have you been focused on while I have been trying to teach you the Creator’s Way?”

³⁴ They were silent and did not respond. Instead of learning the Way of Jesus, they had been busy competing to see who was the greatest among them.

³⁵ After sitting down, Jesus called together the twelve representatives of the Creator’s new people. He said to them,
 “If someone wants to be the greatest in the Creator’s eyes, then he will empty himself of wealth, power, and privilege to be at the bottom of Civilization. The greatest in the Creator’s eyes is the one who rejects his self-centered-ego and becomes the servant of all.”

³⁶ Jesus took a child and placed her in the middle of them. He hugged her and said to them,
³⁷ “Whoever loves the lowliest and most invisible of my people is also loving me. I am present in those who listen to and obey my teachings. And whoever loves me is also loving the Creator himself.”

³⁸ John Zebedee said to Jesus,
 “Teacher, we saw someone following your Way and saving people from the spirits of Civilization. But we stopped him because he was not part of our group.”

³⁹ Jesus said to him,
 “Do not stop someone like him. No one who lives in the power of my Way is doing harm to the Creator’s truth. ⁴⁰ If someone is not opposing my teachings and Way, then that person is on our side. ⁴¹ Whoever gives you even a cup of water because you belong to me is doing a good thing that will never be forgotten by the Creator. ⁴² However, it is better for a person to be permanently lost in the depths of Civilization than it is to cause one of my faithful disciples to stop following my Way. ⁴³⁻⁴⁷ So if any part of yourself causes you to stop following my Way, then remove it from your life. And if any member of my community causes you to stop following my Way, then remove him from the Body of Christ. If you avoid conflict and live in the hypocrisy of fake unity, then the fire of judgment will never stop and you will be destroyed with Civilization. But if you embrace the refining fire of judgment by amputating all hypocrisy from the Body of Christ, then you will share in the life of the Creator’s Kingdom. ⁴⁸ As it says in Isaiah 66, Civilization’s decay and its destruction in fire will never end. ⁴⁹ But all of the Creator’s creation will be preserved and united through the refining fire of his judgment. ⁵⁰ This unity produced by the Creator’s judgment is good. But if this unity is thrown away, how can it ever be restored again? Therefore, be united and maintain peace with each other.”

^{10.1} Jesus left Capernaum and went into Judea, the southern region of Israel. Then he entered the wilderness on the east side of the Jordan River. Crowds gathered to Jesus and as usual he taught them his Way. ² Some members of the political party of the Pharisees came out to test Jesus. They wanted to catch him disobeying the teachings of Moses. So they asked Jesus if it was right for a man to divorce his wife. ³ Answering, Jesus said,
 “What did Moses command you?”

⁴ They said,
 “Moses allowed a man to divorce his wife if he was displeased with her.”

⁵ Jesus said to them,
 “Because of your hardened and disobedient hearts he gave you this command. ⁶ But the Creator made things to be different from this. It states in the first book of Moses in Genesis 2, ‘The Creator made humans to be male and female. ⁷ Therefore, a man will leave his father and mother and be united with one woman. ⁸ The two will become one body.’ They are no longer two separate people with individual paths. They are one body, united to follow the Creator for the rest of their lives. ⁹ Therefore, man must not selfishly tear apart what the Creator has joined together.”

¹⁰ Later, inside the house, Jesus’s disciples asked him about this. ¹¹ Jesus said to them,

“If a man sends away his wife so he can take another, then he is destroying what the Creator has brought together. ¹² And if a woman sends away her husband so she can take another, then she is destroying what the Creator has brought together.”

¹³ The crowds were bringing children to Jesus so he would give them his blessing. But his disciples rebuked them for distracting Jesus and wasting his time. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was furious and said to his disciples,

“Allow the children to come to me! Do not prevent them, for the Creator’s Kingdom is for those who are like children. ¹⁵ The only way to enter the Creator’s Kingdom is with the emptiness, humility, and trust of a child.”

¹⁶ Jesus then embraced the children and blessed them while placing his hands upon them. ¹⁷ As Jesus continued his journey of following the Creator’s Way, a man ran up to him and knelt before him. The man asked,

“Good teacher, what must I do to inherit and share in the past, present, and future life of the new creation?”

¹⁸ Jesus said to him,

“Why do you call me good if you are not obeying what I teach? There is no good apart from the Creator. So if you think I am truly good, then you will listen to my word without question. ¹⁹ You know the commands of the Creator and that listening to them brings past, present, and future life. It says in Deuteronomy 5 and 24, ‘Do not kill or do violence of any kind. Do not have sex outside of lifelong marriage. Do not take what is not given to you or more than you need. Do not speak lies or live a hypocritical life. Do not deprive others of their daily bread. Honor and take care of your father and mother.’”

²⁰ He said to Jesus,

“Teacher, I have obeyed all these since I was a youth.”

²¹ Jesus looked at his expensive clothes and the camels carrying his wealth and possessions. With love, Jesus said to him,

“You have ignored the one command that holds everything together. Love the Lord your Creator with everything you have and with everything you are. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to those who are poor. True treasure is found in emptiness and generosity. Then come back here and devote your entire life to following my example and living as part of the Body of Christ.”

²² The man walked away. He was upset and deeply disturbed because he had many possessions. ²³ After looking around at everyone there, Jesus said to his disciples,

“It is immensely difficult for those having possessions to enter the Creator’s Kingdom.”

²⁴ Jesus’s disciples were shocked by his words. But Jesus again said to them,

“Children, it is very difficult to enter the Creator’s Kingdom. ²⁵ It is impossible for a camel, which transports possessions, to go through the eye of a needle. Likewise, it is impossible for a person holding on to their possessions to enter the Creator’s Kingdom.”

²⁶ They were even more shocked by this statement. They said to themselves,

“Then who is able to be rescued?!”

²⁷ Staring at them, Jesus said,

“It is impossible to let go of everything if you are living in the Way of Civilization. But it is not impossible if you trust the Creator. All things are possible when you are walking by faith with the Creator.”

²⁸ Peter began to say to Jesus,

“Look! We have left everything behind and faithfully followed you!”

²⁹ Jesus said,

“I have called you to leave behind your house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, and land to live in the Gospel of the Creator’s Kingdom. ³⁰ It is certain that all who obey this call and join the Body of Christ will receive in this life a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and lands, as well as persecutions. They will also receive the past, present, and future life of the new creation in the coming age. ³¹ A great reversal is arriving. Those who put themselves first will be last. While those who put themselves last will be first in the Creator’s Kingdom.”

True Discipleship | Mark 10:32—10:52

³² Jesus was leading the Way and his disciples were following him toward Jerusalem, the center of Israel’s Civilization. The crowds were shocked that Jesus was boldly heading into the great city to confront Civilization. Those who had left everything behind to follow Jesus were afraid of what was ahead. Jesus took the twelve representatives of the new Israel aside. He spoke to them about what was coming,

³³ “Look! We are going to Jerusalem into the center of Israel’s Civilization. The Creator’s People will be given over to Civilization’s authorities and condemned to death. ³⁴ They will be mocked, spit on, tortured, and killed—but, after three days, they will be resurrected from the dead.”

³⁵ Jacob and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus and said,

“Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

³⁶ Jesus said to them,

“What do you want me to do for you?”

³⁷ They said to him,

“Give us the top positions and put us on your right and left in the Creator’s Kingdom.”

³⁸ But Jesus said to them,

“You have no idea what you are asking. Are you able to walk the path I am walking? Are you able to finish your baptism and die to every attachment of Civilization?”

³⁹ They said to him,

“We are able!”

Jesus said to them,

“You will indeed walk the path that I am walking. You will finish your baptism and die to every attachment of Civilization. ⁴⁰ But to be at my right or left during the moment of the Creator’s Kingdom is not mine to give. It is for those the Father chooses.”

⁴¹ When the other ten representatives heard this, they were furious that Jacob and John Zebedee had tried to take the top positions. ⁴² Jesus called them together and said,

“You know that the rulers and leaders of Civilization compete for wealth, power, and control. ⁴³ But you who are members of the Body of Christ must never participate in this! Whoever wants to be great among you must be your humble servant. ⁴⁴ Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be the slave of all and the ruler of none. ⁴⁵ Indeed, the Creator’s People are not here to be served. We are here to serve and

to lay down our lives to set others free.”

⁴⁶ Jesus and his disciples then went into Jericho, which symbolized the Creator’s promise to destroy the cities of Civilization and give the land to his people. A beggar named Bartimaeus, who was blind to the truth because he was a student of Civilization’s philosophies, was sitting some distance from Jesus’s path. ⁴⁷ He was told by the crowds that Jesus of Nazareth was in the area. He stopped seeking money and began to shout,

“Jesus, you are the Christ from David’s line! Have mercy on me!”

⁴⁸ The crowds, under the influence of Civilization, were rebuking him,

“Shut up!”

But he would not let the crowds intimidate him. So he began crying out even more,

“You are the Christ from David’s line! Have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said,

“Tell him to come to me.”

They called the blind man, saying,

“Calm down and get up! Jesus is calling for you.”

⁵⁰ He immediately threw away everything he had, including his cloak for collecting money. He then jumped up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ Jesus asked him,

“What do you want me to do for you?”

The blind man said to him,

“My teacher, let me see!”

⁵² Jesus said to him,

“Walk with the Creator. Your faithfulness and trust in him has rescued you from your blindness.”

Immediately his eyes were opened. He then left everything behind to follow Jesus and his Way.

V. Into the Heart of Civilization | Mark 11:1—13:37

Jesus Confronts Civilization | Mark 11:1—12:12

^{11.1} Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, the center of Israel’s Civilization. They stopped on the Mount of Olives, the site where the Creator had promised to return and rescue his people. From this mountain to the east of the Temple, Jesus sent two of his disciples into the city. ² Jesus said to them,

“I have planned this all in advance. Go into the village near this mountain. There you will find a young donkey, which has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. ³ If someone asks you what you are doing, then say, ‘The Lord has need of this donkey and he will immediately return it.’”

⁴ They went and found a young donkey outside of a door and they untied it. ⁵ Those standing there said to them,

“What are you doing with the donkey?”

⁶ The disciples told them exactly what Jesus had said and they were allowed to take the donkey. ⁷ So the disciples brought the young donkey to Jesus. They put some clothes on its back and then Jesus sat on it. ⁸ As if they were welcoming a ruler into the city, they placed their coats and leafy branches onto the road in front of Jesus. ⁹ Jesus then rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, in a mock military parade. He was purposely fulfilling the prophet Zechariah’s words about the Creator returning in peace and not violence. Those in front and behind Jesus were all chanting the words of Psalm 118,

“*Rescue us! We praise the Lord for returning to us!*” ¹⁰ The Creator’s Kingdom through David’s line is arriving! Rescue us and bring us into the Creator’s presence!”

¹¹ It was evening when Jesus came into Jerusalem. Fulfilling the people’s expectations for what the Christ would do, he immediately entered the Temple. But, after looking around at everything in the Temple, Jesus confused everyone by doing nothing. He left and returned to a village outside the city with the twelve representatives. ¹² The next morning, after leaving the village of Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³ He saw a fig tree full of leaves from far away and went to see if there was any fruit on it. But he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ The fig tree was a symbol of Israel and its Temple, for they were not producing the good fruit of justice in all seasons. Jesus said to the fig tree,

“No one will ever eat fruit from you again!”

Jesus’s disciples heard him say this. ¹⁵ When they came to Jerusalem, Jesus immediately entered the Temple, the center of Israel’s Civilization. There he began throwing out everyone who was selling, buying, and participating in its corrupt economy. He overturned the tables of the bankers, for they were disobeying the Creator and charging interest. He released the sacrificial birds being sold to the poor. ¹⁶ Jesus was not allowing anyone to carry anything through the temple. He brought the sacrificial system and the economy of Israel’s Civilization to a sudden stop. ¹⁷ Jesus began teaching them,

“The Creator declares in Isaiah 56, *‘My house will be a house for listening to me. All nations will be welcome within it.’* But you have instead turned the Temple into what Jeremiah 7 declared, *‘A hideout for terrorists!’*”

¹⁸ The Temple leaders and the Biblical scholars saw what Jesus had done and heard these words. They immediately began seeking how to destroy him. They feared Jesus and what he might be capable of because the crowd was intrigued by his boldness and teachings. ¹⁹ When it became evening, Jesus and his disciples left the city and the seductive influences of Civilization. ²⁰ The next morning they again returned to the city. On the way, they saw the fig tree, the symbol of Israel and its Temple. ²¹ Peter remembered what Jesus had done and then said to him,

“Teacher, look! The fig tree you cursed has died and dried up to the root!”

²² Jesus responded to them,

“Trust the Creator and be faithful to his word! ²³ Those with undivided allegiance and trust in the Creator will share in his power. If a faithful person tells a hypocritical mountain, like the Temple, to be thrown back into the chaotic sea of Civilization, then it will happen. ²⁴ If you are humbly listening to the Creator, then you will receive everything you faithfully ask for. Live by faith in the Creator and it will happen! ²⁵ True prayer requires that you let go of everything you hold against others. If you do this, then your heavenly Father will also free you from everything that enslaves you.”

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples again entered Jerusalem and began walking through the Temple. The Temple authorities and the leaders of the powerful families approached him. ²⁸ They said to Jesus,

“Who gave you the authority to shut down and attack the Temple?!”

²⁹ Jesus said to them,

“I will ask you one question. If you answer me, then I will tell you the authority by which I do these things. ³⁰ Was John the Baptist’s

baptism of preparation from the Creator or from Civilization? Answer me.”

³¹ They discussed it among themselves, saying,

“If we say it is from the Creator, then he will ask why we did not obey John the Baptist’s message. ³² But if we say it is from Civilization, then what will the crowds do?”

They feared the crowds, which had been persuaded that John the Baptist was a true prophet. ³³ So they answered Jesus,

“We do not know.”

Jesus said to them,

“Then neither will I tell you the authority by which I do these things.”

^{12.1} Jesus then spoke to them with an analogy. He said,

“A man planted an orchard. That is, the Creator made his beautiful creation. He put a fence around the orchard, prepared a space for processing fruit, placed watchmen, gave it over to the care of gardeners, and went on a journey. That is, he protected his creation with his commands, prepared it for producing justice, placed leaders to oversee it, and then gave it over to the care of humanity. ² When the time came, he sent a servant to gather the fruit of the orchard from the gardeners. That is, the Creator sent a prophet to call people to serve the creation with justice. ³ When the servant arrived, they beat him and sent him away empty-handed. That is, the people ignored the prophet and kept the creation for themselves. ⁴ Again, the owner sent another servant to the gardeners and they repeatedly struck him on the head and shamed him. ⁵ The owner sent another and they silenced and killed him. Then he sent many others and they beat or killed them. ⁶ The owner then decided to send his one beloved Child, hoping they would respect the voice of his child above all others. ⁷ But the gardeners said to themselves, ‘This is the heir! Let us kill him and all of creation will be ours!’ ⁸ When the Child arrived, they rejected his call to surrender their control and ownership over the creation. Then they killed him and threw him out of the orchard. ⁹ So what will the Lord of all creation do? He will return and the gardeners will be destroyed. The creation will be given to others who will care for it and serve it. ¹⁰ Have you not read the Scriptures? Psalm 118 says, ‘*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone and pattern for the Creator’s new creation.*’ ¹¹ *The Lord himself did this and we were shocked and surprised.*”

¹² The authorities immediately knew that Jesus was speaking about them. They were the gardeners and builders who were trying to control and own the creation for themselves. So they began seeking a way to arrest Jesus. But their fear of the crowds prevented them from doing it immediately. So they walked away to figure out a plan.

Jesus Is Challenged by Civilization | Mark 12:13-34

¹³ The authorities wanted to trap Jesus in his words so they could arrest him. So they sent two opposing groups to him—those loyal to the anti-Roman political party of the Pharisees and those loyal to the pro-Roman ruler, Herod Antipas. ¹⁴ These enemy groups were teaming up to destroy Jesus. They said to him,

“Teacher, we know that you are always honest and truthful. You are not concerned about human opinions. You only care about the Creator’s truth. So tell us, should we give our allegiance to the Roman Emperor by paying taxes or should we refuse?”

¹⁵ Jesus knew that if he told them not to pay taxes, then the Romans from Herod Antipas would arrest him. But if he told them to pay taxes, then the Pharisees would turn the crowds against him. Knowing their hypocrisy, Jesus said to them,

“Do you really think you can trap me in this? I have no money. Bring out one of your coins so we can look at it.”

¹⁶ They pulled out a coin and Jesus said to them,

“Whose graven image, which you know is forbidden by the Creator, is on the coin? And who does it blasphemously refer to as the ‘Creator’s Child?’”

They said to him,

“The Roman Emperor.”

¹⁷ Jesus said to them,

“Give back to the Emperor all of his worthless idols. But give back to the Creator all of his priceless creation.”

They were shocked that Jesus had avoided their trap. ¹⁸ Then some members of the political party of the Sadducees approached Jesus. The Sadducees were wealthy Temple leaders who only followed the teachings of Moses while saying there is no resurrection from the dead. They asked Jesus,

¹⁹ “Teacher, Moses wrote for us in Deuteronomy 25, ‘*If a man dies and leaves a wife with no children, then his brother must take the wife and have children with her for his brother.*’ ²⁰ In one family there were seven brothers. The first died and left a wife with no children. ²¹ The second married her and died without giving her children. The third did the same. ²² None of the seven had any children with her. Last of all, the woman herself died. ²³ If there is a resurrection of the dead, then which of these seven brothers will possess the woman as his wife? All seven lawfully possessed her.”

²⁴ Jesus said to them,

“You are leading others astray from the truth! You do not know the Scriptures or the Creator’s power. ²⁵ When the Creator’s children are raised from the dead, there will be no marriage. They will belong to the Creator alone. ²⁶ Have you not read about the dead being resurrected from your beloved Moses? In Exodus 3, the Creator said to Moses at the bush, ‘*I am the Creator of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*’ ²⁷ He is not the Creator of the dead, but of the living. You are leading others astray from the truth!”

²⁸ A Biblical scholar was listening to this conversation. When he heard Jesus give them a good answer, he asked,

“Which of the Creator’s commands is above all the others?”

²⁹ Jesus answered,

“The first is from Deuteronomy 6, ‘*Listen! The Lord our Creator is the only Lord.*’ ³⁰ *You will love the Lord your Creator with all your heart, with all your life, with all your mind, and with all your ability.*’ ³¹ The second is from Leviticus 19, ‘*You will love all the Creator’s creatures you encounter as much as you love yourself.*’ No other command is greater than these.”

³² The Biblical scholar said to Jesus,

“Teacher, you have spoken the truth! Deuteronomy 4 says, ‘*There is only one Lord and there is no other besides him.*’ ³³ Loving the Creator with all your heart, all your mind, and all your ability, and loving the Creator’s creatures around you as much as yourself is far more important than all offerings and sacrifices.”

³⁴ When he heard this great answer, Jesus said,

“You are not far from the Creator’s Kingdom. You have the truth, now you simply need to live it.”

After this, no one was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions.

³⁵ Then Jesus began teaching in the Temple. He said,

“How can the Biblical scholars claim that the Christ will come in the pattern and image of David? ³⁶ While filled with the Creator’s Spirit, David himself said in Psalm 110, ‘*The Creator said to the Christ, who is my Lord, “Sit at my right until I put your enemies under your feet.”*’ ³⁷ David himself says the Christ is greater than him and is his Lord. So how can anyone claim that David is the pattern for the Christ?”

There was a large crowd gathered that was gladly listening to Jesus. ³⁸ In his teaching, Jesus was saying,

“Watch out for the Biblical scholars. They like to walk around in expensive clothes. They want to be greeted with special titles for everyone to hear. ³⁹ They want the most power at gatherings. They want the most recognition at feasts. ⁴⁰ They get rich by taking advantage of widows and little old ladies. Their long prayers are a show to get attention. All such false teachers will be judged more harshly than everyone else.”

⁴¹ Sitting across from the Temple treasury, Jesus began watching the crowds put their money into the offering boxes. Many who were rich and wealthy put in large amounts of money. ⁴² Then one poor widow came forward and put in two coins of the smallest value. ⁴³ Jesus called his disciples together and said to them,

“It is certain that this poor widow has put in more than anyone else who has given to the treasury. ⁴⁴ Everyone else gave just a portion from their excess. But this widow gave everything she had to live on.”

^{13.1} Jesus then left the Temple, frustrated that the authorities were taking from the widows instead of providing for them. One of his disciples said to him,

“Teacher, look at these amazing stones and buildings of Civilization!”

² Jesus said to him,

“Beware of the great buildings and technological achievements of Civilization! They are not the Creator’s work, they are the idols of Civilization. Not one stone will be left standing upon another. All of Civilization will be torn down.”

³ Jesus then went to sit on the Mount of Olives, where the prophet Zechariah declared the Creator would return to fight for his people. They were looking across the Kidron valley at the Temple. Peter, Jacob Zebedee, John Zebedee, and Andrew then asked Jesus privately,

⁴ “Tell us when the great collapse of Civilization will happen. What will be the sign of its approach?”

⁵ Jesus said to them,

“Watch out for those who might lead you astray from the Creator’s Way. ⁶ There will be many false disciples who claim to follow me and speak for the Creator. They will lead many astray from my Way. ⁷ When you hear rumors and reports of wars, do not be disturbed. Wars are a necessary part of the Creator’s ongoing judgment to keep Civilization from growing too strong. This is not the end. ⁸ Nations and governments will fight against each other. There will be upheavals and collapses of cities and governments. There will be food shortages. All these things are only the beginning of the birth pains which will lead to the new creation. ⁹ Keep careful watch over yourselves. You will be questioned by councils. You will be attacked by assemblies. You will stand trial before governors and rulers. You will be my witnesses, revealing the truth of my Way and the injustice of Civilization’s Way. ¹⁰ It is necessary to proclaim the Gospel of the Creator’s Kingdom to all the nations of Civilization. ¹¹ Whenever you are given over to the judgment of Civilization’s authorities, do not worry about what to say. Say whatever comes to you in the moment. It is not you who are speaking—it is the Creator’s Spirit dwelling within you. ¹² Your own siblings, parents, and children will give you over to death because of me. ¹³ You will be disowned and hated by everyone because you follow my Way. But whoever endures faithfully to the end will be rescued by the Creator. ¹⁴ When it becomes clear that the Creator has abandoned a city and has given it over to the consequences of its decisions, then drop everything and escape to the mountains. ¹⁵ Do not return to the city to get anything. ¹⁶ Do not turn back to get even your clothes. ¹⁷ It will be terrifying for those who are pregnant or nursing during those times. ¹⁸ Pray that it does not happen during harsh weather. ¹⁹ The judgment that falls upon Civilization will cause greater oppression than there has ever been since the beginning of creation. ²⁰ If it were not for the Creator’s own intervention, every creature on the face of the earth would be destroyed by Civilization’s collapse. But for the sake of his faithful creatures, the Creator will limit this destruction. ²¹ Do not trust anyone who tells you that salvation can be found within Civilization. ²² False prophets and rulers will do spectacular and amazing things to try and lead you to put your hope in Civilization. ²³ I am telling you, watch out! I have warned you about everything. ²⁴ This great judgment will cause darkness to fall upon Civilization and its powers. ²⁵ The powerful and wealthy will be torn down and the structures and institutions of Civilization will collapse. ²⁶ Then Daniel 7 will be fulfilled as ‘*the Creator’s People are vindicated and rescued.*’ They will share in the Creator’s great power and resurrection. ²⁷ The Creator’s messengers will be sent out to every corner of the earth to gather his faithful creatures into his community.

²⁸ Learn from the trees about how to read the signs of what is coming. When a tree’s branch becomes tender and it puts out leaves, you know that summer is coming. ²⁹ Likewise, when you see my words being fulfilled, then you will know that the Creator is near and is about to arrive at any moment. ³⁰ It is certain that all these things will happen in this very generation! So be ready and pay attention. ³¹ Heaven and earth will change and grow and new generations will come and go. But my words to you will be true in every generation to come. ³² No one except the Creator Father knows the day and hour when judgment will fall upon Civilization. Not even his messengers or Child know! ³³ So watch out and stay awake! You do not know when that time will arrive. ³⁴ The Father has put his servants in charge of his creation, each with their own job, and he has commanded the watchmen to stay awake. ³⁵ Therefore, stay awake! You do not know when the Father will return, whether evening, midnight, early morning, or dawn. ³⁶ Do not let him catch you sleeping! ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to all. Stay awake and be attentive to my teachings! Be faithful at all times and never let your guard down!”

VI. The Creator’s Kingdom Arrives | Mark 14:1—16:8

The New Passover | Mark 14:1-52

^{14.1} It was two days from the Passover and the Feast of Unyeasted Bread, the time when the Creator’s people remembered being rescued from slavery in Civilization. The Temple leaders and the Biblical scholars were trying to figure out how to quietly arrest and kill Jesus. ² They said to each other,

“If we openly arrest and kill him during the festival, then the people may turn against us!”

³ Jesus was in the village of Bethany just outside of Jerusalem. He was eating at the house of Simon, who was an outcast with diseased skin. While he

was there, a woman approached him with a container of very valuable oil. Like a prophet appointing the Creator's ruler, she poured all the oil on Jesus's head. ⁴ Some of those there were furious when they saw this. They said among themselves,

"Why was this oil wasted?! ⁵ This expensive oil could have been sold for a year's worth of wages and the money could have been given to the poor!"

Then they began criticizing the woman for her waste. ⁶ But Jesus said,

"Leave her alone! Why are you harassing her?! She has done a good and beautiful thing for me. ⁷ If you listen to my teachings, then you will always live among the poor and will have endless opportunities to share with them. But you will not always have me with you. ⁸ This woman has done everything she could for me. She has embraced the Way of the cross by preparing me for burial. ⁹ It is certain that wherever in Civilization the Gospel is proclaimed, this extravagant act of love and faith will be told in her memory."

¹⁰ Judah Daggerman, who was one of the twelve representatives, was disgusted by the waste of money and Jesus's path. He immediately went to the Temple leaders to negotiate a price for handing Jesus over to them. ¹¹ The Temple leaders rejoiced and promised to pay Judah a large sum of money for giving them Jesus. Judah then began looking for a way to give them Jesus while the crowds were absent. ¹² While they were preparing for the first day of the Feast of Unyeasted Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus's disciples said to him,

"Where are we going to gather so we can celebrate the Passover and remember the Creator rescuing us from slavery to Civilization?"

¹³ Jesus sent out two of his disciples and said to them,

"I have planned everything in advance. Go into the city of Jerusalem. A man carrying a jug of water will meet you there. Follow him to a house. ¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher is looking for the guest room where he can celebrate the Passover feast with his disciples.' ¹⁵ He will show you a large and furnished room upstairs. Prepare the feast for us there."

¹⁶ The two disciples left and, when they came into the city, they found it exactly as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover feast. ¹⁷ When the sun had set, the Passover day officially began. So Jesus gathered with his disciples, including the men he had chosen to be the new twelve sons of the Creator's people. ¹⁸ While they were dining, Jesus said,

"It is certain that one of you will betray me and turn me over to the authorities. But take notice that I am still sharing dinner with this enemy of mine."

¹⁹ The disciples were grieved and shocked. One by one, they said to Jesus,

"Surely it is not me!"

²⁰ Jesus said to them,

"It is one of my twelve representatives. It is one who is sharing bread with me right now. ²¹ As it is written in the Scriptures, the Creator's People will be betrayed. But their betrayers will be condemned—it would have been better for them to have never been born."

²² While they were eating the Passover dinner, Jesus took the bread. This unyeasted bread represented the Lord's provision for his people during their escape from Civilization. After thanking the Creator for the bread, Jesus broke it for sharing. Then he gave it to them and said,

"Take this. It is my body. Feed on me and you will be free."

²³ Then Jesus took the Passover cup of wine, which represented the Creator rescuing his creation from Civilization. After thanking the Creator for it, Jesus gave it to them and they all drank from it. ²⁴ Jesus said to them,

"This is my blood which fulfills the Creator's covenant to rescue and renew all creation. I am sacrificing myself out of love for all, even for my enemies. ²⁵ It is certain that I will no longer drink wine until the Creator's Kingdom arrives upon the earth."

²⁶ After singing a hymn, Jesus and his disciples left. They went out to the Mount of Olives, where the Creator had promised to fight for the liberation of his people. ²⁷ Jesus said to them,

"All of you will stumble in your faith and stop following me. It is written in Zechariah 13, '*I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.*' ²⁸ But, after I am resurrected from the dead, I will go ahead of you. I will lead you back to Galilee and away from Civilization so you can start your journey over and follow me once again."

²⁹ Peter said to him,

"Even if everyone else stops following you, I will not!"

³⁰ But Jesus said to him,

"It is certain that this night, before the rooster calls out twice, you will deny and reject me three times."

³¹ But Peter defiantly and arrogantly replied,

"I will never say 'no' to you, even if it means I must die with you!"

All the other disciples began saying they would also willingly die with Jesus. ³² On the Mount of Olives they came to a garden called Gethsemane. Jesus said to his disciples,

"Stay here while I go off to pray."

³³ Jesus took Peter, Jacob Zebedee, and John Zebedee along with him. Jesus was feeling terror and overwhelming anxiety about what was approaching. ³⁴ Jesus said to them,

"I am deeply distressed. It feels as if I am dying. Remain here and stay awake. The Creator's judgment might come at any moment."

³⁵ After going a little further, Jesus fell to the ground. He began praying to his Father. Jesus wanted the time of confrontation with Civilization to pass him by. ³⁶ Jesus was saying,

"*Abba*, Father, I trust all things are possible for you. I beg you to take this difficult path away from me! But do not do what I want. Only do what you want."

³⁷ Jesus went back to his disciples and found them sleeping. He said to Peter,

"Simon, are you really asleep? Are you not strong enough to stay awake in prayer for even one hour? ³⁸ Stay awake and pray! It is the only way to keep your faith from failing. The Creator's Spirit is ready to give you strength, but your self-centered-ego has made you weak."

³⁹ Jesus left again and prayed with the same words. ⁴⁰ When he returned to them, his disciples were again sleeping. They were overcome by the weight of Civilization's anxieties. They had no good excuses to offer Jesus. ⁴¹ Then after a third time of prayer, Jesus returned to them and said,

"Are you still sleeping and being inattentive?! The hour has come and you are not ready! The Creator's People are about to be handed over to the followers of Civilization. ⁴² Get up! It is time to go. Look! My betrayer is here."

⁴³ While Jesus was still speaking, Judah, one of the twelve representatives, arrived with a crowd carrying weapons. They had been sent by the Temple leaders, Biblical scholars, and the leaders of the powerful and wealthy families. ⁴⁴ The one who was betraying Jesus had given the crowd a signal. He said,

"Jesus is the one I will greet with a sign of affection. Arrest him and carefully guard him while you lead him away."

⁴⁵ Judah immediately went up to Jesus and said,

“Teacher.”

Then Judah embraced Jesus. ⁴⁶ The guards grabbed Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷ Unprepared because of a lack of prayer, one of Jesus’s disciples reverted to following the Way of Civilization. He pulled out a sword and tried to kill one of the servants of the Temple leader. But instead of a fatal blow, he cut off the servant’s ear. ⁴⁸ Jesus then said to the crowd,

“Here you are with weapons to arrest me, as though I am a terrorist. ⁴⁹ Yet everyday I have stood vulnerable and unarmed among you. I have been fearlessly teaching in your Temple and you have been too scared to arrest me. The Scriptures are indeed being fulfilled.”

⁵⁰ Having failed in their attempt to fight, all of Jesus’s disciples fled into the darkness. Filled with fear, they all abandoned Jesus. ⁵¹ A young man, who had promised to die with Jesus, was there and the authorities tried to arrest him with Jesus. ⁵² But fear overwhelmed him and he abandoned his promise to stand with Jesus. He fled into the darkness, fully exposed as a faithless coward of empty words.

Jesus Is Lord | Mark 14:53—15:41

⁵³ They took Jesus to stand trial before the Temple leader, a man who had been appointed by the Roman Empire. The whole Sanhedrin Council—the highest authority in Israel composed of the leaders of the Temple, the most powerful families, and the Biblical scholars—gathered together. ⁵⁴ Peter followed Jesus from a distance and entered the courtyard of the Temple leader. He began sitting with the guards and warming himself with the fire, seeking comfort from Civilization. ⁵⁵ The Sanhedrin Council began looking for testimonies against Jesus that would allow them to put him to death. But they were unable to find what they needed. ⁵⁶ Many people were testifying against Jesus, but none of the stories were the same. ⁵⁷ Some of the witnesses said,

⁵⁸ “We heard Jesus say, ‘I will tear down this Temple made with human hands! Then within three days I will build another that is not made with human hands!’”

⁵⁹ But not even about this were their testimonies exactly the same. ⁶⁰ The Temple leader stood up in the middle. Then he said to Jesus,

“Why will you not defend yourself with even one word against these accusations?!”

⁶¹ But Jesus was silent. He would not say a word to anyone. So the Temple leader said to Jesus,

“Are you the Christ?! Are you the Creator’s Child?!”

⁶² Jesus responded,

“I am. And you are agents of Civilization who are destroying the creation. You will soon see the Creator’s People rescued by his justice and judgment.”

⁶³ Then the Temple leader tore his sacred robes and said,

“Why do we still need to have witnesses?! ⁶⁴ We have heard the blasphemy from his own mouth! What is your verdict?!”

The whole Sanhedrin Council declared that Jesus was deserving of death as an enemy of Civilization. ⁶⁵ They began to spit on Jesus. They blindfolded him and beat him. They said to him,

“If you are a prophet, then tell us who hit you!”

The guards took him away while continuing to beat him. ⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Peter was below in the courtyard watching and listening to all of this. One of the servant girls of the Temple leader was there. ⁶⁷ She stared at Peter, warming himself by the fire. Then she said,

“You were also with Jesus of Nazareth!”

⁶⁸ But Peter denied it and said,

“I have no idea what you are talking about.”

Peter then went outside to the front of the building and a rooster called out. ⁶⁹ The servant girl followed Peter outside the building and began to say to those standing around,

“This man is a disciple of Jesus!”

⁷⁰ But again Peter denied it. After a little while, those standing around said to Peter,

“It is certain that you are one of the disciples of Jesus! You are from up north in Galilee!”

⁷¹ Peter began to curse. He then swore an oath, saying,

“I have no idea who Jesus is!”

⁷² Immediately a rooster called out a second time. Then Peter remembered Jesus’s words,

“Before a rooster calls out twice, you will reject me three times.”

Peter fell to the ground and wept. He realized that he did not truly know Jesus and his Way. ^{15.1} Early the next morning, which continued the Passover day, the Temple leaders gathered and consulted with the whole Sanhedrin Council. They decided to hand Jesus over to Roman Governor Pontius Pilate. ² Pilate asked Jesus,

“Are you really the one that the Judeans believe is Lord of All Creation?!”

Jesus answered him,

“You yourself are saying it.”

³ The Temple leaders were accusing Jesus of many things. ⁴ The Roman Governor asked Jesus,

“Why will you not answer and defend yourself?! Do you not hear all their accusations and attacks?!”

⁵ But Jesus would not answer anyone at all. His complete silence in the face of attack amazed the Roman Governor.

⁶ It was a tradition during the Passover Festival that the Roman Governor would let one prisoner go for the people. He would release any prisoner they wanted so he could keep the peace during their celebration of freedom. ⁷ During a recent insurrection against the Roman Empire, a revolutionary named Barabbas, meaning “Child of the Father,” had been arrested for killing. ⁸ The crowd, under the influence of Civilization, pushed forward and demanded that the Roman Governor release a prisoner for them. ⁹ Pilate answered the crowd,

“Do you want me to release the Lord of All Creation?”

¹⁰ The Roman Governor knew that the Temple leaders had arrested Jesus because they were jealous of the attention he received from the crowds. ¹¹ But the crowds shouted for Barabbas to be released. The Temple leaders had convinced them that Barabbas would help them lead a violent revolution against Rome. ¹² So the Roman Governor asked them,

“What then should I do with the Lord of All Creation?”

¹³ Completely possessed by the Way of Civilization, the crowd cried out,

“Crucify him! Nail him to a cross!”

¹⁴ But the Roman Governor said to them,

“Why?! What has he done that is deserving of death?!”

But they cried out even louder,

“Crucify him! Nail him to a cross!”

¹⁵ Because the Roman Governor wanted to satisfy the crowd and keep the peace, he released Barabbas for them. Then he ordered the soldiers to whip Jesus half to death and nail him to a cross as an enemy of Civilization. ¹⁶ So they took Jesus into the courtyard of the Governor’s palace and called together the whole cohort of 600 soldiers. ¹⁷ They clothed Jesus in a purple cloak and a crown of thorns. ¹⁸ They began to greet him as if he were a ruler,

“We salute you, Lord of All Creation!”

¹⁹ They were hitting Jesus on the head with a rod and spitting on him. They were also bowing down before him and pretending to worship him as if he were the Roman Emperor. ²⁰ After they finished mocking Jesus, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his clothes back on him. Then they led him away to nail him to a cross. ²¹ Because Jesus was so exhausted and wounded, the soldiers grabbed a man who was passing by. They forced Simon from the African province of Cyrene to carry Jesus’s cross. ²² They led Jesus outside the city to the place where they executed the enemies of Civilization. The place was called Golgotha, which means “place of the skull.” ²³ They gave Jesus wine mixed with oil. But he refused to drink it, for he had said he would not drink wine again until the Creator’s Kingdom had arrived. ²⁴ Having stripped him completely naked, they nailed Jesus to his cross, suspending him between heaven and earth for judgment. Fulfilling Psalm 22, the soldiers divided up his clothes and threw dice for them. ²⁵ It was the third hour after sunrise on the Passover when they nailed Jesus to his cross. ²⁶ Above Jesus’s head there was an inscription of the charge against him. It read, “The Lord of All Creation.” ²⁷ Alongside Jesus they also crucified two terrorists—one on Jesus’s right and one on his left, the very positions Jacob and John Zebedee had requested. ²⁹ Those who were passing by insulted and ridiculed Jesus. They shook their heads and said,

“Ha! You thought you could destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Look at you now! ³⁰ If you are so powerful then rescue yourself! Come down from the cross!”

³¹ Likewise the Temple leaders along with the Biblical scholars mocked Jesus. They said to each other,

“He saved others, yet he cannot even save himself! ³² If you are the Christ and Ruler of the Creator’s people, then come down from the cross! Show us, so we can trust that you are the one!”

Even those who had been crucified next to Jesus were disgusted by him and mocked him. ³³ At noon, when the sun should have been its strongest, darkness came upon all the land for three hours. It was a sign of Civilization’s complete rebellion against the Creator. ³⁴ During the last hour of darkness, Jesus was praying the Psalms to strengthen his trust in the Creator. At one point he shouted the words of Psalm 22,

“*Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani,*” which means, “*My Creator, my Creator, why have you allowed me to suffer this?!*”

³⁵ Some who were standing there heard it and said,

“Look! He is calling for the prophet Elijah!”

³⁶ After filling a sponge with cheap wine and putting it on a stick, a man gave Jesus a drink of wine—signaling the arrival of the Creator’s Kingdom. That man said,

“Stop harassing him! Let us see if Elijah comes to take him down!”

³⁷ But as soon as Jesus drank the wine, he let out a loud cry and breathed out his final breath. ³⁸ At that very moment, the Temple curtain, which held the Creator’s presence within the Temple, was split in two from top to bottom. This signaled that the Creator had once and for all defeated Civilization’s attempts to contain and control him. ³⁹ After watching how Jesus behaved throughout the whole process of his death, the Roman military officer said,

“Surely this man was the Creator’s Child.”

⁴⁰ There were also women observing everything from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Shalome. ⁴¹ These women, along with many others, had been taking care of Jesus in Galilee and had followed him on his journey into Jerusalem.

The Creator’s Final Word | Mark 15:42—16:8

⁴² It was almost sunset and at dark the Sabbath day of sacred rest would begin. ⁴³ Joseph from Arimathea, an influential member of the Sanhedrin Council that had condemned Jesus to death, was hoping for the arrival of the Creator’s Kingdom. He boldly approached the Roman Governor and asked for Jesus’s dead body. ⁴⁴ The Roman Governor was shocked that Jesus was already dead after only six hours on the cross, for many victims lived for days. So the Roman Governor asked the Roman military officer if Jesus was in fact dead. ⁴⁵ After learning what had happened, the Roman Governor gave the dead body of Jesus to Joseph. ⁴⁶ After taking Jesus down from the cross, Joseph quickly wrapped him in a burial cloth and put him in a grave that was cut into a rock hillside. Then he rolled a giant stone against the entrance of the grave. ⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus stood by watching how and where Jesus was buried.

^{16.1} After the Sabbath day of rest was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Shalome bought burial oils so they could finish giving Jesus an honorable burial. ² Right at sunrise, on the first day of the new week and the first day of the new creation, the women went to the grave. ³ They said to each other,

“Who will remove the giant stone from the entrance of the grave for us?!”

⁴ But, when they got there, they saw that the Creator had already removed the exceedingly large stone. ⁵ When they entered the grave, they saw a young man in a white robe, representing those who faithfully embrace the Way of Jesus. They were terrified. ⁶ But the young man said to them,

“Do not be afraid! You are seeking Jesus of Nazareth, the one who has been crucified. He was raised from the dead—he is not here! Look at the place where they put him. ⁷ Now go! Tell his disciples and even Peter that he has forgiven them. Jesus is going ahead of you, leading you back to the beginning of the journey! If you start anew and follow him once again, then you will see him, just as he promised you!”

⁸ The women fled from the grave. They were shaking in fear and were completely beside themselves. They did not say anything to anyone, for they were afraid.