

night, the Roman way of dividing the hours, possibly the origin of the watches still used in most navies. The Jews divided the night into three watches ¹. Mark has edited his material for the convenience of his Roman readers who would not have understood a Near Eastern roof or Near Eastern timekeeping.

3) Again, in the passage about the Pharisees washing of hands and cup and bowl, etc., Mark explains to his Roman audience what would have been obvious to Palestinian readers.

Bible commentators believe that today's passage is a *Duke's Mixture*, that is a collection of originally unconnected material whose exact chronology was unknown. Mark grouped these events together lest these teachings of Christ be lost. (1) above is a basis for Christian living that Moral Theologians call *A Virtual Intention Of Worshipping God*, that is, treating all and sundry people and things as you might treat God in prayer. Such respect is accepted by God as if we were honoring him.. (2) is one of the more disturbing passages in all of the Gospels. The frightening words are the result of a Jewish cultural belief or the sources of sin. First, the *eye* is enticed, then the *foot* brings one near and finally the *hand* embraces the evil.

Verses 44 and 46 are usually omitted from this reading. They duplicate verse 48 and are not found in the most ancient manuscripts. Scholars think that they are a *dittography*, (dit TOG graa fee) a copyist's error (think *ditto*) that was repeated by later scribes' successive replications. Verse 48 (above): reads *where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched*.

Please prepare Saint Mark 10: 2-16 for next Sunday.

¹ Bible students learn not to put their trust in Biblical material found on the Internet. Example: There is a well intentioned but uninformed WEB site called *The Fourth Watch* which says that the Jews used the *four watch* system. Another site purports to be a translation of *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, a venerable and celebrated document of the 3rd century. The author omits whole sentences from the alternate versions of the document that conflict with an Evangelical (how we misuse that word!) stance.



Traditional Millstones

**Stones like these have been used for thousands of years.
They are still used in small mills that produce
stone-ground flours.**



Ancient Mill Stones and Bakery

Ruins of Pompeii (destroyed 79 AD)

The mills stand about 4 feet high

The *rotary quern*, a heavy milling device, appeared at least by Roman times. The mill was driven by slave or animal power. Cato the Elder described a 2nd century BC rotary quern consisting of a concave lower stone and a convex upper. It was turned by a pair of donkeys. Many such large querns were found in the ruins of Pompeii. The upper stone was set on a spindle that fitted into the lower (see picture). The ground grain passed down through holes in the lower stone.

(Adapted from *Encyclopedia Britannica*)

Today's Gospel: Saint Mark 9:38-50

✠ JOHN SAID TO JESUS, 'TEACHER, WE SAW SOMEONE CASTING OUT DEMONS IN YOUR NAME, AND WE TRIED TO STOP HIM, BECAUSE HE WAS NOT FOLLOWING US.' BUT JESUS SAID, 'DO NOT STOP HIM; FOR NO ONE WHO DOES A DEED OF POWER IN MY NAME WILL BE ABLE SOON AFTERWARD TO SPEAK EVIL OF ME. WHOEVER IS NOT AGAINST US IS FOR US. (1) **For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.** 'If any of you put a stumbling block

....A GREAT MILLSTONE WERE HUNG AROUND YOUR NECK...

before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. (2) **If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.** [© NRSV]

A "Duke's Mixture"

The exact chronology of the Gospels is believed to be correct *in general* (Jesus' birth, call of the 12, ministry, arrest, trial, death, Resurrection, Ascension, etc.), but Scripture is necessarily arbitrary in the *specific arrangement* of events in Christ's life and ministry. Most of this year's Gospels are from Mark who wrote of what had occurred 35 or so years before he penned his Gospel. He collected experiences from eyewitnesses and published his manuscript in the year ±65 AD, Saint Peter is considered to be the chief historical source. Mark is believed to have written his Gospel in Rome just before or just after Peter's execution. There are internal clues to the site of the writing found in a few lines of Mark's work. Here are 2 of them:

1) In the story of the man whose friends got him into the house where Jesus was by tearing up the roof, the Greek original speaks of *un-roofing the roof*, that is removing the terra cotta tiles that are still top most Central and Southern European buildings. In Palestine, most peasant house roofs were made of the same mud, manure and stick construction that was found in the walls, what is usually termed *daub and wattle*, surely an easier surface to break though than Europe's heavy clay tiles.

2) Again, in the story of Jesus walking on the water early in the morning, the original Greek says *about the fourth watch of the*