

MARK'S GOSPEL Part 2, Chapters 9 to 16
The Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heaven's light shines on Jesus • Healing and deliverance ministry • Jesus tells about the future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrest, trial and death of Jesus • The resurrection of Jesus • The final teachings of Jesus |
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THIS BOOK teaches about the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus the Christ or Messiah, how He died, came back to life and returned to Heaven. God did this as part of His plan to forgive and save the world from punishment for sin. The final months of Jesus on Earth began with His transfiguration on a mountain top when God's light from Heaven shone on Him. You will also read about the further teachings of Jesus before He died and the last instructions of Jesus after His resurrection and before He returned to Heaven. This book will help you to understand how we can be forgiven for all our sins and how one day we can go to Heaven to live with Jesus before He returns to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth.

MANNA PUBLICATIONS publish small Bible teaching commentaries written by Fred Morris. For many years Fred, and his wife Lorna, travelled round the world teaching and preaching. His books are easy to read, understand and translate into other languages. They give basic teaching to use on your own or to study in a group, plus additional notes for Bible students, teachers and pastors.

THESE BOOKS will help you to understand the truth from Almighty God. He is worshipped by millions of Jews and Christians worldwide. These books will also help you to receive salvation and eternal life through God's Son, Jesus the Christ who is Israel's Messiah. They will help you to talk about your faith in God and to pray to Him. They will help to guide you from going the wrong way in life. They will help you to live a life that is pleasing to God through the love and power of His Holy Spirit. This was promised to all believers after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus who believe He is the Son of God.

WE PRAY that you may have a new peace and purpose in life as you trust in God, read the Bible and use these commentaries. As you study the Old and New Testament truth from God, think about what Jesus taught and suffered 2000 years ago for your salvation and what He is calling you to say and do today to prepare the way for His return.

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FOUNDATIONAL BIBLE TEACHING COMMENTARIES

"The secret of God's Kingdom has been given to you" (Mark 4:11)



**THE DEATH, RESURRECTION
AND ASCENSION
OF JESUS CHRIST**

**A Bible Teaching Commentary
for personal or group study
by Fred Morris**



**Mark Part 2
Chapters 9 to 16**



To the Reader or Leader

These commentaries help to explain the Bible in a way that is easy to read and understand. They are also easy to translate. You can use these books to study the Bible on your own or with others in a group. Each person should have his or her own book and a Bible if possible.



Bible reading: Where you see this, it means you or your group leader should always read the Bible passage first before reading this book.



Talk about this: Where you see this, there are questions to prayerfully answer yourself or to discuss in a group study. They also help the reader to remember the Bible verses.



Think about this: Where you see this, the questions require more time for personal meditation.



Ruled teaching boxes: Where you see these, the information gives extra teaching about life at the time the Bible passage was written and helps to apply the teaching for today.

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God has enabled us to print this title in the following countries:

Revised Worldwide English edition first published in the UK in 2002

Reprinted 2002: Kenya, Uganda (English). Reprinted 2003: Kenya (Swahili), Mozambique (English for Swaziland), India (Tamil), Ethiopia (Amharic). Reprinted 2004: Kenya, Uganda (English), Kenya (Dinka for Sudan), Malawi (Chichewa), Etiopia (Amharic). Reprinted 2005: Uganda (English); Uganda (Lingala for DR Congo NE), Kenya (Dinka for Sudan), Myanmar (English, Khumi Chin), Kenya (Bari for Sudan). Reprinted 2006: DR Congo West (Lingala), Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Liberia (English). Reprinted 2007: Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria (English). Reprinted 2008: Burundi (Kirundi), India (Telugu), Myanmar (Tiddim Chin). Reprinted 2009: Tanzania (English, Swahili). Reprinted 2010: Myanmar (English, Dai, Burmese, Tiddim Chin), UK (English), Mozambique (Portuguese), Ethiopia (Oromo). Reprinted 2011: India (Telugu, Tamil, English), Burkina Faso, Cameroon (French), D.R. Congo, Katanga (Kiluba, Kisongye, French), Guatemala (Spanish), Myanmar (Burmese, Falam Chin), Nigeria, Uganda (English). Reprinted 2012: Serbia (Serbian), Pakistan (Saraiki), D.R. Congo, Katanga (Kiluba, French), Nigeria (English), India (Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Oriya, English), Cameroon (English). Reprinted 2013: Cameroon (English, French), India (Tamil, French), Ethiopia (Sidama, Oromo), South Africa (Congolese refugees), Sierra Leone (English). Reprinted 2014: Mozambique (Portuguese), Kenya (Swahili), Cameroon (English), Armenia (Eastern Armenian). Reprinted 2015: Ghana (English), Myanmar (Ngawn Chin, Burmese), Malawi (Chichewa Braille, English, Braille), Cameroon (English, French), Ethiopia (Oromo). Reprinted 2016: Malawi (Chichewa), Ethiopia (Amharic, Oromo), Myanmar (Hakha Chin, Ngawn Chin), Cameroon (English), Malawi (English Braille). Reprinted 2017: Sierra Leone (English). Reprinted 2018: India (Kannada), Malawi (Chichewa), Cameroon (French), Myanmar (Burmese), Cameroon for Equatorial Guinea (Spanish). Reprinted 2020: Malawi (Chichewa), Armenia (Armenian), Uganda (English). Reprinted 2022: Armenia (Armenian), India (Kannada), Mozambique (Portuguese), Malawi (Chichewa).

Second edition published 2020: Uganda (English), Malawi (English). Reprinted 2021: Zambia (English).

Reprinted 2022: Malawi (English). Revised and reprinted 2023: Kenya (English)

Published by:
Manna Publications (UK)

Printed by:

Distributed by:

Typeset by: MissionAssist (UK)

God has enabled Manna Bible teaching commentaries to be printed and distributed in:

Angola, Armenia, Benin, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Congo Dem. Rep. (Kinshasa and Katanga), Congo Rep. (Brazzaville), Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

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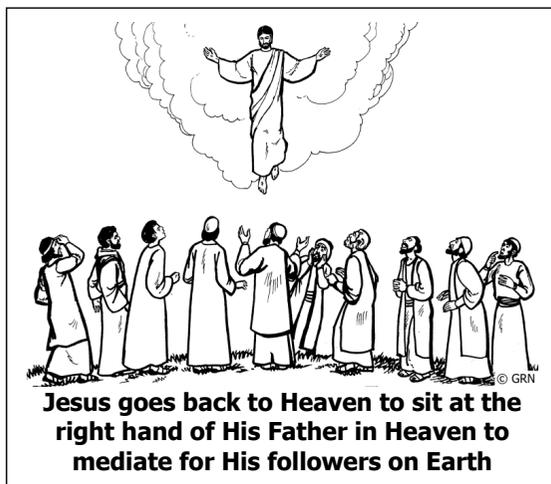
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12. The disciples had to wait until God sent them His Holy Spirit power from Heaven (Luke 24:49).

When the Lord finished speaking to them, He was taken up into Heaven. He sat down at the right hand of God, His Father (Mark 16:19).

The final words in Mark's Gospel are these: 'Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere. The Lord worked with them. And He backed up His word by the signs that went with it' (16:20).

Jesus did not go back to argue with the religious leaders and Pontius Pilate. He went out to Galilee to teach those who believed in Him. He told His followers to "go into all the world and tell the Good News to everyone" (16:15). This is His command to all His followers. (More commands of Jesus can be found in Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8.)



The return of Jesus to Heaven meant that His physical life on earth was ended. Shortly after this He sent His Holy Spirit power to be with His followers to start the work of building His Church and God's Kingdom on Earth (Acts 2:16-41). In this way Jesus can be with everyone, in every place, in every time (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

The church of Jesus will be given power by the Spirit of Christ and by its faith in the risen Lord Jesus to do God's work as the Body of Christ on Earth until His return (Luke 21:27; Revelation 1:7).

Talk about this:

1. What good news did the angel messenger say to the women at the tomb (Matthew 28:5-7)?
2. What were the last commands of Jesus to His disciples?

Think about this: What does the death and resurrection mean to you? Are you obeying the last commands of Jesus? Do you confess your sins each day and ask God to forgive you? Do you invite the Spirit of Jesus to guide and empower your life and ministry?

Mark Part 2: Chapters 9 to 16

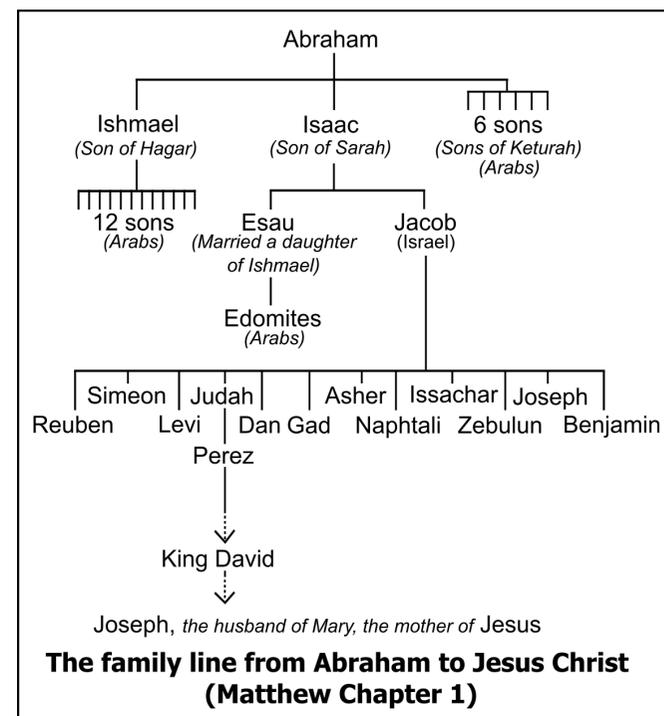
INTRODUCTION

Dear readers. In our first Bible teaching commentary on the Gospel of Mark (Chapters 1 to 8), we talked about the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and the many miracles that He did. He is the Son of God who lived on Earth 2000 years ago for 33 years. The word 'Gospel' means 'God's Good News about His son Jesus Christ'.

The Jewish or Hebrew name for Jesus the Christ is Yeshua the Messiah. Jesus was born to a young virgin girl, Mary, through the Holy Spirit of Almighty God. He was brought up by Mary and her husband Joseph. Joseph was a carpenter in Nazareth, Israel, so Jesus learned to work as a carpenter there until He was 30 years old.

In Part 1 of Mark's Gospel, we told you that the followers of Jesus believed He was the Jewish Messiah. Israel had been waiting many, many years for the Messiah to come. He was and is the Saviour promised by Yahweh, Almighty God, to save His people from sin and receive eternal life with Him after death. The Old Testament prophets of God said that He will save all who worship the one true God

Some people who followed Jesus thought He came to save them from their enemies, the Romans, who ruled the world at that time. However, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, came to set up a new kind of kingdom in the world, a Kingdom of believers who trust in God and obey Him. Jesus did not come to set the people free from the Romans. He came to set the people free from their sins, and all their wrong ways, so that they can know God and be received by Him. Then they will be part of His Kingdom wherever they live and worship and after death, receive His promised eternal life.



The Jews knew that their Messiah came from the family line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (called Israel), Judah and King David. Jesus came to save the Jews and the whole world if they repent and believe He is the Son of God. This is why Christians believe that Jesus is their Saviour, as well as the promised Jewish Messiah.

We told you at the end of the first part of Mark's Gospel that Jesus gave His twelve disciples a warning. He told them that He was going to suffer a lot and die in order to become their Saviour. In chapters 9 and 10, we read more of the teachings of Jesus regarding what it means to be a true disciple. Then we tell you about the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Jesus died on a cross, God raised Him back to life on the third day and went back up to Heaven 40 days later. It was God's plan for Jesus to take on the sins of our world and suffer a cruel death in our place so that we can be free from the punishment we deserve for sin. It means that all who believe that Jesus is the Son of God can have their sins forgiven. If we believe this, we can go to Heaven to live with Jesus for eternity.



Mark 8:27-38. Jesus warns the disciples He would be killed

These verses are at the end of Mark Part 1. They tell us that the disciples of Jesus believed He was the Christ (the Messiah) who is the Son of God (8:29). These verses also tell us that the Son of God was called the Son of Man who would suffer many things as a human being. He would be killed, but after three days His Father God would bring him back from death (8:31). He will also come back again "in glory, with the holy angels" (8:38). The disciples at that time did not understand these things (8:32-33).



Bible reading: Mark Chapter 9

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We begin this second part of Mark's Gospel with chapter 9 verse 1. Here, Jesus tells His followers (the disciples and the crowds) that many people will live to see the things happen which God had already promised. He said, "What I am about to tell you is true." These things were written down in the Old Testament by the prophets. They made people ready for the "coming of the Kingdom of God with power" on Earth through the Messiah (9:1; Matthew 16:28).

For 400 years God did not speak to His people through His prophets, so there was nothing new added to the Old Testament. The New Testament was written 50-100 years after the time of Jesus.

God waited for the right time to send Jesus into the world. During the 400 years of waiting for their Messiah, Jerusalem was ruled by Persians, Greeks, Egyptians and finally the Romans.



Evidence of the resurrection

After the resurrection, Jesus appeared at least 12 times over a period of 40 days:

1. To Mary (Mark 16:9; John 20:14-17).
2. To the two Marys (Matthew 28:1,8-10).
3. To Peter (Luke 24:34).
4. To two of His followers on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-32).
5. To the waiting disciples (Luke 24:36-49).
6. To Thomas (John 20:26-29).
7. To seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee (John 21).
8. To the eleven disciples on a mountain (Matthew 28:16).
9. To His followers for a meal (Acts 1:4).
10. To 500 followers all at the same time (1 Corinthians 15:6).
11. To James, His half-brother (1 Corinthians 15:7).
12. Jesus appeared for the last time when He went up to Heaven (Luke 24:50-51).

After His ascension, Jesus spoke to Saul (later called Paul) on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-8).

WHAT JESUS SAID BEFORE HE RETURNED TO HEAVEN

After the resurrection of Jesus, the eleven disciples went to Galilee as Jesus and the angel had told them. These are the last teachings of Jesus:

1. He told them, "All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Me" (Matthew 28:18).
2. "Go into all the world. Preach the Good News to everyone" (Mark 16:15).
3. "Baptise believers in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).
4. Teach the things that Jesus taught (Matthew 28:20).
5. Jesus promised to be with His people at all times (Matthew 28:20).
6. Those who believe in Jesus will be saved; anyone who does not believe will be condemned for their sins (Mark 16:16).
7. Those who believe in Jesus will do great miracles and be able to speak in unknown languages. "In My name, they will drive out demons" (Mark 16:17).
8. Everything written about Jesus in the Old Testament books of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms must come true (Luke 24:44).
9. His followers will tell people about Jesus urging them to turn away from their sins and be forgiven (Luke 24:47).
10. People from every nation will hear about repentance and the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus (Luke 24:47).
11. This work will begin in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).

The women ran from the tomb, saying nothing to anyone. They were afraid yet full of joy (Matthew 28:8). When they got back to the city, they told the eleven disciples and the others, but they did not believe the women until later (Luke 24:11).

JESUS MEETS HIS FOLLOWERS

Peter and John ran to the tomb. John got there first. He looked in and saw the strips of linen, but he did not go in. Peter went into the tomb first. He saw the strips of linen and also the burial cloth that had been round Jesus. The cloth was folded by itself. When they saw this, they realised that Jesus had risen from death (John 20:6-8)!

Mary Magdalene went back to the tomb and stood outside crying. Then she saw a man she thought was the gardener. "They have taken my Lord away", she said. "I do not know where they have put Him" (John 20:13).

Then Jesus said her name, "Mary". She knew that voice! She knelt down before Him and worshipped Him, holding onto His feet.

"Do not hold onto Me," He said to her. "I have not yet returned to the Father" (John 20:17).

Mary Magdalene hurried back to tell the disciples. They did not believe what the two women told them (18:11). Jesus also appeared to two believers who were walking home. They returned to Jerusalem to tell the others, but they were not believed either (16:12-13).

That evening, the disciples were in the upper room. The doors were locked because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders (John 20:19). Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

After He had said this, He showed them the wounds in His hands and His side. The disciples were full of joy when they saw the Lord (John 20:20).

Meanwhile the religious leaders bribed the Roman guards to tell everyone that the body of Jesus had been stolen by the disciples (Matthew 28:12-14).



Christ is risen!

Things written by the followers of Jesus in evidence of His resurrection:

- The stone rolled away from the tomb (Mark 16:4).
- An angel sat on the stone, bright as lightning (Matthew 28:2-3).
- Roman guards shook with fear and were unable to move (Matthew 28:4).
- An angel spoke to the two Marys "He is risen" (Matthew 28:5-6).
- The angel invited them into the tomb (Matthew 28:6).
- The angel showed them the empty tomb (Mark 16:5).
- The angel told them to share the Good News with the disciples (16:7).
- The angel specially mentioned Peter who denied Jesus (16:7).
- The angel gave them instructions to go to Galilee to meet Jesus (16:7).
- Peter saw the empty tomb and the burial clothes (Luke 24:12; John 20:6).



The coming of the Kingdom of God

Here are some of the things that Jesus knew would happen:

1. The death of Jesus on a cross (His crucifixion) so that His sacrifice of blood would be acceptable to God. Only this would be sufficient punishment to forgive the sins of the people who repent and turn from their bad ways.
2. The raising of Jesus from death (His resurrection) into everlasting life. This event would prepare the way for everlasting life as the gift of God to all who believe in His Son.
3. The lifting up of Jesus into Heaven (His ascension) to be with God the Father. There He will prepare a place for all who believe He is the Son of God (John 14:2).
4. The sending of God's Holy Spirit (at Pentecost) to help believers in Jesus prepare the way for the Kingdom of God. He would bring much power for all believers. (You can read about this in the book of Acts.)
5. The destruction of the earthly Temple of God, which happened in Jerusalem in the war of AD 70. This reminds us that God lives in believers, not temples or church buildings (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Jesus demonstrated the power of the Kingdom of God on Earth during His 3^{1/2} years of teaching and healing and deliverance ministry. When Jesus the Christ is invited to live in the lives of believers today, the future Kingdom of God begins to live in us NOW (Luke 17:20-21).

It was a time of quick and safe travel by land and sea from one end of the Roman Empire to the other. Then God showed His power through the life and miracles of Jesus, His crucifixion, His resurrection and ascension and through the wonderful things that happened after that. The Good News of Jesus travelled quickly around the world.

In this way, the Holy Spirit built the Kingdom of God in the lives of those who followed Jesus. The final words of Jesus to His followers were, "You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem ... in all Judea and Samaria. You will be my witnesses from one end of the Earth to the other" (Acts 1:8). This same Holy Spirit power is building God's Kingdom today through preaching the Good News sent out and received by many modern methods of communication and travel by land, sea and air.

GOD SPEAKS ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP

The next thing that Mark tells us in Chapter 9 is how God spoke to Jesus and prepared Him for these great things to happen. Jesus took Peter, James and John up a high mountain (9:2).

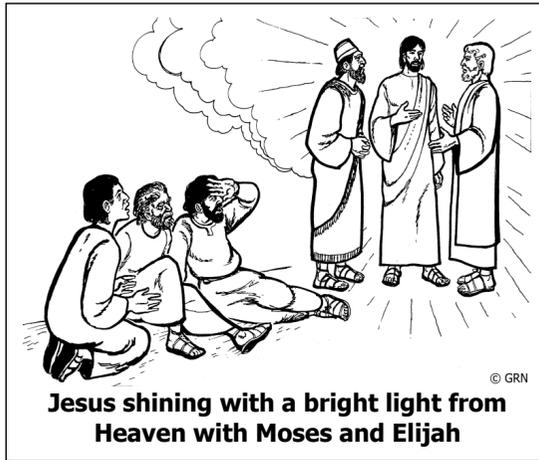
The three disciples stared in amazement at Jesus because His face shone with a bright light from Heaven. His clothes shone brightly also (9:3).

Two other men were there, Moses and Elijah. They were shining brightly too. They had come down to talk to Jesus about His sacrifice and death in Jerusalem (Luke 9:30-31) and His return to Heaven.

As the three talked, a bright cloud came over them. Peter did not know what to say. He tried to talk instead of listening (Mark 9:5-6).

Then God's voice came from the cloud and said these three important things: "This is My Son. I love Him. Listen to Him!" (9:7). These three things reveal the authority of God, the love of God and the purpose of God. These three things reveal who Jesus is, His relationship with His Father then and now and the words of truth He and His apostles teach for us to learn and remember.

The disciples were afraid, and fell down with their faces close to the ground. They lay down on the ground until Jesus came and touched them. "Get up. Do not be afraid," He said (Matthew 17:7). When they looked up, they were alone with Jesus (Mark 9:8). On the way down from the mountain, He ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen, until he had risen from death (9:9). However, Jesus talked openly about His death by crucifixion and His coming back to life, at His resurrection (9:9,31; 10:33-34). When we witness about the death and resurrection of Jesus we must remember to talk about His transfiguration and what God said to His followers.



Mark 9:2-8. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ

This shining light from within Jesus is called His transfiguration and shows us that:

- Jesus is God's Son: God spoke to Peter and James and John about it.
- Jesus was in Heaven before He was born as a baby on Earth.
- Jesus already knew Moses and Elijah who lived many years before the disciples.
- Moses and Elijah knew that it was God's purpose for Jesus to die soon: they talked to Him about it.
- God did this to confirm what would happen to Jesus before He suffered and died.

Peter wrote about the transfiguration of Christ some years later (2 Peter 1:17,18).

Talk about this:

1. Was the trial of Jesus controlled by the unbelieving leaders and the noisy crowd (15:1,11)? Or was God in control (14:36)?
2. How and why did God stop Pilate from letting His Son go free (15:15)?
3. Which two people suddenly believed Jesus was the Son of God on the day He suffered and died (15:39; Luke 23:43)?
4. What happened to the body of Jesus (15:44-46)?

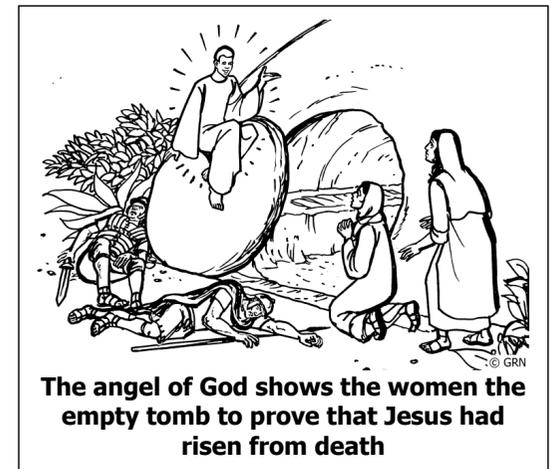
 **Think about this:** Why does God allow ungodly people and noisy crowds to control a nation? How should we pray for believers and non-believers to understand the purposes of God in our own nation? What does the symbol of the cross and the death of Jesus mean to you?

Bible reading: Mark Chapter 16 JESUS RISES FROM DEATH

Early on Sunday, the first day of the week, three women brought spices to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. They wanted to put them on the dead body of Jesus. It was the day after the Jewish Sabbath (16:1).

As they went to the tomb they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" (16:3). The stone was large and heavy, but they found it had already been moved. An angel of God had done it (Matthew 28:2).

- The stone was not rolled away by the Roman guard.
- The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out.
- The stone was rolled away by the angel to let the followers of Jesus in to see that He had risen from death.



A young man dressed in white was sitting in the tomb on the right (Mark 16:5). "Do not be afraid," he said to them. "I know you are looking for Jesus ... He is not here. He is risen! ... See the place where they had put him" (16:6-7). "Go quickly! Tell His disciples He has risen from the dead" (Matthew 28:7).

The angel specially mentioned Peter, who had denied Jesus three times. The angel then said that Jesus would go to Galilee to meet the disciples. "It will be just as He told you" (16:7).

- The Temple curtain was torn from top to bottom (15:38). It was too thick for any man to tear. God's message was plain. People can now enter the most holy place and come straight to God, because of the sacrifice of Jesus (Hebrews 9:12; 10:19-20). We no longer need a High Priest to ask God to forgive our sins. Jesus is our High Priest. Through His blood and His death we can now come to God in the name of Jesus. At great cost to Himself, God has removed the separation between Himself and mankind through sacrificing His own Son for our salvation.
- The earthquake. 'The earth shook and the rocks split' (Matthew 27:51). God shook the earth with His great power.
- The graves in that area opened and many of God's people were raised to life (Matthew 27:52). Their spirits and their bodies came back to life. After Jesus rose from the dead, they went into the city and appeared to many people.
- A Roman soldier saw Jesus cry out and die and he believed. He said "This man was surely [truly, KJV] the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39).

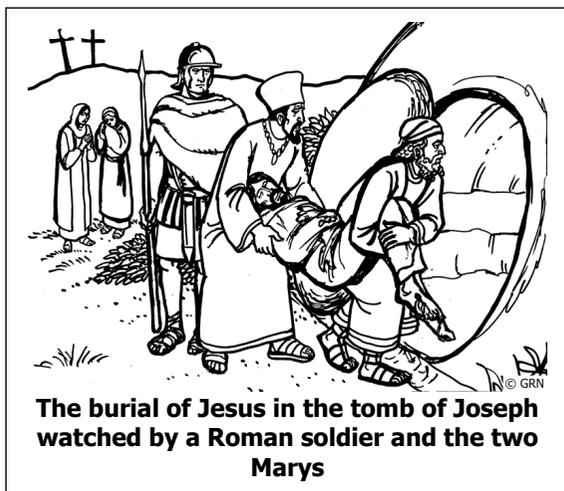
Many of the women were there who followed Jesus during His ministry in Galilee and who took care of His needs (15:40-41).

KEEPING THE BODY OF JESUS SAFE

After the death of Jesus, events moved quickly because it would soon be sunset on that Friday evening. Then it would be the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, when no work was allowed.

Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body in a clean cloth and placed it in his own tomb cut out of rock. The two Marys watched Joseph take the body of Jesus down from the cross. Pilate gave permission for Joseph to bury Jesus in the tomb. They rolled a large heavy stone in front of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body of Jesus was placed (15:47).

The next day Pilate ordered that soldiers should watch the tomb so that no-one could steal the body of Jesus. This was because some of the Jewish leaders remembered Jesus saying that after three days he would come back to life (Matthew 27:63).



The burial of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph watched by a Roman soldier and the two Marys

From that time, Jesus talked openly about His death by crucifixion and His coming back to life, at His resurrection (9:9,31; 10:33-34).

JESUS HEALS A BOY WITH AN EVIL SPIRIT

Jesus, Peter, James and John came down from the mountain. They found the other disciples arguing with the Jewish leaders. A large crowd had gathered. A father had come to find Jesus and get help for his son who could not hear or speak. As a child, an evil spirit had taken hold of him.

"What are you arguing about?" Jesus asked the scribes (Mark 9:16, KJV). The father of the boy answered for them, "I brought my son who is controlled by an evil [dumb, KJV] spirit... I asked Your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not do it" (9:16-18). "It has often thrown him into the fire or water to kill [destroy, KJV] him. If you can do anything, please take pity on us and help us," the father said (9:22).

As followers of Jesus, we must expect to have difficult times when evil spirits attack us or those around us. This can be a test to see if we have faith to believe in the Holy Spirit power of Jesus. We can only win against Satan and evil spirits when we have this power of Jesus in us (Luke 10:19,20). Believers must learn to speak against evil with Holy Spirit power in the name of and with the authority of Jesus.

God 'does not want any of these little ones to be lost [perish, KJV]' (Matthew 18:14). We must pray for our children often. We must also keep them away from evil people in our homes and streets and from evil places and evil books and films, where Satan can attack them. God's power to heal and send away evil spirits is given to believers who pray with His Holy Spirit power in the name of Jesus.

Faith is always needed. Jesus blamed the disciples and also the crowds for not having enough faith in God over evil (Mark 9:19). "Everything is possible for the one who believes" (9:23), Jesus told the boy's father. He cried out, "I do believe." Then he added, "Help me overcome my unbelief!" (9:24).

God can do anything for us; but we must believe that Jesus is still the Son of God today!

Jesus saw a crowd running to see what was happening (9:25). They were eager to see more miracles of Jesus but many were not prepared to believe He was the Son of God. They knew He was the son of Mary and worked as a carpenter in Nazareth.

Jesus spoke to the evil spirit who lived inside the boy. He called the spirit by its name. "You spirit that makes him unable to hear or speak, I command you, come out of him! Never enter him again (9:25)."

The evil spirit screamed and threw the child down and then it came out of him. The people looked down at the body of the boy. "He is dead," some said (9:26). Jesus took him by the hand. He lifted the boy to his feet and he stood up (9:27).

We must remember the important things that Jesus taught His disciples. He said: "Everything is possible for the one who believes" (9:23). Ask in faith, and see

how God works in all things for our good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28). Do not lose hope.

THE DISCIPLES DO NOT UNDERSTAND JESUS

Later, His disciples asked Jesus in private, "Why could we not drive out the evil spirit?" Earlier, they had successfully driven out demons and healed people in the name of Jesus (Mark 6:12-13). Jesus replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer [and fasting, KJV]" (Mark 9:28-29). They needed to combine their faith with prayer and trust in God's power. Were they trying to minister in their own strength?

Jesus then spoke in more detail about His crucifixion and His resurrection. He took the disciples away on their own to teach them about these things (9:30-31). The disciples did not understand fully what would happen. They were afraid to ask Jesus about it (9:32).

When we do not understand, this makes us afraid. When we know Jesus better, we understand more about the things of God. Then we understand our part in teaching 'the mystery of Christ' that Jesus came to earth to suffer in order to save people (Colossians 4:3).

The Bible says that Jesus was our Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53:3-6; Philippians 2:6-8). The disciples had to learn more about Jesus so that they could be more like Him. We, too, should do this and also be prepared to suffer in order to save and serve others.



Talk about this:

1. Why was Jesus transfigured before them (9:4)?
2. Why did Peter talk instead of listening (9:6)?
3. What did God say about Jesus? What did He say for us and Peter to do (9:7)?
4. What did the Jewish teachers believe about Elijah and their Messiah (Matthew 17:10-13)? What did Jesus mean when He said that Elijah had already come (Mark 9:12-13)?
5. Why did the disciples not have the power to heal the sick boy (9:18-19,29)?
6. What did this father say to Jesus (9:22,24)? Do you mix doubts and faith?
7. What did Jesus teach about faith (9:23,29)?



Think about this: Do you sometimes speak instead of praying first then listening to God (9:5-29)? What do you say to others about the life and death and resurrection of Jesus? Do you believe that Jesus heals people through the power of His Spirit today? How do you prove that He has a purpose for you to serve and suffer in the work of His Kingdom?

HOW TO BE IMPORTANT IN GOD'S KINGDOM

On the way to Capernaum the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest among them (9:33-34). They had not really listened or understood what Jesus had said.

This upset the other criminal. He rebuked him saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence? We are punished fairly, for we are getting what our actions deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:40-41).

He turned to Jesus, "Remember me," he begged, "when You come into Your Kingdom" (Luke 23:42).

Jesus forgave him and said, "What I am telling you is true. Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

THE MIRACLES AT THE CRUCIFIXION

Jesus cried out to God, His Father. "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" (Mark 15:34). Jesus felt abandoned by God. This was part of His suffering on the cross. With a loud cry, He took His last breath (15:37).

When Jesus died, God gave many great signs:

- Darkness at midday (Luke 23:44-45). It lasted for three hours (Mark 15:33). The sun did not leave the sky, but a shadow fell upon the earth. (This three-hour darkness even reached to Rome, hundreds of miles away, as recorded by Roman historian, Thallus.)



How the death of Jesus on the cross changed world history

The Old Testament tells how God would send His Messiah to save His people Israel from their sins. The New Testament confirms how God sent His own Son to suffer and to die as their Messiah, then to rise again from death so that people who believe He is the Son of God can be forgiven (Ephesians 4:32) and have everlasting life with Him.

To some, the cross is nothing more than a strange story. To those who know the love and mercy of God, it is the greatest thing that ever happened. The cross and death and resurrection of Jesus have become the most important events in history!

To people everywhere, this 'mystery of Christ' means, "I love you. I died for you. There is no other way for you to be saved from God's hatred of sin." We all deserve God's punishment, for all have sinned (Romans 3:9,10). God, in His love, saves us from the punishment we deserve (Psalm 103:10-12). Jesus took the punishment in our place (Romans 5:8).

For those who turn to Jesus and repent and believe that He died for them, their lives are changed.

- Their sins are forgiven.
- They come closer to God when He fills them with His Holy Spirit.
- They also become more like Jesus.
- They have hope of eternal life with Him in Heaven, or meeting Him on Earth when He returns.

Believe and receive all these things through God's living purpose for you in sacrificing His Son.

They came to Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, and there they crucified Jesus by nailing Him to the cross of wood (15:22).

The soldiers mocked and sneered at Him and offered Him vinegar to drink (15:36).

“Let us not tear His robe,” one said. “Let us cast lots to see who will get it” (John 19:24). The robe was ‘woven in one piece from top to bottom’ (John 19:23).

The Old Testament psalmist prophesied, “They divided My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing” (Psalm 22:18).

They crucified Jesus at nine in the morning and wrote a message on the cross, “The King of the Jews” (Mark 15:26).

They waited for Jesus to die. While they watched, He prayed for them on the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

There were other people watching the crucifixion:

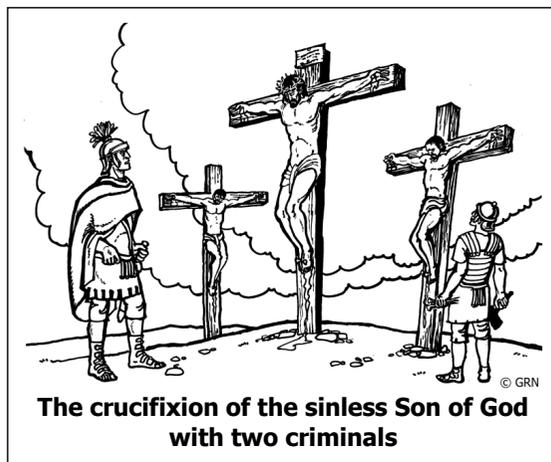
- the crowd;
- Simon, who carried the cross for Jesus;
- the disciples;
- the women who mourned for Him (Mark 15:40);
- the men who were crucified near Him (15:32), prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 53:12).

Jesus said to the women, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me; weep for yourselves and for your children” (Luke 23:28).

People who passed near the cross shook their heads and said, “Save Yourself! Come down ... if You are the Son of God” (Mark 15:30-32; Matthew 27:40). The religious leaders mocked Jesus (Mark 15:31-32) and so did the other prisoners (15:32).

Mary the mother of Jesus stood near the cross with His aunt and Mary Magdalene (John 19:25). When Jesus saw these faithful women, He said to His mother, “Dear woman, here is your son.” He said to His disciple John, “Here is your mother” (John 19:26-27). John took Mary to his own home to care for her. By this time Mary was a widow.

Two robbers also hung on crosses, one on each side of the cross of Jesus. One said, “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself! Save us!” (Luke 23:39).



Jesus warned them that whoever wanted to be first must learn how to be last. “You must be a servant of everyone” (9:35). Then Jesus took a little child and made the child stand among them (9:36). Often in those days people thought that children were unimportant. “You need to change and become like little children,” Jesus told them (Matthew 18:3) “If you don’t, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Anyone who becomes the least important [humble, KJV], like this child, will be the most important [great, KJV] in the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 18:4).

This teaching of Jesus means these things:

- To be great, we must put ourselves last of all (Mark 9:35).
- To be great, we must care for others (9:36), especially people who are ignored and need love.
- To be great, we must welcome and respect all people who have faith in the God of Abraham and belong to Jesus (9:37).

Jesus said that we should welcome and encourage other believers, even if we do not know them (9:38-40). We should not hinder the work of others for Jesus but look for ways to help them such as giving them a cup of water (9:41).

JESUS WARNS US NOT TO LEAD OTHERS INTO SIN

Jesus also warned the disciples not to lead children into sin or there would be severe punishment. (9:42). He does not really want you to ‘cut off your hand’ or ‘cut off your foot’ or ‘poke out your eye’ when you are tempted to do wrong (9:43-47). If you do this, it may not stop you sinning nor make God forgive your sins. Instead, Jesus wanted us to know what a terrible thing it is if others do wrong because of us, especially children. It deserves severe punishment.

Jesus speaks here about Hell. If you don’t believe in Hell, you don’t believe what the Bible says! The prophet Isaiah spoke of Hell as everlasting fire (Isaiah 66:24). Jesus used these same words of Isaiah (Mark 9:48). Satan and all of his demons will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10).

The people knew what He meant. They threw their rubbish outside the city wall. Fires never burned out there. The valley was full of fires, flies and worms. Jesus probably spoke of this to show what Hell is like. He quoted from Isaiah 66:24, “The worms that eat the bodies will not die. The fire that burns them will not be put out.”

Instead of giving in to temptation, Jesus wants us to bless others through what we say, think and do. Our faith will be tested by fire. Salt is essential in our bodies. Our lives will be “salted with fire” (Mark 9:49) to make us strong and healthy when persecuted. We must also watchful and wise when tempted. This is why Jesus said we should be useful like salt. He said, “Have salt in your lives and be at peace with each other” (9:50).



Talk about this:

1. Why did Jesus ask the disciples what they had been arguing about (9:32-33)?
2. What did Jesus say about trying to be first in God’s Kingdom (9:35)?

3. What kind of people does God welcome into His Kingdom (9:37)?
4. Why did Jesus talk about a cup of water (9:41)?
5. Why did Jesus talk about having salt in our bodies (9:49-50)?

Think about this: Do we disappoint or hinder other believers by the things we say and do or even lead them astray? Is the spiritual 'salt' in our lives still 'salty'? What calling do you have to build faith in children and encourage others whose faith is weak?



Bible reading: Mark Chapter 10

QUESTIONS ABOUT DIVORCE AND FAMILIES

Some teachers of the Jewish Law asked Jesus, "Does the Law allow a man to divorce his wife?" (10:2). They wanted to test Him. "What did Moses command you?" He replied.

They said, "Moses let a man write a divorce note and send the wife away" (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). "It was because of your stubbornness [hardness of heart, KJV] that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus said (Mark 10:5).

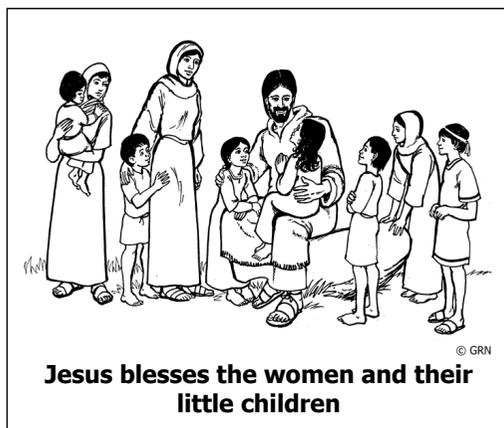
Jesus went on to say, "At the beginning of creation, God made male and female. That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The two of them will become one... so a man must not separate what God has joined together" (10:6-9; Genesis 1:27 and 2:24). His teaching is clear, for one man to be married to one woman, for life.

As sinners, we fail to love another person fully because we love ourselves more. So, when the hearts of men are hard or they are angry or bored with their wives, they are tempted to divorce them. Jesus said it was not this way in the beginning (Matthew 19:8).

Where the love of God rules in men's hearts, men understand that God wants marriage to be a life-long union of one man with one woman until death separates them.

Later in Mark 10:11, Jesus said that to divorce in order to marry another is adultery. He also said that divorce is only allowed if a partner has been unfaithful (Matthew 19:9). However, it is better to forgive.

At the time when Jesus lived on earth, men did not think that women and children were important. Jesus showed by His words and by what He did that He cared about women (Mark 10:9; 12:43; 14:6) and children (9:36; 10:14).



Jesus blesses the women and their little children

Pilate could see that Jesus had not done anything wrong. He was amazed that Jesus was so calm (Mark 15:5).

It was a custom to let a prisoner go free at Passover. Pilate could find no fault in Jesus so he wanted to let Him go (15:9). He asked the people to decide whom he should let go: Barabas, the murderer, or Jesus, the innocent carpenter from Nazareth.

The chief priests stirred up the crowd (15:11). They became excited and shouted to Pilate they wanted him to let the murderer go and to crucify Jesus. (15:13). Pilate asked again, "Why? What wrong has He done?" (15:14).

PILATE WASHES HIS HANDS IN PUBLIC

The crowd shouted even louder. Pilate feared that the people would make trouble, so he took a bowl of water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am not guilty of this man's death," he said (Matthew 27:24). They answered Pilate, "Let His blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:25).

The noisy crowd was willing to take the blame for the death of Jesus, so Pilate let Barabbas, the murderer, go free.

Then he ordered the Roman soldiers to beat Jesus.

The soldiers took Jesus away. They took off His clothes and set a purple robe on Him, to dress Him like a king. After doing this, they made a crown of thorns and set it on His head. They made fun of Him and spat on Him, and hit Him on the head with a stick again and again. They pretended to worship Him (Mark 15:16-19).

Then the soldiers removed the robe and led Jesus away to nail Him to a cross (15:20).



The trial of Jesus

The trial of Jesus lasted only one night and one day, but there were many parts to it.

He was questioned three times by the Jews and three times by the Romans:

1. Jesus before Annas the ex-high priest. (John 18:12-13).
2. Caiphias, the ruling high priest, held a pre-dawn trial (John 18:24).
3. A trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin court (Mark 14:60-64).
4. A trial before Pilate (Mark 15:1).
5. A trial before Herod (Luke 23:7-11).
6. A final trial before Pilate (Luke 23:13-25).

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

The Roman soldiers put the cross on the shoulders of Jesus and made Him carry it. Then they took a man in the street, Simon of Cyrene, in North Africa. This African was made to carry the cross for Jesus the Son of God (15:21).

So, Judas betrayed Jesus, Peter denied Jesus and the other disciples ran away. All 12 disciples let Jesus down. Judas killed himself but the others were sorry and came back to Jesus. Jesus forgave Peter and the other ten disciples and used them to build His Church around the world. We read about this in the book of Acts.



Talk about this:

1. How do the words of Jesus show He was both man and God (14:36)?
2. How did the disciples fail Jesus before His arrest (14:37-38)?
3. How did the disciples fail Jesus after His arrest (14:50-51)?
4. How did the Jewish leaders fail Jesus at His first trial (14:53-57)?
5. What did Jesus say that angered the High Priest? (14:61,62)



Think about this: Think about what Jesus and His Father suffered for us and yet they forgive us when we confess our sins (14:34,36,65). Do you remember the words of Jesus to “watch and pray” (14:38)? Have you ever spoken against Jesus as Peter did? Are you embarrassed to witness about Jesus? When people hear the truth about Jesus, why is it that some are glad and some are angry?



Bible reading: Mark Chapter 15

THE SECOND TRIAL OF JESUS BY THE ROMAN GOVERNOR

The trial of Jesus went on all night. This was against the Jewish law. Nor could they give permission to crucify Jesus. This was against the new Roman law. They tied Jesus up and led Him away to Pilate, the Roman governor of the region of Judea. It was very early in the morning (15:1). Only Pilate could give permission for someone to be crucified and put to death on a cross.

The religious leaders told Pilate the complaints they had against Jesus (Luke 23:1-2). They said that:

- He told lies to the people.
- He told them not to pay taxes to Caesar.
- He called Himself a king.
- He said He was the Messiah, God’s anointed One.

They spoke words of hate, but Jesus did not hate His enemies nor answer back.

Pilate wanted to know if Jesus had said that He was a king. “Are you the king of the Jews?” he asked Jesus. “Yes, it is just as you say,” Jesus replied (Mark 15:2). Jesus made it clear to Pilate that He was not an ordinary earthly king (John 18:36).

The chief priests did not believe the truth about Him. Jesus said to Pilate, “The reason I came into the world was to teach and show [witness, KJV] the truth” (John 18:37). Denying God’s truth leads to rejecting God’s Son. A nation that no longer teaches the truth to its people is easily destroyed from within.

Marriage should provide love and protection for both the parents and for their children.

Jesus spoke important words to His disciples, “Let the little children come to me... God’s Kingdom belongs to people like them” (10:14). He also said, “Anyone who will not receive God’s Kingdom like a little child will never enter it” (10:15). He then took children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them (10:16).

A child often quickly believes and trusts in the words of Jesus. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is made up of people who believe and trust just like little children (10:14). We should respect and welcome all people who trust in Jesus, even if their faith is simple.



Marriage, families and divorce

God created the desire of man for a wife. It is God’s purpose for a man and a woman to come together in marriage. It is also part of God’s purpose for them to have children when they are married (Genesis 1:28). He made it a great pleasure to make love together in marriage so that children could be created more easily. If making love was not a pleasure there would be fewer children, then God’s plan to fill the world with human beings would fail.

If we seek sexual pleasure without marriage and without children, then we are rebelling against God. Also, if a man and woman make love just for pleasure then destroy their unborn child they are also rebelling against God. If we are tempted and seek sexual pleasures in other ways then this, too, is rebellious (Romans 1:22-27). If a man has more than one wife, that can cause jealousy and sadness, too. If a man or woman leaves their spouse for another one, this is not part of God’s plan.

Jesus knew it was God’s will for a man to be faithful to one wife, to make love to no-one else and to stay with that one wife till death parts them. In this way, children can be born and grow up in a safe and loving home. Jesus said that this was God’s will from the beginning (Matthew 19:8). Often an unsaved spouse will later receive Jesus into their life.

If it is not possible to have children in a marriage, the marriage is still complete in Jesus. Therefore, it is wrong to end a marriage if there are no children. It is also wrong for people to say that married couples must have children. That couple may discover ways to care for other children or even adopt a child.

Men and women should never force their spouse to make love with them. They should love each other from the heart and make love as in the Bible, giving pleasure to each other. Song of Songs in the Bible is a love song for us to read.

A RICH YOUNG MAN MEETS JESUS

A rich young man ran up to Jesus. "Good Teacher," he said. "What must I do to receive [inherit, KJV] eternal life?" (10:17). He obeyed the Ten Commandments (10:19-20), but he felt he had to do something more to earn himself a place in the Kingdom of God. Jesus isn't just a "good teacher". He is the Son of God who offers the gift of eternal life.

Jesus loved this man so He said to him, "You are missing one thing. Go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor. You will have treasure in Heaven. Then come and follow Me" (10:21). Jesus knew that this world's riches were more important to the man than treasure in heaven. The words of Jesus made the young man sad. He loved his money and possessions. He could not easily give them up, so he turned his back on Jesus (10:22).

Many put money and their selfish way of living before holiness. But Jesus said, "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:21,33). Jesus said to His disciples, "How hard it is for rich people to enter God's Kingdom!" (Mark 10:24).

The disciples were surprised at these words of Jesus and asked each other, "Who then can be saved?" (10:26).

"All things are possible with God," Jesus said (10:27). God can save rich men if they trust Him and obey Him. "Has anyone left home or family or fields for Me and the Good News?" Jesus asked (10:29). He said that God will give them much more than the things they give up, but they must be ready for hard times ahead. They will suffer persecution, as well as eternal life (10:30).

Then Jesus said that in the Kingdom of God, "many who are first will be last and the last will be first" (10:31). Jesus loved this rich man but he used his riches for himself and did not help the poor. His disciples, however, gave up many things to obey and follow Jesus (10:28).

We need the love of Jesus at work in our lives and to obey His words of wisdom in order to receive eternal life with God.

THE TROUBLES AHEAD FOR JESUS

It was time for Jesus to go to Jerusalem for the last time. He wanted to do the will of His heavenly Father and not run away from the trouble that was coming. The disciples were amazed and those who followed Jesus were also afraid (10:32).

On the way, He told them how He was going to die and rise again from death to everlasting life. This time He said much more about the way He was going to die. He warned them that "the people will make fun of Him and spit on Him and flog Him and kill Him". He also told His disciples that He would come alive after three days (10:33-34).

Jesus led the way. He was not afraid to go up to Jerusalem. He knew the chief priests and leaders would kill Him (10:33), but this was the will of His heavenly

Their stories about Jesus did not agree, so the High Priest asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer?" Jesus did not answer their lies.

When the High Priest asked Him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One... and coming on the clouds of Heaven" (14:61-62).

The High Priest became angry. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked (14:63). He refused to allow anyone else to speak about Jesus. It was a meeting of religious leaders, and none of them believed that Jesus was the Son of God. The High Priest asked "What do you think?" (14:64). The Jewish leaders said that He was guilty and that He had to die (14:64).

Then some began to spit on Jesus. They put a cloth over His eyes and hit Him with their fists (14:65). They said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit You?" (Matthew 26:68). Then the guards took Him and beat Him (Mark 14:65).

We see how brave Jesus was. He knew why He had come into the world. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve others. He came to give His life as the price [ransom, KJV] for setting many people free" (10:45).

THE TESTING OF PETER

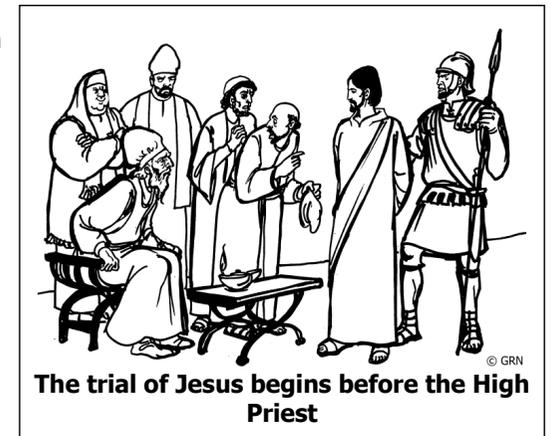
Two stories ran side by side: (1) the trial of Jesus and (2) the testing of Peter and how he denied Jesus.

Peter was afraid and followed Jesus at a distance (14:54). When the soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest's house, Peter followed them. A servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus."

Peter denied it. "I do not know what you are talking about" he said, and stood near the entrance door (14:68). The girl saw him there and said to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." Peter denied it again.

Then others spoke to him. "You are from Galilee." Peter called down curses upon himself and swore an oath and said to them "I do not know this man!" (14:70-71).

Then Peter heard a cock crow. He remembered Jesus had said, "Before the cock crows twice, you will say three times that you do not know me" (14:30,72). He wept bitterly. Three times Peter betrayed his Lord. Three times he failed to witness his faith in Jesus.



Jesus said, "Do you have to come out with swords and clubs to capture Me? Every day I taught in the Temple courts and you did not arrest Me. But the Scriptures must come true", Jesus said (14:48-49).

The soldiers then arrested Jesus, but He faced them calmly. Jesus made it clear that He did not want a fight. He did not run away but all the disciples ran away.

Jesus was taken to the High Priest to begin His trial.

THE FIRST TRIAL OF JESUS BY THE JEWISH LEADERS

First, they took Jesus to Annas, the ex-High priest. Caiaphas, his son, was the ruling High Priest over the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court.

The court of priests, elders and teachers met to judge Jesus (14:53), but did not do it in a fair way:

- The trial was held at night, which was against the Jewish law.
- The prisoner should not be abused, but they spat on Jesus and hit Him.
- If the person's crime was bad enough for him to die, the judges were not allowed to decide until the following day.
- The whole Sanhedrin, with the teachers and the elders, looked for a way to wrongly accuse Jesus 'so that they could put Him to death' (14:55).
- Many people told lies against Him, but no one could find any wrong in Him. Jesus was without sin (Hebrews 4:15).
- False witnesses were brought in to speak against Jesus (Mark 14:56-59).



What unbelievers say about Jesus

We should not be surprised that the words and actions of Jesus make some people angry. Even before Jesus could speak a word, king Herod was angry when he heard about the birth of Jesus (Matthew 2:16).

Today the enemies of Jesus still try to harm the 'Body of Christ' (the Church) just as they did to Jesus Himself:

- Many people do not want to believe Jesus so they tell lies about Him (see Mark 14:56).
- Many people lie about the words of Jesus to try to prove He is wrong (14:58).
- Many people hear the truth about Jesus but get angry and refuse to believe (14:62-63).
- Many people try to harm or hinder those who speak God's truth (14:64-65).

Perhaps this is why Jesus warned His followers that they will have many troubles in life (13:5-9). Jesus told us to pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44). It is through God that our enemies will be defeated. If they reject Jesus as Saviour, then they will meet Him as Judge. "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God" Hebrews 10:31).

Father, and He wanted to finish what His father had sent Him to do (John 4:34; 5:36; 6:38).

His disciples could not believe that Jesus would be killed. They thought that He was going to set up His Kingdom on earth at this time. They had other questions on their minds.

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Jesus continued His final journey to Jerusalem. James and John followed close behind Him. The other ten disciples followed at a distance.

James and John wanted to be sure that they had a good place when Jesus sat on His throne.

"Let one of us sit at Your right hand in Your glorious Kingdom," they asked Jesus (Mark 10:37). "Let the other one sit at Your left hand," they added. The words went against everything Jesus had taught them. They wanted to become important leaders.

"You do not know what you are asking," Jesus told them. "Can you drink the cup of suffering that I drink?" (10:38). Jesus meant that He had chosen God's way of suffering. "Can you go through the baptism of suffering I must go through?"

Jesus was going to die on a cross. Jesus knew that He would sink down under the pain and would suffer for the sins of the world before God raised Him up from death.

"We can," they answered. Jesus said they would share in His suffering (10:39). "But to sit at My right or left is not for Me to say" (10:40). We can be sure there is a place for us if we remain faithful (John 14:2-3; 1 Peter 1:3-4).

The other disciples were angry with James and John for wanting to be so important (Mark 10:41). They were happy to follow Jesus at a distance without wanting to be involved too much in God's plans for their future.

Those who try so hard to be first, hold others back. They are selfish and bossy and rule over people instead of serving those around them. Jesus spoke about many of the rulers of the world. They control people and tell others what to do (10:42). People find ways to rule so that they will gain power.

Jesus came to serve people. More than that, He came to die for them, so that through the sacrifice of His blood, our sins could be forgiven by God. It was God's will for Jesus to die as punishment for the sins of others. He gave His life knowing ahead of time the sins we will do. Because of this, we can confess and be saved and have everlasting life in Heaven with Him and in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus spoke to James and John and the other disciples. He warned them not to try to be important and not to give orders to other people (10:42).

Good leadership in the Christian life is about serving others (10:43-44). Jesus was the Suffering Servant whom God spoke about many years before through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 53:3-6). To follow Him, we too must be ready to suffer, and

to give up whatever He asks for His sake (Philippians 2:5-8). Jesus showed us how to lead by serving others.

Jesus said that He "did not come to be served. Instead, He came to serve others". He added these important words: "He came to give His life as the price [ransom] for setting many people free" (10:45).

JESUS HEALS A MAN WHO HAS MUCH FAITH

A large crowd followed Jesus. Near Jericho they heard a blind man shouting. "Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me" (10:47). Beggars were a common sight at the entrance to cities. God, however, often gives blind and deaf people greater understanding. Blind Bartimaeus called Jesus "Son of David". He understood that Jesus was the promised Messiah from the family line of King David. When the crowds told him to be quiet, he shouted the same words even louder (10:48)!

Jesus stopped and sent a message to the blind man to come to Him. 'He threw his coat to one side. Then he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus' (10:50).

Jesus asked, "What do you want Me to do for you?" (10:51).

The man answered, "I want to see."

"Go," Jesus said. "Your faith has healed [saved, KJV] you" (10:52).

Jesus knew that blind Bartimaeus had faith. Even in a large crowd, Jesus could hear the cries or prayers of faithful people. Faith in Jesus means putting all our trust in Him. We cannot fool God. He knows when we are sorry for our sins. He knows when we have understanding and faith (Hebrews 4:13). Then when we receive an answer to prayer, we know that it has come from God.

Once again, the teaching of Jesus is made very clear by Mark. Faith in Jesus (10:47) and faith in action (10:50) bring answers to prayer (10:52). Bartimaeus understood these things. He shouted out and his sight was restored. Then, instead of going his own way, he followed and went the way of Jesus (10:52). He asked to see so he could follow Jesus!



Talk about this:

1. Why did Jesus tell the rich man to sell everything he owned (10:21)?
2. What was more important than obeying the Law of Moses? What three things did Jesus ask the man to do (10:21)?
3. What did Jesus promise His followers (10:29-30)?
4. "Can you suffer like I will suffer?" He asked them (10:38). What was wrong with their answer (10:39)?
5. Why were the disciples angry with James and John (10:37,41)?
6. What is the best way to show good leadership (10:42-44)?
7. How did blind Bartimaeus show his faith in Jesus (10:48-50)?
8. How do we answer the question of Jesus (10:51)?



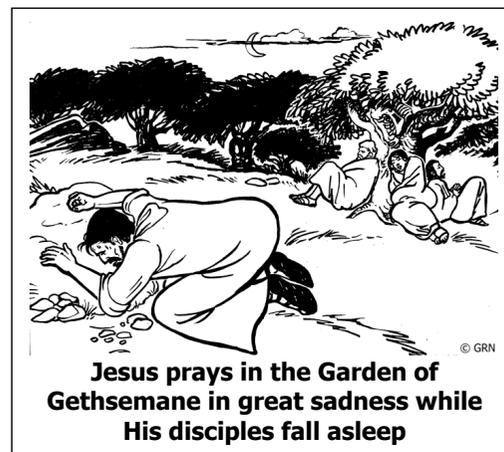
Think about this: If we love anything or anyone more than Jesus, we cannot love Him fully. Are you one of the ten disciples who followed Jesus at a distance without getting too involved with God's future plans? Or are you like the

"Sit here while I pray" He said. He went further on, to be alone with His Father and knelt down and prayed. He asked Peter, James and John to stay near Him (14:33). He was so sad He felt as if He was dying (14:34).

"Abba, Father," He said. "Everything is possible for You. Take this suffering from Me. But let what You want be done, not what I want" (14:36).

So Jesus obediently suffered and died for the sins of the world. He obeyed the will of His Father and died so that our sins could be forgiven.

If you have not asked Jesus to come into your heart as your personal Saviour, receive Jesus NOW so that His sacrifice will allow you to go to Heaven with your sins forgiven. His death and sacrifice of His blood have paid for your sins. And the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross has paid for the sins of all believers since that time. We will meet them in Heaven if we, too, believe that Jesus is the Son of God and our Saviour. Meanwhile, we faithfully serve others in our calling from God. We do this with joy and with suffering, knowing that the return of Jesus on Earth may happen soon. (Zechariah 14:4; Acts 1.11.)



Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane in great sadness while His disciples fall asleep

Ask God to forgive your sins, because His Son Jesus died in your place. Do not forget that He took the punishment for sin that we all deserve.

While Jesus prayed, the disciples fell asleep. Jesus came back to them and said, "Watch and pray. Then you will not fall into sin when you are tempted. The spirit is willing [ready, KJV], but the body [flesh, KJV] is weak" (14:37-38).

Jesus went away again and prayed. Again, they fell asleep. The third time this happened He said, "Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is going to be handed over to sinners" (14:41). Jesus saw torches in the distance and knew that the soldiers were coming to arrest Him.

The disciples failed to watch and pray at a time when Jesus specially needed them. They did not understand what was going to happen. They were tired and worried. This is a warning to obey Jesus when he says we must watch and pray. This is why He warned his disciples about the 'end times' (Luke 21:5-35). "Always keep watching" (Luke 21:36).

THE ARREST OF JESUS

Just then, Judas arrived. He came with the Temple guards and chief priests. They carried swords and clubs (Mark 14:43). "The one I kiss is the man: arrest him," Judas told them.

From this day on they would remember the Passover supper as the Lord's Last Supper. They would remember the meaning of the bread and the wine, also the lamb. They would remember their Messiah whose blood saved them from sin and eternal death. In this way, Jesus asked all His followers to remember His death when they shared bread and poured out wine together. Through it, God revealed the 'mystery of Christ': our sins are forgiven because Jesus suffered and took the punishment we deserve.

When we remember the Last Supper and the sacrifice of Jesus for us, we must also remember He is alive and His Spirit is at work with us today.

JESUS WARNS THE DISCIPLES THEY WILL FAIL HIM

Then Jesus warned the disciples that they would betray or deny Him before His resurrection (Mark 14:27-30):

- They would all run away;
- Jesus would die as it says in the Old Testament (Zechariah 13:7);
- Peter would say three times that he did not even know Jesus (Matthew 26:34).
- He would then come alive and meet them again in Galilee to explain everything (Matthew 26:32).

The disciples could not fully understand these things until after they happened. Peter said to Jesus, "I may have to die with you but I will never say I do not know You" (14:31).

John, the disciple of Jesus, wrote down for us many of the things Jesus said at this time. Read them for yourself in John 14:1 to 17:25.

Talk about this:

1. Why was the expensive oil so special to Jesus (14:6)?
2. What was the difference between blessing Jesus and blessing the poor (14:7)?
3. What similarities are there between the Jewish Passover and the Christian Lord's Supper (14:16,22-24)? Talk about how God's plan to save the world through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was fulfilled in Jesus.
4. What did Jesus ask all His followers to do (14:22-24; Luke 22:19)?
5. What promise did Peter make to Jesus which he failed to keep (14:31)?

 **Think about this:** Do I betray or deny Jesus at times? How often do I ask the question "Lord, is it me?" What does the Passover meal mean to us today? When you share with others the Lord's Last Supper, do you remember both the death of Jesus 2000 years ago and the living Lord Jesus with us today?

JESUS PRAYS AND SUFFERS IN THE GARDEN

Then Jesus led the disciples out across the river Kedron and into a garden called Gethsemane. This garden was on the Mount of Olives. Jesus often went to this garden to pray and He went there this last time to pray with great sadness.

two disciples who faithfully followed Jesus but wanted a reward? Or are you like Jesus, ready to suffer in fulfilling God's plans? How will you answer Jesus when he asks, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Bible reading: Mark Chapter 11

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY

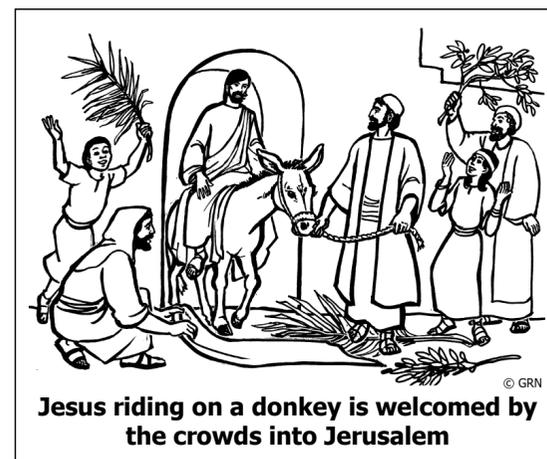
The week before His death, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Passover. Christians now call this the start of the Holy Week of Easter.

In Bethany, a village near the Mount of Olives, He sent two disciples ahead of Him into the city. "You will find a young donkey tied..." He told them. "Untie it and bring it here... Say, 'The Lord needs it'" (11:2-3).

A donkey was an animal that carried heavy loads. Sometimes poor people rode on donkeys. The mother of Jesus rode on a donkey to Bethlehem with the unborn baby Jesus. Rich important people and kings rode on horses. God said through a prophet that the Messiah would ride humbly on a young donkey (Zechariah 9:9). This was said hundreds of years before Jesus chose to ride on the donkey to Jerusalem.

So, Jesus rode the young donkey into the city. He did not hide from the people when He arrived in Jerusalem (11:8-11). The crowds knew from the Old Testament what that meant. They met Him and waved palm branches, shouting, "Hosanna!" This means "Save now!"

They also shouted, "Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" (Mark 11:9-10; see Psalm 118:25-26).



Jesus riding on a donkey is welcomed by the crowds into Jerusalem

All that the prophets wrote about Jesus now began to happen (Zechariah 9:9). The long years of waiting had ended. The people of Jerusalem could see their Messiah. Jesus did not have any political power. The Son of God came to the city as a servant, in a humble, peaceful way. He was not riding on a horse, as a king with soldiers, but on a young donkey. This was a sign of peace. It was the beginning of the fulfilment of the promised everlasting Kingdom of David and Jesus our King.

Jesus went to the Temple, the place in Jerusalem where Jews from many countries came to worship and pray to His Father, Yahweh, the One True God

Almighty. He looked around the Temple, but did not say anything. It was getting late.

Many times, Jesus had been to the Temple in Jerusalem. He was often angry because market traders were inside God's house of prayer. It was nearly time for Him to stand up against what was wrong in the Temple of His Father.

UNFRUITFUL RELIGION

Jesus and the disciples stayed with Mary and Martha at Bethany, the village near Jerusalem (11:11).

Next morning, Jesus saw a fig tree at the side of the path. He was hungry. Jesus did not find any fruit, only leaves, so He cursed the tree. "May no-one ever eat fruit from you again!" (11:14).

Jesus went into the Temple. What He saw in the Temple made Him angry again. In its courtyard, men sold cattle, sheep and doves for temple sacrifices. Others sat at tables changing Roman money into special Temple money. The Jewish leaders made much profit from this market.

Jesus chased the market traders out of the Temple and turned over the tables where they were changing money. "It is written in the Scriptures, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.' But you have made it a den for robbers" (11:17; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11).

Some of the Jewish leaders made a show of worship, but their hearts were empty and cold. They were like the fig tree. They had no fruit, only leaves. There was little in their lives that pleased God.

The Jewish leaders were afraid of Jesus because the crowds heard the truth from God and were amazed at His teaching. But the leaders wanted to kill Him (11:18).

HAVE FAITH IN GOD AND FORGIVENESS FOR OTHERS

The next day the disciples saw the fig tree once again. Its leaves were dead (11:20). The disciples were surprised. Peter said to Jesus, "Teacher, look! The fig tree You cursed has dried up."

"Have faith in God," Jesus said (11:22). Faith is a strong power that can move mountains or curse fig trees. Anything that stands in the way of God's work can be told to go (11:23).

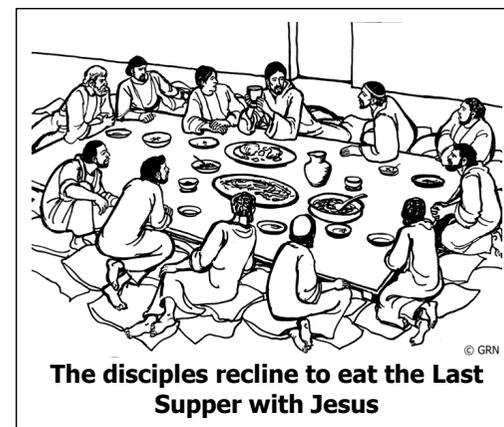
It was now only a few days before Jesus died on the cross. We must understand what Jesus taught His disciples at this time. He showed them how much faith they could have. He said, "You must not doubt in your heart. You must believe that what you say will happen. Then it will be done for you" (11:23). Many Christians have seen miracles take place after faithful prayer.

Therefore, we must pray and believe in order to receive. Also, "When you pray, forgive anyone you have anything against. Then your Father in Heaven will forgive your sins" (11:25,26). Forgive others in order to receive forgiveness.

fellowship meal that Jesus ate with His disciples. This was before He gave His life on the cross as punishment for our sins.

The disciples asked Jesus, "Where do you want us to go... to eat the Passover?" (14:12) Jesus told them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him" (14:13). Normally, only women carried the water. They found the man and he took them to a room which was ready for them to eat the Passover meal. They prepared the meal of lamb, bread without yeast, wine, herbs and sauces. Jesus knew everything about this secret plan.

This last meal helped the disciples to remember their Lord's death. They knew that the blood of the first Passover lamb was sprinkled on the Israelite doorposts in Egypt (Exodus 12:7,13). When the Angel of Death saw the blood of the lamb it passed over their homes and they were saved. Jesus died at the end of the Passover celebration. He became the Lamb of God who paid the price of our punishment to save all believers from their sins (Hebrews 9:12). The innocent blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, was in place of the punishment that we deserve!



While they were at the table, Jesus told them, "One of you who is eating with Me will hand Me over [betray Me, KJV] to My enemies" (Mark 14:18). Each one said, "Is it me Lord?" (14:19). Judas was the one who would betray Jesus (Matthew 26:25). Jesus knew this but the other disciples did not know this.

Then Jesus told them again, "The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him" (Mark 14:21; Isaiah 53:8-9).

"REMEMBER ME"

While they were eating, Jesus took the bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He gave it to His disciples and said, "This is My body given for you," He said. "Do this to remember Me" (14:22; Luke 22:19).

Then He took the cup saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). He gave thanks and handed it to them. All of them drank from it (Mark 14:23-24).

When Judas had eaten some of the meal with them, he went out (John 13:30).

Jesus again told the disciples about His crucifixion, as well as His resurrection and ascension. Soon they would see His enemies put Him to death.

That evening, back in Bethany, someone did something to show how much they loved Jesus.

Jesus was a guest at Simon's house. While Jesus ate, a woman brought a jar of very expensive oil. It smelled very sweet. She poured it on the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her long hair. The house was filled with the sweet smell of the oil.

Jesus was pleased with her, but some were angry. They said that the oil could be sold and the money given to the poor.

"Why are you angry with her?" Jesus said. "She has done a beautiful thing to Me" (14:6). "The poor you will always have with you and you can help them at any time... But you will not always have Me" (14:7).

This woman poured the sweet-smelling oil on Jesus while He was still alive. Jesus knew that He would soon die. Jesus told those in the room that what she had done will always be remembered (14:9). The Holy Spirit revealed to her that Jesus was the Messiah and also that He was soon going to die. This teaches a lesson to do loving things with your family while you have them with you. By loving them, we are also showing our love for Jesus.

After this, Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to talk to the chief priests to help them to arrest Jesus. They promised to pay Judas money if he did this (14:10-11).

THE LAST MEAL OF JESUS

Many years before Jesus lived on Earth, the people of Israel were slaves in Egypt for over 400 years. God warned Abraham that this would happen to his family when they moved to Egypt (Genesis 15:13). This happened 3500 years ago. Then God, by His great power, brought them out (Exodus 2:23-25, Psalm 106:7-12). Each year, at Passover, God's people always remember what He did for them before leading them out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

Each family kill a lamb, just as they did at the first Passover in Egypt, when the angel of death passed over them. In remembrance, they eat the Passover meal as a family. At the time of Jesus, Jews came from all over the country, and from far-away places, to celebrate in Jerusalem. Jewish families still eat this meal today which includes lamb, and bread made without yeast and wine.

Jesus was a devout Jew and ate the Passover meal with His disciples. The Passover meal always included lamb. Jews remembered that the death of a lamb in Egypt protected their family. The blood of the lamb was painted on the doorpost of the Israelites to save them from the angel of death in Egypt (Exodus 12:1-13). Today, we remember the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose sacrifice of blood saved us from death into everlasting life (Revelation 5:6-14).

Christians everywhere remember the Lord's Last Passover Supper. They share a simple meal of bread and wine or grape juice together. Most churches make it a regular part of their worship service, some more frequently than others. Some call it the breaking of bread, or Communion, or Eucharist, to remember the last

THE JEWISH LEADERS QUESTION JESUS

When Jesus began to teach the people in the Temple courtyards, the chief priests and elders were angry. They did not want Him in their Temple. Jesus had thrown out the traders but He did not stop the children who had followed Him there from shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matthew 21:15).

The priests asked what authority He had to do these things. Instead of answering, Jesus asked them a question: "Was John's baptism from Heaven, or did it come from men?" (Mark 11:30). The religious leaders did not understand what the Old Testament said about John and about Jesus. They thought it was a trick question.

Today, we still find that there are people who do not understand the truth or do not want to believe. The truth is written in the Bible for all to read and understand. Many people do not read the Bible and do not have faith in God for His plan of salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus. They do not understand that Jesus died so that their sins could be forgiven. They live and die without knowing the 'mystery of Christ' and God's love for us in sacrificing His Son as punishment for our sin. This means they do not go to Heaven, nor have eternal life.

The Jewish leaders were afraid of the people and afraid of giving the wrong answer (11:32). So they said, "We do not know."

Jesus said, "Then I will not tell you by what authority I am doing these things" (11:33).

We must always help people to understand God's truth before it is too late. Jesus promised us that the Holy Spirit will help us to understand and to tell others the truth, if they are willing to listen (John 15:26; 16:13-14).



Talk about this:

1. Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (11:1-9)?
2. When Jesus reached the Temple, what things did He see that made Him sad and angry (11:11,15-16)? Why (11:17)?
3. What happened to the fig tree (11:14,20)? What does this teach us about faith in God (11:22-24)?
4. What does the fig tree teach about the need to produce fruit in our lives and in our churches?



Think about this: What things in today's churches make Jesus sad and angry? What would Jesus find if He came to your church? Would He find God-centred prayer, worship and witness? Or would He find busy lives without a thought of God? Are we ready to speak and act in love against what is wrong even if we lose our friends, our job, our security?



Bible reading: Mark Chapter 12

THE PARABLE OF THE TENANT FARMERS

Jesus began His last three days of teaching before His death on the cross. Jesus told a story, or parable, of the owner of a vineyard. Owners of farms sometimes rented their land out to other tenant farmers.

The vineyard owner put a wall around it to keep out the animals and he made a wine press. This was the place where they trod the ripe grapes to press the juice out to make wine. He also made a watch-tower, where a guard stood and watched for thieves. He found farmers to work in his vineyard and then he went away (12:1).

At harvest time the owner sent his servants to get some of the fruit and grape juice. The farmers beat the servants and sent them away with nothing. The farmers even killed some of them (12:5).

The owner had only one person left to send, his son whom he loved. "They will respect my son," he said (12:6).

When the farmers saw the son they said, "This is the owner's son. Let us kill him, and then everything will be ours." So, they took him and killed him (12:7-8).

Jesus said the owner of the vineyard would kill the wicked farmers and give the vineyard to others to care for (12:9).

Jesus told this parable especially for the leaders in Israel, as some were going to kill Him. He said this to warn them. God sent His servants, the prophets, to speak to the Jewish leaders, but they would not listen. He sent other prophets and they treated them badly (Luke 11:48). He sent John the Baptist and he was killed. Then God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, and they killed Him too (Isaiah 53:10).

This parable is a picture-story of how Jesus would die. He would be killed by people who would not accept Jesus as God's Son and Israel's Messiah. And they did not accept those whom God sent before Jesus, to prepare the way for Him. Jesus warned them with more words from the Old Testament (Mark 12:10-11; Psalm 118:22-23).

The Jewish leaders knew that Jesus had spoken this parable against some of them (12:12). They had rejected God's most important building stone (Psalm 118:22). This parable shows how those who disobeyed God rejected His wonderful Son and Saviour.

Jesus spoke these things to the chief priests and other religious leaders. Jesus warned His disciples that the elders, chief priests and teachers of the Old Testament Law would make Him suffer. He would be killed but on the third day would rise from death (Luke 9:22). These Jewish leaders did not like His parable, nor the way He taught them from their own books written by Moses and the prophets. (Jesus quoted over 50 verses from the Old Testament in Mark's Gospel.)

God created the angels who do whatever He tells them to do, but even they do not know the plans of God (13:32). However, there will be signs to show that Jesus is coming again. Luke wrote down what Jesus said about the 'last days' before His return to Earth (Luke 21:5-36). We call these days the 'end times'. Jesus will return to Jerusalem to judge the Earth. He will stop the human race from destroying itself through knowing evil as well as good and by following lies, which were the plans of Satan from the beginning.

Jesus told a parable to help them understand (13:34-36). He told them the parable to show that His people must be ready at all times and watching for His return.

"What I say to you, I say to everyone. Watch!" (13:37). No-one knows when Jesus will return. Jesus said that even He did not know (13:32)! Only Father God knows.

We can use the parable in verses 34-36 to remind us about the church:

- The church belongs to Jesus Christ.
- He leaves His followers in charge.
- Each one has a job to do.
- We must watch out for Jesus to return suddenly.

Will Jesus find us asleep when He returns (13:36)? We should stay alert and work hard in extending God's Kingdom as if Jesus is coming back at any time!



Talk about this:

1. Is it a good thing to be proud of our church buildings (13:1)?
2. What did Jesus say will happen in the last days (13:8,9)?
3. Why should Christians not worry about what to say if they are taken to court for preaching the Good News (13:11)?
4. What will happen to those who do not give up their faith in God when persecuted (13:13)?
5. What did Jesus tell His disciples about the time of His Second Coming (13:32)?



Think about this: How can you watch and be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus? Are you ready to trust God, and the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus when troubles come? Satan is busier than ever, trying to deceive or destroy people (1 Peter 5:8-10). Ask Almighty God to help us to stand firm in our faith and in Bible truth. What must we NOT do (13:7)? Pray for those who are persecuted for their faith. Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you" (Matthew 5:44).



Bible reading: Mark Chapter 14

A WOMAN ANOINTS JESUS WITH OIL

At that time, the religious leaders looked for an excuse to arrest Jesus and kill Him (14:1). We should pray against secrecy and deceit which cause spiritual death within the church.

“Be careful that no-one fools [deceives, KJV] you,” Jesus said (13:5). Men will teach wrong things. They will say that they are the Christ. They will say they know the date when Christ will come again. They will fool many people. Jesus said, “Keep watch, that you are not deceived by the enemies of God who seek power for wrong reasons.”

MANY TROUBLES THAT WILL HAPPEN

Jesus then said, “You will hear about wars... Do not be alarmed [troubled, KJV]. These things must happen... Nation will fight against nation. There will be earthquakes in many places. People will go hungry” (13:7-8).

We are now living in the days that Jesus warned about and many believers do not realise this. There will be big troubles before Jesus returns. Also times of a false peace when Christians will forget to pray for the Kingdom of God to be established on Earth. They will be deceived by teaching of prosperity and enjoy the activities of our modern world and do nothing about the moral decline.

Jesus also warned His followers, “You will stand in front of governors and kings because of Me. In that way you will be witnesses to them. The Good News has to be preached to all nations before the end comes. You will be arrested and brought to trial, but do not worry... just say what God brings to your mind at the time. It is not you speaking but the Holy Spirit” (13:9-11).

Then Jesus told the disciples more things that would happen. Many of these things have already happened. Others will happen soon, but we don't know when. The two greatest things Jesus said would happen were:

1. The Temple will be pulled down (13:2). This happened about 40 years after Jesus said these words.
2. Jesus Christ will come again in power. This is still to happen (13:26).

His words prepared His followers for the fall of Jerusalem. He told them how to escape the Roman armies. They should not think God would come and save them by a miracle. He will shorten the time of these things “because of God's chosen people, He has shortened it” (13:20).

In AD 70, the Roman armies, led by Titus, attacked all sides of the city. Then the Christians remembered the words of Jesus and escaped. They had time to cross the River Jordan to the east where they were safe.

JESUS WILL COME AGAIN

Jesus warns us that in times of trouble, people will say things that are untrue about His return to Earth. They will try to deceive God's people (13:21-22). He warns us several times, “Keep watching!” (13:5,23,33,37). “False christs and false prophets will appear” (13:22).

After that, there will be more times of great trouble in the Universe (13:24-26). Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away” (13:31). Jesus will come again and no-one knows when this will happen (13:26,32-36).

It was a clear warning that some of the religious leaders were not obedient to the LORD God Almighty nor believing in His long-promised Messiah.

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ASK JESUS A TRICK QUESTION

Soon after this, they made their plans to arrest Him and kill Him. They did not believe that Jesus had authority to say these things (Mark 11:28). They did not know or believe that God had given Jesus authority.

Some Pharisees tried to trap Jesus by His words and answers (12:13). They knew that the people did not like the taxes they had to pay to the Romans, so they asked Jesus what He thought about the tax.

Jesus knew they wanted to trap Him. If He said “Yes, pay the tax” the people would be angry. If He said “Do not pay the tax” these leaders would report Him to King Herod. So He said to them, “Why are you trying to trap [test] Me? Bring Me a coin” (12:15).

They gave Him a silver coin. Roman coins had an image of the face of the Roman Emperor Caesar on them.

“Whose picture is this?” He asked. “Caesar's”, they replied (12:16).

Then He said to them, “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (12:17). By this, Jesus showed that there are many ways in which we can obey our leaders and government without going against God's laws. They were amazed at His answer. Even hypocrites can believe that Jesus teaches the truth from God. We too must never ignore the ungodly nor the self-righteous, as God wants to save them too.

SOME RELIGIOUS LEADERS DO NOT KNOW GOD'S TRUTH

Next the Sadducees came to Jesus. They did not believe there was life after death. They tried to trick or trap Jesus with a law from the Old Testament: “Suppose a woman's husband died and she married again. If she had seven husbands, which husband will be hers in the resurrection?” they asked (12:20-23).

Jesus showed them their mistake. “You do not know the Scriptures... The dead will rise, but they will be like angels,” Jesus said. Angels do not marry (12:24-27).

Then He asked, “Have you not read? God said to Moses, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living” (Exodus 3:6). These men must still be alive spiritually if God claims to be their God. Their own books written by Moses and the prophets taught them that there is life after death. Jesus told them, “You do not know the Scriptures. Nor do you know the power of God” (12:24).

These religious leaders did not fully understand their own teachings through Moses and the prophets of God. We must not be like them. We must know our Bibles well and also seek God's understanding day by day.

Today, people say wrong things against Jesus. It is the evil in their hearts that make them do this. They show that they do not know or want to understand God or His Bible.

A RELIGIOUS LEADER WHO TRULY KNEW GOD'S TRUTH

A teacher of the Law heard Jesus give this answer. He asked, "Which is the most important of all the commandments?" (12:28).

This man did not come to trick or trap Jesus. He came to Jesus to learn more about the truth from God. Jesus was pleased with him (12:34). This is what Jesus taught the man from the Old Testament (12:30-31):

1. Only the Lord God Almighty, Yahweh, is God. He is the one true God. There is no other God but Him. Love God most of all, with all your heart and soul and mind and strength (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).
2. Love your neighbour just as much as you love yourself. This includes friends and family. This also includes strangers and even people you do not like! (Leviticus 19:18). It includes the people you work with. It includes anyone you meet that needs help (Luke 10:29-37).

Jesus said, "There is no commandment more important than these" (12:31). This man said that he believed these two commandments (12:33).

Jesus then confirmed that he was not far from the Kingdom of God (12:34). After that, no-one dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

WHOSE SON IS THE MESSIAH?

Jesus asked them a difficult question. Many years before, King David wrote about the promised Messiah, or Christ. He called Him 'my Lord' (Psalm 110:1). The Jews knew that the Christ would come from the family line of King David, but they were looking for a king who would reign on Earth.

Jesus told them He was not only David's son, but He used David's own words to tell them that the Messiah was also David's Lord (Psalm 110:1). We know that Jesus came from David's family line through Joseph who married Mary, the mother of Jesus. We also know that He is greater than King David. He is the Son of God and lived with God in Heaven before David was born. Jesus was King David's Messiah and Lord.

The people enjoyed the teaching of Jesus (12:37). They knew Jesus was not like some of their teachers who:

- liked to wear special clothes;
- liked to be greeted in the markets;
- wanted to have the best seats and places of honour;
- said long prayers, to show off;
- demanded money from widows instead of caring for them.

Jesus knew these men deserved God's punishment (12:38-40).

GIVE TO GOD IN LOVE

In a court of the Temple there were thirteen large offering boxes. The priests used the money to buy food and pay people to care for the Temple. Jesus saw one of

the poor widows come into the courtyard. This was as far as women were allowed to go. She put two very small copper coins into one of the boxes.

Rich people threw large bags of money into the boxes. They had plenty of money and so it was easy for them to give it to the Temple. But this widow was putting in all the money she had (12:44). It showed how much she loved God.

We can give little or much to our Lord. Giving is easier when we have plenty to give but giving all that we have is hard. If we truly love God we will give all that we have to Him. We will give Him our lives. We will give our gifts and our skills to God with a willing heart (Exodus 25:2; 35:21-29).



Talk about this:

1. Who were the farmers, the farm owner and the owner's son in the story of the vineyard (Mark 12:1-12)?
2. Why did the religious leaders ask Jesus questions (12:13,18)?
3. What answers did Jesus give to their teacher's question (12:30,31,34)?
4. What question did Jesus ask the people (12:35)?
5. What did King David say about Jesus (Psalm 110:1)? How could Jesus be David's descendant and also his Lord (Matthew 1:6,16)? Is Jesus Lord of your life, too?
6. What did Jesus say about the widow's gift (Mark 12:43)?
7. Who loved God the most: the religious leaders or the widow?



Think about this: Why did Jesus quote verses from the Old Testament? Which commandments did Jesus say are the most important (12:30-31)? Why do we need to understand that the Old Testament teachings are fulfilled in the New Testament though Christ Jesus? What is our role as 'tenant farmers' in the Kingdom of God? Why was Jesus so certain that the teacher in verse 34 was so close to the Kingdom of God?



Bible reading: Mark Chapter 13

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE FUTURE

At the end of the day, Jesus went with His disciples to the Mount of Olives, just outside the city. From the other side of the valley, Jerusalem looked beautiful. The disciples pointed to the wonderful Temple buildings (13:1).

"Not one stone here will be left upon another," Jesus told them. "Every stone will be thrown down" (13:2). The disciples asked, "When will these things happen?" (13:4).

We all want to know what is going to happen in the future, but God tells us only what is good for us to know. Only He knows what is going to happen. He has told us that one day soon, Jesus is coming back to Earth on the clouds (Matthew 24:30). Our great buildings and organisations will be here only as long as God allows them.