

Mark Chapters 9–16: THE DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST

- ◆ Heaven's light shines on Jesus
- ◆ Bad spirits and healing
- ◆ Marriage, divorce and sex
- ◆ Jesus tells about the future
- ◆ Arrest and trial of Jesus
- ◆ The meaning of the cross
- ◆ How to obey Jesus today

THIS BOOK teaches about the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ – how Jesus died, came back to life and went back to heaven. God did this as part of His plan to save the world from punishment for sin. 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 for evermore. You will also read about how to obey the last instructions of Jesus.

MANNA PUBLICATIONS supply Bible teaching commentaries written by Fred Morris. For many years Fred, and his wife Lorna, travelled round the world teaching and preaching. When they returned home they wrote these notes for printing and selling wherever there was a need for basic foundational Christian teaching.

THIS REVISED UK edition is written in easy-to-read Worldwide English which will add understanding and also speed up translation into other languages. It gives basic teaching for all readers plus additional notes for Bible students, teachers and pastors.

THESE BOOKS are to use on your own or to study in a group. They will teach you God's truth. They will help you to know God's Son, Jesus Christ. They will help you to talk about your faith in God. They will stop you from going the wrong way in life. They will help to lead you closer to Christ. They provide food for life.

WE PRAY that you may have a new peace and purpose in life as you read the Bible and use these commentaries.

Manna Publications

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 in easy-to-read Worldwide English for personal or group study by Fred Morris



Mark Part 2 Chapters 9 to 16

To the reader or leader

These Bible teaching commentaries explain the truth about God's Word in a way that is easy to read and understand. You can use these books to study the Bible on your own or with others in a group. In a group study, each person should have his or her own book and a Bible if possible.

There is a lot of information in this book. Please study it slowly and thoughtfully. Ask God to help you apply the things you learn to your own life and situation.



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



Talk about: Where you see this, there are questions that can be asked in a group study. They also help the reader to understand the Bible verses.



Where you see this sign, the question requires more time and meditation.



Multiple choice questions. Where you see this, there are questions with three possible answers; some are right answers, some are wrong answers. These questions help you to think carefully about what you are reading. The answers to these questions are given at the back of the book. You can use the questions as a personal test.



Where you see ruled boxes, the information inside is mainly for Bible students, teachers and preachers.

Additional Bible readings are there to give you important information. God will use them to speak to you. This is why you should check all readings now or later and use them for study at home. Some readings are from the Old Testament (O.T.), which we call 'the holy writings'. That is the part of the Bible written before Jesus Christ lived on this earth. Some readings are from the New Testament (N.T.), the part of the Bible which was written after Jesus Christ lived on this earth.

Manna Bible teaching commentaries give God's truth as a foundation for all believers. The people leading the study should add applications and experiences from their own Christian life and culture.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Chapters 9 – 12

A. 1. c; 2. a; 3. a; 4. a; 5. b; 6. c.

B. 1. T, 2. T. 3. T. 4. F; 5. T, 6. F.

C. 1. separate; 2. life; 3. believe; 4. neighbour; 5. respect; 6. taxes.

Chapters 13 – 16

A. 1. b. 2. c, 3. c, 4. a, 5. b. 6. c. 7. b, 8. b.

B. 1. T; 2.T; 3 F; 4. T; 5. F; 6.T; 7. T; 8. T.

C. 1. rulers; kings. 2. branches; leaves. 3. promised; money. 4. cock; deny; three. 5. garment; crown. 6. noontime; land. 7. showed; different. 8. true; signs.

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6. People made fun of Jesus on the cross. T or F?
7. The disciples did not believe Jesus was alive until they saw him. T or F?
8. Jesus went to heaven and sat with God. T or F?

C. Put the correct words in the spaces

1. For my sake you will stand before — and —.
2. As soon as the — begin to grow and the — come you know summer is near.
3. The priests were glad when Judas went to them and they — to give him —.
4. Jesus said to Peter, 'Before the — crows two times, you will — Me — times'.
5. The soldiers put a purple — on Jesus and made a — of thorns.
6. At — the whole — became dark.
7. Jesus — himself to them but he looked like a — person.
8. He made their words come — by the — that happened after.

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INTRODUCTION

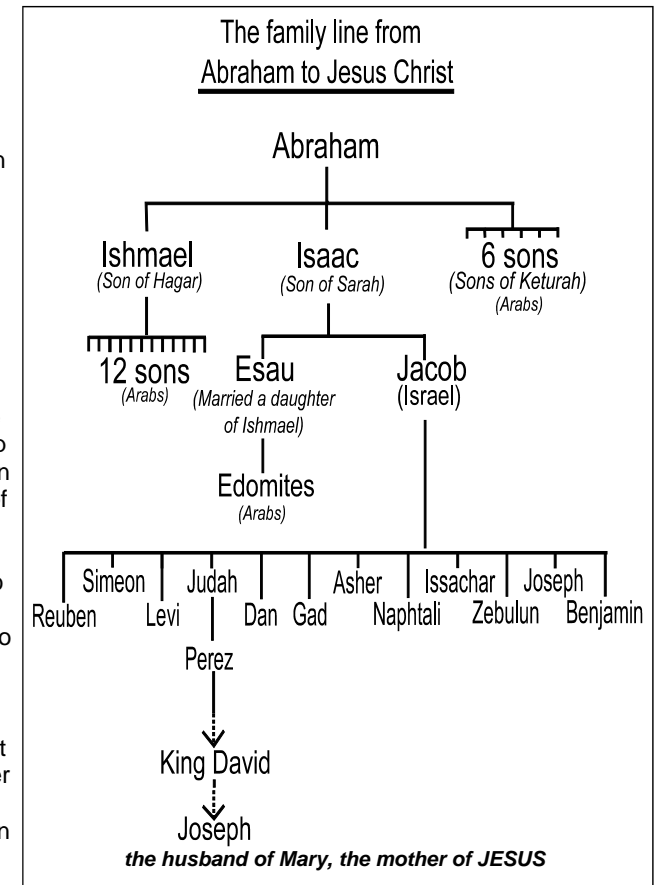
Dear readers. In our first Bible commentary on Mark's Gospel (Mark 1–8) we talked about the many miracles that Jesus did. Christians believe He is the 'Son of God'. Though He was the Son of God, Jesus was brought up by Joseph, a carpenter in Nazareth in Israel. Jesus called Himself the 'Son of Man'.

We are beginning our second part of the life of Jesus Christ near the end of the three years of His teaching and healing work. These things happened nearly 2000 years ago.

In Part 1, we told you that Jesus taught many parables about the kingdom of God. Parables are stories that ordinary people can understand. They talk about the ordinary things in life that show the truth of God to those who are really seeking.

We also told you that the followers of Jesus believed that He was the Messiah, or Christ. The Jews in Israel had been waiting many, many years for the Messiah to come. He was God's Saviour that God had promised in order to save His people. The prophets of God said that He would come. They wrote about Him in the holy writings – the Old Testament of the Bible.

Some people who followed Jesus thought that He had come to save the people from their enemies, the Romans. But Jesus, the Messiah, came to set up a new kind of kingdom in the world – a kingdom of believers who would trust in God and obey Him. He did not come to set the people free from the Romans. He came to set the people free from their sins – their wrong ways – so that they could know God, be part of His kingdom wherever they lived, and have everlasting life in heaven with Him.



The meaning of the Hebrew name of Jesus (Yeshua) is 'God's Saviour of the people'. Many prophets wrote down the promise God had given them that a Saviour would be born in Israel. People kept reading these holy writings. They read that He would be from the family line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Judah and King David. He would save all the Jews and the whole world if the people would only believe in God and in His Saviour.

Christians believe that Jesus is this Saviour, this Messiah, but many Jews and Arabs do not believe Jesus is the Son of God. They are still waiting for Messiah to come.

We also told you at the end of the first part of Mark's Gospel that Jesus gave His disciples (followers) a warning. He told them that He would have to suffer a lot and to die in order to become their Saviour. That was one of many things said about the Messiah in the holy writings (especially in Isaiah 53). These things were written down hundreds of years before God sent His Son Jesus. We can read about these things in our Bibles and see how they all came true.



Now read Mark 9:1 (also in Matthew 16:18)

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In this Bible commentary on Mark 9–16 we tell you about the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ – that is, how Jesus died, came back to life and went back to heaven. This was part of God's plan to save the world from punishment for sin. It means that followers of Jesus can have their sins forgiven and can go to heaven to live with Jesus for ever.

We begin this second part of Mark's Gospel with this one verse. (It is part of the sayings of Jesus from the chapter before this.) 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. These things were written down in the holy writings by the prophets. These things were to make people ready for the coming of the kingdom of God.

For 400 years God had not spoken to His people through His prophets. God waited for the right time to send Jesus into the world. Then God showed His wonderful power through Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension and through the wonderful things that happened after that. In this way, the Holy Spirit was building a new kingdom in the lives of those who followed Jesus Christ – **the kingdom of God**.

The next thing that Mark tells us is how God made Jesus ready for these great things to happen.



Now read: Mark 9:2–13 (also in Matthew 17:1–13)

JESUS SHINES WITH A BRIGHT LIGHT

A week later Jesus took Peter, James and John up a high mountain (9:2) – maybe Mount Hermon which was 3,000m high above the plain. Luke says that they went

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTERS 13 TO 16

(Answers at the end of the book)

A. Multiple choice: Finish the sentence with the best answers

1. Jesus talked to His disciples and said that ...
 - a) there would be peace on earth.
 - b) many people would say that they were the Christ.
 - c) the disciples would have no trouble.
2. The day when the Son of Man will come in the clouds ...
 - a) the angels know.
 - b) the disciples knew.
 - c) God the Father knows.
3. When the woman broke the bottle of sweet-smelling oil over Jesus ...
 - a) He was angry with her .
 - b) the poor people wanted it.
 - c) he said she would be remembered for it.
4. At the Passover Feast ...
 - a) Jesus gave His disciples bread and wine.
 - b) Peter knew he would betray Jesus.
 - c) they were all very quiet.
5. Pilate was very surprised because ...
 - a) Jesus was the king of the Jews.
 - b) Jesus said nothing to answer the things they said against Him.
 - c) the priests said many bad things about Jesus.
6. When Jesus was crucified ...
 - a) He called for Elijah.
 - b) He drank some wine and myrrh.
 - c) the land became dark for three hours.

B. Which sentences are true (T) and which are false (F)?

1. The Holy Spirit will speak through the disciples. T or F?
2. The sky and earth will pass away but the words of Jesus will not. T or F?
3. Judas did not want to help the chief priests. T or F?
4. Jesus was very troubled in the garden of Gethsemane. T or F?
5. The crowd did not want to free Barabbas. T or F?

- Paul taught the believers how to stay true to the faith and to have strength in times of suffering (v. 22).
- Paul appointed leaders in the churches who had a strong faith in God (v.23).
- Paul prayed to God to look after the church and its leaders (v.23).

Keep on reading your Bible to understand more of what it means to be a follower of Christ and how to serve in His church with the power of the Holy Spirit.

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. What did the angel messenger say to the woman at the tomb (Matt. 28:5–7)?
2. Did the disciples believe that Mary had seen Jesus?
3. Did Mary Magdalene see the gardener or Jesus (John 20:15)?
4. What was Jesus' last commands to His disciples (Matt. 28:18–20)?
5. What does the cross mean to you?
6. Are you obeying Jesus' last commands?
7. How would you tell people that their sins can be forgiven?

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS INTO HEAVEN

After these things the disciples were filled with great joy (Luke 24:52,53).

The last ten verses in Mark tell of how Jesus was taken up into Heaven (See also Acts 1:9). They may have been written at a later time as they are not in the oldest copies of his book. Mark's gospel may have ended at 16:8.

The story of Jesus given by Mark ends suddenly. But it does not end with the death of Jesus. It ends with the record of the resurrection and the instruction to go and meet Jesus to receive His instructions (16:7).

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 part of 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.)

John the apostle wrote: 'These things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life because you belong to Him.' (John 20:31).

The ascension of Jesus into heaven meant that His life on earth was ended. But shortly after this He sent His Spirit to be with His followers. In this way Jesus can be with everyone, in every place in every time. The story of the church of Jesus Christ is the story of all people who believe in Him and who have the Holy Spirit.

The history of the first few years of the Christian church is written down for us by Luke in his book 'The Acts of the Apostles'.

The church of Jesus Christ will be kept alive by its faith in the risen Lord Jesus and by the work of His Spirit.

there to pray. It was a lonely place where no-one ever came.

The three disciples stared at Jesus. His face shone with heaven's light, and the disciples could not look at Him for long. The bright light of His glory was bright as lightning, too strong for them to look at (Luke 9:29). His clothes shone brightly also.

The coming of God's kingdom

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

1. The death of Jesus on a cross (the crucifixion) so that His sacrifice of blood would be acceptable to God to forgive the sins of the people who repent and turn from sin.
2. The raising of Jesus from death (the resurrection) into everlasting life which will be the gift of God to all who believe in His Son.
3. The lifting up of Jesus into heaven (the ascension) to be with God the Father where He prepares a place for all believers (John 14:2).
4. The sending of God's Holy Spirit (at Pentecost) to help believers to prepare the way for the kingdom of God with much power for all nations. (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) showing that God now lives in believers, not temples or church buildings (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Then they saw two other men – Moses and Elijah. They were shining brightly too. They had come to talk to Jesus about His death at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31).

GOD SPEAKS ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP

As the three talked, a bright cloud came over them. It had come over Moses long ago, when God spoke to him on the mountain (Exodus 19:18). Peter did not know what to say (Mark 9:6). He tried to talk instead of listen.

Then God's voice came from the cloud: 'This is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!' (9:7). The disciples were afraid, and fell on their faces. They lay on the ground until Jesus came and touched them.



'Get up. Don't be afraid,' He said (Matthew. 17:7). When they looked up, they were alone with Jesus. 'Do not tell anyone', Jesus said, 'until the Son of Man has risen from the dead' (9:9). From now on, Jesus talked a lot about His death (crucifixion) and His coming back to life (resurrection) (9:9,12,31; 10:33,34,45; 12:8; 14:8).

This story of the shining light from God is called the **transfiguration** of Christ. It shows 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: Jesus knew Moses and Elijah who lived many years before.
 - Moses and Elijah knew that it was God's plan for Jesus to die: they were talking to Him about it.
 - God did this to encourage Jesus before He died.
- Peter wrote about the transfiguration some years later (2 Peter 1:17,18).

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. Why was Jesus transfigured before them?
2. Who did the voice belong to and what did it say about Jesus?
3. Why were Peter, James and John afraid?
4. What did the transfiguration story prove about Jesus?
5. Do you sometimes talk instead of listen?

JOHN THE BAPTIZER CAME FIRST

The holy writings tell us that a person would come 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' (Malachi 4:5-6). 'Elijah does come first,' Jesus told the disciples. This was John the Baptist.

John preached 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' and brought many of Israel's people back to the Lord their God. He made the way ready for the Lord Jesus. He had the same spirit and power that Elijah had. He taught people who had not been obeying God. He told them to be wise and do what is right. In this way, he prepared the people and made them ready to receive the Lord Jesus (Luke 1:16,17). But many Jewish leaders did not believe that John was God's prophet and King Herod killed him.

Nor did they believe that Jesus was the Son of God. To these leaders Jesus said, 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to people producing the fruit of it ...' (Matthew 21:43). 'Fruit' means believing and doing work that pleases God.

At that time many of the people believed that Elijah would come before the Messiah. So it was a natural question for the disciples to ask Jesus about Elijah, especially since they had met him on the mountain top with Moses.

Note that before this question, Jesus talks about His resurrection. And in answering the question, He also talks about the suffering of 'the Son of Man'— the name He often used for Himself (9:12).

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. Why did the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first (9:11)?
2. What did Jesus mean when He said that Elijah had already come?
3. How did Jesus know that He would suffer and come alive from the dead (9:9)?
4. List all the things Peter, James and John learnt about Jesus.

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. His followers must go to all countries and make disciples (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15).
3. His followers should baptize believers in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
4. The followers of Jesus must teach the things that Jesus taught (Matthew 28:20).
5. Jesus will be with His people at all times (Matthew 28:20).
6. Those who believe in Jesus will be saved, but those who do not believe in Jesus will be punished (Mark 16:16).
7. Those who believe in Jesus will do great miracles and be given the gift to speak in unknown languages (Mark 16:17).
8. Everything written about Jesus in the books of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms must come true (Luke 24:44).
9. The followers will tell people about Jesus and teach them to turn away from their sins and be forgiven (Luke 24:47).
10. People from every nation will hear about the name of Jesus (Luke 24:47).
11. They were to begin this work in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).
12. The disciples should wait until God sent them His power from Heaven (Luke 24:49).

FOLLOWING JESUS TODAY

We should try to follow these instructions of Jesus. Paul tried to copy the ministry of Jesus. Here is just one example from Acts 14:21-23:

- Paul preached the good news of God's salvation to gain new followers of Jesus (v.21).

Evidence of the resurrection of Jesus	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared at least 12 times: 2. Mary meets Jesus (Mark 16:9; John 20:14-17). 3. The two Mary's see Jesus (Matthew 28:1,8-10). 4. Jesus speaks to Peter (Luke 24:34). 5. Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-32). 6. Jesus appears to the waiting disciples (Luke 24:36-49). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Jesus appears especially for Thomas (John 20:26-29). 8. Jesus appears to seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee (John 21). 9. Jesus teaches the eleven disciples on a mountain (Matthew 28:16). 10. Jesus met His followers for a meal (Acts 1:4). 11. Jesus appears to 500 followers (1 Corinthians 15:6). 12. Jesus appears to James, His half-brother (1 Corinthians 15:7). 13. Jesus appears for the last time at His ascension to heaven (Luke 24:50-51).

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 came up behind John and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen and also the burial cloth that had been round Jesus' head. The cloth was folded by itself. When they saw this they realised that Jesus had risen from death! (John 20:6–8).

Mary Magdalene came back to the tomb and stood outside crying. Then she saw a man. She thought He was the gardener. 'If you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him ...' she begged.

Then Jesus spoke her name, 'Mary.' She knew that voice! She fell at His feet and worshipped Him, holding onto His feet.

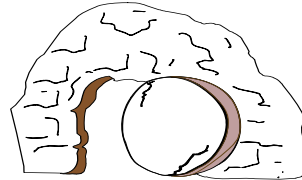
'Do not hold onto Me,' He said to her, 'for I have not yet returned to the Father' (John 20:17).

Mary Magdalene hurried back to the disciples.

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).



WHAT JESUS SAID BEFORE HIS ASCENSION

After the resurrection of Jesus, the eleven disciples went to Galilee as Jesus and the angel had told them.

He is Risen!

Memorable things written in evidence of the resurrection:

- Earthquake (Matthew 28:2).
- Stone rolled away from the tomb (Mark 16:4).
- Angel sat on the stone, bright as lightning (Matthew 28:2-3).
- Roman guards shaking with fear and not able to move (Matthew 28:4).
- An angel speaks to the two Marys 'He is risen' (Matthew 28:5-6).
- The angel invites them into the tomb (Matthew 28:6).
- They are shown the empty tomb by

the angel (Mark 16:5).

- The angel tells them to go and tell the disciples the good news (Matthew 28:7; Mark 16:7).
- The angel specially mentions Peter who denied Jesus (Mark 16:7).
- The angel gives instructions to go to Galilee to meet Jesus (Matthew 28:7; Mark 16:7).
- Jesus meets the women (Matthew 28:9; Mark 16:9).
- Peter sees the empty tomb and the clothes used for wrapping dead bodies (Luke 24:12; John 20:6).



Now read: Mark 9:14–31 (also in Luke 9:37–45)

A BOY WITH AN EVIL SPIRIT

A father had come to find Jesus and get help for his son who could not hear or speak. Even as a child, an evil spirit had taken him. 'It has often thrown him into the fire or water to kill him ...' the father said (9:22).

Just then Jesus came to them. 'What are you arguing with the Pharisees about?' He asked the disciples. The boy's father answered, 'I brought my son who is controlled by an evil spirit ... I asked Your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not' (9:17–18).

'How long has he been like this?' Jesus asked. The father had to tell Jesus how helpless he was:

- He could do nothing to help the boy.
- He had waited a long time to come to Jesus.
- He was ready to give up hope.

THE FAITH TO BELIEVE FOR HEALING

As followers of Jesus, we must expect that 'mountain top' experiences with God are followed by difficult times when evil spirits resist us. This tests our faith to believe in the power of Jesus. We can only win against Satan and evil spirits when we have Jesus' power in us (Luke 10:19,20). Believers who are saved by Him must speak the name of Jesus.

We can protect our children by praying for them and asking for the power of the Lord Jesus, because He gave His blood on the cross to save them. God 'does not want any of these little ones to be lost' (Matthew 18:14).

We must pray for our children often. But we must also keep them away from evil people, and evil places, and evil books and TV programmes, where Satan can attack them. God's power to heal and send away evil spirits is given to believers who pray in the name of Jesus through the blood of Jesus. But faith is also needed.

'You must believe,' Jesus told the father. He cried out, 'I do believe.' Then he added a quick prayer, 'Help me overcome my unbelief!' (9:24).

We should all pray that father's prayer. God can do everything for us; but we must believe!

When Jesus saw a crowd running to see what was happening (9:25), He spoke to the unclean spirit. He did not want a crowd. He called the spirit by name – 'You spirit that stops him from being able to hear or speak, I command you, come out of him ...'

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

This happened just a few days before the death of Jesus. **We must learn carefully what Jesus taught His disciples in His last days.** He says here: 'Everything is possible for the one who believes' (9:23).

No problem is too hard for God (Genesis 18:14). One hard thing may take more faith, another more courage, another more patience, another more time. Hold on, ask in faith, and see God work in all things for your good (Romans 8:28). Do not lose hope.

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. Why did the disciples not have the power to heal the sick boy (9:18,19, 29)?
2. What did this father say to Jesus (9:22)? Do you ever feel like this?
3. What was Jesus' answer (9:23, 29)? What is He saying to you in your need?
4. Do you believe that Jesus heals people today?

THE DISCIPLES DO NOT UNDERSTAND ABOUT JESUS

Jesus spoke 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 these things (v.32). When we do not understand, this makes us afraid. When they knew Jesus better, they would understand more about the things of God. Then they would understand why Jesus came to earth to suffer in order to save people. 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. (See Mark 9:35; 10:43-45).



Now read Mark 9:33-41 (also in Matthew 18:1-5)

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

Then Jesus took a little child and made the child stand among them (9:36). Jesus had just spoken about being killed. But the disciples were arguing who was the greatest among them! They had not really listened to or understood what Jesus had said. 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 humble like this child is the most important in the kingdom of Heaven' (Matthew 18:4).

Children are special to God. There are many children in His kingdom. Be kind to them, Jesus told His disciples.

Jesus spoke strong words. Later on He said, 'Anyone who will not receive God's kingdom like a little child will never enter it.' (Mark 10:15). And He took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them (10:16).



It is easy for a child to trust. A child quickly believes and trusts in the words of Jesus. So God's kingdom is made up of people who believe and trust just like little children. We should respect and welcome those people who trust in Jesus. Even if their faith is simple – like the faith of a child.

To people everywhere, the cross means, 'I love you. I died for you. There was 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 saves us from the punishment we deserve (Psalm 103:10-12). Jesus took the punishment in our place (Romans 5:8). And for those who turn to the cross and accept that Jesus died for them, their lives are changed. Their sins are forgiven. They come closer to God. And they become more like Jesus. And they have hope of going to heaven.



Now read Mark 15:42-47 (also in Matthew 27:57-66)

KEEPING THE BODY OF JESUS SAFE

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

The two Marys watched Joseph of Arimathea take the body of Jesus down from the cross. Pilate gave permission for Joseph to bury Jesus.

Joseph wrapped the body in clean cloth and placed it in a tomb. This was a small room cut out of rock specially for burying bodies. Joseph rolled a large heavy stone in front of the tomb. He went away and left the two women sitting outside.

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 will come back to life (27:63). But the disciples did not believe this. They did not understand what Jesus told them (Luke 18:34).



Now read: Mark 16:1-14 (also in Matthew 28:1-15)

JESUS CHRIST RISES FROM DEATH

Early on the Sunday three women brought spices (dried pieces of plants that have a strong sweet smell). They took the spices to the tomb where the body of Jesus had been laid. They wanted to put them on Jesus' dead body.

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 that covered the opening into the tomb was large and heavy. But, when they looked, they saw that the stone had been rolled away. An angel of God had done it (Matthew 28:2).

'Do not be afraid,' he said to them. 'I know you are looking for Jesus ... He is not here: He is risen, just as He said ... Come and see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead.' Notice that the angel specially spoke of Peter, who denied Jesus (16:7) but not Judas who betrayed Jesus. The angel then said that Jesus would go to Galilee to meet the disciples – 'just as He told you' (16:7).

The women ran from the tomb, afraid yet full of joy (Matthew 28:8). When they got back to the city, they told the eleven disciples and the others. But 'their words seemed to them like nonsense' (Luke 24:11). This was how the first Easter morning began.

sentence? We are punished fairly, for we are getting what our actions deserve, but this man (Jesus) has done nothing wrong' (Luke 23:40–41). Jesus forgave this man's sins and told him that He would meet him in Heaven (Luke 23:43).

Then the second criminal turned to Jesus, 'Remember me,' he begged, 'when You come into Your kingdom' (Luke 23:42). To this man Jesus said, 'What I am telling you is true. Today you will be with Me in paradise' (Luke 23:43).

THE MIRACLES AT THE CRUCIFIXION

Notice here that Jesus cries out to God, His father. Jesus felt totally helpless, alone and deserted by God. This was part of the suffering of the cross.

When Jesus died, God gave many great signs:

- The darkness at midday (Luke 23:44–45). 'From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over the land' (Matthew 27:45). The sun did not go out of 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.)
- The Temple curtain, which kept ordinary people away from God, was torn from top to bottom (15:38). The message was plain. People may now come straight to God, because of the sacrifice of Jesus (Hebrews 9:12; 10:19–20). We no longer need a high priest to go behind the curtain in the Temple or church to ask God to forgive our sins. Jesus is our High Priest. Through His blood and His death we can come to God.
- The miracle of 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 split open and many of God's people were raised to life (Matthew 27:52). Their spirits and their bodies came back and they lived again! There was such joy in Heaven that these holy ones came out of their graves. And 'after Jesus rose from the dead' they went into the city to show that their Saviour had risen! They were God's people in life, and God used them even after they had died.



HOW THE CROSS CHANGED WORLD HISTORY

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

To some people the cross means nothing more than a strange story. But to those who see in the cross the love of God, it is the greatest thing that ever happened. The cross and death of Jesus Christ has become the most important event in history!

This teaching of Jesus means these things:

- To be great, we must put ourselves last of all (9:35).
- To be great, we must serve others (9:35).
- To be great, we must help and respect people with a simple child-like faith (9:37)

Then Jesus went on to say that we should welcome and encourage other believers, even if we do not know them (9:40). Look for practical ways to help them (9:41).

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. Why did Jesus ask the disciples what they had been arguing about (9:33)?
2. What did Jesus say about trying to be first (9:35)? Does He need to say this to us?
3. What did Jesus say about little children (9:37, Matt. 18:1–5) and why should we become like them?
4. How can we welcome Jesus (9:37)?
5. What kind of people does God welcome into His kingdom?
6. What did Jesus teach the disciples about being the greatest?
7. Why did Jesus talk about a cup of water (9:41)?



Now read: Mark 9:42–50 (also Matthew 18:6–9)

PUT ALL SIN OUT OF YOUR LIFE

Jesus warned us not to lead children into sin (9:42). Nor should we mistreat, misuse or abuse them. Jesus did not really want you to 'cut off your hand' (v.43) or 'cut off your foot' (v.45) or 'poke out your eye' (v.47). If you do this, it will not stop you sinning nor make God forgive your sins. But He wants us to know what a terrible thing it is if others sin because of us (v.42). It deserves punishment and everlasting hell. A millstone is a very heavy, flat stone with a hole in the middle used for grinding grain into flour.

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 God's judgement (Isaiah 66:24). Jesus used the prophet's words (Mark 9:48).

The people knew what He was saying. They threw their rubbish outside the city. It filled the valley. Fires always burned there, and the place was full of flies and worms. Jesus spoke of this to show what hell will be like.

Instead, Jesus said, we should be useful like salt. Then He teaches something else important. (9:50): 'Be at peace with each other'.



Now read: Mark 10:1–12 (also Matthew 19:1–9)

QUESTIONS ABOUT DIVORCE

The teachers of the Jewish law asked Jesus, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his

wife' (10:2)? Divorce was common, but what did God's law say? Moses let a man write a divorce note and send the wife away (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). 'It was because you are hard to teach that Moses wrote this law,' Jesus said.

'Haven't you read?' He asked, and He gave them God's marriage law (10:7; based on Genesis 2:24). God's wish is for one man to be married to one woman, for life.

Adam and Eve sinned and spoiled God's plan. Sin makes people selfish and unkind. As sinners, we cannot fully love another person because we love ourselves more. So, when men feel angry with their wives, they sometimes divorce them. Jesus said it was not so 'in the beginning' (Matthew 19:8).

Where God's love rules in men's hearts, men understand that God wants marriage to be a life-long joining of one man with one woman.

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

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



Now read: Mark 10:17-31 (also in Matthew 19:16-30)

A RICH YOUNG RULER

A young man, 'a ruler' (Luke 18:18), ran up to Jesus, 'Good Teacher,' he said, 'What must I do to get eternal life' (Matthew 19:16)?

Sex and Marriage and Divorce

God made only one marriage law. 'A man will leave his father and mother to be joined to his wife. The two of them will become one' (Gen. 2:24). That is a wonderful law. If men keep God's marriage law it will fix many problems. God knew man's need for a wife. And He knew that children needed a father and mother. His law protects marriage between a man and woman and it protects the family.

It is therefore part of God's plan for a man and a woman to come together in marriage. It is part of God's plan for them to have children when they are married. He made it a pleasure to 'make love' (have sex) so that children could be born. If sex was not a pleasure there would be no more children and God's creation would die. But if we seek sexual pleasure without marriage then that is against God's plan. Also, if a man and woman have sex just for pleasure then destroy their unborn child, that goes against God's plan for children. And if we have children without being married, then this can cause problems and sadness for the children. If we seek sexual pleasures in other ways then this is not part of God's plan. If a man has more than one wife, that causes jealousy and sadness, too. If a man changes his

(Continued on page 11)

Matthew 27:31-56)

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

They put the cross on Jesus' shoulders, and made Him carry it until He fell down under the weight of it. Then they took a man in the street, Simon of Cyrene, (North Africa). This man may have travelled 1,000 miles to be in Jerusalem for the Passover. He was made to carry the cross for Jesus (15:21). They came to Gol-gotha, the Place of the Skull, and there they crucified Jesus by nailing Him to the cross of wood (15:22-24).

1. The soldiers and Jesus

Roman soldiers did not care who they killed, or how cruel they were. To them Jesus was just another criminal. They mocked and sneered at Him and offered Him vinegar to drink (15:36).

'Let's not tear His robe,' one said, 'let's 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 holy writings prophesied: 'They divided My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing' (Psalm 22:18).

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

2. Other people round the cross

There were:

- the curious crowd;
- Simon carrying the cross;
- the sad disciples;
- the women who 'mourned for Him' (Luke 23:27).

Jesus said to them, '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 (Matthew 27:41).

Jesus' mother, Mary, stood near the cross, with His aunt Mary, and Mary Magdalene (John 19:25).

When Jesus saw these faithful women, He said to His mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son.' And to His disciple, John, He said, 'Here is your mother' (John 19:26-27). So John took Mary to his own home to care for her. By this time Mary was a widow.

3. Two criminals hung on crosses next to Jesus

Two criminals hung on crosses one on each side of the cross of Jesus. These two men spoke to Jesus. One had a hard and bitter heart. He made fun of Jesus, saying, 'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us' (Luke 23:39). This upset the other criminal. He told him off, saying, 'Don't you fear God, since you are under the same

What unbeliever's 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 do bad things to the Body of Christ (the church) just as they did to Jesus:

- Many people do not want to believe Jesus so they tell lies about Him (see Mark 14:56).
- Many people try to use the words of Jesus 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 condemn, destroy, corrupt, tie up, beat and make fun of those who speak God's truth (14:64–65).

Perhaps this is why Jesus warned His followers that they would have many troubles in life (13:8). Jesus told us to pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44). We must remember, too, it is through God that our enemies will be defeated.

Bar-ab-bas, a murderer, or Jesus?

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 crime has He done?' (15:14).

PILATE WASHES HIS HANDS

The crowds 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). All the people answered Pilate, 'Let His blood be on us and on our children' (Matthew 27:25).

The crowds were willing to take the blame for the death of Jesus, so Pilate let Barabbas, the murderer, go free. But he ordered the soldiers to beat Jesus.

Then the soldiers took Jesus away. They took off His clothes and put a purple robe on Him – to dress Him up 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.



**Now read Mark
15:20–41 (also in**

Jesus' trial

Jesus trial 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. Caiphas, 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 (Luke 23:1–5).
5. A trial before Herod (Luke 23:7–11).
6. A final trial before Pilate (Luke 23:13–25).

(Continued from page 10)

wife for another one, there is anger and sadness. Jesus knew it was God's perfect plan for a man to be faithful to one wife, to have no-one else and to stay with that one wife if possible for life. In this way, children can be born and grow up in a loving home and not be made sad by unfaithful parents. Jesus said that this was God's plan from the beginning (Matthew 19:8). Divorce was man's idea.

Remember that if there are no children in a marriage, the marriage is still complete. There is no mention of having children in Genesis 2. Therefore it is wrong to end a marriage if there are no children. And it is wrong for people to say that married couples must have children. Marriage is complete even without children. For a man and wife to seek pleasure together in sex without having children is good. (The Greek culture at the time of Jesus thought that sex was 'dirty'; but the Hebrew culture believes that sex is a gift from God.)

Adoption of children can be a good thing.

So marriage between a man and woman is God's law. And divorce is man's law. God's law cannot be broken without someone getting hurt. That is true for divorce and it is true for having sex outside of marriage.

Men should not force their wives to make love with them. They should love each other from the heart and make love as in the Bible (read Song of Songs) thinking only of each other.

Disobeying God's laws on sex and marriage can lead to early death, not life, because of the HIV/AIDS virus. Jesus warned us not to allow sexual immorality to spoil the good works of God's grace (Revelation 2:19–23): 'I know your works, love, service, faith and patience... But, you allow ... sexual sin... I will cause sickness. I will kill the children. Then all the churches shall now that I am the One who searches the minds and hearts of the people.' This is a clear warning that our personal sins can harm many, many people sooner or later. In many other ways, our lives are spoiled if God's laws on sex and marriage are disobeyed.

He was a good man, but he felt he had to do something more to earn himself a place in the kingdom of God. Many feel like this young man. This man kept the Law of Moses, but Jesus saw that he needed something more. He was good at keeping the Law but he did not love his neighbour nor care for the poor.

'You are missing one thing,' Jesus told him. 'Go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor ...' The words made the young man sad. He loved his money and possessions. He could not give them up, so he looked sad and he turned away.

Many put their money and their selfish way of living first in their lives. This stops them from following Jesus as their Saviour (Matthew. 6:21,33; James 5:3).

The disciples were surprised at Jesus' words 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 will trust Him and obey Him. Earlier, Jesus said that all true servants of the Kingdom must give up their selfish ways to serve Him (8:34). God will give back much more than the things they give up. But also they must be ready for hard times.

Then Jesus gave His surprise teaching about the kingdom of God (10:31): 'Many who are first will be last and the last will be first.'

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. If we love anything more than Jesus, we cannot love Him fully. How can we show that we love Jesus more than anything else?
2. Was the rich man good? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Why did Jesus tell this man to sell everything he owned (10:21)?
4. What was more important than living by the Law of Moses?
5. What three things did Jesus ask the man to do (10:21)?
6. Compare what Jesus said in Mark 8:35 with 10:31.



Now read: Mark 10:32–45 (also in Matthew 20:17–28)

TROUBLE COMING FOR JESUS

Now the time had come 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. He did not hide from the people when He came to Jerusalem (11:9). On the way He tells how He will die and rise again from death to everlasting life. This time He says much more about the way He will die. And again, He tells His disciples that He will come alive after three days.

The disciples were now afraid. Their Master gone from them ... dead ... killed! Many questions came into their minds:

- Who will betray Him?
- Who will hand Him over to the chief priests?
- Who will condemn Him to death?
- Who will kill Him?

Can you answer these questions?

Jesus was 'leading the way' (10:32). He was not afraid to go up to Jerusalem. He knew the chief priests and leaders would kill Him, but this was His Father's plan, and He wanted to finish His work (John 4:34; 5:36; 9:4).

But it seems that His disciples could not believe that Jesus would be killed. They were sure that He was going to set up His kingdom on earth at this time.

James and John wanted to be sure that they had a good place when He was sitting on His throne. Their mother wanted them to ask Jesus for this (Matthew 20:20–21).

'We want, we want ...' they told Jesus, but their words seemed all wrong. The words went against everything Jesus had taught them.

'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus told them. 'Can you drink the cup of suffering that I drink?' (Mark 10:38). Jesus meant that He had chosen the way of suffering. 'Can you be baptized with My baptism?' Jesus was going to die on a cross. It would be like being baptized in pain and death. Jesus meant that He would sink down under the pain he would suffer for the sins of the world.



The soldiers put a cloth over Jesus' eyes and hit Him with spears and rods. Some spat on Him. They said, 'Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit You?' (Matthew 26:68).

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, and to give His life as the price for setting many people free' (10:45).

Jesus' trial went on all night. This was against the Jewish law. Then they tied Jesus up and led Him away to Pilate, the Roman governor of the region of Judea. Only Pilate could give permission for someone to be crucified (put to death on a cross).

Isaiah wrote:

'He was led like a lamb to be killed, and as a sheep is silent while the wool is cut off, so He did not open His mouth' (Is 53:7).

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. When will the whole world see Jesus (13:26)?
2. What were the words of Jesus that made the religious leaders say He had spoken an evil thing? (14:61,62)
3. When people hear the truth about Jesus, some are glad and some are angry. Are you prepared to speak the truth about Jesus?
4. Have you ever spoken **against** Jesus as Peter did?
5. Have you ever failed to speak **for** Jesus?



Now read: Mark 15:1–19 (also in Matthew 27:11–30)

THE TRIAL OF JESUS BY THE ROMAN GOVERNOR

The religious leaders told Pilate what they had against Jesus. 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 (Luke 23:1–2).

They spoke words of hate, but Jesus did not hate His enemies nor answer back. Pilate was not interested in the Jewish religion, but he wanted to know if Jesus 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). But Jesus made things clear to Pilate that He was not an ordinary 'earthly' king (John 18:36).

The chief priests spoke lies against Jesus. They did not believe what was true about Him. Jesus said to Pilate, 'The reason I came into the world was to teach and show the truth' (John 18:37). The denial of God's truth leads to rejecting God's Son. And a nation that no longer teaches the truth to its people is easily destroyed from within.

Pilate could see that Jesus had not done anything wrong. It was a Roman custom to let a prisoner go free at this special Passover feast. Pilate could find no fault in Jesus and wanted to let Him go. He asked the people who he should let go:

THE TRIAL OF JESUS

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

The court met to judge Jesus (14:53), but this was not done in a fair way:

- The trial was held at night which was against the Jewish law.
- The lesser judges should have cast their votes first, but here the High Priest cast the first vote.
- The prisoner must 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 next day.
- The whole Sanhedrin, with the teachers and the elders, looked for a way to accuse Jesus 'so that they could put Him to death' (14:55).
- Many told lies against Him, but they did not find any wrong in Him. Jesus was without sin (Hebrews 4:15).
- False witnesses were brought in to speak against Jesus.

What they said about Jesus did not agree, so the High Priest asked Jesus, 'Are you not going to answer?' Jesus did not answer their lies. But when the High Priest asked

How Peter denied Jesus

Peter failed his test. He let Jesus down by denying he was a follower of Jesus. It happened gradually, little by little in this way:

- Peter followed Jesus but did not want others to know he was a disciple – he followed at a distance (14:54).
- Peter was afraid he might be taken prisoner so he said that he did not know Jesus (14:67–71).
- The more Peter denied he knew Jesus, the angrier he became (14:71).
- Peter cried very much when he remembered what Jesus had said to him (14:72).

So Judas betrayed Jesus, Peter denied Jesus and the other disciples ran away. All 12 disciples let Jesus down. Judas gave up all hope of being forgiven and 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. In the book of Acts, we read about this and about how Peter became a leader of the church in Jerusalem.

Him, 'Are you the Messiah-Christ, the Son of the Blessed One (God)?' He spoke: 'I am. And you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One (God) and coming on the clouds of Heaven' (14:61–62).

The High Priest became angry. 'Why do we need any more witnesses?' he asked. The Jewish Sanhedrin court then said that He was guilty and that He must die (14:63–64).

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

You will suffer, Jesus told the disciples, 'but to sit at My right or left is not for Me to say' (10:40). The Father has set out an order (a plan) in Heaven, as on earth. We can be sure there is a place for us, and that is enough (John 14:2–3; 1 Peter 1:4–5).

Those who try so hard to be first, hold others back. They are selfish and bossy and do not serve those around them. Jesus spoke of the world's rulers. They control people and tell them what to do (10:42). People find ways to rule over others so that they will be great. 'Not so with you,' Jesus told them. 'Look at how I live. I came to serve and to give up My life. This is what you must do also' (John 13:4–17).

Jesus came to serve people, but more than that, He came to die for them, so that their sins could be forgiven (1 Timothy 2:6). God's plan was for Jesus to die because of the sins of others. He would give His life for the sins we have done, so that we can be saved from our sins and have everlasting life in Heaven with Him.

Jesus was the Suffering Servant. God spoke about this 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 everything for His sake (Philippians 2:5–8).

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. Why was Jesus going up to a city where He knew that some people hated Him?
2. What had Jesus promised His followers (10:29–30)?
3. 'Can you suffer like I will suffer?' He asked them (10:38). What was wrong with their answer (10:39)?



Now read: Mark 10:46–52

JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH FAITH

A large crowd began to follow Jesus. Near Jericho they heard a man shouting: 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.' Beggars were a common sight at the entrance to cities. Blind Bar-ti-mae-us called Jesus 'Son of David'. He knew that Jesus was the Messiah from the family line of King David! (10:47). (See box on page 1.)

'Go,' Jesus said, 'your faith has healed you' (10:52).

Jesus knew Bartimaeus had faith. Even in a large crowd, Jesus can hear the cries or prayers of faithful people. Faith in Jesus means putting our whole trust in Jesus. We cannot fool God. He knows when we are sorry for our sins. He knows when we have faith (Hebrews 4:13). If we have faith we have to do something about it. 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: Faith in Jesus (v.47) and faith in action (v.50) bring answers to prayer (v.52).



Now read: Mark 11:1–19 (also Matthew 21:1–11)

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY

The week before His death, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. We call this the **Holy week of Easter**. At 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.’ A donkey was an animal that was often used to carry heavy loads. Sometimes poor people rode on donkeys. Rich important people and kings rode on horses. But God said through a prophet that the Messiah would come riding on a humble donkey (Zechariah 9:9). This was said hundreds of years before Jesus rode on the donkey.

So Jesus rode the donkey into the city. The crowds knew what that meant. They met Him waving palm branches and shouting ‘Hosanna’ (Save now!) (John 12:13). ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!’ (Psalm 118:26).

All that the prophets wrote about Jesus happened (Matthew 21:5). The long years of waiting were ended. The people of Jerusalem could see their Messiah. Jesus did not have any political power. He came to the city in a humble, peaceful way. He was not riding on a horse, as a king with soldiers, but on a donkey which was a sign of peace.

He comes to our hearts in the same way. He does not force His way in. He comes gently, knocking. He waits for us to open our hearts to Him, then He comes in (Revelation 3:20). Shout Hosanna!

Jesus went to the Temple, the place in Jerusalem where people from many places came to pray to God. He looked around, but didn’t say anything. It was getting late.

Many times Jesus had been to the Temple at Jerusalem. He was sad and angry because market traders were often 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.

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey?
2. Why did Jesus want everyone to know that He had arrived in Jerusalem?
3. What things in today’s church make Jesus sad and angry?
4. Are we ready to speak and act against what is wrong even if we lose our friends, our job, our life? (If we are ready, we must remember to do it with love in our hearts.)



Now read: Mark 11:20–33 (also Matthew 21:18–22)

UNFRUITFUL RELIGION

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

your place.

While Jesus prayed, the disciples fell asleep. Jesus came back to them and said: ‘Watch and pray. Then you won’t fall into sin when you are tempted. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.’

Jesus went away again and prayed. Again, they fell asleep. The third time He came to them and said, ‘Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is about to be handed over to sinners’ (14:41). Jesus saw torches 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 about to happen. This is a warning to us to ‘watch and pray’.

THE ARREST OF JESUS

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

‘Do I have an army,’ Jesus asked, ‘that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture Me? Every day I taught in the Temple courts, and you did not arrest Me’ (14:49).

The soldiers grabbed Jesus, but He faced them calmly. The disciples were not so calm. ‘Lord, should we strike them with our swords?’ One of them shouted (Luke 22:49).

But Jesus made it clear that He did not want a fight. Then all the disciples ran away. Jesus was taken to the High Priest for the start of His trial.



Now read Mark 14:53–72 (also in Matthew 26:57–75)

THE TESTING OF PETER

Two accounts run side by side: (1) the trial of Jesus; and (2) how Peter was tested – and how he denied Jesus. Peter was afraid, but still he followed Him (Jesus) at a distance (14:54).

Then the soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest’s house. Someone must have let Peter in. A servant girl came up to him and said, ‘You were with Jesus.’ Peter denied it. ‘I don’t know what you are talking about,’ he said, and stood near the door (14:69,70). 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 a Galilean. Your accent (speech) gives you away’ (Matthew 26:73). Peter began to curse and swore ‘I do not know this man!’

Then Peter heard a cock crow, and he remembered what Jesus had said (14:30,72). He went out into the night and wept bitterly. (He must have told Mark this.) It is not enough to be brave to follow Christ: we need the Holy Spirit to make us strong (Romans 8:26).

JESUS PREPARES FOR THE FAILURE OF THE DISCIPLES

Jesus then warned the disciples (14:27–30):

- that they would all run away;
- that Peter would say three times that he did not even know Jesus;
- that Jesus must die as it says in the holy writings (Zechariah 13:7);
- that after He has died and come alive again, Jesus will meet them once again in Galilee to explain everything.

But the disciples could not understand these things until they happened.

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. What question did the disciples ask the owner of the house where Jesus would eat the Passover meal (14:14)?
2. How did Jesus show who was the one who would betray Him (14:20)?
3. What did Judas do (Matthew 26:14–16)?
4. Do you believe that God knows what will happen?
5. Do you understand the warnings and promises of Jesus?



Now read Mark 14:32–52 (also in Matthew 26:36–56)

JESUS PRAYS AND SUFFERS IN THE GARDEN

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.

Then Jesus led the disciples out across the river Kedron and into a garden called Geth-sem-a-ne. This garden was on the Mount of Olives. From here, Jesus could look across the valley to His beloved Jerusalem. He often went there to pray and He went there this last time to pray with great sadness.

‘Sit here and keep watch,’ He said. He went further on, to be alone with His Father and knelt down and prayed. He was so sad He felt as if He was dying.

‘Abba, Father,’ He cried, ‘Take this suffering from Me. But don’t do what I want. Do what You want’ (14:36). Jesus hurt badly inside. The sins of the people were going to kill Him! The hatred of the religious leaders would lead to His death. Jesus was dying for their sins and would not fight against them. He had done no wrong. He was willing to die as God’s perfect sacrifice, so that through the giving of His blood God could forgive the sins of the people – then and now. Jesus knew this. But He was suffering great pain inside, and soon the pain would be in every part of His body. Jesus suffered in this way for all people.



Jesus suffered and died for your sins too! God’s plan was to save all people, at all times, in all places. Come to Jesus NOW so that His sacrifice was not a waste. His death and His blood have paid for your sins as well as the sins of the people at that time. Ask God to forgive your sins, because Jesus died in

Next morning, Jesus saw a fig tree at the side of the path. Jesus did not find any fruit, only leaves, so He spoke to 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. In its courts men sold cattle, sheep and doves for the people to sacrifice. Others sat at tables changing Roman money into special Temple money. They had made a market and it was very busy. The Jews made much profit from this market.

Jesus chased the people who were selling things out of the Temple and turned over the tables where they were changing money. ‘Is it not written, “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it a place for robbers’ (11:17: Isaiah 56:7).

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 nothing in their lives that pleased God.

Later the disciples saw the fig tree once again. Its leaves were dead (11:20). They were surprised and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi (teacher), look! The fig tree You cursed has dried up.’



TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. What happened to the fig tree (Matt. 21:19)? What is this a picture of?
2. Is your life like a tree full of leaves or a tree full of fruit? Do you pretend to be something that you are not?
3. What would Jesus find if He came to your church? Would He find prayer, worship and sacrifice? Or would He find busy lives without a thought of God – an empty form of religion?

HAVE FAITH IN GOD

‘Have faith in God,’ Jesus said (11:22). Faith is a strong power that can move any ‘mountain’. That means anything that stands in the way of God’s work can be told to go (11:23).

Jesus taught the people in the Temple. The chief priests and elders were angry. They did not want Him in their Temple. He had thrown out the traders, and now He would not stop the children who had followed Him there from shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’ (Matt. 21:15).

It was only a few days before Jesus would die. We must learn carefully what Jesus taught His disciples at this time. He showed them how much faith they could have. He said (11:23): ‘You must not doubt in your heart. You must believe that what you say will happen. Then it will be done for you.’ Then take notice what else He says here (11:25,26): ‘When you pray, forgive anyone you have anything against. Then your Father in Heaven will forgive you.’

In the Temple they asked what authority He had to do these things, so He asked them a question: 'John's baptism – where did it come from? Was it from Heaven, or from men?' (11:30). How did these teachers answer Jesus (11:33)?

The religious leaders in the temple did not realise who John the Baptizer really was. Nor did they know who Jesus was. This was because they did not understand God's truth. They did not understand what the holy writings said about John and about Jesus. They did not believe.

Today, we still find that there are people who do not understand the things of God even when they are explained. They cannot believe the truth or do not want to believe. The truth is written down in the Bible for all to read and understand. But many people do not have faith in God. They do not understand that Jesus died for their sins to be forgiven. They live and die without knowing the forgiveness of God. This means they do not go to Heaven to live with Jesus.

We must always help people to understand God's truth before it is too late. Jesus promised us that the Holy Spirit would help us to understand and to teach others the truth (John 15:26; 16:13–14).



Now read: Mark 12:1–11 (also in Matthew 21:33–46)

THE PARABLE OF THE FARM WORKERS

Jesus now begins His last three days of teaching before His death on the cross. Jesus told a story of a farmer. Owners of farms let people work on the land for them.

A farmer planted his land with grape vines. It was called a vineyard. He put a wall around it to keep out the animals and he dug a wine press. This was the place where they trod on the ripe grapes to make the juice run out. He also made a watch-tower, where a guard stood and watched for thieves. Then he found people to work in his vineyard.

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

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

When the workers saw the son they said, 'This is the farmer's son. Come let's kill him, and then everything will be ours.' So they took the son and killed him (12:8).

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

So this parable is a picture of how Jesus would die – He would be killed by people who would not accept Jesus as God's Son. Nor did they accept those whom God sent before Jesus, to prepare the way.

We can also see this parable as a picture of the Church today. The Church

His blood was poured out, to pay the price for our sins (Hebrew 9:12). His death would save the lives of all believers.

While they were at the table, Jesus told them 'One of you will betray Me – one who is eating with Me' (14:18). By this Jesus meant that someone would give Him over to His enemies. At this, each one said, 'It isn't I, is it?' (14:19). Judas was the one who would betray Jesus (Matthew 26:25).

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

Then Jesus told them again, 'The Son of Man will go (die) just as it is written about Him' (14:24; Isaiah 53:8–9).

'REMEMBER ME'

While they were eating, Jesus took the bread. He gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples. 'This is My body given for you,' He said. 'Do this so that you will remember Me.'

After the meal, He took the cup and said: 'This cup is the New Covenant (Agreement) in My blood, which is poured out for you.'

Jesus called the disciples and they followed Him. He taught them about the kingdom. He ate His 'Last Supper' with them. He told them about His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Now they would see His enemies put Him to death.

From this day on they would remember the Passover supper as the Lord's Supper. They would remember the meaning of the bread and the wine. They would remember Christ who died to save us from sin and death. Jesus asked all His followers to remember His death when they broke bread and poured out wine together.

God's Plan to Save the World

God knew that His Son would be betrayed:

- Verse 15: A room was ready for them to eat the Passover meal. (This was the **TIME** and **PLACE** it would happen.)
- Verse 18: A man was ready to betray Jesus. (This was **HOW** it would happen.)
- Verse 24: The disciples were made ready for a new beginning (agreement) with God through the blood of Jesus. (This was **WHY** it would happen.)

Before He died, Jesus took two ordinary things and gave them special meaning:

1. **Bread**, which reminds us of His body. Bread is the food of life. But bread is broken in order to give us life. The body of Jesus was 'broken' by the nails, the spear, the beatings and the thorns but His bones were not broken.
2. **Wine** (grape juice), which reminds us of His blood, which was 'poured out'. Blood reminds us of sacrifice and death. But the death of Jesus gives us life.

These two things have become pictures of Jesus' death. They always remind us of what He did for us when He died on the cross (Luke 22:19). Because of His broken body and His blood poured out, we can be forgiven for our sins. Notice that without the spilling of blood, no-one can be forgiven (Hebrews 9:22). God planned this to be so.

have Me.'

This woman poured the sweet-smelling oil on Jesus while He was still alive. (Jesus knew that He would soon be buried.) Jesus told those in the room that what she had done to show her love would always be remembered (14:9). This teaches a lesson: Love your family while you have them with you. By loving them, we are showing our love for Jesus. And worship your Lord, while you have breath to do so (Psalm 150:6).

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. Do you think the woman knew that Jesus would die soon?
2. Why do you think Judas said that she had wasted the oil (14:5)?
3. What did Jesus say about the poor (14:7)? Does He want us to help them?
4. We cannot give expensive oil to Jesus. What does God ask us to give?
5. What did Judas plan to do to Jesus (14:10,11)?



Now read: Mark 14:12–31 (also in Matthew 26:17–35)

THE LAST MEAL OF JESUS

Many years before Jesus lived on earth, the people of Israel had been slaves in Egypt for 430 years. Then God, by His great power, brought them out (Psalm 106:7–11). At Passover they remembered what God had done for them. Mark explains this custom.

Each family killed a lamb, just as they did at the first Passover, in Egypt, when the angel of death passed over them. They ate the Passover meal as a family. Jewish families still eat this meal, called a Sada meal.

At the time of Passover, people came from all over the country, and from far-away places, to Jerusalem.

Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples. The Passover meal is eaten in the evening. An evening meal is often called 'supper'. This meal was the Lord's last supper. Christians everywhere remember this fellowship meal. It is a special time when they remember Jesus' death on the cross. They eat a simple meal of bread and wine. Many churches make it a part of their worship service. Some call it the 'breaking of bread' or 'communion' or 'eucharist'. It is often called 'the Lord's Supper' because it remembers the last meal He ate before He died.

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 woman carried water. They found the man and he led the way to a room which was ready for them to eat the Passover meal. The meal included lamb, unleavened bread (no yeast), wine, herbs and sauces.

This last meal would help to remember their Lord's death. But it would remember much more. Many years before, the blood of the first Passover lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts in Egypt (Exodus 12:7,13). By doing this the angel of death passed over the children of Israel and they were saved. Now, Jesus, the true 'Lamb of God' would die at the time of the Passover. He was 'the Lamb of God' soon to be killed.

belongs to God, not man. He wants it to produce good fruit. He has protected it from its enemies, and has left it to 'workers' to bring a good harvest. But some workers want everything for themselves. They do not make an offering or give thanks to the owner. They make the owner sad and angry.

God wants His people to love and praise Him with thankful hearts (Hebrews 13:15).

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS TRY TO FIND FAULT

The chief priests heard Jesus tell this parable, and 'they looked for a way to take Him prisoner.' They knew that He was talking about them when He told this story.

He said to them, 'Haven't you read what Scripture says: "The stone the builders didn't accept has become the most important stone of all. The Lord has done this, and it is wonderful in our eyes"?' (Psalm 118:22-23).

Verses from the Old Testament holy writings are often used in the New Testament (Isaiah 28:16; Acts 4:11). In Mark's gospel alone, there are over 50 verses from the OT. In Matthew's gospel, there are nearly 90 verses from the OT. The 'most important stone' is the first one laid down in a new building. It is at the corner of two walls, so the whole building rests on it. God's building, the church, all rests on Jesus. He holds everything together. Jesus is the cornerstone of the church (Ephesians 2:21–22). Jesus knew the meaning of this Scripture from Psalm 118 and He knew that it would soon be fulfilled in Him.

Jesus spoke these things to the chief priests and other religious leaders. They did not like His parable, nor the way He told them about the holy writings. They knew Jesus was still speaking against them. Soon they would make their plans to arrest Him and put Him to death. They asked Jesus what authority He had to say these things (11:28). They did not know or believe that God had given Jesus the authority.

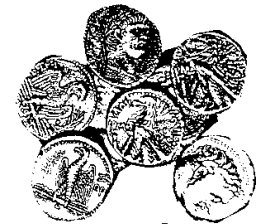
God judged those who killed Jesus. Soon after this, in AD70, their city and the Temple were destroyed. Even worse, the minds of many of them remained closed, so they did not enter God's kingdom (2 Corinthians 3:14).

The Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus by His words and answers (12:13). They knew the people did not like the taxes they had to pay to Rome, so they asked Jesus what He thought about the tax. He knew they wanted to trap Him. If He said 'Yes, pay the tax' the people would be angry. If He said 'Don't pay the tax,' these leaders would report Him to Herod. So He said to them, 'Bring Me a coin.' (12:15)

They gave Him a silver coin. Jesus looked at it. Most coins had the picture of the king stamped on them. Roman coins had Caesar's face on them.

'Whose picture is this?' He asked.

'Caesar's,' they replied. 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 government without going against God's laws.





Now read: Mark 12:18–34

THEY 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 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: Deuteronomy 12:19).

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 living’ (Exodus 3:6). These men must still be alive if God claims to be their God. Their own Scriptures taught them there is life after death. These religious leaders did not fully understand their own holy writings. We must not be like them. We must know our Bibles well and also seek God’s understanding day by day.

These religious leaders also show that they do not know God, His love, His power, His truth (12:24). Jesus said that they were people with evil in their hearts (Matthew 9:4). These evil people wanted to prove that Jesus was wrong. Today, men 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 understand God or His holy writings.

A RELIGIOUS LEADER WHO KNOWS GOD’S TRUTH

A teacher of the law heard Jesus give this answer. He asked, ‘Of all the commandments (of God), which is the most important?’ (12:28).

This man did not come to trick Jesus. He came to Jesus to really learn the truth. Jesus was pleased with him (12:34). This is what Jesus taught the man:

- Only the Lord (Yahweh) is God.
- The Lord God is one.
- Love God most of all.
- Love your neighbour just as much as you love yourself.

This man believed these things. Jesus said he was not far from the kingdom of God (12:34). Probably he did not yet understand that Jesus is the Son of God.

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. Why did the religious leaders ask Jesus questions (12:13)?
2. Why is it so important to understand what the Bible says?
3. In what ways should Christians support the government? In what ways would it be wrong to support the government?
4. Which do you think is the greatest commandment (Deuteronomy 6:4,5)?
5. What answer did Jesus give to this teacher’s question (12:30,31,34)?

will be preached to all the peoples of the world’ (Matthew 24:14). In these last days, there will be false teachers (13:22) but the gospel will be told everywhere, even to kings. Christ’s followers might be arrested and put on trial, but they will witness for Him. They should work hard as if Jesus were coming back at any time.

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. Is it a good thing to be proud of our church buildings?
 2. What did Jesus say would happen in the last days (13:8,9)?
 3. Why should Christians not worry about what to say if they are taken to court (13:11)?
 4. What makes parents and brothers and sisters hate each other (13:12,13)?
 5. What will happen to those who do not give up their faith in God (13:13)?
 6. What did Jesus tell His disciples about the time of His Second Coming (13:32)?
 7. How can we watch and be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus? Jesus could come again at any time!
 8. Are you ready to trust God when troubles come? Will you always trust in Jesus, even when false teachers come and say that they are the Christ (Messiah)?
 9. What should you do while you are waiting for Christ to come again?
 10. If a false teacher comes to your town, how will you know if he is wrong?
- Jesus said times would get worse. Today we have all kinds of modern inventions, but man’s heart has not changed. Satan, the chief devil, is busier than ever, trying to deceive or destroy people (Jeremiah 17:9; 1 Peter 5:8).



Now read: Mark 14:1–11 (also in Matthew 26:6–13)

HOW SOMEONE SHOWED THEIR LOVE FOR JESUS

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

Jesus was at Simon’s house (Matthew 26:6). Martha served dinner while Jesus, Lazarus and the disciples sat, or lay at the tables.

While Jesus ate, a woman brought a jar of very expensive oil called nard. It smelled very sweet. She had to break the jar to pour out the oil. She poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped His feet with her long hair. The house was filled with the sweet smell of this oil.

Jesus was pleased with her, but Judas Iscariot was angry. He spoke against her and the way she showed her love. He said that the oil could have been sold and the money given to the poor, but he did not really care about the poor. Judas was a thief. He was supposed to look after the money for Jesus and His disciples but he took the money out of the bag for himself.

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



His words prepared His followers for the fall of their great city. He told them how to escape the Roman armies. They were not to think God would come and save them by a miracle.

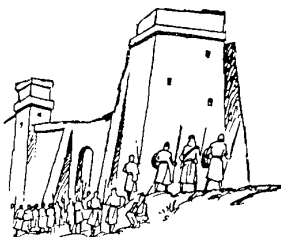
'Don't go back for anything,' Jesus warned them (13:16).

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

JESUS WILL COME AGAIN

Later, there will be times of great trouble (13:24). When this comes, Jesus will come again. But no-one will know when this will happen (13:26,33,35).

God created the angels who do whatever He tells them to do, but even they do not know the plans of God (13:32). But there will be signs to show that Jesus is coming again (13:24,25,29). We must learn the lesson of the fig tree (13:28). There will be times when God's Spirit is waiting ('winter'). But when the Spirit begins to work in the church ('summer') then you know that Christ is very near to coming again.



When God judges cities or nations, this reminds us that Jesus is coming again. It makes people stop and think about God. We should fear God, who is the judge of all. If you do not receive Him into your heart you will stand before Him

later as your Judge (Matthew 25:30; Hebrews 10:27).

In the same solemn words Jesus said, 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away' (13:31).

The disciples may have wanted to ask, 'When are You coming back?' So Jesus answered that question for them. Then He told a parable to help them understand (13:34-36). He told them this parable to show that His people must be awake 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)!

We can use the story in verse 34 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. Will Jesus find us 'asleep' when He returns (13:36)?

When Jesus comes again He will come as King Jesus! He will come with the angels of Heaven (Matthew 24:30-31). At this time the angels will take all God's people to be with Him for ever (13:27).

There is a popular tradition that the Messiah will enter Jerusalem through the east gate, which is now closed. This is based on the holy writings (Ezekiel 44:1-3).

Jesus warns us that there will be many wars (13:8), and earthquakes. People will go hungry and will suffer many troubles (13:9-13). But at this time 'The good news



Now read: Mark 12:35-44

WHOSE SON IS JESUS CHRIST?

Many years before, King David wrote about the Messiah (or Christ) who was to come. He called Him 'my Lord' (Psalm 110:1). The Jews knew that the Messiah-Christ would come from David's family line, 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. (Ps 110:1). Now we know that Jesus came from David's family line (see box on Page 1). We also know that He is greater than King David. He is Son of God. Jesus is King David's Messiah or Christ! Is He Christ of your life, too?

The people knew Jesus was not like 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;
- took money from widows instead of caring for them.



GIVE TO GOD IN LOVE

In a court of the Temple were thirteen large offering boxes. The priests used the money put in them to buy food and pay people to clean the Temple. Jesus saw one of the poor widows come into the courtyard. This was as far as the women were allowed to go. She put two very small copper coins into the box.

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 away, 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 then we will give all that we have to Him by giving Him our lives. We should give our gifts and our skills to God with a willing heart (Exodus 25:2; 35:21-29).

TALK ABOUT THIS:

1. What question did Jesus ask the people (12:35)?
2. How could Jesus be David's son and also his Lord (Matt. 1:6,16)?
3. What did David say about Jesus (Ps 110:1)?
4. What did Jesus say about the widow's gift (12:43)?
5. Who loved God the most – the religious leaders or the widow?

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTERS 9 TO 12

(Answers are at the end of the book)

A. Multiple choice: Finish the sentence with the best answer

- The rich young ruler ...
 - gave all his money to the poor people.
 - did not keep the law.
 - was good but did not want to give away his money.
- Bartimaeus, the blind man ...
 - would not stop shouting until Jesus answered.
 - stopped shouting when told to by the crowd.
 - stopped shouting when told by Jesus.
- Why did Jesus drive people from the Temple?
 - Because they were doing bad things in the house of prayer.
 - Because He wanted peace and quiet to pray.
 - Because He did not like the Pharisees and Scribes.
- Who gave John the right to baptize?
 - God.
 - Jesus.
 - John himself.
- Jesus said that ...
 - people will not die.
 - there is life after death.
 - after death it will be the same as in this life.
- The scribes ...
 - did not say long prayers.
 - did not sit in the front seats.
 - did not believe that they would be judged.

B. Which sentences are true (T) and which are false (F)?

- Jesus said that the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like children. T or F?
- Jesus loved the rich young man. T or F?
- Jesus cursed a fig tree and it died. T or F?
- The man who rented the grape garden gave the owner some fruit. T or F?
- Caesar's picture and name were on the piece of money. T or F?
- The scribe said it is much better to offer sacrifices than to love your neighbour. T or F?

C. Put the correct word in the space

- No-one may — what God has joined together .
- Jesus came to give His — to make people free.
- that you will get it and shall have it.
- You must love your — as you love yourself.
- The owner of the grapes said that they will surely — my son.
- Is it right to pay — to Caesar or not?
-



Now read: Mark 13:1–31 (also in Matthew 24:1–35)

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE FUTURE

The people came to the Temple to listen to Jesus as He taught them (Luke 21:38). At the end of the day, He 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 great walls and the Temple buildings (13:1).

'Not one stone here will be left upon another,' Jesus told them. 'Every stone will be thrown down' (13:2). This happened 40 years later. People say that the gold on the Temple melted in the fires and ran into the cracks between the huge stones. The Roman soldiers took stone from stone to get out the gold.

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 God knows what is going to happen. But He has told us that one day soon Jesus is coming back to this earth again 'on the clouds' (Matthew 24:30). Our great buildings and organisations will be here only as long as God allows.

THINGS THAT WILL HAPPEN

Then Jesus told the disciples some of the things that would happen – some happened after a few years, and some after many years. Many of these things have already happened. Others will happen soon, but we don't know when.

'Be careful that no-one fools 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 and fool people. Jesus said 'Watch out for them' (Matthew 24:24).

The two greatest things to happen would be:

- The Temple will be pulled down (13:2; Matthew 24:15) – this happened about 40 years after Jesus said these words.
- Jesus Christ will come again in power – this is still to happen (13:26).

ROMAN ARMIES WILL COME

Jesus said to His disciples, 'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by Roman soldiers, escape to the mountains' (Luke 21:20-21). Then Jesus spoke of a sign. The sign Jesus gave (13:14), could have been that the Romans would bring idols into the Temple to make it unholy (Luke 21:20).