

# The gospel of Mark

# Mark

## Participants Guide

*For even the Son of Man did not  
come to be served, but to serve,  
and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

*Mark 10:45*

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**8. How can we follow Jesus' example of weakness?****Remembering the big picture**

**Who Jesus is:** Jesus is the Christ, the Son of Man and the Suffering Servant.

**Why Jesus came:** He will reign in power, but he must suffer and die.

**How should I respond?** To follow Jesus means to follow the Suffering Servant. To truly follow, we must openly acknowledging him and all his words. Inseparable from following Jesus is the cost of the cross. There is no other example He gives.

*Prayer requests*



# Jesus on the mount; Jesus off the mount

# Mark

Mark 9:2-29

## OPTIONAL STUDY

We saw that the very minute Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah (8:29), Jesus immediately began to teach, "Yes, but I am the Messiah who has come to be murdered." Peter rebukes him (8:31-32), so it is clear that only relentless teaching on Jesus' part is going to make any "dent" in the prejudices of the disciples. Now we are in the second half of Mark, and the contrast with the first half is already evident. Jesus now constantly speaks of his death and suffering, and he does it in ways that the disciples find extremely hard to swallow. This passage begins to answer the questions about the nature of Christ's life and the reasons that the Messiah has to die.

Jesus was transfigured "before them" (verse 2) meaning that the "Transfiguration" was for his disciples' benefit, designed to teach them about his person and work. Therefore, we have to ask "what does the *transfiguration* teach us?"

- 1. Read verses 2-8. What does the supernatural brightness of Jesus (verses 3-4) and the descent of a cloud (verse 7) tell us about Jesus' person and work? (Remember the cloud and bright light in the book of Exodus.)**
  
- 2. Refer to verses 4-12. What does the presence of Moses and Elijah and the voice from the cloud tell us about Jesus' person and work?**
  
- 3. Refer to verses 2-8. Why does the voice from the cloud add "Listen to Him!"? What do we learn from this?**



**8. What do we learn about faith from this passage? About prayer?**

**Remembering the big picture**

**Who Jesus is:** Jesus is the Son of Man referred to in Daniel 7. He is the Ancient of Days, the Son of God, whom God the Father loves. He is the Messiah, who must be preceded by Elijah (Malachi 4) and to whom the Old Testament points.

**Why Jesus Came:** We already know, from 8:31, that he says he “must die.” Why must he die? Mark 9:2-13 answers in terms of God’s will. It is God the Father’s plan to reconcile sinners to himself. Mark 9:9-29 gives the beginning of an answer in terms of man’s need. No mere human can break Satan’s power to deafen, dehumanize and ultimately kill mankind.

**How should I respond?** We should listen to the apostolic teaching of the cross. We cannot “listen to Jesus” in the sense that the disciples did. But we can “listen” with confidence to Scripture, which is the written account of what Jesus said.



# Mark

## Following the King: II

### Study 10 | Mark 9:30-50

Jesus has begun to tell the disciples that he is the Messiah, but he has come to be rejected and die. He repeats this here in 9:31. The first reaction of his followers is they simply did not understand what he meant (verse 32a). It didn't fit their categories, so it did not "register." Imagine that you are on a campaign team trying to get a man elected president. One day he says, "Listen, here's how the campaign will end. Not only will I lose the election, but the opposition is going to assassinate me." Surely his followers would think he was being sarcastic or trying to motivate them to work harder. We can imagine, then, why they were so confused! But we see another reaction as well. Fear. They don't want to admit how confused they are (verse 32b – *"they were afraid to ask him about it."*) They were afraid that he might be serious. Their fear and pride kept them from admitting how confused and scared the teaching made them feel.

As a result, in the last part of the book of Mark we see Jesus spending a lot more time with disciples, in order to enlighten them. (Verse 30 – *"Jesus didn't want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples."*) He enters a phase in which he puts much more into the intensive training of his disciples in the meaning of his death and resurrection (i.e. the gospel).

#### Jesus frequently used the title

"Son of Man" when referring to Himself. In Jesus' day, it was also recognized as a Messianic title. Daniel 7:13-14 refers to the Son of Man descending down from Heaven to establish an everlasting kingdom of righteousness on earth.

- 1. What is the effect of continually using the term "Son of Man" each time Jesus teaches about his death (8:31; 9:12; 9:31)? (Read Daniel 7:9-15 and ask what kind of figure this is.) What is Jesus trying to get across?**
- 2. How does the disciples' argument on the road (verses 33-34) show why they could not grasp the teaching of Jesus' impending death?**











**8. Read 2 Corinthians 8:9. You know something the rich young man did not. How can this make Jesus' call to us a joy?**

**9. Is there a theme running through all three passages? What do all these passages tell us about entering the kingdom of God?**

**10. Is there an application you can make as a result of today's new found truth?**

### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** Again we see Jesus the authoritative King, who expounds the real meaning of Scripture and states who will and who won't get to heaven. He also is a Servant, welcoming little children.

**Why Jesus came:**

**To judge:** In Chapter 2, Jesus said he came to call sinners. In Chapter 7, he taught that man's basic problem was sin. Now he convicts all of deadly sin, the Pharisees, the rich and the Twelve.

**To save:** But he also says that those who come to him admitting they are unable to help themselves will be "blessed," "saved," "inherit eternal life," and "enter the kingdom of God." This is the language of the true return from exile and of the promises to Abraham. His purpose in the first coming is to rescue men from the final judgment of the second.

**How should I respond?** Giving up everything to follow Jesus reflects a surrendered heart, but it is not a "work" we accomplish to earn God's favor. We must admit we cannot earn our way to heaven and instead trust God to do the humanly impossible.









8. **This is Jesus' last healing miracle. Why do you think Mark places it here? How is Bartimaeus a good example for us?**
9. **What was the most helpful or impressive thing that you learned today personally? What practical difference can it make in your life?**

### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** Jesus is Redeemer King, son of Man and Son of David. Unlike the Gentile 'kings' Jesus really is Lord and has all authority. But his Kingship is demonstrated in 'littleness'; he is also the Suffering Servant (Is 52-53) and the substitutionary sacrifice (Ex 12 and Lev 16), the Ransom by which we are redeemed.

**Why Jesus came:** God says Jesus must die for our sins. Our sin is serious; we cannot save ourselves. Now we learn that Jesus came not only to preach and call sinners, but to die for our death, the price of rescue from hell.

**Man's response?** Since Mark 8:32, the twelve have consistently failed to accept the necessity of the cross and have failed to accept the truth about themselves. In this passage, they at last come empty-handed, but do not see that even this is not enough. We can do nothing but God must do something. Sin is so serious that the divine Son of Man came to die in our place to save us. When we grasp that, our ideas of greatness will be turned on their heads.

*Prayer requests*



# Mark

## The final temple

Mark 11:1-12:17

### OPTIONAL STUDY

#### **Biblical-theological background for Mark 11-15**

If we are to appreciate the meaning of the triumphal entry and the cleansing of the temple (in Mark 11), and indeed, the whole of Mark 11-15 (which takes place in and around the temple) we need to have a deep grasp of the rich Old Testament background.

1. In the beginning, God gave us a “sanctuary,” a place where we could live in the presence of God and meet him face to face. That sanctuary was the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-9; Genesis 3:8-9). It was a place of total fulfillment and fellowship with God. It was the place of shalom, perfect peace and harmony.
2. But because of sin, we were banished from the sanctuary of God’s presence — a flaming sword was put at the entrance of the Garden (Genesis 3:24). This was a representation that the penalty for sin is death. The way back into the presence of God is blocked by justice. There is no way back into the presence of God without going under the sword.
3. In the wilderness, God created a moveable sanctuary — the tabernacle where people could draw near to meet him (Exodus 25:22). The actual throne room of the sanctuary was the Holy of Holies, separated by a thick curtain/barrier, which had pictures of the Garden on it, motifs of cherubim and palm trees (Exodus 26). But only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies, and then only once a year. He had to go “under the sword” with a blood sacrifice, symbolically atoning for sin, paying the penalty in order to go in to God’s presence. At the conclusion of the tabernacle service, God blessed the people with his shalom or peace (Numbers 6:24-27). The shekinah glory of God’s holiness dwells behind the veil in the sanctuary and no sinner can enter there.
4. Though God allows Solomon to build a permanent physical sanctuary (I Kings 8:41-43), yet he alludes to a Son of David building a truly permanent “house” for God and us (2 Samuel 5:6-10; 7:1-16). Since Solomon is not this true Son, his temple is destroyed (I Kings 11:11-13; 2 Kings 25:8-11). During the exile, Ezekiel prophesies a new temple and a new David to build it (Ezekiel 37:24-28; 40-43). It will be much grander than Solomon’s temple. The Lord’s glory will fill it (Ezekiel 48:35), and it will become so large that all the nations of the earth will come to it and into it (Ezekiel 37:28).
5. The temple built after the exiles returned to Israel from Babylon did not fulfill this grand vision of the prophets. When the new foundation was laid, the older people wept because it was far less splendid than Solomon’s, not more (Ezra 3:12). It was this post-exilic temple that existed in Jesus’ day.

## THE FINAL TEMPLE

So this temple was not the one that was prophesied (Haggai 2:1-8). That one would only be built when the Messiah, the new “David” came.

6. Zechariah 9-14 is critical for understanding Mark 11. Zechariah 9:9-12 tells of the Messiah, the king coming back “gentle and riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” The prophecy ends in a stunning way. “On that day **HOLY TO THE LORD** will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the Lord’s house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord Almighty... And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord Almighty” (Zechariah 14:20-21). Here we are told that the returning king will turn the entire city — even the entire world — into a giant holy of holies. It is a breath-taking and overwhelming vision. Even cooking pots will be as holy as those before God’s throne. The Holy of Holies will extend to include the whole world, so that even the Canaanites will be holy and living in the house of the Lord (Zechariah 14:21). This means that the Messiah will not simply build a building, but will mediate the very presence of God back to earth. He will **BE** the door to God, the final temple.
7. Mark 11 is essentially showing how Jesus fulfills this prophecy of Zechariah, and thus all the prophecies of the Old Testament that linked the Messiah to the temple. John is more explicit than Mark. He says, “*the word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory*” (1:14). He tells us how, after Jesus cleansed the temple, he refers to his body as the temple (2:19-21). John records Jesus saying “*I am the Way, the Truth, the Life. No one comes to the Father but by me*” (John 14:6). Jesus is the final temple. In Mark 15:38, we are told how this could be —the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. Jesus went under the sword (Genesis 3:24). He took the sword into himself. He was the High Priest opening the way into the Holy of Holies, but he made himself the sacrifice. He paid the price to open the door.
8. In Mark and the other gospels, Jesus is depicted as “the final temple”. He thus brings us a salvation of unfathomable wisdom and richness. The ripping of the veil signifies the “outbreaking” of God’s royal, healing presence into the world — this is the coming of the kingdom. What does it all mean?
  - a. It means that Christ is not primarily a teacher, but a Savior. This is why Mark concentrates not so much on his moral advice, but on who he is and what he did. He comes to open the way into God for us.
  - b. It means that being a Christian is not primarily being a nice person who subscribes to certain beliefs and codes. It is a radical

regeneration of the heart and reorientation of the life. We are regenerated when we believe (John 3:3), because now the same raw presence that once shook mountains, terrified people, killed living things on contact now can live in us. For we who believe in Jesus are now temples in which the Holy Spirit of God dwells (I Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16).

- c. It means that being a Christian gives us access to the presence of God through prayer now, and access to the bosom of God in the future. Moses' unrealizable yearning to see the light of God's glory and face (Exodus 33:18) is now our privilege (John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 4:6).
- d. It means that being a Christian makes us partners and participants with Christ in his work of spreading the healing and energizing kingdom-power through the world. Because Jesus is the temple, we too are the final temple, "living stones" in it (I Peter 2:4-10). Because Jesus is the High Priest, we are "priests" who can both draw near to God (Hebrews 4:14-16) and bring others to God (Hebrews 13). Because Jesus is a gate to heaven (John 1:51; John 14:6) we are linked to heaven (Colossians 2:20; Philippians 3:20). Because Jesus is an anointed one (Luke 4:18), as was the temple, so we are anointed (I John 2:20). All the lines and themes of the temple converge on Jesus — he is the Sacrifice, the Priest, the Altar, the Light, the Bread, the blood of purification. For all the promises of God become "Yes" in Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Chapter 11 really begins the last chapter of Jesus' life. We notice that in chapter 10:46-52) he allows people (like blind Bartimaeus) to call him the Messiah openly. This can mean only one thing — nothing else needs to happen before he is crucified! He knows that an open declaration of his identity will lead to execution, so the countdown begins. Chapters 11 through 15 cover only a week of his life, but it consumes nearly a third of Mark's gospel. The disproportionate length shows that the gospels are not a biography. These chapters are the climax and fulfillment of Jesus' ministry, not simply the end of it.

- 1. Read verses 1-6. A full six verses are devoted to finding a colt for Jesus to ride. Read Zechariah 9:9. What does it teach us that Jesus has this so well planned out? What are some practical, personal applications for us?**
- 2. In verse 2, Jesus makes it clear that this is a colt "which no one has ever ridden." Why would that be of significance? What does it symbolize?**
- 3. Read Verses 8-10. What do we learn from the response and cries of the crowd?**



## THE JUDGMENT OF THE KING

- 8. In verse 11 Jesus does not simply ride in to Jerusalem. This verse shows his triumphal entry was actually to the Temple. Share from your reading: a) one insight that helps you most in understanding Jesus' mission, and b) one insight that helps you most in understanding the Christian life.**

This passage shows us Jesus repeating himself. The repetition of themes in Mark is not a lack of imagination on the author's part. Rather, it conveys a very important lesson for us. Jesus has only a few very basic things to say, but they are very difficult to learn. Discerning Christians sometimes realize their entire lives have been one long process of learning one or two gospel lessons.

Instead of Jesus instructing his disciples in the meaning of his death, we see him again confronting religious leaders and the crowds through the next couple of chapters. We are brought back to the theme of the first half of Mark — "Who is this?" Jesus' triumphal entry to public acclaim has virtually forced the hand of the "chief priests, teachers of law, and the elders" (Mark 11:27). They can ignore him no longer — they must discredit him or destroy him. His entry was virtually an invitation from Jesus to "crown me or kill me." There is never any doubt which option they will choose.

**1. Read verses 11:27-33. a) What are they asking Jesus? b) Why would this group be so concerned about it? c) Why is Jesus' answer so effective?**

**2. What practical implications does this interchange have for us?**

**3. Read 12:1-12. Why is this parable spoken to religious leaders, and how does it follow from the previous discussion?**



### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** Once again Jesus' supreme authority is evident, not only in his claim to be Son of God and the Messiah to whom John pointed, but also in his complete control over the supposed "authorities" of Israel.

**Why Jesus Came:** The parable of the vineyard puts Jesus' coming in the context of Israel's whole discreditable history. He has come, like the prophets before him, to demand from Israel God's due. But when rebellious Israel kills the messenger, he will rise from the dead, and they will have the care of God's people taken from them, to the marvel of believers.

**How should I respond?** The unbelievers' problem here is rebellion, not ignorance (12:12a). They should have admitted who Jesus was (11:27-33), respected him (12:6) and given God his due (12:17). Instead, they desire an inheritance only for themselves (12:7), are only in awe of men (11:32; 12:12b), ignore dire warnings (12:9-12) and lay deadly traps for Jesus (12:17).



# Mark

## The teaching of the King

### Study 12 | Mark 12:18-44

This passage continues the series of “hot questions” served up to trap Jesus. He deftly fields these questions like a good infielder handles ground balls — he calmly picks each one up and throws it back! In one instance, he throws it back very hard, and goes on the offensive, totally defeating them. Jesus never dodged the hard questions. Sometimes people in the church brush off difficult inquiries with the response “don’t question, just believe.” Jesus doesn’t do that. It is interesting to notice that Jesus doesn’t simply set up a lecture series and give people information. Rather, his teaching is usually a response to concrete situations and questions.

On the other hand, we learn here that asking Jesus a question is very dangerous! He never lets the question remain at the abstract or intellectual level, but gets personal and makes you examine where you stand and to what you are committed.

- 1. Read verses 18-27. Jesus uses several different arguments to show the Sadducees their errors. What are they?**
- 2. What can we learn and infer about life after death, according to Jesus?**
- 3. Read verses 28-30. Why is Jesus’ response to the teacher of the law so amazing to them? (verse 34b, “no one dared ask him any more questions.”) What does it teach us about ourselves? How does it tell us more about the law?**



8. Read verses 12:18-44. What aspect of Jesus' teaching is most challenging to you? How can you more fully follow "the teaching of the King?"

### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** Jesus is the Messiah and, according to the OT, this means that he is incomparably greater than David, descended from David but also the Son of God. As such, he has authority to interpret Scripture and to judge who is near and who is far from kingdom of God. The kingdom of God, God's reign, has itself come "near" in Jesus' presence on earth (cf. 1:14-15).

**Why Jesus came:** As the Messiah, He is due our own whole allegiance. Instead of living for self, we can now live for God.

**How should I respond?** The passage contains two negative examples and two positives.

**We must beware** – of denying (either in theory like the Sadducees or in practice like the Pharisees) that there will be a resurrection, and therefore that there will be judgement and salvation. Such denial ignores what Scripture teaches about God's power.

**We must beware** – of religion like that of the scribes in general which courts homage from others, idolizing self. Such religion may look very holy, but fails in what is due to God and our neighbor.

**We must emulate** – the wise scribe's understanding of God's demands. Jesus commends him not because he has kept the two great commandments but because he knows they are the standard by which he will be judged, and that religion cannot make up for not keeping them.

**We must emulate** – the poor widow's total commitment, not just financially but personally. What she gives is, literally "her whole life" (cf. 8:34-37).

### Prayer requests



# Mark

## This world won't last forever

Mark 13:1-47

OPTIONAL STUDY

### Introduction to Eschatology

There is little consensus among Christians with regard to the details of what the Bible teaches about the “end times.” (The theological term for this area of inquiry is *eschatology*.) On the one hand, we must remember that the basic teaching of the New Testament on this could not be clearer: Jesus Christ will return visibly and personally at the end of time to judge and renew the whole world. There is very little disagreement about this fact among those who accept the basic trustworthiness of the Bible. Some estimate that almost one quarter of the New Testament is devoted to proclaiming this fact. If you reject the concept of the Second Coming of Christ, you essentially have to reject the reliability of the entire New Testament. Jesus is coming back.

But on the other hand, beyond this essential teaching, Christians with very similar commitments and beliefs have not been able to agree on most of the details regarding the Lord's return. One reason for this is because much Biblical prophecy comes in a literary genre often called “*Apocalyptic*.” Every literary genre comes with its own set of interpretive rules. We do not interpret poetry the same way we interpret history. But what are the “rules” for interpreting prophecy? “Apocalyptic” looks seductively like simple historical narrative, only written “ahead of time.” But it is also much like poetry in its images and ambiguities. In short, it is very difficult to understand Biblical prophecy. (When we see how New Testament writers interpreted Old Testament prophecies about the birth of Christ, we see just how tricky such interpretation is. For example, see Matthew 2:14 citing Hosea 11:1 as a prediction that Jesus would go to Egypt. Would you have ever interpreted Hosea 11:1 as a Messianic prophecy if Matthew hadn't explained it?)

What does this mean? First, it means we must hold any of our convictions about eschatology with a certain amount of tentativeness and humility. If we hold our views of prophecy and end-times with the same assurance and conviction with which we hold our views of Christ and the Gospel, we are simply giving ourselves too much credit. What makes us think that we are so much wiser than most of the rest of the Christian church? (*Any* particular view of the end is virtually a minority position — that is how fractured the church is over the interpretation of details!)

Second, however, we should not simply avoid any discussion of details. Our views here *do* have some impact on how we live our lives in the world. Our “eschatology” (as we shall see) can make us either very optimistic or very pessimistic about life in this world, and that affects how we spend our money and our time.

Therefore, we should study this subject with humility, but we *should* study it.

## THIS WORLD WON'T LAST FOREVER

The occasion for Jesus' discourse is his prediction that the temple will be destroyed. The temple was an impressive building. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us each stone was approximately 37 feet long, 12 feet high, and 18 feet long. Therefore, when Jesus says "*not one stone will be standing upon another,*" he is predicting an extremely violent event, and a tremendous disaster. We know that this prophecy came true. In 70 A.D. the Roman army under Titus destroyed Jerusalem. He raised the Temple to the ground, as a "lesson" and warning to all rebels. This is quite important background knowledge for any readers of this passage.

**1. Since the disaster Jesus is predicting in verse 2 is so mammoth, what point in history do the disciples probably think Jesus is describing? (i.e. What are the "these things" that the disciples are asking about in verse 4?**

**2. Read through verses 5-13 and verses 14-23. After reading each, circle which question you think Jesus is addressing in that particular section.**

A-1 "when will the temple end?"

A-2 "what will be the signs leading up to that?"

B-1 "when will the world end?"

B-2 "what will be the signs leading up to that?"

<b>verses 5-13:</b>	<b>A-1</b>	<b>A-2</b>	<b>B-1</b>	<b>B-2</b>
<b>verses 14-23:</b>	<b>A-1</b>	<b>A-2</b>	<b>B-1</b>	<b>B-2</b>

**3. Why do you think the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem was so significant for Christians?**

**4. Read through verses 24-27, 28-31, and 32-37. After reading each, circle which question you think Jesus is addressing in that particular section.**

A-1 "when will the temple end?"

A-2 "what will be the signs leading up to that?"

B-1 "when will the world end?"

B-2 "what will be the signs leading up to that?"

**verses 24-27:      A-1**

**A-2**

**B-1**

**B-2**

**verses 28-31:      A-1**

**A-2**

**B-1**

**B-2**

**verses 32-37:      A-1**

**A-2**

**B-1**

**B-2**

**5. Make a list of all the insights you can glean from verses 5-37 about the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth.**

**6. Read verses 32-37. We know that Jesus is returning but not when He is returning. What is the practical impact of this balance of 'knowing and not knowing'?**

7. **Reflect for a minute on how your behavior and life would change if you took seriously what you have learned here about 'The Return of the King'.**

### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** Jesus is the true Messiah, Son of Man and Son of God. He is absent now, (verses 5-23) but he will return (verses 24-37). When he comes in glory, all will know who he is.

**Why Jesus Came:** He came to bring judgement, but not yet judgement on the world. He came to send the gospel out to the elect a New Israel of all nations. When he returns in final judgement, his people will be gathered.

**How should I respond?** Reject false "messiahs" and false "prophets," however spectacular, and all claims to know the date of Jesus' return. We need to spread the gospel, in light of Jesus' return. The last judgement could come at any time.





# Mark

## The King is prepared

### Study 13 | Mark 14:1-26

This chapter begins the actual “Passion Narrative” of Mark — the actual account of Christ’s death. The foreshadowing and explanations are over. Now we watch it happen. *“The account of Jesus’ betrayal, arrest, condemnation, and execution furnishes a climax to the Gospel and brings together the motifs and themes developed throughout the account.”* (Lane; The Gospel According to Mark, p. 485).

- 1. Read verses 3-9. Why is the woman criticized for her action (verses 4-5)? Why does Jesus call her act “beautiful”?**
- 2. In what specific ways should we be like her?**
- 3. Read verses 10-12, 20-21. Judas is a chilling example. Here is a man who looked like a believer in every way, but was not. a) In what ways are we all like Judas? b) In what ways is a genuine Christian unlike Judas?**



### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** Just as physical Israel was saved from death in Egypt by death of lambs (Exodus 12), so Jesus is the true Passover Lamb whose death saves the true Israel from death. He is the Suffering Servant who dies for many (Isaiah 53:12). He is totally in control; He is King.

**Why Jesus came:** Jesus came to die not for the worthy but for the unworthy, and to give his body and blood to atone for the sins of people of all nations. This makes his death amazingly good news.

**How should I respond?** Although it looks increasingly as if everyone will deny the crucified Christ, the story is not yet over. In thankful devotion, we can give praise for the death of the "Passover Lamb."

*Prayer requests*



# Suffering at the hands of His friends

# Mark

Mark 14:27-52

## OPTIONAL STUDY

The next three sections of Mark look at how Jesus suffered at the hands of his friends, enemies, and Father. These titles are taken from the passage titles of the “Read, Mark, Learn” curriculum used for many years at St. Helen’s Bishops Gate Church in London. The titles show us that the suffering of Christ was multi-dimensional — physical, mental, and spiritual. It is necessary to understand the depths of what he endured for us if we are to appreciate the riches of what he procured for us. Secondly it shows us how to face trials in our own life.

**Note:** We will only touch today on verses 27-31 with little comment. It will be better to consider these predictions of Peter’s denial along with the later account of what and how he did it.

- 1. Notice in verses 27 and 49 how Jesus continually refers to prophecy throughout his trial. a) What does this tell us about Jesus’ death? b) How does the cross help us to face suffering and injustice in our own lives?**
  
- 2. Contrast Jesus’ reaction to death (read verses 33-34, 36) to the deaths of so many Christian martyrs in history (read below). Why the difference?**
  
- 3. a) What does “the cup” tell us about Jesus’ sufferings? (Recall Mark 10:38.)  
b) Many people reject the very idea of hell or the wrath of God. What impact does such a rejection have on one’s appreciation of the love of Christ?**



### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** Jesus is fully man; his suffering is real and he dreads the cross. But he is the obedient Son of God, willing to die, thereby fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy (verses 27, 49).

**Why Jesus Came:** He came to drink the “cup” of God’s wrath, bearing the penalty of man’s sin on man’s behalf. No one else could do this; he was left utterly alone. And there was no other way. Only God Himself could pay the penalty of man’s sin by dying in man’s place.

**How should I respond?** We will be ashamed of Jesus and his words unless we both understand the cross and, “watching,” pray for God’s help. We shall do neither unless we understand ourselves and that we are all prayless, sleepy, self-reliant failures.







### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** Jesus' claims are made public for the first time. He is the Messiah/King of Israel, the Son of God as well as Son of Man, the one who will sit at God's right hand and come in glory to judge. He is shown to be innocent by the very people who most want to prove him guilty. As Suffering Servant, he responds to their taunts with silence.

**Why Jesus came:** He did not come to be the kind of King we think we want, and which they falsely accused him of being in order to kill him. He came to be the kind of King we really need, who will die not only at the hands of, but also die in the place of, such murderous rebels as we are.

**How should I respond?** The Sanhedrin hated Jesus at once; Peter and the crowd denied when persecution came; Pilate was "choked" by the cares of the world (cf. 4:15-19). The contrast between Christ and all who reject him is not there to encourage us to follow his example better in the future but to show us our helpless need of salvation. He did not come to call the righteous but sinners (2:17).

*Prayer requests*



# Suffering at the hands of His Father

# Mark

## Study 15 | Mark 15:16-39

We must remember that Mark always has two reasons for including small details in his narrative. First, anything he writes is included because it happened. Mark is not making this up. (See below, question #2.) Second, however, anything he writes is included in order to teach us about Jesus. Mark is not 'preachy' — he does not do much direct explanation or exposition or moralizing. Rather, he selects facts and events in such a way as to drive home the meaning of the work of Christ. So we should constantly ask: "Why did Mark include that? What is he trying to tell us here?"

- 1. Look at the "mocking" of Christ. Read verses 17-20, 29-32, and also 14:65.**
  - a) For what particular things is Jesus mocked? b) What do you think Mark is showing us in the account of the mocking?**
  
- 2. Read verse 21. What does this interesting little note about 'Alexander and Rufus' tell us about a) Mark's readers, and b) the trustworthiness of the account?**
  
- 3. What is Mark trying to get across about human nature in these descriptions of the mocking, spitting, beating?**



8. Read verse 39. In many ways, the confession of the centurion is the climax of the crucifixion and even of the gospel of Mark. Contrast him to everyone else around the cross. What is the connection between verses 38 and 39? What do you think Mark is trying to get his readers (us) to do here? How can we do it?

### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** Jesus is the Christ and Redeemer King, the Son of God. Jesus suffers as the Passover Lamb not only at the hands of men but at the hands of God.

**Why Jesus came:** Jesus came so that we would believe in this Messiah, the one who “must” die. Jesus bore God’s wrath and died in our place, He was banished by his Father so that we might be welcomed.

**How should I respond?** Believe in this Messiah, the one who must die (8:31).

*Prayer requests*





4. **Why does Mark take such care to show that the resurrection was a historical event? Why does that matter?**
5. **Most of the reliable manuscripts we have indicate Mark's gospel ending abruptly at 16:8. If (as it seems) he ended it that way, why did he do so, do you think?**

### Prayer requests

### Remembering the big picture

**Who Jesus is:** He is the Suffering Servant, Ransom, Passover Lamb, Son of Man, Son of God who is innocent, authoritative, loved by his Father.

**Why Jesus came:**

- To judge all men for fruitlessness, man-centered religion, and rebellion/blasphemy.
- To save both Jew and Gentile, including blasphemers/rebels/his killers from hell for eternal life.
- To serve by dying as ransom. He is the Lamb who accepted God's wrath and takes away the sin of the world.

**How should I respond?**

- Be unashamed of Jesus. (Examples: Take up cross! Deny self!; Be little/welcome little; Serve! Witness! Watch!; Have faith in God! Give All!)
- Be ashamed of ourselves. (Examples: we reject word about cross; we reject word about us; we give man God's due; we deny/kill our Savior.)
- Pray for forgiveness/mercy.





1359 Broadway 4th Floor | New York, New York 10018

(212) 808 4460

[www.redeemer.com](http://www.redeemer.com)