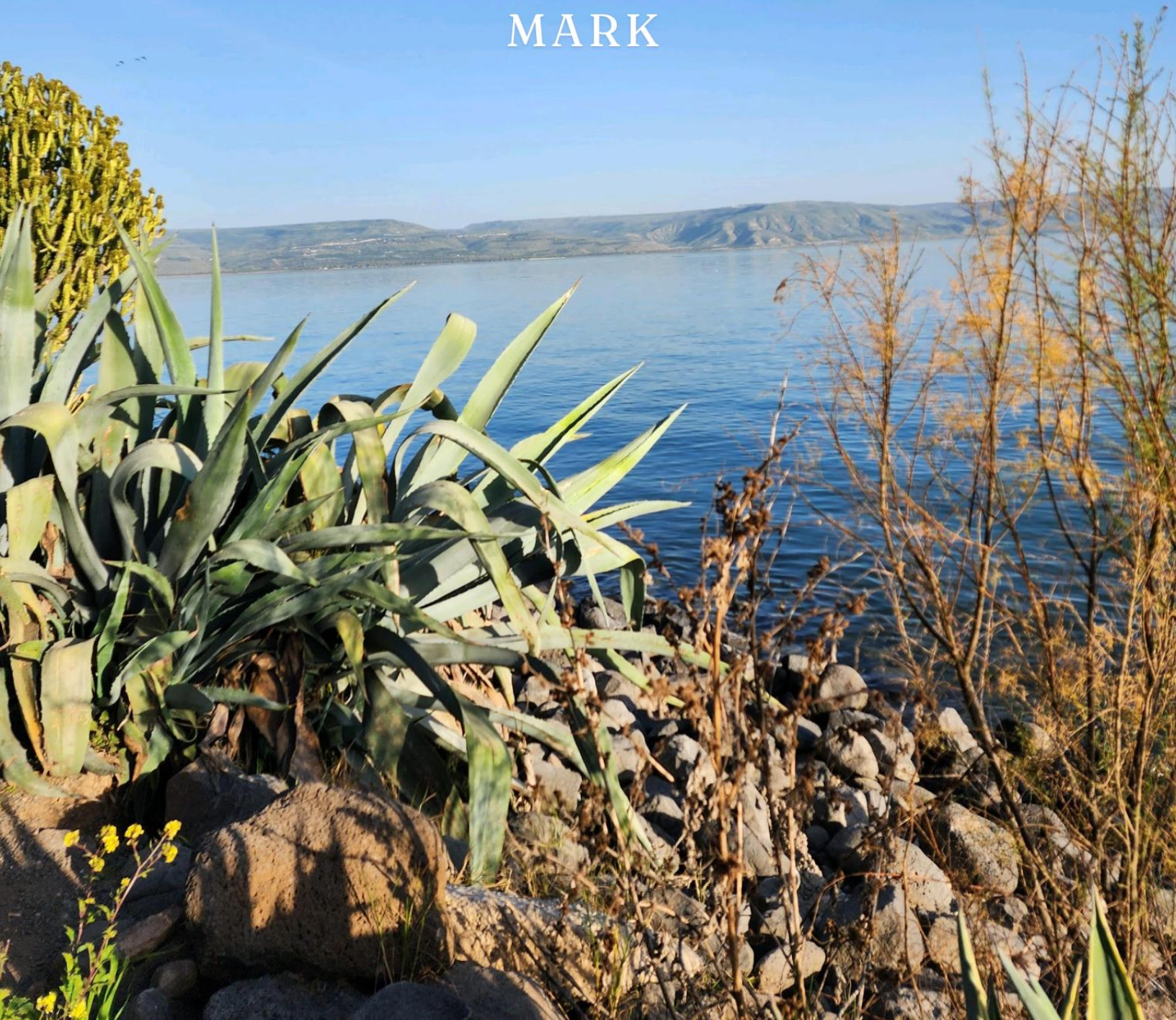


# Come and See

A KID'S COMPANION TO THE GOSPEL OF  
MARK



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*To Jason*

*This life would be so dull without you by my side*

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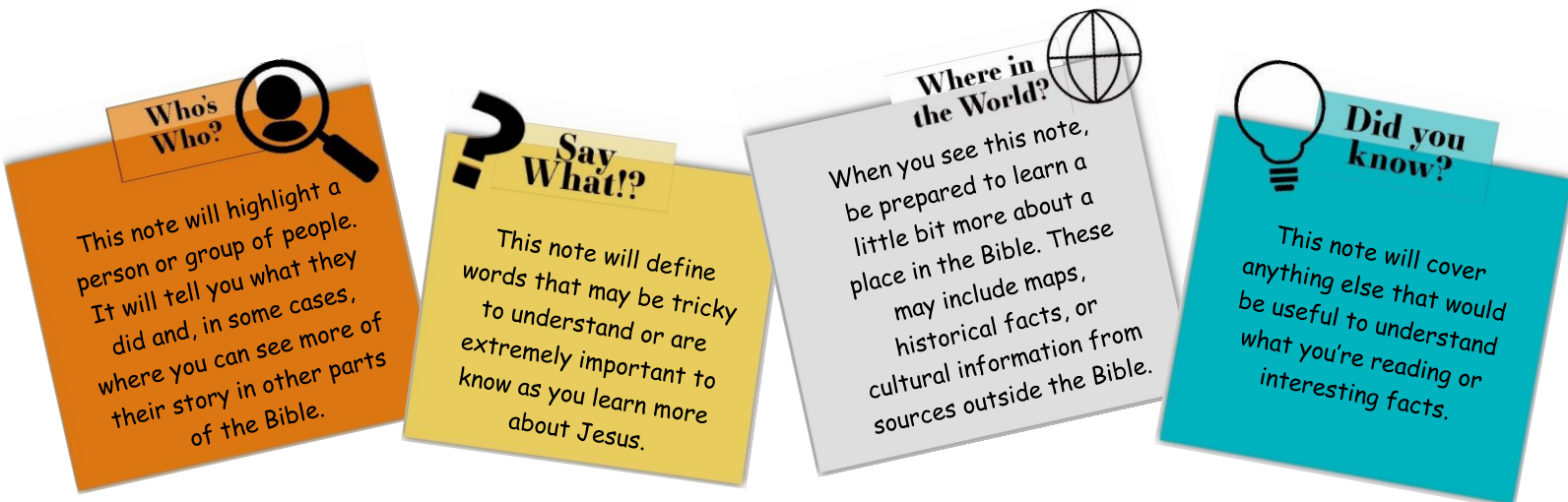
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## Using this Book

Welcome to *Come and See: A Kid's Companion to Mark*! I'm so very excited we're going to begin this adventure together. Though this journey may feel hard at times, digging into God's Word is a habit that will change your life. Allow me to explain how this will work. My hope is to shed some light on what you're reading. Sometimes the Bible can talk about people, places, and culture you may not understand. Using this book alongside your Bible reading, I hope to provide a bridge of understanding to some of the things that are most confusing or hard to follow when you start diving into God's Word. Please know that if you read anything, read the Bible. I will do my best to try to present a helpful tool, but if you only have time to read this book or the Bible, choose the Bible every time—it is the living, active Word of God.

That being said, my hope is to help you on your journey. Providing summary and explanation, this book will take you section by section and chapter by chapter through Philippians. Also included will be little pop-ups in the form of sticky notes titled "Who's Who?", "Say What?", "Where in the World?", and "Did You Know?" When you see these, know they offer information that will help you tie historical and cultural facts to what you are reading. They will explain words or give background on who is being talked about and why they're important to the story. If you come across something underlined in the main body text, look for the corresponding sticky note.



Finally, throughout this book, you will see sections with the heading "Scope It Out." In Mark, Jesus calls his disciples to "come and see." In these sections, we will scope out the teachings and truth of Scripture by taking a closer look through extra thoughts, discussion questions, or practical ways for you to apply what you're learning.

I can't write about everything, and you may have questions I don't address. Ask your questions anyway! Ask a parent, and if you don't get an answer there, find a pastor or mature Christian who can point you in the right direction. The beauty of God's Word is that you will always have questions. I've been following Jesus for a while, and I still have lots of questions. Never let questions or confusion discourage you because God is always in the process of revealing himself to those who seek him. We need only to ask for his wisdom. Let's ask, dear readers, and ready our hearts to explore the book of Mark.

### **A Note to Parents**

I read the Bible as a kid, so I know how it can feel too hard and overwhelming. As a mom, I've also read the Bible to my kids, which is hard in its own way. My prayer is that this book will be a bridge to help you and your family study the Bible.

One tip that I have used with my own children is to read the Bible in **small sections**. Our family does this by using the subheadings within each chapter of the Bible. Some days we'll read one section, and my kids will be ready to move on to another activity. Other days they'll want to keep reading. I let them dictate the pace. Because I've found this to be so helpful in my own family, I have divided this book into subheadings as well. Each of these subheadings relates directly to the latest version of the NIV Bible. Choosing a Bible translation can be difficult, as they each have pros and cons. This translation was chosen based on reading levels and because it is already widely used for children and beginner Bibles.

## A Call

You're in a boat. The heat of the mid-morning sun is burning away the fog, as sweat drips from your brow. Your back is aching and your muscles are exhausted from a night of straining at the nets. The spray of the Sea of Galilee splashes up and you straighten from the knot you were tying and squint to the shoreline. Why are there crowds? Forgetting the net, you row closer to shore. Is that the famous teacher from Nazareth? You've heard talk of him, but never seen him yourself. Leaning closer, you hear the authority in his voice and your soul stirs with his words. Reaching the shore, you pull the boat out of the water and join the crowd. After the Teacher is finished, you ask the person next to you, "Who is this man?" He responds simply, "Come and see."

You probably aren't actually in a boat on the Sea of Galilee right now, but that same invitation is for you. Do you know Jesus? Do you understand his teachings? Do you know the claims he makes? Do you know all that he has done? Come and see. Open the pages of Scripture to the Gospel of Mark and see for yourself who Jesus is. Listen, learn, and seek out the answer to those questions. This book will help to explain background information, cultural notes, definitions and cross-referencing, but the Bible, and for our study purposes, the book of Mark, is the true guide to who Jesus is. Are you ready? Then come and see!

Before we get into the first chapter of Mark, there are some important details that may be helpful to know. When we read God's Word, it's important to know who was writing it and who they were writing it to. Depending on the book of the Bible, these facts may or may not be clear. However, even when we aren't *certain* who wrote the book, we can often make guesses based on artifacts that have been found.

With that in mind, the Gospel of Mark is believed to have been written by a man from Jerusalem named John Mark, probably between AD 41 and AD 67. The primary purpose of the book of Mark is believed to have been for followers of Jesus in Rome. There was a time of great hardship in the church and Mark wanted to strengthen and encourage them. Many assume that Peter (you'll learn about him throughout Mark) was his main source of information.<sup>1</sup>

Think of a TV interview by your favorite actor. The interviewer can ask the actor all sorts of questions because the actor has the inside scoop on what happened on the set of their latest movie. Peter was one of Jesus' closest followers, so Mark interviewed him for a glimpse inside the ministry of Jesus. The Book of Mark is what he learned and recorded.

An action-packed book, Mark doesn't spend much time with the birth or early years of Jesus. Instead, he starts his story just before Jesus' mission starts and introduces us to John the Baptist. Let's jump in and check it out!



## Many Come, Many See

### John the Baptist Prepares the Way (1:1-8)

John, a relative of Jesus, had a unique purpose for his life: he was the one meant to pave the way for Jesus. If you think of a huge, overgrown jungle, picture John with a machete, slicing through the underbrush and carving a path. His path doesn't lead to a jungle, but to God. This path is carved by telling people to repent. John wants people to live their lives according to the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), instead of the ways they have been living. Calling the people to repent will also ready them for the coming Messiah. Messiah is a big word that we'll talk more about later but, for now, know that it means "anointed."<sup>3</sup> The Jewish people were waiting and desperately longing for the Messiah to come and save them.

After listening to John preach, if people wanted to repent and turn their lives around to prepare for the Messiah, John baptized them in a river.<sup>4</sup> If you've never seen a baptism, picture a person being gently dunked under the water by another person and brought back up. If you have seen a baptism at church before, know that what

John was doing was a bit like that only with a different meaning. Christians baptize now to show that we've given our lives to Jesus with the desire and a commitment to follow him. John's baptism was one of repentance.<sup>5</sup>

### The Baptism and Testing of Jesus (1:9-13)

Jesus gets baptized in the Jordan River by John too, not because he needs to turn his life around, but as an example of him taking the repentance required for the people upon himself.<sup>6</sup> As the heavens are torn open and the Spirit descends while the voice of God rings through the air, we also get our first view of the Trinity in the book of Mark. After his

#### Say What!? Repent

Repent means to feel sorry for past actions and long to change.<sup>2</sup> John was calling people to feel sorry for their mistakes. He challenged them to turn and live their lives differently than the way they were currently living.

#### Who's Who?

##### Trinity

Trinity means tri-unity or three-in-one. Christians believe in one God that exists as three persons: the Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit. They exist and function together in perfect unity and the single entity called God.<sup>7</sup>

If that seems confusing, don't worry, adults are confused by it too. This is a flawed analogy but think of the water cycle. Water works together as evaporation, precipitation, and condensation to water the earth. All are water, acting differently and working together.

As you read the Bible, know that some things remain beyond us, if we could understand everything about God, he wouldn't be very big!

#### Who's Who?

##### John the Baptist

The son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, born to them in their old age. John came before Jesus to prepare the way. He is most known for his strange clothes of camel's hair and his gross diet of locusts and honey. He spent most of his time in the wilderness. You can read more about him in Matthew 3, Luke 3:1-20, and John 1:1-34.

#### Where in the World?

##### The Jordan River

The Jordan River is the body of water on the eastern side of Israel that connects the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee. This is the river where John baptized many, including Jesus (see the map on page 7).

## Who's Who?

### Satan

Satan was once a powerful angel of light. In pride, he desired to be like God and fell from his place in heaven. His original name meant "Day Star." Once he rebelled against God, however, he became known as the Adversary (2 Corinthians 12:15), Accuser (Revelation 12:10), Tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5), and the Father of Lies (John 8:44). He is our enemy that seeks to destroy, but thankfully, Jesus has defeated him by his death and resurrection!<sup>8</sup>

baptism, Jesus goes into the wilderness and is tempted by Satan (you can read more about that story in Matthew 4:1-11) and his ministry begins.

### Jesus Announces the Good News (1:14-15)

Soon after, John is put in prison because of his teachings and Jesus begins to preach. Jesus' message begins where John's left off—by calling people to repent.

### Scope It Out

For such an important character, we don't hear much about John in the book of Mark, but

something really special about the Bible is that there are four gospels. Each of these gospels gives a different viewpoint of the author. They share similar stories, but there are parts that are highlighted by some and glossed over by others. Think of it this way: if you went to a theme park with friends or family and someone asked you later what you did, you may all give different answers. Some parts stick out to you that didn't stick out to others. We see that in the gospels, too. So if you want to read more about John the Baptist and why he was put in prison, look to Matthew 14.

### Jesus Calls His First Disciples (1:16-20)

As Jesus begins his ministry, he then decides to call specific people to follow him. Likely he already had crowds listening and learning from him, but he decides to call a few men to walk closely with him and learn from him daily. He calls the first four in this chapter that happen to be two sets of brothers: Simon (whose name is changed to Peter) and his brother Andrew, and James and his brother John. These men were all fishing when Jesus called them. He calls them away from their careers and asks them to follow him.<sup>9</sup> Seems pretty risky, huh? To follow Jesus without knowing how you'll work or eat; maybe not knowing if you'll see your loved ones very much after that. Yet these men obey immediately because they *know* there is something special about Jesus and they want to be a part of it.

### Scope It Out

In the same way Jesus called these men away from what they knew in order to follow him, he also calls us. The Bible often shows people leaving their families, their land, or their jobs to follow Jesus. They did this because they knew that following Jesus was worth more than what they gave up. Have you ever had to give anything up to do something that was more important to you? Maybe you couldn't play both soccer and football because they were during the same season, and you had to choose which one was most important. This is what the disciples were doing, and this is

often required of us to follow Jesus. Have you ever given anything up to better follow Jesus?

### **Jesus Drives out an Impure Spirit (1:21-28)**

With his followers, Jesus' ministry begins in earnest, and we get a taste of just how special he is. In Capernaum, Jesus meets a man possessed by an impure spirit. The spirit recognizes Jesus' power and authority as the "Holy One of God" (verse 24), and Jesus silences the demon, driving him out and saving the man.

### **Scope It Out**

Do you sense the amazement of the people? Could you put yourself in their shoes? A powerful demon, one that the people likely feared, was silenced and removed by the words of Jesus. His teaching not only has authority, but his very words prove to have authority over evil spirits. It's no wonder the news of Jesus spread so quickly.

That same authority is still his today. Seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus has been given the name that is above every other name. He is Lord. As Lord of all, he has authority. He is King. He is eternal. There is evil still now, but that is not because Jesus has lost his power. No. He is patient, longing for all to repent. But there will come a day when Jesus returns as the Victorious King of kings and Lord of lords. On that day, he will justly judge, and evil will be vanquished forever. Do you know this mighty, loving King yet? If you don't, I hope you'll open your heart to continue learning about him.

### **Jesus Heals Many (1:29-34)**

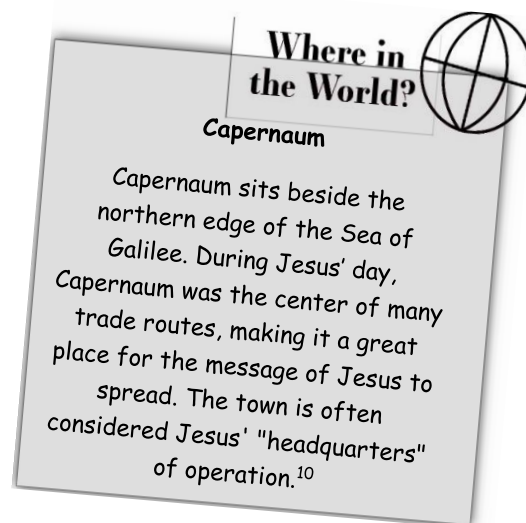
After driving out the impure spirit, Jesus goes to the home of Simon and Andrew, where Jesus takes Peter's sick mother-in-law by the hand. She is healed by his touch and immediately begins to wait on him. At this point, news spreads and people bring all their sick and hurting friends to Jesus for healing. They also bring many who are demon-possessed. Jesus does the same as he did before, always commanding the demons to remain silent.

You may be wondering as Jesus drives out demons, why does he keep the mouths of the demons silent? That is a good question! Many students of Mark believe that Jesus silences the demons because he does not approve of the unclean spirit's testimony.<sup>11</sup>

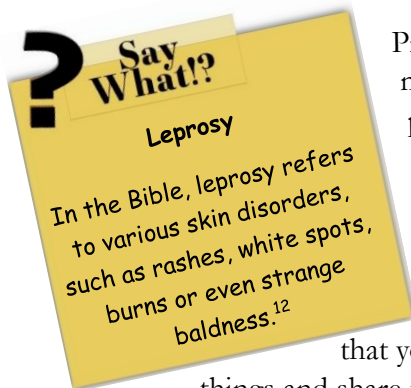
### **Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place (1:35-39)**

After a night of healing, Jesus doesn't take his time to sleep in and recover. Instead, notice how he gets up early and goes off alone to spend time in prayer. The disciples come to find him because everyone is looking for Jesus, but Jesus moves on. His purpose is to preach the message of God to the people. From there, he goes into towns preaching and driving out demons.

### **Scope It Out**







Prayer and time alone with his Father were vital to Jesus' ministry. It is often made known that Jesus went off alone to pray. As his followers, we're called to pray, too. This can be scary or feel strange, but the more you do it, the easier it becomes. Think of prayer as talking to a friend. Tell God about your day. You can do this while riding a bike or just before bed. You don't need a special place, though some people like to have one and that's okay too! Most important is that you start. Tell God you need help to pray. You can ask him for things and share things with him. Turn prayer into an ongoing conversation with God. You can talk to him anytime and anywhere. Make sure you also take time to listen because God speaks when we give him the space to.

### **Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy (1:40-45)**

Crowds are following Jesus now and within these crowds many are searching for healing from Jesus. One such man has leprosy. According to the law of Moses (found in the first five books of the Bible), a man with leprosy had to stay outside of the community (Leviticus 13:46). This man, isolated and alone, begs Jesus to cleanse him. Jesus does so willingly, and the man is healed.

Then, Jesus asks even him to remain silent. His reason here is different than his reason for having the demons remain silent. Students of Mark believe there could be a few possibilities for Jesus requesting the cleansed man not to tell anyone about his healing. First, the healing of leprosy may have caused the man a conflict with the Jewish leaders that needed to proclaim him clean. As you'll see, the Jewish leaders didn't always like Jesus and without a priest's blessing, the newly healed man wouldn't be able to return to his home. Another possibility is that Jesus' time has not yet come. Jesus is operating on a timeline and may have wanted to wait before setting events into motion. A final plausible reason for Jesus asking the leper to remain silent is that he does not want people to come to him only for miracles, but for his teaching.<sup>13</sup>

In the first chapter of Mark Jesus begins his ministry and the crowds are forming. He is a rising star and people are amazed by his authority both in teaching and performing miracles. It seems like smooth sailing for now, but soon the plot will thicken as conflict stirs.

## Jesus and the Outcasts

In chapter two, Jesus causes quite a stir with the people. Many have already heard about him, and crowds are gathering to listen to him when he speaks. Can you

imagine hearing about a friend who has been sick their whole life, that is suddenly better after going to Jesus? Or maybe you knew of the man who had leprosy, but after one touch from Jesus, his skin cleared up and he was totally healed. Jesus would sound amazing, and I bet you'd try to figure out where he was going to be next so you could see and hear him. That's what is happening in chapter two: people are hearing stories about some who were healed or freed from demons, and they want to see for themselves what is going on.

Because of this, the crowds find Jesus. These crowds, however, aren't only full of curious people, they also include the religious leaders of the day. These religious leaders were known as the Pharisees,

Sadducees and teachers of the law. Some would say these men were jealous of Jesus' large following.<sup>4</sup> Some would say these groups wanted Jesus to follow the customs *they* had established and added to the Law of Moses.<sup>5</sup> Either way, they want to know what Jesus is up to.

### Who's Who?

#### Pharisees:

Members of a religious sect (or group) that taught strict following of the laws of Moses and had a great concern for purity. They interpreted and adapted the law to fit the condition of their time and help people to stay true to the Law.<sup>1</sup>

#### Sadducees:

Members of another religious sect that controlled temple worship. Many were also members of the Sanhedrin- the Jewish ruling council. The Sadducees are most known for not believing in the resurrection and as major opponents to the Pharisees.<sup>2</sup>

#### Teachers of the Law or Scribes:

Men schooled in the written law of God and what it meant. We would think of these men like lawyers.<sup>3</sup>

## Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man (2:1-12)

These groups of religious leaders clash with Jesus in chapter two as men cut a hole in the roof of a house to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus. When Jesus sees him, he tells the man his sins are forgiven. This statement is a bombshell to the religious leaders of the day because they know and believe that only God can forgive sins. Jesus knows this too, meaning that he is claiming to be God, which would sound like blasphemy to the leaders. "You can't say that!" they'd be thinking. Jesus knows their thoughts and then provides further evidence that he does indeed have the power and authority of God. By this, he tells the man to get up and walk—and the man does!

### Scope It Out

Did you notice the faith and persistence of the friends of the paralyzed man? This man would have been unable to get himself to Jesus. He couldn't walk, so his only hope would be if Jesus passed by him. But then came his friends. They picked him up and carried him to Jesus. Frustratingly, after their exhausting work of carrying

### Say What!?

#### Blasphemy:

To speak evilly or disrespectfully about God or something holy.<sup>6</sup>

their friend, they meet with a crowd so big even they can't get to Jesus. Not to be deterred, they cut a hole in a roof! What perseverance for the sake of their friend. What faith to know that if they can just get to Jesus, their friend would be healed.

I wonder if we have that kind of persistence and faith. Sometimes, we can think of time with Jesus as just another thing we have to do. Jesus and the Bible can start to seem boring, or like we know all the stories, so why read? Why spend time with Jesus? I pray that instead, we will show the same kind of enthusiasm as these friends did. What if we were so in awe and in love with Jesus that we would cut a hole in a roof just to see him? I wouldn't recommend that exact response, your parents might be a bit upset. But search your heart. Are you that amazed by Jesus and what he does? The Christian walk should be anything but dull and boring, so let's look to him to help us see the wonder of who he is and what he has done. Let's pray, "Lord, excite me by your Word and actions. Give me a heart that recognizes how incredible you are."

### **Jesus Calls Levi and Eats with Sinners (2:13-17)**

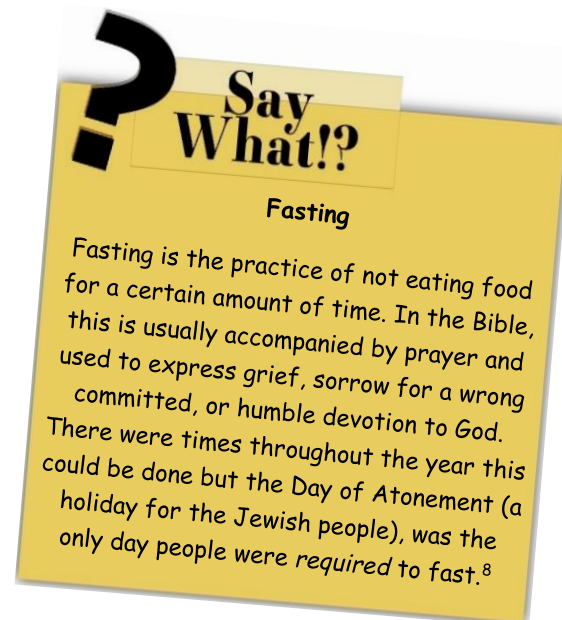
Not long after the healing of the paralyzed man, we see another confrontation Jesus has with the Pharisees. Jesus calls Levi to be his disciple and then goes to have dinner at his house. This doesn't sound wrong, does it? It's just a dinner party. In that time, though, Levi was seen as scum. He was a tax collector. When the Romans occupied Judea, they hired people to become their tax collectors to collect money to pay for the construction of roads and the maintenance of cities. If it wasn't enough that the Jewish people were paying taxes to Rome, the tax collectors were often dishonest, keeping extra money for themselves. Because of this, if a Jewish man became a tax collector, he was regarded as an outcast and his family would likely disown him.<sup>7</sup> "How could Jesus call someone like that?" the religious leaders are wondering. They probably assumed Levi wasn't good enough to follow anybody important and, if Jesus really was important, he wouldn't eat with sinners and rotten people like tax collectors, but they were so very wrong. Jesus calls even the worst of sinners.

### **Scope It Out**

Just as Jesus called the people that no one else liked during that time, he still calls sinners and outcasts today. Sometimes we think we have to be perfect before we can follow Jesus. Throughout his ministry, though, we see the opposite. He doesn't come to call the perfect, best people. He calls the lost, lonely, broken, hurting, and sinners. He calls people the world would never call. If you don't feel like Jesus could ever use you, keep reading and see all that he does with people that others would want nothing to do with.

### **Jesus Questioned About Fasting (2:18-22)**

Continuing in the chapter, Jesus is met with more questions. The disciples of the Pharisees and John the Baptist are fasting, but Jesus' disciples aren't. When asked about why his disciples are not





fasting, Jesus responds with some stories that may be hard to understand. Let's look into these a little further.

As he talks about weddings, Jesus is saying that the time for fasting as a means of sorrow or repentance is over, because he—the salvation—has come. His presence should be a time of great rejoicing, like at a wedding feast.<sup>9</sup>

Then there are two stories that mean the same thing: the story of the wineskin and the story of the cloth. In both of these stories, Jesus is saying that the old understanding of the Kingdom of God doesn't fit with what he is about to unleash. Jesus certainly didn't come in a way that was ordinary, and his life was not going to play out in the way that everyone expected. His ways and plans are different and better. With these stories, Jesus is challenging them to open their minds to a new understanding of what the Kingdom of God is like, because it's even bigger, better, and more powerful than they could imagine.<sup>10</sup>

### Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (2:23-28)

In the final part of chapter two, the Pharisees confront Jesus for allowing his disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath. This isn't because Jesus and his followers were breaking the law, rather, the Pharisees had created *extra* rules to keep the people from breaking laws.<sup>12</sup>

#### Say What!? Sabbath

A day dedicated to rest, based on the seventh day of creation in which God rested. For the Jewish people, this day was (and is still today) observed from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday.<sup>11</sup>

Imagine this: pretend your parents say you can't have dessert unless your room is clean, but you are so afraid they *won't* think your room is clean that you clean the whole house, just to be sure. The rule is that your room needs to be clean, not the house, and now you've added to their rules. There isn't a problem if you want to clean the whole house (your parents won't mind, I promise!), but now pretend that your brother or sister won't help you clean the house because they only want to clean their room. If you complain that they get dessert because they only cleaned their

room and not the whole house like you did, you're creating more rules than your parents had in the first place.

This is what is happening here. According to the Law of Moses, you could not use a sickle on the Sabbath to harvest your grain. Nothing was said about picking some and eating it.<sup>13</sup> Because the Pharisees question Jesus on this, he answers with a story from the Old Testament. He tells of a story about David which you can read more about in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. What Jesus is trying to tell the Pharisees is that their strict interpretation of the rules is a hardship to the people in a way the laws were never intended to be.

### Scope It Out

#### Who's Who?

David

The second King of Israel. He was considered a man after God's own heart and God promised him the Messiah would be one of his descendants (great-great-great-great-a lot of greats- grandsons). He became King at age 30 and is well known for defeating the giant Goliath as a teenager.

We see in this chapter that Jesus often surrounds himself with people the world considers unimpressive. He eats with “tax collectors” and “sinners.” These were the lowlifes of the time and most wouldn’t expect an important teacher to hang out with such people, but he does. I have to wonder, who are you eating with? Are you only hanging out with the popular kids in an attempt to seem cool or important? Or are you on the lookout for people who maybe don’t have anyone to eat with, sit with, talk to, or hang out with? Who can you think of this week that you could approach and show the same love that Jesus showed for the people the world ignored?

## Taking Sides

We left off in chapter two with Jesus being questioned by the Pharisees about his disciples picking grain on the Sabbath. At this point in the book of Mark, Jesus has caused quite a stir. To some he's a rising star, while others see him as a rebellious teacher bent on changing the oral traditions of the time. In chapter three, the divisions become even starker as Jesus continues his ministry.

### Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (3:1-6)

The chapter starts with Jesus entering a synagogue. There he meets a man with a shriveled hand, and Jesus asks all those around him this question in verse 4: "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" Jesus knows the answer to the question, but he is again poking at the traditions the teachers of the law have created. If

it would be a good thing to heal a man, then the Law should allow it, right? They know the answer and they know that Jesus is pointing out their mistake in valuing their rules over people, but when confronted with their mistake, they don't humble themselves and change, they remain silent. Jesus heals the man, but rather than rejoicing in this miracle, the hearts of the Pharisees and Herodians harden even more and they become so angry that they begin to plot a way to kill Jesus.

#### Who's Who?

##### Herodians

The Herodians aren't mentioned in any other ancient sources outside the Bible. We assume from their name, though, that they were Jews loyal to Herod Antipas and to Rome. Their allegiance would have been noteworthy as this was a time when most Jews disliked both Herod and Rome.<sup>2</sup>



#### Say What!?

##### Synagogue

Synagogues were meeting places and served to complement the temple. Local synagogues would allow for the Jewish community to meet, study the Scriptures, and spend time in prayer. This would be similar to your local church.<sup>1</sup>

### Crowds Follow Jesus (3:7-12)

The chapter continues with stories like we have seen in chapter one and chapter two: Jesus travels about teaching and healing many. His popularity with the common people has grown at this point, and they often crowd Jesus, just so they can touch him.

### Jesus Appoints the Twelve (3:13-19)

From these large crowds and people following him, Jesus appoints a special group. These men are commonly referred to as the *Twelve*, the *disciples* or the *apostles*. The term disciple in the Bible means "learner," while the term apostle means "messenger," but both are often used interchangeably in our culture today.<sup>3</sup>

### Jesus Accused by His Family and by Teachers of the law (3:20-35)

After calling the Twelve, we see again how crowds are often pressing in on Jesus and this time, his family comes to him. You would think it would be exciting for Jesus to see his family after all the traveling, right? Unfortunately, this wasn't a happy family reunion. His family comes with the intent to stop his ministry, believing that he is



out of his mind. His family thought he was crazy! This is paralleled with the teachers of the law. They come all the way down from Jerusalem to claim that Jesus must be possessed by Beelzebul, the prince of demons.

Those are some heavy accusations that Jesus is facing. Some- his family- are saying he's crazy, while others are saying he is possessed by a demon. Jesus doesn't run from these accusations, instead he meets them head on. He explains that it wouldn't make very much sense for someone possessed by a demon to drive out demons. If that was how Satan worked, then his whole army would fall apart because they would constantly be fighting against each other.

Jesus goes on to say that no one can break into a strong man's house to take from it

without first tying up the strong man. In this analogy, Jesus is referring to Satan as a strong man. Jesus, by his very nature and power, has come to tie up the strong man and plunder from him.<sup>5</sup> Jesus came to reclaim what sin stole from us! He came to rescue us from the dominion of darkness and bring us into his glorious kingdom of light. Make no mistake, Satan is powerful, but he is no match for the power of Jesus. See how the demons must obey his every command? See how Jesus can "tie him up?" This is not something that a demon-possessed man could do, only God can. Many people, however, don't believe and are warned to not be those that blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Jesus then looks around and makes a distinction. Jesus claims that his mother and brothers are those who surround him and listen to his teaching. His family are not the ones who are calling him crazy and demon-possessed, but those who listen and obey his instructions.

Who's  
Who?

Beelzebul

The Bible indicates that this was the common name the people at the time had given to the "prince of demons." By saying Jesus was possessed by Beelzebul, they were accusing Jesus' work as unlawful and placing him in a class of magicians.<sup>4</sup>

Say  
What!?

"Blaspheme the Holy Spirit"

The tense and writing of verses 28-30 indicate that those claiming Jesus had an unclean spirit were claiming it in an ongoing way. It wasn't a one-time mistake, but a continual hard-heartedness against Jesus which caused them to claim his power came from Satan. For one to continually assert that the power of God belonged to Satan would make it understandable to be called an eternal sin.<sup>6</sup>


### Scope It Out

We can also be a part of Jesus' family! When he spoke to those around him, he said those who listen and obey his instructions were a part of his family. That wasn't meant to apply only to those sitting there at the time; it applies to us as well! Maybe it sounds overwhelming to follow Jesus. Maybe you're afraid you'll mess up. Don't worry, the disciples messed up, too. A lot. But you'll see that, as they come back to him after their failures with humble hearts, he forgives them and urges them to carry on. One way to help us obey God's instructions is to learn them by reading the Bible, which you're doing! So keep it up. Keep learning and diving in to better understand how to follow Jesus.

The tension is coming to a climax in chapter three. The teachers of the law are plotting to kill Jesus, even as his ministry continues to grow. People are beginning to take sides, whether they see him as a crazed man that should be silenced or are counted as members of his family.


## The Kingdom

In chapter four, Mark is going to do something new. So far, his story focuses on the miracles of Jesus and the conflict that is stirring. Mark is telling the parts of the story that are full of action. But we know from the other gospels and a few comments in Mark that Jesus was also an incredible teacher. In chapter four, Mark takes a break from the action to highlight some teachings of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>



**Did you know?**  
**Parable**

Parables were typically given in the form of an extended simile.<sup>3</sup> A simile is a comparison of two things using "like" or "as." Jesus would often say, "The Kingdom of God is like..."



**Say What!?**  
**Gospel**

Gospel simply means "Good News."<sup>1</sup> The reason we call Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the "gospels" of the Bible are because they tell the story of Jesus, which is good news!


These teachings of Jesus typically come in the form of parables. Parables are stories told to make a point of spiritual or moral truth. These stories usually revolve around the common person's everyday life.<sup>4</sup> For example, a lot of the parables Jesus tells are about farming because, during this time, people mostly grew their own food. Other gospels share more of these parables, but Mark records four here in the fourth chapter.

Before we dive into these parables, I want to take a minute to encourage you. These stories are simple but can be hard to understand. Remember that it's okay to ask questions, and it's okay if something seems difficult. You'll see that even Jesus' disciples needed these parables explained to them on a regular basis.

### The Parable of the Sower (4:1-20)


The first parable is about a Sower—which is someone who plants or scatters seed. In this parable, Jesus tells the story of a farmer who sows his seed on four different types of ground. Each of the grounds produces a different result. Jesus explains this parable later in the chapter, so we won't go into too much detail here, but I want to point out verse 12. In verse 12, Jesus quotes from the prophet Isaiah 6:9-10 saying he speaks in parables "so that, 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise, they might turn and be forgiven!'"

This is a little bit confusing, right? It sounds like Jesus doesn't want people to understand what he's saying or else they would turn and be forgiven. Doesn't Jesus want us to be forgiven? The answer is yes. One of the disciples, Peter, who was listening to this teaching from Jesus would later write that the Lord "is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). What is Jesus saying, then? To find this out, we must take a look at Isaiah. When Isaiah prophesied, he was trying to teach people how to live for



**Say What!?**  
**Prophesied**

To prophesy is to tell the future, based on God revealing it to the prophet. A prophet can also be God's spokesperson who tells the truth.<sup>6</sup> We can know a prophet is speaking truth when their words about the future come true and it lines up with the Bible.



**Who's Who?**  
**Isaiah**

Isaiah was a prophet beginning in 740 BC (over 700 years before the birth of Jesus). He prophesied to the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and then to Judah alone. He foretold of God's judgment and salvation by the birth of Jesus. He even prophesied about John the Baptist as we saw in chapter one. His name means "The Lord Saves," and you can read about him in the Old Testament book named for him.<sup>5</sup>

God in a time when they had turned away. Many of the people, however, hardened their hearts against Isaiah's message, even though he did what God asked of him and spoke the truth. This is what is happening here,<sup>7</sup> and can happen to us, too. God longs for us to not only hear his word, but to put it into action. We must turn from our ways to his way, but the choice is ours. We can either harden our hearts against God's message or listen, learn, accept, and be saved. The Word of God remains true, it is up to us to decide what to do with it.

### **A Lamp on a Stand (4:21-25)**

In his second parable of the chapter, Jesus talks about a lamp. Jesus is this lamp that is meant to be revealed. Throughout the Old Testament, Israelites often did not know what God's plan to save the world would look like, but we see it revealed in Jesus. With that, Jesus tells his listeners in verses 24-25 to "consider carefully what you hear," because "whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what little he has will be taken from him."

Does that sound unfair? Like if I had two cookies and you had ten, the little I had would be taken from me and you would get even more? That's how I read this story as a kid. But what Jesus is talking about here is in a spiritual sense. When we consider carefully what we hear, if we respond to the good news of Jesus and seek him, even more spiritual truth and understanding will be given to us. But to those who harden their hearts against Jesus and refuse to listen to the message they've heard, even what they heard will be taken from them.<sup>8</sup>

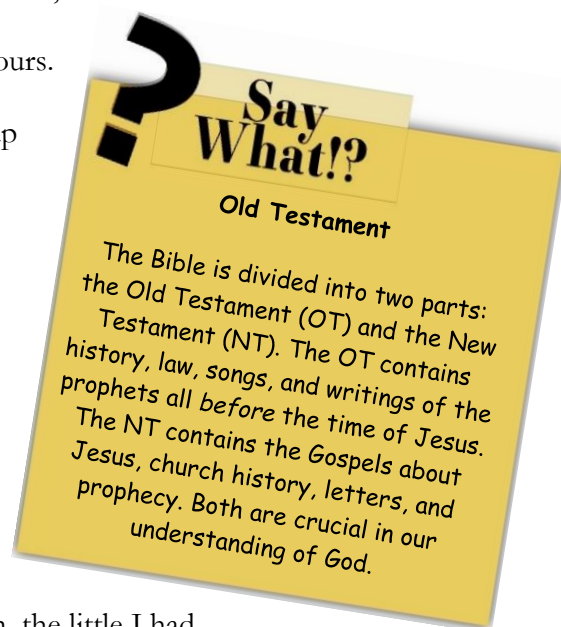
### **Scope It Out**

I wonder what the soil of your heart is like. Are there weeds that need to be removed? Are birds after the seed that is scattered? Or is your soil rich and able to produce fruit? I pray that you have a soft heart with good soil. As you read, allow the words of the Bible to settle deep in your soul and water them so they may grow.

As this faith and knowledge grows inside of you, allow the light of Jesus to shine forth brightly in your life. Maybe that's changing the way you speak to others. Maybe it's obeying your parents without complaint. Maybe it's volunteering to help the poor in your community. As you read, ask God to show you what he wants you to do. He is a good and faithful shepherd who guides his sheep, no matter how young.

### **The Growing Seed (4:26-29)**

The third parable Jesus tells is of the growing seed. This parable is only found in Mark and has a special beauty to it.<sup>9</sup> The first story shows that we need to be concerned with the "soil" of our hearts and our response to God's message, but this story shows that the seed itself has extraordinary power. The seed in this story is still the Kingdom of God. It is scattered and grows on its own. This doesn't mean we



aren't to work in obedience, but simply that the Kingdom of God is powerfully beyond us and our abilities to maintain it and make it grow. It is the work of God to bring his Kingdom come, but we are blessedly allowed to play a part.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Mustard Seed (4:30-34)**

Finally, Jesus gives the last parable of chapter four, and it is about a tiny mustard seed. If you've never seen a mustard seed, take time to look it up with an adult's permission. The seeds are extremely tiny. But here, Jesus proclaims it grows into a large garden plant. This likely relates to how small and unimpressive Jesus' ministry began in the eyes of the world. Though his ministry started humbly, it grew into a life-altering, life-saving sacrifice that changed the world.<sup>11</sup>

### **Jesus Calms the Storm (4:35-41)**

In the final part of this chapter, Mark returns to another miracle of Jesus. In a boat with the disciples, a furious storm pops up. With three words, Jesus calms a storm that may have otherwise thrown the disciples overboard. Then, he asks the disciples the reason for their fear. Do they have so little faith in him? What Jesus is asking is, "Do you trust me?"

### **Scope It Out**

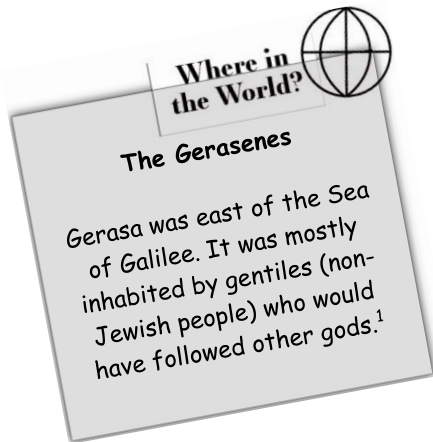
I don't know about you, but trust is hard for me. I want to know what is going to happen and when. But often, Jesus calls us to trust him, even when it doesn't make sense. Thankfully, as he shows the disciples, he is bigger and more powerful than we can imagine. In the same way the disciples stood in awe of Jesus and his mighty power over nature, we can stand in awe of his mighty power over our circumstances trusting that he is in control. He is just as mighty today as he was then. And today, he still desires us to trust him.

If trust doesn't come easily to you, pray about it. Ask God to help you. If you feel fear, tell God about it. 1 Peter 5:7 says to "cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." It was the disciple Peter who wrote that. I wonder if he thought back on this time in the boat whenever he felt afraid. Maybe that reminded him just how mighty God is and how he helps us in our time of need. Maybe this story reminded him that he can trust Jesus fully and completely. Are there any stories you can think of in your own life when God showed himself to be really big and strong? Next time you're afraid, think about that time to remind yourself how powerful God is.



## Clean Meets the Unclean

At the end of chapter four, the disciples stood in a boat, likely with their mouths wide-open in amazement, because even the winds and waves obeyed Jesus. It's in chapter five that we see why Jesus got in the boat in the first place: he was on a mission to get to some hurting people who were desperate for him. All of these people could have been considered outcasts or unimportant at the time, people the world would overlook and ones that would make him "unclean" by Jewish law if he went anywhere near them. How do you think Jesus will respond?



### Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man (5:1-20)

Jesus and his disciples are on their way to the region of the Gerasenes. Upon arrival, Jesus meets a man with an evil spirit. From the description Mark gives us, we learn this man was made strong by the evil spirit. He is also miserable and desperate for freedom.

When he sees Jesus, the man runs and falls at his feet. Here, the encounter occurs, and Jesus and the evil spirit speak to one another. Again, the evil spirit recognizes Jesus' power and authority. He calls Jesus the "Son of the Most High God" (Verse 7). The demon was giving Jesus a divine title, recognizing that Jesus is truly God.<sup>2</sup> Some students of Mark have suggested that the reason for the demon to call the name of Jesus was not out of reverence, but in an attempt to gain authority over Jesus, based on the assumption of the time that, by using the precise name of an enemy, one could gain mastery over them.<sup>3</sup> Either way, the evil spirit knew Jesus was truly God, and in no way did he gain authority over Jesus.

Without authority in the presence of Jesus, the demon is commanded out. After the demon pleads not to be driven away, Jesus asks the demon his name. This is the only time we see Jesus interact with an unclean spirit, rather than to drive it out and silence it. The demon's response that his name is Legion could have a few different explanations. Legion was a term used in the Roman military to designate 4,000-6,000 soldiers, so the spirit could have been indicating that there were that many spirits within the man.<sup>4</sup> Another possible reason for the name was an attempt to intimidate Jesus by their large number and scare Jesus away.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of the reason for the response, Jesus does not fear the spirits that possessed the man. Instead, he commands the spirits to leave the man and travel into a herd of pigs.

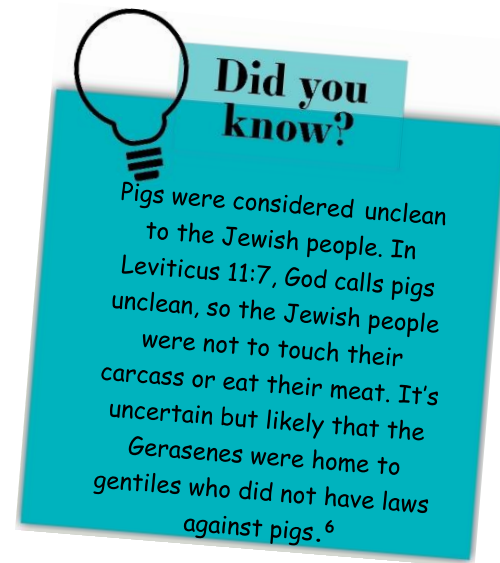
You may be wondering, "Why didn't Jesus leave the poor pigs alone?" and that is a good question. One important thing to remember is that Jesus saves the man from the fate that the pigs receive. Another thing to remember is that Jesus did not command the demons to run into the lake. It is the work of the demons that destroy the pigs, just as they were in the process of destroying the man beforehand.<sup>7</sup>

Once the man is saved and the pigs are driven by the evil spirits into the lake, those who own the pigs run to tell everyone. This causes crowds to form, where people see the man who had once been terrifying and crazed, sitting in his right mind at the feet of Jesus.

Do they shout and jump for joy? Sadly, no. Instead of praising Jesus, the people turn him away. Maybe they are upset because of the loss of the pigs. That would have been a lot of money the pig herders lost when their pigs died, and perhaps the people fear greater losses if Jesus stays. Or maybe the people recognize Jesus had immense power and, not understanding who he is, they are afraid how he might use it.<sup>8</sup>

Whatever their reasons, the people miss out on seeing any further miracles because they drive Jesus away. Jesus, however, doesn't leave the people on their own. He doesn't say, "Forget about these people, they kicked me out." Instead, he leaves them a missionary. The man who was once possessed by Legion longs to leave with Jesus, but Jesus calls him to a different road. Jesus tells the man to stay and tell people about the mercy he received and the freedom he was given. Through his story, many people were amazed.

### **The Sick Woman and the Dead Girl (5:21-44)**





## Did you know?

During this time, Jewish men and women maintained strict boundaries with one another. Women could hardly be in the presence of men, let alone touch a man.<sup>11</sup> She was breaking a lot of cultural and religious rules, but Jesus didn't reprimand her. He healed her and spoke kindly to her.

The chapter goes on as Jesus steps into the boat and likely returns to Capernaum at the other side of the lake.<sup>9</sup> Again, crowds gather to see him and now another man falls at his feet. This time, the man is not demon possessed, but the leader of a synagogue. This is an important note to make because, often, the religious leaders of the day get a bad reputation. Many do refuse Jesus, but there are some that come and fall at his feet, seeking his help. One such man is Jairus, who has a dying daughter, and he begs Jesus to come to his house and heal her.

On the way, a woman reaches to touch Jesus. This woman has been the subject of bleeding for twelve years. Based on the Jewish law, the bleeding makes the woman “unclean.” Not only is she unclean, but anyone she touches would become unclean for the day. When I say unclean, I don't mean she smells a little and needs a bath. In Jewish law, God made rules for his people on how to stay clean and pure. If a person became unclean by these standards, they usually couldn't participate in certain activities until they were clean again.<sup>10</sup> Because of her bleeding, she is unable to touch anyone without making them unclean for the day. The chairs she sits on would be considered unclean, and if anyone else sits on a seat she has sat on, they would become unclean for the day and be required to wash their clothes and take a bath (Leviticus 15:20-23). Can you imagine what her life would have been like? For twelve years she constantly had to tell people she was unclean. She would have needed to explain why they couldn't sit where she sat. For twelve years, she would have had to keep from touching anyone unless they were willing to be unclean for the day. What emotional pain this woman must have lived in, on top of the condition of her bleeding.

It makes sense why she spent all her money on every doctor she could find. She wants to be well. And when she sees Jesus, she sees her chance. For these reasons, the woman forces her way to Jesus to simply touch his cloak. With that touch, she is healed, and Jesus takes notice. He knows that someone came to him for healing, even though they did it without words and Jesus longs to find the one who touched him. Knowing she is healed, the woman confesses, and Jesus says a beautiful thing to her. He calls her “daughter,” and tells her to go in peace because her faith has made her well.

Jesus is interrupted once more to be told that Jairus' daughter, the one who Jesus was originally going to heal, has died. The people assume it is useless now to bother Jesus, but Jesus tells them all is not lost. He continues to the home and takes three of his twelve disciples with him. He dismisses the mourners, telling them to leave because the girl isn't dead, but asleep. When looking at surrounding events and the other accounts of this story, based on the reaction of the mourners, she was



## Did you know?

Jewish customs required families to provide at least two fluteplayers and a professional mourner for a wife's death. In this case, though a daughter, there were likely several mourners because of Jairus' wealth and status. Mourners were paid to wail and cry loudly.<sup>12</sup>

probably dead and not simply in a coma. Jesus likely said she was sleeping to indicate that she would rise again.<sup>13</sup> And, with the touch of Jesus and the command to get up, she does!

### **Scope It Out**

Allow me to make one point here. In each story of this chapter, Jesus is faced with a situation that would render him “unclean” by Jewish law if he went near or touched the person. Unclean spirits, a woman bleeding, and a dead body would each cause any who come in contact to be unclean. By the standards of the law, it would make sense if Jesus ran. Until that point, if clean and unclean met, there was only one outcome: the clean one was defiled. That, however, was before Jesus. You see Jesus turned this rule on its head. By his touch or interaction with the unclean, he passed his cleanness onto them. This is miraculous, revolutionary, and beautiful.

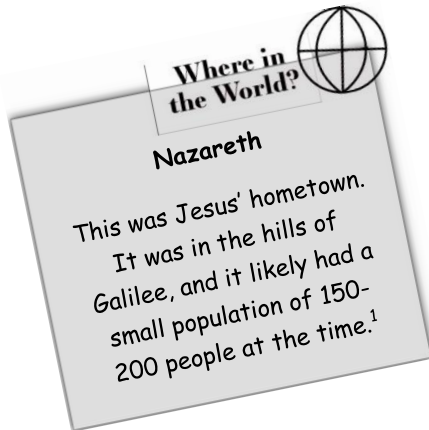
Do you see how Jesus keeps going after those that are rejected by everyone else? Those that are unclean? Maybe you know some people in your life that you think of as unclean. Not in a Jewish law way, but in the way of an outcast. Someone undesirable. Someone overlooked or hard to love. Did you make an effort after chapter two to interact and befriend the outcasts you know? If you did, how did it go? Was it hard? Did people make fun of you for it? If you didn’t, do you think you could try this week?

The events of chapter five were pretty intense, huh? A man possessed by demons is restored and sent to tell others the good news of Jesus. A woman is healed from twelve years of bleeding and emotional solitude. A little girl is raised to life by the gentle touch and command of Jesus. Young learners, our Jesus is so mighty. He is so powerful. He is so good. Do you see it yet? Do you see how he saves and heals and restores? Do you see his character and compassion for the lost and hurting people? Do you see his love for the lonely? It jumps off every page of Mark, and I hope you’re noticing it. Keep going into chapter six, to see even more of our miraculous, life-changing Jesus.

## Sending, Feeding, Walking

In chapter five of Mark, we saw Jesus enter the unclean places and, by a touch or a word, make them clean. He cast the demons out of the man from the Gerasenes, a woman touched his cloak and was healed from a twelve-year sickness, and a young girl was raised from the dead by a gentle touch and the command to get up.

### A Prophet Without Honor (6:1-6)



Chapter six picks up with Jesus in Nazareth, the place where he grew up. Do you remember how his brothers and mom came to collect him in chapter three? They said he was crazy. Here, in Nazareth, the attitudes are similar. Jesus goes into the Synagogue to teach, as he often does, but here his teaching is met with questions. "Isn't this the carpenter?" and "Isn't this Mary's son?" (verse 3), are likely insults being thrown by the people. What they're really saying is, "Aren't you just a simple laborer? Don't we know your family? How could you have such knowledge and wisdom?"<sup>2</sup> The crowd's reference to Jesus being

Mary's son rather than Joseph's was possibly another insult because children were always known by their father's name in this culture.<sup>3</sup> It could also be an indication that Joseph had died, and Mary was a widow.<sup>4</sup>

Because of the crowd's response to Jesus, he marvels at them—in a bad way. Have you ever been so disgusted that your jaw drops? I wonder if that's a little like Jesus' response. He is hugely disappointed in their lack of faith in him and, because there is so little faith, they see very few miracles.

### Jesus Sends out the Twelve (6:6-13)

After leaving Nazareth, Jesus teaches in many places. It is at this point in his ministry that the disciples get called to action. Remember, disciple means "learner" and apostle means "messenger." Here, Jesus is about to make messengers out of his learners. He sends out the twelve in pairs. Jesus tells the disciples not to take anything, but to rely on the hospitality of the people they will meet. He also gives them authority to drive out demons and heal the sick, all while preaching the same message that John the Baptist started in chapter one—to repent (verses 8-12). Please know that the disciples have authority because Jesus gives it to them. They are an extension, a representation of him.<sup>5</sup> What Jesus did, they can now do because they have been sent by their teacher.

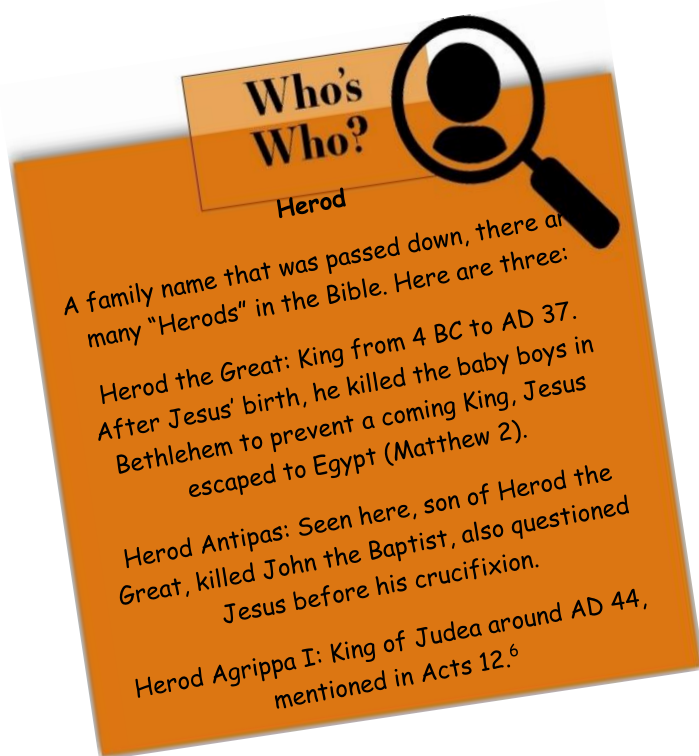
### Scope It Out

We are also called to be the representation of Jesus here on earth. When we believe in him and submit our lives to him, we are meant to be sent just like the disciples were, with power and authority. I wonder if this was a little like riding a bike without



training wheels for the first time or riding a roller coaster. To be sent by Jesus like this would be super exciting, but also a little scary. Even today following Jesus can feel like that. Know that you're not alone in that feeling. But also know that Jesus is with you, meeting all your needs, helping you to be bold for him and empowering you with his Holy Spirit. How can you be bold for Jesus this week?

I also want to point out that Jesus sent out his disciples by two. It is so important to find and maintain a friendship in your walk with Jesus. You may not have a best friend at every point in your life but seek and pray for Godly friends to help you along on this journey. We are so much stronger when we have people to build us up, call us out, and help us in our walk.



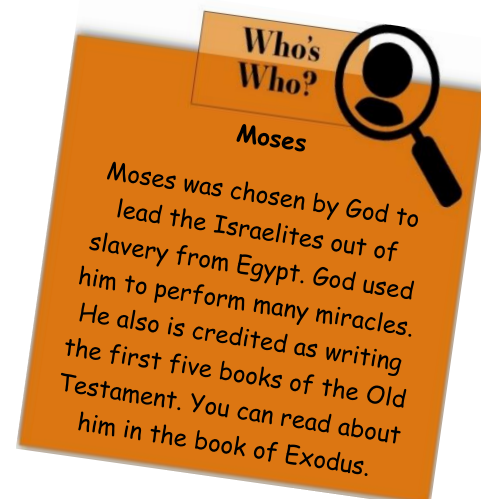
### John the Baptist Beheaded (6:14-29)

With word of Jesus spreading, King Herod hears about him and is afraid. Verse 16 indicates that Herod is afraid of Jesus because Jesus reminds him of John the Baptist. Do you remember John the Baptist? He was Jesus' cousin and the one who prepared the way for Jesus. This is where Mark takes a moment to explain what happened to John. You see, John was well known for speaking the truth and speaking it boldly. He was so bold that he told King Herod that he was making bad choices. King Herod had married his brother's wife, which was against the Jewish law. Everyone knew it, but who would dare tell the King he is doing the wrong thing? John would dare (verse 18). Because

he spoke the truth, Herodias, the wife of Herod, wanted him dead. A time came when her daughter pleased the King, and he promised to do whatever she asked. Sadly, she demanded the head of John the Baptist, and so John was killed. He showed great courage to stand up for the truth to a very powerful man in a time when many were too afraid.

### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (6:30-44)

After the side note about John the Baptist, Mark takes us back to the apostles. They come back to Jesus after his sending them out, and crowds are following them the same way crowds have followed Jesus. Jesus takes them to a quiet, solitary place, but the crowds just won't let up. Jesus, in his compassion, decides to teach the crowds because they "are like sheep



without a shepherd” (verse 34). This is an interesting and exciting statement.

In the Old Testament, there is a man named Moses, who leads the Israelites out of slavery and into the wilderness, where they wander for forty years. Near the end of his life, Moses asks God to appoint a new leader so the people will not be like sheep without a shepherd (Numbers 27:15-17). In Mark, when *Jesus* says the people are like sheep without a shepherd, he is pointing out that, even though a new leader came after Moses, the people are still lost. The people need more than a good human leader, they need God to come in and save them.<sup>7</sup>

Jesus is making an analogy to the Israelites’ time in the wilderness. And Jesus does something even more spectacular than what was done for the Israelites. In the wilderness, God provided food, but it rotted by the next day (Exodus 16). Here, Jesus provides enough food for everyone to eat their fill and have leftovers. Not only that, but he also satisfies their hearts with his teaching. The similarities of these two stories are meant to show Jesus as God. In the same way God provided a leader for the people in the wilderness, he is providing his only Son to save and lead the lost. In the same way God fed the Israelites, Jesus meets the needs of the people, but this time, with food that never spoils.

### **Jesus Walks on Water (6:45-56)**

After this breathtaking miracle, Jesus sends the Twelve to Bethsaida without him. Jesus, as he often does, goes to a solitary place to pray. In the night, however, the apostles are met by a huge storm, so Jesus walks out to them on the water. Yes, you read that correctly. He walks on the water! This would be a big deal for any of us to see, but to these twelve men it was even more meaningful because of their knowledge of the Old Testament. Throughout the Old Testament, God is spoken of as one who walks on the waves. You can check it out for yourself in Job 9:8, Isaiah 43:16, and several other places. The disciples didn't make the connection that Jesus feeding the five thousand was a picture of how God provided for the Israelites in the desert. They aren't always quick to catch on and even here they first assume Jesus is a ghost. Once they realize it's him however, perhaps for the first time, their hearts are softened, and they marvel at who Jesus truly is.<sup>9</sup>



### **Did you know?**

Foreshadowing means to show something beforehand and is often seen in the Bible. Though the events of the Old Testament are true, some can also point to Jesus, his death and resurrection, or his second coming. God feeding the people in the wilderness is one of those times.



### **Where in the World?**

#### **Bethsaida**

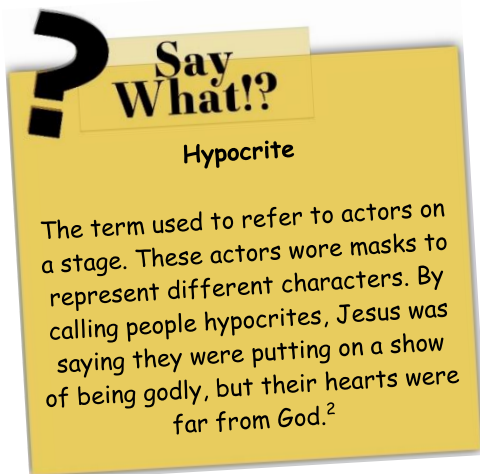
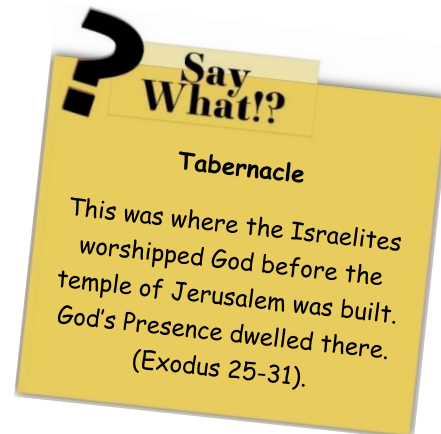
Bethsaida means "house of the fisher," and was located east of the Jordan river.<sup>8</sup> John 1:44 tells us that Philip, Andrew, and Peter were from Bethsaida. In Matthew 11:20-21, Jesus expresses judgment and disappointment for their failure to repent after the many miracles performed there.

## Miraculous Faith

The pace is steadily increasing as we continue in Mark. Crowds are growing, the disciples have seen firsthand the miracles of Jesus, and even done some miracles of their own! Because of this, the teachers of the law are watching their every move. Chapter seven is no different: the Pharisees and teachers of the law are back with more questions for Jesus.

### That Which Defiles (7:1-23)

In this beginning section, the issue the religious leaders have with Jesus this time comes from a lack of handwashing. I'm certain that you've probably been reprimanded a time or two for not washing your hands, but it wasn't quite the same as what the religious leaders are talking about. This, again, goes back to the oral traditions of the Jewish law that the Pharisees were strict in upholding. In Exodus 30:19 (the second book of the Bible), the Law required the priests to wash their hands before entering the tabernacle. By the time of Jesus, the religious leaders were encouraging everyone to clean their hands before eating, to maintain a similar level of holiness or purity like the priests.<sup>1</sup>



Please know that God desires for us to be holy. Holy means to be set apart or different. We are meant to serve God faithfully and with pure hearts. But that is where Jesus sees a problem with the leaders—their hearts. In fact, Jesus calls the religious leaders hypocrites because they are reprimanding others about how they follow God, all while their own hearts are far from him. They are talking the talk, but not walking the walk, and Jesus is disappointed that these leaders have upheld the traditions of men over the commands of God.

Jesus gives an example, then, of a way the Pharisees and teachers of the law were upholding their traditions over God's commands. He mentions an old tradition they had called *Corban*. Corban when a

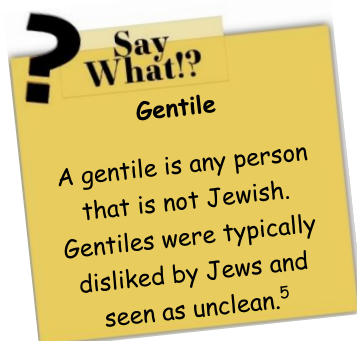
person commits to offer something to God, unfortunately, some people were using the idea of Corban to dishonor their parents. Sometimes, a son would claim his land and money was Corban—devoted the Temple and God—therefore if his family needed money or land, they would say they didn't have any, because it was devoted to God. If, however, the son realized the error of his ways and longed to take back what he declared as Corban to care for their family, the leaders would refuse because it belonged to them.<sup>3</sup> In doing so, the teachers of the law and Pharisees weren't allowing people to care for their moms and dads. Honoring your parents is one of the ten commandments in the Old Testament law. Jesus is trying to explain that an oral tradition can't undo the commands of God. Jesus drives home his point when

he tells the people that nothing they put into their body can make them unclean, but only what is inside of them.

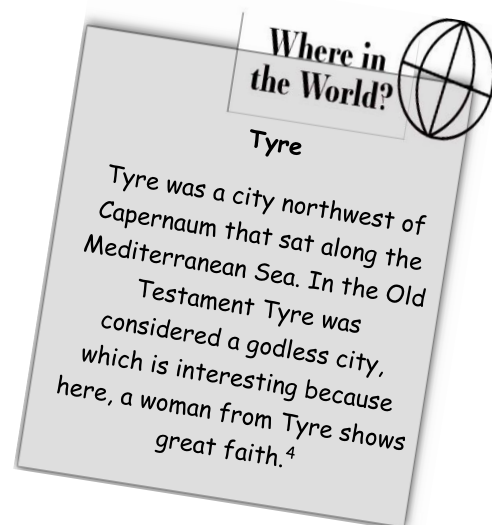
## Scope It Out

We know this, right? It isn't the clothes you wear that make you special, but who you are. It isn't the color of your skin, your hair, or your eyes that determine who you are, it is your character, your heart, and your mind. This is why Jesus longs for the people, and for us, to be concerned about our thoughts and actions. We shouldn't talk about how much we love Jesus and then refuse follow his commands like loving our neighbors or honoring our parents. Our actions should line up with what we say and believe about Jesus, all because of his great love for us and our desire to be like him. How can you match your actions to your belief in Jesus this week?

## Jesus Honors a Syrophenician Woman's Faith (7:24-30)



Jesus leaves the area after his bold statements and travels to Tyre. Here, he plans to rest with his disciples, but even in Tyre, people find him. He is met by a Greek woman born in Syrian Phoenicia. This shows the woman was a Gentile, and she comes to beg Jesus to heal her daughter who is possessed by a demon. At first when reading this, it sounds a bit like Jesus insults her doesn't it? He tells her that the children get bread first, then the dogs. There are a few different ways this has been interpreted.

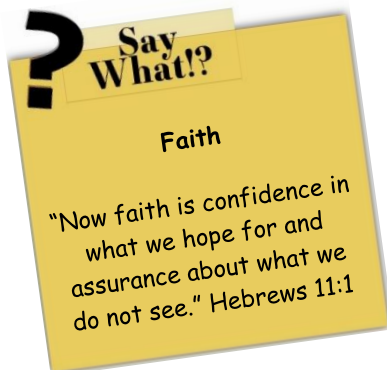


Some believe that this interaction with Jesus and the woman shows that the salvation of Jesus will go first to the Jew and then to the Gentile. This does agree with other parts of the Bible. God's chosen people are the Jews, but eventually, the restoring, saving work that Jesus does on the cross is made known to be for both Jews and Gentiles. This could be what Jesus was referring to here.<sup>6</sup>

Others believe that Jesus was giving the woman a chance to press him, in that way showing her faith. In Tyre there were many "miracle workers." Some believe Jesus was challenging the woman as to where her faith really was. Did she only come to him for a miracle, or did she believe that he was something more?<sup>7</sup>

Finally, some students of Mark believe that this woman was interrupting a time of rest that Jesus was taking with his disciples. During times of rest, Jesus would often teach his disciples. She, with a heart for her daughter, interrupts this time of teaching. Jesus then, when saying that he first needs to feed the children, is referring to his disciples. It would be as if he was saying, "Hey, wait until I'm done here, then I will go and heal your daughter." If this is the case, her response is extremely clever and shows a great amount of faith. She keeps Jesus' analogy and says, "Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs (verse 28)," meaning that Jesus can

heal her daughter without even stopping the meeting. He doesn't need to leave; he can just say the word and her daughter will be healed.<sup>8</sup>



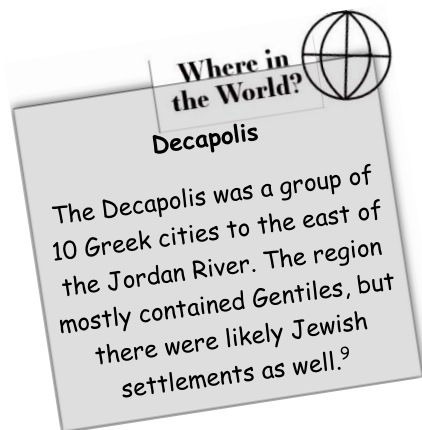
Whether it was one of these three options or a combination of several, by the word of Jesus, even from afar, the demon leaves the child, and she is healed.

### Scope It Out

Sometimes I read the Bible and am in awe of people's faith. This woman came to Jesus with the knowledge that he alone could save her daughter. She had faith, and because she stepped out in faith, her daughter was healed. I want faith like that. What builds your faith in Jesus? For me, hearing about the great things he has done builds my faith. When someone tells me a story of how they were healed or how God

answered their prayers, I get excited and amazed all over again at how incredible God is.

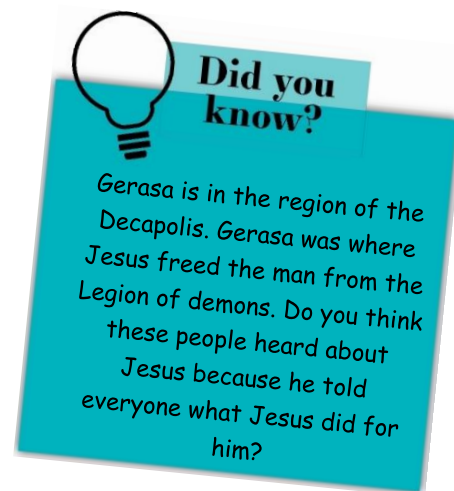
So here are a few things you can do. First: share your faith-building stories. Maybe God helped you with a friend situation you prayed about. Maybe God gave you wisdom when you didn't know what to do. Maybe he healed you. Whatever God did, big or small, tell someone! It may help build their faith. Second, make your own list of ways God has come through. In Hebrews 11, there is a long list of people that lived for God. This list shows God coming through again and again for his people. I bet they used that to look back on during hard times. If you're going through a hard situation, it can be really helpful to think about how God has helped you in the past. This will build your faith to face whatever you're going through.



### Jesus Heals a Deaf and Mute Man (7:31-37)

After leaving Tyre, Jesus continues his travels, and the next story of Mark takes place in the region of the Decapolis. This miracle is always one that stood out to me because it always seemed strange how Jesus went about this miracle. The reason may be found in the history and culture of the region.

During the time of Jesus, healing was often done with hands. If a person was considered a healer, it was expected that they would do something to heal the person that was related to their condition. For example, a person would touch the eyes of a blind person, or the ears of someone deaf as we see here. It could be because of this that Jesus stuck his fingers into the man's ears. Saliva was also considered to have healing properties during this time period.<sup>10</sup> Don't get any ideas and spit on your brother





when he's sick, just know that is what the people in that time had determined as helpful. Jesus, then, was possibly meeting the deaf and mute man at a level of his understanding and culture. Please note that Jesus didn't *need* to do those things to heal the man. Jesus can speak a word over anything and it comes to be. But sometimes, Jesus meets us where we are. He may meet us through a style of music we like or a book we read. Jesus has no shortage of ways and ideas to reach people, he loves us that much to enter our upbringings and worldviews and show himself to us.

What is significant here, however, is that Jesus is more than just a "healer" of the day and culture. When Jesus speaks and tells the man's ears to be opened, he isn't using special phrases that healers and magicians were known for. Instead, he was simply speaking out of a place of authority.<sup>11</sup> The God who made the human body was showing his power to heal and make things new. Jesus met the man where he was but healed in such a way to refute false ideas or notions that he was just an ordinary healer. No, he is *the* healer; the great physician.

Confrontation with the teachers of the law, faith of an outsider, and another healing. This is where chapter seven takes us. The beauty of it all, is that we serve the same God today. He is still concerned when we claim to love him but refuse to walk according to his commands. He still longs for us to elevate the commands of God over our own traditions and thoughts. He still looks for people of faith to come to him. And he still does miracles. Hebrews 13:8 says that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." Oh, that we would sit and learn from you, Jesus. Help us to be more like you.

## Blurry Vision

Chapter seven shows even more confrontation with the religious leaders of the day and ends with another healing. Chapter eight will show more miracles but also highlight the lack of understanding of the disciples. They have been following him for a few years now and still don't quite get it. They still don't fully understand who Jesus is and why he came. I'm so thankful we serve a God who is patient with us. We are so often slow to understand, but he doesn't leave us. He gently guides and teaches us as we seek to know him better. See for yourselves as chapter eight unfolds.

### Jesus Feeds Four Thousand (8:1-13)

Chapter eight begins with another miracle of feeding. Jesus again has compassion on the people who have come to listen to him, and he again implies to his disciples that they must feed the people. Because the disciples continue to miss the point of how mighty and powerful Jesus is, they wonder how they could ever feed so many with what little they have. Jesus then gives thanks to God, he breaks the bread, and the food is handed out again, miraculously feeding all the people.

Some have tried to draw similarities and differences between the feeding of the five thousand in chapter six and the feeding of the four thousand here. The feeding of the five thousand, if you remember, took place in the wilderness and was similar to how God cared for his people after their escape from Egypt. Then, the audience was mostly Jewish. The feeding of the four thousand, however, was in a mostly Gentile region, though it is assumed that both Jews and Gentiles were in attendance. If you remember, Gentiles are any people who aren't Jews. Because of the Gentiles present, some have argued this feeding represents how the Kingdom of God will also be given to the Gentiles, like we learned in the story of the woman from Syrian Phoenicia in the last chapter. Therefore, Jesus first fed the Jews and then the Gentiles, but all were allowed to take the food he provided.<sup>1</sup>

After feeding four thousand, Jesus and his disciples go to Dalmanutha. Here they are met by the Pharisees who ask Jesus for a sign. You have to remember that these people asking for a sign aren't asking for one because of their great faith in Jesus. These are the men who regularly call Jesus "demon possessed." They have already seen many signs, but they are never satisfied because their hearts are hardened against Jesus. Knowing this, Jesus strongly informs them that they will not receive any sign from him.<sup>3</sup>

### The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod (8:14-21)

Once again Jesus gets into a boat with the disciples. I wonder if Jesus does this for them to have time to think about and process everything they are seeing. Many of them were fishers by trade and it probably gave them a chance to pause and think about all that was going on, hopefully leading them to recognition of who Jesus truly is. Unfortunately, they haven't figured it out at this point in Mark.

Where in  
the World?

Dalmanutha

This place is not listed in any other ancient texts. Most students of Mark assume it was the city of Magdala.<sup>2</sup> If correct, Mary Magdalene would have come from this area.

In the boat, Jesus tells the men to watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod (verse 15). They immediately assume it is because they forgot to bring the bread. These are the same disciples that have now watched Jesus feed groups of five thousand and four thousand people, the four thousand very recently. Yet, they're worried they didn't bring enough food. Absurd, right? Jesus is pretty disappointed in their response as well and reminds them of all he has done.

Rather than bread, Jesus is trying to make a point about the Pharisees and Herod. During Jesus' time, yeast was not seen as a bubbly, mouth-watering, fresh-bread-from-the-oven kind of thing. The yeast, also called leaven, was taken from the bread of the batch made before. It was kept until it was needed to make more bread. However, if this yeasted bread wasn't kept well, it had the potential to ruin the entire next batch.<sup>4</sup> Often, Jesus uses yeast as an analogy to sin. He is trying to warn the disciples to watch out for the sinfulness of Herod and the Pharisees, so that it does not spread and spoil them.

### **Scope It Out**

Jesus makes it very clear that even a little sin can ruin us. He warns his disciples to watch out because he knows how easily we can be swayed by "important" people. Sometimes we don't even realize when we're being led astray, and it is rarely intentional. Often, we follow along because we trust somebody or think they have everything figured out. This can be a dangerous path to walk. Don't get me wrong, it's great to have role models in your life and it's great to get advice from Godly people. It's also great to have friends. Our standard of living, however, should always be the Word of God. We should always look first to the truth of Scripture to set the course for our lives. If the person we admire gives advice in line with Scripture, follow it. But Scripture should always be the bottom line for how we base our actions and our lives. If our friends or role models are going against the Bible, we need to take Jesus' warning and be on our guard, so their sin doesn't infect our lives as well.

### **Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida (8:22-26)**

After reaching shore, Jesus and the disciples come to Bethsaida again. There, a blind man meets them, and Jesus leads the man by the hand outside of the city. I want you to note that Jesus takes the time to lead this man by the hand. The idea that Jesus is willing to take any of us by the hand is an incredible thing. He is so good, strong, and mighty, yet he is willing to lead the weak by the hand and bring them to a place of healing.

Once Jesus has taken the man out of the city this story becomes a bit unusual. Jesus again uses his spit and places his hands on the man, and then he asks if the man can see. The man answers that he can see men walking around like trees. This tells us two things. First, the man was likely not born blind since he knew what trees looked like. Second, that he was not completely healed by Jesus' first touch.<sup>6</sup>



We know by now that Jesus can calm storms, feed thousands with a snack, and drive out demons by a few words. People can touch his cloak and be healed, and he can even raise the dead. So, what's with this blindness? Is it stronger than Jesus? Not at all.

When we read the Bible, we have to take in what is happening in surrounding stories. This is called reading within context. Say your friend was telling another person about a dream they had. The dream involved her eating a pizza filled with pickles. You, however, start listening in the middle of the conversation. You don't hear that it was a dream, so you're sitting there and thinking your friend has some weird eating habits. It is because you missed the context of the story. You didn't hear all of it. The same can happen when we read the Bible. If we only read a verse here and there, we can never understand what it's truly saying. That is why it is so important to read the Bible in large chunks. Otherwise, we miss out on a lot of important details.

Looking at this story, let's remember what happened before. Jesus was disappointed because the disciples just weren't understanding. He had fed thousands, and they still couldn't see who he was. They were blind. In this miracle, then, it stands to reason that this blind man took two attempts at healing because sometimes, our blindness in the sense of understanding can be stubborn.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes we can see Jesus move in lots of ways and still not recognize him for who he is. This man's physical blindness shows that same stubbornness. Thankfully, Jesus touches the man again even in the face of stubbornness. We'll soon see that the stubbornness of the spiritually blinded disciples can be healed by Jesus as well.

### **Peter Declares That Jesus is the Messiah (8:27-30)**

If the man healed from blindness in the previous section truly represents the spiritual blindness of the disciples, we have hope that they'll eventually see who Jesus is, right? Thankfully and finally, we see this play out in these verses when Jesus takes his disciples to a place in Caesarea Philippi.

There he asks them a question. This question seems simple in nature, but the answer proclaimed has resounded around the world ever since. "Who do people say that I am?" The disciples answer that some say Elijah, and some say John the Baptist, while others say the prophets. People are recognizing Jesus as a prophet. This is no small step because prophets in this time were near-extinct.<sup>9</sup> The last time anyone had heard from God, other than John the Baptist, was over 400 years ago. As much as they are crediting Jesus, the people have still missed the point.

#### **Who's Who?**

##### **Elijah**

Elijah was a great prophet of the Old Testament. He was sent by God to prophesy to the kings of Israel and stand against their worship of false gods. He is most known for calling down fire from heaven (1 Kings 18) and being taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2).

#### **Where in the World?**



##### **Caesarea Philippi**

Located at the headwaters of the Jordan River, this city was known for its beauty. It was named to honor Caesar (the ruler of Rome). Interestingly, here Jesus is first recognized as the Messiah in a place that typically considered Caesar a god.<sup>8</sup>

Jesus, taking the conversation deeper, makes it personal. He asks, “Who do **you** say that I am?” Peter takes the lead in answering: “You are the Messiah.” Messiah may be a difficult word to understand. Maybe you’ve heard it before, but never understood what it meant. Don’t worry, the disciples didn’t fully understand either. Messiah in and of itself stated simply means “the one anointed by God.”<sup>10</sup> Over time, the Jewish people came to believe that the Messiah would look similar to King David in

that he would rescue Israel from its enemies.<sup>11</sup> They were right—sort of—but the enemy Jesus would rescue them from was sin and death, not the Romans. The Messiah wouldn’t look like a King at this moment, but a suffering servant and Jesus, the master teacher, begins to set the record straight for his disciples about what the true Messiah would do. Jesus, however, probably warned the disciples not to tell anyone because of the nature of the Jewish belief of the Messiah.<sup>12</sup> Jesus did not come to be a King (yet) and if it was proclaimed he was the Messiah, the people may have tried to force him into the role of a King, rather than allow him to complete his work on the cross.

### Did you know?

Isaiah talks about what the Messiah would look like in Isaiah 53. The Messiah is shown as a suffering servant who would bear the punishment of sin and be crushed. Not quite the Messiah the Jews were thinking about, huh?

### Did you know?

In the same way that *hola* and *hello* mean the same thing in different languages, so do the words *Christ* and *Messiah*. *Christ* is Greek and *Messiah* is Hebrew. If you’ve thought before that *Christ* was Jesus’ last name, it isn’t, it’s his title. He is *Jesus Christ*, or *Jesus*, the Anointed One.

## Jesus Predicts His Death (8:31-33)

From this point on, the story of Mark changes. In the first eight chapters, Mark placed a heavy emphasis on the miracles and power of Jesus. Now, Mark will make clear that the purpose of Jesus’ ministry on earth is the cross and resurrection. What Jesus spoke about before in parables, he will now speak plainly to his disciples and crowds alike.<sup>13</sup>

The first lesson Jesus gives to his disciples is that he must suffer. Because this is so foreign to Peter’s understanding of what the Messiah should do, he takes Jesus aside and rebukes him. Jesus, however, responds with a stronger rebuke and says, “Get behind me, Satan!” Jesus refuses to be tempted and derailed by the plans of man. He refuses to take the route the people expect when it conflicts with the plan of the Father.

## The Way of the Cross (8:34-38)

After his teaching to the disciples and his rebuke of Peter, Jesus takes his bold message to the crowds. He calls them to take up their cross. This would have been radical in the time of Jesus. Crosses were used as the cruelest form of Roman torture. The worst criminals were killed on crosses, and it was not something that anyone would willingly take upon themselves.<sup>14</sup> Not only this, but Jews were especially disgusted by crosses because in Deuteronomy 21:23 it says, “anyone who is hung on



a pole is under God's curse." What Jesus is saying here is radical and difficult, it will make some turn away.

Then Jesus says some phrases that may be confusing. "Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and the gospel will save it" (verse 35). This sounds confusing, but Jesus is making a point of what it will be like to follow him. Following him will be hard. There will be a difference between the people who follow him and those who do not. Those that follow Jesus will give up their lives, their hopes, their dreams, for the sake of Jesus. In doing so, however, they will find true life.

### **Scope It Out**

You see, often, we become selfish and distracted. We want to live our lives for ourselves and not consider anyone or anything else. But Jesus calls us to be different. Jesus calls us to surrender everything. That may sound scary, like it would have to the disciples when they left their boats and followed Jesus. How would they eat? How would they live? But Jesus took such good care of them. And that is the beauty of Jesus. He may call us to give up some things we like, but he gives us so much more when we do. And what Jesus gives is better than we can ever imagine. His plans are so much better for us than our own. It may not always feel like it, and the easy road will always tempt us, but God longs for us to stand firm in our faith in him, trusting that his plans for us are far better than our own.

If it feels scary to follow Jesus, remember that this is the same Jesus that took the blind man by the hand to guide him. He freed people from demons and healed so many. He took simple fishermen and taught them closely. And, as we'll see, he gave his life up so that we might truly find ours in him. He is good, friends. And his plans for your life are better than you can imagine if you seek him, follow him, obey him, and give up your life's dreams and goals. It's only then that you'll truly find life.

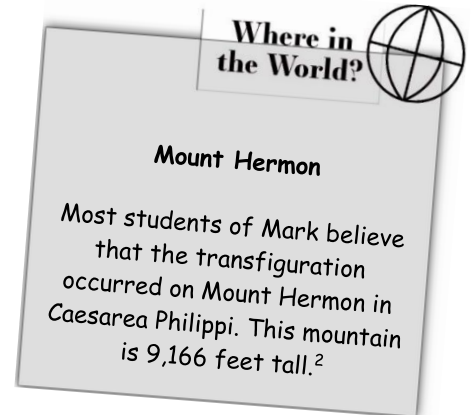
Can you think of anything that is getting in the way of you following Jesus? Maybe you're afraid people will make fun of you. Maybe you don't feel like you understand enough. Bring these thoughts to Jesus. Write about them or talk about them with a parent. Just know that nothing on this earth is better than what Jesus has for us.

## Transfiguration of the Teacher

Last chapter, Jesus proclaimed that he is, in fact, the Messiah. The disciples know it and the crowds have heard the cost required to follow him. Chapter nine will pick up six days after Peter declares Jesus as the Messiah,<sup>1</sup> and we'll get a small glimpse of the glory of God.

### The Transfiguration (9:1-13)

After Peter's bold proclamation, Jesus takes three disciples (Peter, James, and John) with him up a mountain. The location being a mountain may be significant because, just as Moses went up Mount Sinai to see God and receive instructions concerning the Israelites, so here the three disciples are about to see Jesus in his splendor and hear from God.<sup>3</sup> Once they have arrived, the disciples see Jesus transfigured before them. If you've never heard of the word transfigured before, don't worry, I've only ever heard of it in the Bible. It means "to change as to glorify or exalt."<sup>4</sup> Even that feels hard to understand, but it means that Jesus showed off his "God glory." When Jesus is transfigured, he is showing his disciples just a piece of how beautiful and majestic he is.



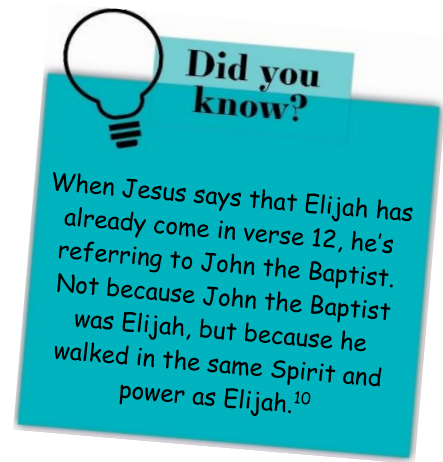
In the Old Testament, when people heard the voice of God, they were amazed and even a bit afraid, because they recognized his power. Jesus is both fully God and fully man. In this moment, however, his holiness and splendor are made visible, and the disciples are astounded. They are seeing almost a veil lifted so that they may see Jesus in total beauty, majesty, and light.<sup>5</sup> His clothes are the brightest white they've ever seen. He probably made them want to put on sunglasses if those had been invented!

Then it gets even more exciting for the disciples because Elijah and Moses appear. Do you remember those guys from our sticky notes in chapter six and chapter eight? Moses was the leader God used to deliver the Israelites out of slavery. Elijah was the first of the major prophets and he came wielding the power of God. Both men were faithful in their service to God, and both were rejected regularly by the people. Jesus, ever faithful, would also soon to be rejected by the people.<sup>6</sup> These are two of the most famous men in Israel and they've come to chat with Jesus.

Peter then opens his mouth (as you read the Bible, you'll find this is something Peter does a lot). He requests that they create shelters. Your translation may say booths or tents. He may have requested this for a few reasons. First, Peter could have been afraid because of the glory of Jesus. Jesus was so powerful and radiant, and Peter did not feel like he could be in the presence of God, so he wanted to hide.<sup>7</sup> Another reason for Peter wanting to build tents could be that he thought Jesus was about to come into his glory for the whole world. Perhaps still not understanding that Jesus needed to suffer and die for the sins of the world, Peter may have thought that Jesus was coming to reign on earth as the Jews expected the Messiah to do.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Peter could have just thought it was really cool to see Jesus like that with Elijah and Moses

and he wanted to set up camp and stay a while.<sup>9</sup> What do you think Peter wanted the shelters for? What would you have done?

The climax of the Transfiguration comes when we once again hear the voice of the Father. He echoes similar words to those spoken when Jesus was baptized by John. In chapter one, the Father's words were: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased," and here, upon the mountain the Father says, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" Do you see the subtle difference? Before, God the Father was affirming Jesus, now he is proclaiming the truth of Jesus to his closest disciples and commanding them to listen to him. Jesus is the Son of God, and he has the approval of the Father.



### **Jesus Heals a Boy Possessed by an Impure Spirit (9:14-29)**

Coming down the mountain, Jesus again meets a large crowd. This time, however, there is a big argument occurring. When they see Jesus they run to him, and a man shares that his son is possessed by an evil spirit that the disciples can't drive out. The boy has been dealing with this since childhood and the father is distraught. He longs for his boy to be well (verses 16-22). Can you imagine the fear he must have felt? Then, when the disciples fail to save his son, he must have wondered if all is lost. Making it to Jesus he says, "If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us" (verse 22).

Jesus responds with a groundbreaking statement: "If you can?" Everything is possible for one who believes" (verse, 23). Whoa. Jesus is showing once again his power and authority. Everything is possible. Now, please don't take this to mean that Jesus is just some granter of wishes and if you ask him for a pony it will appear in your room. Could Jesus make a pony appear in your room? Absolutely, but that doesn't mean he will. Jesus is talking about things that are in line with the will of the Father. When we come to Jesus, he has the power to answer our biggest prayers, but he also has the power to say no if it doesn't line up with his will. Our belief shouldn't change, and the Bible encourages us to ask for things in prayer (James 4:2), but our willingness to accept his divine plan should always be present. Then, as we pray, we start to better understand the will of God, and he starts to put his desires on our heart rather than our own. So ask big prayers and trust him with his answer.

### **Scope It Out**

The boy's father speaks again, and his response is something we could all pray, "I do believe; help me in my unbelief!" You see, the father was struggling to find faith. He did believe, but he also was fighting against unbelief. He went to the best source to help him with that—Jesus. When we have doubts or questions, we don't have to hide those from Jesus. This man was honest and asked for help. Jesus didn't turn him away for having such little faith, he moved on behalf of the little faith he did have.

It turns out, the reason the disciples failed is because this evil spirit could only be driven out by prayer. Prayer is a powerful weapon in the hands of a Jesus follower. We've seen how often Jesus went away to pray, and he longs for us to do the same. When we pray, we are asking God to move on our behalf. When we pray, we are reminding ourselves that we can't do much of anything by our power alone. It is only by the strength that God pours into us that we are able to live for Jesus and do the works he has prepared in advance for us to do (check out Ephesians 2:8-10). Prayer is one way we can learn to align our will with God's will, learning from him and asking him to help us, even in our unbelief.

### **Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time (9:30-37)**

Jesus gets away from the crowds a bit in this section to teach his disciples as he often does. While teaching them, Jesus again tells them that he is going to die (verse 31). The disciples still don't get it. I wonder if they assumed this was a parable. I wonder if they were afraid to ask Jesus what he meant because they felt like they should understand him by now.

### **Scope It Out**

The disciples had a lot of growing to do. I find that really encouraging. Sometimes, I don't understand the Bible. Sometimes, I leave with questions. Sometimes, I wonder what things mean. It's okay if you do too. There are a lot of resources out there, and I hope, through this, you're learning a little bit about studying the Bible. I hope you're realizing that even grown-ups don't have all the answers.

Have you ever planted a garden? The first time I did, I was shocked at how long it took for any food to grow. I certainly learned a lesson in patience. The same is true for us. It takes us time to learn, grow, understand, and apply God's Word to our lives. In the same way gardens require tools and effort, so does our growth in Jesus, but you're doing some of that work right now. So, take heart! Thankfully, we serve a patient, loving God who is the source of all wisdom, and he generously gives wisdom to those who ask (James 1:5).

### **(9:33-37)**

Apparently, when Jesus wasn't explaining that he would soon suffer, the disciples were arguing. They wanted to know who the best was. Have you ever asked your teacher who the best student was? Have you ever wondered who the coach thought the best player on the team was? That's what the disciples were discussing with one another. Knowing this, Jesus pulls a little kid to him to teach them a lesson. Something that you should know is that kids weren't very valued during Jesus' time, they were actually considered unimportant.<sup>11</sup> What Jesus is doing here is revolutionary and totally against the common understanding of the day.

Jesus was pointing out that the Kingdom of God works differently than the world does. In the world, it's all about who has money or power or looks or status. If you're rich or popular or any number of things, you're considered great and those are the people you want on your side. God's Kingdom doesn't work that way. In God's Kingdom, the greatest people are the ones who recognize how small they are and how much they need Jesus. Jesus calls us to be humble and eager to learn in the same way children are. God's Kingdom doesn't look like who can be the best, but people serving one another out of the deep love that the Father has shown us.

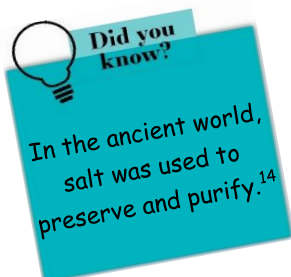
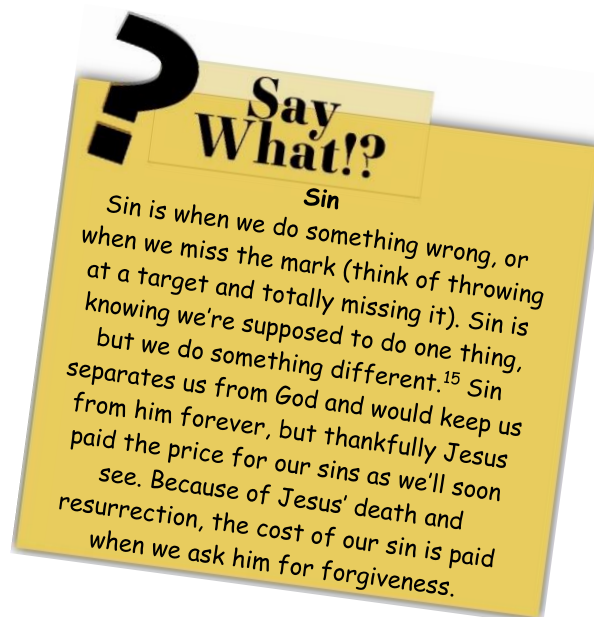


### Whoever is Not Against Us Is for Us (9:38-41)

In this section again, the point Jesus made about becoming a servant seems lost on the disciples. They want a man to stop using the name of Jesus to drive out demons because he isn't one of them. Perhaps they were thinking that the man wasn't called as an apostle, so he didn't have the right to do what they were doing. Maybe they were feeling like they were better than this man because they were a part of Jesus' inner circle. We don't know for sure, but we do know Jesus' response. He tells his disciples not to stop him because whoever is not against them is for them.

### Causing to Stumble (9:42-50)

As Jesus has been instructing in much of this chapter, he continues here. The things he says might sound a bit scary and make you say, "Uh WHAT?" Give me a chance to explain this. In this section, Jesus is speaking of the value of the Kingdom of God. When Jesus says that if your hand, foot, or eye causes you to sin, cut them off because it would be better to enter heaven missing a hand or foot or eye than to be thrown into hell, he's showing the value of eternal life. Eternal life is more important than anything we have here. He's saying if something in our life is getting in the way of following God's commands, we should cut it off. Please know that Jesus was using a special technique called hyperbole.<sup>12</sup> Hyperbole means to exaggerate, like when you say, "I'm so



hungry, I could eat a bear.” You couldn’t actually eat a bear, but you’re making a point. Jesus isn’t expecting you to cut off your hand or foot. He isn’t expecting you to physically pluck out your eye. To hurt your own body was, in fact, against Jewish law.<sup>13</sup> Instead, Jesus is expecting you to do everything you can to flee from sin, so you may be preserved and pure.

### **Scope It Out**

If the Internet is causing you to sin, don’t go on the Internet. If talking with a certain friend leads to conversations that involve gossip, stop the conversation or walk away when you’re tempted. If you’re disobeying your parents and staying up late to play video games without them knowing, get rid of your video game console. This sounds hard, right? It is! It is so hard to flee from temptation, and Jesus knows this. He also knows that your reward is far greater than anything you could have here. He knows that it is better to enter life (meaning heaven) having missed out on something cool on earth than being bound by sin. And don’t worry, Jesus still helps us. A letter in the New Testament says, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it” (1 Corinthians, 10:13).



## Up and Up

In the last two chapters of Mark, we saw a shift. No longer was Mark talking so much about the miracles and power of Jesus, but Jesus' mission, plan, and purpose for coming to this earth. Now, Mark shows that Jesus is focused completely on what is to come for him: suffering on the cross. Because the cross is the entire reason that Jesus came, Mark will spend the second half of his book sharing Jesus' final teachings and miracles as his time to complete his mission draws near.

### Divorce (10:1-12)

The first teaching in chapter ten is on the subject of divorce. The topic comes about because the Pharisees are testing Jesus. These tests could have come for a few possible reasons. First, it is possible the Pharisees wanted to test Jesus' knowledge of the Law. Second, and more likely is that they were hoping Jesus would say something that would get him in trouble. Do you remember John the Baptist? He was killed by King Herod and perhaps the Pharisees were looking to give King Herod a reason to capture Jesus and put him in prison.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus, however, responds with a question. In verse 3, he responds to the Pharisees, "What did Moses command you?" The Pharisees answer, not with a law, but with a permission. Moses had allowed people to divorce, but only because

their hearts were hard. God didn't ever want his people to divorce, but he allowed Moses to give them permission as an attempt to limit the consequences of sin.<sup>2</sup> Jesus, in his answer, shows what God's original intention with marriage was and it was found in the very first book of the Bible. In Genesis 2:24, after God created the woman he said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Jesus is saying that the original design for marriage was for a man and a woman to become one together, therefore, divorce would be like separating something that God brought together, which was not the way it was meant to be.



### Did you know?

This isn't the only place the Bible talks about divorce. These words are important because Jesus said them. But, in the same way context is important within a book, reading *all* of Scripture is important. If you want other insight on divorce, one passage is found in 1 Corinthians 7:10-16.



### Did you know?

God doesn't leave us alone in our pain. He is near, even when we don't feel like he is. Sometimes, when all hope feels lost or I wonder if things will ever be okay, I remember this promise from the Bible. When Jesus comes back, he will gather those who love him to himself, and we will live with him forever.

Revelation 21:3-4 says

*"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'"*

## Scope It Out

Maybe this is a really hard subject for you. Maybe your parents are divorced, or maybe your parents fight often, and you fear they will divorce. These are big, hard things to deal with as a kid. Know that God never intended for divorce to occur because he knows how hard it can be, both on the parents and the kids.

When we are faced with situations in life that are the result of our broken and sinful world, know that God is not far off. Psalm 34:18 says he is "close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." If you feel brokenhearted over your family or crushed in spirit, know that he is near. Know that he sees you and hears your cry. If you feel hopeless, and like your family is beyond saving, remember that he is able to do amazing things, just as you've seen throughout Mark. No family or marriage is too far gone for him to save. Nothing is too hard for him. But we can also trust, no matter the outcome of our family's brokenness or the consequences of people's choices that God is near and can turn broken, ugly things into beautiful works of art through his grace and mercy.

## The Little Children and Jesus (10:13-16)

In the next section, we see a glimpse of a scene that seems to have taken place often. People are bringing their children to Jesus and the disciples don't like it. Remember in chapter nine how we learned that children didn't have very much value in the ancient world? Kids weren't seen as important, and we see that again from the point of view of the disciples. Maybe they were thinking highly of themselves again and thought of Jesus as too important to be bothered by little kids. But Jesus didn't agree with this at all. Jesus makes certain his disciples know the value he places on children because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these (verse 14). Children are so special. You are so special. You see, kids are often so quick to trust and to recognize that they need help. You know when something is too hard for you to do, so you'll ask someone for help. You receive the Kingdom of God more easily because you accept it as a gift.<sup>3</sup> Adults could learn from you. Sometimes we adults are too proud and think we need to do everything by ourselves, but Jesus calls us to be like you. He calls us to be willing to know that we need help. We need Jesus. We can't do anything on our own apart from him. We can't earn our way into heaven by doing enough good things, we must have Jesus. As you grow, continue with your childlike heart. Continue to ask God for help. Continue to realize how much you need him. When you do this—when we do this—the Kingdom of God belongs to us.

## The Rich and the Kingdom of God (10:17-22)

Jesus is then met by a rich man, who wants to know how he can get to heaven. After Jesus lists several commandments to him, the man responds that he has kept these since he was a child, but he must still think he is missing something (verses 17-21). Then, Jesus tells the man to sell all he has and give it to the poor and then come and follow him. Sad because he has great wealth, the man turns to leave (verse 22).



**Did you know?**

Jesus doesn't ever say riches are wrong, but he says the love of riches is. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus says that we can't serve both God and money. God must be our first and greatest love.<sup>4</sup>

This is what I would say is one of the hardest parts of the gospel to understand. In the section before, we learned that we need to accept the free gift of the Kingdom of God like children, that we are helpless to do anything on our own. That is true. Why, then, does Jesus ask this man to sell everything and give to the poor and follow him? It sounds like Jesus is asking him to do things to earn his place in heaven.

The truth is this: nothing you can do will get you into heaven. You can't be a good kid and enter. You can't make sure you're always honest, always kind, always obedient. At some point, you will fail. At some point, you will sin. We all have, and we all do. Romans 3:23 says that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." In this way, the Kingdom of God is a free gift because it involves a price we cannot pay on our own. Think of buying your own spaceship. That would be really cool, but you could never afford it! The cost of getting into heaven is perfection, something we cannot do on our own. We can't afford it. And that is why Jesus came. He lived a perfect life and, as we'll soon see, paid the price to allow us to enter heaven. It is free, all paid for by Jesus and we only need recognize our need for him, then accept his grace and forgiveness.

### **Scope It Out**

Once we accept this gift of God, we begin to realize how much Jesus loves us. We recognize that he has given us the greatest gift ever. Jesus then asks us to follow him. We've talked in earlier chapters about how following Jesus can be really hard because we're called to live according to his Word. It may mean changing the way we talk or what we read. It means changing how we treat other people, even the people we don't like very much. It means giving up time doing something so that we can spend time with Jesus. We don't do this to earn God's saving gift. We do this once we have asked for his forgiveness and accepted his free gift. Our actions after are our response that shows our love for God.

For this rich man, it meant giving up his money. Maybe he loved money more than he loved God and Jesus was asking him to make a choice. Jesus wants to be our first love. He wants us to be willing to give up anything for him so we can be more like him. Is there anything God has asked you to give up to follow him? Have you done it? Share it with your family or ask your parents if that have ever felt the need to give something up to follow Jesus.

### **10:23-31**

From there, Jesus says that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. But that's impossible! And that's what the disciples say, too. Jesus then reminds us that all things are possible with God. Know that there are many places in the Bible where we see that riches are a blessing from God, but these blessings are always meant to be offered generously to others in need (see 2 Corinthians 9:10-11 and 1 Timothy 6:17-18), not to be used selfishly. God provides for us so we can help others. Sometimes, however, it is easy for wealth to cloud our minds and become all we care about. Sometimes wealth can cause us to rely on money to solve our problems rather than God. Sometimes we can

be tempted to store up money for ourselves rather than follow Jesus wholeheartedly. Thankfully, when God becomes the King of our lives and we decide to follow him, he changes our hearts, turning our desire for riches to desire for him because with God, all things are possible.

The disciples, thinking of how much they have given up to follow Jesus, ask what they will receive. Be certain that Jesus says they will be blessed. All who give things up to follow Jesus will be blessed, and this includes you and me. But, as Jesus often does, he reminds his disciples that his Kingdom looks different from the earthly kingdom because many who are last will be first and many who are first will be last.

### Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time (10:32-34)

Mark shifts away from the lesson of the rich young man to the action of Jesus. Here, he is on his way up to Jerusalem. This is Jesus with laser-focus. He has set his course for Jerusalem, and no one will turn him from it. He is beginning the climb to Jerusalem to fulfill his true purpose as the Messiah: to suffer and die for the sins of the world and rise again on the third day.

### The Request of James and John (10:35-45)

On the way to fulfill his mission, Jesus is asked a question by James and John, the two sons of Zebedee. These two have been his disciples from early on. Remember how Jesus called them while they were fishing, and they left everything to follow him? They now want to know if they can be his second- and third-in-command. They likely still don't understand the mission of Jesus. It's even possible that they think his determination to get to Jerusalem is so that he can begin his reign on the earth as king. James and John want to know if they will have a place in ruling that kingdom, but Jesus knows the brothers don't know what they're asking.

When he asks if the disciples can drink from the cup he is going to drink from or be baptized with the baptism he is going to endure, Jesus is talking about a cup and a baptism of suffering, persecution and, ultimately, death. Jesus knows what he is about to endure, and he knows the disciples will also be persecuted in the future. Not all will die, but all will be persecuted and suffer for the name of Jesus.

At this question, the others become upset. This shows that each of the disciples' hearts were in the wrong place. James and John wanted honor, and the others were mad that they would ask for it, possibly showing they were probably hoping for the same honors themselves. Again, Jesus tries to get it

#### Did you know?

It was always said that people were going "up" to Jerusalem in the Bible because it was on a mountain, and it was holy. Psalms 120-134 are called Songs of Ascent, meant to be sung on the way "up" to the Holy City.<sup>5</sup>

#### Did you know?

There are still people who suffer because of their faith in Jesus today. America has the freedom to worship Jesus without fear. In some countries, though, people are put in jail for following him. In other countries, people are even killed. Yet the Word of God keeps spreading because, once people know the truth of Jesus, they can't help but live for him. If you and your family would like to help the persecuted church, the Voice of the Martyrs is a good resource to check out.

#### Say What!?

##### Persecution

To face persecution is to be harassed or treated badly. In this case, it is to be treated badly because of belief in Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

through the disciples' heads that he came to serve and to give up his life. Just as Jesus came to serve, he expects his followers to serve one another as well. To live for Jesus is to be a servant, and this is still true today.

### **Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight (10:46-52)**

Still on his mission to Jerusalem, Jesus passes through Jericho. From the crowds, a blind man shouts out for the “Son of David” to have mercy on him (verse 47). This has been understood a few different ways.

Some students of Mark believe that Bartimaeus addressing Jesus as the “Son of David” was a sign of respect. He had heard of Jesus and knew that Jesus had spread the mercy of God through the healing of many. Here, perhaps Bartimaeus is hoping he also can receive such mercy.<sup>9</sup>

Others believe that Bartimaeus was calling Jesus the Messiah. It was well known that the Messiah would come from the line of David. To come from the line of David

means that David would need to be one of the great-great-great and so on grandfathers of the Messiah. With this title, then, Bartimaeus may have been declaring his faith in Jesus as the Messiah.<sup>10</sup> If this is the case, notice that a blind man has the spiritual sight to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, while many who can physically see still do not understand.

Though Bartimaeus is basically told, “Quiet down!” by the crowds, Jesus wants to talk with him. Once he makes his way to Jesus, Jesus asks him what he wants. Bartimaeus responds, “Rabbi, I want to see.” What a big request in such simple words. Yet as we’ve seen throughout all of Mark, Jesus, in compassion, heals him.

Whew! Chapter ten covered a lot. From divorce to kids to riches. From disciples that don’t quite get see to a blind man that does. He is on his way up to Jerusalem, all the while elevating the minds of his followers to better understand the true Kingdom of God.

Be proud of yourself for how far you’ve come in reading all this. I hope you’re realizing that, even though the Bible can seem big and hard, when we break it down, we are able to learn and understand. In the same way that school, sports, music, and other activities take practice and studying, so does reading the Bible. Don’t be discouraged if something is hard. Keep going. Keep trying. Keep reading. Keep growing. Someday, you’ll look back and be amazed at how far God has brought you.

#### **Where in the World?**



##### **Jericho**

There was both an old and a new Jericho at the time of Jesus.<sup>7</sup> Both were near each other and about 18 miles northeast of Jerusalem near the Jordan River. Jesus was likely leaving the area of the Old Jericho (the Jericho of the OT found in Joshua 6) when healing Bartimaeus.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Say What?**

##### **Rabbi**

This means teacher or master.<sup>11</sup> When written out Rabboni, it is an affectionate way of saying it meaning “dear teacher.”<sup>12</sup>



## The Passion of the King

In chapter ten, Jesus was leaving Jericho when he healed Bartimaeus. At this point in the story, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem in order to fulfill his purpose and mission here on earth. The disciples now know who Jesus is, but they still don't fully understand the true role of the Messiah—to suffer and die and be resurrected for the sins of the world. In chapter eleven, however, they are going to watch Jesus fulfill many prophecies that point to him as the Messiah.

### Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King (11:1-11)

Once Jesus is close to Bethany and Bethphage, he asks his disciples to find a colt that has never been ridden, untie it, and bring it to him. This is very important for a few reasons. First, these are kingly gestures. Kings often rode horses or animals that had never before been ridden. The animal would be considered sacred or set apart.<sup>3</sup> The disciples removing their cloaks is also a kingly gesture because it is similar to when a man named Jehu, was anointed to be King of Israel in the Old Testament book of 2 Kings chapter 9:12-13.<sup>4</sup> Second, there are potentially two prophecies that are being fulfilled from the Old Testament here. Do you remember what a prophecy is? It is something that has been told of by God before it happens.

The first prophecy that Jesus fulfills goes all the way back to the beginning of Israel. I'm not sure if you know this, but Israel was originally someone's name, the name that God gave to Jacob. Israel was a man God chose to make into a great nation—the Israelites. Israel had twelve sons, and at the end of his life he blessed those sons. In his blessing over Judah, Israel

tells of a great king that will rule over the nations and mentions how he will tie his donkey to a choice branch (Genesis 49:11). During this triumphal entry, Jesus could be representing the branch to which the donkey is now tied.

The other prophecy fulfilled here comes from the prophet Zechariah. In Zechariah 9:9 it says, "See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

After Jesus sits upon the donkey and makes his way into Jerusalem, people begin to lay their cloaks on the road and spread branches they have cut down. All the while, people shouted "Hosanna!

Where in the World?

**Bethany**

Bethany was a city two miles from Jerusalem on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives.<sup>1</sup>

**Bethphage**

The name Bethphage means "house of the early figs." This was a city close to Jerusalem, near the Mount of Olives.<sup>2</sup>

**Who's Who?**

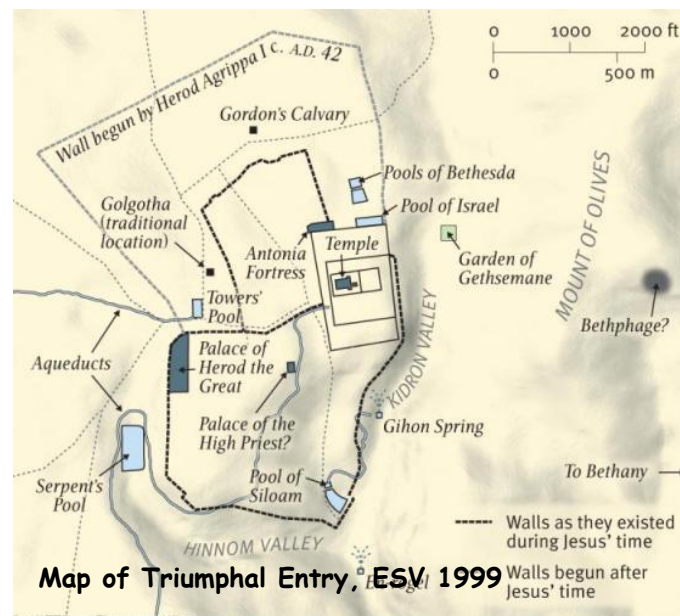
**Zechariah**

Zechariah prophesied around 520 B.C. He was both a prophet and a priest. His prophetic messages involved encouragement for the people of Israel to rebuild the temple that had been destroyed and messages pointing to the coming Messiah.<sup>5</sup>

**Say What!?**

**Hosanna**

Hosanna means "save us."<sup>6</sup> The people were calling upon God to save them.





Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heaven” (verse 9-10).

The song the people were shouting out was from Psalm 118. This psalm is one that proclaims the coming of the Messiah. It is possible that some were singing the song simply out of tradition, rather than realizing they were welcoming the actual Messiah!<sup>7</sup> But we, the disciples, and many in the crowd recognize that Jesus’ time has come. He is entering Jerusalem with his purpose in mind. His entrance marks him as King. Jesus is expected to free Israel from the Romans because the people still don’t understand the purpose of the Messiah. They see only a coming king, but Jesus first must suffer and die.

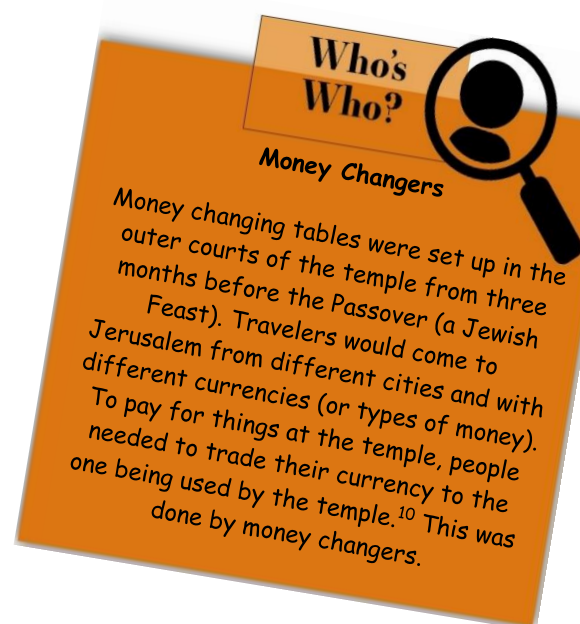
### **Jesus Curses a Fig Tree and Clears the Temple (11:12-26)**

The next section starts off with what may seem like a strange story. Jesus is hungry and sees a fig tree with leaves, but when he reaches the fig tree it hasn’t got any fruit. It isn’t the season for figs, but Jesus curses the tree and says that it shall never bear fruit again. This story always had me scratching my head as a kid. I thought something along the lines of, “Why didn’t he just tell it to grow a fig?” If you’re thinking things like that and asking those questions, great! Remember that it’s good to ask questions!

As for the answers, let’s take a look at the surrounding passages. Remember how it is important to read the Bible in context? This is one of those times where we see just how important it is. In this chapter, Jesus curses the fig tree, clears out the temple, and then we see the fig tree withered. Because the clearing of the temple happens in the middle of the fig tree story, we know that the stories are connected. The connection is the fruit, because fruit is often used in the Bible as a symbol of the changing work of God within us.<sup>8</sup>

When Jesus curses the fig tree, he is making a point that, in the same way the fig tree has no fruit, the temple has no fruit. During this time, people were bringing their money to the temple to buy an animal to sacrifice on behalf of their sins. The fees, however, were unfair. The doves were meant to be for the poor people, but the prices were unaffordable. With people unable to afford sacrifices, they were unable to atone for their sins at the time. Jesus enacts judgment on behalf of the temple because it has failed to live up to its purpose.<sup>9</sup> His judgment comes in the form of driving out the people and flipping the tables of the money changers (verse 15). The temple has failed to bear fruit. This is why Jesus curses the fig tree, and this is why he shows such passion and zeal at the temple. It has stopped being a place of worship and prayer but has instead become a den of robbers.

Once the disciples return and see the fig tree withered, they are amazed again at the power of Jesus. Jesus takes this time to remind his disciples that they can do amazing



things like throw mountains into the sea when they come to God in prayer. I want you to notice, though, that some things go hand in hand with prayer.

## Scope It Out

In verses 22-26, Jesus talks about the importance of belief. Do you remember all of those miracles Jesus did? Many were done on the basis of faith. When we come to Jesus, we need to recognize and believe he is able to do so much more than we can ever imagine. Jesus also talks about forgiveness in these verses. As followers of Jesus, we are called to forgive people as Jesus forgave us, even when people hurt us. Prayer, faith, and forgiveness go hand in hand in these verses. Which of those come easiest to you? Which are really hard? Lord, teach us and help us to practice all three.

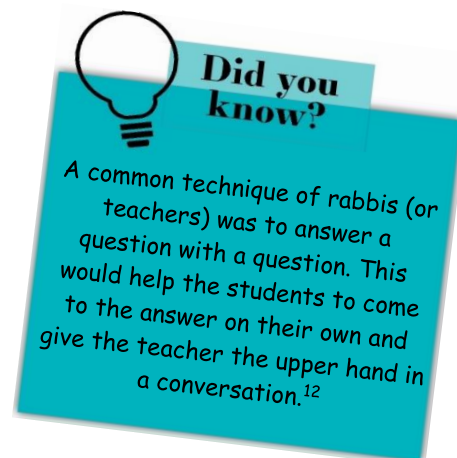
## The Authority of Jesus Questioned (11:27-33)

Each day on the week after Jesus entered the city on the donkey, he returns to Bethany for the evenings.<sup>11</sup> Now, he is back in the temple in Jerusalem and the chief priests and other teachers of the law have a question for him. In verse 28 they ask, “By what authority are you doing these things?” Remember that the day before this, Jesus entered the temple and threw out the money changers. He flipped tables and set loose doves. This was no Sunday stroll in the park. Jesus was on his mission from the Father, and he had proclaimed judgment on the temple. Needless to say, the leaders of the temple aren’t very happy with him and are looking for a way to kill him and trap him.

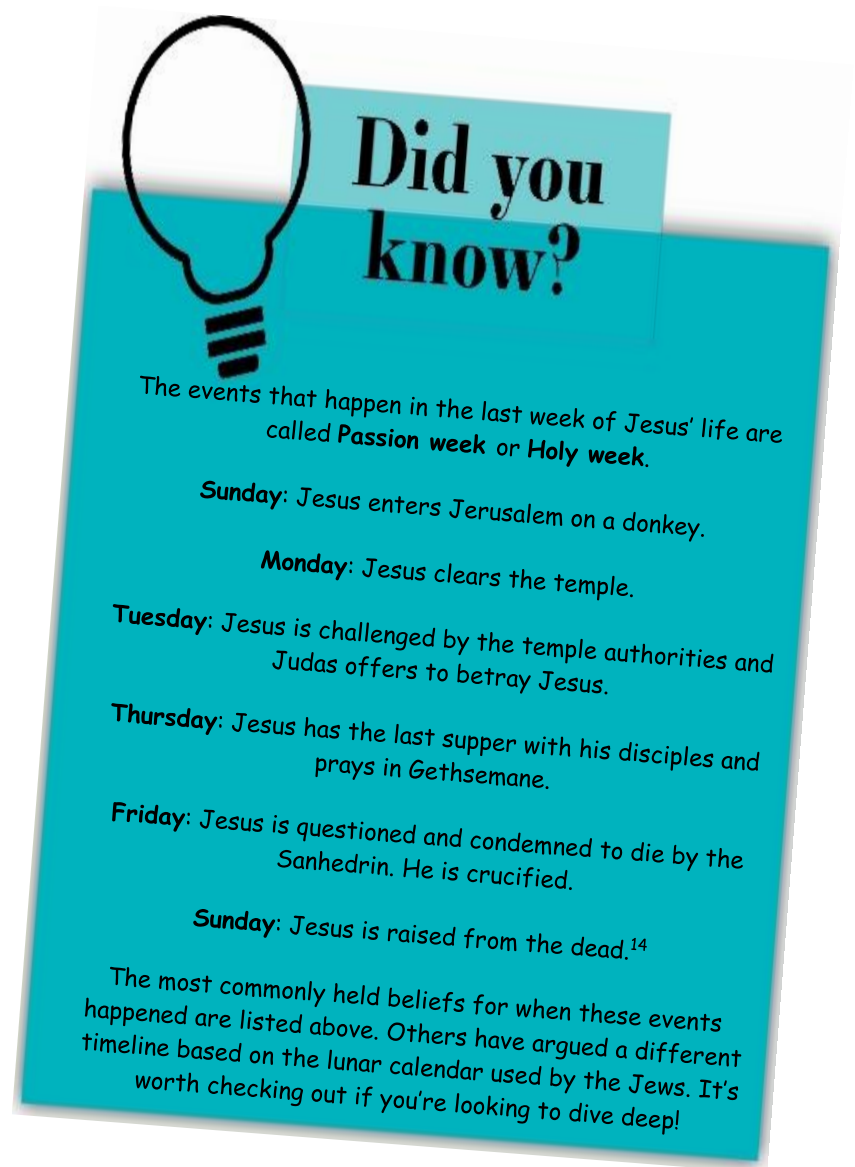
Jesus answers their question with one of his own. He wants to know who gave John the Baptist authority. Jesus knows the answer to this question. He has already made it known that John the Baptist was the one prophesied to pave the way for the coming Messiah. By asking the teachers of the law this, he is putting them in a hard place, and they know it. They know that John’s baptism came from God, and the people know it as well. But the teachers also realize that if they claim John’s authority came from God, they will also have to claim Jesus’ authority comes from God—something they refuse to do. If they claim John’s authority didn’t come from God, they know they will have a mob on their hands, angry with them because the people know John was a prophet.<sup>13</sup>

Without being willing to acknowledge that Jesus’ authority comes from God alone, the teachers know they are trapped between a rock and a hard place. Either answer will ruin their hopes to trap Jesus. Because of this, they take a coward’s way out and answer that they don’t know (Verse 33). Since they refuse to answer, Jesus also refuses, creating even greater tension between the groups.

What a chapter. Take a moment to reflect on how much you’ve read. You’re through eleven chapters! That is no small feat. It is worth noting that the first ten chapters of Mark cover about three years, where these last six chapters, starting with chapter eleven, cover only one week (see the following page for the sticky note).



But what a week it is. The week begins with Jesus entering Jerusalem fulfilling many prophecies that show to him be the long-awaited Messiah. Everything points to Jesus as King, but he first must fulfill the role of the suffering servant. He has shown God's judgment on the temple with his passion for the Lord's house. His passion only further angers the religious leaders of the time, and they begin to plot to kill and trap him. Keep reading and see the tension build over this last week of Jesus' life.



**Did you know?**

The events that happen in the last week of Jesus' life are called **Passion week** or **Holy week**.

- Sunday:** Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey.
- Monday:** Jesus clears the temple.
- Tuesday:** Jesus is challenged by the temple authorities and Judas offers to betray Jesus.
- Thursday:** Jesus has the last supper with his disciples and prays in Gethsemane.
- Friday:** Jesus is questioned and condemned to die by the Sanhedrin. He is crucified.
- Sunday:** Jesus is raised from the dead.<sup>14</sup>

The most commonly held beliefs for when these events happened are listed above. Others have argued a different timeline based on the lunar calendar used by the Jews. It's worth checking out if you're looking to dive deep!

## Questions and Answers

In chapter eleven, Jesus came triumphantly into Jerusalem and then cleared the temple. His opponents weren't too happy with this, and they began to question him. Chapter twelve begins where eleven left off, in the same conversation. The teachers of the law interrogated Jesus as to who gave him authority, and Jesus posed his own question that they refused to answer. Jesus, in turn, refuses to answer their question and then tells them a story.

### Parable of the Tenants (12:1-12)

This story Jesus tells is in the form of a parable. Remember that a parable is a story told to point out a moral truth. In the parable, a man had planted a vineyard and built all the necessary things it needed to thrive. He then rented it to farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest came, the owner sent his servant to retrieve what his land had grown, but the tenants took him and beat him. He sent servant after servant, but they beat some and killed others. Finally, he decided to send his son, thinking they would at least treat his son well. Instead, they killed the son, hoping to take his inheritance for themselves. Yikes, what a story! Let's explore what each of these parts mean.

First, know that the landowner is God. God planted a vineyard and left it to some tenants. The tenants, who are given charge of the vineyard in the man's absence, are the teachers of the law and religious leaders. The servants in the story are the prophets. Just as the landowner sent servants to the tenants, God sent prophet after prophet to the people of the Old Testament. Unfortunately, in the same way the tenants killed the servants in the story, the prophets of God were beaten or killed. As a final attempt to get the tenants to give him the fruit of the vineyard, the landowner decides to send his son. The son in the story is Jesus. God has sent his Son as his final attempt to turn the people to repentance.<sup>3</sup>

Knowing who each person in the story represents, do you see what Jesus is saying to the group of Pharisees, scribes, and teachers of the law? In very strong language, Jesus is telling these leaders that they are the wicked tenants. They have beaten and killed his prophets and are now plotting to kill his only Son. With the story finished, Jesus asks the crowd what they think the owner will do. He doesn't wait for an answer. Jesus tells the crowd listening exactly what the owner will do. The owner will destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to someone else. Then Jesus quotes from Psalm 118. If you remember from chapter eleven, this is the same psalm that was shouted as Jesus entered the city on a donkey. He quotes another part of it in verse 10 saying that "the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." What Jesus is



#### Did you know?

The Bible wasn't originally written in chapters and verses, those were added later to help people follow along. This means a new chapter doesn't always equal a new story, sometimes it is a continuation of the chapter before.



#### Say What!?

##### Tenants

A tenant is someone who rents and occupies land.<sup>1</sup> If you rent your home or apartment, you are a tenant. The people in this story were renting the owner's vineyard.



#### Say What!?

##### Cornerstone

Your Bible may say capstone in verse 10. A cornerstone was typically used to lay a foundation, but the specific meaning here of cornerstone was the head stone, a central, wedge-shaped stone at the top of an arch. This stone locked all other stones into place.<sup>3</sup>

saying is that, even though the leaders have rejected him, he will be lifted up like a cornerstone to the glory of God the Father.

Maybe if you're first reading this, it sounds a bit harsh for the tenants. I suppose it is. However, you need to remember that Jesus is offering these leaders a chance to repent, even with this story. He is pointing out their wickedness, allowing them to see their mistakes and turn. Sadly, the men only harden their hearts and further plot to arrest and kill Jesus.

### **Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar (12:13-17)**

After the Pharisees and teachers of the law have regrouped, they send another to ask a question of Jesus, hoping to trap him. The question asked is whether they should pay their taxes. Major groups fought over the answer to this no-win question: the Zealots refused to pay their taxes to Rome, the Pharisees disliked the tax but conceded to pay it, while the Herodians accepted the tax. Meanwhile, almost *all* the common people were against the tax. Had Jesus said yes, the people would have likely turned against

him. If he said no, however, he would be in trouble with the Roman authorities.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus knows a trap is being laid for him, but he still chooses to enter in and answer. He asks for a denarius. A denarius was a day's wage in that time and contained the picture of the Roman Emperor. Romans often held that their rulers were gods, and the people worshiped them and gave them full authority. When Jesus answers, he gives a limit to the authority of Caesar. He shows that Caesar does not deserve the worship of the people, but the coins can belong to him because they are stamped with his image.

People, however, are stamped with the image of God (Genesis 1:27). We, therefore, belong to God. Because of this, we should give our lives to him and his service.<sup>8</sup>

### **Marriage at the Resurrection (12:18-27)**

The chapter continues and Jesus is met with a second question, this one involving the resurrection of the dead. If you remember from the sticky note back in chapter two, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Because of this, they present a long story for Jesus, wondering who will be

#### **Say What!?**

##### **Imperial tax**

As a province of Rome, Judea was required to pay a poll tax. From the census, each person had to pay a tax to live there, along with taxes on the land.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Who's Who?**

##### **Zealots**

Zealots were Jewish members of a radical, political group that openly (sometimes violently) opposed Roman rule.<sup>5</sup>

Simon, one of Jesus' disciples was called from this group.

#### **Did you know?**

Assuming the coin was a Tiberian denarius, the coin would have been inscribed with words claiming Tiberius was the son of a god.<sup>7</sup> This is another reason the Jews did not like Rome.

#### **Say What!?**

##### **Resurrection**

To be resurrected is to rise from the dead.<sup>9</sup> Except for the Sadducees, Jews believed that their bodies would be renewed after death. If they followed the law, they would go to paradise. Followers of Jesus, called Christians, also believe in another life after death. We believe that our works cannot save us, only the blood that Jesus shed on the cross can cover our sins and make us right with God. When we accept this and follow Jesus, we believe we will be resurrected and live in heaven with God.



married to the woman if there is a resurrection (verses 19-23). Here the Sadducees were assuming that, if there was a resurrection (which they doubted), it would look like earth does today. Jesus corrects them in two ways. First, he tells them that the resurrected life will not look like life on earth. The resurrected life will result in people being like the angels in heaven, worshiping and serving God.<sup>10</sup> Second, Jesus corrects the Sadducees and explains that there is most certainly a resurrection. His point about being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) is showing that God is the God of the living. He did not protect and care for the great leaders of the Faith for them to die and be no more. He protected them and called them that he might give them eternal life with him.<sup>11</sup> This same gift is available for us today through the sacrifice of Jesus, which we are getting closer and closer to seeing in the book of Mark.

### **The Greatest Commandment (12:28-34)**

Jesus is met with a third and final question in this chapter. A teacher asks Jesus which commandment is the most important. This was actually a common discussion at the time. There are 613 laws in the Old Testament, and people regularly talked about which were the most important and which ones would be less of an issue if they were broken.<sup>12</sup>

Let's pretend for a second. Pretend that your parents decide to pay you twenty dollars if you do an entire day full of chores. They give you a list at the beginning of the day, and each chore has what it is worth once it's completed. If you complete all the chores, the total will be twenty dollars. This sounds great, until you realize that the list is too long. You'll never be able to complete all the chores in one day. What will you do? You'll start looking at which chores are worth the most money and focus on those. Vacuuming is worth fifty cents, but cleaning the bathroom is worth two dollars? You're going to clean the bathroom. Watering the garden is only worth a quarter, but weeding it is worth three dollars? You will weed. This is what the leaders are attempting to do.

Some commandments of the Old Testament come with promises attached, and some come with warnings. For example, Exodus 20:4-6 comes with both. God tells his people not to bow down to idols or they will be punished for four generations, but if they keep his commandments, they will be rewarded for 1,000 generations. The scribes would look at this and assume it was very important because it holds

both a promise and a warning. To not clip off the edges of their beard found in Leviticus 19:27 had no warnings or promises so it would be seen as possibly less important. They looked into each law in this way. Now, Jesus is being asked to enter the discussion and determine which commandment is the most important.

Jesus, as he has done with every question, hits a homerun. He answers with part of the *Shema*, found in Deuteronomy 6:5, and tells the man to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength. The second command

### **Say What!?**

#### **Shema**

Shema means "to hear" and is a prayer that is still said daily by devout Jews. This prayer recites scripture from Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37-41, reminding them that God is one and they will honor his commands.<sup>13</sup>



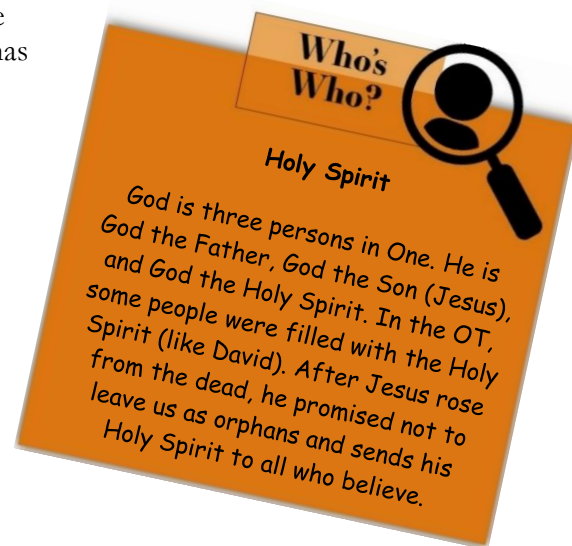
Jesus gives is found in Leviticus 19:18 and is like it, to love his neighbor as he loves himself. Jesus informs the man that the most important laws are to love God and to love others, he doesn't mention sacrifices or cleanliness. The fact that Jesus says loving God and loving people is more important than burnt offerings or sacrifices (which are required by the Law of Moses) is revolutionary and shows that God truly desires mercy not sacrifice (Hosea 6:6). Because of Jesus' incredible answers, people no longer dare to ask him questions.

## Scope It Out

Do you see how Jesus enters these discussions and answers the questions well? Now, we can't always have the perfect answer like Jesus did, but the Bible tells us to always have an answer for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15). If that feels scary, don't worry. It feels scary to adults, too. So often we're afraid we'll mess up or not say the right words. And, honestly, you might mess up. I sure have and your parents probably have, too. The more I have tried, though, the better I have become at answering questions about my faith. If you don't know where to start, tell the person what Jesus has done for you. Tell them what he has taught you in the book of Mark. Take some time right now to think about what God has done for you so you can have an answer ready if you're ever asked.

## Whose Son is the Messiah (12:35-37)

Since the leaders are no longer willing to ask him questions, Jesus poses his own question. He brings up two ideas that seem to say opposite things. The teachers of the law call the Messiah the son of David, but David, speaking by the Holy Spirit, calls the Messiah Lord. We know that Jesus came from David's line, but Jesus is making the point that the Messiah is above David. In this culture, sons were never above their fathers, but Jesus is pointing out that, though he is from David's line, he is greater than David.<sup>14</sup>



### Did you know?

Teachers of the law would often wear white, linen flowing robes to look more important and separate themselves from the "common people."<sup>16</sup>

## Warning Against the Teachers of the law (12:38-40)

After his question, Jesus points out another flaw with the teachers of the law. He talks about how they enjoy the respect and admiration of the people. They make a show of their importance, all the while taking from those who don't have much to offer.<sup>15</sup> God, in his great compassion, calls his people to care for the less fortunate. Here, the teachers of the law are more concerned about their own importance. They care about how they're received at parties and how special their prayers sound. They care more about the appearance of being good and righteous than actually serving

the very people God is calling them to love. These men, Jesus says, will be punished severely.

## The Widow's Offering (12:41-44)



### Did you know?

The coins the woman placed in were called *leptas*, only 1/64 of a denarius, which was a day's wage.<sup>17</sup> To put this in perspective, the average day's wage in America in 2021 for full-time workers was \$142.50.<sup>18</sup> The widow had 1/64 of that which would equal \$2.23 to live on. So little, yet she gave it all to God.

As a way to contrast what Jesus just said about the teachers of the law, Mark tells us a story where Jesus sits down in the temple and watches people placing their offerings in the treasury. Many come and give a lot, but a poor widow comes and throws in two small copper coins. Most probably don't notice. Her gift would seem insignificant when compared with the other impressive gifts that people are giving. But Jesus notices. He notices and brings it to the attention of his disciples. He says that she has put

more into the treasury than any others because she gave out of her poverty. She gave all she had to live on.<sup>19</sup>

### Scope It Out

Jesus is making a point that we all need to remember. We often think that if we don't have much to offer, there is no point in offering anything. "God wouldn't ever use me because I don't have much to give" is a thought I've had more times than I care to admit. But it doesn't matter to Jesus what we start with, he cares what we're willing to offer. Just look at how Jesus fed the 5,000. Someone offered a small lunch, and he used it to feed 5,000 people. Here, a widow offers two coins, and Jesus says she gives more than the rich. She offers it all. She easily could have given one and saved the other, but she gave it all. Do you see? We're called to offer God everything, even if it doesn't feel like a lot or very special because, in the hands of our incredible, miracle-working God, our small offering of ourselves can change everything.

## The End Times

In chapter twelve, we saw Jesus go toe to toe with a lot of religious leaders. He answered their questions flawlessly and they were unable to catch him in their traps. In chapter thirteen, Jesus will be speaking mostly to his disciples.

### The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times (13:1-31)

The chapter starts with Jesus and his disciples leaving the temple. On the way, the disciples are talking about how amazing of a building it is. Make no mistake, the

temple was a sight to behold. The stones of the temple were made of white marble and were massive in size. The marble was decorated with gold, so it shone like a beautiful beacon on top of its hill.<sup>1</sup> The temple was an impressive structure. This is probably why it catches everyone off guard when Jesus responds that not one stone will be left on another; every one will be thrown down (verse 2).

When they have reached their destination of the Mount of Olives, Peter, James, John, and Andrew ask when these things will happen and what will be the sign that they are to be fulfilled (verse 3). Jesus gives his answer to those two questions in this chapter.

Allow me to make a disclaimer: this chapter is one of the most disputed chapters in the book of Mark.<sup>3</sup> Many people have interpreted it in many different ways. Below, you will see notes that offer a *very basic* description of the three main ways people have understood this.

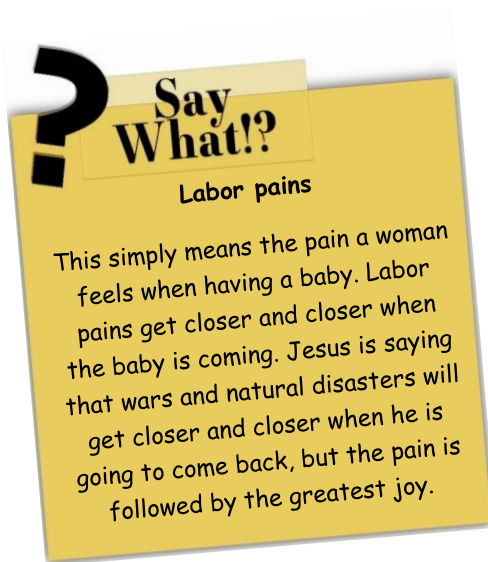
**View #1:** Some believe this entire chapter was meant to describe the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. This happened in AD 70 and Jesus was only referring to that in this passage.<sup>4</sup>

**View #2:** Some believe that verses 5-37 related specifically to the destruction of the temple, but also will be occur before the Second Coming of Christ. They see the destruction of the temple and this prophecy as a foreshadowing of more to come.<sup>5</sup>

**View #3:** Some believe Jesus was talking about the destruction of the temple and Christ's Second Coming separately in this chapter. Verses 5-23 and 28-31 relate to the temple. Verses 24-27 and verses 32-37, refer to the Second Coming.<sup>6</sup>

Always remember that when people are discussing Scripture, we are still people. The Word of God alone is true. Anything I or anyone else writes is a human perspective.

Make the Bible your sole basis for truth. That's the best advice I can give whenever you're confronted with something you don't understand or don't agree with. Check it and see how it measures up to the Word of God. Alright, my disclaimer is done, let's dive in!



When Jesus begins to teach, he speaks in warnings. He informs the disciples that many things will happen, like wars and rumors of wars. He says that many people will come in his name claiming that they are him. Jesus is warning the disciples not to be turned astray by these false teachers, but to stay steadfast, knowing the end has not yet come. It is easy to see wars and assume that Jesus is on his way back immediately. Jesus is explaining to his disciples that, when they see these wars and the destruction of the temple, it is only the beginning of labor pains.<sup>7</sup> We do know that Jesus *will* come a second time, but certain things must happen first within God's plan.

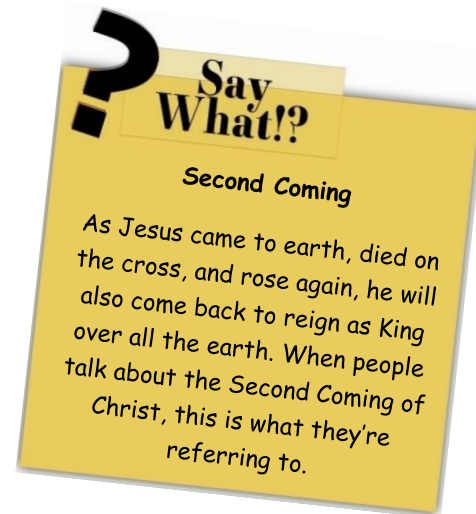
Jesus then moves on and speaks of the hardships that will be faced by the disciples.

He does this in the same way a loving parent would speak to their kids—by warning them ahead of time so the children will not give up when the road gets hard.<sup>8</sup> Jesus never tricks people into following him. He never makes people think it will be an easy road.

Up front, Jesus explains that there will be tough times, but that is no reason to abandon the mission. When tough times come, Jesus assures his disciples that he will be with them as they are flogged and hurt and imprisoned. By his Holy Spirit, he will give them words to speak when they are brought to trial. The road of the disciples will be marked by persecution. In the midst, however, Jesus does not leave his people. He is with them, helping and encouraging them. As true as this was for the disciples, it is true for us today. When we are faced with troubles, we do not need to fear. In John 16:33, Jesus says, “In this world you will have trouble but take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Though this section can be interpreted in the three ways mentioned previously, all agree that the destruction of the temple was a part of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Concerning the destruction of the temple there is quite a bit of history. We can't go into all of it here, but the main gist is that in AD 70 the Roman army burned the temple to the ground. The destruction of Jerusalem was extreme. Flames engulfed the city, and the Romans plundered it.<sup>9</sup>

Before the temple burned, however, there was the “abomination that causes desolation” (verse 14). An abomination is something rejected by God.<sup>10</sup> Concerning the destruction of the temple, this likely meant one of a few different possibilities. At one point, a Roman emperor tried to set up his own statue in the temple, but his



plan didn't succeed. Zealots also controlled the temple before the Romans took over and broke many of God's laws. When the Romans did take over, they sacrificed to their false gods within the temple.<sup>11</sup> Any of these could have been the abomination that occurred before the destruction of the temple. Those that believe this prophecy also points to the Second Coming of Christ (View #2), would argue that, in the same way there was an abomination in the temple before it was burned down, the temple will be rebuilt, and another abomination will be set up within it before Jesus' return.

In verse 14, Jesus tells the disciples that there will come a time before this destruction when his people should flee. Eusebius, and early church historian, tells us this did indeed occur before the destruction of the temple, and many Christians fled to a nearby mountain based on this prophecy.<sup>12</sup> Again, all three viewpoints agree that this did occur, but some argue it also foreshadows the time immediately before Jesus returns.

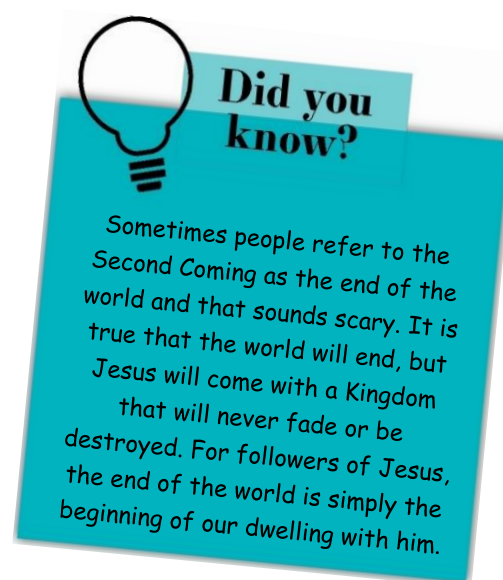
In verse 24, for those who do *not* interpret this passage to be only about the destruction of the temple (views #2 and #3), Jesus moves to prophesying about the end of the world. All of heaven and earth will be shaken at the coming of Jesus in his glory. When he entered Jerusalem on a donkey he was hailed as king, but he did not live up to the expectations of the people because he had to suffer first. When he comes again, his power and glory will shake the earth, and all will recognize that he is King of kings and Lord of lords. At this time, he will gather his elect—those that follow him. What a glorious day that will be!

Finally, Jesus moves into two stories related to the prophecies he just told. The first is the story of the fig tree. Jesus says that in the same way we can recognize the seasons based on the leaves of trees, so we can recognize when these things are about to happen. The whole purpose of this talk is to warn his disciples so that they can keep watch and not be caught off guard or afraid when they see natural disasters, wars, and the destruction of the temple take place.<sup>13</sup> Today we can keep watch for Jesus' return by obeying his will and reading and studying God's Word. His Word should always be our source of truth and comfort, even when times are hard.

### **The Day and the Hour Unknown (13:32-37)**

The second story is related to when Jesus comes back in people who agree with view #2 and view #3. He says that no one knows the exact time he will return other than the Father. Our job is not to try to figure it all out and try to place a date and a time, our job is to keep watch. Our job is to continue doing the work God has for us: telling others about the saving work Jesus did on the cross and making disciples.

That saving work is getting closer in our story in Mark. If you aren't quite sure what that saving work is yet, stay tuned. In chapter thirteen, Jesus gives comfort and teaching to his disciples so that they will be prepared for what is to come. In the next





chapter, however, Jesus will finish his final teachings and be arrested by the religious leaders he has so boldly spoken against during his ministry.

## Boiling Point

Chapter thirteen of Mark showed Jesus comforting his disciples about the trials they would face in his name. In chapter fourteen, we see the beginning of the trials that Jesus will face on our behalf.

### Jesus Anointed at Bethany (14:1-11)

As he had done throughout the week, Jesus returned to Bethany after his day in Jerusalem. Possibly he did this because so many people were looking for him to arrest him and kill him.<sup>1</sup> By staying in

Bethany, he would be further away from the crowds filling the city of Jerusalem for the Passover.

While reclining at a table, a woman comes and pours nard on Jesus' head. Some are upset because she has "wasted" money that could have been given to the poor. Their thoughts may have turned to money because, during the Passover, it was common for people to offer gifts to the poor and less fortunate.<sup>4</sup> Jesus, however, rebukes them. He honors her for the beautiful thing she has

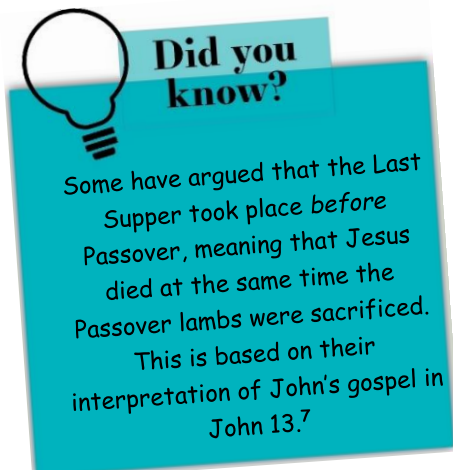
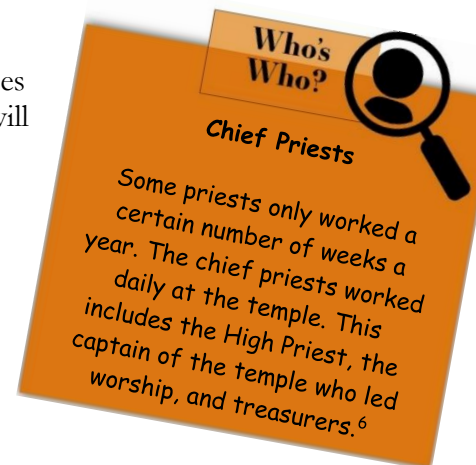
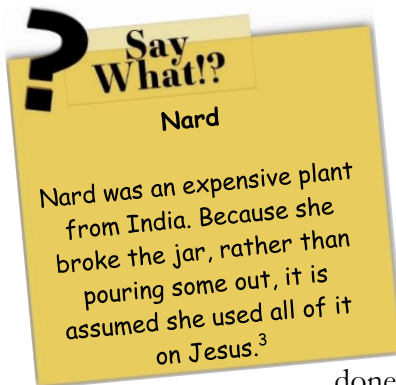
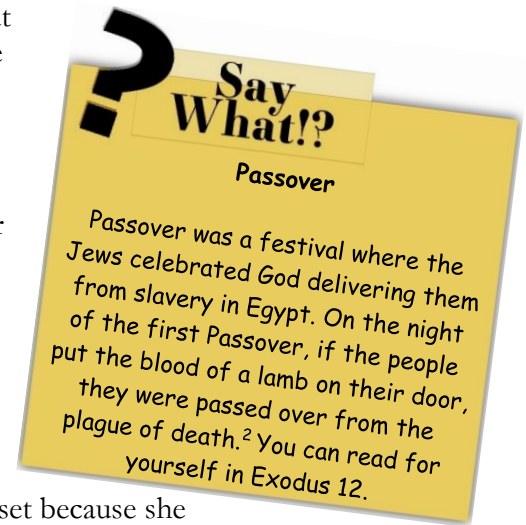
done for him (verse 6). Knowing that he is going to die the death of a criminal, Jesus also knows that he will not be given a typical burial. This, he says, is preparing his body, and he is thankful to the woman.

Jesus' reference that the poor will always be among them in verse 7 isn't to mean that we shouldn't take care of the poor. In fact, Deuteronomy 15:11 uses similar wording and says that people should be *openhanded* because the poor will always be around. Jesus always shows concern for the poor and destitute. Here, he is simply saying that she is generously showing her love to him and caring for him before he fulfills his mission on earth.<sup>5</sup>

After this beautiful moment, we see one that is most ugly. Whether it is because of the expensive perfume or something that Jesus said, we do not really know. We only know that here is when Judas decides to speak to the chief priests in order to betray Jesus.

### The Last Supper (14:12-26)

When the time of the Passover comes, Jesus' disciples wonder where to prepare the meal for him. In ways similar to what we saw in chapter eleven, Jesus tells the disciples exactly what will take place for them to know where to go. Everything goes just as Jesus explained beforehand and the disciples prepare the Passover meal.



During this meal, which is often called the Last Supper because it is the last time Jesus will eat with his disciples before his crucifixion, two very important things occur. First, Jesus tells his disciples that one of them will betray him. This is heartbreaking. It will not be an outsider or even an enemy of Jesus, but one of the Twelve. One of those closest to him that will betray him to his death. Second, Jesus ushers in a new tradition that believers in Jesus still take part in today: the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper (also called Communion or the Eucharist) takes place during the Last Supper. When Jesus takes the bread, he gives thanks and breaks it. He then deviates from the tradition of the Passover and speaks as he hands it out saying, "Take it. This is my body" (verse, 22). He does the same with the cup of wine and says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (verse 24).

With the bread, Jesus spoke of his presence which was with the disciples and would remain with them in the time to come. With the wine, Jesus was speaking of the covenant of God being fulfilled. God promised to send a Messiah from the line of David and salvation through a King. Jesus knows this salvation comes from his blood alone and he willingly pours it out on behalf of the people.<sup>10</sup>

### Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (14:27-31)

Mark includes here the declaration of Jesus that all will fall away. Jesus quotes from the prophet Zechariah again saying, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered" (Zechariah 13:7). Peter replies, "Never!" He thinks he could never possibly turn away from Jesus, but Jesus tells him that he will. In fact, Peter will disown him three times that very night.

### Gethsemane (14:32-42)

Before Jesus is arrested, we see him pray once more. He and all his disciples but Judas go to Gethsemane. Once there, he takes his three closest disciples with him a bit further, but

distances himself even from them to go and pray alone. There, Jesus prays a beautiful prayer. He prays, "Abba Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (verse 36). Jesus longs for this cup of suffering to pass. He longs for God to take the cup from him because he knows that with God, everything is possible. *Yet*. Yet is the word that holds the beauty of

**Did you know?**

Betrayal is never good, but in this culture, you were never to betray someone you ate with. It would be the highest insult.<sup>8</sup>

We still celebrate the Lord's Supper today. We take it to remember the cross and the sacrifice of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins.<sup>9</sup>

**Did you know?**

Throughout the gospel of Mark, the connection between prayer and the mission of Jesus is obvious. Prayer was of the highest importance to Jesus, and it should be to us as his followers.

**Where in the World?**

**Gethsemane**

At the foot of the Mount of Olives, some believe this was the name of an estate. The word Gethsemane means "oil press," and it is possible the estate had an olive grove and its own olive press.<sup>11</sup> Others argue Gethsemane was in a cave nearby because olives were traditionally pressed in caves but would only be used for storage at this point in the season.<sup>12</sup>

this prayer. Jesus longs for a different road, *yet*, not his will, but the Father's will.

### Scope It Out

I don't know what prayers you've prayed. I've prayed some big prayers in my life for God to change situations or save me from circumstances. I've prayed for God to move in huge ways because something in life just feels too hard. I've prayed because I know that *everything* is possible with God. As I've grown though, I've learned how important the *yet* part of this prayer is. At the end of the day, God's will is more important than mine. God's will is what I want for my life, not my own will. During the hardest and scariest times in my life, I want to pray like Jesus and say, "yet not my will, but what you will." If you don't feel like you know how to pray, this is a wonderful prayer to model.

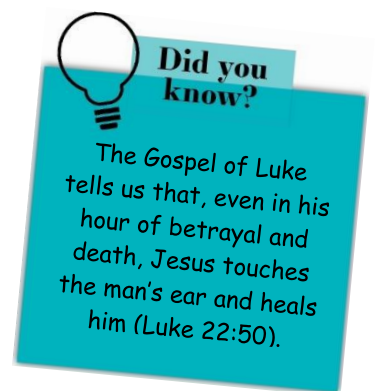
### (14:37-42)

After Jesus pours out his heart to the Father, he returns to find his disciples sleeping. Notice though, that Jesus doesn't ask them to pray for him. He asks them to pray that they might not fall into temptation. Jesus knows that a time of darkness is coming. He knows that he is about to endure the wrath and judgment of God. He also knows that the disciples will be tempted to flee in this time of darkness. He has already warned they will all desert him, and that Peter will disown him three times. Jesus, even in his time of deep need, is instructing his disciples in how to prepare for difficult, dark times.<sup>13</sup> He is teaching them that prayer is their greatest weapon and their greatest preparation against the darkness. When we are deep in dark times, Jesus calls us to pray so that we might not give into temptation. He calls us to pray so that we can be prepared to face whatever forces of evil may come against us. As Jesus prayed to prepare himself for his coming suffering, trials, and death, so we should pray to prepare for anything we might face.

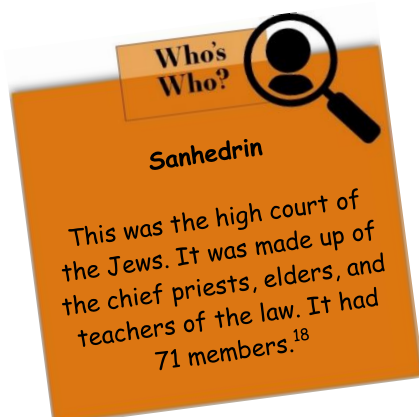
### Jesus Arrested (14:43-52)

While Jesus is waking his disciples for the third time, he says that his hour has come. The crowd approaches him, armed with swords and clubs indicating that they were probably from the temple itself, as servants of the high priest were often armed with clubs.<sup>14</sup> Then Judas comes forth. He kisses Jesus, which was a sign of respect and affection for a rabbi, but here it is a sign of deepest betrayal.<sup>15</sup> A disciple, unnamed by Mark, but named as Peter in the Gospel of John, pulls a sword and cuts off the ear of a man.

The other gospels give greater detail of the interactions between Jesus and the disciples and the mob. Mark, however, remains vague aside from a question of Jesus. Jesus questions the crowd wondering why they have come in such force to arrest him. He reminds them that he has taught them each day in the temple courts, and they have not arrested him but here, in the night, they come with force.<sup>16</sup> Jesus then proclaims the Scriptures must be fulfilled, at this point handing himself over to the authorities and his disciples flee.



Mark, though offering few details in much of the story of the arrest, gives surprising detail of the man who flees naked from the authorities. Some have suggested that this man was Mark himself who was known to have lived in Jerusalem at this time, and church tradition suggests that it was at Mark's house where Jesus ate the Passover. Others have suggested this was John who fled.<sup>17</sup> Whoever it was, Mark does not name the man. What is made clear is that all deserted Jesus, even at the sake of their dignity, just as Zechariah declared.



### Jesus Before the Sanhedrin (14:53-65)

Jesus is brought by the mob that arrested him into the courtyard of the high priest and the Sanhedrin is called. We see here that Peter follows at a distance. The mention of Peter here likely shows that the next section about Peter is occurring at the same time as this trial.<sup>19</sup>

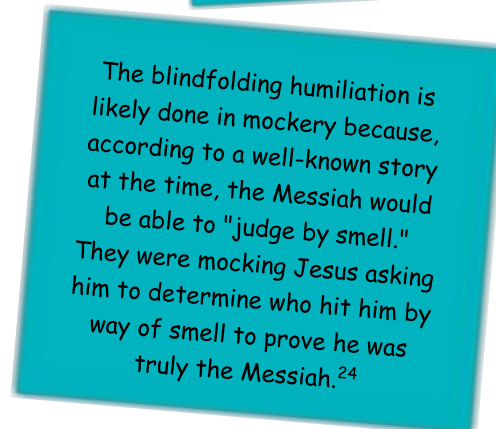
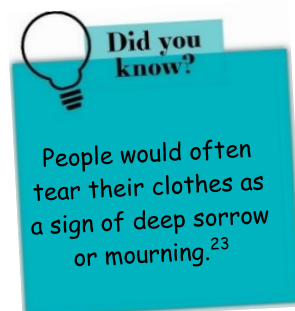
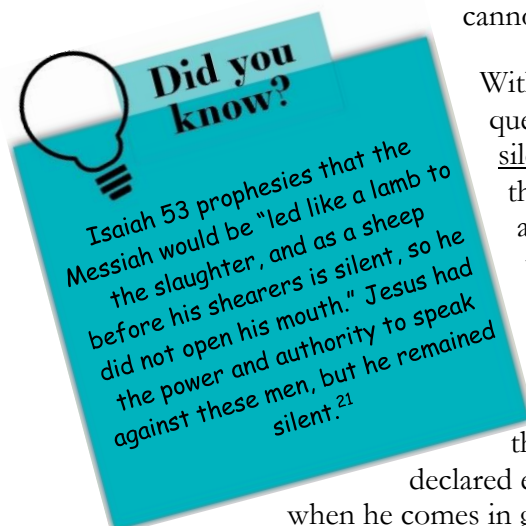
At the trial, the court has come up with many witnesses to testify against Jesus. The witnesses, however, can't agree on what they're accusing Jesus of. In Jewish law, two witnesses needed to agree for someone to be convicted as guilty.<sup>20</sup> Because they cannot do this, no guilty verdict can be made.

With the trial at a standstill, the High Priest decides to question Jesus. Up until this point, Jesus has remained silent. When the High Priest asks a yes or no question that demands an answer, by their law, Jesus must answer the question.<sup>22</sup> The moment of truth comes in verse 61 when the High Priest asks Jesus, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Here, Jesus makes his bold proclamation. "I am", says Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (verse 62). There it is. Jesus has declared exactly who he is—God—and exactly what will occur when he comes in glory. Because of his answer, the High Priest tears his clothes. He states that Jesus is guilty of blasphemy for claiming to be God, and they condemn him as worthy of death.

At that point, the Sanhedrin blindfolds and strikes Jesus telling him to prophesy. Jesus refuses to play their game and they take him and beat him.

### Peter Disowns Jesus (14:66-72)

As you read earlier, the trial by the Sanhedrin was occurring at the same time as this next section. Peter followed Jesus from a distance,





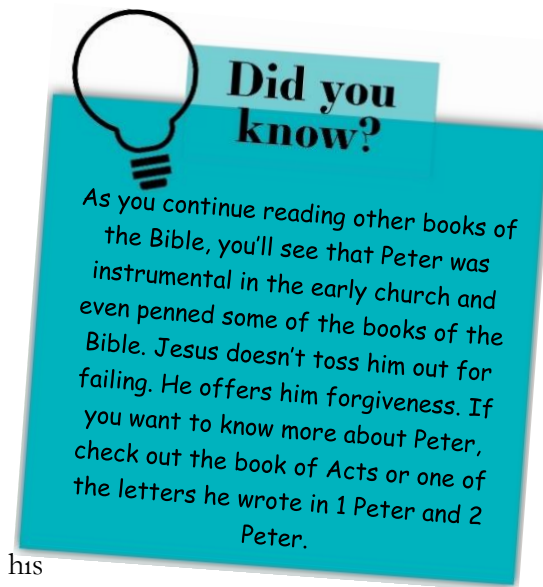
and now we see what he was doing while Jesus was being tried. A servant girl first notices Peter and states that he was with Jesus. Peter, however, lies and says he doesn't know what she is talking about. Then Peter moves away from there, probably to get away from the girl who recognizes him. He doesn't get far before she sees him again and says that Peter is one of them. Peter denies a second time.

Finally, a third accusation occurs because the people standing with Peter realize he is Galilean. Galileans were known by their accents. In the same way you can tell someone is from Boston, Massachusetts or New York or the southern states by their accents, Galileans were known for the way they spoke.<sup>25</sup> At this point, Peter denies Jesus with intensity. He calls down curses and swears that he does not know the man they are talking about. He denies Jesus so strongly, he doesn't even use his name but only calls him "this man."

The rooster crows. Suddenly, Peter remembers how, just hours before, Jesus said he would disown him three times. He remembers how he declared he would never leave Jesus, even if he had to die. He remembers and he breaks down and weeps.

What a heartbreaking betrayal for Jesus, what a gigantic failure for Peter. Maybe you're reading this and wondering if any good can come from all this. It all seems hard and scary and dark. All seems lost. For Jesus. For Peter. But take heart, young learners, this isn't the end. It isn't the end for Jesus or even for Peter. Maybe you've figured out already that Jesus is going to conquer death. But I want you to know that he doesn't disregard Peter for his failings. Mark doesn't record the account, but if you want to know what happens with Peter and Jesus after Jesus comes back to life, read John 21:15-20. Even though Peter fails, Jesus calls him back. He calls him again. Jesus is not done with Peter for a mistake. He is just getting started.

The stakes are pretty high at this point in Mark. Jesus has just been condemned to death in his trial before the Sanhedrin. His disciples have deserted him and left him alone. He is being beaten and mocked while he remains silent. He is on his way to the cross to fulfill his mission as the Messiah. And we'll see it all play out in the final two chapters of Mark.





## The Death of Jesus

In chapter fourteen, we saw Jesus have his last meal with his disciples. He prayed while they slept and then they were met by a mob. He was betrayed with a kiss by Judas, one of his twelve disciples, and handed over to be tried by the Sanhedrin. During the trial, Jesus was convicted of blasphemy and condemned to die. Chapter fifteen picks up the story right where chapter fourteen left off.

### Jesus Before Pilate (15:1-15)

#### Did you know?

Jesus was taken to trial at night by the Jews because the Romans conducted business at the first light of day. This means if the Jews wanted a verdict that day, they would need to bring Jesus to Pilate first thing in the morning.<sup>1</sup>

After the Sanhedrin pronounces that Jesus is worthy of death, they quickly bring him to Pontius Pilate. Though the leaders have condemned Jesus to death, they are not allowed to carry out a death penalty, only the Romans can.<sup>3</sup> It is because of this, they lead him to Pilate, who is the Roman ruler in Jerusalem. The Jewish leaders, however, have a problem: Roman officials did not care if the religious laws of the Jews were broken. The Romans believed in many gods, so Jesus being accused of blasphemy

wouldn't have bothered Pilate. Because of this, the Jewish leaders realize offer Pilate a different reason for condemning Jesus to death: they tell him that Jesus claims to be King.<sup>4</sup>

If Jesus truly had come to be an earthly king at this time, the Romans would certainly have reason imprison or kill him based on their laws. Rome didn't want anyone to challenge their kingdom. This accusation, then, is worthy of Pilate's attention and so he asks Jesus if he is, in fact, King of the Jews. Jesus gives a simple answer. The chief priests continue to accuse Jesus and Pilate asks him again, amazed at his silence.

Likely realizing that Jesus doesn't seem like a king bent on overthrowing the Roman government, he asks the crowd if they would like to have Jesus released. Pilate presents the people with two choices: should he release a murderer or Jesus? The religious leaders see their chance and stir up the crowd against Jesus. They call for Barabbas to be released. Pilate asks the crowd what they would have him do with Jesus and the crowds shout, "Crucify!" Again, Pilate wonders what Jesus has done to deserve death, but the crowds shout all the more for his demise. Finally, Pilate gives in and hands Jesus over to be flogged, condemning him to death by crucifixion.

#### Who's Who?

##### Pontius Pilate

The Roman prefect at the time, Pilate had the power to govern Judea. He came to Judea in AD 26, was a part of the Equestrian class, and was known as a harsh ruler.<sup>2</sup>

#### Say What!?

##### Crucify

Crucifixion was a death sentence and the cruelest form of torture used by the Romans. It was carried out by stretching the convicted person's arms and tying or nailing them to a beam. Then their feet would be nailed to the bottom. The beam would be lifted up, and the person would hang on the cross until he died. Often people who were crucified would either die by exhaustion or the inability to breathe.<sup>5</sup>



### **Praetorium**

The governor's official residence in Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

## **The Soldiers Mock Jesus (15:16-20)**

After Pilate hands Jesus over to the soldiers to be flogged and crucified, the soldiers mock and insult Jesus. They take him to the Praetorium and, because he is sentenced to death as the “King of the Jews,” the soldiers place a purple robe on him along with a crown made of thorns. The robe would have represented the purple worn by kings, and the crown of thorns would have been made as a makeshift crown like one worn by emperors. Then they

call, “Hail, king of the Jews!” Typically, when in the presence of an emperor, soldiers were required to hail him as emperor and bow before him. Everything that the soldiers are doing is representative of the crowning of a new emperor or king and it is all done in mockery.<sup>7</sup>

## **The Crucifixion of Jesus (15:21-32)**

After being beaten, flogged, and mocked, Jesus is led through the streets and out of the city limits. He is forced to carry his own cross, as is the custom for those condemned to death.<sup>8</sup>

However, Jesus is so weakened by the beatings and the blood loss that he cannot carry his cross and Simon of Cyrene is asked to carry it for him. Once Jesus makes it to Golgotha, he is offered wine mixed with myrrh (a drink offered to relieve suffering) which he does not take.<sup>12</sup> There Jesus is crucified between two rebels. The sign he wears on his neck on his way to Golgotha is then nailed above his head and reads: “The King of the Jews.”

On the cross, Jesus is mocked by those on the crosses next to him and by those who pass by. He is ridiculed and cursed.

Jesus, the Holy One of God, the Messiah who came to save, the Son of David, is lifted up and left to die the death of a criminal. Mocked by those he made and ridiculed by those he is offering to save. Here Jesus, God’s only Son, shows that he loves the world so much that he is willing to take on suffering, sin, and death to save all who will call on him.

## **The Death of Jesus (15:33-41)**

As Jesus hangs on the cross, darkness covers the land. During this time, darkness was often seen as a judgment of God by some. Others assumed darkness meant the death of a king.<sup>13</sup> Both are occurring here. The King of kings is dying and taking on God’s judgment of the world. At the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon, Jesus calls out to his Father and asks in verse 34, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus is forsaken by God in this moment to cover the sins of the world.<sup>14</sup>

### **Who's Who?**



#### **Simon of Cyrene**

Simon was likely a Jewish man who lived in Cyrene. Cyrene was a chief city in Libya in northern Africa.<sup>9</sup> Mark mentions the names of his sons: Alexander and Rufus as though the original audience may have known them. Interestingly, there is also a man named Rufus mentioned in the book of Romans. Perhaps they are the same person.<sup>10</sup>

### **Where in the World?**



#### **Golgotha**

This means “Place of the Skull,” and would have been outside of the city. It could have been a hill in the shape of a skull or named that because of the crucifixions that took place there.<sup>11</sup>

### **Did you know?**

When Jesus says, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” He is quoting the beginning of Psalm 22. Read this psalm for yourself and see how much it relates to what is happening in Mark 15. This psalm was written by King David about 1,000 years before Jesus.

## Scope It Out

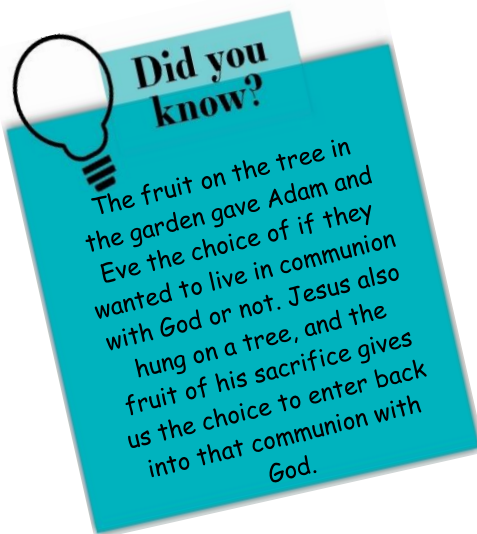
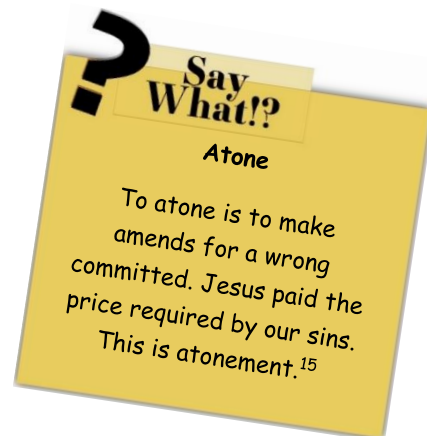
Here I think it's important that we take a break away from the story to explain a bit about **why** Jesus needed to die on the cross to save us from our sins.

In the beginning, God made the world perfect. There was no sin, no sadness, no brokenness. He made it all and called it good (Genesis 1). Unfortunately, that didn't last. The man and the woman God made (Adam and Eve) walked with God and lived in communion with him in the Garden of Eden. God gave them all the trees to eat from in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God warned them if they ate of it, they would surely die (Genesis 2:17). Maybe you're wondering why God gave them a choice. That is a big question, and this is a very short answer to it: God offered the people the freedom to choose. By giving them one tree they couldn't eat from, God was allowing them a chance to choose whether they wanted to obey him and be in right relationship with him or not. God does not force himself on people, he allows us the choice to follow him.

Along came Satan who tempted Eve, who then ate from the tree and convinced Adam to eat as well. From that point on, sin was in the world. If you remember, sin is missing the mark. It's when we do what we aren't supposed to do or don't do something we are supposed to do. The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23 that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." The Bible also says that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). You see, sin has a cost, and the cost is death. In the Old Testament, God made a way for people to atone for their sins. He required the death of a lamb that was without spot or blemish. The lamb needed to be perfect. That perfect lamb took the place of the person by dying for their sins. In his great grace, God provided a way for the people to return to him.

The issue with animal sacrifice is that it didn't last. The people had to sacrifice a lamb for their sins year after year. Until Jesus. Jesus, like the lamb required for sacrifice, was perfect. He never sinned. He never sinned yet submitted to dying on the cross.

When he did this, he offered his own death in the place of ours. Because the cost of sin is death, death was required to make us right with God. Jesus took on this death so that we don't have to. He paid the price of sin for us. When we accept this gift, Jesus' death takes our place, and we no longer are required to die and be separated from God by our sins. We still die a natural death, but then we live forever with Jesus. The gift of Jesus' sacrifice is offered to all, but it is up to us to accept it. We'll talk more about that soon. It is a choice, just like Adam and Eve were given in the beginning. They were given a choice to break their communion with God, we are given a choice to reenter it by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus. We are given the choice to accept his sacrifice for us and follow him. That is the story and victory offered to us by the cross.



### (15:35-41)

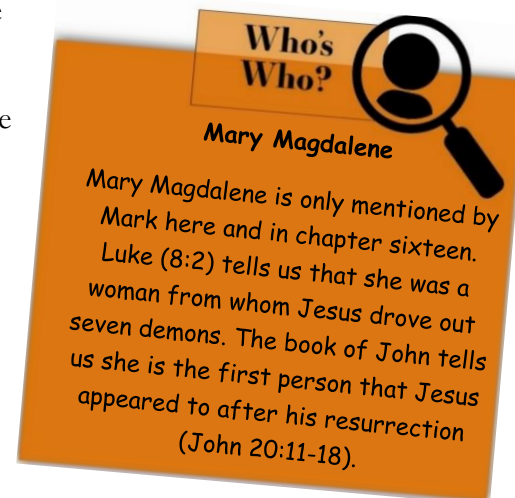
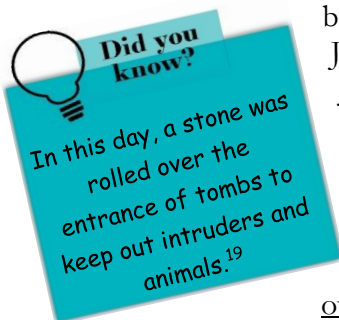
Now back to our story in Mark. Jesus is on the cross and people misunderstand his words asking why God has forsaken him and assume he is calling Elijah. Soon after, Jesus gives a final cry and breathes his last. At this moment, the curtain of the temple is torn in two and a soldier proclaims that surely Jesus was the son of God. There were two curtains: one separated the people from the Holy of Holies within the temple. The Holy of Holies was a place where only the High Priest could go, and even he could only go once a year. If this is the curtain that tore (which most people believe), God was showing in this moment that all now have access to him by the sacrifice of Jesus. The fact that a Gentile proclaims Jesus the son of God at this time could show that God was also opening his kingdom to Gentiles.<sup>16</sup> If the curtain being mentioned in Mark was the outer curtain that separated the sanctuary of the temple from the outer porch, it could be symbolic of the destruction of the temple predicted by Jesus in chapter thirteen.<sup>17</sup>

Women look on from afar as Jesus dies, weeping and mourning. You see, they still do not understand. They are likely still wondering why the one they believed to be the Messiah was dying the death of a criminal. It is not until three days later that they will understand what the sacrifice of Jesus means.

### The Burial of Jesus (15:42-47)

After the death of Jesus, a man named Joseph asks Pilate for his body. This is a bold question for a few reasons. First, only family members typically asked for the body of one that died a criminal's death. Second, by asking for the body of Jesus, it could make Joseph look like a follower when he is clearly mentioned as a member of the Council, probably the Sanhedrin itself.<sup>18</sup> For a member of the Council to be a follower would be a big problem for the Sanhedrin and could endanger Joseph if he was aligning himself with Jesus. Remember how Jesus' disciples fled? They didn't want to be brought to trial for being a part of Jesus' following.

Whether Joseph asks for Jesus' body because he has become a follower or because he simply wanted to have Jesus buried before the Sabbath in accordance with Jewish law, Mark doesn't say. The Gospel of John, however, tells us that Joseph asks for his body because he has, in fact, become a secret follower of Jesus (John 19:38). Joseph is granted his request by Pilate, and he assembles what is necessary according to the customs. He places Jesus in a tomb and rolls a stone over it, while the women Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph watch and see where Jesus is laid.







## The Resurrection

In chapter fifteen, we left off at the death of Jesus. I don't know about you, but I always finish chapter fifteen sad. I feel so heartbroken. I feel the weight of what my sin cost and what Jesus did to set me free. The weight sometimes seems so unbearable that I rush right onto the next chapter, knowing of the hope that is to come. Maybe you don't know that hope yet, and if not, just wait! If you do know the hope of what is coming in chapter sixteen, I want you to remember that, even though we can read chapters fifteen and sixteen in one sitting, the disciples and followers of Jesus weren't reading this. They were living it.

After Jesus dies, they sit in darkness and hopelessness for *three days*. Everything they hoped for in the Messiah had come to nothing, they may have thought. All of their dreams, all of the work they did, all of the miracles they saw. What would you do with that? What would you do if you were them and felt like the last three years of your time with Jesus was pointless because now, he is gone? This is where we find the disciples. They are beside themselves with grief and devastated at losing not only their friend, but the one they hoped would save them.

### Jesus Has Risen (16:1-8)

Chapter sixteen begins with women who followed Jesus closely. Mary Magdalene, who had seen the tomb where Jesus' body was laid, is there. The women plan to anoint Jesus' body with spices. Potentially, this was very unusual during the culture. Typically, bodies were anointed with aromatic oils. Only the bodies of kings were given spices in Jewish customs.<sup>1</sup> Whether they go to do this because they still believe he had been a King or because they simply want to honor him in his death, we don't know. We do know that they wonder how to roll the heavy stone away.

The tombs in this time were cut into rock with a two-foot opening. A stone was placed over the entrance to the tomb, and it was often rolled on a track into a dug-out space in the ground. Rolling it across the entrance wasn't as difficult, but it was extremely difficult to roll back up and out of the track to open the tomb.<sup>2</sup>

When the women get there, however, they find the stone has already been rolled away (verse 4). They enter and see a man dressed in white and sitting. Needless to say, they are terrified. This is an angel. Often, when we read the Bible, we see angelic and heavenly beings described as being clothed in white or having bright clothes to display their dazzling glory.<sup>4</sup> This angel is sitting there and says to the women: "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him" (verse 6).

Whoa. Put yourselves in the women's shoes. They are shattered and broken having lost Jesus three days ago. They come mourning, to care for him out of deepest devotion, only to find the stone of the tomb rolled away and an angel talking



### Did you know?

The testimony of a woman was not accepted by Jewish law. This means, that even if a woman saw a crime, her witness would not count. How beautiful that an angel appeared first to these women, when the culture didn't consider their testimony worthwhile.<sup>3</sup>

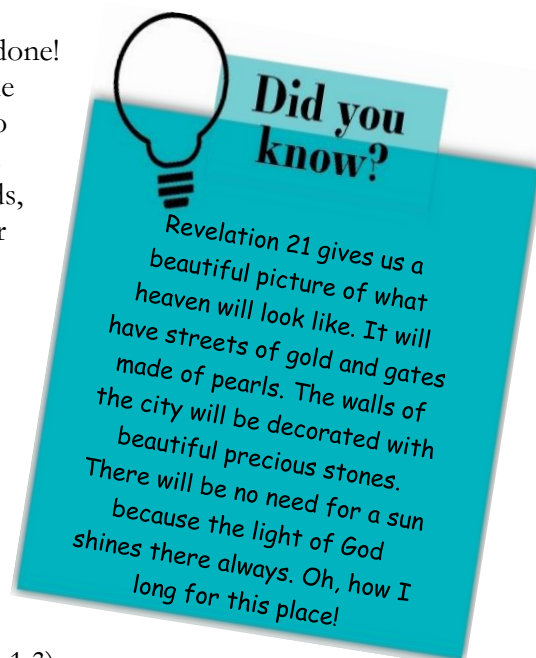
to them. They are shocked. Terrified. Then the angel says the most extraordinary words the world has ever heard. These words have been preached to the ends of the earth since that day: Jesus, the one who was crucified has risen. He is alive!

The angel then tells the women to go and tell the others. He tells them that Jesus is going ahead of them into Galilee, just like he promised in chapter fourteen. They run on their way, unable to even talk for fear. Maybe you wonder why they're afraid. That's a good thing to wonder about. In the same way that Peter was terrified when he saw Jesus during the transfiguration, these women are likely terrified because, for the first time, they recognize the true and awesome power of God they were just told of by the angel.<sup>5</sup> The power of God that can defeat even death and completely change the course of human history. It is with that shock, with that awe and astonishment, that the Gospel of Mark comes to an end.

The final part of chapter sixteen may have a strange note in your Bible about how the first manuscripts do not record verses 9-20. We have found many scrolls containing the books of the Bible, all almost exactly like our Bible today, but the oldest scrolls end at verse 8 for the book of Mark. Some say Mark never finished his work, though that seems unlikely. Others believe that the people in the early church didn't like Mark's abrupt ending and wanted to give more of the story when Mark leaves off.<sup>6</sup> Because it was not recorded by Mark in the earliest form, we won't go into it here, but please finish the rest of the story. And if you would like to read more about what happened after the resurrection of Jesus, you can see stories in the other three gospels: Matthew (Chapter 28), Luke (Chapter 24), and John (Chapters 20-21).

## Scope It Out

The story of Mark has finished. Congratulations! What a job well done! There is, however, one more thing I would like to spend some time on, because it is of the highest importance. To do that, we must go back to the words the angel spoke: "You are looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen!" (verse 6). Those words, **those words**, are the good news of Jesus. He was crucified for our sins like we talked about in the last chapter. He died, paying the price of sin so that we might have communion once more with God. He died for us, but that isn't the end of the story. He died, but then he rose. He rose from the dead, proving that death has no power over him. He submitted to death on a cross, but he was raised to life, the first to taste eternal resurrection. In a letter to the Colossian church, a man named Paul calls Jesus the firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18). This means that Jesus was eternally resurrected first. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we have hope that someday, we as his followers also will rise from the dead. We will die on this earth, but then we will enter new life. Everlasting life. That is the hope, the living hope, of Jesus (1 Peter 1:3).



There is, however, something essential we must discuss about the resurrection of the dead. Remember how, in chapter fifteen, I said that Jesus doesn't force people to follow him? He gives them a choice. He gives each of us a choice. He paid the price for every person in the world, but not everyone in the world accepts him. Remember how the chief priests and teachers of the law hardened their hearts against Jesus again and again throughout the book of Mark? Remember how some people came and fell at Jesus' feet and others stood at the foot of the cross and hurled insults at him? We all have a choice. We can choose to accept the sacrifice of Jesus. We can choose to acknowledge that we cannot pay the price for our sins, only he can. After realizing that, we can choose to follow him and learn from him. We can offer him what we have, even if it feels like the two small coins of the widow. Or we can choose not to. We can harden our hearts and refuse to accept the sacrifice of Jesus and refuse to follow him.

The choice is ours, but either choice affects us eternally. If we accept Jesus as our Savior and by faith rely on him to take the curse of our sins, we get to join Jesus in his resurrection from the dead. If we harden our hearts, we will still be resurrected but not to an eternal life of joy with Jesus.

Those who refuse to accept Jesus will be resurrected to an eternal death of despair and torment. They will be forever separated from Jesus. The choice is ours and we can make it whenever we're ready. If you feel a stirring inside of you and a deep desire to make the choice to follow Jesus, you can do it now. The Bible doesn't give a prayer or tell a special, specific way to do this, though prayer is always a good place to start. We're simply called to confess our sins and realize we need Jesus to pay the price for us, then we follow

him like the disciples did when he called them way back in chapter three of Mark. That's it. Because, once we confess our sins, John tells us in 1 John 1:9 that "Jesus is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." When we confess our sins and seek the forgiveness offered by Jesus on the cross, our sins are gone! They are wiped away and we are made clean! From there, we submit to his lordship over our lives. This means we follow him, learn to obey his commands, and offer him our two coins just like the widow did. We give him ourselves. The gift is available, and the choice is yours. It's up to you to make the decision.

If you made this decision, make sure to talk about it to a parent, pastor, or someone you know that loves Jesus. They can teach you and help you to follow in his footsteps. They cannot make the choice for you, nor can anyone force you to do this. It is your decision alone. If you make this decision, however, it will help you to have others further along in their walk with Jesus to teach you and guide you.

Before Jesus went up to heaven, the Gospel of Matthew tells us that he instructed his disciples to go and make more disciples, teaching them to obey everything he

## ? Say What!?

### Confess

To admit a fault, crime, misdeed, or weakness. Also, to declare or acknowledge one's sins to God.<sup>7</sup> We confess our sins when we tell God what we've done wrong.

## ? Say What!?

### Forgive

To grant relief from a payment; to pardon.<sup>8</sup> When Jesus died on the cross, our debt was paid. We need only confess our sins and seek his forgiveness. Once we do, our sin is removed as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12).

commanded. If you made a decision to follow Jesus, those instructions are for you, too. You need to continue on in being discipled, learning from the Bible and Christian mentors. You also can begin to tell others, guiding them to be disciples of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

That is it, young learners. That is the Gospel of Mark, the good news of Jesus. I'm so very proud of you in your efforts to read, listen, and grow. I don't know about you, but it doesn't matter how many times I've read it, I still learn something new. I still am amazed by his miracles. I still cry at the crucifixion. I still rejoice, absolutely giddy, at Jesus' resurrection. I'm so thankful for this chance to share some of what I've learned with you, and I hope you learned something, too! Now, I want you to put what you've learned into practice. The book of James in the Bible tells us not just to listen to the Word but do what it says (1:22). This means we can't just know all this about Jesus and not do anything with it. The hope that is offered by the resurrection of Jesus dwells in us when we accept his saving grace. Then, by the power of his Holy Spirit at work within us, we all get to participate in that same joy the disciples had by following Jesus. It won't always be easy, but it will be so worthwhile in the end. Well done, friends, well done.

It is my prayer that your reading of the Bible won't stop with Mark. There is so much more to learn in the pages of this ancient book that is still of the greatest value today. So keep reading. Keep asking questions. Keep learning. Keep growing. Keep diving in. Lord willing, in a few years look back from now and see how far God has brought you.

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## Reference Notes by Chapter

### A Call

1. Radmacher, 1201-1202

#### Many Come, Many See

1. Radmacher, 1203-1205
2. Random House, 1633
3. Lane, 291
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3. Radmacher, 1211
4. Lane, 142-142
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#### The Kingdom

1. Define: *gospel*, Random House, 825
2. Lane, 149
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4. NIV, 1496
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6. Random House, 1550
7. Lane, 159
8. Radmacher, 1214
9. Lane, 168
10. Radmacher, 1214
11. Radmacher, 1214

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1. Arnold, 34
2. Arnold, 33
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5. Lane, 185
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7. Lane, 186
8. Lane, 187
9. Lane, 190
10. Burge, 44
11. Burge, 43
12. Lane, 196
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2. Lane, 202
3. Lane, 203
4. Arnold, 37
5. Lane, 206
6. Lane, 218
7. Lane, 226
8. Arnold, 41
9. Lane, 237-238

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1. Lane, 246
2. Radmacher, 1221
3. Arnold, 46-47
4. Arnold, 48
5. Define: *gentile* Random House, 797
6. Lane, 259
7. Lane, 262
8. Lane, 263
9. Lane, 266
10. Arnold, 50
11. Arnold, 50

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2. Arnold, 51
3. Lane, 277
4. Arnold, 51
5. Arnold, 52
6. Lane, 285
7. Lane, 287
8. Arnold, 52-53
9. Arnold, 53
10. Lane, 291
11. Arnold, 54
12. Lane, 291-292
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14. Arnold, 55

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2. Arnold, 55
3. Lane, 317
4. Define: *transfigured*, Random House, 2010
5. Lane, 318
6. Arnold, 55
7. Arnold, 56
8. Lane, 319

9. Radmacher, 1223
10. Radmacher, 1223
11. Radmacher, 1224
12. Radmacher, 1224
13. Arnold, 59
14. Arnold, 59
15. Define: *sin*, Random House, 1784

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3. Lane, 360
4. Radmacher, 1226
5. Lane, 374
6. Random House, 1444
7. Radmacher, 1228
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9. Lane, 388
10. Radmacher, 1228
11. Radmacher, 1228
12. Arnold, 65

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2. Arnold, 65
3. Lane, 395
4. Arnold, 65
5. NIV, 1398-1399
6. Lane, 397
7. Lane, 397
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9. Arnold, 68-69
10. Arnold, 68
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1. Random House, 1955
2. Arnold, 71-72
3. Garland, 454
4. Arnold, 72
5. Define: *Zealot*, Random House, 1652
6. Lane, 423
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8. Arnold, 73
9. Define: *resurrection*, Random House, 1642
10. Arnold, 73
11. Lane, 429-430
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13. Garland, 476
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15. Garland, 479
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17. Arnold, 75
18. Department of Labor
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5. NIV, 1475
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7. Lane, 448
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9. Arnold, 75
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11. Arnold, 79
12. Arnold, 79
13. Lane, 478

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2. Lane, 505
3. Arnold, 83
4. Lane, 493
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6. Arnold, 82
7. Lane, 497-498
8. Arnold, 84
9. Arnold, 85
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23. Arnold, 90
24. Arnold, 91
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2. Lane, 549
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4. Lane, 547-548
5. Lane, 561, 566
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13. Arnold, 99-100
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15. Define: *atone*, Random House, 132
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2. Lane, 581
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6. Arnold, 106
7. Define: *confess*, Random House, 427
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