

The Last Days of Jesus

Mark 10-13



5pm & 7pm Gatherings
INTEGRATED BIBLE STUDY GUIDE



How to get best value out of these studies...

Welcome to a new series of New Testament studies in the book of **Mark**.

If you're using these Guides in a Small Group, it is vital that you have done preparatory work *before* you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of your group.

If you're doing these studies individually, make sure you let someone know you are doing so and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

If you're after good commentaries or resources to complement your looking into the Bible, speak to your Small Group Leader or one of the staff and we'll be as helpful as possible. Most people aren't going to spend lots of money on theological works, so we're constantly on the look out for quality titles that will result in money well spent.

We trust you'll find the guides helpful and we welcome any feedback you can give us as you use them.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with **prayer**, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Background to Mark ...

What is a Gospel?

A Gospel is a 'good news' story that seeks to 'tell' not only the significant features of the person and work of Jesus, but more importantly to declare the meaning and significance of these events for people. The four 'gospel stories' are designed to be 'evangelistic', that is, to persuade people to put their trust in Jesus and follow Him that they might enter the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel According to Mark

The Gospel of Mark seeks to convince us, the reader, that Jesus is 'the Christ', 'the Son of God' (Mark 1:1 cf 1:11; 9:3; 15:39). Written in Rome about 60-65 AD by 'John Mark' (Acts 12:12), Mark's Gospel tells Peter's eyewitness recollections of Jesus. It is vivid, fast moving and full of action. It can be divided into two parts. The first part, chapters 1-8:26 forces us the reader to ask **'Who is Jesus?'** The second part, chapters 8:27-16:9 asks two questions, **'What does it mean for Jesus to be 'the Christ?'** and so **'What does it mean to follow Jesus?'**

The BIG IDEA of these studies

What does 'following Jesus' involve? How do you do it?

The KEY question the Bible keeps asking is, *WHO is the Jesus you are following?* To get our 'following' right we need to get Jesus right.

3. In the Bible we meet a God who is in sovereign control of all things and determines what will happen (Isaiah 46:8-13) so he can declare what will happen in the future. Three times in Mark's Gospel Jesus teaches about what would happen to him (these are known as *Passion Predictions*).

Mark 8:31-33	Mark 9:30-32	Mark 10:32-34
<p>³¹He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.</p> <p>³²He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.</p> <p>³³But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."</p>	<p>³⁰They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." ³²But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.</p>	<p>³²They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.</p> <p>³³"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."</p>

- a) What are the parallels to the 'Suffering Servant portrait' in Isaiah 53? (note how Isaiah 52:13 and 53:10-12 is prophesying the Servant being raised up, "exalted", from death).

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4. How do the following passages help us understand what 'attitudes' people must have to become a follower of Jesus and enter into the kingdom of God?

	What attitude or response does Jesus commend?	What attitude or response does Jesus condemn?
To such belong the kingdom of God (10:13-16)		
Riches and the kingdom of God (10:17-31)		
Not so blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52)		

5. About loyalty and where we find our security ...
- The Rich Young Man claimed a whole hearted love of God in saying he had fulfilled *all* the commandments (v20), but Jesus lovingly (v21) exposes a deeper loyalty. Why do you think wealth or money makes it so hard for people to enter into the Kingdom of God? (vv23-25) (*Hint: 10:14-15*).
 - Comparing the Rich Young Man (vv17-25) and Peter (vv28-31), what is the *Profit* and *Loss* for each of them? (Note how vv17-31 are a real example of Jesus' words in Mark 8:34-36?)

	Profit	Loss
The Rich Young Man (vv 17-25)		
Peter (vv 28-31)		

- c. Jesus' words to Peter are a great encouragement. How have you experienced the truth of Jesus' words?

Something to ponder ...

Writing to his friend Lucilius sometime between AD 63–65, the Roman Stoic Philosopher Seneca said, **'Most men ebb and flow in wretchedness between the fear of death and the hardships of life'....** The fear of death is the most basic of all fears. It introduces a profound anxiety into human existence. This existential anxiety provokes us to undertake a quest for security. Lucretius echoes what we find in the scriptures, that human beings seek after greatness, status, importance, possessions, friendship, pleasure — all in the vain attempt to bring some security to an existence that is constantly undermined by the grave. The wealthy manage to find some security in this world, even if their wealth will ultimately fail to ransom them from the grave (Ps. 49). The powerless have none. In Mark, the fact that it is the powerless who put their faith in Christ whereas the rich man goes away disappointed illustrates how difficult it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God (10.17–27) ... We seek some trustworthy foundation for life. Despite the many attempts to find this in the structures of this world, the only real and proper place to stand is by faith in Christ. As (one commentator) puts it, **'Only the crucified Christ can bring the freedom which changes the world because it is no longer afraid of death.'**

Peter Bolt, "The Cross At A Distance. God Up Close. Mark's message of Atonement., pp28-29

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6. So far, we have seen that for Jesus, the *way to greatness or 'glory' is through suffering and death*. How do the following passages help us understand how followers of Jesus are to relate to one another as God's people?

	What attitude or response does Jesus commend?	What attitude or response does Jesus condemn?
Who is the greatest? (9:33-37)		
How to be great (10:35-45)		
Stumbling blocks (9:38-42)		
Peace with one another (9:43-50)		
Marriage and divorce (10:1-12)		

7. ***Ponder and pray*** over each of the above passages for your our own life and relationships with people - what's easy, what's more challenging?

2 Following Jesus, God the Messiah, Son

Mark 11: 1-26

BACKGROUND: Mark 11-13 is an account of the last three days of Jesus' ministry before he goes to the cross. Each day there is a journey into Jerusalem from Bethany and out again at evening (albeit incomplete on the third day as Jesus is arrested). The arrival of Jesus' last days means the arrival of the 'last days' for Israel to repent (cf Mark 1:14-15). The Old Testament prophets sometimes acted out their predictions to show what would happen (eg see Jeremiah 19) Mark 11:1-26 has three acts of 'prophetic symbolism'.

1. Read Mark 1-11 and Zechariah 9:9-10. By his actions, what is Jesus claiming about himself?
2. By spreading their garments on the road and shouting out verses 25-26 from Psalm 118, who were the people saying Jesus was? (see 1Kings 1:38-40; 2Kings 9:13; Psalm 118)
3. While the crowd's enthusiastic confession had every appearance of being true, given that they quickly lose interest and then come to be part of the mob who ask for Jesus' death (Acts 2:22-23), what does this suggest about how real their understanding and faith was? (cf John 12:16).

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4. ***Ponder And Pray:*** What might saying the right words and not meaning them as compared with a 'true confession' (ie. real understanding and faith) look like for Jesus' followers today at your church?

True Confession	Empty Confession

5. What is the nature and purpose God intended for His temple in the new age when he would gather the people from all nations to worship Him? (see Zechariah 14:21)
6. When Jesus arrived at the temple what did He find? Why was He so angry? (see Isaiah 56: 1-8, Jesus quotes verse 7 and Jeremiah 7:1-11, Jesus quotes verse 11; Ezekiel 34:1-10).
7. Read Malachi 3:1-5 & Ezekiel 34:11-16. In these 'last days', who is it that has come to His temple on Mount Zion in Mark 11:15-18? What has he come to do?

4. Read Isaiah 5:1-10; 3:13-15 and Mark 12:1-11. If the tenants are Israel and it's religious leaders, who are the owner, servants and son (cf Mark 1:11; 9:7)? How does this help us understand what will happen to Jesus? (Remember Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34).

5. ***Ponder and Pray:*** Why is it so important for a person to understand Jesus' authority for their life? Are there any areas in your life you need to properly submit to Jesus' authority?

BACKGROUND: To a Jew in Jesus' day a descendent was always inferior to an ancestor. A son might call his father or grandfather "lord" but never vice versa.

6. Having silenced his opponents, Jesus now starts asking them questions about their understanding of the Messiah by quoting from Psalm 110:1 in Mark 12: 35-37. Why? What is Jesus claiming about himself and what he's come to do? (Psalm 110:5-6 cf Psalm 2:6-9)

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7. Jesus exposes Israel's limited (wrong) understanding about the Messiah. The Lordship on view in Psalm 110 is that of God himself! It is not enough to think of God's Messiah (Christ) as just another human 'son of David'. He is Lord, God the Son! *Ponder and Pray: If someone has Jesus as 'saviour' but not as 'Lord' what might their 'following' look like?*

8. Wrong knowledge leads to wrong and hypocritical practice. Despite their learning and position of authority as Israel's leaders, according to Jesus why must the crowd 'watch out' for the teachers of the law? (Mark 12:38-40)

9. Read Mark 12:38-44. What were Israel's religious leaders doing under the cover of religion? (eg cf Isaiah 1:10-17, 21-23; 3:14; Micah 7:1-4). How is the widow in Mark 12:41-44 an example of verse 40?

10. ***Ponder and Pray:*** This widow's house is literally devoured as she has to put in everything to pay the religious authorities temple tax. Israel's leadership has plundered Israel.
- a) Can you think of any contemporary examples of things done 'in the name of religion'?

 - b) Why is 'knowledge' and 'position' a potentially dangerous mix?

 - c) How might continually reminding yourself as to WHO Jesus is and what He's done be a prevention against pride, hypocrisy and covetousness?
11. Someone has said that Jesus' death was *'the abolition (end) of religion'*. In what way is Jesus' action in Mark 11:15-19 symbolic of this? (cf Mark 14:45; John 2:19-22) Do you agree or disagree? Why? (*Hint: What is at the heart of any religion? What is 'religion' trying to do? What has God done for us in Jesus? (eg Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-26; 5:8-10))*)

4 Following Jesus, the Son of Man

Mark 13

BACKGROUND: Three 'last' days of crisis

- God's Messiah Son arrives in his city, Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11)
- God's Messiah Son attacks Israel's leaders as corrupt and warns of God's judgment (Mark 11:12-19)
- Israel's leaders attack God's Messiah Son with lots of questions (ie their king). (Mark 11:27-12:44)
- **Jesus warns of much greater distress ahead before God's kingdom comes (Mark 13:1-37)**

1. The splendour of Jerusalem and the temple was meant to inspire confidence and trust in the LORD. (see Psalm 48) Given Jesus' growing distress (about his death) what might this disciple of Jesus been trying to do with his words to Jesus in Mark 13:1?

2. Shocked, four disciples of Jesus ask two questions (v3) and Jesus replies with His long speech to them ('The Apocalyptic Discourse'). Jesus doesn't want His disciples to look for security in bricks and what they represent (the old system of religion). Rather, they are to realise that the hopes of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Him. They are to fix their eyes on Jesus, 'the Son of Man'. *To Ponder and Pray: Where do you see people in our society trying to find security? How might followers of Jesus be tempted to look for security in other people or places besides Jesus?*

BACKGROUND: In Mark 13:5-37, Jesus sits on the Mount of Olives and delivers his longest speech. Many people interpret Jesus' words as referring to his second coming, the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in AD 70 or a combination of the two. However, read within the context of Mark's story and given that Jesus is about to be arrested and killed, there is good reason to believe that Jesus is teaching his disciples (Mark 13:3) about the cosmic significance of his imminent death, resurrection and ascension.

3. Read Mark 13:3-23. The disciples want to know 'what will be the sign' (v3). What is Jesus' warning to them in verse 5 (see also v22)?

4. Jesus tells them that the suffering of the last days will culminate in a great distress (v19). The signal of the end will be the 'abomination of desolation' (v14) (see Daniel 12:11) Jesus seems to be alerting his disciples to watch out for something that will be a destructive, sacrilegious abomination to God and will be a time of great distress. *Looking for Fulfilment: What is the most destructive sacrilegious abomination to God that follows in Mark's gospel story?*

BACKGROUND: In Daniel chapter 12 we are told that just before the day of resurrection (v2) there will be a time of terrible suffering (v1). At this time we are told that God's people will be delivered (v1). This language from Daniel is echoed by Jesus in Mark 13:19. Jesus says that so great will this suffering and distress be at this time that it will be worse than any suffering that has ever been experienced in history since the creation of the world and will be worse than anything else to follow. (v19). The suggestion is that Jesus' crucifixion is 'the sign of the end'. This is the sign or 'abomination' that Jesus' disciples are to 'keep watch' for.

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5. Jesus Christ, God the Son, tortured and crucified on a Roman Cross is the most sacrilegious abomination to God that has ever or will occur in history. No suffering will ever surpass this. *To Ponder and Pray: Why was such suffering necessary (Mark 10:45)? Read Isaiah 53:3-5 and ponder the reality of the extent of Jesus suffering for you. What should our hearts and prayers always be overflowing with?*

6. Read Mark 13:24-27. Following 'that distress' (v24), what is the sequence of events that will happen 'at that time' according to verses 26-27?

BACKGROUND: DANIEL 7 The 'coming of the Son of Man' is a citation from Daniel 7:13-14 and is the event that is the key to understanding Mark 13. *Read Daniel 7.* In Daniel's original (apocalyptic) vision, the prophet sees a series of beasts intent on bloodshed (vv1-8), which we discover represent human kingdoms (v17, 19-21, 23-25). It is a vision of human history, with 'kingdom rising against kingdom and nation against nation' (see Mark 13:7-8). Next, the prophet sees a vision of the judgment day with the Ancient of Days (God) taking his seat with the courts and the books of judgment opened (Daniel 7:9-10). The beastly human powers are stripped of their dominion (vv11-12) and then:

the Son of Man comes to the Ancient of Days (v13)

|

the Son of Man receives the position of authority in the Kingdom of God (v14)

|

the Son of Man shares the Kingdom with the Saints (vv18, 22, 26-27)

Ponder: The events of Mark's passion story seem structured around the time references mentioned by Jesus in Mark 13:35. The disciples are told to 'keep on guard' (v23) and 'stay awake' (v34,37), lest the Son of Man 'come suddenly' and find them 'asleep' (v36). They fail to 'keep watch' and we discover in horror that with Judas' arrival in the Garden of Gethsemane, 'the hour has come' (Mk 14:41). The terrible 'apocalyptic' moment of suffering arrives. As Jesus predicted earlier 'The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners'. Such is the distress of this hour, all flee leaving Jesus to face this hour alone. Even Peter, despite his desperate desire to remain loyal to Jesus cannot withstand 'this hour' (Mk 14:27-28). Such is it's horror, he denies even knowing Jesus. Nobody can withstand this great time of suffering - except one man. Jesus - God's Messiah, David's Lord, Suffering Servant Son of God, Son of Man - only he can embrace this hour. And graciously, undeservedly he does - for you, for me!

9. ***Ponder and Pray:*** We live in a world that seems to hover between profound anxiety and a concern for world security. We have learned that kingdoms have risen and will continue to rise against kingdoms and nations against nations (Mk 13:8) all the while promising 'more security', yet paradoxically bringing more blood shed. This was Jesus' world. It is our world. In Mark 13:2, a disciple points Jesus attention to the bricks and mortar of the Jerusalem Temple, suggesting they were reason for security.

a) Why is knowing that God's king has come when He was raised and exalted to the right hand of God such great comfort? What has He been given?

b) What have you learned about where a person can find true and lasting security? Rank the following in respect to what you find yourself being tempted to put your security in.

<p>Greatness</p> <p>Status and Reputation</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Insurance</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #cccccc;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #ffffff;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #cccccc;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #ffffff;"></td></tr> </table>					<p>Money</p> <p>Possessions</p> <p>A Relationship</p> <p>Family</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #ffffff;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #cccccc;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #ffffff;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #cccccc;"></td></tr> </table>				

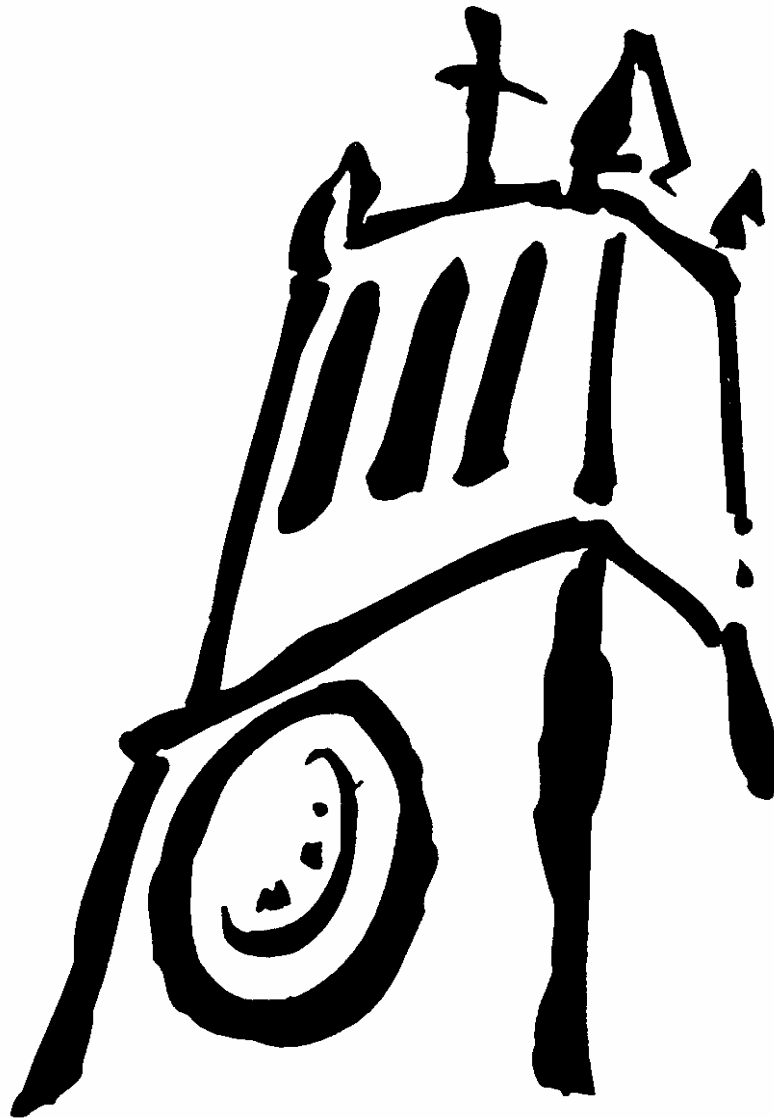
c) What value is there in living as Paul instructs in Colossians 3:1-4. What sorts of things can we be doing to help one another do this?

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10 We have been exploring the idea that the 'shape' of our following - our dreams, attitudes and actions- will be shaped by 'the Jesus' we are following.

a) What challenges to your 'dreams', 'goals' and 'attitudes' does following the Jesus you have met in Mark 8:27- Mark 13 bring for you?

b) What encouragements does following this Jesus bring?



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