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## The Book of Mark

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**T**he Book of Mark tells the story about Jesus' life and His work on earth. From the beginning of the Book of Mark, the reader knows who Jesus is. Jesus is the promised Savior, the Son of God (Mark 1:1). But the people in the story have a hard time understanding who Jesus is and what He came to earth to do. Everyone in the Book of Mark has a hard time understanding, except for the people filled with demons. The demons are afraid of Jesus and His mighty words. The demons know exactly who Jesus is!

Jesus commands the demons to keep this information secret. Why does Jesus tell the demons to tell no one who He is? Bible students have wondered about the answer to this question for hundreds of years. This topic has a special name: the Savior's Secret. Why does Mark want us to keep quiet about who Jesus is?

We will soon learn the answer. As we study the Book of Mark, we will see that some things are kept secret, and some things are shown. At the end of the Book of Mark, all the secrets about Jesus end in a surprising way. The secrets are replaced with a powerful message about Jesus and who He is.

We can divide the Book of Mark into two parts. Chapter 1 to near the end of chapter 8 is about an important question. **Who is Jesus?** The answer is found in His teachings and miracles. Again and again, Jesus wins the fight against evil. He gives hope to people who are suffering and hurting. Jesus teaches important Bible truths. All these things tell the reader that Jesus is the Savior, the Promised One from God. Jesus is the Savior that the Hebrew people have waited a long time for.

We must wait until the middle of the Book of Mark to read about someone who isn't filled with a demon to announce who Jesus is. This announcement answers the question in the first half of the book about who Jesus is. Peter is the one who announces, " 'You are the Christ [the Chosen One, the Savior]' " (Mark 8:29, ICB).

The second half of the Book of Mark starts with Mark 8:31 and goes to the end of the book. The second half of the Book of Mark answers the question, **Where is Jesus going?** The answer is surprising. Jesus is going to the cross. The cross was a symbol of shame in Bible times. The cross was the most terrible way a person could die in the kingdom of Rome. No one expects the Savior of the whole earth to end up there. His

followers expect Jesus to beat Rome and make Israel a powerful country.

Jesus' followers can't understand what He is saying when He tells them He must die. As the Book of Mark continues, the followers ask Jesus fewer and fewer questions about this painful topic. They don't want to hear about it because they want Jesus to throw the Romans out of Israel and start His kingdom on this earth.

Before Jesus dies, He meets the Jewish spiritual leaders who plan to kill Him. At this time, Jesus' followers continue to hope that Jesus will start His kingdom on this earth. The followers of Jesus are surprised when He is arrested, then forced to stand trial, and finally is nailed to the cross. These terrible happenings destroy the followers' hopes.

After Jesus is arrested, He stays calm. Earlier, in Gethsemane, Jesus fought a terrible battle with Himself over His decision to die for our sins (Mark 14:32–42). Later, on the cross, Jesus feels no hope. He cries out in deep sorrow: “ ‘My God, My God, why have You left Me alone?’ ” (Mark 15:34, NLV). The Book of Mark shows us Jesus' dark experience on the cross. The cross shows us how much it cost God to save us: the life of His Son. But the cross does not end Jesus' work on earth. After Jesus wakes up from the dead, He meets with His followers in Galilee. As we know, this meeting is the start of the Christian church.

The Book of Mark is an amazing story about the life of Jesus. Mark tells the story in a fast-moving style of writing. He doesn't offer us a lot of extra words or explanations for the things that happen. Mark just tells the story. He lets the words, the actions, and the miracles tell the story about the life and death of Jesus from Nazareth.

***Mark lets the words, the actions, and the miracles tell the story about the life and death of Jesus from Nazareth.***

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## Who Is Mark?



### SABBATH—JUNE 29

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Acts 12:12; Acts 15:36–39; Mark 1:1–8; Mark 1:9–13; Mark 1:14, 15.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee and told people the Good News from God. He said, ‘The right time is now here. God’s kingdom is very near. Change your hearts and lives, and believe the Good News!’ ” (Mark 1:14, 15, ERV).



People connected the Book of Mark with Peter (read 1 Peter 5:13).

**WHO WROTE THE BOOK OF MARK?** The first four books in the New Testament tell us about the life of Jesus. These books do not tell us who wrote them.

From early times, people connected each of the first four books of the New Testament with a church leader or one of his friends. People connected the Book of Luke with Paul (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24). People connected the Book of Mark with Peter (read 1 Peter 5:13). This information helps us to discover who wrote Mark.

Again, the writer of the Book of Mark doesn’t tell us his name. But early church leaders tell us that John Mark wrote the Book of Mark. John Mark sometimes traveled with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2, 5). Later, John Mark worked with Peter (1 Peter 5:13), which is why people from early times connected the Book of Mark with Peter.

The first thing we will do this week is learn about Mark. Who is he? What does the Bible tell us? Mark failed early in life. Later, he changed and wrote a book of the Bible. We will study why Mark failed. Then we will learn how he changed and later wrote a book about Jesus’ life.

## THE MAN WHO FAILED (Acts 12:12)

**Read Acts 12:12. How does the Book of Acts introduce Mark?**

Most people believe that John Mark wrote the Book of Mark. John Mark was a young man when the story in Acts 12 happened. This story happened sometime between the years A.D. 44 and A.D. 46. In Acts 12:12, we learn that Mark is the son of a wealthy woman named Mary. Mary supported the church with her wealth. She held prayer meeting in her home. You can read about this prayer meeting in Acts 12. Church members came to Mary's house to pray after Herod put Peter in prison. Peter escaped from jail. Then Herod died a terrible death. John Mark doesn't really have an important part in this story. But we first learn about him here. Later, we will read about his connection with Barnabas and Saul.

**Read Acts 13:1–5, 13. How did John Mark start working with Saul and Barnabas? What happened later on, after John started working with them?**

Acts 13 tells us about the first trip that Saul and Barnabas took together in about A.D. 46. Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts, doesn't talk about John Mark until verse 5. John Mark is a helper or servant at that time. Luke doesn't say anything else about John Mark until verse 13. Then Luke says that John Mark went back to Jerusalem.

Luke doesn't tell us why John Mark goes back home. We can imagine in our minds the reason. Ellen G. White says, "Mark grew frightened. He lost his courage. For a time, he failed to give his whole heart to God's work. Mark wasn't used to hard times. The dangers and hard times filled his heart with fear, and he lost hope."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 169, adapted. In short, things got too hard for John Mark. So, he wanted to go home.

**Do you sometimes feel the same as John Mark when things in life get too hard? Maybe you backed off from something or failed in your Christian walk with God because you were afraid. What did you learn from the experience?**



**“The dangers and hard times filled Mark’s heart with fear, and he lost hope.”**



## ANOTHER CHANCE (Acts 15:36–39)

**Why did Paul reject John Mark? Why did Barnabas give John Mark another chance? Read Acts 15:36–39 for the answers.**



**Mark came back later because Barnabas, his cousin, believed in him.**

Acts 15:38 tells us the reason why Paul rejected John Mark: John Mark left Paul and Barnabas. John Mark also stopped working for God. For sure, we can understand why Paul was upset. Preaching and teaching in Bible times was hard work (read 2 Corinthians 11:23–28). Paul depended on his fellow workers to help him. Together, they fought against evil angels. Paul thought that anyone who walked away from this fight should not be a part of his team.

Barnabas didn't agree. Barnabas liked John Mark and didn't want to leave him behind. Paul and Barnabas fought about John Mark. In the end, Paul and Barnabas separated because of Mark. Paul chose Silas to travel with him. Barnabas took Mark.

The Book of Acts doesn't explain why Barnabas chose to take Mark with him. Acts 15 is the last chapter in the Book of Acts that talks about Barnabas and Mark. But this chapter is not the last place we read about Mark in the Bible.

**Read Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24; and 1 Peter 5:13. What do these verses tell us about Mark?**

Mark changed. In these verses, Paul tells us that Mark is a blessing to him and his work for God. Paul thinks of Mark as one of his fellow workers. Paul wants Timothy to bring Mark with him. The Book of 1 Peter tells us that Peter also had a close friendship with Mark. Paul and Peter wrote their books in the early A.D. 60s. So, they wrote 15–20 years after Paul rejected Mark, in Acts 15. Mark failed and left the work. But then he came back later because Barnabas, his cousin, believed in him.

**Think about a time when you or a friend failed. Were you or your friend given a second chance? How did that experience change you? How did your experience change the one who helped you? How did your experience improve the work you did for God?**

## THE MESSENGER (Mark 1:1–8)

**Read Mark 1:1–8. Who do these verses talk about, and what do these people say or do?**

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These verses tell us about three people: Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1), God the Father (Mark 1:2 gives us a hint about Him), and John the Baptist. John was a messenger and preacher.

In Mark 1:2, 3, we read a quote from the Old Testament that comes from three separate Old Testament verses: Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 40:3; and Malachi 3:1. Mark blends these three verses together to show us what will happen in the story about Jesus' life.

**Read Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 40:3; and Malachi 3:1. What is the same in each of these verses?**

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Exodus 23:20 talks about an angel that God will send to lead Israel to the Promised Land. Isaiah 40:3 tells us how God will appear in the desert and the road that will be made ready for Him. Malachi 3:1 talks about a messenger who comes before the Lord. The messenger makes the way ready for the Lord to come. All three verses talk about a trip.

Isaiah 40:3 shows us the future work of John the Baptist. In the Book of Mark, the Lord Jesus is on a journey. This trip will lead him to the cross, where He will die for us.

But much more must happen before Jesus dies on the cross. In Mark 1, Jesus' journey is starting. Mark will tell us all about it.

In Mark 1:2, 3, John the Baptist calls people to stop sinning and to come back to God (Mark 1:4). John the Baptist dressed the same as Elijah, God's special messenger (compare with 2 Kings 1:8). In Mark 1:7, 8, John the Baptist talks about the coming One who is more powerful than he is. This Person will do more than John can do. This Person is Jesus. John says about Jesus, "I am not good enough to get down and help Him take off His shoes" (Mark 1:7, NLV). This verse shows us that John understands that Jesus is more than human. Jesus is God.



**John says about Jesus,  
“I am not good enough  
to get down and help Him  
take off His shoes”  
(Mark 1:7, 8, NLV).**

## JESUS' BAPTISM (Mark 1:9–13)

**Who is at Jesus' baptism? What happens when Jesus gets baptized? Read Mark 1:9–13 for the answers.**

John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River. When Jesus comes out of the water, He sees the skies open. The Holy Spirit comes down on Jesus, the same as a dove. God says from heaven to Jesus, “ ‘You are my Son and I love you. I am very pleased with you’ ” (Mark 1:11, ICB).

These things help us understand that Jesus' baptism is special. Together, these things announce the start of Jesus' work on earth. Many of the same things that happen in this story will happen in Mark 15, when Jesus is on the cross.

Next, the Holy Spirit sends Jesus into the desert. The word “send” comes from the Greek word “ekballô” (Mark 1:12, ERV). Mark also uses the word “ekballô” when he talks about how Jesus commands demons to come out of people (Mark 1:34, 39). This word tells us that “send” was a push full of force. The story in Mark 1:9–13 shows us the Holy Spirit's power in Jesus' life.

Mark shows us Jesus as both God and man. How? Let's review. Mark shows us that Jesus is the Christ, the Chosen One, the Savior (Mark 1:1). As God, Jesus is the Lord. John the Baptist is the messenger that announces Jesus' coming (Mark 1:2, 3). Jesus is more powerful than John (Mark 1:7). Jesus is the Son that God loves. As we saw already, the Holy Spirit comes down from heaven and fills Jesus (Mark 1:10, 11). As a man, Jesus is baptized. Notice that John baptizes Jesus; Jesus doesn't baptize John (Mark 1:9). Then the Spirit sends Jesus into the desert (Mark 1:12). Jesus is in the desert for 40 days. Danger is all around Jesus. Satan tries to get Jesus to sin (Mark 1:13). Finally, angels come to help Jesus (Mark 1:13).

Why does Mark show Jesus as both God and Man? Mark wants us to understand that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. He is God. At the same time, Jesus also is a human. He is both our Brother and our Example. How can we understand this amazing Bible truth? We can't. All we can do is accept it with faith. We must believe in this Bible truth. This Bible truth shows us God's love for the human family.

**Jesus was God. At the same time, He became a man to save us. What does this wonderful Bible truth teach us about God's amazing love for us?**



**Jesus is both our Brother and our Example.**



**THE GOOD NEWS FROM JESUS (Mark 1:14, 15)**

**Jesus preached the Good News. What are the three parts of His message in Mark 1:14, 15?**

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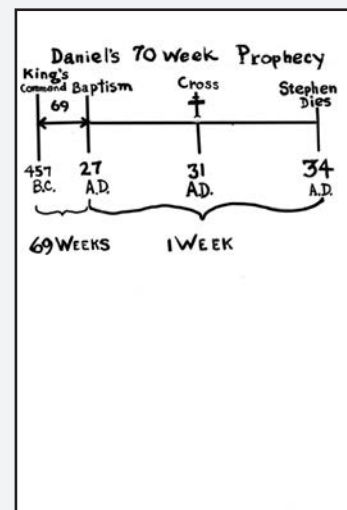
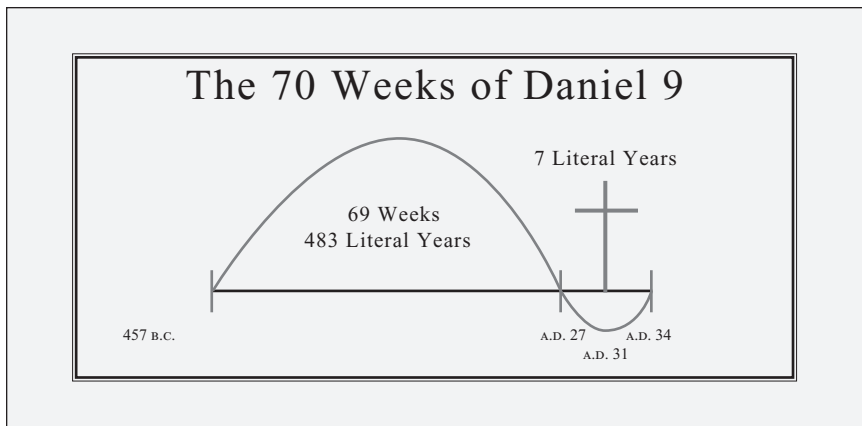


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Jesus' message has three parts:

Part	Meaning
1. A special time message.	The time is now.
2. Promises.	God's kingdom is near.
3. An invitation to follow Him.	Stop sinning. Believe the Good News.

What time message is Jesus talking about? Jesus is talking about the 70-week time message in Daniel 9:24–27. Daniel 9:24–27 shows us the time of Jesus' baptism. The Holy Spirit fills Jesus. Then Jesus starts His work for God (Acts 10:38). The chart below shows us when the 70-week time message will happen in history:



**Jesus is talking about the 70-week time message in Daniel 9:24–27.**

In this time message, one day is a symbol for one year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). The time message started in 457 B.C., when Artaxerxes, king of Persia, made a law. The law permitted the Jews to go home and rebuild the city of Jerusalem (read Ezra 7).

69 weeks in this special time message continue from 457 B.C. until A.D. 27. At that time, John baptized Jesus. Then the Holy Spirit filled Jesus. When the Spirit filled Jesus, Jesus' work on earth for God started.

3½ years later, Jesus died on the cross.

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “The Voice in the Wilderness,” pages 97–108, in *The Desire of Ages*; and “Heralds of the Gospel,” pages 166–176, in *The Acts of the Apostles*.

Did you know that the first angel in Revelation 14:6, 7 says much the same thing that Jesus says in Mark 1:15? The First Angel announces the Good News to everyone on earth in the end times. The First Angel’s Message has the same three parts that we see in Jesus’ message. The chart below compares Jesus’ message with the First Angel’s Message. Both announcements have a time message, a promise, and an invitation:

<b>Mark 1 (topics)</b>	<b>Compare with</b>	<b>Revelation 14</b>
The time (Daniel 9)	Time message	God, our Judge, is finished (Daniel 7, 8).
God’s kingdom is near.	God’s promise	The Good News
Follow Jesus.	Invitation	Worship God.



**The First Angel’s Message has the same three parts that we see in Jesus’ message.**

The First Angel’s Message announces the start of God’s work as Judge. The time message about the 2,300 days shows us that this work will start in 1844 (Daniel 8:14). God’s work as Judge gives God’s kingdom to His people (Daniel 7:22). During the end times, the First Angel invites everyone on earth to worship God and to follow Him. In Revelation 13, the evil animal powers make a false god for everyone on earth to honor, praise, and worship.

So, Jesus’ message in Mark 1 connects with the time messages in Daniel. The First Angel’s Message also connects to Daniel’s time messages at the end times.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- ❶ What does baptism mean? Read Romans 6:1–4 and John 3:1–8. Compare these verses with the baptism of Jesus in Mark 1:9–13. How do these verses help you understand better what baptism means?
  
- ❷ Compare the Good News from Jesus in Mark 1:14, 15 with the First Angel’s Message in Revelation 14:6, 7. How do these messages help you better understand your work as a Seventh-day Adventist today?

## PART 1: CONFUSED WITCH DOCTOR

Father was the most well-known person in his small town in Nepal. Everyone came to Father for healing. Townspeople believed that Father's magic could heal any disease. Father came from a family of witch doctors. Father became a witch doctor after the death of his father, who was also a witch doctor.

Father killed animals and gave their blood as gifts to the spirits. In exchange, Father asked the spirits to heal people. Father believed the spirits respected his gifts. So, he was confused when he couldn't heal the person he loved most: his wife. Father killed a chicken and offered its blood to the spirits and asked them to heal his wife. But her pain didn't go away. Father didn't know what was making her sick. So, Father gave money to another witch doctor. But Mother lost weight. Then Father took her to a medical doctor. But Mother continued to get weak.

Father was confused. He became more confused after his grown daughter, Divya, came home to help mother. Father came home and couldn't find Mother or Divya. Father searched the house. Finally, Father found them in an upstairs room. Mother and Divya were kneeling on the floor. They also were talking to someone he couldn't see. Father left the room quietly without bothering them. Father wondered if his daughter also was a witch doctor. When Father saw Divya later, he asked her what she and Mother were doing.

Divya said, "We were praying to my God to heal Mother."

Father asked, "Which God?" Father prayed to many gods.

Divya said, "To my God, Jesus. I left our family religion. I found a new God in Jesus." Divya explained that Jesus made the skies and the earth. "If I pray, He will hear and heal Mother," she said. Father didn't understand how this God could be more powerful than any of the family gods.

Divya lived in another town. When she needed to go back home, she asked Father for permission to take Mother with her. Divya said, "Mother is sick. You don't have time to take care of her because you are working. Let me take her with me."

Father worked hard as both a witch doctor and a builder. So, he didn't have time to take care of Mother. He didn't think Mother would live much longer. So, he let Divya take her.

Six months passed before Father saw Mother again. Father traveled to Divya's house. He was surprised to see Mother was healthy. Father was filled with questions. He asked Divya, "Why is Mother well? What medicine did you give her?"

Divya said that she prayed only to God. "God heard my prayer. Now Mother is well. She goes to church with me."

Father didn't believe it. He laughed. He never heard of a God who healed people without payment or an animal gift.

INSIDE  
*Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**Mother and Divya were kneeling on the floor. They also were talking to someone Father couldn't see.**

## A Day in Jesus' Life



### SABBATH—JULY 6

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 1:16–20; Mark 1:21–28; Mark 1:29–34; Mark 1:35–39; Mark 1:40–45.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Jesus said to them, ‘Come, follow me, and I will make you a different kind [type] of fishermen. You will bring in people, not fish.’ ” (Mark 1:17, ERV).

**MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, AND JOHN** wrote about Jesus' life. Each writer tells us how Jesus started His work for God. But each writer introduces the story in a different way.

Matthew tells us how Jesus chose His followers and then preached the Sermon on the Mountain.

Luke writes about how Jesus preached His first sermon during the Sabbath in a Jewish church in Nazareth.

John tells how Jesus invited some of His first followers to join Him. Then Jesus went to a wedding.

Mark tells the story about how Jesus invited four men to follow Him. Then Mark tells us about the things Jesus did on the Sabbath in Capernaum and what happened next.

Mark's Sabbath story helps his readers understand Jesus better. In Mark 1, Mark writes about Jesus' work after His baptism. Mark also writes a few words that Jesus says. Jesus invites some men to follow Him. He commands a demon to leave. Jesus talks about His plan to travel. Jesus heals a man with a skin disease and tells him to go show himself to the priest or spiritual leader. As you see, Mark is interested in telling us about what Jesus does, not what He says. So, Mark tells us that Jesus heals many people. Mark also likes to use the words “right away” (Mark 1:12, 18, 20, 28, 30, 31 [WE], 42 [NirV]) to help us understand how fast Jesus worked.



**Mark is interested in telling us about what Jesus does, not what He says.**

## FOLLOW ME (Mark 1:16–20)

**Read Mark 1:16–20. Who did Jesus invite to follow Him? How did the men answer Jesus' invitation?**

As we saw yesterday, Mark 1 doesn't write much of the words that Jesus says. But Mark 1:17 tells us the words that Jesus says to two fishermen, Simon and Andrew, who are brothers. Later, Jesus will name Simon "Peter." Simon and Andrew stand on the beach next to the Sea of Galilee. The men throw a net into the water to catch fish.

Mark doesn't write about a fishing boat, which may show that Peter and Andrew don't earn much money. In Mark 1:19, 20, James and John are in a boat with their father and some servants. Both the boat and the servants show us that James and John enjoyed more success than Peter and Andrew. But Luke tells us that, yes, Peter does have a boat. Luke also says that James and John were business partners with Peter and Andrew (read Luke 5:1–11). Maybe Mark doesn't talk about a boat because he wants us to see that one set of brothers is rich and one set is poor. But Jesus invites both the poor and the rich to follow Him.

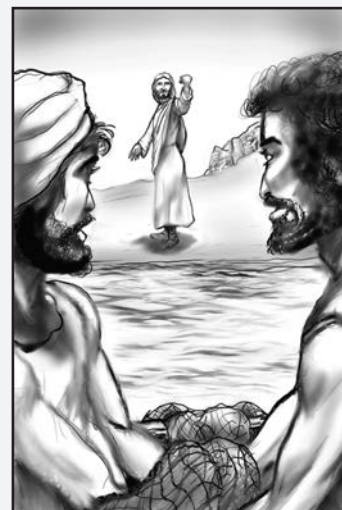
Jesus invites both pairs of the brothers to become His followers. Jesus tells Peter and Andrew that if they join Him, He will teach them to "catch" men, and not fish.

**Read the story in Mark 1:16–20. Why do you think Peter, Andrew, James, and John left everything they owned and followed Jesus right away?**

John gives us more information about the story (read John 1:29–42). The brothers followed John the Baptist. The men heard John announce that Jesus was " 'the Lamb of God. He takes away [removes] the sins of [from] the world [the people on the earth]!' " (John 1:29, ERV). Later, the brothers spent time with Jesus. What does this information tell us about the brothers? They don't hurry to join Jesus. They carefully think about His invitation first.

So, why doesn't Mark give us more information about the story? Maybe Mark wants to show us that Jesus' invitation is powerful. Jesus invites the brothers to join Him. They say yes, and their lives are changed forever.

**What did you give up to follow Jesus? (What does your answer say about you if you can't think of anything?)**



**Jesus tells Peter and Andrew that if they join Him, He will teach them to "catch" men, and not fish.**



## A SABBATH EVERYONE WILL REMEMBER (Mark 1:21–28)

**Read the story in Mark 1:21–28. What happens in the Jewish church in Capernaum? What Bible truths do we learn from this story?**



**This false idea about the Savior as a mighty king made Jesus' work hard and put Him in danger.**

Most Christians can tell you about an important spiritual experience in their lives. Maybe they will tell you about the time they decided to follow Jesus. Or the day they got baptized. Or they will tell you about a powerful sermon that made them feel that God was very close to their hearts. Many of these experiences are so powerful that we will always remember them. They can change our lives forever.

Maybe that's how the people in Capernaum felt when they went to church and heard Jesus teach. "The people there were amazed at his teaching. He did not teach like [the same as] their teachers of the law. He taught like a person who had authority [skill and might]" (Mark 1:22, ICB). While Jesus taught, a man started to shout. A demon was inside the man. The demon shouted, " 'What do You want of [to do to] us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have [Did] You come to destroy us? I know Who You are. You are the Holy One of [from] God' " (Mark 1:24, NLV). Jesus commands the demon to leave.

Think about the demon's words. What do they tell us?

First, the demon knows who Jesus is. Jesus is "the Holy One of [from] God." We expect holy things in a church, and not things that are evil. This story shows us that the worldwide war between good and evil is real. People in the story may not know who Jesus is. But the demon knows.

Next, think about Jesus' words to the demon. We can understand why Jesus commanded the demon to leave the man. But why did Jesus also tell the demon, " 'Do not talk!' " (Mark 1:25, NLV)? In this verse, Mark introduces us to an important idea: Jesus asks demons and people not to announce who He really is. Bible thinkers name this idea the Savior's Secret.

Why doesn't Jesus want people to tell anyone He is the Savior? Because the Jewish people expected the Savior to come to save them from the Romans, and not from sin. So, this false idea about the Savior made Jesus' work hard and put Him in danger. As we'll see, Jesus can't hide who He really is. The truth about Jesus is the most important part of the Good News. People need to know who Jesus is. They also need to decide what His coming means for them.

**JESUS HEALS ON THE SABBATH (Mark 1:29–34)**

**Read the story in Mark 1:29–34. How did Jesus help Peter’s family? What spiritual lessons can we learn from this story?**

After Jesus finishes teaching, He leaves the church. A small group of followers goes with Him. This group included Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Jesus and His followers go to Peter’s house. There, they plan to spend the rest of the Sabbath day enjoying a friendly meal and fellowship.

But Jesus and His followers get some sad news. Peter’s mother-in-law is very sick with a fever. In those days, fevers killed people. If they didn’t get better, they died. Jesus goes to the sick woman’s bed and holds her hand. He lifts her up. Right away, she felt better. She gets up and serves Jesus and His followers. This story is a powerful example of an important Bible rule. Jesus saves and heals us so that we may serve other people!

In the Book of Mark, Jesus often heals with a touch (read Mark 1:41; Mark 5:41). At other times, Jesus heals people without touching them (read Mark 2:1–12; Mark 3:1–6; Mark 5:6–13).

Jesus’ work wasn’t finished. After sunset, many people came to Peter’s house for healing. For sure, they came because they saw or heard about the demon that Jesus threw out earlier at church on the Sabbath. Do you see that Mark doesn’t tell us that people didn’t come to see Jesus at Peter’s house because of the Sabbath? Mark expected his readers to know about the Sabbath already. This information shows us that Mark’s readers were Sabbath keepers.

Mark says that the whole city came to the door of Peter’s house that evening (Mark 1:33). For sure, Jesus must have spent a long time healing all those people.

“Hour after hour, people came and went. No one knew if the Healer would be there tomorrow. Jesus’ visit was the most exciting thing that happened in Capernaum. People praised God for His mercy. Joy filled Jesus’ heart. . . .

“Jesus didn’t stop working until He healed the last person there. When the crowd left, the time was very late. At last, Peter’s house was quiet. The long, exciting day was over. Jesus needed rest. But while the people in the city slept, the Savior went to a quiet place and prayed.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 259, adapted.



**Jesus saves and heals us so that we may serve other people!**

**THE SECRET OF JESUS' SUCCESS (Mark 1:35–39)**

**Read Mark 1:35–39. What does Mark tell us that Jesus did? What was Jesus' secret that helped Him succeed?**

Jesus got up before sunrise and went to a quiet place where He could be alone and pray. Mark 1:35 shows us that praying is the most important action in this verse. Mark tells us that Jesus got up, went out, and left. All these verbs in the Greek show us finished actions. Jesus started doing these things and finished them. But the verb “to pray” in the Greek language is used to talk about something that happens again and again. So, Mark is really saying, ‘Jesus prayed and continued praying. He never stopped praying. He prayed all the time.’ Mark also tells us Jesus went out very early in the morning. Mark wants us to understand that Jesus spent much time alone in prayer.

Jesus is a Man of prayer (read Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; and John 17). Prayer is one of the secrets of Jesus' success in His work for God.



**Prayer is one of the secrets of Jesus' success in His work for God.**

**Read Luke 6:12. What does this verse teach us about Jesus' prayer life?**

Some Christians pray only in the morning. Other Christians pray only at night. There is nothing wrong with praying at the same time each day. But we must be careful not to let our prayers become empty or the same as a chore we must do again and again. How can we give our prayers energy and new life? We can change the time of day when we pray. Or we can pray longer than usual at our regular prayer time. The most important thing to remember is you don't need to pray the same way or the same time every day. You can change when and how you pray.

Peter and his companions don't go with Jesus to His special place of prayer. Maybe Peter and his friends know the location, because they find Jesus there later. They tell Jesus that everyone is looking for Him. Their words show us what is in their hearts. The miracles that Jesus did the day before were very exciting. So, the followers thought that Jesus should continue healing and teaching the people. But Jesus' answer is surprising. “Jesus said, ‘We must go to the next towns. I must tell the good news to the people there too. That is why I came here’ ” (Mark 1:38, WE).

## CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET? (Mark 1:40–45)

**Read Mark 1:40–45. What do these verses say about Jesus? How did Jesus show His love for the poor, the needy, and people the Jews thought weren't important?**

The man who comes to Jesus has leprosy, or a skin disease. The man, or leper, believes that Jesus can make him clean. Leviticus 13 says lepers were dirty. So, the man must stay far away from people (Leviticus 13:45, 46).

The worst type of leprosy today is known as Hansen's disease. The man may have had Hansen's disease. Ellen G. White tells us the man's disease was very bad: "The disease did awful things to the man's body. His rotting skin was terrible and frightening to look at. When the people saw the leper, they were afraid. They pushed against each other to try to get away from the leper. . . . Jesus put His hand on the leper. Right away, the leper started to change. His skin and nerves healed. His muscles became firm. He could feel things again in his nerves. His hard, rough skin disappeared. His skin had a soft glow, the same as a healthy child."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 263, adapted.

Why did Jesus touch the leper? Mark tells us, "Jesus felt sorry for the man. So he touched him and said, 'I want to heal you. Be healed!'" (Mark 1:41, ICB). The law of Moses says that this type of touch should have made Jesus dirty until evening. Moses said that anyone who touched something dirty must wash to become clean again (compare with Leviticus 13–15). But Mark tells us that Jesus' touch heals the sick man and removes his leprosy. So, Jesus didn't become dirty when He touched the man.

Jesus sends the man to a priest or spiritual leader. Jesus tells the man to give the offerings that Moses commanded in Leviticus 14. Again and again, Mark will show that Jesus supports Moses' teachings (Mark 7:10; Mark 10:3, 4; Mark 12:26, 29–31). Compare Jesus and His support for the law with the actions of the Jewish leaders. In Mark 7, 10, and 12, the leaders break Moses' law. The disagreement over the law between Jesus and the Jewish leaders explains why Jesus commanded the leper, in Mark 1:44, not to tell anyone that Jesus healed him. Jesus knows that the priests are angry with Him. So, they may lie and say that the leper is not really healed. But the leper doesn't obey Jesus. The leper tells everyone that Jesus healed him. Soon, Jesus can no longer enter the towns to do God's work anymore.



**The disagreement over the law between Jesus and the Jewish leaders explains why Jesus commanded the leper, in Mark 1:44, not to tell anyone that Jesus healed him.**



**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “At Capernaum” and “Thou Canst Make Me Clean,” pages 252–266, in *The Desire of Ages*.

What picture of Jesus does Mark 1 show us? We see that Jesus has the power to invite men to follow Him. They accept the invitation. Jesus is holy. He is not evil as are the angels who serve Satan. A worldwide war is happening between good and evil. Jesus has more power than the demons. Jesus feels pity for sick people. Jesus helps them. He touches them when no one else will touch them.

“Jesus taught in the Jewish church. Jesus talked about the kingdom He came to start. Jesus said His job was to make prisoners of Satan become free again. Just then a cry of fear stopped Jesus in the middle of His sermon. A madman rushed from the crowd to Jesus. The man shouted, ‘What do You want of [from] us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have [did] You come to destroy us? I know Who You are. You are the Holy One of [sent from] God’ (Mark 1:24, NLV).

“The people in the church became confused and afraid. They stopped paying attention to Jesus and His sermon. Satan didn’t want people to listen to Jesus. So, Satan led this madman to the church to cause trouble. But . . . ‘Jesus spoke sharp [strong] words to the demon and said, “Do not talk! Come out of the man!” The demon threw the man down and gave a loud cry. Then he came out of him’ (Mark 1:25, 26, NLV). . . . Jesus won the fight against Satan in the desert. Now He stood face-to-face with His enemy again. The demon used all his power to keep the madman under his control. If the demon lost control of the man, Jesus won. . . . But the Savior spoke with strength and might. He made the man free from the demon’s control.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 255, 256, adapted.

Mark also shows us that Jesus was very busy. He moved from place to place. He met many people. How did Jesus get so much work done? How did He stay so calm? For sure, His daily experience of prayer was the secret of His success.



“Jesus said His job was to make prisoners of Satan become free again.”

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Why is prayer so important in the Christian life?
- ② Who are the “lepers” in modern times? In Jesus’ day, lepers had terrible skin diseases. People avoided them. How can your church use the Good News to “touch” the hearts and lives of these modern lepers?



## PART 2: CONFUSED WITCH DOCTOR

Father rested for several days at the house of his daughter, Divya, in Nepal. Father was tired from his two jobs. He worked as a builder and a witch doctor.

Father watched with interest when the Seventh-day Adventist pastor of Divya's church came to visit and brought several church members with him. Father listened as they sang songs about his daughter's new God, Jesus.

Then the pastor opened a Bible and read Jesus' invitation: " 'Come to me, all you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest' " (Matthew 11:28, NIV). Next, the pastor read Jesus' words in John 3:16: " 'Yes, God loved the world [everyone on the earth] so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him would not be lost but have eternal [everlasting] life' " (ERV).

The verses touched Father's heart. Father never heard of a God who gave His only Son to save people. Father now understood that we don't need to kill animals and offer them to God to get His blessings. God sent His Son as the offering for our sin.

After the pastor left, Father asked Divya for a Bible. Father wanted to read the two verses for himself. But when he looked in the Bible, he couldn't find them. Divya also couldn't find them. So, she called the pastor. The pastor told them where to find the verses in the Bible. Father was so happy. He started to read the Bible daily. On Sabbath, Father went to church with Divya and his wife. God healed his wife after Divya prayed. At first, Father didn't understand anything at church or in the Bible. But he took the Bible when he left Mother with Divya and went home to his own town a short time later.

At home, Father continued his work as a witch doctor and builder during the day. At night, he read the Bible. As the months passed, he no longer wanted to pray to spirits. Father decided to stop working as a witch doctor. He told the townspeople, "My life is different. I don't want to be a witch doctor anymore."

The townspeople were angry when they learned that Father became a Christian. The townspeople accused Father of not being loyal to the spirits of his dead family members, who had been witch doctors. Father didn't care that the townspeople were mad at him. He was sure that he found the one and only God.

Today, Father and Mother are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church where they serve the Lord. Father's name is Krishna Lama. He is 66 years old and is a church leader.

Krishna says, "I used to think that my home was where the spirits of my dead family members lived. But now I believe that the church is my home. With Jesus, my future is the same as a bright light."

INSIDE  
*Story*

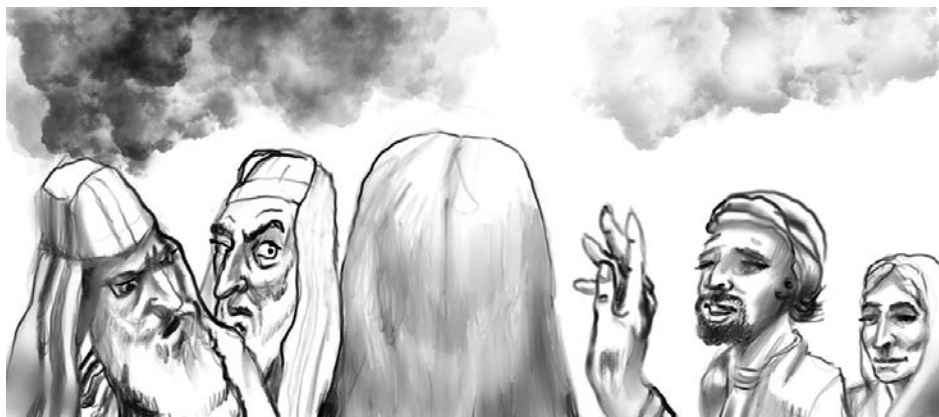
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**The townspeople were angry when they learned that Father became a Christian.**



# Disagreements



## SABBATH—JULY 13

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 2:1–12; Mark 2:13–22; Mark 2:23–28; Mark 3:20–35.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Then Jesus said to them, ‘The Sabbath day was made for man. Man was not made for the Sabbath day. So the Son of Man is Lord even [also] of the Sabbath day’ ” (Mark 2:27, 28, Nlrv).

**MARK 2:1–3:6** contains five stories. These stories compare Jesus' teachings with the teachings of the Jewish leaders. Each story in Mark 2:1–3:6 is connected to the topic of the story that comes before it. The final story is connected to the first story.

Each one of the five stories in Mark 2:1–3:6 teaches us something important about Jesus (read Mark 2:10, 17, 20, 28). Jesus says many wise things in these stories. On Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, we will learn more about these stories and the meaning of Jesus' wise sayings.

On Wednesday and Thursday, we will study Mark 3:20–35.

Mark uses a special form or style of storytelling to tell his stories. This form of storytelling is named “Sandwich Story.” (You can learn more about Sandwich Stories on Wednesday.) Mark uses the Sandwich Stories style of Storytelling at least six times in his book. In each Sandwich Story, Mark tells us something important about Jesus and His work for us as our Savior.

This week, we will read some of Mark's stories about Jesus to discover what we may learn about Him.



These stories compare Jesus' teachings with the teachings of the Jewish leaders.

**HEALING A MAN WHO CAN'T MOVE (Mark 2:1–12)**

Read the story about the paralyzed man in Mark 2:1–12. A paralyzed man is someone who cannot move his arms or legs. What did the paralyzed man want when his friends took him to Jesus? What did Jesus give him?

The paralyzed man can't walk. So, his four friends carried him to the house where Jesus stayed. The four friends tore open the roof. Then the friends lowered the paralyzed man down to Jesus. Mark 2:5 tells us that Jesus saw the faith of the four friends. How can we see faith? We see faith the same way we see love. People show us their love when they do nice things for us. In the same way, when we do something because we believe, then we show our faith. The four friends showed their faith to Jesus when they brought Him their sick friend.

The first thing that Jesus does for the paralyzed man is to forgive his sins. The man doesn't say anything during the whole story. The Jewish spiritual leaders have plenty to say, but they do not say the words aloud. They are angry about Jesus' announcement that He can forgive sins. Only God can forgive sins. Jesus knows the doubts and the evil thoughts that are in their hearts.

If Jesus can make the paralyzed man walk, then this miracle is proof that Jesus is God and can forgive sins.

**Read Micah 6:6–8. How do these verses explain what is happening between Jesus and the Jewish leaders?**

The Jewish leaders' ideas about God were wrong. They refused to accept that God gave Jesus the strength to do the miracle. So, the leaders didn't understand the things that the miracle taught them about Jesus. Jesus gave the leaders proof that He came from God. Jesus showed them that He knew the doubt that was in their hearts. Then Jesus healed the paralytic man in front of them to show them God sent Him to this earth as the Savior.

**The Jewish leaders cared more about their rules than they cared about God. Are we in danger of doing the same thing? What can we do to avoid this trap? As Christians, what is the most important thing that we should care about?**



**If Jesus can make the paralyzed man walk, then this miracle is proof that Jesus is God and can forgive sins.**

**JESUS INVITES LEVI TO FOLLOW HIM (Mark 2:13–22)**

**Who was Levi? Why do you think some of the Jewish spiritual leaders were upset that Jesus asked Levi to become His follower? Read Mark 2:13–22 for the answers.**

Tax collectors in Jesus' day worked for the Roman government. The Jews from Judea didn't like tax collectors very much. Tax collectors often were not fair. They took more money from the people than they needed to take. Many Jewish tax collectors got very rich off the citizens from their own country. One Jewish book says, "If tax collectors enter a house, everything in the house is dirty."

So, we should not be surprised that the Jewish leaders aren't happy with Jesus for asking Levi, a tax collector, to become one of His followers. The leaders also want to know why Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners.

How did Jesus answer their question? Jesus says that people who are sick need a doctor, and not people who are healthy. Jesus is a spiritual doctor. He is the only One who can heal the sin-sick heart. So, a doctor should go to the people who are sick and who need his help, right?

Mark 2:18–22 starts a new story. In this story, the Jewish leaders ask Jesus about fasting. Fasting is a time when someone doesn't eat any food for a short while. The Jewish leaders want to know why Jesus' followers don't fast while their own followers and John the Baptist's followers fast. Jesus answers the question with a picture story. In this story, Jesus compares His being with His followers to a wedding feast. Jesus says that the guests don't fast at a wedding. They eat! But Jesus says that a time will come when the bridegroom will be removed. (Jesus was talking about His death on the cross.) When that day comes, Jesus' followers will have plenty of time to fast.

Jesus continues with two word pictures that compare His teaching to the teaching of the Jewish leaders: Jesus' teaching was the same as a piece of new cloth or new grape juice. You don't sew a new piece of cloth on an old coat or put new wine into old leather bags for holding wine. The old coat and the old leather bags are word pictures for the teachings of the Jewish leaders. The old coat and old leather bags show us that the behavior of the Jewish leaders became very bad. Religion can become evil if people are not careful.



**Jesus says that people who are sick need a doctor, and not people who are healthy.**



**THE LORD OF THE SABBATH (Mark 2:23–28)**

In Mark 2:23, 24, the Jewish leaders accuse Jesus' followers of breaking the Sabbath. The Jews had many rules about work. The Jewish leaders made a list of 39 things that their people should not do on the Sabbath. One of those things included the very thing Jesus' followers did.

**How does Jesus answer the Jewish leaders? Read Mark 2:23–28 for the answer.**

Jesus answers with the story about David. David went into God's house and ate the holy bread that only the priests or spiritual leaders were allowed to eat. Jesus says that if God allowed David to eat the holy bread, then Jesus' followers also can pick and eat the grain while they walked through the fields.

Jesus also says that God made the Sabbath as a blessing for humans. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath.

**Mark 3:1–6. How does this story show us Jesus' teaching that God made the Sabbath as a blessing for humans?**

Again, Jesus gets into trouble with the Jewish leaders about the Sabbath. (Do you see that they never argue about which day is the Sabbath? No, the leaders fight with Jesus about how to keep it.) The Jewish leaders will accuse Jesus of Sabbath breaking if He dares to heal on the Sabbath. Jesus asks the leaders a question. The answer shows that doing good and saving lives are important. We can do good and save lives on the Sabbath. We don't break the Sabbath when we do these things.

Then Jesus heals the paralyzed man. The Jewish leaders get very angry. They decide to kill Jesus. The same leaders who accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath were guilty of breaking the Sabbath when they made a plan to kill Him.

**What do the stories we read about today teach you about keeping the Sabbath holy? How hard is it today for us to keep the Sabbath? What are some of the problems that get in the way of our keeping it holy?**



**The same leaders who accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath were guilty of breaking the Sabbath when they made a plan to kill Him.**



**SANDWICH STORY: PART 1 (Mark 3:20–35)**

**Read Mark 3:20–35. What connection do you see between the two stories in these verses?**

Mark 3:20–35 is the first “Sandwich Story” in Mark. Remember, a Sandwich Story is a type of storytelling where a writer starts telling a story and then begins telling another one in the middle of the first story. The writer finishes telling the first story only after the second story is finished.

The first story is about Jesus’ family members who decide to remove Him because people say He is crazy (Mark 3:21). The second story is about the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem. (Today we look at the second story, which is found in Mark 3:22–30.)

In Mark 3:22, the Jewish leaders say that Satan lives inside Jesus. The leaders accuse Jesus of working with the devil to command demons to come out of people. Jesus answers this insult with a question. He asks the leaders, “‘How can Satan cast [throw] out Satan?’” (Mark 3:23 NKJV). Satan never works against himself. Can Satan have success if he causes division in his own kingdom? Of course not! Jesus also talks about tying up a strong man before stealing from his house. In this last example, Jesus is the same as the thief who enters Satan’s house. Jesus ties up Satan and saves his prisoners.



**Jesus ties up Satan and saves his prisoners.**

**Read Mark 3:28–30. What is the one sin that God can’t forgive? Why can’t God forgive this sin?**

The one sin that God can’t pardon is the sin against the Holy Spirit. This sin includes saying that the work of the Holy Spirit is really the work that the devil does. Look at Mark 3:30. Do you see the reason why Jesus says what He does in verses 28 and 29? Jesus says what He does because the Jewish leaders say that Jesus is filled with an evil spirit. Jesus really is filled with the Holy Spirit. If you say that the work of the Holy Spirit is from the devil, then you won’t pay attention to the Holy Spirit. No one who loves God wants to follow Satan or his advice.

**Do you sometimes feel worried that you did the sin that God can’t forgive? How does this feeling show that you did not do this sin? Why is your worry or fear proof that you didn’t do this awful sin?**

## SANDWICH STORY: PART 2 (Mark 3:20, 21)

**What experience caused Jesus' family to think He was crazy? Read Mark 3:20, 21 for the answer.**

Jesus' family thought that He was crazy. Why? Because Jesus was so busy that He didn't take time to rest and eat. So, Jesus' family went out to control Him. This story stops, and the second story starts about the Jewish leaders who accuse Jesus of working with the devil (read yesterday's study).

In a strange way, the first story and the second story are connected. Jesus' own family believes the worst about Him, just as the Jewish leaders do. Jesus' family says He is crazy. The Jewish leaders say that Jesus is working with the devil.

**What does Jesus' family want? How does Jesus answer? Read Mark 3:31–35 to answer the questions.**

We may think this story is strange. If your mother or other family members came to see you, you should meet with them, right? So, what's the problem? The problem is that Jesus' family members didn't understand God's plan for His life. Jesus knew they didn't understand. In these verses, Jesus gives us a new meaning for the word "family." The ones who obey God are Jesus' brother, sister, and mother. Jesus is the Son of God. The people who honor and obey God become God's family.

The two stories show us a strange and important Bible truth. In the first story, Jesus says that a family that is divided can't continue. When we first look at the two stories, we may think that in the second story Jesus' own family is divided against itself! But Jesus helps us to understand what these verses are saying when He gives us a new meaning for the word "family." Jesus' real family are those people who follow God and obey Him (read Luke 12:53; Luke 14:26).

Many times in history, Christians did not agree with their relatives. Mark 3:31–35 helps us understand that Jesus had the same trouble with His own family. Jesus knows how it feels when your family misunderstands you. So, He can give comfort and pity to people who feel alone.



**Jesus knows how it feels when your family misunderstands you.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “Levi-Matthew,” pages 272–280; and “The Sabbath,” pages 281–289, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“Jesus was asked the question, ‘Does the Law allow us to heal on the Sabbath day?’ [Matthew 12:10, Nlrv]. Jesus answered, ‘What if one of your sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath day? Won’t you take hold of it and lift it out? A person is worth more than sheep! So the Law allows us to do good on the Sabbath day’ [Matthew 12:11, 12, Nlrv].

“The spies for the Jewish leaders didn’t dare answer Jesus in front of the crowd because they were afraid the people would agree with Jesus. The spies knew that Jesus said Bible truth. The Jewish leaders would let a man suffer because they didn’t want to break their rules about the Sabbath. But the Jewish leaders showed more care for an animal than they did for a man that God made. All false religions work this way. They come from man’s wish to lift himself above God. But these false religions cause man to become as low as animals. Every religion that fights against the control of God cheats people of the honor that God gave humans when He first made them. God will give back this glory to us in Jesus. Every false religion teaches its followers not to care about the needs of other people or their suffering. The Good News about Jesus teaches us that humans are worth a lot because Jesus bought us with His blood. The Good News about Jesus teaches us to care about the needs and the suffering of other people. The Lord says, ‘I will make men . . . of more worth than pure gold, even the gold of Ophir’ [Isaiah 13:12, Nlrv].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 286, 287, adapted.



**“The Good News about Jesus teaches us to care about the needs and the suffering of other people.”**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How can you and your local church help people who are suffering?
- ② The Jewish leaders hated Jesus so much. Their hatred “blinded” them to who Jesus really was. His miracles didn’t touch their hearts. So, they rejected Him. What can we do, as a people, to make sure that this same thing doesn’t happen to us?
- ③ How can your local church become “family” for people who lost their families because of their faith?

## ONLY WHEN PEOPLE PRAY AND STOP EATING FOR A SHORT TIME

**14**-year-old Payel changed after her friend killed herself. Payel used to be outgoing and friendly. But now she was quiet and didn't talk to anyone. Then she started to scream, shiver, and shake for no reason. Payel was scared. She told someone that a person who looked the same as her dead friend visited her.

The ghost told Payel, "Come. I want to take you with me."

Two times Payel tried to jump off the balcony of her home. Payel's parents were very worried about their daughter. They called Rustam for help. Rustam was a Bible worker with Global Mission.

Rustam took four church workers to Payel's home to pray. But Payel wouldn't sit still. She screamed. She threw her hands up and down and stomped her feet. The church workers sang hymns. Every time they said the name of Jesus, Payel screamed, "Stop! I can't breathe. Someone is choking me!" Rustam understood that Payel was filled with an evil spirit. Rustam read from the Bible stories about Jesus commanding demons to come out of people. Rustam prayed. Then Payel became calm. But later that night, Payel's aunt called Rustam and said, "Payel is screaming again and says she sees her friend."

Rustam was confused. What did he do wrong? Then he remembered the Bible story about how Jesus' followers couldn't cast out a spirit. When the followers asked Jesus why, Jesus said, " 'But this kind [type] of bad spirit does not come out of a person unless people ask God and fast [do not eat food for a time]' " (Matthew 17:21, WE). Rustam called several other Global Mission workers. They fasted and prayed for two days. Then Rustam went back to Payel's house with a group that included an Adventist pastor.

When Payel saw the visitors, she tried to run away. Four people were needed to hold Payel down. She screamed as the visitors sang hymns for 30 minutes. Then Payel fell asleep while the pastor preached about Jesus. Rustam sprinkled drops of water on her face. Then she woke up and drank some water.

Since then, Rustam has visited Payel and her family every two weeks to pray with them. Payel is outgoing and friendly again. Rustam says, "We weren't ready the first time we visited Payel. We were ready the second time because of Jesus' words in Matthew 17:21."

Thank you for your prayers for Global Mission workers who are starting churches in places where no one knows about Jesus. Learn more on the website: <https://bit.ly/GMPioneers>.

## INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



The ghost told Payel,  
"Come. I want to take you  
with me."



# Picture Stories



## SABBATH—JULY 20

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 4:1–9; Mark 4:13–20; Mark 4:10–12; Mark 4:21–23; Mark 4:26–29.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Think carefully about the things you hear. The way you give to others [people] is the [same] way God will give to you. But God will give you more than you give. The person who has something will be given more. But the person who does not have much, even what he has will be taken [removed] from him” (Mark 4:24, 25, ICB).

**THIS WEEK'S LESSON** is about the picture stories in Mark 4.

Bible thinkers have argued over the meaning of Jesus' picture stories. How should we explain their meaning? What do His picture stories mean? Why did Jesus use picture stories? What lessons do they teach us? Should we understand them as symbols or word pictures? Or were the picture stories real stories?

For sure, we won't answer all these questions in this week's lesson. We will read the picture stories and try to understand the important ideas Jesus wanted to teach.

Mark 4 tells five picture stories: (1) the farmer, (2) the lamp, (3) the measuring basket, (4) the growing seed, and (5) the mustard seed. Most of Mark 4 talks about the farmer. Mark tells us this picture story first. Next, Mark gives us the reason that Jesus told picture stories. Then, Mark tells us what the story means. We will study this three-part plan for Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. We will study the other stories on Wednesday and Thursday.



We will read the picture stories and try to understand the important ideas Jesus wanted to teach.



**PICTURE STORY: THE FARMER (Mark 4:1–9)**

Read the picture story about the farmer in Mark 4:1–9. Mark talks about four different types of earth or ground. Name these four types and explain how they are different from each other. What happens to the seed that falls on them?

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When people read Jesus' picture stories, they often want to read through them fast to get to the ending. They want to know about the lesson that Jesus wishes to teach. But Jesus often doesn't give us long explanations at the end of His picture stories.

So, we should slow down when we read each story and try to understand its meaning. Then we will understand better many of the ideas and lessons that the story is meant to teach us. In the picture story about the farmer, the same type of seed falls on four different types of dirt. The type of dirt changes what happens to the seed. The picture story about the farmer is really four stories in one.

What happens to the seeds? When the seeds fall on the road, the birds eat them. "While the farmer was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed" (Mark 4:4, ICB).

What happens to the seeds that fall on the rocky dirt? The sun burns them a few days later, and they die.

Some seeds fall in the thorny weeds. The weeds and thorns stop the seeds from growing, and they die, too.

Some seeds fall on the dirt in the field. These seeds grow all spring, summer, and fall until the farmer has a full crop.

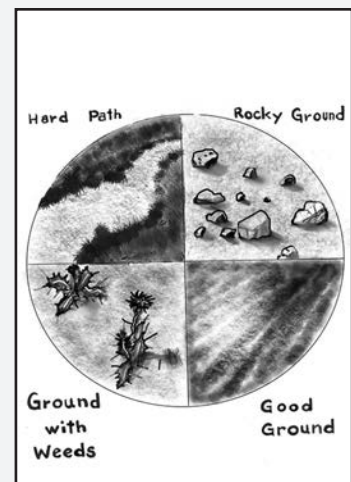
The first three seed stories are about failure. The final story is about success. The picture story teaches us about what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Yes, there are risks. But God will reward us in a big way for following His Son.

**What are some other spiritual lessons that nature teaches us?**

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**In the picture story about the farmer, the same type of seed falls on four different types of dirt.**

### JESUS' EXPLANATION (Mark 4:13–20)

Jesus finished the picture story about the farmer. But He did not explain it right away. Mark 4:1 tells us that Jesus told the picture story in front of a big crowd of people. Later, Jesus explained the picture story when He was with a small group.

**How does Jesus explain the picture story about the farmer? Read Mark 4:13–20 for the answer.**



**The different types of dirt are the different types of people who hear Jesus' message.**

Jesus' explanation helps us to understand that the story is a picture story.

Jesus says that the seed is a symbol for the Word, which is the Bible. James 1:21 says, "So get rid of everything that is sinful. Get rid of the evil that is all around us. Don't be too proud [filled with pride] to accept the word [the Bible] that is planted [put] in you. It [the Bible] can save you" (NIRV).

The different types of dirt are the different types of people who hear Jesus' message. In Jesus' explanation, everyone hears Bible truth. His message is preached to everyone. But not everyone acts the same way when they hear it. The dirt on the road is hard, and the birds quickly grab the seed. Jesus says that the birds show us how Satan quickly takes a belief in Bible truth away from the people who hear it. Rocky dirt is not deep. So, this dirt is a symbol for people who make empty promises. They say they want to follow Jesus. But they haven't really thought about how much following Him will cost them in this life. The dirt filled with weeds causes the seeds that fall on it to die. Jesus explains that this weedy dirt is a symbol for riches and the cares of life. These things destroy our love for Bible truth. The good soil causes things to grow. This soil is a symbol for the people who hear Jesus' message and accept it. Then Bible truth grows in the heart and makes a big "crop."

The longest explanations are for the rocky dirt and the weedy dirt. The people who are the same as the rocky dirt accept Jesus' message with joy. But when they must suffer for their faith, they reject the message. The people who are the same as the weedy dirt don't reject the message because of hard times. They reject the message because of good times. They love the things this life offers them more than they love God.

## THE REASON THAT JESUS TOLD PICTURE STORIES (Mark 4:10–12)

**Why did Jesus use picture stories to teach His lessons? Read Mark 4:10–12 for the answer.**

We must pay careful attention to Jesus' words in Mark 4:10–12 to understand what He is saying. These verses use a quote from Isaiah 6:9, 10. If you don't read these verses carefully, you may get the wrong idea. You may think that Jesus used picture stories to hide what He was really saying from some people. But that idea is false. Jesus wanted to help people understand and accept His teachings.

In Mark 3:5, 6, the hard hearts of the Jewish leaders make Jesus sad. In Mark 3:22–30, Jesus takes time to explain why their ideas are wrong. In Mark 12:1–12, the Jewish leaders understand that Jesus' picture story is really about them. Jesus tells the picture story to warn the leaders about what will happen if they try to kill Him. Jesus cares for the leaders. So, He tries to warn them.

**Read Isaiah 6:1–13. What happened to Isaiah? What message does the Lord give Isaiah to tell Israel?**

Isaiah sees a vision of God's glory in the temple. Isaiah feels very dirty when he sees this vision. God makes Isaiah clean. Then God tells Isaiah to give Israel a surprising message. The message is meant to warn the people to stop doing evil.

In Mark 4:10–12, we find the same message. These verses help us understand why Jesus used picture stories to teach. If we want to understand Jesus' words and teachings, we must obey God. When we obey God, we will become part of Jesus' family (Mark 3:35). The Jews who decided that Jesus was filled with Satan won't listen to His message or obey Him.

Jesus quotes Isaiah 6 to show us an important Bible truth: God doesn't keep people out of heaven because He is mean. Their own ideas and hard hearts keep them from accepting saving truth.

Each one of us chooses what type of "dirt" we will become. Everyone decides if they will, or will not, surrender to Jesus. In the end, we make the choice.



**Each one of us chooses what type of "dirt" we will become.**

**PICTURE STORIES: LAMP AND MEASURING BASKET**  
(Mark 4:21–23)

**Read the picture story about the lamp in Mark 4:21–23. What important lesson does Jesus teach in this story?**

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In Jesus' day, many houses were built around a yard. The yard had walls around it. Some houses were big. Other houses were small. Big or small, the house is a word picture that teaches us an important rule: in the future, everyone will know the Bible truth about Jesus.

Jesus asks two questions in Mark 4:21. "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a large bowl or a bed?" (NIRV). Of course not! Next, Jesus asks, "Don't you put it [the lamp] on its stand?" (NIRV). Of course you do! Lamps give light. If a lamp doesn't give light, why keep it? Mark 4:22 explains the picture story about the lamp. Everything secret will be made public. Jesus is talking about the Good News.



**If a lamp doesn't give light,  
why keep it?**

**Read the picture story about the measuring basket in Mark 4:24, 25. What lesson does Jesus teach us in this picture story?**

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In many places on earth, fresh fruit and vegetables are sold in outdoor markets. Sellers use a basket to measure how much the fruit or vegetable weighs. The basket helps the sellers to figure out how much money the food costs. Some sellers add extra food to a sale to help their buyers feel that they are getting a good deal. Jesus uses this idea about how sellers are fair to buyers to teach an important Bible truth. If we follow Bible truth, God will give us more knowledge. But if we reject the Bible truth that God gives us, we will lose the small amount of Bible truth that we had.

**How can we learn better the important rule that God will show us the same mercy that we show to other people? Think about this rule in all your friendships and relationships with other people.**

## TWO PICTURE STORIES: THE GROWING SEED (Mark 4:26–29) AND THE MUSTARD SEED (Mark 4:30–32)

**Read the picture story in Mark 4:26–29. What important lesson does this picture story teach?**

This picture story talks about growth. People help the kingdom of God to grow. But the real growth happens because of God’s work. The story ends when the grain or wheat becomes full grown. In the same way, when Jesus comes back, history will end.

**Read the picture story in Mark 4:30–32. What important lesson do we learn from this story about the mustard seed?**

This picture story shows how something very tiny grows into something very big. Mustard seeds are as small as 1 to 2 millimeters in size (0.039 to 0.079 inches). The plant in the picture story may be the black mustard. The black mustard plant has tiny seeds (more than 700 seeds in one gram). Black mustard seeds aren’t the smallest seeds on earth. But they are very small compared to the plant they become. The full-grown black mustard plant can grow as large as 3 meters (10 feet) tall. Jesus says that birds nest in the branches of the mustard plant. This word picture about the birds helps us remember Psalm 104:12 and Daniel 4:10–12. In Psalm 104:12, the poet talks about our powerful God who made the earth. Daniel 4 compares King Nebuchadnezzar to a tree who gives food and protection to all the people on the earth.

Jesus wants us to understand that the kingdom of God is the same as the mustard seed in the way that it grows. God’s kingdom is small at first. But it grows and becomes very large.

People in Jesus’ day may have laughed at Jesus and wondered how His words will happen when He had a small group of followers. But time has shown that His kingdom continues to grow and fill the earth.

**“ ‘The Good News about God’s kingdom will be preached in all the world [earth], to every nation [people group]. Then the end will come’ ” (Matthew 24:14, ICB). Think about how small the “church” was when Jesus said these words. Why is this promise so wonderful for us today? How does it make our faith grow strong?**



**Jesus wants us to understand that the kingdom of God is the same as the mustard seed in the way that it grows.**

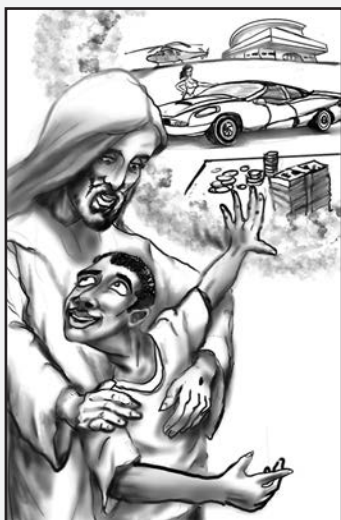


**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘The Sower Went Forth to Sow,’ ” pages 33–61, in *Christ’s Object Lessons*.

“How do you become holy? You give your whole self to God and serve Him. Jesus asks for our whole heart. He wants us to give Him our minds, our spirits, and our strength, too. We must not be selfish. If we live for ourselves, we are not Christians.

“Love must be the reason for everything we do. Love is the foundation of God’s government in heaven and on earth. Our words, thoughts, and feelings must show our love. Only love will make us loyal and keep us loyal to God. Love will help us to stay strong when Satan tries to get us to sin.

“We show our love in the things we give up for Jesus. God’s plan to save us includes the gift He gave to save us. Jesus gave up everything to save us. When we accept Jesus, we will be ready to give up everything for Jesus. We will put Him first in our lives. We will care more about His honor and glory than anything else.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 48, 49, adapted.



“When we accept Jesus, we will be ready to give up everything for Jesus.”

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① “Love must be the reason for everything we do. Love is the foundation of God’s government in heaven and on earth.” How does the Cross show this amazing Bible truth to us? How can we show this same love in our own lives? Why must we do so?
- ② What if someone said that Jesus told picture stories to keep His teachings a secret from some people? Would Jesus really do that when He died for everyone on earth (read 1 John 2:2)? Explain your answer.
- ③ We put lamps on lampstands, not under baskets (Mark 4:21)! How does this important rule help you to “shine” the same as a light in your community? How can you make your light shine more brightly?
- ④ Think some more about the picture story in Mark 4:26–29. How do we help “plant” the Good News in people’s hearts? Also, how do we help the Good News to “grow”? What is God’s part in this work? Why do we need to depend on God for everything if we want to grow?

## PART 1: A FIGHT ABOUT THE SABBATH

Father wasn't worried when Mother attended Seventh-day Adventist meetings at their town's schoolhouse in Armenia. Father also wasn't worried when Mother got baptized.

Father wasn't worried when his daughter Anush and her sister started going to Adventist summer camps. Father often drove his daughters to camp.

Father wasn't worried, later on, when Anush decided to get baptized. She was a 17-year-old university student at the time. Father also wasn't worried when Anush wanted to join the Adventist Church.

But Father was angry when someone from the university called to complain about Anush not going to classes on Sabbath.

A university leader told Father, "If Anush doesn't want to go to class because of the Sabbath, she doesn't need to go. But why does she need to tell everyone about her reasons for not going? She is causing people to lose respect for our school."

Father was upset. He thought that Anush's faith made his family look bad. Father scolded Anush when she came home.

Father said, "Why did you have to announce your reasons for not going to class at the university? If you are going to behave this way, then I forbid you to go to church."

Father also refused to allow Anush to get baptized.

Father told Anush, "When you're older, you can make your own decisions. But for now I'm in charge of you."

Anush didn't argue. In Armenia, a father's word is law. But Anush wondered, Was there a way she could go to church and honor Father at the same time? Anush promised God she would get baptized. But she worried that if she got baptized, Father would not allow Mother to go to church. Mother suggested that Anush wait. Mother found support for a delay in Numbers 30:3–5. These verses talk about the daughter who makes a promise or an oath while she lives in her father's house. If her father approves of the promise, God accepts it. But if the daughter makes a promise that her father doesn't like, then God releases the daughter from her promise.

Mother told Anush, "I think God supports the decision to wait to get baptized."

Anush waited. The next four years at university were hard for her. Anush believed that Father was a good man who wanted only what was best for her. But Anush also wanted to attend church and get baptized. Anush was happy when a classmate got baptized. The classmate first learned about the Sabbath when Anush refused to go to class on that day. This classmate became the first person that Anush won for Jesus.

## INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**Mother found support for a delay in Numbers 30:3–5.**

# Miracles Around the Sea of Galilee



## SABBATH—JULY 27

**READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON:** Mark 4:35–41; Mark 5:1–20; Mark 5:21–24; Mark 5:25–34; Mark 6:1–6; Mark 6:34–52.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But Jesus did not allow the man to go. He [Jesus] said, ‘Go home to your family and friends. Tell them about all that the Lord did for you. Tell them how the Lord was good [showed mercy] to you’ ” (Mark 5:19, ERV).



**Miracles help Jesus’ followers to understand more and more that Jesus is the Son of God.**

**JESUS** did most of His work for God in Galilee, around the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is actually a very big lake. The lake is almost 13 miles long (21 kilometers) and 8 miles wide (13 kilometers). The Sea of Galilee is the biggest lake in the area. Many people lived nearby and made their living from working on the lake.

Mark 4 ends with the story about the trip that Jesus and His followers take across the Sea of Galilee. A storm starts. Jesus commands the wind and waves to be still. Mark 6 ends with another story about the Sea of Galilee. This time, Jesus walks on the water to His followers in the boat. In between these stories about the lake, Mark tells us about the miracles that Jesus does on land. Mark also tells us about the first time Jesus sent His followers to preach. We will study these stories this week.

These stories show us who Jesus is. Jesus stops a storm. He commands demons to come out of people. He heals a woman who touches His clothes. He wakes up a dead girl. He feeds 5,000 people with a little bread and a couple of fish. He walks on top of water. These miracles help His followers to understand more and more that Jesus is the Son of God.

## STOPPING A STORM (Mark 4:35–41)

**Read the story in Mark 4:35–41. What happens in this story? What lessons does this story teach us about Jesus?**

At the beginning of Mark 4, Jesus steps into a boat to teach the crowd on the beach. In Mark 4:10–12, Jesus may have stepped out of the boat again to talk with His followers in private. Jesus taught all day long. So, He was very tired. At the end of the day, the followers take Jesus back into the boat. Jesus falls asleep. Then a storm starts on the lake. The big waves push the boat around. The boat almost sinks when the followers wake up Jesus. Jesus commands the wind and the waves to stop. The whole lake becomes very calm right away. For sure, the followers are very afraid when they see this powerful miracle from God.

**Read Psalm 104:1–9. How does the picture of Yahweh in these verses compare with Jesus when He stops the storm?**

The story in Mark 4:35–41 is an example of a “theophany.” A theophany is a time when God or His angels appear to humans. A theophany has five parts: (1) God shows in some special way that He is very powerful. (2) Humans are afraid. (3) The Lord or His angels command the humans not to be afraid. (4) God or His angels give the humans a special message. (5) Humans accept the message. The story in Mark 4:35–41 has four of the five parts of a theophany: (1) Jesus stops the storm. This miracle shows us He is very powerful. (2) The followers are afraid. (3) Jesus asks His followers why they are so afraid. This question is part 3, which is the command not to be afraid. (4) Jesus’ followers wonder about Jesus and ask who He really is. This question is part five of a theophany, which shows how the humans answer the message. The only part missing is a special message or words from God. Why is this part missing? Remember, Jesus keeps who He is a secret. The message is in His behavior. Mark will tell us who Jesus is, but first we must wait for the answer. When the followers ask, “ ‘Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey Him!’ ” (Mark 4:41, NLV), the readers must give the missing answer. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is the Lord.

**God is very powerful. How can you learn to trust in His strength in all parts of your life?**



**A theophany is a time when God or His angels appear to humans.**



## THE MAN WHO WAS FILLED WITH 5,000 DEMONS (Mark 5:1–20)

**Read the story in Mark 5:1–20. What does this story teach us about the worldwide war between good and evil? Also, what does this story teach us about Jesus? How much power does Jesus have?**

In Mark 5:1–20, we read the story about the man who was filled with 5,000 demons. This story is so sad it breaks your heart. The man lived all alone in hills where the graves were located. The man screamed day and night. He cut himself with sharp stones. “No one was strong enough to control him” (Mark 5:4, ERV). Then the man met Jesus.

Mark tells us what the man did. “When he saw Jesus a long way off, he ran to him. He fell on his knees in front of him” (Mark 5:6, NIV). The words “fell on his knees” come from the Greek word “**proskyneō**.” In the Greek language, “**proskyneō**” means “to worship.” This word shows us that this man understood that Jesus was Someone who could help him. But when the man tried to talk, the demons inside him took control. The demons shouted at Jesus. Jesus heard the man’s cry for help above the demons’ shouts. The demons asked Jesus for permission to enter a herd of pigs. There were about 2,000 pigs in the herd. Jesus allowed the demons to enter the pigs. Then the whole herd ran down the hillside and into the sea. All 2,000 pigs drowned in the water. The loss of the pigs caused the owners to lose a lot of money.

The amazing thing is that the demons knew who Jesus was. They also knew they were powerless against Him. That’s why the demons asked Jesus again (Mark 5:10, 12) to let them enter the pigs. So, the demons knew Jesus was more powerful than all 5,000 demons together!

The story is filled with things that made a person dirty in Bible times. Moses talked about the things that made a person dirty. Graves and dead bodies were not clean (Numbers 19:11, 16). Bleeding made a person not clean (Leviticus 15). Pigs were not clean (Leviticus 11:7).

The story also shows us the war between good and evil. Jesus commands the demons to leave. The demons kill the pigs. The townspeople ask Jesus to leave. But Jesus sends the healed man back to the city as His witness. So, the man goes back to tell other people what Jesus did for him. In some ways, this man was the last person we’d expect to become a worker for God. But the healed man had an amazing story to tell.



**Jesus heard the man’s cry for help above the demons’ shouts.**



## A DEAD GIRL LIVES AGAIN (Mark 5:21–24)

**Read Mark 5:21–24. What do you learn about Jairus in these verses?**

Jairus was a spiritual leader. Most of the Jewish spiritual leaders weren't friends with Jesus (read Mark 1:22; Mark 3:2, 6; Luke 13:14). But Jairus was in need. He falls on his knees in front of Jesus. Jairus's daughter is dying. Jairus asks for Jesus' help. Jesus goes with the worried father to his house.

**Read the story in Mark 5:25–34. What happens on the way to Jairus's house?**

A woman appears in the middle of the story about Jairus while he is on his way with Jesus to his house. The woman has suffered for 12 years. This story is the second Sandwich Story in Mark (read Mark 3:20–35; review lesson 3). Remember, a Sandwich Story is a type of storytelling where a writer starts telling a story and then begins telling another one in the middle of the first story. The writer finishes telling the first story after the second story is finished. In these two stories, Jairus and the suffering woman come to Jesus for help.

The woman comes behind Jesus and touches His clothes. Right away, she is healed. Jesus stops and asks, "Who touched my clothes?" (Mark 5:30, ERV). The woman who was sick is now healthy. But she is afraid that Jesus will be angry with her because she touched Him. Jesus is not angry at the woman. He asks the question because He wants to heal more than her body. Jesus wants to heal her spirit, too.

After Jesus heals the woman, Mark continues Jairus's story (read Mark 5:35–43). Jesus allowed no one else to go with Him and the girl's parents except Peter, James, and John. Jesus says that the girl is not dead but asleep. The people who came to cry for the dead girl laugh at Jesus. Jesus tells all these people to leave the house. Then Jesus goes into the dead girl's room. Jesus takes her hand and says, "**Talitha, kum!**" (This means "Little girl, I tell you to stand up!") Really, the word "**talitha**" means "lamb." Parents called their children "**talitha**" to show them how much they loved them. Then Jesus commands the parents not to tell anyone that He brought their daughter back to life. But as we shall see, who Jesus is cannot stay hidden or secret.



**A woman appears in the middle of the story about Jairus while he is on his way with Jesus to his house.**

## REJECTED AND ACCEPTED (Mark 6:1–6)

**Read Mark 6:1–6. Why did the people from Jesus' hometown of Nazareth reject Him?**

Often when a person from a small town becomes popular or famous, people back home get excited. But the people in Nazareth were not happy about Jesus. The people in Nazareth were surprised and upset at Jesus' success. They had a hard time accepting His change from being a carpenter to a teacher and healer. Jesus did most of His miracles in Capernaum, and not in Nazareth (read Luke 4:23). So, some of the people in Nazareth may have been jealous or angry about that. On top of everything else, Jesus already had a disagreement with His family (Mark 3:31–35), as we saw in lesson 3.

**Compare the work of the Twelve Followers with the death of John the Baptist (Mark 6:7–30). Talk in class about how different these two things are.**



**When they must depend on other people for help, Jesus' followers become friends with the people who need to hear their message.**

In Mark 6:7–30, we read about the third Sandwich Story (see yesterday's study and lesson 3 for more information). The Twelve take the message of Jesus everywhere while John is in prison and no longer allowed to preach. Jesus tells His followers not to take too many supplies with them on their journey. Jesus tells them to depend on other people for support. This advice makes Jesus' followers depend on the people they serve. When they must depend on other people for help, Jesus' followers become friends with the people who need to hear their message.

John the Baptist is not friends with King Herod or his family. Mark tells us about John's terrible death. Herodias's daughter dances for Herod. She asks him for John the Baptist's head on a dish. John is killed at the same time that the Twelve Followers of Jesus announce the Good News. John's death shows us Jesus' death in the near future (Mark 15 and 16). After John is killed and buried, people report that John wakes up from the dead (Mark 6:29, 14–16).

**Did anyone reject you the way Jesus was rejected? Did you suffer something that was hard for you to understand? What did you learn from these experiences that can help you in the future when something terrible happens again?**

## THE SAVIOR NO ONE EXPECTED (Mark 6:34–52)

Read Mark 6:34–52. What problem did Jesus and His followers have? How did they solve the problem?

After the followers come back from preaching, they go with Jesus to rest in a quiet place beside the Sea of Galilee. But a large crowd of 5,000 people arrives at the place before they get there. Jesus sees that the people are the same as sheep who have no shepherd. So, He teaches them the whole day.

In the evening, Jesus' followers tell Him to send the crowd away to find food. But Jesus tells His followers to feed the crowd. Read the conversation between Jesus and His followers in Mark 6:35–38. This conversation shows us that the followers think about how to solve the problem without God's help. But Jesus does a miracle to solve the problem. Jesus uses five loaves of bread and two fish to feed the big crowd.

This story helps us to understand the false ideas that the Jews had about the Savior. The Jews expected the Savior to make Israel free from the Romans. They believed that this freedom from Rome would cause peace. If the Romans heard that 5,000 men were meeting in the desert, they might think Jesus was trying to build an army to fight against Roman control (compare with John 6:14, 15; Acts 21:38).

Jesus doesn't do what anyone expects the Savior to do. He doesn't lead the crowd in a fight against Rome. He sends His followers away and tells the crowd to go home. Then Jesus goes to a mountain to pray.

The Jews expected the Savior to make Israel free from Rome. But Jesus came to make His people free from sin. That's why Jesus walks on water. When Jesus walks on water, He shows His followers that He is the Lord who is in control of all nature. But Jesus didn't come to control the earth at that time. He came to give His life as an offering for many people (Mark 10:45).

**The Jews had a false understanding of Jesus' first coming. How does this story teach us that we must have a correct understanding of special time messages in the Bible? Why is the correct understanding so important?**



**When Jesus walks on water, He shows His followers that He is the Lord who is in control of all nature.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘Peace, Be Still,’ ” and “The Touch of Faith,” pages 333–348, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“God is training His people. Their lives will show that they follow Him in every way. The people who follow God must have personal experience in learning about God and His plan for their lives. We must hear God talk to our hearts. We must wait for God to talk with us. When we are quiet, we will hear His voice speaking to us. God says to us, ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ Psalm 46:10 [ICB]. When we know who God is, we will find real rest. This knowledge will get us ready to do God’s work. Everywhere around us, people are busy and in a hurry. They are weary with the many things they must do. But when we find rest in God, we will feel new energy. The light and peace from heaven will fill our hearts. Our lives will show other people that God is in control of us. This light and peace will touch people’s hearts.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 363, adapted.



“The people who follow God must have personal experience in learning about God and His plan for their lives.”

“Some people wondered why Jesus didn’t give health, strength, and riches to all His people. They saw the miracles and wonderful works He did. So, why didn’t Jesus make His people free from their enemies and give them honor and power? Didn’t Jesus say that God sent Him to this earth? So, why did Jesus refuse to be crowned the King of Israel? The people couldn’t understand Jesus. He was a mystery to them. When He refused to be made king, the people misunderstood Him. Many people thought that He refused to be king because He doubted what He was sent to do and who He was. So, the people let doubt into their hearts. Satan caused the people to misunderstand Jesus and to reject Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 385, adapted.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 What if someone asks you, “What did Jesus make you free from?” How will you answer?
- 2 Why does God sometimes allow a good person to be put in prison and die, the same as John the Baptist? What hope does God give us when things are difficult to understand?



## PART 2: AN UNEXPECTED CHANGE OF HEART

When Anush graduated university, no one offered her work. Father was very worried. In Armenia, fathers often help their kids get jobs. Some fathers pay companies to give jobs to their children. But Father refused to pay a company to hire his daughter. So, Anush had no job in her town in Armenia.

Then Anush learned about a group of churches from the United States. This group was looking for someone who spoke the Armenian language to translate for them. The job paid a small amount of money. Anush needed to move to a nearby city, Vanadzor, to do the job. Anush asked Father for permission to work for the Christian group. In Armenia, children ask their parents for permission to do many things. Father thought that working with Americans would be a good experience for Anush. He told her, "Yes, you may go."

Anush got the job. She was happy. Four years earlier, Father forbade Anush to go to church or get baptized. Now Anush read the Bible and shared Jesus with other people. She also got paid to do it! As Anush worked, she wanted to become a missionary. A missionary is someone who travels to faraway lands to tell other people about Jesus. When her job ended, Anush came home. She wondered how she could become a missionary.

Anush prayed and fasted for three days. When people fast, they don't eat food for a short time. While she fasted, Anush read in Exodus that God told Moses at the burning bush to ask Pharaoh to let His people go serve Him. Anush felt that God said to her, "Go ask Father to let you serve Me."

Anush went to Father. She asked, "May I go study to become a missionary in another country?" Father said, "No."

Anush kept reading Exodus. God continued to send Moses to Pharaoh. Every time Moses talked to Pharaoh, Anush spoke to Father. Father got upset. One day, he shouted at Anush. He said, "Why can't you just go to the local church and get baptized? Forget about becoming a missionary in another country!"

Anush was confused. She hadn't expected Father to agree to her baptism. So, she decided to go to church. She went to a nearby city where an Adventist church held meetings about Jesus. When the preacher asked who wanted to be baptized, Anush stood.

The preacher asked, "Are you sure? What about your father?"

Everyone knew Anush's story. Anush said, "Father is fine with my decision." Father didn't stop the baptism. With joy, Anush got baptized.

Part of last quarter's 13th Sabbath Offering helped build a special center for families in Yerevan, Armenia. Thank you for your offerings which help to share the Good News with people.

## INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**When the preacher asked who wanted to be baptized, Anush stood.**



# Inside Out



## SABBATH—AUGUST 3

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 7:1–13; Mark 7:14–19; Mark 7:24–30; Mark 7:31–37; Mark 8:11–13.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “It is not what goes into a man’s mouth from the outside that makes his mind and heart sinful [filled with sin; not clean]. It is what comes out from the inside that makes him sinful’ ” (Mark 7:15, NLV).

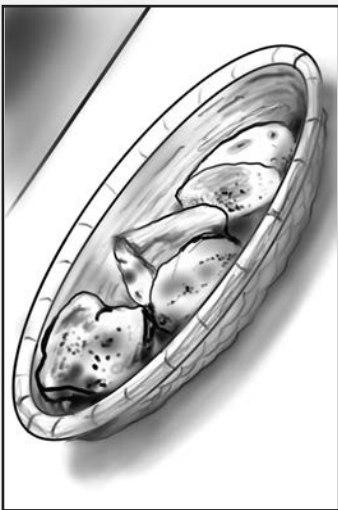
**THIS WEEK,** we study Mark 7 and the first half of Mark 8. At the beginning of Mark 7, Jesus makes the Jewish spiritual leaders angry because He rejects their false religious ideas and teachings. Jesus rejects these things in a way that shows He supports something very important to Christian life today. We will learn what that is this week.

Then Jesus tells a riddle. This riddle helps people understand true faith.

After these things, Jesus goes to Tyre and Sidon. There He meets a woman who is the only person in the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John to argue with Jesus and win! Jesus gives her what she asks for because of her faith.

Mark 7 teaches us an important lesson about miracles. Miracles are very wonderful. But they alone are not enough to open hearts to Bible truth. Just look at Israel’s spiritual leaders. What good did Jesus’ miracles do for them, right? They rejected Jesus.

In Mark 8, we will look at how bread is a symbol for human teachings and rules. The stories this week contain important lessons about religious life and worship.



In Mark 8, we will look at how bread is a symbol for human teachings and rules.

### HUMAN TEACHINGS COMPARED WITH GOD'S COMMANDS (Mark 7:1–13)

**Read Mark 7:1–13. What important Bible truths do we learn from these verses?**

Make a picture in your mind of children studying these verses in Sabbath School. When they get home, the children announce to their mothers that they no longer need to wash their hands before they eat because Jesus said so! But this story is not about germs or health.

In Jesus' day, many Jews cared about having clean hearts. In the past, the spiritual leaders made a rule about handwashing. The leaders commanded everyone to wash their hands so that they would stay clean inside their hearts. In Moses' time, only the priests or spiritual leaders needed to follow this rule (Exodus 30:17–21). But in Jesus' day, everyone must obey it. So, when Jesus' followers break this rule, the Jewish leaders complain to Jesus.

Jesus answers their complaint with a strong Bible quote from Isaiah (Isaiah 29:13). In this verse, Isaiah scolds the Jews who say they honor God but do not keep His law. Isaiah also scolds the Jews for replacing God's commands with man-made rules.

In His answer to the Jewish leaders, Jesus also includes God's command to honor our parents (Exodus 20:12). We must take care of our parents in their old age. Jesus compares this teaching with the religious rule that allows someone to give a gift to God. (The word "gift" comes from the word "**corban**" in the Greek language.) The spiritual leaders allowed a man to give a gift to God but continue to use it for himself. At the same time, the spiritual leaders allowed the man to refuse to help his parents who were old and needed this gift. Can you imagine in your mind the conversation between a young man who followed this rule and his old parents? The young man could say, "I'm sorry, Father. I would really love to help you, but I gave the money to the temple."

Jesus attacks this type of false religious teaching. The Jewish leaders made their rules more important than the Bible. When they did that, they sinned against God.

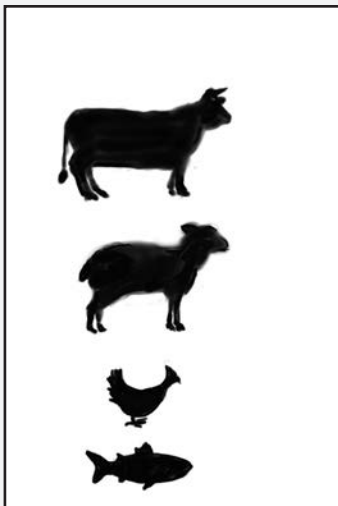
Jesus doesn't believe that the handwashing rule is necessary or part of God's plan. Jesus' answer shows us that He supports God's law and not human rules. (Also read Mark 1:44; Mark 7:10–13; Mark 10:3–8; and Mark 12:26, 29–31.)



**The children announce to their mother that they no longer need to wash their hands before they eat because Jesus said so!**

**CLEAN HANDS OR CLEAN HEART? (Mark 7:14–19)**

**Read Mark 7:14–19. What did Jesus mean when He told the riddle in Mark 7:15?**



**Are Seventh-day Adventists wrong to teach that church members who do eat meat should only eat meat from the clean animal list in Leviticus 11?**

Many people misunderstand Jesus' words in Mark 7:14–19. Is Jesus saying that people no longer need to worry about keeping the food laws in Leviticus 11? Are Seventh-day Adventists wrong to teach that church members who do eat meat should only eat meat from the clean animal list in Leviticus 11?

First, we must remember that Jesus just finished giving reasons for why we should obey the law of Moses (Mark 7:6–13). So, right after that, do you really think He would say that we don't need to follow the food laws that God gave to Moses (read Mark 7:14–19)? Of course not! Second, the food rules that the Jewish spiritual leaders taught did not come from the Old Testament. The food laws of Moses came from the Old Testament. Third, what Mark 7:19 is really saying is that the food rules that the Jewish leaders made were false. One of these rules said that if a Jew touched food that a non-Jew touched, then the food would make the heart of a Jew dirty.

**What makes a person's heart dirty? Read Mark 7:20–23 for Jesus' answer.**

In Mark 7:19, Jesus says that food doesn't go into the heart. Food goes into the belly and goes through the body. But in Mark 7:21–23, Jesus says that evil comes from inside the heart. Jesus gives a list of evil behavior and sins that start with evil thoughts and end with evil actions.

In Mark 7:10, Jesus includes breaking the fifth commandment on His list of evil behavior and sins. Honoring your parents is the fifth commandment. Every commandment from the second part of the law is included on Jesus' list. In Mark 7:7, Jesus also talks about empty worship. When we break the first four commandments, our worship is empty. So, this story in Mark 7 shows us that Jesus supports God's law.

**Maybe you know and understand all the correct teachings and beliefs. But who owns your heart? God? Or self and Satan?**

## CRUMBS FOR THE DOGS (Mark 7:24–30)

**Read the story in Mark 7:24–30. What important lessons do we learn from this story?**

The story in Mark 7:24–30 also brings up some difficult questions. First of all, why does Jesus compare this woman to a dog?

In Mark 7:27, Jesus says the children should be fed first. So, if the children are the “first,” then there must also be another group who is “second,” right? Jesus also uses a special form of the word “dogs,” or “little dogs.” This special form doesn’t mean puppies. The word for “dogs” that Jesus uses means the dogs that are allowed to come inside the house. Street dogs are not allowed inside. Jesus’ words about the “dogs” who can come inside the house give the woman hope.

“She answered, ‘That is true, Lord. But the dogs under the table can eat the pieces of food that the children don’t eat’ ” (Mark 7:28, ERV).

How did this woman come up with this brave answer? For sure, love for her daughter filled her with courage. Jesus’ words about the dogs gave her hope because they showed her that she was the same as a dog inside the house. The dog was under the table at the feet of the Master of the house. In the same way, the woman fell down at Jesus’ feet. There, she asked Him to help her daughter. The dog was allowed to eat the food that fell on the floor. In the same way, the woman asked for what the dog was allowed to have.

The woman’s answer shows her faith. She wanted Jesus to heal her daughter who was at home. The woman knew this miracle was easy for Jesus. That’s why the woman compared this miracle to a small crumb of food. The woman said that this miracle would be easy for Jesus to do because He was very powerful. Her problem was the same as a small crumb compared to Jesus’ strength.

“Jesus showed the woman that she was no longer a stranger in Israel. She was a child of God and part of His family. As a child, she may share in the Father’s gifts that He gives to His children.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 401, adapted.

**Why is it wrong to hate other people who are different from you? Why does this hate go against the teaching of Jesus? How can we clean our hearts of these evil feelings?**



**Jesus’ words about the “dogs” who can come inside the house give the woman hope.**



## THE MAN WHO HAD TROUBLE SPEAKING (Mark 7:31–37)

**Read the story in Mark 7:31–37. Who was brought to Jesus? What did Jesus do for this man?**

Jesus took the long way back to Galilee from Tyre and Sidon. Jesus went north from Tyre, up through Sidon. Then He went down through the area that was to the northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Finally, Jesus arrived near the sea. Jesus may have taken the long way back to Galilee so that He could spend more time teaching His followers.

Someone brought a man to Jesus when he came to Galilee. Mark doesn't tell us who brought the man to Jesus. The man was deaf, and he had trouble speaking.

Jesus understands the man's needs. So, Jesus takes the man aside to heal him in private. As modern readers, we may think that what Jesus did next to heal the man was strange. Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears. Next, Jesus spits and touches the man's tongue. Then Jesus sighs or takes a deep breath and then blows His air out. We see from the story that Jesus touches the parts of the man that need healing. But why did Jesus sigh? "Jesus sighed because He thought about all the people who would not listen to His teachings. Jesus sighed because He thought about all the people who would refuse to accept Him as the Savior." —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 404, adapted.

Jesus healed the man. The man could now hear and speak with no problem. Jesus' sigh helps us to understand that God has put limits on Himself. God will not force Himself on anyone. He gives us free choice. All people are free to choose the one they will serve: Jesus, who is the Prince of Life, or Satan, who is the prince of evil. Jesus could make everyone listen to Him if He wanted. But He will not force anyone to accept Him as the Savior.

This story shows us the things that God can do for the ones who come to Him for help. Maybe you are afraid to share your faith with other people. Maybe you feel the same as this man that Jesus healed because you have trouble talking about your faith or knowing just what to say. Jesus' miracle of healing this man gives us hope that Jesus can help us talk about Him to people who need to know about His love.

**God gave us the gift of communicating with other people. How are we using this gift to honor Him?**



**“Jesus sighed because He thought about all the people who would not listen to His teachings.”**

**WATCH OUT FOR BAD BREAD! (Mark 8:11–13)**

**Read the conversation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in Mark 8:11–13. What did the leaders say that upset Jesus?**

Why didn't Jesus do a miracle to show the leaders that He was God? To understand why Jesus refused, we must remember what Jesus says at the end of Mark 3. At the end of this chapter, Jesus talks about the sin against the Holy Spirit. If people refuse to believe what they do see, then another miracle won't convince them. Miracles aren't enough to convince people who refuse to believe.

**What did the followers forget? What lesson did Jesus want to teach them? Read Mark 8:14–21 for the answers.**

Jesus warns His followers against the “yeast” of the Jewish spiritual leaders and King Herod. Yeast is added to bread dough to make it rise. What is this “yeast” that Jesus talks about? “Yeast” is a word picture for teachings (compare with Matthew 16:12).

But the followers don't understand what Jesus is talking about. They think Jesus is talking about buying real bread! Jesus asks His followers some questions to help them understand. Jesus is disappointed that His followers don't understand the work He came to do. Jesus' words help us remember what He says in Mark 4:10–12 about people who don't understand. Jesus uses strong words to help His followers understand their mistakes.

In Mark 8:19, 20, Jesus asks His followers questions about the number of baskets of bread that were left over after He fed the 5,000 and the 4,000 (Mark 8:1–10). Both of these stories should have taught the followers that how much or little we have does not limit God in His work. Jesus asks a final question in Mark 8:21: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘You remember these things I did, but you still don't understand?’ ” (ICB). Look at all that the followers saw already with Jesus, right? So, why, after all these experiences, do they continue not to understand?

**Think about all the proof God gives us to believe in Him and His love. God gives us so much, right? So, why do some of us continue to doubt?**



**Miracles aren't enough to convince people who refuse to believe.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “Tradition,” “Barriers Broken Down,” and “The True Sign,” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 395–409.

“Many Christians today hide in their hearts a secret wish. They want other people to praise them. This sin fills the hearts of many of the Lord’s followers today, just as it did in Bible times. This secret wish will ruin our work for Jesus and hurt our friendships with other people. So many of God’s people want other people to honor and praise them. When we love self and want an easy way to be saved, we will replace God’s commandments with man-made rules. Jesus’ words of warning to His followers are also a warning for us. ‘Be careful,’ Jesus warned them. ‘Watch out for the yeast [makes bread rise; also a word picture for the false teachings and man-made rules] of the Pharisees [Jewish spiritual leaders]. [Mark 8:15, NlrV].

“Jesus’ religion is holy and honest. When the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts, we will want to give all the glory and praise to God. Only God is powerful enough to empty our hearts of all pride and change us. When this change happens in our lives, we know that God is working. Faith should destroy the selfish spirit in our hearts. Faith should cause us to seek to honor God and not ourselves. When these things happen in our lives, we know that we are following God. Jesus said, ‘Father, honor Your name!’ [John 12:28, NLV]. Jesus followed this rule His whole life. If we follow Jesus, we also will follow this important rule. Jesus commands us to ‘live the way Jesus lived.’ 1 John 2:6 [ERV]. ‘We can be sure that we know Him if we obey His teaching.’ 1 John 2:3 [NLV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 409, adapted.



“‘Watch out for the yeast [makes bread rise; a word picture for the false teachings and man-made rules] of the Pharisees [Jewish spiritual leaders].’ [Mark 8:15, NlrV].”

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① As a Christian, what do you do to keep your heart clean?
- ② Who are the “dirty” people in your community? What can you do to share the Good News about Jesus with them?
- ③ What can you and your class members do to share the Good News about Jesus in little ways with your neighbors?

### **PART 3: PRAYING FOR FATHER TO BE SAVED**

**D**uring the time that Anush was a university student, she watched a film about a Mexican boy. The little boy prayed for his father to give his heart to Jesus. The boy said, “I believe that if I pray for my father every day, he will accept God.”

The story filled Anush with hope. She decided to pray every day for Father to get baptized. She started praying four years before her own baptism. Two years after her baptism, she continued to pray for him. She was sure that Father would give his heart to God. But then Anush started to have trouble at home with Father. So, she wondered how much longer she’d need to wait for her prayers to be answered.

After Anush was baptized, she started to do a lot of work for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She also volunteered for many of the church’s programs. Sometimes she got paid for her work. Other times, Anush didn’t get paid any money.

At first, Father didn’t complain because he gave Anush permission to go to church and get baptized. In Armenia, many fathers make the decisions for their families.

But Father wanted the best for his daughter. He didn’t understand why she worked so hard for so little money. Father told Anush, “The church is using you. You have good skills. The church is not giving you what they owe you.”

Father continued to complain about the church whenever Anush was at home. She didn’t like it. Whenever she was asked to help out in a church program, Anush asked Father for permission. Father allowed her to go but complained every time.

Anush decided to have a heart-to-heart talk with God. She prayed, “God, I know that Father will come to you. But I’m so tired of all his complaining. Please help me.”

Anush told Mother, “Today, I’m praying with all my heart to God. Join me. We don’t want Father to keep complaining. We want Father to go to church with us.”

In Armenia, many mothers and children go to church without their husbands and fathers. Many families are fine with doing things this way as long as the men allow the mothers and children to go and do not hurt them for their faith. But Anush was no longer happy with going to church without Father. She wanted Father to go to church, too.

Mother agreed to pray. Anush’s heart filled with hope again. She was sure that God would touch Father’s heart. Anush believed Father would give his heart to God at any time.

Part of last quarter’s 13th Sabbath Offering helped build a special center for families in Yerevan, Armenia. Thank you for your offerings which help to share the Good News with people. Anush’s story continues next week.

INSIDE  
*Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**Anush decided to pray every day for Father to get baptized.**



# Jesus Teaches His Followers: Part 1



## SABBATH—AUGUST 10

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 8:22–30; Mark 8:31–38; Mark 9:1–13; Mark 9:30–41; Mark 9:42–50.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Then Jesus called the crowd to him, along with his followers. He said, ‘If anyone wants to follow me, he must say “no” to the things he wants. He must be willing to die on a cross, and he must follow me’ ” (Mark 8:34, ICB).



**When we follow Jesus,  
God will give us  
more spiritual wisdom  
about Jesus and  
who He is.**

**THE FIRST HALF OF THE BOOK OF MARK** shows us who Jesus is. His powerful teachings and miracles help us to understand that He is the Savior.

At the beginning of the second half of the Book of Mark, Jesus asks His followers who they believe He is. After Peter answers, Jesus starts to explain what will happen to Him as the Savior.

In the last part of Mark 8 to the end of Mark 10, Jesus teaches His followers about what will happen to Him. Jesus talks about the Cross. Then He teaches His followers special lessons. These lessons are important for us today.

Jesus also heals two different blind men. Jesus heals one blind man in the middle of Mark 8 and the other blind man at the end of Mark 10. These miracles teach us about following Jesus. When we follow Jesus, God will give us more spiritual wisdom about Jesus and who He is. Jesus' teachings helped His followers become better people. His teachings continue to help us today, too. They show us what we will need to do to follow Jesus and the blessings that God will give us when we do.



**JESUS HEALS THE BLIND MAN (Mark 8:22–30)**

**Read the story about Jesus and the blind man in Mark 8:22–30. Why did Jesus touch the blind man two times to heal him? What lessons do you learn from this story?**

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John talk about some blind men that Jesus heals. Jesus heals a blind man in Mark 8. In Mark 10:46–52, Jesus heals a blind man named Bartimaeus. Matthew talks about two blind men (Matthew 20:29–34). John 9 tells the story about Jesus healing a man born blind. Jesus tells this man to wash in the Pool of Siloam.

But the story in Mark 8 is special. We find this story only in the Book of Mark. Jesus heals a blind man in this story, too. But this miracle is the only one of Jesus' miracles that has two parts or actions. Jesus touches the man twice. As part of the story, Jesus also takes hold of the man's hand and leads him out of the village.

But why does Jesus touch the man two times to heal him? Was it because Jesus wasn't strong enough? Jesus touches the man twice to teach a lesson. The healing miracle is a living picture story. Jesus shows us we take time to grow in spiritual wisdom as Christians. Also, look at the writing style or form that Mark uses for this part (Mark 8–10). Mark starts and then ends the chapter with a story about Jesus healing a blind man. So, when Jesus gives the blind man his eyesight, Jesus shows us that He will help us "see" or understand the lessons He wants to teach us, too.

Teachers like questions. Teachers use questions to help students understand a topic. In Mark 8, Jesus asks His followers who He is. Jesus hasn't asked them this question before this time. Peter is the first person who isn't filled with a demon who announces that Jesus is the Savior. After Peter makes this announcement, Jesus starts to explain that He is going to die on the cross.

Why does Jesus tell His followers to tell no one that He is the Savior? Doesn't that order go against His starting the kingdom of God? In Jesus' day, the people expected the Savior to fight the Romans and force them to leave Israel. Jesus didn't come to be that type of Savior. So, He ordered His followers not to tell anyone who He was.

**Are there times when we shouldn't talk about some Bible truths? If yes, why shouldn't we talk about them? How does this story help us answer these questions?**



**When Jesus gives the blind man his eyesight, Jesus shows us that He will help us "see" or understand the lessons He wants to teach us, too.**

**WHAT MUST WE DO TO FOLLOW JESUS? (Mark 8:31–38)**

**Read the story in Mark 8:31–38. What does Jesus teach us about the things we must do to follow Him?**

The followers now know that Jesus is the Savior. This knowledge changes their relationship with Jesus. As readers, we knew this information from the beginning of the Book of Mark (Mark 1:1). So, we understand things in a way that Jesus' first followers didn't.

When Jesus first invited men to follow Him, He promised to teach them how to “catch” men instead of fish (Mark 1:17). Jesus didn't talk about any future trouble or hard times that would happen when people followed Him. But now the followers know who Jesus really is. So, Jesus tells them the reason that God sent Him to this earth. Jesus must suffer many things. He must be rejected and killed. Then He will wake up from the dead after three days.

This news is surprising. An instant before, Peter confessed that Jesus was the Savior. Now Peter takes Jesus aside and scolds Him for saying He will suffer and die. Jesus says sharp words to Peter that must have hurt Peter's heart. Jesus says that Peter is Satan, and tells him to get out of His way. Why does Jesus talk this way to Peter? Because Peter's words and thoughts were not in agreement with God's plan for Jesus' life.

“Peter's words did not give Jesus the help or hope He needed to suffer the many things ahead of Him. Peter's words were different from God's plan of mercy for lost sinners. Peter's words did not agree with the lessons that Jesus came to teach. Jesus came to teach His followers that they must give up things to follow Him. Jesus' life was the example of His teachings.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 415, adapted.

Jesus wants His followers to carry the cross and follow Him. The cross was the worst death that the Romans could force a person to suffer. Everyone wanted to avoid the cross. So, why would anyone want to use the cross as a symbol of their love for Jesus?

In the Christian faith, we give up things for Jesus. He gives us the gift of everlasting life. If we get everything we want in this life and lose everlasting life, we have nothing.

**How does your life show the Bible truth in John 12:25?**



**Jesus wants His followers to carry the cross and follow Him.**

## THE MOUNTAIN AND THE CROWD (Mark 9:1–13)

**Read the story in Mark 9:1–13. What did Peter, James, and John see at night with Jesus?**

In Mark 9:1, Jesus says that some standing with Him would not die before they saw the kingdom of God in all its shining beauty. Jesus' promise comes true a few days later when He takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain alone. There Jesus is changed before them. He shines with the bright glory of God's kingdom.

Elijah and Moses come from heaven to talk with Jesus. Luke tells us that they talked about what Jesus was about to do in Jerusalem (Luke 9:30, 31). Jesus' shining glory on the mountain is connected to His coming death on the cross (compare with Mark 9:9). When Jesus died on the cross, the followers would think back to Jesus' shining glory on the mountain. This thought would give them hope.

The next morning, Jesus and His three followers come down the mountain. Then Peter, James, and John ask Jesus about the Bible promise that says Elijah must come first. The Jews expected Elijah to appear before the Savior came (compare with Malachi 4:5, 6). Jesus answers that Elijah already came. Jesus was talking about John the Baptist. Elijah was a symbol of John the Baptist. Jesus' enemies killed John. They also will kill Jesus. But Jesus will wake up from the dead after three days.

After the night of shining glory, Jesus and the three followers come down to the bottom of the mountain. There, the other nine followers met a boy filled with a demon. But the nine followers could not command the demon to come out of the boy. When Jesus comes down to the bottom of the mountain, everyone runs to meet Him. Jesus learns about the demon's control over the child. The father of the boy says to Jesus, " 'If you can do anything, please have pity on us and help us' " (Mark 9:22, ERV).

Right away, Jesus notices the man's doubt. The Lord's answer can be written this way: "What do you mean, 'If I can'?" (Mark 9:23, author's translation, adapted). Jesus' question helps the father understand that his son is not the only one with a problem. The father has a problem, too. His problem is doubt. His doubt could keep his son from being healed! "Right away the father of the child, with tears in his eyes, said loudly, 'I do believe! Help me to believe more!' " (Mark 9:24, WE). Then Jesus heals the boy.



**When Jesus died on the cross, the followers would think back to Jesus' shining glory on the mountain.**

## WHO IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON? (Mark 9:30–41)

**Read the conversation between Jesus and His followers in Mark 9:30–41. What is different about Jesus' second sermon about His death and resurrection, or waking up from the dead? (Compare with Mark 8:31.) Also, what do the followers argue about? What lesson does Jesus teach them?**



**If you want to be the most important person in God's kingdom, then you must become a servant.**

In Jesus' first sermon about His death, He talks about the people who will reject Him and kill Him. In His second sermon, Jesus tells His followers that someone will sell Him to His enemies. Jesus doesn't say who will sell Him. But the reader knows that Judas will do it because Mark tells us early on in his book (read Mark 3:19). Again, the Lord says that He will be killed and then wake up from the dead after three days. But His followers don't really want to hear this announcement any more than they wanted to hear the first one.

In Mark 8:27, Jesus was north of the Sea of Galilee near Caesarea Philippi. In Mark 9:30, Jesus passes through Galilee. In Mark 9:33, Jesus enters Capernaum alone. His Twelve Followers are far behind Him. When the followers arrive at the house where Jesus was, Jesus asks His followers to tell Him what they talked about on the way there. No one says anything at first. Their conversation was about who was the most important person among them.

Jesus teaches His followers an important lesson about God's kingdom. First, if you want to be the most important person in God's kingdom, then you must become a servant. Then Jesus shows what He means with an action. Jesus puts a little child in the middle of their group. Most children may feel scared if they are in the middle of a group of strangers or big men. But Jesus picks the child up in His arms. The child relaxes. Jesus teaches His followers that if you accept the child, you accept Jesus. If you accept Jesus, then you accept His Father. So, the child that no one thinks is important is connected to God.

John asks Jesus a question about strangers or people who don't belong to the Jewish people group. Jesus teaches the important lesson that everyone who isn't against our cause is on our side. The Lord says that God in heaven always sees when we help people, even in small ways.

**What does the Bible teach about who is the most important? How are you trying to live this Bible truth?**



## THE HEALTHY MAN IN HELL (Mark 9:42–50)

**Read Mark 9:42–50. What are the teachings of Jesus in these verses? What words connect the teachings together?**

At first, we may think that these verses are a collection of Jesus' teachings that are not connected together. When we take a closer look, we see that each new teaching has a word that connects it to the teaching before it. Mark 9:42–50 uses three important ideas to help us understand Jesus' teachings: (1) "causes to sin," (2) "fire," and (3) "salt."

The first teaching is about little ones. Little ones is a word picture for new Christians. God asks teachers and leaders in His kingdom to be responsible for new Christians. Teachers and leaders must show new Christians special care. In the same way, the Old Testament teaches that we should care for the people in our communities who need our help the most: widows, orphans, and foreigners. Jesus says that it would be better for someone to drown in the sea than to cause one of these new Christians to sin.

In Mark 9:42–50, is Jesus really teaching people to cut off their hand or foot? Or to remove one of their eyes? Also, is Jesus teaching that hell is a place where people will burn forever? The answer to the first question is no. Jesus is not teaching us to hurt our bodies. The Jews were against this behavior (compare with Deuteronomy 14:1; 1 Kings 18:27, 28). The Lord is using word pictures to teach an important lesson: we may think losing a hand, foot, or eye is terrible, but sinning is far worse!

The answer to the second question also is no. Jesus is not teaching that people will burn in hell forever. How do we know? Think about the people who are going to heaven in Jesus' example. They enter heaven with only one eye, foot, or hand. Now think about the people who are going to hell. They enter into hell with all their body parts. A healthy man in hell? Shouldn't it be the other way around? A healthy man will go to heaven. Jesus uses humor to help us understand the topic. He wants us to know that sin is very bad. We should be willing to lose a hand, foot, or eye before we are willing to lose everlasting life!

Hell's flames are not everlasting. But what the flames burn up stays dead forever. So, people who are lost don't burn forever. But they do stay dead forever.



**Jesus says that it would be better for someone to drown in the sea than to cause one of these new Christians to sin.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “Ministry,” and “Who Is the Greatest?” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 426–442.

“Do you wish to be honored? Then first you must empty your heart of all pride. When God chooses people for important jobs on earth, He chooses workers who are the same as John the Baptist in their hearts. John the Baptist was not filled with pride. When we are this same way in our hearts, we will be much the same as a child. A follower who is the same as a child makes the best worker for God. Angels can work with God’s followers who are trying to save other people. These followers are not filled with pride. They do not live to honor self.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 436, adapted.

“What gifts did God give you that He didn’t give to someone else? Maybe God blessed you with the education, training, and religious experience that most other people don’t have. God gave you these gifts that He didn’t give to other people so that you will use these gifts to bless them. Are you strong? Then help those who are weak. Angels love to help God’s children. These angels shine bright with God’s glory, and always see the face of the Father in heaven. God commands the angels to watch over people who are not easy for us to love. Angels go where they are most needed. The ones who need their help the most are the people who have the hardest battles with self to fight. These people live in places that do not give them much hope. God’s loyal followers will work with His angels to help these needy and suffering people.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 440, adapted.



**“God’s loyal followers will work with His angels to help these needy and suffering people.”**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Read again Mark 8:27–29. How often do you confess to other people that you believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?
- ② Compare God’s view of success with the human view of success. How are the two different? What type of men and women do most people think are important? Who does God think is a success that the people on this earth pay no attention to or may not even like very much? What do your answers tell us about how wrong the sinner’s ideas about success really are?

## PART 4: A BIG DISAGREEMENT OVER FOOD

One Sabbath, Anush and Mother came home from church. Anush learned that Father made plans for a picnic in the country. He told them, “Let’s barbecue.”

Anush said, “No Father. That’s not a good plan. I don’t eat meat anymore.”

Father decided not to go on the picnic. But he didn’t really understand that Anush gave up eating meat for good. The next day, Father made chicken for Sunday lunch. He offered her a piece. Anush said, “Father, I don’t eat any meat.” Now Father understood. He got upset. He thought that eating no meat was not normal.

The next day, Father told Anush and her mother that they couldn’t go to prayer meeting at the house church in their town. When Mother and Anush got upset, Father got angry. He complained about Adventists. He didn’t like that they gave God tithes or 10% of all the money they got (Malachi 3:8–10). If that wasn’t bad enough, they gave God offerings, too. Father blamed the Adventist Church for being a foreign group that wanted to destroy Armenia. Father said bad things about the way that Anush lived. Father said, “Today you say, ‘I don’t eat meat.’ Tomorrow you will say, ‘I don’t have a father.’”

Anush sat quietly and prayed in her heart. She said, “What shall I say, Lord?” Every time Father spoke against God or the church, she prayed, “Father is not really saying these things to me. He’s saying them to You. It’s your job to answer.” Then Anush remembered Romans 2:4, which says, “God is kind to you so that you will change your hearts and lives” (ICB). Anush believed that God was telling her to show the same love to her father. Anush prayed, “Help me to love him. Amen.”

Father owned a small grocery store. When Father left Mother or Anush in charge, they didn’t sell alcohol or cigarettes. Now, as Father scolded them, he felt guilty. He said, “Do you think that I’m evil and you’re good because I sell alcohol and cigarettes, and you don’t? I’m a better Christian than you both! To prove it, I will lead Sabbath worship from now on. So, you no longer need to go to church.”

That announcement ended the conversation. Anush went to her room. Mother followed. Both were surprised. Mother said, “What will we do now?”

Anush suggested that they cooperate with Father as long as he honored the Bible. Anush said, “Father said we will worship at home on Sabbath. He didn’t take away our Bibles. He also respects the Sabbath. Let’s wait for Sabbath. If Father keeps his promise, we will keep the Sabbath at home with him. If he breaks his promise, we will pray and let the Lord lead us.”

INSIDE  
*Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**When Father left Mother or Anush in charge, they didn’t sell alcohol or cigarettes.**

# Jesus Teaches His Followers: Part 2



## SABBATH—AUGUST 17

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 10:1–12; Mark 10:13–16; Mark 10:17–31; Mark 10:32–45; Mark 10:46–52.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve. The Son of Man came to give his life to save many people” (Mark 10:45, ICB).



Mark talks about marriage, children, money, and the reward and cost of following Jesus.

**THIS WEEK,** we study Mark 10. In this chapter, Jesus finishes teaching His followers about His coming death on the cross. Half of the chapter is about the followers. The other half contains important lessons for Jesus' followers. We learn these lessons from Jesus' meetings with people. The Pharisees, a group of Jewish spiritual leaders, come to argue with Jesus about the topic of divorce. Parents bring their children to Jesus for Him to bless. A rich man asks Jesus about everlasting life. A blind man asks Jesus to heal him.

Mark 10 has important lessons about following Jesus and how we do that in everyday life. Mark talks about marriage, children, money, and the reward and cost of following Jesus. Jesus also heals another blind man (Mark 10:46–52; compare with Mark 8:22–26). Mark also gives us a beautiful example of what following Jesus costs us and what our following Him leads to (Mark 10:17–45).

These lessons help the followers of Jesus to become better followers. These lessons are not only for the followers 2,000 years ago. These lessons are also for us today.



**GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE (Mark 10:1–12)**

**What question do the Pharisees, a group of Jewish spiritual leaders, use to “trap” Jesus? How did Jesus escape the trap? What does His answer teach us? Read Mark 10:1–12; Genesis 1:27; and Genesis 2:24 for the answer.**

In Mark 10:1–12, the Pharisees ask Jesus if it is legal for a man to divorce his wife. The Pharisees taught that divorce was legal. But they didn't agree about the reasons for getting a divorce. One group of Pharisees was the School of Shammai. This group had strict rules about divorce. The School of Shammai taught that a man could only divorce his wife for certain reasons: (1) She couldn't give him a child. (2) She didn't take care of his needs. (3) He didn't love her. Or (4) she cheated on him. The School of Hillel allowed divorce for almost any reason.

So, we may think the Pharisees are strange for asking Jesus this question about divorce if they already teach that divorce is legal. But the Pharisees were really being sneaky. Their question was a trap. If Jesus said the wrong answer, then He could get in trouble with Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas controlled the area east of the Jordan River, where Jesus now was. Antipas divorced his wife and married Herodias, who was his brother's wife. Herod also cut off John the Baptist's head because John told Herod it was a sin to marry his brother's wife (read Matthew 14:1–12).

Jesus answers the question with a question. He asks the Pharisees what Moses said about divorce. The Pharisees talk about what Moses said in Deuteronomy 24:1–4. These verses talk about getting married after divorce. That's because the Israelites in Moses' day were already divorcing their wives. The laws in Deuteronomy 24 helped protect the woman in the marriage. But in Jesus' day, members of the School of Hillel used these laws to make it easier to get divorced for any reason. They used the law that protected a wife as an easy way to get rid of her.

Jesus doesn't try to argue about Deuteronomy 24 with the Pharisees. Jesus talks about God's first plan for marriage before sin (Genesis 1 and 2). Jesus says that in the beginning, God made a man and a woman (Genesis 1:27). Then Jesus talks about the Bible truth in Genesis 2:24. A man leaves his parents and joins himself to his wife. The two become one body, heart, and mind. So, Jesus teaches that what God joins together, people should not separate.



**Jesus teaches that what God joins together, people should not separate.**

## JESUS AND CHILDREN (Mark 10:13–16)

**What did Jesus do for parents who brought their children to Him? Read Mark 10:13–16.**



**Jesus insists that the followers must not stop the children from coming to Him.**

In Jesus' time, people wanted to have children. But if a child was born with a missing or broken body part, parents often left the child to die on rocks or threw it into a river. People wanted sons more than daughters. Sometimes parents left girl babies to die in the sun or rain. At times, people saved these babies and sold them as slaves when they were older. So, while people wanted to have children, the adults weren't always fair to children. People behaved as if children were no better than slaves (Galatians 4:1, 2).

Jesus' followers did not really understand Jesus' teaching in Mark 9 about accepting God's kingdom with a child's trust and faith (Mark 9:33–37). Now the followers scold the people who bring their children to Jesus for a blessing. Maybe the followers think that Jesus doesn't have time for this small task.

The followers are wrong. Jesus is upset. In the Book of Mark, Jesus shows some strong feelings at times. One time, people tried to stop children from going to Jesus for a blessing. This experience teaches us that Jesus thinks children are very important.

Jesus insists that the followers must not stop the children from coming to Him. Why? Because God's kingdom belongs to the children. We must accept God's kingdom with the same faith and trust that a child has in his or her parents' love.

“Don't let your behavior give people a false picture of Jesus. Don't keep the little ones away from Jesus with your mean and nasty spirit. Give children a reason to feel that heaven would be a nice place if you were there. Don't talk about religion as something that children can't understand. Show children that you expect them to accept Jesus when they are young. Show them that Christianity is a religion of joy. Let them see from your own life that coming to Jesus is not the end of everything that makes life joyful.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, pages 43, 44, adapted.

**How can you be a better example of Jesus to the children around you? How can you show them His love?**

**WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? (Mark 10:17–31)**

**Read Mark 10:17–31. What important lessons about faith and following Jesus do these verses teach us, both rich or poor?**

The man in the story in Mark 10:17–31 approaches Jesus. The man shows how much he respects Jesus. The man runs to Him, kneels in front of Him, and asks an important question: “What must I do to have everlasting life?” Jesus talks about the last six commandments. The man answers that he has followed all these laws since he was a youth.

Mark is the only New Testament writer who tells us that Jesus loved the man. Jesus gives the man a test to show the man what is really in his heart. Jesus asks the man to sell everything he owns first and then come follow Him. The man feels very sad when he hears Jesus’ answer. The man turns away from Jesus and leaves because he owned many things. The man was not really following the commandments at all. He broke the first one. He put something above God in his life. The man’s riches were his god.

Jesus then explains that riches can trick us and cause us to reject God. Jesus said that it is hard for rich people to enter heaven.

The followers are surprised at Jesus’ words. The followers wonder who then can be saved? “Jesus looked at them and said, ‘That is something people cannot do, but God can. He can do anything’ ” (Mark 10:27, ERV).

Mark 10:27 is a beautiful verse. This verse contains an important Bible truth: you can’t make it to heaven on your own. You need God’s mercy to be saved. For sure, this idea is wonderful. We may think this verse is a powerful way to end the story. But the story is not over. Then Peter says that he and his friends left everything to follow Jesus. Jesus says that whatever we leave to follow Him is nothing compared to what we will get, now and later in heaven. This story teaches us an important lesson: only Jesus’ death removes our guilt. Only Jesus’ mercy; His resurrection, or waking up from the dead; and His life give us strength to obey His commandments.

**Read Romans 6:1–11. How do these verses show God’s mercy in our lives? How does God’s mercy remove our guilt and sin? How does God’s mercy make us new people in Him?**



**Jesus says that whatever we leave to follow Him is nothing compared to what we will get, now and later in heaven.**

**CAN YOU SUFFER WHAT I MUST SUFFER?**

(Mark 10:32–45)



**In God's kingdom,  
His followers always use  
their gifts and strength  
to bless other people.**

**Read Mark 10:32–45. How do these verses show that Jesus' followers don't understand Jesus' work on earth and what it means to follow Him?**

Jesus moves nearer to Jerusalem in His travels. On the way, He tells His followers what will happen to Him there. Jesus talks about His coming death and resurrection, or waking up from the dead. But Jesus' followers don't want to hear or believe this news. When you don't want to hear something, you can reject it very easily, right?

James and John seem to do this very thing when they come to ask Jesus for a favor. Jesus asks them for more information. James and John say they want to sit on Jesus' right side and left side when He is honored.

Jesus wants James and John to understand what they are really asking Him. So, Jesus asks them if they can suffer what He is about to suffer. Jesus will suffer in Gethsemane and on the cross (compare with Mark 14:36). Jesus will die and be buried in the grave (Mark 15:33–47) in the same way that He was buried under water when He was baptized (read Mark 1).

But James and John don't understand what Jesus is saying. They tell Jesus that, yes, they can suffer what He will suffer. Jesus then tells them that they will suffer for Him. James was the first one of the Twelve Followers who died because of his faith (Acts 12:2). John lived the longest of all Jesus' followers. He was sent to live on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9). Jesus says that God will decide who will get the honor to sit next to Jesus in His kingdom.

How did the other followers feel when they heard what James and John asked? They were angry with James and John (Mark 10:41).

Jesus then gives His followers one of His most important teachings. Jesus tells them that non-Jewish leaders use their control to become more powerful and rich. But in God's kingdom, His followers always use their gifts and strength to bless other people. Jesus is the King of the kingdom of God. As the King, Jesus leads the way to the kingdom. He shows us how to get there. How? Jesus gave His own life as payment for our sins. This news is not what His followers expected or wanted to hear.



**WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?  
(Mark 10:46–52)**

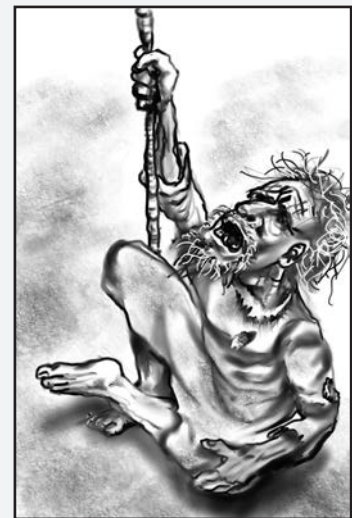
**Read Mark 10:46–52. How did blind Bartimaeus act when Jesus came near him?**

Until now in the Book of Mark, Jesus tells almost everyone He helps not to tell other people about His miracles and who He is. In the story in Mark 10:46–52, Jesus is about to leave Jericho when a blind man named Bartimaeus starts to shout. Bartimaeus is a beggar on the side of the road. “He heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by. So he began shouting, ‘Jesus, Son of David, please help me!’ ” (Mark 10:47, ERV).

“Many people scolded the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he shouted more and more, ‘Son of David, please help me!’ ” (Mark 10:48, ICB). Bartimaeus’s words show his faith in Jesus as the Savior. His words also show he trusts that Jesus can heal him. In Jesus’ day, the name ‘Son of David’ meant two things to the Jews. (1) They believe that the Son of David will sit on David’s throne and be king over all Israel (compare with Isaiah 11; Jeremiah 23:5, 6; Jeremiah 33:15; Ezekiel 34:23, 24; Ezekiel 37:24; Micah 5:2–4; Zechariah 3:8; Zechariah 6:12). (2) They also believe that the Son of David will be a healer and an exorcist. An exorcist is someone who commands demons to come out of people.

Jesus stops walking. He tells the people to invite Bartimaeus to come to Him. As Bartimaeus comes to Jesus, he throws off his coat. This action teaches us something very important about Bartimaeus. First, we must understand what people in Jesus’ day thought about blind people. Then we can better understand the lesson about Bartimaeus’s coat. In Jesus’ day, people thought that widows, orphans, and blind people were not very important. This group of people were often poor and needy. They were in danger of starving. They often had to beg for food. They did not have money for warm clothes. So, the coat was important. When Bartimaeus takes off the coat and leaves it behind, he shows his faith that Jesus will heal him.

Jesus doesn’t disappoint Bartimaeus. People who come to Jesus in the Book of Mark always get the help they need. Jesus asks Bartimaeus what he wants. The blind man asks Jesus to give him his sight. Right away Jesus heals him. The blind man follows Jesus on the road. This story shows us that being Jesus’ follower is about seeing life with new eyes. Then we will follow Jesus in the way that He leads.



**Bartimaeus began shouting, “ ‘Jesus, Son of David, please help me!’ ” (Mark 10:47, ERV).**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “Blessing the Children,” and “ ‘One Thing Thou Lackest,’ ” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 511–523.

“Jesus loved children. He accepted their love for Him. Their words of praise were the same as music to Jesus. Whenever Jesus met men who were sneaky and liars, the words of the children made Jesus’ heart happy. Wherever Jesus went, His loving face and words caused the children to love and trust Him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 511, adapted.

“Many rich and powerful people may think that God asks too much from them. They are the same as the rich young ruler. They don’t want to give up everything they own to follow Jesus. But everyone who wants to follow Jesus must obey this important rule. We must obey Jesus. He will accept nothing less from us. Jesus teaches us that we must give ourselves fully to Him. Often Jesus uses very strong language to explain this teaching. Why does Jesus use strong language in His teaching? Often Jesus uses strong language because it is the only way He can save us. So, He commands us to give up those things that will destroy us if we continue to hold onto them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 523, adapted.



**“Jesus commands us to give up those things that will destroy us if we continue to hold onto them.”**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What are ways you can help children and young people stay connected to Jesus and the church? Why is it so important that we do this?
- ② Sometimes people say that they don’t care about money. That’s not true. Everyone cares about money. There’s nothing wrong with that. What, then, is the problem with money? Why must Christians, rich or poor, be careful with how they manage their money?
- ③ What if Jesus asked you, “What do you want Me to do for you?” What would be your answer?
- ④ Think some more about Jesus’ words in Mark 10:43–45. How do we follow Jesus’ example? How can we learn to serve other people in this way?

## PART 5: A HOME THAT BECAME A CHURCH

Father kept his promise. He held Sabbath worship at home where he lived in Armenia. The week before, Father told Mother and their daughter Anush that they couldn't go to the Adventist church anymore. So, on Sabbath morning, Father told his wife and daughter to come to the living room. For Sabbath School, they studied the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* and prayed. Then Anush preached a short sermon.

The family continued to worship every Sabbath at home for many months. Father never visited an Adventist church before. But he was a loyal Sabbath keeper. If guests came to visit, Father invited them to the living room. He opened his Bible, and said, "Welcome to our worship program in our home. Today is the Sabbath. You may join us." Father's invitation surprised his guests. They wondered what was going on. That's because in Armenia, when someone has guests in his home, he puts his guests first. He stops everything to please his guests.

In Matthew 4, the family read about how Jesus won the fight against Satan with the words, "The Bible says." Father understood that he needed to know the Bible so that he would know when Satan was trying to get him to sin. From that day, Father started to read the Bible daily. As he read, he also found answers to his questions. He learned why he and his family worshiped on the seventh day, Saturday, while many Christians in Armenia worshiped on the first day of the week, Sunday.

Father promised that Anush and Mother would never attend the Adventist Church again. Father wanted to keep his promise. Anush very much missed church services. But she hid her feelings from Father. She understood that it was her duty to love her father and wait for God to give him a new heart.

Then Anush learned that the Adventist house church in their town was going to celebrate the Lord's Supper and wash each other's feet on Sabbath. Anush asked her Father for permission to go. In Armenia, fathers make the decisions for their family members.

Father said, "The Lord's Supper? You know, I can lead out in that part of worship, too." No one went to the house church that Sabbath. Then Father and Mother became grandparents. Anush's sister had a baby. Mother learned that the members of the Adventist home church were praying for them and the new baby. Mother told Father, "They prayed for our whole family in church. I want to take something sweet to them as a thank-you gift."

Father's heart was touched when he heard about the thoughtfulness of the church members. So, he allowed Anush and Mother to go back to church.

## INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**From that day,  
Father started to read  
the Bible every day.**

# Disagreements in Jerusalem



## SABBATH—AUGUST 24

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 11:1–11; Zechariah 9:9, 10; Mark 11:12–26; Mark 11:27–33; Mark 12:13–27; Mark 12:28–34.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And when you stand praying, forgive anyone you have anything against. Then your Father in heaven will forgive your sins” (Mark 11:25, NIV).

**MARK** records five disagreements between Jesus and the Jewish spiritual leaders in Mark 2 and 3 (read lesson 3). In this week's lesson, Jesus argues six more times with the Jewish leaders when He arrives in Jerusalem. The first five disagreements happen at the beginning of Jesus' work on earth. The last six disagreements happen at the end of Jesus' work on earth. All of the disagreements teach us important lessons about the Christian life.

The Jewish leaders come to argue and fight with Jesus. But they never win. This week, we will study why people fight against God. We also will learn what Christians can do to help remove the feelings and ideas from people's hearts that separate them from God. These feelings and ideas keep people from following Jesus.

In Mark 11, Jesus goes to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast, which happens between the end of March and the beginning of April. Mark 11–16 tells us the story about that time. The first 10 chapters of Mark cover about 3½ years of Jesus' life. But the last 6 chapters cover only a little more than a week! Mark spends so much time writing about this time in Jesus' life because he wants us to understand that this time is very important.



This week, we will study why people fight against God.



## LIVING AS JESUS LIVED (Mark 11:1–11)

**Read Mark 11:1–11 and Zechariah 9:9, 10. What do these verses talk about?**

Half of this story is about how Jesus sends two of His followers to a nearby village to get a donkey for Him to ride into Jerusalem. Why does Mark spend so much time telling this story about the donkey?

The answer has two parts. First, this story shows us that Jesus is a powerful prophet or special messenger. Second, Jesus' coming to Jerusalem is part of God's plan. We can read about this plan in Zechariah 9:9, 10. Zechariah 9:9, 10 talks about the king who rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. These verses help us remember the time that Solomon entered Jerusalem on a donkey, too (1 Kings 1:32–48). At that time, Adonijah, Solomon's brother, tried to steal the throne for himself. But David commanded the people to make Solomon the king right away.

"500 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Zechariah told about the coming of the King to Jerusalem. Now this special message was about to happen. For so long, Jesus refused to allow people to honor Him as a king. But now Jesus comes to Jerusalem as the promised King. He is the One who will sit on David's throne."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 569, adapted.

Jerusalem is built on hills that are about 2,400 feet (740 meters) tall. In Jesus' day, about 40,000 to 50,000 people lived in the city. But more people came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast in the spring. The city covered only about 250 acres of land. The temple hill covered 37 of those acres. So, the beautiful temple was the most important part of the city of Jerusalem.

Jesus entered Jerusalem from the east. He rode down from the Mount of Olives. Then He may have entered the Golden Gate and gone up to the temple. Everyone in the city was excited about Jesus' coming. A crowd followed Jesus and shouted, "Hosanna." This word first meant "save now." Later, people used the word to mean "praise to God."

The time for keeping secrets was over. Now Jesus enters Jerusalem in a way that shows everyone that He is their King. Jesus enters the temple and leaves because the time is late. Then Jesus and His Twelve Followers go to Bethany. The exciting day ends with Jesus' leaving the city. But tomorrow will be different.



**"Now Jesus comes to Jerusalem as the promised King."**

**A DEAD TREE AND A CLEAN TEMPLE (Mark 11:12–26)**

**Read the story in Mark 11:12–26. What happens in this story? What lesson does the dead tree teach us?**



**Jesus chases away the sellers from the courts so that people may worship in quiet.**

In the morning, on the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus was hungry. Bethany was about two miles away from Jerusalem. Jesus saw a fig tree covered with leaves. He went to pick some fruit. Jesus was not stealing. Old Testament law allowed a hungry person to eat food from a neighbor's field or fruit trees (Leviticus 19:9; Leviticus 23:22; Deuteronomy 23:25). But Jesus saw no fruit on the tree. So, He said to the tree, " 'People will never eat fruit from you again' " (Mark 11:14, ERV). We may think that Jesus' actions and words in this story are strange. What happens next is even more surprising.

The next part of the story may have happened in the Court of the Gentiles. Gentiles were non-Jews. The Court was a space connected with the temple where the Gentiles were allowed to enter. People bought and sold animal offerings here. Caiaphas, the top Jewish leader, made buying and selling animals legal in this part of the temple. Jesus chases away the sellers from the courts so that people may worship in quiet. Jesus' action makes the people in charge of the temple very angry. Jesus says the temple is a house of prayer for all people (Isaiah 56:7). All people includes non-Jews. Jesus says that the leaders made the temple the same as a hideout for robbers (Jeremiah 7:11). Then Jesus and His followers leave (Mark 11:19).

The next morning, Jesus goes back to the city with His followers (Mark 11:20–26). On the way there, the followers are surprised to see the fig tree is dead, all the way down to the roots. Jesus explains what happened to the tree. He uses the example of the tree to teach His followers an important lesson about prayer and forgiveness.

In this story, the fig tree is a word picture for the temple. Do you see that Jesus judges the tree but cleans the temple? These two stories about the fig tree and the clean temple are the fourth Sandwich Story (review lesson 3) in the Book of Mark. Now the Jewish leaders make plans to kill Jesus. When Jesus dies on the cross, the animal offerings in the temple will no longer be necessary.

**What things in your life do you need Jesus to clean? How does this cleaning happen?**

**WHO SAID YOU CAN DO THAT? (Mark 11:27–33)**

**Read the story in Mark 11:27–33. What did the Jewish leaders say to Jesus? How did Jesus answer?**

The day after Jesus cleans the temple, the Jewish leaders meet Him outside the temple. They ask Him why He chased away the animal sellers the day before. The leaders don't really want to know the answer. They want to trap Jesus with their question. If Jesus says that God told Him to chase the sellers away, the leaders will say that a carpenter from the country can't be that powerful. If Jesus says that He had His own reasons for sending the sellers away, the leaders will say He is a fool.

Jesus sees their trap. He says that He will answer their question if they will answer His question. Jesus asks the leaders if John the Baptist's baptism came from God or from men. Right away, the leaders see that Jesus has trapped them. If the leaders say that John's baptism came from God, Jesus will say, "Why didn't you believe John?" The leaders are afraid to say that John's work wasn't from God. If they do that, the people will get angry because they loved John. The leaders lie and say they don't know. So, Jesus now can refuse to answer their question.

**Read the story in Mark 12:1–12. What did Jesus say to the leaders after He refused to answer their question? What does His picture story mean?**

Jesus tells a picture story about a grape garden, an owner, and the workers who rent the field. The story Jesus tells is much the same as the picture story about the grape garden in Isaiah 5. In Isaiah's story, God accuses Israel of not loving and obeying Him. Everyone who heard Jesus' picture story understood what He was saying. Jesus' story is connected to Isaiah's picture story.

In Jesus' picture story, the workers refuse to give any fruits from the field to the owner. The workers beat and kill the owner's servants. Finally, the owner sends his beloved son. The owner expects the workers to respect his son. But they do not. The workers think that if they kill the son, the grape garden will belong to them. This idea is crazy. The workers earn the punishment they get.

Jesus uses this story to warn the Jewish leaders. If they kill Him, then God will punish them.



**In Jesus' picture story, the workers refuse to give any fruits from the field to the owner.**

## WHAT WE OWE TO GOD AND MAN (Mark 12:13–27)

**Read the story in Mark 12:13–17. What is happening in this story? What Bible truths does Jesus teach?**



**Jesus' answer is to give to the king of Rome the things that belong to him and to give to God the things that belong to God.**

The Jewish leaders want to trap Jesus again. They want a reason to blame Him to the Roman governor or to the people. So, the leaders try to start a fight with Jesus. They ask Him a question about paying taxes. In Jesus' day, not paying taxes was a crime against the Roman government.

Jesus' answer is to give to the king of Rome the things that belong to him and to give to God the things that belong to God. This answer saves Jesus from a trap. His answer also teaches an important lesson. We are responsible for paying our taxes and honoring our governments. "Jesus announced that the Jews lived under the protection of the Roman government. So, they should pay what they owed to the government. As long as the government didn't ask them to do anything that broke God's law, the people should support the government. The people should live in peace and obey the laws of the land. At the same time, the people must put God first."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 602, adapted.

In Mark 12:18–27, the Jewish leaders ask Jesus about the resurrection. The resurrection is the time when God will wake people up from the dead at Jesus' Second Coming. The Sadducees were a group of Jewish spiritual leaders who didn't believe in the resurrection. The Sadducees tell Jesus a story about seven brothers and one woman. The law of Moses said that if a man died with no sons, his brother must marry the widow. Any children who were born would belong to the dead man (Deuteronomy 25:5–10). Then the children could own the dead man's land.

The Sadducees ask Jesus whose wife the woman will be in the resurrection. Jesus answers their question in two parts. First, He talks about God's power to wake up the dead. Then Jesus says we will not marry in heaven. Next, Jesus teaches that the resurrection will happen. Jesus supports this teaching with Exodus 3:1–22. In these verses, God says that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus suggests that this verse means that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will wake up from the dead. They can't stay dead if God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are, for now, dead.



## THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT (Mark 12:28–34)

**Read Mark 12:28–34. What important question does the friendly lawyer ask? What answer does Jesus give?**

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In the Book of Mark, most of the Jewish spiritual leaders argue with Jesus and don't support Him. So, we are surprised when one of the leaders really listens to the answers Jesus gives and likes what he hears. This man has courage to talk with Jesus in front of the other leaders who hate Him. For sure, it would be easy for the lawyer to stay quiet and not let anyone else know that he agrees with Jesus on anything. But this man doesn't do that.

The lawyer asks Jesus which commandment is the most important. Jesus' answer is clear and honest: He says the verses from Deuteronomy 6:4, 5. The most important commandment is to love God with all your heart, spirit, mind, and strength. Jesus also tells the lawyer the second most important commandment: this time, Jesus says a verse from Leviticus, which says to love your neighbor the same as yourself (Leviticus 19:18).

Sometimes people wonder how God can command us to love. When we understand the time in which Moses wrote, we can better understand the commands in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. In Old Testament times, people made or wrote contracts or agreements with other people. The word "love" in those days meant that everyone in the contract must keep the contract and do everything they agreed to do. So, the word "love" means that we show our loyalty to God with our actions and our behavior.

The lawyer was honest. He understood what Jesus taught, and he said so. We can imagine in our minds the frowns on the faces of the other Jewish leaders when one of their own agreed with Jesus! No one else was willing or brave enough to do that. Jesus told the lawyer that he was not far from the kingdom of God. But first the lawyer needed to understand who Jesus was and follow Him.

**How do we learn to love God and love our neighbors the same as we love ourselves? How does the Cross help us to love God and our neighbors?**



**The lawyer tells Jesus that the most important commandment is to love God with all your heart, spirit, mind, and strength.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “A Doomed People,” “The Temple Cleansed Again,” and “Controversy,” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 580–609.



“The selfish ones who live for self are the same as the fig tree that had no fruit.”

“Jesus announced that the tree will die. Jesus’ own power made that tree. This announcement is a warning to all churches and Christians. No one can live the law of God without serving other people. But many people are selfish. They do not show mercy. Some people think they are excellent Christians. But they don’t understand what it means to serve God. They plan and study to please self. They act only to make self happy. They use their time to get what they can only for self. Everything they do in life is for self. They don’t help anyone else. God made them to help and bless other people in every possible way. But self is so big they can’t see anything else. They don’t care about other people at all. The selfish ones who live for self are the same as the fig tree that had no fruit. They are false Christians. They go to church. But they don’t confess their sins or have real faith in God. They don’t obey Him. They say they are Christians, but they don’t serve Him. When Jesus judged the fig tree, He showed that He hated fake Christians. Jesus announces that the worst sinner is less guilty than the Christian who says he serves God but who does not obey Him or honor Him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 584, adapted.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Think about how Jesus cleaned the temple and what that action meant. What does this cleaning mean for the church? How will Jesus clean His church today?
- ② Again and again, Jesus says that God will keep His promises in the Bible. How important is the Bible to our faith? Why must we reject anyone or anything that teaches that the Bible isn’t important to our faith, to our belief in who God is, and how He acts?
- ③ As Christians, what do we owe our leaders and our governments? What do we owe God? How does Jesus’ teaching in Mark 12:13–17 help answer this question?
- ④ Study Bible verses on the resurrection or waking up from the dead. Why is this teaching so important to our faith as Christians?

## PART 6: FATHER'S SPECIAL DREAM

Anush prayed for years for Father to come to God. After Father allowed Anush and Mother to start attending church again on Sabbaths, Anush asked God to show Himself to Father. Anush prayed, "Please talk to Father in dreams and visions. Or use his friends. I just want You to save him."

Anush trusted God to solve her problem. She prayed, "This problem is between You and my father."

Then Father had a dream. In it, he saw fire falling on a city near their town in Armenia. Father saw some people running and screaming. Other people were calm and peaceful. They sang. Father was surprised. He told Anush and Mother about the dream.

About the same time, Anush watched an online sermon about the Holy Spirit. Anush told Father, "The preacher said the fire of the Holy Spirit protects us from the fire of hell. When you get the fire of the Holy Spirit, you won't be afraid of the fire at the end of earth's history."

Anush's words helped Father understand something about his dream. The scared people in his dream didn't have the Holy Spirit. They were afraid of hellfire. The peaceful people weren't afraid because they accepted the fire from the Holy Spirit. Father remembered reading that the Holy Spirit filled Jesus when He was baptized (Matthew 3:16).

Father said, "I need to get baptized."

But the words sounded strange to Father as he said them. Armenians are filled with pride because they were the first country to become Christian, in 301 A.D. Many Armenians feel it is their duty to be Christian. They were baptized as babies, not as adults. Now, Father wasn't sure what to do.

Anush said, "You have the Bible. Read it. Let the Bible answer your questions and lead you to the right church."

Father read the Bible even more carefully. A friend asked him why he read the Bible so much. The friend asked, "Is that something to brag about? If Jesus came tomorrow, would you say, 'I have read the Bible?' Is that enough to be saved?"

The questions surprised Father. His whole body shook. A short time later, when he left the friend's house and was alone in his car, he told God about his fears. He prayed, "If Jesus came tomorrow, what would I say to Him?"

Father went home and told Mother. "I'll go to church with you next Sabbath."

But Father didn't want to go to the town's house church, which had only seven members who were all women. He said, "Let's go to the church in the next town." After that Sabbath, Father started to worship every week in church.

INSIDE  
*Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**"When you get the fire of the Holy Spirit, you won't be afraid of the fire at the end of earth's history."**

# The End Times



## SABBATH—AUGUST 31

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 12:41–44; Mark 13:1–13; Mark 13:14–18; Mark 13:19; Mark 13:24–32.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Then people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great [mighty] power and glory. The Son of Man will send his angels all around the earth. They will gather [collect] his chosen people from every part of the earth” (Mark 13:26, 27, ICB).

**THIS WEEK'S LESSON STARTS** with a very short story about a widow, at the end of Mark 12. Jesus uses this story to teach a powerful lesson. The rest of our lesson this week is about Mark 13. This chapter talks about what will happen to Jerusalem and its temple in the future and to God's people during the end times. Matthew 24 and Luke 21 also talk about these topics.

Mark 13 helps us to understand that these future happenings start shortly after the time that Jesus goes back to heaven and end with the Second Coming. So, these special messages are about the past and the future. Also, we must not think these messages are about things faraway in the future that won't happen for a while.

The Lord's teaching about end-time happenings is His answer to a question that His followers ask Him. Jesus often uses their questions to teach important Bible truths about things that Christians need to know for their spiritual lives. Jesus talks about what will happen in the future and teaches His followers, then and now, how to get ready for the things that are coming.



Mark 13 talks about what will happen to Jerusalem and its temple in the future and to God's people during the end times.



## TWO SMALL COINS (Mark 12:41–44)

**Read Mark 12:41–44. How much did the widow give? What did Jesus say about her small offering?**

The Jerusalem temple was a very beautiful building. Many people brought offerings to the temple. There were 13 offering boxes in the Court of Women near the temple. The Court of Women was a space near the temple where women were allowed to enter. Jesus was sitting in the Court of Women when He saw a widow approach one of the offering boxes. She put in two “lepta.” Lepta are small coins that aren’t worth very much. A worker in those days earned a coin named a denarius each day. The widow’s offering was about a 1/32 part of a denarius. So, the widow’s offering was very small.

The widow’s offering touches Jesus’ heart. Many rich people put large sums of money in the offering boxes. Jesus doesn’t praise their gifts as they put them in. But Jesus praises the widow’s offering. Jesus says that the widow gave more than everyone else. How did she do that? Jesus says that everyone else gave an offering from their leftover money. But the widow gave all that she owned. The other givers had much left after they gave. But the widow gave everything she had to live on. So, her gift was really a rich one, even if it wasn’t worth very much money.

This story teaches us an important lesson about managing everything God gives us. We don’t give because our leaders are good. The leadership of the temple in Jesus’ day was evil. Just look at Caiaphas and Annas. These men were some of the worst leaders in the history of Israel. Jesus knew it, too. But Jesus didn’t say that people should stop giving offerings because of these evil men.

Yes, leaders are responsible for using God’s money to honor Him. But if they do not, we must continue to support God’s work on this earth with our offerings. God will bless our giving, just as He blessed this widow.

What if we don’t give our money to the church because of our leaders’ bad behavior? Then we show that the reason for our giving is about their behavior and not about thanking God. Sometimes when our leaders make mistakes, we may not want to give our tithes and offerings to the church. Tithe is 10% of all the money we get. But God always wants us to give our tithes and offerings to the church. That is His plan.



**The widow gave everything she had to live on.**

## NOT ONE STONE LEFT ON TOP OF ANOTHER STONE (Mark 13:1–13)

**Read Mark 13:1–13. How do Jesus’ followers feel when Jesus tells them about what will happen to the temple? What does Jesus’ answer teach us about the end times?**



**Each post was as big and wide as three men standing in a circle, hand in hand, with their arms reaching around the post.**

As we said yesterday, the temple was a beautiful building. Josephus, a Jewish history writer in the time of Paul, says that the Royal Walkway on the south side of the temple had 162 very tall posts. Each post was as big and wide as three men standing in a circle, hand in hand, with their arms reaching around the post. (Read *Antiquities*, 15.11.5, §§413–414.) Jesus says that the whole temple will be thrown down. The followers of Jesus thought that if the temple will be destroyed, then the earth will end, too.

“Jesus looked at the beautiful temple. What were His thoughts? His own people rejected Him! Yes, the temple was lovely, but Jesus was very sad. He said, ‘I see everything that will happen. The buildings are wonderful. You think that no one can destroy these walls. But listen to My words. The day will come when “All these stones will be thrown down. Not one will be left standing on another [stone]” ’ Mark 13:2, NLV.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 627, adapted.

In Mark 13:4, a small group, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, ask Jesus when the temple will be destroyed. They also want to know what the sign will be that shows these things are about to happen.

In Mark 13:5–13, Jesus warns His followers about what will happen when they do God’s work after He goes back to heaven. The followers will help God start and grow His church on earth. Their job won’t be easy.

God’s enemies will attack His followers and hurt them. Some of the followers will be killed for their faith. Jesus tells Peter, James, John, and Andrew that this time is not now but is coming soon. Jesus also tells His followers not to be tricked when bad things start to happen. Also, Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to help them. The Spirit will give them the words to say at the right time, even when family and friends won’t support them.

Jesus doesn’t want His followers, then or now, to fear the future. We must watch and wait on the Lord. God’s Spirit will protect us and lead us in times of trouble that are coming in the future.

## THE MAN-MADE GOD THAT STANDS IN THE HOUSE OF GOD (Mark 13:14–18)

Read Mark 13:14–18. What hint does Jesus give us to help us understand what “the horrible [awful] thing that destroys” is [Mark 13:14, ICB]? Another name for this horrible thing is the “sinful man-made god standing in the house of God where it has no right [power] to stand” [NLV].

In Mark 13:14, Jesus comes to the important part of His message. He talks about the fall of Jerusalem. Jesus also talks about the “the horrible [awful] thing that destroys” [Mark 13:14, ICB]. These words are from the Book of Daniel (read Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:31; Daniel 12:11; and Daniel 8:13). The Lord says the reader should understand what these words mean. So, with these words, Jesus helps His followers to see that they need to read the Book of Daniel to understand what He says.

Read Daniel 9:26, 27. Who is “the chosen one” (Daniel 9:26, ERV)? And who is “the future leader” (verse 26)?

The name “the chosen one” in Daniel 9:26 (ERV) comes from the Hebrew word “māšiah.” In English, this word is written as “Messiah,” or the “Chosen One.” A careful study of Daniel 9:24–27 shows us that the Chosen One is Jesus.

But who, then, is “the future leader” who destroys Jerusalem? Titus, a Roman general, destroyed the city. So, he must be “the future leader” that we read about in Daniel 9:26, 27. The future leader and the Chosen One are connected. Why? Because when the Jews killed Jesus, God judged them. God allowed the Romans to destroy the city as punishment for killing His Son.

What is “the horrible [awful] thing that destroys” [Mark 13:14, ICB]? As we already said, another name for this horrible thing is the “sinful man-made god standing in the house of God where it has no right [power] to stand” [NLV]. Many Bible thinkers think “the horrible thing” is Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus made the temple dirty in 167 B.C. But that idea doesn’t work. Jesus says “the horrible thing” happens after His own time here. So, it can’t mean something that happened 200 years before His work on earth. “The horrible thing” must be the Roman army who enters the land of Israel in the A.D. 60s. The army was a warning to Christians to leave the city, which they did.



The army was a warning to Christians to leave the city, which they did.

## THE TERRIBLE TIME OF TROUBLE (Mark 13:19)

**Read Mark 13:19. What does this verse mean?**

As we learned yesterday, Mark 13:14 talks about “the horrible [awful] thing that destroys” [Mark 13:14, ICB]. In Mark 13:19, Jesus starts preaching about a new topic. Jesus starts to talk about the horrible time of trouble in the future. This time will be the worst time of trouble in human history.

Just as Mark 13:14 helps us remember Daniel 9, Mark 13:19–23 talks about the things that Daniel wrote about in Daniel 7 and 8. In these two chapters, the little-horn power hurts the people of God “for three and one-half years” (Daniel 7:25, ERV) or 1,260 days. The special message about time is the same as 1,260 real years (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). This time started in A.D. 538 and ended in A.D. 1798. In 1798, Napoleon sent his general to take the pope prisoner. During the 1,260 years, the little-horn power hurt and killed anyone who didn’t agree with the way it controlled governments or the church.



**But the little-horn power would become powerful again, as we read in Revelation 13.**

**Read about the terrible time of trouble in Mark 13:20–23. What hope does God offer His people during this time? What warning does God give to His people when this time is about to end?**

Mark 13:20 says that the time will be cut short for God’s people. History shows that the attacks ended sometime after the Protestant religion started in Europe. So, the days of trouble were shortened, just as Jesus promised. More and more people joined the Protestant churches. The little horn’s power grew weak. But the little-horn power would become powerful again, as we read in Revelation 13.

In Mark 13:21–23, Jesus warns about another danger in the end times: false prophets or messengers and false saviors. These false prophets and false saviors will trick many people before Jesus comes back. Jesus warns His followers to be careful of them.

**When Jesus gave His followers this warning about false saviors, the Christian religion was very new. 2,000 years later, we see how much Jesus’ words have come true. How should His warning help us trust more in the Bible?**



## THE SON OF MAN WILL COME BACK! (Mark 13:24–32)

Read Mark 13:24–32. What important happening in the future do these verses talk about?

Mark 13:24–32 talks about the Second Coming of Jesus. Before Jesus comes back, there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars that show He is coming soon. The New Testament is filled with messages about this wonderful time. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul talks about the resurrection. The resurrection is the time when God will wake people up from the dead at the Second Coming. Paul talks about the Second Coming in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. In these verses, Paul also talks about Christians who wake up from the dead when Jesus comes back.

Peter talks about the Second Coming in 2 Peter 3:3–13. Peter explains that the Lord doesn't delay His promise to come back. The Lord waits because He wants everyone to confess their sins and accept His forgiveness. Revelation also talks about Jesus' coming (Revelation 1:7; Revelation 6:12–17; Revelation 14:14–20; and Revelation 19:11–21). The New Testament teaches us that the Second Coming is real. Jesus will come in person. Everyone on earth will see Him and hear Him when He comes.

What does Jesus mean when He says, “All these things will happen while some of the people of [from] this time are still [continue to be] living’ ” (Mark 13:30, ERV)? Also, what does Jesus mean when He says, “No one knows when that day or time will be’ ” (Mark 13:32, ERV)? These words have confused many people today because Jesus said these words to people who died a long time ago.

How do we explain these two verses? To answer this question, let's look at three different words Jesus uses in the verses. In Mark 13:30, Jesus uses the word “**some**,” as in “some of the people of [from] this time.” Jesus also uses the word “**that**” when He says, “that day or time.” In Mark 13, Mark uses the word “**this**” in verses 1–13. (These verses talk about what will happen in Jerusalem before it is destroyed). So, what do these three words tell us?

These words tell us that “**some** of the people of **this** time” may mean the people living during Jesus' day, who saw the Romans destroy Jerusalem. Mark 13:32 talks about the Second Coming, which is in the future and far away from Jesus' time. So, Mark, in verse 32, uses the word “**that**” to talk about things that will happen in the faraway future.



In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul talks about the resurrection.



“Those servants will be blessed when their master comes home, because he sees that his servants are ready and waiting for him” (Luke 12:37, ICB).

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “On the Mount of Olives,” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 627–636.

“We don’t know the day when Jesus will come back. So, we must watch and wait for Him. ‘Those servants will be blessed when their master comes home, because he sees that his servants are ready and waiting for him.’ Luke 12:37 [ICB]. Jesus’ followers who wait for the Lord’s coming do not sit around and do nothing while they wait. Jesus’ coming should fill our hearts with respect for Him. We should honor and obey His commandments. We should fear His work as Judge against sin. We must work hard to help people understand that they will sin if they reject God’s offer of mercy. We must watch and wait for the Lord. We must make our hearts and minds clean from sin. We make our hearts and minds clean when we obey Bible truth. We must watch carefully and work hard for the Lord. Our love for God will grow because we know Jesus is about to come back. So, we will work harder to save other people. The ones who do these things are the loyal and wise servants of God who ‘give the other servants their food at the right time.’ Luke 12:42 [ERV]. These loyal servants announce to other people the Bible truth that is needed for their time. In the same way, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses announced the special truth for their times. Jesus’ loyal servants living now will give the special warning for their time, too.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 634, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Read again the story about the widow who gave all that she had (Mark 12:41–44). What does it mean for us today to give in this way?
- ② Why didn’t God stop the attacks on His church in the past 2,000 years? How does the worldwide war between God and Satan help us to answer this question?
- ③ What are the signs of Jesus’ coming? Which ones convince you the most that Jesus is coming back?
- ④ When we die, we sleep until Jesus comes back. People close their eyes, then what’s the next thing they know? They see Jesus. How does this Bible truth help us understand that Jesus’ coming is always near?

## PART 7: "ADVENTISTS ARE GOOD PEOPLE"

Anush worked as a planning manager for ADRA (the Adventist Development and Relief Agency) before Father refused to allow her and Mother to worship at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in their town in Armenia. After Father told them they could go back to church, Anush started to work at ADRA again.

Father met many Adventist leaders who came to Armenia and visited ADRA.

When Anush brought guests home, Father saw that they were educated and nice people.

Father told Anush, "Adventists are good people."

Father got to know the seven women who attended the Adventist house church in his town. Father decided they were good people, too.

Then Anush was accepted at Andrews University in the United States where she would study to get her master's. ADRA and the church headquarters in Europe and Asia agreed to pay for Anush to go to school. Father's heart was touched when he heard this news. He wanted only the best for his daughter.

When Anush graduated, she became the manager of ADRA for Armenia. Father watched as she managed a number of special jobs for ADRA. Father's respect grew for both the Adventist Church and the way Adventists lived. Soon Father removed tobacco and then alcohol from the small grocery shop that he owned.

Then Father got baptized and joined the Adventist Church. He joined 21 years after Mother was baptized and nine years after Anush started to pray for him to accept God.

After his baptism, Father met the friend whose question about reading the Bible surprised him and caused him to start to go to church. Father said, "Did you know that your words changed my life? After you asked me these questions, I really started to read the Bible and follow it. Then I got baptized."

The friend asked, "What are you talking about?"

Father said, "You asked, 'If Jesus came tomorrow, would you say, 'I have read the Bible'? Would that be enough?'"

The friend said the conversation never happened. "I never said that," he said. "I would never judge you like that. You made a mistake."

At that moment, Father understood that God talked to him through his friend who didn't remember their conversation.

Part of last quarter's 13th Sabbath Offering went to open a special center in Yerevan, Armenia. Thanks for helping share the Good News about Jesus with your offerings.

## INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Soon Father removed tobacco and then alcohol from the small grocery shop that he owned.

# The Arrest and Trial of Jesus



## SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 7

**READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON:** Mark 14:1–11; Mark 14:22–31; Exodus 24:8; Mark 14:32–42; Mark 14:43–52; Mark 14:60–72.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “He said, ‘Abba, Father! You can do all things. Don’t make me drink from this cup. But do what you want, not what I want’ ” (Mark 14:36, ERV).



Most of the things in Mark 14–16 happen on Thursday and Friday of this final week before Jesus dies on the cross.

**MARK 14–16** talks about Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection. The resurrection is the time when Jesus woke up from the dead. As we learned in lesson 9, the last six chapters in Mark talk about only one week. Most of the things in Mark 14–16 happen on Thursday and Friday of this final week before Jesus dies on the cross. Jesus dies on Friday. He wakes up from the dead on Sunday.

This week, we will study Mark 14. We will look at two different things that Jesus does. Then we will look at the Last Supper and Jesus’ suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is arrested in Gethsemane. Then the soldiers take Jesus to the Jewish leaders for a trial. During this time, Peter says that he doesn’t know Jesus.

As we read the story in Mark 14, we see that another story happens at the same time. Mark shows us how the people in these two stories don’t get along and their plans don’t agree. So, the people fight against each other. Mark also shows us that, in the end, Jesus will win the fight against His enemies.



**A STORY THAT EVERYONE WILL REMEMBER FOREVER (Mark 14:1–11)**

**Read Mark 14:1–11. What two stories do we read about in these verses? How are these stories connected?**

Mark 14:1 says that the Passover feast was two days away. The Jewish spiritual leaders met on a Tuesday or Wednesday night of that same week. The leaders have a plan to kill Jesus. They just need a way to make their plan happen. They get help from someone they didn't expect to help them: Judas.

Mark 14:1–11 connects the plan to kill Jesus with a story about a woman who pours expensive perfume on Jesus' head. In these two stories, we see a woman who shows her love for Jesus and a follower of Jesus who sells Him to His enemies. The woman is not named. Judas is named and is one of Jesus' Twelve Followers. The woman spends a lot of money on her gift. Mark tells us how much the perfume is worth. Judas sells Jesus to His enemies for the promise of money.

Mark doesn't tell us why the woman pours her expensive perfume on Jesus' head. The guests at the feast are surprised and upset with the woman. They think she has wasted a lot of money when she pours the perfume on Jesus. The perfume costs the same as a whole year's pay for work. But Jesus praises the woman's gift. He promises that the story about her gift will be remembered wherever people preach the Good News. Matthew, Luke, and John also include this story about the woman in their books on Jesus' life.

Matthew, Luke, and John also remember Judas's evil actions against Jesus, but not for nice reasons. Mark suggests that Judas sold Jesus because he was selfish and loved money. The Book of John plainly tells us that Judas sold Jesus because Judas was a thief (John 12:4–6).

Mark uses the word "good" in different ways to help us understand the two plans happening in these stories. In Mark 14:6, Jesus says that the woman's action is "good" or "beautiful." Then Jesus tells His followers that they can do "good" for the poor anytime (Mark 14:7), but Jesus won't always be around for them to honor. In Mark 14:9, Jesus says the woman's loving gift will be part of the Good News story that people share about Him. In Mark 14:11, Judas looks for a "good" time to sell Jesus to His enemies. The enemies' awful plan to kill Jesus also will become part of the Good News about Jesus. Their plan to kill Jesus helps God's plan to give His Son to save sinners.



**In these two stories, we see a woman who shows her love for Jesus and a follower of Jesus who sells Him to His enemies.**

## THE LAST SUPPER (Mark 14:22–31)

**Read Mark 14:22–31 and Exodus 24:8. What does the story in Mark teach us about Christians and their faith?**

Mark 14:12 says that this story happens on the first day of the Unleavened Bread celebration. On this special day, the Passover lamb was killed (read Exodus 12). The Passover meal happens on Thursday evening.

At the Last Supper, Jesus starts a new celebration with His followers: the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is connected with the Jewish Passover celebration and also with Israel's leaving Egypt. When Israel left Egypt, they became God's chosen people at Sinai. God made an agreement with His people there. In Exodus 24:8, Moses sprinkles the people with blood from an animal offering. Moses says, " 'This blood shows that the LORD has made a special agreement with you' " (Exodus 24:8, ERV).

At the Lord's Supper, Jesus doesn't use the lamb from the Passover meal. Why? Because Jesus **is** the Lamb of God (compare with John 1:29). The bread is a symbol for Jesus' body. The New Promise (compare with Jeremiah 31:31–34) is made with the blood of Jesus. The cup is a symbol of His blood. Jesus says, " 'This is my blood which begins the new agreement that God makes with his people. This blood is poured out for many [people]' " (Mark 14:24, ICB).

Then Jesus announces that all of His followers will leave Him. Jesus says the words of Zechariah 13:7. This verse says that when the sword hits the shepherd, all the sheep run away. Jesus is the Shepherd. His followers are the sheep. Jesus' message makes the followers sad. But Jesus adds words of hope. He promises His followers that He will wake up from the dead. Then He will go ahead of the followers to Galilee. Later, an angel in the form of a young man waits at Jesus' empty grave. The angel shares the promise, in Mark 16:7, with the women who come to pour oil on Jesus' body. So, this promise is important.

At the Last Supper, the followers have a hard time accepting Jesus' words. Peter announces that everyone else may leave Jesus and runaway. But he will stay loyal to Jesus. Jesus says that before the rooster crows twice, Peter will say three times that he doesn't know Jesus at all.

**Did you promise God something and then break your promise? What did you learn from this experience?**



**At the Last Supper, Jesus starts a new celebration with His followers: the Lord's Supper.**

## GETHSEMANE (MARK 14:32–42)

**Read Mark 14:32–42. What did Jesus pray in the Garden of Gethsemane? How did God answer Jesus' prayer?**

Jesus and His followers go across the Kidron Valley to a garden on the Mount of Olives. A mount is a very tall hill. The name Gethsemane means oil press. An oil press is a machine that squeezes oil from olives. This name suggests that there was an olive oil press somewhere nearby. No one today knows where the press was located. That's because the Romans cut down all the trees on the Mount of Olives when they attacked Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Jesus leaves most of His followers at the entrance to the garden. Then Jesus continues on with Peter, James, and John. But Jesus also leaves these three men and continues alone. Mark shows us that Jesus is feeling more and more lonely and alone as He gets ready to suffer for our sins.

Jesus prays for God to remove His suffering. But only if that is the Father's plan for His Son (Mark 14:36). Jesus uses the Aramaic word "Abba," which Mark writes as "Father." "Abba" doesn't mean "daddy," as some people teach. The word for "daddy" in the Aramaic language is "abi." A child used this name for his father. (Read Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, Anchor Bible Reference Library [New York: Doubleday, 1994], volume 1, pages 172, 173.) But the word "abba" does mean a close family relationship, which shows that God wants to be close to us in our hearts.

Jesus prays for God to remove His suffering. But Jesus gives Himself in obedience to God's plan for Him (compare with the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:10). We soon see that God's answer to Jesus' prayer is no. God will not remove the terrible experience that Jesus must suffer. Why? Because Jesus must suffer for us to save us. We can't be saved any other way.

We are glad to have friends who support us in hard times. In Philippians 4:13, Paul talks about how Jesus "is the one who gives me the strength I need to do whatever I must do" (ERV). Then Paul tells his friends, "But it was good that you helped me when I needed help" (verse 14, ERV). Jesus wanted help in Gethsemane. Three times He came to His followers for help and comfort. Three times they were sleeping. In the end, Jesus wakes them up to go to His trial. Jesus is ready. But His followers are not.



**Mark shows us that Jesus is feeling more and more lonely and alone as He gets ready to suffer for our sins.**

## RUNNING AWAY FROM JESUS (Mark 14:43–52)

**Read Mark 14:43–52. What happens in these verses that is so important to God’s plan to save us?**

We may feel surprised that one of Jesus’ closest friends sells Him to His enemies. Mark doesn’t give us a lot of information about why Judas turns against Jesus. But Ellen G. White writes, “Judas had a strong love for money. But he wasn’t evil enough in the past to do what he did now. He continued to let his love for money control his life until his love for money controlled him completely. Judas’s love for money was more powerful than his love for Jesus. Judas became a slave to money, and this slavery caused him to give himself to Satan to do whatever sin Satan wanted him to do.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 716, adapted.

Judas’s sin is made worse because he tries to hide it with friendship. Judas tells the crowd that the man he kisses is the one they should arrest.

The crowd arrests Jesus. Trouble starts. Someone pulls out a sword. John 18:10, 11 says Peter did it. Peter cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest or top spiritual leader. Jesus talks to the mob. He scolds them for doing in secret what they were afraid to do in public when He taught them in the temple. But Jesus says the things that God promises about Him in the Old Testament must happen. So, we see God’s plan happens at the same time that evil men work to destroy Jesus.

All of Jesus’ followers run away, including Peter. But Peter comes back and follows behind Jesus. Shortly after, Peter gets himself in trouble. We also read in Mark 14:51, 52 about a young man who also followed Jesus. Matthew, Luke, and John don’t write about this young man in their books. Some people think this young man was Mark. But we have no proof. What is surprising is that the young man runs away without any clothes on his body. The young man does not leave everything to follow Jesus. The young man leaves everything to run away from Jesus.

**Think about what Ellen G. White wrote about Judas. Judas was the “slave” of one sin. That one sin caused him to sell Jesus to His enemies. What should this story tell us about why we need to hate sin and win the fight against it in Jesus’ strength?**



**Judas tells the crowd that the man he kisses is the one they should arrest.**



**WHO ARE YOU? (Mark 14:60–72)**

**Read Mark 14:60–72. Compare what Jesus does with what Peter did. How are their actions different? What can we learn from their choices and behavior?**

Mark 14:53–59 talks about how Jesus is brought to the Sanhedrin to stand trial. The Sanhedrin was the Jewish religious court in the time of Jesus. Again and again, the leaders try to accuse Jesus but without any success. Mark tells us how the witnesses against Jesus never agreed and that their stories against him were false.

Finally, the high priest or top spiritual leader stands and talks to Jesus. At first, Jesus doesn't answer. But then the high priest puts Jesus under oath before God (read Matthew 26:63). The high priest asks Jesus if He is the Messiah, or Chosen One. Jesus says, "I am," meaning that He is the Messiah (Mark 14:62). Then He says the quote from Daniel 7:13, 14. These verses talk about the Son of Man who sits at God's right side and will come to earth with clouds from heaven. The high priest refuses to accept Jesus' words about Himself. He tears his clothes and says that Jesus is guilty. The Sanhedrin agrees. The Jewish leaders spit on Jesus. Then they cover His face, beat Him, and ask Him to say who hits Him.

Meanwhile, Peter is outside lying about Jesus. (This is the 6th and final Sandwich Story. Read lesson 3 to review what we learned about Sandwich Stories.) Jesus reports the truth. Peter gives a false report. Three times servants or people from the crowd ask Peter if he knows Jesus. Each time Peter lies. Peter starts to use bad words to make people think he isn't Jesus' follower.

Just then, a rooster crows a second time. Peter remembers Jesus' words that he would reject Jesus three times that very night. Peter starts to cry. At the end of His trial, Jesus wears a blindfold. As we just saw, men hit Jesus and command Him to say who hit Him. The men make fun of Jesus because they think He can't see through the cloth. At this very time, Peter rejects Jesus a third time. In a strange way, when Peter rejects Jesus three times, he shows that Jesus is really God. That's because Peter does just what Jesus said he would do (read Mark 14:30).

**What words of hope would you give to someone who wants to follow Jesus, but who fails at times to do so?**



**Peter remembers Jesus' words that he would reject Jesus three times that very night.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “Before Annas and the Court of Caiaphas,” and “Judas,” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 698–722.

“Just as Peter finished saying that he didn’t know Jesus, the rooster crowed. At that instant, the Savior turned from the frowning judges. Jesus looked at His poor follower. In that instant, Peter looked at His Master’s eyes. Peter saw deep pity and sorrow in the Savior’s eyes. But there was no anger there.

“Peter looked at Jesus’ suffering face. The Savior’s face was white, and His lips trembled. Jesus’ suffering and His look of compassion and forgiveness cut Peter’s heart the same as an arrow. Peter remembered the promise He made Jesus a few short hours ago. Peter promised that he would go with his Lord to prison and to death. Peter remembered that he felt so sad when the Savior told him in the upper room that he would reject his Lord three times in the same night. Now Peter just finished announcing that he didn’t know Jesus at all. Peter felt bitter sorrow. He understood that his Lord knew him better than he knew himself. Jesus read Peter’s heart. Jesus saw the weakness inside Peter that Peter didn’t know was there.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 712, 713.



“Jesus’ suffering and His look of compassion and forgiveness cut Peter’s heart the same as an arrow.”

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Read again Jesus’ words about the woman who poured perfume on His head. When we read her story, how are we part of the promise that Jesus made about her?
- ② Compare Judas and Peter. What did they do to Jesus in the week before He died on the cross? How were these two men the same? How were they different?
- ③ Talk in class about the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. How can we help church members better understand the meaning of the Lord’s Supper? How can we get more members to celebrate it?
- ④ God said no to Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane. What does it mean when God says no to us?
- ⑤ Peter failed, but Jesus didn’t reject him. What hope does this Bible truth give you?

## PART 8: A DREAM ABOUT TOFU

Father started to get sharp pains in his belly. Mother and Anush decided to pay careful attention to Father's diet. Anush didn't eat any meat. Mother was a scientist. She knew which foods were good for you. But Mother had not fed her family the most healthful foods. Mother and Anush started to feed Father meals made mostly from plants. Father's stomach aches went away.

Then Father had another dream. He saw a bright light in the garage. The light was so bright. Father couldn't look at it. A voice said from the light, "Don't be afraid. Come. Take this bucket with seeds. Plant the seeds on this table."

Father saw a bucket of seeds next to a steel table. But Father didn't understand why the voice commanded him to do something so strange. When Father studied at the university, he trained to be a crop scientist. So, he knew about plants. But even a child knew that seeds couldn't sprout from steel! Father said, "Seeds must be planted in the ground to grow." But the voice commanded, "Do as I say." So, Father obeyed.

In the dream, a day passed. Then Father saw healthy, 3-inch plants growing from the table! Father was amazed. He asked, "How can seeds grow in one night and on this steel table?"

The voice commanded, "Pull up the plants and sell them."

Father told the dream to his family. As Anush listened, she wondered if God was telling Father to make tofu. Tofu is a food made from soybean plants. Tofu is used as a substitute for meat. No company in Armenia made tofu.

Then Anush went to a meeting in Ukraine, in 2019. The 300 people at the meeting got excited when they heard about Father's dream. At the time, Adventists in Ukraine had many companies and health-food stores that made and sold tofu. When the meeting manager asked the people at the meeting who would teach Father to make tofu, everyone volunteered.

Two months later, Father bought plane tickets to Ukraine. He and Mother left home without knowing exactly what was going to happen, the same as Abraham and Sarah. God took care of everything. Church workers met them at the airport. Father and Mother stayed with the workers during the time they visited health-food stores and tofu companies for 12 days. Father saw Christians could work both for money and God's glory. When he came home, he opened Armenia's first tofu company. Anush was so happy! She could hardly believe that Father had used her meat-free diet as a reason to prevent her from going to church. Now he was selling tofu and telling people to eat a healthful diet!

## INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**Father saw healthy, 3-inch plants growing from the table!**

# Nailed to the Cross



## SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 14

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 15:1–15; Mark 15:15–20; Mark 15:21–38; Mark 15:33–41; Mark 15:42–47.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “At three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘My God, My God, why have You left Me alone?’ ” (Mark 15:34, NLV).

**MARK 15** tells the story of Jesus’ court trial and death sentence. Also in Mark 15, we read about the soldiers who make fun of Jesus. Then Jesus is nailed to the cross. He dies and is buried.

In Mark 15, things happen in a way that is different from what you may expect. Writers give a special name to this type of experience: irony. Because irony is an important part of Mark 15, we need to know more about it.

Irony often has three parts: (1) when an experience or word in a story has two different meanings, we say that the experience or word is filled with irony. (2) The two different meanings don’t agree with each other. And (3) someone in the story doesn’t see the irony or different meanings. This person doesn’t understand what’s going on around him. So, he doesn’t know that he will suffer.

This week, Mark writes about many painful experiences that also are filled with irony: Pilate’s question to Jesus, the laughing soldiers, the sign above the cross, the mean and nasty Jewish leaders who make fun of Jesus when He is dying. All these painful experiences show us powerful Bible truths about Jesus and what His death means for us.



**This week, Mark writes about many painful experiences that are also filled with irony: Pilate’s question to Jesus, the laughing soldiers, the sign above the cross, the mean and nasty Jewish leaders who make fun of Jesus when He is dying.**



**ARE YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS? (Mark 15:1–15)**

**Read the story in Mark 15:1–15. What ironies do you see in this story? As we saw yesterday, irony is an experience that happens in a way that is different from what you may expect.**

The Jews decide Jesus must die for saying He is God. Roman law didn't allow the Jews to kill anyone. So, the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate. Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from A.D. 26–36. Pilate was not a nice leader. He did many things to upset the Jews (compare with Luke 13:1).

Pilate's question gives us a hint of the "crime" that the Jews accused Jesus of doing. Pilate asks Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" (Mark 15:2, ESV). In Old Testament times, Jewish leaders poured oil on Israel's kings to show that God chose them. The word for the Savior in the Hebrew language was "Messiah," which meant "the One God chose and poured His Spirit on," the same as oil. So, for many Jews, the idea of the Messiah was the same as a king. As a king, the Messiah could challenge the King of Rome. So, when Jesus says He is God, we understand why the Jews accuse Him of fighting against Rome. The Romans often killed people for this crime.

Do you see the irony or misunderstanding in this story? The Jews want to kill Jesus because He says He is God and the King of the Jews. The irony is that the Jews don't see that Jesus is both! The leaders don't believe Jesus is who He says He is. So, they want to punish Him for His "crimes." But they should really honor and worship Him. Jesus answers Pilate's question, " 'You have said so' " (Mark 15:2, NIV). Notice Jesus' answer. Jesus doesn't say that He is a king or is not a king. Jesus' answer shows us that He is a king, but not the type of king that Pilate expects.

In Mark 15:9, 10, Pilate understands that the Jews bring Jesus to him because they are jealous of Him. But Pilate doesn't see that he does what the Jewish leaders want when he asks the crowd who they want him to release: Jesus or the criminal Barabbas? The Jewish leaders get the crowd to shout for Pilate to send Jesus to die on a cross. Pilate is surprised. The cross was a terrible way to die. Worse, Pilate knew Jesus was innocent. So, we see more irony in this story, or something else that we didn't expect: the Roman governor wants to save Jesus, while Jesus' own people want to nail Him to the cross.



**Jesus' answer shows us that He is a king, but not the type of king that Pilate expects.**

**WELCOME, KING OF THE JEWS! (Mark 15:15–20)**

**Read the story in Mark 15:15–20. What did the soldiers do to Jesus? What do their actions mean?**



**The truth, or irony, is that Jesus really is King, and not just of the Jews.**

The Romans beat prisoners to get them ready for death. First, the Romans removed all of the prisoner's clothes. Next, they tied him to a pole. Then they beat him with leather whips. Pieces of bone, glass, stones, and nails were tied to the leather whips.

After Jesus was whipped, the soldiers continued to shame Him. The soldiers put purple clothes on Jesus. They placed a crown of thorns on His head. The soldiers made fun of Jesus for being the King of the Jews. This group of soldiers that hurt Jesus was named a battalion. A battalion has from 200 to 600 men.

As readers, we can see the irony in this story. You will remember that irony is when an experience or word in a story has two different meanings. Also, someone in the story doesn't see the irony or different meanings. We see the irony in this story because we know what the soldiers don't know: Jesus really is the King. The soldiers are making fun of Jesus when they say He is a king. But they announce the truth. The soldiers make fun of Jesus with words that they used to greet the King of Rome: " 'Welcome, King of the Jews!' " (Mark 15:18, ERV).

The soldiers also make fun of Jesus in other ways. They hit his head with a stick. They spit on Him. Then they kneel down and pretend to honor Him. The Greek language that Mark uses shows us that the soldiers do all three of these actions again and again. So, they keep hitting Jesus. They keep spitting on Him. They keep kneeling down in front of Him and making fun of Him. Jesus stays silent. He doesn't say anything or show them any of His feelings.

The Romans made prisoners remove all their clothes and then carry their cross. Why did the Romans do this? They wanted to shame the person completely in front of the community. Mark 15:20 says that the soldiers removed the purple clothes from Jesus. But the Jews were against wearing no clothes in public. So, the Romans put Jesus' own clothes back on Him.

Do you see all the irony in this story? The soldiers bow in "respect" to Jesus as King. But they do it to make fun of Him. The truth, or irony, is that Jesus really is King, and not just of the Jews. He is their King, too.

## NAILED TO THE CROSS (Mark 15:21–38)

**Read Mark 15:21–38. What terrible and painful irony do we read about in these verses? Remember, irony is an experience that happens in a way that is different from what you may expect.**

In this part of the story, Jesus is silent. People who want to kill Him are in control. Until Jesus' arrest, He did many things to help people. Now people do whatever they want to Him and against Him. Jesus was a strong preacher who was in good health. But the beating the soldiers gave Him made Him so weak. The soldiers gave Him no food. They didn't let Him sleep. All these things made Jesus feel weak. So, a stranger must carry His cross. At the cross, the soldiers remove Jesus' clothes. His clothes become the property of the soldiers. The soldiers gamble to see who gets to own the clothes (compare with Psalm 22:18).

Death on a cross was not a very bloody death. Nails were used to fasten a person to the cross (compare with John 20:24–29). These nails went through the wrist below the palm of the hand where there were no big blood vessels. (In both the Hebrew and Greek language, the word for "hand" can mean both the hand and the lower part of the arm.) The soldiers didn't put the nails in Jesus' palms. The palm of the hand doesn't have enough strength to hold the body up on the cross. The nails crushed the nerve that runs along the middle of Jesus' arm and caused terrible suffering. Jesus had trouble breathing. To get a good breath, Jesus had to push against His nailed feet and squeeze His arms. This action caused Him awful pain. People often died on the cross because they were too tired and in too much pain to lift their bodies to get a breath.

All through the Book of Mark, Jesus tells people not to tell anyone who He is. So, Mark often doesn't use Jesus' other names: "Lord," "Son of God," or Savior. But on the cross, Jesus' secret about who He is can no longer be hidden. The Jewish leaders are the ones who now use Jesus' other names! The leaders say, " 'He saved others, but he can't save himself!' " (Mark 15:31, ERV). The word "saved" also can mean "heal" and "remove someone from danger" in the Greek language. Do you see the irony in their words? When they say these words, the leaders show everyone they know that Jesus is the Savior. Jesus healed, saved, and removed people from danger. These actions are everything a Savior does.



**The leaders say,  
" 'He saved others, but  
he can't save himself!' "  
(Mark 15:31, ERV).**

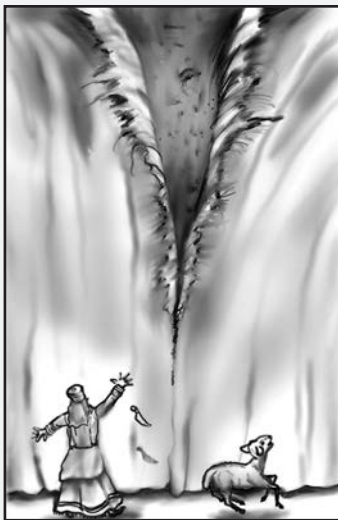
**MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU LEFT ME ALONE?  
(Mark 15:33–41)**

**Read Mark 15:33–41. What words does Jesus say on the cross in the Book of Mark? What does Jesus' death mean for us all?**

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**This torn curtain shows us that the animal offerings for sins are no longer needed because Jesus offered Himself for our sins.**

The Book of Mark shows that the cross is a very dark place. Mark tells us, “About midday [12:00 noon] the whole land became dark and stayed dark for three hours” (Mark 15:33, WE). On the cross, Jesus prays. He cries out to God and asks why God has left Him all alone. Jesus’ words are a quote from Psalm 22:1. In Mark 15:24, 29, we see other quotes from this same psalm or song. These quotes show us that God is keeping all the promises He made about Jesus in the Old Testament. God’s plan for Jesus is happening, even when evil men put Jesus on the cross.

Mark tells us what Jesus says on the cross in the Aramaic language. Then Mark gives us the translation. The words written as “my God, my God” are “**Eloi, Eloi.**” “**Eloi**” comes from the word “**e lahi**” in the Aramaic language. Some people who heard Jesus misunderstood what He said. These people thought that Jesus cried for Elijah, whose name means “My God is YHWH.” Elijah in the Aramaic language is “**eliyyah.**”

Jesus’ death on the cross helps us remember His baptism, in Mark 1:9–11. The baptism of Jesus in Mark 1 is the start of Jesus’ work on earth. Daniel talks about this time in Daniel 9:24–27. When Jesus dies for our sins (Mark 10:45), He finishes what He came to do. Jesus’ death on the cross also shows us another part of Daniel’s special message in Daniel 9:24–27. The temple curtain is torn (Mark 15:38). This torn curtain shows us that the animal offerings for sins are no longer needed because Jesus offered Himself for our sins. A new time in the history of God’s plan to save humans now starts.

**Evil men tried to hurt and kill Jesus. But they did not stop God’s plan to save us. How does this information teach us that we always can trust God and His plan, even when evil happens all around us?**



**JESUS' BODY IS PUT IN THE GRAVE (Mark 15:42–47)**

**Read Mark 15:42–47. What does Joseph from Arimathea do for Jesus? Where were Jesus' followers at this time? How important was Joseph's gift?**

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Dead people must be buried. A man named Joseph who is from Arimathea goes to Pilate. Joseph is a respected member of the Sanhedrin. Remember, the Sanhedrin is the Jewish court. Joseph was a rich and powerful man who lived in the city. As a rich and powerful man, Joseph knew Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. So, now we understand why Joseph was brave enough to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. That Joseph asked to take care of Jesus' body touches our hearts. But we must ask, Where were Jesus' loyal followers at this time?

Mark 15:43 tells us that Joseph asks for Jesus' body. But Pilate is surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead (Mark 15:44). Pilate ordered the head soldier in charge of nailing Jesus to the cross to give him a report. Another name for the head soldier is a centurion. Pilate asks the centurion if Jesus was already dead. The centurion said that, yes, Jesus was dead.

This information is important. Later, some people will say that Jesus didn't really die on the cross. He fainted. The centurion's report to the Roman governor is proof that the report about Jesus' fainting is false. Of course Jesus really died and didn't just faint! If the Romans knew how to do one thing, they knew how to kill criminals.

Joseph brought a sheet to wrap Jesus in. Then Joseph put Jesus' body in a grave that was carved from a rock. This grave was big enough for a man to walk into (Mark 16:5). Mark 15:47 tells us that two women saw where Joseph put Jesus' body. Those two women were Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus. These two women, along with Salome, watched Jesus die on the cross. All three women will go to Jesus' grave on Sunday morning to take care of His dead body (Mark 16:1).

Why does Mark tell us about these three women? They are witnesses. They saw Joseph put Jesus' body in the grave. They will come back to the grave and find it empty. So, these women are important witnesses of Jesus' resurrection, or waking up from the dead.



**The centurion's report to the Roman governor is proof that the report about Jesus' fainting is false.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “In Pilate’s Judgment Hall,” “Calvary,” and “ ‘It Is Finished,’ ” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 723–764.



“Jesus was punished the same as a sinner so that He could save us from the punishment for breaking God’s law.”

“Pilate very much wanted to save Jesus. But he saw he couldn’t do this without losing his own job and honor. Pilate didn’t want to lose his power as governor. So, he chose to let an innocent man die. How many people do the wrong thing to avoid loss or suffering, the same as Pilate? God’s Spirit tells us to do the right thing. But our selfish hearts want to do the wrong thing. The person who gives in to evil will be judged guilty.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 738, adapted.

“Jesus felt the guilt from all of our sins. Jesus is our Substitute. He is God’s Promise to us that He will forgive us and save us. Jesus was punished the same as a sinner so that He could save us from the punishment for breaking God’s law. Jesus felt the guilt of every sinner pressing on His heart. Jesus saw how much God hated sin. This thought filled Jesus’ heart with worry and fear. His whole life Jesus preached the Good News about the Father’s mercy and pardoning love. Jesus’ message was that God wanted to save the worst sinners. But now Jesus feels the terrible guilt of our sins on his heart. The guilt is so terrible that Jesus can’t see the Father’s loving face. The Father turns away His face from the Savior when Jesus is feeling the most pain. Sorrow fills Jesus’ heart. No human heart can fully understand the sorrow that Jesus felt at that time. Jesus’ sorrow was so painful that He hardly felt the pain that He suffered in His body.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 753, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Jesus is our Substitute. He died for us and paid the penalty for our sin. How important is this idea to our being saved? Why is any teaching false that rejects this Bible teaching?
- ② Who or what is today’s Barabbas? Who or what do the people of this earth ask for instead of Jesus?
- ③ Review Daniel 9:24–27. Why is this chapter so important? Are you ready to give a Bible study on these verses to anyone who asks?

## PART 9: BRINGING ARMENIA TO JESUS

While Anush prayed for her father, she also prayed for the 4,000 people who lived in her town in Armenia. Then God started to touch hearts.

After her baptism, Anush met with two other young women to pray for the town. Then they invited people to special meetings. Several dozen young people came. After that, the Adventist Church in Euro-Asia helped Anush and her friends rent buses. They took groups of 50 young people on trips around Armenia. At every stop along the way, church members greeted the young people. Anush saw the young people become excited about Bible truth. They started asking questions about God.

Interest in the Adventist message grew. Then a pastor started to visit Anush's town every other Sunday to hold meetings. At the meetings, the pastor talked about relationships, money, and other topics. Many people came to the meetings over two years.

People in the town respected Father. So, when he became a Seventh-day Adventist, the whole town talked about his faith. Father went to a church that wasn't the state religion of Armenia. His baptism helped other people to want to know more about God. The town's church grew from seven women in a private home to a rented hall where dozens of people meet every Sabbath. Church members meet with other people online to pray daily. The members plan to buy their own church building.

Father's name is Armen Safaryan. His wife's name is Gayane Badalyan. Today, they work with their daughter Anush Safaryan to make tofu at their company. As we saw last week, tofu is a food product made from a special bean named the soybean. Tofu is used as a meat substitute. Father's company is the only tofu company in Armenia. So, Father's company has been shown on TV. Many TV reporters ask Father why he makes tofu. So, Father gets invited often to share his faith on TV.

Father is a church leader. Mother is in charge of health work for their local church. Father is an example to other men in a country where many mothers and children go to church without their husbands and fathers. Father, Mother, and Anush want to change that. When church leaders introduce Father at meetings where he gives talks, the leaders say, "See, this normal Armenian man is an Adventist. Men, you are not alone. This man goes to church on Sabbath."

Anush shares her story at churches and youth camps. She says, "Ask God to touch the hearts of your husbands and fathers. Pray that they will go to church with you."

Part of last quarter's 13th Sabbath Offering helped open a special center in Yerevan, Armenia. Thanks for helping share the Good News with your offerings.

INSIDE  
*Story*

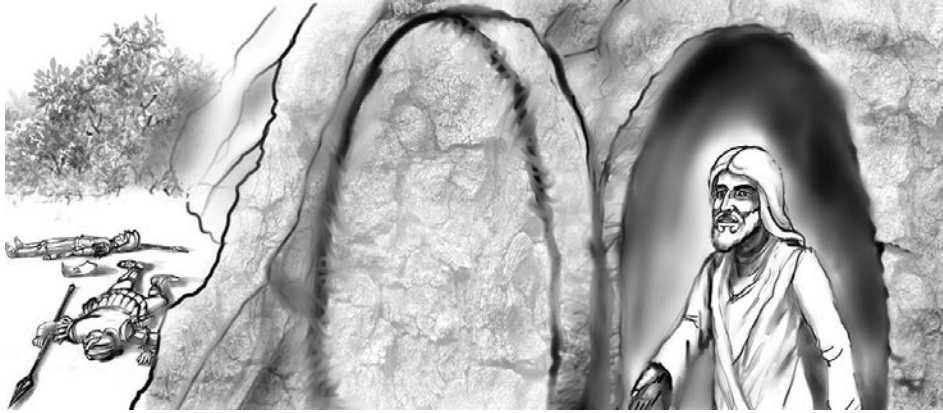
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**At every stop along the way, church members greeted the young people.**



# He Is Alive!



## SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 21

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Mark 15:42–16:6; Mark 16:1–8; 1 Corinthians 15:1–8; Mark 16:9–20; Mark 16:14–20.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But the man said, ‘Don’t be afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, the one who was killed on a cross. He has risen [woke up] from death! He is not here. Look, here is the place they put him when he was dead’ ” (Mark 16:6, ERV).

**JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS** caused His followers to lose hope and faith. During this dark time, the followers of Jesus feared for their own lives, too (John 20:19).

Mark 16 is the final chapter in the book of Mark. In this chapter, we will study what happened after Jesus died.

First, we will look at the time that Jesus woke up from the dead. Also, we will learn why the women came to His grave that Sunday morning. Many Christians use the Resurrection morning to support keeping Sunday holy. So, Seventh-day Adventists often avoid talking too much about Resurrection morning. The Resurrection was the time when Jesus woke up from the dead. But we will see why we should be happy about the Sunday Resurrection, even if many Christians use it to teach false ideas about the Sabbath.

Second, we will study on Monday and Tuesday the ideas in the first verses of Mark 16.

Third, on Wednesday and Thursday, we will look at the rest of Mark 16. Our study ends with an invitation to the reader to share the Good News about Jesus everywhere.



**We will see why we should be happy about the Sunday resurrection, even if many Christians use it to teach false ideas about the Sabbath.**



**FEELING HAPPY THAT JESUS IS ALIVE  
(Mark 15:42–16:6)**

**What happens in Mark 15:42–16:6? Why is this story so important to Jesus’ resurrection? Remember, the Resurrection is the time when Jesus woke up from the dead.**

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all agree that Jesus died on Friday. Another name for Friday is Preparation Day (Matthew 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42). On this day, from sunset Thursday until sunset Friday, people got ready for the Sabbath. Jesus died late on Friday afternoon and was buried very fast before sundown.

During the Sabbath, the Lord rested in the grave. Jesus’ followers rested, too. “On the Sabbath day they rested, as the law of Moses commanded” (Luke 23:56, ICB). Their resting on Sabbath would be a strange thing to do if Jesus told them the Sabbath was no longer important, right?

On Saturday night, the women bought spices to put on Jesus’ body. On Sunday morning, they took the spices and went to Jesus’ grave. Of course, Jesus wasn’t there!

As early as a 100 years after Jesus woke up from the dead, Christians understood that His resurrection on Sunday morning was important. This Bible truth became the reason for their keeping Sunday holy. But does the New Testament teach this idea?

**What does Colossians 2:10–12 say is the New Testament sign that helps us remember Jesus’ resurrection?**

You will not find one verse in the Bible that says that the Resurrection is the reason we should keep Sunday holy. The sign that helps us remember Jesus’ resurrection is baptism. When we are baptized and come out of the water, we remember that Jesus woke up from the dead and came out of the grave. Paul writes this idea in these words: “So when we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. We were buried with him so that we could live a new life, just as Christ was raised from death by the wonderful power of the Father” (Romans 6:4, ICB).

As Adventists, we must rejoice in the Bible truth that Jesus woke up from the dead on Sunday morning. Jesus’ death and resurrection are proof that He won the fight against sin and death. His resurrection is a promise. He will wake up His people from the dead and give them everlasting life.



**The sign that helps us remember Jesus’ resurrection is baptism.**

## THE STONE IS ROLLED AWAY (Mark 16:1–8)

**Compare Mark 16:1–8 with 1 Corinthians 15:1–8. How are these verses the same?**

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all write about the Resurrection. As we saw, the Resurrection is the time when Jesus woke up from the dead. All four Bible writers tell the Resurrection story in a different way. Each story has the same ideas that we see in 1 Corinthians 15:1–8.

In all four stories about the resurrection of Jesus, we see the four same ideas: (1) Jesus died. (2) He was buried. (3) He rose. (4) People saw Him. In the book of Mark, chapter 15, Jesus died and was buried. In chapter 16, Jesus wakes up from the dead, and people see Him. Mark 16:7 talks about a meeting in Galilee where people go and talk with Jesus (read John 21 for more of this story.)

Some people think that Christians are crazy for believing that Jesus woke up from the dead. But the Bible gives us enough reasons and proof to believe.

First, when you believe that God made us (read Genesis 1 and 2), then it is easy to believe in the Resurrection. The God who made everything in the earth and skies, can wake Jesus up from the dead if He chooses.

Next, Jesus' grave was empty. If Jesus' body were in the grave, then His body would show that He didn't wake up from the dead. Also, the Jews said that the reason the grave was empty was because Jesus' followers stole the body. This explanation doesn't work. The followers couldn't sneak past the soldiers who guarded Jesus' grave. Let's imagine in our minds for a moment that the followers somehow got past the soldiers and stole Jesus' body. Why weren't the followers arrested for stealing it? The answer is because the Jewish spiritual leaders knew that the followers didn't steal Jesus' body.

Also, many people said they saw Jesus after His resurrection. Many people, including the followers, didn't believe this story at first.

Finally, the people who started the Christian church said they saw Jesus after the Resurrection. Why would these people be willing to die for their faith if they knew the Resurrection was a lie? Their stories about Jesus, after His death (Acts 3:15) and years later (1 Peter 1:3), are powerful proof that Jesus woke up from the dead.



**The God who made everything in the earth and skies, can wake Jesus up from the dead if He chooses.**

## THE WOMEN AT THE GRAVE (Mark 16:1–8)

“The women who stood at Jesus’ cross waited and watched for the Sabbath to end. On Sunday, the women went very early to Jesus’ grave. The women took expensive perfume to pour on the Savior’s body. The women didn’t think about Jesus’ waking up from the dead. Their hearts were very sad. The women remembered Jesus’ mercy and His loving words. But they didn’t remember His words, ‘I will see you again.’ John 16:22 [ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 788, adapted.

**Read Mark 16:1–8. What happened in these verses? What did the women do at first?**

From the beginning of the book of Mark, the reader knows that Jesus is the Savior. But in the book itself, the first person who announces that Jesus is the Savior is Peter (Mark 8:29). (Of course, before Peter, there were demons inside of people who announced that Jesus was the Savior.) Peter’s announcement doesn’t happen until the middle of the book!

All through the book of Mark, Jesus tells people not to tell anyone who He is or to talk about how He healed them. In Mark 1:44, Jesus tells a leper, a man with a terrible skin disease, to tell no one that He healed him. In Mark 5:43, Jesus tells Jairus and his wife to tell no one that He woke their daughter up from the dead. In Mark 7:36, Jesus tells a group not to tell people about His healing a deaf man who has trouble speaking. Then Jesus commands His followers not to tell people that He is the Savior (Mark 8:30; also read Mark 9:9). For sure, Jesus asked them not to say anything so that He could finish His work for God on time when Daniel said He would (read Daniel 9:24–27).

The women run away from the grave after they hear the news that Jesus is alive. At first, they don’t say anything about what happened. But they are not silent for long.

At the end of the book of Mark, we read, “The followers went from there and preached everywhere. The Lord worked with them. The Lord showed that the Word of God [the Bible] was true by the special works they had power to do” (Mark 16:20, NLV). So, the big secret about who Jesus is is no longer a secret anymore. The book of Mark ends with the followers preaching everywhere.



**At the end of the Book of Mark, we read, “The followers went from there and preached everywhere.”**

## JESUS SHOWS HIMSELF TO MARY AND OTHER PEOPLE (Mark 16:9–20)

**Read Mark 16:9–20. What do these verses tell us about the Resurrection story? Remember, the Resurrection is the time when Jesus woke up from the dead.**

In Mark 16:9–20, Mary Magdalene sees Jesus at the grave. Two men also see Jesus in the countryside. Then Jesus gives His 11 followers their work to do for His kingdom. Matthew, Luke, and John also write about the same things that happen in Mark 16:9–20. In Matthew 28:1, 9, and 10, Mary Magdalene sees Jesus at the grave (also read John 20:11–18; compare with Luke 8:2). In Luke 24:13–35, two men see Jesus in the countryside. In Matthew 28:16–20, Jesus gives His 11 followers their work to do for His kingdom (also read Luke 24:36–49; John 20:19–23).

The first person to see Jesus alive was Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18). Other women also see Jesus (Matthew 28:8–10). Do you see that the first people to see Jesus alive are women? This information is very important. In Bible times, men didn't respect women as witnesses. So, if someone made up the story about Jesus' resurrection, then they would have said that men were the first witnesses to see Jesus, right? But that's not what happened. Mary Magdalene, a woman, was the first witness. Not a man or one of Jesus' 11 followers. Mary goes to tell the good news about Jesus to the followers. But the followers don't believe Mary. Maybe they think the story isn't real. Or worse, they may not believe her because she is a woman.

Bible thinkers who believe in the Resurrection story say that we can learn a lot from the women in this story. As we saw already, these women were the first people that saw Jesus. Anyone trying to make up the story would have said that Jesus showed Himself first to men. That's what everyone would expect in those times. But Jesus surprises everyone when He shows Himself first to women. So, this information is powerful proof the story is not a lie.

### How does Mark write about the followers in Mark 16:14?

Mark tells us things about the followers that make them look bad. Mark wouldn't do that if he was making the Resurrection story up. Later on, the followers announce the good news that Jesus is alive. Their brave announcement is powerful proof that they are telling the truth.



**Jesus surprises everyone when He shows Himself first to women.**



**GO, TELL EVERYONE ON EARTH (Mark 16:14–20)**

**Read Mark 16:14–20. What did Jesus say to His followers when He appeared to them? What do His words mean to us today?**

Jesus scolds His followers for their hard hearts and for not believing His witnesses. We have the same problem today, don't we? As we saw, the followers were with Jesus in person. Again and again, they saw the miracles that Jesus did. But the followers were slow to believe the things that He told them (Matthew 28:17; John 20:24–29).

Jesus convinces His followers that He is alive. He gives them strong proof that He woke up from the dead. Then Jesus tells His followers to share the Good News about Him. The followers must go everywhere on the whole earth and announce the Good News to all people. Jesus then explains what will happen when they do this work: people who believe will be saved. People who refuse to believe the Good News will be lost.

Jesus also talks about special signs His followers will do when they announce the Good News. They will cast out demons. His followers will speak new languages. They will heal the sick. In Mark 16:18, Jesus also promises to protect His followers from evil. Some people think this promise gives Christians special permission to pick up snakes that can kill them. But Jesus is not giving anyone permission to pick up deadly snakes. What Jesus promises is protection from evil when His followers do His work. Read the story in Acts 28:3–6 about how God protects Paul when a deadly snake bites him. Do you see that Paul is helping other people when the snake bites him? Paul does not pick up the snake as proof of his faith.

Of course, the Bible doesn't teach that Christians always will be protected from hurt. Sometimes Christians will suffer for their faith. Then Christians must be patient. Their patient suffering is proof of their faith.

After Jesus talked with His followers, He went to heaven (Mark 16:19). He sat on the right side of God. This place shows that Jesus has full control over everything in heaven and on earth. God gave Jesus this control because Jesus won the fight against evil. Notice the last verse, Mark 16:20. The followers went everywhere. But they didn't go alone. The Lord was with them. Jesus promises to be with us now as we continue the work they started.



**Jesus promises to be with us now as we continue the work His followers started.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘The Lord Is Risen,’ ” and “ ‘Go Teach All Nations,’ ” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 779–787 and pages 818–828.

“Jesus is our hope of resurrection and everlasting life. [Remember, the Resurrection is the time that Jesus woke up from the dead.] Jesus can make anyone alive who is dead. Jesus also has the strength to give us everlasting life. ‘I have come so that people may live and that they may enjoy life to the full.’ [John 10:10, WE]. ‘Whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. The water I give will become a spring [place where water comes out of the earth] of water flowing inside him. It [the water] will give him eternal [everlasting] life.’ [John 4:14, ICB]. ‘Those [people] who eat my body and drink my blood have eternal [everlasting] life. I will raise [wake] them up [from the dead] on the last day.’ [John 6:54, ERV].

“Death is not something that Christians should fear or worry about. Jesus says, ‘Whoever obeys my word will never die’ [read John 8:51, 52, NIV]. For Christians, death is the same as a dark, silent sleep that lasts only a second. When you die, you are hidden with Jesus in God. Then when Jesus “comes again, you will share in his glory [the praise and honor that Jesus will get].’ [Colossians 3:4, ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 786, 787, adapted.

Many history writers don’t believe in God or the Resurrection. But they accept that many people saw Jesus alive after His death. Some people try to say that Jesus’ followers really didn’t see Jesus alive. They saw only His twin brother. Or the followers just imagined in their minds that they saw Jesus. Some people say that Jesus only fainted on the cross and didn’t really die. Another person says that aliens from outer space came down and stole Jesus’ body. (Read Clifford Goldstein’s *Risen: Finding Hope in the Empty Tomb* [Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2021].



**Jesus is our hope of resurrection and everlasting life.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Why do people say that Jesus’ followers lied about His waking up from the dead?
- 2 What proof of Jesus’ resurrection convinces you the most that He is alive? Share your reasons in class.
- 3 How important is the Resurrection to Paul? Read 1 Corinthians 15 for the answer.

## A CHURCH BUILT ON TRASH

Purna had a difficult task. He volunteered to start a church in an important city in South Asia. The city had no churches. Purna was excited, but he didn't know where to start. How could he share his love for Jesus with his non-Christian neighbors? He prayed, "God, please help."

Purna prayed for a week. But he still didn't know where to start. He did know one thing. He couldn't stand the smell on the road outside his house. Piles of trash sat in dirty puddles of rain-water on the road. The trash blocked the flow of water into the gutters along the street. The dirty water flowed over the gutters and flooded the road. Purna decided to do something about it. He took a long pole made from bamboo wood. Purna used the bamboo pole to pick up the trash from the gutters and drains.

As Purna worked, the neighbors watched him.

A neighbor asked Purna, "Did the city government send you to clean the road?"

Purna said that the government did not hire him to clean the road. He was cleaning the road because he lived on it. The neighbors were amazed. Nobody cleaned the road before. A neighbor told Purna, "You're a good man. We need you here."

Another neighbor agreed. "Yes. We need you. Don't leave."

As he cleaned the road, Purna became famous in the town. Everyone knew him and talked about him. People invited him into their homes.

As he met the neighbors, he learned that one man was paralyzed on his left side. So, he couldn't move his arm or leg on that side of his body. Purna offered to help. He was trained in massage. Massage is the action of rubbing and pressing a person's body with your hands to heal pain in the muscles and other parts of the body. Purna started to rub the left side of the man's body. Every time they met, Purna prayed and gave the man a massage. Soon, the man was fully healed.

Neighbors were amazed to see the man in good health.

They asked him, "Who healed you?"

The man said, "Oh, it was the good man who cleans our road!"

Then the neighbors really wanted to get to know Purna. Soon, they started to ask Purna for prayers and massages, too.

Purna has done what no one thought was possible. He started a church. 11 people got baptized. 20 other people are studying the Bible. Purna said, "Please pray for God to help us serve Him more and more. Today, I continue to clean the road."

Purna lives in a country that we can't name so that we may protect his work from people who often hate Christians. Learn more about Adventist Mission volunteers at [bit.ly/GMPioneers](http://bit.ly/GMPioneers).

INSIDE  
*Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**Purna used the bamboo pole to pick up the trash from the gutters and drains.**



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# THE BOOK OF MARK

