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DISCOVERING JESUS

An Introduction to the Savior

LESSON 4 BIBLE STUDY

*Mark's Gospel:
"Who is Jesus?"*

This Bible Study Series Provided By

Herald of Truth

PART 1 HEART TUNING

The Gospel According to Mark is unusual in several respects. It is the shortest of the four gospels and is generally accepted as the oldest written account of the life of Jesus (written between A.D. 50 and 70). This little book seems to provoke surprise, wonder, and reaction on the part of readers. The gospels, of course, were written to challenge and change us. Yet Mark's story seems especially interested in what happens to the reader (or listener) to this gospel.

Over and over, the story turns to the audience with exhortations, warnings, and questions: "Keep awake.... So must you keep a lookout...keep on alert" (Mark 3:3 5-36). "Let the reader take note" (Mark 13:14). Warnings abound, "If a man has ears he should use them!" (Mark 4:23) And so do pointed questions for readers:

Don't you understand or grasp what I say even yet? Are you like the people who 'having eyes, do not see, or having ears, do not hear'? (Mark 8:18) *Phillips Translation*

The question of all questions, however, appears in the very heart and center of this gospel. Jesus turns to Peter, his most loyal and enthusiastic follower, and asks: *But what about you - who do you say that I am?* (Mark 8:29) Peter replies without pause or qualification: "You are Christ." It's the right answer, but as the story unfolds, we see that even Peter didn't know what he was confessing. Jesus tests and probes his disciples throughout this gospel. He keeps asking, "Do you still not understand or grasp who I am?"

In some ways Mark's Gospel is the most intimate of texts. It is addressed to you in a personal way. As you approach this gospel, you must be alert to the questions that it is asking you *personally*. "What about you?" the text will ask you in various ways. It's true and proper to reply, "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." *But what does that mean, exactly?*

Are you willing to accept Jesus' kingship on his terms that may lead to suffering and humiliation?

If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, take up his cross and follow me. The man who tries to save his life will lose it; it is the man who loses his life for my sake and the gospel's who will save it (Mark 8: 34-35). *Phillips Translation*

In so many words, Jesus is asking, "Are you willing to make good on that confession? Are you willing to live it out in your life?"

courtyard (Mark 14:66), then he drifts further out into the forecourt or onto the threshold leading out of the courtyard (Mark 14:68). Now, distanced from Jesus, he begins to swear and curse, saying, "I tell you I don't know the man you're talking about!" (Mark 14:7 1).

Unlike Judas, the other betrayer of Jesus, Peter realizes immediately what he has done, and tears of regret and penitence immediately flow: "He broke down and wept." Interestingly, after Jesus' resurrection, the angelic being tells the women to summon the disciples for a meeting with Jesus in Galilee. Jesus appears to be especially interested in redeeming Peter, for the angel tells the women: "But now go and tell his disciples, and Peter, that he will be in Galilee before you" (Mark 16:7).

Fallen Peter gives all ordinary people hope. No matter what our mistakes, no matter how far we have fallen, Jesus wants us back. Peter used his personal failure as a call to others to come home. He writes:

You had wandered away like so many sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls (1 Peter 2:25). *Phillips Translation*

Mark's Gospel is a demanding one. It is clear and unmistakable in its demands to follow Jesus all the way to the cross. It shows us that even the best men and women can fall through fear. But it's also a gospel of incredible hope and encouragement, because it shows that anyone can be saved.

As Jesus dies on the cross, there is a hardened Roman soldier standing nearby. Imagine the occupation of being a government-paid professional torturer! Here is a man in a foreign land, commissioned to subdue an unruly people by periodically executing selected citizens in public. What a career! But Jesus died in such a way that even this hard-bitten soldier was cut to the heart:

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39)

Truly, if traitors and executioners can find grace in the eyes of God, then so can every man and woman. To do so, however, we must truly repent of our sins, commit our lives to God in faith, confess Jesus Christ as Lord, and unite with him in baptism.

We encourage you to continue your faith walk, through prayer, continued Bible study, and participation in the community of believers which is your local church.

us find the yoke of the cross painful and uncomfortable. We also find the cross offensive and frightening. Before we condemn Peter, we should look within to see if a touch of Peter lurks in our own hearts.

Fear or Faith? (Mark 14:32-15:39)

The disciples in Mark's Gospel are often caught between two positions - fear and faith ("Do not fear, only believe" 5:36). As Jesus moves towards Jerusalem and the hill of crucifixion, the tension between the two polar positions greatly increases. The apostles, with Peter as their most visible representative, clearly love Jesus. They trust him, and they believe in him. But they also are deeply afraid. Jesus understands their hearts on the eve of his arrest, and so he tells them: "Everyone of you will lose your faith in me" (Mark 14:27).

Soon, the prophesy will be fulfilled: "Then all of the disciples deserted him and made their escape" (Mark 14:50). Much of the narrative focuses on Peter whose betrayal is fully developed and dramatized. Because the text focuses on Peter's fall, many people have harsh words for Peter. But we must remember, all the disciples became deserters at the cross.

If all the apostles desert Jesus, then why is so much attention given to Peter's betrayal in particular? Many scholars believe that the writer, who was a personal friend and associate of Peter, is simply giving us Peter's eye witness account. In fact, Peter certainly wanted his story of betrayal and failure to be made known, for it illustrates in a powerful way the extraordinary love and mercy God shows towards his children. Peter, in fact, writes two books of the New Testament (1 and 2 Peter) to describe the life of people who have sinned and have been forgiven. Peter explains:

[Jesus Christ] himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls (1 Peter 2: 23-25).

New Revised Standard Version

How comforting are these words, coming from a man who has denied Jesus Christ, but who has repented and became one of the great builders of the early Christian church.

In the heat of the crisis, Peter failed. He denied his beloved Lord and friend three times. His denial was in stages. First, Peter makes a bold gesture to save Jesus with a sword (Mark 14:47; John 18:10). As Jesus is arrested, Peter's resolve begins to wane. He now follows at a distance (Mark 14:54). During Jesus' interrogation by the authorities, Peter remains nearby in the

As you enter the world of Mark's Gospel, we suggest that you do so with a prayerful heart, realizing how even the greatest followers of Jesus (like Peter) stumble and fall. We must approach Jesus in humility and submission. Perhaps this prayer can become your own:

God,

I want to know your Son Jesus, and I want to experience the power of His forgiving and transforming love. As I read this gospel, dear Father, give me the eyes, the ears and the heart to see, to hear, and to believe. Show me Jesus and help me to confess Him as Lord. Teach me what it means to follow in His steps. Lord, you know my doubts and fears. Please swallow them up in your divine love and mercy. Give me a trusting heart that will be loyal in darkness and in light, in sorrow and in joy. And grant me the strength and courage to confess "Jesus is Lord" all the days of my life.

*I pray through the Master,
Amen.*

PART 2 LISTENING TO JESUS' SERMON

Mark's Gospel is what one might call a "fast read." It is so brief and full of dramatic action that it's easy to read in a single sitting or in one day. We highly recommend that you read the whole gospel without interruption. However, for this study course we will concentrate on only five chapters.

There is a great deal to notice in this little book. Jesus appears as a very active figure. He is constantly *doing* things - healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding thousands, walking on water, and so forth. Some of Mark's favorite words are "immediately," "at once," and "then" - words suggesting action and rapid movement. The writer wants to emphasize the sheer energy and immediacy of the Son of God.

Important ideas occur in the book with regularity, often as answers to key questions. "*Who is Jesus?*" is certainly one of the central topics. Many people in Jesus' day greatly misunderstood Him. Even those closest to Him, like Peter, often didn't fully understand Christ's purposes. It's not enough to call Jesus "Lord" or "Christ" or "Messiah." One has to *understand* the meaning, the *content*, behind the words. Mark's Gospel gives us some of the important meanings behind these great titles.

Not only does this gospel ask, "Who is Jesus?" It also asks, "*Who will believe in Jesus?*" The answer to this question gets very curious and very interesting. Mark's Gospel is full of surprises. Believers lurk in unexpected places. The people who ought to believe in him typically do not - the religious

professionals, the religious elite. And, the people you wouldn't expect to believe - "outsiders," non-Jews, and "pagans" often declare who Jesus is. Perhaps the culminating moment in Mark's Gospel occurs at the crucifixion when one of his executioners, a Roman centurion, looks at Jesus on the cross and exclaims: "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39). We are impressed by this outsider's discovery of faith. But, the question returns to us.

Now that we have seen and heard Jesus, he turns to us and asks: "What about you-who do you say that I am?" That is a question only you can answer.

TEXT:

**Mark 5; 6:30-56; 8:27-38; 14:32-15:39
(New International Version)**

Mark 5:1 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. 2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. 3 This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even a chain. 4 For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 7 He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" 8 For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"

9 Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." 10 And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

11 A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12 The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." 13 He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

14 Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and country-side, and the people went out to see what had happened. 15 When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. 16 Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man - and told about the pigs as well. 17 Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. 19 Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and

becomes immediately clear: "his heart was touched with pity for them because they seemed to him like sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). Jesus feeds their stomachs, but it is clear once again that this healing has a larger, spiritual point. Jesus is the Bread of Life, as he later tries to make plain to the Twelve (Mark 8:14-21; John 6:35-40). Every human being is hungry in their souls for something eternal. Jesus promises to feed our soul's hunger.

Jesus performed many miracles, but these four reveal beautifully the power of Jesus over human problems, fears, and limitations. And they also reveal Jesus' extraordinary understanding, and above all compassion, regarding the human condition.

**Peter's Confession
(Mark 8:27-38)**

Chapter 8 is both the literal and the spiritual center of Mark's Gospel. One might say that the story of Peter's confession is the hinge upon which the whole story turns. Peter is the model believer up to this point - certainly the most colorful, the most enthusiastic, and the most visible disciple. If anyone ought to understand who Jesus is, it is Peter. He is bold as he is certain of what he believes. When Jesus asks, "Who are men saying that I am?" (Mark 8:27), the disciples name the various opinions held about Jesus. But when Jesus asks, "What about you-who do you say that I am?" - it is Peter who gives the clear response "You are the Christ!" (Mark 8:29). The story now takes a surprising turn:

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him (Mark 8:31-32).

Then Peter, bold man that he is, takes Jesus to task for saying such unbelievable things! To Peter, this is a shockingly unacceptable description of a heavenly king! Jesus corrects Peter in the strongest possible language, and then goes on to explain that his role as Messiah is one of suffering. Furthermore, Jesus explains, if we are going to be his disciples, we must be willing to follow in his steps. We must deny ourselves and take up our cross. If we want heavenly glory, we must be willing to walk the path with Jesus to the cross. Later, Paul says it like this: "We are the children of God... heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided that we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (Romans 8:16-18).

Peter looks a bit foolish after this exchange, but we should be slow to condemn him, for he is a "stand in" for most people. Many of us are embarrassed by Jesus' call to the humble life of service and sacrifice. Many of

tombs, howling day and night. But the spirits in this man, though they are evil, still recognize the power of God. Because these spirits are themselves supernatural, they can recognize Jesus' supernatural nature. Jesus is equal to the task of taming this evil force, sending the "legion" of demonic spirits into the swine. Now the madman is "properly clothed and perfectly sane." The people are properly astounded, and the healed man very naturally wants to travel with Jesus. Yet Jesus won't have it. He tells the man:

Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you (Mark 5:19).

In many ways this story of healing also works like a parable. While it is literally true, it contains the elements of a universal story of what God can do for anyone. All of us are trapped by evil in various ways, but Jesus has the power to rescue us from our bondage to sin. And once we are freed, we are asked to tell the story of our personal redemption: "Go home and tell the people what the Lord has done for you."

Chapter 5 contains two other dramatic stories of healing which are linked in an unusual way. Sometimes these are called sandwich stories, for one story is "sandwiched" between the two halves of another story. Story A concerns the ruler of a synagogue named Jairus who has a sick daughter. Jairus comes to Jesus to secure his help to save his daughter's life. Story A is interrupted by Story B which concerns a woman who has suffered from hemorrhaging for twelve years. The woman receives her request because she has had the courage and the faith just to touch the edge of his cloak. Then Mark returns to Story A, the account of Jairus and his daughter. In the remarkable conclusion to the first story we learn that the little girl has died (perhaps because Jesus was delayed in coming?). But even death is not a limitation to Jesus Christ. Jesus tells the people: "Now, don't be afraid, just go on believing!" (Mark 5:-36) This advice is a basic theme of the Gospel of Mark. We have a choice: We can fear, or we can trust.

To be pleasing to God, we must believe, even when we cannot see or understand. And so, Jesus speaks to Jairus' dead child: "Little girl, I tell you to get up!" Immediately, the twelve-year-old child rises and walks around. The effect on the family and friends is electric. The people are overcome with amazement:

"This sight sent the others nearly out of their minds with joy" (Mark 5:42). *Phillips Translation*

Chapter 6 contains the famous story of Jesus' feeding 5,000 (vv. 30-44). The fact that the people had no bread indicates how preoccupied, even desperate, they were to hear Jesus. In a remote region of the country without markets or restaurants, the people became hungry. Jesus' compassionate nature

how he has had mercy on you." 20 So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

21 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. 22 Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet 23 and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." 24 So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

31 "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

35 While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher any more?"

36 Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. 38 When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." 40 But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. 43 He

gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her some thing to eat.

Mark 6:30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33 But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. 36 Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

37 But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

38 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five - and two fish."

39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44 The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

47 When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, 49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be

hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" - (which means, "My God my God, why have you forsaken me?")

35 When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

36 One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

PART 3 BACKGROUND AND COMMENTARY

Theme Verse:

"But what about you?" he asked.
"Who do you say I am?"

Four Miracles (Mark 5:1-47; 6:30-56)

In this passage Jesus is well established in his public ministry which involves teaching and healing. He has already selected twelve men as his special assistants and missionaries. They are often called The Twelve or Apostles (Mark 3:13-19). One of Jesus' distinctive teaching styles is to talk in parables, symbolic stories that could be understood on two different levels:

With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable (Mark 4:33-34).

Through parables Jesus could make vivid and memorable points to those who had open minds and searching hearts. But to those who had attitude problems, the parables were mysteriously unclear

Chapter 5 contains three stories illustrating Jesus' great power. The first story describes a demon-possessed man. Whatever the exact nature of this unhappy man's situation, it is clear that he is in the grip of an evil force. He was beyond the pale of human medicine or society's control. "No one could do anything with him." What a haunting specter this man was, living among the

came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

9 "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, 10 knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

12 "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them.

13 "Crucify him!" they shouted.

14 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

15 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. 17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" 19 Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

21 A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. 22 They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). 23 Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

25 It was the third hour when they crucified him. 26 The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. 29 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 come down from the cross and save yourself!"

31 In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! 32 Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

33 At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth

afraid." 51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. 54 As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. 55 They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went - into villages, towns or countryside - they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

Mark 8:27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

28 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ."

30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

Mark 14:32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba Father," he said, "everything is

possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

43 Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

44 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 The men seized Jesus and arrested him. 47 Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

48 "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." 50 Then everyone deserted him and fled.

51 A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, 52 he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

53 They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. 54 Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. 56 Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

57 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'" 59 Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you

not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"

62 "I am," said Jesus. " And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

63 The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. 64 "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death. 65 Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said.

68 But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway.

69 When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." 70 Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."

71 He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore, "I don't know this man you're talking about."

72 Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept.

Mark 15:1 Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

2 "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate.

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

3 The chief priests accused him of many things. 4 So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."

5 But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

6 Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested. 7 A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. 8 The crowd