

Study Ten

Study Eleven



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9-16

**Central Sydney Semester  
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Study Seven

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Study One

Study Two

Study Three

## Resurrection

We will only be dealing with verse 1-8 of chapter 16. The best ancient manuscripts don't have v9-20. In fact they are a compilation of resurrection appearances from the other gospels. Mark's gospel strangely has no appearances of the resurrected Jesus only reports by the angels to the women and the command for them to tell the men, which they fail to do out of fear.

Some people in the ancient world found this such a disappointing end to a great story that they improved on the ending.

But what if the 'short ending' is the right ending—what does Mark the master story teller want to say by saying so little?

The best insight is this; Mark's ending frustrates the reader. So many great things have happened, the plan of God to save the world has reached a critical point and Jesus is victorious over death. On the mount of transfiguration Jesus told his disciples not to say anything of his glory till after his resurrection—now it has happened and the women, those wonderfully brave women around the cross—have lost their nerve—the angel has undone them. But if they don't tell who will hear?

And then we remember we have seen and we have heard. We have come from Galilee to Jerusalem—and in the frightened silence an unspoken question is posed to us, 'Will you tell?'

This week have a meal together and talk about the gospel of Jesus from Mark—tell his other disciples in your group about your Saviour.

## Eyes Wide Shut

**Getting Started**

How do our expectations of what God should do in our life, blind us to what God is doing in our life?

**Mark 9.2-8 Reviewing Mountain Top Experiences**

Moses and Elijah are very significant players in the Israel Story. Moses was instrumental in setting up the covenant, Elijah in calling rebellious Israel back to covenant faithfulness. Both had 'mountain-top experiences' where they saw or definitely didn't see God.

**MOSES**

1. Read and summarise Exodus 32.7-15;33.18-23

*This occurs on Mt Sinai. Israel sins and God is about to wipe them out and start over again with Moses. Instead of accepting the offer Moses offers himself as a sacrifice for the people and argues that God's name will be dishonoured by the lawful judgment. The LORD rejects the offer of Moses' but spares Israel any way. Moses then sees something of the LORD's glory but only the back half of God's glory.*

**ELIJAH**

2. Read and summarise 1 Kings 19.11-18 (note gentle whisper is translation of 'a small nothing' - Elijah doesn't see God or get a new revelation)

*This occurs in Mt Sinai—Elijah takes 40 days to get there. Elijah comes to pray against Israel. I am the only one left is Elijah offering himself as the starting point of a new Israel. But the LORD has nothing to say at this time there is still a remnant that has not committed idolatry. Elijah does not even get to see the back of God's glory.*

3. What does this account say about what Jesus is doing if he is in the company of Moses and Elijah v7?

*In Jesus Moses, Elijah and the disciples will see more of God that is possible anywhere else. The Israel story will progress in the ministry of Jesus.*

4. Does Jesus have a Moses or an Elijah like role in relation to Israel?

Jesus has a Moses like role and an Elijah like role—he dies for Israel and Israel makes a new beginning in him. Jesus is the new start for the true Israel.

5. Peter's suggestion is that they should set up camp—build Tabernacles for Moses, Elijah and Jesus. The Tabernacle in the wilderness was a point of revelation. Why might Peter think that it was appropriate to build the tent complex?

They were at the point of revelation—the glory of God was shining.

6. How does the voice from heaven direct us away from what is happening to what will happen as the point of revelation?

The voice from heaven tells us to keep on watching and listening to the Jesus space.

#### **Read v9-13**

7. What will we see of God's glory if we keep looking at Jesus v9?

Jesus death and resurrection

8. Is the death and resurrection the back of God's glory, the absence of it or what?

It is the brilliance of it. The absolute commitment of love to his people.

9. Why do you think the disciples couldn't work out what 'rising from the dead meant'?

Because it didn't fit with their idea of God's glory and the plan of God being worked out by Jesus.

v11 seems to be disconnected with what has gone before and what comes after but the disciples are trying to get their theological bearings. In Malachi 4 it says

"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. <sup>2</sup>But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And

**Read Mark 15.21-46  
... and kill him 10.34**

Jesus is already near to exhaustion. He cannot carry the cross piece of the instrument of death. They come to the place of the skull. He refuses to be drugged—the last gasp will require all his powers of concentration, focus and obedience. He is stripped naked and nailed wrists and ankles to the 'tree'. His clothes become the pot for the guards' game of Texas Holdem Poker—this happened at 9 am. The charge sheet nailed to the head of his cross reads, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two robbers, lestage, freedom fighters—possibly Barnabas' left and right hand men turn out to be Jesus left and right hand men. It doesn't look like James and John wanted the position as much as they thought. But these two patriots don't want to die in the presence of someone who is soft on the enemy.

They and everyone else hurl insults at Jesus—this is the ritual of enemies as old as the spectators at Jesus' death and those at Saddam's hanging—mock, depersonalise, make the victim inhuman. But he refused to be depersonalised by the pain or the mocking. At 3 pm he cries out in the words of Psalm 22, My God my God why have you forsaken me—the song of the faithful one torn apart by the unfaithful and still putting his faith in God. Probably some non-Jews miss the allusion and think he is calling Elijah—but Elijah has already come and gone.

Someone takes pity and offers Jesus something to drink, third grade wine, but wine nonetheless; Is Jesus drinking in the Kingdom? Surely not, is he? He dies...

The curtain Temple is torn from top to bottom the grief of God is expressed, he leaves the Temple, he can stand it no longer. A centurion has stood there and seen everything. He has also seen so many deaths, so many crucifixions, too much suffering but today he has seen something different he has seen a man endure pain and mocking, abandoned and belittled but who died with a dignity not bestowed by crowns or gowns but by integrity and love, 'Surely this was the Son of God— a king unbowed by death and derision!'

Not everyone has deserted Jesus—the women remain, watching, grieving.

Joseph of Arimathea—a man waiting for the kingdom of God—comes and asks Pilate for Jesus' body to bury—the women follow, they will come to this place in two days time to find their preparations for embalming—redundant and eclipsed by life.

On the next page ... write a prayer of thanks to God for his son and his death for you.

you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. <sup>3</sup>Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty. <sup>4</sup>"Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. <sup>5</sup>"See, I will **send** you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. <sup>6</sup>He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

10. What is the expectation of Elijah's coming in this passage?

*The wicked will be dealt with and Israel will be freed.*

11. Jesus gets his disciples back to theological reality by say that Elijah has already come and they have done what they wanted to, to him. Who is Jesus talking about, and who did what to him?

*John the Baptist. The leaders rejected him and Herod beheaded him.*

12. When will it be alright to let people know what they have seen on the mountain v9?

*When Jesus had risen from the dead—go to the end of Mark and read only Mark 16.1-8—did they? NO!*

**Read14-32**

13. Who appears to be doing the rejecting in v14-15?

*The teachers of the law who are arguing with the disciples—the people are glad to see him even if they don't understand everything about him. We need to remember that the reject of Jesus was primarily by the leadership of Israel.*

14. Whose failure has brought this confrontation about?

*The disciples' failure - they have been unable to cast out the demon.*

15. Who is Jesus addressing in v19 and why is this surprising?

*Whoever else he is addressing he is addressing the disciples. It is surprising because they above everyone should understand what is going on but they don't.*

16. In v22-24 Jesus underlines the father's unbelief. Why ?

To promote belief.

17. Given Jesus' answer to the disciples' question, 'Why couldn't we drive it out?', whose power must the disciples' have been relying on?

Their own—how often do we do this—we forget it is God's kingdom not ours.

18. Once again why didn't the disciples understand such clear statement by Jesus about what was soon to take place?

Because it did not fit their expectation at all.

What do you think God is doing in your life at the moment?

## Study Ten

Mark 15

### Behold the Lamb ...

#### Read Mark 15.1-15

#### They will condemn him and hand him over to the Gentiles (10.34)

1. The irony of the choice before Pilate, the people (an arranged crowd in the leader's pockets) and the leaders is what sort of king do they want. What sort of king does Jesus offer himself as?

A king who will love his enemies not like Gentile rulers

2. What sort of king would Barabbas be?

One who used power and might and ruthless efficiency to get his own way.

3. What is the irony of the situation?

Jesus is on trial as an insurrectionist when he is not and will be killed and Barabbas who is an insurrectionist will be let go with Jesus dying in his place.

4. How is the Jesus and Barabbas exchange the embodiment of the Gospel?

The innocent take the place of the guilty.

#### Read 15.16-20

#### Who will mock him and spit on him (10.34)

5. In what ways is Jesus mocked as a king?

Purple robe

Crown of thorns

Hail King of the Jews

Spat on him—a parody of anointing

Paid mocking homage

11. Jesus on trial cuts an impressive figure in control and unphased by the tricks and bullying of his accusers. How does Peter fare in contrast?

Falls to pieces and is 'bullied' by a wee slip of a girl.

12. Contrast Peter before and after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Contrast this passage with Acts 4.1-22.

13. If you need boldness what do you need to pray for?

## Study Two

Mark 9.33-50

### On Being Great

#### Getting Started

We have a hunger to be significant. Is that the same as the hunger to be great?

#### Read Mark 9.33-37

1. The disciples have moved from the remote north of the province of Galilee back to home base at Capernaum. What has happened that would get the disciples going about who was the greatest?

The transfiguration—the greatness of Jesus inspires them to be trying to be impressive and occupy a position of significance. Maybe even the failure at the base of the mountain

2. Why have the disciples repeatedly not understood about Jesus and his work Mark 8.34-9.1; 9.9; 9.31-32?

Jesus' greatness leads through a place of service, rejection and death.

3. What does Jesus' explanation of greatness tell us about the way the world defines greatness?

We have it all wrong—we thing being first and being served is what it is all about when it is really about being last and serving.

4. Given v36-37 What was the status of children in the first century Palestine?

Very low—without power or prerogative

5. What do these verses say about the LORD God, if welcoming a little one is welcoming him?

That he is humble and a servant to us in some ways.

**Read Mark 9.38-42**

6. How does the disciples' concern about the man casting out demons show us that they haven't understood what Jesus has just said to them?

They are worried that someone other than them might be doing the Kingdom of God thing. At this point they were the privileged few and they wanted it kept that way.

7. Are the disciples welcoming the man driving out demons?

No, they are suspicious and possibly jealous.

8. How does Jesus counter their concerns in v39-41?

This is not about them it's about him and if someone is doing miracles or a good deed in his name at one moment — won't defame him the next. Although Peter does this pretty well as the rest of the disciples do in the Garden of Gethsemane.

9. How might the man casting out demons in v38 be a 'little one' they 'cause to sin' in v42?

They reject him out of hand because he is not one of them, and so he stops what he is doing as a witness to Jesus.

10. How potentially serious is this to the disciples' future?

It is absolutely serious—offending a little one can lead to disastrous consequences.

**Read v43-48**

11. How seriously does Jesus encourage the disciples to take sin in their life?

With the utmost seriousness—sin takes you to hell—you don't take sin lightly in your life—you cut it out and cut it off!

6. What does Jesus' incredible identification with the Passover lamb imply for the disciples and for us?

That if we shelter under the blood of Jesus we will come to be with God.

7. What is the significance of the New Covenant language in regards to the blood of Jesus symbolised by the cup?

What Jesus is about to do will bring in the New Covenant the covenant of forgiveness, the Spirit, new Hearts and the internalisation of the Law.

**Read Mark 14.32-52**

8. Look up these references to cup—what is Jesus about to drink Isaiah 51.17; Jer 25.15; Lam 4.21; Ezek 23.32-34; Hab 2.16; Zec 12.2?

The wrath of God—judgment and shame—not just death— death yes, but a terrible death.

9. In v48 Jesus challenges his arresters by saying 'Am I leading a rebellion that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?' Why did Israel's leaders want to get rid of Jesus of Nazareth if he wasn't leading a rebellion?

**Read Mark 14.53-65**

10. Jesus refuses to co-operate with their Kangaroo court and out of desperation the high priest gets Jesus to 'hang himself' on his own words. In Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked the disciples who they thought he was. Peter said the Christ, and Jesus immediately qualified that with talking about how the Son of Man must suffer. Here the high priest asks if Jesus is the Christ, to which he admits and again immediately talks about the Son of Man but not as crucified. What will the high priest see and what will it mean?

This one glorious receiving the kingdom from God himself and subduing the rebellious kingdoms.

## Passover Preparations

**Read Mark 14. 1-11****The Son of Man betrayed to the Chief Priests and Teachers of the Law (10.33)**

1. Why did people rebuke the woman?

Because of the huge expense of the largely symbolic act—a years wages that could have gone to help the poor.

2. What was the basis of Jesus' defence of her?

The poor would always be with them they would have time in the future to give them something but his time was running out.  
She anointed his body ready for burial.  
In the future her act will be retold with approval.

3. What is it in this act or more recent acts in Jesus' ministry that would have antagonised Judas to this extent?

Maybe Judas saw Jesus as a failure of a Messiah.

**Read Mark 14.12-31**

4. Notice Jesus has again taken pains to prepare in advance for what he is about to do. What is most unsettling about the disciples' response to Jesus' announcement that one of them will betray him?

They each have a sense that they are capable of betraying him— 'surely not I?'

5. How is divine sovereignty and human responsibility expressed in v21?

God is in control but Judas is responsible.

12. Why would cutting off our hand or foot not stop us from sinning completely?

Because sin is a heart problem—but that doesn't mean we don't take drastic action with sin in our lives it does mean we understand that rooting out sin is the work of the Spirit.

13. Verse 48 is a quote from Isaiah 66.23 the last verse of the great prophecy. There the utter seriousness of not taking God at his word is portrayed. In what ways do you think we have become less serious about sin than we should ?

14. Salt and fire were agents of purification. Salt stopped food from rotting and fire purified metals, but perhaps the image behind this is the image of a sacrifice—all the sacrifices (burnt) to the LORD God were salted. If the idea of sacrifice is to the fore here what might these verses be saying?

We are to be living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

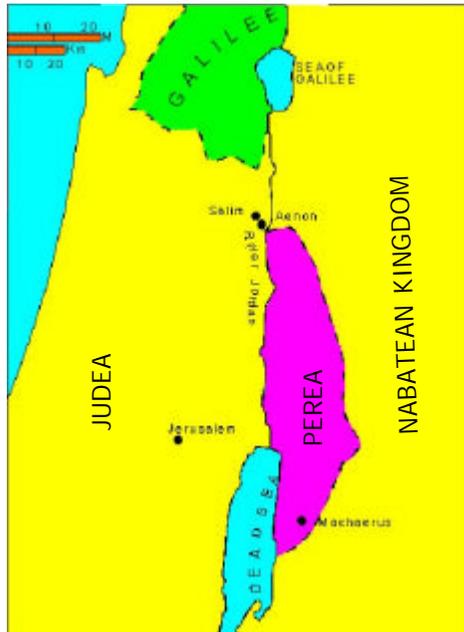
15. What sins are there in your life that you need to take seriously?

**Divorce**

**Getting Started**

Is there anything more painful than broken relationships?

**Background**



Background becomes important sometimes. Not that it changes what is said but it can influence how we hear what is being said.

Jesus moves from Galilee, an area ruled by Herod to the region across the Jordan from Judea, Perea, another area controlled by Herod.

Herod has a fortress in Perea called Machaerus—this is where John the Baptist was beheaded for speaking out against Herod’s adulterous marriage to his sister-in-law Herodias. Herod divorced his previous wife, the daughter of the King of Nabatea.

**Read 10.1-12**

1. The Pharisees come and ask Jesus a question about divorce. What is dangerous about this question?

Last time someone spoke about this highly charged issue they lost their head—Elijah has come and they have done to him as they wished. They are trying to get Herod to do something to Jesus.

Here are some connections between the ‘sign’ passage, Mark 13.14-36, and the rest of Mark’s Gospel as the fulfilment of the sign. Fill in the Table.

Mark 13.14-36	Mark 14-16
1. Flee to the mountains v14	1. 14.50
2. Let no one go back to get his cloak v16	2. 14.51
3. Not in winter v18	3. 14.1 (Spring)
4. False Christs v21f	4. 15.29-32
5. Sun darkened v24f	5. 15.33
6. Son of Man in the clouds and the messengers going out v26f	6. 16.6-7
7. This is very soon v28f	7. 14.1
8. The time is soon be alert	8. 14.34
9. Keep watch	9. 14.34
10. evening	10. 14.17,15.42
11. midnight	11. 14.26?
12. rooster crows	12. 14.66f
13. dawn	13. 16.2
14. Abomination signals defiling of the Temple and its disruption	14. 15.38

This is not an attempt to undermine a belief in the second coming of Jesus something that I long for and look forward to. This judgement becomes the model for the final judgement.

The 'not one stone left on the other' must refer to the fall of Jerusalem, but what is the sign that Jerusalem will fall? I realise that this is not the way you may have previously understood this passage. You have probably read it firstly as an account of the second coming. There are good reasons for doing so. Much of the language of this passage is picked up in the 'return of Jesus' passages but I want to ask that you bear with me in letting the text speak in answering these two questions, 'When will the fall of Jerusalem happen and what will be the sign?'

#### **When will Jerusalem Fall? Read Mark 13.5-13**

4. What sort of things will happen as a preview to the fall of Jerusalem?

There will be many messianic pretenders  
There will be wars, earthquakes, and famines but these are but a preview  
The disciples will be persecuted  
They will be witnesses before governors and kings  
The gospel will be preached to all nations  
You will be inspired by the Holy Spirit  
Betrayal within families

5. Think of what happened in Acts—how many of these pre-events have taken place by the end of that account?

Most of them  
Before the fall of Jerusalem in 66 AD and 125 AD there were Messianic contenders  
There was a famine in Judea as there were battles and earthquakes.  
The disciples were persecuted by the Sanhedrin and the Gentiles  
Paul the apostle spoke before governors and kings  
Paul is able to say the gospel has been spoken to every creature under heaven Col1.23  
The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost and gives the disciples the ability to speak in ways that are surprising.

#### **What will be the Sign? Read Mark 13.14-36**

The term 'abomination that causes desolation' comes from Daniel 9.31;10.11 and 12.15. It appears in Daniel to be an act that defiles the Temple. What is this act? I want to suggest much of what is said about the abomination that causes desolation makes sense if we see the sign of the end of Jerusalem as nothing less than the betrayal, rejection and crucifixion of the glorious Son of Man in Daniel 7—Jesus. Mark says in v14, 'let the reader understand' - is this telling us to keep reading Mark for clues and we will work out what is going on here. We need to also see that in many books with apocalyptic passages (this is what Ch 13 is) the apocalyptic passage is paralleled by other material that says the same thing in a less symbolic way of Daniel, Zechariah and Revelation.

2. What was the motive behind the testing of the Pharisees?

I think they wanted to see if he would compromise himself in a sticky situation—if he did they could point that out to the crowds that had come to have him teach them and so undermine his authority.

3. How does Jesus handle the trap laid before him?

He asks them a question to find out more of their own heart, and then exposes the problem at the centre of all our lives—our hard hearts.  
Jesus points the questioners beyond Moses and his accommodation to hard heartedness to God's original purposes in creation. Jesus says that divorcing for anything other than marital unfaithfulness is adultery—probably there were lots among the self righteous Pharisees who had committed adultery in this sense.

4. In Ezek.36.25-29 God talks about hard hearts. What is Jesus saying about the bigger problem facing Israel that divorce is only a symptom of?

Being far away from the LORD God and in need of the work of the Spirit—this is what Jesus came to do.

5. What does Jesus mean when he says that Moses gave this law to Israel because their hearts were hard?

I take it that an order divorce was better than what could come from a bad marriage—it was a concession and the lesser of two evils.

6. Divorce is a symptom of the fall. How does Jesus' citing of Genesis underline this?

Because before the fall human being lived together and the intention was that a married couple always would.

7. Jesus' conversation with the disciples in the house, away from the antagonistic questioners, continues to focus on divorce. In the parallel passage in Matthew, Jesus gives a qualification to the apparent blanket rejection of divorce on any grounds, Matthew 19.9, that is adultery. Why is divorce so high among God's people whose hearts have been softened?

Well this is at the heart of the issue—it seems to me there are a great many issues here

- to some extent our hearts are still hard.
- our expectation of marriage is often unrealistic.
- Divorce has shaped peoples expectations
- Those of divorced families are prone to divorce themselves.

8. How do we as God's people demonstrate that we are different in this?

I think the answer here is that we work harder at our marriages.

9. Are there any other reasons besides adultery that make divorce acceptable?

Desertion because of the Christian faith 1 Cor 7  
What about abuse of children or your own person?

## Study Eight

Mark 13

### The Temple of Doom

#### Read Mark 13.1-4

We are still in the Temple precincts. The disciples might be enacting **Psalm 48:1**

A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.

Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

<sup>2</sup> It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.

<sup>3</sup> God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress.

<sup>4</sup> When the kings joined forces, when they advanced together, <sup>5</sup> they saw *her* and were astounded; they fled in terror. <sup>6</sup> Trembling seized them there, pain like that of a woman in labour.

<sup>7</sup> You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind.

<sup>8</sup> As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD Almighty, in the city of our God: God makes her secure forever. Selah

<sup>9</sup> Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.

<sup>10</sup> Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness.

<sup>11</sup> Mount Zion rejoices, the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments.

<sup>12</sup> Walk about Zion, go around her, count her towers, <sup>13</sup> consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation. <sup>14</sup> For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.

1. Given Jesus' statement and actions in Mark 11-12 what is no longer true in this Psalm?

The whole thing—the disciples are going on as if Jesus hasn't said anything—but like the ministry of Jeremiah Jesus has highlighted the inherent wickedness of the city.

2. How does Jesus respond to the enthusiastic praising of the Temple's stone work?

He rejects it utterly, a time will come when nothing will remain of it.

3. When the disciples come to Jesus what two things do they ask him for?

- A) When will these things happen i.e. not one stone left on another and
- B) What will be the sign that they are about to be fulfilled

**Read Mark 12.38-44**

10. Jesus is identifying hypocrisy as the great sin of the teachers of the Law. How does he do that?

Over and against prayer—humble dependence upon God they perform and are privileged and prey on the weak.

11. Too often v41-44 is used to preach up giving when it should be seen as the working out of what Jesus has just said and a stinging condemnation of the Temple and the Leadership in Jerusalem. How does Jesus use the praise of the widow's generosity to condemn the powers that be?

She is really generous and ignored—the others are acclaimed but are not worthy. The Temple has beggared the weak and the lowly.

**Entering the Kingdom of God**

**Getting Started**

Have you ever been in a situation where someone continually failed to 'get' what you were saying? How did you feel?

Read Mark 9.33-37 and then Mark 10.13-16

1. What have the disciples failed to get and failing to get it fail to welcome the one who sent Jesus?

Well, it's all pretty clear they don't welcome one of these little ones in Jesus name and so they don't welcome Jesus nor the one who sent him—the LORD God. Instead the disciples rebuked the little ones.

2. What is Jesus' response to the disciples rebuking the 'little ones' and why did he have this response?

Jesus was indignant—I can only think that he took this, not only as a failure to understand what he was saying, but a fundamental 'non-welcoming' of the God he was revealing by the people who should have known best.

3. How were the disciples trying to receive the kingdom of God Mark 9.33?

Their understanding was that entry into the kingdom was on the basis of performance, position and power—all of the things a little child does not have. They only the desire to be blessed (loved).

4. What do Jacob at Peniel (Gen.32.22-32) the disciples and the 'little ones' have in common or contrast?

Jacob wants a blessing from God but like the disciples, on his own terms. The LORD makes him weak and dependent so as to understand where the blessing comes from.

5. Why are the children blessed by Jesus?

Because they want to be and Jesus welcomes God through this act and blesses him.

**Read Mark 10.17-31**

6. What is seemingly appropriate about the young man's request?

He runs up he gets on his knees and he wants to inherit eternal life. It all sounds pretty good and just right but it isn't and Jesus knows it isn't.

7. How does Jesus identify that the Rich Young Man is not acting like a child?

Because he has done all the second part of the 10 commandments since he was a boy. He is no longer a child he has grown up. He has accomplished, he doesn't seem to need blessing, he is already rich.

8. Imagine yourself as the Young man (even you girls) and then imagine v21 happening to you. Jesus looks long and hard at you—he is in no hurry. This is no quick glancing appraisal, he looks into you and you realize he loves you, and he asks you to follow him. What do you do?

9. But following Jesus will mean he needs to leave something behind. Remember what part of the 10 Commandments Jesus asked the man about first? The commandments to do with people. The commandments to do with the worship of the true God are identified now— does he worship his money? Is he willing to leave it and follow Jesus. What is Jesus calling you to leave to follow him?

**Read Mark 12.18-27**

Sadducees—the ruling aristocratic party, didn't believe in resurrection and only read the first five books of the Old Testament as authoritative. One of the Sadducees has formulated a question designed to ridicule a belief in resurrection. In Israel if a man married and died before producing an heir, his brother took over that responsibility, the child would carry his brother's name. So here is a story of very bad luck—a woman marries five brothers who die in quick succession and then she finally dies. The question is , 'If there is a resurrection, whose wife is she?'

5. Jesus pointed out two errors in the arguments of the Sadducees. What were they?

There is no marriage in heaven.

The scriptures from Moses declare that those who have left this world aren't dead.

6. Why was it important that Jesus' quote came from Exodus and not quoted from Ezekiel?

The Sadducees only take Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy as authoritative.

**Read Mark 12.28-34**

Of all the questions this one is the least aggressive v25.

7. What are the two most important commandments and what areas of life do they cover?

Loving God in everything we are and loving your neighbour as yourself.  
There's not much that is left outside of this—doing it is the hard part.

8. Why do you think people didn't want to ask Jesus any more questions?

Because he was in control and was putting the acid back on them.

**Read Mark 12.35-37**

We know that the title 'Son of God' is the title of the king of Israel—the Messiah. But while Jesus is that we have come to see that he is much more than that as well.

9. Where has Jesus shown that he is more than just a human king?

The answers need to be more than he did miracles—Elijah and Elisha do miracles, as do the disciples—they have to be miracles that specifically point to his LORDship. Feeding and calming waters as an expression of—the LORD is my shepherd.

## 5 Steps to Judgement

**Getting Started**

When have you seen someone or a group of people attack the bearer of a difficult message?

Previously, Jesus has pronounced judgement on the leadership and the heart of Israel's institutions—the Temple. The Lord has turned up, weighed the leaders and found them wanting.

In this section we are confronted with the determination of those Jesus has condemned to catch him out by three difficult questions. They want to embarrass him or ensnare him, but Jesus answers them well and then asks his own 'tough question' before pronouncing judgement on the leadership of Israel again and the temple through the generosity of the widow.

**Read Mark 12.13-17**

1. When was the first time the Pharisees and Herodians got together and what were they trying to do? Mark 3.6

They conspired together on how to kill Jesus.

2. Given the previous background, it is no wonder Jesus is suspicious. First they flatter him and then they ask a question that no matter what he answers he will alienate someone and possibly sign his own death warrant. Who would Jesus alienate by answering, 'yes' or, 'no' to the question, 'Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?'

Say yes and you will please the Romans but alienate Jewish support.

Say no and you will please the Jewish freedom fighters but alienate the Romans.

3. Jesus' answer is masterful, he manages to point God's people back to their calling as image bearers of God. How does he do this?

Caesars image is a gilded image – a coin. They are to give God his image—themselves. This cuts right across loyalty to Rome.

10. Read Mark 10.15; why is it hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Because unlike a little child they can have a false view of who they are. And what they deserve.

11. Why do you think the disciples are amazed at what Jesus says about how difficult it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God?

Because in Israel they looked like the ones who had the inside running and were blessed by God—but Jesus blesses little ones.

12. Jesus addresses his disciples as 'children'. How would this be an encouragement given the human impossibility of a camel getting through the eye of a needle?

Because they are entering the kingdom of God—not having money is not a problem.

13. How does the disciples' question bring us to the point where we understand how salvation is accomplished and why the well resourced might have difficulties in understanding this?

Because salvation is given not earned or bought. It is a matter of God's grace not human merit or accomplishment.

14. What have the disciples left behind?

Everything

15. In what context did Jesus talk about 'first and last' before 9.35?

In the context of who was the greatest. The disciples really need to learn this lesson.

16. What are you leaving behind to follow Jesus?

Seeing the Kingdom of God

Getting Started

Describe your most frustrating moment.

Read Mark 10.32-34

1. This is the third time Jesus predicts his death compare and contrast it with the other two; Mark 8.31; 9.31

Mark 8.31	Mark 9.31	Mark 10.33-34
<p>Son of Man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suffer many things</li> <li>• Rejected by elders/ chief priests/ teachers of the law</li> <li>• Be killed</li> <li>• After three days rise again</li> </ul>	<p>Son of Man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betrayed into the hands of men</li> <li>• They will kill him</li> <li>• After three days he will rise</li> </ul>	<p>Son of Man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betrayed to ...</li> <li>• ... the chief priests/ teachers of the law</li> <li>• Condemn him to death</li> <li>• Hand him over to the Gentiles who will ...</li> <li>• Mock him and spit on him, flog him and ...</li> <li>• ... kill him</li> <li>• Three days later he will rise</li> </ul>

2. What sort of development is there in these three predictions??

There is a much greater degree of detail as Jesus is nearing his destination.

7. What are the two reasons the leaders of Israel give for not answering Jesus and what does this tell us about their hearts?

They didn't respond to the call to repent and be ready by John—they didn't believe he was from heaven.

They were afraid of the people who generally did believe he was a prophet sent by God.

Their hearts were hard.

8. The leadership of Israel make a distinction between themselves and the people. What is the nature of that distinction?

The people believe John—one suspects they are believing Jesus. The leadership reject John and will reject Jesus.

Read Mark 12.1-13

9. Jesus uses parables in different ways. Sometimes they are used to confound understanding but the leadership of Israel had no trouble understanding the message of this parable. What was the message?

That Israel's leaders had always rejected God in the person of his messengers and that now they would reject God in the person of the Son. Their failure to be good stewards would be punished and the stewardship of the vineyard passed to others.

Jesus came to Jerusalem to get an account of the stewardship of Israel's leaders—but there was no fruit—judgement is about to fall.

10. Jesus can return at any time and you will have to give an account of the fruitfulness of your life. What can you be doing to make your life more fruitful?

4. The quote from Isaiah 56.7 identifies the intention the LORD had for the Temple—a house of prayer for all nations; the quote from Jeremiah 7.11 ' but you have made it into a den of robbers' shows us what Jesus thinks it has become. Read Jeremiah 7.9-11. Jesus is saying the attitudes that prevailed in Jeremiah's day were still alive and well in his day. What were those attitudes?

That you could do what you wanted and God would still protect Jerusalem.

**OLD TESTAMENT Connections 1**

Have you ever considered how the shape and direction of Jesus' ministry parallels the shape and direction of Jeremiah's ministry?

JEREMIAH	JESUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel occupied by enemy forces—the Babylonians</li> <li>• Jeremiah warns that the Occupation is a punishment for sins against the LORD</li> <li>• The message is rejected</li> <li>• Those in Israel will encourage others to rebel and in doing so will find themselves rebelling against the LORD</li> <li>• Rebellion will be met with judgement and the destruction of the Temple/ Jerusalem and the deportation of the people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel occupied by enemy forces—the Romans</li> <li>• Jesus tells Israel that the Romans aren't the problem sins against the LORD are</li> <li>• Jesus is rejected</li> <li>• Those in Israel will encourage others to rebel and in doing so will find themselves rebelling against the LORD</li> <li>• Rebellion will be met with judgement and the destruction of the Temple/ Jerusalem and the deportation of the people</li> </ul>

**Read Mark 11.27-33**

5. What is the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus?

John was the forerunner, the preparer, the introducer.

6. What was John's message Mark 1.2-5?

That the LORD would turn up soon and that God's people needed to be ready. They needed to repent.

**Read Mark 10.35-45**

3. What is tragically wrong about this request to sit on Jesus' left and right hand in glory?

James and John have not understood anything about the nature of Jesus' mission or greatness or service—they have failed to see what the kingdom is about at all.

4. What is tragically wrong about the other ten disciples when they hear about the Zebedee boys' request?

They're only miffed because the bothers Zebedee got in before them

5. What is the cup that Jesus is about to drink? Mark 14.36

The cup is the cup of judgement - the cross.

6. Who will be on Jesus' left and right hand when he is on the cross ?

Two insurrectionists

7. From v42-44 what model of leadership have the disciples adopted??

A gentile model not the model of leadership that the LORD developed and modelled in Israel –shepherding—being a servant, leadership is slaving for another.

8. How is Jesus the very embodiment of this principle v45?

He as the glorious Son of Man Dan.7 chooses to give his life for his people—unlike the destructive gentile empires.

**Read 10.46-52**

What is perhaps striking is that at this stage the disciples' spiritual blindness is unmistakable. They just don't get who Jesus is and what he is doing. What is extra ordinary is that a blind man does see what the sighted fail to see.

9. How is Bartimaeus like a 'little one'?

Blind, in need, leaves all he has, wants a blessing from Jesus, is rebuked, is a last one

10. Jesus asked the blind man the same question he asked James and John, 'What do you want me to do for you?' How different are the answers?

Different in every way—James and John want position and privilege. The Blind man wants to see

11. What does the newly seeing man do that demonstrates what discipleship is all about?

Follows Jesus

12. When does jealousy or pride show itself most in your life?

13. What steps are you taking to deal with this ugliness?

## Study Six

Mark 11.1-12.12

### The Return of the King

#### Getting Started

Describe a time when you were held to account in a good way and in a bad way

#### Read Mark 11.1-11

When you read the account of the disciples getting the donkey doesn't it sound like a prearranged strategy so that Jesus could fulfil the prophecy of **Zechariah 9:9**

<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Sometimes we are too ready to see that every fulfilment of prophecy just happened but this gives us the sense that Jesus organised some of the fulfilments of prophecy.

1. What is the first thing Jesus does on entering the city?

Jesus goes to the Temple and then goes back to Bethany.

2. Is this the fulfilment of prophecy of Malachi 3.1-2 Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. <sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. And what can we expect?

Yes it is and we can expect judgment and purification.

#### Read Mark 11.12-25

3. The story of the fig tree surrounds the story of the cleansing of the Temple and is meant to interpret it. So what does the cursing of the fig tree and its death tell us about what Jesus is doing to the Temple?

The Temple isn't being cleansed for use - it is being cleansed for vacating—Israel's worship has become a burden to the LORD.