

End Times: Jesus The Prophet

Mark 13

☞ **What would you like to praise God for today?**

JESUS FORETELLS THE FUTURE

¹ As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said, "Teacher, look at these tremendous buildings! Look at the massive stones in the walls!"

² Jesus replied, "These magnificent buildings will be so completely demolished that not one stone will be left on top of another."

³ Later, Jesus sat on the slopes of the Mount of Olives across the valley from the Temple. Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him privately and asked him, ⁴ "When will all this take place? And will there be any sign ahead of time to show us when all this will be fulfilled?"

⁵ Jesus replied, "Don't let anyone mislead you, ⁶ because many will come in my name, claiming to be the Messiah. They will lead many astray. ⁷ And wars will break out near and far, but don't panic. Yes, these things must come, but the end won't follow immediately. ⁸ Nations and kingdoms will proclaim war against each other, and there will be earthquakes in many parts of the world, and famines. But all this will be only the beginning of the horrors to come. ⁹ But when these things begin to happen, watch out! You will be handed over to the courts and beaten in the synagogues. You will be accused before governors and kings of being my followers. This will be your opportunity to tell them about me. ¹⁰ And the Good News must first be preached to every nation. ¹¹ But when you are arrested and stand trial, don't worry about what to say in your defense. Just say what God tells you to. Then it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

¹² "Brother will betray brother to death, fathers will betray their own children, and children will rise against their parents and cause them to be killed. ¹³ And everyone will hate you because of your allegiance to me. But those who endure to the end will be saved.

¹⁴ "The time will come when you will see the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing where it should not be"--reader, pay attention! "Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. ¹⁵ A person outside the house must not go back into the house to pack. ¹⁶ A person in the field must not return even to get a coat. ¹⁷ How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for mothers nursing their babies in those days. ¹⁸ And pray that your flight will not be in winter. ¹⁹ For those will be days of greater horror than at any time since God created the world. And it will never happen again. ²⁰ In fact, unless the Lord shortens that time of calamity, the entire human race will be destroyed. But for the sake of his chosen ones he has shortened those days.

²¹ "And then if anyone tells you, 'Look, here is the Messiah,' or, 'There he is,' don't pay any attention. ²² For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform miraculous signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. ²³ Watch out! I have warned you!

²⁴ "At that time, after those horrible days end, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give light, ²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.

²⁶ Then everyone will see the Son of Man arrive on the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And he will send forth his angels to gather together his chosen ones from all over the world--from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.

²⁸ "Now, learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its buds become tender and its leaves begin to sprout, you know without being told that summer is near. ²⁹ Just so, when you see the events I've described beginning to happen, you can be sure that his return is very near, right at the door. ³⁰ I assure you, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these events have taken place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will remain forever.

³² "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. ³³ And since you don't know when they will happen, stay alert and keep watch.

³⁴ "The coming of the Son of Man can be compared with that of a man who left home to go on a trip. He gave each of his employees instructions about the work they were to do, and he told the gatekeeper to watch for his return. ³⁵ So keep a sharp lookout! For you do not know when the homeowner will return--at evening, midnight, early dawn, or late daybreak. ³⁶ Don't let him find you sleeping when he arrives without warning. ³⁷ What I say to you I say to everyone: Watch for his return!"

Mark 13:1-37 (NLT)

☞ **PRAY for God's guidance**

1. Who pulled off the best surprise party on you? When?

2. Why do you think Jesus used the discussion about the destruction of Jerusalem and the magnificent temple (the home of their anticipated Messiah) to begin His discourse about the end of the age?
3. What events might deceive them into thinking the end times had come (vv. 5-8)? Are these evident in the world today?

What impact will this phase of history have on the disciples and the early church (vv. 9-13)? The church today?

What comfort and helper will aid them to endure their trials?

4. How is v. 11 taken out of context when used as an excuse not to improve our witnessing skills?
5. What exhortation is given to followers of Christ in v. 13?
6. What dreadful event (v. 14; see Da. 9:26; 11:31; 12:11) will bring “days of distress” unequalled in human history?

What deceptive signs will accompany that distress (vv. 21-22)?

7. How will the Son of Man come (vv. 24-27; Rev. 1:7)? Will that be hard to mistake?
8. What promises does Jesus give in verses 30-31? How would they comfort the disciples? Us?
9. Why do you think the Father has kept the time secret (v.32)?

What is He emphasizing... what is the responsibility of believers in the mean time?

Wrap up: What is the most exciting thing to you about the Second Coming? The most distressing?

Specifically, how can you fulfill verses 33 and 37: “Be on your guard! Be alert... Watch!”?

Prayer: For one another

LIFE GROUPS

A safe place to build friendships and grow spiritually.

- L** ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
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Commentary Notes from the Life Application Bible

Chapter 13

Notes for Verses 1,2

About 15 years before Jesus was born (20 B.C.), Herod the Great began to remodel and rebuild the temple, which had stood for nearly 500 years since the days of Ezra (Ezra 6:14, 15). Herod made the temple one of the most beautiful buildings in Jerusalem -- not to honor God, but to appease the Jews whom he ruled. The magnificent building project was not completely finished until A.D. 64. Jesus' prophecy that not one stone would be left on another was fulfilled in A.D. 70, when the Romans completely destroyed the temple and the entire city of Jerusalem.

Notes for Verse 3ff

The disciples wanted to know when the temple would be destroyed. Jesus gave them a prophetic picture of that time, including events leading up to it. He also talked about future events connected with his return to earth to judge all people. Jesus predicted both near and distant events without putting them in chronological order. Some of the disciples lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This event would assure them that everything else Jesus predicted would also happen.

Jesus warned his followers about the future so that they could learn how to live in the present. Many predictions Jesus made in this passage have not yet been fulfilled. He did not make them so that we would guess when they might be fulfilled, but to help us remain spiritually alert and prepared at all times as we wait for his return.

13:3,4 The Mount of Olives rises above Jerusalem to the east. From its slopes a person can look down into the city and see the temple. Zechariah 14:1-4 predicts that the Messiah will stand on this very mountain when he returns to set up his eternal kingdom.

Notes for Verses 5-7

What are the signs of the end times? There have been people in every generation since Christ's resurrection claiming to know exactly when Jesus would return. No one has been right yet, however, because Christ will return on God's timetable, not ours. Jesus predicted that before his return, many believers would be misled by false teachers claiming to have revelations from God.

According to Scripture, the one clear sign of Christ's return will be his unmistakable appearance in the clouds, which will be seen by all people (Mark 13:26; Revelation 1:7). In other words, you do not have to wonder whether a certain person is the Messiah or whether these are the "end times." When Jesus returns, *you will know* beyond a doubt, because it will be evident to all true believers. Beware of groups who claim special knowledge of the last days, because no one knows when that time will be (Mark 13:32). Be cautious about saying, "This is it!" but be bold in your total commitment to have your heart and life ready for Christ's return.

Notes for Verses 9,10

As the early church began to grow, most of the disciples experienced the kind of persecution Jesus was talking about. Since the time of Christ, Christians have been persecuted in their own lands and on foreign mission fields. Though you may be safe from persecution now, your vision of God's kingdom must not be limited by what happens only to you. A glance at a newspaper will reveal that many Christians in other parts of the world daily face hardships and persecution. Persecutions are an opportunity for Christians to witness for Christ to those opposed to him. These persecutions serve God's desire that the gospel be proclaimed to everyone.

Notes for Verse 11

Jesus did not imply that studying the Bible and gaining knowledge is useless or wrong. Before and after his resurrection Jesus himself taught his disciples what to say and how to say it. But Jesus was teaching the kind of attitude we should have when we must take a stand for the gospel. We don't have to be fearful or defensive about our faith because the Holy Spirit will be present to give us the right words to say.

Notes for Verse 13

To believe in Jesus and stand "firm to the end" will take perseverance because our faith will be challenged and opposed. Severe trials will sift true Christians from fair-weather believers. Enduring to the end does not earn

salvation for us, but marks us as already saved. The assurance of our salvation will keep us going through the times of persecution.

Notes for Verse 14

The "abomination that causes desolation" is the desecration of the temple by God's enemies. This happened repeatedly in Israel's history: in 597 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar looted the temple and took Judean captives to Babylon (2Chronicles 36); in 168 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig to Zeus on the sacred temple altar (Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:30, 31); in A.D. 70 when the Roman general Titus placed an idol on the site of the burned-out temple after the destruction of Jerusalem. Just a few years after Jesus gave this warning, in A.D. 38, the emperor Caligula made plans to put his own statue in the temple, but he died before this could be carried out.

Notes for Verse 20

The *elect* are God's chosen people, those who are saved. See Romans 8:29, 30 and Ephesians 1:4, 5 for more on God's choice.

Notes for Verses 22,23

Is it possible for Christians to be deceived? Yes. So convincing will be the arguments and proofs from deceivers in the end times that it will be difficult *not* to fall away from Christ. If we are prepared, Jesus says, we can remain faithful. But if we are not prepared, we will turn away. To penetrate the disguises of false teachers we can ask: (1) Have their predictions come true, or do they have to revise them to fit what's already happened? (2) Does any teaching utilize a small section of the Bible to the neglect of the whole? (3) Does the teaching contradict what the Bible says about God? (4) Are the practices meant to glorify the teacher or Christ? (5) Do the teachings promote hostility toward other Christians?

Notes for Verse 31

In Jesus' day the world seemed concrete, dependable, and permanent. These days many people fear its destruction by nuclear war. Jesus tells us, however, that even if the earth passes away, the truth of his words will never be changed or abolished. God and his Word provide the only stability in our unstable world. How shortsighted people are who spend their time learning about this temporary world and accumulating its possessions, while neglecting the Bible and its eternal truths!

Notes for Verse 32

When Jesus said that even he did not know the time of the end, he was affirming his humanity. Of course God the Father knows the time, and Jesus and the Father are one. But when Jesus became a man, he voluntarily gave up the unlimited use of his divine attributes.

The emphasis of this verse is not on Jesus' lack of knowledge, but rather on the fact that no one knows. It is God the Father's secret to be revealed when he wills. No one can predict by Scripture or science the exact day of Jesus' return. Jesus is teaching that preparation, not calculation, is needed.

Notes for Verses 33,34

Months of planning go into a wedding, the birth of a baby, a career change, a speaking engagement, the purchase of a home. Do you place the same importance on preparing for Christ's return, the most important event in your life? Its results will last for eternity. You dare not postpone your preparations because you do not know when his return will occur. The way to prepare is to study God's Word and live by its instructions each day. Only then will you be ready.

Notes for Verses 35-37

The entire thirteenth chapter of Mark tells us how to live while we wait for Christ's return: (1) We are not to be misled by confusing claims or speculative interpretations of what will happen (Mark 13:5, 6). (2) We should not be afraid to tell people about Christ, despite what they might say or do to us (Mark 13:9-11). (3) We must stand firm by faith and not be surprised by persecutions (Mark 13:13). (4) We must be morally alert, obedient to the commands for living found in God's Word. This chapter was not given to promote discussions on prophetic timetables, but to stimulate right living for God in a world where he is largely ignored.

Reflections On Communion

Mark 14:1-26

☞ **What would you like to praise God for today?**

¹ Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. ² "But not during the Feast," they said, "or the people may riot."

³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶ "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹ I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹ They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

The Lord's Supper

¹² On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

¹³ So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵ He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

¹⁶ The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁷ When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸ While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me--one who is eating with me."

¹⁹ They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?"

²⁰ "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. ²¹ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

²³ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.

²⁴ "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. ²⁵ "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

²⁶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

☞ **PRAY for God's guidance**

1. How does this woman's action (v.3) strike you?
 - a) Thoughtful, but misguided
 - b) Tasteful, but extravagant
 - c) Wasteful, no buts about it
 - d) Honoring to the Nth degree

2. What did she risk by coming into Jesus' presence?
3. What did her actions "say" to Jesus and the others about her faith?
4. How was her action justified by Jesus (vv. 6-9)? Used by Judas (vv. 10-11)?
5. [vv. 12-26] Why would secrecy be needed as this meal was planned? What risk was involved?
6. What does Jesus say about His betrayer? How do the disciples react to that bombshell?
7. What new meaning did Jesus give to the Passover bread? The wine? What vow did He make?
8. How much do you think the disciples understood when Jesus spoke about His body and blood?
9. Why is Communion so important to the body of believers? (see 1 Cor. 11:23-26)
10. What should our attitude be as we approach Communion?

Wrap up: What phrase, thought or scripture stood out to you most today? Why?

Prayer: For one another

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Commentary Notes from the Life Application Bible

Notes for Verse 1

The Passover commemorated the night the Israelites were freed from Egypt (Exodus 12), when God "passed over" homes marked by the blood of a lamb while killing firstborn sons in unmarked homes. The day of Passover was followed by a seven-day festival called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This, too, recalled the Israelites' quick escape from Egypt when they didn't have time to let their bread rise, so they baked it without yeast. This holiday found people gathering for a special meal that included lamb, wine, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread. Eventually the whole week came to be called Passover.

14:1 The Jewish leaders plotted secretly to kill Jesus -- his murder was carefully planned. The murder plot was not being planned because popular opinion had turned against Jesus. In fact, the leaders were afraid of Jesus' popularity.

Notes for Verse 3

Bethany is located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (Jerusalem is on the western side). This town was the home of Jesus' friends Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, who were also present at this dinner (John 11:2). The woman who anointed Jesus' feet was Mary, Lazarus's and Martha's sister (John 12:1-3). An alabaster jar was a beautiful and expensive carved vase. Nard was expensive perfume.

14:3-9 Matthew and Mark placed this event just before the Last Supper, while John placed it a week earlier, just before the Triumphal Entry. It must be remembered that the main purpose of the Gospel writers was not to present an exact chronological account of Christ's life, but to give an accurate record of his message. Matthew and Mark may have chosen to place this event here to contrast the complete devotion of Mary with the betrayal of Judas, the next event in both Gospels.

Notes for Verses 4,5

Where Mark says "some of those present," John specifically mentions Judas (John 12:4, 5). Judas's indignation over Mary's act of worship was based not on concern for the poor but on greed. Because Judas was the treasurer of Jesus' ministry and had embezzled funds (John 12:6), he no doubt wanted the perfume sold so that the proceeds could be put into his care.

Notes for Verses 6,7

Jesus was not saying that we should neglect the poor, nor was he justifying indifference to them. (For Jesus' teaching about the poor, see Matthew 6:2-4; Luke 6:20, 21; Luke 14:13, 21; Luke 18:22.) Jesus was praising Mary for her unselfish act of worship. The essence of worshiping Christ is to regard him with utmost love, respect, and devotion and to be willing to sacrifice to him what is most precious.

Notes for Verse 10

Why would Judas want to betray Jesus? Very likely, Judas expected Jesus to start a political rebellion and overthrow Rome. As treasurer, Judas certainly assumed (as did the other disciples -- see Mark 10:35-37) that he would be given an important position in Jesus' new government. But when Jesus praised Mary for pouring out the perfume, thought to be worth a year's salary, Judas finally began to realize that Jesus' kingdom was not physical or political, but spiritual. Judas's greedy desire for money and status could not be fulfilled if he followed Jesus, so he betrayed him in exchange for money and favor from the religious leaders.

Notes for Verse 13

The two men Jesus sent were Peter and John (Luke 22:8).

Notes for Verses 14,15

Many homes had large upstairs rooms, sometimes with stairways both inside and outside the house. The preparations for the Passover would have included setting the table and buying and preparing the Passover lamb, unleavened bread, sauces, and other ceremonial food and drink.

Notes for Verse 19

Judas, the very man who would betray Jesus, was at the table with the others. Judas had already determined to betray Jesus, but in cold-blooded hypocrisy he shared the fellowship of this meal. It is easy to become enraged or shocked by what Judas did; yet professing commitment to Christ and then denying him with one's life is also betraying him. It is denying Christ's love to disobey him; it is denying his truth to distrust him; it is denying his deity to reject his authority. Do your words and actions match? If not, consider a change of mind and heart that will protect you from making a terrible mistake.

Notes for Verse 20

It was often the practice to eat from a common bowl. Meat or bread was dipped into a bowl filled with sauce often made from fruit.

Notes for Verses 22-25

Mark records the origin of the Lord's Supper, also called Communion or Eucharist (thanksgiving), which is still celebrated in worship services today. Jesus and his disciples ate a meal, sang psalms, read Scripture, and prayed. Then Jesus took two traditional parts of the Passover meal, the passing of bread and the drinking of wine, and gave them new meaning as representations of his body and blood. He used the bread and wine to explain the significance of what he was about to do on the cross.

*Notes on the significance of the Last Supper, from **1 Corinthians 11:24-26**.*

Notes for Verses 24,25

What does the Lord's Supper mean? The early church remembered that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the night of the Passover meal (Luke 22:13-20). Just as Passover celebrated deliverance from slavery in Egypt, so the Lord's Supper celebrates deliverance from sin by Christ's death.

Christians pose several different possibilities for what Christ meant when he said, "This is my body." (1) Some believe that the wine and bread actually become Christ's physical blood and body. (2) Others believe that the bread and wine remain unchanged, but Christ is spiritually present with the bread and wine. (3) Still others believe that the bread and wine symbolize Christ's body and blood. Christians generally agree, however, that participating in the Lord's Supper is an important element in the Christian faith and that Christ's presence, however we understand it, strengthens us spiritually.

Notes for Verse 25

What is this new covenant? In the old covenant, people could approach God only through the priests and the sacrificial system. Jesus' death on the cross ushered in the new covenant or agreement between God and us. Now all people can personally approach God and communicate with him. The people of Israel first entered into this agreement after their exodus from Egypt (Exodus 24), and it was designed to point to the day when Jesus Christ would come. The new covenant completes, rather than replaces, the old covenant, fulfilling everything the old covenant looked forward to (see Jeremiah 31:31-34). Eating the bread and drinking the cup shows that we are remembering Christ's death for us and renewing our commitment to serve him.

11:25 *Jesus said, "Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." How do we remember Christ in the Lord's Supper? By thinking about what he did and why he did it. If the Lord's Supper becomes just a ritual or a pious habit, it no longer remembers Christ, and it loses its significance.*

Notes for Mark 14, Verse 24

Jesus' death for us on the cross seals a new covenant between God and people. The old covenant involved forgiveness of sins through the blood of an animal sacrifice (Exodus 24:6-8). But instead of a spotless lamb on the altar, Jesus offered himself, the spotless Lamb of God, as a sacrifice that would forgive sin once and for all. Jesus was the final sacrifice for sins, and his blood sealed the new agreement between God and us. Now all of us can come to God through Jesus, in full confidence that God will hear us and save us from our sins.

Notes for Verse 26

The hymn they sang was most likely taken from Psalms 115 -- 118, traditionally sung at the Passover meal.

A Matter of Betrayal

Mark 14:27-31; 53-54; 66-72

☞ **What would you like to praise God for today?**

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

27 "All of you will desert me," Jesus told them. "For the Scriptures say, 'God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'

28 But after I am raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there."

29 Peter said to him, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will."

30 "Peter," Jesus replied, "the truth is, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times."

31 "No!" Peter insisted. "Not even if I have to die with you! I will never deny you!" And all the others vowed the same. Mark 14:27-31 (NLT)

Jesus before the Council

53 Jesus was led to the high priest's home where the leading priests, other leaders, and teachers of religious law had gathered. 54 Meanwhile, Peter followed far behind and then slipped inside the gates of the high priest's courtyard. For a while he sat with the guards, warming himself by the fire. Mark 14:53-54 (NLT)

Peter Denies Jesus

66 Meanwhile, Peter was below in the courtyard. One of the servant girls who worked for the high priest

67 noticed Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked at him closely and then said, "You were one of those with Jesus, the Nazarene."

68 Peter denied it. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said, and he went out into the entryway. Just then, a rooster crowed.

69 The servant girl saw him standing there and began telling the others, "That man is definitely one of them!"

70 Peter denied it again. A little later some other bystanders began saying to Peter, "You must be one of them because you are from Galilee."

71 Peter said, "I swear by God, I don't know this man you're talking about."

72 And immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Suddenly, Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and cried. Mark 14:66-72 (NLT)

☞ **PRAY for God's guidance**

1. Where do you go (or what do you do) when facing difficult situations? Do you prefer to be alone or in the company of others?
2. How does Peter see himself in relation to the other disciples? How might the others feel about that?
3. Why do you think Jesus warned the disciples(especially Peter) of their upcoming denial?

4. Why do you think Peter followed Jesus to the scene of the trial?
 - a. to satisfy his curiosity
 - b. to rescue him
 - c. to keep his promise
 - d. to be near Jesus
5. Peter is brave enough to follow Jesus to the high priest's house. Why do you think he now denies Christ? Do you think he realized what he was doing? Why?
6. How were the three denials similar? Different?
7. How do you react to Peter in this story?
 - a. I probably would have done the same thing
 - b. He was a coward
 - c. With pity
 - d. I was angry
8. In retrospect, (see vv. 29-31), how does Peter feel?
9. Jesus chose Peter to launch His kingdom expanding work. He changed his name from Simon (sinking sand) to Peter (the rock). See Matt. 16:18.
 What impact do you think this failure had upon the future of Peter's life?
 - a. it probably made him less cocky
 - b. it probably made him less self-confident
 - c. it probably made him a more sensitive person
 - d. it probably made him into the man of God that he became
10. How do you feel, realizing that Jesus knows your weaknesses and failures?
11. When you blow it, what have you found helpful? What have you found helpful in dealing with a friend who has experienced failure?

Wrap-up: What is the message for all mankind in this story?

Prayer: For one another

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A safe place to build friendships and grow spiritually.

- | | | | |
|----------|---|-----------------|--|
| L | ♦ | Learn..... | applying Biblical truth for everyday living |
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Commentary Notes from the Life Application Bible

Mark 14:27-31; 53-54; 66-72

Notes for Verse 27

It's easy to think that Satan temporarily gained the upper hand in this drama about Jesus' death. But we see later that God was in control, even in the death of his Son. Satan gained no victory -- everything occurred exactly as God had planned.

14:27-31 This was the second time in the same evening that Jesus predicted the disciples' denial and desertion, which probably explains their strong reaction (Mark 14:31). For Jesus' earlier prediction, see Luke 22:31-34 and John 13:36-38
Notes for Verse 53ff

This trial by the Sanhedrin had two phases. A small group met at night (John 18:12-24), and then the full Sanhedrin met at daybreak (Luke 22:66-71). They tried Jesus for religious offenses such as calling himself the Son of God, which, according to law, was blasphemy. The trial was fixed: these religious leaders had already decided to kill Jesus (Luke 22:2).

Notes for Verse 55

The Romans controlled Israel, but the Jews were given some authority over religious and minor civil disputes. The Jewish ruling body, the Sanhedrin, was made up of 71 of Israel's religious leaders. It was assumed that these men would be just. Instead, they showed great injustice in the trial of Jesus, even to the point of making up lies to use against him (Mark 14:57).

Notes for Verses 63,64

Of all people, the high priest and members of the Sanhedrin should have recognized the Messiah because they knew the Scriptures thoroughly. Their job was to point people to God, but they were more concerned about preserving their reputations and holding on to their authority. They valued human security more than eternal security.

Notes for Verses 66,67

Caiaphas's house, where Jesus was tried (Mark 14:53), was part of a huge palace with several courtyards. John was apparently acquainted with the high priest, and he was let into the courtyard along with Peter (John 18:15, 16).

Notes for Verse 71

Peter's curse was more than just a common swear word. He was making the strongest denial he could think of by denying with an oath that he knew Jesus. He was saying, in effect, "May God strike me dead if I'm lying."

14:71 It is easy to get angry at the Sanhedrin and the Roman governor for their injustice in condemning Jesus, but Peter and the rest of the disciples also contributed to Jesus' pain by deserting him (Mark 14:50). While most of us may not be like the Jewish and Roman leaders, we are like the disciples because all of us have been guilty of denying Christ as Lord in vital areas of our lives. We may pride ourselves that we have not committed certain sins, but we are all guilty of sin. Don't try to excuse yourself by pointing at others whose sins seem worse than yours.

Commentary Notes from Barclay's Daily Study Bible

Mark 14:26-31

It is a tremendous thing about Jesus that there was nothing for which he was not prepared. The opposition, the misunderstanding, the enmity of the orthodox religious people, the betrayal by one of his own inner circle, the pain and the agony of the Cross--he was prepared for them all. But perhaps what hurt him most was the failure of his friends. It is when a man is up against it that he needs his friends most, and that was exactly when Jesus' friends left him all alone and let him down. There was nothing in the whole gamut of physical pain and mental torture that Jesus did not pass through.

Sir Hugh Walpole wrote a great novel called *Fortitude*. It is the story of one called Peter, whose creed was, "It isn't life that matters, but the courage you bring to it." Life did everything that it possibly could to him. At the end, on his own mountain top, he heard a voice, "Blessed be pain and torment and every torture of the body. Blessed be all loss and the failure of friends and the sacrifice of love. Blessed be all failure and the ruin of every earthly hope. Blessed be all sorrow and torment, hardships, and endurances that demand courage. Blessed be these things--for of these things cometh the making of a man." Peter fell to praying, "Make of me a man...to be afraid of nothing, to be ready for everything. Love, friendship, success...to take it if it comes, to care nothing if these things are not for me. Make me brave. Make me brave."

Jesus had supremely, more than anyone who ever lived, this quality of fortitude, this ability to remain erect no matter with what blows life assaulted him, this serenity when there was nothing but heartbreak behind and torture in front. Inevitably every now and then we find ourselves catching our breath at his sheer heroism. When Jesus foretold this tragic failure of loyalty, Peter could not believe that it would happen. In the days of the Stewart troubles they captured the Cock of the North, the Marquis of Huntly. They pointed at the block and the axe and told him that unless he abandoned his loyalty he would be executed then and there. His answer was, "You can take my head from my shoulders but you will never take my heart from my king." That is what Peter said that night.

There is a lesson in the word that Jesus used for "fall away." The Greek verb is skandalizein (4624), from skandalon (4625) or skandalethron which meant the bait in a trap, the stick on to which the animal was lured and which snapped the trap when the animal stepped on it. So the word skandalizein (4624) came to mean to entrap, or to trip up by some trick or guile. Peter was too sure. He had forgotten the traps that life can lay for the best of men. He had forgotten that the best of men can step on a slippery place and fall. He had forgotten his own human weakness and the strength of the devil's temptations. But there is one thing to be remembered about Peter--his heart was in the right place. Better a Peter with a flaming heart of love, even if that love did for a moment fail most shamefully, than a Judas with a cold heart of hate. Let that man condemn Peter who never broke a promise, who never was disloyal in thought or action to a pledge. Peter loved Jesus, and even if his love failed, it rose again.

Mark 14:66-72

Sometimes we tell this story in such a way as to do Peter far less than justice. The thing we so often fail to recognize is that up to the very last Peter's career this night had been one of fantastically reckless courage. He had begun by drawing his sword in the garden with the reckless courage of a man prepared to take on a whole mob by himself. In that scuffle he had wounded the servant of the High Priest. Common prudence would have urged that Peter should lie very low. The last place anyone would have dreamed that he would go to would be the courtyard of the High Priest's house--yet that is precisely where he did go. That in itself was sheer audacity. It may be that the others had fled, but Peter was keeping his word. Even if the others had gone he would stick to Jesus.

Then the queer mixture of human nature emerged. he was sitting by the fire, for the night was cold. No doubt he was huddled in his cloak. Maybe someone poked the fire or flung a fresh log upon it, and it flared up with a fitful flame and Peter was recognized. Straightway he denied all connection with Jesus. But--and here is the forgotten point--any prudent man would then have left that courtyard as fast as his legs could carry him--but not Peter. The same thing happened again. Again Peter denied Jesus and again he would not go. It happened once more. Again Peter denied Jesus, Peter did not curse Jesus' name. What he did was to swear he did not know Jesus and to call down curses on himself if he was not telling the truth. Still it seems he did not mean to move. But something else happened.

Very probably it was this. The Roman night was divided into four watches from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. At the end of the third watch, at three o'clock in the morning, the guard was changed. When the guard was changed there was a bugle call which was called the gallicinium, which is the Latin for the cockcrow. Most likely what happened was that as Peter spoke his third denial, the clear note of the bugle call rang out over the silent city and smote on Peter's ear. He remembered and his heart broke.

Make no mistake--Peter fell to a temptation which would have come only to a man of fantastic courage. It ill becomes prudent and safety-seeking men to criticize Peter for falling to a temptation which would never, in the same circumstances, have come to them at all. Every man has his breaking-point. Peter reached his here, but nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of every thousand would have reached theirs long before. We would do well to be amazed at Peter's courage rather than to be shocked at his fall.

But there is another thing. There is only one source from which this story could have come--and that is Peter himself. We saw in the introduction that Mark's gospel is the preaching material of Peter. That is to say, over and over again Peter must have told the story of his own denial. "That is what I did," he must have said, "and this amazing Jesus never stopped loving me."

There was an evangelist called Brownlow North. He was a man of God, but in his youth he had lived a wild life. One Sunday he was to preach in Aberdeen. Before he entered the pulpit a letter was handed to him. The writer recounted a shameful incident in Brownlow North's life before he became a Christian and stated that if he dared to preach he would rise in the church and publicly proclaim what once he had done. Brownlow North took the letter into the pulpit with him. He read it to the congregation. He told them that it was perfectly true. Then he told them how through Christ he had been forgiven, how he had been enabled to overcome himself and put the past behind him, how through Christ he was a new creature. He used his own shame as a magnet to draw men to Christ. That is what Peter did. He told men, "I hurt him and I let him down like that, and still he loved and forgave me--and he can do the same for you."

JESUS - Up Close and Personal

Christ - His Death and Resurrection

Mark 15:33 - 16:8

☞ **What would you like to praise God for today?**

The Death of Jesus

³³ At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. ³⁴ Then, at that time Jesus called out with a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

³⁵ Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. ³⁶ One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a stick so he could drink. "Leave him alone. Let's see whether Elijah will come and take him down!" he said.

³⁷ Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ And the curtain in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹ When the Roman officer who stood facing him saw how he had died, he exclaimed, "Truly, this was the Son of God!"

⁴⁰ Some women were there, watching from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the younger and of Joseph), and Salome. ⁴¹ They had been followers of Jesus and had cared for him while he was in Galilee. Then they and many other women had come with him to Jerusalem.

The Burial of Jesus

⁴² This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath. As evening approached, ⁴³ an honored member of the high council, Joseph from Arimathea (who was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come), gathered his courage and went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. ⁴⁴ Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman military officer in charge and asked him. ⁴⁵ The officer confirmed the fact, and Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. ⁴⁶ Joseph bought a long sheet of linen cloth, and taking Jesus' body down from the cross, he wrapped it in the cloth and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance. ⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body was laid. Mark 15:33-47 (NLT)

The Resurrection

¹ The next evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene and Salome and Mary the mother of James went out and purchased burial spices to put on Jesus' body. ² Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they came to the tomb. ³ On the way they were discussing who would roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb. ⁴ But when they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone--a very large one--had already been rolled aside. ⁵ So they entered the tomb, and there on the right sat a young man clothed in a white robe. The women were startled, ⁶ but the angel said, "Do not be so surprised. You are looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who was crucified. He isn't here! He has been raised from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. ⁷ Now go and give this message to his disciples, including Peter: Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died!" ⁸ The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, saying nothing to anyone because they were too frightened to talk.

[Shorter Ending of Mark]

Then they reported all these instructions briefly to Peter and his companions. Afterward Jesus himself sent them out from east to west with the sacred and unfailing message of salvation that gives eternal life. Amen. Mark 16:1-8 (NLT)

☞ **PRAY for God's guidance**

1. What kinds of people were usually crucified (v. 27)?

How is Jesus like them?

Consider The People:

1. Who are all the people involved in this passage? (list them)
2. How are these people like people in our world?
3. What characteristics in yourself do you see represented in these people?

Consider The Plot:

1. What is happening in this story? What is the conflict?
2. What would you have done in this situation?
3. How is this like what is happening in our lives/in our world today?

Consider The Timeless Truths:

1. What is the message for all mankind? What does this mean for our society or culture?
2. Who did Jesus send to you to tell you He had risen? Did you have trouble believing that person?

Wrap-up: To whom is Jesus sending you with this message? How will you accomplish this mission?

Prayer: For one another

LIFE GROUPS

A safe place to build friendships and grow spiritually.

- L** ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
I ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
F ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
E ♦ Evangelism..... reaching others with the hope of Christ

Commentary Notes from the Life Application Bible

Notes for Verse 21 - Colonies of Jews existed outside Judea. Simon had made a Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem all the way from Cyrene in North Africa. His sons, Alexander and Rufus, are mentioned here probably because they became well known later in the early church (Romans 16:13).

Notes for Verse 24 - Casting lots was a way of making a decision by chance, like throwing dice or drawing straws. The soldiers cast lots to decide who would receive Jesus' clothing. Roman soldiers had the right to take for themselves the clothing of those crucified. This act fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 22:18.

Notes for Verse 25 - Crucifixion was a feared and shameful form of execution. The victim was forced to carry his cross along the longest possible route to the crucifixion site as a warning to bystanders. There were several shapes for crosses and several different methods of crucifixion. Jesus was nailed to the cross; condemned men were sometimes tied to their crosses with ropes. In either case, death came by suffocation as the person lost strength and the weight of the body made breathing more and more difficult.

Notes for Verse 26 - A sign stating the condemned man's crime was often placed on a cross as a warning. Because Jesus was never found guilty, the only accusation placed on his sign was the "crime" of being King of the Jews.

Notes for Verse 27 - Luke records that one of these robbers repented before his death, and Jesus promised that criminal that he would be with him in paradise (Luke 23:39-43).

Notes for Verse 31 - Jesus could have saved himself, but he endured this suffering because of his love for us. He could have chosen not to take the pain and humiliation; he could have killed those who mocked him -- but he suffered through it all because he loved even his enemies. We had a significant part in the drama that afternoon because our sins were on the cross too. Jesus died on that cross for us, and the penalty for our sins was paid by his death. The only adequate response we can make is to confess our sin and freely accept the fact that Jesus paid for it so we wouldn't have to. Don't insult God with indifference toward the greatest act of genuine love in history.

Notes for Verse 32 - When James and John had asked Jesus for the places of honor next to him in his kingdom, Jesus had told them that they didn't know what they were asking (Mark 10:35-39). Here, as Jesus was preparing to inaugurate his kingdom through his death, the places on his right and on his left were taken by dying men -- criminals. As Jesus explained to his two power-hungry disciples, a person who wants to be close to Jesus must be prepared to suffer and die as he himself was doing. The way to the kingdom is the way of the cross. If we want the glory of the kingdom, we must be willing to be united with the crucified Christ.

Notes for Verse 34 - Jesus did not ask this question in surprise or despair. He was quoting the first line of Psalm 22. The whole psalm is a prophecy expressing the deep agony of the Messiah's death for the world's sin. Jesus knew that he would be temporarily separated from God the moment he took upon himself the sins of the world. This separation was what he had dreaded as he prayed in Gethsemane. The physical agony was horrible, but the spiritual alienation from God was the ultimate torture.

Notes for Verse 37 - Jesus' loud cry may have been his last words, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

Notes for Verse 38 - A heavy curtain hung in front of the temple room called the Most Holy Place, a place reserved by God for himself. Symbolically, the curtain separated the holy God from sinful people. The room was entered only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, by the high priest as he made a sacrifice to gain forgiveness for the sins of all the people. When Jesus died, the curtain was torn in two, showing that his death for our sins had opened up the way for us to approach our holy God. And it was torn from top to bottom, showing that *God* had opened the way. Read Hebrews 9 for a more complete explanation.

Notes for Verse 42ff - The Sabbath began at sundown on Friday and ended at sundown on Saturday. Jesus died just a few hours before sundown on Friday. It was against Jewish law to do physical work or to travel on the Sabbath. It was also against Jewish law to let a dead body remain exposed overnight (Deuteronomy 21:23). Joseph came to bury Jesus' body before the Sabbath began. If Jesus had died on the Sabbath when Joseph was unavailable, his body would have been taken down by the Romans. Had the Romans taken Jesus' body, no Jews could have confirmed his death, and opponents could have disputed his resurrection.

15:42,43 After Jesus died on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea asked for his body and then sealed it in a new tomb. Although an honored member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus. Not all the Jewish leaders hated Jesus. Joseph risked his reputation to give a proper burial to his Lord. It is frightening to risk one's reputation even for what is right. If your Christian witness endangers your reputation, remember Joseph. Today he is remembered with admiration in the Christian church. How many other members of the Jewish Sanhedrin can you name?

Notes for Verse 44 - Pilate was surprised that Jesus had died so quickly, so he asked an official to verify the report. Today, in an effort to deny the resurrection, there are those who say that Jesus didn't really die. His death, however, was confirmed by the centurion, Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea, the religious leaders, and the women who witnessed his burial. Jesus suffered actual physical death on the cross.

Notes for Verse 46 - This tomb was probably a man-made cave hewn from a hill. It was large enough to walk into. Joseph wrapped Jesus' body, placed it in the tomb, and rolled a heavy stone across the entrance. The religious leaders also watched where Jesus was buried. They stationed guards by the tomb and sealed the stone to make sure that no one would steal Jesus' body and claim he had risen from the dead (Matthew 27:62-66).

Notes for Verse 47 - These women could do very little. They couldn't speak before the Sanhedrin in Jesus' defense; they couldn't appeal to Pilate; they couldn't stand against the crowds; they couldn't overpower the Roman guards. But they did what they could. They stayed at the cross when the disciples had fled; they followed Jesus' body to its tomb; and they prepared spices for his body. Because these women used the opportunities they had, they were the first to witness the resurrection. God blessed their devotion and diligence. As believers, we should take advantage of the opportunities we have and do what we *can* for Christ, instead of worrying about what we *cannot* do.

Chapter 16

Notes for Verses 1,2 - The women purchased the spices on Saturday evening after the Sabbath had ended so they could go to the tomb early the next morning and anoint Jesus' body as a sign of love, devotion, and respect. Bringing spices to the tomb was like bringing flowers to a grave today.

Notes for Verse 4 - The angels did not roll away the stone so Jesus could get out, but so others could get in and see for themselves that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, just as he said.

Notes for Verse 5 - Mark says that one angel met the women at the tomb, while Luke mentions two angels. These accounts are not contradictory. Each Gospel writer chose to highlight different details as he explained the same story, just as eyewitnesses to a news story each may highlight a different aspect of that event. Mark probably emphasized only the angel who spoke. The unique emphasis of each Gospel shows that the four accounts were written independently. This should give us confidence that all four are true and reliable.

Notes for Verse 6 - The resurrection is vitally important for many reasons: (1) Jesus kept his promise to rise from the dead, so we can believe he will keep all his other promises. (2) The resurrection ensures that the ruler of God's eternal kingdom will be the living Christ, not just an idea, hope, or dream. (3) Christ's resurrection gives us the assurance that we also will be resurrected. (4) The power of God that brought Christ's body back from the dead is available to us to bring our morally and spiritually dead selves back to life so that we can change and grow (1Corinthians 15:12-19). (5) The resurrection provides the substance of the church's witness to the world. We do not merely tell lessons from the life of a good teacher; we proclaim the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Notes for Verse 7 - The angel made special mention of Peter to show that, in spite of Peter's denials, Jesus had not disowned and deserted him. Jesus had great responsibilities for Peter to fulfill in the church that was not yet born.

16:7 The angel told the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee "as he told you" (see Mark 14:28). This is where Jesus had called most of them and had said they would become "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19), and it would be where this mission would be restated (John 21). But the disciples, filled with fear, remained behind locked doors in Jerusalem (John 20:19). Jesus met them first in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36) and later in Galilee (John 21). Then he returned to Jerusalem where he ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12).

Notes for Verse 13 - When the two finally realized who Jesus was, they rushed back to Jerusalem. It's not enough to read about Christ as a personality or to study his teachings. You must also believe he is God, trust him to save you, and accept him as Lord of your life. This is the difference between knowing Jesus and knowing about him. Only when you know Christ will you be motivated to share with others what he has done for you.

Notes for Verse 15 - Jesus told his disciples to go into all the world, telling everyone that he had paid the penalty for sin and that those who believe in him can be forgiven and live eternally with God. Christian disciples today in all parts of the world are preaching this gospel to people who haven't heard about Christ. The driving power that carries missionaries around the world and sets Christ's church in motion is the faith that comes from the resurrection. Do you ever feel as though you don't have the skill or determination to be a witness for Christ? You must personally realize that Jesus rose from the dead and lives for you today. As you grow in your relationship with Christ, he will give you both the opportunities and the inner strength to tell his message.

Notes for Verse 16 - It is not the water of baptism that saves, but God's grace accepted through faith in Christ. Because of Jesus' response to the criminal on the cross who died with him, we know it is possible to be saved without being baptized (Luke 23:43). Baptism alone, without faith, does not automatically bring a person to heaven. Those who refuse to believe will be condemned, regardless of whether or not they have been baptized.

Notes for Verse 18 - There are times when God intervenes miraculously to protect his followers. Occasionally he gives them special powers. Paul handled a snake safely (Acts 28:5), and the disciples healed the sick (Matthew 10:1; Acts 3:7, 8). This does not mean, however, that we should test God by putting ourselves in dangerous situations.

Notes for Verse 19 - When Jesus ascended into heaven, his physical presence left the disciples (Acts 1:9). Jesus' sitting at God's right hand signifies the completion of his work, his authority as God, and his coronation as King.

Notes for Verse 20 - Mark's Gospel emphasizes Christ's power as well as his servanthood. Jesus' life and teaching turn the world upside down. The world sees power as a way to gain control over others. But Jesus, with all authority and power in heaven and earth, chose to serve others. He held children in his arms, healed the sick, washed the disciples' feet, and died for the sins of the world. Following Jesus means receiving this same power to serve. As believers, we are called to be servants of Christ. As Christ served, so we are to serve.