The Good News told by Mark

A Bible teaching commentary
on the Gospel of Mark
in easy-to-read English

Written by Fred Morris

The return of Jesus to Heaven after
God raised Him from death.

Mark Unit 12 of 12

Chapters 15:21-16:20

Manna Publications
Bite-size Manna

Unit 12: Chapters 15:21 to 16:20.
The Crucifixion of Jesus

The Roman soldiers put the cross on the shoulders of Jesus and made Him carry it. Then they took a man in the street and made him carry the cross for Jesus the Son of God.

They came to the Place of the Skull, and there they crucified Jesus by nailing Him to the cross of wood.

The soldiers mocked and sneered at Him and offered Him vinegar to drink.

"Let us not tear His robe," one said. "Let us cast lots to see who will get it". The robe was 'woven in one piece from top to bottom'.

The Old Testament psalmist prophesied, "They divided My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing".

They crucified Jesus at nine in the morning and wrote a message on the cross, "The King of the Jews".

They waited for Jesus to die. While they watched, He prayed for them on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing".

There were other people watching the crucifixion:

- the crowd;
- Simon, who carried the cross for Jesus;
- the disciples;
- the women who mourned for Him;
- the men who were crucified near Him, prophesied in the Old Testament.

Jesus said to the women, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me; weep for yourselves and for your children".

People who passed near the cross shook their heads and said, "Save Yourself! Come down … if You are the Son of God". The religious leaders mocked Jesus and so did the other prisoners.

Mary the mother of Jesus stood near the cross with His aunt and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw these faithful women, He said to His mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." He said to His disciple John, "Here is your mother". John took Mary to his own home to care for her. By this time Mary was a widow.

Two robbers also hung on crosses, one on each side of the cross of Jesus. One said, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself! Save us!"

This upset the other criminal. He rebuked him saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence? We are punished fairly, for we are getting what our actions deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong".

He turned to Jesus, "Remember me," he begged, "when You come into Your Kingdom".

Jesus forgave him and said, "What I am telling you is true. Today you will be with Me in Paradise".

The Miracles at the Crucifixion

Jesus cried out to God, His Father. "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" Jesus felt abandoned by God. This was part of His suffering on the cross. With a loud cry, He took His last breath.

When Jesus died, God gave many great signs:

- Darkness at midday. It lasted for three hours. The sun did not leave the sky, but a shadow fell upon the earth. (This three-hour darkness even reached to Rome, hundreds of miles away, as recorded by a Roman historian.)
- The Temple curtain was torn from top to bottom. The message was plain. People could then enter the most holy place and come straight to God, because of the sacrifice of Jesus. We no longer need a High Priest to ask God to forgive our sins. Jesus is our High Priest. Through His blood and His death, we can now come to God in the name of Jesus.
- The earthquake. 'The earth shook and the rocks split'. God shook the earth with His great power.

- The graves in that area opened and many of God's people were raised to life. Their spirits and their bodies came back to life. After Jesus rose from the dead, they went into the city and appeared to many people.
- A Roman soldier saw Jesus cry out and die and he believed. He said "This man was surely the Son of God!"

Many of the women were there who followed Jesus during His ministry in Galilee and who took care of His needs.

How the Death of Jesus on the Cross Changed World History

The Old Testament tells how God would send His Messiah to save His people Israel from their sins. The New Testament confirms how God sent His own Son to suffer and to die as their Messiah, then to rise again from death so that people who believe He is the Son of God can be forgiven and have everlasting life with Him.

To some, the cross is nothing more than a strange story. To those who know the love and mercy of God, it is the greatest thing that ever happened. The cross and death and resurrection of Jesus have become the most important events in history!

To people everywhere, the 'mystery of Christ' means, "I love you. I died for you. There is no other way for you to be saved from God's hatred of sin." We all deserve God's punishment, for all have sinned. God, in His love, saves us from the punishment we deserve. Jesus took the punishment in our place. For those who turn to Jesus and repent and believe that He died for them, their lives are changed. Their sins are forgiven. They come closer to God. They also become more like Jesus. They have hope of eternal life in Heaven, or meeting Him on Earth when He returns.

Keeping the Body of Jesus Safe

After the death of Jesus, events moved quickly because it would soon be sunset on that Friday evening. Then it would be the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, when no work was allowed.

The body of Jesus is sealed in a tomb

Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body in clean cloth and placed it in his own tomb cut out of rock. The two Marys watched Joseph take the body of Jesus down from the cross. Pilate gave permission for Joseph to bury Jesus in the tomb. They rolled a large heavy stone in front of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body of Jesus was placed.

The next day Pilate ordered that soldiers should watch the tomb so that no-one could steal the body of Jesus. This was because some of the Jewish leaders remembered Jesus saying that after three days he would come back to life.

Mark Chapter 16.

Jesus Rises from Death

Early on Sunday, the first day of the week, three women brought spices to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. They wanted to put

them on the dead body of Jesus. It was the day after the Jewish Sabbath.

As they went to the tomb they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" The stone was large and heavy, but they found it had been moved. An angel of God had done it.

A young man dressed in white was sitting in the tomb on the right. "Do not be afraid," he said to them. "I know you are looking for Jesus … He is not here. He is risen! … See the place where they had put him". "Go quickly! Tell His disciples He has risen from the dead".

The angel especially mentioned Peter, who had denied Jesus three times. The angel then said that Jesus would go to Galilee to meet the disciples. "It will be just as He told you".

The women ran from the tomb, saying nothing to anyone. They were afraid yet full of joy. When they got back to the city, they told the eleven disciples and the others, but they did not believe the women.

Jesus Meets His Followers

Peter and John ran to the tomb. John got there first. He looked in and saw the strips of linen, but he did not go in. Peter went into the tomb first. He saw the strips of linen and also the burial cloth that had been round Jesus. The cloth was folded by itself. When they saw this, they realised that Jesus had risen from death!

Mary Magdalene went back to the tomb and stood outside crying. Then she saw a man she thought was the gardener. "They have taken my Lord away", she said. "I do not know where they have put Him".

Then Jesus said her name, "Mary". She knew that voice! She knelt down before Him and worshipped Him, holding onto His feet.

"Do not hold onto Me," He said to her. "I have not yet returned to the Father".

Mary Magdalene hurried back to tell the disciples.

That evening, the disciples were in the upper room. The doors were locked because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

After He had said this, He showed them the wounds in His hands and His side. The disciples were full of joy when they saw the Lord.

Meanwhile the religious leaders bribed the Roman guards to tell everyone that the body of Jesus had been stolen by the disciples.

What Jesus Said before He Returned to Heaven

After the resurrection of Jesus, the eleven disciples went to Galilee as Jesus and the angel had told them. These are the last teachings of Jesus:

1. He told them, "All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Me".
2. "Go into all the world. Preach the Good News to everyone".
3. "Baptise believers in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit".
4. Teach the things that Jesus taught.
5. Jesus promised to be with His people at all times.
6. Those who believe in Jesus will be saved; anyone who does not believe will be condemned for their sins.
7. Those who believe in Jesus will do great miracles and be able to speak in unknown languages. "In My name, they will drive out demons".
8. Everything written about Jesus in the Old Testament books of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms must come true.
9. His followers will tell people about Jesus urging them to turn away from their sins and be forgiven.
10. People from every nation will hear about repentance and the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus.
11. This work will begin in Jerusalem.
12. The disciples had to wait until God sent them His Holy Spirit power from Heaven.

When the Lord finished speaking to them, He was taken up into Heaven. He sat down at the right hand of God, His Father.

The final words in Mark's Gospel are these: 'Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere. The Lord worked with them. And He backed up His word by the signs that went with it'.

Jesus did not go back to argue with the religious leaders and Pilate. He went out to Galilee to teach those who believed in Him. He told His followers to "go into all the world and tell the Good News to everyone". This is His command to all His followers. (More commands of Jesus can be found in Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8.)

The return of Jesus to Heaven meant that His physical life on earth was ended. Shortly after this He sent His Holy Spirit power to be with His followers to start the work of building His Church and God's Kingdom on Earth. In this way Jesus can be with everyone, in every place, in every time.

The church of Jesus will be given power by the Spirit of Christ and by its faith in the risen Lord Jesus to do God's work as the Body of Christ on Earth until His return.

© 2000, 2021, by Fred Morris, Manna Publications (USA) Inc.
Bible quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, New International Reader's Version, © 1998 by International Bible Society, and are issued by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Limited. All rights reserved. Read online at: www.biblestudytools.com/nirv/
Pictures are copyright © Global Recordings Network (GRN). Used by permission.
Published by Manna Publications (UK) www.manna-publications.org.uk