

SESSION 21

JESUS CAME INTO JERUSALEM AND WAS ARRESTED BY HIS ENEMIES

Now God's story tells us about some things that happened to Jesus. Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem. Mark wrote about what happened. Jesus was doing the work of God. Because Jesus was God, he knew everything that was going to happen. Everything that was going to happen to Jesus was part of God's rescue plan.



MARK 11:1-10

¹ As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. ² "Go into that village over there," he told them. "As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks, 'What are you doing?' just say, 'The Lord needs it and will return it soon.'"

⁴ The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the street, tied outside the front door. ⁵ As they were untying it, some bystanders demanded, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" ⁶ They said what Jesus had told them to say, and they were permitted to take it. ⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it.

⁸ Many in the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others spread leafy branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting,

"Praise God!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰ Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David!

Praise God in highest heaven!"

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

Jesus and the disciples came close to Jerusalem. When they were near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples to get a young donkey.²²⁵ Jesus said they would find it tied up in a village just ahead. The disciples went to find the donkey and it was there, just like Jesus said it would be. They brought it back to him, and he sat on it. Then Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem.

Many people had seen the amazing things that Jesus had done. So they came to see him. They thought that he was the promised Messiah. They thought that he would rule as King of the Jews. They *spread their garments*²²⁶ on the road ahead of him and also some branches from the trees. This was to show that they thought Jesus was a king. They shouted out to him and thanked God for sending their king.

Many years earlier, God's prophet Zechariah had written that this would happen. He said that the King would ride into Jerusalem on a young donkey.



ZECHARIAH 9:9

⁹ Rejoice, O people of Zion!
Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!
Look, your king is coming to you.
He is righteous and victorious,
yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—
riding on a donkey's colt.

The Jewish religious leaders were very worried. They did not want people to follow Jesus. They wanted to arrest and kill him while he was in Jerusalem. But it was Passover. There were crowds of people in Jerusalem. The religious leaders thought that the crowds would get angry if they arrested Jesus. So they decided to wait until after the time of the Passover celebration.



MARK 14:1,2

¹ It was now two days before Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The leading priests and the teachers of religious law were still looking for an opportunity to capture Jesus secretly and kill him. ² "But not during the Passover celebration," they agreed, "or the people may riot."

Judas Iscariot was there in Jerusalem too. He was the disciple that Jesus said would betray him.



MARK 14:10

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests to arrange to betray Jesus to them.

Judas went to the Jewish religious leaders. He said that he could get Jesus for them. He could tell them when and where it would be easy for them to arrest Jesus. They were very happy that Judas wanted to help them. They agreed to pay Judas in silver money. Matthew wrote that the money was

225. **donkey** - an animal that looks like a horse, but with long ears; it is used for riding and for carrying things

226. **garments** - coats and robes - outer clothing

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30 silver coins. Many years before, King David wrote about the Messiah. He said that a close friend would betray him.



PSALMS 41:9

⁹ Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely, the one who shared my food, has turned against me.

Jesus and the disciples were in Jerusalem. They needed to find a place to eat the Passover meal together. A lamb had to be killed and then they would eat it together. The disciples asked Jesus where they could eat together.



MARK 14:12-26

¹² On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go to prepare the Passover meal for you?"

¹³ So Jesus sent two of them into Jerusalem with these instructions: "As you go into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴ At the house he enters, say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' ¹⁵ He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." ¹⁶ So the two disciples went into the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.

¹⁷ In the evening Jesus arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸ As they were at the table eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, one of you eating with me here will betray me."

¹⁹ Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, "Am I the one?"

²⁰ He replied, "It is one of you twelve who is eating from this bowl with me. ²¹ For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!"

²² As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take it, for this is my body."

²³ And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ And he said to them, "This is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many. ²⁵ I tell you the truth, I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."

²⁶ Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus told his disciples to go into the city. He told them to find a man who was carrying a water pitcher.²²⁷ He told them to follow that man. They went into the city and found a man with a pitcher of water and they followed him. The man showed them a room that was ready. It happened just like

227. pitcher - a large container for water

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

Jesus said it would. So the disciples went to the room and got everything ready for the Passover meal.

In the evening, Jesus and the other disciples were in the room. They started to eat the Passover meal together. While they were eating, Jesus said something to them. He said that one of them who was there eating with him would betray him. The disciples heard what Jesus said and they were very distressed.²²⁸ They all began to ask Jesus if they were the one who would betray him.

Jesus told the disciples that it was one of them who would betray him. But he said, *“For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago.”* Jesus knew that it was close to the time that he would die. He knew that he would have to die. God always does what he says he will do. It had been written about in God’s story and Jesus knew it would happen. But he said something about the man who would betray him. He said it would be better for that man if he had never been born. Jesus knew that it was Judas who was going to betray him.

Jesus picked up some bread that was there as part of the Passover meal. Jesus blessed it. That means he spoke to God his Father and thanked him for it. Then Jesus broke the bread into pieces. He gave the pieces to his disciples. Then he said to them, *“Take it, for this is my body.”* Jesus was saying that his body would be broken just like the bread had been broken.

Then Jesus picked up a cup of wine from the table. He thanked God for it. Then he passed it to his disciples so they could drink some of it. He said that the wine was his blood that *confirms the covenant*²²⁹ *between God and his people.* Jesus said that his blood would be poured out for many people. Jesus was talking about the work that God had left for him to do. His body would be broken and his blood would be poured out. That would happen to establish the covenant. The covenant was the agreement that God made with the Israelites when they said that they could follow all of God’s laws. Jesus was saying that he would die so that the agreement between God and all people would be made right.

Jesus and the disciples sang songs of praise to God. Then they went out to the Mount of Olives, which was very close to Jerusalem.

Mark wrote about what happened next. Jesus and the disciples went to an area known as Gethsemane. That name means ‘oil press’ in the Hebrew language. In English, we call it *Gethsemane*. It was a quiet area outside the city where olive trees grew.



MARK 14:32-52

³² They went to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said, “Sit here while I go and pray.” ³³ He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he became deeply troubled and distressed. ³⁴ He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

³⁵ He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. ³⁶ “Abba, Father,” he

228. **distressed** - they were very upset and worried

229. **covenant** - an agreement between two people or groups of people

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cried out, “everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

³⁷ Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour? ³⁸ Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

³⁹ Then Jesus left them again and prayed the same prayer as before. ⁴⁰ When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn’t keep their eyes open. And they didn’t know what to say.

⁴¹ When he returned to them the third time, he said, “Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But no—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Up, let’s be going. Look, my betrayer is here!”

⁴³ And immediately, even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders. ⁴⁴ The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: “You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss. Then you can take him away under guard.” ⁴⁵ As soon as they arrived, Judas walked up to Jesus. “Rabbi!” he exclaimed, and gave him the kiss.

⁴⁶ Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷ But one of the men with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest’s slave, slashing off his ear.

⁴⁸ Jesus asked them, “Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? ⁴⁹ Why didn’t you arrest me in the Temple? I was there among you teaching every day. But these things are happening to fulfill what the Scriptures say about me.”

⁵⁰ Then all his disciples deserted him and ran away. ⁵¹ One young man following behind was clothed only in a long linen shirt. When the mob tried to grab him, ⁵² he slipped out of his shirt and ran away naked.

Jesus knew that the time when he would die was near. He went to the quiet area of Gethsemane to talk to God. He took his disciples with him. Jesus told them to sit down while he went to pray. Then he asked Peter, James and John to join him while he prayed.

Jesus talked to Peter, James and John. He told them “*My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death.*” Jesus knew that he was going to die soon. He knew how he would die and he knew everything that would happen. He knew that he was the Lamb of God who would pay for the sins of the whole world. God the Father would have to punish him for the sins of the whole world. Knowing this was very, very hard for Jesus. Jesus said that it was so hard for him to think about that he felt like he would die. He asked Peter, James and John to stay there and to stay awake.²³⁰ Then he went a little way away from them. He fell down with his face to the ground.

230. awake - not sleeping

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

Jesus spoke to his Father. He said, “*Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.*” Jesus is the Son of God. He knew that God could save him from having to die. At first, he asked God to take away the suffering he would have to go through. He used the example of having to drink something from a cup. And he asked God to take the cup away from him. He was talking about all the terrible things he would have to go through. But Jesus also knew about God’s rescue plan for all people. So he said to his Father that he would do what God wanted him to do. He knew it would be a terrible time for him. But he wanted to do the work that God had for him to do. He knew that God understood how hard it was for him.

Jesus told the disciples to stay awake, but they fell asleep. Jesus went to speak to them three times. Each time he went over to them, they were asleep. The third time he went to them, he told them to wake up. He said that the man who would betray him was near.

Judas had come. He had a group of men with him. These men worked for the Jewish religious leaders. They had *swords and clubs*.²³¹ Judas had told these men that he would show them which man was Jesus. He said that Jesus would be the man that he kissed. To kiss someone on the cheek was a common greeting²³² at that time. So Judas walked up to Jesus and said “*Rabbi.*” Then he kissed Jesus.

The men with Judas saw which man he had kissed. So now they knew who Jesus was. They arrested Jesus and held on to him. One of the men standing there took out his sword. He cut off the ear of the slave of the high priest. When Luke wrote about this, he said that Jesus healed the slave’s ear. Then Jesus asked why the men needed swords to come and arrest him. He said that they could have arrested him when he was in the temple. He knew that they wanted to arrest him in a quiet place. They didn’t want a lot of people to see what they were doing. Jesus said, “*But these things are happening to fulfill what the Scriptures say about me.*” He meant that God’s story had told that this would happen. So it would happen.

All the disciples ran away into the darkness. Jesus was left alone with the people who wanted to kill him.

Peter ran away with the other disciples. But he followed the men who took Jesus. They took Jesus to the house of the high priest in Jerusalem. Peter stayed outside the house. Peter was in the courtyard²³³ of the house.



MARK 14:53-65

⁵³ They took Jesus to the high priest’s home where the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law had gathered. ⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Peter followed him at a distance and went right into the high priest’s courtyard. There he sat with the guards, warming himself by the fire.

231. **club** - a heavy piece of wood for hitting people

232. **greeting** - something that you do when you meet someone

233. **courtyard** - an area outside a large house that has walls around it but no roof

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⁵⁵ Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find evidence against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But they couldn't find any. ⁵⁶ Many false witnesses spoke against him, but they contradicted each other.

⁵⁷ Finally, some men stood up and gave this false testimony: ⁵⁸ "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this Temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another, made without human hands.'"

⁵⁹ But even then they didn't get their stories straight!

⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before the others and asked Jesus, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?" ⁶¹ But Jesus was silent and made no reply. Then the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

⁶² Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, "Why do we need other witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?" "Guilty!" they all cried. "He deserves to die!"

⁶⁵ Then some of them began to spit at him, and they blindfolded him and beat him with their fists. "Prophecy to us," they jeered. And the guards slapped him as they took him away.

Inside the house, the Jewish religious leaders were meeting together. They were trying to find someone to give testimony²³⁴ against Jesus. That meant that they wanted someone to give evidence²³⁵ against him. They wanted to find someone who would say that Jesus had done something that was against the law. Then they could kill him.

God's story says that they could not find any evidence against Jesus. Many people came to speak against him, but what one person said did not agree with what another person said. So the chief priest spoke to Jesus. He asked Jesus if he had any answer to the things that people were saying about him. But Jesus kept silent²³⁶ and he did not answer.

Many years before, David wrote about the Messiah. He talked about the false witnesses²³⁷ who would speak against him.



PSALMS 27:12

¹² Do not let me fall into their hands.
For they accuse me of things I've never done;
with every breath they threaten me with violence.

Then the high priest asked Jesus, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" He was asking Jesus if he was the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus answered, "I am," and he said that one day they

234. **give testimony** - to speak in a court of law about something that you say is true

235. **evidence** - someone to say that Jesus had done something very wrong so that they could kill him

236. **silent** - quiet, not making any noise, not speaking

237. **false witnesses** - people who say they have seen something when they have not seen it

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

would see him sitting in a place of power and authority beside God. The high priest said that this was *blasphemy*. Blasphemy is when a person says something untrue about God. They thought that what Jesus said was not true. God’s law says that people must not blaspheme against God. So the high priest asked all the Jewish religious leaders what should happen to Jesus. They all said that Jesus should die for saying things that were blasphemy. Then some of them spat on Jesus. They put a blindfold²³⁸ on him. They hit him and said that he should *prophecy*. Prophecy means to speak the words of God. They were making a joke about Jesus. They did not really believe that he was the Son of God or that he could prophecy.

God’s prophet Isaiah wrote many years before that this would happen to the Messiah.



ISAIAH 50:6

⁶ I offered my back to those who beat me
and my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard.
I did not hide my face
from mockery and spitting.

The Romans were the people who ran the government²³⁹ at that time. So they were the only ones who could kill criminals.²⁴⁰ The Jewish leaders had to ask the Romans to kill Jesus. The next morning, they took Jesus to Pilate. Pilate was the Roman governor.²⁴¹



MARK 15:1-20

¹ Very early in the morning the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law—the entire high council—met to discuss their next step. They bound Jesus, led him away, and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor.

² Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus replied, “You have said it.”

³ Then the leading priests kept accusing him of many crimes,

⁴ and Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer them? What about all these charges they are bringing against you?” ⁵ But Jesus said nothing, much to Pilate’s surprise.

⁶ Now it was the governor’s custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner—anyone the people requested. ⁷ One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, a revolutionary who had committed murder in an uprising. ⁸ The crowd went to Pilate and asked him to release a prisoner as usual.

⁹ “Would you like me to release to you this ‘King of the Jews’?” Pilate asked. ¹⁰ (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of envy.)

¹¹ But at this point the leading priests stirred up the crowd to demand the release

238. **blindfold** - a piece of cloth tied over someone’s eyes so they can’t see

239. **government** - the group of people with the authority to run a country or state

240. **criminals** - people who have broken the law

241. **governor** - the leader of the government in an area

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of Barabbas instead of Jesus.¹² Pilate asked them, “Then what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?”

¹³ They shouted back, “Crucify him!”

¹⁴ “Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?”

But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!”

¹⁵ So to pacify the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

¹⁶ The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the governor’s headquarters (called the Praetorium) and called out the entire regiment.¹⁷ They dressed him in a purple robe, and they wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head.¹⁸ Then they saluted him and taunted, “Hail! King of the Jews!”¹⁹ And they struck him on the head with a reed stick, spit on him, and dropped to their knees in mock worship.²⁰ When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

Pilate asked Jesus, “*Are you the king of the Jews?*” Jesus answered, “*You have said it.*” Jesus was saying that he was the King of the Jews. He said that because he is the true King of God’s people. Jesus knew that many people did not know who he really was. And he knew that many people did not understand about the Messiah. They thought that the Messiah would be a great king for the Jewish nation. But Jesus knew that his work would be different.

The chief priests accused²⁴² him of many things. Pilate was amazed that Jesus did not answer the people who were accusing him. God’s prophet Isaiah had written about this many years earlier.



ISAIAH 53:7

⁷ He was oppressed and treated harshly,
yet he never said a word.
He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.
And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,
he did not open his mouth.

Isaiah said that the Messiah would be *oppressed and treated harshly*. That means that he would suffer and other people would hurt him. But he would be silent. Isaiah used the example of a lamb going to be killed and of a sheep going to have its wool cut. Lambs and sheep are quiet and don’t make any noise at those times.

God’s story says that Pilate knew that Jesus had not done anything wrong. Pilate knew that the Jewish religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus. He knew that it was because of *envy*. Envy is when

242. **accused** - to accuse someone means to say that they have done something bad

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

you want something that someone else has. Some people wanted Jesus as their leader. So the Jewish leaders were worried that Jesus would take away the power that they had over the people.

Each year at the time of Passover, the Roman governor would release²⁴³ one prisoner.²⁴⁴ So the crowd came up and asked Pilate to release someone. Pilate asked them if they wanted him to release the King of the Jews. Pilate did not believe that Jesus was really the king. He said that because that is who Jesus said he was.

Just a few days before, the people had seen Jesus ride into Jerusalem. They thought he was the Messiah. They thought he would become a great ruler . But now he had been arrested. So now many people did not think he could be the Messiah. They thought the Messiah would be very powerful. They thought that the Messiah would come to rule as a king, not to be arrested. The chief priests and the crowd asked Pilate to release another prisoner. The one they wanted to release was a criminal called Barabbas.

Then Pilate asked the crowd, *“Then what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?”* The crowd shouted that Jesus should be crucified. The Romans at that time killed people by crucifying them. They made a cross out of large pieces of wood. Then they stood the cross up. They put nails through the hands and the feet of the person they wanted to kill. Then they would leave the person on the cross until they died. Sometimes the person would live for many days before they died. They killed very bad criminals and their enemies in this way. They crucified people in places where many people could walk by and see them.

About seven hundred years before, God’s prophet Isaiah wrote about the Messiah. He said that people would despise and reject him. That means that they would hate him and turn away from him.



ISAIAH 53:3

³ He was despised and rejected—
a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.
We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.
He was despised, and we did not care.

Pilate wanted to keep the crowd happy. He wanted the Jewish religious leaders to be happy with him too. So he released Barabbas. Then he said that Jesus should be flogged.²⁴⁵ After that, Pilate gave Jesus to the Roman soldiers²⁴⁶ to be crucified.

The Roman soldiers took him to their meeting place. They called all the soldiers together and they mocked him. Mocked means to make cruel jokes. They joked because he had said that he was the King of the Jews. They put a purple robe, or cloak, on him. Purple is the color that kings wear. Then

243. **release** - let him go free

244. **prisoner** - a person who is locked up in prison or in jail

245. **flogged** - to beat someone with a whip or stick

246. **soldiers** - men who are in the army

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they made a crown out of branches with thorns.²⁴⁷ They put the crown of thorns on his head. They bowed down before him and said “*Hail! King of the Jews!*” They hit him and spat on him. Then they took Jesus, the Son of God, away to be crucified.

?

1. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, who did the crowd think that he was?
2. What did people think that the Messiah had come to do?
3. When Jesus was talking to his Father in Gethsemane, what did he say? Why did he say that?
4. Could Jesus have saved himself if he had wanted to?

247. **thorns** - spikes on a plant or tree



This lesson has been adapted from the book *His Story: The Rescue, The Bible message from Genesis to Christ in easy English* (ISBN: 978-0-9944270-4-5)

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