

A 6-WEEK, NO-HOMEWORK BIBLE STUDY

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Jesus: Understanding His Death and Resurrection

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A Study of Mark 14-16



Kay Arthur & David Arthur

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BIBLE STUDIES

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Understanding
His Death and
Resurrection

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PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



WATERBROOK
P R E S S

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JESUS: UNDERSTANDING HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This small-group study is for people who are interested in learning for themselves more about what the Bible says on various subjects, but who have only limited time to meet together. It's ideal, for example, for a lunch group at work, an early morning men's group, a young mothers' group meeting in a home, a Sunday-school class, or even family devotions. (It's also ideal for small groups that typically have longer meeting times—such as evening groups or Saturday morning groups—but want to devote only a portion of their time together to actual study, while reserving the rest for prayer, fellowship, or other activities.)

This book is designed so that all the group's participants will complete each lesson's study activities *at the same time*. Discussing your insights drawn from what God says about the subject reveals exciting, life-impacting truths.

Although it's a group study, you'll need a facilitator to lead the study and keep the discussion moving. If *you* are your group's facilitator, the leader, here are some helpful points for making your job easier:

- Go through the lesson and mark the text before you lead the group. This will give you increased familiarity with the material and will enable you to facilitate the group with greater ease. It may be easier for you to lead the group through the instructions for marking if you, as a leader, choose a specific color for each symbol you mark.
- As you lead the group, start at the beginning of the text and simply read it aloud in the order it appears in the lesson, including the Insight boxes that appear throughout. Work through the lesson together, observing and discussing what you

learn. As you read the Scripture verses, have the group say aloud the word they are marking in the text.

- The discussion questions are there simply to help you cover the material. As the class moves into the discussion, many times you will find that they will cover the questions on their own. Remember, the discussion questions are there to guide the group through the topic, not to squelch discussion.
- Remember how important it is for people to verbalize their answers and discoveries. This greatly strengthens their personal understanding of each week's lesson. Try to ensure that everyone has plenty of opportunity to contribute to each week's discussions.
- Keep the discussion moving. This may mean spending more time on some parts of the study than on others. If necessary, you should feel free to spread out a lesson over more than one session. However, remember that you don't want to slow the pace too much. It's much better to leave everyone wanting more than to have people dropping out because of declining interest.
- If the validity or accuracy of some of the answers seems questionable, you can gently and cheerfully remind the group to stay focused on the truth of the Scriptures. Your object is to learn what the Bible says, not to engage in human philosophy. Simply stick with the Scriptures and give God the opportunity to speak. His Word *is* truth (John 17:17)!

JESUS: UNDERSTANDING HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God” (Exodus 2:23).

Exodus, the second book of the Bible, tells us that after four hundred years of bondage in Egypt, the sons of Israel groaned to God and He heard them. As their cries arose in His ears, He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was His time to set His people free, to deliver them from slavery. The sign for deliverance would be the blood of a spotless lamb painted on the doorpost of each Israelite house. The angel of death, seeing the blood, would “pass over” the house. Wherever the blood was absent, the firstborn

male in the household would die—and Pharoah finally would be convinced to let God's people go!

Are you sighing, groaning because you want to be free from that which enslaves you?

Or maybe you have friends, family, associates who want what you have: freedom from bondage to sin, peace with God. Reconciliation! The power to live a life pleasing to God!

Whether the cries for deliverance are your own or come from someone you know, we have good news! This good news is the gospel, the account of the death and resurrection of the Son of God, who became the Son of Man. Through the next six weeks you will discover and study for yourself the record of this story in a way that will help you know that you know what God has written in His Word.

It's truth—truth that sets the captive free!

WEEK ONE

As the time of Passover again drew near, Jesus and His disciples gathered in Jerusalem with thousands of other faithful Jews.

However, this Passover was to be unlike any that had ever preceded it or was to come. This Passover would mark a new era, launched by an event that would change the course of history and clear the way for each of us to live in union with God.

As we read through Mark's description of this Passover, please know that what you believe and do with the truths we are about to study will determine your destiny. Your decision to either live by God's precepts or ignore them will set your course for eternity. Your decision to believe or not to believe will bring either life eternal or eternal damnation.

That is a weighty statement, but instead of taking our word for it, let's get into the Word of God to see what He says.

MARK 14:1–11

1 Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill Him;

2 for they were saying, “Not during the festival, otherwise there might be a riot of the people.”

3 While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head.

OBSERVE

Leader: Read Mark 14:1–11 aloud. As you do, have the group mark the text in the following ways:

- Circle all references to **time**, including mentions of annual feasts such as **Passover** and **Unleavened Bread**.
- Mark every reference to **Jesus** with a cross: †. In the same way, mark any pronouns such as **Him**, **He**, and **My** that refer to Jesus Christ. Since you'll be marking references to Jesus so often over the next six weeks, you may prefer to use a particular color to mark the references to Him so they pop on the page.
- Place a big **W** over every reference to **the woman**.
- Mark every reference to **money** with a dollar sign: \$

As you read the text, it's helpful to have the group say the key words aloud as they mark them. This way everyone will be sure they are marking every occurrence of the word, including any synonymous words or phrases. Do this throughout the study.

DISCUSS

- According to verses 1 and 2, what plot was being hatched? What was the concern of the conspirators?
- According to verses 3–5, where was Jesus? Summarize what happened.
- Look at where you marked *the woman*. What do you learn about her?

INSIGHT

A *denarii* was a day's wage; therefore, the perfume was valued at almost an entire year's income. The woman's extravagant offering would have been shocking to the witnesses.

- According to Jesus' comment in verse 8, what was going to happen to Him?

4 But some were indignantly remarking to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted?"

5 "For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they were scolding her.

6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me.

7 "For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me.

8 "She has done what she could; she

has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

⁹ “Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her.”

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Him to them.

¹¹ They were glad when they heard this, and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

- According to verses 6–9, what did Jesus think about the woman’s extravagant outpouring? What was she doing?
- Why were her actions so commendable?
- What actions are described in verses 10–11? What contrast do you see here with the account of the woman’s perfume?
- Describe a time you’ve witnessed someone’s extravagant gift to Jesus—not necessarily a gift of monetary value but something that clearly required a sacrifice. What does such sacrificial giving indicate about our priorities?

OBSERVE

Leader: Read Mark 14:12–21 aloud. Have the group mark the text as follows:

- Circle all references to **(time)**, such as **Passover** and **day of Unleavened Bread**.
- Mark each reference to **Jesus**, including all pronouns and synonyms such as **Son of Man**.
- Put a big **X** over every reference to **betrayal** and **the betrayer**.

INSIGHT

Every year Israel was commanded to celebrate the Passover, which commemorated Israel's exodus from Egypt. This liberation of God's covenant people after they had been slaves in Egypt for four hundred years would become the first of three prophetic feasts celebrated annually by Israel: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

Exodus 12, the account of the first Passover, gives a prophetic picture of the deliverance that was to

MARK 14:12–21

12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

13 And He sent two of His disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him;

14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, “The Teacher says, “Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?””

15 “And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; prepare for us there.”

16 The disciples went out and came to the city, and found it just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

17 When it was evening He came with the twelve.

18 As they were reclining at the table and eating, Jesus said, “Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me—one who is eating with Me.”

19 They began to be grieved and to say to

come through the blood of an unblemished lamb.

Each household of Israelites was to select an unblemished male lamb on the tenth of the first month of the year, observe it to be sure there was no defect in it, and then kill the lamb at twilight on the fourteenth day. The lamb was to be roasted with fire and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

The blood of the lamb was to be put on the doorposts and the lintel of the entrance to their house. That night when the angel of death came to kill the firstborn male, if it saw the blood of the lamb, it would pass over the house.

The Feast of Passover comprised three feasts: Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits. All three gave the prophetic picture of the death and resurrection of “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, 36).

DISCUSS

- On what day did the events of this passage occur?
- What were Jesus' instructions, and why did He give them? Think about it: what did Jesus know was going to happen that the disciples did not yet realize?
- If Jesus knew this, what does that indicate about the extent of His knowledge?
- How can knowing this about Jesus help shape your perspective day by day?
- What do you learn about the Son of Man in verse 21?
- Describe the reaction of the disciples to Jesus' statement in verse 18. What does this tell you?
- Has Mark ever told us who the betrayer would be? If so, when and where was that revealed?

Him one by one,
“Surely not I?”

20 And He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl.

21 “For the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

MARK 14:22–26

22 While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it; this is My body.”

23 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

24 And He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

25 “Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of

- Who was this individual, and why was he betraying Jesus?

OBSERVE

Leader: Read Mark 14:22–26 aloud. Have the group do the following:

- Circle all references to **time**, such as **while** and **after**.
- Mark each of the pronouns referring to **Jesus**.
- Double underline any indication of **geographical location**.
- Draw a box around the word **kingdom**, like this:

DISCUSS

- What happened during the Passover meal? What did Jesus do?
- What did Jesus say about the bread?

- What did He say about the cup?
- What did Jesus declare in verse 25? Note especially the timing.

INSIGHT

A *covenant* is a solemn, binding agreement. The Old Testament term used for making a covenant is *karat berit*, which means “to cut a covenant.” It refers to the ritual sacrifice, the shedding of blood that occurs in making a covenant. Blood was shed in the establishment of the Old Covenant of the Law and in the New Covenant of grace. Under the Old Covenant it was the blood of an animal; under the New, it was the blood of God’s Lamb, the Son of Man, the Son of God (Hebrews 10:1–18; 1 Peter 1:18–19).

the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

²⁶ After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

MATTHEW 26:27–28

27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you;

28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.”

OBSERVE

Before we bring this week’s study to a close, let’s look at what Matthew recorded in his gospel about the cup of wine at the Passover feast Jesus shared with His disciples.

Leader: *Read Matthew 26:27–28 aloud. Have the group say and mark...*

- **blood** with three drops, like this: •••
- **covenant** with a box:
- **sins** with a big **S**.

DISCUSS

- What did the content of the cup represent, and why was it being poured out?
- What did Jesus ask His disciples to do?
- What would drinking the cup of this covenant indicate?

WRAP IT UP

About six hundred years before Jesus celebrated His final Passover meal with the disciples, God made a promise to His people, through the prophet Jeremiah, that a time was coming when He would deal with their sin once and for all. It was the promise of the new covenant.

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.... I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31, 33–34)

God promised to give His people a new covenant. Not like the covenant of the Law He made with them after He brought them out of Egypt—a covenant they broke over and over again. Instead, this new covenant would write God’s Law on their hearts. No longer would they have to say to one another, “Know the LORD.” They would all know Him, from the least of them to the greatest, for He would forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

Now, as Jesus broke bread with His disciples, that long-ago prophecy was about to be fulfilled. The blood of a sacrificial Lamb was

to be poured out. The cutting of a new covenant would bring salvation and forgiveness for all those who believed on Him.

Beloved, do you realize that only Jesus—the Son of God, the Son of Man—can offer forgiveness of all our sin through the shedding of His blood? Do you see and believe this beautiful truth?

By repenting of your sins and believing in Jesus alone you will be forgiven and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit! This is the true message of what the world celebrates as Easter. It is more than painting and hiding Easter eggs, eating chocolate bunnies, buying new outfits, and going to church. Easter is the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. The resurrection was proof that the shedding of Jesus' blood for the payment of our sins was accepted by our just and righteous God. Death could not hold Him. Jesus rose on the third day. And those who believe in Him are given the gift of eternal life. Death cannot hold us! Because Jesus, the Son of Man, lives, we will live also—with Him. Forever!

Do you believe? Have you repented of your sins and sought God's forgiveness through His Son? Have you passed from death to life?