

- Song 95 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy”:** (10 min.)
Mr 15:3-5—He remained silent when accused
Mr 15:24, 29, 30—Lots were cast for his clothing, and he was mocked (*nwtsty* study notes on Mr 15: 24, 29)
Mr 15:43, 46—He was buried with the rich (*nwtsty* study note on Mr 15:43)
 - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mr 15:25—What may account for the seeming discrepancy as to when Jesus was nailed to the stake? (*nwtsty* study note)
- Mr 16:8—Why does the *New World Translation* not include the long or the short conclusion in the main text of the Gospel of Mark? (*nwtsty* study note)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Mr 15:1-15

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *jl* lesson 2

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 63
- **“Follow Christ’s Steps Closely”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Jehovah’s Name Is Most Important* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 23, box on p. 60
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 140 and Prayer

Follow Christ’s Steps Closely

Jesus set an example for us to imitate, especially when we face trials or persecution. (1Pe 2:21-23) Although Jesus was insulted, he never retaliated, even when undergoing suffering. (Mr 15:29-32) What helped him to endure? He resolved to do Jehovah’s will. (Joh 6:38) He also focused on “the joy that was set before him.”—Heb 12:2.

How do we react when we are mistreated because of our faith? True Christians do not “return evil for evil.” (Ro 12:14, 17) When we imitate the way Christ endured suffering, we can rejoice because we have God’s approval.—Mt 5:10-12; 1Pe 4:12-14.

WATCH THE VIDEO JEHOVAH’S NAME IS MOST IMPORTANT, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How did Sister Pötzing* wisely use her time while in solitary confinement?

- What sufferings did Brother and Sister Pötzing endure while in various concentration camps?

- What helped them to endure?

* Name is also spelled Poetzingner.



When suffering, follow Christ’s steps closely

The Light Gets Brighter

(Proverbs 4:18)

1. The prophets of old sought to learn of the Christ,
The hope of all groaning creation.
God's spirit revealed that Messiah would come,
Providing the means of salvation.

The time has arrived, the Messiah now reigns,
The proof of his presence is clear.
How great is the favor of learning such things;
Into these even angels would peer!

(CHORUS)

*Our path now becomes ever brighter;
We walk in the full light of day.
Behold what our God is revealing;
He guides us each step of the way.*

2. Our Lord has appointed a trustworthy slave,
Through whom He gives food in due season.
The light of the truth has grown brighter with time,
Appealing to heart and to reason.

Our path ever clearer, our steps ever firm,
We walk in the brightness of day.
All thanks to Jehovah, the Source of all truth,
We most gratefully walk in his way.

(Chorus)

MARK 14:53-15:4

demned him as deserving of death.^a **65** And some started to spit on him^b and to cover his face and hit him with their fists and say to him: "Prophecy!" And slapping him in the face, the court attendants took him.^c

66 Now while Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came.^d **67** On seeing Peter warming himself, she looked straight at him and said: "You too were with the Naz-a-rene', this Jesus." **68** But he denied it, saying: "Neither do I know him nor do I understand what you are talking about," and he went outside to the entryway.* **69** There the servant girl saw him and again began to say to those standing by: "This is one of them." **70** Again he was denying it. And after a little while, those standing by again began saying to Peter: "Certainly you are one of them, for you are, in fact, a Gal-i-le'an." **71** But he started to curse and swear: "I do not know this man of whom you speak!" **72** Immediately a rooster crowed a second time,^e and Peter recalled what Jesus had said to him: "**Before a rooster crows twice, you will disown me three times.**"^f And he broke down and began to weep.

15 Immediately at dawn, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, indeed, the whole San'he-drin, consulted together, and they bound Jesus and led him off and handed him over to Pilate.^g **2** So Pilate put the question to him: "Are you the King of the Jews?"^h In answer he said: "**You yourself say it.**"ⁱ **3** But the chief priests were accusing him of many things. **4** Now Pilate began questioning him again, saying: "Have you no reply to make?"^j See how

14:68 *Or "vestibule."

MARK 15:5-32

many charges they are bringing against you.”^a **5** But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.^b

6 Well, from festival to festival, he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested.^c **7** At the time the man named Bar·ab·bas was in prison with the seditionists, who in their sedition had committed murder. **8** So the crowd came up and began to make their request according to what Pilate used to do for them. **9** He responded to them, saying: “Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”^d **10** For Pilate was aware that out of envy the chief priests had handed him over.^e **11** But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Bar·ab·bas to them instead.^f **12** Again in reply Pilate said to them: “What, then, should I do with the one you call the King of the Jews?”^g **13** Once more they cried out: “To the stake with him!”^{*h} **14** But Pilate went on to say to them: “Why? What bad thing did he do?” Still they cried out all the more: “To the stake with him!”^{*i} **15** At that Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Bar·ab·bas to them; and after having Jesus whipped,^j he handed him over to be executed on the stake.^k

16 The soldiers now led him off into the courtyard, that is, into the governor’s residence, and they called the whole body of troops together.^l **17** And they dressed him in purple and braided a crown of thorns and put it on him; **18** and they began to call out to him: “Greetings,* you King of the Jews!”^m **19** Also, they were hitting him on the head with a reed

15:13, 14 *Or “Execute him on the stake!” **15:18** *Or “Hail.”

and spitting on him, and they got on their knees and bowed down* to him. **20** Finally, after they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple and put his outer garments on him. And they led him out to nail him to the stake.^a **21** Also, they compelled into service a passerby, a certain Simon of Cy-re'ne, coming from the countryside, the father of Alexander and Ru'fus, to carry his torture stake.^{*b}

22 So they brought him to the place called *Gol'go·tha*, which means, when translated, "Skull Place."^c **23** Here they tried to give him wine drugged with myrrh,^d but he would not take it. **24** And they nailed him to the stake and distributed his outer garments by casting lots over them to decide who would take what.^e **25** It was now the third hour,* and they nailed him to the stake. **26** And the inscription of the charge against him was written: "The King of the Jews."^f **27** Moreover, they put two robbers on stakes alongside him, one on his right and one on his left.^g **28** *— **29** And those passing by spoke abusively to him, shaking their heads^h and saying: "Ha! You who would throw down the temple and build it in three days,ⁱ **30** save yourself by coming down off the torture stake."^{*j} **31** In the same way also, the chief priests with the scribes were mocking him among themselves, saying: "Others he saved; himself he cannot save!^j **32** Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down off the torture stake,* so that we may see and believe."^k Even those who were on stakes alongside him were reproaching him.^l

15:19 *Or "did obeisance." 15:21, 30, 32 *See Glossary. 15:25 *That is, about 9:00 a.m. 15:28 *See App. A3.

33 When it became the sixth hour,* a darkness fell over all the land until the ninth hour.^{#a}

34 And at the ninth hour, Jesus called out with a loud voice: *"E'li, E'li, la'ma sa·bach·tha'ni?"* which means, when translated: *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*^b

35 And some of those standing near, on hearing it, began to say: "See! He is calling E·li'jah."

36 Then someone ran, soaked a sponge in sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink,^c saying: "Let him be! Let us see whether E·li'jah comes to take him down."

37 But Jesus let out a loud cry and expired.^{*d}

38 And the curtain of the sanctuary^e was torn in two from top to bottom.^f

39 Now when the army officer who was standing by with him in view saw that he had expired under these circumstances, he said: "Certainly this man was God's Son."^g

40 There were also women watching from a distance, among them Mary Mag'da·lene as well as Mary the mother of James the Less and of Jo'ses, and Sa·lo'me,^h

41 who used to accompany him and minister to himⁱ when he was in Gal'i·lee, and many other women who had come up together with him to Jerusalem.

42 Now as it was already late in the afternoon, and since it was Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, **43** there came Joseph of Ar·i·ma·the'a, a reputable member of the Council, who also himself was waiting for the Kingdom of God. He took courage and went in before Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.^j

44 But Pilate wondered whether he could already be dead, and summoning

15:33 *That is, about 12:00 noon.

[#]That is, about 3:00 p.m. 15:37 *Or "breathed his last."

MARK 15:33-16:8

the army officer, he asked him whether Jesus had already died.

45 So after making certain from the army officer, he granted the body to Joseph. **46** After he bought fine linen and took him down, he wrapped him in the fine linen and laid him in a tomb^{*a} that was quarried out of rock; then he rolled a stone up to the entrance of the tomb.^b

47 But Mary Mag'da-lene and Mary the mother of Jo'ses continued looking at where he had been laid.^c

16 So when the Sabbath^d was over, Mary Mag'da-lene, Mary^e the mother of James, and Sa-lo'me bought spices in order to come and apply them to his body.^f **2** And very early on the first day of the week when the sun had risen, they came to the tomb.^{*g} **3** They were saying to one another: "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb for us?" **4** But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was very large.^h **5** When they entered into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were stunned. **6** He said to them: "Do not be stunned.ⁱ You are looking for Jesus the Naz-a-rene' who was executed on the stake. He was raised up.^j He is not here. Look, here is the place where they laid him.^k **7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Gal'i-lee.^l You will see him there, just as he told you.'^m **8** So when they came out, they fled from the tomb, trembling and overwhelmed with emotion. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were in fear.^{*n}

15:46; 16:2 *Or "memorial tomb." **16:8**

*According to reliable early manuscripts, the Gospel of Mark ends with the words found in vs. 8. See App. A3.

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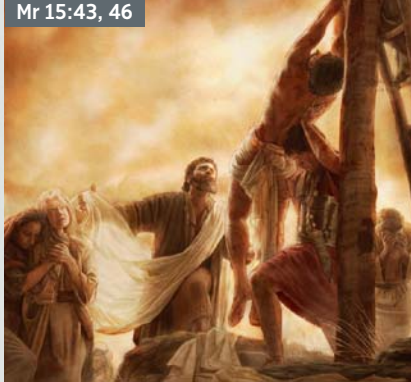
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When suffering, follow Christ’s steps closely

MARK 15-16 | Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy

Match each event in Jesus' life with the prophecy that it fulfilled

EVENT		PROPHECY
<p>Mr 15:3-5</p> 	<p>Mr 15:24</p> 	<p>Ps 22:7</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>Mr 15:29, 30</p> 	<p>Mr 15:43, 46</p> 	<p>Ps 22:18</p> <input type="text"/> <p>Isa 53:7</p> <input type="text"/> <p>Isa 53:9</p> <input type="text"/>

BUILD YOUR FAITH

 What other prophecies did Jesus fulfill? (*w11 8/15 17; bhs 209*)

June 4-10

Treasures From God's Word

Mark 15:3-5—He remained silent when accused

Mark 15:3-5 But the chief priests were accusing him of many things. Now Pilate began questioning him again, saying: "Have you no reply to make? See how many charges they are bringing against you." But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

Mark 15:24, 29, 30—Lots were cast for his clothing, and he was mocked ("distributed his outer garments" study note on Mark 15:24, *nwtsty*; "shaking their heads" study note on Mark 15:29, *nwtsty*)

Mark 15:24 And they nailed him to the stake and distributed his outer garments by casting lots over them to decide who would take what.

Mark 15:29, 30 And those passing by spoke abusively to him, shaking their heads and saying: "Ha! You who would throw down the temple and build it in three days, save yourself by coming down off the torture stake."

Study note on Mark 15:24 distributed his outer garments: The account at John 19:23, 24 adds complementary details not mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke: Roman soldiers evidently cast lots over both the outer garment and the inner one; the soldiers divided the outer garments "into four parts, one for each soldier"; they did not want to divide the inner garment, so they cast lots over it; and the casting of lots for the Messiah's apparel fulfilled Psalm 22:18. It was evidently customary for the executioners to keep their victims' clothes, so criminals were stripped of their clothing and possessions before being executed, making the ordeal all the more humiliating.

Study note on Mark 15:29 shaking their heads: Generally accompanied by words, this gesture expressed derision, contempt, or mockery. The passersby inadvertently fulfilled the prophecy recorded at Psalm 22:7.

Mark 15:43, 46—He was buried with the rich (“Joseph” study note on Mark 15:43, *nwtsty*)

Mark 15:43 There came Joseph of Arimathea, a reputable member of the Council, who also himself was waiting for the Kingdom of God. He took courage and went in before Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Mark 15:46 After he bought fine linen and took him down, he wrapped him in the fine linen and laid him in a tomb that was quarried out of rock; then he rolled a stone up to the entrance of the tomb.

Study note on Mark 15:43 Joseph: The individuality of the Gospel writers is evident in the varying details they provide about Joseph. Tax collector Matthew notes that he was “a rich man”; Mark, writing primarily for the Romans, says that he was “a reputable member of the Council” who was waiting for God’s Kingdom; Luke, the sympathetic physician, says that he “was a good and righteous man” who did not vote in support of the Council’s action against Jesus; John alone reports that he was “a secret [disciple] because of his fear of the Jews.”—Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:43-46; Luke 23:50-53; John 19:38-42.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Mark 15:25—What may account for the seeming discrepancy as to when Jesus was nailed to the stake? (“the third hour” study note on Mark 15:25, *nwtsty*)

Mark 15:25 It was now the third hour, and they nailed him to the stake. [End of inserted scripture.]

Study note on Mark 15:25 the third hour: That is, about 9:00 a.m. Some point to a seeming discrepancy between this account and John 19:14-16, which says “it was about the sixth hour” when Pilate handed Jesus over to be executed. Although the Scriptures do not fully explain the difference, here are some factors to consider: The Gospel accounts generally harmonize with regard to the timing of events during Jesus’ last day on earth. All four accounts indicate that the priests and the elders met after dawn and then had Jesus taken to Roman Governor Pontius Pilate. (Matthew 27:1, 2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66–23:1; John 18:28) Matthew, Mark, and Luke all report that when Jesus was already on the stake, darkness fell over the land from “the sixth hour . . . until the ninth hour.” (Matthew 27:45, 46; Mark 15:33, 34; Luke 23:44) A factor that may have a bearing on the timing of Jesus’ execution is this: Scourging, or whipping, was considered by some to be a part of the execution process. Sometimes the scourging was so terrible that the victim died. In Jesus’ case, it was sufficiently severe to make it necessary for another man to carry the torture stake after Jesus started out carrying it alone. (Luke 23:26; John 19:17) If the scourging was viewed as the start of the execution procedure, some time would have elapsed before Jesus was actually nailed to the torture stake. Supporting this, Matthew 27:26 and Mark 15:15 mention the scourging (whipping) and execution on the stake together. Therefore, different individuals might give different times for the execution, depending on their perspective regarding the time when the process began. This may explain why Pilate was astonished to learn that Jesus died so soon after he was nailed to the stake. (Mark 15:44) Additionally, Bible writers frequently reflect the practice of dividing the day into four segments of three hours each, as was done with the night. Dividing the day in that way explains why there often are references to the third, sixth, and ninth hours, counting from sunrise at about 6:00 a.m. (Matthew 20:1-5; John

4:6; Acts 2:15; 3:1; 10:3, 9, 30) Also, people in general did not have precise timepieces, so the time of day was frequently qualified with the term “about,” as we find at John 19:14. (Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:44; John 4:6; Acts 10:3, 9) In summary: Mark may have included both the scourging and the nailing to the stake, while John referred only to the nailing to the stake. Both writers may have rounded off the time of day to the nearest three-hour period, and John used “about” when referring to his stated time. These factors may account for the difference in times mentioned in the accounts. Finally, the fact that John, writing decades later, included a time that appears to vary from that given by Mark shows that John did not simply copy Mark’s account.

Mark 16:8—Why does the *New World Translation* not include the long or the short conclusion in the main text of the Gospel of Mark? (“for they were in fear” study note on Mark 16:8, *nwtsty*)

Mark 16:8 So when they came out, they fled from the tomb, trembling and overwhelmed with emotion. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were in fear. [End of inserted scripture.]

Study note on Mark 16:8 for they were in fear: According to the earliest available manuscripts of the last part of Mark, the Gospel ends with the words found in verse 8. Some assert that such an ending is too abrupt to have been the original conclusion to the book. However, in view of Mark’s generally terse writing style, that assertion is not necessarily valid. Also, fourth-century scholars Jerome and Eusebius indicate that the authentic record closes with the words “for they were in fear.”

There are a number of Greek manuscripts and translations into other languages that add either a long or a short conclusion after verse 8. The long conclusion (consisting of 12 extra verses) is found in Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus, and

Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis, all from the fifth century C.E. It also appears in the Latin *Vulgate*, the Curetonian Syriac, and the Syriac *Peshitta*. However, it does not appear in two earlier fourth-century Greek manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, or in Codex Sinaiticus Syriacus of the fourth or fifth century, or in the earliest Sahidic Coptic manuscript of Mark of the fifth century. Similarly, the oldest manuscripts of Mark in Armenian and Georgian end at verse 8.

Certain later Greek manuscripts and translations into other languages contain the short conclusion (consisting of just a couple of sentences). The Codex Regius of the eighth century C.E. has both conclusions, giving the shorter conclusion first. It prefaces each conclusion with a note saying that these passages are current in some quarters, though it evidently recognizes neither of them as authoritative.

Short Conclusion

The short conclusion after Mark 16:8 is not part of the inspired Scriptures. It reads as follows:

But all the things that had been commanded they related briefly to those around Peter. Further, after these things, Jesus himself sent out through them from the east to the west the holy and incorruptible proclamation of everlasting salvation.

Long Conclusion

The long conclusion after Mark 16:8 is not part of the inspired Scriptures. It reads as follows:

9 After he rose early on the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Mag'dalene, from whom he had expelled seven demons.
10 She went and reported to those who had been with him, as they were mourning and weeping. 11 But they, when they heard he had come to life and had been viewed by her, did not believe.

12 Moreover, after these things he appeared in another form to two of them walking along, as they were going into the country; 13 and they came back and reported to the rest. Neither did they believe these. 14 But later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table, and he reproached their lack of faith and hardheartedness, because they did not believe those who had beheld him now raised up from the dead. 15 And he said to them: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 He that believes and is baptized will be saved, but he that does not believe will be condemned. 17 Furthermore, these signs will accompany those believing: By the use of my name they will expel demons, they will speak with tongues, 18 and with their hands they will pick up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly it will not hurt them at all. They will lay their hands upon sick persons, and these will become well."

19 So, then, the Lord Jesus, after having spoken to them, was taken up to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 They, accordingly, went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and backed up the message through the accompanying signs.

MARK

Study Notes—Chapter 15

15:1

Sanhedrin: That is, the Jewish high court in Jerusalem. The Greek word rendered “Sanhedrin” (*sy·ne'dri·on*) literally means a “sitting down with.” Although it was a general term for an assembly or a meeting, in Israel it could refer to a religious judicial body or court.—See study note on Mt 5:22 and Glossary; see also App. B12 for the possible location of the Sanhedrin Hall.

Pilate: The Roman governor (prefect) of Judea appointed by Emperor Tiberius in 26 C.E. His rule lasted about ten years. Pilate is mentioned by non-Biblical writers, including Roman historian Tacitus, who wrote that Pilate ordered the execution of Christ during the reign of Tiberius. A Latin inscription with the words “Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea” was found in the ancient Roman theater in Caesarea, Israel.—See App. B10 for the domain ruled by Pontius Pilate.

15:2

Are you the King of the Jews?: No king in the Roman Empire could rule without Caesar’s consent. So Pilate apparently concentrated his interrogation on the issue of Jesus’ kingship.

You yourself say it: This reply is evidently an affirmation of the truth of Pilate’s statement. (Compare study notes on Mt 26:25, 64.) Though Jesus confesses to Pilate that he really is a king, it is in a sense that differs from what Pilate imagines, since Jesus’ Kingdom is “no part of this world” and thus no threat to Rome.—Joh 18:33-37.

15:6

used to release to them one prisoner: This incident is mentioned by all four Gospel writers. (Mt 27:15-23; Lu 23:16-25;

Joh 18:39, 40) There is no basis or precedent for this custom in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, it seems that by Jesus' day, the Jews had developed this tradition. The practice would not have seemed strange to the Romans, since there is evidence that they released prisoners to please the crowds.

15:13

Once more: As indicated at Lu 23:18-23, the crowd yelled at least three times, demanding that Pilate execute Jesus. The account here in Mark indicates that Pilate three times asked the crowd questions regarding Jesus.—Mr 15:9, 12, 14.

15:15

whipped: The Romans flogged victims using a terrible instrument known in Latin as a *flagellum*, from which the Greek verb used here (*phra-gel-lo'o*, "to whip") is derived. This instrument consisted of a handle into which several cords or knotted leather thongs were fixed. Sometimes the thongs were weighted with jagged pieces of bone or metal to make the blows more painful. Such floggings caused deep contusions, tore the flesh to ribbons, and could even lead to death.

15:16

governor's residence: The Greek term *prai-to'ri-on* (derived from the Latin *praetorium*) designates the official residence of the Roman governors. In Jerusalem, the residence was probably the palace built by Herod the Great, situated in the NW corner of the upper city, that is, of the southern part of Jerusalem. (See App. B12 for the location.) Pilate stayed in Jerusalem only on certain occasions, such as festivals, since there was a potential for unrest. His usual residence was in Caesarea.

15:17

they dressed him in purple: This was done to mock Jesus and make fun of his kingship. Matthew's account (27:28) says that the

soldiers draped Jesus “with a scarlet cloak,” a garment worn by kings, magistrates, or military officers. Mark’s and John’s accounts (19:2) say that it was a purple garment, but in ancient times, “purple” was used to describe any color that had a mixture of red and blue. Also, angle, light reflection, and background could have influenced the observer’s perception of the exact color. This variation in describing the color shows that the Gospel writers did not simply copy one another’s accounts.

crown: Along with the purple garment (mentioned earlier in this verse), Jesus was given mock attributes of royalty—thorns for a crown and, according to Mt 27:29, “a reed” for a scepter.

15:18

Greetings: Or “Hail.” Lit., “Be rejoicing.” They hailed him as they would have hailed Caesar, evidently to ridicule the claim that he was a king.

15:19

spitting on him: This contemptuous treatment of Jesus fulfilled Jesus’ own words at Mr 10:34 as well as the prophecy regarding the Messiah at Isa 50:6.—Spitting on a person or in his face was an act of extreme contempt, enmity, or indignation, bringing humiliation on the victim. (Nu 12:14; De 25:9) Jesus here states that he would experience such treatment, which fulfilled a prophecy regarding the Messiah: “I did not hide my face from humiliating things and from spit.” (Isa 50:6) He was spat on during his appearance before the Sanhedrin (Mr 14:65) and by the Roman soldiers after his trial by Pilate (Mr 15:19).

bowed down to him: Or “did obeisance to him; paid him homage.” Here the Greek verb *pro-sky-ne’o* is used of the soldiers who mockingly bowed down to Jesus, calling him “King of the Jews.”—Mr 15:18; see study note on Mt 2:2.

15:20

nail him to the stake: Or “fasten him on a stake (pole).”—See study note on Mt 20:19 and Glossary, “Stake”; “Torture stake.”

15:21

compelled into service: A reference to the compulsory service that the Roman authorities could demand from a citizen. They could, for example, press men or animals into service or commandeer whatever was considered necessary to expedite official business.—See study note on Mt 5:41.

Cyrene: A city located near the North African coast, SSW of the island of Crete.—See App. B13.

the father of Alexander and Rufus: Only Mark mentions this point regarding Simon of Cyrene.

torture stake: Or “execution stake.”—See Glossary, “Stake”; “Torture stake”; see also study notes on Mt 10:38 and 16:24, where the term is used in a figurative sense.

15:22

Golgotha: From a Hebrew word meaning “skull.” (See Joh 19:17; compare Jg 9:53, where the Hebrew word *gul-go'leth* is rendered “skull.”) In Jesus’ day, the site was outside the city walls of Jerusalem. However, the location remains uncertain. (See App. B12.) The Bible record does not state that Golgotha was on a hill, though it does mention that some observed the execution from a distance.—Mr 15:40; Lu 23:49.

Skull Place: The Greek expression *Kra-ni'ou To'pos* renders the Hebrew word *Golgotha*. (See Joh 19:17 and the study note on **Golgotha** in this verse.) The term Calvary is used at Lu 23:33 in some English Bible translations. It comes from the Latin word for “skull,” *calvaria*, used in the *Vulgate*.

15:23

wine drugged with myrrh: The parallel account at Mt 27:34 says that the wine was “mixed with gall.” The drink likely contained both myrrh and bitter gall. This mixture was evidently given to deaden pain.—See study note on **he would not take it** in this verse and study note on Mt 27:34.

he would not take it: Jesus evidently wanted to have full possession of all his faculties during this test of his faith.

15:24

distributed his outer garments: The account at Joh 19:23, 24 adds complementary details not mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke: Roman soldiers evidently cast lots over both the outer garment and the inner one; the soldiers divided the outer garments “into four parts, one for each soldier”; they did not want to divide the inner garment, so they cast lots over it; and the casting of lots for the Messiah’s apparel fulfilled Ps 22:18. It was evidently customary for the executioners to keep their victims’ clothes, so criminals were stripped of their clothing and possessions before being executed, making the ordeal all the more humiliating.

by casting lots: See Glossary, “Lots.”—Pebbles or small bits of wood or stone that were used in making decisions. These were gathered into the folds of a garment or into a vessel and then shaken. The lot that fell out or was drawn out was the one chosen. This was often done prayerfully. The term “lot” is used both literally and figuratively with the meaning “share” or “portion.”—Jos 14:2; Ps 16:5; Pr 16:33; Mt 27:35.

15:25

the third hour: That is, about 9:00 a.m. Some point to a seeming discrepancy between this account and Joh 19:14-16, which says “it was about the sixth hour” when Pilate handed Jesus over to

be executed. Although the Scriptures do not fully explain the difference, here are some factors to consider: The Gospel accounts generally harmonize with regard to the timing of events during Jesus' last day on earth. All four accounts indicate that the priests and the elders met after dawn and then had Jesus taken to Roman Governor Pontius Pilate. (Mt 27:1, 2; Mr 15:1; Lu 22:66–23:1; Joh 18:28) Matthew, Mark, and Luke all report that when Jesus was already on the stake, darkness fell over the land from “the sixth hour . . . until the ninth hour.” (Mt 27:45, 46; Mr 15:33, 34; Lu 23:44) A factor that may have a bearing on the timing of Jesus' execution is this: Scourging, or whipping, was considered by some to be a part of the execution process. Sometimes the scourging was so terrible that the victim died. In Jesus' case, it was sufficiently severe to make it necessary for another man to carry the torture stake after Jesus started out carrying it alone. (Lu 23:26; Joh 19:17) If the scourging was viewed as the start of the execution procedure, some time would have elapsed before Jesus was actually nailed to the torture stake. Supporting this, Mt 27:26 and Mr 15:15 mention the scourging (whipping) and execution on the stake together. Therefore, different individuals might give different times for the execution, depending on their perspective regarding the time when the process began. This may explain why Pilate was astonished to learn that Jesus died so soon after he was nailed to the stake. (Mr 15:44) Additionally, Bible writers frequently reflect the practice of dividing the day into four segments of three hours each, as was done with the night. Dividing the day in that way explains why there often are references to the third, sixth, and ninth hours, counting from sunrise at about 6:00 a.m. (Mt 20:1-5; Joh 4:6; Ac 2:15; 3:1; 10:3, 9, 30) Also, people in general did not have precise timepieces, so the time of day was frequently qualified with the term “about,” as we find at Joh 19:14. (Mt 27:46; Lu 23:44; Joh 4:6; Ac 10:3, 9) In summary: Mark may have included both the scourging and the nailing to the stake,

while John referred only to the nailing to the stake. Both writers may have rounded off the time of day to the nearest three-hour period, and John used “about” when referring to his stated time. These factors may account for the difference in times mentioned in the accounts. Finally, the fact that John, writing decades later, included a time that appears to vary from that given by Mark shows that John did not simply copy Mark’s account.

15:27

robbers: Or “bandits.” The Greek word *lei-stes'* may include robbing by using violence and at times could refer to revolutionaries. The same word is used of Barabbas (Joh 18:40), who according to Lu 23:19 was in prison for “sedition” and “murder.” The parallel account at Lu 23:32, 33, 39 describes the men as “criminals” from a Greek word (*ka-kour'gos*), which literally means “one who engages in doing bad or evil.”

15:28

A few later manuscripts here add the words: “And the scripture was fulfilled that says: ‘And he was counted with lawless ones,’” which quotes a part of Isa 53:12. But these words do not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts and are evidently not part of the original text of Mark. A similar statement is part of the inspired text at Lu 22:37. Some are of the opinion that a copyist inserted into Mark’s account the expression from Luke’s account.—See App. A3.

15:29

shaking their heads: Generally accompanied by words, this gesture expressed derision, contempt, or mockery. The passersby inadvertently fulfilled the prophecy recorded at Ps 22:7.

15:30

torture stake: Or “execution stake.”—See Glossary, “Stake”; “Torture stake”; see also study notes on Mt 10:38 and 16:24, where the term is used in a figurative sense..

15:32

torture stake: Or “execution stake.”—See Glossary, “Stake”; “Torture stake”; see also study notes on Mt 10:38 and 16:24, where the term is used in a figurative sense.

15:33

the sixth hour: That is, about 12:00 noon. In the first century C.E., the Jews used the count of 12 hours to the day, starting with sunrise at about 6:00 a.m. (Joh 11:9) Therefore, the third hour would be about 9:00 a.m., the sixth hour about noon, and the ninth hour about 3:00 p.m. Since people did not have precise timepieces, only the approximate time of an event was usually given.—Joh 1:39; 4:6; 19:14; Ac 10:3, 9..

a darkness: Luke’s parallel account adds the observation that “the sunlight failed.” (Lu 23:44, 45) This darkness was miraculous, caused by God. It could not have been caused by a solar eclipse. Those occur at the time of the new moon, but this was Passover season, when the moon is full. And this darkness lasted for three hours, far longer than the longest possible total eclipse, which is less than eight minutes.

the ninth hour: That is, about 3:00 p.m. In the first century C.E., the Jews used the count of 12 hours to the day, starting with sunrise at about 6:00 a.m. (Joh 11:9) Therefore, the third hour would be about 9:00 a.m., the sixth hour about noon, and the ninth hour about 3:00 p.m. Since people did not have precise timepieces, only the approximate time of an event was usually given.—Joh 1:39; 4:6; 19:14; Ac 10:3, 9.

15:34

Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?: Though some consider these words to be Aramaic, they were likely contemporary Hebrew, somewhat influenced by Aramaic. The Greek transliteration of these words recorded by Matthew and Mark does not allow for a positive identification of the original language.

My God, my God: In calling out to his heavenly Father, acknowledging him as his God, Jesus fulfilled Ps 22:1. Jesus' cry of agony may have brought to his listeners' minds the many things prophesied about him in the rest of Ps 22—that he would be mocked, derided, and attacked in his hands and feet and that his garments would be divided by lot.—Ps 22:6-8, 16, 18.

15:35

Elijah: From the Hebrew name meaning “My God Is Jehovah.”

15:36

sour wine: Or “wine vinegar.” Likely referring to a thin, tart, or sour wine known in Latin as *acetum* (vinegar) or as *posca* when diluted with water. This was a cheap drink that poor people, including Roman soldiers, commonly drank to quench their thirst. The Greek word *o'xos* is also used at Ps 69:21 in the *Septuagint*, where it was prophesied that Messiah would be given “vinegar” to drink.

reed: Or “stick; staff.” In John's account, it is called “a hyssop stalk.”—Joh 19:29; see Glossary, “Hyssop.”

15:37

expired: Or “breathed his last.” The term “spirit” (Greek, *pneu'ma*) may here be understood to refer to “breath” or “life force,” which is supported by the use of the Greek verb *ek-pne'o* (lit., “to breathe out”) in the parallel account at Mr 15:37 (where it is rendered “expired” or, as in the footnote, “breathed his last”).

Some suggest that the use of the Greek term rendered “yielded up” means that Jesus voluntarily stopped struggling to stay alive, since all things had been accomplished. (Joh 19:30) He willingly “poured out his life even to death.”—Isa 53:12; Joh 10:11.

15:38

curtain: This beautifully ornamented drape separated the Most Holy from the Holy in the temple. Jewish tradition indicates that this heavy curtain was some 18 m (60 ft) long, 9 m (30 ft) wide, and 7.4 cm (2.9 in.) thick. By tearing the curtain in two, Jehovah not only manifests his wrath against his Son’s killers but also signifies that entry into heaven itself is now possible.—Heb 10:19, 20; see Glossary.

sanctuary: The Greek word *na·os*’ here refers to the central edifice with its Holy and Most Holy compartments.

15:39

army officer: Or “centurion,” that is, one in command of about 100 soldiers in the Roman army. This high-ranking officer may have been at Jesus’ trial before Pilate and may have heard the Jews say that Jesus claimed to be God’s Son. (Mr 15:16; Joh 19:7) Mark here uses the Greek word *ken·ty·ri’on*, a Latin loanword that also occurs at Mr 15:44, 45.—See “Introduction to Mark” and study notes on Mr 6:27; Joh 19:20.

15:40

Mary Magdalene: Her distinguishing name Magdalene (meaning “Of, or Belonging to, Magdala”) likely stems from the town of Magdala on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee about halfway between Capernaum and Tiberias. It has been suggested that Magdala was Mary’s hometown or place of residence.—See study notes on Mt 15:39; Lu 8:2.

James the Less: One of Jesus’ apostles and the son of Alphaeus. (Mt 10:2, 3; Mr 3:18; Lu 6:15; Ac 1:13) The

designation “the Less” may indicate that this James was either not as old or not as tall as the other apostle James, the son of Zebedee.

Joses: From Hebrew, a shortened form of Josiphiah, meaning “May Jah Add (Increase); Jah Has Added (Increased).” Although a few manuscripts here read “Joseph,” the majority of ancient manuscripts read “Joses.”—Compare the parallel account at Mt 27:56.

Salome: Probably from a Hebrew word meaning “peace.” Salome was a disciple of Jesus. A comparison of Mt 27:56 with Mr 3:17 and 15:40 may indicate that Salome was the mother of the apostles James and John; Matthew mentions “the mother of the sons of Zebedee,” and Mark calls her “Salome.” Further, a comparison with Joh 19:25 points to Salome as possibly being the fleshly sister of Mary, Jesus’ mother. If so, then James and John were first cousins of Jesus. In addition, as Mt 27:55, 56, Mr 15:41, and Lu 8:3 imply, Salome was among the women who accompanied Jesus and ministered to him from their belongings.

15:42

Preparation: As Mark evidently writes primarily with non-Jewish readers in mind, he clarifies that this expression refers to **the day before the Sabbath**, an explanation not found in the other Gospel accounts. (Mt 27:62; Lu 23:54; Joh 19:31) On this day, Jews got ready for the Sabbath by preparing extra meals and finishing any work that could not wait until after the Sabbath. In this case, the day of Preparation fell on Nisan 14.—See Glossary.

15:43

Joseph: The individuality of the Gospel writers is evident in the varying details they provide about Joseph. Tax collector Matthew notes that he was “a rich man”; Mark, writing primarily for the Romans, says that he was “a reputable member of the Council”

who was waiting for God's Kingdom; Luke, the sympathetic physician, says that he "was a good and righteous man" who did not vote in support of the Council's action against Jesus; John alone reports that he was "a secret [disciple] because of his fear of the Jews."—Mt 27:57-60; Mr 15:43-46; Lu 23:50-53; Joh 19:38-42.

Arimathea: See study note on Mt 27:57.

member of the Council: Or "councilor," that is, a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court in Jerusalem.—See study note on Mt 26:59 and Glossary, "Sanhedrin."

15:46

tomb: Or "memorial tomb." A vault, or chamber, cut into the soft limestone rock, rather than a natural cave. Such tombs often contained benchlike shelves or niches where bodies could be laid.—See Glossary, "Memorial tomb."

a stone: Apparently a circular stone, since this verse says that it was rolled into place and Mr 16:4 says that it "had been rolled away" when Jesus was resurrected. It might have weighed a ton or more. Matthew's account calls it "a big stone."—Mt 27:60.

MARK

Study Notes—Chapter 16

16:1

Sabbath: The Sabbath day (Nisan 15) ended at sunset. All four Gospel accounts contain the report of Jesus' resurrection.—Mt 28:1-10; Mr 16:1-8; Lu 24:1-12; Joh 20:1-29.

Mary Magdalene: Her distinguishing name Magdalene (meaning "Of, or Belonging to, Magdala") likely stems from the town of Magdala on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee about

halfway between Capernaum and Tiberias. It has been suggested that Magdala was Mary's hometown or place of residence.—See study notes on Mt 15:39; Lu 8:2.

James: That is, James the Less. One of Jesus' apostles and the son of Alphaeus. (Mt 10:2, 3; Mr 3:18; Lu 6:15; Ac 1:13) The designation "the Less" may indicate that this James was either not as old or not as tall as the other apostle James, the son of Zebedee.

Salome: Probably from a Hebrew word meaning "peace." Salome was a disciple of Jesus. A comparison of Mt 27:56 with Mr 3:17 and 15:40 may indicate that Salome was the mother of the apostles James and John; Matthew mentions "the mother of the sons of Zebedee," and Mark calls her "Salome." Further, a comparison with Joh 19:25 points to Salome as possibly being the fleshly sister of Mary, Jesus' mother. If so, then James and John were first cousins of Jesus. In addition, as Mt 27:55, 56, Mr 15:41, and Lu 8:3 imply, Salome was among the women who accompanied Jesus and ministered to him from their belongings.

bought spices . . . apply them to his body: Jesus' body had already been prepared for burial "according to the burial custom of the Jews." (Joh 19:39, 40) However, since Jesus died about three hours before the start of the Sabbath and the Jews were not allowed to do such work during the Sabbath, this task was likely done hastily. Now, on this first day after the Sabbath, that is, the third day from Jesus' execution, the women may have come to add more spices and oils, perhaps as a means of preserving the body for a longer period. (Lu 23:50–24:1) Likely, they would apply the spices and oils over the wrapped body.

16:2

the first day of the week: That is, Nisan 16. For the Jews, the day immediately after the Sabbath was the first day of the week.

16:3

the stone: Apparently a circular stone, since this verse says that the women asked about who would “roll the stone away,” and verse 4 says that it “had been rolled away.” It might have weighed a ton or more. Matthew’s account calls it “a big stone.”—Mt 27:60.

16:8

for they were in fear: According to the earliest available manuscripts of the last part of Mark, the Gospel ends with the words found in verse 8. Some assert that such an ending is too abrupt to have been the original conclusion to the book. However, in view of Mark’s generally terse writing style, that assertion is not necessarily valid. Also, fourth-century scholars Jerome and Eusebius indicate that the authentic record closes with the words “for they were in fear.”

There are a number of Greek manuscripts and translations into other languages that add either a long or a short conclusion after verse 8. The long conclusion (consisting of 12 extra verses) is found in Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus, and Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis, all from the fifth century C.E. It also appears in the Latin *Vulgate*, the Curetonian Syriac, and the Syriac *Peshitta*. However, it does not appear in two earlier fourth-century Greek manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, or in Codex Sinaiticus Syriacus of the fourth or fifth century, or in the earliest Sahidic Coptic manuscript of Mark of the fifth century. Similarly, the oldest manuscripts of Mark in Armenian and Georgian end at verse 8.

Certain later Greek manuscripts and translations into other languages contain the short conclusion (consisting of just a couple of sentences). The Codex Regius of the eighth century C.E. has both conclusions, giving the shorter conclusion first. It prefaces each conclusion with a note saying that these

passages are current in some quarters, though it evidently recognizes neither of them as authoritative.

SHORT CONCLUSION

The short conclusion after Mr 16:8 is not part of the inspired Scriptures. It reads as follows:

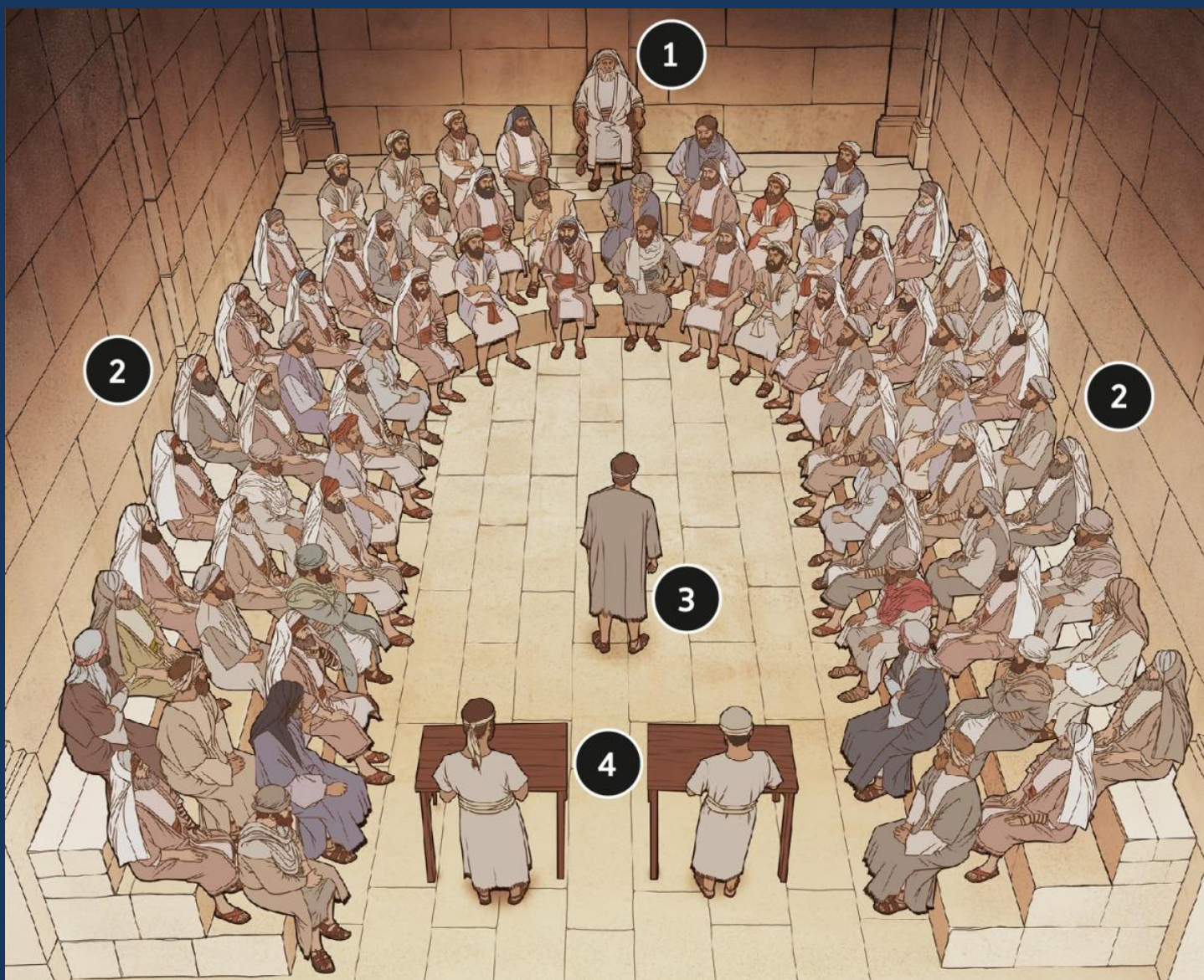
But all the things that had been commanded they related briefly to those around Peter. Further, after these things, Jesus himself sent out through them from the east to the west the holy and incorruptible proclamation of everlasting salvation.

LONG CONCLUSION

The long conclusion after Mr 16:8 is not part of the inspired Scriptures. It reads as follows:

⁹ After he rose early on the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Mag'da-lene, from whom he had expelled seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and reported to those who had been with him, as they were mourning and weeping. ¹¹ But they, when they heard he had come to life and had been viewed by her, did not believe. ¹² Moreover, after these things he appeared in another form to two of them walking along, as they were going into the country; ¹³ and they came back and reported to the rest. Neither did they believe these. ¹⁴ But later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table, and he reproached their lack of faith and hardheartedness, because they did not believe those who had beheld him now raised up from the dead. ¹⁵ And he said to them: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ¹⁶ He that believes and is baptized will be saved, but he that does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ Furthermore, these signs will accompany those believing: By the use of my name they will expel demons, they will speak with tongues, ¹⁸ and with their hands they will pick up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly it will not hurt them at all. They will lay their hands upon sick persons, and these will become well."

¹⁹ So, then, the Lord Jesus, after having spoken to them, was taken up to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ They, accordingly, went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and backed up the message through the accompanying signs.



The Sanhedrin

Seventy-one members constituted the Jewish high court called the Great Sanhedrin. It was located in Jerusalem. (See Glossary, “[Sanhedrin](#).”) According to the Mishnah, the seating was arranged in a semicircle three rows deep, and two scribes were present to record the court’s rulings. Some of the architectural features shown here are based on a structure discovered in Jerusalem that is considered by some to be the Council Chamber from the first century.—See [Appendix B12](#), map “Jerusalem and Surrounding Area.”

1. High priest
2. Members of the Sanhedrin
3. A defendant
4. Clerks

Related Scripture(s) Mr 15:1; Lu 22:66; Joh 11:47



Photo Clara Amit, Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority

Nail in a Heel Bone

This is a photograph of a replica of a human heel bone pierced by an iron nail that was 11.5 cm (4.5 in.) long. The original artifact was found in 1968, during excavations in northern Jerusalem, and dates to Roman times. It provides archaeological evidence that nails were likely used in executions to fasten the person to a wooden stake. This nail may be similar to the nails employed by the Roman soldiers to fasten Jesus Christ to the stake. The artifact was found in a stone box, called an ossuary, into which the dried bones of a deceased person were placed after the flesh had decomposed. This indicates that someone executed on a stake could be given a burial.

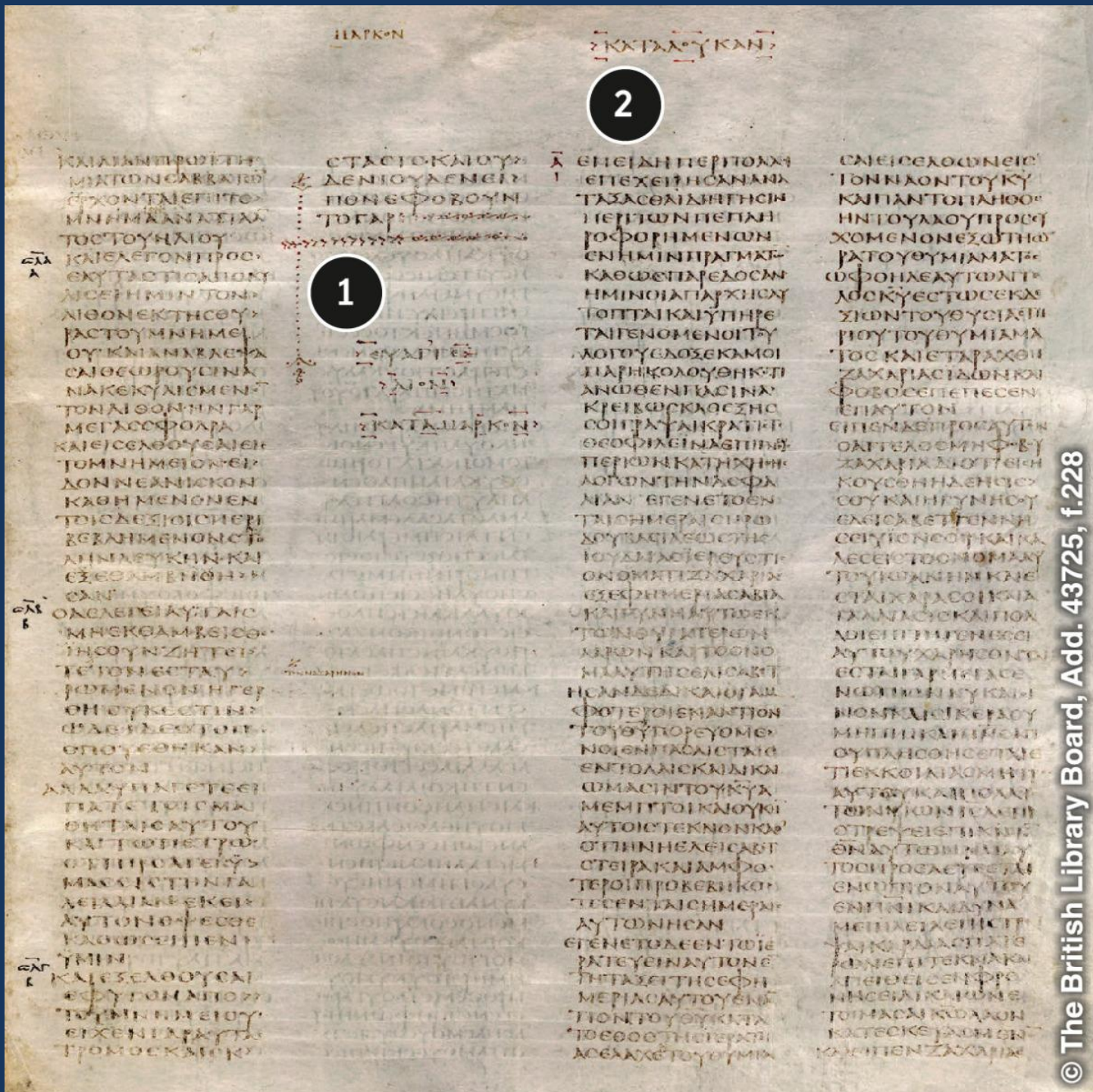
Related Scripture(s) Mt 27:35; Mr 15:24; Lu 23:33; Lu 24:39; Joh 19:18



Tomb Chamber

The Jews usually buried their dead in caves or vaults cut into the rock. These tombs were customarily located outside the cities, an exception being the tombs of the kings. Jewish tombs that have been found are notable for their simplicity. This was evidently because the Jews' worship allowed no veneration of the dead and did not foster any ideas of a conscious existence in a spirit world after death.

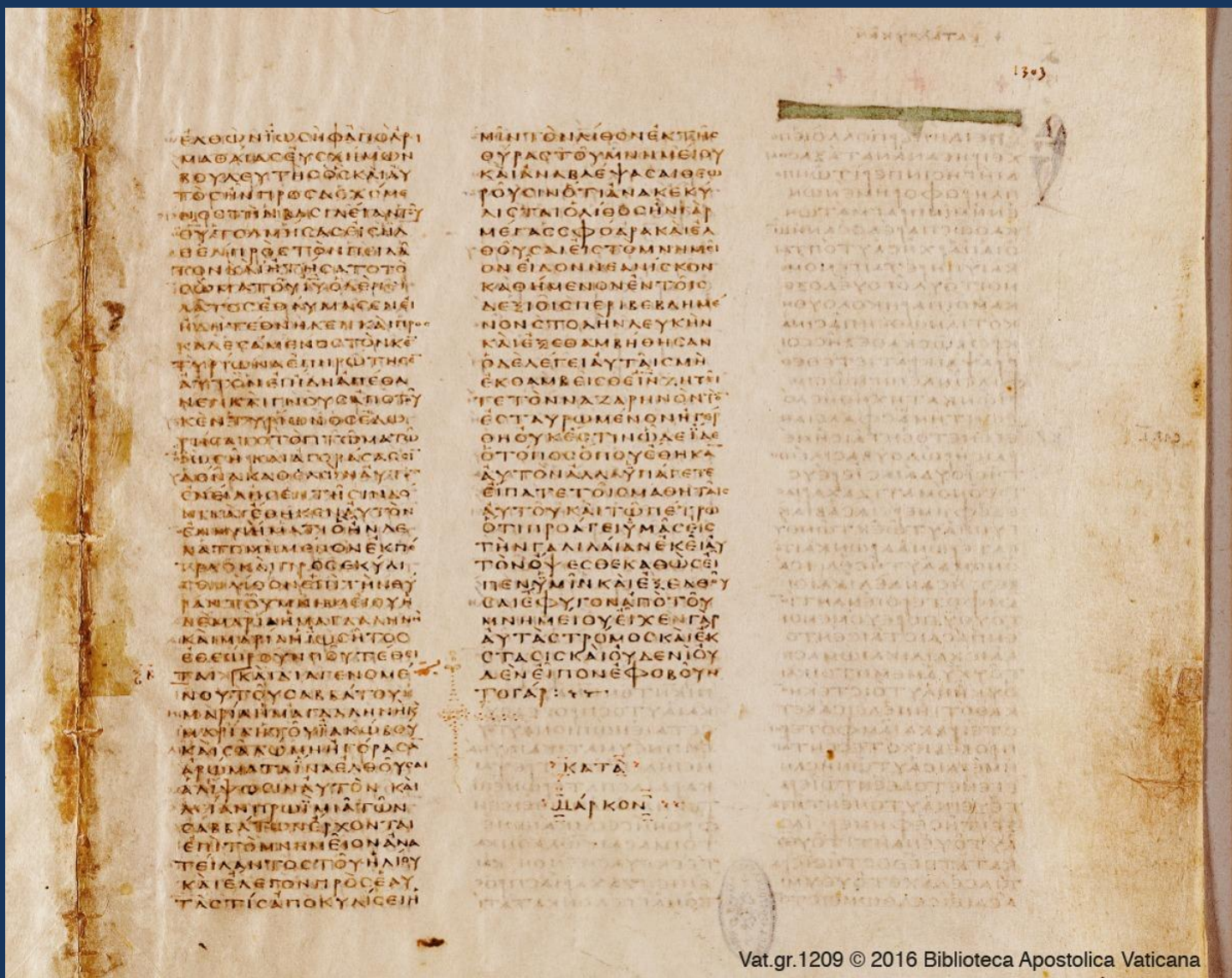
Related Scripture(s) Mt 27:52, 53; Mt 28:8; Mr 15:46; Lu 23:53; Joh 19:41, 42



Codex Sinaiticus—End of Mark’s Gospel

The Codex Sinaiticus is a vellum manuscript written in Greek and dating from the fourth century C.E. It contains all of the Christian Greek Scriptures and portions of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures known as the *Septuagint*. Scholars consider Codex Sinaiticus to be one of the authoritative sources for the Greek Bible text. Until the mid-1800’s, the manuscript was located in St. Catherine’s Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai. Today, a major part of this manuscript, including the section shown here, is preserved at the British Library in London, England. This photo shows the end of the Gospel of Mark (1) and the beginning of Luke’s account (2). In both this manuscript and the equally important fourth-century manuscript known as the Codex Vaticanus, Mark’s account clearly concludes with the words that appear in modern Bibles at [Mark 16:8](#). —See study note on Mr 16:8.

Related Scripture(s) Mr 16:8



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Codex Vaticanus—End of Mark’s Gospel

The Vatican Manuscript No. 1209, also known as Codex Vaticanus, dates to the fourth century C.E. Scholars consider it to be one of the authoritative sources for the Greek Bible text. This image shows the end of the Gospel of Mark. In both this manuscript and the equally important fourth-century manuscript known as Codex Sinaiticus, Mark’s account clearly concludes with the words that appear in modern-day Bibles at [Mark 16:8](#). (See study note on Mr 16:8.) The codex was possibly produced in Alexandria, Egypt, and the faded writing seems to show that the copyist used parchment that had been used before. This codex originally contained the entire Bible in Greek and probably had approximately 820 leaves, 759 of which remain. Most of Genesis is missing, as well as a part of Psalms, Hebrews 9:14 to 13:25, and all of 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation. Codex Vaticanus is preserved at the Vatican Library in Rome, Italy, and is known to have been there from as early as the 15th century.

Related Scripture(s) Mr 16:8

- Song 95 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy”:** (10 min.)
Mr 15:3-5—He remained silent when accused
Mr 15:24, 29, 30—Lots were cast for his clothing, and he was mocked (*nwtsty* study notes on Mr 15: 24, 29)
Mr 15:43, 46—He was buried with the rich (*nwtsty* study note on Mr 15:43)
 - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mr 15:25—What may account for the seeming discrepancy as to when Jesus was nailed to the stake? (*nwtsty* study note)
- Mr 16:8—Why does the *New World Translation* not include the long or the short conclusion in the main text of the Gospel of Mark? (*nwtsty* study note)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Mr 15:1-15

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *jl* lesson 2

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 63
- **“Follow Christ’s Steps Closely”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Jehovah’s Name Is Most Important* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 23, box on p. 60
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 140 and Prayer

Follow Christ’s Steps Closely

Jesus set an example for us to imitate, especially when we face trials or persecution. (1Pe 2:21-23) Although Jesus was insulted, he never retaliated, even when undergoing suffering. (Mr 15:29-32) What helped him to endure? He resolved to do Jehovah’s will. (Joh 6:38) He also focused on “the joy that was set before him.”—Heb 12:2.

How do we react when we are mistreated because of our faith? True Christians do not “return evil for evil.” (Ro 12:14, 17) When we imitate the way Christ endured suffering, we can rejoice because we have God’s approval.—Mt 5:10-12; 1Pe 4:12-14.

WATCH THE VIDEO *JEHOVAH’S NAME IS MOST IMPORTANT, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:*

- How did Sister Pötzing* wisely use her time while in solitary confinement?

- What sufferings did Brother and Sister Pötzing endure while in various concentration camps?

- What helped them to endure?

* Name is also spelled Poetzingner.



When suffering, follow Christ’s steps closely



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

▲ Parents in South Africa studying with their children

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: How can we know what the future holds?

Scripture: Isa 46:10

Link: What Bible prophecies are we seeing fulfilled today?



●●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: What Bible prophecies are we seeing fulfilled today?

Scripture: Mt 24:6, 7, 14

Link: What will happen after “the end”?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What will happen after “the end”?

Scripture: Re 21:4

Link: Where will this Bible prophecy be fulfilled?

Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Bible Study: (6 minutes or less) *j*/ lesson 2

LESSON 2

Why Are We Called Jehovah's Witnesses?

Many people think that Jehovah's Witnesses is the name of a new religion. However, over 2,700 years ago, the servants of the only true God were described as his "witnesses." (Isaiah 43:10-12) Until 1931, we were known as Bible Students. Why did we adopt the name Jehovah's Witnesses?

It identifies our God. According to ancient manuscripts, God's name, Jehovah, appears thousands of times in the Bible. In many translations this name has been replaced by titles, such as Lord or God. Yet, the true God had revealed himself to Moses by his personal name, Jehovah, saying: "This is my name forever." (Exodus 3:15) In this way, he distinguished himself from all false gods. We are proud to bear God's holy name.

It describes our mission. A long line of ancient people, beginning with the righteous man Abel, bore witness about their faith in Jehovah. Throughout the centuries, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, David, and others joined this "great cloud of witnesses." (Hebrews 11:4–12:1) Just as an individual may bear witness in court in behalf of an innocent person, we are determined to make known the truth about our God.

We are imitating Jesus. The Bible calls him "the faithful and true witness." (Revelation 3:14) Jesus himself said that he 'made God's name known' and kept 'bearing witness to the truth' about God. (John 17:26; 18:37) Christ's genuine followers must, therefore, bear Jehovah's name and make it known. This is what Jehovah's Witnesses are endeavoring to do.

- Why did the Bible Students adopt the name Jehovah's Witnesses?
- For how long has Jehovah had witnesses on earth?
- Who is the greatest Witness of Jehovah?

[Box/Picture on page 5]

FIND OUT MORE

When you meet members of our local congregation, try to get to know them better. Ask them: "Why did you become one of Jehovah's Witnesses?"

63 *We're Jehovah's Witnesses!*

(Isaiah 43:10-12)

1. Men make gods of wood and stone,
 But the true God they've not known.
He is God Almighty,
 As he's often shown.
Other gods just cannot see
 What in future days will be.
For witnesses they look all in vain,
 Since none their godship can maintain.

(CHORUS)

We're Jehovah's Witnesses.

We speak out in fearlessness.

Ours is the God of true prophecy;

What he foretells comes to be.

2. Proudly we declare God's name,
 Bearing witness to his fame.
News about his Kingdom,
 Boldly we proclaim.
We help others come to see
 How the truth can set them free.
As they grow strong, their voices they'll raise,
 Singing to God this song of praise.

(Chorus)

3. Witnessing exalts God's name,
Lifts therefrom reproach and shame.
And it warns the wicked,
Who God's name defame.
Pardon it holds out to men,
If they turn to God again.
Whole-souled devotion brings joy and peace;
Promise of life that will not cease.

(Chorus)

- Song 95 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy”:** (10 min.)
Mr 15:3-5—He remained silent when accused
Mr 15:24, 29, 30—Lots were cast for his clothing, and he was mocked (*nwtsty* study notes on Mr 15: 24, 29)
Mr 15:43, 46—He was buried with the rich (*nwtsty* study note on Mr 15:43)
 - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Mr 15:25—What may account for the seeming discrepancy as to when Jesus was nailed to the stake? (*nwtsty* study note)
- Mr 16:8—Why does the *New World Translation* not include the long or the short conclusion in the main text of the Gospel of Mark? (*nwtsty* study note)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Mr 15:1-15

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *jl* lesson 2

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 63
- **“Follow Christ’s Steps Closely”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Jehovah’s Name Is Most Important* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 23, box on p. 60
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 140 and Prayer

Follow Christ’s Steps Closely

Jesus set an example for us to imitate, especially when we face trials or persecution. (1Pe 2:21-23) Although Jesus was insulted, he never retaliated, even when undergoing suffering. (Mr 15:29-32) What helped him to endure? He resolved to do Jehovah’s will. (Joh 6:38) He also focused on “the joy that was set before him.”—Heb 12:2.

How do we react when we are mistreated because of our faith? True Christians do not “return evil for evil.” (Ro 12:14, 17) When we imitate the way Christ endured suffering, we can rejoice because we have God’s approval.—Mt 5:10-12; 1Pe 4:12-14.

WATCH THE VIDEO JEHOVAH’S NAME IS MOST IMPORTANT, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How did Sister Pötzing* wisely use her time while in solitary confinement?

- What sufferings did Brother and Sister Pötzing endure while in various concentration camps?

- What helped them to endure?

* Name is also spelled Poetzing.



When suffering, follow Christ’s steps closely

23

JESUS PERFORMS GREAT WORKS IN CAPERNAUM

MATTHEW 8:14-17 MARK 1:21-34 LUKE 4:31-41

- JESUS CASTS OUT A DEMON
 - PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW IS HEALED
-

Jesus has invited four disciples—Peter, Andrew, James, and John—to be fishers of men. Now, on the Sabbath, they all go to a local synagogue in Capernaum. Jesus teaches in the synagogue, and again the people are astounded at his manner of teaching. He does so as one having authority and not as the scribes.

On this Sabbath a demonized man is present. Right there in the synagogue, the man shouts in a loud voice: “What have we to do with you, Jesus the Nazarene? Did you come to destroy us? I know exactly who you are, the Holy One of God!” Rebuking the demon who is controlling the man, Jesus says: “Be silent, and come out of him!”—Mark 1: 24, 25.



DEMON POSSESSION

When a demon or demons gained possession of someone, they could cause much suffering. (Matthew 17:14-18) But upon being freed of the demons, the person returned to a normal state of mind and body. Repeatedly, Jesus displayed his power to expel demons by means of God's holy spirit.—Luke 8:39; 11:20.

At that, the wicked spirit throws the man to the ground in a convulsion and yells at the top of its voice. But the demon comes out of the man “without hurting him.” (Luke 4:35) The people around him in the synagogue are simply astonished! “What is this?” they ask. “He authoritatively orders even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” (Mark 1:27) Understandably, the news about this impressive event spreads throughout all Galilee.

Leaving the synagogue, Jesus and his disciples go to the home of Simon, or Peter. There Peter's mother-in-law is very sick with a high fever. They beg Jesus to help her. So Jesus goes over, takes her by the hand, and raises her up. Right away she is cured and begins to wait on Jesus and the disciples there with him, perhaps preparing a meal for them.

About sunset, people from all over come to Peter's house with their sick ones. Soon it seems that the whole city is gathered at the door. Why? They are seeking a cure. In fact, 'all those who had people sick with various diseases bring them to him. And laying his hands on each one of them, he cures them.' (Luke 4:40) Yes, no matter what their diseases are, Jesus helps them, just as was foretold. (Isaiah 53:4) He even frees those who are demon-possessed. As the wicked spirits come out, they shout: "You are the Son of God." (Luke 4:41) But Jesus rebukes them and does not allow them to speak anymore. They know that Jesus is the Christ, and he does not want them to put on the appearance of serving the true God.

- ◇ What happens in a synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath?
- ◇ When leaving the synagogue, where does Jesus go, and what does he do there?
- ◇ How do the people of the city react to what Jesus has done there?

140 *Life Without End—At Last!*

(John 3:16)

1. Can you see with your mind's eye,
Peoples dwelling together?
Sorrow has passed. Peace at last!
Life without tears or pain.

(CHORUS)

*Sing out with joy of heart!
You too can have a part.
Live for the day when you'll say,
"Life without end, at last!"*

2. In those days all will be young,
All at peace with Jehovah.
Troubles are gone, from now on,
No need to weep or fear.

(Chorus)

3. Paradise all will enjoy
As we sing of God's glory.
Long as we live, we will give
Honor and praise to God.

(Chorus)

APRIL 2018

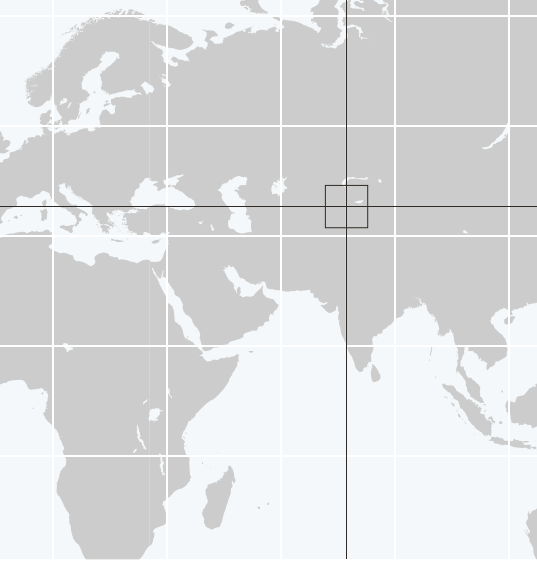
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JUNE 4–JULY 8, 2018

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

KYRGYZSTAN

A special pioneer couple preach in a remote area near the city of Balykchy

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The Way to True Freedom

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Serve Jehovah, the God of Freedom

People around the world are demanding more freedom. How should Christians view freedom? These two articles will consider what true freedom is, how we can attain it, and how to use our relative freedom now to benefit ourselves and others. Above all, we will learn how to honor Jehovah, the God of true freedom.

“This Is the Way”

(Isaiah 30:20, 21)

1. There is a way of peace,
The way you’ve come to know.
It is the way you learned,
The way of long ago,
The way that Jesus taught you
When his voice you heard.
This is the way of peace,
Found in Jehovah’s Word.

(CHORUS)

*This is the way to life; This is the way.
Don’t look aside; Not for a moment stray!
God’s voice is calling: ‘This is the way;
Do not look back, for yes, this is the way.’*

2. There is a way of love,
No need to look around.
God’s voice has shown the way
He lets himself be found.
His love is full and good;
His love is warm and true.
This is the way of love;
It touches all we do.

(Chorus)

3. There is a way of life,
 No need to look behind.
Our God has promised us:
 No better way we'll find,
No higher way to peace,
 No finer way to love.
This is the way to life,
 Thanks to our God above.

(Chorus)



SONGS:
54, 36

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

What is relative freedom?

How was true freedom lost?

What freedom did Jesus promise, and how can we gain it?

The Way to True Freedom

“If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free.”—JOHN 8:36.

TODAY, there is much talk about equality, liberty, and freedom. People in many parts of the world want to be free from oppression, discrimination, and poverty. Others demand to have

- 1, 2. (a) What evidence is there that people are struggling to gain freedom?
- (b) What have been the results of such struggles?

freedom of speech, of choice, and of self-determination. To be able to do what one wants to do or to live the way one wants to live seems to be much desired by people everywhere.

² How to satisfy those desires, however, is quite another matter. On the social or political level, many resort to protests, demonstrations, revolts, even revolutions. But do such confrontations achieve the desired results? On the contrary, they often lead to tragedies and loss of life. All of this once again testifies to the truthfulness of King Solomon's inspired observation: "Man has dominated man to his harm."—Eccl. 8:9.

³ The Christian disciple James pointed out the key to finding true happiness and satisfaction. He wrote: "The one who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and continues in it . . . will be happy in what he does." (Jas. 1:25) Jehovah, who gave that perfect law, knows best the things humans need in order to be completely happy and satisfied. He gave the first human couple everything that they needed to be happy—including true freedom.

3. What can we do to find true happiness and satisfaction?

WHEN HUMANS WERE TRULY FREE

⁴ When reading the first two chapters of Genesis, we can easily see that Adam and Eve enjoyed the kind of freedom that people today can only hope for—freedom from want, from fear, and from oppression. The first couple’s life was completely free from worries about food, work, sickness, and death. (Gen. 1:27-29; 2:8, 9, 15) Does this mean that the freedom that Adam and Eve enjoyed was absolute? Let us see.

⁵ Many today think that to be truly free, they must be able to do anything and everything they want to do, regardless of the consequences. *The World Book Encyclopedia* defines freedom as “the ability to make choices and to carry them out.” However, it adds: “From a legal point of view, people are free if society imposes no unjust, unnecessary, or unreasonable limits on them.” This implies that, in practice, certain limits are necessary so that everyone in that society can benefit from the freedom granted. The question, then, is: Who has

-
4. What freedom did Adam and Eve enjoy? (See opening picture.)
 5. Contrary to what many think, what is needed for people to enjoy freedom?

the right to determine what limits are just, necessary, and reasonable?

⁶ When it comes to freedom, a key point for us to bear in mind is that Jehovah God alone has what can be called absolute and unlimited freedom. Why? Because he is the Creator of all things and the almighty Sovereign of the universe. (1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 4:11) Recall the beautiful words of King David in describing the unique and lofty position that Jehovah alone occupies. (Read 1 Chronicles 29:11, 12.) Accordingly, all creatures in heaven and on earth have freedom in only a relative sense. They must recognize that Jehovah God has the ultimate authority to impose what he determines to be just, necessary, and reasonable limits. That, in fact, was what Jehovah God did with his human creation right from the beginning.

⁷ Even though Adam and Eve initially enjoyed freedom in many ways, there were limits imposed on them. Some of them were instinctive, but they were limits nonetheless. For example, our first parents knew that to keep on living, they had to

6. (a) Why does Jehovah alone possess absolute freedom?
(b) What sort of freedom can humans enjoy, and why?

7. What are some instinctive actions that contribute to one's happiness?

breathe, eat, sleep, and so on. Would they feel a loss of freedom for having to do these things? No, for Jehovah saw to it that even in doing such routine things, they could find enjoyment and contentment. (Ps. 104:14, 15; Eccl. 3:12, 13) Who would not delight in taking an invigorating breath of fresh air, eating his favorite food, or awakening from a restful night of sleep? We happily do these necessary things without any feeling of constraint or burden. Adam and Eve no doubt felt the same.

⁸ Jehovah specifically commanded Adam and Eve to populate the earth and to take care of it. (Gen. 1:28) Did this command in some way deprive them of their freedom? Of course not! It was given to enable humans to participate in their Creator's purpose—to make the earth into a global paradise home for a race of perfect humans forever. (Isa. 45:18) Today, it is not against Jehovah's will for people to choose to be single or to be married but remain childless. Still, by and large, people marry and raise children in spite of the challenges such choices bring. (1 Cor. 7:36-38) Why? Because under normal circumstances, people find

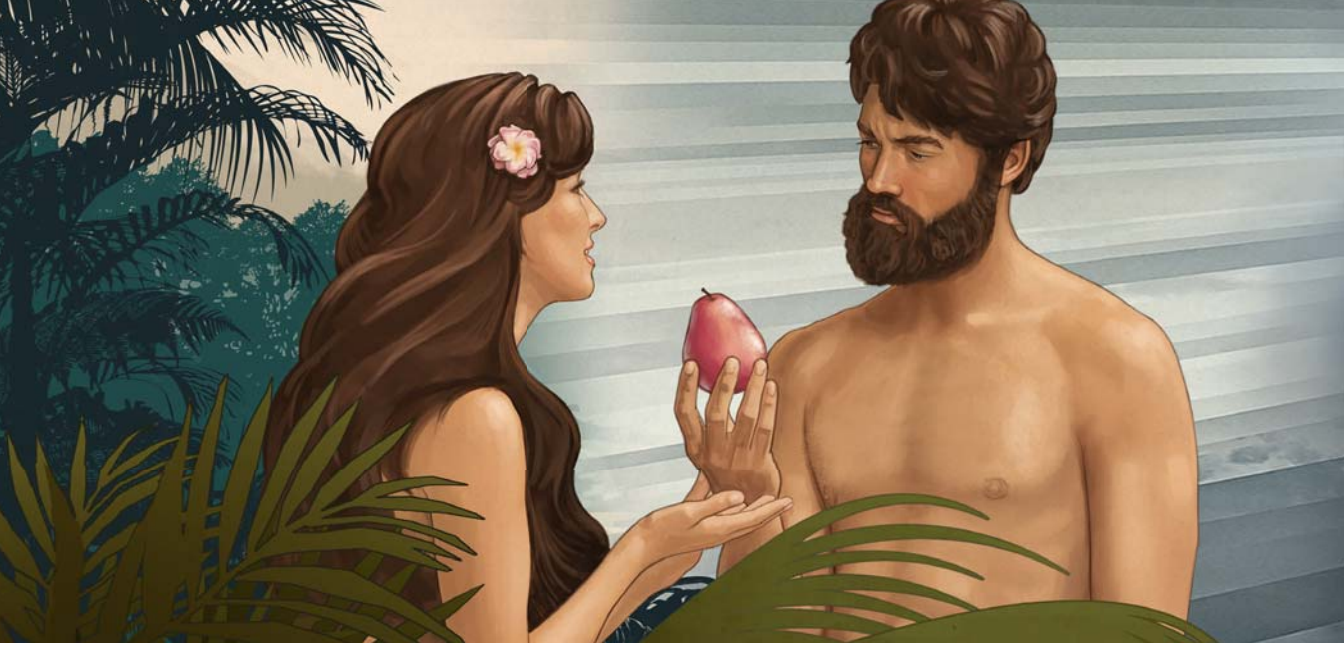
8. What specific command did God give our first human parents, and for what purpose?

happiness and satisfaction in doing so. (Ps. 127:3) Enjoying their marriage and family for all eternity could have been Adam and Eve's happy lot in life.

HOW TRUE FREEDOM WAS LOST

⁹ Jehovah gave Adam and Eve another command, which included a clear statement of the penalty if violated: "As for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will certainly die." (Gen. 2:17) Was this command in any way unjust, unnecessary, or unreasonable? Did it rob Adam and Eve of their freedom? Certainly not. In fact, a number of Bible scholars comment on the logic and good sense of the command. For example, one scholar observes: "The inference of God's commands in [Genesis 2:16, 17] is that only God knows what is good . . . for humanity and only God knows what is not good . . . for them. To enjoy the 'good,' humankind must trust God and obey him. If they disobey, they will be left to decide for themselves what is good . . . and what is not good." That is a burden that humans could not carry successfully on their own.

9. Why was God's command found at Genesis 2:17 not unjust, unnecessary, or unreasonable?



¹⁰ Upon reading Jehovah’s command to Adam, many today would say that Adam was denied the freedom to do what he wanted. In saying so, they are confusing the exercise of one’s free will with the right to *decide* what is good and what is bad. Adam and Eve did have the freedom to choose whether they would obey God or not. However, only Jehovah has the right to decide in the absolute sense what is good and what is bad, as symbolized by “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad” in the garden of Eden. (Gen. 2:9) We have to admit that we do not always know what the out-

10. Why should we not equate free will with the right to decide what is good and what is bad?



Adam and Eve's choice
proved disastrous!
(See paragraphs 9-12)

come of our choices will be; nor do we know whether they will turn out for our good every time. That is why we so often see people make choices or decisions with all good intentions—only to have them result in suffering, disaster, or tragedy. (Prov. 14:12) Human limitations play a large role. By means of his command, Jehovah lovingly taught Adam and Eve the way to exercise true freedom. How is that so, and did that first couple respond?

¹¹ As it turned out, our first parents chose to disobey. Satan's tempting promise—"your eyes will be

11, 12. Why did Adam and Eve's choice prove to be disastrous? Illustrate.

opened and you will be like God, knowing good and bad”—proved to be irresistible for Eve. (Gen. 3:5) Did Adam and Eve’s choice eventually enhance their freedom in any way? Sadly, it did not. Their choice did not bring them what Satan said it would. In fact, they soon learned that rejecting Jehovah’s direction and going their own way resulted in disaster. (Gen. 3:16-19) Why? Simply because Jehovah did not give humans the freedom to determine for themselves what is good and what is bad. —Read Proverbs 20:24 and footnote; Jeremiah 10:23.

¹² This can be illustrated with a pilot flying an airplane. To reach a certain destination safely, he usually must follow a preapproved flight path. Modern aviation equipment allows a pilot to use onboard navigation instruments and to keep in touch with air traffic controllers along the way so as to reach his planned destination. However, if the pilot chose to disregard that guidance and fly any route he desired, the result could be disastrous. Like that pilot, Adam and Eve wanted to do things their own way. They rejected the guidance God had provided. The result? They ended, as it were, in a tragic crash, resulting in sin and death for themselves and for their future offspring. (Rom. 5:12)

In striving for self-determination, they lost the true freedom they had been given.

HOW TO GAIN TRUE FREEDOM

¹³ People may think that the more freedom they have, the better off they will be, but the reality is that having unbounded freedom is a two-edged sword. True, freedom does bring many benefits; yet, we shudder to imagine what the world would be like if there were no restraints at all. For this reason, *The World Book Encyclopedia* states: “The laws of every organized society form a complicated pattern of balanced freedoms and restrictions.” “Complicated” is surely the right word. Just think of the volumes and volumes of laws written by man, let alone the armies of lawyers and judges needed to interpret and administer them.

¹⁴ In contrast, Jesus Christ pointed out a simple way to enjoy true freedom. He said: “If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31, 32) Jesus’ direction for gaining true freedom involves two requirements: First, accept the truth that he taught, and second, become

13, 14. How can we gain true freedom?

his disciple. Doing so will lead to true freedom. But freedom from what? Jesus went on to explain: “Every doer of sin is a slave of sin. . . . If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free.”—John 8: 34, 36.

¹⁵ Clearly, the freedom that Jesus promised his disciples is far superior to the social or political freedom that most people yearn for today. When Jesus said: “If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free,” he was talking about liberation from the greatest bondage and oppression that human-kind has ever experienced—being “a slave of sin.” Not only can sin lead us to doing what is bad but it can also prevent us from doing what we know is right or from living up to what we know we are capable of. In that sense we are slaves of sin, and the outcome is frustration, pain, suffering, and finally death. (Rom. 6:23) The apostle Paul felt this pain and agony deeply. (Read Romans 7:21-25.) It is only when the shackles of sin are thrown off that we can hope to have the true freedom that our first human parents once enjoyed.

¹⁶ Jesus’ statement “if you remain in my word”

15. Why can the freedom that Jesus promised make us “truly free”?

16. How can we become truly free?

implies that there are certain requirements or boundaries for being set free by him. As dedicated Christians, we have disowned ourselves and have chosen to live within the bounds of Christ's teachings as his disciples. (Matt. 16:24) Just as Jesus promised, we will be truly free when the benefits of his ransom sacrifice are fully applied to us.

¹⁷ Submitting to Jesus' teachings as his disciples will give our life real meaning and satisfaction. This, in turn, opens up the prospect of being completely liberated from enslavement to sin and death. (Read Romans 8:1, 2, 20, 21.) The following article will consider how we can wisely use the freedom we now have, so that we can honor Jehovah, the God of true freedom, forever.

-
17. (a) What will give our life real meaning and satisfaction?
(b) What will we consider in the next article?

1. We guard our hearts, it means our life;
 We shun the path of sin.
 God reads the heart, and there he finds
 The person deep within.
 Sometimes the heart deceives the mind,
 And we begin to stray.
 So may our mind direct our heart
 And keep Jehovah's way.
2. Prepared in heart, we search for God
 By means of earnest prayer.
 Each day we give him praise and thanks,
 Revealing ev'ry care.
 The things Jehovah teaches us,
 We gladly will obey.
 We cultivate a loyal heart,
 To please him ev'ry day.
3. Our hearts we shield from harmful thoughts,
 We dwell on what is true.
 We love God's Word to touch our hearts,
 To strengthen and renew.
 Jehovah loves his loyal ones;
 On this we can depend.
 We'll worship him wholeheartedly
 Forever as his friend.

