



FAITH

& LOVE

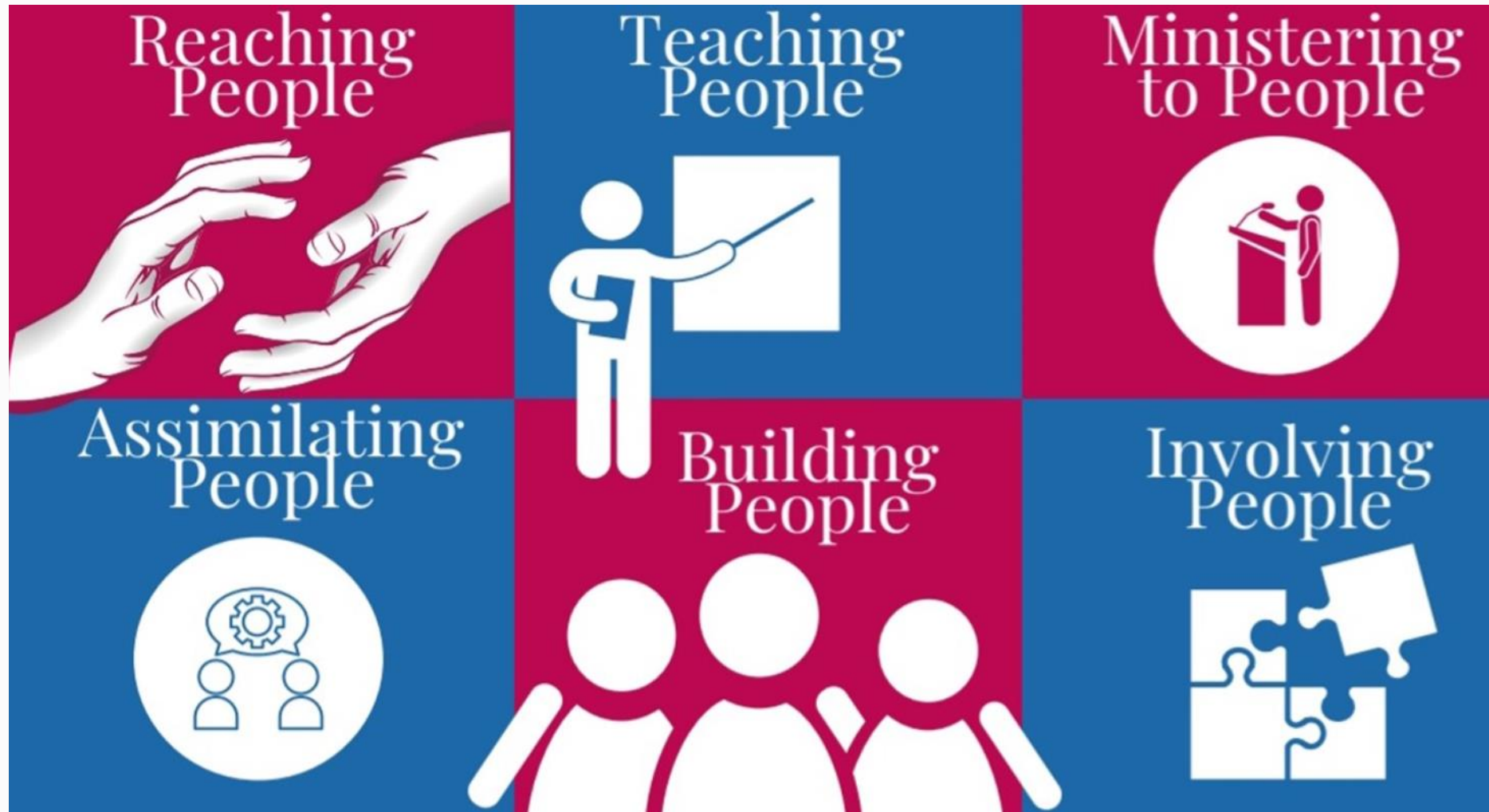
Church of God in Christ

Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C
Sunday School

Lesson 4 March 22, 2026

THE NEW COVENANT OF
FAITH

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119:105

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

2 Peter 3:18

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- Bible Basis: Mark 15:6-15, 25-39
- Bible Truth: Mark describes how Jesus' crucifixion forges a new covenant and reconciles God and humankind.
- Memory Verse: "And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39)
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: SUMMARIZE Mark's account of the crucifixion of Jesus; REFLECT on the amazing price Jesus paid to establish a new covenant between God and humankind; and PRAY for a restored relationship with God in light of the reconciliation Jesus provides.
- Background Scriptures: [Mark 14:32-50; 15](#) – Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

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Mark 15:6-15, 25-39 KJV

- 6** Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.
- 7** And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.
- 8** And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.
- 9** But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?
- 10** For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.
- 11** But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

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14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

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Mark 15:6-15, 25-39 KJV

25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, The King Of The Jews.

27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,

30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

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Mark 15:6-15, 25-39 KJV

31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

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Mark 15:6-15, 25-39 KJV

36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

God is the author of covenants. In [Genesis 15:9-21](#) God initiates the establishment of a covenant with Abram and ultimately the Jewish people. Thus, the Jews have now become a covenantal people. The Jews take covenants seriously. Jews have been known to walk back and forth stepping between the bloody pieces of the animal sacrifice saying, "May this or worse happen to me should I fail to keep the terms of this covenant." Humanity has drifted far away from God's original intent and sin is the blame. This is nothing new as God has sent destruction upon humanity, time and time again. The Old Testament shows God articulating commandments and establishing covenants. But God always has a plan!

LIGHT ON THE WORD

In [Mark 14](#), Jesus is revealed as the final covenant needed to redeem humanity. He has lived a pristine life and now the time of his sacrificial death is at hand. Jesus displays incredible courage as he and the disciples encounter the need to stay nearby. Judas is making ready to betray him and the Roman authorities are seeking to kill him. Jesus goes to a familiar place, a garden – Gethsemane – a place that he apparently frequented. Otherwise, how would Judas know to find him there? It is from this garden that the covenant must emerge. For Jesus, this is the moment of decision.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will affirm personal relationships encounter problems that result in division and strife.

INTRODUCTION

All relationships encounter problems that result in division and strife. Who can heal the breaches and restore harmony? Humanity in general faces a breach in its relationship with God. We need a mediator and an assurance that this relationship is restored, Jesus is that mediator. He becomes the way that humanity will be restored to God. But first Jesus must die. The covenant can only be cut through a blood sacrifice. According to tradition, the author of the book of Mark is also the person referred to in Acts 15:37-38, who was the subject of a rift in the relationship between Paul and Barnabas, as Barnabas ends up taking Mark with him while Paul takes Silas with him.

INTRODUCTION

It is this Mark, who writes describing the agony of how Jesus' decision in the Garden of Gethsemane forges a new covenant and reconciles God and humankind. The Garden of Gethsemane means "oil press" in Aramaic. Jesus is being "pressed" to make a decision and he must persist to receive direction from God.

INTRODUCTION

In the Memory Verse Mark highlighted the persistence of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. He has to repeat his prayer because of the inability of the disciples to watch and pray for Jesus for one hour. One hour! The disciples could not keep watch for Jesus for one hour. Jesus makes repeated trips to pray and to check on his disciples.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will believe that the Word of God supersedes all other laws and that the new covenant with Christ fulfills the covenant God made through Moses at Sinai ([Exodus 24:7-8](#)).

I. DEALING WITH REJECTION OF THE CROWD

Mark 15:6-15, 25-26

All night, the high priest and the Sanhedrin council have questioned Jesus. They brought false witness after false witness and finally charged Him with blasphemy ([14:61-64](#)). Now headed to Pilate to have Jesus die by capital punishment, the high priest and the Sanhedrin have stirred the crowd to request Barabbas' release and Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus, once a crowd favorite, now found Himself without a friend.

I. DEALING WITH REJECTION OF THE CROWD

Mark 15:6-15, 25-26

Just a few days earlier, crowds had gathered to cut down palm branches and lay them in the road, saying "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest" ([11:9-10](#)). They called Him King of the Jews because He rode in triumph on a colt. They thought He would be the one to overthrow the oppressive Roman government. But crowds are fickle. They are with you when it seems like you are the one on top, but when trouble comes they scatter or turn their back on you.

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6 Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. 7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. 8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

The feast being described is the Passover feast, which was a reminder of God delivering the Children of Israel out of Egypt. Passover is one of the three feasts that the Israelites were instructed to keep annually in every generation. The word for prisoner is *desmios* (**DES-mee-*oce***), which means someone who is a military prisoner or captive. This sort of prisoner was held because they were a political threat or had committed a crime against the state. In this case, it was someone who had been arrested in the previous rebellions.

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Apparently, it had become Pilate's practice to release one prisoner during the Passover as a gesture of goodwill to the occupied people of the Roman Empire. Pilate was a harsh governor, not only during Jesus' lifetime but in the years following as he tried to maintain control over Judea, a rebellious region of the empire. It is worth noting the complexity of his character. He was willing to allow for gestures of mercy, such as the release of a prisoner during the important Jewish feast, when there would have been Jews from all around the occupied land in Jerusalem. The crowd assembled in Jerusalem was crying out for Pilate to perform his customary release of a prisoner.

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Barabbas had committed murder during the insurrection, perhaps killing a Roman guard or Temple worker. The rebellions were likely inspired by the history and legend of Judas Maccabeus and the Maccabean revolt. The last time Israel had been an independent nation not ruled by an imperial power was after the Maccabean revolts successfully freed Judea and established an independent monarchy in Judah for the first time since the Babylonian exile. The monarchy eventually ceased to be independent, and the territory was ruled by the Roman Empire during Jesus' lifetime. However, there were periodic uprising as the Israelites fought for freedom. Many Israelites believed that the Messiah would be the ultimate freedom fighter who would liberate the people.

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Pilate again asked the crowd if they wanted him to release Jesus. The title "King of the Jews" was a reference to the role some thought the Messiah would fill. The Messiah was expected by some to overthrow the empire and restore the Davidic lineage as king of Judah.

The Scripture suggests that Pilate asks this question expecting the crowd to want Jesus released. Pilate has just confronted Jesus about the accusation that He is King of the Jews, and Jesus does not deny it. Having a King of the Jews would be a direct political threat to the symbolic kingship of Herod and to the control of the Roman Empire.

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The popularity of Jesus is also a direct threat to the chief priests and elders because if Jesus holds spiritual authority apart from them, it makes them less powerful. Pilate is well aware of this dynamic (v.10). Pilate has seen Jesus' humility, wisdom, and conviction (vv. 1-5). Jesus does not respond the way a normal rebel, criminal, or lawbreaker would because He is innocent. Pilate, who is not Jewish and does not know God, is able to tell that these accusing priests have wicked motives.

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The priests continue to act out their unjust plan by persuading the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. The priests are more interested in preserving their position than doing what is just. The priests go as far as to justify the release of a violent rebel instead of the innocent Son of Man. In this passage, the striking parallel is the crowd choosing the violent revolutionary instead of the true Messiah and the anointed Son of God to be their liberator.

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Pilate again places the fate of Jesus in the hands of the crowd. The madness of mob mentality has fully set in. They move from wanting the criminal released instead of Christ, to demanding that Christ be crucified. Crucifixion was not a common death. It was a death reserved only for criminals and enemies of the state. It was intended to be not simply punishment but public humiliation, excruciating death, and a warning to all who watched. Death by crucifixion was not caused by bleeding but by a person suspended from a cross suffocating to death slowly. Its impact on the audience was much like that of a public hanging, death by firing squad or the electric chair, or the lynching of African-Americans. It was not enough that Jesus had been beaten and humiliated already. The priests had persuaded the crowd that he needed to be killed, publicly and in one of the most violent ways possible.

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Pilate tries again to reason with the crowd, yet the crowd again demands that Pilate crucify Jesus. Pilate, known for violently putting down any opposition or disorder, does not want the large crowd to riot. A riot at this point could result in dozens of deaths as Roman soldiers gain control of the crowds visiting Jerusalem for the high holiday of Passover.

Instead, Pilate decides that Jesus of Nazareth must die to please the crowd and stop any unrest. This fulfills the prophecy of the chief priest that it would be better that one man die than all the nation perishes ([John 11:49-51](#)). Pilate gives in to the crowd and has Jesus scourged with a whip, an intensely brutal practice, then has Him taken to be crucified.

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25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, The King Of The Jews.

The cycle of the Jewish day began with sunset and lasted until the following sunset, but the numbering of hours began at sunrise, which was around 6 a.m. in Palestine where the crucifixion took place. Therefore, the third hour would have been approximately 9 a.m. It was early in the morning when Jesus was crucified. It would have been a time when many people were around to watch and see what had happened, and yet only some in the crowd would have come out to Golgotha to watch such a spectacle; those in the city would have seen Jesus on His way to be crucified as He walked through the street struggling to carry His own Cross.

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The accusation written over His head was "King of the Jews," for the audience that mocked His claim that He was the Messiah. The one who had declared He was the Messiah meant to free the people was being publicly killed and would not free Himself. In a deeper meaning, it's ironic that God was the original King of the Jews and allowed them to have a human king. Now, Jesus Christ, the God-Man was being openly identified for who He was, God and Messiah, yet dying on a cross in a completely unexpected death for all those who followed and believed in Him.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Pilate, Please the Crowd

After the arrest of Jesus, Pilate asks Him if He is the King of the Jews. Jesus humbly replies, "Thou sayest it." The chief priests bring accusations against Jesus. Jesus does not defend himself. Pilate ultimately condemns Jesus. While the Roman soldiers try to humiliate Jesus, Judas hangs himself. As was his custom. Pilate gives the crowd a choice of prisoners to release, and they choose Barabbas over Jesus. Pilate has Jesus beaten and washes his hand in an attempt to disconnect himself from any blame in the matter. Jesus is tried through illegal means and sentenced to die. The soldiers lead Jesus away to be crucified. Jesus is crucified. The way is clear for the necessary blood sacrifice to satisfy the wrath of God.

II. DARKNESS THAT REVEALS THE COMMITMENT OF CHRIST

Mark 15:33-39

As Jesus was hanging on the Cross, darkness loomed over the land for three hours starting at noon. Jesus began to cry out to God at about 3 p.m., saying, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (v.34, AMP). At this moment, Jesus showed His humanity even while obeying the will of the Father. While Jesus was dying, many gathered around to see what would happen next. Some thought He was calling for Elijah; some wanted to give Him something to drink. But Jesus took His last breath and died. Jesus' death sealed our salvation. His death destroyed the power of sin. He gave His life that we might have the opportunity by faith to have eternal life and life more abundantly. He paid the ultimate price for our sin, so that we may be reconciled with God. Jesus is now the mediator between heaven and humanity. The veil in the Temple, where only the high priest could enter, was torn from top to bottom. Jesus is the only High Priest the believer needs.

II. DARKNESS THAT REVEALS THE COMMITMENT OF CHRIST

Mark 15:33-39

The way Jesus died even had an impact on those who guarded the Cross. One centurion confessed that Jesus truly was the Son of God. Jesus' death showed God's commitment to restoring fallen humanity to the relationship enjoyed in the beginning. Have you been reminded of God's commitment during some of life's darkest moments?

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33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabach thani? Which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

After three hours, the suffering was intense. Jesus cried in Hebrew, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabach thani, (**el-OY lah-MAH-ma sah-BAKH-thanee**) or "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The Hebrew word fluidly translated "why" could more literally mean "for what thing or reason?" This is a quotation of [Psalm 22:1](#). Jesus probably had in mind the whole psalm, a prayer of a righteous sufferer. The speaker of the psalm cries out from his pain but also sees God's past and present faithfulness and determines to praise and trust God still.

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Rather than indicating that Jesus actually thought God had abandoned Him, this cry expressed Jesus' unshaken faith in God at this horrible hour. He had faith in God's continual protection and final vindication. The scene is to be understood in the perspective of the holy judgment of God and the character of sin, which cuts the sinner off from God ([Isaiah 59:2](#)). Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the entire world. He bore on the Cross the judgment of God upon human rebellion (see [Mark 10:45; Romans 5:8; Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

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Mark 15:33-39

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

Some spectators, who probably misunderstood Jesus or were mocking Him, said: "Behold, he calleth Elias" They believed that He was calling Elijah to rescue him ([Malachi 3:1; 4:5](#)). There was an expectation among the Jewish people that Elijah would return before Christ came based on the prophecy of Malachi. Elijah was one of the two people in the Old Testament who ascended to Heaven without dying ([2 Kings 2:10-12](#)), the other was Enoch ([Genesis 5:21-24](#)). Elijah was one of the archetypal Jewish prophets. For some then it made sense that Jesus would be calling Elijah with the expectation of Him coming off the Cross and establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth by overthrowing the Roman Empire.

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Mark 15:33-39

36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

A soldier soaked a sponge in vinegar and reach edit up to Jesus' mouth on the end of a reed. It was intended to keep Him conscious for as long as possible. But some were still wondering whether there would be a last-minute miracle. They said, "Let us see whether Elias will come to take him down." According to popular Jewish beliefs, Elias (Elijah) would come to the help of the just in their time of distress.

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**II. DARKNESS THAT REVEALS
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37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

Mark 15:33-39

The loud cry of Jesus before He expired indicates that His death was different from others who died on a cross. He died suddenly (vv. 39, 44). He died for us (Mark 10:45; 14:24). His death was voluntary. His life was not taken, for He "gave up the ghost" (His Spirit). Jesus gave His entire life, His very last, for His love of humanity. Through His death and resurrection, we are invited to have life more abundantly and be restored to right relationship with God. We know as Christians that God had a plan that defied the expectations of the people through Jesus' death on the Cross. God would liberate the people not with a violent revolution but humble submission and total obedience to God. The revolution freed humanity from the penalty of sin as the love of God was shown through Jesus' death on the Cross.

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God was restoring not just a monarchy or land but restoring people to right relationship with Himself. The enemy of the Jewish people (the emperor) was not defeated. Death itself – the ultimate enemy of all people – was defeated. God was empowering humanity not just to make free political decisions but empowering them, by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ, to be agents of change in the world. The message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ did, in fact, change the course of history: For the first time, the followers of Jesus who were oppressed, unimportant, and unremarkable became the most influential and powerful people in history.

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Mark 15:33-39

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. 39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

These final verses of the Scripture add a further supernatural dimension to Jesus' death on the Cross. When Jesus gives up His Spirit, the veil in the Temple that separated the Holy place from the Holy of Holies was ripped from top to bottom. The Holy of Holies was where the presence of God dwelt, and the Ark of the Covenant was kept. This would have been an incredible sight and an impossible work for any human being to accomplish. The veil in the Temple was made of several layers of thick weaving and was almost two stories high, the closest analogy would be like the curtain on the stage of a theater. A rip in this veil would take extraordinary force, and that might only cause a small tear that would happen from bottom to top. The fact that the veil was torn from top to bottom signifies that it was an act of God from heaven above.

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Furthermore, this tear in the veil would have been unimaginable for the priests and Levites at the Temple. The veil not only separated the Holiness of God from the interactions of humans except for one day a year (the Day of Atonement), it also protected the priests who worked in the Holy place from being destroyed by the awesome presence of the Almighty God. The separation – which kept God from being openly accessed by all people and kept people from being destroyed by encountering God's presence – was ripped apart.

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The centurion, who was a Roman soldier designated to guard the prisoners and monitor them as they died, recognized that Jesus was divine. We can only imagine what struck him about Jesus' cry and His last breath that revealed to the centurion that Jesus was the Son of God. As the centurion witnessed the events, he confirmed the truth of Jesus' identity. The witness of the veil and the witness of the soldier simultaneously give testimony to the tremendous impact of Jesus dying on the Cross for both Heaven and Earth.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Fallen Humanity Restored

Since the Passover, blood has been the manner in which covenants were established. The Passover was the primary Jewish festival, symbolizing God's salvation of His people from Egypt. The Jews were well aware of the story of the angel being sent to destroy the first-born males and only through the sprinkling of the blood of a lamb over the door post could one initiate a Passover from the angel. When he came to destroy all of the first-born in the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:12-13) that he must "pass over it." whenever he saw the blood sprinkled on an Israelite house. It has to have been an incredible time to be alive, to witness the fulfillment of hundreds of years of prophecy.

Lesson 4 March 22, 2026
THE NEW COVENANT OF FAITH



LIGHT ON THE WORD

Fallen Humanity Restored

Jesus is now the blood sacrifice necessary to establish the New Covenant. His disciples are sleeping through the event of a lifetime! When Jesus decides to die, He makes a way for peace with God through an eternal covenant. They are alive precisely at the time of the greatest Passover ever. Christ our Passover becomes the ultimate sacrifice for us. The New Covenant is established!

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will confess Jesus as the one who seals God's new covenant with humanity.

BIBLE APPLICATION

The example of Jesus' obedience to God – remaining faithful even though He had to die – shows us a level of commitment that is hard to match. We need to have that same level of commitment in reaching out to brothers and sisters who are on the margins of life. We must help others remain on a path of productivity and progress despite current cultural norms. Can a brother or sister count on you to be present in their darkest hours of life? Will you this week stand up for someone who is being unjustly treated by the crowd, the elite, or the powerful?

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: We will confirm our participation in the new covenant through the Lord's Supper.

STUDENT RESPONSES

Jesus' death sealed the deal for our salvation. During His trial, sentencing, and execution, things seemed to be following the will of the high priest and the Sanhedrin council. They said of Jesus, "He saved others; himself he cannot save" ([Matthew 27:42](#)). Despite their ridicule, God's plan of restoration was being completed. This week, attempt to model what Christ did for us by paying a debt that cannot be repaid. Buy lunch for someone you do not know. Pay for somebody's parking ticket. By performing acts of kindness while expecting nothing in return, you will show the love of Christ toward someone else.

Prayer

Gracious God,

We are unworthy of Your sacrifice. We celebrate the Cross and the reminders of the Cross for our sins. The forgiveness of our sins is a blessing greater than we can imagine. The shed blood of Jesus and His death are perfect and true gifts. The mockery and the pain that Jesus withstood is undeniable. Lord, we must always give You praise, honor, and glory. Thank You for the Cross and thank You for Christ, who gives us another chance to spread the good news of the Gospel.

In the name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

Lesson 4 March 22, 2026
THE NEW COVENANT OF FAITH



Next Sunday
March 29, 2026
Lesson 5
Renewed Health
Luke 7:1-10