

**Mark 15:1-5 (NIV)**

- 1) As we look back, we know that the Sanhedrin had already made its decision to put Jesus to death.
- 2) However, the law said that the decision must be made during the daylight hours so, they waited until after sunup to make it official.
- 3) One commentary noted also that these types of trials, by law, must take place in the temple so they may have reconvened there after sunup.
- 4) To show how hypocritical these men were at this time, the convenient parts of the law, i.e. decision after sunup and trial in the temple were taken care of and carefully observed.
  - a) But, they wanted it done immediately so they ignored the part of the law that said there had to be a full day between a conviction of this type and the actual execution so that new evidence could be brought if available.
  - b) Instead, they immediately take Jesus to Pilate to bring this to a quick end.
- 5) They wanted Jesus executed on a cross which was a method of death that according to Deut 21:23 brought a curse.
  - a) When the Jewish leaders did execute someone illegally (which they have and will do on several occasions) it is by stoning.
- 6) They also wanted to make the Romans responsible for Jesus' execution so that the crowds wouldn't blame them.
- 7) As we know, these guys convicted Jesus on theological grounds — blasphemy.
- 8) But they knew that that charge would be thrown out of a Roman court.
- 9) They had to come up with a political reason for Jesus' death.
- 10) Their strategy was to show Jesus as a rebel who claimed to be a king and thus a threat to Caesar.
- 11) There were other charges but the main charge against Jesus in the Roman court was treason and we see that Pilate focuses on that.
- 12) Pilate was their chosen instrument for accomplishing their end.
- 13) Pilate was in Jerusalem during the Passover to maintain order and keep the peace.
- 14) He was no doubt aware of who Jesus was and all He had done in the city that week, from His triumphal entry to His clearing of the temple.
- 15) The Roman cohort that were present when Jesus was arrested on Friday morning in the garden would not have been dispatched without Pilate's knowledge or permission.
- 16) As we will see, even considering all this, he never believed that Jesus posed a serious political threat, as the Sanhedrin alleged.
- 17) Moving on to verses 6 thru 15 we find ...

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **Mark 15:6-15 (NIV)**

- 1) Only as a matter of completeness, we should mention that, as we see in Luke's account, somewhere in the middle of this interrogation Jesus is sent before Herod Antipas.
  - a) Mention was made that Jesus was a Galilean which meant that he was really under Herod's jurisdiction.
  - b) Pilate was hoping for some help.
  - c) He was hoping that Herod would either take responsibility for the execution or free Jesus.
  - d) As, we know, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate – no actual help given on either account.
- 2) At this point, it has become obvious to Pilate that Jesus is innocent of anything that had to do with an insurrection or his even being a problem for Rome.
  - a) Especially a problem that would warrant death.
- 3) Pilate is now looking for anyway possible to free Jesus and be done with this whole affair.
- 4) This passage opens with what I think is more a description of what Pilate is thinking.
  - a) He knows that at some point here, the crowd will ask for the customary release of a prisoner.
  - b) This was a custom he himself had instituted.
  - c) He is probably thinking that Barabbas would likely not be their top choice.
  - d) So, that is whom he chooses as the alternate when he asks them if they would suggest.  
Matthew states:

### **Matt 27:17 (NIV)**

- 5) The crowd being egged on by the religious leaders of course requested Barabbas instead.
- 6) One commentary brought up an interesting question – where were the disciples and all the other followers of Jesus during this mob scene?
- 7) Likely, they were in hiding, fearing for their lives as well.
- 8) Another alternative might be that they might have been there but, they would have been vastly outnumbered and outshouted.
- 9) If the entire Sanhedrin was there, that would be 70 religious leaders egging on the crowd to ask for Jesus to be crucified and Barabbas to be freed. We don't know the actual size of this crowd – not probably the multitude that welcomed Jesus a few days before.
- 10) Pilate gives in and, frees Barabbas then he asks:  
"What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?"
- 11) The crowd's answer is a resounding "Crucify him!"
- 12) At this point, Pilate basically gives up. As Mark indicates:

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

13) The flogging as you have probably been told in the past is a horrific ordeal in itself.

- a) The instrument is consists of leather strips with bone or metal fragments at the ends.
- b) It is designed to tear away at the flesh – even to the depth of victims bone.
- c) For the Romans, it was customary to flog prisoners who were to be executed on the cross.
  - i) It so weakened them that they would die quicker.

14) During this particular flogging, Jesus is also humiliated and taunted.

Beginning in vs. 16 we read ...

### **Mark 15:16-20 (NIV)**

- 1) Were you ever mocked as a kid? Kids can be exceedingly cruel in what they say to others.
- 2) Here we have grown men doing that same kind of mocking to our Lord.
- 3) The number of men involved here is debatable. Some commentators have the number between 500 and 1000 (size of a company). Others fix the number at 200.
- 4) I personally cannot see 500 to 1000 men involved in this – in fact I think perhaps, 200 may be high.
- 5) Without regard to the actual number, we can know with certainty that there were a lot of men involved in this mocking making the whole act horrific.
- 6) As I contemplated this, I almost think that Jesus was in enough pain that He may not have even heard the mocking and taunts.
  - a) Deep open wounds most likely on His back, sides, and arms.
  - b) Many thorns piercing in His scalp and forehead.
  - c) Being struck in the head – not with their hands but with a staff – not hard enough to knock Him out – just enough to cause more pain.
- 7) Once they had had their “fun” they took the purple robe off him and put his regular outer garments on him and led him away to be crucified.
- 8) Jesus at this point was about as low as any human being could possibly be.
- 9) As they start this trek to Golgotha He was weak from the physical ordeal that began with the flogging, humiliated, and in severe pain,
  - a) He now faces what He knew was an even worse physical ordeal to begin in only a few minutes.

### **Mark 15:21-25 (NIV)**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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1) This section begins with an interesting turn of events – Simon was forced to carry the cross for Jesus because He himself was too physically weak at this point to carry it alone.

2) John MacArthur connects the dots for us on this event:

Mark identifies Simon as the father of Alexander and Rufus, an unexplained reference that indicates Mark's readers were familiar with Simon's sons. Since Mark wrote for Gentile believers in Rome, Alexander and Rufus were almost certainly active in the church there. That conclusion is supported by Paul's mention of Rufus and his mother (Simon's wife) in Romans 16:13. Wondrously, the man who carried Jesus' cross came to embrace Him in saving faith, as did his wife and sons.

3) They offered Jesus myrrh mixed with wine to drink. This was actually a mixture made to dull pain.

4) Jesus refused to take it. He would suffer fully conscious and with a clear mind as He could maintain.

5) Jesus was in all likelihood wearing traditional Jewish garments.

6) They included an inner garment, an outer garment (or tunic), a belt, sandals, and a headpiece.

1) As if this ordeal in itself was not enough, there is more.

2) These next verses highlight the mockery that Jesus endured while hanging on the cross.

### **Mark 15:26-32 (NIV)**

3) We begin with the mockery of the written notice placed on the cross of every crucified criminal.

4) In Jesus' case, the full inscription read "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews".

a) The sign was written in Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek so that anyone passing by could see the crimes that brought an end to the individual.

b) The Jewish leaders did not want this sign to read as it did but Pilate would not change it.

c) That was the charge that they had brought against Him and despite their protests that was the charge for which He was being crucified.

d) This laid the blame squarely on their shoulders – not the desired charge of insurrection that they wanted Him to be crucified for.

e) Remember, the Jewish leaders wanted to cause the crucifixion to be because the Romans found Him guilty of something – thus, the people would blame them and not the Jewish leaders.

5) This ordeal points out clearly that the Roman way of "justice" was not anything like what we enjoy in America today.

6) One person, Pilate, could be forced into sentencing someone to death with no court, no attorneys, no appeals – simply a pronouncement of "crucify Him".

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 7) Along side Jesus were two robbers, common thieves who may have even been involved with the same insurrection that Barabbas was accused of leading.
- 8) Here again, we run into one of those verses that may or may not be in your translation – verse 28 says

“that the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “and He was numbered with transgressors”.

- a) This phrase was not in the earliest and best manuscripts.
  - b) Copyists could have added it from Luke 22:37
  - c) Regardless of how it got into Mark’s gospel, it has been deemed added so it is either removed or in brackets in most modern translations.
- 9) I find it interesting that Mark reports at the end of verse 32 that these two men (at least one of them) also “hurled insults at Him”
  - 10) Another very interesting thing can be seen indirectly from the insult that Mark reports in verse 29.

"So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 come down from the cross and save yourself!"

- a) Nowhere in Mark’s gospel does he report the incident that these passers-by are referring to.
- b) Peter would obviously have known of it, but Mark’s complete readership (the church at Rome) could only have learned of it from John’s gospel.

### **John 2:15-19 (NIV)**

- 11) Finally, Mark reports at least some of the insults of the religious leaders.
- 12) They were there I guess to see this thru to the bitter end. They wanted to make sure that this problem was finally taken care of.
- 13) It is interesting also to see that this is an attempt by their mocking to discredit the sign the Pilate would not change declaring Jesus the king of the Jews.
- 14) They say:

"He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! 32 Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe."

- 1) Interestingly, this next passage, MacArthur titles “God Visits Calvary”... see if you agree with his assessment.

### **Mark 15:33-41 (NIV)**

- 2) The hour is now noon – the beginning of the end so to speak.
- 3) Jesus has been on the cross now for 3 hours – 3 hours of agony, insults, and humiliation.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 4) For the next 3 hours, darkness falls over the entire land.
- 5) Normally, death by crucifixion was very slow – it would take as much as 3 days for some men to die.
- 6) Some have attributed the darkness during this three hours to a total eclipse.
  - a) Problems with that are many.
  - b) One is simply that though a “normal” total eclipse can last up to 3 hours, the actual darkness only last for a few minutes at the longest.
- 7) We do not know the exact timing – i.e. which came first, Jesus’ out cry to God or the darkness ending but they did occur at the same time.
- 8) The word Eloi sounds much like the word for Elijah – thus the misunderstanding of those who were watching.
- 9) Jesus breathed His last.
- 10) The loud cry that Mark records could have been the words that John records in John 19:30 – “it is finished”**
- 11) Another interesting and very relevant fact here is that Jesus unlike most who were crucified remained conscious and fully in charge of his faculties thru the entire ordeal.
- 12) Most lapse into a coma and die of suffocation and/or exhaustion.
- 13) Finally, with His out cry and death the temple veil is torn in two.
- 14) This is a very significant part of this event.
- 15) The temple had three main parts — the courts, the holy place (where only the priests could enter), and the most holy place, a place reserved by God for himself.
  - a) It was in the most holy place that the ark of the covenant, and God's presence with it, rested.
  - b) The curtain of the temple could be the outer curtain hanging between the court with the altar for burnt offerings and the actual sanctuary.
  - c) Or it could be the curtain hanging between the two areas of the sanctuary — that is, between the holy place and the most holy place also called the Holy of Holies
  - d) Most likely, the curtain that was torn was between the holy place and the most holy place.
  - e) Symbolically, this curtain separated the holy God from sinful people.
- 16) By tearing the curtain in two, God showed that Christ had opened the way for sinful people to reach a holy God.
- 17) The exact time of the death of the Lord Jesus was accompanied by two additional miracles:
  - a) A powerful earthquake followed by a preview of the resurrection.
  - b) Both are recorded in the gospel of Matthew.

**Matt. 27:51 (NIV)**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 18) Mark records no more jeers or insults – only the simple recognition by a lone centurion that by these events Jesus was undoubtedly “the Son of God”.
- 19) He concludes his narrative of the event by naming some of the women who stood by Jesus until the very end.
  - a) He mentions that Mary Magdalene was there.
  - b) Another Mary is distinguished from Mary Magdalene and Mary, Jesus' mother by the names of her sons who may have been well known in the early church.
  - c) Salome was the mother of the disciples James and John and was probably Jesus' mother's sister.
  - d) And of course, we also know that Mary the mother of Jesus was there.
- 20) Only the disciple John is mentioned in scripture as being there during the crucifixion.
- 21) The disciples had all made great promises of loyalty to Jesus but, as far as we know, save John, none were to be found at this horrible scene.
- 22) It was the women who were among Jesus’ followers who waited at cross and went to the tomb.

### **Mark 15:42-47 (NIV)**

- 1) Mark only records that Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body.
- 2) However, Nicodemus was also involved.
- 3) It is interesting to note also that the Jewish leaders were also involved – not in the burial but in assuring that Jesus and the other two men crucified with him were dead.
- 4) Though they had for all intents and purposes just committed murder by Pilate’s hand, they were concerned about the rules that the bodies not be left on the crosses overnight into the Sabbath.
- 5) By the leaders making their request, they became instruments of God’s plan.
  - a) They were responsible for the fulfillment of prophecies
    - i) That Jesus’ bones would not be broken and that He would be pierced.
    - ii) They were also responsible for assuring that Jesus was dead since the Romans would not remove the bodies from the cross without first assuring that they were dead.
      - (1) Breaking legs to assure suffocation.
- 6) It is under these circumstances that Joseph requests the body of Jesus.
- 7) In doing this, both he and Nicodemus were totally exposed as followers of Christ and would of course be in conflict with the rest of the Sanhedrin.
- 8) After being assured by the Centurion that Jesus was dead, Joseph’s wish was granted.
- 9) He then takes the body and places it in his own tomb.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 10) The two Mary's who had been at the crucifixion and stayed to the end either watched where Joseph placed Jesus' body or perhaps they were even involved in the burial process.
- 11) In either case, Mark mentions this so that his audience would know that they knew where the body was in order for them to accomplish what comes next.

### **Mark 16:1-8 (NIV)**

- 1) We are now at the point of the first discovery of Jesus' resurrection.
- 2) These women who had stood at the cross for many hours and watched as their beloved teacher's body was removed from that cross and placed in a tomb are now on their way to take care of His body as required.
- 3) The disciples had all deserted Jesus and were basically in hiding in Jerusalem.
- 4) The women were alone and really had two concerns.
  - a) One stated here was that of rolling away the stone.
  - b) The other (not spoken here) was that of the guards that had been posted.
  - c) It could be that these guards would not allow them entry for fear they might steal the body.
- 5) Turns out neither of these were a problem.
  - a) The guards are not mentioned but the stone, was, to their surprise, already removed from the tomb.
- 6) Having seen the stone rolled away, they were likely cautious as they entered.
- 7) And then, the next surprise – the body was not there and, there was a young man dressed in white sitting to the right.
- 8) Of course, they became alarmed – who wouldn't at this turn of events.
- 9) Next the angel speaks to them:

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

“The words He has risen are literally "He is raised." God raised Jesus from the dead. The Resurrection was not an act of Jesus' power, but a vindication of Jesus' divinity.”

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- 10) John records that the linen cloths that had been wrapped around Jesus' body were left as if Jesus had passed right through them.
- 11) The handkerchief was still rolled up in the shape of a head, and it was at about the right distance from the wrappings that had enveloped Jesus' body (John 20:6-7).



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 12) A grave robber couldn't possibly have made off with Jesus' body and left the linens as if they were still shaped around it. The best explanation was that Jesus had risen from the dead, just as he had said he would.
- 13) Additionally, angel's words held hope of renewal and forgiveness for the disciples.
- 14) They were invited to meet Jesus in Galilee — there was work to do.
- 15) The angel made special mention of Peter to show that, in spite of Peter's denials, Jesus had not disowned and deserted him.
- 16) Peter had wept bitterly after his denials (14:72). Jesus forgave Peter and still considered him to be one of his disciples.
- 17) Besides, Jesus had great responsibilities for Peter to fulfill in the church which was not yet born.
- 18) Getting to vs. 8 is a vital point in our study.

8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

- 19) This is not unusual for Mark to show this type of reaction to exceeding fear. For a typical example we need only to look at Mark 4:41 and 9:30.

Mark 4:40-41 (NIV)

Mark 9:30-32 (NIV)

- 20) Fear is an appropriate response to divine power. These women have absolutely observed divine power here.
- 21) An angel of God has told them the news of a risen Savior and they are witnessing for themselves the empty tomb.

### ***Verses 9-20 and a Few Comment on Multiple endings:***

- 1) If you have perhaps looked at the footnotes for this chapter in your bibles, you may be aware that verse 8 is most likely the last verse of Mark's original writing.
- 2) Though all the translations that I could find do have verses 9 thru 20, [The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.]
- 3) Most scholars believe that verses 9 to 20 were added sometime in the second century or later.
- 4) The testimony of the early church fathers also indicates that these verses were not part of the original text of Mark's Gospel.
- 5) The section seems to have been added to give this Gospel, what some consider, a more suitable ending.
- 6) Thus, most modern translations note that these verses are absent from our earliest manuscripts but include them anyway.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **Mark 16:9-20 (NIV)**

- 7) Some have proposed that the original ending was somehow lost.
  - a) This is highly unlikely in that Mark's original writing (based on estimated dates) would have been on a scroll.
  - b) Scrolls were rolled with the first words of the writing on the outside so that the end would have been much more protected than the beginning.
- 8) What we just read is the most well-known ending and is what appears in our English Bibles, as printed in 16:9-20
- 9) In some ancient versions, another shorter ending, placed after 16:8, is as follows:

And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

10) In another ancient manuscript, there is an expansion after 16:14, which reads,

And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now" — thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The term of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven" (from NRSV margin).

There are other endings, some which combine both the longer ending (16:9-20) and the shorter ending noted above.

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- 11) This ending problem is a debate among scholars that has been going on for the past 150 years.
- 12) If you wish to research this further, there are many books and papers which have been written on the subject.
  - a) One that I read which was interesting and shows clearly the various views is "Perspectives on the Ending of Mark – 4 Views" David Alan Black (editor), Darrell Bock, Keith Elliot, Maurice Robinson, and Daniel Wallace.
  - b) Very interesting but somewhat deep in places.
- 13) I personally believe that Mark's original ending was concluded with verse 8.
- 14) To that end, there are some dots that I would like to connect. I think these are plausible if not absolute.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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15) First, one of the criticisms of Mark's original ending is that it does not address or show the risen Lord.

- a) I personally disagree – the Mary's are told by an angel of God that Jesus has been raised and that 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'
- b) That to me is proof enough even if there were no further knowledge that Christ was raised from the dead.
  - i) Of course, we know thru the other gospels of His appearances and ascension.
- c) An angel of God, an empty tomb, the burial cloths that they likely helped place on His body – all in plain view – what more would one need.

16) Second, regarding the women not saying anything to anyone.

- a) I do NOT believe this means they did not tell the disciples.
- b) I do believe that it means they did not generally speak of the incident to everyone they met.
- c) It also probably indicates that they did not say anything to the guards they were present at the tomb.

17) In short, given Mark's style and these factors I see no reason to doubt this ending.

18) There obviously is a great deal more that could and has been said about this and all the varied opinions as to how we got to this point.

19) These are some closing comments from *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark*:

Mark ended at 16:8 with an open ended attempt to say to listeners that once the message is heard, it becomes the hour of decision. Mark's ending matches the circumstances of his readers: the Resurrection is proclaimed and the only remaining issue is what will the one who hears about the Resurrection do with a risen Jesus. Mark's ending assumes that the women did emerge from their silence and fear to believe and proclaim. That is precisely where Mark wants his readers to go, even in a context like Mark's where suffering for such a decision can be anticipated. Behind this call stands the promise embodied in the Word and the action of God. We can embrace them.

Whatever view one has on this issue, there is no central teaching of the Christian faith at stake in which view is chosen. Obviously, if the Long Ending is taken as original, then everything presented there is taught.

Robinson, Maurice; Bock, Darrell L.; Elliott, Keith; Wallace, Daniel. *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark* (Kindle Locations 3367-3369). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.