

Mark Chapter 15 Second Continued

Mark 15:36 "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 Elijah will come to take him down."

“Vinegar” meaning a sour wine. Cheap wine commonly consumed by soldiers and workers. It may have been an act of mercy, or merely intended to prolong His suffering.

“Reed”: A hyssop branch (John 19:29).

The thought in offering drink was to prolong consciousness in case “Elijah” was about to appear.

In the last lesson, Jesus had cried out to the Father, and those standing around thought He was calling out to Elijah.

Mark 15:37 "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost."

“With a loud voice”: Demonstrating amazing strength in light of the intense suffering He had endured. His shout reveals that His life did not slowly ebb away, but that He voluntarily gave it up (John 10:17-18). For the words of Christ’s cry (see Luke 23:46).

This showed that the act of giving up the ghost was of Jesus' free will. This loud voice indicated His power was still there to do as He would. The six hours of work on the cross was over. He had accomplished what He had set out to do.

Mark 15:38 "And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."

“The veil of the temple was rent in twain”: The massive curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the sanctuary (Exodus 26:31-33; 40:20-21; Lev. 16:2; Heb. 9:3). This rending signified that the way into God’s presence was open by the death of His Son.

The temple “veil” hung between the Holy of Holies (the sanctuary of God’s very presence), and the rest of the temple. It was a somber reminder of the separation between God and man. Tearing of the veil indicates that Christ’s death makes possible free access for sinners to the holy and almighty God.

Here we see the curtain, which closed the way to God the Father, was now opened. It was not opened by man (from the earth), but by the Lord of all the heavenly. It was torn from the top; showing that God did it. Now, the way to the Father was open to man. No mere man could go to the Father before, but now the way was opened by the Son.

Mark 15:39 "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."

“Centurion”: The Roman officer in charge of the crucifixion. Centurions, considered the backbone of the Roman army, commanded 100 soldiers.

“Saw that he so cried out”: The centurion had seen many crucified victims die, but none like Jesus. The strength He possessed at His death, as evidenced by His loud cry (verse 37), was unheard of for a victim of crucifixion.

That, coupled with the earthquake that coincided with Christ’s death (Matt. 27:51-54), convinced the centurion that Jesus “was the Son of God.” According to tradition, this man actually became a believer (see note on Matt. 27:54).

The fact that Jesus dismissed His Spirit from His body tells you He was in total control. This is more fully described (in Luke 23:46):

Luke 23:46 "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

Jesus you see, commanded His Spirit to go to the Father, dismissing His Spirit from His body. This centurion had been at many crucifixions and knew this one was different. He was convinced by the happenings that Jesus truly was the Son of God.

Mark 15:40 "There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;"

Some of these women had earlier been at the foot of the cross (John 19:25-27). By then, unable to watch Jesus’ suffering at such close range, they were “looking on from a distance.” Their sympathetic loyalty was in sharp contrast to the disciples who, except for John, were nowhere to be found.

“Mary Magdalene”: She was from the village of Magdala, on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee, hence her name. Luke notes that Jesus had cast 7 demons out of her (Luke 8:2). She is usually named first when the women who followed Jesus are listed, which may suggest that she was their leader.

“Mother of James the less and of Joses”: She is distinguished from the other Marys’ by the name of her sons. “James the Less” (called “James the son of Alphaeus” in Matt. 10:3), was one of the twelve.

“Salome”: The wife of Zebedee (Matt. 27:56), and the mother of James and John (see note on 10:35).

Mention of these “women” is significant, for they serve as eyewitnesses to the death, burial and Resurrection (see 15:47; 16:1).

Mark 15:41 "(Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem."

“Many other women”: They had been with Jesus since the days of His Galilean ministry, traveling with Him and the disciples, caring for their needs (Luke 8:2-3).

We see that the women (even in the face of these self-righteous religious people), had not abandoned Jesus. Jesus' ministry involved these women. Mary Magdalene had been delivered by Jesus of seven devils. These women never doubted who this was. It is very sad, but even today the larger percentage of the church is made up of devoted women.

Most churches have three women for every man. Perhaps, the women were not in as much danger as the men being close by. We do not know the details; we just know they were there. John was there also, and brought the account.

Mark 15:42 "And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,"

“Preparation ... day”: Friday, the day before the Sabbath (Saturday).

Mark 15:43 "Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus."

“Joseph of Arimathea”: “Arimathea,” known in the Old Testament as Ramah, or Ramathaim-zophim (the birthplace of Samuel, 1 Sam. 1:1, 19; 2:11), was located about 15-20 miles northwest of Jerusalem. Joseph was a prominent member of the “council” (or the Sanhedrin, see note on 14:43), who had opposed Jesus’ condemnation (Luke 23:51).

“Kingdom of God” (see note on 1:15).

“Went in boldly”: Pilate would not likely have been pleased to see a member of the Sanhedrin, after that group had forced him to crucify an innocent man. Further, Joseph’s public identification with Jesus would enrage the other members of the Sanhedrin.

“And craved the body of Jesus”: Though prisoners sentenced to death forfeited the right to burial under Roman law, their bodies were usually granted to relatives who asked for them, but Jesus’ mother was emotionally exhausted from the ordeal.

There is no evidence that His brothers and sisters were in Jerusalem and His closest friends, the disciples, had fled (except for John, who had Mary to take care of; John 19:26-27). In the absence of those closest to Jesus, Joseph courageously asked Pilate for Jesus’ body.

“Craved” means requested.

“Arimathea,” Joseph’s birthplace, was about 20 miles northwest of Jerusalem.

“Joseph” was a member of the Sanhedrin, and asking for the body of one convicted of treason or sedition was a daring step of devotion to an unpopular figure. Such criminals were normally left to the elements and carrion birds.

The Sabbath began at 6 p.m., so the body had to be taken care of quickly. About 3 p.m., Jesus gave up the ghost. This left three hours for getting the body wrapped and in the tomb before Sabbath. This was Friday, not Wednesday, as many would have you believe.

Sabbath is Saturday, the day before is Friday. Matthew tells us a little more about Joseph of Arimathea. It says that he was a rich man, and also a disciple of Jesus. Perhaps, he was of the 120 disciples. We know he had a cave that had not been used for burial. This was where he would lay Jesus.

Joseph loved Christ enough to expose himself to the danger of association with Him, just to be able to bury His body. Possibly he was known of Pilate, but at any rate, he was allowed to see Pilate and ask for the body. Remember, Pilate found no fault in Jesus.

Mark 15:44 "And Pilate marveled if he were already dead: and calling [unto him] the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead."

“Pilate marveled”: Victims of crucifixion often lingered for days, hence Pilate’s surprise that Jesus was dead after only 6 hours. Before granting Jesus’ body to Joseph, Pilate checked with the “centurion” in charge of the crucifixion (see note on verse 39), to verify that Jesus was really dead.

This was a very unusual turn of events. Most crucifixions were long and drawn out. Many times the legs of the victims had to be broken to hasten death. This was not the case with Jesus. He had no broken bones. The perfect Lamb sacrifice could have no broken bones. In John, we read a little more detail about their not breaking His legs.

John 19:31-34 "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and [that] they might be taken away." "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him." "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:" "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

Every little detail of prophecy was fulfilled. Jesus is our Lamb Sacrifice. The centurion could only say, "Yes, He is dead" when Pilate asked.

Mark 15:45 "And when he knew [it] of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph."

“He gave the body to Joseph”: Having received confirmation from the centurion that Jesus was dead, Pilate granted Jesus’ body to Joseph. By that act the Romans officially pronounced Jesus dead.

Hebrews do not embalm, embalming is an Egyptian custom, so Jesus was wrapped in fine linen and carried to the tomb, as we read (in verse 46).

Mark 15:46 "And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulcher which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulcher."

“Wrapped him in the linen”: The Jews did not embalm corpses, but wrapped them in perfumed burial cloths (see note on 16:1). Nicodemus, another prominent member of the Sanhedrin (John 7:50), assisted Joseph in caring for the body of Jesus (John 19:39-40). These men, who had kept their allegiance to Jesus secret during His lifetime, then came forward publicly to bury Him, while the disciples, who had openly followed Jesus, hid (John 20:19).

“Sepulcher ... hewn out of a rock”: This “tomb” was located near Golgotha (John 19:42). Matthew adds that It was Joseph’s own (Matt. 27:60), while Luke and John note that no one as yet, had been buried in it (Luke 23:53; John 19:41).

We see that Joseph loved Jesus, possibly, even helped with the wrapping and carrying of the body personally. At any rate, Jesus was put in a brand new tomb which had belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. This had been hewn out of a rock, and Jesus was laid inside, and a large stone rolled over the door. This fulfilled the Scripture which stated He would be buried with the rich.

Mark 15:47 "And Mary Magdalene and Mary [the mother] of Joses beheld where he was laid."

The women had still been at the cross when Joseph came and got the body, and they followed, and saw where the body was laid. The spices or perfumes would be applied to the burial cloths later.

I say one more time that Hebrews were not embalmed, as that was an Egyptian practice. Hebrews today are buried within 24 hours so embalming is not necessary.

Mark Chapter 15 Second Continued Questions

1. What did Jesus do, right before He gave up the Ghost?
2. What did that show us and the centurion?
3. How many hours was the suffering on the cross?
4. How was the temple veil torn?
5. What does this show?
6. When the centurion saw all of this, what did he say?
7. In Luke 23:46, what do we learn about Jesus' death on the cross?

8. Who were the loyal followers of Jesus who stood nearby?
9. What is a sad thing in our churches today regarding women?
10. Who was Mary Magdalene?
11. What disciple had been at the crucifixion?
12. What was the hurry to get the body off the cross and buried?
13. Who came for the body?
14. Who did he ask for it?
15. How many hours were left for the burying before the Sabbath?
16. What day of the week was Jesus crucified?
17. In verse 42, what left no doubt as to the day?
18. Who was Joseph of Arimathea?
19. What did Pilate marvel at?
20. What sometimes had to be done to hurry death?
21. Were Jesus' legs broken? Why?
22. When the soldier pierced Jesus side, what two things came out?
23. When did Pilate release Jesus' body to Joseph?
24. What was Jesus wrapped in?
25. What does the material symbolize?
26. After Jesus was placed in the rock hewn tomb, what was done to secure the tomb?
27. What country does embalming come from?
28. Was Jesus embalmed?
29. What two women beheld where He lay?