



**UNIT 9 LESSON 10**  
**MARK Chapters 15,16**

**THE CLIMAX OF THE GOSPEL.**

**1. TRIAL OF JESUS. Mark 15:1-20.**

In this final lesson we cover the conclusion of the trial of Jesus, his death and resurrection.

If you look for the overall emphasis of the account in Mark's Gospel you will notice that the following are the main points that emerge:

- 1) The Roman authorities have no particular quarrel with Jesus.
- 2) The chief responsibility lies with the Jews.
- 3) The silence of Jesus is notable, yet it accords with prophecy that Jesus had to die.
- 4) Jesus died especially as Messiah, the King of the Jews.

In verse 2 the Council charges Jesus with claiming to be "King of the Jews". They had framed this charge with its political flavour, since a claim to Messiahship would be meaningless to Pilate. The Roman Ruler's authority was necessary for the death sentence.

Pilate normally resided in Caesarea but came to Jerusalem for the passover season to ensure order when national feeling ran high. Mark's account here does not hide the deplorable weakness of the man but, at the same time, seems designed to exonerate him as far as possible and to place the ultimate responsibility for the crucifixion upon the Jews.

**2. THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF JESUS. Mark 15:21-41.**

- a) In all the gospels the actual crucifixion is narrated in the most straightforward manner and with marked restraint. Our Lord's physical sufferings are not dwelt upon, for nothing is gained by gruesomeness. Moreover the physical pain was only secondary to the bitter desolation of spirit which he experienced because of sin. The most surprising thing about the death of Jesus was how quickly it occurred. Many men would hang on a cross for days on end. The agony was pitiful. In Jesus' case, it was but a few hours. The reason for this is that his death was not the result of natural causes or of exhaustion. It was a voluntary act and therefore unique. Before any natural cause became fatal, and at the moment of his own choosing, he delivered up his own spirit, so that Pilate marvelled that he was already dead (v. 44).
- b) While we may take the cry (v.34) as one of despair at the desolation of death, we must account for the change in wording in Luke 23:46 and John 19:30. The words as they stand are hard to understand - can God forsake Jesus?

Commentators see a positive association here with Psalm 22, from which these words are taken. Far from being a lamentation, this Psalm is a prayer of commitment (cf.



Luke 23:46) - a cry of faith in spite of the prospect of death. (N.B. - it is understood in most cases where an O.T. quotation is made in the N.T. that not just the specific passage is quoted but the whole context is understood. Hence, we are not to understand merely a cry of dereliction here, but the whole confident Psalm.)

### 3. VERSE 33.

All the Synoptic Gospels record the darkness from noon until 3.00p.m. Though brought about by natural causes, the timing of it was clearly supernatural. It could not have been the darkness of a solar eclipse for, as Origen pointed out, it was full moon.

### 4. THE BURIAL OF JESUS. Mark 15:42-47.

Some scholars think that as a sympathizer with Jesus, Joseph may not have been summoned to the illegal night trial at the high priest's house. Nevertheless there is a strong possibility that he was there and at a later date he revealed the events of the night to the other disciples. If the latter idea is true Joseph has certainly changed from one of those present in 14:53-65 to the Joseph we see in 15:42-46. Since the Sabbath began at sundown on Friday and work was then forbidden, there was urgency in Joseph's work.

### 5. THE RESURRECTION. Mark Chapter 16.

In all the great early manuscripts available to scholars the Gospel of Mark ends at 16:8. It is obvious however that the story is not over and the most plausible explanation is that the original ending of this account was lost. Verses 9-20 appear to be composed of material mostly available in the rest of the New Testament. Read Luke 24 for a fuller view of the resurrection.

The resurrection itself was an event of the utmost importance. The Early Church came into being because there was a resurrection, for if there had not been one, then nothing more would have been heard of the whole affair.

We are not in a position to know exactly what happened. We can look at all the details recorded in the Gospels and Acts and 1 Corinthians 15, but we still have the impression that we don't know exactly what happened. Once again, the record is in terms of preaching, rather than documentary.

Many have called the resurrection God's seal of approval on all that Jesus said and claimed and did. The fact that the Lord Jesus is risen from the dead becomes the major theme of the early church's message in the book of Acts.

In verse 7 the Angel gives the women a message for the disciples "including Peter". These words about Peter are only found in Mark's Gospel and are one of the evidences of the connection between this Gospel and Peter. Peter would cherish the fact that, despite his grievous fall, his risen Lord showed special remembrance of him.

### 6. CONCLUSION: Mark 16:19-20.

From one point of view our Lord's work on earth, of which this Gospel is a record, is finished "He sat at the right side of God". From another point of view it is to continue through the church which is his mystical body: "they went and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them". And so the



Gospel which pre-eminently sets forth the power and activity of the Son of God on earth closes with the revelation of the unfinished task of the church on earth. That task still awaits completion, but the same Lord still works with those who obey his command.

### **QUESTION 1:**

Mark 15:6-15 What custom has been established which gives Pilate an opportunity to mollify the crowds? How does Pilate hope to use this custom to his own advantage? How do you know he is not blind to the true issues in the situation?

### **QUESTION 2:**

How are the words of Jesus in Mark 10:33,34 fulfilled in verses 16-20? What has Jesus already suffered?

### **QUESTION 3:**

What specific details does Mark mention in connection with the crucifixion? What is their significance? The offer in Mark 15:23 was an act of mercy. Drugged wine would ease the pain. Why does Jesus refuse it?

### **QUESTION 4:**

Mark 15:42-47. What do you know about Joseph? What surprises Pilate? What specific things does Joseph do and who observes his activities?

### **QUESTION 5:**

Mark 16:1-8. Who are the women going to the tomb? What do they see and learn at the tomb? Why should they not be amazed? Compare with 14:28. How do they react?

### **QUESTION FOR GROUP STUDY:**

What record of the bodily resurrection of Jesus is given in this Chapter? What difference did it make to his disciples? What practical difference does his resurrection make to you today?