

MARK CHAPTER 15– Jesus Faces Pilate; Taking the Place of Barabbas; The Soldiers Mock Jesus; The King on a Cross; Jesus Dies on the Cross; Jesus Buried in Joseph’s Tomb

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – **Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221**; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Jesus Faces Pilate;

Mar 15:1 Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.

Mar 15:2 Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered and said to him, "It is as you say."

Mar 15:3 And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing.

Mar 15:4 Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!"

Mar 15:5 But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.

Taking the Place of Barabbas;

Mar 15:6 Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested.

Mar 15:7 And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.

Mar 15:8 Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask him to do just as he had always done for them.

Mar 15:9 But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

Mar 15:10 For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

Mar 15:11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

Mar 15:12 Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?"

Mar 15:13 So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

Mar 15:14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

Mar 15:15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.

v. 1 Jesus was bound not by puny ropes, **but by cords of love**. As Creator of the ropes, He could have burst them easily. As the Lamb of God, He chose to be bound by them willingly.

v. 2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, You said it. Pilate, the sixth Roman governor in this region, was in political trouble. He had already made the mistake of allowing a picture of Caesar to be placed on the temple mount, causing the Jews to riot. His second mistake was financing an aqueduct with funds from the temple treasury, again resulting in a riot. Thus, after two riots in which a number of people had been killed, Pilate was warned by Rome that one bad report and he'd be out. Jesus went through two trials—one before Caiaphas and a second before Pilate and Herod. Due to His claim of deity, the Jews accused Him of being too heavenly, while Herod, thinking He wanted to lead a coup politically, accused Him of being too earthly. Throughout history, the church has gone through this same two-fold trial—and so will you. People will accuse you of being too heavenly, while, at the same time, another group will accuse you of being too worldly. You'll get hit both ways—and when you do, realize Jesus did as well.

v. 3 In Jesus is an oasis of tranquility in a sea of controversy. To any who truly wanted information, Jesus would answer willingly (Mark 14:62). But to those who hurled accusation, He answered not a word. And therein lies a good principle. If someone wants information, we should share freely and openly. But **if they only want to accuse us, we need not defend ourselves**.

vs. 4-7 “Barabbas” means “son of Abba,” or an Israelite. The parallel is obvious. **Barabbas**, a son of Abba, **had taken a life**, while **Jesus**, the only begotten Son of Abba **had come to give His life**.

vs. 8-10 Any crusade to crucify **usually has its roots in envy or jealousy**. Even Pilate knew this.

vs. 11-15 Jesus was scourged not because the Father in heaven was allowing sadistic pain to be placed upon His beloved Son, but because, as Isaiah tells us, **although it is by the Cross we are saved, it is by His stripes that we are healed** (Isaiah 53:5).

What does history tell us about Pontius Pilate?

- Pontius Pilate was a prefect of Rome and governor of Judea from about 26-36 AD. Despite being identified in the Bible, his existence was not accepted by secular historians **until 1961 when a limestone inscription was found bearing his name** and relating him to the reign of Tiberius who was Caesar from 14-37 AD. At the time of Jesus' crucifixion, Pilate had already gotten into trouble with Rome, having already been involved in 3 riots.
- The first was occurred early in his term in a confrontation described by the historian Josephus. Apparently a new cohort of guards was assigned to Jerusalem, bearing a standard of undefined design that was sacrilegious to the Jews, who then rebelled.
- The second was when Pilate was less understanding during the events surrounding the building of the Jerusalem aqueduct. Apparently he abused temple money for the building of the Jerusalem aqueduct. The people rioted and many were killed.
- The third event was his putting Roman shields with insignias that the Jews considered to be sacrilegious.
- **Pilate's end of life** - Eusebius reported that Pontius Pilate **committed suicide during the reign of Caius or Emperor Caligula**. Eusebius records: It is worthy of note that Pilate himself, who was governor in the time of our Savior, is reported to have fallen into such misfortunes under Caius, whose times we are recording, that he was forced to become his own murderer and executioner; and thus divine vengeance, as it seems, was not long in overtaking him.

Joh 18:28-37 *Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they **themselves did not go into the Praetorium**, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. [29] Pilate **then went out to them** and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" [30] They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you." [31] Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death," yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" [35] Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"*

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

The Soldiers Mock Jesus;

*Mar 15:16 Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison.
Mar 15:17 And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head,
Mar 15:18 and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"
Mar 15:19 Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him.
Mar 15:20 And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.*

The King on a Cross;

Mar 15:21 Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.

*Mar 15:22 And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.
Mar 15:23 Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it.
Mar 15:24 And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take.
Mar 15:25 Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.
Mar 15:26 And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS.
Mar 15:27 With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left.
Mar 15:28 So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS."
Mar 15:29 And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days,
Mar 15:30 save Yourself, and come down from the cross!"*

vs. 16-20 Jesus was led out of the city because the scapegoat—the one who bore the sins of the people in Old Testament typology—was always led out of the city (*Leviticus 16:10*).

v. 21 Simon had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, and as he approached the procession toward Golgotha, he was tapped on the shoulder with the flat side of the spear of a Roman soldier and ordered to take up the Cross of the One before him who was no longer able to bear its weight on His lacerated and bruised shoulders. Jesus does not bear the Cross for two reasons... It was not His Cross. It was mine. I am the one who deserves to go to hell. Secondly, He’s showing us that taking up our cross doesn’t mean gritting our teeth and being miserable. **It means letting the Cross do to us exactly what it did to Him when it caused Him to fall on His knees and allow another to bear it.** ...the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. Simon is identified as the father of Alexander and Rufus because they would have been known as key members of the early church—which means that at some point after bearing Jesus’ Cross, Simon got saved.

vs. 22-24 Because clothing identifies one’s culture perhaps more readily than any other single feature, in being stripped of every article of clothing, pinned to the wooden Cross of Calvary in naked humanity, Jesus shed every identifying mark of any single culture, **thereby becoming the Savior for all the world.**

vs. 25-30 Come down from the Cross” is still being heard today as the world continues to clamor for a Cross-less Christ. “Jesus is cool,” they say. “He was a good teacher, a good example, a good moral leader. **But don’t talk to me about the Cross. It’s too bloody.**”

[36] *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."* [37] *Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."* [38] *Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, **he went out again** to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.*

v. 21 Simon, a Cyrenian – Think what it must have been like for Simon: To be compelled by a touch of a Roman sword or spear to carry Jesus’ cross! Why? I’ll be defiled from the blood; won’t be able to attend the Passover feast! What would Simon think at every Passover after that? Would you have carried the cross? Then look back later and **see the wonderful blessing from that experience, that privilege?** If I was there! **There is enough cross to go around! How are you carrying it today?** When in an argument with another? When very tired and asked to serve? When someone who is broken wants to talk, talk, talk?

Mar 8:34 *When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

Mar 10:21 *Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."*

It means letting the Cross do to us exactly what it did to Him when it caused Him to fall on His knees and allow another to bear it.

What would you have done with your clothes that were all bloodied from Jesus’ blood?

v. 26 YHVH? One suggested reconstruction is מלך הנצרי ישוע היהודים (*Yeshua HaNazri Melekh HaYehudim*), but this presupposes that the Hebrew rendition was “**Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews**” which cannot be known with any reasonable degree of certainty.

In Latin - **INRI** stems from the Latin phrase **Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum** meaning ‘*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*’. This was the notice Pontius Pilate nailed over Jesus as he lay dying on the cross.

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Mar 15:31 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save.

Mar 15:32 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.

Jesus Dies on the Cross;

Mar 15:33 Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Mar 15:34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

Mar 15:35 Some of those who stood by, when they heard that, said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!"

Mar 15:36 Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink, saying, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down."

INTERPRETATION

v. 31 The fact that Jesus had indeed saved others was undeniable—for in their midst were lepers who had been cleansed, blind men who could now see, lame men who were now walking. The chief priests were right when they said He saved others. And they were equally right when they said, **“Himself He cannot save”—for if He had come down off the Cross, He could not have saved me.**
v. 32-33 “If I can see it, I’ll believe it,” said the skeptics. But the way of the Lord is always if you believe it, then you’ll be able to see it. *the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.* For three hours, there was complete, total darkness. Why? Think back to Exodus. What happened before the Passover lamb was killed? The entire land was covered with darkness for three days (Exodus 10:21, 22), symbolizing the darkness that would descend as the Lamb of God was slain. **Because they had no desire to see spiritually, men became unable to see physically what was really taking place on the Cross of Calvary.**

v. 34 I believe Jesus’ cry is kept in the original Aramaic, His native tongue on earth, in order to show the intensity of His cry. Leprosy didn’t intimidate Him; storms didn’t frighten Him; armies didn’t faze Him. **The only thing that terrified our Lord was being out of fellowship with His Father.** And when He who knew no sin became sin for us, that is exactly what happened. Because we have grown accustomed to being out of touch with God, the things that terrify us are bounced checks, not getting the promotion, or a boyfriend or girlfriend breaking up with us. **Jesus, on the other hand, had faith concerning that that frightens us, yet was terrorized by that which we barely notice.**

v. 35 Had those at the Cross been perceptive, they would have recognized Jesus’ words as the beginning of Psalm 22, a Messianic Psalm describing crucifixion in great detail centuries before it was ever conceived as capital punishment. Instead, some in the crowd thought He was calling for Elijah.

v. 36 Because vinegar was used as a drug to numb some of the pain, was this done out of compassion? No. It **was done out of curiosity**—to sustain Jesus’ life long enough to see if Elijah would indeed come

APPLICATION

JESUS PAID IT ALL – Elvina Hall; sung by Joslin Choral Society

I hear the Savior say, “Thy strength indeed is small;
Child of weakness, watch and pray, Find in Me thine all in all.”

*Refrain - Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.*

Lord, now indeed I find Thy power and Thine alone,
Can change the leper’s spots And melt the heart of stone.
Refrain

And when before the throne I stand in Him complete,
“Jesus died my soul to save,” My lips shall still repeat.
*Refrain - Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.
He washed it white as snow.*

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Jesus Heals a Deaf Mute

Mar 15:37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

Mar 15:38 Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Mar 15:39 So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

v. 37 Jesus’ cry was comprised of the three greatest words spoken in the history of humanity: **“It Is Finished.”** From the day of His birth until the day He died, the Enemy came against Jesus relentlessly, trying to derail Him, to destroy Him, to keep Him from providing salvation. But the Enemy failed when Jesus finished the work of redemption on Calvary. **Thus, His was a cry not of agony, but of victory. ...and gave up the ghost.** Why isn’t there a description of the actual act of crucifixion? I believe it’s because, rather than arousing our feelings, **the Father wants to affirm our faith; that His desire is not to move us emotionally, but that we understand rationally that Jesus finished the work.** Six hours on the cross to death, was a very short crucifixion time! Usually it would take several days.

v. 38 In rending the massive veil in the temple that kept everyone but the high priest from going into the Holy of Holies where the shekinah—the visible presence of God—dwelt, the Father declared, Now, you can come boldly into My presence anytime you want because the price has been paid once and for all.” This grace is free—but it’s not cheap because it cost Jesus everything to open the way to the Father. Therefore, don’t sew the veil back up, with legalism, rules, regulations, or expectations. **Don’t feel as though you must prove something to God before you can come** into His presence to present your petitions or to enjoy His fellowship. **The way is open. Nothing else remains to be done.**

v. 39 It was in the Lord’s death that the centurion found life. It was in the time of darkness that he saw the light. “Lord,” we cry, “if you loved Me enough to die for me, if the veil was rent to open the way for me, then why am I going through this difficulty, this tragedy?” “Because there are centurions watching,” He declares. “And they will see My light in your dark days.” Note! If you want to be used by God, there is no other way than to go through disappointment, difficulty, and pain in order that people might relate to you, observe you, and see by the reality of Jesus in your life that He truly is the Son of God. People are not convinced of the reality of His reality when they see us sailing through easy times and prosperous days. Such times cause only envy and cynicism. When people are truly touched is when they see us navigating adversity and difficulty all the while trusting the Lord (2 Corinthians 1:4). **This centurion was won, saved, converted not because he was one of the five thousand eating bread and fish in the sunlight, but because he saw Jesus in the darkness.**

v. 40 Salome – from Mt. 27:56, we read that Salome is referred to as the mother of Zebedee’s sons. What **now would she be thinking as she would remember** back to the time she asked Jesus for one of her sons to be on His left and one on His right? At a time of great anticipation? At the time Jesus told her that she did not know what she was asking—“*Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink*” Sometimes we pray with suggestions as to what the Lord should do and when He doesn’t, we’re a bit put off a bit! **Now here He is dying with thieves on His left and right! What a thing to watch! - they don’t know the next chapter! How broken they must have felt and been!**

v. 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, - Luke 23:50-53 Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. [51] He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who **himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God.** [52] This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. [53] **Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before.**

John 19:38-41 After this, Joseph of Arimathea, **being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews,** asked Pilate that **he might take away the body of Jesus;** and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. [39] And Nicodemus (3rd most wealthy man in Jerusalem), **who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.**(est. value \$150k-\$200k) [40] Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, **as the custom of the Jews is to bury.** [41] Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. **“custom of the Jews”** – means they would have **carefully washed** the whole body of Jesus. **So important, it could even be done** on the Sabbath!

Why did Joseph have a carved out tomb in Jerusalem? - He was waiting for the kingdom of God! **A prominent or honorable counselor.** The Talmud said there had only been 14 so designated in Israel’s history. In the Sanhedrin – a very high rank!

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*Mar 15:40 There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome,
Mar 15:41 who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.*

Jesus Buried in Joseph’s Tomb

*Mar 15:42 Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath,
Mar 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.*

*Mar 15:44 Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time.
Mar 15:45 So when he found out from the centurion, he granted (gifted) the body to Joseph.
Mar 15:46 Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.
Mar 15:47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid.*

INTERPRETATION

vs. 40-41 In all of the Gospel stories, you will never find a woman opposing or resisting the ministry of Jesus Christ. Where were the disciples at this point? Men’s love being primarily based on logic, it was no longer logical for them to be at the Cross. After all, what could they do? They couldn’t mount a military defense. Peter tried that and failed miserably. So they simply scattered. **Women’s love being not so much logical as it is emotional and mystical, however, the women remained at the Cross.**

vs. 42-43 Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple. After all, had he identified with Jesus openly, **he would have lost his coveted position in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court.** But seeing Jesus on the Cross caused such courage and passion to flood his heart that he asked for His body—fully knowing **that touching it would defile him and prevent him from celebrating Passover, fully knowing he would be in danger from Roman and Jew alike, fully knowing that he would be ostracized financially and socially.** That is the way it always is. **When you really see the Cross, you have no choice but to “crave” the Lord.** You have no choice but to **openly share the gospel.** That’s why Jesus said, **“Do this in remembrance of Me”** (Luke 22:19)—for when I remember **what the Lord did for me as I eat of His body and drink of His blood, much of what was important to me only a few hours previously isn’t important any longer.** As it did for Joseph of Arimathea, the Cross **has an incredible way of changing one’s priorities.**

vs. 44-47 “Joseph” literally means “addition.” And that is exactly what will happen when, in addition to Jesus bursting forth from the grave, believers throughout history will one day burst forth to live eternally. **Maybe you’re a Joseph—one who is quieter in personality.** Although you may not be one who preaches or distributes tracts to everyone you see, **Often when the going really gets tough, when push comes to shove, a lot of time it’s the Josephs who emerge as heroes, solid and steadfast.** In the moment of greatest danger, when the hour of challenge has come, **it is the Josephs who are often those who are most solid in time of crisis.** **May this be true to an ever greater degree of us. he granted (doreomai – gave, granted-as a gift –** only used here and in 2 Peter 1:3 - *His divine power has given to us) the body*

APPLICATION

How many today are secret disciples? Fearful of their peers! To be excommunicated – **For Joseph, it meant he would be cut off from his wealth, his family, his inheritance, from the temple, his position on the Sanhedrin. It’s almost impossible to count that cost.** Notice he didn’t know the next chapter!

v. 46 – Note “took him down” (told in both Mark and Luke) Can you imagine what that would have been like? Where were they during the three hours of darkness? Somehow the cross!!!! Forced them out into the open!

Just think of it! Removing the nails from His feet; then His hands; having the body slumped over Joseph. What about the thorns?

Then to wash Him! To wash Jesus’ face where the beard had been pulled out! Brushed back His hair, covered with spit. Removing the thorns and those that has been broken off. The hole in His side! His back? The holes in His feet! Thinking of Isa 53:9 *And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. Joh 12:32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.*”

Just think at this point! They cast off all restraint! They’ve let go of their reputations! They’ve cast off everything for a corpse! All we thought, why didn’t we stand up sooner? Why where we such cowards?

Not knowing the next chapter! Not knowing what we know! Just think of their courage – brought out by the cross!

I wonder what they would say to us? You know the whole truth! They may now say they gave up everything for a dead Christ? What have you?...What have I given up for a risen Christ, a living Christ? Are you willing to deny yourself? To take up your cross to follow Him?