Jesus Seals the New Covenant

SS Lesson for 06/09/2019

Devotional Scripture: Acts 2:22-36

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Key Verse: Mark 15:39
Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

SEALED THROUGH JESUS’ CONDEMNATION (MARK 15:6-15)

Condemned through substitution (6-8)
- A substitute who was the atoning sacrificed for our sins (1 John 2:1-2)
- A substitute who died so that we might live (1 Peter 2:24)
- A substitute who died for the sins of the unrighteous (1 Peter 3:18)
- A substitute who through God’s love was sent to be our sacrifice (1 John 4:10)
- A substitute who is the Lamb of God (John 1:29)
- A substitute who eternally took away our sins (Heb 9:28)

Condemned through rejection (9-11)
- Rejection because of hardening of the heart (Eph 4:18)
- Rejection because of ignorance (1 Tim 1:13)
- Rejection because of saying Jesus' source was Satan (Matt 12:24)
- Rejection unless miracles are done (John 4:48)
- Rejection because of not believing Jesus as God's Son (Heb 11:6)

Condemned but innocent (12-15)
- Innocent even though Jesus was betrayed (Matt 27:3-5)
- Innocent because Pilate’s wife confessed it (Matt 27:19)
- Innocent because the centurion confessed it (Matt 27:54)
- Innocent because Pilate even confessed it (Luke 23:22)
- Innocent because one of the thieves confessed it (Luke 23:41)
- Innocent because no evidence for guilt was found (Acts 13:28)
- Innocent because to be our High Priest Jesus had to be blameless (Heb 7:26)
- Innocent because Jesus was the sacrificial lamb who shed His blood for us (1 Peter 1:19)

SEALED THROUGH JESUS’ CRUCIFIXION (MARK 15:25-26, 33-39)

Crucifixion on a cross (25-26)
- Jesus was crucified to be the author and perfecter of faith (Heb 12:2)
- Jesus was crucified to declare the power of God (1 Cor. 1:17-18)
- Jesus was crucified so we could boast in it (Gal 6:14)
- Jesus was crucified to reconcile us to God (Eph 2:14-16)
- Jesus was crucified because He humbled Himself to be obedient (Phil 2:8)
- Jesus was crucified to make peace through His blood (Col 1:19-20)
- Jesus was crucified to satisfy the punishment of sins (Col 2:13-15)

Crucifixion through being forsaken (33-35)
- Forsaken because God would not save Him (Ps 22:1)
- Forsaken because He was seized and no one rescued Him (Ps 71:11)
- Forsaken because God desired to crush and allowed Him to suffer (Isa 53:10)
- Forsaken because Jesus’ humanity did not want to die (Heb 5:7)
- Forsaken because Jesus’ humanity felt God’s rejection (Ps 88:14)
- Forsaken because His own Jews forsake Him (John 1:11)
- Forsaken because His kingdom forsake Him (Luke 19:14)
- Forsaken because His own people betrayed Him (Acts 7:51-53)

Crucifixion until dead (36-37)
- Jesus died so that we could be resurrected and live for God (2 Cor 5:15)
- Jesus died so that we could have a chance to be a Christian (John 3:16-17)
- Jesus died so that it would demonstrate God’s love (Rom 5:8)
- Jesus died so that we could be alive in Jesus (Eph 2:4-5)
- Jesus died to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18)
- Jesus died at the right time for the ungodly (Rom 5:6)
Jesus died so that He could die for everyone (Heb 2:9)
Jesus died as a ransom so that He could become our mediator of the new covenant (Heb 9:15)

_Crucifixion that proved His divinity (38-39)_
- Son of God because the gospel teaches it (Rom 1:2-5)
- Son of God because in Him God always answers yes (2 Cor 1:19)
- Son of God because the Holy Spirit declared it (John 1:32-34)
- Son of God because Peter testified to it (Matt 16:15-16)
- Son of God because Jesus Himself declared it (John 10:36-39)
- Son of God because of faith (John 3:36)
- Son of God because Jesus and God are equal (John 5:17-18)
- Son of God because the Bible was written to declare it (John 20:31)

**CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS**

**COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE**

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY**

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY**

**Lesson Background and Key Verse**

**Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

The Roman Empire was one of a series of powerful empires that the Bible cites as having dominated Israel. It followed Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia in that regard (see Exodus 1; 2 Kings 15:29; 16:7–9, 18; 24:15–17; 25:8–12; 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23; Ezra 1; Esther 1:1–4; 10:1–3). Roman rule was not simply a political problem for Israel; it was a religious difficulty. The Romans claimed absolute authority for Rome, not for Israel’s God. Many of Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for a mighty military leader who, with God’s power, would rally Israel to overthrow their Roman oppressors. This leader was expected to establish God’s rule over the entire world, beginning with Jerusalem. Revolt always seemed to be in the air (compare Acts 5:36, 37). One way Rome demonstrated its determination to squelch such movements was crucifixion. This style of execution involved hanging or nailing a victim on a wooden frame and allowing the victim to die slowly from shock, exposure, dehydration, and loss of blood. Crucifixion was reserved for those whom Rome wanted to make a public example. At the point where today’s text begins, Jesus had repeatedly told his disciples of his forthcoming death and resurrection (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33, 34). Knowing full well that he could avoid that death, Jesus submitted to the Father’s will nonetheless. He felt all the fear that any person would have when facing execution (14:35, 36). He knew his death was to be a sacrifice for many (10:45; 14:22–25).

**Key Verse: Mark 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!"

**Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary**

15:6. Each year during the Passover festival it was the governor’s custom as a sign of goodwill to release a prisoner selected by the people (cf. v. 8). Though no explicit reference to the custom occurs outside the New Testament it was consistent with Rome’s conciliatory attitude toward subject peoples on local matters. Instead of granting Jesus an acquittal, Pilate chose to grant the customary Passover amnesty, thinking the people would request Jesus’ release (cf. v. 9).

15:7. While suppressing an uprising in Jerusalem, the Roman authorities had arrested Barabbas (from Bar Abba, “son of the father”), a notorious freedom fighter, robber (John 18:40), and murderer, along with other insurrectionists. He may have been a Zealot, a nationalist who stirred up opposition against Rome. Now he was awaiting execution.

15:8-11. During the trial proceedings a sizable crowd had gathered in the palace forum (cf. v. 16). The people approached Pilate’s elevated judgment seat and asked him to grant the annual Passover amnesty (cf. v. 6). Many of them were probably supporters of Barabbas. Pilate saw this as an opportunity to show his contempt for the Jews, especially their leaders. He offered to release to them the King of the Jews (cf. v. 2). He recognized that the chief priests had turned Jesus over to him not out of loyalty to Rome but...
out of envy and hatred. Pilate hoped to achieve Jesus’ release and thus undo the religious leaders’ scheme. But Pilate’s plan did not work. The chief priests incited the emotional crowd to pressure him into releasing Barabbas instead of Jesus. Apparently they knew that the Sanhedrin had already condemned Jesus (cf. 14:64). Strangely, Pilate failed to consider that the crowd would never side with him against their own leaders (cf. John 19:6-7).

15:12-14. Since the crowd had rejected Pilate’s offer and requested the release of Barabbas, he inquired (“again” is in the Gr.) about what they wanted done with the One they called the King of the Jews. Pilate did not accept this title for Jesus but his question implied he was willing to release Jesus also if they wished. But without hesitation they shouted back, Crucify Him! The punishment that once awaited Barabbas was now thrust on Jesus. Pilate challenged them to state the crime which made Jesus guilty enough to be crucified. But they persistently cried out all the louder, Crucify Him! Pilate considered the clamor of the crowd an acclamation, legally indicating a decision by popular demand. Thus Jesus must be pronounced guilty of high treason, a capital offense normally punishable by crucifixion in Roman provinces.

15:15. Though he believed Jesus was innocent (cf. v. 14) Pilate followed political expediency rather than justice. Wishing to satisfy the people lest they complain to Emperor Tiberius—thereby putting his position in jeopardy (cf. John 19:12)—Pilate released Barabbas to them... had Jesus flogged, and sentenced Him to death by crucifixion. A Roman flogging was a brutal beating that always preceded the execution of a capital sentence on male offenders, though it could also be a separate punishment (cf. TDNT, s.v. “mastigoō,” 4:517-9). The prisoner was stripped, often tied to a post, and beaten on the back by several guards using short leather whips studded with sharp pieces of bone or metal. No limit was set on the number of blows. Often this punishment was fatal. Pilate had Jesus flogged in hope that the people would take pity and be satisfied. But this also failed; they still insisted He be crucified (cf. John 19:1-7).

15:16. After the flogging of Jesus, presumably outside in the public square, the Roman soldiers took Him, battered and bleeding, into (esō, “inside”) the palace (lit., “courtyard”; cf. same word in 14:54, 66). The rendering “palace” is justified due to Mark’s explanatory comment, that is, the Praetorium, equating the two places. The Latin loanword, Praetorium, meant the governor’s official residence (cf. Matt. 27:27; John 18:28, 33; 19:9; Acts 23:35). Once inside they summoned the whole company (spēiran, Gr. for the Latin “cohort”) of soldiers. Ordinarily a cohort was 600 men, 1/10 of a 6,000-soldier legion. But in this case it may have been an auxiliary battalion of 200-300 soldiers that had accompanied Pilate to Jerusalem from Caesarea.

15:17-19. In ludicrous imitation of a vassal king’s regal robes and gilded head-wreath, the soldiers dressed Jesus in a purple robe, a faded military cloak, and pressed a crown of thorns, perhaps palm spines, on His head. With this “crown” the soldiers unwittingly pictured God’s curse on sinful humanity being thrust on Jesus (cf. Gen. 3:17-18). Matthew noted that they also placed a staff in His hand as a mock scepter (Matt. 27:29). Then they ridiculed Him with contemptuous words and insulting actions in mock homage to a king. The derisive greeting Hail (Rejoice), King of the Jews, paralleled the formal Roman plaudit, “Ave, Caesar.” The NIV words, again and again reflect the imperfect tense of the Greek verbs. The soldiers kept striking Jesus with a staff, probably His mock scepter, on His thorn-crowned head. They kept spitting on Him (cf. Mark 14:65) and bending their knees in mock submission to royalty. In all this they acted out of contempt not so much for Jesus personally but for their subject nation which had long desired a king of its own.

15:20. The soldiers then removed the mock royal attire and dressed Him in His own clothes. Then they, a four-soldier execution squad (cf. John 19:23) under the command of a centurion, led Him outside the city to crucify Him. Jesus’ suffering before the Roman authorities was exemplary for Mark’s readers who would be subjected to similar ridicule before pagan authorities (cf. Mark 13:9-13). Death by crucifixion was one of the cruelest forms of capital punishment ever devised. Mark’s account of Jesus’ physical sufferings is vivid but restrained. They were secondary to His overwhelming spiritual anguish (cf. 14:36; 15:34). (For the order of events, see Matt. 27:32-38.)

15:21-22. Customarily a condemned man carried the patibulum of his own cross, that is, the crossbeam weighing about 100 pounds, through the city streets out to the place of crucifixion. Jesus started to carry His (cf. John 19:17) but was so weak from being flogged that His strength gave out near the city gate. The soldiers randomly seized a passerby named Simon and forced him to carry the beam the rest of the way. Simon was a native of Cyrene, an important coastal city of North Africa that had a large Jewish colony (Acts 2:10). He was either an immigrant living near Jerusalem or more likely, a pilgrim who had come to
Jerusalem for the Passover festival but had to stay in the country at night because there was no room in the city. Only Mark mentioned Simon’s sons, Alexander and Rufus, suggesting that they were disciples known to his readers in Rome (cf. Rom. 16:13). The soldiers took Jesus to the place outside but near the city wall (cf. John 19:20) called Golgotha, a Greek transliteration of an Aramaic word meaning The Place of the Skull. The word “Calvary” comes from the Latin Vulgate rendering Calvaria, a variation of calva, “a skull.” Golgotha was a rounded, rocky knoll (not a hill or mountain) vaguely resembling the shape of a human skull. Its exact location is uncertain. It was either at the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the traditional site dating from the fourth century, or “Gordon’s Calvary,” a more recent suggestion. The traditional site is more probable.

15:23-24. According to Rabbinic tradition certain Jerusalem women provided sedative drinks for those about to be crucified, to decrease their pain (cf. Prov. 31:6-7). On arrival at Golgotha, they, presumably the Roman soldiers, offered (lit., “were attempting to give”) Jesus such a drink, wine mixed with myrrh, a plant’s sap having anesthetic properties. But after He had tasted it (cf. Matt. 27:34) He refused it, choosing rather to face suffering and death in full control of all His faculties. With restrained simplicity Mark wrote, 
And they crucified Him. His Roman readers needed no elaboration and he offered none. Normally a condemned man was stripped (except possibly for a loincloth), laid on the ground, and both outstretched forearms were nailed to the crossbeam. Then this beam was raised and fastened to an upright post already stuck in the ground and the victim’s feet were nailed to it. A wooden peg partway up the post on which the victim sat helped support his body. Death from extreme exhaustion and thirst was painful and slow and usually came after two or three days. Sometimes death was hastened by breaking the victim’s legs (John 19:31-33). A victim’s personal belongings became the property of the execution squad. In Jesus’ case the four-man squad (cf. John 19:23) cast lots, probably dice, for His clothes—an inner and outer garment, a belt, sandals, and perhaps a head covering—to see what each one would get. Unwittingly they fulfilled Psalm 22:18, another aspect of Jesus’ humiliation.

15:25. Using the Jewish method of counting hours from sunrise (and sunset) Mark alone recorded that Jesus’ crucifixion took place at the third hour, that is, 9 A.M. This seems to conflict with the time reference “the sixth hour” in John 19:14. But John probably used the Roman (modern) method of counting hours from midnight (and noon); thus he put Jesus’ trial before Pilate at “about the sixth hour,” that is, approximately 6 A.M. The interval between 6 and 9 A.M. was filled with the soldiers’ mockery (cf. Mark 15:16-20), Pilate’s verdict on the two robbers (cf. 15:27), and preparations for the crucifixions.

15:26. It was a Roman custom to write the name of the condemned man and a description of his crime on a board and attach it to his cross (John 19:19). All four Gospels record the words of Jesus’ notice but with minor variations, probably because it was written in three languages (John 19:20). Mark recorded only the official charge against Him... THE KING OF THE JEWS (cf. Mark 15:2, 12). Pilate’s wording was intended as an insult to Jewish aspirations for independence (cf. John 19:21-22).

15:27-28. Pilate had Jesus crucified between two robbers who, like Barabbas, were perhaps guilty of insurrection (cf. v. 7; John 18:40). They may have been convicted of treason at the same time as Jesus because they were familiar with His case (Luke 23:40-42). Unwittingly Pilate’s action fulfilled Isaiah 53:12, which is cited in Mark 15:28 (niv marg.; KJV; cf. Luke 22:37).

15:29-30. Again Jesus was subjected to verbal abuse (cf. 14:65; 15:17-19). Passersby hurled insults at Him (lit., “kept slandering Him”). Shaking their heads refers to a familiar gesture of derision (cf. Pss. 22:7; 109:25; Jer. 18:16; Lam. 2:15). They taunted Him for His alleged claim regarding the temple (cf. Mark 14:58). If He could rebuild the temple in three days (a great feat), then surely He could save (from sōzō, “deliver or rescue”, cf. 5:23, 28, 34) Himself from death by coming down from the cross (a lesser feat).

15:31-32. Similarly the Jewish religious leaders mocked Jesus indirectly in conversations among themselves. Their long-standing desire to kill Him was successful at last (cf. 3:6; 11:18; 12:12; 14:1, 64; 15:1, 11-13). Their words He saved (from sōzō) others refer to His healing miracles, which they could not deny (cf. 5:34; 6:56; 10:52). But they ridiculed Him because He seemed powerless to save (from sōzō; cf. 15:30) Himself. Ironically their words expressed a profound spiritual truth. If Jesus was to save others, delivering them from the power of sin, then He could not save (rescue) Himself from the sufferings and death appointed to Him by God (cf. 8:31). They also mocked Jesus’ messianic claims (cf. 14:61-62) replacing Pilate’s words “King of the Jews” (cf. 15:26) with King of Israel. They challenged Him to prove His messianic claim by a miraculous descent from the cross so they could see the compelling evidence and believe that He is God’s Messiah. The issue, however, was not lack of evidence but unbelief. The two
men **crucified with** Jesus also joined in reviling Him. But one of them soon stopped and asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom (Luke 23:39-43). Climactically Mark recorded five phenomena that accompanied Jesus’ death: (a) darkness (Mark 15:33), (b) Jesus’ cry, “My God...” (v. 34), (c) Jesus’ loud cry (v. 37), (d) the temple curtain torn from top to bottom (v. 38), and (e) the Roman centurion’s confession (v. 39).

**15:33.** Jesus hanged on the cross for three hours in the daylight (9 A.M. till noon) and then **at the sixth hour** (noon) **total darkness** engulfed the whole land (Palestine and environs) **until the ninth hour** (3 P.M.; cf. v. 25). The darkness, whether caused by a sudden dust-laden wind, or thick clouds, or, more likely, a miraculous solar eclipse, was probably a cosmic sign of God’s judgment on human sin (cf. Isa. 5:25-30; Amos 8:9-10; Micah 3:5-7; Zeph. 1:14-15) which was placed on Jesus (cf. Isa. 53:5-6; 2 Cor. 5:21). Specifically it pictured God’s judgment on Israel who rejected His Messiah, the Sin-Bearer (cf. John 1:29). The darkness visualized what Jesus’ cry (Mark 15:34) expressed.

**15:34.** Mark (and Matthew) recorded only this one of Jesus’ seven sayings from the cross. At the **ninth hour** (3 P.M.), Jesus cried... *Eloi, Eloi* (Aram. for the Heb., *’Elî ’Eli*), *lama sabachthani?* (Aram.; from Ps. 22:1) Mark translated the saying into Greek for his readers, **which in English means, My God, My God, why (lit., “for what [reason]”) have You forsaken** (lit., “did You abandon”) Me? This was more than the cry of a righteous Sufferer affirming His faith that God would cause Him to triumph (contrast Ps. 22:1 with Ps. 22:28). Nor did Jesus merely *feel* abandoned. Instead, Jesus’cry combined (a) abandonment by God the Father in a judicial not relational sense, and (b) a genuine affirmation of Jesus’ relationship to God. Bearing the curse of sin and God’s judgment on sin (cf. Deut. 21:22-23; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13) He experienced the unfathomable horror of separation from God, who cannot look on sin (cf. Hab. 1:13). This answers Jesus’ question, “Why?” Dying for sinners (Mark 10:45; Rom. 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18), He experienced separation from God. Also Jesus’ cry affirmed His abiding trust, reflected in the words, “My God, My God.” This is the only one of Jesus’ recorded prayers in which He did not use the address “Abba” (cf. Mark 14:36). Far from renouncing Him, Jesus claimed the Father as His God. He died forsaken by God so that His people might claim God as their God and never be forsaken (cf. Heb. 13:5).

**15:35-36.** Some Jewish bystanders apparently misunderstood or more likely, as a mockery, deliberately misinterpreted Jesus’ cry as a call to **Elijah.** Popular Jewish belief held that Elijah came in times of distress to deliver righteous sufferers. Probably in response to Jesus’ additional words “I thirst” (John 19:28-29) a bystander, likely a Roman soldier, soaked a **sponge with wine vinegar** diluted with a mixture of eggs and water, a common inexpensive beverage, and raised it on a stick to Jesus’ mouth so He could extract some refreshment from it (cf. Ps. 69:21). Jesus’ cross was probably higher than normal, holding Him two or three feet off the ground. If the drink prolonged His life, the spectators would have a chance to **see if Elijah would take Him down.** In Mark the words Leave Him alone were spoken by the soldier to the bystanders just before he offered a drink to Jesus. The verb is plural, “You (pl.) leave...” In Matthew 27:49 the same words are spoken by bystanders to the soldier apparently while he was giving Jesus the drink. The verb is singular, “You (sing.) leave...” Both expressed the taunt about Elijah coming to rescue Him.

**15:37.** Jesus’ **loud cry** (Luke 23:46) before He **breathed His last** indicated that He did not die the ordinary death of one who was crucified (cf. Mark 15:39). Normally such a person suffered extreme exhaustion for a long period (often two or three days) and then lapsed into a coma before dying. But Jesus was fully conscious to the end; His death came voluntarily and suddenly. This accounts for Pilate’s surprise (cf. v. 44).

**15:38.** Simultaneous with Jesus’ death the curtain (veil) of the temple (naou, “sanctuary”; cf. 11:11) **was torn in two from top to bottom.** The passive verb and the direction of the tear indicate that this was God’s action. It was no doubt observed and reported by the priests (cf. Acts 6:7) who at that moment were conducting the Jewish evening sacrifice. This could have been the outer curtain hung between the sanctuary itself and the forecourt (Ex. 26:36-37) or the inner curtain separating the holy place from the most holy place (Ex. 26:31-35). If it was the outer curtain, then the tear was a public sign confirming Jesus’ words of judgment on the temple, later fulfilled in A.D. 70 (cf. Mark 13:2). Probably the inner curtain was torn, for it was a sign that Jesus’ death ended the need for repeated sacrifices for sins, and opened a new and living way of free and direct access to God (Heb. 6:19-20; 9:6-14; 10:19-22).

**15:39.** The **centurion who stood** nearby facing Jesus and observing these unusual happenings (cf. vv. 33-37) was the *Gentile* Roman officer in charge of the execution squad (cf. v. 20) and thus accountable to Pilate (cf. v. 44). Only Mark used the Greek word *kentavrion* (“centurion”), a transliteration of the Latin word referring to a commander of 100 soldiers (also vv. 44-45). All other New Testament writers used the
equivalent Greek word hekatontarchos, also translated “centurion” (e.g., Matt. 27:54). This provides additional evidence that Mark wrote to a Roman audience. The manner of Jesus’ death, especially His last loud cry (cf. Mark 15:37), prompted the centurion to declare. Surely (lit., “truly,” despite all insults to the contrary; cf. Matt. 27:40; John 19:7), this Man was, from the centurion’s perspective, the Son of God. The Roman officer probably did not use the phrase “the Son of God” in its distinctive Christian sense, as a reference to Jesus’ deity (cf. Luke 23:47). Because of his pagan background he probably viewed Jesus as an extraordinary “divine man” much like the Roman emperor who was acclaimed “son of God” (cf. Mark 12:16). Consequently some interpreters translate the phrase with an indefinite article, “a son of God” (NIV marg.). However, Mark regarded the declaration in its distinctive Christian sense; the centurion unwittingly said more than he knew. The centurion’s confession is the climax of Mark’s revelation of Jesus’ identity (cf. 1:1; 8:29-30). This confession by a Gentile Roman officer contrasts with the mocking response of those mentioned in 15:29-32, 35-36. This Gentile’s confession also exemplifies the truth of the torn curtain.

15:40-41. In addition to the mocking crowd and the Roman soldiers, some devoted women were also (in Gr.) carefully observing from a distance all that occurred. Earlier in the day—probably before the sixth hour (noon; v. 33)—they had stood “near the cross” (John 19:25-27). Mary Magdalene’s surname indicates she was from Magdala, a village on the Sea of Galilee’s western shore. Jesus had released her from demon possession (Luke 8:2; she is not the sinful woman of Luke 7:36-50). The second Mary (the “other Mary”; Matt. 27:61) is distinguished from the others by the names of her sons James the younger (lit., “the small one,” in stature and/or age) and Joses, who apparently were well known in the early church. Salome, whose name appears only in Mark (Mark 15:40; 16:1), was the mother of Zebedee’s sons, the disciples James and John (Matt. 20:20; 27:56). She was probably the sister of Jesus’ mother whom Mark did not mention (John 19:25). When Jesus was in Galilee these three women used to follow (imperf. tense) Him from place to place and used to care for (“serve,” imperf.) His material needs (cf. Luke 8:1-3). Many other women who did not accompany Him regularly were also there. They had come... to Jerusalem for the Passover festival with Jesus, perhaps hoping He would establish His messianic kingdom (cf. Mark 10:35-40; 15:43). Mark mentioned the women as eyewitnesses of the Crucifixion in anticipation of their eyewitness role at Jesus’ burial (15:47) and His resurrection (16:1-8). Their devotion surpassed that of the 11 disciples who had deserted Him (14:50). Mark may have intended these words as an encouragement to faithful discipleship among women in the church.

**Major Theme Analysis**

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

**Sealed Through Jesus’ Condemnation (Mark 15:6-15)**

6 Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested.
7 And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.
8 Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask him to do just as he had always done for them.
9 But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"
10 For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.
11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.
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?"
13 So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"
14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"
15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.

**Condemned through substitution (6-8)**

_A substitute who was the atoning sacrificed for our sins (1 John 2:1-2)_

1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
A substitute who died so that we might live (1 Peter 2:24)
24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness;
by his wounds you have been healed.

A substitute who died for the sins of the unrighteous (1 Peter 3:18)
18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put
to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

A substitute who through God’s love was sent to be our sacrifice (1 John 4:10)
10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our
sins.

A substitute who is the Lamb of God (John 1:29)
29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the
sin of the world!

A substitute who eternally took away our sins (Heb 9:28)
28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time,
not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Condemned through rejection (9-11)

Rejection because of hardening of the heart (Eph 4:18)
18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance
that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Rejection because of ignorance (1 Tim 1:13)
13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I
acted in ignorance and unbelief.

Rejection because of saying Jesus' source was Satan (Matt 12:24)
24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this
fellow drives out demons."

Rejection unless miracles are done (John 4:48)
48 "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

Rejection because of not believing Jesus as God’s Son (Heb 11:6)
6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he
exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Condemned but innocent (12-15)

Innocent even though Jesus was betrayed (Matt 27:3-5)
3 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and
returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. 4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have
betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." 5 So Judas threw
the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Innocent because Pilate’s wife confessed it (Matt 27:19)
19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do
with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."
Innocent because the centurion confessed it (Matt 27:54)

54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Innocent because Pilate even confessed it (Luke 23:22)

22 For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him."

Innocent because one of the thieves confessed it (Luke 23:41)

41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Innocent because no evidence for guilt was found (Acts 13:28)

28 Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed.

Innocent because to be our High Priest Jesus had to be blameless (Heb 7:26)

26 Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

Innocent because Jesus was the sacrificial lamb who shed His blood for us (1 Peter 1:19)

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

**Sealed Through Jesus’ Crucifixion (Mark 15:25-39, 33-39)**

25 Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.

26 And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

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

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?"

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

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."

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

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

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!"

**Crucifixion on a cross (25-26)**

*Jesus was crucified to be the author and perfecter of faith (Heb 12:2)*

2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

*Jesus was crucified to declare the power of God (1 Cor. 1:17-18)*

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

*Jesus was crucified so we could boast in it (Gal 6:14)*

14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
Jesus was crucified to reconcile us to God (Eph 2:14-16)
  14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Jesus was crucified because He humbled Himself to be obedient (Phil 2:8)
  8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

Jesus was crucified to make peace through His blood (Col 1:19-20)
  19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Jesus was crucified to satisfy the punishment of sins (Col 2:13-15)
  13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Crucifixion through being forsaken (33-35)

Forsaken because God would not save Him (Ps 22:1)
  22 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?

Forsaken because He was seized and no one rescued Him (Ps 71:11)
  11 They say, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him."

Forsaken because God desired to crush and allowed Him to suffer (Isa 53:10)
  10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

Forsaken because Jesus' humanity did not want to die (Heb 5:7)
  7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

Forsaken because Jesus’ humanity felt God’s rejection (Ps 88:14)
  14 Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?

Forsaken because His own Jews forsake Him (John 1:11)
  11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

Forsaken because His kingdom forsake Him (Luke 19:14)
  14 "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

Forsaken because His own people betrayed Him (Acts 7:51-53)
  51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52 Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—
Crucifixion until dead (36-37)

Jesus died so that we could be resurrected and live for God (2 Cor 5:15)
15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Jesus died so that we could have a chance to be a Christian (John 3:16-17)
16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Jesus died so that it would demonstrate God’s love (Rom 5:8)
8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Jesus died so that we could be alive in Jesus (Eph 2:4-5)
4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.

Jesus died to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18)
18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

Jesus died at the right time for the ungodly (Rom 5:6)
6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Jesus died so that He could die for everyone (Heb 2:9)
9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Jesus died as a ransom so that He could become our mediator of the new covenant (Heb 9:15)
15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Crucifixion that proved His divinity (38-39)

Son of God because the gospel teaches it (Rom 1:2-5)
2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Son of God because in Him God always answers yes (2 Cor 1:19)
19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes."

Son of God because the Holy Spirit declared it (John 1:32-34)
32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

Son of God because Peter testified to it (Matt 16:15-16)
15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
Son of God because Jesus Himself declared it (John 10:36-39)

36 what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? 37 Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. 38 But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

Son of God because of faith (John 3:36)

36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Son of God because Jesus and God are equal (John 5:17-18)

17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." 18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Son of God because the Bible was written to declare it (John 20:31)

31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable

Verse 6

Evidently this custom served to improve relations between the Roman ruler and his subjects. Dictatorial governments such as Rome sometimes imprison popular rebel leaders. The Roman governor of Egypt practiced a similar custom. [Note: Taylor, p580.] "Amnesties at festival times are known in many parts of the world and in various periods." [Note: S. E. Johnson, A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark, p249.] "Two forms of amnesty existed in Roman law, the abolitio or acquittal of a prisoner not yet condemned, and the indulgentia, or pardoning of one already condemned. What Pilate intended in the case of Jesus, who at this stage of the proceedings had not yet been sentenced by the court, was clearly the first form." [Note: Lane, p552.] "The historicity of the paschal amnesty has been disputed often, primarily because Josephus offers no evidence that such a custom ever existed. There Isaiah, however, a parallel in Roman law which indicates that an imperial magistrate could pardon and acquit individual prisoners in response to the shouts of the populace." [Note: Ibid, pp552-53.] Jesus' second appearance before Pilate15:6-15 (cf. Matthew 27:15-26; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-19:16) Mark's brief account of Jesus' arraignment and sentencing concentrates on Pilate's offer to release Jesus or Barabbas.

Verse 7

This verse and the next provide more background information. Barabbas was one of the popular Jewish freedom fighters whom the Romans had imprisoned for participating in an uprising against Rome. Later a large number of these revolutionaries organized and became known as the Zealots. Barabbas had also committed robbery, probably as part of his insurrection (John 18:40). Mark's use of the definite article before his name implies that his original readers had heard of Barabbas.

Verse 8

Evidently a large crowd of Jews had come to request the customary amnesty from Pilate. There is no indication in the text that they had come because they knew of Jesus' arrest or because they wanted to observe the outcome of His trial. They appear to have been there for reasons unrelated to Jesus. [Note: Swete, p371.]

Verse 9-10

Pilate responded to this crowd's request by asking if they wanted him to release Jesus, whom he contemptuously called "the King of the Jews" (cf. Mark 15:2). He recognized the chief priests' motives in arresting Jesus as being self-seeking rather than loyalty to Rome. He hoped to frustrate the chief priests by getting the people to request the release of someone Pilate viewed as innocent. He could thereby retain real criminals such as Barabbas. Matthew wrote that Pilate gave the people the choice of Jesus or Barabbas.
(Matthew 27:17). He evidently believed that Jesus had the greater popular following and would be the people’s choice.

Verse 11

Many of the people in the crowd were residents of Jerusalem and many were pilgrims from far away. The chief priests were able to persuade them to ask for Barabbas’ release. The people may have accepted the advice of their leaders because Barabbas had already tried to lead a rebellion, but Jesus had only hinted at an overthrow. Moreover it would have been very unusual for the crowd to side with Pilate and oppose their leaders.

"In Judea it was customary to confront the Roman authorities with as large and boisterous a delegation as could be mustered. (cf. Acts 24:1; Josephus, Antiquities XVIII. viii4).” [Note: Lane, p555.]

Verses 12-14

The people’s choice left Pilate with a problem. What would he do with innocent Jesus? Pilate’s wife had just warned him to have nothing to do with that innocent man (Matthew 27:19). He put the question to the crowd. The religious leaders probably started the chant calling for Jesus’ crucifixion, not just capital punishment, but it quickly spread through the crowd. The mob ignored Pilate’s request for reasonable reconsideration and continued chanting.

Verse 15

Pilate had had problems in his relations with the Jewish people that he governed (cf. Luke 13:1-2). He saw the present situation as an opportunity to gain popular support. This overrode his sense of justice and his wife’s warning. Evidently Pilate flogged Jesus in the presence of the crowd hoping that that punishment would satisfy them. John recorded that after the flogging Pilate tried again to persuade the people against crucifixion (John 19:1-7). Flogging was not a necessary preparation for crucifixion. [Note: Wessel, p775.] Probably two soldiers stripped Jesus and tied His hands above him to a post. Then they beat Him with a leather whip with pieces of bone and or metal embedded in the leather strips. Victims of Roman floggings seldom survived. [Note: Ibid.,] “The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus’ shoulders, back and legs. At first the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurring arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles.... Finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue.” [Note: C. Truman Davis, “The Crucifixion of Jesus. The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View,” Arizona Medicine22:3 (March1965):185.] Mark’s use of the phrase “delivered Him over” (NASB) or “handed Him over” (NIV) may be an allusion to Isaiah 53:6; Isaiah 53:12 where the same expression occurs in the Septuagint translation. This reminder of Jesus’ position as the Suffering Servant is the emphasis in Mark’s account of this aspect of His trial.

Verse 25

This time reference is unique to Mark’s Gospel. The third hour was9:00 a.m. John located Jesus’ trial before Pilate at “about” the sixth hour (John 19:14). This would have been noon. Consequently we should probably understand Mark’s reference as being to the approximate beginning of Jesus’ crucifixion rather than the precise time when the soldiers nailed Him to the cross. [Note: See A Dictionary of the Bible, 1906 ed, s.v. “Numbers, Hours, Years, and Dates,” by W. M. Ramsay, extra volume: 478-79.]

Verse 26

Typically Mark recorded only the essence of the charge that Pilate wrote and had displayed over Jesus’ head on the cross. It was probably written in red or black letters on a whitened background. [Note: Lane, p568.]

Verse 33

All three synoptic evangelists recorded the supernatural darkness that covered all of Judah from12:00 noon to3:00 p.m. None of them explained it. They all evidently viewed it as a sign of God’s judgment on Jesus (cf. Isaiah 5:25-30; Isaiah 59:9-10; Joel 2:31; Joel 3:14-15; Amos 8:9-10; Micah 3:5-7; Zephaniah 1:14-15). The Father withdrew the light of His presence from His Son during the hours when Jesus bore the guilt of the world’s sins (Isaiah 53:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Perhaps darkness covered the whole land of Israel because it also symbolized God’s judgment on Israel for rejecting His Son. [Note: Grassmick, p189.] The ninth plague in Egypt was a plague of darkness, and it too was followed by the death of the firstborn (Exodus 10:22 to Exodus 11:9). The death of Jesus15:33-41 (cf. Matthew 27:45-56; Luke 23:44-49; John 19:28-30) Mark’s account of
Jesus' death included five climactic events: the darkness, two of Jesus' cries, the tearing of the temple veil, and the Roman centurion's confession. All of these events happened during the last three of the six hours of Jesus' sufferings on the cross. "For the first three of Jesus' six hours on the cross he suffered in daylight at the hands of humans (Mark 15:21-32). In the darkness of the second three hours He suffered at the hands of God." [Note: Bailey, p96.]

Verse 34

This cry came at the ninth hour, namely, 3:00 p.m. Jesus' cry expressed what the darkness visualized. Jesus cried out loudly, not weakly with His last available energy. His great agony of soul was responsible for this cry. Mark recorded Jesus' words in Aramaic. Probably Jesus spoke in Aramaic in view of the crowd’s reaction (cf. Matthew 27:46-47). "The depths of the saying are too deep to be plumbed, but the least adequate interpretations are those which find in it a sense of desolation in which Jesus felt the horror of sin so deeply that for a time the closeness of His communion with the Father was obscured." [Note: Taylor, p549.] Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1. That is why He expressed His agony of separation as a question. Jesus was not asking God for an answer; the question was rhetorical. As Jesus used this verse, it expressed an affirmation of His relationship to God as His Father and an acknowledgment that the Father had abandoned Him. God abandoned Jesus in the judicial sense that He focused His wrath on the Son (cf. Mark 14:36). Jesus bore God’s curse and His judgment for sin (cf. Deuteronomy 21:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). God, who cannot look on sin (Habakkuk 1:13), turned His back, so to speak, on Jesus who bore that sin in His own body on the cross. Jesus experienced separation from God when He took the place of sinners (Mark 10:45; Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18). Even though the physical sufferings that Jesus experienced were great, the spiritual agony that He underwent as the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world was infinitely greater. We need to remember this when we meditate on Jesus' death, for example at the Lord’s Supper.

Verse 35-36

Elijah had delivered several people in distress during his ministry. It is difficult to know if the bystanders did what they did because they sincerely misunderstood Jesus or if they were cruelly twisting His words to persecute Him further. In either case they did wound Him deeper. Perhaps one of the soldiers gave Jesus the sour wine (Gr. oxos) to prolong His life so the onlookers could see if Elijah would come and help Jesus. [Note: Gould, p295.] In Mark’s account the soldier spoke (Mark 15:36) and in Matthew’s the people did (Matthew 27:49). Both evangelists were undoubtedly accurate.

Verse 37

Jesus' loud cry indicates that this was not the last gasp of an exhausted man. Jesus' cry was a shout of victory. He announced, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). Then He dismissed His spirit (Matthew 27:50; Luke 23:46; John 19:30). Normally it took as long as two or three days for crucified people to die. [Note: Grassmick, p190.] Jesus' relatively short period of suffering on the cross amazed Pilate (Mark 15:44). "His comparatively early death was not due to His physical sufferings alone, and it is a mistake to center major attention on the physical agonies of our Lord." [Note: Hiebert, p397. Cf. Clarke, p246.]

Verse 38

All the synoptic writers also recorded the symbolic act of the tearing of the temple veil. They did not explain it, but the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews did (Hebrews 6:19-20; Hebrews 9:1-14; Hebrews 10:19-22). It represented God opening a way into His presence by the death of His Son. The veil was probably the great outer one that separated the holy place from the courtyard. [Note: Lane, p574-75.] If Song of Solomon , it would have been observed by many people. Priests would have been preparing the evening sacrifices in the temple when this event occurred near3:00 p.m.

Verse 39

The centurion (Gr. kentyron, a transliteration of the Latin centurio that only Mark used) was the soldier in charge of Jesus' crucifixion (cf. Mark 15:44). Elsewhere in the New Testament the customary Greek word hekatontarchos ("centurion") appears. Mark’s word choice here is another indication that he wrote for Romans. This centurion spoke more truly than he probably knew. He evidently meant that Jesus was a righteous man (Luke 23:47). Still his words spoken as he stood directly in front of Jesus as He died were literally true. His statement constitutes the climax of Mark’s demonstration that Jesus was God’s divine Son (cf. Mark 1:1; Mark 8:29-30). The torn veil was a Jewish testimony to Jesus' identity, and the centurion’s confession was a Gentile testimony to the same thing. Taken together they provide a double witness that Jesus was the Son of God. "Here
Judaism and the Gentile world, each in its own way, acknowledges Jesus' sovereign dignity." [Note: Ibid, p488.]

(Adapted from URL:https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/mark-15.html)

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

The story of Jesus’ death prompts us to ask ourselves important questions. One is, “Who is my king?” Am I ruled by selfish impulses, others’ opinions, culture’s conformity, the past’s burdens? Or is the crucified Christ my king? Another way to ask that question is, “What do I see as power?” Is it following my dreams, getting my way, having it all, impressing others? Or is it giving myself for the benefit of others, as King Jesus did? Jesus came to power not through a bloody insurrection or other worldly means. He humbled himself and was crucified. In this way, Jesus demonstrated that he is the Son of God. Are you following in the way of the king? In the end, the gospel calls all people to repentance and submission to the crucified and risen king, Jesus. Everyone needs his mercy, and no one is beyond the reach of it.

**Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary**

**The Accusations and Trial** - The Jewish chief priest and the religious leaders worked hard at doing away with Jesus. They envied His popularity and sought to regain their revered place in the spotlight. Satan blinded their minds and hearts. They had no idea they crucified the very person God appointed to open the gateway to His throne. After Pilate heard the arguments presented by the Jewish leaders, he declared Jesus to be an innocent man. Pilate attempted to save Jesus by following the Passover custom of releasing one prisoner during the feast. Surely, he thought, they will pick Jesus over Barabbas, a known terrorist and murderer. But the crowd, incited by the religious leaders, demanded that Jesus be crucified and release Barabbas. Pilate feared a riot and problems with his superiors, so he had Jesus scourged with a whip made of leather thongs with sharp pieces of bone and iron balls that repeatedly ripped the flesh from His back, tearing through the muscles, down to His bare bones.

**The Cross** - After the scourging, the soldiers mockingly placed a crown of thorns on His head, then led Him out of the city to crucify Him. Upon being nailed to cross, Jesus endured a long, agonizing execution. Above His head was an inscription on a placard that Pilate had ordered that proclaimed Jesus King of the Jews. This insulted and angered the Jewish leaders, but Pilate refused to remove the placard. Daytime turned into midnight for about three hours and the earth shook. On the cross, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46, KJV), then "It is finished" (John 19:30), and died.

**The Open Way** - Once Jesus died, the veil in the temple split from top to bottom. Previously, no man could walk freely into the Holy of Holies, but now Jesus had opened the way to enter into God's presence through Him and His sacrifice.