

## Mark 15

Written by K B Napier  
Friday, 14 August 2015 15:46

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Jesus had already suffered at the hands of the palace guard and hierarchy. Even the supposed religious leaders took turns to beat Jesus about the head, spit on Him, and told their servants to do the same. Now we come to the next stage of humiliation, foul-mouthing and violence against the Saviour, the Messiah, God. It was the most infamous day in history – the day men murdered God's Son.

In many ways we are reading the precursor to today's 'political correctness', when those who speak truth and uphold the laws of God are punished and cast aside. Though some unreal Christians think no man wants evil or despicable activity, it is a fact of life that ALL unsaved men and women, if given a choice of good or evil, will choose the latter, because they *are* unsaved sinners. They **MUST** choose evil because their father, the devil, demands it. And it was evil that was unleashed on Jesus on this, His last day on earth as an human being.

As a watchman I observe who is doing what. Not like some kind of nasty schoolboy taking tales to teacher, but as one called by God to warn the churches of impending doom and trouble. If it will harm Christians, I shout loudly. But know what? When I do, many Christians will shout back and accuse me of being wicked! This is how corrupt churches have become. It is a time when sin is the norm and Christians have no idea how to live holy lives. Why? Because they do not want to! An holy life is demanding and stark compared to the easy-sin found in our churches today, and in society as a whole. Jesus died for holding to God's plan and way. We must live the same way.

### Verses 1-5

1.

And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

2.

And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it.

3.

And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

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4.

And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

5.

But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

We know from the text that Jesus had eaten the seder meal the previous evening. By the time He and the Apostles got to the Mount of Olives, it must have been very late, and still dark. When He was taken prisoner it was dead of night, and when He was dragged into the palace of the high priest, it was getting close to dawn. By the time the cock crowed twice at dawn, Peter had denied Christ three times. Now, as daylight took over, Jesus was still standing, beaten and humiliated, in the palace, waiting for the next phase of violence and hatred against Him.

Genuine Christians are often accused of “many things”. Even when their response is sound, it is ignored. The reason is that Satan wants to do us damage, in any way possible, whether through unsaved men or ignorant saved brethren. As time progresses accusations increase and will continue to grow.

No matter how many accusations were thrown at Jesus, He remained silent. Some take this to mean we, too, must remain silent in every circumstance. Frankly, this is mostly due to cowardice, not a genuine desire to follow Christ! And, the situation with Christ was unique, never to be repeated. It is a fact of history, *only* for the Redeemer, not for us to mimic. Yes, there are times to remain silent, but we are also told we must give a good account of our faith, and that God will fill our mouths as necessary.

When Pilate asked Jesus “Art thou the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered “Thou sayest (it).” This was a very blunt question and Jesus answered in equally open terms. This is yet another example of Jesus saying He was God: Yes, He was King of the Jews. Previously He had told listeners that His kingdom was not of this earth, so He was no trouble-maker or usurper of the throne. This, however, is how the religious band construed it, in order to get rid of the Messiah.

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Jesus said nothing else, and Pilate marvelled. He was amazed that a man so close to judgment was staying quiet and not arguing. (Note for those unfamiliar with Pilate: Pilate/Pilatós ('with a spear') was a Roman procurator, or provincial governor, and this day he was in Jerusalem. He ruled from 26AD to 36AD. As with all procurator jobs, he was appointed by the Roman Emperor, at that time Tiberius Caesar, to control and subdue the Jews, and generally keep the peace and gather in taxes. Though his attitude towards Jesus appears reasonable, he was known for his brutality, which was usual amongst Roman sub-rulers.

Pontius Pilate, others say, was a 'prefect'. In terms of rank, he was 'equestrian', so he was subordinate to the senate legate of Syria. Pilate's home was on the Mediterranean coast, at Caesarea Maritima. The only other information we have about him is from Philo and Josephus, who both describe him as cruel... but, as I have said, this was normal for sub-rulers. However, his brutality was greater than usual, for one incident (the slaughter of Samaritans at mount Gerizim) had him recalled to Rome for questioning. Pilate was a merciless and brutal ruler, yet he used proper judicial procedure to judge Jesus. Only Pilate could authorize Jesus' death, and that is why the Jews handed Him over.

### Verses 6-15

1.

Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

2.

And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

3.

And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

4.

But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

5.

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For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

6.

But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

7.

And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?

8.

And they cried out again, Crucify him.

9.

Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

10.

And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

Pilate decided to release one prisoner of the people's choice. This had nothing to do with compassion, but expediency, an act used to keep the people on his side. "There was one named Barabbas". (Full name: Jesus bar-Abbas – 'son of the father'). He was a rebel who, as a Jew, wanted freedom from Rome. He took part in a rebellious riot and was caught, but not until he had killed someone (perhaps a Roman soldier sent to help quell the insurrection). For now he was languishing in prison chains with his fellow rebels, awaiting trial. We are not told if he had committed first-degree murder or manslaughter, but his end was to be death by crucifixion. Matthew refers to Barabbas as a 'notorious prisoner', whilst John calls him a 'bandit'. All apply.

The decision by Pilate to free a prisoner has no real basis in Roman law itself. This is why I

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suggest his decision was a personal one, used to bring Jewish leaders on-line. Some suggest this was an annual event, but the text does not actually say that. On the other hand, the text of verse 8 might *imply* such an annual activity. Verse 6 reads differently; it simply says that Pilate released one prisoner.

We have unique circumstances – a famous Jewish preacher was about to be killed; a revolutionary was due for trial, and the whole of the Jewish Sanhedrin was agitated. A brutal man, Pilate could just have put Jesus to death, but, seeing that there was no evidence to support that action, he put the accountability back on the Jews themselves. It was, then, a clever political manoeuvre.

The text says that the “multitude” or crowd called for Jesus’ death. They did so because Temple agents were agitating the crowd, much as a football crowd can be manipulated by thugs to riot and commit violence.

Pilate, knowing Jesus was innocent, asked the crowd if they wanted him to release Jesus, and here we see the fickle nature of humanity. They had watched Jesus perform countless miracles; they heard Him trounce the Temple hierarchy time and again, and knew His preaching was amazing. Now, in a crowd, ordinary group dynamics was used to drive them into a frenzy, demanding the release of Barabbas! This automatically meant the death of a good man, the Son of God. But, that is what happens when group dynamics takes hold of a crowd... they lose all sense and reason and follow their base instincts and violent natures. It is a cautionary account for us today, for western Christians are being ever more closely monitored and abused by the authorities. It is but a step away from violence. Christians in Muslim, communist and Catholic countries are already killed, maimed and imprisoned.

Trying to keep Jesus free, Pilate then asked the crowd what he should do with Jesus. Their reply was thundering as they obeyed their base natures: “Crucify him”! Pilate was perplexed by their fickleness and inappropriate response, and asked “Why, what evil hath he done?” But the crowd was now blood-crazy and again demanded that Jesus be crucified. Pilate probably sighed, but as a Roman ruler he was used to being brutal. He released Barabbas and then handed Jesus over to the Roman soldiers to be ‘scourged’ before being crucified. If you think today’s authorities will not hand us over for judgment, think again, because it is already happening, particularly at this time by demand of Islamicists and homosexuals.

Scourging was vicious; it meant flogging the person, who was stripped of clothing. Jesus was

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either tied to a pillar or stretched on a frame. The 'scourge' or whip was made of leather strips with weights on the end of each strip, made of sharp bones, stones, or lead balls. The whipping then tore out bits of flesh from the back, legs, buttocks and chest. (This was the punishment ordered for Paul, before he demanded to be tried by Caesar). The scourging was not the only vile violence on Christ – He suffered far more than whipping, and we are told His face was so battered it was a mess of swollen flesh, unrecognisable as a face. The whipping alone produced extensive blood loss, because the wounds were very deep.

Scourging was always a prelude to crucifixion, so it was not unusual. The flogging covered back, legs, chest and buttocks, and was done by two soldiers, called 'lictors', at the same time, causing an herring-bone pattern of the wounds. One flogged, then as he was bringing the whip ready for the next stroke, the other soldier flogged from the other side. If there was only one soldier, he moved from one side to the other. The purpose of the scourging was to bring the victim close to death. It was also usual for soldiers to taunt the victim, because crucifixion was only used for the lowest of criminals or traitors.

The scourging was far worse than mere flogging. As the lashes increased so the bones, balls or stones tore deeper and deeper, first the superficial skin and flesh and then down to the muscles and even the bone. Leaving the victim looking like shredded meat. Blood loss was profuse, as deep veins and perhaps even smaller arteries were torn open. As the cuts went deeper the whole body would shake with shock and muscle damage, and there was also circulatory shock.

The words used of Jesus' treatment shows that His scourging was particularly harsh. The usual number of lashes was 39, but there is no indication of this, so Jesus may indeed have had many more. There can be no doubt that crucifixion, though brutal, was only the final step in the total obliteration of Jesus' body, which was already racked with appalling pain, loss of blood, and loss of sleep, food and water. He was as close to death as it was possible to be, which explains why He stumbled when carrying the large wooden beam of the cross. It is remarkable that Jesus, as a man, KNEW what was going to happen to Him, and yet He carried on. This is God in action, the Son being put to death for our sins.

### Verses 16-20

1.

And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band.

2.

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And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,

3.

And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

4.

And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

5.

And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

When He had been scourged, Jesus was taken away to the “hall, called Praetorium.” The hall could have been either an inner court or an outer court of the governor’s palace. The Praetorium is where the governor had his quarters when in Jerusalem. In this case it was a palace built by Herod the Great. The ‘hall’ could have been either an inner hall, or the outer, roofless courtyard, used for judgments.

The guard then called together the “whole band”. This was the entire military cohort or detachment. We are not told how many this was, but it would have been large: either the tenth of a legion, about 600 men; or, if auxiliary soldiers (those captured from foreign countries), between 500 and 1000 men, or a ‘maniple’ – a thirtieth part of a legion. Whichever it was, Jesus was surrounded by hundreds of violent soldiers; Hardened Roman soldiers were known for their efficient brutality and extreme violence, which were enacted without conscience.

These men, spoiling for trouble, threw purple robes over Jesus, Who was naked and bleeding, mocking His regality. They constructed a rough crown of thorns, ramming it onto His head. They “platted” the thorns, so this meant they had longish stems containing thorns... even the one making it would have been cut as he weaved the stems into a rounded shape. We do not know what plant was used – it could have been anything with thorns. Then, they shouted out in derision: “Hail, King of the Jews!”

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The soldiers beat Him on the head with a large stick, spat on Him, and bowed to Him as they worshipped Him in mock obedience. When they finished beating and mocking Him, the soldiers removed the purple robes, replacing them with His own simple clothes. Immediately, they dragged Him out to take Him to the place of crucifixion.

### Verses 21-26

1.

And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

2.

And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

3.

And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

4.

And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

5.

And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

6.

And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

As they entered the street, they saw a man named Simon (Peter). He was from Cyrene, a wealthy city in Libya. Thus, he was either a northern Negro, or, more likely with such a name, a

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Jewish descendant of earlier Hebrews. He was an older man, who had sons named Alexander and Rufus. Simon was commanded to carry Jesus' cross, because He was by now staggering through blood loss and pain.

The group made their way through the city and then, outside, they came to the place called Golgotha ('skull'). Though not sure, it seems it was named because of the shape of its rock formation. There, they hung Him and offered a drink of wine and myrrh. The wine was a rough type, more like vinegar, often drunk by soldiers. The myrrh flavoured the otherwise cheap wine, though some suggest it also had some kind of anaesthetic effect. This is possible, as other things were in the wine, such as gall. But, Jesus was not going to die with His mental faculties dulled! He refused.

Verse 24 tells us that the soldiers hanged Jesus naked, for they took off His clothes and cast lots with a dice, to see what items they could take for themselves. This was a normal thing to do – they reasoned that a dead man would not need clothes!

We know from verse 25 that they crucified Jesus at the third hour, which was about nine o'clock in the morning. The soldiers, again mockingly, rigged up a wooden sign saying "The King of the Jews". It was not just a derisory remark, it was also a summary of the accusation against Him.

### Verses 27-33

1.

And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

2.

And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

3.

And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,

4.

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Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

5.

Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

6.

Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

Close to Jesus were two more crosses, both occupied by thieves. This fulfilled a prophecy about the Messiah's death, that He would be killed amidst sinners. Just as curious insensitive people used to pay a fee to watch inmates at Bedlam mental hospital in London from an elevated walkway, in Victorian times, so curious people strolled around execution sites to see who was being put to death and to watch victims die. Those who passed Jesus tut-tutted as they shook their heads, and railed at Him. The word 'railed', in Greek, is the word we use for 'blaspheme', blasphemēō. It means in this text that they swore and cursed at Him, ridiculing Him. In this case they truly were blaspheming God!

As part of their blasphemy, they poured scorn on Him contemptuously, taunting Him spitefully – if He said He would tear down the Temple and rebuild it Himself, why not come down from the cross? In my imagination, I ask myself 'And what if He did?'

In this description of the way Christ was maltreated, even to death, we see the ultimate in persecution. Today, in the west, we see nothing of this kind of fatal persecution, but plenty of it exists in Muslim and communist countries. It can also be witnessed in Catholic countries, in, say, Mexico, where priests encourage violence against Christians.

What is evident throughout the west is the low view Christians have of Jesus. They call upon Him to give them power, but what would they do with it? Nothing! I say this because their calls, usually in prayer, are useless and false. Just as they call for 'love', which they never show, so they ask for 'power', though they do not understand what it is! Jesus brought Himself into being

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as a baby; He had power and authority within Himself for His 33 years on earth; when He died He caused Himself to rise again, alive, on the third day! This is God, not a Walt Disney character!

How many Christians realise just Who they are calling to when they ask for such favours and gifts? In modern parlance, they must be told: Get Real! The power they speak of and seek is the power of God. It is not for their amusement, or their self-gratification, but for the representation of Christ on earth. It is a power beyond anything available on earth. It can transcend any human interference and evil. Do not ask for something you do not understand.

A steady stream of curious people passed Jesus on the cross (how macabre are human beings!), and they included the ones who captured Him, the priests and scribes. Like the others, they mocked Jesus: 'Look at him! He saved everyone else but he can't save himself!' Little did they know they had played their part well! They were intended to be the killers of the Messiah, and they did the job assigned them. To save others Jesus *had* to be put to death, so He fulfilled His ministry to the letter... but the scribes and priests failed. They mocked by calling Him "Christ the king of Israel", but their mockery was based on fact, for He WAS (is) the King and the Messiah!

The priests and scribes further mocked Jesus by commanding Him to come off the cross, to show He was Who He said He was. This was not part of prophecy, and so Jesus stayed where He was. He had to die. This was seen as a failure by the onlookers. Even the others who were dying on crosses mocked Jesus! Such is evil and sin in the hearts of mankind.

### Verses 33-39

1.

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

2.

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

3.

And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

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4.

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 Elias will come to take him down.

5.

And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

6.

And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

7.

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.

Jesus was hanged on the cross at nine in the morning. He hung in utter agony for six hours. At noon (sixth hour), darkness came upon the land, and lasted until three in the afternoon. Obviously, it was not a natural phenomenon, but was imposed by God as a sign of what was going on, and because sin was being dealt with. After three hours of darkness, at three in the afternoon, Jesus suddenly cried out loudly: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" It means "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Jesus called out in Aramaic. Those who insist there is a special heavenly language called 'tongues' should note that though Jesus, above all beings, had a right to use a special heavenly language, if it existed, did NOT, but He used the language of earth!

The whole passage used by Jesus was Aramaic in language but is from the Hebrew meaning the same thing. The actual transliteration is "My God, my God, why thou hast forsaken me?" Thus, the 'hast' is inserted to make the question clearer. Without the question mark and with a lack of a comma after 'why', it could mean something different. However, the question is not a sign of Jesus' bewilderment, but a rhetorical statement. Jesus KNEW why God had forsaken

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Him; He voiced the question as a sign of His utter horror at being cut off from the Father for a moment, because He bore all the sins of all the elect.

The phrase is taken from Psalm 22:1, where David was asking why God did not seem to hear him or help him. As always, David began with his question, then reassured himself by saying God had helped the patriarchs when they called, but then ended with full faith. The whole Psalm should be read in conjunction with this text in Mark. Note the description given by David, even verse 18, where he says "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."! The whole Psalm is prophetic and Jesus was repeating what had been prophesied.

In that Psalm we see David is not questioning God's actions, but was only saying that at that time he felt alone. But, he quickly followed that statement with assurance of God's plan and protection. That is how we should view the question asked by Jesus on the cross. The question is rhetorical and tells us that though God indeed had to 'disown' Jesus for a brief moment, because He bore sin on Himself, He nevertheless took His Son to be with Him in Heaven. The word 'forsaken' in this text means to leave someone helpless.

Some who stood nearby heard Jesus shout out, and thought Jesus was shouting 'Elias' (Elijah). One supposes that the confusion came because it was a sudden shout unexpected by the bystanders, so they misheard what Jesus said. The word 'Elois' is said ell-ow-ee; the word 'Elias' is said ell-ee-os. Jews believed Elijah would return just before the Messiah came, to prepare them. So, the bystanders thought Jesus was calling on Elijah to come. Jesus said three and a half years previously that John the Baptist 'was Elijah', who paved the way for the Messiah, Himself. How wrong can religious people be? Very wrong, just as they are today!

One of the bystanders ran and filled a sponge with 'vinegar', the rough wine imbibed by the Roman soldiers, put it on a stick, and tried to get Jesus to drink it. But, the cry went up: 'No! Leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to remove him from the cross!' Then, Jesus cried out loudly and died. His death, like His shout, was unexpectedly swift. Most people took much longer to die, which is why guards usually broke their legs whilst they hung there, to hasten death.

When Jesus cried out and died outside the city walls, inside the city the veil in the Temple was torn apart from top to bottom. The veil was a curtain blocking off the Holy of Holies from everyone but the High Priest. It was where God came to meet the priest. The tearing down of this curtain was highly symbolic, for it meant that there was no longer a division between people

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and God, where only a chosen man, the priest, could talk with God and listen to what he had to say. Now, with the curtain gone, man and God could commune together, without a priest.

The centurion in charge of the Roman crucifixion guards stood near Jesus when He cried out. Though the religious fakes who mocked Jesus would see Jesus' last words as proof of His ineffectiveness, the centurion, someone who was not a Jew, had to admit: "Truly, this man was the Son of God."

Note that! The centurion was NOT persuaded by some kind of miraculous removal of Jesus by Elijah. He was persuaded by a dying man, beaten to pulp by violent soldiers, bleeding greatly and in immense agony! Thus, the soldier was persuaded not by miracles or even by great preaching, but by the Holy Spirit Himself Who alone can persuade a person to believe! The same happens when any person is saved – it is effected by the Holy Spirit, not by anything we say or do. Preaching is only a contribution, not a cause, for if we could persuade by our words, salvation would be by works, not by grace alone.

### Verses 40-47

1.

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;

2.

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

3.

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

4.

Joseph of Arimathaea, and honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

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5.

And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

6.

And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

7.

And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

8.

And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.

At the time of Jesus' death certain women were present; they had been there for the past six hours, hoping to minister some comfort to Jesus, though comfort is hardly a word we can use for such intense continuing agony. Among them was "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome." Salome was the wife of Zebedee and mother to James the elder (who became a leader of the church at Jerusalem) and John. We are not told Mary, Jesus' mother, was, or was not, there, but she may well have been, for we are told there were "many other women" with them, who came out from Jerusalem. It is noticeable that it was the women who stayed close to Jesus, not the apostles, who had all fled. Very often, women are the most loyal of believers. (The lack of position given to Jesus' mother shows us that her part had finished and she had no other reason to be honoured).

Jesus hung on the cross, dead, for the next three hours, until six. As a Jew He had to be taken down before the preparation began for the coming Sabbath (Saturday, the day of rest). This preparation started after six in the evening.

To comply with this rite, Joseph of Aramathaea went to Pilate and asked if he could remove the body of Jesus for burial. This request was more brave than is realised, for Joseph was a

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member of the Sanhedrin, the same people who condemned Jesus to death. Joseph was a believer, so his request was extremely brave in the prevailing atmosphere of Jewish-leader hatred for the Gospel and Jesus. This is why Mark says Joseph “went in boldly” and “craved”, or pleaded passionately, for Jesus’ body.

Pilate could not have cared less what happened to a dead body, but he needed to know that Jesus was indeed dead. He did not want anyone taking a man down and reviving him, to make the person a hero (though after his treatment survival would be impossible). He called for the centurion, who confirmed the death. Once he heard Jesus was truly dead, Pilate allowed Joseph to remove Him.

Joseph immediately went to the market place and bought a length of the finest cotton. He took Jesus down from the cross, and wrapped Him in the cotton sheet. Then, with others, he carried Jesus to a sepulchre or tomb. It is likely that Joseph bought the tomb previously for his own use, but he willingly gave it over to Jesus. The tomb was hewn out of solid rock, a cave. When Jesus had been laid out, Joseph got a huge stone to roll against the opening, to keep animals out. Again, it is likely the stone was already placed there in readiness for its occupant, so it would have fitted the opening reasonably well.

Mary Magdalene, and Mary, mother of Joses, watched as this happened, so they knew where Jesus was laid.

The spectacle of evil portrayed in this chapter is reflective of man’s wickedness under Satan. It shows the suffering of Christ, Who gave His body as a sacrifice for those whom God chose to be saved. It tells us of Jesus’ final hours, horrific in their violence and evil. Yet, in the words are a sombre reason to be glad, for Jesus was born to die! He came knowing what He would suffer for our sakes. He did not run away or flinch from what He came to do. He did not have to do it, but He did. And because He did, all who are elect are assured of salvation and an eternity in Heaven. Why should any of us be fearful or anxious for everyday things, when Jesus did this to secure our place in Heaven?

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