

Pentwater Bible Church

*Gospel of Mark
Message 61
July 12, 2015*



The Crucifixion by Andrea Mantegna Cir 1459-59

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Mark

Message 61

The Crucifixion

July 12, 2015

Daniel Woodhead



The Crucifixion by Matthias Grunewald Cir 1510-15

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

Mark 15:21-41

²¹ 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. ²² And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. ²³ And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. ²⁴ And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. ²⁵ And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. ²⁶ And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁷ And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. ²⁸ And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

²⁹ 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, ³⁰ save thyself, and come down from the cross. ³¹ Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. ³² 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.

³³ And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ 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? ³⁵ And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. ³⁶ And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone;

let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

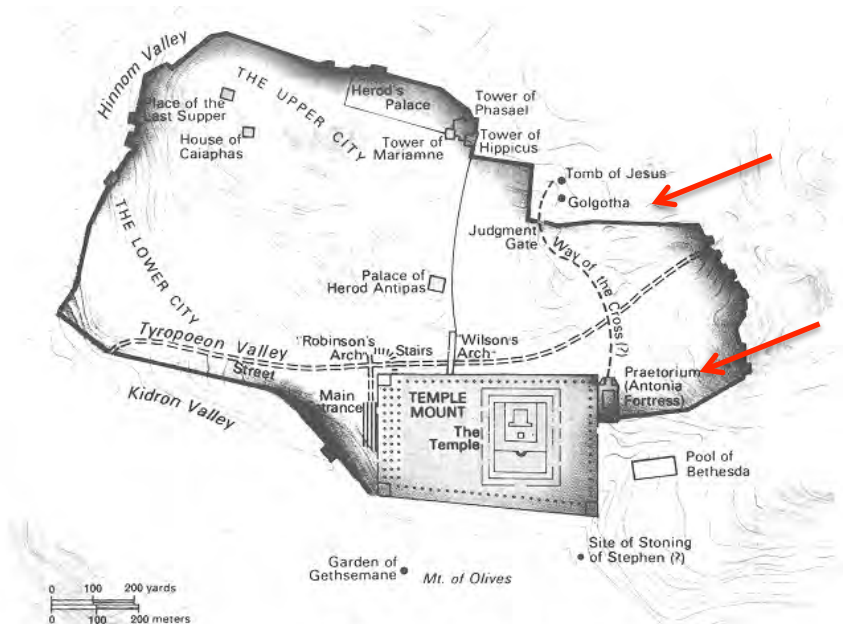
³⁷ And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. ³⁸ And the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. ⁴⁰ There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; ⁴¹ (who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem (KJV).

SIMON ENLISTED TO CARRY THE CROSS

Mark 15:21-22

²¹ 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. ²² And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull (KJV).

Typically the condemned would carry their own 100 lb. crossbeam (Latin *patibulum*) to the place of execution. Many did not make it to the crucifixion because the flogging they received prior to crucifixion commonly took their lives. Jesus lived through the flogging so as to fulfill the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 21:23). He was weakened and was having trouble carrying His cross. He bore it from the Antonia Fortress Praetorium to the gate of the city (Matthew 27:32).



Jerusalem at the Time of Jesus

When He reached the Judgment Gate He could no longer bear the weight of the cross. The Roman soldiers forced a pilgrim named Simon from Cyrene in North Africa to carry it for Him. Mark mentions Simon's two sons Alexander and Rufus because his Roman audience

would know them. Simon was most likely in Israel for the Passover as there was a large colony of Jews in Cyrene who would make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Cyrenians also had a synagogue in Jerusalem (Acts 6:9). Writing to the Romans Paul (Romans 16:13), sends a special salutation to Rufus, "*chosen in the Lord, and his mother, and mine;*" a delicate recognition by Paul of something like maternal care bestowed upon him by the mother of Rufus. Polycarp in his Epistle to the Philippians also favorably mentions Rufus. They ended the walk from the Praetorium at Golgotha where He was to be crucified.

Golgotha, a hill got its name from the stony shape of the top of the hill which was said to be skull like. Golgotha is the Hebrew word for skull. Calvary which is very familiar is derived from the Latin word *Calvaria* (which means scalp or bald head).

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

Mark 15:23-24

²³ *And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.*

²⁴ *And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take (KJV).*

They offered wine drugged with myrrh to help reduce the pain. Myrrh was a narcotic, which was frequently given by women to the condemned to lessen the excruciating pain of the crucifixion. Jesus chose to not take it. This is a fulfillment of the prophecy.

Psalm 69:21.

²¹ *They gave me also gall for my food; And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink (ASV, 1910)*

Further as they crucified Him *they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.* He was crucified naked adding to the humility of the execution. As this was transpiring they did not realize that they were again fulfilling prophecy.

Psalm 22:18

¹⁸ *They part my garments among them, And upon my vesture do they cast lots (ASV, 1901).*

Crucifixion was an extremely cruel and painful form of punishment primarily reserved for non-Roman citizens. It was usually carried out on slaves, violent criminals, and prisoners of war. Enhancing the shame and as a deterrent to crime the victims were executed publically and naked. Jesus experienced the maximum amount of shame any person could endure (Hebrews 12:2). Slave and lower class women were also executed in this manner.¹ Depending on the severity of flogging, some victims survived on crosses several days. Usually there were no major arteries severed so death came not by blood loss, but from hypovolemic shock or exhaustion asphyxia or heart failure, or a combination of the above.

¹ Corley, Kathleen E. *Women and the Crucifixion of Jesus*, Forum (new series) 1.1 1998; <http://www.westarinstitute.org/resources/forum/forum-new-series-1998-2004/>

Crucifixion was a ghastly form of death: excruciatingly painful, prolonged, and socially degrading. The accused was nailed to the cross as it was on the ground then lifted and inserted into a hole in the ground. From there it was made stable with shims inserted between the wall of the home and the base of the cross. The thought that God's Messiah could suffer "a cross of shame" (Hebrews 12:2) was so terrible that the apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians said that the preaching of a crucified Messiah was "*a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles*" (1 Corinthians 1:23). It was just extremely difficult to imagine that God would bring such a savagely despicable form of execution upon the Messiah. In the very act of crucifixion God identified Himself with the worst of mankind, which He endured for us, that brought us freedom from spiritual death.

THE KING OF THE JEWS

Mark 15:25-28

²⁵ And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. ²⁶ And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁷ And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. ²⁸ And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors (KJV).

The third hour, 9:00 AM is when they crucified Him. Roman custom required a cause of the crucifixion to be written and affixed to the cross. This too was meant to be a deterrent to any onlooker thinking of engaging in criminal activities. When Pilate wrote the title of "Jesus Of Nazareth The King Of The Jews" on the sign he wrote it in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The chief priests objected and wanted him to write that Jesus *only said* that He was King of The Jews. But Pilate simply said that, "What I have written I have written" (John 19:19-22). Pilate was divinely restrained from acquiescing to the chief priests objection so Jesus' true title remained. Jesus was never found guilty of any crime. He is a king who was stripped naked and executed in public view. The chief priests thought He had lost His kingdom and influence but actually it was just starting. They wanted to put an end to His influence. They were wrong. His death and resurrection would mean death to Satan's rule and establish Christ's eternal authority over the earth. Nobody that day reading that sign would understand its true meaning at that time. Jesus is King of the Jews, the Gentiles and the whole universe.

Two thieves were crucified with Him one on each side. They are unnamed as well as their crime. We know they were robbers. Their presence at the crucifixion is fulfillment of the prophecy from Isaiah 53:12, "*he was numbered with transgressors.*"

THE MOCKING CONTINUES

Mark 15:29-32

²⁹ 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, ³⁰ save thyself, and come down from the cross. ³¹ Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. ³² 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 (KJV).

The mocking of Jesus continued as people passing by railed on Him. They used the same accusations that the chief priests had. Mark emphasizes the *mockery* to which Jesus is subjected. During the trial Jesus' opponents were the chief priests, Pilate, and the soldiers. At the Golgotha crucifixion there was a much larger audience of mockers. Nondescript bystanders shook their heads and ridiculed Jesus about his predictions regarding the temple (Mark 15:29; 14:58). They did not understand that He spoke of His body not the Temple.

Like the bystanders, the chief priests and scribes view Jesus' unwillingness to save himself as a confirmation of their denial of his status as Son of God. "He saved others" they taunted, "but he can't save himself!" Ironically their words state a 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 (Mark 8:31). The demand for a sign here is also in Mark 8:11–13, which is just evidence of unbelief. Faith is not the result of signs and miracles, but the condition for them. Their taunting assumes that preservation of self is the greatest good; the surest vindication of a would-be Messiah is therefore the ability to save Himself. Jesus did not take it upon himself to preserve His body. Jesus became a ransom for *others* (Mark 10:45). The horrific events starting in Gethsemane and ending at the cross were about affirming and fulfilling that calling (Mark 14: 32–42). The mockery of those watching at the cross fails to begin to understand the vast mystery that Jesus is a ransom for others (Mark 10:45). The scornors even initially included even those who were crucified with Jesus (Mark 15: 32). One of them stopped mocking when he realized who Jesus was and asked Him to remember him when He came into His kingdom (Luke 23:39-43).

DARKNESS COVERS THE LAND

Mark 15:33-36

³³ *And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.* ³⁴ *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?* ³⁵ *And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.* ³⁶ *And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down (KJV).*

At twelve noon darkness was brought upon Israel. It lasted until three PM. This was a cosmic sign brought about by God to affirm the authenticity of Jesus and His judgment of human sin (Isaiah 5:25–30; Amos 8:9–10; Micah 3:5–7; Zephaniah 1:14–15). This is followed with Jesus crying out in Aramaic, "My God, My God Why Have You Forsaken Me?" Jesus is the righteous perfect sinless Lamb of God who suffers without cause. He was rejected and scorned by the Israeli religious leaders. He was then sacrificed as a political pawn by Rome. Add to that the denial and abandonment by all of his own followers, Jesus experienced something that is so horrible and so total that in his dying breath He realized His separation from God. The triune Godhead had been temporarily broken for the salvation of the world and the cleansing of the heavenly Tabernacle.

Some who were there thought He was calling on Elijah. Since Elijah was taken up to heaven without dying (II Kings 2:11) some thought that he would return to rescue the Jews in a crisis. Because Jesus said He was thirsty (John 19:28-29) one of them tried to give Jesus some sour wine, which had become vinegar (not the drug mix). They were trying to hasten Elijah's coming to take Jesus down from the cross before He died.

IT IS FINISHED

Mark 15:37-41

³⁷ And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. ³⁸ And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. ⁴⁰ There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; ⁴¹ (who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem (KJV).

Jesus cried out with a loud voice at the moment of His death, which indicates that this was not a normal human's death on the cross. If He were not part of the Godhead He would have had no ability to make a loud sound. He would have been exhausted. He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Several events coincided with His death. *First*, the Temple veil was torn in two but from starting from the top not the bottom. This was done to clearly show it was God and not a human doing this. In the renting of the curtain there is much theological symbolism. In the temple in Jerusalem there were two curtains (see Hebrews 9:1-5), one was before the Court of Israel and one before the Holy of Holies. Mark's Greek terms do not allow us to determine what part of the temple he intended. The Court of Israel, also known as the Holy Place, was the main sanctuary where Jewish men worshiped. The curtain before the Court of Israel was a beautifully embroidered Babylonian tapestry, depicting the earth, sea, and heavens that were meant to "typify the universe," according to Josephus (*War* 5.210-14). The second curtain (Exodus 26:31-37), which Josephus also mentions but does not describe, hung before the Holy of Holies. This was thirty feet square covering the entrance to the Holy of Holies that the high priest entered once a year on the Day of Atonement (*War* 5.219). The curtain that was most likely to have torn was the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the outer chamber. The symbolism can't be missed here. God Himself would enter the Holy of Holies and hover over the mercy seat and only the high priest was allowed in once a year on Yom Kippur. With the curtain torn mankind now had permanent access to God all the time due to Christ's sacrifice.

The *second* sign was the declaration of the centurion who sees and believes. This miraculous conversion is accompanied with his statement, "*Truly this man was the Son of God.*" The centurion is the first person in the Gospel to confess Jesus as the Son of God. The *third* sign is seen in Matthew's gospel, which adds that graves were opened, and the bodies of Old Testament saints rose from the dead and went into Jerusalem appearing to many people (Matthew 27:52-53).

In addition to the mockers there were some women who carefully watched from a distance the crucifixion of Jesus. Only one apostle was there and it was John. John wrote that Jesus' mother Mary was there too. 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). The second Mary (the "other Mary"; Matthew 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 only appears in this gospel account, was the mother of James and John. Many other women who did not accompany Him regularly were there too. Mark mentions these women because as we will see they play a prominent role in Jesus burial and announcement of the Resurrection.

NEXT WEEK: MARK: JESUS IS BURIED AND RESURRECTED

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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