

Mark: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Mark 15-16

Mark 15

15.1 Chief priests deliver Jesus to Pilate in the morning Mt 27:1-2 Lk 23:1 (Jn) 18:28

An official morning meeting of the Sanhedrin approves the unofficial night-time verdict sending Jesus to Pilate.

15:¹ And immediately in early morning,

the chief priests along with the elders and scribes and the whole Sanhedrin,
convened a council, bound Jesus securely, and took him away

and handed him over to Pilate.

[Pontius Pilate, Roman governor (Prefect) of Judea ad 26-36]

15.2-5 Trial before Pilate / Are You the King of the Jews? Mt 27:11-14 Lk 23:3 (Jn) 18:29-38

Pilate, who carries Roman authority, seems only interested in whether Jesus makes threatening royal claims.

² Then Pilate interrogated him: "Are you the king (*basileus*) of the Jews?"

[Mk 15:26; Mt 2:2; Jer 22:1-6]

But Jesus answered him, "You are saying so."

[Perhaps: "As you say!"]

The chief priests try to widen the scope of accusations, but Jesus refuses to engage their accusations.

³ Then the chief priests began accusing him of many things.

⁴ And Pilate again questioned him,

"Aren't you going to answer anything?"

Don't you see how many things they've accused you of?"

⁵ But Jesus answered not a thing more,
so that Pilate was amazed.

[Mk 14:61; Isa 53:7]

15.6-14 Jesus or Barabbas / "Crucify him!" Mt 27:15-23 Lk 23:17-23 (Jn) 18:39-40

An older custom of a Passover amnesty changes the direction of the inconclusive trial.

⁶ Now, at the feast Pilate was accustomed to release for them
one prisoner that they requested.

A group of Jewish rebels against Rome (including Barabbas) had tried to start a rebellion at Passover.

⁷ Now the man called Barabbas

[The Aramaic name means something like "Father's-son"]

had been captured among the insurrectionists
who had committed killings
in the insurrection (*stasis*).

[Mk 14:48; 15:27, more formal term for *lestes*]

[Zealot bands often attacked Roman troops.]

The crowd request the amnesty—for the rebels, or specifically for Barabbas.

⁸ And the crowd surged up and started demanding
for Pilate to do as he usually did for them.

Pilate tries to play the crowd's respect for their "king" against the danger of releasing a rebel like Barabbas.

⁹ But in response, Pilate said to them.

"Are you wanting me to release for you the king of the Jews?"

Mark 15

¹⁰ He recognized, you see, that it was out of their own envy
that the chief priests had handed him over.

Chief priests play on the anti-Roman sentiments of the crowd to bring about the condemnation of Jesus.

¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to demand
that he release Barabbas for them instead. [Act 3:4]

¹² But again in response, Pilate asked them,
“What do you want me to do with the one you call
the king of the Jews?”

¹³ They again made an outcry, “Crucify him!” [Jn 1:10-11]

¹⁴ But Pilate said to them, “Why? What crime has he done?” [Mt 27:24; Lk 23:4; Jn 19:6; Act 4:27]

But they cried out even louder, “Crucify him!”

15.15 Pilate orders Jesus to be Crucified Mt 27:26 Lk 23:24-25 (Jn) 19:16

Pilate betrays his responsibility as judge and, knowing Jesus is guiltless, condemns him to crucifixion.

¹⁵ So Pilate, since he wanted to do something to pacify the crowd,
released Barabbas for them, [That is, to pacify them.]
and he handed over Jesus,
after scourging him, to be crucified. [Mk 10:34]

Philo of Alexandria (*Embassy to Gaius* 301-302) quotes Herod Agrippa I describing Pontius Pilate in a letter in ad 40 to the emperor Gaius Caligula (ad 37-41), with whom Agrippa was closely acquainted. Pilate began as governor in ad 26, four years before Jesus' trial, and was deposed from office in ad 37 by emperor Tiberius shortly before the emperor's death. Agrippa writes to Caligula:

“He [Pilate] was a man of a very inflexible disposition, and very merciless as well as very obstinate.” With regard to Pilate's governorship, Agrippa describes, “his taking bribes, acts of insolence, plundering the region, uses of torture, his cruelties, his repeated practice of killing people without judicial trial, and his never ending, brutal savagery.”

15.16-20 Jesus is mocked by Soldiers Mt 27:27-31a (Jn) 19:2-3

As the High Priest's attendants mocked Jesus as a Prophet, Roman soldiers ridicule him as King of the Jews.

¹⁶ Then the soldiers led him away inside the [governor's] courtyard,
which is a praetorium, [government and military headquarters; Act 23:35; Phi 1:13]
and they called together the whole cohort of soldiers. [a tenth of a legion, up to 600 soldiers]

¹⁷ And they dress him up in purple cloth, and they put on him
a crown of thorns that they'd plaited. [Isa 28:5-6; Lam 5:16; Ezk 21:25-26; Job 19:8-12; 31:35-36; PsSol 2:19-21]

¹⁸ And they started saluting him,
“Hail, King of the Jews!” [Mk 14:65; 15:2, 26; Jer 22:1-6]

¹⁹ And they were striking his head with a reed [Isa 9:13-16; 42:1-4; Wisd 2:19]
and spitting on him [Isa 50:6; 53:3-5, 10; Heb 12:2]
and dropping to their knees they started worshiping him. [Ps 69:19-20]

Mark 15

The soldiers return Jesus to his clothes and begin leading him out of the coty.

²⁰ And when they had ridiculed him,
they stripped him of the purple
and put his own clothes back on him. [Ps 22:7; Prov 17:5]

And they led him out to crucify him. [Wisd 2:20]

15.21 Simon of Cyrene carries Jesus' cross to Golgotha Mt 27:31b-32 Lk 23:26-32

Simon from North Africa carries the cross-bar. He's known to believers as father of well-known people.

²¹ Now they pressed into service to carry his cross a passerby,
named Simon of Cyrene, as he was coming in from the countryside,
(the father of Alexander and Rufus). [Mk 8:34; cf. Jn 19:16-17; Mt 5:41]
[Cyrene is in North Africa]
[Rm 16:13; A Gk name & a Latin name]

15.22-26 Jesus is Crucified, his garments divided Mt 27:33-37 Lk 23:33-34 (Jn) 19:17-27

Jesus is brought to the place of crucifixion outside Jerusalem. They try to give him wine with bitter myrrh.

²² And they bring Jesus to the "Golgotha" place
(which means a Skull's Place). [Aramaic]
[In Lk 23:33, KJV translates "skull" *kranion* as "Calvary" from Latin Vulgate]

²³ And they tried giving him wine mixed with myrrh,
but he didn't take it. [Mk 10:38-39; 14:36; Ps 69:21; Prov 31:6]

The soldiers take their time, dividing his clothes, but by 9 am nail Jesus to the crossbar and hoist it in place.

²⁴ And they start crucifying him
and dividing his clothes
by throwing dice for them – who gets what. [Ps 22:18]

²⁵ When it got to be nine in the morning, they fixed him to the cross. [3rd hour of the day, starting at 6 am]

The placard of Jesus' crime, mocks both him and the Jews by asserting Roman power.

²⁶ And there was a written placard of the charge against him:
"The King of the Jews." [Mk 15:2]

15.27-32 Two robbers crucified; Jesus is mocked Mt 27:38-43 Lk 23:35-39 (Jn) 19:18

Jesus is grouped with two insurrectionists as a rebel against Rome.

²⁷ And they crucify two insurrectionists with him,
one on the right and one on the left. ²⁸

[v 28: "and the scripture was fulfilled that says, "And he was counted with the lawless." (Isa 53:12; Lk 22:37). Earliest Gk mss with the verse are 6th cent.

The people in general see the folly of Jesus' opposition to the Jewish Temple and religious pretensions.

²⁹ And people passing by were scoffing at him,
wagging their heads: "Well, well!" [Ps 22:7; 109:25; Lam 1:12; 2:15]

You're destroying the temple and building it in three days? [Mk 14:58]

³⁰ Just deliver yourself, by getting down from that cross!" [Ps 22:8]

The Temple aristocracy scoffs at Jesus' pretensions to fulfill scripture or to be God's Anointed King.

³¹ So also the chief priests with the scribes
ridiculed him to each other,
"Did he save others? He can't even get himself out of this.

³² The Anointed Messiah? The King of Israel?

Mark 15

Let him get down now from the cross
so that we can watch, and trust our eyes.”

[Wisd 2:17-18]

Those who were crucified with him were also insulting him.

15.33-39 Jesus' Death: "My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?"

Mt 27:45-54 Lk 23:44-48 (Jn) 19:28-30

At Mid-day darkness covers the land. Jesus cries out the mysterious lament of Psalm 22:1.

³³ And when noon arrived,
a darkness came over the whole land till about three in the afternoon.

³⁴ It was then that Jesus called out loudly,
“Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?”

[Aramaic rather than Hebrew from the Psalm. Mt 27:46]

which means, “My God, my God, why did you forsake me?” [Psa 22:1]

Those standing at the foot of the cross totally misunderstand. They want some excitement of the miraculous.

³⁵ And some bystanders listening said, “Hey, he’s calling Elijah.”

³⁶ And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine,
put it on a reed and tried to get him to drink it, saying,
“Wait, let’s watch whether Elijah comes to take him down.”

As Jesus, the true presence of God, dies, the veil before the Holy of Holies in Herod's temple is torn in two.

³⁷ And when Jesus gave a great cry, he breathed his last.

³⁸ And the veil of the sanctuary was split in two,
from top to bottom.

[Mk 1:10; Isa 64:1]

A pagan centurion (unwittingly) speaks the truth, when none of those who should recognize Jesus speak.

³⁹ And when the centurion, who was posted opposite him,
saw that he breathed his last in this way,
he said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

[Lat: centurion, Gk kenturion]

[or “a son of a god”]

15.40-41 Women who witness the Crucifixion

Mt 27:55-56 Lk 23:49 (Jn) 19:25-27

From Jesus' disciples, it is the women who are present near the cross and observe his death.

⁴⁰ There were also women
watching from a distance, among whom were
Mary Magdalene,
and Mary

[of Magdala in Galilee; Lk 8:2, healed by Jesus of demons]

[Jn 19:25. Jesus' mother?]

the mother of James the younger and of Joses,
and Salome,

[Mk 6:3 (Jesus' mother); James = Jacob; Joses = Joseph]

[Mk 16:1; cf. Mt 27:56, wife of Zebedee & mother of James & John]

⁴¹ who, when he was in Galilee, used to follow him
and to minister to him;
and there were also many other women
who came up with him into Jerusalem.

[Lk 8:1-3]

[1Cor 15:6; Act 1:13-15]

Mark 15

15.42-47 Joseph of Arimathea entombs Jesus

Mt 27:57-61 Lk 23:50-56 (Jn) 19:38-42

Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, informs Pilate of Jesus' death and asks custody of the body.

⁴² And when evening was already coming on,
since it was "Preparation" day,
that is, just before the Sabbath,

[perhaps 5 p.m.]

[Friday; cf. Jn 19:31]

⁴³ Joseph from Arimathea,
a prominent council member,
who was also himself awaiting the kingdom of God,
took courage and went in to Pilate
and asked for the body of Jesus.

[a town NW of Jerusalem = Ramathaim-zophim, 1Sm 1:1]

[Mk 1:15; 9:1; 11:10; Mt 4:17; Act 1:6]



Pilate certifies that Jesus is dead and grants Joseph the corpse.

⁴⁴ Pilate was amazed that Jesus had already died,
and summoning the centurion,
he asked him whether he had been dead long.

⁴⁵ And when he got information from the centurion,
he granted the corpse to Joseph.

Joseph takes down the body, wraps it in linen, and lays it within a prepared tomb.

⁴⁶ And having bought a linen cloth, having taken him down,
Joseph wrapped him in the linen cloth
and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of rock.
And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

[Mk 14:51-52]

[1Cor 15:3-4; Rm 6:4]

Two of the women observe the process and know the location of the tomb.

⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene
and Mary the mother of James
watched where he was laid.

Mark 16

SUNDAY – RESURRECTION

16.1-8 Women go to the Tomb and find Jesus has been Raised

Mt 28:1-8 Lk 24:1-12 (Jn) 20:1-2

On Saturday evening, the women go out to buy spices to prepare Jesus' corpse for long entombment.

16:1 When the Sabbath was past (at evening),

[Sabbath ends at sundown not midnight, thus Saturday evening]

Mary (*Maria*) Magdalene,
Mary the mother of James,
and Salome

[Mk 15:40, 47]

bought spices (*aroma*), so that when they went, they could pour them on him.

Sunday morning, the women go to the tomb worried that they will not be able to roll back its stone cover.

² And very early on the first day of the week,
they come to the tomb when the sun had risen,

Mark 16

³ And they were saying to each other,
“Who’s going to roll the stone from the entrance of the tomb for us?” [Mk 15:46; Mt 27:60]

At the tomb, the women find it opened and Jesus gone and a youth in white sitting in the tomb.

⁴ And when they looked up, they saw that the stone was already rolled back;
it was very large. [Jn 20:1]

⁵ And when they entered into the tomb,
they saw a young man [Mt 28:2-3 (angel); Lk 24:4; Jn 20:11-12 (2)]
sitting on the right, dressed in a white robe, [Mk 12:38; Rv 6:11;7:9, 13-14]
and they were alarmed. [Mk 9:15; 14:33]

The youth calms their alarm. He knows their mission and tells them Jesus has been raised.

⁶ And he says to them,
“Stop being alarmed.
You’re looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who’s been crucified. [Mk 1:24; 10:47; 14:67]

He was raised!
He’s not here!
Look, here’s the place where they laid him!

The youth tells the women to tell Peter and the disciples that Jesus is leading them to Galilee to see him.

⁷ Now go, tell his disciples and Peter [Mt 28:7, 10]
that he’s going before you into Galilee. [Mk 14:28; Jn 21:1; Cf Lk 24:6]
You’ll see him there, just as he told you.” [Mt 28:8-10, 16-20; Mk’s words imply Matthew’s ending.]

Mark 14:27-28 ²⁷Then Jesus said to them, “You’ll all fall away, for it’s written, ‘I’ll strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ [Zech 13:7] ²⁸But after I’m raised, I’ll go ahead of you into Galilee.”

The women flee from the tomb in astonishment, and (at first) do not report the empty tomb.

⁸ And when they went out, they fled from the tomb,
for trembling (*tromos*) and bewilderment (*ekstasis*) [Mk 5:42; Phi 2:12]
took hold of them,
and they said nothing to anyone, [Note that this narrative itself could only have come from the women telling the event.]
for they were afraid. [...]

[The text breaks off, apparently in the middle of a sentence: ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ It quite possibly continued with something like “... until Jesus suddenly met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” Cf. Mt 28:8-10 leading to Jesus appearing to the disciples in Galilee.]

Mark 16

LONGER ADDED ENDING [Written in the 2nd cent. Added to most manuscripts copied after the 5th cent.]

16.9-11 Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene

(Mt) 28:9-10

(Jn) 20:14-18

⁹ But after he rose early on the first day of the week (sabatón),

he appeared first to Mary (Maria) Magdalene,

[Mt 28:9; Jn 20:14-18]

from whom he had cast out seven demons.

[Mary Magdalene introduced, Lk 8:2]

¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

[Jn 20:18]

¹¹ But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her,

they would not believe it.

[Lk 24:10-11, 22-23; Jn 20:24-25]

16.12-13 Jesus appears to two disciples

(Lk) 24:13-35

¹² After these things he appeared in another form to two of them,

as they were walking into the country.

[Cf. on the road to Emmaus, Lk 24:13-32]

¹³ And they went back and told the rest,

but they did not believe them.

[Cf. Lk 24:33-35]

16.14-16 Jesus appears to the eleven at table, commissions them.

(Mt) 28:16-20 (Acts 2:1; 28:3-9)

¹⁴ Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves

as they were reclining at table,

[Lk 24:41-43]

and he rebuked them for their unbelief

and hardness of heart,

[Lk 24:25-26]

because they didn't believe

those who saw him after he had been raised.

¹⁵ And he said to them,

“Go into all the world;

[Mk 13:10; Mt 28:19; Lk 24:46; Jn 20:21 Act 1:8; Col 1:23]

proclaim the Good news to the whole creation.

[Act 2:5-12]

¹⁶ The one who has believed

and has been baptized will be saved,

[Act 8:12; 35-36; 16:31-33; 18:8]

but the one doesn't believe will be condemned.

[Jn 3:18, 36]

16.17-18 The signs that will accompany disciples.

(Acts 28:3-9)

¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who've believed:

[Act 2:43; Heb 2:4]

in my name they'll cast out demons;

[Lk 10:17; Act 16:18]

they'll speak in new tongues;

[Act 2:4; 19:4]

¹⁸ and in their hands, they'll pick up serpents;

[Act 28:3]

and if they drink anything deadly, it certainly won't hurt them;

on sick people, they'll lay hands, and they'll be healthy.”

[Act 28:8]

16.19-20 Jesus is taken up to Heaven, Disciples preach everywhere.

(Lk) 24:50-51 Acts 1:9-11

¹⁹ So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them,

was taken up into heaven

[Lk 24:51; Jn 20:17; Act 1:2, 9; 1Tm 3:16]

and sat down at the right hand of God.

[Mk 12:36; 14:62; Act 2:34; Rm 8:34; Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3; Ps 110:1]

Mark 16

²⁰ And when they went out, they proclaimed everywhere, [Act 8:4]
while the Lord worked with them [2Cor 6:1]
and confirmed the message (*logos*) through the signs that followed. [Act 14:3; Rm 15:19]

SHORT ADDED ENDING (Some manuscripts add the following after Mk 16:8)

But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him
all that they had been told.

And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them,
from east to west,
the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

Mark 13.9-11 Jesus foretells the future ministry of the disciples, not a paradoxical silence.

The approach of the destruction will bring dangers for the apostles, but won't stop the Gospel of the Kingdom.

⁹ “But you watch out for yourselves.

For they'll hand you over to councils, [Mk 1:14; 3:19; 9:31; 10:33; 13:11-12]
and you'll be whipped in synagogues, [Mk 12:3-5; 2Cor 11:24]
and you'll be set before governors and kings on account of me,
for testimony to them.

¹⁰ And the announcement of good news [Mk 1:1, 14-15; 8:35; 10:29]
must first be proclaimed into all the nations/Gentiles. [Mk 1:38-39, 3:14; 6:12; 11:17]

In the face of persecution, the apostles should trust the Holy Spirit who empowers them.

¹¹ And when they lead you away as they hand you over,
don't be anxious in advance what you'll say,
but say whatever is given you in that hour, [Jn 14:26]
for you are not the ones speaking, but the Holy Spirit. [Act 4:8, 31; 1Cor 2:13]