

When Life is Over

Mark 15

Barabbas

If the Jews felt good about the Romans, then there would be less of a chance that they would rebel during the holidays when everyone was in Jerusalem. So they had established this tradition by which they would release a prisoner at the holiday. Barabbas was a notorious prisoner (Matt 27:16). The Scriptures tell us that he was thrown into prison for a certain insurrection made in the city (Luke 23:19). He'd committed murder in the insurrection (Mark 15:7), and was also a robber (John 18:40). Interestingly, the name "Barabbas" means "son of the father". I see that the people had a choice. They had to choose between Barabbas - the son of the Father, and Jesus - the only begotten Son of the heavenly Father. Barabbas was a prisoner. Jesus came to set the captives free. Barabbas was a robber. Jesus came to give Himself. Barabbas was a murderer. Jesus came to allow Himself to be murdered that we would live.

You have the same choice today. Who do you want to give freedom to in your life? Will you choose the way of Barabbas, or the way of Jesus?

I. The Preparation. Mark 15:15-20

The Crown Of Thorns

When He had been before the high priest, we read, Mark 14:65 And some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers received Him with slaps {in the face.} By the Jews, He had been spit upon and punched in the face with while blindfolded. When He was brought to the Romans, He was scourged. In scourging, prisoners were bent over and their arms tied around a large post. The whip the Romans used was called a flagellum. The flagellum was made of many leather thongs. To the thongs they tied lead balls for weight and sharp pieces of bone and metal to grab and tear the prisoner's flesh. By the time it was over with, the prisoner's back was laid bare - no skin left, only torn muscle exposing bones and internal organs. Now the Roman soldiers mock Jesus, physically abusing Him even more. They lay a purple robe on the exposed, bleeding flesh of His back.

Isaiah also tells us through prophecy that they plucked out His beard:

Isa. 50:6 I gave My back to those who strike {Me.} And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

They also wove a crown of thorns - estimated to be between 2 to 3 1/2 inches long. They shoved it down on His head and put a reed in His right hand. Then they kneeled down before Him and mocked Him; and they began to acclaim Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and give Him blows in the face. And they took the reed and were beating His head with it, and spitting at Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him. And after they had mocked Him, they tore the purple robe off His back, and put His garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him.

II. The Humiliation. Mark 15:29-32

Numbered With The Transgressors

Mark points out that his crucifixion between the two robbers was a fulfillment of prophecy:

Isa. 53:12 ...He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors. People like those two robbers were exactly who Jesus was dying for.

15:29-32 Hurling Abuse At Him

He was being verbally abused, mocked, and insulted. By the Jews, the chief priests, the scribes, and even the two others being crucified. At that point, I would have definitely had enough. I would have called the whole thing off and smoked every human on earth with lightning bolts.

This is real evidence of just how deep Jesus' love for mankind really is.

Again, these things were also fulfillments of prophecy:

Ps. 22:6-8 But I am a worm, and not a man, A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, "Commit {yourself} to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

The crowd fulfilled the prophecy exactly.

III. The Crucifixion. Mark 15:37-39

They Crucified Him

Crucifixion is a combination of tortures. The prisoner was laid down on the cross and one hand was nailed to it. Not through the palm, but through the strong ligaments in the carpal area where the wrist flexes. Then the other hand was stretched tight so that the arms were straight across. The knees were bent and the feet nailed flat to the cross.

Structural mechanics tells us that when the cross was elevated, literally tons of pressure were put on the arms. It was then dropped into a hole several feet deep. At that thumping impact with the ground, both shoulders and elbows dislocated and each arm became about 6 inches longer.

Now suffocation begins. With that pressure on the arms, He cannot breathe unless He lifts Himself up. Using the nail in his feet as leverage, He lifts Himself up to take a breath. The pain in His feet is excruciating, and the strange angle of His legs overlapping and bent at the knees compounds the problem.

Lack of oxygen brings carbon dioxide levels in the blood way up, which makes the prisoner struggle to breathe more and the heart begins to beat as fast as possible to oxygenate the blood. Instead of its usual 5 liters per minute, it is now pumping out 20 liters per minute. At this rate it will become fatigued and the person will die of high output failure.

The blood pressure becomes so high that plasma is actually forced out the walls of the blood vessels into the area between the thorax and the lung. This fluid lost from the blood and filling this area can amount to a gallon. The only way for the body to replace it is to drink liquids. Thus the Lord says, "I thirst".

After hearing all of this, it is interesting to note that Jesus knew what this would be like. 800 years before, He had put this in the Bible:

Ps. 22:1 MY God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

Ps. 22:6-8 But I am a worm, and not a man, A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, {saying,} "Commit {yourself} to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

Ps. 22:14-18 I am poured out like water, AND all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And Thou dost lay me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots. This Psalm was written in about 1000 B.C. The Romans invented crucifixion about 900 years later, around 90 B.C.

IV. The Exaltation. Mark 16:3-7

The Stone Had Been Rolled Away

Have you ever wondered why the stone was rolled away? Couldn't Jesus have just passed through it like He did later, entering the locked room that the disciples were in? That stone wasn't rolled away to let Jesus out. It was rolled away to let us in, so we could see what the Lord had done!

Very often God does things not because He is limited, but because we are limited. After sinning in the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve tried to hide from God.

Gen. 3:9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

It wasn't like God didn't know where Adam was! Also, right before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He prayed,

John 11:41-42 ..."Father, I thank Thee that Thou hearest Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me."

He didn't need to pray aloud, but did it so that those standing around would hear. That is also why the stone was rolled away.

16:5-7 Just As He Said

The women see an angel inside, who tells them,

Mark 16:6-7 ..."He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you.'"

Back in the Garden of Gethsamane, Jesus had told them,

Matt. 26:32 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

Notice that the angel did not give them a new revelation. He merely reminded them of what Jesus had already said.

Beware of people who come with new news. It might sound authentic, it might sound right, but if it is contrary to the Word of God then it is deception contrived in the war room of hell. Remember that Paul said,

Gal. 1:8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Because remember, even

2Cor. 11:14 ...Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Angels confirm the word of God with their message, not contradict it.

Chronology of Events

Saturday	Supper at Bethany
Sunday	Disciples bring colt, Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, Jesus in the city and temple, Retirement to Bethany
Monday	The fig tree cursed, Second cleansing of the temple
Tuesday	The last day in the temple, Christ's authority challenged, Parable of the two sons, Parable of the wicked husbandman, Parable of the rejected stone, Parable of the marriage feast, The question of tribute to Caesar, The question of the resurrection, The greatest commandment, David's son and Lord, Denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, Lament over Jerusalem, The poor widow's gift, Greeks desire to see Jesus, The Olivet Discourse, Parables: The fig tree, The porter, The master of the house, The faithful and evil servants, The ten virgins, The talents, The sheep and the goats, Judas bargains to betray Jesus
Wednesday	Day of quiet at Bethany
Thursday	Preparation for the Passover, The Pascal meal and the Lord's supper, Jesus washed the disciples' feet, Judas signaled as the traitor, Apostles warned against desertion, The great upper room discourse (Jn. 13-17), The agony in Gethsemane, The betrayal and arrest, Peter and the healing of Malchus' ear
Friday	First Jewish trial - before Annas, Second Jewish trial - before Caiaphas, Third Jewish trial—before Sanhedrin, Jesus declared His messiahship, Jesus mocked; Peter's denial and remorse, First Roman trial - before Pilate, Second Roman trial - before Herod,

Third Roman trial - before Pilate again,
Pilate handed over Jesus to the Jews,
Pilate again attempted to rescue Jesus,
Judas' suicide,
The road to the cross,
On the cross: First three hours: 9:00 to 12:00 a.m.
Three sayings: 'Father forgive them...'
'Today you will be with me in paradise'
'Dear woman, here is your son' Second three hours: 12:00-3:00 p.m.
Four sayings: 'My God, my God...'
'I am thirsty...'
'It is finished'
'Into your hands I commend my spirit' Supernatural phenomena
accompanying Jesus' death:
Darkness, earthquake,
Rending of the temple veil, Burial of the body in Joseph's tomb

Saturday Body in the tomb, spirit in Sheol

Sunday The resurrection