

## The Final Hour

### Gospel of Mark Ch. 15 - Week 3

#### INTRODUCTION

Our study today reaches the final hour of Jesus' life on earth. The culmination of His suffering and sacrifice was reflected in His words of lament and seen in the physical world around Him as darkness descended at midday. Those around were confused as they struggled to understand what was happening to the one they had thought would rescue them but now hung on a cross as their hopes and His life ebbed away. Who was this man and what did it all mean? And then God opened to way into His presence as the veil in the temple was torn open.

#### Ice Breaker

Describe your most memorable experience in any frightening natural event such as an earthquake, storm, tornado, or eclipse.

#### Key Passages

33 At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34 And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). 35 When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah." 36 Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said. 37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. 38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"  
- Mark 15:33-39 NIV

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

##### 1. Son of Man

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, - Mark 1:1 NIV

39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" - Mark 15:39 NIV

From the first verse of his Gospel, Mark declared that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. God reveals Himself to unlikely people. And while Jesus was on earth few had recognized Him as the Son of God. But at the moment of Jesus' death, a Roman soldier was able to see the truth of who Jesus was.

37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. 38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. - Mark 15:37-38 NIV

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. - Hebrews 10:19-22 NIV

Under the law of Moses, the old covenant defined our relationship with God by requiring animals to be sacrificed, a veil to separate Holy God from sinful man, and a High Priest to stand in our place before God. Hebrews 10 says we can now enter the Holy place by the blood of Jesus, and the way through the curtain is His body, and He is our great High Priest.

How did God justly satisfy the price of sin? How did He demonstrate mercy towards us? Considering all that God has offered, what remains for us to do?

We have no way to approach God in our own righteousness. But in Christ's death and resurrection we've been given everything we need to approach God confidently as His beloved children. We are saved by grace through faith.

#### WRAP-UP

At the final hour of Jesus' life, darkness covered the land as He suffered on the cross and cried out to God in deep anguish. The people watching were confused because the one they hoped would rescue them now seemed defeated. Yet in that moment of suffering, a Roman centurion recognized the truth—that Jesus was the Son of God. The suffering servant was part of God's plan. When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn, showing that through His sacrifice the barrier between God and humanity was removed. Even when God's plans don't align with our expectations, Jesus' death shows that God was willing to give everything—even His own Son—to restore our relationship with Him, because He loves us.

#### MEMORY VERSE

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" - Mark 15:39 NIV

#### Challenge –

Reflect on what it meant for Jesus to be willing to go to the cross for us. What did He suffer when all of the sins of mankind were placed on Him? How did He feel when He was separated from God's presence? What was it like to suffer the physical pain of crucifixion. There can be no greater love.

Why didn't the others see that Jesus was Messiah? A crucified savior didn't meet their expectations of what a Messiah should be like. A crucified savior appears powerless and defeated. The people probably thought that God should spare the Messiah, not leave Him to die.

*When God doesn't do what we expect, it is likely that our expectations are wrong. Can you recall a time when God didn't do what you thought He should? Were you eventually able to accept that God's plan did not agree with your plan? What things do you still find difficult to accept as God's will?*

*9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, **lowly** and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. - Zechariah 9:9 NIV*

*22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. - 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 NIV*

The crowds had cheered the prophesied King who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. They welcomed the righteous, victorious ruler, but did they forget He was also lowly (Gr *ānī*). a word in the Greek that translates as humble, afflicted, poor? Jesus' suffering didn't compromise but fulfilled God's plan even though it failed to meet the people's expectations.

## 2. Darkness

Mark tells us the land was covered in darkness from noon until 3pm on the day Jesus died. This was not the only time when darkness fell on the earth.

*2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. - Genesis 1:2 NIV*

*22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. - Exodus 10:22 NIV*

*9 "In that day," declares the Sovereign LORD, "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. - Amos 8:9 NIV*

*In the passages above we see*

- *Gen 1:2 that before God spoke light into existence the world was wild, chaotic, formless and void*
- *Ex 10:22 the last thing God did before the death of the firstborn in Egypt was to send darkness to cover their land*
- *Amos 8:9 on the day of God's judgement the sun will go down at noon*

*In what ways does the darkness preceding Jesus' death relate to each of those passages?*

*1b ...My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? ... 7 All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. 8 "He trusts in the LORD," they say, "let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him." ... 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. 15 My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. 16 Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. 17 All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. 18 They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. 19 But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me. ... 24 For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. 25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows. ... 31 They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it! - Psalm 22:1, 7-8, 14-19, 24-25, 31 NIV*

*45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." - Mark 10:45 NIV*

As you read Psalm 22 you may think it was written by Jesus himself. Each of the lines from the Psalm above describes details of the crucifixion. The Jews should have been familiar with this lament of David (Ps 22) when Jesus cried out its first line from the cross. But they mistook the word Eloi (my God) for Elijah. The prophet Elijah was a key figure to the Jewish culture. It was thought Elijah would return in times of need.

*How was each of the above verses fulfilled during Jesus' trial and crucifixion? How does Mark 10:45 describe the vow Jesus fulfilled?*

Jesus was willing to suffer in solidarity with man. He trusted that God was faithful though He felt absent in the crisis. In the pain of separation, he still calls out and says, "My God," expressing the agonizing consequences of his full obedience. In Him we see that no depth of human anguish can break the bond of God's love. He fully felt the grief of separation from God, yet even then He trusted God to be faithful (v. 24-25)

## 3. The Veil is Torn

The veil or curtain of the temple separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple. The high priest was the only one who could pass through and then only once a year to make sin offerings for the people at the ark, where God's Holy presence was encountered. But when Jesus died, that separation was removed.