

The Gospel According to Mark

Lesson 10

Mark 14:1 – Mark 16

After teaching in the temple all day on Tuesday, the Lord departed with His disciples to the Mount of Olives, where He taught about the signs of the destruction of the temple and His second coming. While on the Mount of Olives, the priests and scribes were holding a secret meeting at the temple.

The secret meeting of the priests and scribes on Tuesday

Mark 14: ¹Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread was two days off; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth, and kill *Him*; ²for they were saying, "Not during the festival, lest there be a riot of the people."

Some people try to move the day of the Passover to Wednesday with the crucifixion taking place on Thursday. By moving the Passover they are able to justify three full days or seventy-two hours between the Lord's death and the resurrection. But the Scripture states the Lord rose on the third day, not in three days. The chronology that began in Mark 11:1 with the triumphal entry on Sunday shows that this secret meeting took place late Tuesday afternoon. Now in Mark 14:1 we see that the Passover was two days away, placing it on Thursday which has been traditionally accepted by the church throughout the centuries. The crucifixion would then follow on Friday.

The priest and scribes were so set on Jesus' death that they wanted to kill Him at any opportunity, regardless of the day or hour. However, the priest and scribes were afraid of the people in Jerusalem. If they were doing their jobs properly, according to the direction of God, why would they fear? When Jesus gave the parable of the evil vinedresser as recorded in Mark 12:1, the Sanhedrin knew He was speaking about them and it made them mad. Instead of changing their minds and correcting their attitudes, they would rather remove the beloved Son of God. They concluded that Jesus must die, but not on the holy festival day.

The costly perfume – in the home of Simon the Leper on Wednesday

Mark 14: ³And while He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining *at the table*, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; *and* she broke the vial and poured it over His head. ⁴But some were indignantly *remarking* to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted? ⁵"For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and *the money given to the poor*." And they were scolding her. ⁶But Jesus said, "*Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me.* ⁷"*For the poor you always have with you, and whenever you wish, you can do them good; but you do not always have Me.* ⁸"*She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.* ⁹"*And truly I say to you, wherever*

the gospel is preached in the whole world, that also which this woman has done shall be spoken of in memory of her."

Jesus did not go into Jerusalem on Wednesday, but stayed in the home of Simon the leper. The apostles were with Him when He was anointed by the woman with the perfumed oil. John tells us that it was Judas Iscariot who objected to the anointing, stating it was a wasteful use of the oil. Now Judas was the treasurer of the apostles and it was his job to keep the money bag and pay for the ministry expenses. History has proven that the keeper of the money bag often loses sight of the bigger picture and seizes the available power for his own purposes at the moment. Judas was no different, and for whatever reason, he was more concerned about money than the Lord on this Wednesday.

Judas makes a deal – Wednesday in Jerusalem

Mark 14: ¹⁰And Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests, in order to betray Him to them. ¹¹And they were glad when they heard *this*, and promised to give him money. And he *began* seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

Judas must have had some money issues which prompted him to go into Jerusalem on Wednesday and make a deal with the priests. The priests were thrilled with Judas' offer. Judas knew the habits of the Lord and could recommend the most convenient time to catch Him with the fewest number of people around since they did not want to take Him with the multitude present.

The prophecy of the room for Passover – Thursday in Bethany

Mark 14: ¹²And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover *lamb* was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?" ¹³And He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, "*Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him;* ¹⁴*and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"*" ¹⁵*"And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; and prepare for us there."*"

Mark 14: ¹⁶And the disciples went out, and came to the city, and found *it* just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover. ¹⁷And when it was evening He came with the twelve.

The miracle of the upper room preparation for the Passover was no different than the miracle of the colt being ready for the Lord's use on the previous Sunday. Two of the apostles were sent into the city to locate the room ahead of time. The man carrying the pitcher would be the clue to finding the room. It was not a difficult task to find this man because it was always woman's work to carry the water in those days. A man would carry water only if a woman was not available to carry the water. Just as Jesus predicted, they found the man and the room, set and prepared for the meal.

One at the table will betray the Lord – in the upper room on Thursday

Mark 14: ¹⁸And as they were reclining *at the table* and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me-- one who is eating with Me." ¹⁹They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, "Surely not I?" ²⁰And He said to them, "*It is one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl.* ²¹"For the Son of Man *is to go*, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! *It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.*"

The words of Jesus would escape the notice of all the apostles except one, Judas. Possibly they all dipped their bread in the sop, but only Judas dipped his bread at the same time as the Lord. We can only wonder if their eyes met as Jesus spoke the words of doom to Judas. Judas' heart was so fixed on the money that he did not hesitate to leave the room and continue on his hell bent path to deliver the Lord into the hands of the priest in a secluded place. Judas probably left the room at this time, failing to experience the inaugural symbol of the new covenant which the Lord would present shortly.

The inauguration of the new covenant – in the upper room on Thursday

Mark 14: ²²And while they were eating, He took *some* bread, and after a blessing He broke *it*; and gave *it* to them, and said, "*Take it; this is My body.*" ²³And when He had taken a cup, *and* given thanks, He gave *it* to them; and they all drank from it. ²⁴And He said to them, "*This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.* ²⁵"Truly I say to you, I shall never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

²⁶And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The wine used at this supper would have been the "country mix" of the day. It was one part wine and two parts water. For the Lord, it would be the last time He would drink the Passover wine until He returns to earth to establish His kingdom. The Passover ceremony had been the same in every home for the past 1475 years, but this new covenant ceremony was an addition to the Passover that Thursday evening in 30 AD. For the church it would become one of the highest and holy times for all Christians until the day He returns to earth.

You will fall away – late Thursday evening on the Mount of Olives

Mark 14: ²⁷And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, '*I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP SHALL BE SCATTERED.*' ²⁸"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

The eleven remaining apostles went with the Lord to the Mount of Olives where Jesus warns them of their unfaithfulness to Him in the coming hours. At His betrayal they would all scatter save one, Peter. John, the youngest of the apostles, would run but he will be with Mary at the cross. Most of the apostles were from the Galilean area so

Jesus foretells that He will catch up with them there after His resurrection. Still, they do not understand the significance of His words.

Impetuous Peter – late Thursday evening on the Mount of Olives

Mark 14: 29 But Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not." **30** And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me." **31** But Peter kept saying insistently, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all were saying the same thing, too.

Impetuous Peter cannot keep quiet. He is offended by the Lord's words and vows to never fall away. Notice the Lord's prophecy that Peter will fall away, not once, but three times.

Time to pray – late Thursday evening at Gethsemane

Mark 14: 32 And they came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." **33** And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. **34** And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." **35** And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground, and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. **36** And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

It is at this point in Jesus' life that we see His most human side. We saw Him weep at the death of Lazarus in John's gospel account, but not to this extent. Jesus was distressed, troubled, and deeply grieved to the point of death. The events of the next hours had been planned since the beginning of time. He knew the hurt and agony that He was about to endure and His human side longed for these events to pass, and pass quickly.

Three times Jesus finds the sleeping apostles – after midnight, now Friday in the garden of Gethsemane

First Time

Mark 14: 37 And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? **38** "Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Jesus had not prayed long in the garden when He decided to check on His men. They were asleep. He had warned them to be on alert for the time was near and they had forgotten His words in favor of sleep. Jesus spoke to Peter about the human side of service to the Lord as He spoke about the spirit being willing but the flesh needed rest. Peter's boastful faithfulness to the Lord was already failing.

Second Time

Mark 14: ³⁹And again He went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

Peter, James, and John were embarrassed. What could they say? In their tiredness they could not muster the strength to support the Lord with prayer in His time of distress.

Third Time

Mark 14: ⁴¹And He came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴²"Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

The hours of prayer were over and Jesus came to wake His apostles. He knew they were sleeping. They needed to wake up because Judas was on his way with the priests. Jesus rallies the men so they can be eyewitnesses of the next event in the garden.

The kiss of Judas – in the dark of Friday morning in Gethsemane

Mark 14: ⁴³And immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁴⁴Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him, and lead Him away under guard." ⁴⁵And after coming, he immediately went to Him, saying, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him. ⁴⁶And they laid hands on Him, and seized Him. ⁴⁷But a certain one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. ⁴⁸And Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as against a robber? ⁴⁹"Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but *this has happened* that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." ⁵⁰And they all left Him and fled.

Mark does not reveal the name of the impetuous one who tried to defend the Lord in the dark of the morning. John 18 does and states that it was Peter who drew the blood that morning and the slave's name was Malchus. Since this was Peter's eyewitness account, Mark did not want to bring further embarrassment to the fumbling of his tutor. The other gospel tells that Jesus healed the ear immediately. After the healing came the arrest and with the arrest came the scattering of the apostles. Jesus foretold it and the appointed time had arrived.

The naked young man – in the dark of Friday morning in Gethsemane

Mark 14: ⁵¹And a certain young man was following Him, wearing *nothing but a* linen sheet over *his* naked body; and they seized him. ⁵²But he left the linen

sheet behind, and escaped naked. **53**And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together.

We can only speculate why this life touch was placed in the Scripture by Mark. Since Mark did not include the identity of Peter as the swordsman in the garden, most likely Mark did not want to reveal that he was the one who had followed them wearing only a sheet to cover his body.

Peter by the fire – next to the council room of the Sanhedrin – in the dark of Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 14: **54**And Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers, and warming himself at the fire.

It was surely Peter's intent to continue defending the Lord, but he did not know what to do. Trying to watch out for Jesus and be there when He needed him, Peter followed the guards as far as the courtyard of the Sanhedrin.

False testimony against Jesus – next to the council room of the Sanhedrin – in the dark of Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 14: **55**Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death; and they were not finding any.

56For many were giving false testimony against Him, and yet their testimony was not consistent. **57**And some stood up and *began* to give false testimony against Him, saying, **58**"We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'" **59**And not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

The priest had Jesus captured in the dark of the morning hours. The whole Council was present. Without a doubt, Judas' deal with the chief priests had prompted the called meeting as the rest of the town would be sleeping. But in the midst of the wolves there were evidently men of honor and integrity. Witnesses had been enlisted from the common people but their stories did not match and the Council could not come to an agreement since a collaborated truthful testimony was lacking. They needed a stronger testimony of two or three witnesses to press charges, or Jesus would have to say something in their presence to incriminate Himself, then they would be eye witnesses to His own incrimination.

Jesus is the Christ – next to the council room of the Sanhedrin – in the dark of Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 14: **60**And the high priest stood up *and came* forward and questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" **61**But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the

Blessed One?" **62And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."**

"I am," were the only two words the Lord needed to say to incriminate Himself. Jesus was there for a reason. He needed a charge against Him in order to die as the Savior of the world. Out of His mouth He sealed the course of history and all eternity with His first two words.

The beating of Jesus – next to the council room of the Sanhedrin – in the dark of Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 14: ⁶³And tearing his clothes, the high priest said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. ⁶⁵And some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers received Him with slaps *in the face*.

We do not know the count of the vote for or against Jesus that morning, but we do know that the majority of the Sanhedrin voted for death. The punishment would also include a horrible beating. Since the whole Council was there we can assume that both Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were present also. Surely their votes were not in favor of His death.

Peter's first denial – in the courtyard of the Sanhedrin – in the dark of Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 14: ⁶⁶And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, "You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene." ^{68a}But he denied *it*, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about."

During the beating, Peter did not try to protect the Lord this time; rather, he denied his knowledge of the Lord when approached by the servant girl.

Peter's second denial – on the porch of the Sanhedrin – in the dark of Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 14: ^{68b} And he went out onto the porch. ⁶⁹And the maid saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is *one* of them!" ^{70a}But again he was denying it.

Horrified by the beating of the Lord and in fear of his being noticed, Peter moves quickly to the porch. Outside he was recognized by a maid and he failed to defend the Lord once again.

Peter's third denial – on the porch of the Sanhedrin – in the dark of Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 14: ^{70b} And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are *one* of them, for you are a Galilean too." ⁷¹But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" ⁷²And immediately a

cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep.

The beating was over when Peter denied Him the third time and the cock crowed for the second time. His eyes filled with tears because he knew the Lord's words had come true.

Jesus sent to Pilate – in the dark of Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 15: ¹And early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate.

The meeting with Jesus was not legal and the Sanhedrin scurried to justify the beating they gave Him. Mark states that a consultation was held. The gospel of John records that this consultation took place with Annas and Caiaphas. Caiaphas was the son of Annas. Both had held the position of High Priest. Caiaphas was in the position at the time of this trial, having followed his father's term. Within the year, Annas would once again hold the position in the Sanhedrin. The records of both meetings indicate that Jesus was probably unbound and then retied before going to the next person. Mark does not need to include these Jewish encounters because they mean nothing to the Roman audience to whom he is writing. Mark simply records the meeting with Pilate, a meeting that held credibility with the Romans.

Pilate question Jesus – in the dark of Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 15: ²And Pilate questioned Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And answering He said to him, "*It is as you say.*" ³And the chief priests *began* to accuse Him harshly. ⁴And Pilate was questioning Him again, saying, "Do You make no answer? See how many charges they bring against You!" ⁵But Jesus made no further answer; so that Pilate was amazed.

The Sanhedrin brings only one charge against Jesus to the attention of Pilate. Pilate does not believe the charge to be true but he cannot simply dismiss it without being accused of stopping a man from starting a revolution against Caesar. Pilate is amazed that Jesus does not answer the one charge but affirms its truth.

The crowd chooses Barabbas – Friday morning, after sunrise, in Jerusalem

Mark 15: ⁶Now at the feast he used to release for them *any* one prisoner whom they requested. ⁷And the man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection. ⁸And the multitude went up and began asking him *to do* as he had been accustomed to do for them. ⁹And Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰For he was aware that the chief priests had delivered Him up because of envy. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the multitude *to ask* him to release Barabbas for them instead. ¹²And answering again, Pilate was saying to them, "Then what shall I do with Him whom you call

the King of the Jews?" ¹³And they shouted back, "Crucify Him!" ¹⁴But Pilate was saying to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!" ¹⁵And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.

Barabbas was the leader of a riot that had taken place at Bethsaida. He was considered a desperate criminal, revolting against Rome. He was probably placed with the murderers because he had committed a murder in the revolt. Pilate offered to let Jesus go free instead of Barabbas, thinking that the crowd would think Barabbas too violent to be released. The plan backfired and the crowd demanded Barabbas' release instead.

The Roman soldiers take Jesus away - Friday morning in Jerusalem

Mark 15: ¹⁶And the soldiers took Him away into the palace (~~that is, the Praetorium~~), and they called together the whole *Roman* cohort. ¹⁷And they dressed Him up in purple, and after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on Him; ¹⁸and they began to acclaim Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹And they kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting at Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him. ²⁰And after they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, and put His garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him.

At first glance it seems that this was just another crucifixion, but Mark gave us one word in the text that reveals the fear that this crucifixion would cause a massive revolt. It is the word "cohort." This word indicates the number of soldiers that were call into service to help with His crucifixion. A whole cohort of Roman soldiers represented 1,000 men. With all these soldiers parading through the streets of Jerusalem on the way to Calvary, it was no small event. It is clear that Pilate was just as worried about the reaction of the people as the Sanhedrin.

Simon of Cyrene bears Jesus' cross

Mark 15: ²¹And they pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (~~the father of Alexander and Rufus~~), to bear His cross.

We really know very little about this man for Cyrene, but we know a great deal about the Jews from that area. Cyrene is located in North Africa in the province of Libya. Three hundred years before, during the reign on Ptolemy Soter, over one-hundred-thousand Jews were re-settled in the Cyrene area. By the time of the crucifixion, their number had greatly increased to the point that a synagogue had been built in Jerusalem just to handle the visitors from Cyrene. We do not know why this Simon was pressed into service, yet he was. It could have been because he showed great pity for the Lord, so He was enlisted to carry the Lord's cross on to Calvary.

Crucified on Golgotha

Mark 15: ²²And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. ²³And they tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it. ²⁴And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among

themselves, casting lots for them, *to decide* what each should take. ²⁵And it was the third hour when they crucified Him.

Jesus accepted nothing that would dull the pain of His crucifixion. He bore the full torture of the cross for the world in total consciousness. They began driving the nails into His hands at the third hour in Jewish time, or 9:00 in the morning. Jews began their timing for the day at 6:00 AM. Romans began their day at midnight so this was the ninth hour of the Roman day.

The inscription, the thieves and the heckling

Mark 15: ²⁶And the inscription of the charge against Him read, "THE KING OF THE JEWS." ²⁷And they crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and one on His left. ²⁸[~~And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with transgressors."~~] ²⁹And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! You who *are going to* destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, ³⁰save Yourself, and come down from the cross!"

The people misunderstood Jesus' words. Earlier in Matthew we read the Jesus promised the temple would be resurrected on the third day after it was destroyed. The context of that story spoke of the resurrection of His body after His death, but the people in the streets misquoted the words of the Lord claiming He would destroy the physical temple and rebuild it in three days, a tragic misunderstand. Little did they know that His staying on the cross until death would yield a greater miracle at His resurrection.

The heckling of the religious leaders

Mark 15: ³¹In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes, were mocking *Him* among themselves and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself. ³²"Let *this* Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe!" And those who were crucified with Him were casting the same insult at Him.

Notice that the priests and the scribes used words similar to those of Jesus when He had called for them to see and believe. The Roman audience did not need to know all the details of this portion of the story, so Mark failed to record the conversation of the two thieves.

Darkness at the sixth hour

Mark 15: ³³And when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour.

For some reason Mark uses the Jewish system of time in this verse rather than the Roman system. The darkness fell over all of Israel from 12:00 PM until 3:00 PM.

The ninth hour

Mark 15: ³⁴And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" which is translated, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"

At 3:00 PM the last words of Jesus are spoken from the cross and Mark records them in both Aramaic and Greek. We will never be able to fully grasp the weight upon the humanity of Christ at this point. He never committed a sin during His life on earth yet at that moment the Father placed on Him the total weight of all the sin of mankind. At that moment He paid the price for the guilt of every human born on earth from all times. Paul said in **2 Cor. 5:21**, "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Even with all this weight of sin upon Him, He did not stop being God.

The veil is torn in the temple

Mark 15: ³⁵And when some of the bystanders heard it, they *began* saying, "Behold, He is calling for Elijah." ³⁶And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down." ³⁷And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. ³⁸And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

With Jesus' last breath on earth, a miracle occurred in the temple. **Exodus 26:33** states, "And you shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies." So the veil was a barrier between God and man. At the moment of the Lord's death, God took that barrier away by ripping the veil from the top to the bottom. In the past, only the high priest was allowed into the holy of holies one time a year, but with the veil torn, everyone was welcome to visit the holy of holies every day of the year.

The testimony of the soldier

Mark 15: ³⁹And when the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

One of the thousand soldiers at the cross that day believed in the Lord. He was there as a soldier because it was his job, but even carrying out the penalty of death at the decree of the government officials did not stop nor hinder his personal belief in the Lord.

A few disciples were there at the cross

Mark 15: ⁴⁰And there were also *some* women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹And when He was in Galilee, they used to follow Him and minister to Him; and *there were* many other women who had come up with Him to Jerusalem.

Friends and family stood by as near as they could with the massive cohort of soldiers surrounding the cross. Most of them were women, although Joses was probably the Lord's half brother.

Jesus is buried before sundown in Friday

Mark 15: ⁴²And when evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴And Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. ⁴⁵And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶And Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. ⁴⁷And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were looking on to see where He was laid.

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Council which met in the early morning hours to make the Jewish trial of the Lord legal. Perhaps his presence, along with Nicodemus, spurred the need for the legal meeting after the ad-hoc meeting. He was wealthy and could afford to bury Jesus. He too believed in Jesus although at this point in the story his motives are not certain. Possibly he just wanted to return a kind deed for the One who had healed so many in the past three years. It took true courage to approach Pilate for the body of Jesus and Pilate could not believe that Jesus was already dead. It took days for men to die by crucifixion, but one of the soldiers assured Pilate of the Lord's death and he granted Joseph's request.

Quiet on the Sabbath – then the time to prepare the body of Jesus

Mark 16: ¹And when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.

Jesus was placed in the tomb before sundown on Friday. The Jewish Sabbath started at that time and nothing else could be done for the Lord until the completion of the Sabbath on the following night at 6:00 PM. Although they could have begun preparation of the Lord's body on Saturday evening after dark, they did not, but waited until dawn of Sunday morning to go to the tomb with their supplies. Preparation of a body in that day was nothing like the preparation of a body today. For the Jewish women, preparation it would be a simple but reverent anointing with fragrant oils.

The angel at the tomb

Mark 16: ²And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴And looking up, they saw

that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. ⁵And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. ⁶And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, *here is* the place where they laid Him. ⁷"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.' "

Mark does not fail to mention Peter in these last words of the gospel; after all, it was his eyewitness account. The angel sends the women on to tell the good news to all the disciples, including Peter. Mark does not share all the citings of the Lord in this record, but they can be found in Matthew, Luke, John, and the letters of Paul. The women would tell the story to Peter just down the road and the Lord would visit him that afternoon in Jerusalem. Over the next forty days the Lord would be seen by over five hundred people at different times. He appeared in Jerusalem that day to many people, which at first seems to contradict His promise to meet them in Galilee. But it really doesn't disagree. The Lord will meet them at the Sea of Galilee and invite them to come and dine with Him. Mark doesn't record these details because the Romans only needed to know that the Lord's resurrection was a true historical fact.

They went away in fear for He had risen and was going to meet them in Galilee

Mark 16: ⁸And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

For some reason Mark ends this record of Peter's eyewitness account with these words about the visitors at the tomb. They were gripped by the news just as we would be if we had been there. They were careful who they spoke to that morning until they saw Him as the risen Lord for the first time. The Lord did not make them wait long though, they would see Him face to face within a few hours.

The eleven verses usually found in the rest of Mark's record are not in the oldest and most reliable copies of the text. Although most of the detail is found in Matthew 28, it is truly difficult to believe that Mark ended this account with the women leaving the tomb. Perhaps he was interrupted. Perhaps a page or column may have been torn off from the copy from which our oldest copies were made. In the early years the ending of Mark has been handled in many ways, some left it alone at the end of verse 8, others added their own ending. Since archeology has yet to discover any texts between 100 AD and 400 AD which includes an ending to Mark's record past verse 8, we too will end this study at the same place and in the same spirit of the women leaving the tomb, trembling and astonished at the gospel of our Lord.

Mark 16:9 – 20 are not found in the oldest and most reliable copies of the book of Mark

Mark 16: ⁹[Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. ¹⁰She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. ¹¹And when they heard that He was alive, and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it. ¹²And after that, He appeared in a different form to two of them, while they were walking along on their way to the country. ¹³And they went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either. ¹⁴And afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen. ¹⁵And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. ¹⁷"And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." ¹⁹So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.] [And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]