

The Death of the Savior

Mark 15: 33-41

The text we have read today is contrary to the narrative most popular scripts of our day follow. In best selling books and block-buster movies, the hero always beats the villain and rides off into the sunset. Rarely, if ever, does the hero die in the script.

This passage is not on the New York Times' best seller list, nor is it a block-buster movie script. It is the eternal record of the death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. No doubt, the script had not gone as the disciples and those who followed Jesus had imagined. However, this was in accordance with the sovereign will of God. While the hero dies in our text verses, this is not the final chapter or the closing scene. This Hero will rise again from the dead, and the villain will suffer eternal defeat.

As we continue in Mark's account of Jesus' life, we come to the day Jesus was crucified on the cross. Jesus had spent His life heading toward the cross. This was not a tragic turn in events; Jesus knew all along that this day would come. This is the reason He came to earth, robed in flesh. Jesus came to offer Himself the atonement for our sin. As we examine the [observations](#) within the text, I want to consider: [The Death of the Savior](#).

I. The Agony in His Death (33-37) – Mark gives insight to the enormous suffering and agony Jesus endured upon the cross. He recorded:

A. The Timing (33) – [And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour](#). Mark revealed that darkness covered the land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. We know that Jesus was placed upon the cross at the third hour, [V.25](#). Jesus was crucified at 9:00 am. At noon, the brightness of the day was shrouded, enveloping the land in an eerie darkness. This unusual and miraculous darkness lasted until 3:00 pm. In the brightest hours of the day, the sun's light was hidden, covering the land in darkness. I am sure this created quite a stir as it began to happen, but likely it quickly became still and silent around the cross.

- The darkness is quite significant when we pause to consider it. Sin is often represented by darkness. The Light of Christ can deliver from the darkness. This revealed the great need for sin to be atoned. Also, Jesus hung in an open shame upon the cross. I believe the Father turned the lights out to prevent humanity from gawking at the Lord as He hung on the cross. Finally, we know the Father judged our sin in the body of His Son. While this holy judgment was being carried out, God prevented men from looking in on such a sovereign event.

B. The Tragedy (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?* Here we discover the most agonizing moment for Jesus as He bore our sin on the cross. As God judged our sin in the body of His Son, Jesus felt the separation sin had caused. The Father had to turn away, being unable to gaze upon the sin that was placed upon Jesus, His Son. This moment was completely foreign to Jesus. There had never been a moment in His eternal existence when fellowship with the Father had been broken. As Jesus bore our sin, literally becoming sin for us, He endured a time of separation in fellowship with the Father. *2 Cor.5:21 – For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

C. The Travesty (35-36) – *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.* As Jesus bore our sin on the cross, enduring the wrath of God in our place, there were those present who still failed to see Him as the Christ. There was an old Jewish legend that taught Elijah would come to the aid of Jews in desperate need. As Jesus cried out from the cross, sensing the separation from the Father, these assumed He was calling for Elijah to come and take Him down from the cross. The crucifixion became a spectacle, as men watched to see if Elijah would in fact come to the aid of this condemned man, who claimed to be the Christ.

D. The Triumph (37) – *And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.* As the skeptics and scoffers looked on, Jesus cried out once more with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. At this moment, Jesus willingly laid His life down in order to atone for our sin. He had power to lay it down, and He would soon reveal His power to take it up again. These were unaware, but Jesus was not the victim here; He was the Victor!

- We cannot look at this moment upon the cross apart from John's record of Jesus' final words. Mark didn't reveal the words Jesus spoke, but at that moment, Jesus spoke the greatest words ever uttered from human lips! *John 19:30 – When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* Having satisfied the righteous demands of God, fully atoning for our sin and securing our redemption, Jesus declared that He had fulfilled the sovereign will of God. The penalty for sin had been paid; the debt was now satisfied. Christ endured the judgment of God for sin, dying in the place of sinful men, fully providing atonement for sin. There was nothing left to accomplish! God had been satisfied and salvation was now available for all who come to Him in repentance and faith. It was finished!

II. The Atonement through His Death (38) – [And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.](#) Mark revealed a miraculous event that took place immediately following the death of Jesus – the veil within the temple that separated the Holy of holies from the place where the priests worked daily, was torn in two pieces. We cannot imagine the enormity of this event from a physical standpoint. The veil was estimated to have been as thick as the palm of a man's hand. Some scholars estimate it would have taken 300 priests to hang the veil within the temple. Can you imagine the sheer force and power it would have taken to rend the veil into two separate pieces? Surely the priests within the temple were astonished at such an event.

- The physical miracle of the rending of the veil is hard to fathom, but the spiritual significance surpasses the physical aspect. For centuries the veil had stood between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. God's presence dwelt behind the veil, hovering over the Mercy Seat. Only the high priest was allowed within the Holy of Holies, behind the veil, and that was only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. The holiness of God was separated from the presence of all but the high priest. The high priest served as the mediator and intercessor for the people. He took the blood offering behind the veil, placing it on the Mercy Seat, on the Day of Atonement. The people were well aware that they were not allowed within this place, and depended on the high priest to stand as their representative to God. The veil pictured the separation between God and man, caused by our sin nature.

- As Jesus died on the cross, fully and eternally atoning for sin, the veil of separation was torn into because it was no longer necessary. The righteousness of God had been satisfied through the sacrifice of His Son, and all who come to Christ in salvation, have access to the throne of God. We no longer need a man to intercede on our behalf. Jesus ascended back to the Father, where He stands as our mediator and intercessor. We can approach the throne of grace with full confidence, being granted the right to enter the presence of God through the righteousness of Christ being imputed to us! [Eph.2:13-14 – But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.](#) ^[14] [For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*.](#)

III. The Announcement after His Death (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.](#) After experiencing the death of Jesus upon the cross, the centurion, a Roman commander over a company of soldiers, declared that Jesus was in fact the Son of God. A hardened Roman soldier saw the evidence of Calvary and believed that Jesus was who He claimed to be!

- Consider the significance of this declaration. Being a Roman centurion, this man had likely witnessed many crucifixions. He had watched as the condemned cursed and spoke of the injustice of their deaths. This man was much different. There was no animosity; there was no

hatred in His eyes or condemnation in His voice. While others died a slow, painful death, growing weaker and weaker with each passing moment, this man was different. He cried out with a voice that revealed confidence, strength, and victory as He died.

- I can't say with certainty, but it appears this centurion revealed saving faith in the Lord. He saw the evidence and believed that Jesus was in fact God's Son. He saw Jesus for who He really was. Whether he was saved or not, all must do as the centurion in order to be saved. We must see Jesus as the only means of salvation, realizing He died in our place to atone for our sin, believe on Him as Savior and Lord, while confessing Him to be the Son of God!

IV. The Attendance at His Death (40-41) – [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.](#) Mark revealed there were women watching these events on Calvary. We know that Mary, Jesus' mother was there, along with John. Jesus spoke directly to them from the cross. Also, we find that Mary Magdalene was there, viewing from a distance. With her was Mary the mother of James the less and Joses, believed to be the wife of Cleophas. Salome was the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of James and John, Jesus' disciples. We also discover that many other women were there, who had come to Jerusalem with Jesus.

- Apart from John, we have no record of any men who followed Jesus, being near Calvary during the crucifixion. These women were committed to the Lord and determined to show their support, while seeing what would happen to Jesus as He was crucified. We need the committed devotion of these women in our Christian lives. They serve as an example for all who read these words!

Conclusion: We have again considered a gracious and holy passage of Scripture. Jesus died in our place, enduring the judgment and death we deserved. He was there because He knew this was His purpose for coming to live as a man on earth. His commitment to fulfill the plan of redemption, and great love for us, compelled Him to endure the suffering and agonies of the cross. He endured all of this for you and me! Have you believed in Christ for salvation, repenting of sin and believing in His atoning work by faith? If so, rejoice that you have been saved and placed within the body of Christ. If not, I urge you to do so today!