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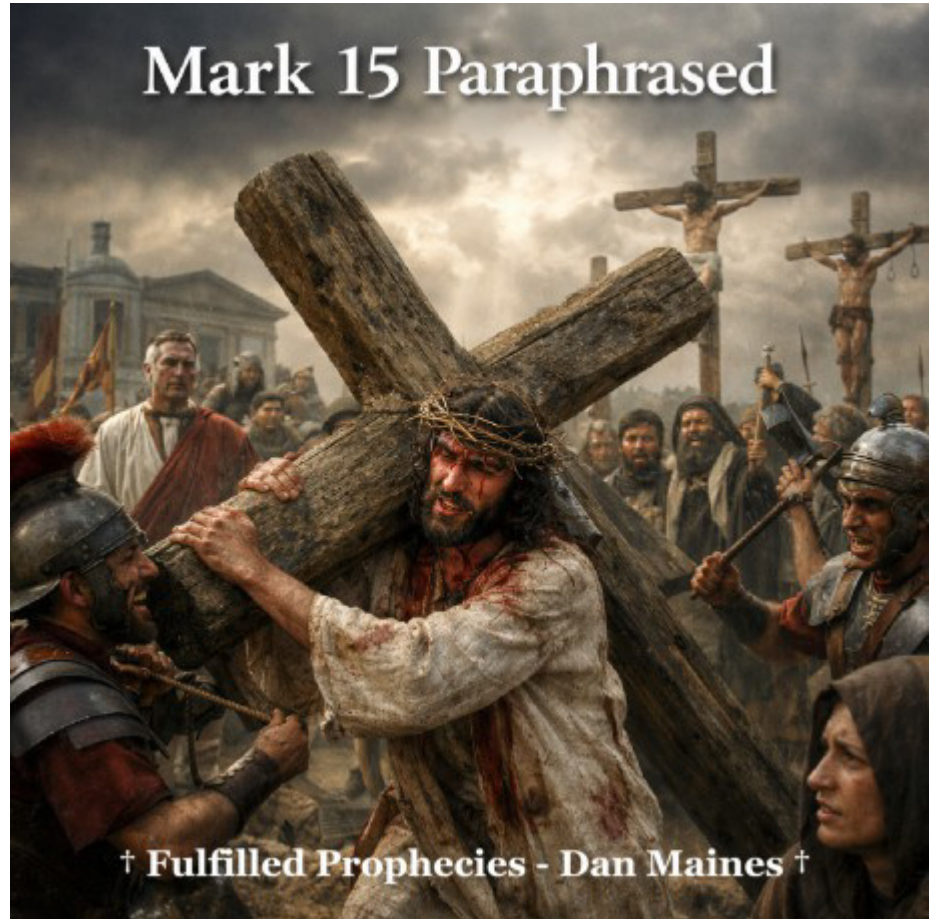
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Mark 15 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Mark 15 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Mark 15 records the final trial, crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus.

† This chapter shows the Roman judgment, the mocking by soldiers, and the execution that fulfilled the prophets.

† The events here happened in real history under Roman authority, and they set the stage for the resurrection that would follow.

Mark 15:1

Early in the morning the chief priests, elders, scribes, and the whole council reached their decision. They tied Jesus up, led Him away, and handed Him over to Pilate.

† The religious leaders didn't have authority to execute anyone under Roman rule, so they brought Jesus to the Roman governor (John 18:31).

† Their goal wasn't justice, it was to have Rome carry out the execution they already decided on.

† Josephus describes how Jewish leaders often brought capital cases before Roman governors during this period.

Mark 15:2

Pilate asked Him, Are you the King of the Jews? Jesus answered, It is as you say.

† Pilate focused on political claims, because Rome only cared about threats to Caesar.

† Jesus acknowledged the title but didn't present Himself as a political rebel (John 18:36).

† Roman historians like Tacitus confirm that Pilate governed Judea and handled cases involving accusations of sedition.

Mark 15:3

The chief priests kept bringing many accusations against Him.

† The leaders tried to overwhelm the governor with charges hoping something would stick.

† Luke records that they accused Him of misleading the nation and opposing taxes to Caesar (Luke 23:2).

† This shows how the charges were political, not theological.

Mark 15:4

Pilate questioned Him again, saying, Aren't you going to answer? Look at how many things they are accusing you of.

† Pilate was surprised by Jesus' silence because defendants normally argued their case.

† This silence fulfilled the prophecy of the suffering servant who remained quiet before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7).

† Roman legal practice expected self defense, which Jesus intentionally refused.

Mark 15:5

But Jesus said nothing more, and Pilate was amazed.

† Pilate recognized that Jesus wasn't acting like a criminal.

† The governor could see the charges were driven by jealousy (Matthew 27:18).

† Early Christian writers often pointed to this moment as proof of Jesus' innocence.

Mark 15:6

Now at the feast the governor had a custom of releasing one prisoner whom the people requested.

† This practice was meant to keep peace during the crowded Passover season.

† Roman authorities sometimes used public gestures like this to prevent unrest.

† Jerusalem would have been filled with pilgrims, making tension high.

Mark 15:7

A man named Barabbas was in prison with rebels who had committed murder during an uprising.

† Barabbas was likely involved in a violent revolt against Rome.

† Ironically the real insurrectionist would be released while the innocent one was condemned.

† Josephus describes many such uprisings during this turbulent time.

Mark 15:8

The crowd came up and began asking Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

† The crowd expected the yearly release tradition.

† The chief priests would soon influence their choice.

† Public pressure often shaped Roman decisions in volatile

regions.

Mark 15:9

Pilate answered them, saying, Do you want me to release the King of the Jews for you?

† Pilate attempted to free Jesus through the custom.

† He likely thought the crowd would prefer Jesus over a violent rebel.

† This was his attempt to avoid executing a man he believed innocent.

Mark 15:10

He knew the chief priests had handed Him over out of jealousy.

† Pilate saw through their motives.

† Religious envy had turned into a political accusation.

† Roman officials often distrusted local religious leaders.

Mark 15:11

But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so they would ask for Barabbas instead.

† The leaders actively manipulated the crowd.

† Public opinion shifted quickly under their influence.

† This moment shows how mob pressure shaped the outcome.

Mark 15:12

Pilate responded again and said to them, Then what do you want me to do with the one you call the King of the Jews?

† Pilate placed the decision back on the crowd.

† This shows his hesitation to execute Jesus.

† Roman governors often balanced justice with maintaining order.

Mark 15:13

They shouted again, Crucify Him.

† The crowd demanded the Roman method of execution.

† Crucifixion was reserved for rebels and slaves.

† It was designed to be both painful and humiliating.

Mark 15:14

Pilate said to them, Why? What evil has He done? But they shouted even louder, Crucify Him.

† Pilate openly admitted no crime had been proven.

† The mob responded with louder demands instead of evidence.

† This shows how political pressure overrode justice.

Mark 15:15

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. After having Jesus flogged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

† Roman flogging was brutal and often fatal on its own.

† Pilate chose political peace over justice.

† Tacitus later confirmed that Jesus was executed under Pontius Pilate.

Mark 15:16

The soldiers took Him inside the palace courtyard and called together the whole battalion.

† A Roman battalion could include hundreds of soldiers.

† They gathered to mock the condemned prisoner.

† Roman soldiers often ridiculed those they executed.

Mark 15:17

They dressed Him in purple and twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on Him.

† Purple symbolized royalty.

† The crown of thorns mocked the idea that He was a king.

† Their mockery unintentionally declared the truth about who He was.

Mark 15:18

They began greeting Him, Hail, King of the Jews.

† The soldiers turned the charge against Him into a cruel joke.

† Their sarcasm echoed Roman loyalty chants to Caesar.

† This fulfilled the suffering described in prophetic passages (Isaiah 50:6).

Mark 15:19

They kept striking His head with a reed, spitting on Him, and kneeling down pretending to honor Him.

† The abuse was both physical and humiliating.

† Spitting was a sign of deep contempt in ancient culture.

† The mock kneeling showed their complete disrespect.

Mark 15:20

After mocking Him, they took the purple robe off Him, put His own clothes back on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

† The crucifixion site would be outside the city walls.

† Roman executions were public warnings to others.

† The condemned were often forced to carry the crossbeam.

Mark 15:21

They forced a man named Simon from Cyrene, who was coming in from the countryside, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry His cross.

† Simon was likely a pilgrim visiting Jerusalem.

† His sons later became known in the early church (Romans 16:13).

† Roman soldiers could legally compel civilians to carry burdens.

Mark 15:22

They brought Him to the place called Golgotha, which means Place of the Skull.

† Golgotha was likely a hill outside Jerusalem.

† The name may refer to its shape or to executions performed there.

† Archaeological studies confirm crucifixions occurred outside city walls.

Mark 15:23

They tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He didn't take it.

† This mixture acted as a mild pain duller.

† Jesus refused it, choosing to face the suffering fully.

† This fulfilled the pattern of voluntary sacrifice.

Mark 15:24

They crucified Him and divided His clothes among themselves, casting lots to decide what each would take.

† Roman soldiers kept the belongings of the condemned.

† This fulfilled Psalm 22:18.

† Crucifixion involved nails or ropes securing the victim to the cross.

Mark 15:25

It was the third hour when they crucified Him.

† This places the crucifixion around mid morning.

† Mark gives the timeline of the execution process.

† Public executions lasted for hours.

Mark 15:26

The inscription stating the charge against Him read: The King of the Jews.

† Roman practice included a written accusation above the victim.

† This title unintentionally proclaimed the truth.

† Pilate refused to change the wording despite objections (John 19:21-22).

Mark 15:27

They crucified two rebels with Him, one on His right and one on His left.

† This placed Jesus among criminals.

† The scene fulfilled prophecy about being counted with transgressors (Isaiah 53:12).

† Roman executions often grouped criminals together.

Mark 15:29

Those passing by insulted Him, shaking their heads and saying, You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself.

† They misunderstood Jesus' earlier statement about the temple (John 2:19).

† The mocking crowds echoed accusations from His trial.

† Public ridicule was common during crucifixions.

Mark 15:30

Come down from the cross and save Yourself.

† The crowd challenged His authority and power.

† Ironically His refusal to come down was exactly how salvation would come.

† The temptation echoed earlier tests in the wilderness.

Mark 15:31

In the same way the chief priests with the scribes mocked Him, saying among themselves, He saved others, but He can't save Himself.

† The leaders continued their mockery even at the cross.

† Their words unintentionally confirmed His miracles.

† Their blindness prevented them from seeing the purpose of the cross.

Mark 15:32

Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross so we may see and believe. Those who were crucified with Him were also insulting Him.

† The demand for signs continued even at His death.

† Faith based only on spectacle isn't true belief.

† The criminals joined the mockery at first.

Mark 15:33

When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land

until the ninth hour.

† The darkness symbolized divine judgment.

† Ancient writers recorded unusual darkness around this time.

† It marked the turning point of the crucifixion.

Mark 15:34

At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which means My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me.

† Jesus quoted Psalm 22.

† This connected His suffering directly to prophetic scripture.

† The cry expressed the weight of the moment.

Mark 15:35

Some of those standing nearby heard it and said, Look, He's calling for Elijah.

† The crowd misunderstood His words.

† Jewish tradition expected Elijah to appear in times of crisis.

† Their confusion added to the chaos of the scene.

Mark 15:36

Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to Him to drink, saying, Let's see whether Elijah will come to take Him down.

† Sour wine was a common drink for soldiers.

† This act may have been curiosity rather than compassion.

† The crowd still treated the moment like a spectacle.

Mark 15:37

Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed His last.

† Jesus died willingly after enduring the crucifixion.

† The loud cry showed He still had strength at the moment of death.

† His death completed the sacrifice.

Mark 15:38

The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

† The temple curtain separated the Holy of Holies.

† The tearing symbolized the end of the old covenant system.

† God Himself tore it from top to bottom.

Mark 15:39

When the centurion standing there saw how He died, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

† A Roman officer recognized what many in Israel refused to see.

† His confession stands as a powerful witness.

† Roman soldiers were trained observers of death.

Mark 15:40

Some women were watching from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and Joses, and Salome.

† The women remained when many disciples fled.

† They would later become witnesses to the resurrection.

† Their presence adds historical credibility to the account.

Mark 15:41

When He was in Galilee they used to follow Him and serve Him, and many other women had come up with Him to Jerusalem.

† These women supported Jesus' ministry.

† Their loyalty continued even at the crucifixion.

† Early Christian communities remembered these witnesses.

Mark 15:42

When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

† Jewish law required burial before the Sabbath began.

† The timeline confirms the approaching Sabbath sunset.

† Burial had to happen quickly.

Mark 15:43

Joseph from Arimathea, a respected member of the council who was also waiting for the kingdom of God, courageously went to

Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

† Joseph risked his reputation by publicly identifying with Jesus.

† Not all council members supported the execution.

† Roman permission was required to release a crucified body.

Mark 15:44

Pilate was surprised that He was already dead, so he summoned the centurion and asked him if He had been dead for some time.

† Crucifixion victims sometimes lived for days.

† Pilate verified the death before releasing the body.

† The centurion confirmed it.

Mark 15:45

When he learned from the centurion that He was dead, he granted the body to Joseph.

† Roman law allowed relatives or supporters to bury the dead with permission.

† This ensured Jesus received proper burial.

† The confirmation also proves the death was real.

Mark 15:46

Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen, and laid Him in a tomb cut out of rock, then rolled a stone against the entrance.

† Rock cut tombs were common for wealthy families.

† The burial fulfilled prophecy about being with a rich man in death (Isaiah 53:9).

† The stone sealed the entrance.

Mark 15:47

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where He was laid.

† These women carefully observed the burial location.

† Their testimony later confirmed the empty tomb.

† Their witness became part of the earliest resurrection reports.

Historical References

† Tacitus, Annals 15.44 confirms Jesus was executed under Pontius Pilate.

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews mentions Jesus and the early Christian movement.

† Eusebius recorded early Christian traditions about the crucifixion events.

† Irenaeus affirmed the gospel accounts in Against Heresies.

How It Applies To Us Today

† The cross shows the cost of redemption and the seriousness of sin.

† Jesus' obedience demonstrates complete trust in God's plan.

† The tearing of the veil shows the old covenant system had reached its end.

† The historical witnesses remind us that our faith is rooted in real events.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Pilate allow Jesus to be crucified if he knew He was innocent?

A: Pilate feared unrest and chose to satisfy the crowd rather than enforce justice (Matthew 27:24).

Q: Why was Barabbas released instead of Jesus?

A: The chief priests persuaded the crowd to demand Barabbas (Mark 15:11).

Q: Why did darkness fall during the crucifixion?

A: The darkness symbolized divine judgment and the gravity of the moment (Amos 8:9).

Q: What did the tearing of the temple veil mean?

A: It showed the old covenant temple system had reached its end (Hebrews 9:8).

Q: Why is the centurion's confession important?

A: A Roman officer publicly recognized Jesus' identity, confirming the impact of the event (Mark 15:39).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Mark 15

† Tacitus, Annals

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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