



## [Remarks from the last moments of the Messiah 15:1-37]

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### Famous Quotes

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” –Edmund Burke

“God helps those who help themselves.” –Ben Franklin

"You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can not fool all of the people all of the time." –Abraham Lincoln

“Whats in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” – Shakespeare

We are continuing a message series through selective passages in the Gospel of Mark: “Quotation Marks.” Today we examine dialogue, particularly citations from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Today’s message is titled: Remarks from the Last Moments of the Messiah. Our goal is not to feel sorry for Jesus, but to see and hear him as Savior of the world and rescuer of our souls.

## Read [Mark 15:1]

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### Are you King of the Jews? (15:2)

The first quotation found in the passion narrative in Mark follows the handing over of Jesus to a man named Pilate. This man was an influential individual in Judea during the time of Christ.

He was of the equestrian class (a knight) which means he had some property but was not a true aristocratic. Knights were used to govern the small and sometimes more troublesome areas of the empire (BWIII, 389). Both historians Philo and Josephus make clear he was a cruel and vicious man, and his relationship with the Jews was far from cordial.

Pilate was more than a political figure during the time of Jesus. This leader plays a crucial role in the crucifixion of the Messiah. So much so, his name is referenced **12** separate moments in Mark 15 and the name of Jesus receives **6** mentions. The first question from the lips of Pilate is this: *Are you king of the Jews?*

**What an odd question.** To this point, the phrase “King of the Jews” is unknown in Mark. Naturally to the Jew, the title of the Messiah would be Christ. This question (echoing loudly 5 times in this chapter) reverberates even today.

**Politically** First, one can hear political motivations beneath the surface. To claim kingship would indeed constitute high treason and justify the charge of crucifixion. Pilate effectively asked: “Are you king over Caesar.” Sadly, even today many have turned Jesus into a liberal or conservative politician who only furthers their agenda. Jesus is a threat to our political kingdoms. *Jesus did not come to restore a political agenda or further a governmental agency, he came to save sinners.*

**Spiritually** King of the Jews A decisive point is that a Roman official would not crucify a man on charges of blasphemy against the Jewish God. *What role does Pilate have in religious matters?* For the Jews, Pilate asked, “**Jesus do you have authority over spiritual matters.**” Not only does Jesus not fit into a political “box,” He neither fits into a neat spiritual paradigm. Obviously, Pilate had been prepped by the religious circles. Ironically this is not a status bestowed on Jesus by his teachings. Rather Jesus declares “Follow Me, and I will make you fish for people (Mark 1:17). Jesus declared “I am the way.” **Jesus did not die to make you spiritual. He willingly gave himself to make your Right-eous before God.**

**Authority King= a person regarded as the finest or most important and the ruler of an independent state.** The same question and similar authoritative implications continue in our lives. If Jesus is King, He has complete control of our lives. **Is your life defined by the authoritative rule of the Messiah?** “*Jesus has a right to interrupt our life. He is Lord. When you accepted Him as Lord, you gave Him the right to help Himself to your life anytime He wants.* –Henry Blackaby Are you King? Jesus has the right to interrupt your life.

If He is king he also is the most important and most treasured person in your life. *Christ did not die to forgive sinners who go on treasuring anything above seeing and savoring God. And people who would be happy in heaven if Christ were not there, will not be there. If we don't want God above all things, we may have not been converted by the Gospel* –Piper **Do you treasure this King above all?**

## Crisis (15:2)

In the mouth of Jesus enemies, unwittingly they confess Him as king. And the response of Christ: **You say so.** The You say so with **emphasis on YOU.** **The reply is suggestive, as if to say, “You would do well to consider the question.” Today, we do well to consider the question.**

It is the **silence** of Christ that demands a response. We are a people uncomfortable with spiritual silence. *We need “white noise.” We want to live in the non committal spiritual limbo of “white noise.”* When you see Christ as He truly is, you must make a choice. Is He liar, lunatic, or Lord.

Pilate asked again, **aren't you going to answer?** This time, the silence of Jesus remains unbroken. **Is. 53:7** *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.*

**The silence of Christ is not the silence of defeat or dejection.** The silence of Jesus Christ was a **silence of surrender** to God's sovereign plan of redemption. What is this plan? It is the

plan to bring you back to the Father! It is precisely the silence and surrender of the King that requires a response from every person.

## Silence Broken (15:13)

The vocal response to the silence of the accused rings in our ears: “Crucify Him!” It is disconcerting to find it (crucifixion) requested by a Jewish crowd (the approved Jewish methods of execution being stoning, burning, beheading, or strangling). We know that crucifixion could only come from the Roman leaders. It was an especially brutal and public way to die. *So, ugly that it was later outlawed in the empire. This was the death the crowd wanted.*

Barabas indeed was a proper candidate for crucifixion and doubtless Mark wishes to play up the irony here. Jesus is going to be killed for the sort of crime that the man set free committed.

Flogged: Much can be said about the savagery of the beatings and flogging of the Roman garrison. Suffice to say one of its main purposes was to shorten the duration of the crucifixion. Many died before reaching the cross.

What crime had this man committed? Did his silence justify the cross? *Yet, he was pierced for your transgression, crushed for your sin, the punishment that brought you peace was upon Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*

## Mockery (15:29)

If the Cross was not enough, he was given an honor title: King of the Jews. The implied mockery of the “honorary” title turns to overt mockery of onlookers at the cross.

HA! Gains its sense from the tone of voice rather than from a lexical meaning. The following words suggest that it conveys vindictive sarcasm (NIGTC, 647). The hatred towards a man who was the **greatest threat the world has ever seen. Who is this King?**

**Come down.** They demand a sign. Faith is not the result of signs and wonders, but the condition for them. *What a grand mockery: God jump through these hoops and we will believe. The faith the Lord desires for you is not compelled by sight or hearing, but the person of Jesus Christ.*

**Save yourself** The taunt assumes the salvation of self is the greatest good. Jesus has not taken upon himself the mission of self-help but gave himself as a ransom for others (Edwards, 474).

*Mock= make something laughable or not authentic/real. What in your life mocks the glory of God?*

## Response (15:33)

**Jesus' Response** My God: while my God expresses a continued relationship with God, it is a relationship that feels like abandonment. *Jesus took upon himself the abandonment of the Father so that you would never have to.*

Loud Voice: accounts of ancient crucifixion indicate a gradual loss of strength and consciousness, so that Mark's emphatic statement that these last words of Jesus were a shout. *You don't shout in death, you shout in victory.*

**Centurion's Response** Centurion: the centurion was in charge of the execution squad keeping watch over the victims as they died.

The first human witness to describe Jesus as the son of God and mean it, and that witness not a disciple or even a Jew at all, but a Gentile army officer with no previous connections with Jesus.

At his baptism the heavenly voice proclaimed 'you are my son' and at his death a Roman centurion confessed truly this man was a son of God."

**My Response** In Mark, the confession of the soldier is evoked not by signs but by Jesus' very death, when the centurion "heard his cry and saw how he died."

**How will you respond? Is He King?** Where does the King need to interrupt your life today? Is he most treasured among all?

**One Day** **Rev. 20:11** Then I saw a great white throne and one seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. **12** I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. **13** Then the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; each one was judged according to their works. **14** Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. **15** And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

**Is your name written in the King's book of life?**

Because of Jesus, you can approach the throne with confidence. **Turn from- turn to- find mercy and new life (Heb. 4:16.**

# Notes

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## It is the silence of Christ that demands the response

### Quotation marks if Jesus in Mark 15: “You say so” “My God My God” “Loud Cry”

All were united in rejecting Jesus as King of the Jews: Sanhedrin, Pilate, Crowd, Soldiers, and each had their own way of contributing to the outcome.

Pilate: name referenced 12 times in Mark 15.

Jesus: name referenced 6 times in Mark 15

Who was Pilate?

He was of the equestrian class (a knight) which means he had some property but was not a true patrician. Knights were used to govern the small and sometimes more troublesome areas of the empire (BWIII, 389). Pilate ruled from 26-36 A.D. and both Philo and Josephus make clear he was a cruel and vicious man, and his relationship with the Jews was far from cordial.

This favors the view that the reason Pilate wanted to release Jesus was not because he was a fair-minded man, but because he wanted to spite the Jewish officials.

**Mark 15:1** As soon as it was morning, having held a meeting with the elders, scribes, and the whole Sanhedrin, the chief priests tied Jesus up, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.

**Mark 15:2** So Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

He answered him, “You say so.”

King of the Jews, a term not yet used in Mark. This phrase, in comparison to Christ, is most naturally used by non-Jew. Jesus does enter into his true kingship, paradoxically enthroned on the cross.

Again, even in the mouths of Jesus’ enemies unwittingly confess him (Edwards, 458).

A decisive point is that a Roman official would not crucify a man on charges of blasphemy against the Jewish God, for crucifixion was the punishment for crimes against that state such as insurrection or high treason (BWIII, 388).

The claim to kingship is the important thing, for such a claim would indeed constitute high treason and it is the title Jesus is labeled by for the rest of this chapter.

You say so with emphasis on YOU. The reply is suggestive, as if to say, “You would do well to consider the question.” (Edwards, 459).

**Mark 15:3** And the chief priests accused him of many things. **4** Pilate questioned him again, “Aren’t you going to answer? Look how many things they are accusing you of!” **5** But Jesus still did not answer, and so Pilate was amazed.

This time the silence of Jesus will remain unbroken (NIGTC, 629).

**Is. 53:7** He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.

Silence It is not a silence of defeat, but a silence of surrender to God’s sovereignty in the passion (Edwards, 459).

Amazed. Amazement is not the same as faith, although it may become the first step to faith.

**Mark 15:6** At the festival Pilate used to release for the people a prisoner whom they requested. **7** There was one named Barabbas, who was in prison with rebels who had committed murder during the rebellion. **8** The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them as was his custom. **9** Pilate answered them, “Do you want me to release the King of the Jews for you?” **10** For he knew it was because of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. **11** But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so that he would release Barabbas to them instead. **12** Pilate asked them again, “Then what do you want me to do with the one you call the King of the Jews?”

**Mark 15:13** Again they shouted, “Crucify him!”

It is disconcerting to find it (crucifixion) requested by a Jewish crowd (the approved Jewish methods of execution being stoning, burning, beheading, or strangling).

**Mark 15:14** Pilate said to them, “Why? What has he done wrong?”

But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!”

The governor is strangely governed

**Mark 15:15** Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them; and after having Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Here indeed was a proper candidate for crucifixion and doubtless Mark wishes to play up the irony here. Jesus is going to be killed for the sort of crime that the man set free actually committed (BWIII, 391).

Flogged: Much can be said about the savagery of the beatings and flogging of the roman garrison. Suffice to say one of its main purposes was to shorten the duration of the crucifixion. Many died before reaching the cross.

**Mark 15:16** The soldiers led him away into the palace (that is, the governor’s residence) and called the whole company together. **17** They dressed him in a purple robe, twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on him. **18** And they began to salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” **19** They were hitting him on the

head with a stick and spitting on him. Getting down on their knees, they were paying him homage. **20** After they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his clothes on him.

They led him out to crucify him.

**21** They forced a man coming in from the country, who was passing by, to carry Jesus's cross. He was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

**Mark 15:22** They brought Jesus to the place called *Golgotha* (which means Place of the Skull). **23** They tried to give him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.

**Mark 15:24** Then they crucified him and divided his clothes, casting lots for them to decide what each would get. **25** Now it was nine in the morning when they crucified him. **26** The inscription of the charge written against him was: THE KING OF THE JEWS. **27** They crucified two criminals with him, one on his right and one on his left.

**Mark 15:29** Those who passed by were yelling insults at him, shaking their heads, and saying, "Ha! The one who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, **30** save yourself by coming down from the cross!" **31** In the same way, the chief priests with the scribes were mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others, but he cannot save himself! **32** Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe." Even those who were crucified with him taunted him.

The implied mockery of the "honorary" title turns to overt mockery of onlookers at the cross.

HA! Gains its sense from the tone of voice rather than from a lexical meaning. The following words suggest that it conveys vindictive sarcasm (NIGTC, 647).

The hurled insults are called blasphemia in the original Greek. Blasphemia is used almost exclusively in biblical literature of evil speech against God.

**Come down.** They demand a sign. Faith is not the result of signs and wonders, but the condition for them. The faith Mark wills for his readers is not compelled by sight or hearing, but the person of Jesus Christ.

**Save yourself** The taunt assumes the salvation of self is the greatest good. Jesus has not taken upon himself the mission of self-help but gave himself as a ransom for others (Edwards, 474).

**Mark 15:33** When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. **34** And at three Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lemá sabachtháni?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Loud Voice: accounts of ancient crucifixion indicate a gradual loss of strength and consciousness, so that Mark's emphatic statement that these last words of Jesus were a shout.

My God: while my God expresses a continued relationship with God, it is a relationship that feels like abandonment .

**Mark 15:35** When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “See, he’s calling for Elijah.”

**Mark 15:36** Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, fixed it on a stick, offered him a drink, and said, “Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down.”

**Mark 15:37** Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed his last. **38** Then the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Josephus describes the huge outer curtain hung in front of Herod’s temple as a magnificent work of Babylonian tapestry totaling 55 cubits (82 ft)

**39** When the centurion, who was standing opposite him, saw the way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

Centurion: the centurion was in charge of the execution squad keeping watch over the victims as they died.

The first human witness to describe Jesus as the son of God and mean it, and that witness not a disciple or even a Jew at all, but a Gentile army officer with no previous connections with Jesus.

At his baptism the heavenly voice proclaimed ‘you are my son’ and at his death a Roman centurion confessed truly this man was a son of God.”

In Mark, however, the confession is evoked not by signs but by Jesus’ very death, when the centurion “heard his cry and saw how he died.” (Edwards, 479).

The fact that the passion and death of Jesus on the cross evoke the confession of the centurion indicates that he, by divine revelation, has been granted the mystery of faith in Jesus as the Son of God (Edwards, 481).

## Application

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The presence of Jesus Christ does not prevent His own from suffering. Even more, His presence prepares us to suffer.

Without Christ, you are not prepared.

The Gospel is about the way of the cross, as an expression of Christology and discipleship.