

I HAVE ANNOTATED THIS WITH MY OWN COMMENTS (IN CAPITAL LETTERS). FEEL FREE TO IGNORE THEM IF YOU WISH.

THE BOOK OF MARK IS THE EARLIEST WRITTEN OF THE FOUR GOSPELS WE HAVE IN OUR BIBLE. IT WAS WRITTEN AROUND THE YEAR 65 IN ROME, THAT IS TO SAY ABOUT 30 YEARS AFTER THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

NOTICE AS YOU READ THE WHOLE BOOK THAT MARK IS NOT INTERESTED IN JESUS' BIRTH (HE NEVER MENTIONS IT) BUT BEGINS HIS GOSPEL WITH JESUS FULLY GROWN AND ABOUT TO BE BAPTIZED.

NEARLY HALF OF HIS BOOK IS ABOUT THE PASSION: THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS' LIFE. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE CALLED IT "THE PASSION NARRATIVE WITH A LONG INTRODUCTION".

YOU MIGHT BEGIN BY TELLING YOURSELF THE STORY AS YOU REMEMBER IT. THEN, AS YOU READ THROUGH MARK'S ACCOUNT, NOTICE WHAT DETAILS ARE THERE, WHAT ARE DIFFERENT THAN YOU REMEMBER, AND WHAT ARE NOT THERE AT ALL.

Mark 11-16

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

11 When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples 2 and said to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. 3 If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately."' 4 They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, 5 some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' 6 They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. 7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches JUST BRANCHES. NOT PALMS HERE that they had cut in the fields. 9 Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!' MANY SCHOLARS SEE THIS AS A POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION. AT THAT VERY TIME IN JERUSALEM, THROUGH ANOTHER GATE IN THE CITY WALL, PILATE WAS ENTERING IN A ROYAL PARADE, AS HE DID AT ALL JEWISH FESTIVAL TIMES, JUST TO REMIND EVERYONE OF THE MILITARY POWER THAT ROME HAD, IN CASE THEY WERE GETTING IDEAS ABOUT REVOLT. HE WAS REPRESENTING THE EMPEROR, WHO WAS CALLED SON OF GOD, LORD AND SAVIOUR. SO WHAT JESUS AND HIS FOLLOWERS ARE DOING IS THEIR OWN PARADE, NOT ON A WHITE HORSE OF TRIUMPH BUT ON A LOWLY DONKEY; AND CLAIMING THAT THE SON OF GOD WAS NOT IN FACT CAESAR BUT THIS COMMON CARPENTER'S SON.

11 Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything,

as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. ONLY MARK HAS JESUS LOOKING AROUND THEN GOING HOME FOR THE NIGHT BEFORE GOING BACK TO THE TEMPLE THE NEXT DAY.

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

12 On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 He said to it, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' And his disciples heard it. THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A "MARK SANDWICH" MEANING THIS: MARK'S WRITING STYLE INCLUDES STARTING TO TELL ONE STORY, THEN HE'LL STOP, TELL ANOTHER ONE, THEN CONTINUE THE FIRST ONE. THIS PARTICULAR ONE HAS FIGS AS THE SANDWICH FILLING!!

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

15 Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves; 16 and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. 17 He was teaching and saying, 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations"?' THIS IS FROM JEREMIAH'S TEMPLE SERMON IN CHAPTER 7 OF JEREMIAH, VERSE 11. But you have made it a den of robbers.'

18 And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. 19 And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples* went out of the city.

The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree

20 In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. 21 Then Peter remembered and said to him, 'Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.' 22 Jesus answered them, 'Have* faith in God. 23 Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, "Be taken up and thrown into the sea", and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. 24 So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received* it, and it will be yours.

25 'Whenever you stand IINTERESTING PRAYER POSTURE praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.*'

Jesus' Authority Is Questioned

27 Again they came to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him 28 and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?' 29 Jesus said to them, 'I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me.' 31 They argued with one another, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will say, "Why then did you not believe him?"' 32 But shall we say, "Of human origin"?'—they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. 33 So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.' And

Jesus said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.'

CHAPTER 12

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

12Then he began to speak to them in parables. 'A man planted a vineyard, CHECK OUT ISAIAH 5: 1-7. MARK IS BUILDING ON THIS HERE. put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watch-tower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. 2When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. 3But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. 4And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. 5Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. 6He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, "They will respect my son." 7But those tenants said to one another, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." 8So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. 9What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10Have you not read this scripture: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;*_ 11 this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes"?' PSALM 118: 22 AND 23

12 When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away.

The Question about Paying Taxes

13 Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. 14And they came and said to him, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? 15Should we pay them, or should we not?' THIS WAS A GENUINE DILEMMA FOR FAITHFUL JEWS; THERE WERE TWO KINDS OF MONEY THEN: ONE KIND HAD NO IMAGES ON IT AND THIS IS THE ONLY KIND THAT STRICT JEWS WOULD USE. THE OTHER MORE COMMON COINS HAD THE FACE OF CAESAR ON THEM, AGAINST THE LAW FOR JEWS. But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, 'Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it.' 16And they brought one. HE SHOWS EVERYONE THEIR COLLABORATION WITH THE ROMANS BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE SECOND KIND OF MONEY ON THEM. Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' They answered, 'The emperor's.' 17Jesus said to them, 'Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' I.E. EVERYTHING. And they were utterly amazed at him.

The Question about the Resurrection

18 Some Sadducees, THESE WERE THE ARISTOCRATIC PRIESTLY PARTY, MORE CONSERVATIVE THAN THE PHARISEES. who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, saying, 19'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, the man*_ shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. 20There were seven brothers; the first married and, when he died, left no children; 21and the second married her and died,

leaving no children; and the third likewise; 22none of the seven left children. Last of all the woman herself died. 23In the resurrection* whose wife will she be? For the seven had married her.’ THE CONCERN ABOUT WHOSE WIFE SHE IS, IS REALLY ABOUT THE PROTECTION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS AND POWER, THROUGH PATRIARCHAL MARRIAGE THAT PERPETUATED MALE LINEAGE.

24 Jesus said to them, ‘Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? 25For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? 27He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong.’

The First Commandment

28 One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, ‘Which commandment is the first of all?’ 29Jesus answered, ‘The first is, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; DEUTERONOMY 6:4, WHICH IS CALLED THE SHEMA. MOST IMPORTANT VERSE TO JEWS . 30you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” 31The second is this, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” LEVITICUS 19 There is no other commandment greater than these.’ 32Then the scribe said to him, ‘You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that “he is one, and besides him there is no other”; 33and “to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength”, and “to love one’s neighbour as oneself”,—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.’ 34When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ After that no one dared to ask him any question.

The Question about David’s Son

35 While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, ‘How can the scribes say that the Messiah* is the son of David? 36David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.’ ” PSALM 110:1 37David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?’ And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

Jesus Denounces the Scribes

38 As he taught, he said, ‘Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, 39and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! 40They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.’

The Widow’s Offering

41 He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are

worth a penny. 43Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'

CHAPTER 13 THIS MATERIAL IS APOCALYPTIC IN NATURE: SIMILAR TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION. THIS CHAPTER IS CALLED "THE LITTLE APOCALYPSE"

FOR THE DISCIPLES THEMSELVES, THESE EVENTS ARE IN THE FUTURE BUT FOR THE READERS OF MARK'S GOSPEL THEY ARE ALREADY IN THE PAST. THE TEMPLE HAS BEEN DESTROYED BY THE TIME MARK IS WRITING THIS.

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

13As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' 2Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

3 When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, USUALLY WHEN SOMETHING BIG IS HAPPENING HE TAKES PETER JAMES AND JOHN. HERE ANDREW JOINS THEM. 4'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?' 5Then Jesus began to say to them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. 6Many will come in my name and say, "I am he!"* and they will lead many astray. 7When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. 8For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

Persecution Foretold

9 'As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. 10And the good news* must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; 13and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

The Desolating Sacrilege

14 'But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand),SEE HOW THE AUTHOR STEPS OUR FROM BEHIND THE WRITING AND SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO THE READER then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; 15someone on the housetop must not go down or enter the house to take anything away; 16someone in the field must not turn back to get a coat. 17Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! 18Pray that it may not be in winter. 19For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be.

20And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut short those days. 21And if anyone says to you at that time, “Look! Here is the Messiah!”* or “Look! There he is!”—do not believe it. 22False messiahs* and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. 23But be alert; I have already told you everything.

The Coming of the Son of Man

24 ‘But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

26Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. 27Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. IMAGES DRAWN FROM ISAIAH 13, EZEKIEL 32, JOEL 2

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

28 ‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. REVERSING THE FIG TREE IMAGE FROM CHAPTER 11. HERE WE LEARN FROM IT. 29So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he* is near, at the very gates. 30Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 31Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

The Necessity for Watchfulness

32 ‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33Beware, keep alert;* for you do not know when the time will come. 34It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. 35Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, 36or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. 37And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

CHAPTER 14

The Plot to Kill Jesus

HERE COMES ANOTHER MARKAN SANDWICH. HE STARTS TO TELL ONE STORY, INTERRUPTS HIMSELF WITH SOMETHING ELSE THEN PICKS UP THE STORY AGAIN.

14It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus* by stealth and kill him; 2for they said, ‘Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.’

The Anointing at Bethany

3 While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,* as he sat at the table, a woman WHO DOES YOUR MEMORY SAY THIS WOMAN WAS? MARK NEVER SAYS. came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. 4But some were there who said to one another in anger, ‘Why was the ointment wasted in this way? 5For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii,* and the money given to the poor.’ And they scolded her. 6But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. 7For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. 8She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. 9Truly I tell you, wherever the good news* is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.’ THIS IS ONE OF ONLY FOUR STORIES THAT ARE TOLD BY ALL FOUR GOSPEL WRITERS: THE FEEDING OF THE 5000, THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION, JESUS' BAPTISM, AND THIS ONE. INTERESTING EH??

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. 11When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money.WHILE THE WOMAN ABOVE DIDN'T COUNT THE COST OF THE OINTMENT SHE Poured ON JESUS, JUDAS BY CONTRAST SETS A PRICE FOR THE LIFE OF HIS FRIEND. MARK DOESN'T TELL US HOW MUCH THOUGH. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

The Passover with the Disciples

12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, ‘Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?’ 13So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you;THIS WAS USUALLY WOMEN'S WORK. follow him, 14and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, “The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?” 15He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.’ 16So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

17 When it was evening, he came with the twelve. 18And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, ‘Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.’ 19They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, ‘Surely, not I?’ 20He said to them, ‘It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread* into the bowl* with me.THE COMMON MEAL WAS A VERY INTIMATE ACT.... 21For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.’

The Institution of the Lord’s Supper

22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, ‘Take; this is my body.’ 23Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. 24He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the* covenant, which is poured out for many. 25Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’ NOTICE HE DOES NOT SAY DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

Peter's Denial Foretold

26 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 27 And Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."' 28 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' REMEMBER THIS. IT'S GOING TO BE REALLY IMPORTANT IN CHAPTER 16. 29 Peter said to him, 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.' 30 Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' 31 But he said vehemently, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And all of them said the same.

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane; LITERALLY MEANING WINE PRESS and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' 33 He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. 34 And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' 35 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 He said, 'Abba,* Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.' 37 He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'Simon, HE CALLS HIM BY HIS OLD NAME THAT MUST HAVE HURT. are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?' 38 Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;* the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' 39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. 41 He came a third time and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

43 Immediately, ONE OF MARK'S FAVOURITE WORDS while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. 44 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' 45 So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, 'Rabbi!' MEANS TEACHER and kissed him. 46 Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. 47 But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 48 Then Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? 49 Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.' 50 All of them deserted him and fled.

51 A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, 52 but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked. THIS ACCOUNT OF THE NAKED YOUNG MAN IS ONLY TOLD BY MARK. SOME SAY THAT IT WAS MARK HIMSELF.

Jesus before the Council

53 They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. 54 Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire. 55 Now the chief priests and the whole council

were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. 56For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. 57Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, 58‘We heard him say, “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.” ’ 59But even on this point their testimony did not agree. 60Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, ‘Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?’ 61But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, ‘Are you the Messiah,* the Son of the Blessed One?’ 62Jesus said, ‘I am; CAN ALSO MEAN “AM I?” BOTH MATTHEW AND LUKE CHANGE THIS WHEN THEY RECORD IT TO MAKE IT MORE DEFINITE. and

“you will see the Son of Man

seated at the right hand of the Power”,

and “coming with the clouds of heaven.” ’ DANIEL 7:13

63Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘Why do we still need witnesses? 64You have heard his blasphemy! THE BLASPHEMY IS ASSOCIATING HIMSELF WITH THE SON OF MAN – CLAIMING TO BE GOD; PUNISHABLE BY DEATH. SEE LEVITICUS 24What is your decision?’ All of them condemned him as deserving death. 65Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, ‘Prophecy!’ The guards also took him over and beat him.

Peter Denies Jesus

66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. 67When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, ‘You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.’ 68But he denied it, saying, ‘I do not know or understand what you are talking about.’ And he went out into the forecourt.* Then the cock crowed.* 69And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, ‘This man is one of them.’ 70But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, ‘Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.’ HIS ACCENT GIVES HIM AWAY. 71But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, ‘I do not know this man you are talking about.’ 72At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. ONLY MARK SAYS THE ROOSTER CROWED TWICE. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ And he broke down and wept.

CHAPTER 15

Jesus before Pilate

15As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM WERE STILL NOT CLEAR....IN THE END THEY CANNOT SENTENCE HIM TO DEATH. ONLY ROME CAN. THEY HAVE TO FRAME THE CHARGES IN A WAY THAT ROME WILL UNDERSTAND.....IT HAS TO BE INSURRECTION AGAINST THE EMPIRE OR A THREAT TO NATIONAL ORDER.... They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. 2Pilate asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ He answered him, ‘You say so.’ 3Then the chief priests accused him of many things. 4Pilate asked him again, ‘Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.’ 5But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified

6 Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. 7 Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. 8 So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. 9 Then he answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' 10 For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. 12 Pilate spoke to them again, 'Then what do you wish me to do* with the man you call* the King of the Jews?' 13 They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' 14 Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' 15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. CRUCIFIXION WAS A PARTICULARLY AWFUL WAY TO DIE. ROME USED IT AS A FORM OF STATE TERRORISM; IT WAS DONE PUBLICALLY, AS A WARNING TO OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE PLOTTING AGAINST THE EMPIRE. THERE HAS ONLY BEEN ONE SKELETON FOUND WITH EVIDENCE OF CRUCIFIXION. WHY? BECAUSE THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO BURY- THE BODIES WERE LEFT THERE AND ANIMALS AND BIRDS FINISHED THEM OFF.... YET ANOTHER LAYER OF PUNISHMENT FOR THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO WERE CRUCIFIED.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

16 Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters*); and they called together the whole cohort. 17 And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. 18 And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' 19 They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. 20 After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

21 They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. THE IMPLICATION IS THAT JESUS IS ALREADY TOO WEAK FROM THE BEATINGS TO CARRY IT. MARK SEEMS TO THINK THAT HIS READERS KNOW THESE TWO. AN EARLY WRITING BY A GUY CALLED BASILIDES CLAIMS THAT IT WAS SIMON WHO WAS CRUCIFIED INSTEAD OF JESUS. SOME EARLY WRITERS DID EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO "PROVE" THAT JESUS HADN'T REALLY DIED. YOU'LL NOTICE WHEN WE GET TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN THAT JOHN INSISTS THAT JESUS CARRIED HIS OWN CROSS. PERHAPS TO ADDRESS THIS RUMOUR? 22 Then they brought Jesus* to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). AGAIN, NOTE THAT MARK FEELS IT NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE FOR US SO HIS READERS WERE NOT JEWS WHO SPEAK HEBREW. HMMMM. 23 And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh IT WOULD HAVE EASED HIS PAIN; but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

25 It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. 26 The inscription of the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews.' 27 And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.* 29 Those who passed by derided* him, shaking their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 save yourself, and come down from the cross!' 31 In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves

and saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. 32Let the Messiah,* the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.' Those who were crucified with him also taunted him. NO REPENTANT THIEF HERE. ONLY LUKE TELLS US ABOUT HIM.

The Death of Jesus

33 When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land* until three in the afternoon. 34At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' THIS IS A QUOTE FROM PSALM 22. INTERESTING THAT MARK THINKS HE NEEDS TO TRANSLATE FOR HIS READERS...WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT WHO HE ASSUMES HIS READERS TO BE? * AT HIS BAPTISM, AT THE TRANSFIGURATION, THERE IS A HEAVENLY VOICE. HERE, ONLY SILENCE. 35When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' AT THE END OF THE OLD TESTAMENT THE PROPHET MICAH SAYS THAT BEFORE MESSIAH COMES, THE PROPHET ELIJAH WILL RETURN. YOU'LL REMEMBER THAT ELIJAH HAD BEEN TAKEN TO HEAVEN IN A WHIRLWIND INSTEAD OF HAVING DIED THE REGULAR WAY. 36And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' GOOD PLAY ON WORDS. IN FACT, HE WILL BE TAKEN UP. 37Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. 38And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. SEE EXODUS 26:33. THAT CURTAIN SEPARATED BUT ALSO PROTECTED THE PEOPLE FROM THE PRESENCE OF GOD. 39Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he* breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'* FOR A ROMAN CENTURION TO SAY THAT WAS AMAZING; THAT MAN SERVED THE EMPEROR WHO CLAIMED TO BE THE SON OF GOD. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME ANY HUMAN SAYS THIS. LEGEND TELLS US HIS NAME WAS LONGINUS.

40 There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

The Burial of Jesus

42 When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. VERY UNUSUAL 44Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. 45When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. 46Then Joseph* bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body,* wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body* was laid.