

Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Session 24, Crucifixion, Empty Tomb, Ending (Mark 15:33-16:8) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Jennings, Mark, Session 24, Crucifixion, Empty Tomb, Ending (Mark 15:33-16:8), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mark Jennings's lecture analyzes the final chapters of the Gospel of Mark, specifically focusing on the crucifixion of Jesus, the discovery of the empty tomb, and the abrupt ending of the original text at 16:8. **The lecture meticulously examines the biblical narrative**, exploring the mockery Jesus endured, the theological significance of the temple curtain tearing, and the centurion's confession. **Jennings highlights the striking parallels between the crucifixion account and Psalm 22**, pondering whether Jesus intentionally chose these words. **He also addresses the debated longer ending of Mark**, suggesting the original conclusion, possibly depicting a resurrection appearance, might be reflected in Matthew's Gospel. **Ultimately, this session concludes the textual analysis of Mark**, setting the stage for a discussion on the Gospel's overarching theological themes.

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Jennings, Mark, Session 24 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Mark).



**Jennings_Mark_Ses
sion24.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Jennings, Session 24, Crucifixion, Empty Tomb, Ending (Mark 15:33-16:8)

Briefing Document: Analysis of Dr. Mark Jennings' Lecture on Mark 15:32-16:8

Overview:

This lecture by Dr. Mark Jennings focuses on the concluding passages of the Gospel of Mark, specifically Mark 15:32-16:8, encompassing the continued crucifixion narrative, the events surrounding Jesus' death and burial, and the discovery of the empty tomb. Jennings delves into the historical context, literary devices, and theological implications within these verses, while also addressing the contentious issue of Mark's ending.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Continuation of the Crucifixion Scene (Mark 15:32-32):

- **Mockery and Derision:** Jennings highlights the persistent mockery Jesus faces, not only from passersby but also from the chief priests and scribes. The specific taunt referencing the destruction and rebuilding of the temple in three days is noted as ironic, as Mark intends for readers to understand this as being fulfilled in Jesus' death and resurrection.
- **Quote:** "Mark wants us to realize that these people are mocking Jesus for saying he will end the temple and rebuild a new one in three days, but that is actually exactly what is occurring at this moment."
- **"King of the Jews" Inscription:** The inscription above Jesus' head is discussed in relation to the other Gospels, noting the general agreement on this core phrase. Jennings emphasizes the political statement made by Pilate in using this charge for a man in such a degraded state.
- **Quote:** "Pilate reinforces that this is the charge. There's a political statement being made there as well, that this man who's now completely beaten and has been whipped and has been mocked and has been spit upon and is being crucified, this is the King of the Jews."
- **Crucifixion with Robbers:** The presence of two robbers crucified alongside Jesus is linked to the disciples' earlier request to sit at Jesus' right and left, subtly underscoring the nature of Jesus' kingdom. Jennings clarifies that the term

"robbers" likely refers to brigands or revolutionaries, emphasizing Jesus' isolation even in his suffering.

- **Quote:** "I think Mark reminds us a little bit of that in his depiction of the robbers. They were crucified, one on Jesus's right and one on his left. There's a subtle reminder that this is what Jesus came to do, and this is the coming of his kingdom here."
- **Loneliness and Rejection:** Mark's account emphasizes Jesus' complete isolation, even noting that those crucified with him reviled him, unlike other Gospel accounts.

2. Jesus' Death and the Supernatural Response (Mark 15:33-39):

- **Darkness at Noon:** The three hours of darkness are interpreted as a sign of God's judgment, aligning with Old Testament prophecies of the "day of the Lord" in Isaiah, Joel, and Amos, and also drawing a parallel to the plague of darkness in Exodus.
- **Quote:** "I think here, with this darkening of the midday, we have a similar reality now being shown that we have the physical ramifications of creation as it applied to the day of the Lord now coming into view in a very particular way."
- **The Cry of Forsakenness (Eloi, Eloi, L'ma Sabachthani):** Jennings highlights the use of Aramaic and suggests Mark includes it to explain why the crowd misinterpreted Jesus' cry as calling for Elijah due to phonetic similarity. He also connects this cry to Psalm 22:1, exploring the complex relationship between Jesus' utterance and the psalm.
- **Quote:** "I think Mark gives us the reason why. If we didn't have the Aramaic there, we might be confused as readers... about why the crowds think Jesus might be calling out to Elijah. We wouldn't catch the phonetic similarity."
- **Significance of Psalm 22:** Jennings details numerous parallels between Psalm 22 and the events of the crucifixion as depicted in Mark (mockery, casting lots, surrounding enemies, agony, loneliness). He discusses the debate around whether Jesus actually spoke these words or if the early church retroactively applied them. Jennings proposes that Jesus, knowing his impending crucifixion and his role as the suffering servant, may have intentionally chosen to utter this psalm, which moves from lament to praise and foreshadows the spread of the gospel.

- **Quote:** "And so when I look at this, I think, you know, there's this question: Did the early church put these words onto Jesus because they matched so perfectly? Well, isn't there an option that has it both matching so perfectly? Has Mark understood what is happening and matched so perfectly yet still allows it to be historical?"
- **The Temple Curtain Torn:** This event, following Jesus' final cry and death, is interpreted symbolically as the end of the temple's function, both in terms of sacrifice and as the unique dwelling place of God, paving the way for a new "temple" in Jesus himself. The question of which curtain (Holy of Holies or inner courtyard) is raised, with both possibilities having symbolic weight.
- **Quote:** "The tearing of the curtain is a symbolic way of saying the temple and what its function was, both in the atonement and sacrifice, but also in the sort of unique location of God, which has ended and is now over."
- **The Centurion's Confession:** The Roman centurion's declaration, "Truly this man was the Son of God," is presented as a pivotal moment. Unlike previous instances where confessions of Jesus' identity were met with silence, this one is unqualified and marks a turning point in understanding Jesus' identity in the context of his death. Jennings notes the irony of a Roman soldier being the first to offer an undiluted confession and draws a parallel to the declaration at Jesus' baptism.
- **Quote:** "From a literary view, it's as if now it's okay. Now you understand what it means to say Jesus is the Son of God."

3. Burial and the Empty Tomb (Mark 15:40-16:8):

- **Women Watching from a Distance:** The introduction of the women (Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger, and Salome, along with other women who had followed and ministered to Jesus in Galilee) is noted as the first time they are mentioned during the crucifixion narrative.
- **Joseph of Arimathea's Bold Act:** Joseph, a respected member of the council who was also awaiting the kingdom of God, requests Jesus' body from Pilate for burial, demonstrating continued care for Jesus even after his death. Pilate's surprise at Jesus' quick death and his confirmation through the centurion are highlighted. Jennings suggests Pilate's action of granting the body might hint at his unease regarding the crucifixion.
- **Burial Details:** The burial in a tomb cut out of rock, the wrapping in a linen shroud, and the rolling of a stone against the entrance are detailed. Importantly,

Mark notes that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph witnessed where Jesus was laid, countering later arguments about the women going to the wrong tomb.

- **Discovery of the Empty Tomb:** After the Sabbath, the women return to anoint Jesus' body and find the stone rolled away. A young man in a white robe informs them that Jesus has risen and directs them to tell the disciples and Peter to meet him in Galilee, as he had foretold.
- **Quote:** "He has risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell the disciples and Peter that he is going before you in Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you."
- **The Problematic Ending of Mark:** Jennings discusses the widely accepted view that verses 9-20 of Mark 16 are likely not original to Mark due to lack of strong manuscript support, stylistic differences, and theological inconsistencies. He notes that all early manuscripts of high reliability end at verse 8.
- **Reasons for Later Additions:** The lack of a resurrection appearance in Mark's apparent ending is suggested as the primary reason for later scribes adding verses 9-20, as the resurrection appearances were a core element of the early church's confession.
- **Speculation on Mark's Original Ending:** Jennings expresses his conviction that Mark likely did have an account of a resurrection appearance, but it has been lost. He entertains the theoretical possibility that Mark's intended ending might be found within Matthew's Gospel, specifically Matthew 28:1-17. He points out similarities in the accounts of the women at the tomb and the instruction to meet in Galilee. He even speculates that Matthew 28:16-17, describing the disciples in Galilee worshipping Jesus but with some doubting, could potentially be Markan in its concise and somewhat unresolved nature.
- **Quote:** "I've come then to the conviction that Mark had a resurrection appearance. There is a longer ending to Mark, but somehow it has been lost."
- **Quote:** "I wonder, and within the turn I suggested, if verses 16 and 17 aren't actually Markian. You would have the women being told to go and that they were afraid. And then we lose the bit where it actually says they go and tell the disciples. And the 11 disciples then go to Galilee, to which Jesus had directed them. And it said that they worshipped him, but then some doubted. Which would actually be very Markian."

- **Concluding Thought:** Despite the uncertainty surrounding the exact ending of Mark, Jennings emphasizes the core message conveyed in the first eight chapters (Jesus' authority) and the subsequent chapters leading to 16:8 (Jesus' authority laid down as a suffering servant). The next lecture will focus on the overarching theology of Mark.

Conclusion:

Dr. Jennings provides a detailed and insightful analysis of the final chapters of Mark's Gospel, highlighting the profound theological significance of Jesus' crucifixion and the initial discovery of the empty tomb. He addresses the textual complexities surrounding Mark's ending, offering a compelling perspective on the potential loss of the original conclusion and even suggesting a possible resonance with Matthew's resurrection account. The lecture emphasizes Mark's portrayal of Jesus as both authoritative and the suffering servant, setting the stage for a broader theological discussion of the Gospel.

4. Study Guide: Jennings, Session 24, Crucifixion, Empty Tomb, Ending (Mark 15:33-16:8)

Study Guide: Mark 15:32-16:8

Key Themes:

- The Crucifixion as a public spectacle and the fulfillment of prophecy.
- Jesus's suffering and sense of abandonment.
- The irony of the mockery and misunderstanding surrounding Jesus's identity and mission.
- The significance of the temple curtain tearing and the centurion's confession.
- The discovery of the empty tomb and the message of resurrection.
- The abrupt ending of Mark's Gospel and questions surrounding a possible lost ending or its presence in Matthew.

Key Questions to Consider While Studying:

- What is the significance of the inscription above Jesus on the cross?
- How does Mark portray Jesus's isolation during the crucifixion?
- What is the irony in the various groups mocking Jesus? How do their words unknowingly affirm his identity or mission?
- What is the symbolic meaning of the darkness that falls during Jesus's crucifixion? How does it relate to Old Testament concepts?
- Why does Mark include Jesus's Aramaic cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani"?
- How does Psalm 22 relate to the events of the crucifixion as described by Mark? What are the different interpretations of this connection?
- What is the significance of the tearing of the temple curtain? What are the possible interpretations of which curtain was torn?
- Why is the confession of the centurion so important in the narrative of Mark?
- What role do the women play in the crucifixion and resurrection narrative in Mark?

- What are the arguments for and against the longer ending of Mark (verses 9-20)? What alternative possibilities are discussed regarding the ending of Mark's Gospel?

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. What was the inscription placed above Jesus on the cross, and what was its intended purpose according to Roman custom?
2. Describe the mockery Jesus endured while on the cross, mentioning at least two different groups who participated and the nature of their taunts.
3. Explain the symbolic significance of the darkness that fell over the land from the sixth to the ninth hour during Jesus's crucifixion, referencing relevant Old Testament passages.
4. Why do some scholars believe Mark included Jesus's Aramaic cry on the cross, and how does this relate to the reaction of those standing nearby?
5. What are the two main interpretations regarding which temple curtain was torn at Jesus's death, and what is the symbolic meaning of this event in either case?
6. Why is the centurion's confession, "Truly this man was the Son of God," considered a significant moment in Mark's narrative, especially in light of previous attempts to identify Jesus?
7. What actions did Joseph of Arimathea take after Jesus's death, and why was this considered unusual for someone crucified by the Romans?
8. According to Mark, why did the women who followed Jesus go to the tomb after the Sabbath, and what did they intend to do there?
9. Describe the encounter the women had at the tomb, including who they saw and the message they received.
10. What is the prevailing scholarly view regarding the verses found after Mark 16:8 in many Bibles, and what is the primary reason for this view?

Quiz: Answer Key

1. The inscription above Jesus read "The King of the Jews." The Roman custom was to display the charge for which someone was crucified as a public message.
2. Those who passed by mocked Jesus by taunting him to save himself if he could destroy and rebuild the temple, echoing accusations from his trial. The chief

priests and scribes mocked him by challenging him to come down from the cross so they might believe, failing to recognize him as the Christ even in his suffering.

3. The darkness is symbolically linked to the "day of the Lord" in Old Testament prophecies (Isaiah, Joel, Amos), which is associated with God's judgment. It also echoes the plague of darkness in Exodus, suggesting this was a moment of divine wrath being poured out.
4. Scholars believe the Aramaic was included to explain why the bystanders thought Jesus was calling for Elijah. The phonetic similarity between "Eloi" and "Elijah" in a garbled cry would have led to this misunderstanding.
5. One interpretation is that the curtain separating the Holy of Holies was torn, symbolizing the end of the exclusive access to God or the cancellation of the sacrificial system. The other is that the outer curtain was torn, signifying the destruction of the temple itself and its function.
6. The centurion's confession is significant because it is the first clear and undiluted affirmation of Jesus's divine sonship in Mark's Gospel, coming from a Gentile, and it occurs without any silencing or rebuke, suggesting a shift in understanding.
7. Joseph of Arimathea, a respected council member, took courage to ask Pilate for Jesus's body. This was unusual because the Romans typically left crucified bodies on the cross as a deterrent.
8. The women, including Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, went to the tomb after the Sabbath to anoint Jesus's body with spices, as they were unable to properly prepare it for burial before the Sabbath.
9. At the tomb, the women found the large stone rolled away and entered to see a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side. He told them not to be alarmed, that Jesus, who was crucified, had risen and was not there, instructing them to tell the disciples and Peter that he would go before them to Galilee.
10. The prevailing scholarly view is that verses 9-20 were likely not part of the original Gospel of Mark due to a lack of strong manuscript support in the earliest and most reliable texts, as well as differences in writing style, vocabulary, and theological themes compared to the rest of Mark.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the portrayal of power and authority in Mark 15:32-16:8. How is Jesus's authority ironically displayed in his suffering and death, and how does this contrast with the earthly authorities present?
2. Discuss the significance of the Old Testament allusions and connections in Mark's account of the crucifixion, particularly focusing on Psalm 22 and the concept of the "day of the Lord." How do these connections deepen our understanding of Jesus's suffering and its purpose?
3. Examine the roles and reactions of the different groups of people present at Jesus's crucifixion (the passersby, the chief priests and scribes, the robbers, the centurion, and the women). What does Mark emphasize about their understanding (or lack thereof) of the events unfolding?
4. Interpret the abrupt ending of Mark's Gospel at 16:8. What are the potential reasons for this ending, and how does it impact the reader's understanding of the resurrection and the subsequent mission of Jesus's followers? Consider the possibility of a lost ending or the suggestion of its presence in Matthew.
5. Explore the theological implications of the tearing of the temple curtain and the centurion's confession in Mark's narrative. How do these two events signify a shift in the relationship between God and humanity, and what do they reveal about Jesus's identity and the nature of his sacrifice?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Crucifixion:** A brutal method of capital punishment in which the victim is tied or nailed to a large wooden cross and left to die. It was a common Roman practice.
- **Inscription (Titulus):** The written notice or plaque placed above the head of a person crucified by the Romans, indicating the crime for which they were being punished.
- **Robbers (Brigands):** In this context, likely referring to rebels or revolutionaries, rather than common thieves, suggesting a political dimension to their crime and crucifixion alongside Jesus.
- **Mockery:** Behavior or speech that ridicules or makes fun of someone or something, often in a cruel or contemptuous way.

- **Temple (of Jerusalem):** The central place of worship for the Jewish people in Jerusalem, believed to be the dwelling place of God.
- **Temple Curtain (Veil):** A heavy curtain that separated different sections within the temple, most notably the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple.
- **Sixth Hour:** In Jewish reckoning, approximately noon.
- **Ninth Hour:** Approximately 3 PM.
- **Day of the Lord:** A concept in the Old Testament referring to a time when God will directly intervene in history to judge his people and the nations. It is often associated with cosmic disturbances and darkness.
- **Eloi, Eloi, Lema Sabachthani:** Aramaic words meaning "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" a direct quote from Psalm 22:1.
- **Elijah:** A major prophet in the Old Testament, who was believed by some to return before the Messiah.
- **Psalm 22:** A lament psalm in the Old Testament that contains striking parallels to the suffering of Jesus on the cross, including mockery, pierced hands and feet, and the casting of lots for garments.
- **Centurion:** A Roman military officer in command of about one hundred soldiers.
- **Apotheosis:** The elevation of a person to divine status after death, a concept present in Roman culture.
- **Day of Preparation:** The day before the Sabbath, when Jews would prepare for the day of rest during which no work was permitted.
- **Sanhedrin:** The Jewish high council in Jerusalem.
- **Resurrection:** The act of rising from the dead. In Christian theology, the central belief that Jesus Christ rose from the dead three days after his crucifixion.
- **Textual Criticism:** The scholarly discipline of analyzing and comparing different manuscript versions of a text to determine the most accurate original reading.
- **Manuscript Support:** The evidence provided by ancient handwritten copies of a text that supports the inclusion or exclusion of certain passages.
- **Autograph:** The original handwritten manuscript of a literary work.

5. FAQs on Jennings, Mark, Session 24, Crucifixion, Empty Tomb, Ending (Mark 15:33-16:8), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Mark 15:32-16:8 and the Ending of Mark

1. What was the significance of the inscription "The King of the Jews" placed above Jesus on the cross according to Mark?

In Mark's Gospel, the inscription "The King of the Jews" was placed by Pilate as the charge against Jesus. While the religious leaders wanted a different phrasing, Pilate's choice reinforces a political statement, highlighting the irony of a powerless, crucified man being declared the King of the Jews. It also underscores a central accusation against Jesus.

2. How does Mark's portrayal of the two robbers crucified with Jesus connect to earlier themes in the Gospel?

Mark mentions the crucifixion of two robbers, one on Jesus's right and one on his left. This subtly echoes the request made by James and John to sit at Jesus's right and left in his kingdom. Mark uses this imagery to remind the reader that Jesus's coming kingdom is being inaugurated through his crucifixion, a path of suffering rather than immediate glory.

3. What is the significance of the mockery Jesus endured on the cross, particularly the reference to destroying and rebuilding the temple?

The mockery, including the taunt about destroying and rebuilding the temple in three days, highlights a key aspect of Jesus's ministry and the misunderstanding surrounding it. Mark wants readers to recognize the irony: the physical temple is indeed ending in its significance, and Jesus himself, through his death and resurrection, is becoming the new temple. The mockery inadvertently points to the transformative events unfolding.

4. What is the theological importance of the darkness that fell during Jesus's crucifixion and his cry of forsakenness?

The darkness at noon until the ninth hour is presented as a cosmic sign, potentially reflecting the "day of the Lord" described in the Old Testament as a time of judgment. Jesus's cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?), taken from Psalm 22, underscores the profound sense of abandonment Jesus experienced. Mark includes the Aramaic to explain why onlookers might have mistakenly thought he was calling for Elijah, and also to highlight the fulfillment of the suffering servant motif from Psalm 22. This cry, while expressing agony, is also the beginning of a psalm that moves towards praise and the proclamation of God's work.

5. What is the significance of the tearing of the temple curtain immediately after Jesus's death?

The tearing of the temple curtain is a powerful symbolic act. It signifies the end of the old covenant system, potentially indicating the removal of the barrier between God and humanity (if it was the veil to the Holy of Holies) or the end of the temple's function itself. This event reinforces the idea that Jesus's death inaugurated a new era, fulfilling his earlier statements about the temple's destruction and the rise of a new reality centered on him.

6. Why is the confession of the Roman centurion, "Truly this man was the Son of God," so significant in Mark's narrative?

The centurion's confession is a pivotal moment in Mark's Gospel. It marks the first clear, undiluted affirmation of Jesus's divine sonship by an outsider, a Roman soldier. This is significant because throughout Mark, attempts to publicly declare Jesus's identity were often met with silence or rebukes. The centurion's recognition at the moment of Jesus's death suggests that the true nature of Jesus as the Son of God is revealed through his suffering and death. It also hints at the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan.

7. What are the issues surrounding the ending of Mark's Gospel at 16:8, and why do many scholars believe the longer ending (verses 9-20) was not original?

Mark's Gospel ends abruptly at 16:8 with the women fleeing the empty tomb in fear and saying nothing to anyone. This ending is considered problematic because it lacks a direct account of Jesus's resurrection appearance, a central tenet of early Christian belief and present in the other Gospels. The longer ending (16:9-20) is believed by many scholars to be a later addition due to several factors: it is absent in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts, its writing style and vocabulary differ from Mark's, and it contains theological themes not emphasized elsewhere in the Gospel. The abrupt ending raises questions about whether Mark intended to conclude his narrative this way or if the original ending was lost.

8. What is the theory that the original ending of Mark might be found in the Gospel of Matthew?

One theory suggests that Matthew, who likely used Mark's Gospel as a source, might have incorporated Mark's intended resurrection appearance account into his own Gospel (Matthew 28). Similarities in the accounts of the women at the tomb and the instruction to meet Jesus in Galilee exist between Mark 16:7 and Matthew 28:7, 10. Some scholars even speculate that certain verses in Matthew 28, particularly verses 16-17 describing the disciples in Galilee, could potentially reflect the lost ending of Mark, aligning with Mark's emphasis on the disciples' flawed understanding and Jesus's prior announcement of meeting them in Galilee. This remains a speculative but intriguing possibility.