

## ELEMENTS

### "TEAR"

#### MARK 15:33-41

### This Week's Core Competency

**Salvation by grace** – I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

In our country, we are blessed by and celebrate the many rights and freedoms afforded to us as United States citizens. One of the ways in which these freedoms have been preserved is through the willing sacrifice of brave men and women who gave up their life and liberties in our defense; most of whom did so voluntarily. On days like Veterans Day, Memorial Day and the Fourth of July, we are reminded that the freedoms we presently enjoy were not afforded to us *freely*. Rather, they came at the great cost of millions of lives and survivors' well-beings.

The same can be said of our salvation. We believers have been freely forgiven our sins by faith in Jesus Christ. By joyful extension we have been freed as well from the penalty of our sin - namely eternal separation from God. While these gifts were freely given to us, God's 'ability' to do so required a just payment, a sacrificial offering, to extinguish his righteous indignation against human sinfulness and rebellion. No mere mortal

---

***The LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.***

– Isaiah 53:6

---

would ever be up to the insurmountable task of dying for the sins of the world, much less his/her own sinfulness. Rather it would take God himself in the person and work of his Son, incarnate in human flesh. The Son of God voluntarily offered to give up his life so that we could be saved.

The Passion account in the Gospels paints a horrifying picture of the physical sufferings Jesus endured from the moment of his arrest until he breathed his last breath on the cross. Since we are all acquainted with physical pain in varying degrees, it is not difficult to come up with words to help us describe, to some extent, his bodily torments. However, Christ's atonement for our sins greatly transcends corporeal agony.

In reality, our forgiveness and freedom from the penalty due our sin came at a price that will forever remain incomprehensible to us. Jesus' prayers in Gethsemane that God's "cup" pass from him, was not simply a request to avoid tremendous physical pain. Rather, it was a desperate cry to avoid the ultimate of all agonies - true separation from his intimate, previously unbroken fellowship with the Father. As Christ became accursed on the cross and took upon himself the fullness of God's wrath and righteous judgment against human sin, his communion to the Father, for the first and last time in the eternity of the Triune God, was severed. By God's grace, we will never experience even a fraction of the same.

Have you acknowledged by faith that Jesus is your Savior who graciously endured the penalty of God's wrath and judgment due your sins? If not, I "implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." (2Co 5:20ff).

---

# day 1

**ENCOUNTER** – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

## Mark 15:33-41

33 *At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.* 34 *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" - which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

35 *When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."* 36 *One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.*

37 *With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.*

38 *The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.* 39 *and when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"*

40 *Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.*

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Circle "sixth hour" indicating *time* in v. 33.
- \* Box "darkness" in v. 33.
- \* Underline "the whole land" in v. 33.
- \* Circle "ninth hour" indicating *time* in v. 33.
- \* Highlight the words of Jesus in v. 34.
- \* Write "Psalm 22" in the margin next to v. 34.
- \* Circle each occurrence of "Elijah."
- \* Bracket all of v. 38.
- \* Box "torn" in v. 38.
- \* Double underline "from top to bottom" in v. 38.
- \* Highlight the centurion's words in v. 39.
- \* Number each of the women mentioned in v. 40..

---

## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. How long had Jesus been on the cross leading up to this moment of the crucifixion narrative (Mark 15:25)? How long is this portion of the crucifixion narrative?
2. What adjectives would you use to describe Christ's sufferings during this entire time?
3. Do you think the noonday darkness was a 'natural' or 'supernatural' phenomenon? Explain.
4. Regardless, what do you believe to be the *theological* significance of this pervasive 'darkness'?
5. What do you make of Jesus' words to God in v. 34?
6. Many scholars see a 'silver lining' in these agonizing words of Jesus. How could this be?
7. Who is Elijah? Why would anyone present expect Elijah to do anything on Jesus' behalf?
8. What do you infer is the significance of the phrase "torn in two from top to bottom" in v. 38?
9. Read v. 39, Matthew 27:54 and Luke 23:47. Identify the details that prompted the centurion's confession. Do you think it is an authentic conversion experience? Explain.
10. The women in this passage: played a vital role in Jesus public ministry, stood in sharp contrast to the disciples during his crucifixion and received special privilege after his resurrection. Identify all three of these.
11. **Discussion:** How might the answer to question '6' offer comfort in our present sufferings?

---

## day 3

## EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

Jesus' arrest is met with a hasty hearing by the Sanhedrin before he is ushered into Pilate's presence early Friday morning. Failing to satiate the crowd, Pilate acquiesces to their hostile cries by turning Jesus over to be crucified. By 9:00 A.M. his journey to "the place of the skull" (i.e. *Golgotha*) ends and the King of Kings is crucified by Roman soldiers. Their incessant derision towards Jesus only adds insult to devastating injury. Even more contemptible, the Jewish elite and many others shout insults and accusations at him to maximize his public humiliation and projected shame. Scarcely a follower of his can be found. And yet, the worst is yet to come. Mark 15:33-41 represents not only the darkest moment in Christ's incarnation but the bleakest incident in all of human history.

It is noon. Christ has been hanging on the cross for three agonizing hours. Seemingly out of nowhere the sky succumbs to darkness. The whole land is seized by its presence from noon until 3 P.M. *What* is causing this darkness is of little consequence compared to the *why* of this inexplicable phenomenon. Divine judgment has fallen. Prophets warned of Yahweh's judgment, accompanied with darkness, upon his people for their prideful, unrepentant, disbelieving ways (Jer 13:15-16; Joel 2:10; Am 5:18, 20; 8:9-10). And undoubtedly this is a real and present component at this moment.

However, in light of v. 34 ("My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?") it is the author's contention that the principal exercise of God's judgment during this three-hour time span is the judgment he places upon his Son - for *our* sin. On the cross, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us..." (2 Cor 5:21a). Jesus Christ became a curse for us on the cross (Gal 3:13). In Isaiah 53 it is foretold that: the Suffering Servant would be "stricken, smitten and afflicted" by God (v. 4); that Yahweh would lay upon him "the iniquity of us all" (v. 6); and that it was the Lord's will to "crush him and cause him to suffer" as a "guilt offering" for us all (v. 10). In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus is overwhelmed by sorrow and thrice pleads for the "cup" of the Father's divine wrath to be taken from him before resolving, "Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mk 14:36). As the story unfolds we see that it is indeed the Father's will to pour out his wrath upon his Son for the sins of the world. This is *that* moment. Isaiah's words

echo again when he spoke of God's people, of whom Jesus is now substitute, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isa 59:2).

One commentator minces no words regarding this climactic moment of judgment. "Now on the cross he who had lived wholly for the Father experienced the full alienation from God which the judgment he had assumed entailed. His cry expresses the profound horror of separation from God. The cry of dereliction expressed the unfathomable pain of real abandonment by the Father. The sinless Son of God died the sinner's death and experienced the bitterness of desolation. This was the cost of providing "a ransom for many" (10:45)" (William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT, 573).

Shortly after Jesus' grief-stricken lament and knowing that "all things were now accomplished" he says "I thirst." (Jn 19:28 - NKJV). Jesus receives a taste of sour wine from one of his onlookers. Others are not so compassionate. "[They] stop this man and mockingly wait for a miraculous deliverance from Elijah. Their jeer, 'Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down,' turns his cry of desperation into a heartless joke; but the joke is filled with irony. After all, the reader knows that Elijah has already come, and they did to him as it was written concerning him (9:12-13). Elijah (i.e., John the Baptizer) has already been put to death and will not return to rescue Jesus. Moreover, these scoffers want to see something, but they reveal themselves to be those who can see nothing" (David E. Garland, *Mark*, NIVAC 594). Unmoved by their ridicule, Jesus confirms "It is finished" (Jn 19:30). But what happens next quickly turns their callous jeer into penetrating fear.

In a manner wholly uncharacteristic of the crucified, Jesus, the judged of God, now evokes an intense "loud cry" (v. 37) of judgment upon the prevailing and perverted religious order of Jewish leaders. The earth quakes, rocks split in two, and the graves of deceased saint supernaturally open (Mt 27:51b-52). But most ominously, "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (v. 38). "With an unexpectedly and inexplicably powerful shout, [its] force tears the temple veil. He who had spoken of the temple's destruction (cf. 13:2; 14:58)

---

has now on the cross struck it with his dying breath, tearing the veil "from top to bottom," that is, tearing it completely. The torn veil is but a token of the complete destruction that will someday befall the temple. It is also the first step in the promised judgment that will overtake Jesus' priestly judges (14:62)" (Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, WBC, 509).

Jesus expresses his dying trust in the One who has promised to vindicate him on the third day. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Lk 23:46). And with that Jesus breathes his last breath and yields up his spirit in death. Women who had demonstrated unwavering faithfulness to Jesus throughout his public ministry mournfully watched all these events from afar (vv. 40-41).

The Roman centurion in charge of the company of soldiers who tortured and crucified Christ is convicted by everything he has just seen and heard. "Surely this man was the Son of God!" This is no mere editorial 'gloss' by Mark. Indeed, "the centurion's exclamation is the climax of the crucifixion scene, and one of the Christological high points of the gospel" (R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC, 659). Prior to this, the centurion was a "battle-hardened campaigner promoted from the ranks, who had no reason to be sympathetic toward Jesus." And of even greater significance, "[his] confession marks the beginning of the fulfillment of Psalm 22:27, "All the families of the nations will bow down before him." (Garland, 596).

## *The Message of the Passage*

*The events surrounding Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection prove he was a worthy substitute sacrifice for the sins of the world. Therefore, share in the centurion's confession that Jesus is THE Son of God.*

## day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the first two "living questions" below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following living questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

---

# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 33 **darkness** "Darkness shrouds the whole land for the next three hours, from the sixth to the ninth hour (noon until 3:00 P.M.)" (Garland, 591). "Attempts to explain [the darkness] by some natural phenomenon miss the point. The evangelists are more likely to have been thinking of a fulfillment of Amos 8:9-10: 'On that day...I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight, [I will make that time like mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day].' The darkness at midday symbolizes the judgment that comes upon the land of Israel with the rejection of Israel's king" (Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, BNTC, 376). See also: Ex 10:21-23; Isa 13:9-13; Jer 13:16; 15:19; Joel 2:10; 3:14-15. God's judgment is indeed upon the land but its principal placement is upon his only begotten Son.

v. 34 See Psalm 22:1. In rabbinic circles the first line of a passage could be stated to infer the interpretive thrust of the entire passage. "Interpreters are divided whether to consider only the words written or to weigh them against the entire psalm, a lament that ends with a triumphant hope of vindication" (Garland, 592). "A commentary on Mark is not the place to debate how this sense of abandonment fits into the Christology and Trinitarianism of later Christian orthodoxy. [Mark] wants us to feel Jesus' agony, not explain it" (France, 653). For a comparison of Mark's passion account with the psalms see Garland, 593-94.

v. 35, 36 **Elijah** An influential prophet who lived in the ninth century B.C. in the northern kingdom of Israel. At the end of his miracle-filled ministry he ascended to heaven via whirlwind (2 Ki 2:1-11). Elijah shaped the history of his day and dominated Israelite thinking for centuries afterward. The prophet Malachi closes his words to Israel with, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (4:5; NKJV). "Jesus' undoubtedly slurred, stammering speech, due to his intense suffering, made some in the crowd watching think he was calling for 'Elijah,' whose name would have been pronounced very similar to *Eli* (Heb. 'my God'). Thus they wonder if Elijah, in his role as messianic precursor, will come at the last second to rescue Jesus before he dies" (Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew," *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 98). Jesus' rejecters failed to realize John the Baptist served in this prophetic role. Luke states, "[John] will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah (1:16b-17a). Still further, Jesus says of John the Baptist, "he is the Elijah who was to come" (Mt 11:14).

v. 38 **curtain** In light of the rich theological symbolism found in the book of Hebrews (6:19; 9:3; 10:19-20) the curtain in question is oft assumed to be that which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. And, while it is agreed that Christ's sacrifice made the high priest's duties within the Holy of Holies forever obsolete, notable arguments exist to support that the curtain in question is in fact that between the forecourt and the Holy Place. First, Mark makes no specific mention of which curtain is torn (and Hebrews makes no mention of a torn curtain at all). Second, *this* curtain's height (over 80 feet) and majestic beauty (Josephus described it as "a panorama of the entire heavens") greatly enhances the supernatural nature of its tearing from "top to bottom" in v. 38. The inner curtain to the Holy of Holies would have been a mere 12-15 feet in height and only seen by the priestly select. Third, this curtain would have been visible for all, Jew *and* Gentile, to see - albeit by differing vantage points. Lastly, both early Jewish and Jewish-Christian traditions speak of an "astonishing happening at the entrance to the sanctuary" rather than "the partition between the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies" (Lane, 575). "Mark does not say which curtain he means, and there is no [textual] evidence...to denote *specifically* either the one or the other" (France, 656). The bottom line is this: a curtain was torn in two in response to Jesus' ghastly cry of judgment against Israel's rejection of him, their Messiah. It was a divine act that foreshadows both the prophetic destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. (cf. 13:2; 14:58) and the removal of Jewish privilege, via the order of priests, to commune with the living God.

v. 38 **top/bottom** This is likely to signify divine orchestration in the tearing of the curtain rather than any form of human effort.

v. 38 **centurion** "The centurion who stood facing Jesus was the Roman officer who superintended the execution. He had followed each stage of the crucifixion exactly, and knew that Jesus had not died the normal death of crucified men. The strength which he possessed at the moment of death was so unusual [coupled with the accompanied supernatural events: darkness, earthquake, splitting rocks, etc; see Mt 27:51b-54] the centurion spontaneously acknowledged Jesus' transcendent dignity" (Lane, 576).

v. 40 **women** "When all the male disciples have deserted, the women are still there, faithful to the last. And it will be to them first that the message of the resurrection is entrusted. In a society which gave no legal status to the testimony of women, everything will nevertheless come to depend on their witness to what they have seen and heard" (France, 665)

---

## Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

For most kids this is Spring Break Week! I know they are excited about a break from school and having lots of outside time enjoying our beautiful spring weather. This would be a great week to plan a simple Easter party or cookout. Invite some friends over for a party with a purpose. Use this fun party as an opportunity to share the Resurrection Eggs you made last week (download a copy of last week's Scrolls for instructions). Here are some fun ideas for your party. (1) Dye and decorate Easter eggs. (2) Plan an obstacle course where kids have to travel around with an egg balanced on a spoon. (3) Make Resurrection cookies. There are several websites that have instructions for making these memorable cookies. (4) Look on Pinterest for some fun cross crafts. As Christ followers, we have an opportunity to share the hope and joy we have with others this season. It's the perfect time to share your story and bless your neighbors and friends. Romans 12:13 and 1 Peter 4:9 encourage us to be hospitable and generous with others. As you bring others into your home (or yard) you are teaching your kids what love in action looks like. I am praying that in these days leading up to Easter, our families would be open to opportunities to be good news bearers to our friends who need Jesus so desperately.

### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Mark 15:33-41

1. What did Jesus say in verse 34?
2. Had God really abandoned Him? Talk about this with your parents or small group leader.

### What Do You Think

When Jesus died the curtain's temple was torn from top to bottom. This symbolized our ability to freely enter God's Presence because of Jesus' sacrifice. How does it make you feel to know that you can talk to God anytime? That He always hears you?

### What R U Going To Do

Next week we celebrate Easter Sunday! As Christ followers it is our favorite Sunday of the year. Pray and ask God to bring someone to your mind that you can invite to church. It is going to be a fun-filled service and we want all your friends there!

## MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Salvation by Grace - I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

Memory Verse

Romans 5:8 - *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

## KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

**Tom Bulick** (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. He and his wife Ruth have been married forty-six years and have one son, Zach.

**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.

**Kevin Glenn** (M.A.B.S., M.A.C.E. Dallas Theological Seminary) guest author.



8001 Anderson Blvd.  
Ft. Worth, TX 76120  
1-866-PANTEGO  
Fax 817-275-6403  
www.pantego.org

The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).